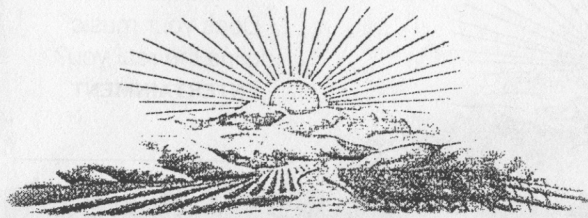


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# YAKIMA HERALD-REPUBLIC

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## Small Supply Drives Up Apple, Pear Prices

With lighter crop,  
new fruit moving  
out at higher levels

By **DORI HARRELL**  
YAKIMA HERALD-REPUBLIC

Prices on early apple varieties are soaring, and the trend will likely continue as the apple industry estimates the lightest crop nationwide in

more than a decade.

The Washington and Oregon fresh pear crop estimate also has come in light, and prices should rise for that fruit, too.

The nation's apple crop is forecast at 213.3 million boxes for the fresh and processed markets combined, according to figures released this week by the U.S. Apple Association in Vienna, Va.

That's down 7 percent from last year's actual crop and the

smallest amount since 1986, which just topped 187 million boxes.

A box weighs 42 pounds.

Earlier this month, state industry officials estimated a smaller than expected Washington crop of 88.8 million boxes, up only 6 percent over last year's harvest.

The light national crop on top of a small state crop will likely send prices climbing this season,

said Dan Kelly, assistant manager of the Wenatchee-based Washington Growers Clearing House, which tracks fruit prices.

"Supplies are limited, and the new fruit has started going out at good prices. It's moving well," Kelly said Thursday.

As of Monday, the Gingergold variety, one of the earliest picked statewide, averaged \$19.92 per box, up from \$15.97 last year and \$16.09 the year before, according

to the Clearing House.

The Earli Gold variety averaged \$15.42, up from \$11.44 last year and \$13.18 two years ago.

"This is a good indication of what's going on," Kelly said. "We're starting on much stronger footing than we have in a number of years."

Most in the industry expected the national apple crop to come

SEE **GROWERS** PAGE 10A

*On the lighter side...*

### GONE OUT IN STYLE

Unable to attend the funeral after his father died, a son who lived far away called his brother and told him, "Do something nice for Dad and send me the bill." Later, he got a bill for \$200, which he paid. The next month, he got another bill for \$200, which he also paid, figuring it was some incidental expense. A bill for \$200 kept arriving every month and finally the man called his brother again to find out what was going on. "Well," said the other brother, "you said to do something nice for Dad, so I rented him a tuxedo."