

# Duckwall-Pooley earns Oregon Governor's Award

**Fruit company is state's first agri-business to receive such occupational safety recognition**

By **JULIE RAEFIELD GOBBO**

CRG Business Review

ODELL — Walking the packing line of Duckwall-Pooley Fruit Company brings home just how fast the abundant fruit crop travels on its way to American tables and those overseas.

Yet, while experienced workers' hands keep steady pace with the pears rushing along conveyors, speed isn't the only thing in great supply here.

Safety is actually No. 1, along with worker health.

At DP, these priorities include, during high season, free sample massages for line workers and regular exercise breaks, sometimes attended by the company president.

These innovative workplace practices, among many others, have gained the attention of some pretty important eyes.

Hood River's Duckwall-Pooley received an Oregon Governor's Award as an exemplary employer in the field of jobsite occupational health and safety. Only 16 other industry leaders

statewide were honored with similar awards at the 2011 Oregon Governor's Occupational Safety and Health Conference in March.

"We were totally surprised at receiving the nomination and the award," said Kathy Nishimoto, vice president and director of human resources.

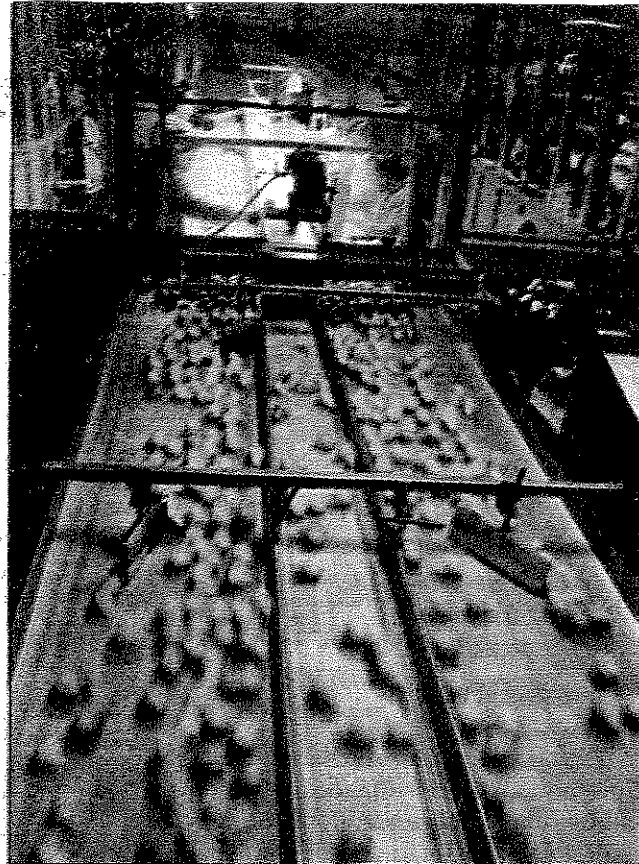
"We are actually the first agri-business in Oregon to receive one of these awards," continued Nishimoto. "You know ag is tough, with so many repetitive-motion jobs."

Duckwall-Pooley was nominated by its loss-control consultant, Scott Clark, from SAIF Corporation (workers compensation insurance provider for Oregon).

Awards aside, it isn't recognition that motivates the company to focus on safety and employee health.

"We really work at this (safety). Our driver is making sure employees go home in the same or better condition than when they came to work each day," Nishimoto said.

At the March 9 awards ceremony, 15 DP shift supervisors and department heads accompanied the company presi-



Julie RaeField-Gobbo photo

**Duckwall-Pooley workers pack local pears.**

dent, Fred Duckwall, to the winner's luncheon at the Convention Center in Portland.

According to Clark's nomination letter, the company's commitment to safety "starts with the owner, Fred Duckwall. His involvement with the program is highly visible."

This personal commitment supports ongoing teamwork throughout the company to maintain safe and healthy practices.

"A special emphasis is placed on advanced communication and empowerment training," noted Clark.



**Fred  
Duckwall**