



## Announcements

### NOVEMBER

**8 Walla Walla County Noxious Weed Board Public Meeting**, WSU Extension office, 328 West Poplar at 1:30 p.m. Open to anyone who would like to add their input to the 2012 county program.

**11 Dryland Organic Agriculture in the PNW**, Yakima, WA, Convention Center. This symposium will address agronomic and economic issues specific to dryland organic production. Direct questions to [kelsey@tilthproducers.org](mailto:kelsey@tilthproducers.org) or call 206-632-7506. Register online at <http://www.tilthproducers.org>.



**9-12 Washington Cattlemen's Assoc. Annual Convention**, Walla Walla, WA, Marcus Whitman. For information or registration, call 509-925-9871 or visit [www.washingtoncattlemen.org](http://www.washingtoncattlemen.org)

**13 4-H Achievement Night**, Walla Walla County Fairgrounds Community Building, Sunday at 5:00 p.m. Come join us to celebrate the achievements of our 4-H youth. Come early to see all of the silent auction items. Bring a hot dish and a salad or dessert, serving utensils, plates, and silverware for your family and guests. Coffee and punch provided.

If you would like to donate an item or a service to the 4-H silent auction, please bring it to the WSU Extension office at 328 West Poplar Street by November 2. No used items, please.

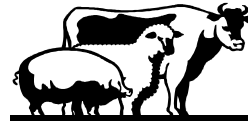


**14-15 Washington State Crop Improvement Assoc. (WSCIA) Annual Meeting**, Spokane, WA, Mirabeau Park Hotel & Convention Center. Pesticide re-certification credits and CCA credits. For more information and registration, visit <http://www.washingtoncrop.com/>, call 509-335-4365 or email [darlene@washingtoncrop.com](mailto:darlene@washingtoncrop.com)

**16-18 WA Tri-State Grain Growers Convention**, Spokane, WA, Davenport Hotel. Learn and connect with fellow grain farmers from around the Pacific Northwest. For information and to register, visit <http://www.wawg.org/> or call 1-509-659-4302.

### NOVEMBER

**19 Free 4-H & FFA Animal Judging Clinic**, Waitsburg, WA, Waitsburg Fairgrounds, 9:00 a.m. to noon. This clinic includes conformation judging of beef, dairy cows, goats, horses, sheep, and swine. The program is presented by Waitsburg FFA and Walla Walla County WSU Extension. For more information, contact Jim Burres at 509-337-6545 or Walla Walla WSU Extension at 509-524-2685.



**28, 29 Pesticide Recertification Training**, Pasco, WA, TRAC- Holiday Inn Express. Classes are from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. for 6 credits in Washington and Idaho. For Oregon assigned credits, access [http://oregon.gov/ODA/PEST/recertification\\_index.shtml](http://oregon.gov/ODA/PEST/recertification_index.shtml). For more information and registration, Visit <http://pep.wsu.edu>. Seating is limited.

### DECEMBER

**7 Last Chance Pesticide Recertification Credits** Walla Walla County Extension office, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., Wednesday. No need to pre-register; \$15 at the door. 3 credits – applied for both Washington and Oregon.

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## Updates

### AGRICULTURE: A CORNERSTONE OF WASHINGTON'S ECONOMY

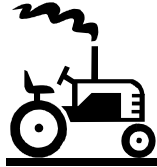
Rich soils, diverse climates and large-scale irrigation make Washington one of the most productive growing regions in the world. The state's deep-water ports and its proximity to important Asian markets also provide natural advantages for agricultural trade.

Washington's 39,000 farms produce 300 different crops. The top five agricultural commodities in Washington State are apples, milk, potatoes, wheat and cattle. Washington ranks first in the U.S. for production of 10 crops including apples, sweet cherries, pears, red raspberries and hops. In the

U.S., our state produces 78% of all hops and is the second largest producer of premium wines. Apples are a \$1.5 billion crop and sell in all 50 states and around the world.

The state's \$35 billion food and agriculture industry employs 160,000 people and contributes 11% percent to the state's economy. Nearly \$11 billion in food and agricultural products were exported through Washington ports in 2009, the third largest total in the U.S.

Source: WSDA



### **\$3.1 MILLION IN FEDERAL GRANTS**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has approved the state's application for \$3.1 million in grant funding for projects to support the state's fruit, vegetable and horticulture growers. Commodity commissions, agricultural associations, Washington State University and WSDA programs will receive grant funds. Awards for individual projects range from \$62,000 to \$250,000.

WSDA conducted a competitive solicitation process to award the funding. WSDA selected 20 projects that build on the expertise and success of the industry, make a meaningful contribution to the viability of fruit, vegetable and horticulture production and have the potential to support the largest number of producers.

To read the complete article, visit <http://agr.wa.gov/News/2011/11-22.aspx>

## *Farming & Livestock*

### **FALL GRAZING IMPACTS SPRING GRASS**

It may be tempting to graze your grass to the ground this fall with hay and feed prices so high. However, this may be a poor decision as it will likely affect production next year. Carbohydrates are the energy form that plants store to make it through the winter and start growth in the spring. Grasses store these reserves above ground and how much forage you can harvest by haying or grazing depends on the species.



Ideally, tall wheat grass should be harvested at 10 inches in height leaving 6 inches of stubble.

Pubescent wheatgrass, intermediate wheat grass, orchard grass and smooth brome grass should be harvested at 8 inches in height, leaving 4 inches. Tall fescue and timothy should be 6 inches tall before harvesting, leaving 4 inches. In the fall after frost or when very little growth is occurring, all you need to worry about is how much stubble to leave.

Other species and more details can be found in Chapter 2 of the publication *Pasture and Grazing Management in the Northwest*. Download at <http://www.cals.uidaho.edu/edcomm/pdf/PNW/PNW0614.pdf>

Source: Steve Norberg, WSU Franklin County Extension

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF RAM SELECTION**

The rams you select for the 2011 breeding season will greatly impact the number, pounds of lambs, and quality of lambs you will have for sale in 2012 and beyond. Because of the number of total lambs produced by a single ram compared to a single ewe, his contribution to the overall flock performance and profitability is significantly higher than that of a ewe.

Selection of high quality rams for traits that are economically important to your operation's resources and management style will increase your chance of having a more profitable lamb crop. Ram selection becomes even more important when you are breeding your own replacement ewes and/or rams.

Evaluating rams for breeding soundness is one of the most neglected management practices in a sheep operation. Even if a ram has proven satisfactory in the past, it is important to consider a breeding soundness evaluation (BSE) about four to eight weeks prior to breeding season. If a ram fails the exam for a reason that he may recover from, four to six weeks will give the ram time to heal and be reevaluated. If the ram fails completely, it gives the producer time to find and purchase another ram. A basic BSE consists of a physical examination, examination of the reproductive organs, measurement of the scrotal size and semen evaluation. Almost any large animal veterinarian can administer the test.

Producers breeding with one ram should have a back up ram available in the case a ram is sterile or becomes ill or injured. It is very important to observe the ram for lameness, body condition and any other defects which may interfere with

breeding. Rams with problems which cannot be resolved or limit effective breeding should be culled.

Observing the ram service a ewe often enables you to identify back, leg, feet, or other reproductive problems that prevent him from completing the act successfully. The mating ratio for healthy and fertile rams is typically one mature ram for 30 to 50 ewes or one ram lamb for approximately 20 ewes.

Rams need to be a body condition of 4 at the beginning of breeding. Once rams are turned in with ewes they will expend a lot of energy and time checking and breeding ewes, and very little time eating. Many rams will lose between 10-15% of their body weight during a 45-day breeding period. Poor nutrition is the major cause of ram mortality. Rams should be evaluated for body condition six weeks before breeding. If a ram is thin, it will take at least 50 days and approximately 2.5 pounds of corn per day in addition to the ram's normal diet to increase his weight by 25 pounds.



*A ram exhibiting a body condition score of 4*

In most cases, forage alone is not adequate nutrition for growing ram lambs that are being used for breeding. Make sure that rams have easy access to minerals and water. When rams are breeding, especially in multi-ram breeding pens, they will not leave the ewes in standing heat to travel great distances for minerals or water. It is also critically important that upon removing rams from the breeding flock that their body condition score is brought back up to a 3, which will require grain supplementation for thin mature rams and ram lambs.

Source: Sarah M. Smith, WSU Grant/Adams County Extension. For the complete article, go to <http://animalag.wsu.edu/>.

## 4-H

### 4-H POTLUCK, AUCTION, AND AWARDS PROGRAM



All 4-H families, friends, and supporters are invited to the 4-H Achievement Program on Sunday, November 14 starting at 5 p.m. The evening includes a potluck dinner, silent auction, and awards program. Approximately 150 awards are given to 4-H members and adult volunteers in recognition of their accomplishments this past year. Join us in celebrating another successful 4-H year!

### *Financial Fitness*

#### **EMERGENCY CASH RESERVE**

Setting aside money to meet unexpected expenses provides a financial safety net and allows you to take advantage of financial opportunities as they arise. Most experts recommend an emergency fund equal to 3 to 6 months living expenses; however, you do not need to set aside this total amount in a low-yielding passbook, certificate of deposit, or money market account.

The amount of your emergency fund depends upon your age, health, job outlook, and personal financial situation (e.g., amount and kind of insurance coverage). An emergency fund might be adequate with enough to cover 3 to 6 months of expenses using a combination of cash and credit if you have a source of low-cost borrowing (e.g., home equity credit-line loan, cash-value life insurance, or retirement plan). If your household has multiple sources of income or dual earners, you can count on those other sources of income in an emergency.

You might want a larger emergency fund if you are in business for yourself, your work is seasonal, your job is uncertain, or you rely heavily on commissions. If your health is questionable (e.g., you foresee long-term disability or extensive medical expenses), you anticipate a large expenditure for the care of a relative in the near future, or your child is about to enter college, you may also need a larger cash reserve.



Your emergency cash reserve can be subdivided to minimize penalties for early withdrawal of large amounts of funds at one time and to maximize

interest earned on accounts should an emergency occur. Money that would be needed within 3 months of a financial emergency is best placed in an interest-bearing checking account, passbook savings, money-market deposit account, or money market mutual fund. Funds needed 4 to 6 months after an emergency could be placed in short-term certificates of deposit (CDs) as well as 3- and 6-month Treasury bills. Money that would not be needed for 7 months to 2 years could be placed in a money market mutual fund and longer term CDs (12-, 18-, and 24-month). Money you can avoid withdrawing for 2 to 5 years during a financial emergency could be placed in Treasury notes, short-term bond funds, or 3- to 5-year CDs.

Source: <http://www.extension.org>

## Home & Garden

### MAKE THE MOST OF MICROCLIMATES

Have you ever wondered why your neighbor can grow beautiful hydrangeas while yours freeze to the ground every winter? Or why your evergreen trees tend to turn brown on the edges while a friend's evergreens remain lush and green year round? While many factors affect our garden plants, microclimates are one of the most important to consider.

A microclimate is the climate of a small area that is different from the area around it. It may be warmer or colder, wetter or drier, or more or less prone to frosts. Microclimates may be quite small - a protected corner next to a building, for example, that is warmer than an exposed field nearby. Or a microclimate may be extensive - a band extending several miles inland from a large body of water that moderates temperatures.

When consulting maps of USDA Hardiness Zones and spring and fall frost-date maps, you need to consider that these are averages for your area. Although the Walla Walla area is situated in USDA Hardiness Zone 6, the actual temperature range could be from Zone 5 to Zone 7 depending on microclimates.

Your landscape or garden may experience colder winter temperatures than the map indicates or be more prone to late spring or early fall frosts. You may have a shorter growing season and some marginal plants may not survive winters in your yard. If you put out tender plants too early, you

might lose them. If you plant long-season heat-loving plants, they may not mature before fall frost.

On cold nights when frost threatens, the cold air flows downhill and collects in low spots. Winter winds can often wreak havoc on exposed hilltops. Winds dry out plants, and are particularly hard on evergreens, which cannot replace moisture lost through their needles or leaves when the ground is frozen.

Areas with a northern exposure are slower to warm up in spring because they receive less direct sun but early spring warmth in southern exposures may cause plants to begin flowering prematurely, only to have the blossoms killed by a sudden frost.

Trees may provide shelter from the weather but may also prevent rain from reaching the ground. They also compete with nearby plants for available moisture and nutrients.

Urban areas tend to have less extreme low temperatures than the surrounding countryside. This may result in a full Hardiness Zone warmer than nearby rural areas. Buildings and pavement absorb heat during the day, radiating it back into the air at night, reducing the chances of frost and moderating low temperatures during winter.

However, that same heat reflected off the house in winter may warm the bark of young trees enough to result in frost crack when temperatures drop later in the day. In summer this may be the perfect spot for heat-loving plants or a scorching environment that can damage plants.

Although your house may provide some shelter from weather extremes, when wind hits your house, turbulence and higher wind speeds occur along the wall and around the corners. This would not be a good place for broad-leaved evergreens or other plants that tend to dry out in the wind.



Fences, walls and large rocks can protect plants from wind and radiate heat, creating sheltered spots. But cold air may pool behind them, increasing frost damage to nearby plants.

Raised beds will warm and drain earlier in spring. Mulches help protect roots from temperature extremes. However, if they are applied too early in the fall, they may delay plant dormancy making them more susceptible to frost damage.



Make microclimates work for you! Even the smallest yard has microclimates but you can use them to your advantage and often modify them a bit. Put hardy plants in cooler, more exposed areas and more marginal plants where they will be more protected from weather extremes.

## *Master Gardeners*

### **MASTER GARDENER TRAINING**

Master Gardener training will be offered here in Walla Walla at the WSU Extension office beginning on January 24 through March 27. Master Gardeners will meet on Tuesday mornings from 9 a.m. to noon. Trainees must also complete online training sessions. A fee of \$150 and computer access is required.

University-trained volunteers provide research-based information about gardening, environmental stewardship and horticulture topics to local community members. Volunteers receive horticulture training in exchange for 50 hours of volunteer service to the local community. Master Gardeners answer gardening questions at the Extension office plant clinics, Farmer's Market, Walla Walla Fair & Frontier Days and other community events.

You do not have to be a gardening expert to attend; just have the desire to learn and the ability to return volunteer service to the program.

Applications are available at the Walla Walla County WSU Extension office. For more information, contact the Extension office at 524-2685 or email [meagon@wsu.edu](mailto:meagon@wsu.edu).

## *Food \$ense*

### **CONTAINING THE COLD AND FLU**

Now that school has started in the Walla Walla Valley, students are thrown together in close contact where coughs, sneezes and runny noses are common. The germs can't be avoided, but their effects can be minimized with basic food safety techniques. **Washing hands before eating** is one of the best ways to minimize the spread of the cold and flu virus.

Other tips to keep your family healthy throughout the cold and flu season include:

**Avoid close contact** with people who are sick.



**Stay home when you are sick** to help prevent others from catching your illness.

**Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.

**Wash your hands often** to reduce your exposure to germs.

**Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth** to help prevent the spread of germs.

**Practice good health habits.** Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.



Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm>

## *Family Living*

### **10 HEALTHY FALL FRUITS AND VEGETABLES**

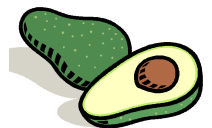
**Sweet potatoes** are loaded with beta-carotene (which the body makes into vitamin A), vitamin C, potassium, fiber, iron and vitamin B6. Sweet potatoes have more nutrients than regular white potatoes and can replace white potatoes in some recipes. Try them mashed, baked or as a dessert.

**Apples** are a quick, easy snack and can be paired with peanut butter or cheese for protein. Apples contain antioxidants, which may help protect against certain cancers and reduce levels of LDL or bad cholesterol. Apples have vitamin C, vitamin K and fiber.

**Broccoli** is one vegetable that can be eaten raw or cooked, hot or cold, by itself or with other foods. Broccoli can help prevent cancer and heart disease, and boost the immune system. Nutrients in broccoli include vitamin C, vitamin A, vitamin B6, iron, calcium, magnesium and vitamin E.

**Pumpkin** is a great source of beta carotene, a powerful antioxidant that is good for the eyes. They also contain potassium. Canned or prepared fresh, pumpkin can be made into a variety of soups, baked goods and desserts.

**Kiwi** contains antioxidants, which can help protect the eyes, heart and colon. Kiwi has vitamin C, fiber, potassium, magnesium and vitamin E. They are a good addition to salads, soups and desserts.



**Avocados** contain healthy monounsaturated fat. They also contain vitamin E, fiber, potassium,

folate and vitamin C. Avocados can be used on sandwiches or salads, or made into guacamole.

**Green beans** are high in vitamin K which protects red blood cells and helps reduce the severity of asthma, osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. They also contain vitamin C, potassium, folate, iron and magnesium. Green beans can be served as a side dish or used in salads, soups or casseroles.

**Spinach** is packed with vitamin A, vitamin K, iron, folate, magnesium, vitamin C, calcium, potassium, fiber and vitamin E. Spinach also has antioxidants and anti-cancer agents. Frozen or fresh spinach can be added to just about any meal. Try using it on pizza, lasagna or instead of lettuce in a salad.

**Pears** are a good source of fiber, antioxidants and vitamin C. Research suggests that regularly eating pears and other fruits may guard against macular degeneration. Pears seldom cause allergies and are usually safe for infants and small children.

**Winter squash** contains fiber, potassium, iron and vitamin A. Vitamin A helps ensure healthy skin, hair, vision and bones. Winter squash can be mashed, used in breads, desserts and soups, or as a snack or side dish.

Source: Melissa Bess, University of Missouri Extension

## SMOKE ALARMS ARE ESSENTIAL



Roughly two-thirds of home fire deaths happen in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms. About one in five smoke alarm failures is due to dead batteries. Working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in reported home fires in half. In fires considered large enough to activate the smoke alarm, hardwired alarms operated 91% of the time, while battery powered alarms operated only 75% of the time.

Install smoke alarms high on a wall or on a ceiling in every bedroom, outside each separate sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement. Interconnect all smoke alarms so when one sounds, they all sound.

An ionization smoke alarm is generally more responsive to flaming fires, and a photoelectric smoke alarm is generally more responsive to smoldering fires. For the best protection, both types of alarms or a combination alarm (photoelectric and ionization) should be installed in homes.

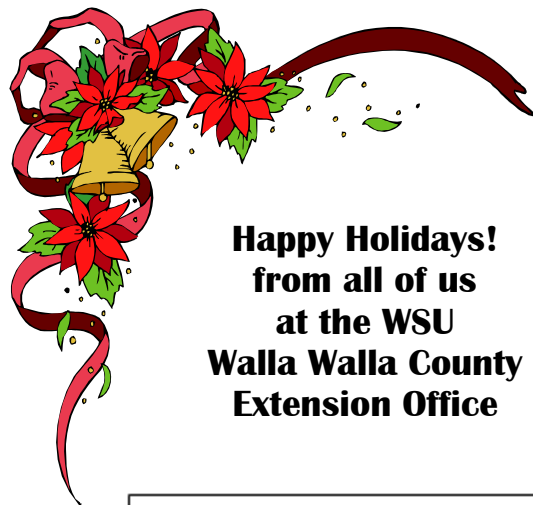
Be sure the smoke alarm has the label of a recognized testing laboratory. To help prevent nuisance alarms, an ionization alarm with a hush button or a photoelectric alarm should be used if the alarm is within 20 feet of a cooking appliance.

Smoke alarms that include a recordable voice announcement in addition to the usual alarm sound, may be helpful in waking children through the use of a familiar voice. Smoke alarms are also available with strobe lights or vibration devices for people with impaired hearing or sight.

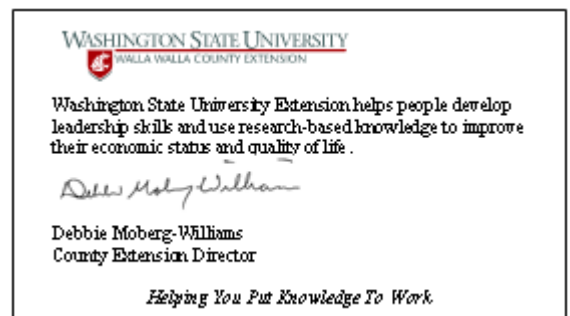
Follow the manufacturer's instructions for installation, testing and maintenance.

- Test alarms at least monthly.
- Replace batteries in all smoke alarms at least once a year. If an alarm "chirps", warning the battery is low, replace the battery right away.
- Replace all smoke alarms, including alarms that use 10-year batteries and hard-wired alarms, when they are 10 years old or sooner if they do not respond properly.

Source: National Fire Protection Association, <http://www.nfpa.org>



**Happy Holidays!  
from all of us  
at the WSU  
Walla Walla County  
Extension Office**



*Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office.*