

**Orcharding Meet and Greet Summary-
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In order to further the growth of the craft cider industry, significant progress must be made in making heirloom and traditional cider fruit available to cider producers. Similar to the craft beer industry, which can be used as a guideline for trends and growth, consumers in the craft cider industry will continue to become more savvy, and the demand for more esoteric, traditional, and unique products will grow. As the cider industry as a whole expands, the niche market of heirloom craft ciders will grow as well. Putting energy and resources into this small niche market of more unique ciders will help grow the overall cider market, as fans, critics, reviewers, aficionados, and media thrive on the cutting edge.

Venturing into heirloom cider apple production is not without risks, so I would summarize some key points in the following outline:

- Growers need to be aware of the specific risks associated with growing traditional fruit in terms of cost, yield, and disease.
- Growing apples in general is not an easy, 'moneymaking' crop, and is a long-term investment.
- Growing cider apples in the northwest has not yet proven to make money.
- No one besides cider makers will buy bittersweet fruit.
- One of the many advantages and reasons that cider apple production works in England and France is because they are able to mechanically harvest fruit with very low labor input costs.
- Growers should strongly consider pairing with cider producers in a manner that helps spread the risk for both parties.
- In England ten to 30 year contracts are not uncommon and have proven successful.
- We theoretically have very good conditions for growing apples here in the Northwest and a strong craft cider industry, thus there is a lot of potential for healthy apple grower/cidermaker partnerships