



May you have a joyful Christmas and a Blessed New Year

Walking the Fields

In the last two months, I've been less in the field, and more at the desk, or meeting with many of you, and attending those proverbial winter meetings. There is an abundance of information inventory to stock up on, and we have been doing just that. For example, just recently, one or several of us have attended the following:

- WA State Pest Consultants meeting
- WA State Vegetable Conference
- Horticultural Convention, Wenatchee
- Hop Commission Meetings
- OSU Farm Fair, Hermiston
- WA Growers League, MSPA Info by Gene Cole, page 2.
- In January we invite you to visit our booth on January 6 & 7 at the 2004 Mid Columbia Ag Show at the T.R.A.C. in Pasco.

'Tis the season for other thoughts beyond Farming. We in Agriculture all enjoy the down time to recharge and reflect on the nobler purposes of life. I reflect on the privilege we have to work for and serve our clients, and we thank you for that opportunity.

We can also reflect on the small opportunities before us to sometimes make a large impact. Several items come to mind. One is how hundreds of individuals in Yakima, have contributed a single gift to make a huge impact in the lives of less fortunate needy children in our community. In other cases, it may be an opportunity to offer a rather

insignificant word of encouragement that uplifts another person at a critical time. This was illustrated to me by a story my Dad liked to tell about himself, and Mr. Springer. As it went, Dad was an aspiring high school football player assigned down to the position of "Full Bench" and "Water Boy". While cheers would go out to the scoring players Mr. Springer, came up to Dad one game and said "you have a very important job Paul. Without the water the field players could not function."

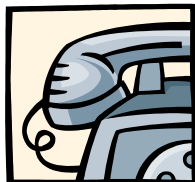
Some say "Big doors open on small hinges" This **Christmas Season** may we each humbly do the little things, perhaps the unnoticed that make a big difference in the lives of others. I'm often struck by what I hear some of you are giving. ☑

Our 2004 Calendars

Again we are giving away the Classic Farm Tractors Calendars. We will bring them by in January. ☑

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For your convenience we have **direct voice mail or cell:**

Don Jameson	895-0100 or 945-0549
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Some Organic Principles Go Conventional

In the early years of organic production various ideas were advanced on how the crop might attract to itself useful beneficial insects. Many organic crops were grown with an eye on the lookout for the pests, but less common were detailed notes and counts made of the beneficial populations. In recent years we have come to realize which beneficials can strike down hard on a pest insect. Our own 2003 scouting continues to confirm the benefit of spiders, Big eyed bugs, Damsel bugs, and ground beetles.

New research shows plants under attack can emit certain organic pheromones, if you will, which send a mutation signal to beneficials. Also a wide range of ground cover or attractant plant species dispersed in the field will attract in beneficials. Local USDA scientists are likewise discovering they can synthesize the ingredient of attractant plants. Then “slow release dispensers” placed in the field will invite in significant populations of beneficials ready to go to work.

In 2004, we will continue to promote some early seeding of attractant crops, and hope to do some trial work in release dispensers. ☐

MSPA Act

For those who employ Migrant and Seasonal agricultural workers, a recent seminar put on by the Washington Growers League advises attention to the MSPA federal law (Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act). Occasional on-sight inspections are being carried out in Washington and the financial implications of non-compliance with these requirements can be quite substantial, especially if consecutive violations are found.

MSPA is intended to protect the worker from such employment scenarios as; erroneous pre-employment information and assumptions; changes to working conditions after employment is commenced; sub-standard housing conditions; unsafe transportation practices; and unfair payroll practices. It also affords the compliant employer protection against litigation in the case of unwarranted complaint and accusation. However, the employee that is not in compliance will not find this law a friend in court.

There are 3 ways to be exempt from MSPA. Each of them is quite precise and without much “wiggle room”. If you are a “Family Business”, a “Small business”, and if you hire within a “25 mile” radius of your

residence but not for more than “13 weeks per year”. These exceptions have more detail that you will need to examine before determining your status.

One MSPA requirement, is to display a U.S. Dept of Labor poster on MSPA in a place where employees can see it. This must be in English and in any other language that the majority of workers speak.

Much attention was encouraged regarding having a Workers Information Notice carefully written up to give to the potential employee, or the hired worker upon employment. This provides a record for both parties regarding the conditions of employment, and gives you documentation if you are inspected. Another document that was recommended for all employers was a workplace Policy Statement. This eliminates ambiguity and confusion regarding your standards and expectations, and provides you a tool for confrontation when those procedures are violated.

For further assistance regarding MSPA compliance requirements, contact Washington Growers League at 509-575-6315. ☐

Some Country Humor

*Why put pictures of criminals up at the Post Office, rather put them on postage stamps so mailmen could look for them.

*Young kids explaining love: “Love is what it is in the room at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen” age 7; “Love is when Mommy gives Daddy the best piece of chicken”, age 5.

*Jake bought his wife a new car. She called and said she’d stalled due to water in the carburetor. He asked, “where is the car?” She said “In the lake”.

*You are in California when the high school quarterback calls time-out to answer his cell phone. Or in Montana where all the men wear orange vests in October and November. Or in Louisiana where you can rent a video and buy fish bait at the same store. Or in Colorado where they carry a \$3,000 Mountain bike on the top of a \$500 car. Or the mid west where a traffic jam is 10 cars waiting to pass a tractor. Or Florida where everyone knows an excellent dermatologist. ☐

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Mission Statement

Agrimanagement is an agricultural consulting company that provides production services, independent of product sales, to farmer, orchardists and vineyards. Our main objective is to enable growers to be more efficient and achieve higher profitability. We achieve this by applying ag-science principles and techniques to address the needs and problems of the modern farmer. Our reputation is based on providing reliable, objective, timely, and affordable services adapted to individual client needs. We maintain a high level of professionalism and respect the proprietary nature of the information we collect and analyze.



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