

## LACK OF APPLES MEANS FEWER JOBS IN MICHIGAN



The state of Michigan is currently dealing with a struggle due to the lack of apples that have been growing. Those who grow apples in the state of Michigan have been struggling with the lack of apples due to the strange weather from the season, which basically destroyed the apple cultivation for the state. Michigan is known for being the third largest apple producer in the United States, only behind two other states, Washington and New York. However, the state of Michigan is dealing with a shorter supply of apples than usual. While harvest season is already halfway through, growers have been picking fewer apples than they normally do. In fact, they have only been picking around 15 percent of their usual crop during this time of year. The Michigan State University has made estimates that the value of all the apples that have been missing this season is equal to around \$110 million, which means this is a huge loss for those who are working in this industry. With less fruit available, there are fewer jobs available for those who pick fruit for a living. At the same time, there will be hardly any type of income from the apples that typically get put into storage and are used in preparation for the following harvest. Joe Rasch is one of the apple growers who are struggling this year. He has been working as an apple grower for the past two decades and this year, he says that he is having a hard time getting his bins filled. Amy Irish-Brown, who works with a number of fruit growers and is from the Michigan State University Extension, has said, "This spring, 2012, is probably going to be one for the record books." Irish-Brown has said that the mild weather from last fall, along with the mild winter, was the beginning of the problem for this harvest season. She also said that because temperatures were so high back in March that contributed to the problem as well. Irish-Brown said, "That mild winter, no frost in the ground ... as soon as that warm weather came and lasted for a whole week, the trees just started growing." In the meantime, Rasch said, "I always say we're 2 degrees from disaster, most springs." He also said, "This year, it caught up with us." At this point, his current harvest is at 10 percent less than the usual amount of crops for this time of year. This means that he has less work available for the apple pickers. He said that while he normally hires around 70 workers to pick the apples, this year he has only hired a total of 20 workers.