

**Inside This Issue**

Farm Conference	1
Famer Recognition	1
WA Apple Harvest	1
Climate Change	2
Crop Insurance	2
Port Labor Dispute	2
Bee Gardening	2
EPA Standards	2
American Farmer	3
Mabton FFA Prog	3
Blueberries	3
Staff Recognition	3
Chair of WSFTA	3
High Tech Lines	3
Wine Award	3
FSA Loan Rates	4
Lupe Garcia	4

**4th Annual Farm Conference Wealth of Info**

The Center for Latino Farmers (Center) Annual Small Farms Conference (SFC) held on 2/6/15 at the Yakima Convention Center in Yakima was “awesome and producers were engaged,” said Luz Bazan Gutierrez, CEO of RCDR. The conference succeeded in bringing 165 Hispanic/Latino farm operators from WA St, Tonasket close to the Canadian border, Yelm in the Western side of the site & from Portland. The SFC entitled **"Changing Dynamics of Agriculture"** was an all day event for producers, Ag professionals and businesses to network and hear from experts and other peers about the issues facing small producers.

Jim Davenport, Board Chair of the Rural Community Development Resources (RCDR) welcomed everyone to the session, and spoke about the challenges faced by all farmers. David Reeploeg, Central WA Director of Sen. Cantwell's office delivered the Senator's message expressing support of the Center's efforts in assisting Latino farmers to access USDA programs. Jon DeVaney, president of the newly formed WA State Tree Fruit Asso (WSTFA) spoke about the change that had taken place when four industry groups merged to better serve the producers, and that he was selected to take the helm. He provided information on the 2014 bumper crop apple productions, challenges faced by all producers, work stoppage at the port hurting the Ag industry and export sales.



Juan Marinéz of the Alliance of Hispanics in American Agriculture (AHAA) gave a great presentation about the growth of Hispanic farmers per Ag Census that is taken every five years, and expressed the importance of all producers getting involved. The charts presented showed that Hispanic farm operators are in the lead in the growth of new & beginning farmers. He also provided a historical prospective as how the Mexican people have been involved in farming and cattle operations for generations in Mexico & USA, territories that once belonged to Mexico. He sees the desire of immigrants to own their own land as the driver for this growth.



AHAA will continue to request support for more funding for Community Based Organization (CBO's) who have the direct ties to the farm operators. He congratulated the Center & the Hispanic farm operators for their success. ([www.hispanicproducersalliance.org](http://www.hispanicproducersalliance.org))

**Six Latino Farmers Recognized for Leadership -FSA County Committees**

During the luncheon, six Latino producers were recognized for their leadership in vying for and being elected/appointed to the FSA Advisory Committees in their respective counties. Ernesto Lara-Benton County 5 years, Jesus Limon -Okanogan County, and appointed by President Obama's Administration



for State Advisory Committee 6 years (Served a total of 15 years), Porfirio Covarrubias-Douglas County 2 years, Raul Sanchez- Chelan County 6 years, Sergio Marquez-Yakima County 5 years, Victor Castro-Okanogan County 5 years.

(L-R) Víctor & Susan Castro, Jesús & Maria Limón, Porfirio Covarrubias, Lilia & Sergio Márquez. (Raúl Sánchez & Ernesto Lara not in picture)

**150 Million-WA Apple Harvest**

The 2014 apple crop easily blows away the previous record of 129 million boxes set in 2012, According to the (WSTFA) report, a normal standard box is between 40 and 42 pounds.

WA leads the nation in apples production, while Yakima County is the highest-producing county in the USA. The apple crop was worth \$2.25 billion in market value in 2012, according to the most recent USDA Ag census.

Mr. DeVaney of WSTFA estimates apples have a \$7.5 billion overall impact on the WA State's economy. He stated that packing houses in Yakima & Wenatchee have been sending some of their apples to companies such as Tree Top to be made into apple sauce or juice due to port stoppage. (Yakima Herald, Dec 2014)



## Climate Change Affecting Production

An unusually warm, dry January slowed snowpack accumulation in much of the West, according to data from the second 2015 forecast by the USDA, National Water and Climate Center (NWCC). "January is usually a big month for snowpack accumulation," NWCC hydrologist Cara McCarthy said, "but most of the West didn't see significant gains this month."

Stream flow in the West consists largely of accumulated mountain snow that melts and flows into streams as temperatures warm in spring and summer. NWCC scientists analyze the snowpack, air temperature, soil moisture and other measurements taken from remote sites to develop the water supply forecasts.

The Cascades of Oregon and Washington have received normal levels of precipitation this winter year, but it's mostly fallen as rain instead of snow. The NWCC, part of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, monitors conditions year-round and will continue to issue monthly forecasts until June. The water supply forecast is part of several USDA efforts to improve public awareness and mitigate the impacts of climate change, including drought and other events. (<http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov>)

## New Crop Insurance

The 2014 Farm Bill gave USDA-RMA the flexibility to announce the Whole-Farm Revenue Protection Pilot Program (WFRP). This program combines the Adjusted Gross Revenue Pilot (AGR) and the Adjusted Gross Revenue-Lite (AGR-Lite). Based on the success of the programs in the North West the "WFRP combined programs includes enhancements" said the new RMA director Ben Thiel.

These coverage's provides a risk management safety net for all commodities on the farm under one insurance policy. This insurance plan is tailored for any farm with up to \$8.5 million in insured revenue, including farms with specialty or organic commodities (both crops & livestock), or those marketing to local, regional, farm-identity preserved, specialty, or direct markets. (<http://www.rma.usda.gov>)

## Port Labor Disputes Slows Apples Exports

"The timing couldn't have been worse," said Jon DeVaney President of WSTFA after weeks of delay have turned into a critical situation.

The months-long dispute between the International Longshoremen Warehouse Union (ILWU) & the Pacific Maritime Asso (PMA) which represents port operators in Seattle, Tacoma & Longview has put the squeeze on exports, including apple shipments to key markets in Latin America & Asia.

Seattle & Tacoma slowed by as much as 60 %, said PMA officials, as union workers either walked off the job early each day or were sent home by supervisors. ILWU officials representing 13,900 workers at 29 west coast ports, including Seattle & Tacoma slowdowns were due to mismanagement and shortage of equipment. "Missing any delivery deadline undermines the chances of continuing sales," Said DeVaney, "it opens the doors for our competitors to step in."

## Bee Friendly Gardening in the Pacific Northwest

We can question the growers of our fruits and other producers about the steps they take to ensure bees aren't contaminated with pesticides or fungicides from their crops. Remember that from the perspective of bees, the most important thing is what might be sprayed on the blossom.

A joint report from the EPA and the USDA found that hives are collapsing because of parasites, lack of genetic diversity, poor nutrition, and poor communication between growers and bee-keepers.

We should not use insecticides in our own garden; we should plant things and provide habitat for bees and other pollinators. We should support local, small scale honey producers, particularly those that demonstrate sustainable management practices with their hives. Small and backyard beekeepers can encourage genetic diversity in their hives by using naturally-reared queens who mate with feral drones instead of pre-mated purchased queens.

(<http://www.nwedible.com/bee-friendly-gardening/>)

## EPA Strengthens Ag work Standards

During the summer of 2014, more than 200,000 people made comments to the US Environment Protection Agency (EPA) calling on the agency to strengthen its Agricultural Worker Protections Standards (WPS). Individuals such as farm workers, public health advocates, union members, and public officials are working to insure that the agency acts quickly to implement a WPS that prevents needless illness, injury, and death in farm working communities.

The WPS will require applicators to be certified as competent to apply certain hazardous pesticides in accordance with EPA's national standards. ([www.farmworkerjustice.org](http://www.farmworkerjustice.org))



The WA State Dept of Agriculture (WSDA) partnered with the Center in hosting a WPS Hands-On-Training for pesticide handlers as part of the SFC. The workshop provided practical hands-on training that exceeds the state and federal training requirements of the Worker protection Standard (WPS). A total of 19 Latino producers and/or farm workers obtained their Handlers Training Verification Card and were given 6 credits for the existing license holders. (<http://agr.wa.gov>)

## American Farmer Growing Old!

“Each one of those trees is like a child-when a limb breaks, it bothers me,” says McManus, who planted this orchard of maraschino cocktail cherries more than a decade ago. “It took all this time to get it to this point, and I’d like to keep it going.”

At 73 years old and owner of the 150-acre Southview Orchards isn’t sure he can make that happen. Unfortunately none of McManus’s three grown children wants to take over the tart cherry farm. His son works as a lineman for the local power company, his daughter works as a physical therapist, and another is a stay home mom who isn’t interested in farming. So the McManus remain reluctant for the dramatic graying of the American farmer.

There are less U.S. farmers than there were 30 years ago, and as a group, they’re getting older. (National Geographic, Sept 2014)

## Mabton FFA Receives Grant

A \$5,000 grant was awarded to Mabton High School from the program Curriculum for Agricultural Science Education (CASE). “This will help make the classes more lab-based and hands-on,” said Krieg an agricultural teacher from Mabton High School. The grant will be used to buy lab computers and sensors that will help implement the CASE program. Kudos to Mabton FFA! (Daily Sun News, Dec 2014)

## Blueberries Are Beneficial

Five Reasons to Eat More Blueberries: dose of Vitamin C, prevent blindness, improves cardiovascular disease, heart, reduce cancer risk, fight bacteria faster, boost brain cells.

Scientists started to unlock the secrets of cultivating blueberries, and we’re glad they did! Plump, juicy berries are now easy to grow in your backyard on bushes that are resistant to most pests and diseases, and can produce for up to 20 years. A relative of rhododendron and azalea, blueberry bushes are also an attractive addition to your overall landscape, offering scarlet fall foliage and creamy white spring flowers. ([www.medicaldaily.com](http://www.medicaldaily.com))

## Kudos to Maria Giedra !!!!

Maria Giedra Farm Outreach Specialist received a recognition award for her work in reaching out to the Latino producers and farmworkers. She knows the producers and they are always happy to hear from her. Her outreach work is valuable for the success in workshop and conference participation.



## Ramirez Elected Chair of WSFTA

Congratulations!!! Jose F Ramirez is the Chair of the WA State Tree Fruit Asso (WSTFA). Mr. Ramirez has been a client of the Center for 10 years and has taken classes such as financial management, computer basics, farm succession planning, and participating in small farm conferences.

He participated in the meeting of the Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers in Albuquerque, NM on Nov 2011, where he spoke about the challenges faced by Latino producers.

His journey began in 1985, at the age of 17 when he decided to pursue his dream and left Mexico for Vista, CA where he got a job picking strawberries. Bending over all day long pushing a small cart and picking the fruit made his hamstrings hurt and his feet numb. He wanted a change and decided to move to WA where he is a successful farm owner.

Felicidades Sr. Ramirez!



## Warehouses Investing in High Tech Lines

Many Yakima Valley packing warehouses are investing in lines that feature computer imaging and robotics. This will require skilled technicians with the right training to operate them. From record apple crops and strong markets, the new technology will allow them to pick more fruit with the same amount of people.

Some industries officials encourage young people to start training for those types of jobs through program at Perry Technical Institute. Many fruit companies are gearing up to add extra shifts, which will create more demands for sorters and packers who are not going anywhere anytime soon. (Yakima Herald, Oct 2014)

## Palencia Wins Wine Award

Victor Palencia won awards for his own Palencia Wine Company and Jones Winery at the Northwest Wine Awards. The Seattle times and its wine writer, Andy Pedue, recently released the Top 50 Northwest Wines.

At just 28 years old Mr. Palencia is the owner and winemaker of Palencia Wine Co. He is opening a tasting room at the Walla Walla Regional Airport, not far from where he went to college to learn winemaking. In growing up, it was not that easy for his mother to take care of the family’s eight children, and worked as a seasonal worker. His father grinded in the mint fields, orchards and vineyards of the Yakima Valley. Congratulations to Mr. Palencia! (Wenatchee World, 2014)

**Do you need assistance to apply for a loan?  
Would you like to participate in workshops?  
Do you need financial management assistance?**

**Call the Center 509.453.3157**



## Development Resources

**Center for Latino Farmers**

P.O. Box 9492

Yakima, WA 98909

509-453-3157

[www.centerforlatinofarmers.com](http://www.centerforlatinofarmers.com)

### Lupe Garcia Presente !!!

Jose Guadalupe (Lupe) Garcia passed on Friday 12/19/14 in Las Cruces NM surrounded by his loving family. Mr. Garcia was the lead plaintiff in the Hispanic Farmers USDA discrimination law suit. Garcia & Sons, his father, brother & Lupe, owned two farms in Dona Ana County, NM where they grew onions, lettuce, wheat & corn. The family operations repeatedly applied and were denied operating loans from the USDA FSA.

This systematic deprivation of operating capital continued until they were foreclosed upon in 1999. He was a strong advocate for demanding equity for those farmers that had lost their land because of actions taken by USDA. He continued his battle against injustices until his last breath.

We salute and honor Lupe Garcia for his work on behalf of Hispanic famers in their struggles to seek justice for injustices.



### FSA Loan Rates-Effective as of February 1, 2015

Program	Interest Rates
Farm Operating-Direct	2.625%
Farm Ownership-Direct	3.75%
Farm Ownership-Direct, Joint Financing	2.50%
Farm Ownership-Down Payment	1.50%
Emergency Loan-Amount of Actual Loss	3.625%
Conservation Loan	3.75%

### Monthly Radio Program

Month	Day	Time
Feb	Thurs 19	4 - 5 p.m. 
Mar	Thurs 19	
Apr	Thurs 16	



This project was supported by the Beginning Farmer & Rancher Dev Program of the National Institute of Food & Agriculture, USDA, Grant # 2012-49400-19670. To find more resources and programs for beginning farmers and ranchers please visit [www.Start2Farm.gov](http://www.Start2Farm.gov), a component of the Beginning Farmer & Rancher Development Program