

JOB

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the machine is — even if it doesn’t travel faster than 2 miles per hour.

Sammy Moore, 16, is in his second summer at Golden Valley Farms.

“It’s farm labor — anything and everything,” he said, as he sorted through a box full of sprinkler heads that had been pulled out of the blueberry fields. “It’s all on-the-job training. It’s just common sense.”

For many teens, securing a seasonal job is easier if they know someone in the industry.

“It’s kind of a networking thing,” said Jack Bellinger, owner of Bellinger Farms. He said he hires anywhere from five to 10 teens per summer, and many are friends of his high school-age sons, or people they already know.

Most teens work on the sorting line, processing, weighing and dividing up melons. They will help pack them into boxes for small-market orders, and make lids and pallets.

“Some drive forklifts — not very many,” Bellinger said, noting that kids have to be a certain age to operate machinery.

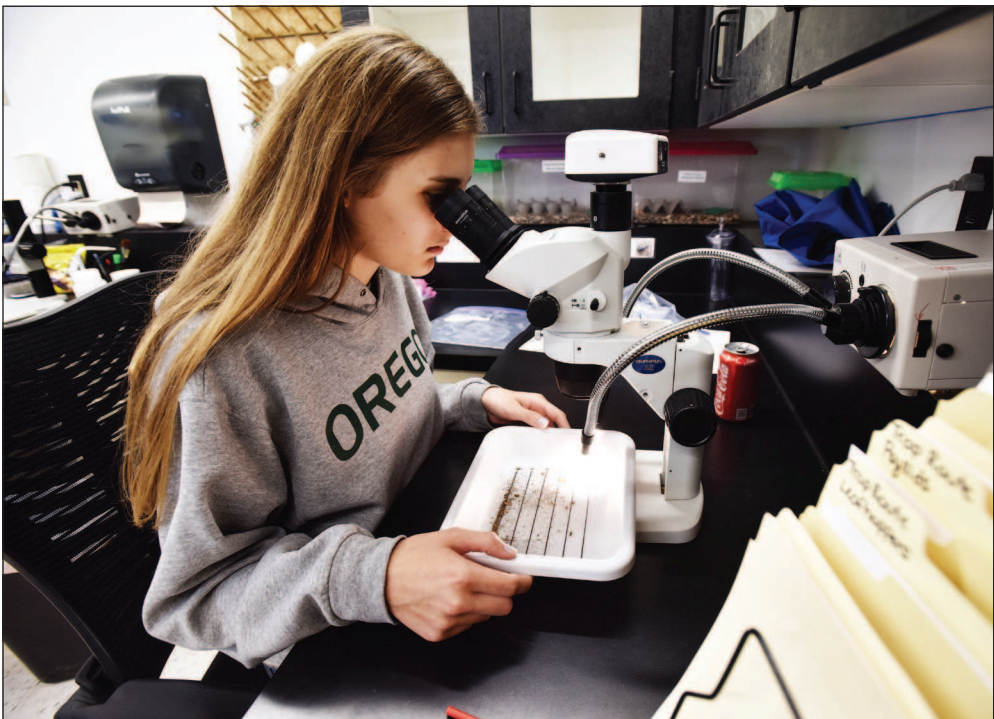
Rarely are teens out in the field, Bellinger said.

“It’s definitely manual labor,” he said.

Larger companies like Atkinson Staffing hire students every summer to work in the fields starting at age 15, mostly weeding around crops in Hermiston and Boardman.

Some agricultural jobs in the area are more research-based.

The Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center, operated through



Hermiston High School senior Raegan Aldred reads a sample looking for potato psyllid on Friday in the entomology lab at HAREC in Hermiston.

Oregon State University, hires a handful of high school students, as well as college and graduate students, to assist with lab work every summer.

“The principal investigator will hire students based upon need,” said center director Phil Hamm. While high schoolers don’t have to have a science background to get hired, it does help.

“It gives them the potential to learn about something they never knew about before, and potentially to do as a career,” he said.

Raegan Aldred, 17, and Benjamin Moore, 18, are both in their second year working at the experiment station, and are assisting with research in the entomology lab.

The two help collect data and read samples from the field.

Before starting work, the students have to go through safety training to learn how to be around farm equipment, and when it’s safe to go in the fields after pesticide has been applied.

Both are interested in wildlife, and have been able to apply the skills they’ve learned in some way.

“For me, it’s more been learning how scientists put data together,” Moore said. “It’s helped me out with some science classes.”

Dallas Fridley, a regional economist for the state employment department, said in the third quarter of 2017, teens ages 14 to 18 held about three percent of the jobs in Umatilla County, or about 1,047 jobs. The number of agricultural jobs for youth increased in 2017, from about 40 to about 200.

“There has been more

competition for these jobs from older workers,” Fridley said in an email to the *East Oregonian*. “Certainly the situation was more difficult for youth following the recession — but with unemployment rates at historic lows, the job market for youth should be better now than it has been in recent years.”

He said the top employer of youth in Umatilla County is the leisure and hospitality industry, providing about 370 jobs.

Many local employers said they will start their high school students at minimum wage, but are happy to give raises if they come back the next year, or show initiative in the job.

“The labor force out there is not plump,” Bellinger said. “We’re always looking for qualified people.”

TEXTING

Continued from 1A

including drivers making a 911 call during an emergency and professionals such as bus drivers and ambulance drivers who are acting in the scope of their employment.

ODOT reported that this year an unofficial tally shows Oregon has had 172 traffic fatalities so far, up 17.8 percent from this time last year. From 2012-2016, according to the department, Oregon saw 10,814 crashes involving a distracted driver, including 70 fatalities.

“Distracted driving is an epidemic in Oregon, and the consequences can be deadly,” Troy E. Costales, Transportation Safety Division administrator, said in a statement. “Everyone using the transportation system — drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians alike — should put away the distractions when traveling to help eliminate these tragedies.”

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BRIEFLY

Canada announces retaliatory tariffs against U.S.

TORONTO (AP) — Canada announced billions of dollars in retaliatory tariffs against the U.S. on Friday in a tit-for-tat response to the Trump administration’s duties on Canadian steel and aluminum.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s government released the final list of items that will be targeted beginning July 1. Some items will be subject to taxes of 10 or 25 percent.

Trudeau and U.S. President Donald Trump spoke late Friday.

“As he has said in past conversations and in public, the Prime Minister conveyed that Canada has had no choice but to announce reciprocal countermeasures to the steel and aluminum tariffs that the United States imposed on June 1, 2018,” Trudeau’s office said in a statement.

“The two leaders agreed

to stay in close touch on a way forward.”

It may have been their first direct conversation since Trump tweeted that Trudeau was “weak” and “dishonest” after leaving the G-7 meetings in Quebec earlier this month.

Trudeau also spoke to Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto and updated him on Canada’s response to the U.S. tariffs.

The taxes on items including ketchup, lawn mowers and motor boats amount to \$12.6 billion.

“We will not escalate and we will not back down,” Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland said.

Many of the U.S. products were chosen for their political rather than economic impact. For example, Canada imports just \$3 million worth of yogurt from the U.S. annually and most of it comes from one plant in Wisconsin, the home state of House Speaker Paul Ryan. The product will now be hit with a 10 percent duty.

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— Phil Hamm,
Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center Director

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