

Mechanical Harvesters Can Provide Labor and Costs Savings For Hard Cider Apples

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A new study by researchers at Washington State University (WSU) shows that mechanical harvesting of cider apples can provide labor and cost savings without affecting fruit, juice or cider quality. In an article written in the journal HortTechnology, the study focused on cider apple production due to a response to the growing demand for hard cider apples in the state and nation. Carol Miles, a vegetable horticulturist with WSU, was the lead author of the study. She notes that there is not a dedicated agricultural labor market in western Washington and the need for mechanical harvesting is growing. However, two problems exist: a machine doesn't exist for apples and mechanical harvesting is likely to damage fruit. The researchers looked at using an over-the-row raspberry harvester and assessed the level of damage to the apples and what impact it had on the fruit and juice quality. For more information, please go to our website <http://citrusMH.ifas.ufl.edu> to read both the WSU article and the journal article in HortTechnology.