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Crop Conditions: Apples remain about 7-10 days ahead of normal. The warm weather has not been particularly conducive to good coloring, although with some cooler nights now hopefully coloring will be acceptable on our main season varieties. Overall fruit size and quality look to be good. Having said that, some orchards have small fruit size due to under-thinning – the temptation with light flowering is not to thin, and some of these blocks set up surprisingly heavy, with small fruit size resulting from this. Dry conditions continue in many parts of the state, but we haven't fared as badly as our counterparts in more eastern states. Grape harvest is ongoing and yield and quality are excellent. Early ripening varieties have been low in sugar and generally high in pH, but mid and late season varieties are developing excellent fruit chemistry.

Dry Conditions: This has been a year where our crops would definitely benefit from some supplemental irrigation. If you have the capacity to irrigate, hopefully you have been applying frequent irrigation throughout the season and avoiding the worst of the drought. For those with irrigation, do not apply large amounts of water after the trees have been dry. This can lead to fruit cracking and splitting, and can also make the fruit more susceptible to bruising. However, many of us do not have the capacity to irrigate our trees, so how badly affected are we going to be? Well this is going to be the biggest problem in trees that have just been established – make sure your weed control is excellent to avoid the weeds competing for water with the trees. In established trees, the dry conditions will probably cost us a little in terms of fruit size, but flowering next year shouldn't be adversely affected unless it has been exceptionally dry. -Hirst

Cider Update: No news from the FDA regarding HACCP, so this would seem to be a case where no news is good news. Also, no news from the FDA regarding approval for UV treatment of cider, which is not so good news. Remember, pasteurize or put warning labels on the jug – these are your choices this year. -Hirst

