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Building on NAFTA's Success



*By Zippy Duvall
AFBF President*

Agriculture will be keeping a close eye on the next rounds of the North American Free Trade Agreement renegotiation this month in Mexico City and Washington, D.C. For farmers and ranchers across the country, spring is a time of planning, planting and praying for a fruitful year. But if our leading

Beyond the Fencerows



export markets hang in the balance, a cloud of uncertainty hangs over a time that usually is filled with optimism and hope. The impact of U.S. withdrawal from NAFTA could be devastating for farms and ranches of all sizes.

Robust trade agreements boost farm prices and help sustain farms and ranches. Twenty-five percent of American-grown products go to customers outside our borders, and in 2017 nearly

a third of those exports went to our North American neighbors. Mexico and Canada are top export markets for all types of commodities—from grains to dairy, from poultry and livestock to fresh fruits and vegetables. NAFTA has been a real success story for U.S. agriculture, and it continues to be. Last year, ag exports to Canada and Mexico topped \$39 billion—that's \$1 billion higher than in 2016.

See DUVALL, page 6

Federal Regulations Stifle Small Business



*By Bryan Searle
President Idaho Farm Bureau
Federation*

American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall recently told a U.S. Senate Committee that federal government regulations are ripe for reform.

“I have met farmers and ranchers who are not sure if they should encourage their children to remain on the farm,” Duvall said. “This is not a partisan issue. This is about allowing our farmers and businesses to be productive. It’s about a goal that I believe we all share: a regulatory process that is credible—one that we can get behind instead of having to fight against.”

Duvall singled out the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act and the Administrative Procedure Act as laws that are harmful and

over-reaching.

In my own recent discussions with Idaho Farm Bureau members I sense a remaining frustration and confusion over many of the federal government’s attempts to regulate agriculture in the wake of the Obama presidency.

Waters of the U.S. or WOTUS as it has come to be known, is one example of government agencies biting off more than they could chew. Since this issue rose to the sur-

See SEARLE, page 7

Are There Any Young Farmers and Ranchers?



*By Rick Keller
CEO Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

As I have traveled around the state, I’m frequently asked about the future of agriculture. One of the more common concerns expressed is there just aren’t any young farmers and ranchers entering the farming scene. Yes, it is true the average age of Idaho’s farmers

continues to creep up, currently at 57.6 years. That statistic implies an aging farmer base, but statistics don’t always provide a full picture.

I wish all the nay-sayers commenting of no young farmers and ranchers could have attended the meetings that I have this past month, where there were many young farmers and ranchers present. The meetings were refreshing as hundreds of young famers and ranchers met to discuss pertinent issues before them. Even more encouraging was to witness most attending the conferences were couples, united

to making their life choice and career a family priority. The conferences are sponsored by the American and Idaho Farm Bureaus, through a program called the Young Farmers and Ranchers program (YF&R).

In Boise, I attend a conference of over 200 young farmers and ranchers from around the state. It was awesome. The conference was put on by young farmers and ranchers for young farmers and ranchers. The meeting provided a wonderful blend of training, networking, and leadership development.

See KELLER, page 6



IDAHO FARM BUREAU

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This is a photograph of federal land in Custer County, where 96 percent of the land is controlled by the federal government. Many rural counties in Idaho are facing difficult budgeting decisions due to large sections of federal land within their boundaries and underperforming federal programs established to offset tax exemptions on that land.

Farm Bureau file photo

PILT Distribution Unfair to Rural Counties

By John Thompson

Idaho legislators are in Boise this winter doling out tax cuts, deliberating on how to allocate budget surpluses and focusing on re-election.

But out in the rural counties, budget-setting is a bit more tenuous. In fact some rural counties are struggling just to keep the lights on and are in discussions about override levies that will increase property taxes later this year.

Washington County Commissioner Kirk Chandler says Idaho's rural counties, especially those with high percentages of federal land, are at the bottom of the food chain because of underperforming federal programs established to offset large tracts of untaxed federal land and costly mandates passed down from the State. Ultimately, it's the farmers, ranchers and other private landowners who the costs are passed down to.

One of the options under consideration in Washington County is to pull sheriff's deputies off patrol, put them in charge of the jail and lay off the jail staff. In the past Chandler said some rural counties have even escorted law-breakers to the state line and let them go because the cost of jailing them was more than the county could afford.

"We have had to go out for override levies twice in the last few years just to pay the

See PILT page 4

Cover: At Huston Winery in Canyon County's Sunnyslope area, pruning the grape vines is a family affair that got underway in late February this year. Photo by Steve Ritter





Kirk Chandler, center, is a rancher and commissioner in Washington County. In this photograph he is teaching children from an elementary school in Weiser about agriculture and natural resources. *Farm Bureau file photo*

bills,” Chandler said. “If the PILT money doesn’t come through we will have to lay off our jail staff, put our deputies in the jail and then not be able to patrol the county.”

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) is a federal government program that channels money to counties across the nation that contain federal land. PILT must be reauthorized periodically by Congress and payments in recent years have been intermittent. This fact makes the program unreliable and adds considerable challenge to the county’s budget setting process, Chandler said.

In addition, the PILT formula contains a population component that penalizes the counties with the fewest residents, regardless of the number of federal acres within their borders. For instance, Ada County has 434,000 residents and 298,000 acres of public land. Ada County’s yearly PILT allocation is \$789,086. By contrast, Custer

County has 4,087 residents and 2.9 million acres of federal land, or 440,000 fewer residents and 2.7 million more acres of public land than Ada County. Yet Custer County’s yearly PILT allocation is only \$730,092, or \$58,994 less than Ada.

Chandler is beyond frustrated with the difficulties associated with budget-setting in his rural county because of the heavy burden created by large tracts of federal land, Congress’ failure to appropriate PILT funds on time and other mandates passed down from state to county government. He said some counties are facing an even bigger budgeting struggle than Washington County.

County commissioners in rural Idaho are charged with providing law enforcement, search and rescue, fire protection, road maintenance and a long list of other services for huge areas of federal land they have no control over.

Chandler says the millions of U.S. residents who call themselves proud public land owners and who live here or travel to Idaho to recreate, should have a better understanding of the challenges rural counties face.

“Many people are passionate about their public land,” Chandler said. “It seems fair to me that they should pay the taxes on it and not just have it for free. If that land was managed better it could even generate income and jobs.”

Nationwide, PILT paid out \$460 million last year. Chandler said according to a study conducted by the National Association of Counties, if the federal land were under the same tax structure as private land it would have generated \$1.3 billion in property taxes last year.

To cope with the cost of state mandates

See PILT page 8



Many rural counties are struggling to set budgets and being forced to raise property taxes while waiting for Congress to reauthorize a federal program that helps fund roads and schools. *Farm Bureau file photo*

Secure Rural Schools Act Delinquent

By Jake Putnam

GRANGEVILLE - Rural Idaho counties have not received a Secure Rural Schools and Self-Determination Act (SRS) payment in more than 18 months.

Rural Idaho counties usually receive SRS checks in March. County budgets throughout Idaho are dealing with major budget shortfalls.

“We haven’t had a check since March of 2015,” said Idaho County Commissioner Mark Frei.

The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act was passed by Congress in 2000. It replaced a similar act adopted by Congress in 1908 established to help rural counties with high percentages

of untaxable U.S. Forest Service land. SRS money replaces lost timber revenue and can only be allocated for schools and road maintenance. SRS was last reauthorized by Congress in 2015.

“We’re working without \$1.2 million dollars that we usually have in our operating road and bridge budget,” Frei said. Things are so bad the county has had to take drastic measures.

“So we have to levy higher taxes on everyone that lives within this road and bridge highway district,” he said.

The SRS is administered by the U.S. Forest Service and originally passed in 2000. Before 2000, many rural communities

supported by this act depended on receiving 25 percent of timber sale revenues from nearby National Forests to pay for schools and other critical infrastructure.

“It was initially approved for six years back in 1995,” said Adams County Commissioner Mike Paradis. “Ever since then it was attached to other bills in various forms. In 2015 we had our last payment and it was \$774,000. This year we’re working on a budget of \$14,494 dollars.”

Paradis says roads in Adams County are not being repaired, and many paved roads will go back to gravel. He says Adams

See SRS page 8

DUVALL

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While NAFTA has a track record of working for agriculture, we can't be certain that we'll keep those customers if we back out of the agreement or lose the gains we've made. You don't have to look far to see how markets adjust when better deals come along. No company or industry is exempt from changes in the market. Companies that were once pillars of their industries have crumbled when they couldn't keep up with the changes taking place around them. For example, there's no longer a Woolworth's in every downtown. You can't get a phone plan with MCI, and you can't book a world-class flight on Pan-Am. But folks still have plenty of means to shop, communicate and travel. In the same way we've adjusted and

taken our business elsewhere, our customers in Mexico and Canada will go to other countries for their soybeans, wheat, apples, poultry, and much more, if trade with us no longer remains a good deal all around.

That's not to say that we have a perfect trade agreement with NAFTA. We've seen a lot of change in the 20-plus years since it was signed, and agriculture would like to see modernizations that improve on the strong trade partnership with our neighbors. All our trade agreements must be based on scientific standards that advance innovation in our industry. Free trade involves give and take, and U.S. agriculture can't do all the giving. That's why we're looking to these NAFTA talks to reduce tariffs and modernize

sanitary rules. We have seen this kind of progress in other trade talks like the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and are confident we can get there again.

In the middle of these negotiations, I am reminded of a Bible verse in Ecclesiastes: "The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned; but time and chance happen to them all." I often look to God's Word for guidance on all kinds of issues. It's amazing how much wisdom in the Bible applies to our business and professional lives, as well as our spiritual lives.

No matter how good a job we do in American agriculture, winning the "race" is not guaranteed. We are not promised success. But

all of us get our time and chance to be successful, if we are smart enough to see the opportunity in front of us and act on it.

If the U.S. pulls out of NAFTA, our competitors around the world certainly will see their opportunity to swallow up the markets we would leave behind for the taking.

America's farmers and ranchers are swift, strong, wise and learned. There's nothing we can't do, including feed our nation and much of the world. It's up to us to make the right decisions to ensure we make the most of the opportunities we have.

We must remain in NAFTA and keep working to make it better, so America's farmers and ranchers can continue the export growth we've seen in our closest markets.

KELLER

Continued from page 2

The topics in the workshops were based on the realities of being a young farmer or rancher today. The networking developed new friendships and mentoring from around that state that will last a lifetime.

Following the meeting in Boise, I attended a national meeting of young farmers and ranchers in Reno, Nevada. There were more than 900 young farmers or ranchers in attendance, and again, the vast majority were couples. The conference was planned by young farmers and ranchers for young farmers and ranchers. They developed the workshops, arranged the speakers, scheduled devotionals, selected the venues, and arranged wholesome entertainment. The national young farmers and ranchers committee, which organized the event, reported on

activities in their communities where the strength and energy of these young leaders is most felt. One report given showed American Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers' Harvest for All national campaign recently participated in donating 28.9 million pounds of food, 9,067 of hours of volunteer time, and \$1.1 million to local food banks.

In each of the conferences, the theme of inclusion was prominent. Not only was there discussion of reaching out to fellow young farmers and ranchers, but also, how to assist in the development of more young farmers and ranchers. Included in the conferences were collegiate agriculture students who are studying and want to make agriculture their careers. The collegiate students fully participated in the discussions, workshops, activities, and networking. There was plenty

of college alumni bantering and good-natured interaction.

Inclusion is the great bond which exists between young farmers and ranchers and many state and local Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapters. Many of the young farmers and ranchers were actively engaged in FFA while attending high school. FFA is integral in agriculture and providing leadership to build healthy, local communities. These young farmers and ranchers are building the bridge between adolescence and agriculture.

The young farmers also seek to include the 4-H. 4-H which functions with many land grant colleges, is a great youth organization with close ties to agriculture. Many of the young farmers and ranchers in attendance were in 4-H in their youth and are currently local 4-H leaders, giving

back to their chosen profession of agriculture.

We are grateful Farm Bureau is engaged in the YF&R program, for that is where Farm Bureau's future leaders are developed. There isn't another viable program in the state or nation which is dedicated to strengthening the future of agriculture and leadership. I'm encouraged by these young farmers and ranchers. Their enthusiasm is contagious. Their passion for agriculture is reassuring. Their leadership is profound. Those concerned about the future of agriculture need not worry. With the combination of the young farmers and ranchers' enthusiasm, passion, and leadership bridging the gaps between the collegiate ag students, high school FFA'ers and youth 4-H groups, the future of agriculture is secure and bright.

SEARLE

Continued from page 2

face in 2014 a lot of water has passed under the bridge, which has created confusion in farm country over where things now stand. I'd like to attempt to clear some of that up for Idaho Farm Bureau members.

First, AFBF created comprehensive timeline of the issue that can be accessed at this link: <https://www.fb.org/issues/regulatory-reform/clean-water-act/>

In 2015, the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers finalized a rule that expanded their regulatory authority under the Clean Water Act. The rule gave a new, exceptionally vague definition to waters of the U.S., also known as "navigable waters." Yes this means that the puddle of water in your farm yard, out in that potato field or any other place they wanted to control.

EPA failed to listen to concerned farmers, ranchers and business owners around the country in crafting its new rule, vastly expanding EPA's and the Corps' regulatory authority beyond the limits approved by Congress and affirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court. The rule was challenged in court by dozens of state, municipal, industry and environmental organizations, including Idaho Farm Bureau. It was quickly blocked by the federal courts based on its legal flaws and the harm it threatened to cause, and was never implemented nationwide.

An executive order from President Trump last year, sent EPA back to the drawing board and directed the agency to consid-

er whether to repeal or revise the order. This is where in my view, the issue gets cloudy. But if we back up and remember that in 2015 the EPA "finalized" the rule. Therefore, the process of whether to repeal or revise the rule is still under consideration inside EPA. That's why we as farmers and ranchers must remain engaged on this issue.

When the rule was initially sent out for public comment AFBF created the "#Ditch the Rule" public relations campaign. Farm Bureau members from throughout the country responded with a strong, unified voice. Now we're in the midst of a second AFBF public relations campaign that uses rubber duckies to generate buzz and drive home the point that we strongly oppose over-regulation of water by federal agencies.

The new campaign - "If you can't #FloatUs, it's not WOTUS," - encourages members to remain active in advocating our position through social media. Here's what you can do:

- Share your message on social media!
1. Get a rubber duck.
 2. Share photos and videos on your social media platforms of your duck on non-navigable areas of your land.
 3. Use the hashtags #FloatUs and #CleanWaterClearRules with each post.
 4. Tag @FlaFarmBureau on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter with your photos and videos.

Sample Posts:
5. Tell Washington #WOTUS shouldn't regulate lands that are sometimes wet. American

farmers and ranchers deserve a common-sense rule. #FloatUs #CleanWaterClearRules
6. #WOTUS isn't what it's quacked up to be. Farmers and ranchers need a clear and reasonable definition of "Waters of the U.S." #FloatUs #CleanWaterClearRules
7. Regulating farmlands that are sometimes wet is fowl play. It's time to rescind the 2015 #WOTUS rule. #FloatUs #CleanWaterClearRules
8. Even ducks know ditches and low lands aren't #WOTUS. #CleanWaterClearRules
9. The 2015 #WOTUS rule didn't fly with the federal courts. It's time for a common-sense rule within the

limits set by Congress. #FloatUs #CleanWaterClearRules
Pass your message and a rubber duck to your neighbor when you're done to keep our message viral. It's you and your neighbors who can truly make a difference.

Idaho Farm Bureau looks forward to working with AFBF, the U.S. EPA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the future to write a new rule that protects our nation's waters without penalizing farmers and ranchers.

#FloatUs #CleanWaterClearRules #Grassroots #Advocate

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	Yield	.600	.700	.800	.900	1.21	1.51	1.81	
\$ 1,000 - \$ 2,499	Rate	.650	.750	.850	.950	1.25	1.55	1.85	
	Yield	.650	.750	.850	.950	1.26	1.56	1.86	
\$ 2,500 - \$ 4,999	Rate	.700	.800	.900	1.00	1.30	1.60	1.90	
	Yield	.700	.800	.900	1.00	1.31	1.61	1.91	
\$ 5,000 - \$ 9,999	Rate	.750	.850	.950	1.05	1.35	1.65	1.95	
	Yield	.750	.850	.950	1.05	1.36	1.66	1.96	
\$ 10,000 - \$ 24,999	Rate	.800	.900	1.00	1.10	1.40	1.70	2.00	
	Yield	.800	.900	1.00	1.10	1.41	1.71	2.02	
\$ 25,000 - \$ 49,999	Rate	.850	.950	1.05	1.15	1.45	1.75	2.05	
	Yield	.850	.950	1.05	1.15	1.46	1.76	2.07	
\$ 50,000 - \$ 99,999	Rate	.900	1.00	1.10	1.20	1.50	1.80	2.10	
	Yield	.900	1.00	1.10	1.20	1.51	1.81	2.12	
\$ 100,000 +	Call	Call	Call	Call	Call	Call	Call	Call	

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PILT

Continued from page 4

and absence of PILT funding in 2015 and 2016, Washington County pulled \$180,000 out of its road maintenance funds and raised property taxes.

Idaho Senator Mike Crapo provided the following information:

The Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program in Idaho, managed by the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), provides funding to Idaho's counties to make up for lost revenues from non-taxable federal lands. PILT funding provides essential services such as law enforcement, search and rescue, public health programs and critical infrastructure across the state. The

DOI calculates PILT allocations based a complex formula as determined by federal law that includes acreage, county population, previous payments, state law and the Consumer Price Index.

This Congressional Research Service Report outlines the intricacies of the PILT formula calculations: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL31392.pdf>

“Smaller counties with larger percentages of untaxable land may see a difference in payment levels based on a myriad of other factors contained in the payment formula other than land acreage such as population, state law, or excluded land

protections,” Crapo said. “Other federal payments are calculated in the formula also, and address the needs of rural populations differently. I continue to strongly support county funding through payment streams like PILT and reauthorizing the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program (S. 1027), because of their vital importance to our rural communities. Congress must look for supplemental support, such as strengthening revenue sharing with local governments by increasing timber harvests and restoration work on federally-managed lands. Finding a long-term solution to the challenges facing these counties so that they are

not left in annual limbo remains one of my top priorities.”

Department of Interior Press Secretary Heather Swift provided the following information to Idaho Farm Bureau: “The formula is mandated by Congress. Any changes would go through legislation.”

<https://www.doi.gov/pilt>

The formula used to compute the payments is contained in the PILT Act and is based on population, receipt sharing payments, and the amount of Federal land within an affected county.

SRS

Continued from page 5

will have to tax users just to keep roads and bridges operable. But he says there's talk of another SRS bill.

“Senators Hatch and Wyden have created another bill but we've got to pass a budget. Congress has yet to pass that, so we're operating on what timber sale receipts that are out there,” said Paradis.

There's a growing restlessness in the West. Western senators are urging the Trump Administration and to honor the government's promise to fund the SRS Act.

“SRS funding extends a lifeline to rural communities by funding road repairs, schools and law enforcement to communities. Our rural counties are dependent on the federal

government to help with taxes,” said Idaho Senator Mike Crapo.

The SRS grew out of the 2000 Craig-Wyden Bill to pay rural counties for the decline in timber harvests. SRS provides 775 rural counties across the nation and 4,000 schools with funds to support public services including roads and forest health.

Since SRS expired last March, many rural counties haven't had enough money for basic services like road repairs, and snow removal.

According to the Idaho Association of Counties, Idaho County has lost more money than any other county, nearly \$7.3 million. Five counties will lose more than a million dollars including Boundary, Clearwater, Custer, Lemhi,

Shoshone, and Valley. Adams County has seen more logging open up this past year.

“If we can't get SRS funding we need to open up the forests for logging. Evergreen Forest Products in Tamarack put on another shift because they have the volume to do that, but it is still not enough to fund our road and bridge department,” said Commissioner Paradis.

With gridlock in Congress, Idaho Counties are not optimistic about funding this winter.

“The Congressional delegation says they're working on it, but it's not really going anywhere, so we have to levy more taxes,” said Commissioner Frei. But he says Senator Crapo continues to work SRS behind the scenes.

“We stressed the importance of prioritizing the SRS program in the federal budgeting process,” said Crapo during a recent town hall meeting in Kamiah.

“SRS payments provide critical revenues to more than 4,400 schools throughout the country. In many cases, these forest counties include massive swaths of public lands in national forests,” said Crapo.

Right now a simple two-year extension is a realistic goal according to county commissioners. Senator Crapo said he wants a long-term effort that'll provide rural counties stable funding allowing counties to fund programs and move forward.

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Life on the Range



Jim Sprinkle, U of I beef extension specialist, talks about a research project that is looking for the “perfect cow.”

Unique Collaboration Created Around Blaine County Ranch

By Idaho Rangeland Resources Commission

The Rock Creek Ranch embraces 10,400 acres of land in a series of succulent meadows surrounded by miles upon miles of good-quality rangeland below the shadow of the Smoky Mountains in Blaine County.

The ranch is home to sage grouse, a species of concern, as well as moose, elk,

deer, antelope and many other critters.

Because of its dual qualities as a working ranch with strong conservation values, Rock Creek Ranch was purchased recently from the Rinker Family by the Wood River Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy in a unique partnership with the University of Idaho.

Under the partnership, the University of Idaho provides a cow-calf herd from its

Nancy M. Cummings Research and Education Center in Salmon for rangeland-related research. The 850-acre Cummings Ranch is all irrigated pasture. Rock Creek offers an opportunity to do research on a ranch with a true rangeland setting.

“It’s a great station, we can do a lot of great research here, but one of the things we’ve always lacked has been a range component,” says John Hall, Superintendent of

the Nancy M. Cummings Research, Extension and Education Center in Salmon. “That means our system of production was not really relevant to the majority of the industry, which relies on range at least 5-6 months out of the year. So the Rock Creek Ranch gave us a wonderful opportunity to expand our research, and make our research more industry-relevant.”

Both the Wood River Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy are excited about the potential to conduct research and education at the ranch through the partnership with the University of Idaho.

“A great part about this project is the research that’s taking place here, and we don’t have that on many of our projects,” said Lou Lunte, deputy director of The Nature Conservancy in Idaho. “The Nature Conservancy prides itself on using science to guide our conservation work. So actually having a ranch, working with the university, we could do really good research, which is important us.”

Public education programs at the ranch like “Sagebrush Saturdays” also provide a window into the benefits of good stewardship.

There were five education events in the first summer of ranch operations. Topics included learning about birds of prey, wildflowers and pollinators, beavers, bugs and stream restoration, soil, fire and wildlife, and raising cattle from A-Z.

Rock Creek Ranch also hosted the Western National Rangeland Career Day Event for high school students learning about range management. Students from multiple western states participated. During a full day in the field, they worked on plant identification, evaluating habitat for wildlife and livestock, and making recommendations for future management.

Scott Boettger, executive director of the Wood River Land Trust, is excited about the educational opportunities at the ranch.

“Like the Peaveys have been able to do with the Trailing of the Sheep, there’s a big component of that, understand what it means to have cattle on that land in a way that benefits the grass regrowth, the fire

prevention, all of the things that aren’t understood at first blush,” he said. “More importantly, get good information out there, what it actually means to graze it properly, and how that’s a healthier situation for all.”

Karen Launchbaugh, Director of the University of Idaho Rangeland Center, describes the new collaborative research opportunities at Rock Creek.

“Well, it’s really a brand new idea, it’s a mix of people’s ideas of what should be done on landscapes, and the science and education there to see if it works,” she says. “To me, what’s really unique about it, is this combination of science and education, and a lot of voices weighing into that and helping us with how to do this at a landscape scale.”

It might have been fate that the Wood River Land Trust worked with the Rinker family and partnered with the Nature Conservancy to save the ranch for conservation purposes.

At one time, the Rinkers were looking at building a subdivision there, with up to 2,000 residential units. But that idea didn’t bode well with locals in Blaine County.

“The initial intent was it could become a development play, where it would become an off-shoot of Hailey, and actually the formation of its own city, but there was a lot of obstacles involved with that, it had no power, as such that would have been a huge cost and impact to the land,” explains Bart Rinker. “The political environment started to change to the point where doing a development of that type would be questioned.”

The Rinkers decided to withdraw their development proposal and focused on selling the ranch. Along the way, ranch broker Trent Jones, who also is a board member on the Wood River Land Trust, started to discuss the possibility of a conservation outcome with the Rinker Family.

“Maybe there’s a way to generate some funding through the Grassland Reserve Program administered by NRCS, maybe there’s some other public entities who could bring some money to the table, the Land Trust, and also looking to the Rinker

family, if a conservation outcome, which could really be a legacy, after so many years here in the valley, maybe there’s something the family could contribute beyond just creating the opportunity?” Jones says.

The Rinkers were open to the concept. Bart’s dad, Harry Rinker, had been a successful real estate developer in California.

“And then it started into a collaborative discussion,” Bart Rinker said. “It came to light that there could be some other benefits that we could benefit from, as well as the county, the Land Trust, TNC, all of that.”

Trent Jones and Bart Rinker engaged with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to explore the concept of selling easements to the agency through the Grassland Reserve Program. The robust sage grouse populations and premium habitat at the ranch made it a good fit.

In the meantime, Trent Jones worked with Scott Boettger at the Wood River Land Trust to see if they could raise sufficient funds to buy the ranch. This was where The Nature Conservancy came into play.

“The magnitude of the property is significant. We’ve never come close to protecting something that large,” Boettger said. “We didn’t have anything close to the money we needed to purchase this ranch, even with the significant reduction in asking price.”

“With the GRP easements, we were able to generate most of the monies necessary to acquire the property. So we borrowed money, in conjunction with the TNC to make it happen. They were true partners, our name was on the title, but without their support, we couldn’t have done this.”

The Nature Conservancy had its eye on the Rock Creek property for some time, explains Lou Lunte. “We have a 30- to 40-year history at Silver Creek and the Wood River Valley. But this was a big project, and the land trust was a smaller organization, so it was great that we could partner together to make it happen,” he says.

See LIFE ON THE RANGE page 12

LIFE ON THE RANGE

Continued from page 11



Rock Creek Ranch Manager Wyatt Prescott moves cattle.

Initially, the Wood River Land Trust and the Nature Conservancy thought they would sell the property to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game to be managed as a Wildlife Management Area. But when Idaho legislators heard about that, they blocked the sale. And then discussions turned toward the concept of partnering with the University of Idaho.

“I was at the Capitol in Boise talking to a number of legislators just after the vote happened to not allow fish and game to move forward, but they were very committed to the Rock Creek project,” Lunte explains. “And we immediately began to have conversations about alternative strategies.

Laurie Lickley, former board

president of the Idaho Cattle Association, was instrumental in persuading legislators and the University of Idaho about the partnership at Rock Creek Ranch.

Another positive aspect that occurred was that Wyatt Prescott, former executive vice president of the Idaho Cattle Association, was hired to manage operations at the ranch for research and education. Prescott speaks about the ranch’s potential at a Sagebrush Saturdays event.

“That’s what we’re trying to do here, find out what the ranch personality is, and do those developments so you can use cattle as a conservation tool in a working landscape, and not just a beef production tool,”

Prescott says. “My passion about this project is there’s going to be a number of research projects done out here from the university perspective, to look at how do we do that better. How do we use that livestock better as a tool for conservation?”

“It’s not good enough for me as a rancher and cattle consultant to say we can serve wildlife habitat and raise a few cows, we have to strive to find production techniques that both enhance the amount of beef we can produce on this landscape, and but also enhance the amount of conservation wildlife habitat we can produce on this landscape.”

Management, research and education functions at Rock

Creek Ranch are overseen not only by the Wood River Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, and the University of Idaho, but also by a diverse advisory committee, including the Idaho Cattle Association, NRCS, Central Idaho Rangeland Network, Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission, Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission, Idaho Fish and Game, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The University of Idaho Rangeland Center brings together the research functions of the UI College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the UI College of Natural Resources at Rock Creek. “Rangeland studies and education at the U of Idaho have always been done at the College of Natu-

ral Resources and the College of Agriculture, and this ranch gives us a chance to work side by side on the same project,” Launchbaugh says.

The Rock Creek Ranch deeded lands, combined with another 11,000 acres of BLM grazing allotments, encompass a whole watershed. Launchbaugh notes that it’s rare to do research in such an ideal setting.

“One, it’s one watershed. We don’t get that chance very often,” she says. “But that gives us a lot of understanding about management and research, so that’s unique. The location of Rock Creek is really cool because it’s right in the middle of Idaho. And then the third thing that makes it unique is the private federal and state lands, so it is a pretty good post card of what ranching looks like in Idaho.”

Given the ranch’s location, it’s close to population centers in southern Idaho, convenient for range tours for policy-makers, state legislators, school groups and other ranchers.

“That location is just tremendous because of its geographic location in the state,” says UI’s John Hall. “The fantastic thing is it’s two hours from Boise, it’s just a hop and a skip from Twin Falls, so we can bring up students from the College of Southern Idaho, we can bring K-12 kids up there from a variety of communities, and we can bring legislators and students over from Boise.”

In the first year of operation at the ranch, eight research projects got under way, and more are being planned. The projects cover a wide variety of topics, from animal health to invasive weeds to monitoring plants

and water quality, and a study looking for the ideal range cow using space age technology.

“We’re trying to find cattle that fit these rangeland systems, but also will use rangeland sustainably and will have minimal impacts,” says Jim Sprinkle, a Ph.D. Beef Extension Specialist for the University of Idaho at the Cummings research and education facility in Salmon.

Using GPS collars and accelerometers, Sprinkle is tracking how cattle use the range, how much they eat, how much they travel, how much they rest and sleep, etc. The more efficient cows don’t need as much to eat and graze in the upland areas, where ranchers want them to graze. The less-efficient cows eat more forage each day, and tend to be lazy, staying in the creek-bottom instead of hiking to the uplands, Sprinkle says.

“We’re looking for the ideal cow.”

Mother cows with more efficient characteristics could be bred with bulls to improve the efficiency of a cow herd, Sprinkle said. “This research I’m describing to you is some of the first research of its kind in the world.”

Another study at Rock Creek is looking at the impact of cattle grazing on wet meadow habitat where sage grouse like to raise their broods. Using electric fence, they created six, 5.5-acre pastures, and put different numbers of cattle in the pastures to consume forage and tracked the results.

They will look at various levels of grass utilization and how that might affect sage grouse broods and cattle weight gain.

All of these studies are exciting

to working ranchers like Jerald Raymond, board president of the Idaho Cattle Association who ranches near Menan in Eastern Idaho.

“This ranch benefits wildlife, it benefits livestock, it benefits those alliances we have with the sportsmen, with the education, and with the communities that surround this area. The research being done will enhance what we know about how livestock reacts to certain situations and how wildlife reacts to those scenarios and situations.

Now that research, education and conservation are moving ahead at Rock Creek Ranch, it’s rewarding for the people involved to see things moving ahead.

Adds Trent Jones of the Wood

River Land Trust, “It’s a gift to this community that’s hard to replicate and really a legacy for the Rinker family. We are all so deeply appreciative of what they’ve done toward that end.”

“I’m just so proud to be part of a bigger project,” says Boettger. “It wouldn’t be possible without all of the different partners being involved. And the future of that property is much grander than we ever could have imagined. The university brings a big part of that, and I’m really excited about the future.”

Article and photos by Steve Stuebner. Stuebner is the writer and producer of the Life on the Range online education series, sponsored by the Idaho Rangeland Resources Commission. View their work at online at www.lifeontherange.org

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Farm Bureau Members Encouraged to Participate in new PR Campaign

IFBF

During a recent Legislative Leadership Conference luncheon, the Idaho Farm Bureau encouraged members to take part in a new public relations campaign.

Sponsored by American Farm Bureau Federation, the #FloatUs social media campaign focuses on maintaining momentum that will limit federal agency attempts to regulate non-navigable water. In 2017, the Environmental Protection Agency adopted a rule that is a major impediment to private property owners. This PR campaign supports rewriting that rule, the 2015 Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule.

“We gave members a rubber duck and are urging them to snap a photo of their duck in supposedly navigable waters on their farm and then share that photo on social media platforms,” said Jake Putnam, Idaho Farm Bureau Social Media Manager. “We’re anxiously waiting to see what our farmers and ranchers come up with. That creativity is an effective lobby tool, and it may be funny but also packs a political punch.”

The campaign kicked off earlier this year and gives Idaho Farm Bureau mem-

bers a way to share their feelings about WOTUS on their social media.

For years Idaho’s farmers and ranchers have sought a new definition of the 2015 Waters of the United States rule that will protect water quality and provide regulatory certainty in a common sense, transparent and collaborative way.

What Can our Members Do?

Share your message on social media!

1. Get a rubber duck.
2. Share photos and videos on your social media platforms of your duck on non-navigable areas of your land.
3. Use the hashtags #FloatUs and #CleanWaterClearRules with each post.
4. Tag @FlaFarmBureau on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter with your photos and videos.

Sample Posts:

5. Tell Washington #WOTUS shouldn’t regulate lands that are sometimes wet. American farmers and ranchers deserve a common-sense rule. #FloatUs #CleanWaterClearRules
6. #WOTUS isn’t what it’s quacked up to be. Farmers and ranchers need a clear and reasonable definition of “Waters of the U.S.” #FloatUs #CleanWaterClearRules
7. Regulating farmlands that are sometimes wet is fowl

play. It’s time to rescind the 2015 #WOTUS rule. #FloatUs #CleanWaterClearRules

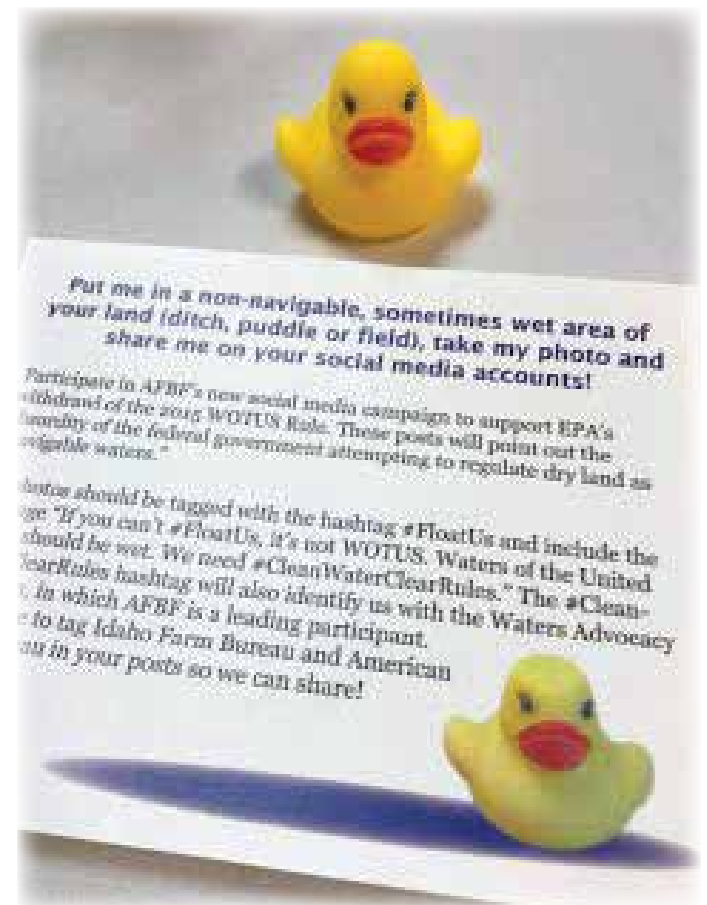
8. Even ducks know ditches and low lands aren’t #WOTUS. #CleanWaterClearRules

9. The 2015 #WOTUS rule didn’t fly with the federal courts. It’s time for a common-sense rule within the limits set by Congress. #FloatUs #CleanWaterClearRules

Pass your message and a rubber duck to your neighbor when you’re done to keep this message viral.

Idaho Farm Bureau looks forward to working with AFBF, the U.S. EPA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the future to write a new rule that protects our nation’s waters without penalizing farmers and ranchers. #FloatUs #CleanWaterClearRules #Grassroots #Advocate

Read more background on this issue at the AFBF website, www.fb.org under Issues, then Regulatory Reform, then WOTUS.



Strolling Buffet highlights IFBF Legislative Conference



By Jake Putnam

BOISE — The buffet tables were stacked with roast beef, ham and side dishes galore at Boise's Riverside Hotel as more than 220 sat down to dinner on February 13th.

The Idaho Farm Bureau's annual 'Strolling Buffet' was another big success this year as lawmakers dined with Farm Bureau Members from voting districts all over the state. The event was part of the three-day meeting that included a combined legislative and commodity conference.

"There's not a better way to communicate with lawmakers," said Idaho Farm Bureau President Bryan Searle. Searle adds that a personal visit with neighbors is good grass-roots politics.

The Strolling Buffet has become a Legislative institution and is prized by

members and lawmakers because it's low-key, no speeches, no podiums, and a relaxed atmosphere. Each table was marked by legislative district. Farm Bureau members visit the buffet table and then sit at their district table where they can converse with their state senators and representatives.

"There's nothing like this in Idaho. We get to bounce ideas off constituents and they can ask us anything they want," said Representative Judy Boyle from Midvale. «I love visiting with people from back home.»

Dinner conversations were lively, with issues ranging from brand inspections to taxes and private property rights. The conference also included speeches from legislative leadership and leaders of House and Senate agriculture committees. Members of Idaho's congressional delegation also

called in from Washington D.C. to address Idaho Farm Bureau members.

The commodity portion of the conference included commodity committee

meetings allowing members to discuss policy relating to specific crops and livestock. They also heard from several industry experts including veterinarians and agronomists.

This Month's Top Farm Bureau Agents



Agent of the Month
Rob Ellis
Magic Valley Region



Rookie of the Month
John Nishimoto
North Idaho Region

Region of the Month
Magic Valley Region

Trespass Bill Clears Ag Committee



By Jake Putnam

Boise - The House Agricultural Affairs Committee voted to support a bill that increases penalties for trespassing sponsored by Rep. Judy Boyle R-Midvale on February 14.

The committee voted 14-1 in support of strengthening Idaho's outdated trespass statutes and sent the bill to the floor of the House.

The lone vote against came from House Minority Leader Mat Erpelding D-Boise.

The Agriculture Committee hearing was packed with farmers and ranchers with trespass horror stories including Idaho Farm Bureau President Bryan Searle who testified that the trespassing fine is so low, that it's not worth the sheriff's time in his county.

"We've experienced all kinds of damage," said Searle. "At my farm in Shelley, we've had pivot tires shot up, fertilizer

tanks shot full of bullet holes, we've had people drive through plowed fields. We even had a demolition derby with a couple of our tractors, not to mention garbage dumped in our fields."

Searle says deputies responded to their calls but all he can do is file a report. With just a \$50 fine for trespass there's no investigation, and in all his years farming, he's seen just a single arrest for littering.

"Farmers want people to enjoy the land, but the challenge comes with vandalism when they damage machinery or shoot things up. We have to have something in place so when we are violated there's a penalty rather than a \$50 fine or what I call a fee to have fun. Fines need to be updated and we need to put some bite into the statute," said Searle

Cody Chandler from Washington County testified that on his ranch they're seeing more and more inci-

dences of trespass each year.

"I'm not an advocate of locking gates, they just keep honest people out, but we continue to have more and more cut fences and vandalism," said Chandler. "We had a guy make off with some of our cattle and drove across our property to do it. If we had a stronger statute we could have got him for trespass and subsequently theft, but the laws are so weak we were violated twice."

Some on the committee thought the bill was too rushed and needed vetting. Others questioned its legality. Attorney Gary Allen, representing the Idaho Property Rights Coalition, said he disagreed with those interpretations.

"The Girl Scouts are not going to become trespassers or felons," he said, referring to committee concerns that anyone who sets foot on private property without permission could become a felon.

Allen stressed that the bill targets repeat offenders, not people who get lost or accidentally trespass. To that point, Rep. Boyle added, that she wants a three-strike clause. If within a 10-year period someone is convicted of two trespassing charges, the third offense is a felony.


When it comes to trespassing on private property, the county sheriff's office enforces the law and the county prosecutor prosecutes offenders. Still, some committee members thought the bill too harsh and that some convicted felons could lose the right to carry a firearm and to vote.

Boyle, an avid hunter, and rancher said that Idaho Fish and Game already has a third-trespass-is-a-felony rule. She said her bill adds the exact same language to the criminal trespass section of the law.

"This is all geared to the habitual offender," she said. "The felony provision has been in Idaho Fish and Game since 1986. No one has demanded it be taken out of the code."

Boyle says her bill has widespread support. "We're not talking about public land. We're talking about private property," she said. "People who pay taxes and paid for their land."

She reminded the committee that 62 percent of Idaho is public land. "There's plenty of opportunities to fish and hunt without trespassing on private land," said Boyle.



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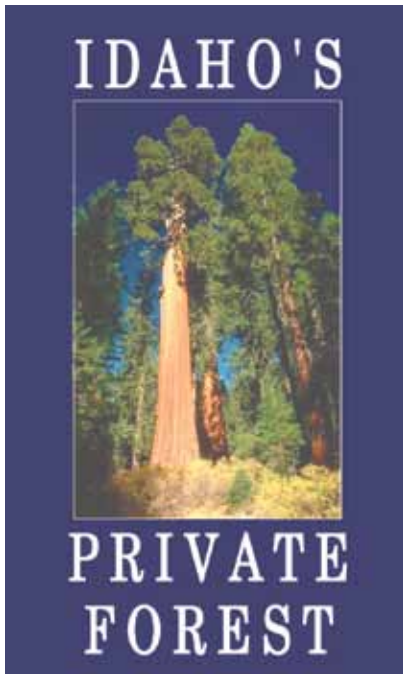
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Rolling dips are an alternative to cross drain culverts.
Photo Courtesy Robert Barkley, Idaho Department of Lands

Drainage Structures and Forest Roads

By Randy Brooks

Forest roads are essential to forest management activities, but are also the main source of sediments entering our streams. Conducting forest activities requires adequate road construction and maintenance. Roads located on steep terrain can be easily eroded if not properly constructed. This not only creates a costly maintenance problem, but is also an environmental concern when eroded soil is carried as sediment into streams and lakes.

Moving water, such as water running downhill on a road surface, can be thought of as a source of kinetic energy. This energy is one of the primary causes of erosion often seen on forest roads. The velocity of moving water is a function of slope steepness upon which the road is built. Velocity contributes to the amount of kinetic energy exponentially, meaning a small increase in slope steepness rapidly increases kinetic energy and erosive capacity of moving water. The primary means to reduce water velocity is to locate forest roads on gentle slopes

Water volume can be reduced by diverting

the water running along the road at frequent intervals. The most common method of reducing water volume in the construction of forest roads is through the use of water diversion structures. Four water diversion devices or structures that are commonly used include:

Water turn-outs.

Ditch relief culverts.

Drain dips.

Water bars.

Each of these structures has specific uses and should be used appropriately. The construction costs, time, and materials vary for each structure. The costs and benefits of each structure should be carefully evaluated within the constraints of the specific road construction project being considered.

Water Turn-Outs

Water turn-outs are designed to remove water from road ditches and from the downhill side of outsloped roads. These are the least costly of the water diversion structures, and should be installed during the construction of the pioneer road. The

water turnout should be graded on a 2 to 3 percent slope to allow constant drainage, which will flush most sediment out of the turn-out. As the turn-out is usually built with a crawler tractor, the operator must be sure that the spoil from the turn-out construction is scattered and not allowed to form a dam at the end of the turn-out. This will allow the outlet drainage to be dispersed into nearby forest vegetation, which filters the sediment out of the discharge water. Best Management Practices also require that you exercise extra caution to avoid discharging water from a turn-out directly into a stream; this discharge should flow through a stream protection zone before entering a stream or other water body.

Ditch Relief Culverts

Ditch relief culverts are used on crowned or ditched roads and are probably the most expensive of the four water diversion structures. The purpose of these structures is to transfer water under the road from the uphill ditch before the flow gains sufficient volume to erode the ditch. Placing the culvert on a 2 to 4 percent grade and at a 30-degree angle downgrade across the road



Water bars, also known as cross ditches are used to drain water across forest roads.

Photo Courtesy Robert Barkley, Idaho Department of Lands

to allow smooth entrance of water at the inlet will help make the culvert self-cleaning of sediment. To be sure that no water bypasses the inlet, install a control backstop of earth, rip-rap, sandbags, or half-culvert sections on the downhill level of the inlet.

Size the culvert adequately to handle the maximum water volume expected. An 18-inch minimum diameter is recommended, with at least one-half the culvert diameter, but not less than 12-inches of fill over the top of the culvert. Extend the culvert beyond any fill and place something to dissipate the energy, such as brush or rip-rap, at the outlet end of the culvert to minimize erosion.

Drain Dips

Drain dips, or rolling drain dips are an alternative method to cross drain culverts to remove water across a forest road. Drain dips work best on outsloped roads and on road grades of less than 10 percent. The construction of a drain dip involves a road section of 15 to 75 feet in length that is dropped at an approximate 3 percent reverse grade, approximately 12 to 18 inches below grade, and then raised back to the original grade. The specification for rolling

dip construction is dependent on the designed grade of the road surface. The lowest portion of the dip should be constructed at a three percent outslope to facilitate drainage, and the dip should be surfaced with crushed rock to minimize erosion and rutting by vehicular traffic during wet weather. When constructing the dip, make certain that the outlet, much like a water turn-out, is at the lowest point of the dip.

Water Bars or Cross Ditches

Water bars or cross ditches are used primarily when a road will be put out of use for an extended period of time. Vehicular traffic should be minimized and the water bars/cross ditches should be seeded to reduce erosion. A water bar/cross ditch is constructed by excavating a trough roughly 2 feet deep by 4 feet wide at a 30-degree angle across the road. The excavated earth should be piled on the downhill side of the water bar. To be sure that no water bypasses the water bar, the uphill end of the water bar should be connected to the upper bank of the road. A properly constructed water bar/cross ditch also has an outlet on its downhill end to allow water to be directed into the nearby forest vegetation.

Although water bars/cross ditches are recommended for inactive roads, some landowners use a smaller, modified version of it in conjunction with a water turn-out on active roads. These combination structures are adequate for light traffic, but they will wear down rapidly if they become rutted.

Conclusion

Water diversion structures are an often neglected component of forest road construction. When properly constructed and spaced at appropriate intervals, these structures can greatly reduce road maintenance costs, erosion, and sedimentation of our streams. When you construct your next forest road, include an adequate number and type of water diversion structures. This will save money in the future, and help reduce sediment in our streams.

For more information, see Idaho Forestry Best Management Practices Field Guide. Bulletin 891. University of Idaho Extension.

Randy Brooks is a University of Idaho professor and extension forestry specialist. He can be reached at rbrooks@uidaho.edu.

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In addition, the local FFA chapters designated on the winning tickets will receive a portion of the total ticket proceeds.

Tickets may be purchased from your local FFA chapter or the Idaho FFA Foundation. **The drawing will be on April 6, 2018 at the Idaho State FFA Leadership Conference in Twin Falls. Need not be present to win.**

This restored tractor includes a loader and a rear blade.

Contact your local Idaho FFA Chapter for Tractor Raffle tickets, or call Idaho FFA Foundation Tractor Raffle Chairman Sid Freeman at 208-941-3584. For more information about the Tractor Raffle, visit: www.idffafoundation.org



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FFA—Premier Leadership, Personal Growth and Career Success through Agricultural Education



Students learn about agriculture during an event held at North Fremont High School in 2017.
Farm Bureau file photo

Focus on Agriculture

Celebrating Career and Technical Education

By Cyndie Shearing

Throughout Career and Technical Education Month this February, educators, students and the business community celebrate the value of career and technical education and the achievements of these programs across the country.

Cutting-edge, rigorous and relevant curriculum helps youth and adults prepare for a wide range of high-wage, high-skill, high-demand careers. Programs cover many different fields including: agriculture, food and natural resources; STEM; information tech-

nology; advanced manufacturing; health science; and hospitality and tourism.

Simply put, careers that touch virtually every sector of the economy are available to students who pursue career and technical education. From livestock geneticist to nuclear engineer and everything in between, career clusters and a multitude of related pathways help guide students to the career of their dreams.

CTE encompasses a broad range of types of education, from classroom

learning to certification programs to work-based learning opportunities outside the classroom. Closely related is FFA, the national leadership organization which makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

Parents considering the merits of this type of program should find it interesting that according to the Association for Career and Technical Education, high school students involved in CTE

are more engaged in the classroom, perform at higher levels and graduate at higher rates.

Looking for another reason to consider this type of education? Consider this: ACTE reports that more than 80 percent of manufacturers face a talent shortage, and nearly half of talent recruiters at Fortune 1000 companies report trouble finding qualified candidates with a two-year STEM degree. Also, between now and 2024, 48 percent of all job openings will require education beyond high school but less than a four-year degree.

In addition, according to ACTE, taking one CTE class for every two academic classes minimizes the risk of students dropping out of high school. Further, the average high school graduation rate for students concentrating in CTE programs is 93 percent, compared to an average national freshman

graduation rate of 80 percent. And ACTE research indicates 91 percent of high school graduates who earned two to three CTE credits enrolled in college.

But career and technical education is not just for high school students. Post-secondary coursework in career and technical education fosters degree completion, preparing both recent high school graduates and older adult learners for in-demand careers.

A strong incentive during challenging economic times is that students can attend public community and technical colleges for a fraction of the cost of tuition at other institutions: \$3,520, on average, in 2016-2017.

Also of interest – research in Texas, Colorado and Virginia indicates graduates with technical or applied science associate degrees out-earn bachelor's degree holders by \$2,000 to \$11,000.

And 27 percent of people with less than an associate degree, including licenses and certificates, earn more than the average bachelor's degree recipient.

Career and technical education programs are delivered in a variety of ways. At the secondary level, the program is available in comprehensive high schools, magnet schools, area CTE centers, career academies, early college high schools and other unique models. At the postsecondary level, it is most often delivered at community or technical colleges or designated centers.

CTE policy and program priorities vary by state. Learn about opportunities in your state online at <https://www.acteonline.org/stateprofiles/>.

Cyndie Shearing is director of internal communications at the American Farm Bureau Federation.



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Soft White Price Level Expected to Improve: Marketing is the Key



Clark Johnston

By Clark Johnston

Spring is approaching rapidly and there has been quite a little happen in the markets since my last column. In the Chicago May futures contract we moved 30 cents higher from the second week in January to the second week in February. This move gave producers an opportunity to contract some of their old crop wheat as the basis remained steady if not strengthened during this time frame.

The local flour mills did contract their nearby demand for soft white and began contracting in the April forward months. Demand for red spring wheat dried up as the flour mills in Ogden didn't have any bids into and through new crop. Hard white demand was steady with the basis remaining strong with the cash bids in southeast Idaho reaching the area of \$5.50 per bushel for 12 percent protein with some premiums being offered up to 13 percent protein. The nearby bids for hard red winter were also strong lagging the hard white market by twenty cents per bushel.

The strength in the futures also gave producers the opportunity to contract some new crop bushels in both soft white and hard white. The basis for the new crop wheat wasn't anything to write home about but the cash bid looked to be a good level to begin pricing the new crop production. The bid for hard white for August delivery was in the neighborhood of \$5.20 per bushel in southeast Idaho.

In past articles we have visited about separating the futures and the basis in an attempt to enhance your contract price for wheat. We are beginning to see more and more producers wanting more information on just how to accomplish this in their marketing plan. Over the past three years a producer could have marketed their soft white between 60 cents and a dollar per bushel more by using this one strategy over simply contracting at the cash bids.

Having said this let me also say that this strategy will take some additional work on your part. First of all you will need to track your futures position and then second track the local basis for your commodity. It will be important for you to follow the markets closely and track your position at least daily. This won't take a lot of time each day but you will need to designate a few minutes every day to ensure the best final price the market is willing to provide to you.

Remember, once you have entered into this strategy you are still able to contract your wheat into the best bid on any given day. This will give you the opportunity to market your wheat at not only a good level in the futures market but also shop the market for the very best basis level for your commodity, unlike a forward contract with a flour mill or elevator where you are locked into a specific delivery location.

Let's take a closer look at new crop soft white. New crop is being bid at about \$4.15 per bushel. Let's break this down like we

have talked about. If you were to sell Chicago December wheat futures at this time and then contract your soft white in the fall for delivery in September/October our final sale price would be close to \$5 per bushel based off of the basis level this past fall time frame. The key to being able to accomplish this is to lock in the futures side of your pricing equation ahead of time before the market takes the carry out of the futures.

Now before I forget the answer is YES! You will need to have an account with a futures brokerage firm. Depending on your comfort level you can either visit with a broker to enter your futures orders or you can trade your futures on line. There will be a difference in fees depending which way you decide to go.

The Idaho Farm Bureau Federation will help you with hands on programs to educate and help you in your decisions that will be best for your operation. For more information on how the Farm Bureau will be able to assist you contact Zak Miller. Office 208 239 4341, Cell 208 390 4636

Clark Johnston is a grain marketing specialist and owner of JC Management Company of Ogden, Utah. He can be reached at clark@jcmanagement.net



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Livestock owners may have to begin reporting animal emissions under CERCLA, also known as the Superfund Law.
Farm Bureau file photo

Court of Appeals Stays Manure Emission Rule Until May

By Jake Putnam

Washington D.C. - The District of Columbia Court of Appeals recently delayed a decision that would have required livestock producers to report manure emissions.

The court's action delayed the regulation until May 1st.

The late-February decision is the third granted by the court at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) request. It delays a mandate for livestock operators to report emissions from manure under the Comprehensive Environmental Response or Superfund law.

The stay order was signed by Justices Sri Srinivasan, an Obama appointee, and Stephen Williams, a Reagan appointee illustrating the bipartisan nature of the decision.

Starting back in December 2008, during the George W. Bush administra-

tion, the EPA issued a final rule that exempted most beef and dairy operations from most requirements under the Superfund law. The rule exempted farms releasing gasses from animal waste to the air above threshold levels under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), also known as Superfund. For Superfund reporting, the rule exempted reporting of such releases if the farm had fewer animals than a large CAFO or concentrated animal feeding operation.

In short, the small farms and cow-calf operations were spared from what amounted to an unreasonable and expensive mandate and a regulatory nightmare.

While the Obama Administration's EPA was aggressive on a number of issues, the agency argued that the intent of CERCLA was not meant to be applied to animal agriculture. Clearly, the EPA had better things to do than send its employees out to

measure the smell coming off of individual cow-pies in the pastures of Nebraska, Wyoming and Idaho.

But citizen groups like the New York-based Water Keeper Alliance challenged the validity of the final rule in the Court of Appeals. The group argued that the EPA didn't have a right to issue an exemption to CERCLA for agriculture. Last spring the Court struck down the final rule, eliminating the reporting exemptions for farms.

In the meantime, the EPA bought time from the Court so it could develop guidance rules and regulations to help farmers understand reporting obligations. So far no reporting is required until the Court issues its order, or mandate, enforcing the April 11, 2017, mandate.

Now farmers and ranchers can do nothing but wait and see if the Court decides to continue the stay or start requiring small farms and ranches to report manure air emissions.



Idaho net farm income up 15 percent in 2017

By Jake Putnam

BOISE — After a harsh start last spring, net farm income in Idaho rose 15 percent during 2017.

The year-end 2017 receipts showed Idaho net farm income blasted past the USDA's projected three percent increase for all of U.S. agriculture.

University of Idaho Economist Garth Taylor testified in front of the House Agriculture Committee and gave his annual "Financial Condition of Idaho Agriculture" report in late February.

"Idaho is on a different track than national agriculture and I'm always amazed," said Taylor. "Net farm income is a farmer's revenue minus expenses and that represents the farmer's bottom line."

According to the report farm input expenses were up two percent but net farm income still climbed to 15 percent.

"It's because we had a five percent farm revenue increase across the board. That's the first increase in net farm income in four years," said Taylor, "Resulting in \$1.9 billion in total net farm income for Idaho farmers last year."

Taylor told the committee that dairy continues to lead the way in Idaho.

"A third of our cash receipts come from dairy. "It's the 900-pound gorilla in the Idaho economy. It's not famous potatoes, now its famous dairy that's driving the

state," said Taylor.

Dairy, cattle, and potatoes are the state's main commodities in terms of income dollars.

"2017 showed solid improvement over last year in terms of cash receipts," Taylor said. "The improvement was led by our two biggest commodities, potatoes and dairy. And then there are cattle, that's driving income as well but clearly, net earnings in dairy drove profits. Yet dairy is still below historical averages."

Taylor's report also revealed that Idaho net farm income dropped the three previous years — three percent in 2014, nine percent in 2015 and eight percent in 2016.

"Some farmers say this is the best year in the past 10," Taylor said. "Potatoes and onions helped a lot this year."

But the report also revealed that low commodity prices continue to threaten the bottom line on the farm.

"After the past three years, we'll take it," said Taylor.

Taylor's report had peaks, valleys, and surprises, like this gem: Idaho's net farm income has grown 100 percent more than the U.S. since 1997.

"Like I said, we're on a different track in Idaho than the rest of the nation. Far different," Taylor said.

Taylor says 60 percent of cash receipts in Idaho come from livestock and prices were

good. "When you start to add in the hay, feed barley, corn, and other feedstocks we're up 70-80 percent. Idaho's cash receipts are also driven by the livestock industry."

Looking to 2018 Taylor says there are also points of concern in the livestock sector.

"Hay is going to be down and it follows corn and we have surplus stocks of grain out there and that always means the feed is going to be down. That means farmers this spring will look to spuds for a cash crop and you know what happens," said Taylor. "Prices will be down and it's going to take a lot to get back to where we were in 2017."

Milk prices started flat in January and have not improved. Taylor says a few dairies are canceling contracts and there have been herd liquidations. "This may be the first time in 2018 where we may see a reduction in herd sizes. It'll be at least the second half of 2018 before we see a turnaround in milk prices," said Taylor.

The UI report revealed Idaho farm expenses topped \$6.24 billion in 2017, that's up two percent over the \$6.14 billion total in 2016.

Also, a one percent decrease in costs for farm origin inputs and capital consumption were offset by a one percent increase in contract labor costs, a seven percent increase in property taxes and fees and a five percent increase in payments to stakeholders.



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Kaitlyn Mirkin from Jerome County, left, is the winner for the 2018 Idaho Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee Speech Contest. Mirkin is pictured with Committee Chair Judy Woody.

Photo by Steve Ritter

Jerome County Student Wins Speech Contest

By Jake Putnam

Boise - Kaitlyn Mirkin from Jerome County won the Idaho Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee Speech Contest held in mid-February at the Idaho Statehouse.

Mirkin's speech immediately captured the Statehouse crowd with an impressive array of facts and figures that illustrated the economic importance of Idaho agriculture. She compared Idaho's agriculture economy to an engine and stressed that the agriculture

engine drives the state's economy.

"I grew up on a dairy farm and I did this speech to illustrate how agriculture fuels the Idaho economy. I knew a lot about agriculture, and I learned more. I want to either be a dairy veterinarian or a professor. I've seen the difference a vet can have in people's lives, showing up in the middle of the night to pull a calf or treat a cow with milk fever. I want to just make a difference and if I can't be a vet, I'll teach," said Mirkin.

Idaho State Senator Jim Rice welcomed the seven contestants whom participated this year to the West Wing of the Senate. He emphasized the importance of communication and speech in agriculture and urged students to not only farm, but to tell the world about their farming operations and experiences.

Mirkin won \$175 for first place in the contest. She plans to add the money to her college fund. Riatta Chandler of Washington County was this year's runner up.



Members of the Idaho Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee present a donation to the Ronald McDonald House in Boise in mid-February. Pictured left to right are Women's Committee Coordinator Melissa Nelson, committee members Sandy Daniel, Sheril Tillotson, Ronald McDonald House Executive Director Mindy Plumlee, committee members Allis Chandler, Doris Pearson, Committee Chair Judy Woody and committee member Susan Allen. Photo by Steve Ritter

Women's Leadership Committee Donates to Boise Charity

By Jake Putnam

The Idaho Farm Bureau's Women's Leadership Committee met at Boise's Ronald McDonald House in mid-February with a check that will benefit critically ill children and their families.

The mission of the Ronald McDonald House is to provide a "home away from home," for families of sick and injured children receiving medical treatment at Saint Luke's Medical Center in Boise. Executive Director Mindy Plumlee says more than 500 families spent time at the facility last year and they're almost always booked.

"I think it's wonderful that we are able to bring a focus to something that's so essen-

tial. This is a 19 bedroom house and we're at capacity," said Plumlee. "That's why we welcome the Farm Bureau Women's Committee donation and all they do for us. It means so much to families staying here."

The Ronald McDonald House, located on Main St. near St. Luke's Hospital, started in 1988 and provides affordable alternative housing for out-of-town families with children who require medical treatment.

It was built in the early 1900s and later purchased by the late J.R. Simplot for the Ronald McDonald Foundation. Families are charged a minimal fee per night and the balance is paid with public and private donations to the Ronald McDonald house.

"We are farm families, we have a long history with the House. I personally had premature twins, and I know other moms that have come to the house. It is good that they're here and provide services when they're so badly needed," said Women's Leadership Chairman Judy Woody.

Woody also presented the House with money collected from County Farm Bureaus from all over Idaho.

"This donation came from just about every county in the state, and what started as a small donation from county to county ended up being a significant amount and we're honored to help out." said Woody.



Idaho Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee members prepare Idaho-grown snack back for legislators at the Statehouse in mid-February.
Photo by Steve Ritter

Our Food Week Observed at Statehouse

By Jake Putnam

Boise - Monday, February 12th marks the Idaho Farm Bureau's 'Our Food Week' at the Idaho Statehouse.

"Our Food Week is a program that comes down from the American Farm Bureau," said Women's Leadership Committee Chairman Judy Woody.

The Committee teams up with all of the county Farm Bureaus to gather food and materials for the snack bags that are circulated to legislators.

"We got a lot of it donated, we're reaching out to our lawmakers to tell them to say thank you and we appreciate all that they do," said Woody.

This 12th day of February marks the number of work days from the first of the year

it takes to pay for a year's worth of food for the average family.

It takes the average American 77 days to earn enough income to pay their federal taxes; 62 days to pay for housing and household operation expenses; 52 days to cover health and medical care costs; 39 days for state and local taxes; and 36 days for recreation, clothing, and accessories.

"The snack bags are made up of different Idaho-grown foods that are representative of commodities grown here like potatoes, wheat, milk, and fruit," said Woody.

USDA says the average American spends about \$2,400 on food consumed at home and in restaurants each year. Farmers get about 22 cents of every dollar spent on food in this country. But there are additional costs like wages, materials for produc-

tion, processing, marketing, transportation and distribution of the nation's food supply.

"Today's event is a reminder of where our food comes from and it's important to note that only two percent of our population actually lives on farms, produces the food, fiber, and fuel in this country," said Woody.

While Americans spend slightly less than 10 percent of their disposable income for food, those figures are considerably higher abroad: Japan, 14 percent; Israel, 20 percent; China, 26 percent; the Philippines, 38 percent; and Indonesia, 55 percent.

Back in 1980, farmers received 31 cents of every dollar spent but it took Americans a long time to pay for it. In 1970, it took American families an extra two weeks to pay for their annual food supply.

Farm Bureau Calls for Clarity on Exemptions for Agricultural Haulers

While again urging the Department of Transportation to grant agricultural haulers a waiver and limited exemption from the electronic logging device mandate, Farm Bureau in recent comments responded to the department's efforts to provide clarity to the 150-air mile agricultural commodity exemption and the hours of service regulations.

Until recently, very few Farm Bureau members or agricultural haulers were aware of their ability to use the newly interpreted 150-air mile agricultural commodity exemption, which provides exceptions from the HOS rules for the transportation of agricultural commodities within a 150-air mile radius from the source of the commodities. Enforcement officials, too, likely have very little knowledge about this exemption. This lack of awareness, combined with the unforgiving realities of ELD technology, makes the need for clarity all the more pressing, Farm Bureau emphasized.

In terms of what products are categorized as agriculture commodities, all nonprocessed food, feed, fiber, livestock and nursery and greenhouse crops qualify, according to Farm Bureau. Agricultural commodity "sources" are farms, ranches and other locations where ag-

ricultural commodities are loaded for transport, including livestock markets and grain elevators.

"Animals are unpredictable at livestock markets. Just like at a ranch, they can balk at the loading chute, be uncooperative, and need to be loaded carefully in accordance with appropriate animal husbandry techniques. All of this coupled with oftentimes long post-sale or load-out lines makes applying the flexibility afforded to a 'source' of livestock to livestock markets or agricultural commodity at a grain elevator a logical conclusion," Farm Bureau said.

Had congressional lawmakers wanted to exclude grain elevators or livestock markets from the definition of an agricultural commodity source, they could have easily done so, the group noted.

Farm Bureau is also urging the department to expand its interpretation of the 150-air mile exemption. Current informal Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration guidance limits a driver's use of the exemption to once per trip. However, the concept of such a "trip" is not defined in either the statute or the related regulation, so limiting the exemption only to the first "source" of any given "trip" is a narrower interpretation than the statute calls for.



"Such an interpretation also opens the use of the exemption to additional confusion in situations where some agricultural commodities or livestock are unloaded and others are picked up and calls for further subjective interpretation as to when a 'trip' is started and concluded," according to Farm Bureau.

In a similar vein, the organization challenged proposed guidance that indicates once the hours of service rules have begun to apply on a given trip, they continue to apply until the driver crosses back into the area within 150 air-miles of the original source of the commodities and is returning to that source.

According to Farm Bureau, the law clearly indicates that each farm, ranch, grain elevator, livestock market or other location where an agricultural

commodity is loaded for shipment is a "source" of an agricultural commodity and, as such, each act of "transporting agricultural commodities from the source" is entitled to the 150-air mile radius exemption described in the applicable regulation.

In addition, time spent operating unladen vehicles traveling to or from the source of an agricultural commodity should be considered exempt time, as the proposed guidance states.

As Farm Bureau continues to encourage the administration to give agricultural haulers relief from the ELD mandate, the organization is also working with Capitol Hill lawmakers on a legislative solution to the ELD mandate and HOS challenges.



The first load of of donated hay arrives in Dawson County. Photo by Montana Farm Bureau

Hay Lift Brings Together County Farm Bureaus in Minnesota, Montana

By Rebecca Colnar

Wadena County (Minnesota) Farm Bureau President Craig Neil and Vice President Brian Roth love bird hunting in Dawson County (Montana) and enjoy the community. During a visit with ranchers in the Dawson/Wibaux County Farm Bureau, they heard about the record-breaking drought taking place in Montana. The idea for organizing a hay lift surfaced.

“Craig and I have been coming to Dawson County to bird hunt for 20 years. We thought it would be great to help Farm Bureau members experiencing this terrible drought,” noted Roth. “At our Wadena County Farm Bureau meeting, we talked about having a hay lift, which was very well received. We thought there may be other county Farm Bureaus who would want to help, as well.”

What resulted is not only Wadena County Farm Bureau, but Cass, East Ottertail and Todd County Farm Bureaus solicited hay donations for Farm

Bureau member ranchers in Dawson County. Six tractor-trailer loads of hay—upland grass, alfalfa and mixed—wended their way from central Minnesota to the southeastern edge of Montana the week of Feb. 12.

To make the distribution fair, voting (producer) members of Dawson/Wibaux County Farm Bureau could put their name in a raffle, with names being drawn at the Farm Bureau booth during the Glendive Agricultural Trade Exhibition show Feb. 10. Six names were drawn for six tractor-trailer loads of hay.

The special event served as a recruiting tool, as well. Non-members were encouraged to stop by the booth, join Farm Bureau and put their name in the raffle. “Getting a load of hay for \$75 is a great deal,” noted Dawson/Wibaux County Farm Bureau President Gene Evans while working the booth.

“We truly appreciate what Minnesota farmers have done

to help our farmers and ranchers in need. The outpouring of donations was phenomenal,” noted Evans. “You couldn’t find any nicer people in the world.”

“We know that Mother Nature is in charge, and there are a lot of elements outside of our control in farming and ranching,” said Roth. “It was an easy de-

cision for our county Farm Bureaus to come together to help them out. We don’t think of it as being anything special. We just do it because we know it is the right thing to do.”

Rebecca Colnar is Director of Public Relations for Montana Farm Bureau.



Dawson/Wibaux County Farm Bureau President Gene Evans and Montana rancher Bob Phalen talk about the haylift on the Voices of Montana radio show.

Photo by Montana Farm Bureau

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14% Spring	7.22-7.42	7.17-7.32	- .05 to - .10
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11% Winter	4.68	4.86	+ .18
14% Spring	5.92	5.93	+ .01
Barley	6.20	7.00	+ .80

BLACKFOOT/ IDAHO FALLS

White Wheat	3.70	3.65	- .05
11.5% Winter	4.55	4.85	+ .30
14% Spring	5.60	5.40	- .20
Hard White	4.75	4.95	+ .20

BURLEY:

White Wheat	3.80	3.95	+ .15
11% Winter	4.12	4.46	+ .34
14% Spring	5.71	5.22	- .49
Barley	6.25	6.25	Steady

MERIDIAN:

White Wheat(cwt)	4.08	4.38	+ .30
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LEWISTON:

White Wheat	5.02	5.25	+ .23
H. Red Winter	5.53	5.91	+ .38
Dark N. Spring	7.02	7.03	+ .01
Barley	116.50	128.50	+ 12.00

LIVESTOCK PRICES

	1/23/2018	2/20/2018	Trend
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FEEDER STEERS

Under 500 lbs	152-201	168-230	+ 16 to + 29
500-700 lbs	139-187	140-206	+ 1 to + 19
700-900 lbs	120-160	130-159	+ 10 to - 1

FEEDER HEIFERS

Under 500 lbs	135-177	150-200	+ 15 to + 23
500-700 lbs	128-164	130-171	+ 2 to + 7
700-900 lbs	119-146	120-146	+ 1 to steady

HOLSTEIN STEERS

Under 700 lbs	79-100	80-100	+ 1 to steady
Over 700 lbs	70-85	70-90	steady to + 5

COWS

Utility/Commercial	46-67	62-86	+ 16 to + 19
Canner & Cutter	45-62	48-72	+ 3 to + 10

Stock Cows	760-1500	875-1060	+ 115 to - 440
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BULLS

Slaughter	63-85	67-95	+ 4 to + 10
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BEAN PRICES:

Pinto	21.00-23.00	21.00	Steady - down 2.00
Small Red	Not Established	Not Established	N/A
Garbanzo	42.00-43.00	42.00-43.00	Steady

COMPILED BY THE IDAHO FARM BUREAU COMMODITY DIVISION

IDAHO HAY REPORT

USDA Market News, Moses Lake, WA

February 23, 2018

Tons: 3030 Last Week: 450 Last Year: 300

Compared to last Friday, Alfalfa steady in a light test. Trade slow to moderate with moderate demand. Retail/Feedstore not tested. Prices are dollars per ton and FOB the farm or ranch unless otherwise stated.

	Tons	Price	Wtd Avg	Comments
Alfalfa				
Mid Square				
Premium/Supreme	600	170.00-170.00	170.00	Tarped
Good/Premium	500	140.00-140.00	140.00	Tarped
Fair/Good	1780	90.00-108.00	97.75	Tarped

Alfalfa/Orchard Mix

Mid Square

Fair/Good 150 125.00-125.00 125.00 Tarped

Alfalfa hay test guidelines, (for domestic livestock use and not more than 10% grass), used with visual appearance and intent of sale

Quantitative factors are approximate and many factors can affect feeding value.

	ADF	NDF	RFV	TDN-100%	TDN-90%	CP-100%
Supreme	<27	<34	>185	>62	>55.9	>22
Premium	27-29	34-36	170-185	60.5-62	54.5-55.9	20-22
Good	29-32	36-40	150-170	58-60	52.5-54.5	18-20
Fair	32-35	40-44	130-150	56-58	50.5-52.5	16-18
Utility	>35	>44	<130	<56	<50.5	<16

POTATOES & ONIONS

February 21, 2018

Potatoes

UPPER VALLEY, TWIN FALLS-BURLEY DISTRICT, IDAHO -- Shipments 707-734-695 (includes exports of 1-3-2) --- Movement expected to remain about the same. Trading slow. Prices bales and Burbank carton 40-50s generally unchanged, others lower. Russet Burbank U.S. One baled 10-5 pound film bags non size A mostly 6.00-6.50; 50-pound cartons 40-50s mostly 9.00-9.50, 60-80s mostly 10.00-11.00, 90s mostly 9.50-10.00, 100s mostly 9.00-10.00: Russet Norkotah U.S. One baled 10-5 pound film bags non size A mostly 6.00-6.50; 50-pound cartons 40-50s mostly 8.50-9.00, 60-80s 9.50-10.00, 90s 8.00-9.00, 100s mostly 8.00.

Onions - Dry

IDAHO AND MALHEUR COUNTY OREGON--- Shipments 271-260-261

--- Movement expected to remain about the same. Trading fairly slow. Prices White medium and Reds generally unchanged, others lower. Yellow Spanish Hybrid 50-pound sacks super colossal mostly 11.00, colossal mostly 10.00, jumbo mostly 8.00, medium mostly 4.50-5.00; White 50-pound sacks jumbo 16.00-17.00, medium mostly 14.00-16.00; Red Globe Type 25-pound sacks jumbo mostly 8.00, medium mostly 6.00.*revised

5 YEAR GRAIN COMPARISON

Grain Prices: 2/25/2014 2/20/2015 2/22/2016 2/22/2017 2/20/2018

Portland:	2/25/2014	2/20/2015	2/22/2016	2/22/2017	2/20/2018
White Wheat	7.36	No Bid	No Bid	4.76-4.86	5.25-5.41
11% Winter	8.47-8.57	6.19-6.33	5.33-5.49	5.07-5.42	5.86-6.21
14% Spring	8.61	8.56	6.02-6.12	6.57-6.87	7.17-7.32
Corn	No Bid	No Bid	4.46-4.54	4.58-4.68	4.58-4.63

Ogden:	2/25/2014	2/20/2015	2/22/2016	2/22/2017	2/20/2018
White Wheat	6.35	6.20	4.64	3.91	4.10
11% Winter	7.00	5.46	4.43	4.11	4.86
14% Spring	7.77	6.16	5.08	5.42	5.93
Barley	8.05	5.85	7.25	5.50	7.00

Blackfoot/Idaho Falls:	2/25/2014	2/20/2015	2/22/2016	2/22/2017	2/20/2018
White Wheat	6.10	5.80	4.45	3.60	3.65
11% Winter	7.15	5.38	4.05	4.40	4.85
14% Spring	7.41	6.31	4.80	5.15	5.40

Burley:

White Wheat	6.08	5.75	4.33	3.51	3.95
11% Winter	6.81	4.63	3.69	3.57	4.46
14% Spring	6.97	6.17	4.58	5.17	5.52
Barley	7.50	5.00	6.00	5.00	6.25

Nampa/Meridian:

White Wheat (cwt)	10.50	9.15	7.63	3.69	4.38
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Lewiston:

White Wheat	7.02	6.50	4.90	4.52	5.25
Barley	156.50	151.50	126.50	96.50	112.00

Bean Prices:

Pintos	35.00-37.00	35.00-37.00	22.00	28.00-30.00
28.00-30.00				
Pinks	39.00-40.00	39.00-40.00	28.00	N/A
Small Reds	40.00	40.00	33.00-35.00	33.00-35.00
Garbanzo			32.00-35.00	34.00-37.00

MILK PRODUCTION

February 21, 2018

January Milk Production up 1.8 Percent

Milk production in the 23 major States during January totaled 17.3 billion pounds, up 1.8 percent from January 2017. December revised production, at 17.0 billion pounds, was up 1.1 percent from December 2016. The December revision represented an increase of 4 million pounds or less than 0.1 percent from last month's preliminary production estimate.

Production per cow in the 23 major States averaged 1,979 pounds for January, 24 pounds above January 2017. This is the highest production per cow for the month of January since the 23 State series began in 2003.

The number of milk cows on farms in the 23 major States was 8.74 million head, 49,000 head more than January 2017, and 4,000 head more than December 2017.

2017 Annual Milk Production up 1.4 Percent from 2016

The annual production of milk for the United States during 2017 was 215 billion pounds, 1.4 percent above 2016. Revisions to 2016 production decreased the annual total 31 million pounds. Revised 2017 production was up 35 million pounds from last month's publication. Annual total milk production has increased 13.4 percent from 2008.

Production per cow in the United States averaged 22,941 pounds for 2017, 163 pounds above 2016. The average annual rate of milk production per cow has increased 12.5 percent from 2008.

The average number of milk cows on farms in the United States during 2017 was 9.39 million head, up 0.7 percent from 2016. The average number of milk cows was unrevised for 2017. The average annual number of milk cows has increased 0.8 percent from 2008.

5 YEAR LIVESTOCK COMPARISON

	2/21/2014	2/20/2015	2/22/2016	2/22/2017	2/20/2018
Feeder Steers					
Under 500 lbs.....	180-259	235-367	170-232	134-176	168-230
500-700 lbs.....	167-231	200-310	151-216	117-160	140-206
700-900 lbs.....	130-175	171-224	134-168	105-133	130-159
Over 900 lbs.....	105-152	155-195	120-141	95-118	No test
Feeder Heifers					
Under 500 lbs.....	170-237	220-337	150-225	116-157	150-200
500-700 lbs.....	153-197	185-257	137-179	106-142	130-171
700-900 lbs.....	129-174	162-217	120-159	96-122	120-146
Over 900 lbs.....	101-144	120-172	123-136	94-109	No test
Holstein Steers					
Under 700 lbs.....	98-128	140-188	91-120	70-81	80-100
Over 700 lbs.....	90-130	120-175	101-120	70-81	70-90
Cows					
Utility/Commercial.....	70-97	85-120	58-79	45-67	62-86
Canner & Cutter.....	60-94	79-105	58-75	39-61	48-72
Stock Cows.....	925-1425	1200-2200	875-1700	625-1425	875-1060
Bulls – Slaughter					
.....	70-111	97-139	65-104	62-87	67-95

CATTLE ON FEED

Released February 23, 2018

United States Cattle on Feed Up 8 Percent

Cattle and calves on feed for the slaughter market in the United States for feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head totaled 11.6 million head on February 1, 2018. The inventory was 8 percent above February 1, 2017.

Placements in feedlots during January totaled 2.07 million head, 4 percent above 2017. Net placements were 2.00 million head. During January, placements of cattle and calves weighing less than 600 pounds were 375,000 head, 600-699 pounds were 450,000 head, 700-799 pounds were 625,000 head, 800-899 pounds were 418,000 head, 900-999 pounds were 115,000 head, and 1,000 pounds and greater were 85,000 head.

Marketings of fed cattle during January totaled 1.86 million head, 6 percent above 2017.

Other disappearance totaled 69,000 head during January, 30 percent above 2017.

2017 Cattle on Feed and Annual Size Group Estimates

Cattle and calves on feed for slaughter market in the United States for feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head represented 82.0 percent of all cattle and calves on feed in the United States on January 1, 2018. This is comparable to the 81.2 percent on January 1, 2017.

Marketings of fed cattle for feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head during 2017 represented 87.2 percent of total cattle marketed from all feedlots in the United States, up slightly from 87.1 percent during 2016.

CATTLE MARKET REPORT

February 20, 2018

Cash Cattle.

Reaction on Monday without futures was mostly positive to the cash markets. Box prices were higher. We continue to slaughter more fed cattle than last year but not quite so many as placements might indicate we need to slaughter. Everyone will take a close look at this week's show list to determine how the show list will fit with this week's slaughter level.

Sales occurred last week at \$130 live and mostly \$205 dressed. Both prices were \$4-5 higher than last week.

Packers are keeping a lid on slaughter volumes during a period of year when beef demand is weak and tight supplies of fed cattle available. The past couple of weeks have failed to purchase the slaughter above 600,000. This week should also hold in the same level.

Cattle Futures.

Futures were higher in anticipation of higher cash.

Carcass weights

are released each Thursday and are a closely watched barometer indicating the position of cattle feeders in the nation's feedlots. The last report released for the week of February 3rd, had steer carcass weights down 1# at 888# which is 1# above prior year. Heifers were 10# over prior year with more heifers in the mix.

Forward Cattle Contracts:

May and June continue to attract the largest attention in forward contracts. May had a range of \$2-5 over the June board depending on when the cattle shipped in May. June reported 10,000 head at Par to \$2 premium.

The weekly breakdown of fed cattle moving to the beef processing plants is as follows. 1) formulas 55%; 2) negotiated 20% [both live and flat dressed]; 3) forward contracts 25%. Some of the formula arrangements are week to week negotiated prices and not committed cattle to one plant.

The Cutout.

The cutout was higher as retail interest scrambled for short term product. The choice/select spread is narrowing as seasonally occurs in most years. The spread has moved from \$20 to \$5 in the past few weeks.

Beef Feature Activity Index. Beef features are often planned months in advance. Retailers look at the pricing of live cattle futures for signals of product availability and price. Beef specials serve as drawing cards into the stores and are profit centers. This new link provides perspective on the level of feature activity week by week in the country. the country.

CLASSIFIEDS

Animals

Reg. Blk Angus bulls coming 2 yr old, Fell yearling and spring yearling-sires Basin Excitement, 101 Git R Dun, ten x. Oreana, Id. for information call Bill 208-834-2505.

Australian Cattle Dog BUD Looking for Full-Time Employment as Ranch Hand. Smart, treat-motivated, 3-year-old that moves like an agility dog, physically fit, high endurance. Movie to show my talents around farm animals. https://youtu.be/_4VH3AiIYE - Meridian Canine Rescue 208-794-0944.

Alpine milk goat doe. DOB: 03/05/2016. Never been bred. Mother is registered. Negative for CAE, CL and Johnes. Asking \$250 obo. Arimo, ID. Call or text Stephanie 208-312-9255.

Farm Equipment

John Deere 1948 Model A tractor. Good condition. New tires \$2,250 obo. Located in Boise, Id. 208-861-7029.

1956 Ford 850. Includes original Dearborn front end loader with trip bucket, heavy duty box scraper, log skidder, rebuilt car, plus extras. \$4,500 pictures available. Grangeville, Id. 208-983-1417.

New Squeeze chute, green, hand pull, \$1,300. Midvale, Id 208-355-3780.

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

Hay and Feed

Barley straw for sale, small bales about 70# each. Blackfoot, Id 208-785-3434 or 208-680-6883.

Miscellaneous

Forest Service compliant weed wash unit. Two Hotsy high pressure pumps with Honda engines mounted on 20ft 14,000 GVW trailer. Salmon, Id. 208-756-4414.

New wine making supplies: 6 gallon screw top fermenter \$40; two 6 gallon heavy glass carboys \$10 each; hydrometer, 4 air locks \$20; dozen champagne bottles with stoppers and wire hoods \$50, plus much more. Pictures available Grangeville, Id 208-983-1417.

Weathermaster Studded Tires 215/65R15 Set of 4 (less than 100 miles) \$350 new (traded car). Maytag Propane Clothes Dryer \$150. Cash only. Sagle, Id 208-946-0996.

Old fashion style Pine Coffin. Clear finish. Unlined - \$700.00, Lined - \$850.00. Delivery available. Weiser, Id 208-549-2239.

Real Estate/Acreage

Horse property in N. ID 19+acres. 4B 3b 3600 sq ft, day light basement. 40X80 barn, 2 tack rooms, secure grain area, 4 indoor stalls, covered feed area. 24X30 shop, 42X60 equip shed. \$629,000. 208-699-0816

Do you want solitude? 25.44 acres N.E. Tetonia. New gravel Rd-Hiatt Trail, School bus and mail on Rammel Rd. 40 miles to Jackson, 1 mile to BLM land. \$200,000. 208-521-4601.

6 corner lots and buildings. Commercial zone, city water and sewer in Hazelton, Id. 208-731-4181.

Nice house with 5 bdrms. Fridge furnished, electric heat. Nice large insulated shop. Lots of space, three car garage. Good water, sitting on 120 acres. Location 1405 E Richards Road, Downey, Id \$360,000. Call for appointment to see. 208-233-1317 or 208-226-4887.

Real Estate/Acreage

12 acres - 10 miles N of priest River, Id. Approx 1200 sq ft house. 2 bd, 2 bth, new roof, paint, 2 wells, 3 car garage, RV garage outbuildings. Fenced garden, green house. \$245,000. Gary, 208-826-3132.

Trailers

2005 Iron Eagle tandum axle utility trailer. Electrical brakes, removable front & 1/4 sidewalls, long ramps, wratchet tie down straps, chocks. I transported a mini cooper. \$1,900. Caldwell, Id. 208-455-2571.

Wanted

Want-used 4wd van, good condition, 10 yrs old or newer, mechanically sound, side entry for wheel chair access. 208-926-4784.

Used (within last 20 years) 13 to 14 ft double disc Great Plains or John Deere grain drill. Need to have press wheels and prefer alfalfa/grass seeder. 208-317-7858.

Wanted

Paying cash for old cork top embossed bottles and some telephone insulators. Call Randy. Payette, Id. 208-740-0178.

Paying cash for German & Japanese war relics/souvenirs! Pistols, rifles, swords, daggers, flags, scopes, optical equipment, uniforms, helmets, machine guns (ATF rules apply) medals, flags, etc. 549-3841 (evenings) or 208-405-9338.

Old License Plates Wanted: Also key chain license plates, old signs, light fixtures. Will pay cash. Please email, call or write. Gary Peterson, 130 E Pecan, Genesee, Id 83832. gearlep@gmail.com. 208-285-1258

DEADLINE DATES:

ADS MUST BE RECEIVED BY
March 20
FOR NEXT ISSUE.

FREE CLASSIFIEDS

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

Mail ad copy to:
FARM BUREAU PRODUCER
P.O. Box 4848, Pocatello, ID 83205-4848
or e-mail Dixie at: dashton@idahofb.org

Name: _____

Address: _____

City / State / Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Membership No. _____

Ad Copy: _____

FREE CLASSIFIED ADS
FOR IDAHO FARM BUREAU MEMBERS
send to: dashton@idahofb.org



JOHN DEERE

NEW

Use your Idaho Farm Bureau membership number for GreenFleet at JohnDeere.com/FarmBureau. You will have access to the following benefits:

IDAHO FARM BUREAU FEDERATION
P.O. Box 4848
Pocatello, ID 83205-4848



\$350-\$3,200 off Commercial Mowing
\$100-\$250 off Residential Mowing
\$200-\$350 off Utility Vehicles

\$200-\$350 off Tractors
\$500-\$3,700 off Golf & Sports Turf
17% off MSRP – Commercial Worksite

- Combine GreenFleet equipment savings with National Offers
- Special parts savings delivered to their inbox
- 10% off Home & Workshop Products, including air compressors, generators and more!
- 10% off apparel and accessories at JohnDeereStore.com

Other Details and Restrictions

- GreenFleet Loyalty Rewards benefits are **only available at John Deere dealerships**. Purchases from Lowes or Home Depot will count towards GreenFleet status, but are not eligible for a GreenFleet discount.
- There is no minimum length of Farm Bureau membership to receive the GreenFleet benefit.
- Members need to sign up once for the GreenFleet Loyalty Rewards program, then renew or reactivate their membership approximately every two years.
- GreenFleet members can manage their account at MyJohnDeere.Deere.com.
- For full GreenFleet Terms & Conditions, visit JohnDeere.com/GreenFleet.

Quick access to links at
www.idahofbstore.com