

# Washington State Conservation Commission

## FARMLAND PRESERVATION NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2017

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



### *New Mentorship Effort to Support New Farmers and Ranchers*

#### **USDA and SCORE Launch Innovative Mentorship Effort to Support New Farmers and Ranchers**

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue today signed a Memorandum of Understanding with officials from SCORE, the nation's largest volunteer network of expert business mentors, to support new and beginning farmers. Today's agreement provides new help resources for beginning ranchers, veterans, women, socially disadvantaged Americans and others, providing new tools to help them both grow and thrive in agri-business.

SCORE matches business professionals and entrepreneurs with new business owners to mentor them through the process of starting-up and maintaining a new business. USDA and its partners across rural America are working with SCORE to support new farming and ranching operations, and identify and recruit mentors with a wealth of agricultural experience.

SCORE mentors will partner with USDA and a wide array of groups already hard at work serving new and beginning farmers and ranchers, such as the Future Farmers of America, 4-H, cooperative extension and land grant universities, nonprofits, legal aid groups, banks, technical and farm advisors. These partnerships will expand and integrate outreach and technical assistance between current and retired farmers and agri-business experts and new farmers.

Anyone interested in being a mentor can get more information and sign up on the USDA New Farmers' website at <https://newfarmers.usda.gov/mentorship>.



### *Yakima Basin water-rights case coming to a close*

#### **State's largest stream adjudication will confirm 2,500 water rights**

The historic Ecology v. James Acquavella, et al adjudication determining and confirming all surface water rights in the Yakima River Basin will soon be final, announces the Washington Department of Ecology.

After 40 years of court proceedings and deliberation, Yakima Superior Court Judge F. James Gavin entered a proposed final decree for the case on Aug. 10, 2017, including a draft schedule of rights set to be confirmed over the next eight months. Information is now being mailed to water right holders, beginning a review process after which the court will enter a final judgment concluding the case.

An open house is scheduled for 5-7 p.m., Sept. 6, 2017, at Ecology's Central Regional Office, 1250 W. Alder St., Union Gap, where people can ask questions about their water rights and learn more about the process including deadlines for filing objections. [Read more](#)



**Stay in contact and sign up for the OFP-Newsletter!**

Email frequency is once a month

Sign up on the web at: <http://ofp.scc.wa.gov>

## ***Economic Contributions of H-2A in WA***

### ***New Study on Benefits of H-2A in WA***

A study prepared for the Washington Farm Labor Association (WAFLA) by ECONorthwest finds that H-2A workers generated \$619 million in economic activity for the tree fruit industry in 2015. In that year, Washington farmers received visas for 11,844 workers through the H-2A legal worker program. In 2017, that number has increased 31.8 percent.

The study demonstrates the economic importance of H-2A workers to the Washington economy in light of well documented labor shortages.

Access the study [here](#)



**Economic Contributions of Washington H-2A Workers**

May 2017  
Prepared for WAFLA  
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## ***Food Policy: US Company Delivers Wonky Produce To Cut Food Waste***

A San Francisco Bay Area company that embraces “ugly” produce is taking off and has just kicked off business in Portland. The company is called Imperfect Produce, and its goal is to put an end to the 6 billion pounds of produce wasted each year in the United States. Ben Simon’s company delivers fruits and vegetables rejected by grocery stores at 30-50 percent less than you’d normally pay.

“In every grocery store, they want their produce section to be pristine and beautiful,” CEO Ben Simon said. “They assume that because an onion is too small or a melon has a little bit of scarring on the outside that the customer isn’t going to want that.”

Most of the ugly produce would go to waste on farms, rejected by grocery stores for its appearance. The food only looks imperfect. Imperfect Produce says just because the produce is too small, misshapen or the wrong color, doesn’t mean it tastes bad. source: [koin.com](http://koin.com)



## ***Food Safety: FDA Food Safety Plan Builder***

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Food Safety Plan Builder (FSPB) is a tool designed to assist owners/operators of food facilities with the development of food safety plans that are specific to their facilities and meet the requirements of the Current Good Manufacturing Practice, Hazard Analysis, and Risk-Based Preventive Controls for Human Food regulation (21 CFR Part 117).

Use of this tool is strictly optional on the part of the user. FDA is not requiring use of this tool to develop a facility's food safety plan. [Read more](#)

## ***FDA delays inspections under FSMA animal food rule***

FDA not beginning inspections for hazard analysis and risk-based preventive controls portion of Food Safety Modernization Act animal food rule until fall of 2018.

Food & Drug Administration Center for Veterinary Medicine director Dr. Steve Solomon recently announced at a meeting of the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) that the agency will not begin inspections for the hazard analysis and risk-based preventive controls portion of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) animal food rule until the fall of 2018.

Previously, feed facilities were expected to be in compliance and ready for inspections by Sept. 18 — something the feed industry has pushed back on, given the short lead time for the facilities to conduct the necessary actions in order to be in full compliance. [Read more](#)

## *2017 Washington fruit production update*

The Pacific Northwest office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service recently provided an update on fruit production in Washington.

**Apples:** At 64 percent of the U.S. apple production, Washington still ranks number one in apple production. Washington apple production is forecast at 6.70 billion pounds, down 8 percent from last year's production.

**Grapes:** Washington total grape production is forecast at 460 thousand tons, down 6 percent from last year. Of the 460 thousand tons in Washington, 200 thousand tons are forecast for juice grapes, down 8 percent from 2016. Washington wine grapes are forecast at 260 thousand tons, down 4 percent from last year. Washington is the second largest grape producer in the nation at 6 percent of national production.

**Peaches:** Washington peach production, at 14.0 thousand tons, is up 12 percent from last year. Washington peach production is forecast as the fourth largest in the U.S.

**Pears:** Total Washington pear production, at 280 thousand tons, is down 20 percent from 2016. Of that total, 120 thousand tons are for Bartlett pears, down 19 percent from last year, and 160 thousand tons are for other pears, down 20 percent from 2016.



## *Publication Profiles Ranches' Successful Sales to Area Schools*

More and more, schools across the United States are buying local foods to serve in their cafeterias. For farmers and ranchers, schools present a new market channel for their products – provided they are prepared to raise and process their crops or livestock to meet the schools' needs and specifications.

An [ATTRA](#) publication, “Farm to School Sales: Profiles of Ranches Making It Work,” profiles two Montana ranches that have successfully sold their beef to area schools. It outlines some of challenges of producing, processing, and selling to schools, as well as the featured ranches' business models, equipment needs, and the ranchers' perceptions of farm to school sales in the future.

You can find “Farm to School Sales: Profiles of Ranches Making It Work” at <https://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/summaries/summary.php?pub=569>

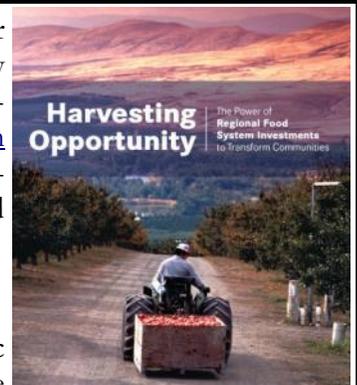


## *U.S. Federal Reserve Highlights Economic Benefits of Organic Agriculture*

The significant and long-lasting economic benefits that organic agriculture can offer local communities are featured in an important new publication recently released by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis and the U.S. Federal Reserve Board of Governors. The new book, [Harvesting Opportunity: The Power of Regional Food System Investments to Transform Communities](#), is a compilation of research, essays and reports exploring how the growing popularity of locally sourced food can be harnessed to boost economic opportunities for rural and urban communities..

### **The value of organic investments**

The chapter on organic agriculture highlights the findings of the study on organic hotspots, which finds that on average, county poverty rates drop by 1.3 percentage points and median household income rise by over \$2,000 in counties with high organic activity that neighbor other high-organic counties. [Read more](#)



## *No-till farming research looks at fungal disease outbreaks*

Scientists compare soil microbes in no-till, conventional tilling systems of Pacific Northwest farms

American Phytopathological Society via Phys.org

In recent decades, growers have increasingly been adopting no-till farming to reduce soil erosion and decrease fuel, labor and inputs. Wheat farmers of the inland Pacific Northwest, however, have been slower to adopt no-till, in part because they see more incidence of fungal soil-borne diseases when crop residues accumulate in the field. However, over longer periods of time, researchers saw these fungal disease outbreaks decrease after farmers continuously practiced no-till over multiple seasons. [READ MORE](#)



To see wheat harvest on the Palouse near Rosalia, go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wsfV6yqy9iU>

## *USDA announces SNAP grants—Washington group included*

USDA recently announced 32 grants totaling \$16.8 million to help Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants increase their purchases of fruits and vegetables. The program is operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The funding comes from the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) program, authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill.

# **GROW FOOD**

Grow Food, based in Burlington Wa., was awarded a multi year award of \$488,758 for a farms to families CSA effort to provide SNAP clients affordable access to local produce and food education through a community partnerships project.

Read more about Grow Foods effort [here](#)

## *WSDA discovers first-ever live female gypsy moths in Washington*

For the first time in its more than 40-year history of trapping for gypsy moths, the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) has discovered actively reproducing female gypsy moths during annual summer trapping.

"This is an extraordinary find for our team," said Jim Marra, WSDA Pest Program Manager. "While we have found evidence of reproducing gypsy moths in the past, we've never found female moths actively laying eggs in our state. To halt the egg-laying activity and remove this infestation before the caterpillars hatched likely saved our state from an extensive, multi-year eradication project that would have cost millions of dollars. It's confirmation that our program is working as intended." [Read more](#)



Gypsy moth laying eggs on leaves—WSDA photo

## *Health Insurance Costs Threaten Farm Viability*

A study by the University of Vermont and the University of Chicago revealed that lack of access to affordable health insurance is one of the most significant concerns facing American farmers. Health-related costs are a cross-sector risk for agriculture, tied to farm risk management, productivity, health, retirement, the need for off-farm income, and land access for young and beginning farmers. [Read more](#)

*In Short*

**AG Ferguson argues agricultural workers must be paid fairly for all time worked**

Attorney General Bob Ferguson filed a “friend of the court” brief arguing that agricultural workers who are paid on a “piece-rate” basis by what they pick are also entitled to compensation for time they spend on other aspects of their jobs.

In the amicus brief, filed yesterday in a case before the Washington State Supreme Court, Ferguson argues that piece-rate workers deserve compensation for work-related activities other than picking. Those activities include traveling between orchards, attending meetings and trainings, or transporting or storing equipment.

[Read more](#)

**GRANT:**

**Western SARE Competitive Grants**

Calls for Proposals Released

The 2018 Calls for Proposals for Western SARE grant programs have been released.

The three open grants programs include:

- [Professional Development](#)
- [Farmer/Rancher](#)
- [Professional + Producer](#)

Please read each call carefully for eligibility and deadlines.

**GRANT:**

**Clif Bar family Foundation**

Clif Bar Family Foundation Small Grants are awarded for general organizational support as well as funding for specific projects.

Small grants average approximately \$7,000 each. Applications are reviewed three times a year; the deadlines are the 1st of February, June, and October.

Award Amount: \$7,000

**Deadline: October 1, 2017**

For More Information, [Click Here](#)

*In Short*

**Online farmers markets: a new trend in local foods**

The Survey of Local Food Marketing Practices found U.S. producers utilized online marketplaces to sell \$171,728,337 dollars of local food and value-added products in 2015.<sup>1</sup> Climbing consumer demand for locally produced food and a preference for convenience fuels the future of online farmers markets.

Online farmers markets showcase fresh food and food products from multiple farms within a defined geographic region, such as a single county or tri-county area.

[Read more](#)

**2016 Washington Total Farm Production Expenditures Down 4 Percent from Previous Year**

Farm Production Expenditures in Washington are estimated at \$8.11 billion for 2016, down from \$8.42 billion in 2015. This is a 4 percent decrease from the previous year.

The four largest expenditures at the State level accounted for 60 percent of total expenditures in 2016. These include Labor, 26 percent; Farm Services, 18 percent; Feed, 10 percent; and Rent, 7 percent.

In 2016, average total farm expenditure per farm in Washington was \$225,776, down from the previous year average of \$233,889. This is higher than the United States farm expenditure average per farm which was \$169,035 in 2016, down 4 percent from the previous year.

**Mobile Drip Irrigation Offers Benefits of Two Systems**

Some Idaho farmers are retrofitting center pivots with long hoses to ground level, ending in drip emitters, to create mobile drip irrigation, reports the Times-News.

The systems combine the benefits of a center pivot with the savings of drip irrigation. Studies show a 10 to 25% increase in water-use efficiency and also a 10 to 20% increase in crop yields.

Water filtration represents the largest share of the retrofit cost.

[Read more](#)

# WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

## Mark Your Calendars

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>Cider &amp; Perry Production<br/>A Foundation, October 9-13,<br/>Mt. Vernon, WA</b></p> <p>This five-day course located in Washington's Skagit Valley provides students with expert knowledge of cider and perry principles and practices. The curriculum includes information regarding cider culture, production, and business. Students of this course will participate in hands-on sensory demonstrations, laboratory exercises, and blending trials.</p> <p><b>Details at:</b><br/><a href="https://goo.gl/bjGaj1">https://goo.gl/bjGaj1</a></p> | <p><b>Clark County Farmer-Buyer Mobile<br/>Workshop &amp; Business Networking<br/>Event</b></p> <p>Thursday, September 7th, 2017<br/>8:30am - 3:30pm - Vancouver, WA<br/>\$5 Registration Fee</p> <p>This event will offer specialty crop farmers and local buyers the opportunity to meet casually and talk directly about selling and buying products.</p> <p><b>Details and registration at:</b><br/><a href="https://goo.gl/kJAUbS">https://goo.gl/kJAUbS</a></p> | <p><b>Washington Food Coalition<br/>2017 Annual Conference—Sept. 14<br/>Greater Tacoma Convention Center.</b></p> <p>Learning tracks this year include: Safety, Best Practices, Capacity Building, Social Justice, and more!</p> <p>There will be lots of sessions to choose from with all kinds of info to bring home and inspire.</p> <p><a href="#">Register today</a></p>  |
| <p><b>Tilth Conference—Vancouver WA<br/>November 10-12</b></p> <p>Every year, the Tilth Conference brings together hundreds of farmers, producers, researchers and food system professionals to network and learn. This is a great way to meet others in your field, enjoy locally sourced meals and participate in fun evening events around Vancouver.</p> <p><a href="#">Registration will open soon!</a></p>  | <p><b>Small Ruminant Animal Health<br/>Class—Olympia</b></p> <p><b>Sept 6 – October 11, 2017</b></p> <p>6-week series: \$150<br/>Wed. evenings (6-8:30pm)</p> <p>Classes held at local farms, and WSU Extension Thurston County, 5033 Harrison Ave NW.</p> <p>Check out the course outline and registration details at:<br/><a href="https://goo.gl/DW8UUQ">https://goo.gl/DW8UUQ</a></p>   | <p><b>Food Policy Webinar: Navigating<br/>the Farm Bill - Sept. 7th</b></p> <p>Join the Food Policy Networks project for a conversation with authors Parke Wilde and Alan Hunt about what matters most to community food systems and the mechanisms by which to shape the contents of the farm bill.</p> <p><a href="#">Registration and details</a></p>   |
| <p><b>Save the Date!<br/>South Sound Food Summit—South<br/>Puget Sound Community College<br/>October 20 &amp; 21</b></p> <p>Join the South Sound Food System Network (SSFSN) in October for a two day summit. SSFSN is comprised of local businesses, non-profits, educational institutions and local government agencies with a mission to grow a vibrant local food economy, ensure broad access to healthy foods, and steward the environment in the South Sound.</p>  | <p><b>Continuing Legal Education<br/>10th Annual Water Rights<br/>Transfers—Nov. 8 &amp; 9—Seattle</b></p> <p>This CLE will discuss the law of water rights in our state.</p> <p>To view full agenda, which includes registration information and pricing, go to the link below.</p> <p>To register over the phone, or if you have any questions please call 800-574-4852</p> <p><a href="#">Agenda and registration</a></p>  | <p><b>7th annual Washington Young<br/>Farmers Coalition farm mixer—<br/>October 8th, Walla Walla</b></p> <p>Join WYFC at <a href="#">Welcome Table Farm</a>, for a potluck and dance. 2.30pm tour of nearby <a href="#">Hayshaker Farm</a>. 4pm tour of Welcome Table. 5pm-late dinner and dancing at Welcome Table</p> <p>They will have music, food and drinks. Bring your friends, a potluck dish, your own tableware, dancing boots, and your stories from the farming season.</p> <p><a href="#">Details here</a></p> |

“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.”