



# Capital Press

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Serving Farms and Ranches in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, California

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Turn to FOOD, Page 2

different perennials, has a patented and branded growing system that gives plants a head start.

Earlier this year, Etera unveiled a \$12 million, state-of-the-art greenhouse operation with a 65,000-square-foot warehouse, and 13 acres of state-of-the-art greenhouse with more than 8 million nursery plants, plus adjoining fields in Mabton in Washington state's Yakima Valley. The new facility was widely touted as bringing hope for economic revival to the depressed Mabton area.

The company has an excellent product, growing process, facility and staff, but sales fell far short of projections, said Youssef Sneifer, a Seattle attorney representing Etera in the bankrupt filing.

The company is not likely to reorganize, said Sneifer. The focus is on negotiating with a strategic buyer or buyers to continue the business, he said.

This week, a financing

Turn to ETERA, Page 2



PEGGY STEWARD/Capital Press

**FITTING IT TOGETHER** — Jose Ramirez attaches hose fittings to drip irrigation tape during an Aug. 1 demonstration at Brian Andersen's Royal Slope, Wash., farm. The demonstration of drip irrigation in beans, onions and potatoes was organized by Clearwater Supply, Othello.

## UFW seeks 'fair trade' for apples

### Labor union wants bigger slice of the retail pie for growers, workers

By **COOKSON BEECHER**  
Capital Press Staff Writer

SEATTLE — If fair-trade certification can help coffee growers capture more of the retail dollar, why not use a similar approach to help Washington apple growers and their workers net a bigger slice of the retail pie?

That's the strategy behind the Fair Trade Apple Campaign, announced last week by the United Farm Workers of America during a Seattle news conference also attended by Wash-

ington State Labor Council President Rick Bender.

Through this program, consumers buying apples labeled as "fair-trade" would know that working conditions in the orchards meet certain standards and that the growers are getting a fair share of the profits.

That means retailers will need to be convinced to pay a fair price for the fruit they sell in their stores, while at the same time consumers will need to be educated about conditions in the orchards, said Guadalupe Gamboa, UFW's regional director.

"Retail food chains get an unfair percentage of the price that our country's consumers pay for their (the growers') harvest," he said.

According to figures from

Turn to APPLE, Page 2