

Idaho Farm Bureau. Quarterly

Winter 2021 • Volume 21 Issue 1

Saving Farms and Restaurants



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Resolved for stronger rural communities in 2021



With each new year comes the time-honored tradition of setting resolutions.

At the American Farm Bureau, we have a similar tradition as our grassroots leaders meet to set our policy resolutions and priorities for the coming year.

At the conclusion of our 2021 Virtual Convention, which wrapped up Jan. 14, Farm Bureau delegates from all 50 states and Puerto Rico voted on the policies that guide our work in Washington.

This year's meeting looked a little different to ensure everyone's health and safety, but our grassroots

policy-setting remained the same. For over 100 years, we have been the national Voice of Agriculture and the trusted source of farm-related policy insights for lawmakers on both sides of the aisle.

Every American has a shared interest in protecting U.S. agriculture and that became even clearer when this pandemic began. Each member of Congress needs to understand how policies and regulations impact our farms and ranches, the millions of jobs we create, and the safe, sustainable food, fiber and energy we grow.

See **DUVALL**, page 7

The President's Desk

By Bryan Searle

President Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

Grassroots: The strength of Farm Bureau



The strength of Farm Bureau always has been and always will be its grassroots members.

Some groups claim to be grassroots but in reality they are based on a top-down type of command structure. The "leaders" of these organizations develop the policy that directs their efforts and members fall in line with their decisions.

In Farm Bureau, our members are the policy-makers and they set the direction. This is not just lip service; this is truly the way it works in the various county, state and American Farm Bureau organizations.

In the pages of this magazine, you will find Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's entire policy book. These policies, which cover everything from water to wolves, education, taxation and transportation, are the principles that guide IFBF throughout the year.

They are the marching orders that direct the efforts of IFBF's professional staff and volunteer leaders. These leaders don't tell the members what the policies are; the members set the policy that is to be followed.

See **SEARLE**, page 8

Inside Farm Bureau

By Zak Miller

CEO Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

Overcoming the fear of speaking



As of this writing, the American Farm Bureau Federation annual convention was in full swing. The convention offers many speakers and motivational messages for those who attend.

The annual meeting also features competitions through the Young Farmers and Ranchers program, which I confess is my favorite part of the entire event.

Idaho winners of the various YF&R competitions were set to compete at the national level against their peers from around the nation during the AFBF convention.

Kyle and Jessica Wade from Bannock County won the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation Achiever in Agriculture Award, Adam Clark from Jefferson County was the state winner of the Excellence in Agriculture Award and Marquee Ricks from Madison County won IFBF's Discussion Meet.

These competitions reward farmers' and ranchers' efforts both on their farm and in the community and we are able to hold them in Idaho thanks to excellent supporting partners like Valley Wide Cooperative and Northwest Farm Credit Services.

See **MILLER**, page 8

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Photo by Sean Ellis

ON THE COVER: A chef prepares food at Bittercreek Ale-house restaurant in downtown Boise Jan. 11. A new trade group, FARE Idaho, seeks to help farmers by helping independent restaurants like Bittercreek survive.

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FARE Idaho

trying to help independent restaurants and farmers

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

BOISE – A recently formed Idaho trade group seeks to save independent restaurants that have been hammered by the government-ordered restrictions related to COVID-19.

By saving restaurants, FARE Idaho also hopes to improve the financial lot of the farmers whose products end up in those establishments.

“FARE Idaho is an organization that represents small- to mid-size farms, independent restaurants and bars, and other food and beverage producers,” says executive director Katie Baker.

FARE, which stands for food, agriculture, restaurant and beverage establishments, is a non-profit that was formed last March and now includes 550 members of the state’s food and beverage industry, including about 20 farmers.

Saving the beleaguered restaurant industry has been the main focus of the group because of the extreme pressure the COVID-related restrictions have placed on them but helping farmers who supply the products sold at those eateries is a main goal of the group, Baker says.

“It has felt at times that we are very focused on independent restaurants but we see the larger picture, that helping independent restaurants ultimately helps our farmers,” she says. “Farmers are near and dear to FARE’s heart.”

According to FARE, there were 3,385 small independent restaurants in Idaho before the COVID-related restrictions began. Those establishments have struggled greatly and many have either shut down permanently or are struggling to stay afloat, Baker said.

According to FARE, about 75 percent of eateries in the nation are independently owned.

“A lot of independent restaurants right



Photo by Sean Ellis

A chef at Bittercreek Alehouse in downtown Boise prepares lunch Jan. 11. A new trade group, FARE Idaho, seeks to help farmers by helping independent restaurants like Bittercreek survive.

now are struggling to survive,” says FARE Idaho board member Dave Krick, who owns three restaurants in downtown Boise.

Aside from the current need to help restaurants weather the COVID storm, FARE Idaho also has as one of its goals making it easier for farmers to sell directly to independent restaurants and other food establishments, Krick says.

There is a lot of focus on export markets in Idaho’s agricultural community but very little focus on local markets, he says.

“If you sell everything to the commodity world, great. But what if we can also open up markets to you on a local level?” says Krick, who purchases about 50 percent of the food products for his restaurants from local agricultural producers.

“This is the area we really want to step into,” he adds. “How do our farm products and food and beverage products find their way into local markets and what are those local markets?”

A lot of restaurants want to purchase local food products and a lot of farmers want to sell their products locally but there are regulatory and other challenges to do that and FARE hopes to bring the two parties together to figure out how to accomplish that in a way that benefits restaurants and farmers, Krick says.

“There are lot of independent restaurants and grocers that want to buy directly from farmers, they just don’t now how to,” he says. “The problem is access to markets. The vision we have is to provide the tools to be able to allow people to access those markets.”

One advantage of selling locally for farmers is that it can be more lucrative because they are making a direct sale without the middleman, Krick says.

“We want to help open up these local markets, especially to these smaller and mid-sized farms,” he says. “Let’s give them another market and that’s what we want to work on.”

John Klimes, an organic farmer in Buhl and a FARE member, says the group provides the state’s combined food industry an opportunity to make some changes that would benefit farmers and eateries.

“It’s a great way for us to collaborate on making changes to the industry that make sense for us locally,” says Klimes, who



Photo by Sean Ellis

Boise restaurant owner Dave Krick and FARE Idaho Executive Director Katie Baker are shown outside the Bittercreek Alehouse restaurant in downtown Boise Jan. 11. They are members of FARE Idaho, a newly formed group that seeks to help farmers by helping independent restaurants survive.

sells his products to local restaurants and grocers, as well as at farmers markets. “I think FARE Idaho has a lot of potential.”

He says by facilitating the conversation between restaurants and farmers, the group can also help both sides understand what the other faces.

“They can understand the situation we are dealing with, we can understand what they are dealing with and if something needs to be worked on, we can all work on it together,” he says.

He also understands FARE’s initial focus on helping restaurants survive because “it’s been a tough year for restaurants. We can only collaborate if both of us exist.”

FARE plans to hold an annual expo that brings farmers, restaurant owners and other players in the food and beverage industry in Idaho together to find solutions, Baker says.

“We want to help facilitate that conver-

sation,” she says.

Farmland is disappearing rapidly in some areas of Idaho, particularly in southwest Idaho, which is one of the fastest-growing regions in the country, and FARE also wants to try to figure out ways to slow that loss of ag land without treading on farmers’ property rights, Krick says.

“One of the things we all have in common (at FARE) is the desire we have to protect the farmland here in Idaho and find ways to help the people that are working that land,” he says.

“How do we help slow the loss of farmland so that we have this economic base in the future?” he adds. “Well, the best thing we can do is help the business model of the farmer. One of the reasons farmers decide to sell their land is because they just can’t make money off of it anymore. We think local markets are an opportunity.” ■



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*You're automatically entered into our \$500 drawing when you refer a friend, even if they don't purchase a policy. Visit: idahofarmbureauinsurance.com/refer-a-friend-get-a-gift for complete rules and restrictions. Above left: Rick Forestier, the winner of our second quarter Refer A Friend, Get A Gift \$500 drawing, with his agent Jolene Zollinger.

Together, we can strengthen our rural communities and protect our farm businesses in 2021 and beyond.

Our farm and ranch communities are the backbone of our great nation. But if these communities are going to thrive in the days and years ahead, we need access to the same resources and essential services that our suburban and urban neighbors enjoy.

We need to rebuild our rural infrastructure to incentivize more business growth, ensure our communities have consistent access to healthcare, and finally bridge the digital divide.

When essential services like medical appointments and educational classes went virtual this spring, 25% of rural Americans were still without access to reliable broadband.

We have made positive steps to map and pinpoint where rural service is still lacking, and private efforts, including from state and county Farm Bureaus, to offer free public WiFi provided a lifeline to many this last year.

But we still need a permanent solution to bring broadband service to every home and business: Our rural communities and businesses cannot survive offline.

The COVID-19 pandemic also spotlighted essential employees across our food system. While many Americans adjusted to working from home, men and women across the food chain from the farm to the grocery store played a vital role in keeping our nation fed throughout this crisis.

Across the country, farms and ranches adapted to new CDC guidelines, providing employees with protective equipment, training and resources.

With PPE shortages and costs rising, Farm Bureau worked with Congress and the Administration to ensure farms had access to the equipment and housing necessary to continue to promote safety for all employees.

We have also called for farm employees to be given priority as frontline workers for the COVID-19 vaccine in the coming months.

American agriculture relies on skilled farm employees, many of whom migrate to the U.S. for seasonal work. At the start of the pandemic, farm workforce shortages were worsened by travel restrictions. We are long overdue for a guest-worker visa solution that is clear, works for all types of agriculture, and protects our current farm employees.

As farmers and ranchers look to 2021, we are eager to move forward and build new markets. We are seeing the glimmers of hope beyond this pandemic and are ready to do our part to return our communities and economy to full strength.

Opening access to new international markets will be key to getting the farm economy humming again. American-grown products have led the way wherever our farmers and ranchers have a level playing field.

We need to keep working toward trade agreements that break down barriers and rely on science-based guidelines.

When farmers talk about looking to the future, our vision goes

beyond the next harvest. Sustainability is always a priority on the farm because we are committed to our role as caretakers, and we take great pride in the progress we've made, especially in the last several decades.

For many of us, we're farming the same land generations before us have, and we want to pass that legacy on to our children and grandchildren. We are eager to continue to move forward with reducing our environmental impact, but we cannot do that work alone.

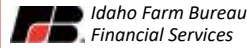
Access to innovation, funding for agricultural research, voluntary and market-based incentives and partnerships with food and agricultural companies will all play a role in protecting the land, air and water we all enjoy.

When the clock struck midnight on Jan. 1, it didn't erase all the troubles of our past year, but it did give us renewed hope as we move forward, stronger together.

That was our theme for our virtual convention and it's a fitting theme to take us into this new year.

At the American Farm Bureau, we are resolved to build on our heritage of working together across the industry, with lawmakers on Capitol Hill and each Administration.

We believe that we are stronger when we help our neighbors and come together to care for our communities, and it's in that strength that we go into the new year. ■

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SEARLE

Continued from page 2

That makes Farm Bureau a grassroots organization in the truest sense of the word.

Think about this for a moment: every policy has begun as a challenge or issue a farmer or rancher was faced with. It began in a member's head as an idea or thought and progressed to a policy that will defend or promote livelihoods within agriculture.

That person took that idea to their county Farm Bureau to explain and then defended it as a proposed policy.

That member successfully explained their proposal and fellow members at the county level supported their proposed policy. Eventually, a majority of voting delegates approved the idea during IFBF's annual meeting in December.

The voting delegates from each county Farm Bureau who approved the idea are all bona fide farmers and ranchers who receive a substantial part of their income from agriculture.

IFBF represents more than 11,000 farmers and ranchers across the state involved in all forms of agriculture, from potatoes to milk to beef to onions to grain to trout to beans.

As members face challenges, they diligently research and come up with a proposed resolution and work to advance that idea to become an official Farm Bureau policy.

Agricultural producers with real-life experiences on the farm are the real experts on the issues. You are the ones who know intimately what it takes to plant a seed, cultivate it, harvest it and get it sold.

You, the thousands of people who make up the Idaho Farm Bureau family, have a wide and deep understanding of the many issues that face the state's agricultural industry.

Your collective knowledge and wisdom are invaluable.

If a proposed policy is approved and makes it into our policy book, that means it has passed the careful scrutiny of the collective Farm Bureau family. Believe me, that's no small feat and you can rest assured every policy contained in the IFBF policy book has been debated long and hard.

This same process is followed when there is a national issue. It starts in the county, then moves to the district level, then to the state Farm Bureau and onto the delegate session of the American Farm Bureau Federation during AFBF's annual meeting.

When the AFBF delegate body – this year there are a total of 346 voting delegates from the various state Farm Bureaus – passes a resolution, it becomes national policy.

As the AFBF convention kicked off Jan. 10, I was one of four AFBF board members asked to participate in a roundtable discussion with industry leaders from Caterpillar, John Deere, Case IH, Corteva, Syngenta, Bayer, and Farm Credit Council.

Every industry representative expressed appreciation for the grassroots policy of AFBF. Every policy Farm Bureau has started with a farmer or rancher with their boots on the ground.

The strength of Farm Bureau is its grassroots and it is at the county Farm Bureau level that that strength is nurtured and unleashed.

Each county Farm Bureau organization is incredibly beneficial on its own merit but combine all of them together and they make up an incredibly effective and influential state Farm Bureau group.

That's why IFBF as an organization, from board members to staff, is focused heavily on strengthening the various county Farm Bureaus.

These county organizations, through the efforts of our grassroots members, are the strength of Idaho Farm Bureau and by strengthening the county Farm Bureaus, we are strengthening Idaho Farm Bureau.

Please take the time to look through the policies included in this magazine and become familiar with where we all stand on the various issues facing our state's important agricultural industry.

Every member of Idaho Farm Bureau has the opportunity each year to be part of the policy development process.

We invite you to get involved with your county Farm Bureau and do your part to make sure Idaho Farm Bureau Federation continues to be the voice of Idaho agriculture. ■

MILLER

Continued from page 2

Thanks to these industry partners, each of the Idaho award winners received a Honda Pioneer 700 "side-by-side" utility vehicle.

I have no doubt these young producers from Idaho represented the state well during their respective American Farm Bureau competitions. I know I am biased on this issue, but I believe they are among the best in the nation.

If you know of a young producer, I hope you will encourage them to participate in these YF&R competitions in the future.

The Achiever award recognizes young farmers or ranchers who have excelled in

their farming or ranching operation and honed their leadership abilities, and the Excellence award spotlights young Farm Bureau members who are agricultural professionals but have not earned a majority of their income from an owned production agriculture enterprise in the past three years.

I particularly love the Discussion Meet, which is also a YF&R event. This competition requires 3-5 competitors to discuss a pre-determined topic for 20-30 minutes.

It is a judged event, and the winner is the one who is seen not as the most dominating, smart, or controlling but instead, the one who fostered good discussion among all the contestants, helped develop good ideas and solutions, and generally helped the quality of the group discussion.

The Discussion Meet is intended to mimic a good committee meeting. If only more actual meetings could operate with such quality objectives.

The Discussion Meet is intense and exciting. Watching smart, prepared, passionate people compete is a joy any time. But the thought of participating in this event for many is also very intimidating.

One of the most common reasons given not to compete in this event is fear.

We all face feelings of inadequacy in all that we do but rarely are we forced on a stage for all to potentially see our faults. Being fearful of competing in an event such as the Discussion Meet is understandable.

See **MILLER**, page 31



I don't want to leave
my family to cover:

- Mortgage debt
- Monthly expenses
- Funeral costs
- Kids' college tuition

I know you say I need **life insurance**, but **do I really?**

Yes! While the reasons for having life insurance vary from person to person, coverage is a smart move no matter what stage of life you're in. Talk to your agent about the many ways life insurance can help protect you and your loved ones.

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IFBF Policy for 2021

The following policy statements were developed over the past 81 years by Idaho Farm Bureau volunteer members. IFB members meet every year to discuss, amend, delete and create the policy statements that guide the organization. The policy development process takes place at the county and district level throughout the year. Then the entire organization meets in early December to update the policy book. The policy comes from our grassroots members and is then used to guide Idaho Farm Bureau's lobbying, public relations and membership efforts throughout the year. To see a four-minute video on how Farm Bureau policy is developed, visit <https://www.idahofb.org/how-fb-policy-is-made>

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Purpose of Farm Bureau

Farm Bureau is a free, independent, non-governmental, voluntary organization governed by and representing farm and ranch families united for the purpose of analyzing their problems and formulating action to achieve educational improvement, economic opportunity, environmental awareness and social advancement, and thereby, to promote the national well-being.

Farm Bureau is local, statewide, national, and international in its scope and influence, and is non-partisan, non-sectarian, and non-secretive in character.

Farm Bureau Beliefs and Philosophy

America's unparalleled progress is based on freedom and dignity of the individual, sustained by basic moral and religious concepts. Freedom to the individual versus concentration of power, which would destroy freedom, is the central issue in all societies.

We believe that since the beginning of time, man's ability to provide food, fiber, and fuel for himself and his dependents has determined his independence, freedom and security.

We believe that a strong and viable agricultural industry is one of the most important cornerstones in the foundation of our national security, and the importance of that role in society must never be taken for granted. Economic progress, cultural advancement, ethical and religious principles flourish best when men are free, responsible individuals. The exercise of free will, rather than force, is consistent with the maintenance of liberty. Individual freedom and opportunity must not be sacrificed in a quest for guaranteed "security."

We believe that America's system of

private ownership of property and the means of production has been, and is, one of the major foundation stones of our republic. This element of our economic system and the personal rights attendant to private property, including grazing and water rights, must be maintained and protected.

Ownership of property and property rights are among the human rights essential to the preservation of individual freedom. The right to own property must be preserved at all costs.

We will take every opportunity to publicize, defend and promote our position, and we will stand firm on basic constitutional rights.

We believe in government by law, impartially administered, and without special privilege.

We support agricultural programs and organizations that give equal opportunity for developing skills, knowledge and leadership ability.

We believe in the representative form of government; a republic as provided in our Constitution; in limitations upon government power; in maintenance of equal opportunity; in the right of each individual to worship as he chooses; and in freedom of speech, press, and peaceful assembly.

The U.S. Supreme Court imposed one man one vote rule should be overturned and return the United States to the republican form of government that was envisioned by the framers of the Constitution. Individuals have a moral responsibility to help preserve freedom for future generations by participating in public affairs and by helping to elect candidates who share their fundamental beliefs and principles.

We oppose the use of public funds for financing political campaigns. People

have the right and the responsibility to speak for themselves individually or through organizations of their choice without coercion or government intervention.

We believe in the right of all individuals to choose their own occupation; to be rewarded according to their contribution to society and to save, invest, spend, or convey their earnings to their heirs.

These rights are accompanied by the responsibility that all individuals must meet the financial obligations they have incurred.

We support a society free of drug abuse.

We support English as the official language of Idaho and the United States.

We support English as the language that students should learn and use in public schools.

We support public schools starting the day by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Constitution

Stable and honest government with prescribed and limited powers is essential to freedom and progress. The Constitution of the United States was well designed to secure individual liberty by a division of federal authority among the Legislative, Executive and Judicial branches. The Tenth Amendment assures that liberties are further secured for the states and the people through the retention of those powers not specifically delegated to the federal government. The constitutional prerogatives of each branch of government should be preserved from encroachment.

We support the Constitution as the supreme law of the land. Changes should be made only through constitutional amendments, not by federal policy or regulation. One of the greatest dangers threatening our republic and system of

private, competitive enterprise is the socialization of America through the centralization of power and authority in the federal government. The centralization of power and responsibility in the federal government violates constitutional purposes. It has usurped state sovereignty and individual freedom and should be reversed.

In defense of our Constitution, and of the sovereignty of the U.S.A., we oppose the centralization of power worldwide into one world government.

State's Rights and Sovereignty

We support the protection and defense of states' rights and state sovereignty over all powers not otherwise enumerated and granted to the federal government as specified in the 10th amendment to the constitution. The federal government must respect state laws and state agencies. All lands within the boundaries of Idaho, excluding those lands as allowed by Article 1, Section 8, Clause 17 of the U.S. Constitution and ceded to the federal government by the Idaho Legislature, shall be subject solely to the laws and jurisdiction of the state.

Religious Life

Our Nation was founded on spiritual faith and belief in God. Whereas the Constitution of the United States was founded on moral and religious principles, moral, ethical and traditional family values should get equal support and consideration in the public schools as do the atheistic and humanistic views.

We support the right to have religious beliefs and symbols of those beliefs presented in our communities.

We vigorously support retention of:

1. "So Help Me God" in official oaths;
2. The phrase "In God We Trust" on our coin;
3. The fourth verse of the "Star Spangled Banner;" and
4. The phrase "Under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Family Values

We believe God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society.

We believe the definition of marriage is a union between one man and one woman.

We believe in the sanctity of innocent human life from conception until natural death. We must protect the right to life to

preserve the rights to liberty and property.

We oppose abortion. In the event the mother's life is in danger, we support all measures aimed directly at saving the life of the mother.

We oppose euthanasia (intentionally ending a life) and physician-assisted suicide.

Capitalism - Private Competitive Enterprise

We believe in the American capitalistic, private, competitive enterprise system in which property is privately owned, privately managed, operated for profit, individual satisfaction and responsible stewardship.

We believe in a competitive business environment in which supply and demand are the primary determinants of market prices, the use of productive resources, and the distribution of output.

We support the continuing freedom of the people of Idaho to manage, develop, harvest and market the useful products of our natural resources.

We believe in man's right to search and research to select the best ways of maintaining quality production of food and fiber.

We believe every individual in Idaho should have the right to a job without being forced to join or pay dues to any organization.

Government operation of commercial business in competition with private enterprise should be terminated.

We also believe that no element of society has more concern for, understanding of, or a greater stake in, the proper husbandry of poultry, livestock, fur-bearers, game animals and aquaculture than the producer.

Economy in Government

We consider the proliferation of government with its ever-increasing cost to the taxpayer a major problem.

State expenditures and growth of personnel on the public payroll should not be allowed to expand faster than the population and should be compatible with the percentage of economic growth of the state.

We believe that Article 8, Section 1, "Limitation of Public Indebtedness" of the state Constitution is the main reason for the healthy financial condition of Idaho's government. We will oppose any attempt to amend this section of the Constitution.

Tax exemptions granted by the state

Legislature that reduce county income should at the same time require appropriation of sufficient funds to replace county revenue losses caused by such exemptions.

We support economy at all levels of government.

Education

We believe that agricultural education is critical in creating and maintaining a strong and viable agricultural industry.

We believe education starts with the parent or guardian and is extended to the schools as a cooperative partnership in which parents and guardians have the right to review any and all methods and materials used in the educational processes of school systems.

We believe parents have the right to choose how best to direct the upbringing and education of their children.

We believe local school boards must be elected by the people to maintain control of public school systems and must have authority to establish policy for dress standards, personal conduct standards, testing standards, fiscal controls and curriculum.

We believe all school systems must be accountable to provide opportunities for all students to obtain proficiency in the basics of reading, writing and mathematics. Parents and guardians must be kept informed by the school system of the educational progress of their children.

We believe parents and guardians have an inherent right and obligation to discipline their own children.

Political Parties

Strong, responsive political parties are essential to the United States system of elective government.

We recommend that Farm Bureau members support the political party of their choice.

We believe that government should in no way be involved directly in the political process but should lay down certain rules to assure fair and proper elections.

We strongly favor retaining the county central political committees composed of county precinct committee people and their existing functions within the party structure.

We are opposed to shifting the functions of county committees to a district committee.

COMMODITIES

1. Agrichemicals/Pesticides

We support:

1. Increased research and labeling for minor-use pesticide registrations;
2. The continued use of approved pesticides and/or related products until conclusive scientific evidence proves there is an unacceptable risk; and
3. Compliance with federally approved label instructions absolving farmers or commercial applicators from liability claims of environmental pollution.

We oppose:

1. Establishment of zones of agricultural land in which any kind of legal application or storage of agricultural chemicals is curtailed without sound, scientifically validated evidence to warrant curtailment; and
2. Fumigant buffer zone limitations proposed by the EPA without research giving substantial evidence that current practices are negatively affecting bystanders.

2. Commodity Diseases

We support:

1. The quarantine of all sources of the potato wart virus;
2. Active research and the dissemination of information to all interested parties related to rhizomania and urge that any imposed restrictions be based on scientific data;
3. Any phytosanitary action taken by the Idaho Department of Agriculture to protect the Idaho potato industry from the threat of the "Pratylenchus Neglectus" nematode;
4. The rewrite of the Idaho Plant Pest Act to include language to protect growers from being subject to unnecessary search and seizure without probable cause, and advanced warning to enter premises; and
5. A federal and state PCN (Pale Cyst Nematode) program that is based on good science, stakeholder participation, and minimal impact to grower operations.
6. We urge the Idaho State Department of Agriculture to do all within its power to prohibit the importation of Anthracnose virus into Idaho.

3. Commodity Commissions

We support commodity commissions having:

1. Self-governing status with no political influence;

2. Boards solely elected by the growers/producers;

3. Uniform provisions to run referendums;
4. Commissioner districts representing even areas of production;
5. The right for legal entities to cast votes in elections;
6. Nominations held for a month-long period followed by a month-long voting period so that all growers can be represented and participate; and
7. Uniform provision for refunds for all or a portion of the commodity tax.

4. Commodity Sales

We support expansion of Idaho agricultural markets, domestic and foreign. We also support trade missions abroad to better inform our producers and the hosting of foreign delegations to our state in efforts to increase our market share.

We support changes to crop insurance that truly reflect a safety net.

We oppose double discounts by grain dealers.

We support licensing and bonding of all commodity brokers by the State of Idaho.

We support amending the Idaho Pure Seed Law to fully disclose the contents of all seed lots by requiring the tag or label to list each plant species therein by name and rate of occurrence.

We support the state having one statewide licensing program to allow for the sale of meat in bulk to individual people and/or their families.

5. Environmental Studies

We recommend that any individual or group doing environmental studies be held accountable for claims or assertions of damage by agricultural practices to the environment. Claims or assertions should be treated with skepticism until they have been subjected to critical peer review and tested by practical application.

6. Fair Trade

We support strict adherence to bilateral and multilateral trade agreements to which the United States is a party to prevent unfair practices by competing nations and to assure unrestricted access to domestic and world markets. All trade agreements should be continuously monitored and enforced to ensure they result in fair trade.

7. Field Testing Biotechnology Products

We support effective field testing of new biotechnology products to promote commercial use of products that will benefit agriculture and the general public.

We oppose any law or regulation requiring registration of agriculture producers who use or sell biotech-based products or commodities.

We oppose any law or regulation requiring registration or labeling of agricultural products containing GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms).

We oppose attempts to restrict or prohibit planting of biotechnology crops on either a statewide or county by county basis.

We support scientifically accurate consumer education about the safety and benefits of genetically engineered crops.

8. Food Safety/Government Accountability

We strongly believe a government agency making public health decisions that result in product recalls, product seizures or destruction of perishable goods must be held accountable when such decisions prove false. Such agencies must be required to compensate or indemnify individuals and companies for the monetary losses that occur because of poor or false regulatory decisions.

We support laws and regulations that exempt farmers and ranchers from liability from food contamination when best practices or food safety programs have been followed and no gross negligence has been shown.

9. Industrial Grade Hemp

We support legalizing the production of industrial grade hemp with 0.3% THC (Tetrahydrocannabinol), or less in Idaho, and to authorize the University of Idaho and the Idaho Department of Agriculture to conduct research and pilot programs to determine suitable varieties to meet market demand.

10. Lien Law

We oppose any attempt to alter the system of centralized filing or first-in-time, first-in-right system of lien priorities, either in revised UCC Article 9, or any other legislation.

We oppose delivered feed being encumbered by a blanket lien from a financial institution until the grower/supplier is paid in full.

We support the creation of an

agricultural commodities lien law, which would allow for the attachment of a lien in favor of an agricultural producer for the contract price or reasonable value of delivered agricultural commodities. Such a lien should also include attachment to the proceeds received.

11. Seed Indemnity Fund

We support aligning the financial reporting requirements for the Seed Indemnity Fund and the Commodity Indemnity Fund.

LIVESTOCK

12. Animal Care

We support:

1. The rights of owners and producers to raise their animals in accordance with commonly accepted animal husbandry practices;

2. The role of a licensed veterinarian in the care of animals and support current licensing standards for veterinarians;

3. The Idaho Veterinary Practice Act and oppose any efforts to weaken it or the licensing standards; and

4. Punishments for those with non-service animals who attempt to portray them as service animals.

We oppose:

1. Any legislation, regulatory action or funding, whether private or public, that interferes with commonly accepted animal husbandry practices;

2. Legislation that would give animal rights organizations the right to establish standards for the raising, marketing, handling, feeding, housing or transportation of livestock and production animals and any legislation that would pay bounties to complainants;

3. Any livestock and production animal care legislation that would impose a stricter penalty than the 2016 law;

4. The creation of an Idaho livestock care standards board;

5. Requiring a licensed veterinarian for docking, dehorning, castration, pregnancy checking and any other routine livestock healthcare management practices; and

6. Comfort animals having the same rights and privileges as service animals covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

13. Animal ID

We support:

1. Procedures and or equipment for an animal ID program that makes it possible

to trace an animal back to its original location;

2. The right of the owner to choose among the acceptable methods of identification and to leave their animals unidentified prior to movement from the premises of origin;

3. Having the Idaho State Department of Agriculture determine acceptable methods of identification, including hot or cold brands, for the state.

14. Bovine Tuberculosis

We support an ISDA surveillance testing program for Bovine Tuberculosis and its continued funding.

15. Brucellosis

We oppose all efforts to eliminate the mandatory vaccination law and require its complete enforcement.

We insist that the National Park Service eradicate brucellosis in Yellowstone and Grand Teton Parks.

We support regulations requiring the appropriate state and federal agencies to control and eradicate this disease in wildlife.

We oppose separating the state into zones for definition of brucellosis-free status.

We oppose the establishment of any herds of free roaming buffalo outside of Yellowstone National Park.

16. CAFO Regulations

We support efforts by all livestock associations to create MOUs with the appropriate state and federal agencies.

Matters pertaining to CAFO regulation other than siting should be under the jurisdiction of the state.

17. Data Confidentiality

We support the confidentiality of data collected on farms and feedlots. Only final reports or conclusions should be made a matter of public record. No data collected from individual operations should be made public.

18. Domestic Cervidae

We support the right of domestic cervidae owners to breed, raise, harvest, and market all members of the cervidae family indigenous to Idaho that can be legally acquired.

19. Equine

We support:

1. Construction of new slaughtering

facilities and/or use of existing processing facilities in Idaho to slaughter equines without duress;

2. The right of individuals and nongovernmental organizations to save horses from slaughter as long as they take possession of the horses and are responsible for their care and feeding;

3. The continued classification of equines as marketable livestock and oppose any efforts to classify them as pets or companion animals;

4. When an equine is in the custody of a government agency and an adoption has not been able to take place within six months, that equine should be harvested or euthanized with minimal stress and without delay; and

5. Funding for USDA food service inspectors in facilities that harvest horses.

We oppose:

1. Any attempt to eliminate the right of the equine owner or BLM to the minimal stress slaughter of their equine for consumption or any other purpose.

20. Foot and Mouth/BSE Disease

We support stringent controls to protect Idaho's livestock industry from foot and mouth disease and BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy).

We oppose importation of live cattle over 30 months of age until sound science proves this does not threaten to spread BSE to the United States.

We support allowing entities to voluntarily test all slaughtered animals for BSE in order to ship products to countries that require individual tests.

21. Law Enforcement Training

We support law enforcement officers being trained in open range laws, proper livestock herding techniques and how to properly euthanize livestock as part of the Idaho Peace Officers Standardized Training.

We support immediate notification by law enforcement or emergency personnel to landowners when fences or property sustain damage due to accidents, or by entrance of emergency personnel.

22. Livestock Brands

We support the concept that livestock may be left unbranded at the discretion of the owner except for those livestock grazing on federal/state managed lands.

23. Manure Management

We believe that manure and manure/compost are nutrient-rich residue resources.

We support:

1. Research on manure management including such areas as odor reduction and waste and nutrient management; and
2. Programs that educate livestock operators on techniques regarding properly managed organic nutrient systems, especially if implemented with consistent Best Management Practices (BMPs) developed by extension, university and the livestock industry.

We oppose:

1. Manure being classified as industrial, solid, or hazardous waste or as raw sewage.

24. State Meat Inspectors

We support state certified meat inspectors for small meat processing plants.

We support a state meat inspection program in Idaho which would allow for the intrastate commercial sale of meat.

We support more kill facilities in our rural areas of the state.

We support having large animal veterinarians and other interested individuals in rural areas becoming certified meat inspectors under a state meat inspection program.

We support all mobile butchers and processors to require a trip permit brand inspection slip or bill of sale on all bovine animals they receive and retain those records for a 3-year period to help monitor theft and illegal taking and processing of animals.

25. State Veterinarian

We believe the Animal Health Division of the Idaho Department of Agriculture should be administered by a licensed veterinarian.

WATER

26. Aquifer Recharge

We support the beneficial use of managed basin-wide aquifer recharge with the state being involved with both financial support and implementation.

27. Bureau of Reclamation Reservoirs

Release of water in power head space in Bureau of Reclamation reservoirs shall be controlled solely by state water law.

28. Cloud Seeding

We support cloud seeding and encourage continued investment in its application and research.

We support the Legislature and the Idaho Water Resource Board continuing to study and fund cloud seeding efforts.

29. Comprehensive State Water Plan

We support:

1. The Governor appointing individuals to the Idaho Water Resource Board who will protect the water resources of the State;
2. Requiring legislative approval before establishing minimum stream flow, instream flow, reconnect permits, river basin plans and state water plans;
3. Amending the Idaho Constitution, Article XV Water Rights Section 7, State Water Resource Agency to read, "That any change shall become effective only by approval of the legislature."; and
4. Legislative approval for water agreements made between the state and federal government.

We oppose:

1. Minimum stream flows until sufficient storage facilities are built to supply priority needs first.

30. Dams

We support the Northwest Power Planning Council focusing its efforts on issues that will provide the region with its current and future power needs.

We support the construction, improvement and increased size of storage facilities that provide beneficial multiple uses of Idaho's water.

We support municipalities, federal agencies and tribes advocating for and funding additional storage projects to help meet the increasing demand for water, and avoid taking irrigation water from agricultural purposes.

We support the continued existence and current usage of all dams on the Columbia and Snake Rivers. We oppose any efforts to destroy or decrease production of those dams.

We support construction of the Galloway Dam on the Weiser River.

31. Effluent Trading

We support the concept of effluent trading.

32. Flood Control

We support additional storage facilities, increased recharge, and federal land transfers to state ownership to control future flooding.

33. Ground Water Districts

We support changing the boundaries of local groundwater districts that are directly connected to the underground aquifer to include those who are not currently participating but are of a common ground water source.

We oppose any diminishment of authority of local water districts or groundwater districts through creation of a Groundwater Management Area.

34. Mid-Snake Data Collection

We support the Legislature appropriating additional funding to enable the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to conduct data collection and analysis to complete the water quality report of the Upper Snake/Rock Sub-basin in support of Idaho's Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) development.

35. Moratorium

We support the current Idaho Department of Water Resources moratoriums on critical groundwater development.

36. Outstanding Resource Waters

We support the Basin Advisory Groups (BAGs) and Watershed Advisory Groups (WAGs) process as it pertains to Outstanding Resource Waters (ORWs).

We oppose nominations of ORWs by parties other than BAGs and WAGs.

37. State Purchase of Water Rights for Mitigation

We support the state purchasing and holding water rights for the purpose of mitigation, so water trade may benefit aquifer recharge and groundwater conservation.

38. Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs)

We support mandating Idaho's Department of Environmental Quality to conduct an Economic Impact Analysis of an area's businesses (including the agri-business and agricultural operations of that area) before initiating a TMDL process for that geographic area. The analysis shall be provided to the Watershed Advisory Group before consideration is given to develop and implement a TMDL. A copy of the analysis shall also be provided to the germane committees of the Idaho Legislature.

39. Transfer of Water Rights

We believe all water in Idaho should be used beneficially. In the event the BOR or IDWR desires use of water they would have to negotiate on a yearly basis for rental-pool water in accordance with state water law.

We support:

1. Re-evaluation of the need for flow augmentation on the grounds that the science does not support any biological benefit.
2. IDWR automatically transferring stock water rights from any federal agency to the allotment permittee.

We oppose:

1. The transfer of water rights to the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR);
2. The taking of water for fish flushing. Water held by the Idaho Water Resource Board will be held and used for purposes intended and in accordance with state law; and
3. Out-of-basin transfers of irrigation water from lands enrolled in the federal cropland set-aside program for use on lands that have not historically been used for agricultural development.

40. Waste Management

We oppose mandatory waste management facility construction without scientific proof of environmental pollution on an individual basis.

41. Water Development on New Non-Ag Development

We support legislation that would require developers to supply water and water-delivery systems using existing water rights or gray water to new developments.

42. Water Quality

We support:

1. The continued management of water quality, both underground and surface, by utilizing "Best Management Practices" (BMPs) as contained in USDA's "Natural Resource Conservation Services Field Office Technical Guide" and Idaho's "Forest Practices Act." Changes in these BMPs should be based only on scientifically monitored data rather than "best professional judgment;
2. The development of BMPs for recreational uses; and
3. The efforts of canal and irrigation districts to halt unwanted drainage into their water systems.

We oppose:

1. The DEQ having the authority to arbitrarily impose penalties on landowners without first identifying the problem and giving the landowner an opportunity to correct the problem. If there is a difference of opinion concerning the extent of the problem, a reasonable and cost-effective appeal process of the DEQ decision should be available to the landowner; and
2. Levying fees associated with State NPDES programs implementation, operation and permit issuance on agriculture and aquaculture producers.

43. Water Quality Standards

Water quality standards must be site specific and realistically achievable for each water body. These standards must at least partially support designated beneficial uses.

44. Water Rights

We support:

1. State ownership and control of Idaho water held in trust for the residents of the State of Idaho, and will oppose any policy, program or regulation, including Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing, which would infringe on this right;
2. Defining local public interest, under water right law, to give priority to beneficial uses and agricultural viability, with local vested interest and use, a priority;
3. Sanctions upon any party making frivolous claims against water right applications. Frivolous claims are not reasonably grounded in fact or law causing unnecessary delay, increased cost, or harassment;
4. Permittees on federal land being recognized and acknowledged as the owners of stock water rights in their allotments as their livestock provide beneficial use under state law and the water rights are an appurtenance of the private base property;
5. Requiring that minimum stream flows not jeopardize water rights and are being financed by the benefit recipients;
6. The continued wise development of all Idaho's rivers and their tributaries as working rivers;
7. First in time, first in right, and state control of water issues within appropriate Idaho agencies without federal regulatory or legislative intervention;
8. The privatization of Idaho irrigation canal systems;

9. The protection of canal and drain ditch easements from arbitrarily being taken over by cities, counties, state, federal or private developers or private landowners and developed into green belts or bike paths;

10. The concept of conjunctive-use management when scientific evidence is available to support such management;

11. Efforts by local groundwater districts to provide supplemental or water bank water to senior surface water users to prevent curtailment of junior water rights. Irrigation districts shall have no net loss of irrigated acres due to growth and development; and

12. Idaho water law that denies considering flood control releases as a beneficial use.

We oppose:

1. The Idaho Department of Water Resources accepting any further applications for water rights on surface stream water of the state that has been over-decreed and adjudicated. Adequate water for domestic and agricultural purposes should have priority over other uses when the waters of any natural stream is insufficient, as per Article 15, Section 3 of the Idaho Constitution;
2. Changing the historical beneficial use of water rights when that change will have a negative impact on other water right holders;
3. The federal government changing the historic priorities and uses of water storage reservoirs;
4. Any diminishment of storage fill rights due to flood control or other discharge prior to season use including efforts by any entity that would count flood control releases against the storage rights of water right holders;
5. Any federal agencies' use of priority dates, in regard to water rights, that are not in accordance with Idaho Water Law;
6. The adoption of source water protection plans/ordinances by local government that create land use policies prohibiting generally accepted farming and animal agriculture practices/activities;
7. Indian tribes requiring/requesting water right encroachment permits on state waters;
8. Agreements between water groups that neglect the first in time, first in right and treat senior, junior, trust and

expansion rights near-equal; and

9. The 5-year averages that were used to determine the quantity of water that is allowed to be pumped by a user in the future.

45. Water Spreading

We support voluntary conservation of water use by updating irrigation systems. Increases in irrigated acres (water spread acres) due to redesigning or remodeling irrigation systems or development of areas within a recorded water right, should not be excluded from irrigation. Conservation should not adversely affect the full use of an irrigation water right.

We support legislation and rulemaking that will protect the full use of an irrigation water right.

46. Water Use - International Water Agreements

We support the renewal of the Columbia River Treaty with Canada in such a manner as to maintain its original focus upon flood control and power generation.

LAND USE

47. Government Land Transactions

We support:

1. No net loss of private property;
2. Enactment of legislation to require prior legislative approval for any state land acquisition on a parcel-by-parcel basis;
3. Prohibiting the sale of state land to the federal government or agencies of the federal government, except for the purpose of building federal facilities or structures;
4. When land is to be sold, the current grazing permit holder must have the first right of refusal. If there is no permit holder, the adjacent landowner should be given the first right of refusal based on appraised value. When federal land is sold, traded, or exchanged, all holders of grazing preference must be fairly compensated;
5. Requiring any entity which acquires property from the federal government, to compensate grazing preference holders on the former federally administered lands for the loss of their property rights if that entity does not continue to maintain and protect those rights;
6. The enactment of legislation to ensure that none of the valid existing private rights are lost in any land exchange between Idaho and the federal government or in the transfer of federal lands to Idaho;

7. Amending the Idaho Constitution to mandate that any federal land conveyed to the state in any manner from the date of the passage will be managed from multiple use and sustained yield; that all valid existing rights will be honored; and allow for the sale of the isolated, landlocked, and uneconomical parcels with the first right of refusal going to the adjoining landowner(s) at fair appraised value; and

8. No net loss of tax base with all land exchanges and sales. Tax obligations must stay with the property.

We oppose:

1. Any land exchanges involving publicly owned land unless there is strong local support; and
2. The State purchasing private property for investment purposes.

48. Government-Managed Lands

We support:

1. Multiple-use management of federal and state lands with protection of the traditional rights of use;
2. A study of the Payment In Lieu of Taxes formula to determine if it is meeting its purpose and is equitable in its distribution of funds;
3. The equal-footing doctrine and insist on the passage of legislation to establish a deadline for complete transfer of public land back to state jurisdiction and management;
4. The Idaho Legislature joining with other states in the West, in an interstate compact, with respect to the transfer of public lands;
5. The timely salvage of trees in burn areas within our state;
6. Legislation that would promote harvest of trees and forage on federal and state land to help prevent and control wildfire;
7. The use of land-use management plans by county governments to encourage state and federal agencies to coordinate and protect the land within their tax base;
8. The legislature and the governor asserting their authority and taking all necessary measures to protect the citizens and counties of the State of Idaho from federal agency overreach;
9. The release of federal, state and local government held lands for development or private use; and
10. Proactively utilizing Good Neighbor Authority, or similar programs to more productively manage federal lands in Idaho.

49. Grazing

We believe grazing to be an effective tool in maintaining sustainable rangeland, forests, improving watersheds, wildlife habitat, reduction of wildfire potential, and supporting ranchers and rural community economies.

We support:

1. The protection of grazing on public lands as a viable economic solution for managing agencies of rangeland by reducing forage minimizing costs for fighting catastrophic wildfires;
2. "Best Management Practices" by all State and Federal agencies, land grant colleges and research facilities on how grazing affects habitat for all wildlife including sage grouse leks;
3. "Rangeland Management Plans" that use current science-based information developed by the Idaho Department of Lands, BLM, Forest Service, and NRCS including the development of a certification process recognized by these agencies which would allow grazing permit holders to submit voluntary forage monitoring data to be used in the creation and development of said plans;
4. Range management plans should be developed in careful and considered consultation, cooperation, and coordination with local government, permittees, lessees and landowners involved;
5. The Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission, the Experimental Stewardship Program, and the Coordinated Resource Management Program encouraging producer control and supporting fees;
6. Our local NRCS "Grazing Land Conservation Initiative" (GLCI) and the "Conservation Reserve Program" (CRP) and its programs of intermittent grazing which pay producers to set aside marginal ground to enhance soil health;
7. Grazing fee formulas for AUM's currently used by Idaho Department of Lands, BLM, Forest Service, and (PRIA) which are based upon forage monitoring by agencies and permittees under the "Federal Land Policy and Management Act" of 1976 (FLPMA);
8. The current grazing permit holder to have first right of refusal when land is sold and when there is no permit holder, the adjacent landowner should be given the first right of refusal based on appraised value;
9. All holders of grazing preference be fairly compensated when federal land is sold, traded, or exchanged and any

entity acquiring property from the federal government to compensate grazing preference holders;

10. Requiring any entity which acquires property from the federal government to compensate grazing preference holders for loss of their property rights if that entity does not continue to maintain and protect those rights;

11. Funding from both federal and state governments for the operation and research of the U.S. Sheep Experiment Station in Dubois;

12. A grazing preference right being transferred from one base property to another base property, if the transferor shall own or control the base property from which the grazing preference right is being transferred and file with the authorized officer a properly completed transfer application for approval to the respective agency;

13. Selling of a permit by a holder to another interested party that will continue using the permit for its original intended purpose;

14. The new "Outcome Based Grazing Authorizations" of 2017, which is designed to offer a more coordinated approach to resolve disputes between the BLM and its partners within the livestock grazing community when issuing trading authorizations; and

15. All stakeholders being a part of the vetting process when curtailment, termination, or fee increases of any existing grazing permits or allotments are proposed.

We oppose:

1. The reduction or curtailment of any grazing activity for the creation or recognition of wildlife corridors;

2. The U.S. Forest Service ruling that will prevent transferring grazing permits for 25 head or less;

3. The termination of grazing permits for administrative errors or omissions of the land managing agency;

4. Mandatory forage monitoring by livestock permittees on federal lands as proposed by the Federal Land Management Policy Act;

5. The termination or curtailment of permittees because of livestock proximity to bighorn sheep, bison, and sage grouse; and

6. The purchase or retirement of grazing permits or allotments by any State or Federal agency, group, or individual whose sole purpose is to not allow any further grazing.

50. Idaho Forest Practices Act

We support the Idaho Forest Practices Act except where it infringes on private property rights.

We oppose The Forest Practices Act Streamside Retention Rule (Shade Rule) unless accompanied by fair market appraised value compensation to landowners for loss of property rights.

51. Landfills on BLM Lands

We encourage the development of new, and the continued use of existing, county landfills on BLM lands.

52. Local, State or National Land Designation

We oppose any infringement upon private property rights through any designation of land by any government entity, including highway scenic byways/corridors, National Heritage Areas, National Monuments and National Parks. We oppose any change to federal or state land designation when there is the potential to harm agriculture.

We oppose Craters of the Moon becoming a national park.

53. Mineral Rights

We support legislation that would transfer government-retained mineral rights to current landowners (at no expense to the landowners), where there has been no meaningful mineral activity for 10 years.

We support requiring that property deeds state the name and address of the person or entity who owns the mineral rights for each property. If mineral rights are sold or transferred, the deed should be updated. The surface owner should be notified and offered first right of refusal.

54. Mining

We support the continuation of mineral extraction in Idaho as long as the appropriate mine reclamation and environmental protections are in place and followed.

55. Open Range

We oppose any changes to Idaho open range laws.

56. Pest Control

We support enforcement of current laws to give counties authority to spray and control insect infestations on private land, with the cost of the spraying to be assessed to the present owner of the land.

We support safe and effective county and state pest control programs when landowner property rights are respected, and commodity production is not adversely affected by the program(s).

We support legislation that requires local, state and federal governments to manage lands to prevent spread of noxious weeds and pests from their lands to adjoining lands, crops and animals.

57. Regulation of Agricultural Practices

We support:

1. Long-standing sound agricultural practices such as field burning, including grass seed, straw, residue burning, timber slash burning and animal-waste disposal, cultivation and harvest practices;

2. Farmer participation in voluntary airshed quality programs; and

3. The farmer's right to farm by being able to carry on sound farming and forestry practices and to be free from environmental regulations that are not proportionately beneficial to the implementation cost.

We oppose:

1. Any legislation or regulations that would segregate any agricultural industry, agricultural crop, cropping practice or geographical area and would impose a higher air quality, water quality or environmental standard than is required of any other person, entity, industry or geographical area within the state;

2. Regulations on agricultural practices that are not validated by sound peer reviewed scientific process and supported by scientific fact;

3. The Idaho State Department of Agriculture having the authority to impose sanctions on livestock operators without first identifying specific problems and giving the operators an opportunity to correct said problems; and

4. Efforts to regulate logging slash burning on private timberlands by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

58. Right to Farm

We support the right-to-farm law, and the concept behind it, and encourage legislative changes to strengthen the law so it can be enforced at the local governmental levels through conditional use permits or other permitting processes.

We support local, state, and federal agriculture exemptions from dust rules.

59. Riparian Management

Proper multiple-use management of riparian areas is essential.

We believe these highly productive areas can be properly harvested with modern forest or livestock Best Management Practices (BMPs) and still improve riparian habitat for all uses.

We believe these areas should be properly used but not abused. However, management of the entire allotment should not be governed by forage utilization of riparian areas.

We support the concept that all existing roads along streams be given grandfather rights approval.

60. State and County Noxious Weed Control

We support:

1. Strong enforcement of Idaho's noxious weed law by the state and counties, together with appropriate use of special management-zone provisions;

2. Idaho Transportation Department weed control policies at both state and district levels be required to be in compliance with the Idaho Noxious Weed Law each year by controlling all infestations of noxious weeds in a timely and effective manner and by controlling noxious weeds on the full width of all rights of way;

3. Enforcement of timely and effective noxious weed control by all railroads on their rights of ways within the state; and

4. Adding dog rose (*Rosa canina*) and sweet briar (*Rosa eglanteria*) to the Idaho noxious weed list.

61. Timber Management

We support all efforts by the Department of Lands to optimize the timber yields and stumpage prices as mandated by the Idaho Constitution.

We oppose actions by the Land Board or Department of Lands that would inhibit or further restrict these processes, including, but not limited to, habitat conservation plans and conservation easements.

62. Wilderness and Restrictive Zones

We support:

1. The traditional balanced multiple-use practices on all federal/state lands and that access to existing wilderness be free and accessible for everyone; and

2. Adding adequate fire breaks in existing wilderness areas.

We oppose:

1. All dedication of land in Idaho for wilderness and roadless areas and support the release of lands currently held in Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) back to multiple-use management. All lands designated as non-suitable for wilderness must be immediately released from WSA status;

2. Designation of lands in Idaho as biosphere reserves, corridors or buffer zones, using the Lands Legacy Initiative, the Antiquities Act or National Monument Declarations by the executive branch of the government;

3. Any expansion of the boundaries of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA);

4. Any reinterpretation of the mandates of the SNRA which would impose further use restrictions; and

5. The reduction or curtailment of any grazing or farming activity for the creation or recognition of wildlife corridors.

63. Wildfire Control

We support:

1. Fire-control policy to put out any fire upon arrival or as soon as safely possible. Local entities (such as counties, fire districts, and forest or rangeland protective associations) and private landowners and individuals being allowed to act as first responders. When the protection of the health, safety, and property of the citizens are in jeopardy, the local protective associations being allowed to act beyond the first response and initial attack phase of a fire. Local landowners must be allowed to protect private property including livestock on federal and state lands;

2. Changing state and federal wildfire policy to require that state and federal fire managers and incident commanders coordinate with county and local fire departments and landowners;

3. A provision that state and federal agencies will allow forest or rangeland protective associations in neighboring states, that meet the requirements of their home state, to enter into mutual aid agreements with forest and rangeland protective associations across state lines;

4. An increase in management activities, such as thinning and grazing, to achieve federal agency goals of reducing the potential for catastrophic wildfires;

5. A provision that state and federal agencies maintain a fire break strategically located to protect private property and to control large wildfires; and

6. An aggressive initial attack and suppression on all forest and rangeland wildfires on public land and firefighting suppression activities in addition to fire management, in order to protect our water basins and watersheds.

We oppose:

1. Landowners being held accountable for fire suppression costs except in cases of gross negligence.

FISH AND WILDLIFE

64. Animal Damage Control

We support animal damage control programs to control and manage predators, rodents and destructive wildlife.

65. Animal Threat and Public Safety

It shall be the responsibility of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services and any state agencies, that manage predatory or proven problem animals, to notify all residences within a five-mile radius using a 9-1-1 reverse calling system of potential conflict in their area.

66. Endangered Species Act

We believe that modern society cannot continue to operate on the premise that all species must be preserved at any cost.

We believe basic requirements of human life have priority over protection of other species, including threatened or endangered (T/E) species. A thorough consideration of all potential adverse impacts to human economic and social welfare should be an integral part of any consideration to list and T/E species.

If lethal action is taken against any threatened or endangered species for the preservation of public safety, all investigations should be conducted by the local officials of the county involved. All applicable state and government agencies are to be notified so as to provide assistance when called upon.

We support:

1. A revision of the ESA to include a more thorough consideration of agriculture, mining, logging and tree farming in such a manner that these activities will be sustained and made part of any recovery plan. Recovery of T/E species should not receive higher priority than human uses or rights;

2. Anadromous hatchery fish and wild fish being treated equally under the ESA. Hatchery fish should be counted toward recovery of the species;

3. Eliminating the marking of hatchery fish.

4. The right of landowners to protect themselves, their families, livestock and properties from all predators including grizzly bears and wolves without legal retaliation;

5. Congress providing depredation funding for losses or damage resulting from endangered species and to mandate responsibility to deal with such losses; and

6. Livestock grazing as an effective tool to reduce wildfires and enhance plant and wildlife habitat.

We oppose:

1. Any effort to create a State Endangered Species Act (ESA);

2. Road closures and restrictions imposed on land and water in the name of critical habitat;

3. Implementation of the endangered species pesticide labeling program, other than in critical habitat;

4. The listing of the Giant Palouse Earthworm (*Driloleirus americanus*) and the Greater Sage Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) and Slick Spot Peppergrass (*Lepidium papilliferum*) as an endangered species;

5. Listing any species before its critical habitat is identified within its scientifically established historical range. Habitat site specific assessments and recovery plans must include comprehensive protection of private property rights; and

6. Any critical-habitat designation until it has been established beyond scientific doubt that the species in question is actually present and that endangered or threatened status is actually warranted. The data to satisfy the scientific criteria should meet the guidelines of the Data Quality Act under federal statutes sections 3504(d)(1) and 3516 of title 44, United States Code. The agency, organization or individual requesting the critical-habitat designation must bear the cost of proving presence of the species and this must be done through the use of the best available peer reviewed science.

67. Fish and Game Department

We support:

1. The department using good-neighbor management practices on the land they now own, including fences, pests, noxious weeds, and providing sportsmen with guidance and marked boundaries;

2. The Fish and Game Department controlling the concentration of wildlife numbers on all lands and being prohibited from entering into agreements to limit

access to any area, without approval of the local governing authority;

3. Retaining the December 2016 composition and selection method of the Idaho Fish and Game Commission;

4. Implementing a requirement for non-resident mentored youth hunts where both the non-resident mentor and the mentored youth must purchase matching species tags. Non-resident tags should cost more than resident tags;

5. A Habitat Improvement Program and request Idaho Fish and Game Commission to reflect strong emphasis on multiple use;

6. Reducing the depredation deductible. Compensation by IDFG for crop loss due to depredation shall be for actual loss minus the one-time deductible and should be expediently paid with no pro-rating;

7. Oversight of the depredation account by the Idaho Department of Agriculture with technical support provided by Idaho Fish and Game;

8. Fish and Game being responsible and pay for damages caused by management decisions;

9. Idaho Fish and Game issuing emergency depredation permits to ag producers and landowners to harvest animals that are causing verifiable damage to crops, livestock and property. The issuance of these depredation permits by IDFG and other actions by IDFG to relieve depredation shall be free of conditions that landowners must allow hunting on their land. Landowners should be allowed to determine who hunts and they should be allowed to receive compensation for allowing hunts on their private property;

10. Creating depredation areas for landowners who are annually affected by depredating animals and support mechanisms for quicker response in those areas;

11. The Landowner Appreciation Program (LAP) being made available to anyone owning 320 acres or more and recipients of these tags should be free to do what they wish with the tags; and

12. Investigating transactions between the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game to determine if there is a conflict of interest.

We oppose:

1. The acquisition of additional land by the Fish and Game Department;

2. Any increase in funding for the Idaho

Department of Fish and Game from either the general fund or license fees without showing a specific need or use for the funds;

3. The erection of either permanent or temporary hunting or viewing blinds within 100 feet of a developed livestock watering site on public lands;

4. Idaho Fish and Game abdicating responsibility for year after year losses due to depredation impacts regardless of other reimbursements; and

5. Idaho Fish and Game utilizing animal depredation claims to count against actual production history (APH).

68. Fish and Game—Prior Notification

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game must have permission from the landowner before entering private property.

69. Fish and Game—Private Reservoir Companies

Fish and Game Department shall pay private reservoir companies for the use of that reservoir for fish habitat. The Department should also pay upkeep assessments on reservoirs in which they own water.

70. Fish and Game/U.S. Fish & Wildlife Responsibility

We support:

1. Reform of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game to create local management of the wildlife of Idaho. This program should be site specific to control damage caused from overpopulated species of both game and non-game animals;

2. Requiring state or federal wildlife personnel to file an environmental and economic impact statement before they can release non-native insects or plants in Idaho or make regulations that affect the counties and/or the state;

3. The Idaho State Department of Agriculture's ban on the release of deleterious exotic animals into the State of Idaho; and

4. Requiring all state and federal agency personnel going through the elected county sheriff for all law enforcement.

We oppose:

1. The relocation of wild game and non-game species without proper notice being given to residents and property owners in the area where they are released. Local county officials must receive official notice at least 30 days

prior to any relocation or release, into the wild, of any species raised in captivity;

2. Relocation or release into the wild of wolves or grizzlies that have been raised in captivity; and

3. The Idaho Fish and Game Department engaging in activities that encourage only non-consumptive uses of fish and wildlife species in Idaho.

71. Fish Species Population Management

We support alternative scientific applications to modify fish species population without affecting contractual agreements or causing detrimental effects on flood control, irrigators, recreation and economies.

72. Grizzly Bear

We support:

1. Delisting the grizzly bear from endangered species status;
2. A hunting season on the grizzly;
3. Requiring the costs associated with grizzlies, including triple damages for depredation costs, to be borne by the federal government, and its agencies such as U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services;
4. Paying compensation to state and local agencies when any assistance in the management, control, or defense of the public is needed from such agencies. Compensation to state and local agencies should be paid regardless of whether a request has been made by a federal agency for assistance until such time as the current grizzly bear policy can be changed to allow less conflict with humans and livestock; namely the delisting of the grizzly bear and transfer of management to individual states' authority; and
5. Requiring the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services to coordinate all grizzly bear related activities with the Idaho Fish and Game and local county officials.

We oppose:

1. The reintroduction of grizzly bear into any area of the State of Idaho; and
2. The relocation of any known problem bear that has threatened human safety outside a recovery zone regardless of the number of strikes against it.

73. Introduction of Salmon

We oppose the introduction of salmon above the Brownlee Dam.

74. Invasive Species

We support efforts to remove Asian clams from the waters of Idaho.

We support adequate state funding for inspections of all water craft and other vessels to prevent the spread and infestation of quagga/zebra mussels in Idaho waters.

75. Sage Grouse

We support predator control as a method to increase sage grouse populations. We encourage the use of bounties to control all non-protected sage grouse predators.

We support grazing on public lands as a primary method of increasing sage grouse populations by controlling the amount of vegetation that fuels wildfires.

We support private sector rearing and releasing of sage grouse.

76. Salmon Recovery

We support the following salmon-recovery alternatives:

1. Physically modifying the dams rather than tearing them down or lowering the water levels;
2. Improving barging such as net barge transportation;
3. Privatizing salmon fisheries for stronger fish;
4. Controlling predators of salmon;
5. Utilizing new hydroelectric turbine technologies to achieve the goals of increased power production and reduced hazards to fish; and
6. Regulating harvest of off-shore and instream fish.

77. Snake River Basin Snails

We support the delisting of snail species in the Snake River Basin and the grouping of snail species based on taxonomic/biological similarities.

We oppose the future listing of new snail species.

78. Wolves

We support

1. All methods of year-round wolf control and population management statewide;
2. Funding for government agencies tasked with wolf management and support appropriate compensation for damages incurred by producers;
3. Adding wolves to the IDF&G depredation list so that depredation on livestock can be paid by the IDF&G Big Game Depredation and Prevention Fund; and

4. Requiring when possible, all wolf carcasses to be presented for testing for communicable diseases, especially the tapeworm *Echinococcus granulosus* which causes Hydatid Disease in livestock, elk, deer, and humans.

EASEMENTS

79. Conservation Easements and Scenic Easements

We support continuation of conservation easement agreements and scenic easements or agreements only if the real property involved remains on the tax rolls according to use.

We oppose the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative (Y2Y).

ENERGY

80. Affordable Energy

We support:

1. Transparency in how energy monopolies plan to incur expenses and make investments that are passed on to ratepayers;
2. Thorough, fair and publicly involved process for evaluating rate requests and setting rates; and
3. Increased focus on removing barriers to widely available and affordable sources of energy.

81. Alternative Energy

We support the development of alternative energy.

We oppose a broad moratorium on alternative energy projects.

We support county control in the siting of these projects.

We support sales tax incentives to assist in the development of alternative energy projects of less than one megawatt constructed on or by existing agriculture operations.

We support that alternative energy should not receive subsidies beyond the bulk market rate. Any such contracts shall be allowed to expire.

82. Bonneville Power Administration Credit

We support some type of BPA credit that allows all citizens of Idaho to benefit from the BPA's use of Idaho water for power generation.

83. Electrical Energy

1. Hydroelectric Dams:

We support

- 1.1. The continued careful use of water

as one of our renewable natural resources through existing and the construction of new hydro projects, as future demands for electrical energy increase;

1.2. The adaptation of hydro projects to generate power for sale; and

1.3. The relicensing of dams, including Hells Canyon Complex, using a least cost mitigation plan reflecting the desire for the customers to have a reliable power source at reasonable rates.

2. Renewables:

We Support:

2.1. Utilities operating in Idaho developing economically feasible renewable energy portfolios;

2.2. The construction of economically feasible power generation facilities in Idaho, including those that use plant and/or animal residue or logging slash; and

2.3. An annual true-up for net metering rather than a monthly true-up.

3. Regulations:

We support:

3.1. State agencies removing barriers that prevent utilities from increasing Idaho's power generation capacity; and

3.2. Current laws that require coal fired plants be held to strict standards in the construction, operation and retirement of the facility.

We oppose:

3.1. Any deregulation, reorganization, merger or consolidation of power generation or transmission which could result in loss of water rights, less service or increased rates; and

3.2. The sale of any public utility company operating in the State of Idaho to an entity either partially or wholly owned by a foreign government.

4. Transmission:

We support:

4.1. Upgrades in transmission and distribution. Routing of utility corridors should be placed on public land first and then to the areas of least impact to private property owners; and

4.2. The initiation of on and off ramps in transmission lines within the State of Idaho.

5. PUC Rates:

We oppose:

5.1. Any action by the PUC to move in the direction of inverted block rates or in any major rate design revision that would be detrimental to agriculture.

84. Fossil Fuels

We support the mining and drilling of fossil fuels.

We support the legislature ensuring that rules for oil and natural gas production safeguard the water aquifers for all citizens and protect property owners' rights to use their property.

If a local government entity bans the development of mineral rights in its jurisdiction, it should be considered a property rights "taking" and compensation should be provided to the property owner.

85. Nuclear Energy

We support the generation of electricity from nuclear reactors in meeting our future energy needs and urge the development of permanent disposal sites for radioactive waste material where it will not endanger the aquifer in Idaho.

We support research and development of further usage of radioactive waste materials and safer ways of storage.

We support development of the fast burn sector of nuclear technology which massively reduces or eliminates the need for nuclear waste disposal.

We support the Idaho National Laboratory providing the lead role in advancing the development of this technology.

86. Power Demand Control Program

We support demand control programs as long as current water rights and power usage contracts are protected. These programs must remain on a voluntary basis.

87. Renewable Fuels

We support the promotion and use of alternative fuels made from agricultural products, as long as they are driven by open markets and not economically supported by mandates and government subsidies.

We encourage all state and local governments to assist in developing renewable fuel projects in Idaho.

We support the availability of low-cost fuels, including off-road bio-fuels, for the operation of farms and ranches.

88. Utility Companies

Utility companies that damage public roads should be responsible for restoring roadways to their original state for at least a period of two years.

We support utility companies retaining the liability when underground utility lines are not at the required depths.

We oppose requiring farmers to call dig line in order to work their fields for planting, cultivation and harvesting activities, where underground utility lines exist.

If dig line is required to be used in normal farming cultivation practices, we support the 21-day time constraint being extended as long as flags and or markings for underground utilities are left untouched.

LABOR

89. Legal Aid

We oppose state funding of Idaho Legal Aid Services.

We oppose the uninvited presence of Legal Aid personnel soliciting business on private property.

90. Minimum Wage

We oppose any minimum wage within the state that is higher than the federal minimum wage.

91. New Hire Reporting

We support changes in the Idaho New Hire Reporting Law to extend the reporting date to 60 days.

We support not having to report seasonal temporary workers that work less than 45 days in a year.

92. Unemployment Insurance

Eligibility requirements should be made realistic to reflect agriculture's seasonal employment practices.

93. Workers Compensation

Workers compensation for agricultural employers should provide:

1. Cost control measures and fair base rates;

2. Mediation for agricultural concerns;

3. Protection from third party lawsuits; and

4. Employer protection from worker caused injuries (i.e. drug & alcohol).

We support changes in the existing Workers' Compensation Law that would take into consideration the employee's responsibility when an accident occurs.

We support having the settlement reduced by the percentage that was determined that the worker was responsible.

TAX

94. Agricultural Property Tax Shifts

We are opposed to shifting property tax to agricultural real estate.

95. Assessed Value of Ag Production Land

We support ag land being assessed at its actual use value for taxation purposes.

We support:

1. Assessed values being capped at a 5% increase in any given year;
2. The retention of five-acre minimum productivity option and the Bare Land & Yield Option for forest lands; and
3. Legislation that allows county commissioners to appeal an assessment change by the Idaho State Tax Commission for a category of property.

We oppose:

1. The State Tax Commission having power to equalize county property tax assessments.

96. Budget Caps

We oppose the loosening, removal or alteration in any way or the granting of an exemption from limitations and restraints placed by present Idaho law on units of local government, community colleges, school districts, etc., in increasing local property taxes.

We oppose the creation of additional tax entities that could be exempt from such limitations and restraints.

97. Fuel Tax

We support the refund of tax paid on fuel used off-road.

We support having non-taxed dyed-fuel available for off-road use.

98. Impact Fees

We support local impact fees on new or expanding developments to pay for the services required to support growth.

We support simplification of current impact fee rules and procedures.

99. Investment Tax Credit

We support retention of the current three percent investment tax credit provisions, or an increase in the credit.

100. Local Option Taxation

We support local option taxation when used specifically for projects that would have been paid for with property tax dollars.

101. Maximum Levy Rights

We oppose raising the maximum statutory levy rates for any taxing authority.

102. Personal Tax Privacy Rights

We oppose the county assessor's office requiring personal tax information to establish land use.

103. Property Tax

We oppose budget increases and foregone balances that current Idaho State Law allows for local governments.

We support limiting yearly property assessment increases to a maximum of the state inflation rate.

We support legislation that would allow county tax assessments and collection on property that has been purchased by non-profit groups and placed in tax exempt status, such as a tax code that covers environmental tax-exempt classification.

We support exempting all equipment used in the production of agricultural commodities from personal property tax.

We support efforts to amend the Idaho Forest Tax Law to allow forest landowners to designate and maintain multiple timberland parcels under respective Bare Land and Yield (Category 6) or Productivity (Category 7) classifications.

104. Property Tax-Funding Local Government and Schools

We support:

1. Gradually reducing the property tax burden to fund public schools and local government;
2. Legislation mandating that plant facilities levy monies can be used only for capital expenditures related to school operation and maintenance;
3. The creation of standardized mandatory full disclosure of the school district's revenues and expenditures that are related to extracurricular activities; separated into curriculum and athletics, and budgeted in standard categories of salaries, transportation, supplies, and capital expenditures; and
4. Removing the school budget stabilization levy that was authorized in the 2006 Special Legislative Session, unless it is supported by a local vote.

We oppose:

1. Judges being allowed to levy taxes;
2. Indefinite or permanent supplemental school levies on taxpayers,

regardless of the number of consecutive levies passed; and

3. School districts carrying over plant facilities levy funds to finance the construction of new buildings or the acquisition of additional property.

105. Sales Tax

We oppose removing the sales tax exemption on production items.

We support legislation that would exempt nonprofit organizational fund-raising from paying sales tax on those receipts.

106. Services Tax

We oppose all tax on services.

107. Special Taxing Districts

We support a requirement that all new taxing districts must be approved by a 66-2/3% majority vote of the registered voters within a district.

We support legislation allowing special taxing districts to be funded by a household fee. All taxing districts that charge fees should be under the same three percent cap that applies to counties and municipalities.

We support giving library districts the option to be funded by a household fee rather than through an ad valorem tax. If the library district chooses the household fee option, any bonds they pass must also be paid through household fees.

We support a 10-year sunset on all special taxing districts, after which they would require re-authorization by the voters to continue.

108. State Budget

We support zero-based budgeting.

We support a constitutional amendment limiting state spending to a calculation determined by population growth and economic growth of the state.

We oppose balancing budget shortfalls by any tax increase.

We oppose any state funding of Planned Parenthood.

109. Super Majority

We support retaining the 66-2/3% majority vote as required in the Idaho State Constitution for bond levies.

We oppose circumventing the required two-thirds majority by creative financing options.

110. Tax Compensation for Federal and State Managed Lands

We recommend that a fee in lieu of taxes be assessed on all lands removed from tax rolls by state or federal agency management. We favor an annual fee equivalent to local private property tax on land.

111. Tax Liens

We oppose the recording of federal tax liens (IRS) by the county recorder without due process of law.

112. Tax Refund Extension

We support income tax assessments and income tax refunds having the same statute of limitations.

113. Taxing Districts Sharing Administrators

We encourage similar taxing districts to share administrators and secretaries on a county-wide or multi-district basis to help ease the tax burden of administration.

114. Urban Renewal Districts

We support the repeal of urban renewal laws.

LOCAL AFFAIRS

115. Annexation

We are opposed to areas adjacent to a city being annexed into the city unless a two-thirds majority of those owning property in the area proposed for annexation vote in favor of the annexation.

116. County Commissioners

We encourage county commissioners to develop a Natural Resource Plan per NEPA guidelines that clearly states the objectives and policies of the county in regard to management of the natural resources located on public lands in their county.

We encourage county commissioners to invoke the "coordination mandate" of Congress set forth in federal statutes with the public land management agencies plans and actions that may negatively impact the county's economy, culture and heritage.

We support the formation of a formal ANRAC (Agriculture & Natural Resources Advisory Committee) or NRAC (Natural Resources Advisory Committee) within each county.

117. Distribution of Federal Fines

We support legislation that would require public notification of the distribution of fines collected by the governmental agencies in that county.

We support legislation that would require federal agencies to return a portion of federal fines collected in the county where the infraction occurred.

118. Elections

We support:

1. Allowing Idaho residents who own real property in a taxing district to vote on any tax proposal in that district;
2. Consolidation of all elections, including school bonds/levies to the May and November elections;
3. Requiring a minimum of 30% voter turnout if a school bond/levy election occurs on March or August dates;
4. A Mandatory pre-registration requirement to be eligible to vote in all local bond elections;
5. Requiring photo identification, proof of residency and proof of U.S. citizenship for new voter registration;
6. Pay raises for elected officials only taking effect after the official stands again for election; and
7. Changing the number of members of the Idaho redistricting commission to 7 with the majority on the commission reflecting the current partisan makeup of the legislature; and
8. Absentee ballots with verification of identity and signatures.

We oppose:

1. Unsolicited mail-in voting and vote harvesting practices.

119. Emergency Response Fees

We oppose the imposition of a "crash tax" to cover the cost of cleaning up spills at the site of an accident.

We favor reducing regulatory burdens which prohibit low-cost clean-up solutions.

120. Public Hearings

Public hearings that affect a given area of the state must be held in the area that is affected, at a reasonable time and date for those impacted.

121. Zoning

County commissioners should control all zoning in the county. Zoning should be site specific within the county.

We oppose the use of blanket zoning ordinances, including sustainable

development and smart-growth initiatives.

We recognize and encourage the use of planning tools allowed under state law to encourage planned and orderly growth in or near agricultural areas.

EDUCATION

122. Adolescent Nutrition

We support school districts offering dairy products, healthy nutritional snacks and fruit juices in vending machines on school premises.

123. Ag in the Classroom

We support "Ag in the Classroom" in school curriculum to increase student literacy of agriculture.

We support an increase in funding for Ag in the classroom.

124. Career Technical Education

We support enhanced funding for Idaho's Career & Technical Education, Agricultural Science and Technology courses and programs.

125. Contracts for Teachers

We recommend that the tenure system for school teachers be eliminated and replaced with contracts based on evaluation and performance.

We support the concept of incentive pay that will improve teacher excellence.

School teachers should have the option of being able to negotiate their own contract with the school district as a private contractor.

126. Education Funding

We support that funding be made available from the state endowment fund's reserve account to be used to maintain/replace existing buildings and facilities in school districts throughout the state.

Endowment funds designated for public schools should be used for school funding only.

127. Education Standards and Assessments

We support using:

1. Professionally established standards and assessments that can be modified to reflect locally recognized educational values, goals and philosophy; and
2. Standards to ensure the progression of a student that reflect a comprehension of the subject.

128. Knowledge of Constitution

We support requiring students graduating from Idaho schools to have a thorough understanding of the Constitution and the form of government that it gives us in accordance with the original intent of the founders.

129. Local Control of Education

We encourage the State Board of Education and the Idaho Legislature to refuse federal funds aimed at promoting control of educational programs in public schools by the federal government.

We support the repeal of the federal education program, Common Core and SBAC testing, in the State of Idaho.

We oppose the gathering of personal information of students that is not related to their academic education without parental consent.

130. Mandatory Agriculture Education Class

We support state legislation requiring all high school students to take Ag-Ed in order to graduate, utilizing current STEM classes already available.

131. No Increase in School Time

We oppose increasing required school hours beyond 990 hours per year.

132. Parental Choice in Education

We support the voucher system for education.

We support the continuing freedom of Idaho parents to choose private school, parochial school, home school, public charter school or public school as prescribed in the Idaho Constitution and in Idaho Code.

We support optional kindergarten.

We oppose public funding of pre-kindergarten.

We support legislation amending the Blaine Amendment, Section 5, Article IX of the Constitution of the State of Idaho to provide for an educational system of grants or monetary assistance in which the money follows the child.

133. Veterinary Students

We support an increase from eleven (11) to fifteen (15) seats per year for Idaho residents in the Washington-Idaho Cooperative Veterinary Medical Education Program.

STATE AFFAIRS

134. Agricultural Research and Extension

We request the legislature examine the role of the University of Idaho as the land grant college and take steps to ensure the university honors its commitment as our agricultural research facility. The university should be on the same budgeting system as the State of Idaho.

We recommend that extension activities assist farm programs on a first-priority basis, including the integrated Farm Management Program.

We believe that county agents should be first and foremost county agricultural agents.

We support:

1. The University of Idaho Agricultural Research and Extension Service and urge the Legislature to adequately fund this vital program;

2. Adequate funding to the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences to allow research to develop new improved varieties of seed that are classed as public varieties;

3. Expanded research and education in all crop areas relative to Idaho. This must also include new and improved plant and animal varieties along with effective insect, pest, disease and weed controls;

4. An informational exchange and cooperative effort within the tri-state area in agchemical registration and research as well as plant/animal variety improvement research. Every effort should be made by state and county officials and the University of Idaho to retain an agricultural extension agent in each county as an extension service of our land grant university. Strong pressure must be exerted to revitalize and improve the agricultural information and education programs;

5. The hiring of new extension educators in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences with primary training and experience in commercial agriculture and forestry; and

6. Full funding, from both federal and state governments, for operations and research at the current U.S. Sheep Experiment Station, including continuous research on the effects of grazing and sage grouse habitat, and the relationship between wildfire and grazing.

135. ATV Safety

We oppose the creation of a mandatory class or special license for the ability to ride an ATV on private or public land.

136. Ballot Initiative

We support requiring all ballot initiatives to collect signatures from 6% of registered voters in each of the 35 legislative districts.

We oppose taxes being levied through the initiative process.

137. Bicycle Safety

We support bicyclists using public roadways be subject to the same laws that motorists must obey.

138. Cell Phone Use

We oppose any legislation that would ban cell phone use in vehicles for voice communication.

139. Commercial Auction Company Bonding

We support legislation that would require licensing and bonding of commercial auction companies.

140. Constitutional Defense Fund

We support adding another leadership position to the existing four-member council when voting on the distribution of Constitutional Defense Funds.

141. County Fairs

We support the review and revision of all county fair related state statutes to better reflect current year-round fairground operations under the administration of local appointed fair boards even above the 200,000-county population limit.

142. Cross Deputization of Law Enforcement Officers

We believe that cross deputization of county sheriffs and any tribal law enforcement officers should be voluntary.

143. Definition of Agricultural Buildings

We support changes to Idaho Code to define agricultural buildings as follows:

1. They are buildings where agricultural products are stored, housed or grown;

2. They are buildings where agricultural equipment, including licensed vehicles that are used in the production of agriculture can be fixed, repaired or stored;

3. They are buildings that are used for the normal servicing of an agricultural business; and

4. They can be used by employees as a place of employment as well as a place to have meals and take bathroom breaks as required by GAP (Good Agricultural Practices).

144. Executive Branch MOU/MOA

We oppose actions by the governor entering into Memorandums of Understanding or Memorandums of Agreement without legislative oversight and approval.

We support granting the legislature the ability to override a governor's veto after the session is adjourned.

145. Falsifying Reports

Knowingly filing a false report and/or complaint to any agency shall be considered a misdemeanor and the perpetrator should be required to pay damages and/or expenses to the individual that was falsely accused as well as the investigating agency.

146. Hazardous Waste

We believe that each state should, to the extent possible, take the responsibility for treatment and disposal of hazardous waste generated in its state and that these waste products be disposed of in the most feasible manner that will not endanger life or resources.

We believe that hazardous material and hazardous waste should be kept separate in the law.

We support a statewide hazardous materials clean-up day.

147. Health Insurance

We support:

1. Private optional health insurance;
2. Legislation that permits, promotes, and/or assists:
 - 2.1. In individual health savings accounts with tax free withdrawals for all health insurance premiums;
 - 2.2. In free market solutions to health care costs and access;
 - 2.3. In free clinics funded by local community/faith-based organizations; and
 - 2.4. In development of Direct Primary Care in Idaho supporting the offering of wraparound health insurance policies.

3. Health insurance as a risk management tool by reducing and/or eliminating the number of mandated services.

We oppose:

1. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and fines for individuals and employers who refuse to carry health insurance; and
2. Any legislation to require employers to carry health insurance on their employees whether they are seasonal or full-time.

148. Judicial Confirmation

We support the repeal of the "Judicial Confirmation," Title 7, Chapter 13, Idaho Code, for ordinary and necessary expenses.

149. Legislative Testimony

We support accepting testimony at legislative hearings via remote audio/visual technology to be managed by the sponsorship of a legislator.

150. Liability and Tort Claims

We support current Idaho Statutes dealing with liability and tort claims and will resist any effort to weaken or erode them.

151. Marijuana

We support marijuana staying on the class 1 list of banned controlled substances in the State of Idaho.

152. Medicaid

We support:

1. Repeal of Medicaid Expansion;
2. Informing the taxpayers each year of the cost of Medicaid expansion and the effect on state budgets;
3. Elimination of the Idaho State CAT Fund; and
4. Medicaid expansion being paid for with State of Idaho general funds.

We oppose:

1. County property taxes paying any portion of Medicaid expansion.

153. Mental and Behavioral Health

We support programs and initiatives that address mental and behavioral health issues that affect veterans, agricultural and rural communities statewide.

154. One Senator Per County

We support an amendment to change the Idaho Constitution to allow one senator per county.

155. Private Property Rights/Eminent Domain

We support:

1. Defining private property to include, but not be limited to, all land, crops, timber, water rights, mineral rights, all other appurtenances and any other consideration associated with land ownership;
2. An Idaho Constitutional Amendment defining public use as found in the eminent domain doctrine to prohibit the condemnation of private property for

economic development or any use by private parties. If private property is taken, compensation must be prompt, just and adequate;

3. Compensating landowners in the cases of partial taking of real property, when government-imposed regulations cause a loss in value of private property. Landowners or tenants shall not be held liable for any damages incurred as a result of the condemnation. Entities condemning property shall assume liability for any damages incurred by landowners.

4. The federal and state "takings" law in support of the U.S. Constitution, Article V; and

5. Amending the State Building Code to prevent infringement on private property rights through excessive permit requirements.

We oppose:

1. Landowners having lands adjacent to federal and or state lands should not be forced through coercion or fear of imprisonment to allow new easements across their land for public access to federal and state lands. The taking of property or easements should be permitted only when there is eminent domain;

2. The use of eminent domain for recreational purposes, for private economic development or to expand the land holding of wildlife agencies;

3. Any infringement of private property rights caused by regulations of rivers and dams for endangered species;

4. Infringement on private property rights caused by highway districts and transportation departments; and

5. Governmental taking of private property rights by restriction of use without just and due compensation.

156. Proprietary Information

We oppose laws requiring insurance companies or other private business entities to provide proprietary information to state or federal agencies.

157. Public Employees Bargaining

We believe that public employees, when negotiating contracts, should be separate entities in themselves, and by statute not allowed to delegate or reassign their negotiating rights to professional negotiating forces.

158. Re-Establish Congressional Lawmaking Responsibility

We support the state legislature in its efforts to encourage Congress to reclaim its constitutional responsibility of making law.

159. Refugees in the United States

We oppose sheltering refugees who do not agree to uphold American constitutional government and values.

We oppose any refugee program that adds increased stress to local services. We support any county that chooses to refuse or remove refugee programs in their county.

160. Regulation Reform

We support:

1. Complete review of existing regulations to determine their effectiveness and appropriateness prior to assigning more restrictive regulations; and

2. Peer review of the existing regulations to determine their potential to mitigate the problems they address.

161. Regulatory Fines

The remedy for any violation of federal and state agency rules should be to fix the problem rather than to pay fines unless the violation rises to the level of a felony.

162. Rights-of-Way

Any party who controls or obtains title to a right-of-way must be responsible for maintaining fences, drainage systems, all field and road crossings, controlling noxious weeds and any other agreement that might have been in existence on any such acquired rights-of-way before the corridor changed management.

We Support:

1. Access to or through federal lands using RS2477;

2. Allowing county commissioners the ability to determine the validity of an RS2477 claim, the right to move an RS2477 when it occurs on private land and the ability to temporarily close an RS2477 for resource reasons. To prevent the misuse of RS2477 claims, we recognize the superiority of a property's title over RS2477 claims; and

3. Enactment of legislation to require that adjacent landowners be given priority to purchase at fair market value lands that have been vacated by railways, power companies, roadways, etc.

We oppose:

1. Committing easement rights-of-way obtained by public or private sectors to any new or additional purpose, either during their original usage or after abandonment, without consent of the owner of the land underlying the easement. Upon abandonment of railway or utility rights-of-way or leases, all property and rights associated with such rights-of-way or leases should revert to the current owner of the original tract; and

2. The use of RS2477 as a tool for the taking of private property without just compensation as prescribed in the Constitution.

163. Right to Bear Arms

We oppose any abridgment of the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which protects the right to keep and bear arms.

We support current law that allows law-abiding citizens the right to bear arms and be free from legal jeopardy when protecting themselves, their families and their property.

We oppose the retaining of personal records collected by the FBI as a result of firearms purchase background checks. The dangerous weapons code should be updated to reflect these rights in the home, the place of business or in motor vehicles.

We declare all firearms and ammunition made and retained in-state are beyond the authority of the federal government.

We support expanding reciprocity with other states for concealed carry permits.

164. Road Closures

We believe when any government entity closes a road, use on these roads for commodity production should be exempted from the closure.

We oppose the closure of any existing roads.

165. Road Infrastructure on State Endowment Lands

We support the Idaho Department of Lands hiring or contracting a transportation planner to organize road infrastructure on endowment lands.

166. State Agencies

We support:

1. The Soil Conservation Commission or successor entity advising and aiding

local Soil Conservation Districts by providing technical support and funding at the statutory level;

2. Representation by an agricultural producer on the Board of Regents for Idaho's land grant university and on the Idaho Fish and Game Commission;

3. Legislation to require that government rules and regulations, wherever applicable, be based upon supportive disciplinary peer reviewed scientific data and that wherever policies, rules or regulations do not meet this standard the responsible individual and/or individuals can be held liable;

4. When a state law enforcement agency makes an arrest, there should be a means provided to reimburse the county for all costs associated in maintaining the prisoner; and

5. The legislature reviewing agency rules. In order to approve a new rule, both the House and Senate must agree. A rule shall be rejected if either the House or Senate does not approve.

We oppose:

1. Combining, splitting or changing government agencies without the approval of users of the services; and
2. Regulating any phase of farm and ranch business by any state agency that does not have an agricultural representative as a member of its policy making board or committee.

167. State Hatch Act

We favor restoring the State Hatch Act, 67-5311 Limitation of Political Activity, to its original form and content.

168. State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

We oppose the expansion of the authority of the SHPO and oppose any state funding.

169. State Legal Reform

We Support:

1. Reform of the state's civil justice system, which would cure or substantially solve many of the problems farmers face with hostile, harassing legal services lawsuits. Any person or organization that sues to prevent livestock operation siting, or the use of agriculture or resource management practices, should be required to post a bond in a reasonable amount, which will be forfeited to the defendant to help defray their costs in the event that the suit is unsuccessful;

2. Legislation by the Idaho Legislature that would require any entity bringing such lawsuits to post substantial bonds based on the potential harm of the lawsuit. Individuals who file complaints against an agricultural operation and request an investigation must pay a fee to cover administration costs. Complete names, addresses and phone numbers are required on each complaint;

3. Legislation to elect district judges when appointments are made within one year of the next election;

4. Entities from outside the jurisdiction of taxing districts that file lawsuits against public entities should be required to pay all legal expenses;

5. Legislation to amend Idaho state statutes to ensure that justice and equity prevail in the awarding of attorney fees;

6. Idaho courts using only the United States and Idaho laws in the court system;

7. As a matter of equity, when a private party must act in the place of the Attorney General to enforce and protect the Idaho Constitution and statutes, the Idaho Legislature must reimburse the party for all reasonable attorney fees and costs if the courts fail to do so; and

8. Requiring judges to inform jurors of the legality of jury nullification.

170. States' Rights and Sovereignty

We support a law stating that Idaho and all political subdivisions of the state are prohibited from using any personnel or financial resources to enforce, administer or cooperate with an executive order issued by the President of the United States that has not been affirmed by a vote of the Congress of the United States and signed into law as prescribed by the Constitution of the United States.

171. Transportation

We support:

1. Continuation of independent road districts without oversight by county commissioners;

2. The Idaho Transportation Department utilizing revenue sources efficiently to maintain and construct Idaho roads;

3. The Idaho Transportation Department increasing their cost saving efforts;

4. The sales tax collected from vehicles (vehicles, batteries, tires and other general parts) going to road maintenance;

5. Increases in gross weights with axle weights non-changing;

6. The continued use of long combination vehicles (LCVs);

7. The Idaho Transportation Department policy of issuing oversize load permits for Idaho public roads;

8. The continued improvement of Idaho's agricultural roadways;

9. Accountability of highway transportation department's engineers for the cost over-runs and/or miscalculations for wrongful designs of highway projects;

10. Increasing permit fees on loads exceeding 200,000 GVW to be comparable with fees in surrounding states;

11. The review of current Idaho Transportation Department policies regarding economics of maintenance versus new construction of roadways;

12. Expenses for environmental studies and the expenses required to meet the mandated environmental standards being calculated and tabulated on an environmental budget and not included in the Highway Construction and Maintenance budget;

13. Construction and/or improvement of a North-South Highway to the Canadian border;

14. Port districts in Idaho that help move agricultural commodities;

15. Access of agricultural implements of husbandry and vehicles to any and all local, county and state roads/highways in Idaho, and oppose the imposition of any minimum speed requirements;

16. Alternative solutions to wildlife overpasses.

17. The Idaho Transportation Department allowing axle weight limit violations for livestock and commodity haulers to be waived as long as the truck's gross weight is less than or equal to the maximum weight-limit;

18. 129,000 GVW limits on all highways within the state that can accommodate the weight;

19. 115 feet vehicle lengths when the highways can accommodate the length;

20. Universal off-track standards for highways within Idaho;

21. Increases in automobile liability minimums to a level to cover reasonable medical and replacement costs; and

22. Stricter penalties for drivers of vehicles without insurance.

We oppose:

1. A tax or fee increase on fuel;

2. A tax or fee increase on vehicles;

3. The removal of the Port of Entry

system from the Department of Transportation; and

4. Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) wildlife overpass construction unless wildlife overpasses are the most effective solution.

172. Trespass

We support:

1. Programs to educate the public about private property rights and about trespass laws. Landowners retain the right to refuse access within the current law;

2. IDFG making a concerted effort to educate hunters about private property rights and the location of private property in their hunting regulations and maps. It is the hunters' responsibility to know where they can hunt, and not the landowners' responsibility to mark or post their property;

3. Making it unlawful to enter any facility to use or attempt to use a camera, video recorder, or any other video or audio recording device without permission from the owner or authorized agent;

4. A law placing the burden of trespass on the trespasser instead of the landowner; and

5. Mandatory education regarding current trespass laws and private property rights in the Hunter education program.

173. Tribal Jurisdiction on Reservations

We support the requirement that tribes and the affected municipalities and counties collaborate and coordinate to ensure that the best interests of the tribe and the surrounding communities are served if a tribe submits a retrocession resolution to the governor.

We oppose any act by the State of Idaho to return to the federal government any jurisdiction acquired over Indian tribes under Federal Public Law 280.

174. Unfunded Mandates

All new laws passed by the legislature that put financial burdens on the counties or cities should be funded by the state.

175. Welfare Reform

Believing that all people should productively engage in providing for their own sustainability, we support elimination of welfare in Idaho replacing it with work programs.

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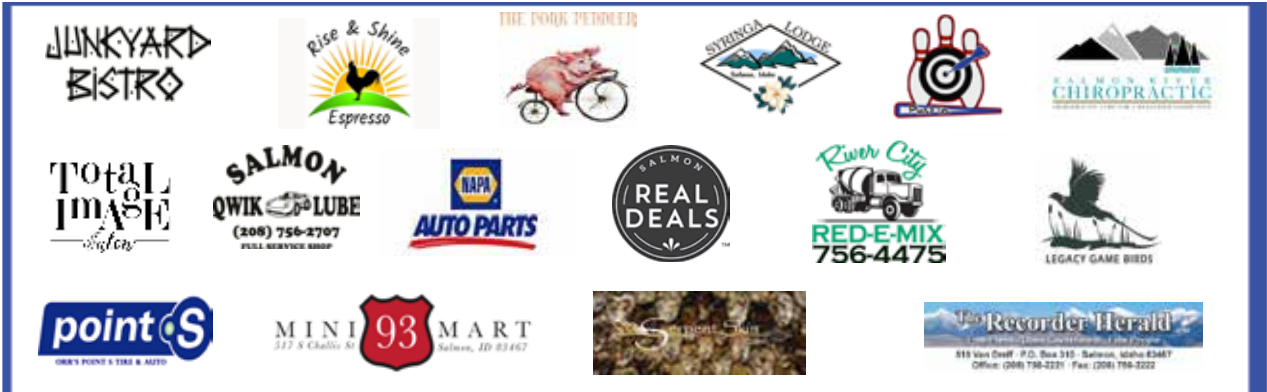
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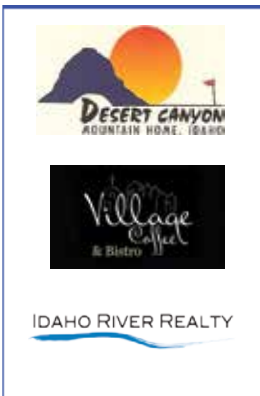
CENTRAL IDAHO



EASTERN IDAHO



SOUTHWEST IDAHO



SOUTHCENTRAL IDAHO



NORTH IDAHO



Word Search

Hop Varieties

N	T	R	P	M	C	N	Y	C	R	W	Z	H	C	L
C	O	L	U	M	B	U	S	I	M	C	O	E	B	M
H	M	R	E	T	S	U	L	C	A	L	Y	P	S	O
I	A	B	T	M	C	P	W	E	D	A	C	S	A	C
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Amarillo

Apollo

Bravo

Calypso

Cascade

Cashmere

Chinook

Citra

Cluster

Columbus

Comet

Crystal

El Dorado

Eureka

Super Galena

Galena

Hallertauer

Idaho

Mosaic

HBC

Northern Brewer

Saaz

Simcoe

Tomahawk

Triumph

Willamette

Zeus

YCR

MILLER

Continued from page 8

However, we also love sports, acting, music, dance, rodeos, etc., and we pay others to compete and perform. So why the fear to be one that steps forward?

That question can never really be answered. I love this quote from Sheryl Sandberg: “What would you do if you weren’t afraid?”

I know that Marquee Ricks has had more comfortable days than those when she competed in the Discussion Meet but were those days of more comfortable living more memorable than the stress, anxiety, and adrenaline of competing against the best in the nation?

I do not know, but I have my suspicions.

How often do we, and I do mean we – I perhaps need this lesson the most – make choices based upon our fears, anxieties, or doubts? What would our actions look like if we could move past these negative doubts?

The not-so-well-kept secret of the Discussion Meet is this it is a competition to help train our young leaders not to be afraid to share their intelligence with the world.

Farm Bureau invests in our youth, both for them and for all of us. If fear can be removed from the equation, imagine what each of us could do for our communities, counties, state, and even nation by stepping forward and sharing our thoughts.

I believe in the silent majority’s wisdom, and when those that overcome their fears speak, we all become stronger. ■

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Photo by Chris Schnepf

Tree heights are common forest measurement.

Sharpening your forestry lens with plots

By Chris Schnepf
University of Idaho

Anyone who decides to get a degree in forestry, or any degree in the sciences, quickly discovers, sometimes to their dismay, that there is a lot of math involved.

To be sure, there is also plenty of study in biology, ecology, silviculture, forest policy, wildlife, soils, hydrology, entomology, wood products, and many other subjects.

But forestry often requires measuring a variety of forest attributes. Some of these are individual tree attributes, such as species, height (one of the few times in life where I use trigonometry), and diameter, all of which help you estimate board-foot volume.

Other forest attributes are more collective measures of forests, such as stand density

(trees per acre, basal area), canopy closure, etc.

It is not usually practical to measure every tree in a forest. Instead, we typically take a sample (again more math, this time, statistics) and use that data to make estimates about the forest overall.

Taking measure of a forest is often called a “timber cruise” and typically involves a set of randomly or systematically located sample plots on which we can measure a whole variety of forest attributes, including tree heights, tree diameters, tree volume, understory tree regeneration, understory coverage of different plants, coarse woody debris, fuel loads, or anything else we want to estimate.

Many plots are made by measuring tree and forest attributes on small pieces of land –



anywhere from 1/100th to 1/5th acres each.

Estimates of stand volume in our region are most commonly made by sampling trees instead of units of land. Trees are identified from a set of randomly or systematically selected points, from which individual trees are selected using an angle gauge or glass prism (often called variable plot cruising).

We have a variety of extension publications that can help forest owners measure trees and plots (see below). Or you can come to our class on Sept. 2 in Sandpoint.

However, if you are estimating sellable volume for a timber sale, you may want to hire a costing forester, as they typically have more experience regarding the amount of defect in any logs you want to sell.

But here I'm going to pivot a bit. Even if you hire a forester, it is still good to measure a few plots on your own.

Forestry educators are fond of saying that there is no substitute for getting people out in the woods, something that has been made painfully clear by how our extension field programming has been hampered by COVID.

During extension field programs on pre-commercial thinning or reforestation, we commonly have participants take a few stocking plots. First, we ask people to guess-timate trees per acre in a lodgepole thicket before they take the plot.

Then we pass out ropes 11.8 feet long (the radius for a circular plot that is one-hundredth of an acre in size). This plot size makes the math easy – you simply count trees and multiply by 100 to get a stems-per-acre estimate.

Participants in this activity often guess hundreds of trees per acre and discover upon measurement that there are thousands (i.e., they count 50 trees in a 1/100th acre plot to yield 5,000 stems to the acre).

We do the same kind of plots in tree planting workshops, and people discover many more (often very small) seedlings than they realized.

Measurements from such plots provide real, usable stand data, if they are distributed in an unbiased way and a sufficient number of plots are measured across the site. However, when we do these plots in an education program, their primary value is focusing participants' attention.



Photo by Chris Schnepf

Looking closely at small plots can reveal previously unnoticed forest features.

For that purpose, taking a few plots is worth doing even if you don't want to mess with getting a statistically adequate sample.

That is because taking a plot focuses your attention, or put another way, changes the lens through which you see your forest.

That ultimately informs your intuition and understanding of your forest, bringing some things into focus that you might not have noticed on a casual stroll through the woods, valuable as such walks may be.

That is particularly true if you are studying understory features, such as tree seedlings or coverage of different types of plants (plant coverage plots are also a staple in range management).

In the process, you may see plants you never noticed before. You may discover new invasive weeds. Many landowners on moist sites may discover they had more white pine or western hemlock seedlings than they knew.

If you really want a good example of how much you can learn by taking a closer look at a smaller piece of your forest, I would highly recommend reading a Pulitzer-nominated book by David George Haskell titled, *The Forest Unseen: A Year's Watch in Nature*.

The author spends time every month closely examining the same one-meter plot of eastern hardwood forest. He goes into great, poetic detail about what he sees in

those examinations.

Of course, he has extensive training in biology and ecology, so he can see and articulate features many of us would not. Learning more about forest biology and ecology is another part of improving your forestry lens.

So, take some plots. Even if you do not take enough to make a statistically valid estimate about your forest, you will gain insights, understandings, and most importantly, new questions about your forest you might not have imagined.

You may also add a little more sanity to your day in times when many of us may spend too much time looking at screens. Perhaps bring younger family members with you, too!

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.

References:

Basic Forest Inventory Techniques for Family Forest Owners. PNW 630. <https://pubs.extension.wsu.edu/basic-forest-inventory-techniques-for-family-forest-owners>

The Forest Unseen: A Year's Watch in Nature. David George Haskell. Penguin, New York. 2012. 270 pp. ■

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

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Photo by Sean Ellis

A foreign agricultural guest worker here under the federal H-2A visa program prunes trees in an orchard near Fruitland in 2019. A court-ordered injunction has blocked a new U.S. Department of Labor rule that would have frozen minimum H-2A wage rates for two years.

Blocking of new H-2A rule leaves farmers with uncertainty

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – A new U.S. Department of Labor rule that would have frozen the minimum wage that farmers and ranchers must pay H-2A foreign agricultural guest workers for two years has been halted by a court injunction.

A new DOL rule that went into effect Dec. 21 changed how the minimum H-2A wage is determined. It also froze H-2A minimum wages for most ag jobs for the

2021 and 2022 seasons before a new methodology for determining the wages was set to go into effect.

But on Dec. 23, a federal district court judge in California issued an injunction preventing the DOL from implementing the rule. The court ruling, in addition to eliminating the two-year freeze on H-2A minimum wages, ordered the department to instead use its previous methodology for determining minimum H-2A wage rates.

The national average H-2A wage rate increased by 21 percent from 2015 to 2020.

Many farmers and ranchers set their 2021 budgets and contracts assuming H-2A wage rates would be frozen this year and in 2022.

But with the overturning of the rule, producers who use the federal H-2A visa program have no idea right now what they will have to pay their foreign guest workers this year.

Across the United States, farmers, ranchers and other agricultural operations use more than 250,000 H-2A workers in a given year. More than 600 ag operations in Idaho applied for H-2A workers in 2019

and more than 5,000 workers were certified.

The court injunction results in a lot of uncertainty for farmers who use the federal H-2A visa program, said Joel Anderson, executive director of the Snake River Farmers Association, a non-profit group of agricultural producers that helps members process H-2A applications.

“It creates uncertainty and challenges because we keep having to change gears,” he said. “It’s very tough.”

The federal H-2A agricultural guest worker program allows ag producers who can’t find enough domestic workers to bring in foreign guest workers to fill jobs on a temporary or seasonal basis.

Besides paying for their housing and transportation to and from the United States, farm operations that use H-2A workers must pay them a minimum wage mandated by the federal government.

That wage, which varies by state, is determined annually by the U.S. Department of Labor based on USDA farm labor wage surveys of non-supervisory farm and ranch workers in a particular area.

The rate is known as the adverse effect wage rate or AEW. R.

There have been significant increases and variability in AEW. R. rates over the years. In 2019, the AEW. R. rate increased 16 percent in Idaho.

The AEW. R. wage rates for each state for the coming year are usually known by this time, Anderson said, but now it appears the 2021 rates won’t be released until the first part of February.

And, because the two-year freeze on minimum H-2A wages is now gone, there is no guarantee the rates won’t increase substantially.

“To have to stop and then start again puts growers in a difficult position because ... you’re budgeting and contracting for the coming growing season without any clue what hourly wage you’re going to have to pay your workers,” Anderson said.

Jennifer Uranga, who owns Mountain West Ag Consulting, which specializes in H-2A issues, said she’s been busy since the injunction fielding phone calls from producers who are filled with uncertainty.

One person who called was almost in tears, she said. Many farmers are very



Photo by Sean Ellis

A foreign agricultural guest worker here under the federal H-2A visa program prunes trees in an orchard near Fruitland in 2019. A court-ordered injunction has blocked a new U.S. Department of Labor rule that would have frozen minimum H-2A wage rates for two years.

concerned about what the 2021 AEW. R. rate will be because of some big jumps in the rate in past years, she added.

From 2018 to 2019, the AEW. R. rate in Idaho jumped by 16 percent, from \$11.63 to \$13.48.

“This has kind of thrown a loop into everything,” Uranga said. “It’s left the farmers with so much uncertainty.”

Many farmers who use H-2A workers say the unpredictability of AEW. R. rates from one year to the next shows the formula used to determine them is unreliable and flawed. Over the past 10 years, H-2A wage rates have been highly variable and uncertain.

Idaho hop farmer Mike Gooding said the 16 percent increase in Idaho’s AEW. R. rate in 2019 was absurd. He believes the formula used to determine those rates is arbitrary and not based on the reality of what is really happening on the farm.

“The wages we had to pay that year were considerably higher than what we were paying for local ag labor,” he said. “There was nobody who paid 16 percent more for local ag labor from one year to the next. Nobody.”

The DOL’s new but now overturned rule would have replaced the methodology DOL uses for determining the AEW. R. rate with

an annually adjusted wage rate based on the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Employment Cost Index.

The rule would have frozen AEW. R. rates for two years and after that, the AEW. R. rate would have been indexed to the percent change in the ECI for the previous 12 months.

“For example,” American Farm Bureau Federation Economist John Newton wrote in a November analysis of the new rule, “in 2023, if the ECI for the previous 12 months increased by 3 percent, then all H-2A AEW. R. s nationwide will be increased by 3 percent from the prior-year’s level.”

According to the AFBF analysis of the new rule, the average H-2A wage rate across the United States increased by 21 percent from 2015 to 2020 and by almost 6 percent from 2019 to 2020.

During that same time, according to BLS data, labor costs across the broader U.S. economy rose by 13.5 percent from 2015-2020 and by less than 3 percent from 2019 to 2020.

Anderson said it appears unlikely the injunction will be overturned because in his ruling, U.S. District Judge Dale Drozd said the United Farm Workers union, which brought the lawsuit that targeted the DOL rule, would likely prevail in its case. ■



Photos by Bob Smathers

This is a photo of a hay field on the Rider Ranch near Coeur d'Alene. With agricultural land in Kootenai County quickly being replaced by houses, The Kootenai-Shoshone County Farm Bureau is focusing heavily on educating local folks about where their food really comes from.

Kootenai-Shoshone Farm Bureau focuses on ag education

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

COEUR d'ALENE – As agricultural land in Kootenai County is quickly giving way to more houses and development, the Kootenai-Shoshone County Farm Bureau is focusing heavily on educating local folks about where their food really comes from.

“Farmland is disappearing really quickly in Kootenai County,” says Bob Smathers, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation’s regional manager in North Idaho. “The trend has been fewer acres in agriculture and more acres in houses and businesses.”

This area has a rich agricultural tradition that began in the 1890s with logging to support railroads and mines and the growing of food to support the developing towns and mining communities.

“As the area matured, farming took on a wide variety of

crops, from orchards, vegetables, grains and hay to support cattle,” says Linda Rider, who owns a ranch near Coeur d’Alene.

But much of that agricultural production is gone now, replaced by houses and businesses in this fast-growing region of the state.

As more people move into the area, farmers are slowly squeezed out because it becomes difficult to move their equipment and do the other things they need to do to economically produce crops, says Rider, a member of the Kootenai-Shoshone County Farm Bureau’s board of directors.

“Eventually, farming is no longer an economically viable thing to do,” she says.

“Many farm families on the Rathdrum Prairie have or are choosing to sell their land to developers at healthy prices rather than try to farm and pass it on to the next generation,” Rider says. “Currently, we have one of the fastest-growing popu-

lations in the nation and a huge residential building industry, which is quickly covering what was once farm ground as well as parcels of timber ground.”

The climate in the area is not conducive to growing specialty crops that could enable a farmer to get by on smaller acreage, she adds.

As a result, the Farm Bureau organization has made educating people about the importance of agriculture its main focus.

“That’s what our Farm Bureau has mainly done, get together and tell our story,” Rider says. “As a group, most of our focus has been on educating people about where their food comes from.”

Because so many local folks have a very limited knowledge of production agriculture, the Kootenai-Shoshone Farm Bureau has partnered with other entities, specifically the Kootenai County Fairgrounds, to develop ag education events, such as an annual Farm to Table Ag Field Day for 1,200 fifth-grade students in three school districts.

The Farm Bureau organization has also developed a Farm Park at the county fairgrounds and helps coordinate a Meet a Farmer tour for adults in partnership with the Coeur d’Alene Chamber of Commerce.

Kootenai-Shoshone Farm Bureau also provides donations to seven local food banks annually.

According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, there were 1,073 farms and 139,705 total acres of farm ground in Kootenai County in 2017. The vast majority of those farms were small operations of 50 acres or less.

Six hundred seventy six of those farms made less than \$2,500 in sales in 2017 and only 28 made \$100,000 or more.

“There are still some commercial-scale operations on the Rathdrum Prairie, where hay, grain, oilseed and mint is grown, but the main type of farming is now residential housing,” Smathers says. “Kootenai County is experiencing some growth in small farms that produce organic vegetables, livestock, eggs, etc., for local farmers markets and restaurants, but there is only so much that the local market can absorb.”

Forestry is a major part of the ag industry in Kootenai County, Smathers said, and about 77 percent of the land base in that county is forested. There are 9,513 forest owners in Kootenai County and a significant portion of timber for local mills comes off the 260,264 family owned forest acres every year.

Blue grass seed was once a major crop in Kootenai County and the area was a global leader in that crop at one time. However, the practice of burning grass seed stubble to shock the plant for re-growth and weed control met resistance from some groups.

Annual field burning was the only way to produce bluegrass profitably for seed production and after federal court rulings hampered this practice, the bluegrass industry left the area and moved further south.

“Since 2007, the agricultural land base in Kootenai County has been shrinking in favor of residential/commercial development, since the only real cash crop option for farmers on the prairie – bluegrass seed – has disappeared,” Smathers said.

Rider says one of the bright spots in the region is that many of the small-acreage farms there have children involved in 4-H



This is a picture of the Kootenai-Shoshone Farm Bureau booth during the North Idaho State Fair. The Kootenai-Shoshone County Farm Bureau is focusing heavily on educating local folks about where their food really comes from.

projects and Kootenai-Shoshone counties combined have the largest 4-H enrollment of any county in Idaho.

Even without a true county fair in 2020, 363 4-H members competed and sold market animals last year, fetching just over \$1 million combined.

The Kootenai-Shoshone Farm Bureau supports the local 4-H program with donations for projects, support money for each market animal, added ribbon money for each completed project and purchases made at the market animal auction.

According to the Census of Ag, there were only 48 farms and 2,435 total acres of agricultural land in Shoshone County in 2017. The total market value of all ag products sold in that county in 2017 was \$215,000, ranking that county last in Idaho in that category.

There were no farms over 499 acres in size in that county in 2017 and 36 of Shoshone County’s 48 farms were less than 49 acres in size.

Most of “the farm ground in Shoshone County, especially that along rivers, is now small RV sites,” Rider says. ■

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