

AG DIGEST

Apples abundant as pears dip

Shoppers might pay less for apples and more for pears at the grocery store this fall, according to a report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This report reveals that apple production is up 4% from 2015, so apple prices are expected to go down.

The report predicts that this year's crop will be the fourth largest since 2000.

On the other hand, pear production has dropped 5% due to declines in Washington, Oregon and California. The smaller pear crop will likely raise pear prices.

This will potentially be the lowest pear crop yield in the past 20 years.

— *Aylin Woodward*



THE SALINAS CALIFORNIAN

Apples are a good source of fiber for people on a weight-loss regimen.

Western Growers oppose Prop 55

Last week the Board of Directors from Western Growers, a trade association of California, Arizona and Colorado farmers, unanimously voted to oppose Proposition 55, a measure that would extend Proposition 30 for 12 years.

Passed in 2012, Proposition 30 aimed to prevent a \$6 billion cut to the California state school education budget. It increased personal income tax for residents with an annual income over \$250,000, and increased state sales tax by a quarter of a percent by 2016.

In a news release earlier this week, Western Growers' president and CEO Tom Nassif said Proposition 30 was intended as a temporary measure to stabilize funding.

Proposition 55 would continue a "manifestly dangerous and foolish tax policy" that hinges on the fortunes of

high income earners. The Salinas Chapter of Western Growers is located at 928 E. Blanco Road.

— *Aylin Woodward*

Students develop jumbo pepper

UC Davis students have been developing a giant organic jalapeño pepper that can be stuffed and used as a "popper," according to Diane Nelson in the UC Davis Food and Agriculture News.

The giant pepper, a cross between a bell and a jalapeño pepper, was designed in 2012 by graduate student Jorge Berny. Berny was looking for ways to solve organic farmers' issues related to sun damage, pepper yield, and pepper size.

Now students are working to alter other pepper characteristics, such as shape, taste, and texture.

The students' project has helped UC Davis earn a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which is expected to help design new vegetable crops for organic farmers.

— *Sarah McQuate*

State a leader in organic farming

California had the highest number of certified organic farms in the 2015 Certified Organic Survey, according to the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

The state dominated the U.S. with 2,637 certified organic farms compared to the 12,818 certified farms overall. Wisconsin took second place with 1,205.

Additionally, California led the country in organic food sales with \$2.4 billion, 39% of the U.S. total.

— *Sarah McQuate*