Growers and packing sheds across the 5 Northwest states are grinding into gear, as harvest begins in many districts from the North to the South. From Fieldmen reports, we are still expecting a sizable crop this July that will extend into August. Through yesterday, the Northwest cherry industry shipped just short of 2 million boxes (20-pound equivalents). A full two-thirds of that fruit has been 10.5 row or larger. Yellow-fleshed Rainier and Early Robin have made up a short 9 percent of shipments thus far.

This has been a challenging week for the growers and retailers alike, as reports of poor weather have stretched far and wide. While precipitation has certainly been an issue in some areas, the immediacy of news and weather updates far outpaces a grower’s ability to assess the trees. To date, some growers have certainly been impacted heavily - if not totally - by untimely precipitation following poor pollination weather in their districts. Other growers report being down only fractionally from last year’s record crop. The many growers spread across Oregon continue to enjoy a fairly consistent run of decent weather. Thus in practice, while most weather maps may identify the production regions at risk, they often fall short of detailing the exact path of a rain cloud or any unlucky orchards caught beneath it.

As an industry we can not outrun the effects of Mother Nature in this startup portion of the season. However, ample supplies of great-eating fruit yet remain and as an industry, we can continue to promote the incredible crop that is making its way onto the shelves. Higher prices will reduce some impulse purchases, but it’s years like this where our growers and retailers should focus on repeat purchases by those core cherry buyers who tend to be more affluent, loyal and consistent. According to SPECTRA analysis, cherry sales are twice as likely in market demographic areas such as cosmopolitan centers and affluent suburban spreads, where 2/3 of the buyers return all season long. Category attention will remain key to moving this crop. If the #1 Dollar-Per-Square-Foot-Item isn’t merchandised in the #1 display position of a store, retailers looking to our category to make their summer dollar targets should focus heavily on signage and display efforts to remind consumers of the limited season and great taste of Northwest cherries.
Shipments for the 2013 season officially began on June 1st.
On Tuesday, the NW Cherry Growers launched the opening salvo in a health-related consumer push that will continue all season long. Supported by national long lead articles, television segments, blog posts and a coming wave of social media promotion outside of stores, as well as POS materials and in-store radio ads scheduled to reach over 1 billion consumers (aged 18+) this season, produce circular ads or not, consumers will be hearing about sweet Northwest cherries and the healthful powers they contain from every corner this summer. To improve the value to consumers, we strive to promote increased use & benefits!

In these first 48 hours, the story detailing the USDA-conducted, Journal of Nutrition-published cherry health study has been posted by nationals such as the Associated Press, CNBC, Reuters, The Wall Street Journal, Yahoo!, The Produce News, and The Shelby Report; locals such as the Puget Sound Business Journal and the Seattle PI, and even random online portals such as Maxim.com, the Automotive Engineering International and the London School of Journalism.
This is part of the media announcement package for the 2013 Tree to Table promotion, a Rainier variety-spotlighting event where an iconic restaurant from each state will highlight the fruit during the week following the 4th of July. Last year’s program generated over 130 million impressions in circulation; the NWCG aims to surpass that this season.
Legrow (LEGW) 2005 - 2013
Cumulative Growing Degree Days (Base 43*)

Harrah (HRHW) 2005 - 2013
Cumulative Growing Degree Days (Base 43*)

Source: US Bureau of Reclamation AgriMet System -- * GDD formula based on a modified version of the AgriMet methodology.
Mattawa 2005 - 2013
Cumulative Growing Degree Days (Base 43*)

Source: AgWeatherNet -- http://weather.wsu.edu/ -- * GDD formula based on a modified version of the Agrimet methodology.
* It may have been cool at times, but this is obviously a data glitch! It will be corrected for the next update, but still gives an idea of the progression.

Sources: US Bureau of Reclamation AgriMet System -- * GDD formula based on a modified version of the Agrimet methodology.
Parkdale (PARO) 2005 - 2013
Cumulative Growing Degree Days (Base 43*)

* It may have been cool at times, but this is obviously a data glitch! It will be corrected for the next update, but still gives an idea of the progression.

Source: US Bureau of Reclamation AgriMet System -- * GDD formula based on a modified version of the AgriMet methodology.