

alpha acid found in the yellow lupulin glands under each flap of the cones. The larger cone varieties tend to fall into the aroma class. Wholesale buyers are specific as to the variety they want, and they also expect the grower to test for and certify the alpha acid content of each variety sold. Several labs on the West Coast provide this service. Our homebrew customers were content to nibble a sample prior to purchase. Our one large customer was so pleased to help establish a domestic source of organic hops that they bought the crop sight-unseen and have continued to provide encouragement and hopefully a reliable market.

Our first crop was sold mainly by word of mouth. About 50% went to hobby-brewers who were excited to find a locally grown, organic product. When we increase production, we expect that a few classified advertisements in the many homebrew magazines will provide a larger market. The other half of our production went to a homeopathic medicine manufacturer on the West Coast. We have also been approached by many organic breweries, and at this point the market for organic or "craft" hops looks promising. Non-organic growers equipped with a hops harvester (\$30 K used) could still compete by providing fresh, local hops to their regional breweries for \$3 per ounce. We know of one grower who receives a premium by having the brewery add a small surcharge to each bottle made with local hops. So far the brewery's customers have been happy to oblige. Certified organic growers have added opportunities in medicinal and food products, where rates currently range from \$9 to \$14 per ounce. If the vine-training and harvest labor requirements mesh well with other farm enterprises, hops may be a worthwhile small farm enterprise for Northeast farms.

Appendix

Sources: Freshops
36180 Kings Valley Highway
Philomath, Oregon 97370
541-929-2736
www.freshops.com

Weeks Berry Nursery
6494 Windsor Island Rd. North
Keizer, Oregon 97303
503-393-8112

Advice: Dr. Leonard Perry
University of Vermont
www.uvm.edu/~pass/perry/hopsne.html, hopsvars.html, faqhops.html

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