

Marcus Robert

NWCA Meet and Greet Notes

March 22 & 23, 2016

-Why grow Cider Fruit?

- Currently, there is a substantial demand with very little supply for this fruit and it is growing.
- Diversification of land
- This is a field run crop= no packing charges and no culls

-What to think about before planting

- Lowering capital investment wherever possible (\$30,000/ acre investment may not payoff)
- Lowering operating cost as much as possible
 - Labor=mechanize (UK growers have been able to farm 100 acres with 2 people including harvest)
- Prevent mistakes
 - If you have never grown apples or have any reservation on growing cider fruit **find a grower who has experience to help you**. A simple mistake could cost you \$5000-\$10000 per acre.
- Have a good business plan written out before you jump in
 - This should tell you how you will make money at market prices (\$700/ ton)
- Finding customers
 - Developing contracts or Spot Market Pricing
 - Utilizing groups like NWCA and NWABC
 - Networking within the cider community

-Disadvantages of growing Cider Fruit

- Lower yields than desert fruit (30-40 bins/ acre)
- Extreme biannualism
- No reliable research for growers (disease resistance, rootstock selections, canopy management, etc).
- Crop insurance can be hard to find