



WESTERN WASHINGTON AG REPORT

JULY/AUGUST 2022



COLD SPRING, DELAYED HARVEST

With the wetter, colder and longer spring than normal, crops are delayed and harvest for fruit, vegetable and seed crops will be later than normal

The cold, wet spring and summer has delayed harvest for many crops in northwest Washington. Local farmers produce about \$300 million worth of crops, livestock, and dairy products on approximately 90,000 acres of land. Over 90 different crops are grown in Skagit County. Blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, tulips, daffodils, pickling cucumbers, specialty potatoes, and vegetable seed are some of the more important crops in this maritime valley. More tulip, iris, and daffodil bulbs are produced here than in any other county in the U.S. Ninety-five percent of the red potatoes grown in the state of Washington are from Skagit County. From potatoes to strawberries, crops have been delayed by the weather.

Potatoes

The biggest impact on potatoes in the Skagit and nearby counties has

been planting dates. "We were delayed in getting the crop planted this year because the wet weather didn't give us optimal days to get in the fields," explained WWAA President Jenn Smith. Smith and her husband grow potatoes and other crops on Fir Island. "Most of us were dodging rain storms to get the crop in, and some areas in the fields didn't take well."

This challenge led to spotty areas in certain fields and means the crop is two to three weeks behind in harvest. While the overall crop quality hasn't been affected, the 2022 crop is delayed and harvest will be rushed before the fall weather moves into the area.

Vegetable Seeds

Similarly, vegetable seeds crops are also delayed this summer. "The crop looks good," explained WWAA member Annie Lohman who grows many veg-

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etable seed crops near Bow. "Our beet seed plants look good, but harvest will be a little off this year."

Northwest Washington is home to the best seed growing region in the nation. Seeds grown here are then sent to farms and homeowners around the world for vegetable production. The region specializes in spinach, beet, cabbage, brassica and other seed crops.

Alfalfa and Hay

If you look at the hay fields of the region you'll see that they are lush and

WWAA MISSION

To represent agriculture by providing services to the entire agricultural community

WWAA COMMITMENTS

Engage in internal and external (economic, environmental, regulatory) pressures on agriculture

Interact with county, state, and federal legislators and regulators

Pest and nutrient management control

Network with and support of the agricultural research community

Seek out and develop opportunities and technologies for agriculture

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beautiful. The cool weather and naturally wet spring proved beneficial to the feed crops. Quality is also high on the current crops.

Tulips and Flowers

While the wet weather hit some farms with planting challenges the Tulip Festival was incredibly successful this year. The fields had longer staying power because of the cool weather. Flowers lasted longer and visitors were able to enjoy beautiful moments in between rain showers. The digging season was wet, but most farms were able to get the bulbs out of the ground at a reasonable pace for refrigeration and shipping preparations later this summer and fall.

The cut flower season also has been extended due to the cool, wet weather. Plants enjoy the cooler weather but need warmer weather to fully develop and grow to their potential and normal production levels.

Berries

Like the other perennial crops, this spring and early summer cool, wet weather delayed the crops' development. Strawberries, raspberries and other berries will have a later harvest but the berries will not lack in quality standards. The overall crop will not see any degradation, but the harvest is two to three weeks behind.



WSU MT. VERNON CELEBRATES 75 YEARS IN THE REGION

This month, Washington State University is celebrating a 75 year-presence in northwest Washington. Recently WSU held a field day at the Northwestern Washington Extension & Research Center on State Route 536 near the river.

Established in 1947, WSU Mount Vernon has a long tradition of serving western Washington's agricultural and horticultural communities. During the early years of WWII, WSU and USDA scientists working in the area were able to successfully control devastating diseases of beet and cabbage that were being grown for seed. Impressed by the value of research-based information, the community—including farmers, seed companies, processing firms and



Farmers, industry members, and agricultural organization staff attended the recent 75th anniversary of the WSU Northwestern Washington Research and Extension Center (NWREC) at Mount Vernon.

civic groups—raised funds for a permanent facility. The facilities have continued to grow and improve over the years and in 2006, the new Agricultural Research & Technology Building opened. The vision for the building as a full-service research center was led by members of northwestern Washington’s agricultural community in collaboration with WSU and augmented by public appropriations and gifts reaching nearly \$2.25 million. The efforts and partnerships here are truly unique, and considered a model for revitalizing R&E Centers throughout the U.S.

During the field day, participants heard from multiple researchers regarding the progress of their projects. Most projects were funded by the Northwest Agricultural Research Foundation (NARF). NARF is made up of local farmer and industry members. The foundation distributes farm, industry and port funding to research that benefits the agricultural community.

MILES OFFICIALLY NAMED NWREC DIRECTOR

It’s finally official. Carol Miles, PhD, will be the new director of Washington State University’s Northwestern Washington Research and Extension Center (NWREC) at Mount Vernon. After two years of successfully serving as the interim director, Miles has accepted the permanent position.

“We were pleased to hear that Dr. Miles is staying on as the NWREC director permanently,” said WWAA Executive Director Brandon Roozen. “Carol has been a strong advocate for farmer-based prioritization of research, and we look forward to coordinating faculty and facility investments forward under her leadership”



Hired in 1994, Miles began her career



Dr. Chakradhar Mattupalli explains his work with the long-term soil health initiative project at Mt. Vernon. Mattupalli leads the Berry-Potato Pathology (BPP) program at NWREC.

at WSU Extension, leading and sharing on-farm research, and producing experience-based educational programs in horticulture production. She is also a vegetable extension specialist and a professor in the Department of Horticulture, based at NWREC, home to research programs in entomology, small fruit horticulture, vegetable pathology, vegetable seed pathology, weed science, and plant breeding.



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