

# Idaho Farm Bureau. Quarterly

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A Glimpse

Into Where

Idahoans Eat

## New H-2A wage rule set to crush family farms



At the end of March, the Department of Labor's new formula for H-2A wages, the Adverse Effect Wage Rate or AEWR, took effect.

Now farm families across the country, small farms especially, are taking a hard look at their balance sheets, and many may find it hard to stay afloat.

Although the administration says it supports farmers, its agency's actions are having the opposite effect. The AEWR is long overdue for a fix, but this wasn't it.

The U.S. Department of Labor largely ignored input from across the agricultural community. Instead of addressing inconsistencies and fixing its flawed wage formula, they actually managed to make it even worse.

Rather than bringing the consistency and fairness that we called for, the 2023 AEWR impacts small farmers disproportionately and is wildly unpredictable.

What's more—it doesn't factor in the already competitive wages farmers pay to ensure we have

See DUVALL, page 6

## The President's Desk

By Bryan Searle

President Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

### Farmers and ranchers together can move mountains



Two recent developments – one at the state level, the other at the national level – show what Farm Bureau members can accomplish when they commit to a goal and work together to achieve it.

At the Idaho level, state lawmakers in late March overrode a governor's veto to pass a property tax relief bill that will provide Idahoans with some real property tax relief.

House Bill 292 contains provisions that accomplish two Idaho Farm Bureau Federation policies that were created by the organization's grassroots members.

One is IFBF policy 102, which opposes shifting property taxes to agricultural land by increasing the homeowner's exemption.

The other is policy 114.2, which supports eliminating the odd March and August election dates. Voter turnout in these special elections is about a third of what the turnout is for primary and general elections.

The bill successfully provides property tax relief without shifting the tax burden and it also eliminates the March election date used by schools to run bonds and levies.

See SEARLE, page 6

## Inside Farm Bureau

By Zak Miller

CEO Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

### Lessons learned from calving



I am hard-wired to view the calendar differently. March is calving, and April through May is planting.

June-July is irrigation, haying, and grazing. August is grain harvest and fair time. September-October is harvest, roundup, and weaning, and November-February is winter feeding, vaccinating, and preparation for spring.

Calving used to be one of my favorite times of the year for the longest time. This shouldn't make sense because calving season has always meant so many hours of work, snow, cold, wet, mud and

muck, and frustration.

Most cows do not need help other than access to food and water. These are the cows everyone loves.

Maternal instinct is nearly a superpower. A good cow can give birth in a driving blizzard and then, using only her tongue, get her newborn standing, nursing, and able to thrive.

The power of mothers transcends species.

Working with cows giving birth for many years has only strengthened my reverence for

See MILLER, page 7



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Photo by Joel Benson

See page 27 for a story on Idaho's good winter snowpack and what that means for irrigators.

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**COVER: See page 8 for a story providing a glimpse of where Idahoans spend their food dollars.**  
 (Illustration by Joel Benson)



Photo by Sean Ellis

**Sugar beets are planted in a field near Meridian April 10. A recently released report shows the combined food and agriculture sectors have a massive impact on the nation's economy.**

# Report: food and ag sectors have massive impact on economy

**By Sean Ellis**  
*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

POCATELLO – A recently released national report shows the food and agriculture industries combined have a massive impact on the nation's economy.

The seventh annual Feeding the Economy report shows the two industries and their suppliers contribute more than \$8.6 trillion to the U.S. economy, which is nearly one-fifth of total national output and a 22 percent increase since the 2019 report.

The data, which is also broken down by state, shows the food and ag sectors in Idaho together are responsible for 370,878 jobs, \$21.9 billion in total wages, \$7.5 billion in taxes and \$1 billion in exports.

The Feeding the Economy report's results are shocking in a good way and show that the food industry truly is the foundation of the nation's economy and way of life, said Idaho Farm Bureau Federation President Bryan Searle.

"Those numbers are astounding and reveal just how important the agriculture and food sector is to Idaho's economy and the American economy as a whole," he said. "I would





The seventh annual Feeding the Economy report shows the food and agriculture industries combined contribute more than \$8.6 trillion to the U.S. economy.  
Photo by Michaela Andrus

encourage everybody involved in the industry to spread those numbers far and wide and especially make sure your elected officials know about them.”

Searle, who farms in Shelley, said the results of the report should be required reading material for every decision-maker in Idaho.

A separate University of Idaho study shows the economic impact of the state’s agriculture industry alone is huge.

According to that report – The Economic Contribution of Idaho Agribusiness – the state’s ag industry was responsible for \$29 billion in sales in 2019, which amounted to 17 percent of Idaho’s total economic output.

The U of I report also showed agriculture was responsible directly and indirectly for one in every eight jobs in the state and 13 percent of Idaho’s total gross state product.

Feeding the Economy is an economic impact study commissioned by 25 food and agriculture groups, including American Farm Bureau Federation.

The report can be found at [www.FeedingTheEconomy.com](http://www.FeedingTheEconomy.com).

Providing data on jobs, wages and economic output, the farm-to-fork analysis illustrates the food and agriculture sectors impact on local and nationwide economic activity.

The Feeding the Economy analysis includes the direct and indirect economic activity surrounding the food and farming industries, capturing both the upstream and downstream activity generated by both sectors.

For example, it would include a new employee hired by a farm equipment dealer because farmers are buying more tractors.

It would also include as an induced economic impact the money spent by a food retail associate

when they spend their paycheck.

The report shows that together, the two sectors, which are inextricably linked, have a formidable impact on the U.S. economy.

This year’s report shows the U.S. food and agriculture sectors nationwide directly and indirectly support 46 million jobs and provide \$2.61 trillion in total wages.

The sectors together are also responsible for \$948 billion in taxes and \$202 billion in exports.

The 2023 report notably reveals that the manufacturing of agricultural products accounts for nearly one-fifth of total manufacturing jobs in the United States.

Overall, more than 46 million jobs are supported across the food and agriculture supply chain, an increase of nearly 2 percent since the 2019 report despite the economic challenges and disruptions associated with the global pandemic.

“This study highlights the impact the greater food and ag sector industries have on the American economy and the sector’s critical role in providing economic opportunity, nutritional value and safe food for all Americans,” American Bakers Association President and CEO Eric Dell said in a news release announcing the report’s findings.

According to the news release, the strength highlighted in this year’s report reinforces that agriculture is evolving and innovating to meet the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

For example, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, between 1948 and 2019, land use for agriculture decreased by 28 percent while land productivity grew nearly four times and labor productivity in agriculture grew more than 10 times.

This year’s report showed increased economic output in every state compared to the 2022 report.

■

*Continued from page 2*

enough hands to plant, tend and harvest crops, or care for animals.

The 2023 AEW rule has some states facing wage increases well over 10%, outpacing inflation and jumping dramatically from previous years.

Take Michigan for example. In 2022, H-2A wages increased 3.5%, but in 2023, the increase will be nearly 13%.

Traveling to the Southeast, take a look at Florida's H-2A wages, which increased 6.5% in 2022. With the 2023 increase, Florida's farm wages are now increasing another 15.5%.

Keep in mind that those two examples are average increases. The 2023 AEW rule increase gets even higher when you take into account that the new rule requires the adjusted wage to match the highest-skilled duty performed on the farm by a given worker.

As farmers and ranchers know, we wear many hats on the farm and the same goes for our employees, especially on smaller farms.

Let's say one of your employees is responsible for driving other employees to and from the farm every day. Well, under

the new AEW rule, that employee would be paid a higher "chauffeur rate," not only for the hours spent driving but also for every other task they complete on the farm, regardless of the level of skill involved.

Depending on your state's wage rate, you could wind up paying that employee an extra 30% overall. Our economists have dug into the impact these changes could have on farms of all sizes in a recent Market Intel report.

If you're not already fired up, I guarantee you will be after seeing our analysis.

With farm wages running as high as 40% of farm operating costs, this new AEW rule cannot stand.

And at Farm Bureau, we are not just standing by and hoping for a better outcome. Getting reasonable H-2A reform that works for all has long been a priority across our organization, and stopping the 2023 AEW rule is at the forefront of our efforts in Congress.

Farm Bureau is calling on Congress to deliver a fair and reasonable solution to the 2023 AEW rule—one that does not exchange one problem for another or enshrine a fundamentally flawed process into law.

Thanks to efforts by the Georgia and North Carolina Farm Bureaus, a bill has already been introduced in the Senate to

provide a stopgap.

The bipartisan Farm Operations Support Act (S.874) led by Senators Jon Ossoff, D-Ga., and Thom Tillis, R-N.C., would temporarily reset the AEW rule at 2022 levels.

The 2022 levels were not ideal, but this bill is critical to help our farms stay in production while we find a workable, permanent solution.

We also have joined with nearly 600 farm organizations and agribusinesses to urge Congress to support a resolution of disapproval under the Congressional Review Act.

We need Congress and the administration to deliver certainty and fairness to the farm economy.

Farmers value our employees, and we are committed to paying competitive wages. On my family farm, some of my employees have been with me for decades and they are like family.

I know that the same can be said on farms across the country. These new wage increases only make it harder for farmers to remain competitive.

Our employees, our communities and our country are counting on us to keep our farms running through all seasons. We cannot afford a delay. ■

# SEARLE

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*Continued from page 2*

It also provides directions to school districts to pay down bonds and levies first with funding allocated from the legislation.

HB 292 passed both the House and Senate overwhelming but was surprisingly vetoed. A quick action from you provided the support to your elected officials to override the veto.

Veto overrides in Idaho are rare occurrences and this bill would not have passed had it not been for the enormous support it received from the grassroots level by farmers and ranchers. It required very quick action and you stepped up and contacted your elected officials to help make it happen.

Farm Bureau thanks everyone who con-

tacted their legislators and asked them to override the governor's veto of House Bill 292. And thanks to those elected officials who listened to their constituents and did the right thing.

At the national level, two U.S. district courts recently ruled to stop implementation of the 2023 Waters of the United States rule in 26 states.

On March 19, a ruling by a Texas judge stopped implementation of the rule in Texas and Idaho.

Then on April 12, a federal judge in North Dakota temporarily blocked the rule in 24 other states.

Both district courts acknowledged the new rule oversteps EPA's authority under the Clean Water Act.

The rulings halt enforcement and im-

plementation of the rule by the EPA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the 26 affected states pending the outcomes of the lawsuits filed by those states.

American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall correctly called the rule "a clear case of government overreach."

He said, "It would leave farmers and ranchers with no clear way to determine where federal jurisdiction begins and ends on their own property."

Opposition to the rule is being led by AFBF together with 24 states and more than a dozen other organizations.

The effort to ditch this hideous rule has been an ongoing battle for several years through previous administrations and is of utmost importance to Farm Bureau and all farmers and ranchers.



To be very clear, ensuring clean water is important to Farm Bureau and all farmers and ranchers.

But this rule creates a subjective, confusing assessment that would require farmers to hire a team of lawyers to interpret it, while doing nothing to enhance water quality.

In reality, it would give the federal government authority over virtually every body of water in the nation, including roadside ditches. At the same time, it would leave ag producers wondering

whether they can farm their own land.

Both of these recent successes – the passage of House Bill 292 and the halting of the new WOTUS rule – happened largely because Farm Bureau members refused to give up on these issues.

In Idaho, property tax relief was finally achieved in part because Farm Bureau members were not content just to pass a policy supporting it. They knew it would only be accomplished if they took the policy and pushed for implementation.

Whether at the county, state or national

level, when farmers and ranchers stick together on an issue and commit to seeing it through, there's almost no limit to what they can accomplish.

They can move mountains.

Thanks again to everyone who contacted their legislators while HB 292 was being debated, and to everyone who has remained in the fight over the WOTUS issue for many years.

May we continue to work together to defend our rights and opportunities. ■

## MILLER

*Continued from page 2*

motherhood's powerful and sacred nature.

The primary tool a rancher needs during calving is grit, that stubborn determination to never give up or give in. While most cows and calves thrive, there are some awful things about calving season.

Few things trigger my emotions more than finding a wet, shivering calf because its mother hasn't done her job. Calves that struggle to suckle, and the process of helping them learn, pushes my patience as few things can.

Aggressive cows that appear to want to kill me, their calf, or both of us, create consternation. Cows that decide another calf is theirs and refuse to accept their own are causes for headaches.

Aside from the awfulness of some cattle, let us refer to them as challenging cows and calves. There are better adjectives, but sensitive eyes may read this.

A lot of grit is needed during calving.

Grit is also required for the relentless battle with nature that occurs during calving season. Caring for a herd includes moving snow, spreading straw, providing wind protection, moving animals to avoid bacteria buildup, and providing adequate and nutritious food and water.

Rearing animals is the furthest thing from a factory or an assembly line. A rancher must have an eye for their animals because every situation is new and unique.

Some animals need just a little longer to succeed. If a human intervenes too soon, it can disrupt the maternal bond, sometimes leading to death.

At other times, waiting even a moment

too long can also spell death. The anxiety of doing something at the right time, in the right place and making the right decision is the hardest part of calving for me.

Most death loss during calving can be lumped into three buckets: death at birth (something went wrong during delivery), failure to thrive (primarily cows not caring for their calves), and death from sickness.

No herd is immune to death. Management decisions for some, but mainly the weather, will dictate how and why some calves die. Each year is different.

The anxiety of wondering whether you made the right choice during calving season is also where the excitement comes from.

Aside from my family, I have experienced few joys more significant than when it is clear I made the right decision at calving time. Aiding in a difficult birth and delivering a live calf is almost ecstasy.

As frustrating as suckling a calf can be, it is also a serene moment when the light finally goes on for a calf and they begin to nurse. The slurping sound of a nursing calf is one of the most beautiful sounds my ears will ever hear.

Seeing a calf that struggled with its mother at birth or experienced sickness later bucking, running, and thriving is also exhilarating.

Calving is harder for me now because as I've matured, I question my decisions more than ever. It is a foolish exercise because I can't change the past, and I know that.

I also know that not all losses are my fault. Sometimes, I have made one or a series of bad decisions that sealed the

fate of that lost calf. There are other times where my actions were flawless, and yet the animal still died.

It is foolish and egotistical to believe I alone could save them all. The inverse is true for those that thrive. Some of them live and thrive not because of but despite my decisions.

Logically I know this, but my heart still hurts. Finding a dead calf under fresh snow or seeing a mother cow nudging a lifeless, dead calf, and breathing into the nostril of a calf that will never take a breath, are gut-wrenching.

Worst of all, it is heartbreaking when grit is not enough, and I must take a calf's life because it has no future but suffering.

Worst of all, in calving, all these scenarios will repeat. It is the suffering and loss that hurts so much.

Calving season is a painful privilege; the fight to help calves live increases my appreciation for how fragile life can be. Calving also helps remind me how grateful I am for a God who knows and understands much more than I do.

Only through sacrifice can we appreciate our gifts. Because of inclement weather, this year has required so many ranchers to provide great sacrifices through an especially tough calving season.

Because of my current position, I'm not as involved in the day-to-day activities of calving as I used to be. However, I am grateful for calving and the reminder of the awesome responsibility a rancher accepts when they decide to be a cattleman or woman. ■

# Data show how, where Idahoans spent their food dollars

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

POCATELLO – Recently created data dashboards provide an interesting glimpse into how and where Idahoans and other Americans spend their food dollars.

Dashboards are interactive tools that allow people to analyze and display metrics and key performance indicators.

A team of researchers at Purdue University's Center for Food Demand and Sustainability recently created new data dashboards that allow people to analyze consumer spending at restaurants, grocery stores and food delivery companies.

The team partnered with Facticeus, which processes debit/credit card transactions.

Data from the dashboards can be broken down nationally and by state and zip code. The data in the dash-

boards created by the Purdue team is based on select credit card purchases and is not meant to be all-encompassing.

However, it does provide some interesting findings.

Not surprisingly, given the total number of restaurants it owns, McDonald's is where Americans and Idahoans spent most of their dollars when it comes to food and drink establishments.

However, the data shows Idahoans spend far less of their restaurant dollars at McDonald's than people in many other states on a per capita basis.

In this case, per capita refers to total spending within a state divided by that state's population.

The data shows Idahoans spent \$2.11 per capita at McDonald's from April 1, 2022, to April 1, 2023.

During that same period, Hawaiians spent \$8.78 per capita at McDonald's, people from West Virginia spent \$7.01, people from Mississippi spent \$6.64, Kansas spent \$6.25 and people from Kentucky spent \$6.05 per capita at McDonald's.

Again, those numbers are based on select credit card transactions so the data doesn't capture the full amount people spent at McDonald's during that period.

However, it does show trends and it's of note that Idahoans spend far less at McDonald's than people in many other states.

The dashboard data showed Domino's came in at No. 2 in Idaho when it comes to per capita spending at food and drink establishments, Taco Bell ranked third, Dutch Bros Coffee







Stock photo

Recently created data dashboards provide an interesting glimpse into how and where Idahoans and other Americans spend their food dollars.

ranked fourth and Burger King ranked fifth.

Ranking sixth through tenth were Wendy's, Jack in the Box, Starbucks, Panda Express and Subway.

Ranking 11<sup>th</sup> through 15<sup>th</sup> were Pizza Hut, Chick-Fil-A, Little Caesars, Sonic Drive-In and Dairy Queen.

Nationally, Taco Bell, Wendy's, Starbucks and Chick-Fil-A ranked Nos. 2-5 in total spending per capita at food establishments.

Ranking sixth through tenth nationally were Dunkin' Donuts, Burger King, Domino's, Sonic Drive-In and Subway. Ranking 11<sup>th</sup> through 15<sup>th</sup> were Pizza Hut, Popeye's Louisiana Kitchen, Jack in the Box, Whataburger and KFC.

In Idaho, the highest per capita spending by zip code at any restaurant in the state during the April 1, 2022, to April 1, 2023 period occurred at Texas Roadhouse in Fernwood, which is located in

Benewah County.

This data would be arrived at by dividing dollars spent at restaurants by the population of the zip code.

Coming in second in that category was Arby's in Blackfoot, followed by Jimmy John's in Sun Valley, McDonald's in Rupert and Subway in Blackfoot.

When it came to food delivery sales during the same April to April period, Uber Eats ranked No. 1 in the United States in total sales, followed by Grubhub, Schwan's, Delivery.Com, Eat Street, Waitr, DoorDash and Beyond the Menu.

Data for food delivery sales in Idaho is incomplete but it does appear to show Idahoans who live within the 83822 zip code that includes Newport, Wash., spent the most money per capita on food delivery during that April-April period.

People in Notus ranked second in that category, followed by people in Basalt (Bingham County), and Twin Falls resi-

dents who live within the 83301 zip code.

When it came to grocery store shopping, Fred Meyer was king in Idaho from April 1, 2022, to April 1, 2023.

WinCo Foods was second in that category, followed by Albertsons, Ridley's Family Markets, Broulim's, Safeway, Super 1 Foods, Grocery Outlet, Rosauers, Trader Joe's, H-E-B, Kroger, Natural Grocers, Whole Foods and Market Street Grocery.

Walmart was not included in this category.

When it came to grocery store spending on a per capita basis by zip code, Super 1 Foods in Eastport (Boundary County) ranked No. 1 in Idaho during the April-April period.

Ridley's Family Markets in Buhl and Rupert ranked Nos. 2-3 in that category, followed by Fred Meyer in Twin Falls and Ridley's in Blackfoot. ■

# Word Search

## Food Safety

Answer key on page 42

P	R	E	V	E	N	T	I	O	N	B	N	W	S	D	J
R	U	W	S	B	T	G	N	I	N	I	A	R	T	R	F
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C	L	M	I	C	R	O	W	A	V	E	R	T	R	I	S
E	G	N	I	H	S	A	W	D	N	A	H	K	A	N	H
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S	A	I	R	E	T	C	A	B	C	L	J	R	E	R	R
I	K	E	S	C	R	D	G	M	L	P	I	D	Y	H	E
N	R	E	S	P	O	N	S	I	B	I	L	I	T	Y	H
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P	R	C	I	T	M	I	N	S	P	E	C	T	I	O	N

Bacteria  
Canning  
Chill  
Clean  
Cooking  
Cutting board  
Danger zone  
Disinfect  
Drying

Food  
Freezing  
Germs  
Hand washing  
Hygiene  
Illness  
Inspection  
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Processing  
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Visit: [idahofarmbureauinsurance.com/refer-a-friend-get-a-gift](http://idahofarmbureauinsurance.com/refer-a-friend-get-a-gift) for complete rules and restrictions. Above left: Darla Fletcher (third from left) of Cocolalla, the winner of our 4th quarter 2022 Refer A Friend, Get A Gift \$500 drawing.



Photo by Jacob Christensen

From left to right: Brock Driscoll of Aberdeen, Chris Wride of American Falls, Sara Henson Skaar of Hagerman, Chester Adams of Firth, and Val Schwendiman of Newdale were inducted into the Eastern Idaho Agriculture Hall of Fame March 17.

# Five inducted into Eastern Idaho Agriculture Hall of Fame

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

FORT HALL – Five people were inducted into the Eastern Idaho Agriculture Hall of Fame March 17.

Hall of Fame inductees are people who have made extraordinary contributions to agriculture and Eastern Idaho, according to the organization.

Since the EIAHF was formed in 1972, 246 people have been inducted.

Chosen for the Class of 2023 were Val Schwendiman of Newdale, Chris Wride of American Falls, Brock Driscoll of Aberdeen, Sara Henson Skaar of Hagerman,

and Chester Adams of Firth.

During the hall of fame recognition dinner, Paige Nelson of Rigby was named the Ed Duren Memorial Young Producer Award winner.

A record 429 people turned out for this year’s induction ceremony in Fort Hall.

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation CEO Zak Miller, a member of the EIAHF board of directors, said hall of fame inductees represent the drivers of the most important industry in the state.

“These people represent the crème of the crop of Idaho’s agriculture industry,” he said. “By their actions over many years,

they have shown they are committed not only to agriculture, but to East Idaho as well.”

One of the common themes of the inductees’ acceptance speeches this year was that they were humbled to have their name included among all of the stalwarts of Eastern Idaho agriculture who have received the honor since 1972.

“I feel very good about being in this class and this company,” Skaar said.

Wride said when he looks at the names in the hall of fame, he thinks, “Great people. Inspiring people. Innovators. Leaders. People that get things done.”





### R. Chester Adams

Adams spent many years in the classroom, as an educator and as a principal, before focusing fully on his ranching operation.

He received many awards during his years in education and in 1973, decided to have a dual career in education and ranching.

According to his induction bio, he purchased 52 acres along the Snake River and five registered Angus cows. Over 30 years, he added four

additional properties and his herd grew to 125 registered mother cows.

Adams' operation utilized a modified form of intensive grazing and he incorporated animal science research and new techniques to his feeding program to enhance the quality of his herd.

His operation implemented artificial insemination practices in 1975 and embryo transfers in 2001.

Adams received numerous agriculture awards, including recognition as a 50-year member of the American Angus Association. He has also served many years as a 4-H leader and volunteer for community events and is currently a director of the New Sweden Irrigation District.

Looking back at the last five decades, he said during his acceptance speech, "It's really about the journey ... I cherish the lifestyle that I chose and the many friends" I made along the way.

### Sarah Henson Skaar

According to her award bio, "Sarah's entire life has revolved around agriculture, livestock and ranching..."

That began with her farm experiences as a child and includes 4-H participation, university studies, employment and production agriculture partnerships with her father and husband.

While attending Washington State University, Skaar milked cows at the university dairy and conducted oilseed research in WSU's department of agronomy.

She was a founding member of the WSU Cooperative of University Dairy Students organization.

After earning her master's degree, Skaar accepted a job with University of Idaho as an Extension agent in Caribou County and was later promoted to associate professor of agriculture. She later transferred to Bonneville County Extension, where she continued working with livestock and youth.

Skaar has been involved in the equine industry and has organized and continues to teach youth horsemanship clinics throughout southern Idaho.

According to her award bio, "Whenever the Skaars owned ranches in Idaho, the sustainability of natural resources has been the cornerstone of their operation."



Those production strategies focused on improved soil health, water quality, end-use quality and financial returns.

Skaar is also an award-winning ag journalist and author, an inductee into the Eastern Idaho Horseman's Hall of Fame and was honored as Latah County Cattleman of the Year.

### W. Brock Driscoll

According to his award bio, Driscoll had an early love for agriculture while growing up on a diversified crop farm in Aberdeen.

After marrying in 1974, he began farming as a livelihood and formed a partnership with his brothers. He was involved in creating a potato packing facility and trucking company in 1983 and the business expanded to the Mag-

ic Valley area by 1997.

Driscoll Brothers Partnership later incorporated an international compressed alfalfa company located near the Pocatello Airport, where hay purchased from area growers is processed into tightly compressed balls and shipped overseas.

Driscoll Brothers has expanded its original 4,000-acre farming and potato operation into a 16,000-acre operation with 150 full-time and 300 seasonal employees.

In addition to its own crops, Driscoll Brothers also purchases alfalfa, potatoes and grain from other Eastern Idaho producers.

During his acceptance speech, Driscoll said equal credit for the business' success should go to his brothers.

"The four of us should be partners in this award," he said.

He also said he's "grateful to work in agriculture. It's a great, great blessing and it helps teach our families what's real in life."

### Christopher Wride

According to his bio, "Chris began his farming career as a young boy when the rocks and sagebrush were being cleared on the Wride farm north of Pleasant Valley in Power County."

After attending college, Wride and his brothers worked together to raise potatoes, small grains, alfalfa and sugar beets. He encouraged his brothers to convert the farm's furrow irrigation to sprinkler irrigation and, according to his award bio, doing that improved the operation's production and profitability.

He was elected to the Bingham County Farm Service Agency Committee and Bingham Soil Conservation District, where his knowledge of farm and conservation programs grew.

This led the Wride operation to begin implementing more systematic farm management plans and Wride and his brothers embraced the use of technology and other best management practices.

One of Wride's noted projects has been experimentation with mustard green manure crops as a way to improve soil health.



According to his award bio, “Chris was nominated to the (EIAHF) for his dedication to Eastern Idaho’s agriculture industry and natural resource conservation. Chris’ leadership has had a lasting effect on the implementation of conservation practices while maintaining successful farming operations in Bingham and Power counties.”



### Val Schwendiman

Schwendiman’s first job on the family farm, according to his award bio, was scattering sacks in the fields so the workers could fill them with potatoes. During this time, plowing was done using a one-row digger pulled by horses.

Schwendiman earlier farmed with his brother and now farms with three of his sons and eight grandsons. He

is also owner and operator of a seed and commercial potato business and runs a large operation of irrigated and dryland wheat and barley.

According to his award bio, Schwendiman is continually upgrading his equipment to increase productivity. To ensure wise decisions are made on the farm, the Schwendiman operation keeps good records of farm operations.

According to his bio, Schwendiman has made significant improvements to his irrigation system by using computerized panels on the pivots and radio telemetry and putting variable frequency drives on all wells to conserve water.

According to Schwendiman’s award bio, he is “noted for working cooperatively with neighboring farmers by being respectful of their land. He forms and maintains many good relationships with buyers, sellers and customers....”

“As a third-generation farmer, Val is noted for working hard to install a love and respect for the land to his posterity,” the bio states.

During his acceptance speech, Schwendiman said that over his lifetime, “I’ve had the opportunity to work with so many great people in the agriculture industry.”

He also said he is grateful for the opportunity “to be part of growing, harvesting and producing food for the world.”

### Paige Miller Nelson

Nelson was presented the Ed Duren Memorial Young Producer Award, which recognizes “an agricultural producer under 40 years of age for product innovations, leadership and a positive impact on the agriculture industry of Eastern Idaho.”

Raised on the family farm in Fremont County, Nelson is a fifth-generation ag producer with experience raising potatoes, wheat, barley, corn and alfalfa, and with a cow-calf feedlot ranch.



While attending BYU-Idaho, Nelson double minored in journalism and natural resources to compliment her animal science major to allow her to pursue a career in agriculture journalism.

While attending college, she served in various leadership roles, including as an Idaho Cattle Association intern, chairwoman and organizer of the first-ever BYU-Idaho Ag Days in 2013 and the 2013 BYU-Idaho Beef Day, and as vice president of the BYU-Idaho Cattlemen’s Association.

Nelson and her husband live on their cattle ranch in Rigby and manage a cow-calf herd, breed heifers and lease corrals to a rodeo bull consigner.

They also manage the family’s direct-to-consumer beef business, ML Brand Beef.

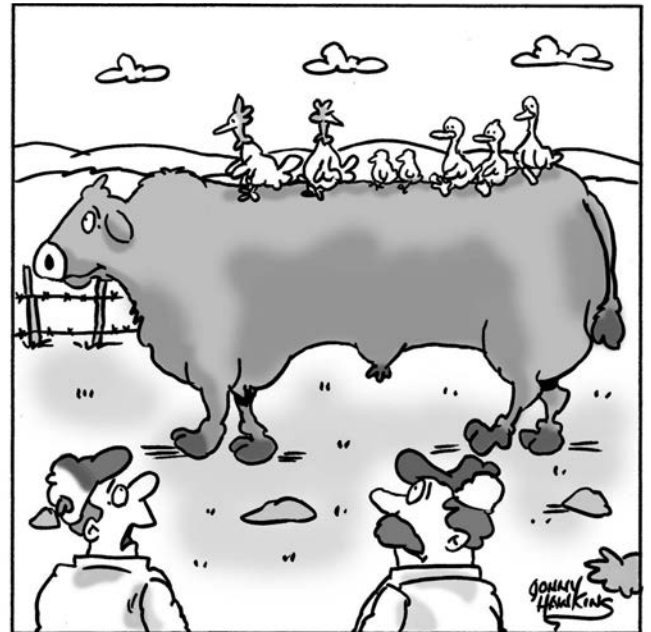
Nelson is a field editor for Angus Journal and a freelance writer for several ag publications and serves as vice president of the Jefferson County Farm Bureau board of directors and as a member of the Jefferson County Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers program.

Duren, who passed away in 2017, was a University of Idaho Extension Livestock specialist based in Soda Springs.

According to the EIAHF, “Ed spent a 39-year career (and many more years as a professor emeritus) providing education, outreach and leadership to producers and organizations across Idaho and beyond. His impact on agriculture in Idaho is beyond measure.” ■

## Country Chuckles

By Johnny Hawkins



“It’s a rare French breed known as the Stretch Limousin.”



# Idaho researcher helps develop promising alternative commodity price predictive model

By John O'Connell  
University of Idaho

MOSCOW, Idaho – A University of Idaho researcher helped to create a commodity markets forecasting model that rivals USDA's two preferred models at predicting corn prices.

Xiaoli Etienne, Idaho Wheat Commission endowed chair in commodity risk management, started work on the project while employed at West Virginia University (WVU), where she received a \$20,000 grant from USDA's Economic Research Service to fund the effort.

Etienne and her colleagues have continued perfecting the model since she joined U of I.

Etienne's team included her former graduate student at WVU, Sara Farhangdoost, and USDA ERS economists Linwood Hoffman and Brian Adam.

Their paper, "An Alternative Method to Forecast the Season-average Price for U.S. Corn," is currently in revision for publication in the *Journal of Commodity Markets*.

The alternative model they created uses only publicly available data, unlike the agency's go-to forecast, the World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates, which Etienne describes as using a "black box" model.

WASDE is released monthly based on a top-secret equation and private data, including global market factors often unknown by the public.

USDA's WASDE forecast has major implications, as it can influence markets and producers' planting decisions and is used for calculating government payment programs.

The new alternative model slightly outperforms WASDE from January through April.

"Whether it's economically significant, that's another paper to write," Etienne said.

Their model tracks closely with WASDE throughout the rest of

the year – with WASDE having a slight edge during the growing season.

In most months, their alternative model also outperforms the other model commonly used by USDA ERS – the Hoffman model developed by Etienne's team member Linwood Hoffman.

The Hoffman model bases its forecasts on publicly available futures price data. Futures contracts involve locking in future delivery of a commodity at a price set today.

Etienne's alternative model also relies heavily on futures prices, but it adds in current cash prices, providing some real-world data while recognizing many commodities aren't sold on the futures market.

Etienne's alternative model is slightly more laborious to calculate than the Hoffman model, requiring regression analysis – statistical processes for evaluating the strength of relationships between elements.

Both the Hoffman model and the alternative model offer far greater flexibility than WASDE reports, as they can be computed by any economist at any time, while WASDE is secretive and publishes at a set time of each month.

The alternative model has performed especially well when run against actual price data since 2004, despite extreme corn market fluctuations during those years, demonstrating that it's highly effective during periods of volatility.

"In years of volatility in prices, the model performs much better," Etienne said. "That's when the forecasting really matters. When prices are so volatile, no one knows what the price will be."

The alternative model was also highly accurate when used for predicting soybean prices. Etienne believes each model fills a niche and using them together would be prudent.

"We need to consider a composite approach," she said. ■



Xiaoli Etienne, shown here visiting a farm field near Moscow, has helped develop a new model for forecasting corn prices.  
Photo by Xiaoli Etienne





Photos by Joel Benson

Participants in Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's inaugural Fusion Conference gather on the steps of Idaho's Capitol building March 23.

# Idaho Farm Bureau holds first-ever Fusion Conference

By Sean Ellis  
*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

BOISE – About 175 farmers and ranchers from across the state attended Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's inaugural Fusion Conference March 22-24.

The conference brought together members of IFBF's Young Farmers and Ranchers program, which is open to producers 18 to 35 years of age, with members of the organization's Promotion and Education Committee, which is tasked with sharing agriculture's story with consumers.

Just like the name suggests, the goal of the first-ever conference was

to bring the two programs together to learn from each other, said IFBF leaders.

"This convention is an opportunity for both of those programs to team up and get a hybrid that will allow them to learn from each other, as well as create bonds and friendships that will last throughout the years," said Ott Clark, who manages both programs for Idaho Farm Bureau Federation.

Young producers bring a lot of excitement and energy to the table, while members of the P&E Committee bring seasoned leadership



and sharpened advocacy skills, said IFBF CEO Zak Miller.

“One of the main goals of the conference is to get these young producers excited about going out to promote agriculture,” he said. “It’s the maiden voyage of the Fusion event and I’m really excited to see what comes of this conference.”

An additional goal of the conference, Miller said, is to introduce young producers to the Promotion and Education Committee so they can join that program if they choose to when they age out of the YF&R program.

“That’s exactly what the goal is – we teach them how to be leaders in YF&R and then we give them something to lead toward, which is the P&E so they can go and advocate for agriculture,” he said.

The conference included multiple breakout sessions and presentations all centered around helping sharpen Farm Bureau members’ speaking and leadership skills and giving them the confidence to advocate on behalf of their industry.

“It’s so important that we share our stories,” said Alan Clark, chairman of IFBF’s Promotion and Education Committee. “Each individual farm is so different and they all have that unique story that can touch consumers. We need to share those stories and one of the main goals of this conference is to show them that they can do that; it’s possible.”

Participants spent half a day at the state’s Capitol building during Idaho’s legislative session. They attended House and Senate meetings and met with legislators.

“We want to provide them the tools and confidence to share their stories and promote agriculture,” said Ray Searle, chairman of IFBF’s Young Farmers and Ranchers program. “We want them to have the confidence to be able to stand up in front of legislators or members of Congress and be able to say, Hey, this is my story.”

One challenge Farm Bureau sees with many of its volunteer members is that they don’t feel like they have the ability to effectively share their stories, said Brody Miller, vice president of member relations for IFBF.

“When we’re out in the counties visiting with Farm Bureau members, their biggest hesitation when we ask them to go and talk with somebody is, I’m not sure I’m the one to do that,” he said. “These programs and this conference is about giving them

the skills to have that confidence and find their voice.”

During the three-day event, several speakers encouraged participants to remain engaged in Farm Bureau and tell the public the true story of agriculture.

The Fusion Conference included a lot of new faces at a major Idaho Farm Bureau Federation event and IFBF President Bryan Searle gave them a Farm Bureau 101 introduction and invited them to become more involved in the organization.

He said the “Farm Bureau family are hard-working, genuine, honest people” and said the organization is “recognized in the state and nation as the voice of agriculture. We have gained that reputation because we are a grassroots organization.”

He told participants the organization has lots of ways for people to participate and encouraged them to get involved in their county Farm Bureau organization.

“We have to preserve our livelihoods and in order to do that, you need to be involved and take part in Farm Bureau,” said Searle, a potato farmer from Shelley. “Why be involved? Because you’ll make a difference.”

Arizona rancher Chris Dalley, a former IFBF board

member, said one common

thing everyone at the conference shares is that “we all have a love for agriculture ... We are the future of agriculture and we are the future of Farm Bureau. We are the ones who will make a difference.”

Arizona Farm Bureau President and rancher Stefanie Smallhouse, a keynote speaker, pointed out Idaho has been the fastest-growing state in the nation over the past several years and warned that will bring new challenges to the state’s agricultural industry.

She cautioned Fusion participants not to assume the newcomers, or even long-time Idaho residents, understand the important role farming and ranching play in the state’s economy and way of life.

“Never assume the people in your state understand what you do; never take that for granted,” she said. “Get out in front of (the growth). Do everything you can to promote your industry. Use all the tools Farm Bureau has provided you to get in the game.”

“Idaho Farm Bureau has basically set the table for you,” she said. “You just have to show up ... and protect what you have here that you love so much.” ■



Participants in Idaho Farm Bureau Federation’s inaugural Fusion Conference enjoy some family time March 22 at the JUMP Center in Boise.

# MEAT LOAF

## Ingredients:

- 2 lbs. ground beef
- 1/2 lb. ground pork
- 1 large white onion, finely diced
- 1 cup diced celery
- 2/3 teas. black pepper
- 1 large green pepper
- 1 1/2 teas. salt
- 2 eggs
- 1 can tomato sauce
- 2 teas. Worcestershire sauce
- 4 slices toasted bread  
(crumbled)
- 2 teas. oil
- Dash of garlic salt
- Milk: Enough to mold into a loaf.



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IDAHO  
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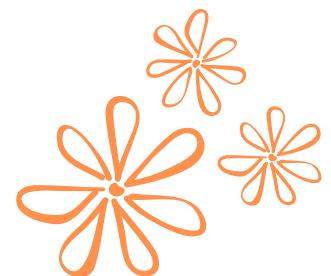
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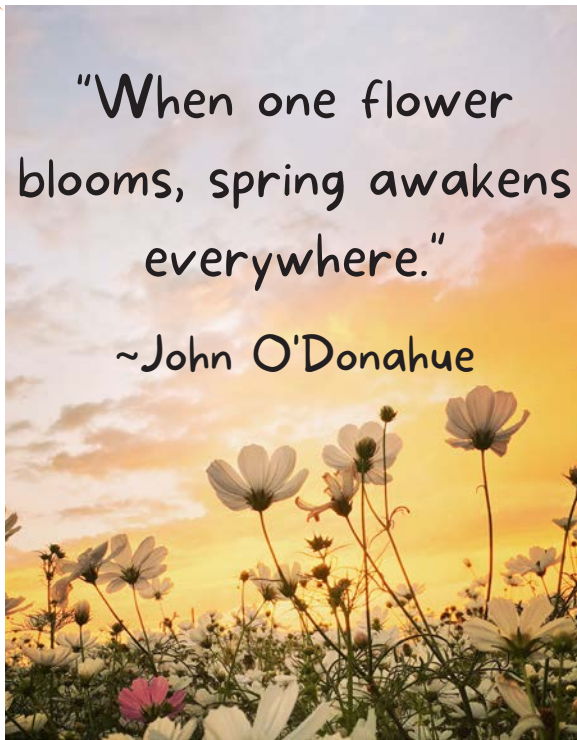


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# Logger credentials

Photo by Chris Schnepf

Hiring loggers who have the right skills and equipment for your job is critical.

By **Chris Schnepf**  
*University of Idaho*

I frequently get asked to recommend a logger or forester.

Unfortunately, I cannot recommend for or against any particular firm. I can recommend credentials to look for, however.

A credential is defined by Webster's Dictionary as "something that gives a title to credit or confidence." In other words, a credential can provide some assurance that the bearer can perform a task related to that credential with a reasonable degree of competence.

Credentials occur in many forms at many levels. A credential can range from membership in a professional organization, to certification by that organization, to more formal licensing programs required by a state or other level of government (e.g., pesticide applicator licenses).

Some credentials require completing some sort of schooling or passing a test. A degree from a high school or college is one level of credential. But even a college degree is insufficient in many settings.

Credentials have been growing in importance in our society and the forestry community is not immune to these larger trends.

For example, in 1994 the Society of American Foresters started a "certified forester" program that requires a forestry degree from an accredited institution, five years of forestry work experience, and 60 contact hours in continuing forestry education every three years.

One of the advantages of credentials is that they give those

unfamiliar with a field, standards by which to judge services they would be paying for. Landowners seeking a forester can consider whether a forester is certified to provide one criteria for their decision.

For more information on forester credentials you can download an Idaho consumers' guide and directory at <https://www.uidaho.edu/extension/publications/publication-detail?id=cis1226>.

## How do you choose a logger?

There are up to 3,500 full- and part-time loggers in Idaho. How do you choose? Unfortunately, some forest owners end up choosing the first logger who knocks on their door without doing more research.

One might look in the newspapers for a logger, but many loggers will tell you to ignore the loggers you see advertised in the papers or on TV – the best loggers have all the work they need and do not need to advertise.

But that puts many landowners in a quandary – how do you get "in the loop" to choose a logger that meets your needs?

Working with a reputable consulting forester is an excellent way to choose a logger (and supervise the work), but consultants are also always looking for loggers with a higher level of training and skill.

## The Idaho Pro-Logger Program

Loggers have not traditionally been very fond of additional paperwork or other administrative hoops (who is?), so they were not quick to support formal logging credentials.

Nevertheless, loggers became increasingly frustrated by those





Photo by Chris Schnepf

Hiring loggers who have the right skills and equipment for your job is critical.

who buy a chainsaw, declare themselves loggers, then log in a way that gives all loggers a bad name.

Because of these reasons, and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, which is an effort to certify forest products as having come from sustainably managed forests, support among Pacific Northwest loggers for logger credentials has grown.

After some preliminary meetings, a statewide logger education implementation committee was formed of loggers and representatives from the forest industry, the University of Idaho, the Idaho Department of Lands, and Idaho Logging Safety Advisors.

That committee provides guidance to Idaho's Pro-Logger Program, administered by the Associated Logging Contractors of Idaho. To participate in the program loggers must:

1. Complete three days of instruction in silviculture, forest ecology, and water quality as offered in the current University of Idaho Extension program titled LEAP (Logger Education to Advance Professionalism).
2. Complete logging first aid and safety training presented by the State of Idaho Logging Safety and Associated Logging Contractors of Idaho.
3. Take 12 credits of continuing education annually, on topics such as water quality, the Idaho practices act, silviculture, new logging technologies, and many other topics, including four credits on logging first aid and safety.

Hopefully, the programs that loggers participate in as part of this effort are designed well enough that

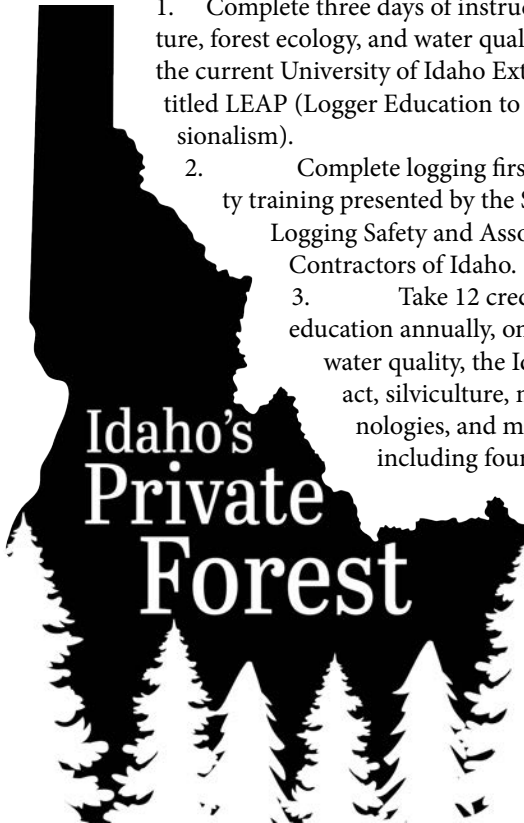


Photo by J. Ekins

Over 2,000 loggers have completed University of Idaho Extension's "LEAP" program.

loggers leave with knowledge and skills they can apply directly to their work on the ground.

In program evaluations filled out by loggers who have attended LEAP, nearly 100% of the participants typically indicate they will implement improved management practices as a result.

Completing a given number of hours of training is no guarantee of what someone has learned, that they will always practice what they have learned, or that they will otherwise meet your expectations.

At a minimum, this program does give you a leg up on operators who have at least been committed enough to the profession to sign up for these programs.

You should still check on things like insurance coverage and references and put together a contract that precisely communicates your expectations for a given job.

For more information on the Idaho Pro-Logger program or for a list of participating loggers, contact the Associated Logging Contractors of Idaho at (208) 667-6473. Or go to <https://members.idahologgers.com/content.asp?contentid=137>. ■

*Chris Schnepf is an area extension educator in forestry for the University of Idaho in Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai and Benewah counties. He can be reached at [cschnepf@uidaho.edu](mailto:cschnepf@uidaho.edu).*



These pictures show a barn in Bear Lake County before and after it collapsed this winter under the tremendous weight of snow and ice. Photos by Jim Parker

# Bear Lake County swamped with snow

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

MONTPELIER – After suffering through a few tough water years, farmers and ranchers in Bear Lake County prayed for moisture this winter.

Well, they got it and then some.

“We prayed for snow, we got snow,” said Bear Lake County rancher Mark Harris.

Snowpack in the Bear Lake Basin was pushing 170 percent of normal as of early April and the snow was still coming.

“We’re having a winter to remember,” said Bear Lake County farmer Jim Parker. “We’ve had a lot of snow; heavy snow.”

He said the Montpelier valley has received a record amount of snow this year.

“There are quite a few places where you can’t see a fence because it’s covered with snow,” Parker said. “It’s just been a crazy, crazy winter for us.”

Drought won’t be an issue in the county this year but the tremendous amounts of snow are causing other problems.

Dozens of structures, most of them ag-type structures such as barns, have collapsed under the weight of snow and ice that has built up all winter.

“We’ve had a lot of buildings collapse,” said alfalfa farmer Albert Johnson, president of Bear Lake County Farm Bureau.

“I’ve had to build scaffolding under some of my barns to keep them from coming down.”

“There are some pretty serious effects of that much snow,” he said. “There’s some unbelievable stuff happening in the county.”

Parker said he lost count of how many structures have collapsed.

“Some of the structures that we’ve lost are metal buildings with metal girders,” he said.

The brutal winter has made calving season a major challenge, said Harris, who serves as a state legislator.

“It’s made calving extremely difficult,” he said. “It’s hard to find places to put cattle.”

Parker said the difference between this winter and others with lots of snow is that temperatures never warmed up enough to melt any of it away.

“Usually (during the winter) we get a thaw and it melts the snow down a lot, then it builds back up,” he said. “We didn’t get that this year. So it’s just been stacking up and stacking up. This year it hasn’t melted. It’s just piles and piles of snow.”

“I remember in the ‘80s we got quite a bit of snow but not this late in the year,” Harris said. “It is one for the record books.”

With that much snow, the next danger is flooding.

“The main concern now is flooding,” Harris said. “If it rains and warms up too fast, there’s going to be a lot of flooding.”

Parker said the county is already preparing for the possibility of significant flooding.

“We have facilities ready with sandbags. We’re preparing for flooding,” he said.

The plentiful moisture will also delay planting this year in an area that already has a short growing season. The main crops in the county are alfalfa, barley and wheat but farmers in the area will almost certainly be late in planting them this year.

With all the troubles the snowfall has brought to the county, farmers and ranchers there say they wouldn’t trade it for the alternative: drought or another tough water year.

“My dad told me to never cuss the moisture so I’m not going to complain,” said Harris.

“We’ll get through it,” Parker said. “At least there will be water this year.”

Johnson said he’s expecting the Bear Lake to rise 10-12 feet this year.

“We’ll take that for sure,” he said. “Irrigation, that’s where our money is made.” ■



# It's shaping up to be a good water year in Idaho

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

POCATELLO – Most Idaho basins received a lot more snowpack than normal this winter and it's shaping up to be a good water year.

That's welcome news to Idaho farmers, ranchers, recreationists and others who depend on the state's reservoir systems to receive enough water during the hot, dry summer months.

"I think we're going to have plenty of water this year," said Rupert barley farmer Mike Wilkins. "We knew it was going to take something special to save (us) this year and we got it."

The state's agricultural producers suffered through tough water years in 2021 and 2022. That almost certainly won't be the case this year, according to water managers.

"We have a pretty good snowpack," said Tony Olenichak, watermaster for Water District 1, which is Idaho's largest and encompasses the Upper Snake River system. "Unless we have an extraordinarily hot summer, the water supply will be a lot better than it was last year."

Heading into this winter, most Idaho reservoirs had little carryover water and ag producers were on pins and needles hoping for an above-average snowpack.

That happened and then some.

April 1 is typically the date Idaho's mountain snowpack levels peak. On that date this year, all the basins in southern Idaho had well above normal snowpack and a few were pushing 200 percent.

Those snowpack levels continued to

climb after that date as the state was hit with several new snowstorms.

As of April 4, snowpack levels were at 120 percent of normal in the important Snake River basin, which feeds the Upper Snake reservoir system, which holds 4 million acre-feet of water, enough to supply well over 1 million acres of farmland in eastern and southern Idaho with irrigation water.

Olenichak said the snowpack in the basins that feed the Upper Snake River reservoirs might be enough to fill the system if the area receives a wet spring.

That would be great news for irrigators because it would likely mean those reservoirs would finish this growing season with a good amount of carryover water heading into next winter.

On April 4, snowpack in the Weiser basin was 161 percent of normal, it was 128 percent of normal in the Payette basin and it was 138 percent of normal in the Boise basin.

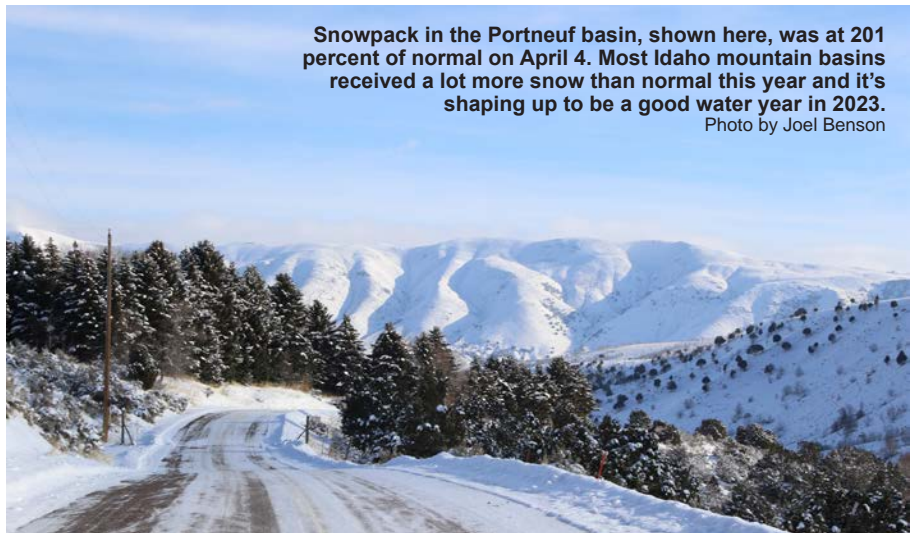
"We have 138 percent of normal snowpack and the reservoir system has a good amount of carryover water," said Bob Carter, project manager for the Boise Project Board of Control, which provides water to five irrigation districts that service a total of 165,000 acres of irrigated ground in the Treasure Valley of southwestern Idaho.

"The system looks good; we're anticipating a pretty good water year," Carter said.

The Big Wood and Little Wood basins had 157 percent and 165 percent of nor-

Snowpack in the Portneuf basin, shown here, was at 201 percent of normal on April 4. Most Idaho mountain basins received a lot more snow than normal this year and it's shaping up to be a good water year in 2023.

Photo by Joel Benson



mal snowpack on April 4 and the Big Lost and Little Lost basins had 151 and 152 percent of normal snowpack on that date.

Snowpack levels in the Henry's Fork and Teton basins were at 124 percent of normal on April 4 and the Willow, Blackfoot and Portneuf basins were at 201 percent of normal.

Snowpack in the Owyhee basin was at 213 percent of normal on April 4 and the Bear River basin had 165 percent of normal snowpack on that date.

Coming out of winter, there was so much snow in parts of Eastern Idaho that it was causing some major challenges to farmers and ranchers there.

At least 40 structures, most of them ag buildings, had collapsed in Bear Lake County as of late March and the snow caused major difficulties during calving season, according to area ranchers.

Heading into warmer weather, flooding was a major concern there and in other counties as well. The snow was also delaying planting season.

Still, farmers and ranchers, who have faced two straight years of drought conditions, said they would not trade the snow for anything.

"We prayed for snow, we got snow," said Bear Lake County rancher Mark Harris. "My dad told me to never cuss the moisture so I'm not going to complain."

"We're grateful for every drop of water we get; we'll just deal with it," said Bear Lake County farmer Jim Parker. "At least there will be water this year." ■

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**Fun Fact: Idaho's horticulture industry generates 14,500 jobs each year**

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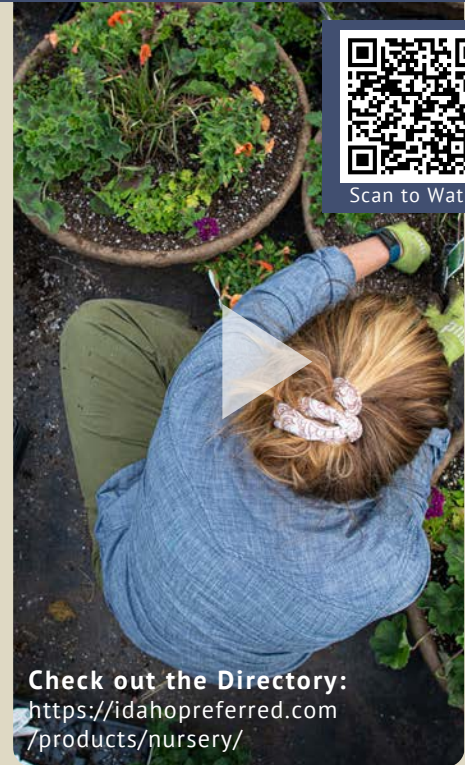
It's time to get growing Idaho! Looking for a successful planting season? The Idaho Preferred tag at your local nursery identifies plants that were propagated in Idaho. The logo helps ensure that whatever plant you choose, will thrive in Idaho's unique climate and volcanic soils. By purchasing items tagged with the Idaho Preferred logo from your local lawn and garden growers, you are not only supporting your local growers, economy and community, but you are also ensuring better success in your own lawn and garden projects.

### THREE WAYS YOU CAN ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL GROWING SEASON:

- Visit your local Idaho nursery or greenhouse and take advantage of the local expertise when purchasing any garden and nursery item.
- Look for the Idaho Preferred logo on your plants at local nurseries and garden centers.
- Check out the Idaho Preferred Nursery Locally Grown Guide and Directory. Here you will find retailers providing locally grown plants, as well as growing tips and resources from farmers, growers, and expert gardeners.

We're celebrating the growing season, by kicking off May with Idaho's Inaugural Horticulture Month! Idaho Preferred encourages you to get out to your local greenhouse or nursery to find locally grown goodness. Whether you are a seasoned gardener or just looking for a fun way to spend an afternoon, Idaho's nurseries, greenhouses, and garden centers provide a great space for resources, education, and plants that are sure to thrive all season long!

### Learn How to Identify Locally Grown Plants



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*May*

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
	1	2	3	4	5	6
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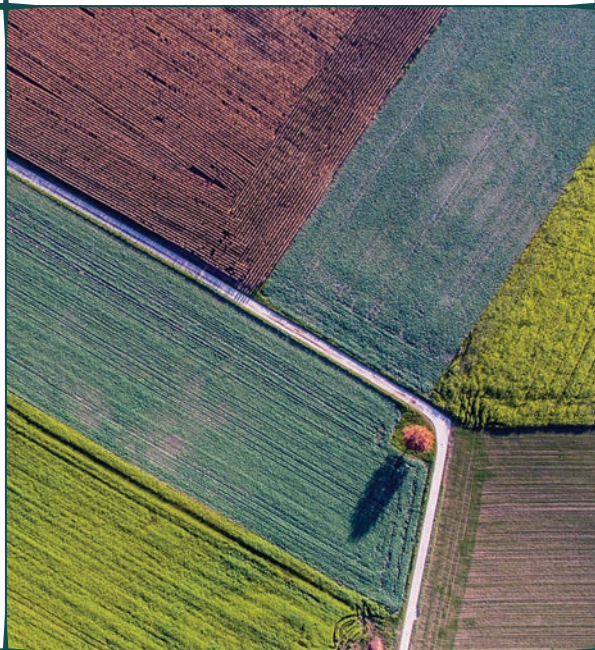
## Spring Activities Community Calendar

## Blooming into Idaho's Farmers Market Season

As spring in Idaho begins to bring our agricultural season to life, we start to see the launch of farmers markets throughout the state. Be sure to check out the Idaho Preferred Farmers Market Directory to find markets near you. The Idaho Preferred Community Events Calendar is also your go-to resource for finding fun agriculturally connected events happening in your area!

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# Watercraft Inspection Stations

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture

**CLEAN** watercraft and equipment before leaving any waterbody. Inspect and clean watercraft, anchors, planes, trailers, waders, shoes, life jackets and scuba gear for visible plants and animals. Remove and dispose of material on-site in a trash receptacle or on high, dry ground where there is no danger of it washing into a waterbody.

**DRAIN** water from all equipment, including motors, live wells, sea strainers, wakeboard ballast tanks, boat hulls, scuba gear, bait buckets, waders and boots. Pull the boat's bilge plug and allow water to drain.

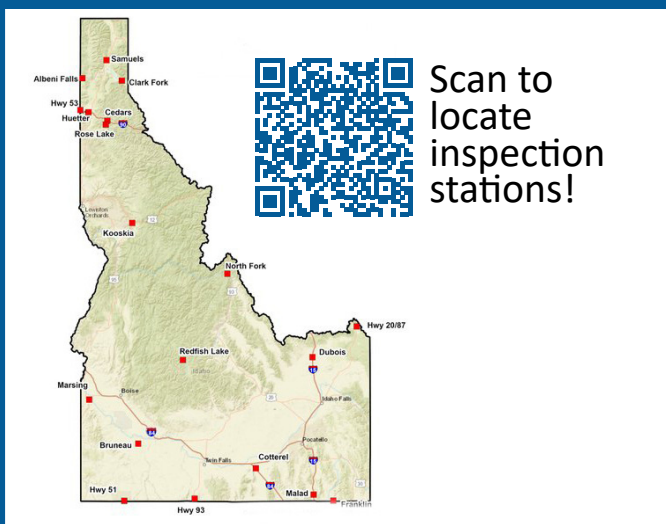
**DRY** all vessel compartments and lay equipment out to dry before using in a different waterbody or watershed.

## Protecting Idaho

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture watercraft inspection stations play an essential role in protecting Idaho from invasive species, such as quagga and zebra mussels. Quagga and zebra mussels threaten Idaho's water systems, native species, agriculture, utilities and more. If these invasive species were to infest Idaho's waters, it could cost the state nearly \$100 million annually in damage and lost revenue.

"The ISDA Invasive Species program continues to grow thanks to support from the governor and the Idaho Legislature to meet the demands of our communities," said Chanel Tewalt, ISDA director. "We appreciate the program's partners, including Idaho State Police, county law enforcement and the counties and conservation districts that operate so many of our stations."

## ALL WATERCRAFT MUST STOP



In 2022, the program performed over 100,000 watercraft inspections and intercepted 36 mussel-fouled watercrafts. Throughout the history of the program Idaho stations have performed over one million inspections.

Invasive quagga and zebra mussels have not been detected in Idaho waterways as well as the Columbia River Basin. This reinforces prevention efforts in the form of watercraft inspection and decontamination are successful in Idaho.







Photos by Bob Smathers

Wheat is the main crop grown in Nez Perce County. But the county is very diverse geographically and a lot of other crops are grown there as well.

# Port of Lewiston a major benefit to Nez Perce County farmers

By Sean Ellis  
*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

LEWISTON – When it comes to agriculture, wheat is king in Nez Perce County.

But the county is very diverse geographically and plenty of other crops are produced there as well.

And anchoring the county's agricultural industry is the Port of Lewiston, which provides farmers in the region an efficient and cost-effective way to ship their wheat and other ag products to overseas markets.

"Winter wheat is the predominant crop in Nez Perce County," says Robert Blair, who farms near Kendrick.

But, he adds, the county is very diverse geographically. For example, elevation around Lewiston, the county seat, is about 800 feet above sea level, while it's closer to 4,000 feet in some other farming areas in the county.

The Lewiston area gets roughly 10-12 inches of rain per year while other areas of the county receive 25-plus inches, says Blair, former president of Nez Perce County Farm Bureau. And the Lewiston area



has sandy soils, while heavier clay soils are predominant in the higher elevations.

“Nez Perce County is very diverse geographically,” he says.

That’s the reason a variety of crops are able to be produced in Nez Perce County, which has 446 farms and 381,587 total acres of land in farming, according to the 2017 Census of Agriculture.

“We have wheat and barley, garbanzo beans, lentils, peas, canola, alfalfa, and there’s a lot of Timothy hay exported from the area,” says NPCFB President Dale Wolff, who farms and ranches near Kendrick.

The backbone of the county’s and region’s agricultural industry is the Port of Lewiston, where bulk ag commodities can be loaded onto barges and moved down river to West Coast ports for export.

“It’s a vital part of the county. I can’t imagine life here without it,” Wolff says about the port, which is the furthest inland seaport in the United States. “We’ve built our economy here in Nez Perce County around that river system. It’s staggering how much of our economy the river system supports.”

The port is crucial to the region’s agricultural community because it gives producers a competitive freight advantage that it otherwise wouldn’t have, says Blair.

“The port is huge both for moving farming products down the river to global markets and to get our inputs, like fertilizer, coming in through Lewiston at reduced rates,” he says.

Cattle and calves also play a significant role in the county’s agricultural portfolio. According to the 2017 ag census, there were 13,000 head of cattle in the county during the 2017 census year and that industry brought in \$13 million in farm-gate revenue.

“There is a significant amount of rangeland in the county where cattle grazing is the main use because of steep slopes and poorer soils,” says Bob Smathers, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation’s regional field manager for North Idaho.

The economies of rural areas in the county are primarily based on farming, livestock and forestry, Smathers says. “In fact, Nez Perce County’s overall economy is rooted in agriculture.”



**Wheat is harvested in a Nez Perce County field in this Farm Bureau file photo. Wheat is the predominant crop in the county, according to the 2017 Census of Agriculture.**

According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, there were 105,449 acres of wheat produced in the county during the 2017 census year, 44,982 acres of garbanzo beans, 14,538 acres of hay, 6,247 acres of lentils and 6,116 acres of barley for grain.

Ninety-three percent of the farms in Nez Perce County are family farms, according to the census, and 8 percent of them sell directly to consumers.

There are a lot of very small farms in the county. According to the ag census, 117 of the county’s farms are 9 acres or less in size and 191 of them had sales of \$2,500 or less in 2017.

But there are still plenty of bigger farms in Nez Perce County. According to the ag census, 108 farms in the county were 1,000 acres or more in size in 2017 and 112 of them had sales of \$100,000 or more.

One of the main focuses of the Nez Perce County Farm Bureau organization is reaching youth with the message of agriculture and making sure they receive the real facts about farming and ranching, Wolff says.

“We support all of our local youth

programs, such as 4-H and FFA,” he says. “Most people are generations away from the farm now and there are fewer and fewer of us involved in farming. If we don’t educate those kids in town where their food comes from, then they’ll be susceptible to all the gobbledygook that’s being fed to them by (anti-agriculture groups).”

Wolff says another big focus of the local Farm Bureau organization is trying to preserve the great way of life that has made Idaho the fastest-growing state in the nation percentage-wise.

One way the group is trying to do that is through a TV commercial that encourages newcomers, as well as long-time residents, to keep Idaho, Idaho.

The commercial scrolls through farming and ranching pictures and video while telling people to remember why they moved here.

“The intent of the commercial is to tell people, there’s a reason why you’re coming here. Leave it alone,” Wolff says. “I also want everyone to know Farm Bureau is working to keep Idaho, Idaho. It’s a good message.” ■

# Classifieds

## FARMING/EQUIPMENT

Grow your own food! Single row potato equipment. 1 row diggers 3 point on or pull type. 2 row planters 3 point or full type. 2 row rolling cultivators. All have been reconditioned and are field ready. Call or text 208-757-0400. Blackfoot.

875 Versatile 3 pt. clean. \$20,000 obo. 8630 bad clutch, make offer. Call 208-267-5297.

Massey Ferguson 290, 65 horse diesel farm tractor. This tractor runs very well and includes all new hydraulics, 4 brand new tires, draw bar, top link, 3-point hitch and loader. \$9,500.00 obo. Call (do not text) 208-406-9302, or email njwc55@gmail.com.

Attachments for John Deere 3020 farm tractor: 48 Loader w/ hay fork, nice bucket, both in good shape but they do need some paint. \$3200.00 for both obo. Call (do not text) 208-406-9302 or email njwc55@gmail.com.

Fordson Major Diesel, 42 HP engine, overhauled 2020, 6 speed transmission, Hi-Lo Range, very good tires, fluid + weights at rear, 3 pt hitch, PTO, lights. Includes: shop manual, drawbar, top link, rear chains, and 3 pt. rear blade. \$5,500. Moscow, call or text 208-892-1887.

Colorado Pellet Mills like new. American made Model Mill 10 \$6,500 obo. Produces 80 to 800lbs of pellets per hour. Matt 208-250-0924.

Balewagons: New Holland self-propelled or pull-type models, parts, tires, manuals. Also interested in buying balewagons. Will consider any model. Call Jim at 208-880-2889.

Challenger MT 755, 2209 hrs, annual service by Western States, Trimble A/S, (reduced) \$124500.00. 500hp US Motor, 480 volt, hollowshaft irrigation motor, \$21500.00. 208-220-5588 or e-mail: deegt@aol.com.

## LIVESTOCK

30 white face ewes. Grace, Idaho call 208-223-3898.

## AUTO

1984 Corvette classic. 90 90 restored, overhauled engine and transmission. Beautiful gold color and clean interior. California car and fun to drive. Garaged in Salmon. \$8,500 obo. Insured for \$10,000 will consider trade for ATV. Call 858-518-4622.

## MISCELLANEOUS

Our Idaho family loves old wood barns and would like to restore/rebuild your barn on our Idaho farm. Would you like to see your barn restored/rebuilt rather than rot and fall down? Call Ken & Corrie 208-530-6466.

## WANTED

Paying cash for unwanted fireworks, the older the better. I collect firecrackers, Roman candles, mortars and anything else aerial. I also collect old m-80s like fish and

game used to hand out. Great way to repurpose old fireworks as they are disassembled and used to create new ones. 208-866-2112.

Looking for old sawmill two or three saw board edger mounted or by itself. Older three- or four-sided lumber planner. Call 208-743-9204. Lewiston, ID.

Paying cash for old cork top embossed bottles and some telephone insulators as well as other vintage and antique items. Call Randy. Payette, ID. 208-740-0178.

Paying cash for German & Japanese war relics/souvenirs! Pistols, rifles, swords, daggers, flags, scopes, optical equipment, uniforms, helmets, machine guns (ATF rules apply) medals, flags, etc. 208-405-9338.

Pre-1970 Idaho License Plates Wanted: Also Revere Ware and Solar-Sturges Permanent cookware, and old signs. Will pay cash. Please email, text, call, or write

Gary Peterson, 115 E D St, Moscow, ID 83843. gearlep@gmail.com. 208-285-1258.

Wanted old Idaho Patches! Farm Bureau, Farming, Hunting, Idaho Cattlemen Assoc, Idaho Fish and Game. Top Dollar Paid! Call, email, or text pics. Rusty Kramer idahotrappguy@hotmail.com 208-870-3217.

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Ranch made items- Personalized Stainless Steel Shovels with your name stamped on it. Dependable Chain Oilers- for harvesters, planters, every chain on earth. Custom Portable Stainless Steele Tilting Bathtubs- With sliding seat for home care. Rocking Cowboy Piano-Chassis 21" wagon wheels. Weiser, ID call 208-550-4619.

## FREE CLASSIFIEDS

Non-commercial classified ads are free to Idaho Farm Bureau members. Must include membership number for free ad. Forty (40) words maximum. Non-member cost is 50 cents per word. You may advertise your own crops, livestock, used machinery, household items, vehicles, etc. Ads will not be accepted by phone, Ads run one time only and must be re-submitted in each subsequent issue. We reserve the right to refuse to run any ad. Please type or print clearly. Proofread your ad. Ads must be received by May 18 for the June Producer

Mail ad copy to:  
FARM BUREAU PRODUCER  
P.O. Box 4848, Pocatello, ID 83205-4848  
or email Kristy at [knlindauer@idahofb.org](mailto:knlindauer@idahofb.org)

**Free Classified ads for  
Idaho Farm Bureau Members  
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\$10 of EACH ticket goes directly  
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be drawn June 14, 2023!*



Photos by Sean Ellis

Visitors to the Idaho Capitol building check out a National Agriculture Day display March 21. The Idaho State Department of Agriculture created the display to celebrate the state's farmers and ranchers on National Ag Day.

# Idaho agriculture department celebrates National Ag Day

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

BOISE – On National Agriculture Day this year, 166 dinner plates hung from a display inside the Idaho Capitol building.

They were meant to be a very visual representation of how many people the average U.S. farmer feeds.

The plates were part of a larger display by the Idaho State Department of Agriculture

to celebrate National Ag Day, which occurred March 21.

“What we’re recognizing today is that our farmers and ranchers, each one of them, every day, feeds 166 people,” said ISDA Deputy Director Lloyd Knight. “It’s a chance for us all to take a minute and think of what all the farmers and ranchers in the state and nation do in feeding our country and the world.”

ISDA Director Chanel Tewalt said the

display was meant to be a fun way for lawmakers and visitors to the Capitol to learn a little about Idaho agriculture and the impact it has on the state.

“It’s an honor for us to celebrate this day inside the Capitol building and engage in conversations with lawmakers and with the folks who visit the Capitol during spring break as well,” she said.

Tewalt said the display was also a way to celebrate all the Idaho farmers, ranchers



and other agricultural workers who produce a good chunk of the nation's food supply.

Included in the ag day display were visuals giving people an idea of the sheer amount of food that Gem State farmers and ranchers produce.

Idaho ranks No. 1 in five different agricultural commodities (potatoes, barley, alfalfa hay, peppermint oil and food-size trout) and the state ranks near the top in many other commodities, including milk and cheese, dry onions, spring wheat and lentils, dry edible beans, corn silage and dry edible peas.

Idaho ranked in the top 8 nationally in 22 different ag commodity categories in 2021.

Several signs included in the display showed how much of certain ag commodities each Idahoan would have to eat every day if Gem State residents had to consume all ag products produced within the state

For example, 38 potatoes, 137 slices of bread, 2 pounds of cheese, 2 pounds of beef, 1 cup of beans and 3 pounds of sugar.

"We want to show Idahoans how much productivity exists in our ag industry," Tewalt said. "I hope people are blown away by the productivity of the agriculture industry in the state. Our ag folks are just doing the most incredible things in terms of productivity, ingenuity and producing some of the highest-quality food products in the world."

She said she also hopes people walked away from the display with an appreciation for how much work goes into getting food to



their table.

"I would hope that people take away from this that it's not an accident that food gets to their table," Tewalt said. "It takes an incredible amount of hard work to ensure that happens."

According to a University of Idaho study, agriculture directly and indirectly accounts for about \$29 billion in sales each year in Idaho, which is more than 17 percent of the state's total economic output.

The study also found the ag industry accounts for

one in every eight jobs in the state and 13 percent of Idaho's total gross state product.

"So it doesn't matter if you're in Bonners Ferry, Boise or Rexburg, agriculture matters to everybody in Idaho," Tewalt said.

Knight said he hopes people who visited the display got an appreciation for just how important the state's agricultural industry is.

Idaho is famous for potatoes, obviously, but the state's farmers and ranchers also produce an enormous amount of other ag products, he said. When you add in the ag processing capacity in the state, "It's a substantial footprint that agriculture has in Idaho," he said.

"I would hope they can remember the scope of agriculture in Idaho that the display represents," Knight said. "We produce far more than we could ever consume as a state and we produce some of the highest-quality food in the country and world. I hope Idahoans can be proud of that." ■



# Smoke exposure linked to smaller, misshapen potatoes

By John O'Connell  
*University of Idaho*

MOSCOW, Idaho — Potato plants exposed to extreme smoke produced lower marketable yields than smoke-free plants, according to preliminary data from a joint University of Idaho and Boise State University study.

Results differed based on variety, with heavy wildfire smoke exposure being linked to smaller Clearwater Russets and causing more unusable and misshapen Russet Burbanks.

The project involved pumping artificially emulated wildfire smoke onto potato plots covered by plastic.

The two-year study seeks to understand how prolonged exposure to wildfire smoke affects yields, crop quality and the chemical composition of potatoes.

Project leaders Mike Thornton, a professor in U of I's Department of Plant Sciences, and Boise State University Chemistry Department Chair Owen McDougal hope the research helps identify smoke-resistant potato varieties.

"As we look at these varieties, if we see some that are less responsive to smoke, growers and processors can start looking at using those long term," Thornton said.

The preliminary data suggests grow-



Deron Beck, a scientific aide at the University of Idaho's Parma Research and Extension Center, left, and Mike Thornton, a U of I plant sciences professor in Parma, stand by the smoker they use to simulate wildfire smoke and its effects on potatoes, as well as trays filled with different types of wood to make the most accurate wildfire smoke simulation possible.  
Photo by John O'Connell

ers who raise Russet Burbanks stand to suffer a greater economic hit due to smoke than growers who raise Clearwater Russets.

In Clearwater Russet, smoke exposure reduced the yield of potatoes greater than 6 ounces by 12%, with no change in the percentage of misshapen tubers. Smoke exposure did not shrink the size profile of Russet Burbank crops, but there was a 3% increase in tubers greater than 10 ounces becoming misshapen.

McDougal's laboratory analyzed the spuds, as well as fries processed by the U of I Food Technology Center in Caldwell from the experimental tubers, immediately after harvest and will conduct another chemical analysis this spring following six months of storage.

McDougal will evaluate how storage of smoke exposure may affect potato-reducing sugars, which contribute to darker and less desirable fry color.

"We're also looking at storage and whether smoke exposure negatively impacts potatoes' storage resilience," he said.

Thornton and his colleagues at the UI Parma Research and Extension Center

burned a blend of hard and soft woods in a smoker and piped the smoke into potato plots under plastic covers for three hours each morning from July 11 to Aug. 18 last year, removing the covers following the treatments.

Smoke levels in the experiment were far greater than levels that occur in nature, even during bad wildfire seasons, Thornton said.

Plastic covers raised humidity by up to 20% — enough to interfere with evaporative cooling of leaves — and increased temperature by up to 9 degrees during late morning, which likely stunted the potato crops.

When the team repeats the experiment this summer, Thornton plans to use shade covers to keep the temperature down and fans to circulate air, in part to control humidity.

Thornton also believes the study's data could eventually provide evidence that smoke lowers potato yields and should be covered by crop insurance plans.

McCain Foods provided assistance and guidance with the project and assembled its research team. ■



# Lewiston High School students discover new aquatic invader

By John O'Connell  
*University of Idaho*

MOSCOW, Idaho – A Lewiston High School teacher and two of her former students recently became published authors in a peer-reviewed scientific journal based on their discovery while participating in a University of Idaho Extension citizens' science program.

For the past seven years, UI Extension's IDAH20 program has provided hands-on learning opportunities for Lewiston High School teacher Jamie Morton's ecology and environmental science classes, which sample water and trap invertebrates in local watersheds.

Morton shares their data to help UI Extension assess the health of Idaho's waterways.

In October 2021, one of Morton's IDAH20 field trips uncovered an important scientific finding that led state and federal water managers to take action.

While investigating a pair of municipal storm-water ponds near the confluence of the Snake and Clearwater rivers, Morton's class trapped a crustacean they later confirmed to be Idaho's first known red swamp crayfish.

If the aquatic invader multiplies in the surrounding environment, it could harm water quality and native species.

For their discovery, Morton and former students Elizabeth Connerley and Robert Bayless are among the listed authors of a paper published online this week in the journal "BioInvasions Records."

Their publication will also appear in the quarterly journal's June print edition.

"It's a genuine, honest discovery. And I hope it creates more buy-in with my classes as we go on, especially when it's officially published," Morton said. "We can make a contribution just being normal citizens. You don't have to go to college and you don't have to become a scientist in your day job to be interested and take care of your environment."

Throughout the past decade, IDAH20 has taught basic water quality monitoring techniques to more than 600 citizen scientists from throughout the Pacific Northwest.

Active participants receive pH test strips, kits for measuring dissolved oxygen in water and other basic supplies to record stream data, which they upload via a web app.

In addition to having volunteers collect data on stream health, Jim Ekins, UI Extension water educator and director of IDAH20, trains his volunteers to identify and report crayfish species for River Mile, which is a network of educators and students who

study crayfish in the Pacific Northwest to better understand stream health.

Ekins also partners with like-minded organizations in Idaho, eastern Washington and eastern Oregon, training other trainers for IDAH20.

"We think citizen science may be a good way to find new invasions of invasive species. There are that many more eyeballs," Ekins said. "Plus, we are teaching kids science, being observant and writing things down. Those are skills you



Stock photo of a red swamp crayfish.

need for any job."

Typically, Morton's classes trap and identify one of Idaho's three native crayfish species. The red coloration and bumpy, pointy claws made the red swamp crayfish specimen relatively easy for the class to identify by comparing it with River Mile photographs.

A crayfish expert confirmed their suspicions, which were reaffirmed through DNA testing.

Two of Morton's students — Connerley and Bayless — were captivated by the discovery and continued trapping crayfish outside of class in the following weeks.

They trapped six more red swamp crayfish from the ponds, proving the original finding wasn't an isolated occurrence. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has continued monitoring the ponds and the surrounding area.

"The best part was seeing the students who wanted to participate and were motivated to continue doing it because they wanted to," Morton said. ■

# Scoular announces \$20 million expansion in Jerome

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

JEROME – Scoular Co. announced April 12 it will invest \$20 million to expand its existing feed blending facility in Jerome, which serves the state’s dairy and beef producers.

A company news release said the investment will help Scoular serve the growing and changing needs of dairy and beef producers.

Scoular is a \$10 billion agribusiness company that buys, sells, stores, handles and processes grain and other feed and food ingredients. The company operates more than 100 offices and facilities in North America and Asia, including in Jerome and Twin Falls.

The company plans to break ground on the expansion project this month and expects it to be complete about spring 2024.

The existing facility in Jerome provides feed blends for dairy and beef customers. The expansion project will add two new key capabilities.

One includes a “steamflaking” process which processes corn into flakes and makes the feed more digestible for cattle. The corn is steamed, heated and then processed into a flake.

The other new capability is a pellet mill to make feed pellets. According to a company news release, pellets, which are typically used for feeding calves and beef cattle, are easy to transfer, handle and proportion for optimal nutrition.

Idaho ranks No. 3 in milk production in the United States and the bulk of the state’s dairy production occurs in the Magic Valley area of southcentral Idaho, which includes Jerome.

The region also includes a sizable portion of the state’s beef cattle industry.

Oakley rancher and Cassia County Farm Bureau President Paul Marchant said Scoular’s planned expansion of its Jerome facility is good news to livestock producers in the Magic Valley.

“The strength of Idaho’s dairy and cattle feeding industries lies in southcentral Idaho, so enhanced and expanded opportunities to gain access to more and higher quality feed can only strengthen livestock production in the area,” he said. “And it goes without saying that a thriving, vibrant livestock sector only improves the overall



Photo by Scoular

**This is a photo of Scoular Co.’s existing feed blending facility in Jerome, which serves the state’s dairy and beef producers. The company announced a \$20 million expansion of the facility on April 12.**



economic health and stability of the entire region and state.”

Idaho Dairymen’s Association Executive Director Rick Naerebout said the announcement speaks to Scoular’s commitment to the region’s dairy and cattle industries and their allied partners.

“It’s no small investment,” he said of the project, adding that Scoular is a nationwide company that had lots of opportunities on where to locate the expansion. “It’s a good indication of their confidence in the dairy industry in Idaho.”

Scoular’s April 12 announcement is the latest in a series of recent investments that demonstrate the company’s confidence in Idaho’s agriculture industry.

The company in December 2021 celebrated the opening of a facility in Jerome that produces a new barley product called Emerge that is sold to the aquaculture and pet food industries.

A high-energy liquid feed supplement for cattle feeders is also produced during the manufacturing process.

Idaho leads the nation in barley production.

In August 2021, Scoular announced a new program called Barley MVP that seeks to promote food and feed barley varieties as economically viable rotation crops for Idaho farmers.

Most of Idaho’s roughly 550,000 barley acres are malt varieties produced for the beer brewing industry.

The Barley MVP program will focus on helping Idaho growers expand the production of barley varieties that are produced for the animal feed or human food markets.

“Agriculture drives the Magic Valley’s economy, and Scoular has made it a priority to support the industry through innovation, state-of-the-art facilities and programs that support local producers,” Andy Hohwieler, a Scoular regional manager based in Twin Falls, said in the company’s recent news release. “With our latest investment, we look forward to creating new feed products that create solutions for end-users.” ■



# U of I researcher investigating fall food peas in northern Idaho

By John O'Connell  
*University of Idaho*

MOSCOW, Idaho – A crop researcher with University of Idaho's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences is working out the agronomics of raising food-quality fall peas as a high-yielding rotation option for farmers in the state's northern Panhandle.

Fall-planted peas significantly out-yield spring varieties, though there are increased risks such as winter kill. Furthermore, the Austrian winter pea varieties that have historically been available to the region's growers have a purple-brown seed coat and small seed size that isn't attractive for culinary use.

Farmers in the Panhandle have mostly raised winter peas as seed for cover crops, which are planted specifically for soil-health benefits, or for forage.

Kurt Schroeder, a UI Extension cropping systems agronomist, is in the first year of fall food pea trials in Moscow and the Camas Prairie planned to span four years.

He's testing six newly released winter varieties with clear seed coats and larger-sized peas, making them a good fit for the food pea market.

The varieties he's testing were bred by USDA's Agricultural Research Service in Pullman, Wash., and by ProGene Plant Research in Othello, Wash. The pea breeding programs continue working to improve fall food pea winter hardiness.

Schroeder will harvest his fall pea plots soon, but the results in Moscow already appear promising.

"The stand there is incredible," he said.

Plots in the Camas Prairie were hindered by plant disease and management with fungicides was delayed due to frequent rain.

Schroeder has also been studying the ideal seeding rate and seeding depth for planting fall peas. He's finding winter peas do best when planted 2 to 3 inches deep.

Regarding the seeding density, he's planted plots at between eight and 12 seeds per square foot. His preliminary data suggests increasing the density boosts yields enough to more than offset the added seeding cost. A bonus of the denser stand is improved weed competition.

Schroeder's winter pea research will be expanded during the 2022-23 growing season with a \$62,000 grant through USDA's Pulse Health Initiative.

Consumer interest in plant-based proteins is on the rise and fall peas present growers the added benefit of maintaining live roots to hold soil in place throughout the winter.

"Winter peas are pretty exciting to me because of the yield potential," Schroeder said. "It's something that has got a lot of potential for being a really viable rotation crop in the area."



Photo by Audra Cochran

**University of Idaho crop researcher Kurt Schroeder, who is working out the agronomics of raising food-quality fall peas as a high-yielding rotation option for farmers in the state's northern Panhandle, speaks at a winter wheat site.**

He plans to expand his future fall food pea research to include trial plots south of Genesee.

Schroeder also intends to evaluate how the region's generally acidic soil pH may affect survival of various formulations of the bacterial inoculant that establish a symbiotic relationship with pea roots and enable the plants to fix nitrogen, thereby providing growers an additional source of fertility.

While the bacterium can persist for years in the soil, populations decline in acidic soils, necessitating more frequent application of inoculum.

"The main goal of this project is to develop strategies for winter pea production to increase yield and reduce risk," Schroeder said. ■

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