

Idaho Farm Bureau. Quarterly

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Producing food in a

PANDEMIC

Farmers show we're all in this together



While there's a long road ahead in the health crisis we're facing nationally and globally with COVID-19, I can't help but be uplifted when I hear the stories of how farmers and ranchers and local Farm Bureaus are answering the call to community and country.

For some that could mean doing all you can to hold on till we get to the other side of this crisis. It also means all of us sharing stories of how we are still farming to put our fellow Americans' minds at ease about the security of our food supply.

And for others, it may mean adjusting the way you do business for a time, to meet the needs of today.

For Chad Butters, founder of Eight Oaks Distillery in Pennsylvania, answering the call meant changing over his distillery to produce hand sanitizer when he heard about the shortage in his community and across the country. At Holesinsky Winery in Idaho, they can barely keep up with demand for the hand sanitizer they're producing.

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The President's Desk

By Bryan Searle
President Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

Groups come together to support farmers during shutdown



These are very trying times for everyone, especially the nation's farmers and ranchers. The men and women who produce the safest, most abundant and affordable food supply in the history of the world are facing many challenges right now, just like everyone else is.

As soon as our nation was shut down, the American Farm Bureau Federation, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation, the ag and food industries and government entities quickly came together to communicate and work to address the many challenges that the coronavirus outbreak has caused agriculture.

One of the challenges was that the initial panic caused by the coronavirus outbreak resulted in a disruption in getting some food items on store shelves. But that was caused by supply chain disruptions and at no time did this nation ever get close to having a food shortage.

It's important that consumers understand that and AFBF, IFBF and other farm organizations have worked hard to ensure they do.

An example of working to calm the fears of consumers is an AFBF social media campaign

See **SEARLE**, page 7

Inside Farm Bureau

By Rick Keller
CEO Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

What have we learned in 2,075 years?



Marcus Tullius Cicero was a great Roman orator, statesman and philosopher who believed very strongly in a republican form of government being responsive to the people.

He was a great Roman constitutionalist who commanded the support and confidence of the people.

After Julius Caesar destroyed the republic and became a dictator, he tried to recruit Cicero into his inner circle of influence. Due to Cicero's love for the republic, Cicero declined.

Cicero's popularity was such that when Bru-

tus did his infamous deed and stabbed Julius Caesar, he raised his voice calling upon Cicero to restore the republic.

Mark Antony became the next Roman emperor and he did not deliver upon his promise to restore the republic. Antony was challenged by the great orations of Cicero and eventually, Antony ordered Cicero's execution.

Cicero was beheaded and his hands were amputated and nailed to the walls of Rome to warn other opposition writers of similar fates.

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From the editor

Despite uncertainty, Idaho farmers are plowing ahead

It should probably come as no surprise that most of this May Quarterly magazine is filled with stories or columns about how agriculture is being affected by and dealing with the coronavirus outbreak.



COVID-19 has pretty much dominated the news cycle and is at the forefront of people's minds as we as a nation and state work through this unfortunate crisis that has caused an unprecedented upheaval in how we live and interact with each other.

Reaction to the coronavirus has affected every segment of society, including agriculture.

We feel it is important that people understand some of the impact the virus is having on the state's important agricultural industry, which is responsible directly and indirectly for one in every eight jobs in Idaho and 13 percent of the state's total gross domestic product.

As you read through the stories and columns in this magazine, it will become apparent that farmers and ranchers are forging ahead with their normal food production plans, even though many farm commodity prices have declined significantly and producers face an uncertain financial future.

At the same time, farmers and ranchers, food processors and other agriculture-related businesses are being socially responsible and trying their best to protect their employees and help prevent the virus from spreading.

Keep in mind that there was about a two-and-a-half week lag between the time the contents of this magazine were sent to the printer and it arrived in your mailbox.

Response to the coronavirus outbreak, and its impact, is fluid and the situation is changing rapidly. Hopefully, things will begin to return to normal or at least semi-normal by the time you are reading this.

If that is the case, then some of the stories may seem a little outdated and some of the issues that farmers and ranchers faced because of the coronavirus outbreak may or may not still be relevant.

However, we thought it was important to document how the virus outbreak affected agriculture and how farmers and ranchers responded to it.

It's become apparent after speaking with a lot of farmers, ranchers and leaders of farm organizations that represent producers that although Idaho's nearly 25,000 farms and ranches have been seriously challenged by this unprecedented situation, they are plowing ahead nonetheless.

Frankly, those of us who work at Idaho Farm Bureau Federation, the state's largest general farm organization, expected nothing less.

One of the main messages that IFBF, American Farm Bureau Federation and other farm organizations have continued to deliver is that there will be no food shortage in this nation.

Sean Ellis
*Idaho Farm Bureau
publications editor*

You can view the latest agriculture-related updates and resources on COVID-19 online by going to www.idahofb.org/covid19



Photo by Sean Ellis

Sugar beets are planted in a field near Weiser in March.

First glimpse of Idaho farmers' 2020 planting intentions

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – The coronavirus outbreak has not slowed Idaho farmers' plans to produce food this year.

"Agriculture is moving forward and nothing's changed," said Idaho Barley Commission Executive Director Laura

Wilder. "It's business as usual."

Roger Batt, who represents several Idaho farm organizations, said he's hearing the same message: "Basically, it's business as usual. Farmers are out planting or getting the groundwork ready and preparing for this production season."

That's good news for two reasons: People need to eat and, according to a

University of Idaho study, agriculture is responsible for one of every eight jobs in the state as well as 18 percent of Idaho's total economic output.

So, while the impact that the COVID-19 outbreak has on the state's economy is expected to be severe, agriculture will act as a type of stabilizing force on the Idaho economy.

While many businesses and services have ground to a halt or decreased significantly during the virus outbreak, agriculture is plowing ahead.

Cows still need to be fed and milked and a farmer will spend roughly the same amount each year on inputs – labor, seed, fertilizer, etc. – regardless of how much they get for their commodity.

Idaho leads the nation or ranks in the top three in 11 agricultural commodities and ranks in the top 10 in 25 farm commodities.

Those rankings shouldn't change much this year, based on a USDA report released March 31 that offers the year's first glimpse of farmers' planting intentions for certain crops.

According to the report by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, Idaho farmers plan to plant more wheat, hay corn and dry beans this year than they did in 2019. Idaho farmers' potato planting intentions won't be known until late June.

The NASS survey, which was conducted during the first two weeks of March, included about 80,000 farm operators across the nation.

According to the NASS report, Idaho farmers expect to plant 1.21 million acres of wheat this year, a 1 percent increase over 2019.

Nationwide, wheat acres are expected to total 44.7 million acres, down 1 percent from 2019 and the lowest level since records began in 1919.

U.S. wheat acres have been declining for the past two decades.

However, U.S. farmers are expected to plant 97 million acres of corn in 2020, 8 percent more than they planted in 2019. Idaho farmers expect to plant 400,000 acres of corn this year, up 4 percent compared with last year.

U.S. soybean acres are expected to total 83.5 million acres, up 10 percent. Idaho farmers do not grow soybeans except for a few field trials.

Idaho's expected increase in wheat acres "reflects the fact that Idaho has a very stable wheat industry," said Idaho Wheat Commission Executive Director Blaine Jacobson.

He said Idaho wheat acres might actu-

ally rise more than the 1 percent increase estimated by the NASS survey.

The recent run on many grocery items included a lot of wheat-based foods such as pastas and flour, Jacobson said.

"There is going to be a replenishment of those items that is going to occur," he said. "Winter wheat is already in the ground but I actually think spring wheat acres will come in higher than the report says just because of the changes that have happened since NASS did its survey."

In an April 1 Market Intel report, American Farm Bureau Federation Economist Shelby Myers wrote, "Wheat expectations remain lackluster; however, recent surges in demand for wheat products could lead to last-minute shifts in planting decisions over the next few weeks."

According to NASS, Idaho barley acres are expected to decrease 6 percent to 510,000. However, Wilder said the barley commission is re-surveying the major contractors of Idaho barley and she expects Idaho barley acres to be on par with 2019 or even up slightly.

"Based on what I'm hearing from the major (buyers) of Idaho barley, the acres will be about the same as last year," she said.

NASS expects Idaho dry edible bean acres to increase 2 percent to 48,000. Idaho Bean Commission Commissioner Don Tolmie said bean acres will be up nationwide as well.

Bean prices were already on the rise before the coronavirus outbreak gripped the nation and now American consumers are buying even more dry beans than normal, Tolmie said.

"People are in quarantine and gathering foodstuffs and dry beans are flying off the shelves," he said.

NASS estimates that Idaho farmers will harvest 1.35 million acres of hay in 2020, up 4 percent from 2019. Nationally, hay acres are expected to increase 2 percent.

Idaho sugar beet acres are expected to remain essentially unchanged at 168,000.

Oat, lentil, dry edible pea and chickpea acres in Idaho are expected to decrease this year.

Idaho mint acres – peppermint and spearmint – will total about 17,000 this

year, the same as last year, said Batt, executive director of the Idaho Mint Growers Association.

JC Management Co. President Clark Johnston said he does not expect the virus to have a significant impact on growers' planting intentions.

JC Management, which is based out of Utah, contracts with Idaho Farm Bureau Federation to help IFBF members develop individual marketing plans for their farm commodities.

Johnston said farmers and ranchers should not make drastic changes in their plans for the 2020 season based on the latest swings in commodity markets.

"Guys should plant what they normally plant instead of chasing this market around," he said. "If they do that and stick to what they were planning to do this year, things are going to be OK for them."

According to Myers, the USDA prospective plantings report, which is the first survey-based estimate of crop production for the upcoming marketing year, typically produces reactions from markets, "but those seem to be overshadowed by COVID-19 concerns."

"With the circumstances of the pandemic ever-changing, there is still time for growers to alter their planting intentions, especially if they want to react to any emerging consumer trends or if significant weather delays push planting later, as it did in 2019," Myers wrote.

"Given the uncertainty and unprecedented times of COVID-19 in the U.S., producers will decide whether to react to volatile markets or stay the course with their planting intentions," she added.

A much clearer picture of 2020 crop acreage in the United States will be revealed when USDA releases its next crop acreage report on June 30.

While farmers and ranchers are moving ahead with their normal food production plans this year, they are also going out of their way to try to prevent spread of the virus and protect their workers, Batt said.

"For anybody with employees, their top priority is the health of their workers," he said. "They're all taking the necessary precautions that the president and governor and health professionals have laid out." ■

Continued from page 2

These are just a couple of examples of family farmers who are stepping up to meet a need and solve a problem, often donating their new product to medical workers and community members at highest risk.

Farm Bureau staff are answering the call, too, working tirelessly for members and finding ways to get food from the farm to local customers. Hawaii Farm Bureau has set up a “Farm to Car” service to get food safely to the community, while helping members continue to sell their products.

Customers can place orders online and simply drive up to the farmers market where staff will load orders right into the car.

U-pick farms across the country are getting into the drive-through business,

including Butler’s Orchard in Maryland.

And thanks to creative solutions like the online direct-buy, farm finder from the Maryland Farmers Market Association, customers can easily find safe ways to get their fresh produce, meat and dairy products while supporting local farmers and relieving some of the burden from grocery stores.

For so many, answering the call means giving with no expectation of return, or selling products at a reduced cost to prevent waste. This has taken on many forms, and I am sure there are more acts of sacrifice across our rural communities than we can ever fully know. Members across the country, like in Champaign County, Illinois, donated face masks to health care workers to help protect them on the frontlines of this fight.

Others, like Oregon Farm Bureau

President Barb Iverson, are bringing a little extra joy to others in a tough time. When Barb and her family had to make the tough decision to cancel their annual Tulip Festival at Wooden Shoe Farm, they found a way to deliver tulips to seniors under stay-at-home orders in their state, bringing a bit of the colorful festival home to those who could use a little spring the most.

Here at the American Farm Bureau, we continue to work with our grassroots members and state Farm Bureaus, doing all we can to help you and your families make it through this crises.

This is a time unlike any of us have seen in our lifetimes, and hopefully we will not see again. I know we are all praying for relief to come soon, and as we wait, hope and work amid all we are facing, we will continue to be stronger together. ■

KELLER

Continued from page 2

Cicero’s writings were preserved. They had a great influence upon our Founding Fathers. John Adams said of Cicero, “As all the ages of the world have not produced a greater statesman and philosopher united than Cicero, his authority should have great weight.”

It was from Cicero we owe much of our republican form of government.

The U.S. Constitution places the power to govern our country in the hands of elected representatives. But this power is temporarily returned to us, the people, at regular intervals – each election day.

Our Constitution discusses the election process at least nine times, and its authors set the electoral responsibility squarely on the shoulders of each citizen. Our Founding Fathers clearly intended that we should accept this

responsibility without hesitation and dutifully exercise it by electing suitable representatives and officers.

What values should an elected representative have today that Cicero would support?

His words are clear: “The budget

Let us use our united voice as a people to elect individuals who will support strong values, ideals and who will represent their constituency.

should be balanced, the treasury should be refilled, public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of officialdom should be tempered and controlled, and the assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed lest Rome become bankrupt.

People must again learn to work, instead of living on public assistance.”

Those values may be difficult to live up to during the current crisis in which we find ourselves; however, they demonstrate an ideal we must remember and strive for.

Let us use our united voice as a people to elect individuals who will support strong values, ideals and who will represent their constituency. We must be active in the campaigns of those who support these ideals, not just hypocritically publicly plead their virtues at election time.

We must elect those who have the character and integrity espoused by Cicero.

We thank Cicero for our republican form of government, but on election day, we are a democracy. Let our voices be heard and counted.

Vote in the primary elections by casting your absentee ballots to be received on or before Tuesday, May 19. ■

Continued from page 2

titled, “Still Farming.” This message has gained more attention and was shared to others more than any other message that Farm Bureau has ever delivered.

The message illustrated how farmers and ranchers were continuing to work hard each day to provide safe food and fiber and that there was not a shortage of food.

Though the message was a huge success and reached many people, we as farmers and ranchers are asking ourselves the question, “still farming?”

How do farmers and ranchers move forward with such an over-supply of food due to the shutdown?

With schools, restaurants, cafeterias and other foodservice channels shut down, farm-gate milk prices – the price that dairy-men receive for the milk they produce – have tanked way below production costs.

Processors’ freezers are full of frozen potato products, which has halted the processing plants from processing the raw potatoes. That has created the impossible situation of the large over-supply of potatoes needing to be processed before the new crop is harvested only a few months from now.

The price that beef producers receive for their cattle plummeted instantly once the shutdown happened, even though demand increased for a time. Some people think these lower prices were a case of packers taking advantage of cattle producers, which is a claim that is currently being investigated.

Idaho’s food trout market came to a halt, malt barley demand has dropped, Idaho’s growing hop market is taking a hard hit and the list goes on, as every single sector of the ag industry has been affected by the coronavirus outbreak.

A significant decline in the price that producers receive for their commodities could threaten the livelihood of some of the nearly 25,000 ranches and farms across the state, along with all those associated with the ag industry.

Though farmers are plowing ahead with the gamble and uncertainty of where prices and demand will be, the situation is very challenging and concerning.

That’s why Idaho Farm Bureau Federation is working with American Farm Bureau Federation and other agricultural organizations to work on getting some financial relief for farmers and ranchers who are under the gun right now and will be into the future.

Farm Bureau leaders, in unity with many other ag groups, are in constant contact with USDA officials and our elected officials, working to get some financial support and relief.

Each one of us has our own story and faces different financial obligations. We must communicate more than ever as farmers and ranchers, along with the food industry, to help curtail production in areas where that is needed and yet continue to promote the safe food and fiber we produce.

Social media provides opportunities to tell our story and to promote agriculture in a positive way. We need to be engaged.

There is help and support available to you. I wouldn’t say it’s in the way of a gold tree you can pick your fruit off of, but there are ways to work together to sustain us through these challenging times.

Stay up to date and involved, making yourself aware of the opportunities and challenges. Share your ideas and thoughts.

We have county Farm Bureaus in each area of the state that can provide that support. Go to IFBF’s web page – Idahofb.org – where you will find information to lead you to a county Farm Bureau or other area you may need help in.

Farm Bureau leaders in Idaho and across the country continue to assure farmers and consumers that we will get through this as an industry and Americans will continue to enjoy an abundant food supply.

My message for farmers and ranchers, as well as the consumers who depend on their hard work, is that we indeed will get through this.

But to do that, we must continue to work together and continue the almost full-court press that has been going on for some time now to address financial, supply chain and other challenges.

Now, more than ever, it’s important that the entire agricultural industry work together to address the impacts the coronavirus outbreak is having on producers and ensure our fellow Americans that they will continue to enjoy an abundant and affordable food supply. ■

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“COVID has changed people’s consumption patterns and producers need to take that into account when they are making their planting decisions. It’s not a typical year and COVID-19 has changed the game.”

— Zak Miller, a potato farmer and director of commodities for Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

Idaho potato acres could drop this year due to outbreak reaction

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – Total acres of Idaho’s iconic potato crop could decrease significantly this year as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.

Although there was a rush on potatoes at grocery stores early on, that has abated somewhat and has not been enough to make up for a major decrease in sales of potatoes and potato products through foodservice channels, according to industry leaders.

“We expect to see a significant cut in acres this year,” said Idaho Potato Commission President and CEO Frank Muir.

He said reaction to COVID-19 has had a major impact on the potato processing industry and industry officials have been told processors are planning to cut acreage by 10-20 percent in 2020.

Muir said growers should not rely solely on data from the past

several years to make planting decisions in 2020 and he encouraged farmers to have a customer for their spuds lined up before they plant this year.

“This is different than anything we’ve ever experienced before,” he said.

Potato planting has just recently begun in Idaho and growers are on the front end of planting spuds.

Zak Miller, a potato farmer and director of commodities for Idaho Farm Bureau Federation, encouraged spud growers to think long and hard this year when making their planting decisions.

“COVID has changed people’s consumption patterns and producers need to take that into account when they are making their planting decisions,” he said. “It’s not a typical year and COVID-19 has changed the game.”

Some French fry processors in Idaho have cut contracted acreage by 10-20 percent this year, North

American Potato Market News Publisher Bruce Huffaker told Idaho Farm Bureau Federation members and industry leaders April 9 during a conference call.

Some growers have had their contracts cut by as much as 50 percent, he added.

A lot of French fry processing plants are shut down or running on reduced schedules, Huffaker said.

“You’re going to definitely need to see some (potato acreage) cuts to bring Idaho’s crop into balance with demand,” he said.

Idaho leads the nation in potato production and Gem State farmers planted 310,000 acres of spuds last year and 315,000 acres in 2018.

Huffaker said potato acres in Idaho will need to decrease by at least 30,000 in 2020 to balance out the supply and demand situation.

Idaho potato growers need to receive about \$7 per hundred-weight (cwt) of potatoes they produce in order to break even.

“If we don’t cut back on acres, the best market (in the coming year) may be \$2 per cwt, which isn’t enough to pay the bills,” Huffaker said.

Reaction to the COVID-19 outbreak has taken the Idaho and U.S. potato industry on a roller-coaster ride.

Early on during the outbreak, consumers flocked to grocery stores and bought large amounts of potatoes.

“People were running to grocery stores and loading up on the essentials and potatoes happened to be one of those essential items,” Muir said. “Across the U.S., shelves were completely empty of potatoes.”

While potato sales at the retail level are still pretty decent, they are showing signs of slow-

ing down, said IPC Commissioner Randy Hardy, a potato farmer from Oakley.

At the same time, sales of potato products through food-service channels have basically ceased, he added.

“Sales to restaurants, cafeterias, schools, all those things have slammed to a screeching halt,” he said. “Nobody (in foodservice) is buying right now. It’s very, very, very slow.”

As a result, farm-gate potato prices, which had been up significantly since last fall, have fallen.

“We saw the market go from rocking and rolling at \$11-12 per cwt, which are prices we don’t see very often, down to maybe \$8-9 but on half the volume or less,” Hardy said.

The COVID-19 outbreak has had a myriad of impacts on the potato industry and it’s a fluid situation, Huffaker said.

“It’s changing day to day and almost hour to hour,” he said.

Huffaker said that when social distancing guidelines and stay-at-home orders are finally lifted, there is likely to be a temporary surge in potato shipments for a week or two to fill the pipeline.

But it’s unrealistic to expect that restaurant and overall potato demand will return to where it was for quite some time, he added.

For one, he said, some restaurants will never reopen, and consumers’ discretionary income won’t be the same for a while, so people will not have the money to eat out as regularly as before.

“All this suggests that demand for potatoes is going to be declining next year,” Huffaker said. “How much it will go down nobody knows.” ■



Reaction to the coronavirus outbreak could result in potato acres decreasing in Idaho this year.



Submitted photo

A Reed's Dairy employee delivers food items to a home in the Treasure Valley of southwestern Idaho. Reed's home-delivery service in the Boise area is booming during the coronavirus outbreak but the Idaho Falls operation's dairy retail stores are suffering.

Coronavirus slows Idaho Falls dairy's Boise area business

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

BOISE – An Idaho Falls dairy's expansion into the Boise area market was going great, until the coronavirus outbreak hit.

The response to the virus has had a negative impact on Reed's Dairy's retail stores in the Treasure Valley of southwestern Idaho, but the operation's home delivery service there is booming.

Reed's Dairy, based in Idaho Falls, opened a retail dairy store in Meridian in southwestern Idaho in 2017 and opened another in Boise a little more than a year ago.

The stores sell ice cream, cheese, milk and other dairy products that are produced at Reed's Idaho Falls dairy and shipped to the Treasure Valley.

Reed's Dairy's move into

the Boise area, one of the fastest growing areas in the nation, enabled the dairy to greatly expand its reach. There are about 680,000 people in the Treasure Valley, compared to about 55,000 in Idaho Falls.

The Treasure Valley retail outlets were booming until the coronavirus outbreak, said Reed's owner Alan Reed.

"The stores were doing really good until about four weeks ago," he said. "Their sales have really collapsed through this COVID-19 thing."

Reed said sales at the retail outlets are down about 60 percent.

But the dairy's home delivery business in the Treasure Valley has seen a rapid increase in sales. Reed's purchased a home-delivery service in 2017 that sells

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Submitted photo

Farm commissions still working to support producers

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – Just like the farmers and ranchers they serve, Idaho’s agricultural commissions and organizations are plowing ahead with their normal activities.

That includes programs and efforts to promote the commodities they represent, educate producers and fund important research projects.

“We may not be at the office, but everyone I know is working,” said Idaho Barley Commission Administrator Laura Wilder. “We’re just working remotely and we all have plenty of projects and programs going to support our growers.”

Even during a pandemic, “agriculture doesn’t stop and that includes all of the people who are working hard to add value to what growers do,” she added. “Nothing’s stopped; we just have to work a little differently.”

Like Wilder, other farm organization leaders are working mostly from home but stop by the office occasionally to pick up mail.

“We’re still rolling,” said Idaho Cattle Association Executive Vice President Cameron Mulrony. “We’re working remotely, from home, and I’m going to the office on a limited basis when I need to.”

He said the ICA is still moving forward with planning for the association’s annual summer meeting in late June, although that could change depending on how the state’s COVID-19 response plays out.

While working remotely, farm organization leaders and employees are doing a lot more conference calls.

“So many conference calls,” said Idaho Wine Commission Executive Director Mora Shatz-Dolsby.

While the Idaho Wheat Commission’s



Photo by Sean Ellis

Idaho Wheat Commission Executive Director Blaine Jacobson, top center, leads an IWC meeting last year. Like Jacobson, leaders and employees of the state’s farm commissions and agriculture-related organizations are still working during the coronavirus lockdown, but mostly from home.

other three employees are working from home, executive director Blaine Jacobson is still working in his office inside the wheat commission building that also houses several other farm-related organizations, including ones that represent barley, bean, wine and milk producers.

The two-story building in downtown Boise is often times the epicenter of meetings and activities among Idaho’s agricultural community but right now Jacobson is about the only person working in the building.

“The office is pretty well deserted,” he said. “I see people come by occasionally to pick up mail ... but for the most part, it’s an empty building.”

Idaho Potato Commission employ-

ees are working hard to try to resolve the many issues the potato industry faces right now due to the COVID-19 outbreak, said IPC President and CEO Frank Muir.

“We are basically all guns blazing to try to address this problem,” he said. “This is such a fluid situation (and) we are working around the clock on this issue.”

Shatz-Dolsby said that farm organizations are trying their best to continue serving producers while at the same time being socially responsible and doing their part to help prevent spread of the coronavirus.

“We’re trying to do our part,” she said. “At the end of the day, we’re just grateful we still have our health.” ■

Idaho dairies hurting but still producing plenty of milk

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – Idaho dairy farmers are still producing milk, and lots of it, even as the price they receive for their commodity has plummeted during the coronavirus outbreak.

Idaho ranks No. 3 in the nation in total milk production and most of the milk produced in the Gem State is turned into cheese.

Dairy is the No. 1 farm commodity in Idaho in terms of farm cash receipts, which is the money that farmers and ranchers receive from buyers for their commodity.

The coronavirus outbreak has not slowed milk production in Idaho or the nation and consumers don't have to worry about shortages of dairy products, said Idaho Dairy-men's Association Executive Director Rick Naerebout.

"So far, dairies are still milking cows and producing milk," he said. "There will still be plenty of dairy products on grocery shelves."

He said response to the virus has created some production and supply challenges but nothing that American dairy farmers can't overcome.

"The dairy supply chain is pretty resilient," Naerebout said. "You can go to any grocery store and find ample supplies of milk, cheese, yogurt and other dairy products."

One of the challenges has been a disruption in the supply of distillers grains, which are fed to cows and are a byproduct of ethanol production, which has slowed significantly during the outbreak. However, dairy operators are replacing distillers grains with other feed, including soybean meal and canola meal.

"We're able to manage around" that decrease in distillers grains, Naerebout said.

But the price outlook for dairy operations is bleak right now, he said, and some operators will have a difficult time managing



Photo by Sean Ellis

The price that Idaho dairy operators are receiving for their milk has decreased dramatically during the coronavirus outbreak.

through those low prices.

After suffering through four years of depressed milk prices, the Idaho and U.S. dairy industry got a shot in the arm toward the latter part of 2019 when the price that dairies receive from buyers for their commodity increased significantly.

Now, prices are headed back down, in part because of decreased demand from restaurants, many of which are closed or have suffered significant decreases in sales. A significant portion of dairy demand in the United States comes from restaurants.

Naerebout said dairy industry officials have been told demand at restaurants is down 70-80 percent.

"We're seeing a real hit (in prices) from that today," he said.

There was an initial pickup in overall demand for dairy products during the coronavirus outbreak but that has tailed off

significantly, Naerebout said.

While the price that Idaho dairymen receive for their milk touched \$20 per hundredweight (cwt) in December, May futures prices are in the \$13 cwt range and could go down even more, Naerebout said.

"It's really disheartening," he said. "We came into 2020 thinking it would be a good year after several years of depressed prices."

The price that Idaho dairy operations must receive for their milk in order to break even is around \$16 cwt, he said.

"We're going to be significant dollars below break-even," Naerebout said. "Hopefully, this will only last for a short period of time and we can get back to business as usual..."

Feed and energy costs have softened but not enough to offset the price decrease, Naerebout said. ■



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PLOWING AHEAD

Drip tape is laid March 6 in a field that will be planted to onions.

Photo by Sean Ellis

Coronavirus not stopping Idaho agriculture

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – Idaho farmers and ranchers are plowing ahead with their food-production plans this year, even as they deal with great uncertainty over how the coronavirus outbreak will impact things.

“Beyond all the noise the media is making about this, things are not much different here,” said Don Tolmie, production manager of Treasure Valley Seed

Co. in Homedale.

Tolmie said farming operations are proceeding as normal in his neck of the woods, with an added emphasis on being socially responsible and doing what they can to prevent spread of the virus.

“We’re trying to be cognizant of that and doing things like keeping a six-foot distance, keeping surfaces wiped down and using hand sanitizer often,” he said. “These are things we always do – we always take good, sanitary measures – but it’s even more emphatic now.”

The last thing the farming community wants is for farm workers to catch the coronavirus, he said.

“It would be terrible, atrocious really, to get an outbreak within the farm worker community,” he said. “Man, we would be in trouble then.”

Michael Williamson, manager of Williamson Orchards and Vineyards in the Caldwell area, said his operation is proceeding as usual this year.

“We have crews out there pruning and getting ready for this year,” he said.

He said the operation is taking steps to try to prevent spread of the disease, while at the same time trying to remain in business.

“We’re just trying to keep our business going but also do our part to help stop this thing,” he said. “It’s tough. Things are happening that you’ve never heard of before. The imagination has time to think about what will happen next.”

One of the biggest concerns in farm country at the moment is what kind of impact the outbreak will have on operations that use the federal H-2A agricultural guest worker program.

There is significant concern over whether those operations will be able to receive their normal number of foreign H-2A workers this year, said Joel Anderson, executive director of the Snake River Farmers Association, a non-profit group of agricultural producers that helps members process H-2A applications.

“It’s a significant concern and it’s a fluid, developing situation,” he said.

If there is a major disruption in the flow of H-2A workers from other nations, “There is a tremendous potential to negatively affect food production (in the U.S.) this year,” Anderson said.

About 700 agricultural operations in Idaho applied for H-2A workers last year and almost 6,000 foreign workers were certified to work in Idaho.

Nationwide, 258,000 immigrant workers were approved under the H-2A program in 2019.

Officials from the U.S. State Department have publicly stated they understand the importance of the H-2A visas and that they are a priority, which is a good sign, Anderson said.

The state department has “been very

clear they understand the importance of the H-2A program and are doing everything they can to process those applications that they can,” he said.

But, he added, the larger threat would be a full closure of the U.S. border, and agricultural groups are working hard to ensure government officials understand the impact that would have on the nation’s food supply.

If it’s necessary in the interests of national security to shut the border completely, that’s understood, Anderson said, “but we and other organizations are working hard to ensure they understand the impact any complete border closure would have on agriculture.”

On March 20, the Trump administration announced new travel restrictions between the U.S. and Mexico. That

“We have urged them to find safe, practical ways to admit farm laborers as emergency workers for visa purposes while still protecting public health.”

— American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall

includes halting all non-essential travel. What that means for agriculture isn’t certain yet.

Members of Congress, including members Idaho’s congressional delegation, sent a letter dated March 19 to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Chad Wolf emphasizing the importance of the H-2A program to U.S. agriculture.

The letter makes it clear congressional members understand the importance of maintaining public health safety and efforts to minimize the impacts of coronavirus.

“However, there are substantial national security concerns that will arise

should our farmers not have the labor they need,” the letter adds.

The letter asks officials to “use all available authorities to provide maximum flexibility to consulate staff in the processing of H-2A visa applicants, while implementing protocols to protect public health.”

American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall released a statement about U.S. farmers’ commitment to producing the nation’s food supply this year.

“Farmers and ranchers remain committed to doing the work in the fields, orchards and barns across the country to ensure Americans have access to healthy, affordable food,” he stated.

Duvall said AFBF is in constant contact with USDA, the State Department and the White House.

“We have urged them to find safe, practical ways to admit farm laborers as emergency workers for visa purposes while still protecting public health,” he stated. “We will remain watchful and vigilant to ensure U.S. agriculture and others in the food supply chain are able to continue feeding America, as

we do 365 days a year.”

Cherry Hill Farm in the Caldwell area relies on H-2A workers for most of its labor needs and so far this year, has 24 of the guest workers. However, the operation will need about 40 come harvest time, said manager Sean Rowley.

“We are concerned that we will not have enough workers to take care of what we need to get done,” he said. “We hope the border is still open then and that we are still allowed to apply for H-2A workers.”

Cherry Hill Farm has the potential for a decent size crop this year, Rowley said.

“We’re going to be in a world of hurt

if we have a full crop and we aren't able to get the H-2A laborers that we need to harvest it," he said.

Idaho State Department of Agriculture Director Celia Gould sent a letter March 19 to members of the state's agricultural community ensuring them the department is doing everything it can to help farmers and ranchers through this trying time.

ISDA officials are in constant contact with the governor's office regarding the state's response to coronavirus, the letter said.

"One thing is clear: the food system is critical infrastructure," Gould said. "The ISDA will do everything we

can to ensure we're doing our part to keep the food system moving."

The letter says ISDA is fielding calls from businesses, such as livestock sale yards, asking whether the department is mandating closure of any agribusiness.

"The governor has not mandated closure of operations," Gould said. "However, we strongly encourage enhanced health and cleaning measures."

"To everyone in Idaho agriculture, thank you for feeding the world," Gould's letter concluded. "Your work is essential every day but has been especially highlighted in recent weeks." ■



Photo by Sean Ellis

A field is prepared for planting in southwestern Idaho this spring. The coronavirus pandemic is not stopping farmers and ranchers from forging ahead with their normal food-production plans.



Submitted photo

REED'S

Continued from page 10

milk and other grocery items directly to homes in the Boise area.

"Our home delivery business is strong right now," Reed said. "We're adding a lot of new customers over the last few weeks."

Besides dairy products, the home-delivery service also delivers meats, breads, produce, chips, salsa and a host of other food items.

"We have quite a list of grocery items we deliver," Reed said. "People are really happy that they can have groceries delivered to their homes instead of having to go to the grocery stores."

The increase in the home delivery business does not make up for the decrease in business at the dairy's retail outlets but it does help, Reed said.

"We're going to have some tough times with our dairy stores until things start to get back to normal," he said. "But the home-delivery

service is a bright spot in our sales right now."

The coronavirus has not stopped the dairy's normal operations — "We're still milking the cows and running our production plant," Reed said — but the dairy is making an extra effort to try to ensure its employees and customers remain healthy.

One person at each dairy retail store is designated to sanitize everything anyone touches.

"They continuously go around and around sanitizing anything people touch," Reed said.

Reed also constantly talks to his employees about all the precautions they should be taking to help keep themselves and their families healthy and he has even bought Vitamin C for all of them.

"We're really trying to take care of our employees because we need them healthy," Reed said. "I don't want them or their families sick; they mean too much to me." ■



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File photo by Bill Schaefer

Henry Etcheverry marks a lamb with red paint to identify which ewe it belongs to in his lambing shed outside of Rupert in February 2013.

Idaho farmers forge ahead through coronavirus outbreak

By **Bill Schaefer**

For Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

Planting and grazing season is starting up and Idaho's farmers and ranchers are trying to balance protecting both their business interests and the health and welfare of their workers in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic that has dominated the headlines for the past few months.

Idaho Gov. Brad Little issued a state-wide 21-day stay-home order on March 25 in an attempt to limit the spread of

the virus. Little's proclamation deems "food cultivation, including farming, livestock, and fishing" as an essential business.

Across Idaho, foreign workers who come to the United States seasonally through the H2-A agricultural guest worker program have started returning to work on farms and ranches.

Two farmers and one sheepherder interviewed for this story compared these times to uncharted waters and they are uncertain how the year will play out and where they will land eventually.

Henry Etcheverry grew up in the sheepherding business and operates a ranch near Rupert.

Etcheverry relies on the help of 18 migrant workers, 17 from Peru, who employed through the H2-A program.

Lambing season is over and Etcheverry and his men are beginning to move an estimated 23,000 ewes and lambs east across the Arco desert, south of Craters of the Moon National Monument, to U.S. Bureau of Land Management grazing fields.

Etcheverry expressed deep concern

about the effects that exposure to the coronavirus would have on his crew and business. The 18 men share living quarters in three bunkhouses and eat three daily meals together.

“I told them, you guys are on your honor but this is serious and we’re not going to have it,” Etcheverry said. “This virus, we cannot take a chance and I do not want them going to town at all.”

He said he has asked the men to avoid going to town in an effort to keep potential exposure to the virus to a minimum. A 14-day quarantine would result in increased feed costs.

“We can’t afford to have that (virus) out here because it’ll go through the place,” Etcheverry said. “I’d be stuck feeding that expensive alfalfa hay to my sheep and my costs would be exorbitant.”

Etcheverry said he and his men were following President Trump’s “15 Days to Slow the Spread” guidelines in avoiding unnecessary human contact.

Etcheverry said that he was slightly inconvenienced by the run on groceries and paper goods but that his inventory of dry goods was sufficiently stocked up prior to the panic buying.

“I stocked up before this thing ever hit this area,” he said.

Etcheverry predicted an uncertain future for the lamb market.

“I see some pretty dark clouds,” he said. “I’ll tell you why. Lamb is traditionally eaten in the high-end restaurants in the east and in other restaurants and they have basically shut down. I’m just scared to death what’s happening in the market....”

Merrill Hanny grows about 500 acres of potatoes outside of Shelley, in Bingham County. He is expecting six H2-A workers to arrive from Mexico around April 20.

Hanny said he’ll have an orientation session on personal hygiene when the men arrive. Other than that and keeping social distance within their housing, Hanny said that there’s not much more he can do.

“Hopefully, this enactment by the governor, the lockdown, it’s over by then,” he said. “By the time they come



File photo by Bill Schaefer

H-2A workers monitor cut potato seed at one of Merrill Hanny’s storage sheds in April 2019.

we’re hoping we’re through the worst of the crisis.”

Looking forward to the coming season, Hanny expressed a pragmatic philosophy common to anyone who has been in the agricultural sector for any period of time.

“You have to be cautiously optimistic,” he said. “This affects the whole world. It’s a worldwide economy that has come into play. It will affect prices up and down and the biggest thing is none of us have been down this path before. So there’s a lot of unknown factors yet to play out.”

Armand Eckert grows sugar beets, barley, winter wheat and alfalfa in the Magic Valley. The center of his farming operation is about 10 miles northwest of Buhl.

Eckert employs eight H2-A workers. He said seven of them arrived around March 4, with one delayed by paper work at the border. He has multiple housing units on his farm with no more than three workers per household.

Eckert said the very nature of his farming operation means he and his workers are self-quarantined.

“Out here we’re not around anyone. There’s not another human being or

building in sight,” he said. “We’re pretty isolated onto itself. We’re already kind of self-quarantined just being out here.”

Eckert said that when he spoke with his farm workers about coronavirus, they were pretty knowledgeable about the situation.

“If somebody gets sick we’re going to get him tested to make sure that they don’t have that particular virus and get them taken care of,” Eckert said. “Then we’ll definitely have to take some steps to protect the rest of the crew.”

He said the measures initiated by the governor were necessary but he hopes that cases of the virus will diminish as the climate warms up.

Eckert said he is concerned about securing parts for equipment breakdowns during harvest season but he hopes that his inventory of parts will get him through harvest.

“I hope this thing gets past,” he said of the pandemic’s effects. “We know people that are in the service industry and are out of jobs and we’re trying to step down and help them where the need arises. Let’s hope this thing gets past us and as a country we get back on our feet and get going again.” ■

Idaho Farm Bureau

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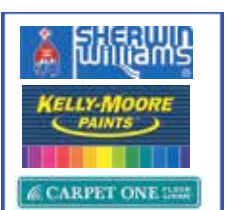
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Idaho Potato Commission photo
 In the midst of the coronavirus outbreak, potatoes are flying off grocery store shelves across the nation. While spuds are suddenly very popular right now, the outbreak has resulted in the Big Idaho Potato Truck's 2020 tour across America being temporarily suspended. The truck is shown here in front of an Idaho charter school shortly before the 2020 tour was halted.

Potatoes flying off retail shelves

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – In the midst of the coronavirus outbreak, potatoes are suddenly a hot item across the nation and there are reports of spuds flying off grocery store shelves.

“It’s been really remarkable how fast ... potatoes have been flying off the shelves,” said Blair Richardson, president and CEO of Potatoes USA, the nation’s potato marketing organization. “Potatoes are being purchased as soon as they come into stores in many areas.”

“You can hardly find retailers with potatoes on the shelves” in some places, said Idaho Potato Commission CEO Frank Muir.

The sale of potatoes through foodservice channels has dropped significantly as many restaurants and schools have shut down because of the coronavirus outbreak, Muir said.

But retail sales have jumped significantly and the IPC has sent out a communication to retailers, foodservice customers and shippers trying to facilitate a quick shift of spuds from foodservice to retail channels.

“Foodservice doesn’t have the demand right now and we don’t want those

potatoes sitting there and (being wasted),” Muir said. “We’re trying to make sure those potatoes have a home, especially when there is such demand for them and retailers are out of stock.”

“It’s kind of frantic right now,” said Idaho spud farmer and IPC commissioner Randy Hardy. “We’re trying to (move) all we can from foodservice, where they are not being used, and get them shoved over to the stores.”

IPC Chairman Nick Blanksma, a farmer from Hammett, said he’s heard that “retail can’t keep up with the demand for potatoes right now.”

He said the industry, with the help of the commission, is undertaking a major effort to move potato cartons from foodservice to retail.

“Potatoes flying off shelves has never happened before,” he said. “These are drastic measures being taken in a drastic time.”

Muir said potatoes are a hot item right now because consumers know, or are learning, they are a great value, nutrient-rich and versatile.

“People are realizing potatoes are a pretty good value and that they are pretty versatile,” Hardy said.

Richardson said Potatoes USA has

switched most of its communications efforts for the moment into more of an education mode: “How to properly store all the potatoes being purchased to avoid waste and how to use the potatoes in simple preparations with whatever else happened to be available at the store.”

Even though spuds are a hot item right now, industry leaders said there is no shortage of potatoes in this country, nor will there be next year.

Blanksma, who grows potatoes for the process market, said processing plants are not shutting down. “They are still producing potatoes.”

He also said that farmers in Idaho, the nation’s No. 1 spud-producing state, are forging ahead with their usual plans to produce another bumper crop in 2020.

“Farmers are resilient and the planting process is proceeding on schedule,” Blanksma said. “We haven’t stopped. We’re looking to the future.”

Richardson said spud farmers across the nation are moving forward with their usual potato production plans.

“Notwithstanding the vagaries of nature, I foresee that we’re going to have a plentiful supply of potatoes again this year,” he said.

See **POTATOES**, page 31

Idaho Farm Bureau announces support for legislative candidates

The Idaho Farm Bureau Federation has a Political Action Committee named Agra-PAC. The purpose of Agra-PAC is to assist state legislative candidates who are philosophically aligned with Farm Bureau policies and positions to win their election.

Based upon recommendations from county Farm Bureaus, the following legislative candidates have demonstrated a high level of support for Idaho agriculture and have been endorsed by Agra-PAC.

Many of these candidates have also been awarded the Idaho Farm Bureau Friend of Agriculture Award, the highest honor legislators can receive from Farm Bureau. Every two years the Friend of Agriculture Award recognizes legislators who have consistently supported or opposed bills in harmony with Farm Bureau member positions.

Agra-PAC has endorsed these legislative candidates who have an opponent in the primary election:

District 1 (Boundary, Bonner counties)



House Seat B

Sage G. Dixon, Ponderay
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award
Recipient 2020, 2018, 2016

District 2 (Kootenai County)



House Seat A

Vito Barbieri,
Dalton Gardens
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award
Recipient 2020, 2018, 2016



House Seat B

Tim Kastning, Hayden

District 3 (Kootenai County)



Senate Seat

Peter Riggs, Post Falls

District 4 (Kootenai County)



House Seat A

Jim Addis, Coeur d'Alene

District 5 (Benewah & Latah counties)



House Seat A

Brandon Mitchell, Moscow

District 6 (Lewis & Nez Perce counties)



House Seat A

Thyra Stevenson, Nezperce
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award
Recipient 2020, 2018, 2014

District 7 (Bonner, Clearwater, Idaho, Shoshone counties)



House Seat A

Priscilla Giddings, White Bird



House Seat B

Cornell Rasor, Sandpoint

District 8 (Boise, Custer, Gem, Lemhi, Valley counties)



Senate Seat

Steven Thayn, Emmett
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award
Recipient 2018, 2016, 2014, 2012



House Seat B

Dorothy Moon, Stanley
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award
Recipient 2020, 2018

District 9 (Adams, Canyon, Payette, Washington counties)



House Seat A

Jim Smith, Fruitland

District 10 (Canyon County)



Senate Seat

Jim Rice, Caldwell
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award
Recipient 2018

District 11 (Canyon County)



Senate Seat

Patti Anne Lodge, Huston
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award
Recipient 2012



House Seat A

Scott Syme, Caldwell
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award
Recipient 2018



House Seat B

Tammy Nichols, Middleton

Legislative candidates continued ...

District 12 (Canyon County)



House Seat B

Rick Youngblood, Nampa
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award
Recipient 2020, 2018, 2016

District 14 (Ada County)



Senate Seat

Scott Grow, Eagle



House Seat B

Gayann DeMorduant, Eagle
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award
Recipient 2020

District 15 (Ada County)



Senate Seat

Fred Martin, Boise

District 20 (Ada County)



House Seat A

Joe Palmer, Meridian
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award
Recipient 2020, 2018, 2016

District 21 (Ada County)



Senate Seat

Regina Bayer, Meridian



House Seat B

Brenda Palmer, Meridian

District 22 (Ada County)



House Seat A

John Vander Woude, Nampa
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award
Recipient 2020, 2018, 2016, 2014



House Seat B

Jason Monks, Nampa
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award
Recipient 2020, 2018, 2016, 2014

District 23 (Owyhee, Elmore, Twin Falls counties)



Senate Seat

Christy Zito, Hammett
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award
Recipient 2020, 2018



House Seat A
Andrea Owens,
Grandview

District 30 (Bonneville County)



Senate Seat

Kevin Cook, Idaho Falls

District 31 (Bingham County)



House Seat A

David Cannon, Blackfoot

District 32 (Caribou, Franklin, Bear Lake counties)



House Seat B

Dave Radford, Ammon

District 34 (Bonneville & Madison counties)



Senate Seat

Doug Ricks, Rexburg



House Seat A

Jon Weber, Rexburg

District 35 (Butte, Clark, Jefferson, Fremont counties)



Senate Seat

Van Burtenshaw, Terreton
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award
Recipient 2018



House Seat A

Jerald Raymond, Menan



House Seat B

Rod Furniss, Rigby

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Agra-PAC has also endorsed these candidates who do not have an opponent in the primary election:

District 1 (Boundary, Bonner counties)

Senate Seat: **Jim Woodward**, Sagle
House Seat A: **Heather Scott**, Blanchard
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award: 2020, 2018, 2016

District 2 (Kootenai County)

Senate Seat: **Steve Vick**, Dalton Gardens
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award Recipient 2018, 2016, 2014

District 3 (Kootenai County)

House Seat A: **Ron Mendive**, Coeur d'Alene
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award Recipient 2020, 2018, 2016
House Seat B: **Tony Wisniewski**, Post Falls

District 4 (Kootenai County)

Senate Seat: **Mary Souza**, Coeur d'Alene
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award Recipient 2018
House Seat B: **Paul Amador**, Coeur d'Alene
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award Recipient 2018

District 5 (Benewah and Latah counties)

Senate Seat: **Dan Foreman**, Viola
House Seat B: **Caroline Nilsson Troy**, Genesee
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award Recipient 2018, 2016

District 6 (Lewis and Nez Perce counties)

Senate Seat: **Daniel Johnson**, Lewiston
House Seat B: **Mike Kingsley**, Lewiston
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award Recipient 2020, 2018

District 7 (Bonner, Clearwater, Idaho, Shoshone counties)

Senate Seat: **Carl Crabtree**, Grangeville
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award Recipient 2018

District 8 (Boise, Custer, Gem, Lemhi, Valley counties)

House Seat A: **Terry Gestrin**, Donnelly
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award Recipient 2020, 2018, 2016

District 9 (Adams, Canyon, Payette, Washington counties)

House Seat B: **Judy Boyle**, Midvale
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award Recipient 2020, 2018, 2016, 2014

District 10 (Canyon County)

House Seat B: **Greg Chaney**, Caldwell
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award Recipient 2020, 2018, 2016

District 12 (Canyon County)

Senate Seat: **Todd Lakey**, Nampa

District 13 (Canyon County)

Senate Seat: **Jeff Agenbrood**, Nampa
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House Seat A: **Brent Crane**, Nampa
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award Recipient 2020, 2018, 2014

District 14 (Ada County)

House Seat A: **Mike Moyle**, Star
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District 15 (Ada County)

House Seat A: **Patrick McDonald**, Boise
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District 20 (Ada County)

Senate Seat: **Chuck Winder**, Boise
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House Seat B: **James Holtzclaw**, Meridian
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District 21 (Ada County)

House Seat A: **Steven Harris**, Meridian
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District 22 (Ada County)

Senate Seat: **Lori Den Hartog**, Meridian
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award Recipient 2018, 2016

District 23 (Owyhee, Elmore, Twin Falls counties)

House Seat B: **Megan Blanksma**, Hammett
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award Recipient 2020, 2018

District 24 (Twin Falls County)

Senate Seat: **Lee Heider**, Twin Falls
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House Seat A: **Lance Clow**, Twin Falls
House Seat B: **Linda Wright Hartgen**, Twin Falls

District 25 (Jerome, Twin Falls)

Senate Seat: **Jim Patrick**, Twin Falls
House Seat A: **Laurie Lickley**, Jerome
House Seat B: **Clark Kauffman**, Filer

District 27 (Minidoka and Cassia counties)

Senate Seat: **Kelly Arthur Anthon**, Burley
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award Recipient 2020
House Seat A: **Scott Bedke**, Oakley
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award Recipient 2020, 2018, 2016, 2014, 2012
House Seat B: **Fred Wood**, Burley

District 28 (Bannock and Power counties)

Senate Seat: **Jim Guthrie**, McCammon
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award Recipient 2018, 2014, 2012
House Seat A: **Randy Armstrong**, Inkom
House Seat B: **Kevin Andrus**, Lava Hot Springs
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District 29 (Bannock County)

House Seat A: **Dustin Manwaring**, Pocatello

District 30 (Bonneville County)

House Seat A: **Gary Marshall**, Idaho Falls
House Seat B: **Wendy Horman**, Idaho Falls
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Senate Seat: **Steve Bair**, Blackfoot
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Senate Seat: **Mark Harris**, Soda Springs
IFBF Friend of Agriculture Award Recipient 2020, 2018
House Seat A: **Marc Gibbs**, Grace
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District 33 (Bonneville County)

Senate Seat: **Dave Lent**, Idaho Falls
House Seat A: **Barbara Ehardt**, Idaho Falls
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Word Search

State Parks in Idaho

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

Bogus Basin

Bruneau Dunes

Dworshak

Eagle Island

Farragut

Harriman

Henrys Lake

Heyburn

Horsethief Reservoir

Indian Rocks

Lewis-Clark Canoe Camp

Malad Gorge

Massacre Rocks

Mowry

North Beach

Old Mission

Ponderosa

Round Lake

Three Island Crossing

Three Island

Winchester

Mary Minerva

McCroskey Memorial

Priest Lake State Park Indian Creek Unit

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Above left: Thomas Lariviere (left) with his Farm Bureau Insurance agent, Kendon Perry.



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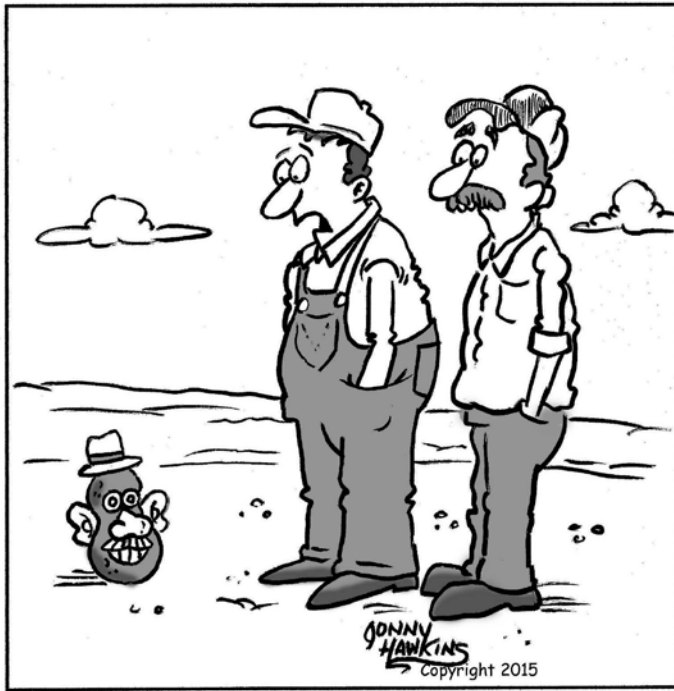
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Country Chuckles

By Jonny Hawkins



“Our potato crop is really weird this year.”



Ewetopia



“I’m manic-depressive. I laugh so hard I shoot milk through my nose and then I cry over it.”

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Farm Bureau employees donate \$52,000 for coronavirus relief

By John O'Connell
Idaho State Journal

POCATELLO — Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company of Idaho and its statewide workforce raised nearly \$52,000 in one week to help businesses and individuals struggling due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Todd Argall, executive vice president and CEO of the insurance company, challenged his workers in an email sent on March 24 to donate to help their communities or have funds withheld from their paychecks.

He pledged the company would evenly match their contributions of up to \$5,000 for each team. The teams include the Pocatello main office, Eastern Idaho, Magic Valley, Treasure Valley and Northern Idaho.

The fundraiser had reached about \$52,000 by the following Tuesday. LeAnn Nelson, assistant to Argall, said the insurance company also matched contributions from some Idaho Farm Bureau Federation employees, and the federation's Idaho Young Farmers and



Todd Argall

Ranchers Association made a generous contribution.

Nelson said the insurance company's agents and their staffs also participated.

Nelson said members of each team are voting on which causes they'll support with their contributions, and some teams may opt to support more than one cause.

She said the Pocatello office, for example, is leaning toward buying gift cards from local businesses that have lost revenue due to the outbreak in order to give the cards away to local health care workers and others who are responding to the outbreak.

On March 25, Gov. Brad Little issued an order for people to stay at home, except for essential trips, and for businesses deemed to be nonessential to close. Restaurants have been allowed to remain open for carry-out or deliveries only. Statewide unemployment claims have increased at record levels.

Nelson said the Pocatello team well exceeded its goal, raising more than \$11,000.

Nelson said employees had the option of having their contributions deducted over the course of up to four pay periods.

"A lot did \$100. Two employees donated \$1,000 (each). It amazed me," Nelson said.

Nelson said the Northern Idaho team has expressed interest in supporting a local food bank. Another team is looking into devising a way to help out-of-work waiters and waitresses. ■

POTATOES

Continued from page 22

One thing the coronavirus outbreak has shut down is the IPC's famous Big Idaho Potato Truck. After visiting a charter school in Idaho earlier this month, the truck, carrying a gigantic "potato," headed to Florida for the first stop of its 2020 tour of America.

But once it became apparent how widespread the outbreak was, the Idaho Potato Commission quickly decided to pull the truck, and the Tater Team that drives, operates and promotes it, back to Idaho.

The truck normally moves from town to town, every day, and the commission did not want to risk spreading the virus to the public or the Tater Team, Muir said.

"The news just kept breaking and breaking," he said, adding it didn't take long for IPC commissioners to decide to halt the 2020 tour. "It's been brought home temporarily until we consider it safe to be back on the road. It was absolutely the responsible thing to do."

"For the safety and health of everyone, including our team, we felt it was necessary to pull it back home," Blanksma said.

Although the correct and socially re-

sponsible thing to do, stopping the tour "is kind of disappointing, but so is everything else right now," Hardy said.

In an off-the-beat type of way, Idaho potatoes are also helping keep people safe from the coronavirus.

According to a report by a local CBS news station, Koenig Distillery in Caldwell, which produces vodka from Idaho potatoes, has instead started turning the spuds into hand sanitizer at the request of a local hospital.

"Whether it's cleaning your hands or filling your belly, Idaho potatoes are good for you," Muir said. ■



A log scaler can get log diameter and length to determine volume, usually in board feet.

Photo by Chris Schnepf

How much wood is in my tree(s)?

Tree log volume simplified

By Randy Brooks
University of Idaho

Most of us have heard the term “cord of wood” when buying firewood, but what does that really mean?

When describing the amount of wood in a tree, the term “volume” is used. Tree volume describes the quantity of wood in an individual tree, or a group of trees on an acre basis, or in a section of forest.

Just as peppers are sold by the peck and milk by the gallon, wood is typically bought or sold by the volume. Volume is expressed in board feet, cubic feet, cubic meters, cords, or by weight, depending on the products derived from the trees.

Throughout the United States, lumber volume is expressed in board feet. A board foot measures 1 inch x 12 inches x 12 inches or 144 cubic inches. The formula for determining lumber volume in board feet is:

Board feet = Width (in inches) x Thickness (in inches) x Length (in feet)

When a tree is standing, the board foot gross volume is estimated using tree height and diameter. Tree diameters are measured at breast height (termed diameter at breast height, or DBH) which is 4.5 feet above ground on the uphill side of the tree.

Tree diameters can be measured with a tree diameter tape (D-tape, Figure 2), a tree caliper, a Biltmore stick, or a measur-



ing tape.

A D-tape, Biltmore stick, or tree calipers directly measure diameters in inches, and can be purchased through equipment supply companies. A measuring tape (that is flexible) can be used to measure tree circumference (at breast height) and then divided by 3.14 to determine diameter.

Tree height can be measured with a number of special instruments designed specifically for tree height measurements such as clinometers (most common), relascopes, hypsometers, or altimeters. These instruments are available through forestry equipment supply companies.

Clinometers (Fig. 1) have two scales that can be easily read, a topographic scale and a percent scale. The topographic scale requires a fixed distance of 1 chain (66 feet). At this distance away from the tree, the number read on the clinometers equals tree height in feet. The percent scale allows tree height to be measured from any distance, and then the distance multiplied by the percent value on the scale to obtain height.

These standing tree measurements estimate the tree volume. One can enter tree height and diameter measurements into a formula, or the easiest method is to compare height and diameter values on a table called “log rules” that estimates the tree volume.

Since the first sawmill was built in the U.S., over 100 log rules have been developed, using a variety of methods. Some were based on lumber tallies of individual mills, others were developed by diagramming the cross-section of boards in the ends of logs, while still others were developed using mathematical formulas.

In general, log rules must account for the taper that exists in all logs, saw kerf (or the loss of wood as sawdust), and a fixed procedure for removing wood on the outside of the logs for slabs. The Doyle, Scribner, and International log rules are the most widely used rules in the United States.

The rule used in Idaho is the Scribner Log Rule (see Table 1). The Scribner Log Rule, developed around 1846, is a good example of a diagram rule. It was



Photo by Randy Brooks

This is a log scaling stick. This log is a little over 10 inches in diameter.

Table 1. Douglas-Fir - Scribner Board Foot Volume.

DBH	Total Tree Height (ft)							
	040	050	060	070	080	090	100	110
10	15	25	35	45	55	65	75	85
12	32	47	61	76	90	105	119	134
14	53	73	93	112	132	152	171	191
16	77	103	129	154	180	206	231	257
18	105	137	170	202	235	267	300	332
20	135	175	215	256	296	336	376	416
22	186	235	284	333	382	431	480	529
24	223	282	340	398	456	515	573	631
26	264	332	401	469	537	606	674	742
28	308	387	466	545	625	704	783	862
30	354	445	536	627	718	809	900	991

created by drawing the cross-sections of 1-inch boards within circles representing the end view of logs.

A space of 1/4 inch was left between the boards to account for saw kerf. The Scribner Rule does not have an allowance for log taper and typically underestimates logs, particularly if the log length is long.

The Scribner Decimal C is a different form of the Scribner Rule; it rounds the

volumes to the nearest 10 board feet. For example, 392 board feet on the Scribner is equivalent to 390 board feet on the Scribner Decimal C scale.

Once the diameter at breast height and total height of the tree has been measured, the volume tables can be used (they are species dependent) to determine gross volume.

For example, you have a Douglas-Fir on your property that is 24 inches in

diameter and 90 feet tall. Using Table 1, follow the left column under DBH until you find 24. Then go to the point where the 24 intersects with the nearest height (90 ft in this case).

At this point of intersection, you find that there are 515 board feet (Scribner) in that particular tree. Volume tables exist for all commercial timber species.

When using volume tables, it is important to remember that only the portion of the tree that will produce a useable product should be measured. Those portions of the trunk or bole that are hollow, excessively crooked, rotten, etc., should not be measured, since boards cannot be cut from the unusable portion.

You may hear foresters or log buyers talk about gross and net volume. Gross volume is the estimated tree volume without deduct for defects (i.e. the DBH and merchantable heights were measured ignoring defects when volumes were determined). Net volume is the estimated tree volume with proper deductions made for defects.

If you sell trees for something other than lumber, the common measure is typically in cords. A “standard cord” is a stack of wood measuring 4 feet by 8 feet by 8 feet and contains 128 cubic feet. Cords describe wood sold for pulp, firewood, or chips.

A “face cord” or “rick” is a common measure for selling firewood and measures 4 feet by 8 feet, but the length of the sticks will vary, for example, from 12 to 18 inches. Weight is an easy measure if you have access to scales.

Your local Cooperative Extension office will likely have access to publications on how to measure an individual tree to estimate its volume.

Your local Idaho Department of Lands service forester can help you get started on this process and will also have access to publications and volume tables.

There are private consulting foresters with extensive experience who can give you volume estimates of your forest.

Although you will pay for this service, you will have a reliable estimate not only of volume, but also of the market value, since foresters operate in the timber market all the time.



Figure 1. Using a clinometer to measure tree height. Note scale on the dial.



Figure 2. A diameter tape converts tree circumference to diameter in inches. This tree is 21.5 inches in diameter.

To download a self-extracting file of a volume table generator from the U.S. Forest Service, see: <http://www.fs.fed.us/fmnc/measure/volume/tablegenerator/index.php>

For information and rules on Idaho’s

Board of Scaling Practices, visit the following website: <http://www.ibsp.idaho.gov>

Randy Brooks is a University of Idaho Extension forestry specialist. ■

Word Search Answers

State Parks in Idaho

S	T	A	O	P	R	B	M	E	K	A	L	D	N	U	O	R	P	M	S
K	M	C	C	R	O	S	K	E	Y	M	E	M	O	R	I	A	L	A	B
P	M	A	C	E	O	N	A	C	K	R	A	L	C	S	I	W	E	L	R
R	P	O	S	F	G	L	H	F	K	L	S	P	N	W	E	I	A	A	U
I	N	M	W	S	N	H	D	G	A	K	F	L	R	K	L	N	G	D	N
E	D	O	L	R	A	I	K	M	C	R	P	R	A	W	N	C	L	G	E
S	W	P	R	S	Y	C	S	O	I	D	R	L	H	F	S	H	E	O	A
T	O	S	F	T	K	N	R	A	L	S	X	A	R	Y	P	E	I	R	U
L	R	P	K	D	H	N	R	E	B	Y	S	L	G	K	G	S	S	G	D
A	S	G	S	W	A	B	T	U	R	S	Y	I	R	U	P	T	L	E	U
K	H	P	C	I	B	M	E	N	B	Q	U	M	Q	K	T	E	A	W	N
E	A	B	D	R	S	N	E	A	L	Y	C	G	P	N	L	R	N	R	E
C	K	N	F	K	G	H	D	S	C	L	E	K	Q	P	W	M	D	C	S
M	I	P	N	A	M	I	R	R	A	H	T	H	S	B	F	H	W	L	P
S	G	N	I	S	S	O	R	C	D	N	A	L	S	I	E	E	R	H	T
P	O	N	D	E	R	O	S	A	T	H	R	E	E	I	S	L	A	N	D
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Rancher's customized water trough systems satisfy thirsty cows on remote pastures

By Dianna Troyer

For Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

Knowing how cows think, southeast Idaho rancher Jed Heaton designs water trough systems for them in remote pastures in Idaho and surrounding states.

Frustrated with constantly hauling water to his thirsty cows, Heaton brainstormed about ways to eliminate the tedious chore. With massive tire troughs, high density polyethylene pipe, valves, and floats, he installed a permanent watering system on his ranch south of Malta, Idaho, near the Utah border.

"Through word-of-mouth, we started helping other ranchers develop springs and ponds into permanent watering systems," said Heaton, who started his unplanned business, Range Water Solutions and Supplies, in 2001.

Since then, he and his crew have installed watering systems in Idaho, Utah, Nevada, Wyoming, and Oregon. He often works in conjunction with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and other grazing improvement programs, using the NRCS' range improvement guidelines.

"We never thought it would get this big because we don't advertise," Heaton said of the family-owned company, nicknamed Thirstycows.com by his son Tykus.

Depending on weather, he installs systems from April until December.

One of his biggest jobs was in northeastern Utah near Randolph, so ranchers would have a reliable water source for their cattle.

"We laid 50,000 feet of 3-inch main line pipe and grouped 20 tire troughs together, in sets of three, with a float controlling them, so they fill level," he said.

On some jobs, he has installed as many as six level troughs on one float in one location, so the float controls storage of 9,600 gallons of water.

His wife, Meshia, does the bookkeeping.

"People tell me they like Jed's work because he knows how a cow thinks and can recommend the best place to put the



Photo by Dianna Troyer

Jed Heaton fixes webbing on his equipment during the off-season, so he is ready to install water trough systems for cattle in remote pastures.

troughs or ponds and how to configure the pipes," Meshia said. "Plus, he has a reputation for doing a quick and quality job."

He uses high density polyethylene pipe that can be fused together at joints with a McElroy welder.

"That joint is amazingly strong," he said. "You can beat on it, and it won't break."

The circular troughs he installs are durable, too, because they are made from tires that were used on massive gold mining equipment in Nevada but can no longer be used due to wear. The tires are about 12 feet tall and 5 feet thick.

"We get them and cut them in half, so they're about 27 inches tall," he said. "They're great because unlike metal troughs they won't rust, dent, or spring a leak. When we put them in, we laser level the ground, so water is level in the trough."

Due to his work volume, Heaton buys semi-truck loads of pipe and other supplies to last the season. If ranchers want to install



Photo by Dianna Troyer

Tykus and his sister Braylee often fuse two pieces of a hard plastic pipe together on a job site.

their own systems, he gives advice and sells them what they need.

"These systems will last for a long time with little maintenance," he said. ■



Photo by Sean Ellis

Farm-level prices for milk and other agricultural commodities have been negatively impacted by the coronavirus outbreak.

Coronavirus outbreak roils farm commodity prices

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – The coronavirus outbreak has had a major negative impact on farm commodity prices.

The futures markets – futures prices are the markets’ expectations of what a commodity’s value will be at a specific

future point – for some major agricultural commodities have taken a beating recently.

“Some commodities have seen their prices tank just because of all the uncertainty right now,” said University of Idaho Agricultural Economist Ben Eborn. “Things are super volatile right now. Everyone is trying to figure out

what’s going to happen.”

According to a recent Market Snapshot by Northwest Farm Credit Services, during the first quarter of 2020, “agricultural industries ... navigated volatile economic conditions caused largely by the coronavirus pandemic.”

Dairy is Idaho’s top farm commodity in terms of farm cash receipts – the



Photo by Sean Ellis

Potatoes are harvested in a southeast Idaho field in 2019. Farm-level prices for many agricultural commodities, including potatoes, have been negatively impacted by the coronavirus outbreak.

revenue a farmer or livestock producer receives for their product – and it has been one of the hardest-hit commodities.

Most of Idaho’s milk is Class III milk, which is used to produce cheese, and May futures prices for Class III milk have fallen to about \$12.50 per hundred-weight (cwt), which is almost \$5 per cwt less than it was before the coronavirus outbreak hit the U.S.

“We’re facing milk prices that could be equivalent to what we saw in 2009,” said Idaho Dairywomen’s Association Executive Director Rick Naerebout.

The U.S. and Idaho dairy industry were slammed hard in 2009 by depressed milk prices that reached as low as the \$10 per cwt range.

If things don’t turn around soon and milk prices do sink near 2009 levels, “You’re going to see cows go to beef,” Naerebout said. “Things are so severe that if we do see those types of prices, the response is going to be increased culling rates.”

“Commodity futures markets were roiled by the near zeroing out of demand that came with school, restaurant and bar closures, reduced demand for gasoline and ethanol, and projections for negative economic growth across the entire U.S. economy,” AFBF Economist John Newton wrote in an April 7 Market Intel report.

As an example, he pointed out that the May futures price for corn has fallen 15 percent since Jan. 14 and June live cattle futures prices have decreased by more than 30 percent.

“It’s been pretty volatile,” said Idaho Cattle Association Executive Vice President Cameron Mulrony. “It’s going to impact the (cattle) industry. Exactly to what extent we won’t know until this is over.”

Beef cattle is Idaho’s No. 2 farm commodity in terms of farm cash receipts.

The fallout from the coronavirus response has begun to drag down what were until very recently good potato prices. Surging demand for fresh potatoes at the retail level has not been enough to offset a screeching halt to demand for potatoes and potato products at restaurants and other foodservice channels.

Potatoes are Idaho’s No. 3 farm commodity and the state’s top crop in terms of cash receipts.

The drop-off in demand for potato products through foodservice channels has Idaho Potato Commission employees basically working around the clock to try to address the issue, said IPC President and CEO Frank Muir.

That includes working with shippers, retailers and foodservice customers to

redirect a large amount of potatoes from foodservice to retail, Muir said.

That effort has included getting grocery stores to include larger displays of potatoes and also offer larger sized bags of potatoes.

Potatoes are typically bought in grocery stores in 5- to 10-pound bags but the IPC launched a bin promotion program to encourage retailers to bring in 1,000-pound bins offering jumbo sized potatoes in 10-, 15- and 20-pound bags.

That has helped move some of the jumbo sized potatoes that would normally be sold in restaurants and through other foodservice channels.

The IPC is also sending out a weekly industry situation update that provides a snapshot of what is happening in the industry and what the potato commission is doing to try to help.

The commission is also using online ads targeted toward foodservice customers to direct them to the IPC website where they can find creative menu ideas that could benefit restaurants that are limited to only drive-through and curbside pickup options right now.

“We’re doing our best to help mitigate the problems caused by this constant change of what’s being demanded,” Muir said. “We are basically all guns blazing to try to address this problem.” ■



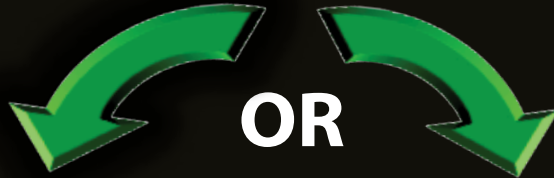
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