

# Frozen assets: WSU Organic Farm loses pumpkin harvest, other crops to colder-than-normal temperatures

By Yesenia Amaro Daily News staff writer

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Brad Jaeckel, farm manager for the Washington State University Organic Farm, is facing the worst crop failure he has ever had.

"We lost our pumpkin crop, and we lost most of the other greens that were remaining in our fields," he said.

The crops were ruined by the freezing temperatures that came earlier than usual this year. The temperature dropped to 18 degrees in the Palouse area on Friday night.

Jaeckel said this situation was "completely abnormal" and as a result, the farm has canceled its fifth-annual Harvest Party.

The all-day event was scheduled to take place Saturday at the three-acre farm, which is located inside the 50-acre WSU Tukey Horticultural Orchard, about one-and-a-half miles from campus.

Jaeckel said he is very disappointed to have to cancel the event.

"A lot of people look forward to the Harvest Party," he said. "It's definitely a highlight for a lot of people and their kids."

Aside from canceling the event, the Organic Farm will not be selling pumpkins this year, as it has done in previous years.

Jaeckel said the farm usually makes around \$2,000 from its pumpkin sale. He said this year more pumpkins had been grown and estimated the loss to be around \$5,000.

He said the Orchard also lost the "majority of its apple crops."

"They probably had a bigger loss," he said.

Jaeckel said employees at the Organic Farm were planning to harvest for two more weeks, but instead, this will be the last week.

Jodi Johnson-Maynard, faculty adviser for the University of Idaho Soil Stewards Club, said the student-managed organic farm - located inside the UI Parker Farm, two miles east of Moscow - also lost its chard crop.

She said it was surprising because chard is a cold-tolerant crop.

The club manages a Community Supported Agriculture program, in which community members support a farmer for an exchange of a weekly share of the harvest. Johnson-Maynard said the CSA shareholders won't get chard in their share.

"That (is) disappointing," she said.

UI Parker Farm manager Roy Patten said the freeze did not affect any crops on the university-managed farm.

"I saw it coming," he said. "I knew that it was going to get cold, and I began to prepare for it before it came."

Patten said he normally doesn't worry too much about the weather, but this year it was a record. He said the first cold front usually comes around Halloween.

**Yesenia Amaro** can be reached at (208) 882-5561, ext. 237, or by e-mail at [yamaro@dnnews.com](mailto:yamaro@dnnews.com).