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## Apple Payments to Average \$14,105

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By TOM ROEDER

YAKIMA HERALD-REPUBLIC

Apple growers in Yakima County who applied for help under a federal bailout program got checks averaging \$14,105 this week, according to numbers released Tuesday by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

While the program was estimated to pay an average of \$30,000 to growers, the number dropped as more and more people asked for help. The aid to Yakima County totaled \$17.2 million, which was divided among 1,221 growers. Statewide, 3,337 growers netted \$46 million or almost half of the \$100 million allocated for the bailout.

"I think most of this money will be used directly on production and harvest this year," said Todd Young, a spokesman for U.S. Rep. Doc Hastings, a Republican from Pasco.

Although approved by Congress in October, the money was tied up for months as the Clinton and then Bush administrations determined how to distribute it. Growers statewide have now received their money, Young said.

The money was allocated by Congress to cover losses sustained by apple growers in 1998 and 1999. For the past five years, the price of apples, especially the Red Delicious varieties, has rendered orchards unprofitable.

