



Craft Beverage Guide

TAKING FLIGHT

About a month after opening in the former Destihl Brewery space in downtown Champaign, **BLIND PIG BREWPUB** is slowly ramping up operations, and owner **MATT MONAHAN**, right, is expanding one aspect that makes it unique — the menu of its full-service restaurant.

Story, D-5.



CRAFT BEVERAGE GUIDE

JOEY WRIGHT

No shortage of local craft-beer options

I've talked with nearly 100 restaurateurs since I began spotlighting local eateries for The News-Gazette almost two years ago. Among the many points of pride they have — great atmosphere, scratch-made food and locally sourced ingredients — is always a common refrain: a wide ar-

ray of beers on tap to satisfy thirsty customers. And fortunately for diners in our area, there are plenty of restaurants that put just as much thought into the bar as they do into the kitchen. I enjoyed the recent "King of the Hill" episode centered around craft beer. And like Hank Hill, I tend to like my beer to taste like beer, with limited exceptions.

Riggs Beer Co. in Urbana brews a delicious smoked lager that I have to order whenever it is in season. And I can be swayed to try something new from the expansive wall at Pour Bros. Anytime I go somewhere with a Radler available — on tap or in a can — I'm a happy customer. But if something fruitier or hop-

luck. Restaurants like Cast Iron Pub in Tuscola, The Space in Champaign and The Wheelhouse in St. Joseph all offer wide selections of craft beer to pair with great menus. There's plenty of options out there to enjoy, even if I'm having a pint of Miller High Life on the cheap after The News-Gazette's Monday night radio show at Esquire Lounge in downtown Champaign.

'I encourage everyone to stop following the herd and start your journey to see what you like'

What's driving the ever-increasing popularity of craft beer? For insights, we turned to five local business owners on the front lines.



Robin Scholz/The News-Gazette

MATT RIGGS
Co-owner, Riggs Beer Co., Urbana

"There are two main reasons why I think it makes sense to drink locally brewed beer. The first reason is based on the fact that beer is both heavy and perishable. At about \$1.50 per pound, beer is far less value-dense than wine (\$3), meat and cheese (\$5) or spirits (up to \$40). That makes the economics of long-distance shipping harder to justify — especially since beer quality depends on refrigerated storage. Beyond quality and cost, there's also the question of who benefits from your purchase. At Riggs Beer, we employ nine full-time people at good wages and benefits, reinvest hundreds of thousands into local contractors each year, and contribute meaningfully through property and sales

taxes that support schools, roads and public safety. "Far off, publicly traded breweries generally focus on international growth and delivering dividends to shareholders. They don't provide similar levels of economic support to central Illinois on a per-beer basis. "I've learned to never tell anyone what they should or shouldn't consume. That's a personal choice that everyone has to make for themselves. And I sometimes treat myself to a product that's made far away. "I am a firm believer, however, that you vote with your dollar every single day. And when you choose a beer from one of your local breweries, you're voting for a stronger local economy and a more competitive free market overall."



Provided

PETER BLACKMON
Partner, Vermilion River Beer Co., Danville

"Interesting question, as there always is an uncertainty as to whether the beer industry itself is slowing down or not. However, even as recently as July, Forbes published an article acknowledging that craft beer is driving the beer market worldwide. So I suppose it comes down to a rise in discerning tastes. "When we opened our establishment, we wanted to create a climate where the customer base would pair their drink choices with conversations; a concept where things (including consumption) would slow down. "From our perspective, based on that concept, people drink less, in terms of drinks

per visit, but are making up for that by way of flavor and quality. (I should mention that on average, many craft beers are higher in ABV than the average domestic, and logically, people should be drinking less.) "While we based our entire establishment on craft beer, there is a very visible change in the selections offered at establishments who previously offered almost exclusively domestics. "Furthermore, I like to think people are celebrating the accessibility of their local breweries as well as places that offer local products. They are not only choosing fuller flavors, but they are also supporting small business. What a great pairing!"



Robin Scholz/The News-Gazette

ANTHONY BENJAMIN
Owner, Triptych Brewing of Savoy

"Honestly, I think we've moved past the 'ever-increasing' phase of craft beer. Sales have leveled off nationally, and the novelty rush for weird, one-off brews has cooled. "What's grown instead is trust in local spots making consistently good beer. Per-capita beer drinking may be down, but there are still more beer drinkers than ever, and the breweries doing well are the ones that offer diverse options and serve as welcoming spaces where anyone can feel

comfortable. "Beer has always been a beverage of moderation in America, and it has been part of human life for thousands of years. That kind of cultural staying power makes me hopeful it will find its way back to a period of growth. "At the end of the day, people will always gather around a pint, and the local brewery has become one of the best places for that."



Jana Wiersema/The News-Gazette

MATT MONAHAN
Current owner, Blind Pig Brewpub, Champaign

"Hold on to your stein and have a seat! I'm Irish; this could take awhile. "I started home brewing in 2011. The zombie TV show 'The Walking Dead' started in 2010. A popular conversation was 'What's your apocalypse skill?' — something you could contribute in such a situation. "My wife and I had three young daughters at the time. I joked that if I learn to brew good beer, the community would build a wall around us to protect us! With a strong appreciation and a willingness to learn more about beer, down the rabbit hole I went. "Craft-beer popularity in the U.S. in particular — I think it's safe to say that we've finally recovered from Prohibition. Yes, Blind Pig's name comes from a Prohibition term — a speakeasy for commoners. I can't help myself! But hear me out. "The beer industry in the U.S. was in a delicate position of its evolution when Prohibition was enacted on Jan. 17, 1920. A lot of Old World knowledge was lost and family traditions of beer making were abandoned. By the time Dec. 5, 1933, rolled around, only a tenth of the 1,300 pre-Prohibition breweries were able to start back up. These events laid the foundations for a single style of beer to dominate the market for decades. "That style is the American light lager. Don't take that the wrong way, I love the style. We brew a few beers in this style (Blind Pig Reserve). You'll find that dominant regional styles throughout the world are very similar to this type of beer — referred to by brewers and craft-beer enthusi-

asts as 'macro' beer, due to its mass appeal, production, availability and sheer mass-media oversaturation. Yes, we're jealous, but we all started our personal beer journey enjoying this style. "In 1921, Wonder Bread was launched. They didn't invent bread or sliced bread, they revolutionized it and created a dominant style in the U.S. Macro bread, I dare say! 'So?' you say. Well, beer and bread are made from the same ingredients, the most abundant ingredients. Both are integral components of our history. The spark of the Neolithic Revolution. Personally, I favor 'Beer Theory' — I don't think the nomads settled down from the chase of a good steak for sourdough bread and gathered vegetables. Beer sterilizes bad water and can help people make strong bonds. It takes time to make and you need to stay in one place. "Trust me, from the bird's nest, there's a point on the horizon! "Craft beer would just be beer if not for 'macro' beer. It's a regional thing. There are as many different styles of beer as there are types of bread. Would you only eat Wonder Bread your whole life? We don't do that to prisoners, thank goodness. "Discovering these beer styles in an individual journey. The 'craft' or non-macro-specialized brewing industry is as strong as ever. I encourage everyone to stop following the herd and start your journey to see what you like. "P.S.: You can start at the Blind Pig Brewpub. Let's meet for a pint!"

CRAFT BEVERAGE GUIDE

‘America embraced craft beer, and in true American fashion, made it bigger, better ... and weirder’

CHRIS KNIGHT

Former owner of Champaign’s first brewery, The Blind Pig Co.

“The simple answer to what is driving the craft-beer craze is that craft beer is more exciting, and flavorful, than the standard American beer, the light lager. Not to say that light lagers are necessarily boring and bland. Clearly, people love them. After mowing the lawn, what would you rather drink, a few Bud Lights or a heavy stout? “But really, the question is not so much why people like craft beer, but why this is such a recent phenomenon in the U.S. European countries have enjoyed craft beer for centuries. Germany even passed a law about what ingredients are allowed in beer in the 16th century. “The roots of the current American craft-beer renaissance, and the absolute hegemony of U.S. light lagers, go back over 100 years, and perhaps surprisingly, are a direct result of two things: Prohibition and advances in transport. Before the 1920s, the U.S. had thousands of small breweries, many of which were brewing, and selling, what would now be called craft beer. “Of course, Prohibition put most of the small breweries out of business, meaning that, by the time the 21st Amendment repealed the 18th Amendment, only the large ones remained. Given that the American public had not lost its fondness for beer, these breweries found

themselves distributing further, and more frequently, than before, and became big, wealthy and powerful, easily mopping up any competition. “And the beer that travels best is lager. It is also often the cheapest to produce. “So light lager ruled! And ruled it did, for decades. When I arrived in Champaign in the early ‘80s, the most popular bar in town had five beers on tap. These were Bud, Bud Light, Miller, Special Export and the execrable Special Export Light. “If you wanted something that was, perish the thought, not a light lager, you could get a bottle of Guinness, or Bass, or a ‘domestic’ such as Anchor Steam. And that was pretty much it. “Compare that to now. In my old bar, the Blind Pig on Walnut Street — now The Hound’s Rest — there are 27 taps. The new Blind Pig Brewpub has 24 taps. And craft beer, once a niche market, has become so mainstream that even the Onion teases it. “America embraced craft beer, and in true American fashion, made it bigger, better ... and weirder. Want a beer made with Froot Loops? Or squid ink, meat or even yeast from the brewer’s beard? Yep. All real, all American, all (in my opinion) vaguely disgusting. “But, I have to say, all better than Special Export Light!”



Robin Scholz/The News-Gazette

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PUB CRAWL

Area bartenders spill details on local trends

Of the drinks from East Central Illinois’ many craft breweries, which are selling out at local bars? What’s the future of the craft beverage industry? Reporter **LUKE TAYLOR** reached out to area bars that have been featured in The News-Gazette’s ‘Bartender of the Week’ series for their expert opinions.

Huber’s
Champaign

“Huber’s crowd is more the Busch Light/Miller Lite/Bud drinkers, but we do offer several craft beers. Our local draft-beer selection is Riggs Hefeweizen, Blind Pig U of IPA and Triptych Dank Meme. These sell pretty equally, but if I had to pick, I’d say the Blind Pig U of IPA wins by a hair.

“We also offer White Oak Rippin’ Lips IPA, Odell Sip-pin Pretty Fruit Sour Ale and 3 Floyd’s Gumballhead in cans. These are a few of our new selections I’ve added.

“There will always be people interested in craft beer, so I’m glad we have a good selection to offer, while also promoting local breweries.

“I only see the craft-beer industry growing as brewers get more inventive with their brewing processes and ingredients.”

— **MELODY ENSINGER, bartender**

Rose Bowl Tavern
Urbana

“The Riggs Hefeweizen is currently our number-one seller, followed closely by the Triptych Dank Meme. People love local craft beers, and the Riggs Hefeweizen is a great easy-drinking option with excellent flavor.

“Especially for folks that love wheat beers or Blue Moon, this is, in my opinion, a much tastier option. Also, it’s local, so you’re getting it really fresh.

“In five years, craft beer will be still going strong! As long as places like the Rose Bowl Tavern continue to curate a great selection of craft beers, customers will find something they really enjoy.”

— **MARTEN STROMBERG, co-owner**

The Space
Champaign

“The go-to craft beers are Triptych Dank Meme and Rigg’s American Lager — local, solid and approachable choices. Folks from out of town want something local and flagship, local folks want what they know.

“People who haven’t tried it are missing out on the ‘beer-flavored beers.’ Craft beer isn’t all hops — lots of excellent options of traditional-style beers made either with a twist or exceptionally well by craft breweries.

“In five years, craft beer will be even more leaning traditional — as we’ve seen the hop and sour trends reach a fever pitch in the last decade, I think we’ll see some absolutely wildly good basic beers with mild twists. Ambers with a slight spice, old-school German styles, etc.”

— **IAN NUTTING, co-owner**

Gallery Art Bar
Urbana

“We offer a fair few craft beers, but I’d say the go to for a lot of our customers bounces back and forth between our two Riggs cans: the Hefeweizen and the American Lager. Right now, the American Lager is in the lead!

“The Riggs American lager is smooth and refreshing — accessible for those just dipping their toes into the world of craft beer but also delightfully refined.

Not only is Riggs a local brewery, but they grow the 6-row barley and corn that this beer is made of right at their brewery, which makes it a fantastic way to support local farmers while you unwind!

“In five years, craft beer will be hopefully stronger and more diverse than ever! As of the past few years, I’ve noticed a shift back in the



Some beverage options at the Rose Bowl Tavern in Urbana.



Some favorite craft beers at Bookie’s Tavern in Tuscola.

direction of a wider variety of styles, spanning from classic to complex, after a brief period of a heavier focus on IPAs, and I hope it continues. Craft beer is for everyone who likes to drink beer, and I genuinely hope the trend of the variety of styles available continues to grow to reflect that.”

— **ANASTASIA PENNINGTON-FLAX, bar manager**

The Literary
Champaign

“Among our guests (and staff alike), this past summer, one of our most popular draws was Punch Patch from Pig Minds Brewing, as well as Eris’ Blush Cider. Punch Patch is a fruited Gose that has different variations. We’ve grown a bit of a following with the anticipation of putting it on during the spring/summertime. As for our ciders, I think guests have really enjoyed the fact that we put on drier ciders showcasing the apple varieties.

“For these two fruit-forward craft beers, there’s a whole lot of flavor. Our most recent Punch Patch that we had on was a blueberry flavor and conditioned on whole Madagascar vanilla beans. It has a super luxurious velvety mouthfeel. As for the Eris Blush Cider on draft, this is a hard cider blended with cherries — you really can’t go wrong!

“In five years, craft beer will be trending more toward lower ABVs, sessionables and flavors we hadn’t even thought existed! Savory is on the rise, and I think there will be a lot more herbaceous-forward, sustainably driven brews.”

— **KALLAN BUSS, general manager**

Rosie’s Tavern
Danville

“The go-to craft beers among our customers are Big Thorn’s Farmer’s Red and Riggs Hefeweizen. Both use grains that are grown locally; the Farmer’s Red is an amber ale with caramel and chocolate malts and

the Hefeweizen is a German wheat beer — Oktoberfest is here! Clean and slightly tart with banana aromas.

“In the next five years, I see expansion especially in this area where there is not much competition. Breweries tend to be a destination anyway. Besides, we are in the grain belt.

“Overall, craft beer will seriously rival major brands. Flavors will tend to move toward existing favorites — Michelob Ultra, Bud Light, Miller Lite, Coors Light, etc. — but there also will be experimentation with flavors: fruits and cultural combinations.”

— **RONNIE JOHNSON, owner**

Aspen Tap House
Champaign

“Any Riggs beer is super popular in our restaurant. Riggs is as local as it gets; they are a great brewery, and their beer is always fantastic!

“People who haven’t tried it are missing delicious, consistent flavor! From American Lager, Hefeweizen and my favorite, the Red Lager, they are all fantastic! And you MUST try their Oktoberfest! The best around!

“In five years, craft beer will be even more unique!”

— **LESLIE STAKEMAN, managing partner**

The Wheelhouse
St. Joseph

“I believe our best seller is Triptych Dank Meme. An approachable hazy pale ale.

“Anyone who hasn’t tried it is missing a really well done beer done here locally. It is a gateway to the big hoppy IPAs in my opinion.

“In five years, craft beer will be sustainable without much growth. I think the boom of the craft breweries is over. The ones that are still around and on their own (not bought out by the big ones) will continue to push their core beers that put them on the map while still trying to be creative, which is probably why they started in the first place.”

— **RYAN ROGIER, owner and chef**



A favorite craft beverage at The Literary in downtown Champaign.

holic options such as THC, CBD, and more. I also see a lot more interesting flavors or uniqueness behind more craft beers down the road.”

— **KAILAN MORRIS, owner**

Houdini’s Spirits
LeRoy

“We serve Deadhead. People who haven’t tried it are definitely missing out on the flavor. Our customers like the Deadhead series. Typically we have Riggs Hefeweizen on tap. We are out of that, if that tells you what they love. We love their military background also. Most of these pair well with our 200-plus bourbons.”

“In five years, you will still see the love for a good craft beer. People want to treat themselves. A good craft beer is a treat!”

— **DAWN SHANNON, owner**



A look behind the bar at The Space in downtown Champaign.

Bookie’s Tavern
Tuscola

“Our customers really enjoy the seasonal rotating beers. Our most popular one over the summer was Saugatuck Brewing’s Blueberry Lemonade Shandy. Now that we are getting into fall, our Schlafly Oktoberfest has definitely taken reign.

“In terms of craft beer, I have lived by the ‘there’s one for everyone’ rule. I truly believe there is a craft beer out there for everyone, you just need to find the right flavor profile.

“In five years, craft beer will be taken over by seltzers. Just kidding, but I do foresee a shift to more concurrent trends like nonalco-



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Robin Scholz photos/The News-Gazette

A flight of some of the beers on tap at The Blind Pig Brewpub in downtown Champaign.

THE BLIND PIG BREWPUB

SOMETHING'S BREWING

New downtown venture has an ever-growing food menu to enjoy alongside its sizable draft-beer selection

By CAROLYN MAILLE-PETERSEN
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CHAMPAIGN — The Blind Pig Brewpub opened in downtown Champaign in mid-August, and it's time for a check-in to see what's new.

Business at the brewpub, located at 301 N. Neil St. in the former Destihl Brewery, is slowly ramping up, said owner Matt Monahan, adding that they benefited from the last few weeks of the Friday Night Live concerts in downtown Champaign.

The response from customers has been overwhelmingly positive, he reported, but there's always room for more patrons. Their challenge, he said, is getting the word out that they're a family-friendly destination with a full-service restaurant.

Having a kitchen on-site is what makes them unique from other local microbreweries, Monahan said, but it also requires them to educate the public to the fact that they offer more than just beer.

To that end, their menu has expanded quite a bit from their original offerings of appetizers, pizza, salad and burgers.

"We knew we wanted some balance in there, with something that's appealing to everybody," he said.

Thanks to a large kitchen and a great general manager and chef, Monahan said, they are adding new items so quickly that "it's hard to keep up with printing out menus."

New additions include grilled and fried-chicken sandwiches, a veritable smorgasbord of burger options for carnivores and vegetarians alike, as well as two of Monahan's personal favorites: fish and chips, and the steak sandwich.

Coming soon, he said, are wraps, expanded dessert options, a kids' menu and a catering menu.



Brewers Larry Bolton, left, and B. J. McCabe discuss their craft last week at The Blind Pig Brewpub in downtown Champaign.

Of course, they have two dozen taps, including 22 of their own beers and one each from Riggs Beer Co. and Triptych Brewing, as well as some available in cans. Occasionally, they also have some tap-room exclusives that you can't get off premises.

For customers who want something a little different, they offer a selection of Illinois-crafted liquor from Silver Tree Beer & Spirits and North Shore Distillery, in addition to non-alcoholic beer, Cloud Mountain Kombucha and wine.

They also now offer beer to go in both cans and kegs, as well as delivery via Uber Eats and DoorDash. Monahan said they hope to provide alcohol delivery, but are working out the details with the delivery services.

On site, a newly instituted

happy hour features full-pour drafts of nearly all their beers for \$5. Hours are 4-6 p.m. Monday through Wednesday and 3-6 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays.

While they don't brew their beers at the Neil Street location — that's done down the street at their Market Street production facility — they are planning to do small-scale "exhibition brewing" at the brewpub for interested customers.

Monahan pointed out that their location is particularly well-situated for people who like the festivities that precede football games. You can enjoy a microbrew and pub grub while watching the Illini players board their buses on game day for their police escort from downtown to Gies Memorial Stadium. When customers are ready to go to the

game, he said, they can hop on the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District's 280 TRANSPORT bus nearby and get a roundtrip for \$2.

Don't have tickets or don't like fighting the crowds or braving the wild weather? Monahan invites customers to stay and watch the game on one of their many big-screen televisions in climate-controlled comfort.

"We're trying to figure out what other things that we can do that would be of interest to get people to come in and hang out with us or have dinner or lunch and enjoy the space," he said. "Once you come in and check it out, from the feedback I've heard, it's overwhelming that people enjoyed it and were looking forward to coming back. And that's all you can ask for."

"We're super excited to be at the location we're at, and the



ABOVE: Blind Pig Brewing won first place at the Indiana State Fair in the professional brew division for their Reserveza Salt and Lime Lager. **BELOW:** The take-out cooler is packed with cans of its own beers, such as U of IPA Game Day and Columbia Street Coffee Stout.



community we're in, and our peers that we're big fans of," Monahan added. "We're happy to be an option alongside them."



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AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

Hop farmers, brewers feel sting of shifting immigration, trade policies

By MEGAN ULU-LANI BOYANTON
The Seattle Times (TNS)

YAKIMA, Wash. — Late August marked the start of the Yakima Valley's six-week blitz to harvest fields of hop plants bound for breweries.

With the citric scent of Centennial hops hanging in the air, Jessica Riel, a fourth-generation farmer at Double 'R' Hop Ranches, looked on as her employees unloaded long bines — stems similar to vines — from the backs of white trucks. Their gloved hands guided the plants onto the picking machine for processing.

With a dearth of local workers, Riel has turned to seasonal foreign labor to fill the gaps and complete the yearly harvest. Out of her current workforce of about 100 employees, 42 arrived from Mexico last month.

"The goal is always to recruit local employees, and over the years, we've seen the number of available local workers decline," Riel said.

Bringing in labor from other countries isn't easy either, and it's not the only issue this year. With President Donald Trump back in office for a second term, the beer industry is facing new and pre-existing hurdles tied to immigration and trade.

The farmers, brewers, manufacturers and distributors that work to deliver bottles of ale to consumers in Washington state and beyond are watching repercussions from foreign-policy fights trickle down to their businesses.

The Trump administration is cracking down on illegal immigration — and purportedly causing visa delays for some seasonal workers coming to the U.S. through the H-2A program, a legal process that temporarily permits foreigners into the country to work for American employers in the agriculture industry. That's on top of longstanding headaches related to



Karen Ducey/The Seattle Times/TNS

Jose Luiz Sanchez, center, and Jesus Zaragoza hang hop bines onto a picking machine Aug. 28 from the bed of a truck that brought them in from the fields at Double 'R' Hop Ranches in Yakima, Wash. The ranches employ a number of workers who are in the U.S. on H-2A visas.

the program that employers would like to see resolved.

Fluctuating U.S. trade deals and tariffs are also complicating brewers' approaches to exports and imports.

"The reality of the situation in Washington (D.C.) right now is that this administration is trying to reset global trade," including relationships with neighbors Mexico and Canada, said Brian Crawford, president and CEO of the Beer Institute, the beer industry's trade association. "We're all just collateral damage."

The beer industry is a global affair. The U.S. produced the largest share of the world's hops in 2023, followed by Germany, the Czech Republic and

China, the trade association Hop Growers of America found in its 2024 report.

Countries that received the most exports of U.S. hops in 2023 included Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Canada and Brazil. Meanwhile, that year, the U.S. mainly imported hops from Germany, New Zealand, Australia and the U.K.

The Pacific Northwest produces the majority of U.S. hops, according to Hop Growers of America, with Washington state making up 74 percent of the region's production in 2023.

The state's beer industry is responsible for more than 57,000 jobs, including over 1,400 agriculture jobs, and a total economic output of \$12.4 billion,

according to the Beer Institute. Nationwide, those numbers jump to 2.4 million jobs — almost 43,000 agriculture jobs among them — and an economic output of \$471 billion.

At the Beer Institute, "what our members are saying is, we just need certainty," Crawford said. "These guys are making humongous investments, and they don't know exactly what the rules of the road are."

For now, despite the lingering questions, business owners are pushing forward.

"We have to be adaptable," Riel said. "Every day, there's something new coming at us, whether it's weather-related or labor-related, regulation-related."

Riel's farm has relied on the H-2A program since 2015. That year, Riel left her software industry job in the Seattle area to return to Double 'R' Hop Ranches — a family business started by her great-grandfather, Willie Riel, in 1945. The younger Riel was born and raised in Yakima.

As the farm's co-owner, she helped implement the program for temporary agricultural workers.

"We have quite a few of those men that have been coming on the H-2A program every year since 2015," she said in late August at the farm in Harrah, which is located about 20 miles south of Yakima.

Washington is considered one of the top five states dependent on H-2A workers, with close to 36,000 seasonal positions in the state's agriculture industry allocated to those laborers in fiscal 2023, according to the Migration Dialogue project by the University of California, Davis.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the seasonal employees at Double 'R' Hop Ranches worked from April through mid-October. The viral outbreak caused a downturn in the hops industry, Riel said, so the foreign laborers now adhere to a varied schedule.

They first come to Harrah, Yakima County, in spring, then return to their home countries for a summer break. They migrate back in August for the hops harvest.

Riel expected that, in the near future, her business will need its employees for the full six-month period again.

"We are seeing great improvement in the hop industry," she said. "I expect, next year, we'll be moving back to that method of more of like a 50/50: half the time here in Yakima with us, half the time back home."



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