

GEM STATE **Producer**

Idaho Farm Bureau

November 2022 • Volume 26 Issue 7



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Food and farm bill for all

While we're hardly to the close of 2022, the 2023 farm bill is already top of mind for farmers and ranchers across the country.

And for good reason—it's one of the most significant pieces of legislation when it comes to support of farming.

This bill plays a vital role in securing our nation's food supply while ensuring food security for all Americans and promoting the sustainability of U.S. agriculture and vibrancy of our rural communities.

We could more accurately call it a food and farm bill because whether you come from a rural community, a city or a suburb, it matters for you and your family.

At the American Farm Bureau, renewing the farm bill is our top priority, and we recently announced more than 60 recommendations for the 2023 bill.

These priorities represent months of work and collaboration across Farm Bureau from grassroots members, leaders and staff from

See **DUVALL**, page 6

The President's Desk

By Bryan Searle
President, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation



Let's help educate Idaho's newbies and the state's new legislators

Idaho has been the fastest-growing state in the nation over the past several years. In one way, that's good because it shows that Idaho is a great place to live and work in.

But it's also concerning because it raises a host of challenges, including increased pressure on existing farmland and resources.

Farmers, ranchers and other private landowners have been offered a pretty penny in recent years for their land and ag land in

some areas of the state has disappeared at an alarming rate.

At the same time, the results of the November general election are in and Idaho's 105-member legislature is going to have an awful lot of new faces when the 2023 Idaho legislative session convenes in January.

It's probably safe to say close to 40 percent of the Idaho Legislature will be new in 2023.

See **SEARLE**, page 7

Inside Farm Bureau

By Zak Miller
CEO, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation



Human capital

USDA and industry surveys often show that access to capital is routinely identified as one of the top challenges faced by people wanting to enter agriculture.

The current rising interest rates and inflation environment ensures that capital concerns will stay at the top of our mind.

Human capital is another form of capital that all farmers and ranchers need. This capital is often cited as more difficult than farm financing.

There are three primary ways to acquire

human capital; none are easy.

First is our local community and state. Some individuals dream of working on farms and ranches. Many receive training, start in high school, and learn to farm as they complete high school and choose their career.

In contrast, others study at our colleges and universities.

The University of Idaho, College of Southern Idaho, and BYU-Idaho all offer agriculture degrees from their respective institutions.

See **MILLER**, page 6



Idaho Farm Bureau.

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Photo by Sean Ellis

Pinto beans are harvested in a field near Wilder in October. Idaho last year again ranked No. 1 among the 11 western states in farm income on a per capita basis.

Idaho unchallenged No. 1 in the West in per capita farm income

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – Despite being the fastest-growing state in the nation, Idaho is still No. 1 among the 11 western states when it comes to farm income on a per capita basis.

Per capita farm income is arrived at by dividing a state’s population by the total amount of farm cash receipts produced in that state. Farm cash receipts refers to the revenue farmers and ranchers receive for selling their commodity.

According to federal data released Sept. 1 and crunched by University of Idaho Extension Educator Brett Wilder, Idaho farmers and ranchers produced \$4,392 per Idahoan in farm revenue during 2021.

That made Idaho the top state in per capita farm income among the 11 western states last year, far ahead of No. 2 Montana, which came in at \$3,729 in per capita farm income.

“We’re just a big ag state,” said University of Idaho Agricultural Economist Garth Taylor. “The profile of agriculture in the state is still huge.”

Wilder said the per capita farm income data shows that “agriculture remains an incredibly important industry to Idaho.”

California led all U.S. states in total farm cash receipts last year, at \$51 billion. But when it came to per capita farm income, California came in at \$1,302 per Californian.

What the per capita income data shows is that agriculture is

See **PER CAPITA**, page 17

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COVER: Hundreds of sheep march down Main Street in Ketchum Oct. 9 during the Trailing of the Sheep Festival. See page 4 for story. Photo by Sean Ellis

Trailing of the Sheep Festival draws 25,000 to Wood River Valley

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

KETCHUM – About 25,000 people from Idaho and around the U.S. showed up to the Wood River Valley this year to help the Trailing of the Sheep Festival celebrate its 26th anniversary.

The festival has grown in size and scope and is now a five-day celebration of Idaho's past and cur-

rent sheep industry and the men and women who helped form it.

"I'm blown away by how big it's become," said John Peavey, the Wood River Valley sheep rancher who, along with his wife Diane, helped start the festival 26 years ago as a simple way to educate locals about the industry.

Now, more than 20,000 people show up each year to participate in the many events that are included



The 26th Trailing of the Sheep Festival in Idaho's Wood River Valley attracted about 25,000 people during the five-day event. Photos by Sean Ellis

in the Trailing of the Sheep Festival, which was held Oct. 5-9 this year in Ketchum and Hailey.

The genesis of the festival has its roots in the Peaveys having coffee with locals to explain why it is necessary to trail the sheep through the area, as well as educate them about the history of the industry and the impact it has on the economy.

From those humble beginnings, the festival has exploded in size and scope.

“It’s phenomenal; I’m amazed at the interest in the festival,” said East Idaho sheep rancher Cindy Siddoway. “I never thought people would be that interested in a sheep festival.”

The festival features a myriad of events over five days, including cultural performers, sheep dog trials, sheep shearing, farm-to-table dinners, story-telling by Idaho sheep ranchers, American lamb and other cuisine, and a Sheep Folklife Fair that includes about 80 vendors, features cultural performers and draws about 7,000 people.

The capstone and most popular part of the festival is the actual trailing of the sheep parade that occurs on the last day of the event, in Ketchum.

“Several hundred sheep will come running down Main Street in Ketchum and it’s a sight you have never seen before,” said Laura Drake, executive director of the Trailing of the Sheep Festival.

The sheep dog trials, which serve as national qualifiers and include about 100 dogs, are also very popular and typically draw about 4,000 people, she said.

“It is a spectator favorite,” Drake said.

The festival has greatly expanded its cuisine arm, she said, and this year it included three sold-out farm-to-table dinners where a different Idaho rancher’s lamb was featured each night, along with the rancher.

Those dinners also included local farmers that grew the vegetables featured in the meals, as well as the winemakers who produced the wine.

“Those are really one-of-a-kind experiences and one of our most popular events,” Drake said. “They sell out really fast the minute we put tickets on sale.”

The main goals of the festival, according to organizers, are to preserve the stories and history of sheep ranchers and herders, celebrate the rich culture of the state’s sheep industry and entertain and educate children and adults about the production of local food and fiber that have helped sustain the local economy for



Eighty vendors set up shop during the Sheep Folklife Fair, which attracted about 7,000 people and is part of the five-day Trailing of the Sheep Festival.

generations.

“We go all out for this festival; it is very authentic,” Drake said. “Our mission is to celebrate, educate and gather people together to explore and remember the history of sheep and sheep ranching and herding in Idaho and the West.”

“This festival is truly one of a kind,” said Liz Wilder, executive director of the Idaho Wool Growers Association. “It brings people from all over the country and even the world to learn about this rich cultural heritage of the sheep industry in Idaho.”

John Peavey said the festival is a great way to educate people about the Idaho sheep industry’s rich heritage.

“We like to share our life with people that are curious enough to show up and ask questions,” he said.

Siddoway points out that sheep ranchers also are asked plenty of questions by festival attendees about a host of issues, from the industry’s sheep dogs, to labor, to grazing, and are happy to answer them.

“We get a chance to educate a lot of people about our industry but we also learn about the issues that are important to people,” she said. “It works both ways. It’s a good, healthy discussion and sharing back and forth.”

At the industry’s peak, there were about 2 million sheep in Idaho. Today, that number has fallen to about 250,000, which ranks Idaho sixth in the nation in that category.

There are about 40 large-scale operators left in the state, Wilder said.

“Idaho’s history is rooted in the sheep industry (and) it’s a very large industry still in Idaho,” she said.

“The sheep industry has a rich history in Idaho. It is part of our history,” Siddoway said. ■

The 27th Annual Trailing of the Sheep Festival will be held next year from Oct. 4-8. For more information online, visit: www.trailingofthesheep.org.



About 25,000 attended this year’s Trailing of the Sheep Festival that included a myriad of events over 5 days.

Continued from page 2

across the country.

The AFBF board of directors unanimously approved the priorities, and we'll be looking to Farm Bureau delegates at our annual convention in January to provide final direction in shaping our policy.

Among our top priorities going into 2023 is ensuring appropriate farm bill funding. This funding is an investment for all Americans, and there's no question as we look at recent global events, from the pandemic to the war on Ukraine, that protecting our nation's food supply is vital to our national security.

Agriculture does not take this national investment lightly either. Farm bill programs are market-oriented, thanks to reforms we have achieved with lawmakers over the last decade.

The proof is in the spending: The fact that the 2018 farm bill farm programs have paid out less than projected is evidence of the responsible approach taken.

Another priority for us is to maintain a unified farm bill, and that means keeping nutrition programs and farm programs together.

Why is that so important? Because it makes the most sense for a single bill to support the people who produce the food and the people who need assistance to access safe and nutritious food for their families.

Few people have not been touched by tough times in one form or another over the last couple years. From rising inflation to natural disasters, many need support to hang on for the next season.

The farm bill is that lifeline for many Americans through the nutrition assistance programs and for farmers and ranchers through risk management programs that are really part of our national security strategy by helping to secure our food supply.

The importance of maintaining risk management tools in the farm bill cannot be overstated. Federal crop insurance and commodity programs are critical for farmers and ranchers.

No one buys insurance for the good times, and when you buy that insurance, you truly hope that policy will remain safely

Continued from page 2

And some people just love to farm and will find a way to work on a farm or ranch regardless of their background, education, or training.

Temporary foreign workers who come to a farm for a season and then go home are another way of attaining human capital.

The federal program that allows this, known as the H-2A foreign agricultural guest worker program, currently works, but it is costly and includes challenging regulations.

Farm Bureau and many other ag groups continue to advocate

'Application must go hand in hand with innovation and that requires strong technical support from USDA helping farmers apply new technologies.'

tucked away.

But when the storms come, federal risk management programs are sometimes all that stand between farms and foreclosure.

The farm bill is also critical as we work together to build a bright future for agriculture. The farm bill is the largest source of funding for critical research that our country needs to fuel the innovation that will help us feed a growing population while taking care of our natural resources.

Application must go hand in hand with innovation and that requires strong technical support from USDA helping farmers apply new technologies.

But we've seen a disheartening trend when it comes to staffing at USDA to fulfill its mission. That's why the 2023 farm bill must ensure adequate USDA staffing and resources to provide technical assistance.

This is just a sampling of the priorities that will be driving our advocacy at Farm Bureau around the farm bill in the coming months.

I invite you to learn more on our website – fb.org – where you can dive into all 60 of our recommendations and check out market impact analysis related to farm bill programs.

I also invite you to be part of the conversation, whether that be at your county or state Farm Bureau in developing policy or engaging with your lawmakers on the importance of this legislation to your farm or ranch.

We must get this 2023 farm bill right, and it will take all of us working together to ensure that our nation's investment in our farms and food supply remains secure. ■

for the "Workforce Modernization Act." Rep. Mike Simpson, R-Idaho, played a key role in getting this legislation passed in the House of Representatives.

Sen. Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, co-sponsors the bill in the Senate, where it currently resides.

This bill would improve the current H-2A program, especially for dairy producers, because the current law only allows seasonal work to qualify, while dairies need workers year-round.

The best pipeline for human capital is also the oldest. For many farms and ranches, the best human capital is within their own homes – their own family.

Recently, I read an Instagram post from my dear friend Jenny complaining that she had to have her husband Todd fix the knotter on her baler. She noted that she usually could fix it, but this time was different.

In Jenny's Instagram post, she humbly remarked that she was only the worker because she was available. I would dare to believe she is only half right.

It may be true that one of the greatest abilities is availability. On the other hand, I doubt Todd would rather have anyone other than Jenny for that job.

Then there's Hagen.

This fall, while rounding up cows, my friend Hagen's parents told me a few stories about him. When asked if he wanted to play football, his reply was, "Why would I pay to do something when I can get paid to do something I like?"

In school, he was asked to write a persuasive essay. Hagen chose to write to his uncle explaining why he should operate the

vine roller in potato harvest.

How can you not like this kid?

My favorite story about Hagen: Last year, for his birthday, his wish was to be allowed to visit Harbor Freight and have plenty of time to look around at the power tools there.

[By the way, Farm Bureau has a wonderful member benefit at Granger when it comes to power tools.]

I like Hagen and his entire family. They exemplify what I mean when I say the best human capital is within our own homes.

Access to capital, land, water, and the right people are all vital to providing food and fiber for our world.

Luckily for many farmers, their greatest capital often sits with them at the same kitchen table.

However, there are not enough family members to operate all the farms. That is why Farm Bureau continues to work to ensure that farmers and ranchers have access to all the forms of capital they need to be successful. ■

SEARLE

Continued from page 2

That's a lot of new faces in the legislature, to go along with the tens of thousands of new faces flocking to Idaho each year.

The Idaho Department of Labor estimates the state will add about 228,000 new residents from 2021-2031.

Among the multitudes flocking to Idaho are many who don't have a solid understanding of what made Idaho a great place to move to, and probably most of them have little to no understanding of the state's extensive agricultural industry, which underpins Idaho's economy and way of life.

Here's a quick example of how important agriculture is to Idaho.

When it comes to a state's per capita farm income – this is derived at by dividing total farm revenue in a state by the state's population – Idaho ranks an unchallenged No. 1 among the 11 western states.

California easily led the nation in total farm revenue in 2021 but California's farm income per capita that year (\$1,302 per Californian) paled in comparison to Idaho's (\$4,392 per Idahoan).

What that simple yet profound number shows is that agriculture is way more important to the average Idahoan than it is to the average Californian.

The state's newcomers – indeed, even existing Idahoans – need to understand how important farming and ranching are to Idaho and it's up to us to educate them about that.

Please don't shy away from that task. If we don't tell them, who will?

If we don't tell the story of agriculture in Idaho, that task will be left to the anti-ag folks and we certainly don't want that.

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation will hold its annual meeting

from Dec. 6-8 in Boise. It's during this annual event that county Farm Bureau delegates from around the state vote on what policies will be included in the IFBF policy book.

It's these policies, which cover everything from water to wolves to government regulation, that give our organization's professional and volunteer members their marching orders.

These policies were formed at the grassroots level and represent the essence of what IFBF stands for.

With so many new lawmakers in the legislature, it will be up to us to educate them about the various issues affecting our industry and how Farm Bureau stands on them.

I would encourage each one of you to form a professional relationship with your local legislators, whether new or incumbent, and

regularly reach out to them and chat about issues that are important to you and your community.

When the need or opportunity arises, read directly to them from our policy book, which is available on the IFBF website.

Again, if we don't educate them about our issues, who will?

So here's your homework assignment: reach out to those Idaho newcomers and let them know how important the ag industry is to the state and why it's important to preserve and allow it to flourish.

And make every effort to communicate with your local legislators and make sure they also understand how important agriculture is to the state and where Farm Bureau stands on the various issues important to our members.

As we head into the holidays and winter months, let's be thankful for this year's harvest and let's resolve to make the necessary effort to ensure Idaho's agriculture industry thrives now and into the future. ■

'The state's newcomers – indeed, even existing Idahoans – need to understand how important farming and ranching are to Idaho and it's up to us to educate them about that.'



Photo by Gene Alba

Gene Alba, a longtime admirer of the White Horse of Black Daisy Canyon, photographed him Sept. 12.

Devotees admire indomitable spirit of the White Horse of Black Daisy Canyon

By **Dianna Troyer**
For Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

HE LIVES!!

A springtime Facebook post proclaimed the beloved and reclusive White Horse of Black Daisy Canyon had survived his 25th winter living alone in central Idaho's Lost River Valley.

"It was great to see him again a couple of times in May," said Barbara Harp, who photographed him on May 30.

He was basking in the sunshine high on a ridge across from her house a couple of miles south of Black Daisy Canyon.

Since wandering away from an elk hunting camp in 1997, the gelding has lived in the vast canyon north of Mackay, relying on plentiful grass, a nearby reservoir, and a spring that fills a trough

for livestock and wildlife.

"I had to take a photo before time eventually takes him," Harp said.

She grabbed her camera, dashed outside, and steadied it on top of a fence post.

"He was so far up on the ridge, I really had to zoom in," she said.

Slender and pure white, he looked like a radiant ivory statue, she said. A breeze rustled his mane as he turned slightly to look over his right shoulder.

The short, sturdy gelding's numerous admirers say his indomitable spirit symbolizes freedom, grit, and the self-sufficiency characteristic of the West.

He embodies being at peace living alone, content with the so-

lace of nature and his own company. Local residents accept and respect his choice of living as a hermit and give him privacy and space.

Barbara and her husband, Rodger, are familiar with the renowned runaway's springtime routine. In May, he leaves the canyon west of Mackay Reservoir and meanders south.

"He likes our side of the ridge, soaking in the sunshine," Harp said. "It really feels good that time of year."

By fall, he still looked robust when Harp's husband saw him on Sept. 15.

"Rodger was glad to see him looking healthy across the river from our home," she said.

The Harps' neighbor, Scott McAfee, has also seen him.

"We're all amazed he has survived, especially during winter with all the wolves in the valley," McAfee said. "In winter, along the ridges, the wind keeps the snow blown away, so he has grass to eat."

The horse has fans outside the valley who have read about him, including Tommy Thompson and his wife, Kathy, of Orofino.

"He symbolizes an Idaho spirit – treasuring his freedom, surviving without handouts, and being content by himself in the wild," Tommy said.

To Kathy, the horse reminds people to have hope, to look forward to a new day and the future.

"In what sometimes seem like times of great despair, there is hope, so often from God's other creatures," she said.

Another longtime fan, Gene Alba of Bliss, hiked three days with his dog, Mutley, before finding the elusive equine Sept. 12. Every summer since 2015, Alba has visited him, forming a bond by whistling and talking to him.

"He knows us," Alba said. "At first, he stayed about 350 yards from us. Now we come to within about 20 yards. A couple of summers ago, I was camped out and filming him when he suddenly ran away, startled by a predator. I thought I wouldn't see him again, but the next morning he was about 30 yards from my tent, like he had come back to check on me and say hello. We spent the day near each other."

Alba first heard about him while passing



Photo by Melissa Fowler

When the horse wandered away from a hunting camp in Copper Basin in 1997, he still had remnants of civilization. Over time, his gray coloration faded away to where he now appears white, which is not uncommon among horses.

through the area during summer and staying at the reservoir campground.

"I couldn't stop thinking about him living alone," he said. "I worry about whether he'll survive another winter, so I come every summer to see him. He looks good, a bit heavy with a full belly. People tell me it's because he eats so much grass to put on weight for the coming winter."

The horse's appearance has changed considerably since 1997 when he walked away from a hunting camp in the Copper Basin about 15 miles west of the reservoir.

Eventually, he shed his remnants of civilization – a bell dangling from a strap behind his ears and a hobble on a front ankle. As gray horses do, his color has naturally turned to white as he aged.

Alba is curious about who once owned him. A hint about the horse's origins is a freeze brand on his neck, indicating he was likely part of a wild horse herd and had been sold through the Bureau of Land Management's adoption program.

He behaves like a wild horse, "curious but cautious," said local hunting guide Will Marcroft. "You can get only so close to him. He likes to keep a certain distance between himself and people."

Marcroft said he was with elk hunters from Washington who camped in Copper Basin.

"He must have broken his hobbles," Marcroft said. "They looked for him but couldn't find him and had to get back home. You have to admire that he's survived all these years, especially with our cold winters and predators that are common around here like wolves and mountain lions."

Marcroft estimates his age to be late 20s.

"That's old – for a horse in the wild and a domestic one, too," he said. "It's always good to see him. We all know there will come a time when we don't see him anymore, but we hope that won't be for a while yet." ■

Taiwan pledges to buy \$576 million worth of U.S. wheat

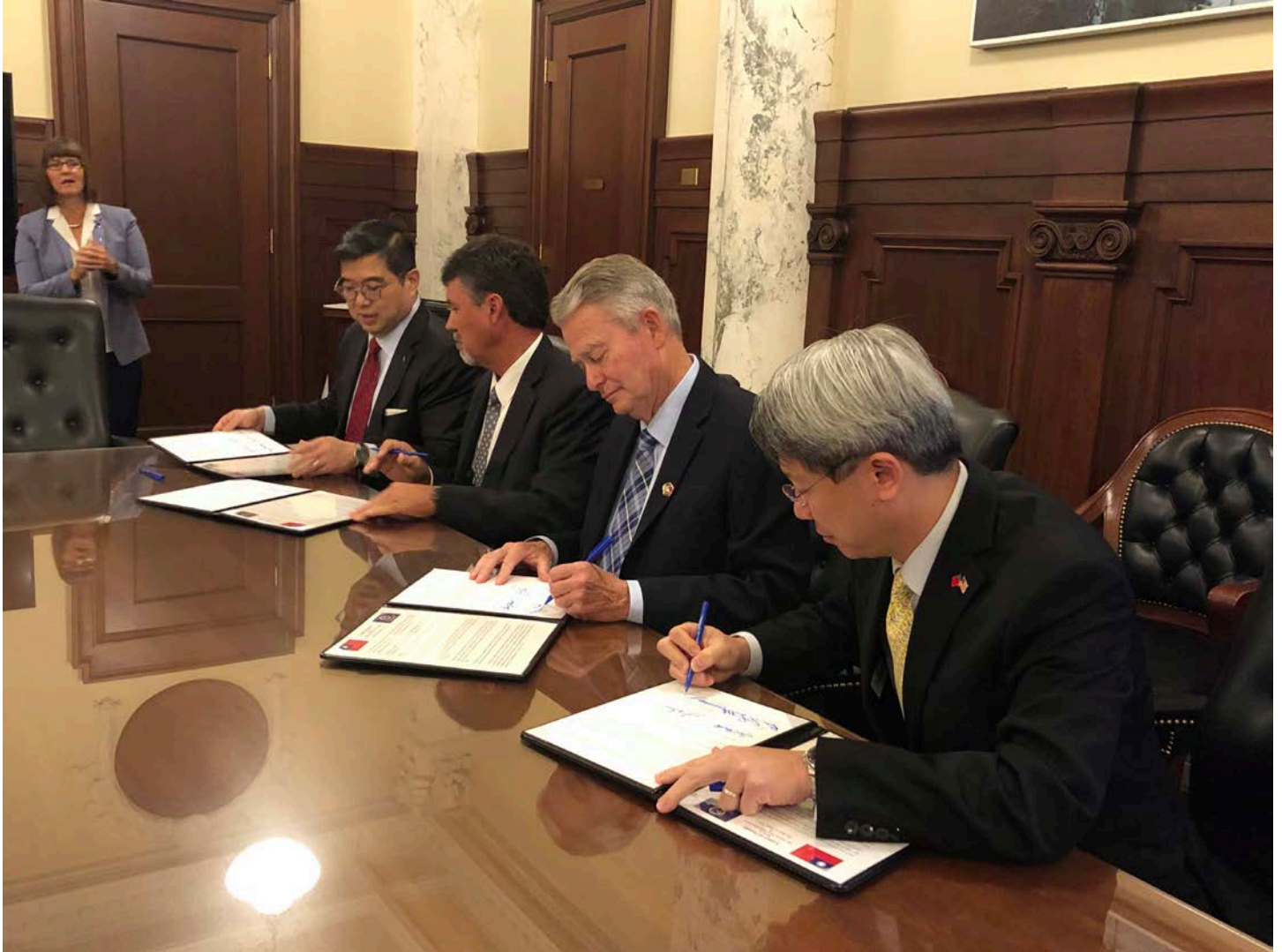


Photo by Sean Ellis

A letter of intent for Taiwan to purchase \$576 million worth of U.S. wheat over the next two is signed Sept. 19 by Idaho Gov. Brad Little, second from right, Idaho Wheat Commission Chairman Clark Hamilton, second from left, Director General Daniel K.C. Chen of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Seattle, right, and Tony Yi-Cheun Shu, chairman of the Taiwan Flour Mills Association. The TFMA committed to buying the wheat and Idaho and other U.S. growers committed to providing it.

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

BOISE – A Taiwanese trade delegation’s recent trip to Idaho to sign a “letter of intent” to purchase \$576 million worth of U.S. wheat over the next two years was much more than just a ceremonial pledge.

Taiwan has signed these intent letters

to purchase U.S. wheat for four decades now and even though they aren’t contracts, they have followed through on every one of them. Similarly, U.S. and Idaho wheat farmers have consistently followed through on their pledges to provide that wheat.

Since 1998, Taiwan has purchased 1 billion bushels of U.S. wheat worth about \$6.7 billion. A good portion of the wheat

Taiwan purchases comes from Idaho.

A Taiwanese agricultural trade delegation visits the U.S. every two years to sign an agreement to purchase a certain amount of U.S. wheat. They sign agreements in Washington, D.C., as well as several of the nation’s wheat-producing states.

Idaho wheat industry leaders were on hand Sept. 19 as a Taiwanese trade delega-

“They know they are going to get a quality product coming from us. It’s always within spec of what they want and they know they can count on it.”

*- Justin Place, Secretary-Treasurer,
Idaho Grain Producers Association*

tion gathered in Gov. Brad Little’s office to sign the latest agreement for Taiwanese flour millers to purchase \$576 million worth of U.S. wheat over the next two years.

“We are here to buy more wheat,” Director General Daniel K.C. Chen of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Seattle, said during a press conference held along with the ceremonial signing.

He was joined by members of the Taiwan Flour Mills Association, which will purchase the wheat.

TFMA Chairman Tony Yi-Cheun Shu said Taiwan imports 99.9 percent of its wheat and likes Idaho and U.S. wheat because of the United States wheat industry’s ability to deliver the type and quality of wheat that Taiwan millers need on a consistent and reliable basis.

He also said the U.S. wheat industry is very transparent about quality and pricing.

“It may not be the cheapest wheat ... but we love the quality,” Shu said. “I want to thank you all for supporting us and I think our cooperation and collaboration in the future will continue.”

The TFMA imports wheat on behalf of all 20 flour mills in Taiwan. The U.S. supplies more than 80 percent of Taiwan’s total wheat imports.

While members of the Taiwanese trade team stressed their commitment to continue purchasing U.S. wheat, members of Idaho’s wheat industry likewise reiterated their commitment to keep providing a quality product.

“I want to commit to you that the wheat commission and the farmers in Idaho are committed to maintain this relationship,” said Ririe farmer Clark Hamilton, chairman of the Idaho Wheat Commission.

Hamer wheat farmer Justin Place, who attended the signing and met with TFMA officials and the governor beforehand, said the trade delegation stressed how much they value the consistency of U.S. and Idaho wheat.

“They know they are going to get a quality product coming from us,” said Place, secretary-treasurer of the Idaho Grain Pro-

ducers Association. “It’s always within spec of what they want and they know they can count on it.”

Although the agreements aren’t contracts, they are serious pledges between wheat purchasers and suppliers, said Idaho State Department of Agriculture Director Celia Gould.

“We have done this for a very, very long time and every time, the commitment has been honored, by both sides,” she said. “It’s a sacred document in that regard. That shows the value of this intent agreement.”

Taiwan’s commitment to purchase U.S. wheat provides a level of certainty to many of the state’s grain farmers. Idaho growers produce more than 100 million bushels of wheat annually on about 1.2 million acres and half of the state’s wheat is exported.

Wheat is the state’s No. 2 crop and No. 4 agricultural commodity in terms of total farm-gate receipts, which is what the farmer gets for their commodity.

Wheat is grown in 42 of the state’s 44 commodities and is an important part of most Idaho farmers’ crop rotations.

Little, a farmer and rancher from Emmett, pointed out that Idaho also exports other ag commodities to Taiwan, including beef, processed potatoes, dairy products, hay, dried peas, chickpeas, animal feed, hide and fertilizer.

“Taiwan has been a very, very loyal customer for a long time,” he said. “A lot of our farmers in Idaho ... have made significant investments in their farms predicated on that consistent, good market that we have (in Taiwan).” ■

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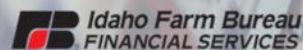
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Photo by Sean Ellis

Barley is harvested in Soda Springs in this Idaho Farm Bureau Federation file photo. Idaho's barley crop this year is one of the biggest ever and it's 37 percent bigger than last year's drought-affected crop.

Idaho's 2022 barley crop is a big one

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – Idaho's 2022 barley crop is much bigger than last year's drought-affected crop and it's estimated the state set a record for average barley yields this year.

Most importantly, the quality of Idaho's 2022 barley crop looks really good, said Idaho Barley Commission Executive Director Laura Wilder.

"It's a big crop; it's an excellent crop," she said.

According to USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, Idaho farmers produced 59.9 million bushels of barley this year, which is 37 percent more than the 43.6 million bushels of barley the state's growers produced last year.

Average barley yield in Idaho is estimated by NASS at 111 bushels an acre this year, which would be a record, narrowly clipping the previous record of 110 bushels an acre set in 2020.

"We got some good, strong barley yields ... and the quality was really good," said Rupert barley farmer Mike Wilkins.

The state's average barley yield includes both irrigated farm

ground and dryland, which depends only on natural precipitation. Some barley growers with irrigated farmland reported more than 200 bushels an acre this year, while some dryland farmers reported less-than-normal yields.

Soda Springs farmer Scott Brown said unusually high temperatures took a toll on his 2022 barley crop.

His area received more moisture than last year, “but it was so hot and the rain didn’t come at the right time,” Brown said. “The drought continues to affect our crop.”

Due to severe drought conditions and a brutal heatwave in 2021, last year’s barley crop was way down from normal.

The water situation in Idaho was much better this year but high temperatures again had an impact on some barley, said Teton farmer Dwight Little.

While most farmers made it through the year with enough water, some of “the crops just didn’t produce as much because of the heat,” he said.

But overall, the state’s barley crop was much bigger this year and it was the second-largest production year for barley in Idaho in at least the past decade. Idaho farmers produced 62 million bushels of barley in 2016 off of 580,000 acres.

According to NASS, Idaho farmers harvested 540,000 acres of barley in 2022, up from 490,000 in 2021. Average barley yield in the state last year was only 89 bushels an acre.

Idaho remains the nation’s No. 1 barley producing state, ahead of North Dakota and Montana. According to NASS, Idaho accounted for 34 percent of the nation’s total barley crop this year.

Montana and North Dakota both have more barley acres than Idaho but Idaho’s yields are much higher because most of the state’s barley crop is grown under irrigation.

Idaho has led the nation in barley production nine out of the last 10 years and Wilder doesn’t see that changing because of the state’s irrigation infrastructure and favorable growing climate.

Those factors result in Idaho farmers producing a consistent supply and

“Barley production in Idaho is here to stay,” she said. “We have companies that have located here because of the reliability of our crop. They’re not going anywhere. They need the barley and we’re able to produce it.”

- Laura Wilder, Executive Director, Idaho Barley Commission

quality of barley virtually every year, Wilder said.

“Barley production in Idaho is here to stay,” she said. “We have companies that have located here because of the reliability of our crop. They’re not going anywhere. They need the barley and we’re able to produce it.”

About 70 percent of the barley grown in Idaho is malt barley that is used in the beer-brewing process. That barley is purchased by beer companies.

Idaho farmers typically grow enough malt barley each year to produce 12 million barrels of beer or 4.1 billion 12-ounce bottles of beer.

The rest of the barley grown in Idaho is used for human food or animal feed.

Idaho’s barley industry has a major impact on the state’s economy and a good barley year is a good thing for Idaho’s overall economy.

According to a study commissioned by the IBC that was released this year, the state’s barley industry contributes about \$274 million to Idaho’s total gross state product each year and is responsible for \$551 million in total sales. It also supports 2,698 jobs in Idaho. ■

Idaho farmers produced 59.9 million bushels of barley this year, up 37 percent from last year, according to the USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service. Stock photo



Sen. Crapo addresses inflation's impact on agriculture

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

MURTAUGH – During a press conference Aug. 25, Sen. Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, told participants that out-of-control inflation is having a major negative impact on the agriculture industry.

He also reminded them that inflation in farm country translates into higher food costs for consumers at the retail level.

All Idahoans are feeling the pinch of record high inflation and rapid price increases, Crapo said.

“Nowhere is this more apparent than in the agriculture industry, where Idaho farmers are experiencing increases across their operations, from seed, chemical and fertilizer to the diesel used in harvest equipment and shipping, all of which culminate in higher costs for consumers,” he said.

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation helped host the press conference, which was held at a farm in Murtaugh in Twin Falls County.

A handful of farmers were there to share their own experiences with rapidly rising farm production costs.

Larry Hollifield, who farms in nearby Hansen, read through a list of some of the price increases his farming operation has sustained year over year.

The list includes a 73 percent increase in diesel fuel costs, 97 percent increase in the price of dry nitrogen, 118 percent increase in liquid nitrogen, 21 percent increase in baling twine, 43 percent increase in tires for irrigation pivots, and a 17 percent increase in miscellaneous chains that are used to operate the farm's various machines.

“It's very difficult to market our crops for sale when our input costs keep increasing,” said Hollifield, president of Twin Falls County Farm Bureau.



Photo by Kristy Lindauer

Sen. Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, speaks about how inflation is negatively impacting farmers and ranchers, Aug. 25 during a press conference in Murtaugh in Twin Falls County. As an example, the farmer who owns the property where the press conference was held paid \$43,800 more this year to fill just one of the fuel tanks behind Crapo.

The backdrop for the press conference were large, 20,000-gallon fuel tanks and Hollifield used those as an example of how serious of an impact inflation is having on farmers and ranchers.

The farmer who owns that property, he

said, paid \$43,800 more this year to fill just one of the tanks.

Hollifield shared a 1960 quote from former U.S. President John F. Kenney to make his point that farmers and ranchers are getting hit from every angle by high

inflation: “The farmer is the only man in our economy who buys everything at retail, sells everything at wholesale, and pays the freight both ways.”

Bryan Jensen, parts manager for Stotz Equipment, a John Deere dealer in Twin Falls, said the dealership has seen double-digit increases in the price of parts over the past year.

“In about a 14-month period ... I’ve seen 20 to 21 percent increases, across the board,” he said.

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation CEO Zak Miller, a farmer from Rigby, said farmers are price takers, not price makers, and high inflation is making life uncertain for them because they don’t control how much they have to pay for inputs or how much they can charge for their commodity.

“We’re seeing right now significant challenges in farm country,” he said. “No farmer can actually control the price that they receive. In this inflationary environment, that puts a pinch on them.”

Unfortunately, Miller said, the large increases in production costs that farmers and ranchers are facing are translating into higher prices for consumers and that pain is being felt the most by those least able to afford it.

He pointed to a recent annual survey conducted by American

Farm Bureau Federation that showed Americans paid on average 17 percent more for their Fourth of July picnic this year.

“The worst, most insidious part of this whole inflation thing is that those that are most vulnerable are the ones that may have to choose what they can and cannot put on their table,” Miller said.

Crapo said the record-high inflation “comes from an uncontrolled, unfettered spending spree in Washington, and a taxing spree in Washington, and a regulatory spree in Washington, that is driving up prices.”

The senator said one of the most achievable solutions to reversing the trend of rapidly rising inflation is for the nation to once again become energy-independent.

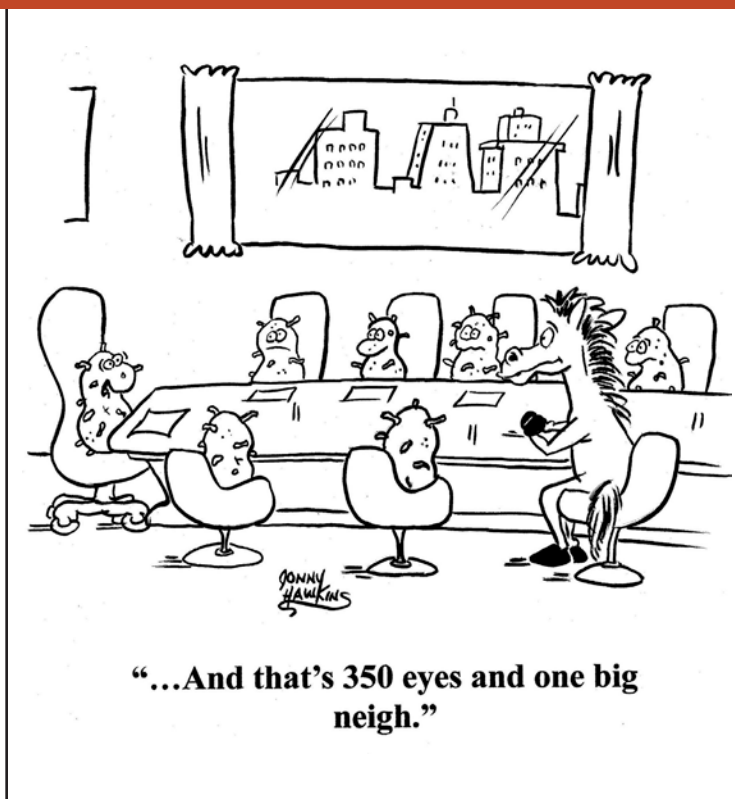
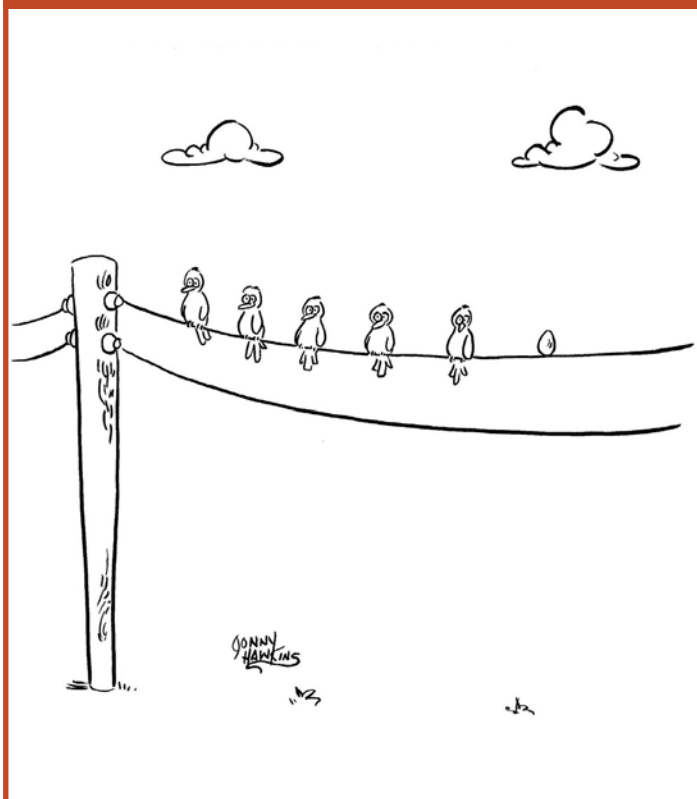
“First ... we have to get America back into the business of producing our own energy,” Crapo said. “We need to become energy independent again and we can do that ... That’s something we can get done if we can get the political willpower in Washington to do it.”

He also addressed other issues, including federal labor and trade policy.

“They are the kinds of things I’m hopeful America will demand we get focused on,” Crapo said. ■

Country Chuckles

By Jonny Hawkins



U of I ag college gets \$55 million grant

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – University of Idaho’s College of Agricultural and Life Sciences has received a massive \$55 million grant to help Idaho farmers and ranchers voluntarily adopt agricultural practices to combat climate change.

The grant is twice as large as any other grant U of I has ever received.

Half of the money will be passed through to farmers and ranchers who are willing to adopt certain “climate-smart” practices aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Loud applause erupted when CALS Dean Michael Parrella announced the grant Oct. 5 to a group of U of I supporters and alumni in Meridian.

“It’s almost earth-shaking in terms of its size; it’s the largest grant the campus has ever gotten,” he said. “It is a game-changer ... It is absolutely phenomenal.”

Parrella pointed out that almost half the money will be passed through to agricultural producers to incentivize them to voluntarily adopt climate-smart agricultural practices.

“While this is a monumental achievement for our university, the big winners will be Idaho farmers and ranchers who are willing to try new approaches to producing food, with the goal of making their operations more sustainable and protecting the environment,” Christopher Nomura, U of I’s vice president of research and economic development, said in an Oct. 5 news release announcing the grant.

According to the news release, university researchers will use the grant money to focus on the state’s staple commodities, including potatoes, beef, sugar beets, wheat, barley, hops and chickpeas.

Farmers and ranchers will be eligible for payments to adopt

a host of possible agricultural practices aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, such as raising cover crops for soil health benefits, or reducing reliance on tillage.

The grant money, which was awarded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, could also be used by producers to adopt certain water quality and quantity practices.

Idaho’s Natural Resources Conservation Service office will work with growers to pass grant dollars through to people who adopt those types of practices.

Curtis Elke, the state conservationist for NRCS in Idaho, said there are about 60 such conservation practices that producers could adopt as part of the grant.

NRCS will work with U of I “in getting these monies on the ground in the best interests of our farmers and ranchers out there,” he told Idaho Farm Bureau Federation Oct. 5 following Parrella’s presentation to U of I supporters.

“It’s a super, super exciting opportunity not just for the University of Idaho but for our farmers and ranchers out there who are trying to make Idaho even more productive and better in agriculture,” Elke said. “It’s a huge opportunity.”

The grant project will be led by Jodi Johnson-Maynard, head of the U of I Department of Soil and Water Systems, and Sanford Eigenbrode, a distinguished professor in the university’s Department of Entomology, Plant Pathology and Nematology.

“This project will allow us to pilot a program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in a way that meets the market demands for sustainably produced products while benefiting our farmers,” Johnson-Maynard said in the U of I press release.

Eigenbrode said that “A lot of companies big and small see the handwriting on the wall – that the need for a climate-friendly pipeline is not going away, and if they’re staying competitive in the industry, they’ve got to get on board.” ■

PER CAPITA

Continued from page 3

far more important to the average Idahoan than it is to people in other states, even California, the king of ag states, Taylor said.

U.S. Census Bureau data show that Idaho has been the fastest-growing state in the nation over the past decade on a percentage basis.

While Idaho's population is growing quickly, so is the state's farming sector, Taylor said.

Earlier this year, he told state legislators that Idaho's total gross domestic product grew by more than 100 percent from 1997 to 2020. During that same period, Idaho farm GDP grew by more than 200 percent.

"Agriculture is growing faster than the state's overall economy," Taylor said. "We're big and we're growing."

When it came to per capita farm income last year, Wyoming ranked No. 3 in the West at \$2,962, followed by Colorado (\$1,415), New Mexico (\$1,413), Washington (\$1,315), Oregon and California (\$1,302), Utah (\$595), Arizona (\$545) and Nevada (\$240).

California ranked No. 1 in the West in total farm cash receipts (\$51.11 billion), followed by Washington (\$10.18 billion), Idaho (\$8.35 billion), Colorado (\$8.22 billion), Oregon (\$5.53 billion),

"Agriculture is growing faster than the state's overall economy. We're big and we're growing."

- Garth Taylor, Agricultural Economist,

University of Idaho

Montana (\$4.1 billion), Arizona (\$3.97 billion), New Mexico (\$3 billion), Utah (\$1.99 billion), Wyoming (\$1.71 billion) and Nevada (\$750 million).

When it came to net farm income – the farmer's paycheck – California was No. 1 at \$15 billion, followed by Washington (\$3.2 billion), Colorado (\$2 billion), Idaho (\$1.78 billion), Oregon (\$963 million), New Mexico (\$839 million), Montana (\$836 million), Utah (\$549 million), Wyoming (\$468 million), Arizona (\$420 million) and Nevada (\$221 million).

According to the federal data released by USDA Sept. 1, dairy was the No. 1 agricultural sector in Idaho last year in terms of total revenue, with \$3.1 billion in farm cash receipts.

Cattle and calves ranked No. 2 with \$1.67 billion in farm cash receipts, followed by potatoes (\$934 million), wheat (\$558 million), hay (\$519 million), barley (\$256 million) and sugar beets (\$243 million). ■



Photo by Sean Ellis

Wheat is harvested in an East Idaho field this summer. Idaho last year again ranked No. 1 among the 11 western states in farm income on a per capita basis.



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Friendly firs and spikey spruce – more tree ID

By Randy Brooks
University of Idaho

In the summer issue of this magazine, I wrote how I am blessed to teach at and direct the University of Idaho Extension Natural Resource Camp each June. At this camp, a fundamental forestry element I teach students is the basics of tree identification.

Having some knowledge of tree identification is important because that is one of the basics of forestry. In that “Pines have needles in packs” article, I mentioned that pines have needles in, you guessed it, packs (also called bundles or fascicles).

When you look at the branch of a conifer, see if it has individual needles attached to the branch or needles in packs. For the most part, only pines have needles in bundles. Larch is an exception, but more on it in a later edition.

Recall that most trees and shrubs fall into one of two categories: deciduous and coniferous. Deciduous trees have leaves that fall off yearly, but for this issue, I’m going to focus on conifers.

So, what is a conifer? Any of an order of cone-bearing (typically) trees and shrubs that usually have needle-shaped or scale-like leaves, are often evergreen (versus deciduous), and retain their green foliage year-round.

Coniferous and evergreen are not synonyms, as evergreen refers to the nature of a tree’s leaves/needles. There’s always an exception to the rule it seems, and larch is one exception. It is a deciduous conifer, but more on that in a later column.

So why the name, friendly fir? Well, I teach my students that when you grab a branch, the needles will feel soft, or friendly. And (spoiler alert!) spruces, when you grab them or touch the branches, are spikey, or pokey.

For this issue, I want to focus on the commercial species of firs and spruce that are native to Idaho. Firs and spruce only have one needle attached to the branch.

The first species that comes to mind is Douglas fir. It’s not a true fir, hence it’s



Photos by Randy Brooks

PHOTO 1: Douglas-fir needles grow 360 degrees around the branch. The needles are soft and “friendly.”



PHOTO 2: Douglas-fir cones are unique due to the bracts sticking out from the cone scales.

Latin name, *Pseudotsuga menziesii*, which means false hemlock. Another common name is red fir.

Douglas-fir is an important timber species in the West, as the wood, which is very strong, is used mainly in construction and for Christmas trees.

Its needles are approximately one inch long, are flat, somewhat spiraled, and grow all around the branch, sort of like a baby bottle brush (photo 1).

What’s unique about Douglas-fir is its cones. The hanging, oblong cones have a three-pointed bract hanging out of the cone scales (photo 2).

The cones mature in one season and retain their scales when they fall from the tree. Douglas-fir tends to have very thick bark as the trees mature and is somewhat shade-tolerant.

Unlike Douglas-fir, Grand fir (*Abies grandis*) is a true fir in the *Abies* genus. It is also called white fir, coast grand fir, interior grand fir, great silver fir, western white fir, etc.

True firs tend to have flattened needles with blunt tips with two whitish colored stripes on the underside of the needle (photo 3).

The cones are resinous and sticky and are unique in that they stand straight up near the tips of upper branches. The cones disintegrate rapidly at maturity (photo 4), which is about six months after pollination.

Grand fir is used for paper and lumber and this species can grow from 130-230 feet tall. They also make good Christmas trees.

The species found in Idaho (east of the Cascades) is the interior grand fir (*Abies grandis* var. *idahoensis*).

Grand fir is very shade-tolerant, meaning it can grow in the shade of other species. Due to wildfire suppression, grand fir has been able to proliferate in areas previously dominated by more fire-resistant species like Ponderosa pine.

Unlike pines, shade-tolerant species like firs do not self-prune their lower branches, which creates a fuel ladder for flames to spread from the ground to the crowns.

Grand fir has thinner bark than Douglas-fir, which makes it more susceptible to threats like fire and rot.

Another true fir, subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*) is a medium-sized conifer that has a very narrow, conical shaped crown



PHOTO 3: Grand fir needles are flat and friendly with white stripes on the underside of the needles.



PHOTO 4: These cones are heavy and leaning over, but true fir cones grow upright and disintegrate soon after maturation.

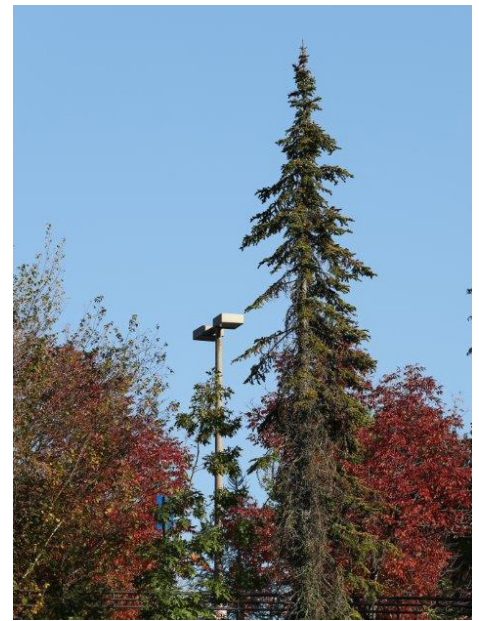


PHOTO 5: Subalpine fir have very conical shaped crowns like a cathedral spire. The cones grow upright and disintegrate quickly.

(photo 5) and depending on site conditions, can grow from 60-160 feet tall.

Idaho has the Rocky Mountains subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa* var. *bifolia*). The bark on younger trees is smooth and often has resin pockets. It is very shade-tolerant with branches growing low to the ground, making it susceptible to fire.

The needles are flat and range in length from 5/8' to a little over an inch long. The cones also grow upright, are resinous and often purplish in color, ranging from 2.5-4.5 inches long.

The wood is light and can be used for pulp, paper, or general construction purposes. It is also a popular Christmas tree and in landscape settings.

Native Americans used the needles as deodorant, burned them as incense, and for medicinal vapors. It is mostly a high-elevation tree (above 3,000 feet).

Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*) is also known as white spruce, mountain spruce, and silver spruce. It is not to be confused with Colorado blue spruce, which has bluish colored needles and is not native to Idaho.

The crown tends to be conical shape, but not so much as subalpine fir. The reddish bark is thin and scaly. It is a medium to large sized growing tree and has leaves that are needle-like, giving it the spiky feeling when touching the branches.

The needles have a pungent odor when crushed and when you grab the branches, they poke you, hence the nickname “spikey spruce.”

It is shade-tolerant, but not so much as the subalpine fir.

The pendulous cones (downward hanging) start out purple in color but mature to light brown. They are approximately 1.5-3 inches long (photo 6) and have thin, flexible scales.

It is mostly a higher-elevation (above 6,500 feet) tree that is typically shallow-rooted, making it susceptible to wind throw.

This has been a quick overview of firs and spruces – there are many more details on each species I could go over, but for more information on Idaho’s major softwood (coniferous) species, check out what the Idaho Forest Products Commission has to offer at www.idahoforests.org/content-item/trees-of-idaho/.

From there, you can print out a color version of a poster on our tree species or learn more about Idaho’s awesome trees.

And, stay tuned for Larch and hemlock identification. These two are quite interesting. ■

(Randy Brooks is a University of Idaho Extension forestry specialist. He can be reached at rbrooks@uidaho.edu)



PHOTO 6: The larger cone is Douglas-fir and the smaller cone is Engelmann spruce.

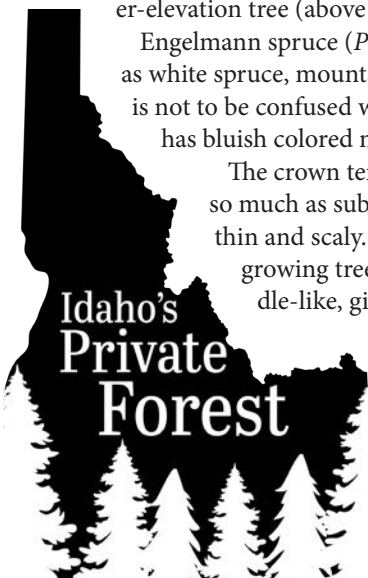




Photo by John O'Connell

Marek Borowiecki, with University of Idaho's Department of Entomology, Plant Pathology and Nematology, is the lead investigator on a project that is creating an app that will allow grain farmers to instantly identify common pests as well as beneficial insects.

U of I developing novel app to identify farm pests

By **John O'Connell**
University of Idaho

A University of Idaho research team is refining a first-of-its-kind app that will allow grain farmers to instantly identify common pests and beneficial insects inhabiting their fields.

Marek Borowiecki, with U of I's Department of Entomology, Plant Pathology and Nematology, is the lead investigator on the project, funded with a four-year, \$500,000 Food and Agriculture Cyberinformatics Tools grant offered through USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

Alex McKeeken helped finetune the app for his master's thesis

in bioinformatics and computational biology.

The team also includes Sanford Eigenbrode, a professor in the Department of Entomology, Plant Pathology and Nematology; Arash Rashed, a UI Extension entomologist; Jennifer Hinds, with U of I Research Computing and Data Services; Luke Sheneman, program manager of U of I's Institute of Modeling Collaboration and Innovation; and postdoctoral researcher Subodh Adhikari.

They hope their unique app will be finished and in use in farm fields throughout Idaho by next fall.

Once it goes live, the app will allow farmers to take photos of insects common in cereals and other Idaho rotation crops with a phone camera to be uploaded and identified.

Borowiecki believes the app will also be of interest to some home gardeners in the state.

He knows of only one other effort to use artificial intelligence to identify important pests of U.S. crops: an app is in the works to serve Florida citrus farmers. The iNaturalist app can identify many species of plants and animals, but Borowiecki finds it's not

accurate with most insects.

The U of I research team plans to cover 26 categories of pests and beneficial insects with their app, which should name a species with 85% to 95% accuracy.

‘Through promptly and accurately identifying pests, Idaho grain growers stand to prevent crop damage, avoid unnecessary insecticide treatments and understand the ramifications of their treatments on beneficial insects.’

“We have this problem in biology: It’s really hard to identify things,” Borowiecki said. “It often takes a few people to identify something correctly.”

Idaho is a major producer of several classes of wheat and is the nation’s top barley producing state.

Through promptly and accurately identifying pests, Idaho grain growers stand to prevent crop damage, avoid unnecessary insecticide treatments and understand the ramifications of their treatments on beneficial insects.

UI Extension currently offers the Idaho Insect Identification program as a free service to growers who submit photos for Extension entomologists to identify.

“A human has to go through that and figure out what it is,” Borowiecki said. “The hope with this tool is to shortcut that process a little bit – let them know quickly whether they have something to worry about.”

They need hundreds of photos of each insect covered by their app to improve the accuracy of its identifications and have been working with agronomists throughout the state, who submit photos from the field via a website to bolster their database.

They also invite others to submit photos of Idaho crop pests. Some of the photos in their database were found on the internet.

As a preliminary test, they added hundreds of images to the database of three common aphid species affecting Idaho grains – bird cherry-oat aphid, cereal grass aphid and English grain aphid – which they took in a greenhouse and at some of the university’s experimental farms.

They trained their algorithm to differentiate between photos of the three species with up to 80% accuracy.

Borowiecki estimates the database is about halfway complete. Larger pests, such as click beetles and wire worms, can be identified with greater accuracy by their program.

The app will identify specimens to the species level if there are important considerations, such as diseases that an individual species may transmit or differences in pest management approaches.

In many cases, the app will identify pests only by category. ■



A University of Idaho research team is in the process of creating an app that will help identify agricultural pests, such as aphids. Stock photo

UI Extension raising awareness about rural mental health challenges

By John O'Connell
University of Idaho

MOSCOW, Idaho – A team of University of Idaho Extension educators is seeking 17 small, agricultural communities willing to host public conversations about the elevated risk of depression and suicide in rural America, as well as local solutions to address the problem.

Each participating community will be asked to develop an action plan identifying a specific concept to help residents who may be struggling with their mental health.

In exchange for completing six public discussions, each community will receive \$3,000 toward implementing its idea.

Contact Talje Hoene, UI Extension mental health program coordinator, at thoene@uidaho.edu for more information.

Hoene and her team, which also includes UI Extension educators Lance Hansen, Madison County, Bracken Henderson, Franklin County, and David Callister, Butte County, plan to have all the communities selected before the end of October.

The team members underwent training to teach people how to recognize and respond to warning signs of depression and suicide.

They'll facilitate separate, complementary sessions in the rural communities, lasting six hours for youth and eight hours for adults. Those who complete the course will receive mental health first aid certification.

UI Extension is posting billboards throughout the state – four in northern Idaho and six in the state's southern, central and eastern regions – directing farmers and ranchers who are overwhelmed by stress to Farm Aid and the Farm Crisis Center.

The billboards, which will remain posted throughout the fall, read: "Agriculture can be stressful. If you or someone you know needs resources call 1-800-FARM-AID."

"We're searching for small communities to work with because we're trying to reach that harder to reach population," Hoene said. "They have their own culture. They're



University of Idaho photo

University of Idaho Extension is posting billboards throughout the state – four in northern Idaho and six in the state's southern, central and eastern regions – directing farmers and ranchers who are overwhelmed by stress to Farm Aid and the Farm Crisis Center. The billboards, which will remain posted throughout the fall, read: "Agriculture can be stressful. If you or someone you know needs resources call 1-800-FARM-AID."

close-knit. They don't necessarily seek help from outside?"

Communities will have the flexibility to invest their funding in a small project that best meets their unique circumstances. For example, a community might opt to expand a local food pantry or elect to buy a pizza oven for hosting civic wellness events.

The Extension team will lead the discussions. The conversations are open to anyone, but the team will prioritize farmers and others who work in agriculture, which is an especially stressful field.

According to a study published Sept. 5, 2021, in the American Journal of Industrial Medicine, using data from 1986 through 2014, the age-adjusted suicide mortality rate per 100,000 farmers and farm managers was 22.3, compared with 15.3 across all other occupations.

A 2019 study by American Farm Bureau Federation found 87% of agricultural workers agreed that cost, embarrassment and lack of awareness posed obstacles to accessing mental health care.

Furthermore, half of the agricultural workers said they had trouble finding a therapist in their community.

"The main thing we're finding with this population is lack of control is a big problem," Hoene said. "They can have a freak weather occurrence and their entire crop is ruined. A lot of farmers are having to give up their family farm because they can't keep up with the bill payments."

Callister understands the stress and profound disappointment of losing a family farm all too well. He'd farmed with family for 25 years in Butte County until 2018, when his family members retired and he couldn't buy them all out.



Stock photo

A 2019 study by American Farm Bureau Federation found 87% of agricultural workers agreed that cost, embarrassment and lack of awareness posed obstacles to accessing mental health care. A team of University of Idaho Extension educators is hoping to help rural communities develop a plan to help their agricultural members with mental wellness.

“I hope it becomes more socially acceptable to open up when you are struggling and not just have ‘good’ as the default answer when someone asks, ‘How are you doing?’”

- Bracken Henderson, UI Extension Educator, Franklin County

At age 53, Callister found himself seeking a new career.

“I’ve dealt with the heartache of losing a farm, feeling like I’d let past generations down because I wasn’t able to keep grandpa’s farm going,” Callister said. “You start feeling isolated. There is still a stigma in our society – and maybe it’s more so in rural society – that you should be able to pick up and go. That’s not the case if somebody has a heart attack. You don’t tell them to buck up and deal with it.”

Callister is grateful for the opportunity to help other farmers avoid similar outcomes as an Extension educator. He’s a strong advocate for farm succession training to help farmers plan early to pass down their properties to the next generation.

Hanson is aware of several recent suicides in rural Driggs, and in the early 1990s, his wife lost a couple of extended family members who were agricultural producers from Driggs to suicide.

“For me this is about just getting the discussion started,” Hanson said. “I think a lot of times there’s the discussion and that’s all there is. I’m hoping we can develop an actual plan and we can do our part as Extension agents to give them resources so they can see this further than a couple of discussions we have with them.”

As an Extension educator, Henderson has worked with a few farmers who died of suicide.

“We need to open up that dialogue so that people are willing to admit this is an issue in our agricultural communities,” Henderson said. “But that is just the first step. I hope it becomes more socially acceptable to open up when you are struggling and not just have ‘good’ as the default answer when someone asks, ‘How are you doing?’”

The program to launch community discussions and implement action plans is funded with a \$200,000 Western Regional Agriculture grant.

WRA also awarded a separate \$10,000 grant to fund the 10 billboards, which are expected to be viewed by about 275,000 motorists per week. ■

Notice of Annual Meeting of Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Co. of Idaho

To all policyholders: The 2023 annual meeting for policyholders of Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Co. of Idaho will be held on Friday, Feb. 3, 2023, at 10 a.m. at the company's home office at 275 Tierra Vista Drive in Pocatello, Idaho. You are invited to attend.

Tom Lyons, Secretary

Notice of Stockholders Meetings

The following annual stockholders meetings will take place Friday, Feb. 3, 2023, at the Idaho Farm Bureau home office, 275 Tierra Vista Drive in Pocatello, Idaho.

The board of directors for each company will be elected at these meetings.

10:45 a.m. - Farm Bureau Marketing Association of Idaho
11 a.m. - FB Development Corporation of Idaho

Zak Miller- Executive Vice President, CEO

Country Chuckles

By Jonny Hawkins



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Now is a good time to ponder minor adjustments in your marketing plan

Autumn is slipping by quite rapidly and it won't be long until we are in the middle of winter. This year's harvest for the most part was good, with Mother Nature cooperating except for a few minor delays in some areas.

Prices have been good for our commodities, with a fair amount of second-guessing as the markets moved higher after producers contracted or they moved lower with producers wishing they had contracted more. Nevertheless, prices have been good.

To say that grain futures have been volatile this past year would be a huge understatement. Let's take Chicago December wheat for example.

The first week in February, the contract was trading around \$7.60 per bushel. The contract traded higher until the middle of May when we topped out around 12.80 per bushel.

At that time, there were many that thought we still had nowhere to go but higher, only to see the market trend lower into the middle of August when we once again were in the area of 7.50 per bushel.

After experiencing reduced yields the previous year, I understand why producers were hesitant to forward contract more wheat, if any, when we were in the late winter and early spring months.

However, there are more ways to protect ourselves from lower prices than simply contracting wheat ahead of time. Yes, contracting wheat could possibly be the simplest way but it definitely isn't the only way.

Now I don't want to forget about our cattle producers because that market has been just as volatile. Back in the second week

of February, the November feeder cattle contract was trading at \$189 per hundred-weight (cwt).

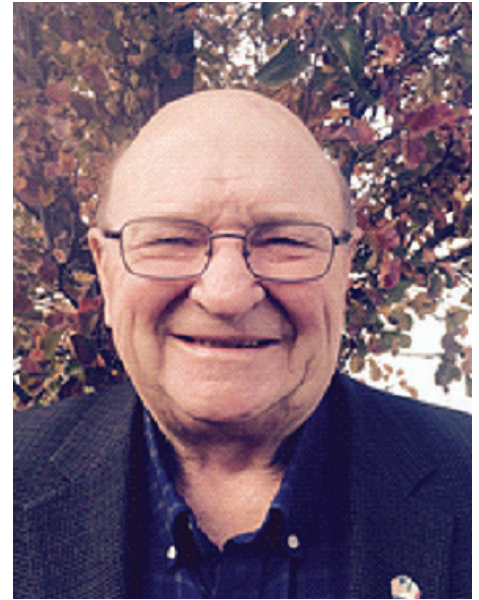
By the third week in May, the contract was trading in the area of \$171 cwt. The market did rebound and trend higher, up to \$190 in the third week

of August, then we took \$15 back out as we moved into the end of October. The cash price for calves in October was very good, with the basis in the area of \$35 to \$40 cwt over the futures. The strong basis is our signal that the market needs calves and the strong basis needs to be sold and many producers did just that.

I can also say that the producers that used the futures market to hedge their calves during the year also did very well.

We are now at an excellent time of the year to take a look at last year and see if we could have done something maybe just a little different and then ponder a little to see if we want to make some minor adjustments in our marketing plan.

'We are now at an excellent time of the year to take a look at last year and see if we could have done something maybe just a little different and then ponder a little to see if we want to make some minor adjustments in our marketing plan.'



The reason the next few weeks is a good time to reflect is that most of you have only 50 things going on during the day, rather than 100. Besides, studying and analyzing something new can be relaxing.

Let's say we do this for just 10 minutes each evening. By the end of the week we have studied for an hour.

Now I know that this just might be easy to say and hard to do, but I also know that we all will find the time to do the things we really want to do.

I know that there are some that aren't interested in doing anything different but for those of you that do, now is the time. Let's not bite off more than we can chew, but let's simply nibble and learn a little here and a little there.

I will promise you that what you learn about marketing and the different ways that you can hedge your commodities will pay off in the years ahead. ■

Agricultural Profile

Ada County



Photo by Sean Ellis

Hay is harvested in a field just off Interstate 84 in Meridian in this Farm Bureau file photo. Ada County has lost a lot of farmland to development in recent years as the county's population has exploded.

Ada County a hotspot for loss of farmland

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

BOISE – Idaho has been the fastest-growing state in the nation in recent years, from a percentage standpoint, and Ada County is the hotspot for that growth.

Not surprisingly, Ada County, which includes Boise and Meridian, the state's two largest cities, is also the hotspot in Idaho for loss of agricultural ground.

According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, Ada County lost 24,000 acres of farmland between the 2012 and 2017 ag census years.

There were still 112,000 acres of land in farming in the county as of the 2017 census year but it's a safe bet that number will be down significantly when the 2022 Census of Agriculture data is released in early 2024.

There is still plenty of agricultural production going on in Ada County but it's getting increasingly more challenging to make a

living farming and ranching there as people continue to flock to the area, said Meridian farmer Neil Durrant.

“We’re still out here trying to make a living farming and doing our best to be great stewards of the land,” said Durrant, president of Ada County Farm Bureau. “But there’s a lot of farmland in the county where you’re basically farming through subdivisions now.”

According to the 2017 ag census, there were 1,304 farms in Ada County in the 2017 census year, which placed Ada as the No. 2 county in the state, behind Canyon, when it comes to total number of farms.

But most of those farms were very small and the average-sized farm in Ada in 2017 was 86 acres, much smaller than the state-wide average of 468 acres.

According to the ag census, there were 672 farms from 1 to 9 acres in size in Ada County in 2017 and 460 were from 10 to 49 acres in size.

“There are a lot of small farmers here; a lot of these direct farm-to-consumer type of operations,” Durrant said. “That was something you couldn’t do before because there weren’t enough people, but there’s a lot of people now.”

He said as the eat local movement has grown, along with the county’s population, those small farms have more opportunities to sell directly to consumers, whether it’s through farmers markets, directly to restaurants or other ways.

“When you look at ag in Ada County, to me that’s where the next big thing is,” Durrant said.

There were 17 farms in Ada County that were from 500 to 999 acres in size in 2017 and 27 were larger than 1,000 acres.

“There are still a lot of larger farms here, but the number is diminishing as growth is occurring,” Durrant said.

According to the ag census, Ada County farmers brought in a total of \$132 million in farm-gate revenue in 2017.

There were 24,002 acres of hay grown in Ada County in 2017, 11,589 acres of corn for silage, 9,009 acres of wheat, 4,844 acres of



Photo by Braden Jensen

Sugar beets are harvested in Ada County field Oct. 18. Ada County has lost a lot of farmland to development in recent years as the county’s population has exploded.

grain and 1,947 acres of mint for oil.

There are still a good number of milk cows here as well and Ada County dairy operations brought in \$61 million in farm-gate revenue in 2017.

Durrant said Ada County Farm Bureau’s top priority is to educate all the newcomers about the county and state’s agricultural industry and how important it is, economically as well as to Idahoans’ way of life.

“The main thing we’re focusing on is educating and trying to show people the importance that agriculture still has in the county and in the state,” he said. “Your groceries don’t just come from the grocery store. They come from the dirt we’re farming.”

One way ACFB is educating people about agriculture is by hosting farm and ranch tours and the organization on Oct. 18 hosted a tour for 13 local legislators.

The legislators visited several ag operations and growers got the opportunity to chat with them about issues important to farmers and ranchers.

Durrant said connecting with elected officials is critical to ensure the people who make important decisions about laws and regulations understand the various issues that impact agriculture and why the industry is so important to the state.

“There are a lot of us that want to continue to farm and we’ve got to find ways to do that and not keeping getting more and more regulations put on us that are going to hurt us or make it so we can’t farm,” he said. ■

Ada County farmer Tyler Reynolds, red shirt, talks about sugar beets during an Oct. 18 farm tour with 13 local legislators.

Photo by Braden Jensen



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

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Please email, text, call, or write. Gary Peterson, 115 E D St, Moscow, ID 83843. gearlep@gmail.com. 208-285-1258

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

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- Sydney Anderson, 2016-2017 Idaho FFA State Officer

To volunteer or support the Idaho FFA Foundation, call 208-869-6594 or email: marcia@GrowIdahoFFA.org





Photo by John O'Connell

Terrell Sorensen, University of Idaho Extension educator in Power County, sits on the foundation of a building from the original townsite of American Falls. The city was moved to accommodate construction of American Falls Reservoir, but water levels in the reservoir are now so low that the townsite has been exposed.

U of I expert offers water conservation tips heading into winter with drained reservoirs

By John O'Connell
University of Idaho

MOSCOW, Idaho – Absent an extremely wet winter, University of Idaho Extension educator Terrell Sorensen expects growers throughout southern and eastern Idaho

will have to get creative next season to stretch meager water supplies.

Sorensen, of Power County, served as district manager of Falls Irrigation in American Falls for more than 25 years before joining UI Extension in 2015. In the late fall of each year, Sorensen authors a

water outlook on behalf of the university.

Conditions are already taking shape for a challenging 2023 irrigation season. Farmers mostly drained the Eastern Snake Plain reservoir system to weather the 2022 growing season, and many canal companies have had to shut off early.

The Aberdeen-Springfield Canal Co., for example, cut off water in early September, about 40 days ahead of its usual schedule.

As of Sept. 26, the Upper Snake River reservoir system was at just 14% of its capacity, according to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

Sorensen said some water-intensive crops, such as corn, are being harvested early, and the early dig sugar beets are also being harvested in areas that are going to lack irrigation water.

“We need at least 125% of the average snowpack this winter to start getting some of this storage back,” Sorensen said.

The dry season undermines efforts by the state’s groundwater irrigators to meet milestones of a major settlement agreement with surface water irrigators who have senior water rights.

A key prong of the settlement requires large-scale managed aquifer recharge – intentionally allowing surface water to seep into the aquifer through unlined canals and spill basins to replenish declining groundwater levels.

There’s been little surplus water to recharge for the past two years.

Sorensen has several tips for farmers seeking to conserve their water without sacrificing yields and profits.

First, he recommends changing cropping systems to prioritize low-water crops and short-season crops that can be harvested earlier in the year.

He finds using probes to track soil moisture can help growers avoid overwatering during the heat of summer.

Finally, he suggests that growers remove their pivot end guns, which are large sprinklers on the outer ends of pivots that spray water up to 120 feet to cover field corners.

Former UI Extension irrigation specialist Howard Neibling once estimated that farmers grow about 18% less crop on pivot corners due to uneven distribution of water by end guns.

Wind and evaporation also play a large role in the reduced efficiency of watering those areas.

Sorensen suggests that farmers who remove end guns enroll their field corners in the federal Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, which pays farmers to stop irrigating fields throughout the



Stock photo

Conditions are already taking shape for a challenging 2023 irrigation season as farmers mostly drained the Eastern Snake Plain reservoir system to weather the 2022 growing season.

duration of a 10-year contract.

There are about 12,000 acres in Idaho enrolled in CREP, which is significantly below a goal of 100,000 acres set in support of the water settlement.

Sorensen’s advice to irrigators following a dry season: “The main thing is you’ve got to be conservative on water use.

Get your leaks all stopped. Check your pivot sprinkler packages, check your nozzles, just get your system in top irrigating shape.

“The best thing you can do is monitor your soil. You don’t want to overwater, which you tend to do when it’s hot. Switch to some different cropping systems. Maybe put fall wheat in if you can.

“Maybe look at some triticale or something for a forage crop – something that you can get off early. With alfalfa, maybe dry it up and don’t get a third crop if you’re short on water.

“You’d better look at your potatoes if you don’t have a sure water supply. The same goes with sugar beets and corn, and any intensive water crops. With corn maybe you could grow another feed that wouldn’t use as much water – maybe barley or something else that is a water-short crop.

“If you’ve got pivots, I’m big about taking the end guns off. If you put the pencil to it, with your crops out there in those corners it doesn’t pay that much to plant them and you can save a bunch of water by taking off those end guns.”

Sorensen said the reservoir storage water outlook throughout the Eastern Snake River Plain doesn’t look good heading into the next water year.

“There’s going to be next to nothing left in storage,” he said. “You look at the reservoirs now and we are really down there. American Falls is around 4% full.” ■



Photo by Ron Crawford

Harry Crawford of Darlington with a grapple he and brother Ron Crawford built from used parts.

Build it, or buy it?

By Kathy Corgatelli Neville
For Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

When a job requires specific equipment, you shop for it, or build it.

More often than not, brothers Harry and Ron Crawford choose the latter.

Their latest project was building a grapple for Harry's John Deere 4455, 140-horsepower four-wheel-drive tractor to clear dead trees, logs and brush from some property he and wife Bev own in Darlington.

While the Crawfords farm and ranch in Darlington, Ron is from Sandpoint where he has a small farm and works at a sawmill

near there.

Ron is a frequent visitor to Harry and Bev's, where there's always something that needs doing, or built.

"It's really challenging and rewarding when you get it done and get to use it," Harry said, and Ron added, "And it brings brothers together and brings back lots of memories of all the stuff we did as kids."

The brothers often draw on their father's teachings he taught them as they were growing up in Sandpoint where they inherited ingenuity and a strong work ethic from parents Harlan and Hazel Crawford.

During World War II, Harlan Crawford was a mechanic who repaired bombers in the United States Air Force while stationed



Submitted photo

Harry Crawford of Darlington hauls dead trees and brush on his property with a grapple he and brother Ron Crawford of Sandpoint built from used parts.

in England.

After the war, he returned to his hometown of Sandpoint and spent a career keeping huge log handling machines used in the timber industry operational. He could be counted on for his welding, fabricating and repairing skills at work and on his small farm.

“Dad taught us to be really creative and to repurpose parts to make things you can’t find, or can’t afford,” Ron said.

The grapple was built from a collection of used parts from Ron’s Sandpoint property, and from an old machinery and parts cache on Harry’s property, called “the gold mine.”

Ron’s old stumping rig that was once used to gather brush came from a “gold mine” on Ron’s Sandpoint property and it became the backbone of the grapple.

The brothers combined the stumping rig with parts from an old hay swather, an old round hay bale baler, an old ripper, several old corrugators, and an old three-point roll-over plow, all sitting idly waiting for a new use.

“Everything around here has two lives,” Harry Crawford said, and Ron Crawford added, “Or four or five lives.”

Not satisfied to be idle, the brothers are always thinking about what to build next, which can cause some eye rolling in the Crawford household.

“Sometimes when they talk about starting a new project, I just cringe because Harry goes to town and buys 100,000 welding rods,” Bev jokes.

The projects always seem to turn out well and fabricating them now is more convenient thanks to a new 24-foot by 36-foot shop Ron designed and helped build.

Ron selected and hauled the wood to build it from Sandpoint to Darlington and along with Harry, Harry and Bev’s sons, Tony and Brian Crawford from Idaho Falls and Mackay, Ron’s friend Ollie Olsen from Sandpoint, and Harry and Bev’s neighbor, Allen Doolittle, the eager crew got the shop built, wired and painted in no time.

Another time-saving and handy project was fabricating a snow blade with sides that attaches to the front of Harry’s tractor. It makes clearing snow from their 10-acre calving ground each January much easier.

“Bev got tired of pushing one little bucket of snow at a time. It’s so much quicker and so much better than anything you can buy,” Harry Crawford said.

And another project, a hay feeding tractor attachment that Harry and neighbor Allen Doolittle finished last spring, challenged and thoroughly entertained the pair, and all who would listen, nearly every day, all day, all last winter.

No one sees the end to the “project pipeline,” as long as “the gold mine” holds out, that is.

“Part of ‘the gold mine’ here is disappearing, it’s a lot thinner than it used to be,” Harry Crawford said. ■

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