

## **Climate Change Bites – Apple Farmers Face New Risks**

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<http://naturechange.org/2017/10/16/climate-change-bites/>

Apples! One of Michigan's largest and most valuable crops, there are over 11 million apple trees in commercial production helping to support 825 family run farms. But climate change is taking a big bite out of the profits.

Across Northern Michigan, the fruit farms look like quilt pieces draped over the rolling landscape. The sprawling cherry and apple orchards mixed in with forests, fields, wetlands and lakes spill over with natural beauty. But a changing climate is creating new challenges for the region's fruit growers. The weather has become more erratic with dramatic spring warm ups followed by hard frosts, big summer wind and hail storms, and – this year – an unprecedented warm spell just as the apple crop was maturing

In this video, we visit with fruit farmers in Leelanau and Antrim Counties to ask how the dramatic and unpredictable weather is impacting our favorite apples. We found both orchards busy with workers picking and packing the last of the Honey Crisp, Gingergold and other high value apples. They had very little time to get the fruit off the trees and into the cooler after that big warm up.

### **Topics Covered**

Agriculture; Fruit Farming; Climate Change; Weather

### **Next Generation Science Standards**

- K-ESS2-1. Use and share observations of local weather conditions to describe patterns over time.
- 3-LS4-4. Make a claim about the merit of a solution to a problem caused when the environment changes and the types of plants and animals that live there may change.
- ESS3.C: Human Impacts on Earth Systems. Human activities in agriculture, industry, and everyday life have had major effects on the land, vegetation, streams, ocean, air, and even outer space. But individuals and communities are doing things to help protect Earth's resources and environments. (5-ESS3-1)