

# WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2013

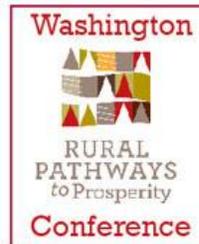
[HTTP://OFP.SCC.WA.GOV/](http://ofp.scc.wa.gov/)

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 11

## *Nov. 15 - Rural Pathways to Prosperity Conference - Statewide!*

WSU Extension invites you to participate in an exciting and innovative conference for your rural community. It's an opportunity to make personal connections, share ideas, and learn from experts about how to solve complex challenges.

No need to travel far to hear from keynote presenter, Becky McCray, a national expert in changing the entrepreneurial climate. **Broadcasting on a live webinar**, she will lead participants through the process of identifying and creating a small business eco-system.



Local facilitators and experts will share information about the current status of your ecosystem. The afternoon will be interactive with engaging exercises specific to your region that will move your community forward in developing your own plan.

For more information on conference sites and registration, [visit the website](#) or <http://waruralprosperity.wsu.edu/>

## *Skagit County Commissioners hold work session on ag*



On Monday, October 28, Skagit County Commissioners held a work session on the future of agriculture in Skagit County. Recent issues impacting agriculture in the county have prompted commissioners to seek guidance and direction on the future of agriculture in the county. With the loss of another cucumber processor, concerns with a recent water right ruling, the need to improve markets and the labor environment, commissioners heard from growers, and others on what could be done to strengthen and improve the outlook on agriculture.

The work session was recorded and is available by going to:

[http://skagit.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=2&clip\\_id=1581](http://skagit.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=1581)

Commissioners heard from 17 individuals who discussed issues including local permitting challenges, pressures from regulators, water quality concerns, buffer requirements, the idea for an agriculture business park similar to business parks to encourage infrastructure development, how to better communicate ag's story in Skagit and more.

## *Value of WA 2012 Ag production surpasses previous record*

The value of Washington's 2012 agricultural production reached \$9.89 billion, 6 percent above the 2011 revised figure of \$9.31 billion.

Record high values of production were set for six of the top twenty Washington commodities, including apples, wheat, cattle and calves, grapes, pears, and dry edible beans. Of the top forty, there were significant gains in values of several commodities including dry edible beans which increased 79 percent in value from 2011, barley up 69 percent, canola up 64 percent, and onions which increased 51 percent from the previous year. Notable commodities that declined in value in 2012 were blueberries, down 30 percent from the record high value in 2011, and wrinkled seed peas, down 28 percent from the previous year.



For more details, download the press release from Washington NASS at: [NASS Press Release \(PDF\)](#)

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Sign up by going to [OFP Newsletter](#) - Email frequency is once a month

Find us on the web at: <http://ofp.scc.wa.gov>

## *Farm to School spending in Washington tops \$10m in 2011/12*



USDA Secretary Vilsack [recently highlighted important strides](#) made in offering healthy, local food to millions of school children through USDA's Farm to School program, and emphasized the program's role in creating economic opportunity for America's farmers and ranchers. According to USDA's first-ever Farm to School Census, in school year 2011-2012, schools participating in farm to school activities purchased and served over \$350 million in local food, with more than half of participating schools planning to purchase even more local foods in future school years.

Here in Washington there are approximately 283 public school districts, 220 of which completed the USDA Farm to School Census. 104 districts representing approximately 1,144 individual schools with an estimated 523,917 children in attendance are bringing the farm to school.

The Washington school districts that bought local products in the 2011-2012 school year spent an estimated \$43,498,189 on school food, with \$10,527,555 of that directed locally. 52% of these districts say they will buy more local foods in the future.

Interest in local products spans the school meal tray, with fruits, vegetables, and milk topping the list of local products currently offered in schools across Washington, while census respondents indicate an interest in local plant-based proteins, grains and flour, and meat and poultry in the future.

In addition to buying local products and building school gardens, school districts in WA are promoting locally produced foods at school in general (23%), holding taste tests/demos of locally produced foods (21%), and promoting local efforts through themed events (20%).



## *DelBene Named to Conference Committee to Negotiate a Farm Bill*

Congresswoman Suzan DelBene was recently named as a member of the conference committee to negotiate a reauthorized Farm Bill. The House of Representatives on October 11th passed a resolution to enter formal talks with the Senate, and named their conferees. DelBene issued the following statement:

"I'm honored to have been appointed to the conference committee to negotiate a reauthorization of the Farm Bill. As the only Member of Congress from Washington on the conference committee, I take this responsibility very seriously.

"I came to Congress to find solutions and deliver results. As formal negotiations get underway, I will continue to work tirelessly for investments that benefit our local producers of specialty crops. In addition, our dairy farmers deserve major reforms to help stabilize the dairy market and protect consumers. Finally, I will fight for the millions of working families, seniors and children who count on nutrition programs and help expand innovative job-training programs to help low-income individuals get the education and skills they need to become self-sufficient."

Read the full statement and follow progress of farm bill talks by going to: [Rep. DelBene House Web Page](#)

## *ECY releases update on Wetland Buffers: The State of the Science*

The Washington Department of Ecology has released the final report, [Update on Wetland Buffers: The State of the Science \(Ecology Publication #13-06-011, October 2013\)](#). [Read more here](#)

This final report incorporates the comments received through October 2013 from outside reviewers. All the comments and responses to them will be published in a separate document, and will be available on Ecology's web site after January 2014. Background information on this report can be found on Ecology's Best Available Science for Wetlands web page: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/wetlands/bas/index.html>.

NOTE: **This update does not address how this new information can be incorporated into CAO's.** Ecology's suggestions for updating buffer regulations will be in a separate document.

## *Growth Patterns in the U.S. Organic Industry*

[USDA's Economic Research Service - Amber Waves, Oct. 2013](#)

U.S. consumer demand for organically produced goods has grown continuously since USDA established national standards for organic production and processing in 2002. And, while Americans economized on their food purchases during the 2007-09 recession, including purchases of organic products, growth in demand for organic products rebounded quickly following the recession. Industry analysts estimate that U.S. organic food sales were \$28 billion in 2012 (over 4 percent of total at-home food sales), up 11 percent from 2011. USDA has begun organic regulation of nonfood agricultural products—for example, laundry detergent with organic coconut oil, aloe vera, and other ingredients—which accounted for another \$2.2 billion in organic sales in 2011, according to the Organic Trade Association.

U.S. organic food sales reached \$28 billion in 2012



\*Estimated.  
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from *Nutrition Business Journal*, 2013.

Read more over at Amber Waves - <http://goo.gl/mgBqHX>

## *Whatcom Ag Advisory Committee - Right to Farm Recommendations*

The [Whatcom County Agricultural Advisory Committee](#) (AAC) has been working to improve and strengthen the County's Right to Farm ordinance. In May 2013, four motions passed regarding AAC recommendations for changes to the Right to Farm code, and how the public is made aware of that code. To view in more detail the recommendations that were adopted, please go to: [Meeting Minutes \(PDF\)](#). In summary, the recommendations that were approved included:

1. A postcard mailer to all Rural and Ag zoned property owners and residents with legal 'Right to Farm' language reminding property owners about the legally required 'Right to Farm' language which is required by county code to be present on all deeds. [UPDATE: Materials are being drafted and will be taken back to the committee for approval and implementation]
2. A recommendation that County staff write a letter to the title companies doing business in the County reminding the title company staff of the legal 'right to farm' language that is required to be placed on Rural and AG zoned parcels. [UPDATE: Materials are being drafted and will be taken back to the committee for approval and implementation]
3. A recommendation that County training for new and current staff members include review of the 'right to farm' code that requires the 'right to farm' language be placed on all short plat parcels originating in Rural and Ag zone areas. [UPDATE: staff has adopted these recommendations and will train new and current staff on right-to-farm code and language].
4. A recommendation that an ordinance be developed to reflect certain changes to Whatcom County Code Chapter 14 (Right to Farm). [UPDATE: The language change to the ordinance will need to go directly to council and include a public hearing. This will occur most likely in early December].

## *Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group annual forum*

The Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating group recently held the 5th annual coordinating forum in Olympia before an audience of local and state elected officials, state agency staff and stakeholder interests. The Coordinating Forum is a chance for state agencies to share information about acquisition projects that were recently funded and to coordinate plans for future purchases.

Participating agencies presented maps and other information about land acquisitions that received state and federal funding in 2013. Attendees were encouraged to ask questions and discuss the projects with the state agency staff to help identify opportunities for coordination about habitat and recreation land acquisitions and disposals.

Participating agencies were the State Conservation Commission, Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources, State Parks, and the Department of Ecology.

Presentations are available for each agency by going to: [http://www.rco.wa.gov/doc\\_pages/other\\_pubs.shtml#hrlcg](http://www.rco.wa.gov/doc_pages/other_pubs.shtml#hrlcg)

## ***Season Extension: Practical Ways Extend Production and Income***

### From Small-Scale Intensive Farm Training (SIFT)

Season extension simply refers to anything that allows a crop to be cultivated beyond its normal outdoor growing season. Here in Butte, Montana, our growing season tends to be fairly short; therefore any techniques that can prolong our ability to grow and harvest fresh food are highly valued.

Wherever you are, season extension practices provide a multitude of benefits, including extended production (which can mean extended income), higher yields, higher-quality vegetables, and, quite obviously, a longer amount of time to enjoy fresh food.

Among the most popular season-extension techniques are low tunnels, greenhouses, cold frames, heated seedbeds, hoop houses, thermal mass, irrigation, mulches, transplanting, windbreaks, and shade. There is an abundance of ways in which you can extend your growing season. To figure out which ways would be best for your farm, consider how much of an investment you are willing to make and how long you would like to extend your crop's growth. **Read more [here](#)**



## ***Getting Fresh Fruit to kids, Stemilt joins Sunkist for Lil Snapper***

From [The Packer.com](#) by Dan Galbraith

Wenatchee, Wash.-based Stemilt Growers LLC is rolling out an apple/citrus cross-promotion with Sunkist Growers as part of its Lil Snappers line, Roger Pepperl, Stemilt's marketing director, said Oct. 20 at Fresh Summit 2013.

The promotion will feature bags that include a mix of Stemilt apples and Sunkist oranges.

"We're getting a whole lot of excitement on this in the booth," Pepperl said. "Our first big launch for this will be coming out in November, and we expect big, wide distribution for it. We've already gotten a lot of pre-orders on it here at the show."

Other news from Stemilt centers on the pear category.

"We're also just now doing Lil Snappers bosc pears, which we feel could be a big win with kids in getting them to eat something they haven't tried before," he said. The pears have a suggested retail price of \$3.99-4.99. Pepperl said Stemilt is also offering a 5-pound pear bag for retailers, with a suggested price of \$3.99-4.99. "It's a heck of a retail opportunity for a value pear to hit a category that needs some uplift," Pepperl said. "It's a pallet-drop product with good mark-up."



## ***USDA Invests in Crop Insurance Education in Washington, PNW***



The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Risk Management Agency (RMA) Spokane Regional Office recently announced \$620,499 in partnership agreement awards that will support crop insurance education and outreach to ensure that small and underserved producers get the information they need to effectively manage their risk and remain productive. Several projects are occurring in Washington State.

"Wholesale Success: Crop Insurance and Risk Management Education for Spokane Region Specialty Crop Farmers." This project focuses on working with partners to engage small-scale, limited-resource, and bilingual Washington, Oregon, and Idaho farmers who are exploring new markets.

"Expanding Financial Risk Management Education for Underserved Farmers in Washington State." This project offers a semester-long "Cultivating Success Business Planning and Entrepreneurship" course in seven locations statewide, including two bilingual sites in Spanish.

For more information about these and other agreements, please see the RMA web site at: [www.rma.usda.gov/aboutrma/agreements/](http://www.rma.usda.gov/aboutrma/agreements/)

## ***Report - How Land Trusts can Save America's working farms***

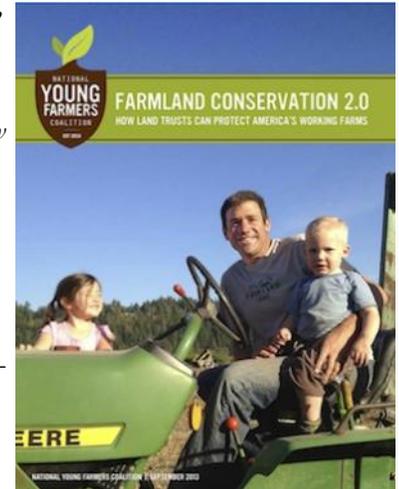
### ***New Survey of 200 Land Trusts Finds Protected Farmland Selling to Non-Farmers, Going Fallow***

The National Young Farmers Coalition recently released a report that reveals how current farmland conservation practices are failing working farmers. *Farmland Conservation 2.0: How Land Trusts Can Protect America's Working Farms* surveyed 200 land trust leaders from across the United States and found that one-quarter of land trusts have seen protected farmland move out of production. Land is going fallow as non-farmers purchase farms at prices beyond what farmers can afford. As a result, farmers are being pushed hundreds of miles from urban markets as they look for land to buy. **Report findings include:**

- 24 percent of land trust respondents said that they had seen farmland protected with conservation easements taken out of production.

- Non-farmers are the #1 threat to the continued use of protected farmland. Traditional conservation easements are designed to protect farmland from residential and commercial development, but they do not prevent non-farmers from purchasing protected farms as estate properties. Land transitioning away from farmer ownership contributes to the trend of farms being underutilized or taken out of production altogether.

Download the full report by going to: <http://www.youngfarmers.org/affordablefarms/>



## ***Introductory, 8 week online course in whole farm planning***

**Live Course Webinars - November 12, 2013 – January 21, 2014; Tuesdays 4:00-6:00pm Pacific**

This course on Sustainable Small Farming and Ranching guides participants to realistically evaluate their goals and resources, and provides the tools to evaluate the feasibility of starting a sustainable small acreage enterprise. Course topics include whole farm planning, resource evaluation, site appropriate production practices, enterprise budgets, market analysis and risk management/food safety assessment. Upon course completion, project participants will have the knowledge and skills to engage in whole farm planning. **Registration is now open!**

For more information on course requirements and how to register: <http://www.ruralroots.org/programs/susfarming.asp>

## ***Ties to the Land - Upcoming dates/locations***



The popular Ties to the Land workshop is coming to several communities across Washington. This program is designed for families to begin thinking about how to plan for the future through estate planning and works to build awareness of key challenges facing family business.

**Locations include Spokane (Nov 9), Dayton (Nov 16), Goldendale (Nov 16), Tonasket (Dec 7), and Ellensburg (Dec 14).**

For more information and registration details, [check out the flyer \(PDF\)](#) or by going to <http://forestry.wsu.edu/>

## ***Free Agricultural Business Training - Nov. 15 Tumwater***

The Washington State Dept. of Labor and Industries, Washington State Dept. of Agriculture, Washington State University, USDA Risk Management Agency, Enterprise for Equity, and Thurston Conservation District are pleased to bring you a free agricultural business training opportunity in Tumwater on November 15 at the Labor and Industries building.

Check out the flyer for agenda and registration. [Ag Business Training \(PDF\)](#) or <http://goo.gl/TNGekj>

## *Skagit River Basin Water Management Ruling*

On October 3, 2013, the Washington Supreme Court ruled that Ecology cannot set aside reservations of water through adoption of water management rules where water was previously set aside to support stream flows for fish. Without water reservations, later water uses can be interrupted when dry spells impact the protected stream flows. Ecology found in 2006 that limited reservations would not substantially harm fish populations. The Swinomish Tribe challenged the establishment of the reservations in 2008 and appealed a Thurston County Superior Court finding in Ecology's favor in 2010.

Ecology is pursuing a number of projects to find water supplies and solutions for property owners in the Skagit Basin. Ecology will be partnering with local governments, Tribes, the Skagit PUD and other water systems, and affected property owners to develop and implement projects. Ecology will be seeking input from the public and will be updating the Legislature on their progress.

Learn more or review the Supreme Court ruling by going to the Skagit River Basin rule page at: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/instream-flows/skagitbasin.html>

## *Job Opportunity: Northwest Harvest is Hiring!*



**Northwest Harvest is looking to hire a public policy coordinator in central & eastern Washington.**

The position will implement the grassroots organizing plan for Northwest Harvest (NWH) partner programs with focus in central and eastern Washington.

In addition to public policy and advocacy, this position works with all three Hunger Response Network department managers to implement all departmental activities, including partner program communication and technical assistance with our statewide network of over 360 food banks, meal programs, and high need schools; the Three Squares program that addresses childhood hunger; and annual focus group project.

For full details on this position, go to: <http://wafoodcoalition.blogspot.com/2013/10/northwest-harvest-is-hiring->

## *Land Values - Third Quarter Update 2013*

For the full Land Values report published by NW Farm Credit, go to: <http://goo.gl/63tPrA>

Although mixed, rural and agricultural real estate market conditions remain mostly stable for the majority of the Northwest region. While sales transactions are limited, most areas still report strong demand for good quality agricultural properties. Demand and market activity are reportedly mixed throughout the region, and are generally dependent upon property type and/or market segment. Many sales transactions continue to occur between landlord and tenants. Agricultural properties also continue to see interest from investors in many areas.

Check out the full report by going to: <https://www.northwestfcs.com/en/Resources/Land-Values>

## *Webinar - Assessment Tools for Improving Farmer Financial Skills*

On November 21, the National Good Food Network is holding a webinar on assessment tools for improving farmer financial skills. Registration details here: <https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/250135114>

This webinar focuses on three assessment-centered tools and programs. First, we will learn about a tool for farmer trainers themselves - to assess the strengths of the trainer's knowledge as well as assess students' knowledge at the outset and their subsequent progress. Second, how Annie's Project, a highly successful program for women farmers, integrates such an assessment tool as a part of the curriculum. And third, an entry level training tool that walks farmers through farm business cash flow analysis in an approachable way.

## In Short

### Feeding America NGO looks to hire a Federal Legislative Assistant

[Feeding America](#) is recruiting for a [Federal Legislative Assistant](#) to contribute to the development and implementation of a public policy agenda that increases both private and government food and funds for members, leads to federal regulations and laws that support reducing domestic hunger, with special emphasis on federal nutrition programs and budget policy, and positions Feeding America as the leading authority on hunger and hunger-related issues.

Learn more here: <http://goo.gl/ITygHR>

### WA Senate Committee to hold Work Session on Growth Management Act

The Senate Governmental Operations Committee is holding a work session November 13, 7pm at the Fraternal Order of Eagles Lodge #1490. The Lodge is located at 32618 Railroad Ave, Black Diamond, WA

[Link to Google Map](#)

**The Work Session topic is Growth Management Act - a case study in Black Diamond.**

An agenda is available by going to:

<http://goo.gl/ZGsa2K>

### Upcoming Farm Legal Issues Webinars - December 2013

Commons delivers fast-paced webinars that help farmers move forward on the legal issues that affect their farm operation. These webinars are engaging and practical- this isn't just theoretical learning!

Learn more about the legal issues being covered by going to: <http://farmcommons.org/webinars/>

Topics include: Value Added, food safety, regulations and more.

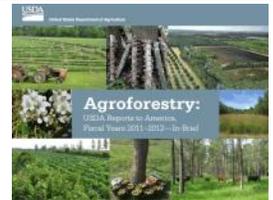
**First webinar is December 2, 2013**

## USDA releases inaugural report on agroforestry work

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack recently released the first-ever report on USDA's role advancing agroforestry. [Agroforestry: USDA Reports to America](#) details how agroforestry practices are helping farmers, ranchers and woodland owners enhance agricultural productivity, protect the environment and increase profits.

With the release of this report on agroforestry, USDA wants to start a national conversation about agroforestry with producers, landowners, communities and young people - America's future farmers.

To access the report, visit [www.usda.gov/agroforestry](http://www.usda.gov/agroforestry) send questions or comments to [agroforestry@USDA.gov](mailto:agroforestry@USDA.gov).



## October 29 - Weekly Weather and Crop Bulletin

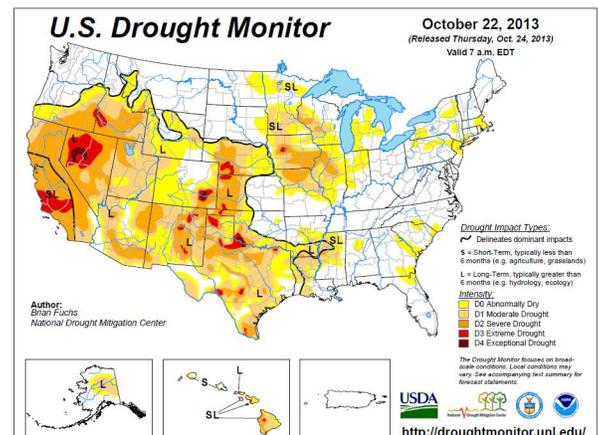
In **Whitman County**, it was another beautiful week with temperatures above normal with little precipitation having much of the fall plantings emerged and looking healthy.

In **Adams and Lincoln Counties**, winter wheat planting was wrapping up as mild weather conditions prevailed. In Franklin and Adams Counties, potato season was coming to a close.

In **Thurston County**, Christmas tree growers continued tagging trees for wholesale buyers and preparing fields for harvest while U-Pick pumpkin growers reported brisk sales. Also in **Thurston**, dairymen continued pumping manure lagoons for application to forage fields.

In the **Yakima Valley**, average temperatures were warmer than normal, varying from 1 degree below normal to 8 degree above normal with widespread rain showers over the weekend which contributed between 0.05 to 0.25 inches of rain. Apple harvest was wrapping up with Jonagolds and Honey crisps coming in from the upper Valley while Fuji and Crisps Pink (Pink Lady) apples were coming in from the lower Valley. Record-setting highs in Washington for October 23 included 73°F in **Yakima** and 70°F in **Ephrata**.

In **Chelan County**, apple harvest continued in warm, dry weather.



# WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

## Market Access Program Brand Promotion

The Market Access Program (MAP) Brand Promotion was designed for small businesses that desire financial support to launch a new branded export effort. For accepted participants, SUSTA reimburses up to 50% of certain international marketing and promotion expenses, including eligible tradeshows, in-store displays, and required label changes. Small companies must export a branded product that is at least 50% U.S. agricultural origin by weight.

Applications are accepted until funding is exhausted.

Details available at: <http://goo.gl/P6cNAd>

## Western SARE Farmer-Rancher Grants

Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program has issued a call for proposals for Farmer/Rancher Research & Education Grants for 2014.

A producer, working with a technical advisor, develops a proposal to conduct both research and education on a sustainable-agriculture topic. Up to \$15,000 per proposal is allowed for a single producer and up to \$25,000 is allowed for three or more producers.

Proposals are due by December 4, 2013.

Details available by going to:

<http://goo.gl/twuqyU>

## Annie's Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship Program

Annie's is offering \$100,000 in funds to students studying sustainable agriculture. Annie's Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship Program is open to full-time undergraduate and graduate students studying at an accredited U.S. two- or four-year college or graduate school for the 2014/2015 school year.

**Applications must be postmarked by December 2, 2013.**

Details available by going to:

<http://goo.gl/OE0Ri8>

## Mark Your Calendars

### 2013 Tri-State Grain Growers Convention—Nov. 14-16, Spokane

The Washington Association of Wheat Growers, and neighboring wheat associations are joining forces to create one of the largest grain-specific conventions in the U.S. **If you are under 40 and have never been, you may be eligible to have your registration covered.**

Details on this [here](#). General registration available by going [here](#).

### Save the Date—2014 Farmers Market Association Annual Conference

Friday, Jan. 31-Feb 2, Heathman Lodge, Vancouver WA. Click [here](#) for details.

Save the date now and plan to attend the 2014 WSFMA Conference. A robust agenda of workshops and speakers, including some fun new opportunities to interact with conference attendees, sponsors, exhibitors, and experts is in the works!

### 10th annual Focus on Farming Conference - Nov. 21 - Everett

The 10th annual Focus on Farming Conference will be held November 21, 2013 at the Comcast Arena in Everett, with Will Allen of Growing Power as keynote. You will find 24 great workshop classes with six industry tracks presented by some of the top experts in the country.

Details: <http://goo.gl/OxiPcv>

### NWABC - Orchard Management: Cider Fruit Production

**Saturday, Dec 7, 2013 - 9am to 2pm**  
WSU-NWREC 16650 State Route 536,  
Mount Vernon 98273 ([MAP](#))

\$85. Includes snacks, light lunch, and all lecture materials. For more information and registration, go to: <http://goo.gl/fnopjw>. Questions? Call NABC office at 360-336-3727.

### Nov 18 - Master Beekeeper Course begins in Everett

Designed to build basic beekeeping skills, topics covered include bee biology, equipment, seasonal management, identification and management of pests and diseases, as well as honey harvest. The overall focus will hone in on the unique challenges and benefits to beekeeping in Western WA. [Details](#)

### Washington State Horticulture Association - Wenatchee - Dec 2-4

2013 will mark the 109th Annual Meeting of the WA State Horticultural Association. The annual meeting is the largest gathering of orchardists, shippers, suppliers and vendors in the nation.

**Registration and agenda here:**

<http://goo.gl/0oyAjp>

“OUR MISSION IS TO PROMOTE THE VITALITY OF FARMING, FARMERS, AND RANCHERS BY ENSURING THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL LANDS IN WASHINGTON STATE. WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS THROUGH POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR, THE LEGISLATURE, THE OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION AND OTHERS AND BY ENLISTING PUBLIC SUPPORT. PROGRAMS WILL BE VOLUNTARY, RECOGNIZE LOCAL PRIORITIES, AND PROVIDE FOR ECONOMIC INCENTIVES.”