

Oregon berry, produce farms seek emergency aid for heat, drought

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
Capital Press

CORNELIUS, Ore. — Greg Unger and his father, Matt, leaned in to inspect a row of ripe raspberries at the family's 160-acre farm in Cornelius, Ore., following a brutal heat wave that gripped the Willamette Valley in late June.

Red fruit was flecked with white, a sign of sunburning in the relentlessly hot weather. If not for an overhead misting system set up to keep the berries cool, it is possible the entire crop may have been destroyed.

"There's only so much you can do in 115 degrees, but we did what we could," Greg Unger said.

Unger Farms, about 25 miles west of Portland, grows fresh strawberries, raspberries, blackberries and blueberries that are sold at New Seasons grocery stores and local farmers markets around the metro area, as well as some U-pick.

Between severe drought and heat, 2021 is so far proving a painful year at the farm. Strawberry yields took an estimated 80% hit due to dry conditions in May, and early raspberry yields may be down by as much as 40%.

They are not the only ones reeling from Mother Nature.

Bell's Orchard, a nearby farm in Beaverton, Ore., predicts it lost 25-30% of its apple and cherry crops to the heat. Hoffman Farms, about 3 miles to the south, reports an 80% loss in its black raspberries and 40% loss in its blueberries, the equivalent of 400,000 pounds of fruit.

Tri-County Farm Fresh Produce, an organization that represents 43 produce farms in Washington, Clackamas and Multnomah counties, sent a letter July 5 to Gov. Kate Brown asking her to

declare a state of emergency and provide relief funding for agricultural losses.

"Our member farms are seeing fields of crops devastated by the heat, especially those farms growing native-Oregon or Northwestern-based crops, which are not bred to withstand high temperatures," the letter states.

The immediate losses are just the start of the damage, the letter continues. The full extent of the damage will not be known until later in the year after everything is harvested.

The governor's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

For Greg Unger — who, along with his wife, Kara, took over the farm from his parents in January — blueberry harvest began June 21. Blackberry and raspberry harvest followed a few days later.

In a stroke of bad timing, high temperatures in the area hit triple digits each day between June 26 and 30, including 117 degrees on June 29.

To keep ripe blueberries from shriveling, Unger said they ran their overhead irrigation sprinklers all day. While the misting system in raspberries did help, it could not keep up entirely, resulting in the white-speckled drupelets.

Everything at Unger Farms is hand-picked for fresh market. Since the heat made it unsafe for workers to pick during the day, Unger said they switched to nighttime harvest, renting three large generator-lights and purchasing head lamps for the crews.

"That seemed to work really well," Unger said. "The whole crew was really happy with it, because they could still get their hours, and we got our product picked."

Farm seeks \$600,000 for lost hemp under hay insurance policy

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**
Capital Press

An Oregon farm is seeking at least \$600,000 for a destroyed hemp crop that it claims should be covered under an insurance policy for hay.

Mike & JD Alley Farms of Culver, Ore., have filed a lawsuit alleging breach of contract, good faith and fair dealing against The American Insurance Company of Novato, Calif.

"It's not produce, it's not a grain, it's not a fruit. What is it?" asked Mike Alley, the farm's co-owner.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture considers hemp a form of "forage or feed," he said. "It's a plant material and there's lots of uses in the livestock industry."

The complaint alleges that a severe wind storm in May 2020 damaged about 20,000 pounds of "hemp hay foliage," which equated to 10,000 pounds of salable processed material, and 100,000 pounds of "thrashed hemp biomass straw."

The "foliage" included hand-picked hemp flowers with a higher oil content, while the "biomass straw" consisted of raw hemp that was combined in a field but not processed, Alley said.

Though the farm hoped to salvage the hemp, it was ultimately unable to sell any because the crop was too damaged by rain. At the time, the processed "foliage" would have been worth \$250 per pound and the "biomass straw" would have been worth up to \$8 per pound, the complaint said.

While the insurance company paid out \$200,000 for the lost hemp as general personal property, it refused to pay \$600,000 under a policy specific to hay stored in a barn building, the complaint said.

The insurance company claimed the farm's policy had a "CBD/THC exclusion," referring to chemical compounds contained in hemp, but the farm claims that exclusion doesn't exist, according to the lawsuit.



Cows are milked at Vander Woude Dairy near Merced, Calif. A referendum to end the dairy quota was rejected by a small margin.

Capital Press File

California dairy referendum fails

By **CAROL RYAN DUMAS**
Capital Press

California dairy producers voted by a slim margin to keep the state's controversial quota program in a referendum conducted by the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

The department released the results of the referendum July 1, stating the Quota Implementation Plan approved by producers through a referendum in late 2017 will not be terminated.

The referendum was a result of a petition to end the program by March 1, 2025.

Passage of the referendum required a "yes" vote from 65% of voters producing 51% of the voting milk or 51% of the voters producing 65% of the voting milk.

Of the 933 eligible producers, 733 or 78.56% voted in the referendum with 49.25% voting in favor of terminating quota, falling short of satisfying the 51% threshold. Those producers accounted for 54.47%

of the voting milk, falling short of satisfying the 65% threshold.

The program, which assesses all Grade A milk producers to pay a premium to quota holders, has been a contentious battleground since producers joined the federal milk marketing order system in 2018. The marketing order has no quota provision.

Language sponsored by Rep. David Valadao, R-Calif., in the last farm bill, however, allowed California to maintain a stand-alone quota program if it joined the federal order system. Maintaining that program was crucial in securing producer votes to join the federal order system.

The program has stuck in the craw of those who don't own quota or don't own enough quota to get any benefit. But it is considered a valuable asset by those who do benefit. They say they have either inherited it or invested in it to augment their milk check, save for retirement or

remain competitive where expansion isn't possible.

The issue has divided families and friends and led to the formation of United Dairy Families of California, which has sought an equitable resolution and unity in the industry. The group submitted the petition to sunset the program based on producer meetings and an economic analysis of the situation but had no stake in the outcome of the referendum.

The referendum was a test to determine if the industry could come together on a compromise or continue to fight it out, said Dino Giacomazzi, one of the organizers of United Dairy Families.

The organization's mission was to get producers to vote on what they wanted to do with quota, and it succeeded, he said.

United Dairy Families "was formed because we recognized the co-ops and trade organizations had a conflict over the issue," he said.

UDF took a leadership role to bring the feuding factors together to have a con-

versation about quota, and its job is done, he said.

"The only thing left is for the leadership structure — the co-ops and trade organizations — to continue the conversation," he said.

That the referendum lost by a hair "demonstrates to me the industry is split right down the middle. It's clear division in the industry still exists," he said.

Cooperatives have the leadership to find compromise, and it's now their opportunity to step up and do it, he said.

"I'm sure the co-ops will help their producers come to a reasonable conversation. The industry can't push this division under the rug for very long," he said.

The quota program was instituted in 1969 to win support for a state marketing order that more equitably pooled milk and distributed payments for milk across different utilizations. It allowed producers with existing Class I contracts to receive a higher price for their milk than the market average, or blend price.

Japanese beetles found in large numbers in C. Washington

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

An outbreak of Japanese beetles, whose wide-ranging diet includes fruit, hops, grass and asparagus, has been detected in Central Washington.

The state Department of Agriculture on Tuesday found 145 of the invasive bugs in eight traps in Grandview, Yakima County, the state's top producer of farm goods.

It was the first day the department checked traps hung in the spring. The department will put up additional traps to document the spread, but more importantly to kill beetles, spokeswoman Karla Salp said June 30.

The beetles are above ground for about two months in the summer. The department probably won't apply pesticides this year because it must do an environmental assessment first, she said.

"We're doing everything we can this year without an actual eradication," Salp said.

"The most important thing now is to keep as many as possible from reproducing," she said. "Every



WSDA

A Washington State Department of Agriculture trap holds Japanese beetles found June 29 in Yakima County.

female we trap this year is potentially 130 fewer we have to deal with next year."

Japanese beetles are highly destructive pests that

are difficult and expensive to control, according to the USDA.

The beetles infest the eastern half of the U.S. They have largely been kept out of the West, though Oregon has been battling an outbreak for several years by spreading a granular larvicide on lawns and flower beds in Portland and its suburbs.

The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food this spring sprayed 300 acres scattered over three counties after trapping 89 Japanese beetles, the Standard-Examiner newspaper in Ogden reported.

Each year, Washington traps for Japanese beetles, but has never found many. A Grandview woman, however, reported finding doz-

ens on her roses last year.

Her report tipped off the department and led to more intensive trapping in the area this year. "Thank goodness for that woman's report," Salp said.

The insects are underground in the larval stage for about 10 months a year and can spread in potting soil. Live beetles have been known to stow away on aircraft or hitch rides in vehicles. Interstate 82 passes through Grandview.

The beetles have metallic green bodies, bronze wings and white spots on the side. Traps scented to lure Japanese beetles are commercially available.

The agriculture department is asking people to report Japanese beetles online at agr.wa.gov/beetles.

LEGAL

PURSUANT TO ORS CHAPTER 87

Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 07/12/2021. The sale will be held at 10:00am by

COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2017 HONDA CIVIC 4DR
VIN = 19XFC1F97HE200468
Amount due on lien \$1515.00
Reputed owner(s)
DAWN MARIE DINGMAN

LEGAL

PURSUANT TO ORS CHAPTER 87

Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 07/12/2021. The sale will be held at 10:00am by

COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2012 DODGE 3500 PK
VIN = 3C7WDTCL2CG265186
Amount due on lien \$1515.00
Reputed owner(s)
NICHOLAS VILLASENOR VALENCIA

LEGAL

PURSUANT TO ORS CHAPTER 87

Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 07/12/2021. The sale will be held at 10:00am by

COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2018 HONDA ACCORD 4DR
VIN = 1HGCV1F33JA072006
Amount due on lien \$1515.00
Reputed owner(s)
ALLSTATE INSURANCE

LEGAL

PURSUANT TO ORS CHAPTER 87

Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 07/12/2021. The sale will be held at 10:00am by

COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2018 HONDA CR V L
VIN = 2HKRW2H88JH655281
Amount due on lien \$1515.00
Reputed owner(s)
AN THUY & QUYNH NGOC NGUYEN
FIFTH THIRD BANK NATL ASSOC

LEGAL

PURSUANT TO ORS CHAPTER 87

Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 07/12/2021. The sale will be held at 10:00am by

COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2017 FORD F 150 PU
VIN = 1FTEW1EP8HFA60570
Amount due on lien \$1515.00
Reputed owner(s)
HAMMERSON ELECTRIC LLC

LEGAL

PURSUANT TO ORS CHAPTER 87

Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 07/19/2021. The sale will be held at 10:00am by

COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2016 NISSAN SENTRA 4DR
VIN = 3N1AB7AP9GY334999
Amount due on lien \$1555.00
Reputed owner(s)
NATALIE RENE WING
SANTANDER CONSUMER USA