

# King Fire cuts into Apple Hill traffic

By Richard Chang, Sacramento Bee

Business was slow at Apple Hill's famed orchards Saturday, as smoke from the King fire in El Dorado County discouraged people from visiting, owners said.

Apple farmers, bakers and craft vendors said foot traffic had dropped by at least 50 percent, marking a gloomy start to the high season that began Labor Day and ends in December. Thousands of tourists traditionally make the trip from across Northern California to the area for a chance to pick their own apples or indulge in apple pie.

"Let's put it this way: It's not good," said Paul Dozier, owner of Pine-0-Mine ranch in Placerville, when asked about the fire's impact on sales.

Dozier said conditions on Friday were "like walking through the fog."

On Saturday, however, only a slight tinge of smoke was in the air, but not far off, a heavy haze hovered over the rolling hills. Dozier's 13-acre property was practically deserted, save for the occasional customer.

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