

GEM STATE **Producer**

 Idaho Farm Bureau[®]

July 2019 • Volume 23 Issue 5

Idaho Wine & Cheese

**\$16 billion in
'trade aid,' 10**

**Miniature
potato
home, 14**

**Wolf video
series, 18**

Leading ways your membership dollars are working for you



Farm and ranch families know how to stretch every dollar, and we take that same care here at Farm Bureau with every dollar that comes our way.

We want you all to get the best value from your membership.

Everywhere I go, I ask folks — from FFA and 4-H kids to long-time farmers — if they're members because I believe my Farm Bureau membership dues were one of the best investments I made as a young farmer and still are today.

For nearly a century now, the American Farm

Bureau Federation has been the leading general farm organization. While we've upgraded our way of doing things to meet the times, our values haven't changed, and the value we bring to your Farm Bureau membership has only grown.

1. A united voice in Washington

Thanks to the membership dollars your states send to support our national organization, we all share in a united voice in Washington, D.C. From the Capitol to the White House, we are able to

See **DUVALL**, page 7

The President's Desk

By Bryan Searle

President Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

Keeping trade challenges, 'retaliatory' tariffs in perspective



Over the past few months, farmers in many parts of Idaho have had plenty to worry about from a weather standpoint.

First, many parts of Idaho received record or near-record amounts of rain this spring. For a while, it seemed to rain every day, providing a very small planting window and precious little time to cultivate and spray fields.

Then, during the second week of June, the temperature dropped to below freezing.

You don't sleep well when the weather report says it's going to be 31 degrees and you have five-

inch potato plants in the field and your grain is at a critical stage.

Then the temperature dipped below even the predicted 31-degree low and caused damage that will only truly be felt and known once the harvest takes place. There will be a reduction in production because of that event and hopefully less production can bring an increase in the prices we receive for our crops, making for a profitable year.

The same can happen to American farmers and ranchers when it comes to the current trade

See **SEARLE**, page 6

Inside Farm Bureau

By Rick Keller

CEO Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

An update on the 2015 WOTUS rule



The Clean Water Rule is a 2015 regulation published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to clarify water resource management in the United States.

It is also referred to as the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule.

Although the intent of the rule was to clarify, it did anything but clarify. It created and put far-reaching land management decisions into the faceless hands of a daunting federal bureaucracy.

In 2015, the state of Idaho joined with 10 other

states and petitioned a federal court in North Dakota for an exemption from the implementation of the onerous rule.

The court granted that exemption to Idaho and the other states participating in the decision. Since that time, federal courts have blocked a total of 28 states from enforcement of the rule. However, WOTUS remains in effect for the other 22.

After years of litigation, a federal court late last month reached a final decision on the lawfulness of the WOTUS rule. The U.S. Court for the

See **KELLER**, page 6

President..... Bryan Searle, Shelley
Vice President..... Mark Trupp, Driggs
Executive Vice President..... Rick Keller
Assist Executive Vice President..... Justin Patten

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dan Garner..... Clifton
Austin Tubbs..... Malad
Fred Burmester..... Downey
Scott Steele..... Idaho Falls
Stephanie Mickelsen..... Idaho Falls
Travis McAfee..... Howe
Gerald Marchant..... Oakley
Rick Pearson..... Hagerman
Rick Brune..... Hazelton
Cody Chandler..... Weiser
Galen Lee..... New Plymouth
Matt Dorsey..... Caldwell
Marjorie French..... Princeton
Tom Daniel..... Bonners Ferry
Tom Mosman..... Craigmont
Judy Woody..... Filer
Kyle Wade..... Downey

STAFF

Director of Admin. Services..... Cara Dyer
Commodities & Mrkting Assist..... Melissa Nelson
Member Services Assistant..... Peggy Moore
Member Benefit Assistant..... Dixie Ashton
Assistant Treasurer..... Tyler Zollinger
Dir. of Commodities and Marketing..... Zak Miller
Dist. I Regional Manager..... Ott Clark
Dist. II Regional Manager..... Tyrel Bingham
Dist. III Regional Manager..... Zack Lanier
Dist. IV Regional Manager..... Brody Miller
Dist. V Regional Manager..... Bob Smathers
Dir. of Governmental Affairs..... Russ Hendricks
Energy/Natural Resources..... Braden Jensen
Legislative & Regulatory Counsel..... DeLon Lee
Director of Information..... Joel Benson
Publications Editor/Media Contact..... Sean Ellis
Video Services Manager..... Steve Ritter
Broadcast Services Manager..... Jake Putnam
Business Systems Administrator..... Tyler Moore

Printed by: Adams Publishing Group, Pocatello, ID

GEM STATE PRODUCER

USPS #015-024, is published monthly except February, May, August and November by the IDAHO FARM BUREAU FEDERATION, 275 Tierra Vista Drive, Pocatello, ID 83201.

POSTMASTER send changes of address to:
GEM STATE PRODUCER

P.O. Box 4848, Pocatello, ID 83205-4848.
Periodicals postage paid at Pocatello, Idaho, and additional mailing offices.
Subscription rate: \$6.00 per year included in Farm Bureau dues.

MAGAZINE CONTACTS:

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation
EDITOR (208) 239-4292 • ADS (208) 239-4279
E-MAIL: seanellis@idahofb.org
web: www.idahofb.org



Idaho Farm Bureau photo

The total value of Idaho agricultural exports during the first quarter of 2019 increased 8 percent compared with the same period in 2018. Idaho dairy product exports rose 14 percent to \$57 million during the first quarter.

Idaho ag export value up 8 percent during first quarter

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – Idaho exported \$231 million worth of agricultural products to other nations during the first three months of 2019, an 8 percent increase compared with the same period in 2018.

The 8 percent increase in ag export value during the first quarter is a good sign but it could have been even higher if not for the retaliatory tariffs some of the United States’ main trading partners have imposed on some U.S. farm products, industry leaders said.

For example, while U.S. wheat exports have increased recently they should have increased even more based on global conditions but were held down by trade challenges, said Teton grain farmer Dwight Little, president of the National Barley Growers Association.

“We should have been looking at quite a bit higher price structure for wheat than what we got,” he said.

Wheat is just one example, Little said.

“Those numbers may show an 8 percent increase (in the value of Idaho ag exports) but maybe it should have been 15 to 20 percent” if not for the trade challenges, he said.

See EXPORTS, page 8

ON THE COVER: About 55 people participated in a June 13 wine and cheese event designed to showcase both commodities and the important role they play in Idaho's economy. SEE STORY ON PAGE 30. (Photo by Sean Ellis)

Bearing fruit

University of Idaho partnership with Limagrain yielding results

By John O'Connell
Intermountain Farm and Ranch

MOSCOW — A partnership between University of Idaho and an international wheat and barley breeding company is yielding its first collaborative wheat varieties, selected for planting in the Pacific Northwest.

UI and Limagrain Cereal Seeds, which was founded in France and has its U.S. headquarters in Colorado, teamed up in 2013, three years after Limagrain entered the Pacific Northwest market.

Thus far, Limagrain has marketed several UI varieties, significantly boosting their planted acreage. Limagrain has been returning more than \$1 million per year in royalties to UI's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

UI and Limagrain have also pooled their breeding program resources to jointly develop new soft white winter wheat varieties.

"We were new to the area. We didn't have our own locations and we didn't have a lot of adapted germplasm, but what we did have was an extremely experienced team of

breeders and access to technology, including rapid breeding techniques and genetic marker platforms," said Frank Curtis, a consultant for Limagrain.

Limagrain has benefited from UI's research team, trial plots, locally adapted germplasm and facilities in Moscow and Lewiston, which supplement the company's area facility in Walla Walla, Wash.

Curtis said Limagrain and UI will both retain their own individual breeding programs, and Limagrain will continue marketing certain UI varieties. They'll share royalties from the varieties they develop together, which will be sold under the new Varsity Idaho brand.

A university committee has approved the release of the first two varieties, VI Frost and VI Bulldog.

"We'll be offering foundation seed [seed to build up the supply to support commercial sale] to local companies this year, and growers can see these two varieties in plots this summer," Curtis said.

Curtis said Frost is resistant to major diseases of wheat, including snow mold and stripe rust. It was bred with the

See **WHEAT**, page 33

“(Limagrain) has really brought the yield, genetics and the knowledge of how to identify and move a product into the market quickly.”

— Cathy Wilson, director of research collaboration
with the Idaho Wheat Commission



SEARLE

Continued from page 2

challenges and the “retaliatory” tariffs some of our major trading partners have slapped on many U.S. farm products.

Much fuss has been and is being made by the media, which seems to relish in quoting a farmer or two here and there who says these trade challenges are killing U.S. agriculture.

It’s true that these trade battles and retaliatory tariffs have caused some real pain for many U.S. farmers and ranchers but it’s not true that they are causing the sky to fall on American agriculture.

American farmers understand very well what the Trump administration is trying to accomplish by imposing tariffs on certain nations that have not always played by the rules when it comes to the trade front.

By imposing tariffs on these nations, the administration seeks to bring them to the table to negotiate better trade deals that are fairer to U.S. businesses, including farms and ranches.

For too long, some nations have played by a different set of rules that are unfair to American businesses. Farmers and ranchers understand that the administration’s game plan is to renegotiate trade deals that result in a more level playing field for American businesses.

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation policy, which was developed by real farmers and ranchers, supports strict adherence to bilateral and multi-lateral trade agreements. But IFBF policy also says that “all trade agreements should be continuously monitored and enforced to ensure they result in fair trade.”

That said, we also realize the current trade situation is

causing some real pain for many producers and that’s why we appreciate the USDA’s recent announcement it will provide up to \$16 billion in “trade aid” this year to help U.S. farmers and ranchers hurt by unjustified retaliatory tariffs on U.S. farm products.

That’s on top of the \$12 billion USDA provided last year.

According to a USDA press release, the money will help U.S. producers “while President Trump works to address long-standing market access barriers.”

On a related note, the total value of Idaho agricultural exports during the first quarter of 2019 increased by 8 percent compared with the same period in 2018. That’s a good sign.

But it’s also worth noting that leaders of the state’s farming industry said the increase would have been even greater if U.S. agriculture wasn’t facing the headwinds that these trade challenges bring.

All that American farmers and ranchers want on the trade front is a level and fair playing field because we know we can compete with anyone in the world when that’s the case.

U.S. farmers and ranchers understand and support what the president is trying to accomplish and the plan will open up more markets to U.S. agricultural products and American producers will be better off in the long run.

These trade challenges may be painful now but we believe that the U.S. as a whole will prevail in the end.

That said, we hope for a quick and successful resolution to these trade negotiations. The sooner they are resolved, the sooner American farmers and ranchers can fully get back to doing what they do best: feeding the world. ■

KELLER

Continued from page 2

Southern District of Texas ruled that the agencies violated basic requirements of fair process when they concluded the 2015 rulemaking without first releasing for comment a key report that was the basis for many of their most controversial decisions.

The American Farm Bureau Federation was part of the 17 private-sector plaintiffs challenging the decision.

AFBF General Counsel Ellen Steen praised the court’s decision: “This decision provides strong vindication for what many of us have said for years—the waters of the U.S. rule was invalid. It is time for agencies to move on to a legally sound basis for determining federal jurisdiction over waters.”

The EPA has since submitted a proposal to define which waters can be regulated by the federal government and which by state and local authorities.

Farm Bureau believes, and testified before a U.S. Senate hearing,

that this latest proposal is a vast improvement over previous efforts.

It preserves the Clean Water Act’s partnership among federal, state and local regulators. It draws clearer lines of jurisdiction that farmers and ranchers can understand without needing to hire armies of consultants and lawyers.

The EPA proposal also protects our nation’s water. By drawing clear lines between waters of the U.S. and waters of the state, the proposal strengthens the cooperative federalism Congress envisioned and that the Supreme Court has long recognized as fundamental to the Clean Water Act.

Farm Bureau supports the new proposed rule because it strikes a balance between regulatory clarity and transparency on the one hand, and the need for robust environmental protection of waters and wetlands on the other.

Farm Bureau will continue to monitor, educate, litigate and testify on this issue so that farmers and ranchers can continue farming and ranching without the burdensome overreach of government. ■

Continued from page 2

stand together on the top issues facing agriculture and make our voices heard.

We're in continual communication with the administration on the trade issues farmers and ranchers are dealing with right now, for example. We're also making progress with Congress on agricultural labor, disaster assistance, rural broadband Internet access and other issues.

Our strength is in both our numbers and our unity. Your American Farm Bureau has built a strong reputation on Capitol Hill and among other leading ag organizations, and we regularly have a seat at the table with our nation's leaders and lawmakers because of the respect the name Farm Bureau carries around town.

I love looking back at the history of our great organization and seeing how right from the beginning our forefathers and mothers were front-and-center in shaping policy to build strong farms and rural communities. And we're still working just as hard today protecting the business of farming and ranching for this generation and the next.

2. A seat at the table with leading ag businesses

At AFBF, we understand that policy isn't just shaped in government buildings but in company boardrooms around the country. Our team in Washington has built—and continues to build—strong relationships with food and agriculture companies around the country.

It's no secret that there's a lot of misinformation about agriculture, and companies face pressure from consumers responding to that misinformation. When a company takes a bold stand for safe and sustainable farming practices, we want them to know that farmers have their back.

And if a company promotes messages that get it wrong about modern farming, then we want to come alongside and provide them with the facts. We ensure we are working together across the food chain to protect the business of farming.

It's up to all of us to educate consumers on where their food comes from, and we want to support companies who stand with the farmers who grow and raise the food we all enjoy.

3. Leadership development and grassroots advocacy training

In my opinion, this one of the greatest values membership brings. I grew up in Farm Bureau, and it's hard to put a price tag on the training I received through the young farmer program or the relationships my wife, Bonnie, and I have formed over the years through Farm Bureau.

I'm so grateful for the leadership and advocacy training team we have here at AFBF, and I'm proud of each of you who

have taken advantage of these programs to take your advocacy to the next level. Advocacy and leadership are muscles that we all need to train and exercise, and when we do we help make the whole body stronger.

If you haven't already, I'd urge you to take advantage of these training programs and get involved in any and every way you can. From special advocacy trainings and boot camps here in Washington to our online Farm Bureau University, we are committed to bringing you the tools you need to lead in advocating for agriculture in your community, your state capital, and all the way to Capitol Hill.

On behalf of our whole team here at your American Farm Bureau, I want to thank you for investing together with us to strengthen our agricultural and rural communities.

I hope you will let your friends and neighbors know about the value of Farm Bureau membership, so we can continue to grow the Farm Bureau family and its influence.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me or any member of our staff, to let us know how we can serve you and your farm better. ■

IFB Idaho Farm Bureau Financial Services		◆ IDAHO PEOPLE SERVING IDAHO ◆ <i>Now with five convenient locations throughout the state</i>		
275 Tierra Vista Drive Pocatello, ID 83205 208.232.7914	4122 East Cleveland Blvd. Caldwell, ID 83605 208.455.1526	1250 S. Allante Ave. Boise, ID 83709 208.947.2519	806 E. Polston, Ste. A Post Falls, ID 83854 208.457.8018	2732 Kimberly Road Twin Falls, ID 83301 208.733.7212

Idaho Farm Bureau Financial Services is happy to announce



Auto Lending Guidelines

- ➡ **Competative Rates!**
- ➡ **Up to 100% financing available, on 2019, 2018 & 2017 model years, for qualified buyers**
- ➡ **Up to 72 month terms for 2019 model year**
- ➡ **Up to 60 month terms for 2018 and 2017 model years**
- ➡ **80% Financing available on all other model years**

To learn more or to apply, please call your nearest Idaho Farm Bureau Financial Services office at their number above or call Idaho Farm Bureau Financial Services at 1.888.566.3276.

You may also visit idfbfs.com online anytime.

Some restrictions apply based on the make and model of vehicle offered as collateral. Loans are subject to credit approval. 100% loan value based on NADA high retail, or purchase price, whichever is less. Finance charges accrue from origination date of this loan.

EXPORTS

Continued from page 3

Idaho ag export value hit a record \$1.02 billion in 2014 but decreased in 2015 and 2016 before rebounding in 2017.

The total value of Idaho exports during 2017 was \$829 million, an 11 percent increase over 2016, and the total in 2018 was \$850 million, 2 percent more than 2017, according to data provided by the Idaho State Department of Agriculture.

Idaho's total ag export value of \$231 million during the first quarter of 2019 was up from \$214 million during the first quarter of 2018 but still below the first-quarter total of \$300 million during the record year in 2014.

Idaho's farming industry is heavily dependent on export markets and the retaliatory tariffs have posed challenges for Idaho's agricultural industry, said Laura Johnson, who manages ISDA's market development division.

"But fortunately, there are a lot of other markets out there that have helped us," she said.

During the first quarter, Idaho exported \$57 million worth of dairy products, a 14 percent increase over the same period in 2018, and dairy accounted for 24 percent of Idaho's total ag export value during the first three months of this year.

Idaho Dairymen's Association Executive Director Rick Naerebout said the increase in Idaho dairy exports is a welcome development but added the number could

be much higher if not for the current trade challenges.

Idaho's dairy operators in the past few years have struggled with low prices below the break-even level in many cases.

"It's good to see that increase but that number could be even better and that would bring us closer to getting our dairymen ... back to making some money again," he said.

The Gem State also exported \$47

"It's good to see that increase but that number could be even better and that would bring us closer to getting our dairymen ... back to making some money again."

— Rick Naerebout Idaho Dairymen's Association Executive Director

million worth of ag products listed under the "edible vegetables" category, a 4 percent increase over 2018. That category includes, in order of highest export value, legumes, fresh potatoes, onions and frozen vegetables not including French fries.

Idaho exported \$27 million worth of oilseeds during the first quarter, down 10 percent from 2018, and \$26 million worth of ag products listed under the "milling, malt and starch" category, a 31 percent increase compared with the first quarter of last year.

The state exported \$16 million of ag products listed under the "prepared

vegetable" category, 13 percent more than 2018, and 96 percent of that category was French fries.

Almost \$9 million worth of live animals from Idaho were exported during the first quarter of 2019, a 57 percent increase over 2018. Most of those sales were to Canada. That category lists the animals as bovines but doesn't say whether they were dairy or beef cattle.

According to the ISDA data, Idaho exported \$67 million worth of ag products to Canada during the first quarter, 5 percent less than 2018, and that nation was the top destination for Idaho ag exports.

While Idaho oilseed and dairy sales to Canada decreased, fresh potato sales increased significantly, from \$613,000 during the first quarter of 2018 to \$3.4 million during the same period this year.

Idaho sold \$44 million worth of ag products to Mexico during the first quarter, up 29 percent over 2018, and \$20 million worth of ag products to South Korea, up 83 percent.

Idaho dairy product sales to South Korea during the first three months of 2018 jumped 80 percent to \$17 million.

Total Idaho ag sales to the Netherlands dropped 25 percent to \$12 million, increased 11 percent to Japan (\$12 million) and decreased 5 percent to China (\$11 million).

Idaho dairy product exports to China during the first quarter dropped 25 percent to \$5 million. ■

Top Farm Bureau Agents

Agent of the Month



Kerry Baxter,
Ada County

Region of the Month



Magic Valley Region
Scott Badger,
Regional Executive

Your crop revenue is guaranteed

COME HAIL OR NO WATER.

**ASK OUR CROP SPECIALISTS ABOUT
FEDERAL CROP INSURANCE**



www.idahofarmbureauinsurance.com



Photo by Sean Ellis

USDA will provide up to \$16 billion this year to help U.S. farmers and ranchers hurt by unjustified retaliatory tariffs that China and other trading partners have placed on American farm products.

USDA to provide \$16 billion in ‘trade aid’ to farmers in 2019

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced May 23 that USDA will provide up to \$16 billion this year to help U.S. farmers and ranchers hurt by unjustified retaliatory tariffs that China and other trading partners have placed on American farm products.

In a USDA news release, the department said President Donald Trump directed Perdue to “craft a relief strategy to help U.S. agricultural producers while the administration continues to work on free, fair and reciprocal trade deals to open more

markets in the long run to help American farmers compete globally.”

The \$16 billion total, the news release said, “is in line with the estimated impacts of unjustified retaliatory tariffs on U.S. agricultural goods and other trade disruptions. These programs will assist agricultural producers while President Trump works to address long-standing market access barriers.”

USDA last year provided \$12 billion in so-called “trade aid” to U.S. ag producers impacted by tariffs and trade disruptions.

According to USDA, the 2019 trade aid package will provide \$14.5 billion in direct payments to crop and livestock producers.

The list of eligible crops includes alfalfa hay, barley, wheat, dry peas, canola, corn lentils, oats, dried beans and chickpeas, all of which are grown in Idaho.

The payments will also go to dairy producers and dairy is Idaho's No. 1 farm commodity in terms of total farm-gate receipts.

Payments will also be made to producers of fresh sweet cherries and grapes, both of which are grown in Idaho.

"These payments will help farmers absorb some of the additional costs of managing disrupted markets, to deal with surplus commodities and to expand and develop new markets at home and abroad," the USDA news release states.

The payments will be made in up to three stages, with the first phase of payments scheduled to begin in late July or early August. If conditions warrant, a second and third stage of payments will be made in November and early January.

The 2019 trade aid package includes \$1.4 billion that will be used by the federal Agricultural Marketing Service to purchase surplus commodities affected by trade, including vegetables, fruits, beef, lamb, milk and some processed foods. This food will be distributed to food banks, schools and other outlets serving low-income people.

USDA will also provide \$100 million through the Agricultural Trade Promotion Program to assist in developing new export markets on behalf of ag producers.

According to the news release, more details regarding eligibility and payment rates will be released later.

After meeting with Trump and Perdue at the White House May 23, American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall said the administration's ag assistance program "is welcome relief to an economic sector that has been battered by foreign competitors and retaliatory tariffs. We thank the president for living up to his commitment to stand by our farmers and ranchers."

Farmers and ranchers would rather earn their income from the marketplace but they have been suffering during the agricultural downturn and trade war, Duvall added.

"This aid package will help us weather the storm as the administration works to correct unfair trade practices that have hurt the U.S. economy for too long," Duvall said.

In the USDA news release, Perdue said Trump has great affection for American farmers and ranchers "and he knows they are bearing the brunt of these trade disputes."

"The plan we are announcing today ensures farmers do not

bear the brunt of unfair retaliatory tariffs imposed by China and other trading partners," Perdue said. "Our team at USDA reflected on what worked well and gathered feedback on last year's program to make this one even stronger and more effective for farmers."

Leaders of Idaho's farming industry said their members appreciate the assistance and acknowledgment by the administration that the U.S. agricultural industry is being negatively impacted by retaliatory tariffs.

But they also said they would rather not have to be provided the assistance.

"We'd rather have trade than aid," said Scott Brown, a wheat and barley grower from Soda Springs. "A level playing field is all us American farmers want."

Brown, who serves on the Idaho Barley Commission, said farmers understand and support the administration's goal of ensuring China and other trading partners are truly

engaging in free and fair trade but they also wish they weren't bearing the brunt of the retaliation.

"Farmers support the principle and idea of what is taking place," he said. "But we also wish there could have been successful negotiations from day one. Farmers are hurting; prices are down. We understand what's happening and that things take time but sometimes our bankers don't understand that."

Idaho Dairyman's Association Executive Director Rick Naerebout said that Idaho's dairy farmers "would much rather have free trade than a payment from the government."

U.S. dairy producers received a total of 12 cents per hundred pounds of production in trade aid last year but Naerebout said the retaliatory tariffs are costing U.S. dairy operations about \$1 per hundred pounds of production.

"It was offensive that they thought (12 cents) was an acceptable amount to reimburse dairy farmers who have been stuck in a trade war that they want nothing to do with," he said. "We're hopeful that this year's amount will be meaningful but at the end of the day, it probably won't be."

U.S. wheat producers received 14 cents per bushel in trade aid in 2018 and corn producers receive 1 cent per bushel.

An AFBF analysis of last year's USDA trade aid package estimated that Idaho dairy, wheat and corn producers received a total of \$30 million in assistance.

AFBF estimated Idaho dairy producers received a total of \$17 million, the state's wheat growers received \$12.6 million and Idaho corn farmers received a total of \$320,000. ■

"The plan we are announcing today ensures farmers do not bear the brunt of unfair retaliatory tariffs imposed by China and other trading partners."

— Sonny Perdue, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture



ISDA to award \$1.8 million to specialty crop projects

By Sean Ellis
Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – The Idaho State Department of Agriculture plans to award a total of \$1.86 million this year to 13 projects designed to benefit Idaho’s specialty crop industries.

The money will be used to market, promote and conduct research for the state’s potato, cherry, onion, dry bean, wine grape and hop sectors.

For the first time, ISDA will provide specialty crop grant money to Idaho’s budding truffle industry. The newly formed Idaho Truffle Growers Association is set to receive \$111,000 for a research project aimed at establishing best practices in Idaho for growing truffles and increasing yields.

“We’re excited about this project,” said ITGA President Paul Beckman, who in 2006 became the first person in Idaho to plant trees in the hopes they will produce truffles, one of the world’s most expensive foods.

Truffles, an underground fungus that grows near tree roots, sell for hundreds to several thousand dollars a pound depending on the variety.

Since Beckman planted his first trees in the Eagle foothills, about 15 other people in southwestern Idaho have planted trees inoculated with truffle spores. There are about 150 total acres of truffle trees in Idaho’s Treasure Valley area.

Beckman found his first truffles in 2012 and has been finding about 12 pounds a year since then. However, Idaho’s truffle growers hope to figure out how to optimally grow the hard-to-figure-out crop on a more scientifically sound basis, he said.

“It’s hard to get these truffles to produce,” he said. “We hope to figure out a simple way to cause the trees to fruit and be more productive than they have in the

Idaho Farm Bureau photo

Onions are sorted at a packing facility in southwestern Idaho. Idaho’s agriculture department will award \$1.86 million to 13 projects designed to benefit the state’s specialty crop industries.



Photo by Steve Ritter

Paul Beckman searches for truffles last year in his orchard in the Eagle foothills. Idaho's agriculture department will award \$1.86 million to 13 projects designed to benefit the state's specialty crop industries. For the first time, Idaho's truffle industry received a specialty crop grant.

past. We're really trying to figure out what triggers the fungus."

ISDA awards money each year through its specialty crop block grant program, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Idaho's 2019 funding plan must still be approved by USDA and final approval is expected by September.

The program is designed to solely benefit specialty crops, which include vegetables, fruits, tree nuts, dried fruits, nursery and horticulture crops.

ISDA receive 15 applications seeking a total of \$2 million in funding this year and will fund 13 projects. The total number of applications was down from previous years.

Last year, the ag department received 20 application, in 2017 ISDA received 26 applications and in 2016, the department received 18 applications.

Since the program began in 2009, ISDA has awarded a total of \$12.9 million to 133 projects designed to benefit specialty crop farmers in Idaho.

For some specialty crop industries, such as the state's dry bean growers, the grants have enabled them to fund a significant amount of promotion, marketing or re-

search projects that they otherwise could not afford to do.

For example, the Idaho Bean Commission is set to receive \$100,000 this year for a project aimed at developing better water management and soil conservation techniques in dry bean production.

The bean commission, which has an annual budget of about \$200,000, has received several specialty crop grants over the years and that has helped it fund a lot of projects it couldn't otherwise fund, said IBC Executive Director Andi Woolf-Weiby.

"For us, this funding has been vital because we have such a small budget," she said. "The program has been a big benefit in helping us move our industry forward."

ISDA also plans to provide \$107,000 this year to the Idaho Hop Growers Association for a project designed to improve the efficiency of water use in hop production.

The hop association will also receive a \$35,000 grant to increase awareness of Idaho's fast-growing hop industry locally as well as nationally.

The Idaho Wine Commission is set to receive a \$315,000 grant to increase consumer awareness of Idaho wines, the

Idaho Cherry Commission will receive \$163,000 for a project designed to create high-density cherry orchards with the goal of reducing the cost of production, and ISDA's Idaho Preferred program will receive \$272,000 to market the state's specialty crops through advertising, social media and retail promotions.

The Idaho Potato Commission will receive a \$166,000 grant to market Idaho spuds in Taiwan and another \$114,000 grant to develop potatoes resistant to pale cyst nematode.

University of Idaho will receive a \$124,000 grant toward a project aimed at controlling pale cyst nematodes in potatoes.

ISDA will provide the Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Committee with a \$103,000 grant for a project to build awareness and increase sales of onions in domestic and international markets.

U of I will receive a \$141,000 grant for a project aimed at managing onion storage diseases and Boise State University will get a \$107,000 grant for a project designed to enhance the competitiveness of Idaho's specialty crop industry by creating a web-based site climate suitability tool. ■



HOME SWEET TATER

Photo submitted by Kristie Wolfe

Kristie Wolfe stands in front of a giant potato she converted into a miniature home available for rent on Airbnb.

Giant potato converted into miniature home

By John O'Connell

Intermountain Farm and Ranch

BOISE — Giving away the original 6-ton replica Russet Burbank that once toured the nation on the Great Big Idaho Potato Truck is paying major dividends for the Idaho Potato Commission.

Kristie Wolfe, who spent two years traveling with the iconic truck as a member of its “Tater Team,” has converted the oversized tuber into a miniature home, available for rent on Airbnb.

Media outlets and TV programs throughout the world have publicized Wolfe’s Boise-based Big Idaho Potato Hotel, which welcomed its first guests in late June and has already booked more than 100 reservations.

The IPC considered donating the spud to a museum but ultimately opted to give it to Wolfe, who made it into her fourth creative, miniature home listed on Airbnb. IPC CEO Frank Muir said that gesture is now paying off for his organization in a big way.

Since April 20, IPC has enjoyed nearly \$1 million worth of free advertising from the extensive media coverage of the unique rental home, according to an estimate by an agency

that works closely with IPC.

Muir said the potato hotel has made news in 27 countries, including Russia, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, India and Brazil.

“This is like the United Nations of potatoes,” Muir said. “That everyone would be interested in a 6-ton Idaho potato hotel is pretty cool.”

In the U.S., the spud hotel story has been picked up by the likes of The Today Show, National Public Radio, USA Today and Live with Kelly and Ryan. People Magazine included the hotel among topics such as Game of Thrones and The Avengers in its May 13 column, “Five Things that People are Talking About.”

“There are so many potato fanatics,” said Wolfe, who now lives in Boise and continues to work on the landscaping at the site. “We got one (reservation) the other day from a gal turning 26, and she was having a potato-themed party, and then she saw this.”

IPC unveiled the truck in 2012, intended to be the focal point of a year-long campaign to celebrate the organization’s 75th anniversary. But the truck proved to be so popular, IPC has organized annual U.S. treks every year since then.

Muir explained the hollow tuber was sculpted from the same



Photo submitted by Kristie Wolfe

This giant potato was converted into a miniature home available for rent on Airbnb.

material used to build indoor climbing walls. Repairing cracks in the facade became increasingly difficult over time, so the commission built a new fiberglass tuber to mount out on the truck prior to its current U.S. tour.

“Early on, Kristie approached me with the idea of turning the potato into a tiny hotel,” Muir said. “She’s built several tiny hotels, many of which have been featured in various magazines and newspapers, and she was on a TV show building tiny homes for a while. I had 100 percent confidence she could do this and do it well.”

IPC launched the 2019 Great Big Idaho Potato Truck tour in April from the site of the potato hotel, in conjunction with Earth Day. The commission also donated a metal sign to post at the hotel, offering a history of the potato and the truck, as well as background on IPC.

Wolfe explained she designed the interior to be elegant, appealing to couples. The small library inside the potato features agricultural-themed books; rather than a TV, there’s a record player, with vinyl featuring the queens of country music. At its highest point, the ceiling is 10.5 feet tall.

The bathroom is housed in a nearby grain silo and includes a heated floor, a fireplace, a two-person tub and a separate

shower. The landscaping is theme-appropriate — potato plants surrounding the silo and decorative sweet potato vines planted around the giant spud, which is surrounded by earthen berms. Furthering the farm theme, Wolfe built a 1-acre enclosure, which is home to a tame Jersey cow named Dolly.

A night’s stay costs \$200, and Wolfe has been booking reservations from people throughout the country, as well as a few guests from foreign countries. Visitors have also been stopping by routinely just to see the little potato house, or to inspect it more closely after spotting it to determine if it’s real.

In addition to the spud, Wolfe rents stays in a Hobbit House in Washington State, a treehouse in Hawaii and a converted fire lookout in Northern Idaho.

“I think (the Big Idaho Potato Hotel) will definitely be the most popular (Airbnb rental) in Idaho,” Wolfe said. “I don’t expect we’ll have any vacancies.”

The potato hotel is located in a rural setting accessed by turning south on the Boise Orchard exit. It’s just past the railroad tracks. As Muir points out, one can’t miss a giant potato.

Wolfe’s father, Frank Wolfe, is a retired Century English teacher. Both her little brother and little sister are past Century student body presidents. ■

Idaho lands Taiwanese dairy manufacturer

Idaho Department of Commerce news release

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Idaho Department of Commerce Director Tom Kealey announced June 11 that Taiwanese dairy product manufacturer and co-packer Jetton Biochemistry Co., Ltd. will locate a new blended powder facility for production of a proprietary dairy formula in southwest Idaho.

JBC will locate its facility in a commercial park in Nampa, hiring 25 local employees. The company estimates it will process close to 2.4 million pounds of dairy annually and plans to pursue opportunities to produce multiple product lines within the U.S.

“Idaho’s innovative and reliable dairy industry has made our state a consistent top-three producer of milk and cheese in the United States,” said Gov. Brad Little. “With over 600,000 dairy cows and access to more than 450 dairies, Idaho was the premier choice for JBC’s expansion. On top of that, Idaho has a successful, long-standing relationship with Taiwan. Our quality raw materials and history of international collaboration combined with the state’s stable tax and operating environment make Idaho a natural fit for JBC and other international firms looking for a new location in the United States.”

JBC’s sale of milk powder products will be enhanced by the addition of the dairy powder facility in Idaho, whose goods will be exported to consumers across Asian markets. Their decision to locate in Idaho is a result of the state’s strong relationship with



Idaho Department of Commerce photo
From left to right, William Brent Christensen, director of the American Institute in Taiwan, Idaho Department of Commerce Director Tom Kealey, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross and Idaho-Asia Trade Office Manager Eddie Yen announce June 11 in Washington, D.C., that a Taiwanese dairy product manufacturer will locate a dairy processing facility in Nampa.

Taiwan, including the efforts of Idaho’s longest-serving trade manager, Eddie Yen.

“JBC compared milk sources from Europe, Australia, New Zealand and the U.S., and finally chose Idaho milk sources,” said Rover Lin, CEO of JBC. “Our value is based on the supply chain of raw materials and the value of dairy products within that chain. Idaho’s quality and technology of milk production is consistently improving. This will be a very important asset for our products to compete internationally.”

Idaho’s dairy industry accounts for 33% of the state’s total farm cash receipts and the state’s 20 dairy processing plants export roughly 2 million pounds of milk from the state every day.

“We are very excited that Jetton Biochemistry has chosen to invest in a facility in Idaho,” said Idaho State Department of Agriculture Director Celia Gould. “Year after year, Idaho is one of the biggest dairy states in the country. The credit for that goes to our tremendous dairy sector. Their quality and volume production are what make Idaho a very attractive location for value-added dairy processing. Idaho’s dairy companies are innovative and consistently produce superior-quality ingredients that consumers trust.”

The JBC facility in Nampa will not be limited to its own brand and is scheduled to undertake additional brands, bringing more diversified products to Idaho.

“The City of Nampa is honored to have been chosen by JBC for their new location,” said Nampa Mayor Debbie Kling. “The international food manufacturing industry is a core strength of our area, which provides excellent access to a variety of resources needed to make an outstanding dairy product. We are confident the operating environment in Nampa will support their long-term success.” ■

LOW INTEREST LOANS FOR IDAHO SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION

2.75% - 3.5%
Terms 7-15 Years
Up to \$200,000

- Sprinkler Irrigation
- No-Till Drills
- Fences
- Livestock Feeding Operations
- Solar Stock Water Pump Systems



swc.idaho.gov

(208) 332-1790



My life insurance means the future is taken care of—mine, and theirs.

Life insurance is great at providing peace of mind. But it can provide so much more than that. Together, we'll develop a plan that's right for you.

Contact your local agent today!

 **FARM BUREAU
FINANCIAL SERVICES**

It's your future. Let's protect it.®

Visit fbfs.com



Photo by IRRC

The Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission has produced a five-part video series on wolves.

Idaho rangeland commission releases video series on wolves

By Royce Schwenkfelder
Cambridge rancher/IRRC chairman

It's really gratifying to see the engagement on the Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission's five-part video series on wolves, which looks at how wolves have affected our people

and our state almost 25 years after reintroduction in 1995.

As of early June, the videos had garnered more than 200,000 views and counting on YouTube. You'll find our video series at idrange.org/wildlife, the Life on the Range Facebook page, or on Life on the Range YouTube channel.

The IRRC is responsible for sharing information and edu-

‘Over time, the wolf-recovery program abandoned any strategy for trying to keep the apex predators in the Central Idaho wilderness areas – as promised – instead, allowing wolves to spread statewide.’

cation about issues of the day as they relate to Idaho’s rangelands and their use. Generally, we’ve focused on positive projects that benefit fish and wildlife, water, and sage grouse on those private and public rangelands.

But the wolf story had not been told in the level of detail that’s needed for better public understanding of what has occurred over the last 25 years. To recap some of the key points:

Thirty-five wolves were introduced by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness in 1995 as a “non-essential experimental” population.

The feds didn’t ask the Idaho Legislature for permission, but if they had, they wouldn’t have gotten it, as former State Sen. Laird Noh explains in Part 2 of our series.

Wolves reached the initial recovery goal of 10 breeding pairs in Idaho in 1998. The USFWS tried multiple times to delist wolves but was blocked by lawsuits until 2011, when Congress got wolves delisted in Idaho and Montana.

By 2011, Idaho had well over 1,000 wolves – a far cry from the 30 called for in the reintroduction plan. We’ve never recovered from that situation. Many people say Idaho Department Fish and Game needs to be more aggressive with hunting and trapping seasons. It turns out that it’s really hard to trap or hunt wolves. There are more new wolves born each year than harvested. This has been a daunting task for IDFG, which inherited this management challenge from the USFWS. The goal of the 2002 Wolf Management Plan is to maintain a minimum of 150 wolves in Idaho.

Over time, the wolf-recovery program abandoned any strategy for trying to keep the apex predators in the Central Idaho wilderness areas – as promised – instead, allowing wolves to spread statewide, mostly north of Interstate 84. Now there are more wolves and elk in the ag-wildland interface than ever before, and that’s why cattle and sheep ranchers are seeing record numbers of livestock predation.

Since 1995, wolves in Idaho have killed more than 982 cattle, 3,150 sheep, and 53 guard dogs, causing \$1.6 million in damages and impacting 435 ranchers statewide. Smaller numbers of llamas, border collies, horses, goats and other animals have been killed by wolves as well. Federal officials in 1995 predicted that wolves would kill 10 cattle, 57 sheep and up to

1,650 big-game animals per year.

Part 4 of our series details the unforeseen impacts of wolves that few expected or anticipated – things like cattle tormented by wolves attacking herding dogs to the point where the dogs are useless to move the cattle; lighter calves and lambs coming off the range, affecting ranchers’ profits; stressed cattle contracting PTSD-like behavior, again affecting their ability to graze and put on crucial pounds; wolves killing mother cows and leaving no outward sign of trauma; elk hanging out in ranchers’ private land meadows as a safe zone from wolves; and higher percentages of calves and lambs getting killed on public and mostly private lands in wolf country.

The genie is out of the bottle and wolves are here to stay. But looking back at the history and intent of the wolf-recovery program, we are reminded how it has totally lost its bearings.

It was an unfunded mandate forced on Idaho by the federal government, and all of the negative impacts are hitting rural people, ranchers, hunters and outfitters, with no end in sight. Eventually, wolves will cause problems near our urban communities, picking off a stray cat, a pet dog or worse – similar to what has happened with coyotes and mountain lions.

We respect what pro-wolf ranchers have done with non-lethal livestock management in Blaine County and in the Pahsimeroi Valley. We all can learn from their experience.

But the broader answer, it seems to us, is that we should work toward a wolf population that mainly resides in the Central Idaho wilderness areas. We have almost 4 million acres of designated wilderness in Central Idaho, plus another 9 million acres of de facto wilderness – or 13 million acres of backcountry – where wolves could live in a more sustainable way.

If they remain in large numbers, hovering near private ranch meadows in the ag-wildland interface, they are bound to get in trouble over and over again, costing everyone money, and harming rural people and the rural Idaho economy.

Let’s work toward a wild wolf population that lives in the wilderness, where it should.

Royce Schwenkfelder and his family operate SS Cattle Co. near Cambridge. He is chairman of the Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission. ■

Idaho Farm Bureau

www.idahofbstore.com

THEME PARKS



RENTAL CARS



OIL CHANGE



TIRES



HOTELS



WINTER SKIING



INSURANCE



SUPPLIES



PROPANE



MOVIE TICKETS



HEALTH / MEDICAL



VEHICLES



AGRICULTURE



MACHINERY



TRANSPORT



SPORTS



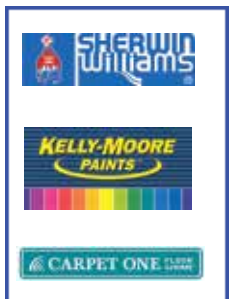
IDENTIFY THEFT



SMART HOME TECHNOLOGY



HOUSEHOLD



SOLAR



NOTARY



FINANCIAL



FOOD STORAGE



SEED



Member Benefits

(208) 239-4279

NORTH IDAHO



CENTRAL IDAHO



EASTERN IDAHO



SOUTHWESTERN IDAHO



SOUTHCENTRAL IDAHO





Photo by Joseph O'Brien, U.S. Forest Service

Different types of lichens growing on a dead branch.

LIKING THE LICHENS

By Yvonne Barkley

University of Idaho Extension

Lichens. Anyone that has ever walked in a forest or rocky alpine region has seen them — multi-colored splashes clinging to rocks and trunks of trees, gray-green cascades swaying from branches, bursts of color and fantastic shapes growing everywhere.

Lichens are ancient organisms, with the oldest recorded lichen fossil dating to around 400 million years ago.

This huge group of diverse organisms occupies almost every habitat on earth and is the dominant vegetation in approximately 8 percent of terrestrial ecosystems. Of the 14,000 species of known lichens, 3,600 of them occur in North America.

Most lichens are temperate or arctic, though

there are many tropical and desert species.

Lichens will colonize almost any stable and reasonable well-lit surface. Trees, as well as the surfaces of wood, rock, soil, leaves, bone, antlers, and even abandoned cars (if left undisturbed long enough) all provide places for lichens to colonize and thrive.

Lichens that grow on plants are epiphytes, which are organisms that grow on other plants, attaching themselves by roots, rhizomes, or fungal strands. Epiphytes are not parasitic and do not harm or feed on the plants they are perched on — instead, they use these plants as platforms to grow on.

Lichens are currently classified in Kingdom Fungi but are made up of two, and sometimes three, different organisms that form a symbiotic relationship for their mutual benefit and survival. The dominant member is an ascomy-



cetous fungus (Kingdom Fungi). Inside this visible part of the lichen are cells of an alga (Kingdom Protista) or a cyanobacterium, once known as blue-green algae (Kingdom Eubacteria), or both.

Each member of these symbiotic organisms plays a crucial role. Algae and cyanobacteria (photobionts) are photosynthetic and supply the fungus with carbohydrates and vitamins, while the fungus (mycobiont) extracts necessary water and minerals from the air and colonized surfaces.

The components of a lichen can be separated and grown apart in a lab, but when married, form a new association that is long-lived and unlike any of the single components in structure or form.

Lichens reproduce vegetatively. Pieces containing both the fungus and algae and/or cyanobacteria (called propagules) are blown in the wind or carried by water and establish new colonies on all but the smoothest surfaces. Because of this, lichens are often referred to as “nature’s pioneers.”

Filaments from the fungal component of the lichen surround and grow into the algal cells, providing most of the lichen’s physical bulk and shape.

Lichens vary tremendously in size, shape, and color. Some are familiar, such as lace lichen that grows on many trees in the Northwest. Some are many meters in length while others are less than a millimeter tall.

They can stand erect and look like little shrubs, drape gracefully from tree limbs, or lie flat, looking like little more than a black spot on a rock. They transverse the color spectrum, from brilliant yellows, reds, and greens to barely noticeable grays and whites.

Lichens are self-sufficient and can withstand long periods of drought by taking minerals and water needed for survival from dust and available moisture. Lichens not just dehydrate, but completely dry up when moisture is unavailable, becoming brittle. Once moisture becomes available, they fully hydrate to their former state.

People have long used lichens in many ways. Horsehair lichens have been eaten by the native people of the Interior Northwest and are listed as a favorite food of the Interior Salish of the Okanagan-Colville language group.

Fibrous lichens have been incorporated into clothing and many species of lichens are



Lace lichen.

Photo by David Stephens, Bugwood.org

used throughout the world to make beautiful dyes while others are used ornamentally.

Lichens are used as ingredients in personal products such as perfumes and can be found in many commercial deodorants and toothpaste products. Lichens are known to be antibacterial, antifungal, and antiviral, and show antioxidant and antitumor activity and over the centuries, many cultures have used lichens as medicines and poisons.

Contrary to what some people think, lichens do not injure trees. Forests benefit greatly from lichens as rainfall and fog passes through forest canopies. Resident lichens intercept and absorb nutrients that leach down to forest soils below and increase humidity by absorbing moisture during precipitation events and releasing it afterwards.

Lichens are also able to fix nitrogen. Atmospheric nitrogen cannot be used by plants for growth nor are useable forms of nitrogen abundant in native minerals or soils. Nitrogen fixation is the domain of a small group of bacteria and cyanobacteria that can convert atmospheric nitrogen into nitrates or ammonium compounds that are available to plants for growth.

Nitrogen fixed by lichens becomes available to surrounding plants when the lichens die and decay, or when nitrogen compounds leach from living lichens. In addition, lichens growing on rocks have been found to release chemicals that speed

up the process of decomposition and the production of new soils.

Lichens are high in carbohydrates and many animals, from mites to musk oxen, use them for food or shelter. Some birds and small mammals such as squirrels use lichens to build and line nests and many small mammals live in nicely camouflaged, lichen covered habitats.

Lichens make up 90 percent of the winter diet of caribou and reindeer, and white-tail and mule deer, moose, elk, mountain goats, and pronghorn antelope all include lichens in their diets.

As a group, lichens prefer unpolluted landscapes and are now being used as early warning systems to detect declining air quality and as indicators of ancient forests. To quote Irwin M. Brodo, one of the authors of *Lichens of North America*, “To find them in abundance is to find a corner of the universe where the environment is still pure and unspoiled.”

This fascinating group of symbiotic organisms we call lichens are not only elegant and interesting, but important and useful to humans, plants, and animals in so many ways.

From food to fiber and dyes, promising medicines, nitrogen-fixers, and as early warning systems for ecosystem degradation, it is safe to say that there is much to like about lichens. ■



\$1 million problem

Photo by Bill Schaefer

Don McFarland stands in a field at his Little Camas Ranch where a herd of elk damaged his organic grain crop. One of his organic potato fields, visible in the background, also suffered crop damage from the elk during the 2018 season.

Elk cause major problems for organic spud farm

By Bill Schaefer

For Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

Who knew that elk would have an insatiable appetite for Idaho's famous potatoes?

Growing potatoes is a tough enough occupation in Idaho without the additional interference of up to 500 head of elk grazing on your spud fields and compacting the soil in the process during the summer and fall.

It was an expensive lesson for Don McFarland during the 2018 growing season. Crop damage to 300 acres of organic potatoes and 800 acres of organic kamut, an ancient grain, resulted in McFarland filing a claim for \$1.03 million to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game's Expendable Big Game Depredation Account this past year.

The claim was by far the largest ever filed in the history of IDFG's depredation account. While the claim was paid in full, it resulted in new legislation being passed this year that places a cap on the amount paid on any single claim not to exceed 10 percent

of the account's annual appropriation.

McFarland's Little Camas Ranch is located in Elmore County, above the Anderson Ranch Reservoir's southeast side, just past the Little Camas Reservoir, with the Trinity Mountain Range to the north and the Soldier Mountain Range to the northeast, at an elevation of 5,000 feet.

When McFarland bought the 3,885-acre homestead in 1996, it was a dryland grain farm with 400 irrigated acres. Since then, he has drilled a number of wells to provide irrigation for 2,817 acres.

McFarland, who had been growing conventional potatoes since the early 1960s, decided seven years ago to convert the Little Camas Ranch into an organic farm, concentrating on growing organic spuds, grain and alfalfa.

"We started with five acres, just as a trial, and we increased to 15 and then 50 and now the whole farm is organic," he said.

In August 2018, McFarland signed an agreement with Wada Farms, located in Bingham County, to provide organic potatoes.

Three years ago, he converted a dehydrated potato plant in



Photo by Bill Schaefer

An elk herd migrates across Don McFarland's Little Camas Ranch.

Glenns Ferry into an organic packing shed to sort, wash, bag and box his and other growers' organic potatoes. He then trucks them to Wada's warehouse in Pingree for shipment across the U.S.

Kevin Stanger, senior vice president of sales and marketing for Wada Farms Marketing Group, said the organic potato market has shown tremendous growth in Idaho during the past five years but that it still represents a very small segment of Idaho's total acreage of potatoes.

"It's grown many times over (but) in comparison to everything else, it's a pretty small blip on the radar," he said.

Stanger said Wada relies on McFarland to meet a majority of its demand for organic potatoes.

McFarland is working closely with IDFG to find ways to keep the elk from damaging his fields in 2019.

Mike McDonald, IDFG regional wildlife manager at the Magic Valley regional office in Jerome, has been working with McFarland the past two years to try to keep the wildlife damages to a minimum.

McDonald said that the farmland lies right in the heart of a migration corridor for elk and deer.

"It's kind of the perfect storm," he said. "You have this fantastic piece of property that's located in a really
See ELK, page 33



Photo by Bill Schaefer

An aerial view of Don McFarland's farm, located between the Anderson Ranch Reservoir, foreground, and the Little Camas Reservoir in the background.

When a friend you refer purchases a policy from us, you'll receive a **\$25 MasterCard® Gift Card** and be entered into our quarterly **\$500 drawing**.* Our latest \$500 drawing winner is **Tony Drost** of Eagle. Congratulations Tony!

Tony Drost with his Farm Bureau Insurance agent, Lynnae Giege.

Farm Bureau INSURANCE
FARM BUREAU MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY OF IDAHO

*Certain restrictions apply. Please see the Rewards Program flyer available from your Farm Bureau Insurance agent for complete details.



Sign your vehicles up for the Idaho Farm Bureau/Jiffy Lube Signature Service Oil Change \$10 Discount* program.

*This is a stand alone discount and is not stackable with any other Jiffy Lube promotions or discount offers. Once an Idaho Farm Bureau membership is confirmed on the first oil change, the discount remains in effect for that specific vehicle (using fleet #102851).

Present A Valid Idaho Farm Bureau Membership Card Or Proof Of Insurance to One Of The Following Participating Idaho Jiffy Lube

AMERICAN FALLS

2830 POCATELLO AVE
AMMON
 2523 E SUNNYSIDE RD
BLACKFOOT
 933 MARKET ST
BOISE
 1206 BROADWAY AVE
 3606 W STATE ST

BOISE (cont.)

1484 S WEIDEMAN AVE
 5007 OVERLAND RD
 8401 W FRANKLIN RD
CALDWELL
 1204 CLEVELAND BLVD
CHUBBUCK
 4674 YELLOWSTONE AVE

EAGLE

1516 E. STATE STREET
FRUITLAND
 903 NW 16TH ST
HAYDEN
 8655 N. GOVERNMENT WAY
IDAHO FALLS
 185 S WOODRUFF AVE
 570 PANCHERI DR
 1546 W BROADWAY ST

MERIDIAN

360 E FAIRVIEW AVE
 1645 S SPRINGVALLEY LANE
MOSCOW
 326 TROY ROAD
NAMPA
 1130 CALDWELL BLVD
 824 12th AVE RD

POCATELLO

588 YELLOWSTONE AVE
POST FALLS
 1650 EAST SELTICE WAY
TWIN FALLS
 947 BLUE LAKES BLVD N
 2362 ADDISON AVE E
 142 WASHINGTON ST N

Judge dismisses ‘forced labor’ lawsuit against Idaho dairy

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – A district court judge has dismissed a lawsuit by six Mexican veterinarians who accused an Idaho dairy of subjecting them to forced labor.

The lawsuit, filed in January 2017, accused the defendants of engaging in a criminal conspiracy to bring them to the United States for the purpose of forced labor.

It accused Funk Dairy and Shoesole Farms, located near Murtaugh east of Twin Falls, of forced labor and human trafficking.

On May 20, Chief U.S. District Court Judge David Nye dismissed the case for lack of evidence and legal merit.

Boise attorney David Claiborne, who represented the defendants, said his clients vehemently rejected the claims all along and feel vindicated by the court’s ruling.

“They were accused of ... trafficking human beings,” he said. “They were very pleased that the court didn’t see it that way. The evidence, and the plaintiffs’ own testimony, showed that they came here of their own free will and could leave at any time.”

Claiborne said the defendants, known collectively as Funk Dairy, maintained from the outset that they had lawfully employed the plaintiffs to work in the United States and treated with in accordance with federal and state law.

“There were no restrictions on where they went or how they spent their free time,” he said. “They were granted all the freedoms any American worker would expect to have.”

The defendants, who are all animal scientists, came to the U.S. under a visa work program for people with professional degrees.

According to Nye’s written ruling, they



File photo

A district court judge on May 20 dismissed a lawsuit brought by six Mexican veterinarians who accused an Idaho dairy of subjecting them to forced labor.

broadly accused the defendants of conspiring “to recruit experienced Mexican veterinarians to work in the United States under the false pretense that they would be professional animal scientists, only to be hired as low-wage, general laborers at Funk Dairy.”

They alleged those acts violated U.S. immigration laws and they also claimed they were subjected to long working hours under arduous conditions and were forced to stay under the threat of deportation, fear and unfamiliarity with the English language and American legal system.

According to Nye’s ruling, the defendants claimed they were tasked with “menial, unskilled farm duties, despite their understanding that they would be animal scientists.” They also claimed that the defendants “monitored their movements and communications, charged them for things such as rent and transportation, reduced their income arbitrarily and generally failed to abide by the agreed upon terms of their employment.”

In his ruling, Nye wrote, “Plaintiffs, however, only provide conclusory statements to this effect with scant evidence in

support of such a proposition.”

On the plaintiffs’ claim that Funk Dairy pre-planned a scheme to defraud them and intended to coerce them into staying, Nye wrote that the plaintiffs “cannot point to anything concrete in support of such a position.”

Three of the plaintiffs quit their jobs and Funk Dairy terminated the employment of the other three.

Nye wrote that plaintiffs did not present “any evidence that would indicate that Funk Dairy obtained, and kept, their labor by means of serious harm, threats or other improper methods.”

“This is most strikingly evidenced,” he added, “by two facts: first, that three of the plaintiffs quit ... and second, that Funk Dairy terminated the remaining three employees because they were dissatisfied with their work performance. If Funk Dairy was truly forcing plaintiffs to perform labor, they would not have allowed three plaintiffs to quit, nor terminated three plaintiffs themselves. Plaintiffs’ personal choices to leave their employment with Funk Dairy was just that: a personal, independent choice.” ■



POLARIS
RANGER

**RANGER XP® 1000:
YOUR NEW 80HP
WORKHORSE**

**THE HARDEST WORKING, SMOOTHEST RIDING
AUTHORITY ON GETTING EVERY JOB DONE.**

The all-new Polaris RANGER XP® 1000, the world's most powerful and most comfortable utility side-by-side featuring a class dominating 80HP ProStar® engine, an all-new industry-exclusive 3-mode throttle control for ideal power and control for every situation, and best-in-class payload and towing capacity. See your dealer for more information or visit polaris.com to see the full RANGER® lineup.

Thanks to the following Polaris Dealers for supporting the Young Farmer & Rancher Program:

- | | |
|--|--|
| Action Cycles N Sleds
Twin Falls (208) 736-8118 | Mile High Power Sports
McCall (208) 634-7007 |
| Action Motorsports
Idaho Falls (208) 522-3050 | Northstar
Preston (208) 852-1888 |
| Buds Powersports
Cottonwood (208) 962-3211 | Performance Motorsports
Ashton (208) 652-7738 |
| Carl's Cycle Sales
Boise (208) 853-5550 | Post Falls Powersports
Post Falls (866) 628-3821 |
| Dennis Dillon
Boise (208) 343-2830 | Rexburg Motorsports
Rexburg (208) 356-4000 |
| Grizzly Sports
Caldwell (208) 454-8508 | Sandpoint Marine
Sandpoint (208) 263-1535 |
| Guys Outdoor
Lewiston (208) 746-0381 | Switchback Motor Sports
Pocatello (208) 238-1575 |
| Krehbiel's Sales & Service
Aberdeen (208) 397-4704 | Young Powersports
Burley (208) 678-5111 |



Warning: The Polaris RANGER is not intended for on-highway use. Driver must be at least 16 years old with a valid driver's license to operate. Passengers must be at least 12 years old and tall enough to sit with feet firmly on the floor. All SxS drivers should take a safety training course. Contact ROHVA at www.rohva.org or (949) 255-2550 for additional information regarding safety training. Polaris recommends that drivers and passengers wear helmets, eye protection, and protective clothing, especially for trail riding and other recreational use. Always wear seat belts. Be particularly careful on difficult terrain. Never engage in stunt driving, and avoid excessive speeds and sharp turns. Riding and alcohol/drugs don't mix. Check local laws before riding on trails.



Where to begin.

Are you a young or beginning producer with dreams of a successful future in agriculture?

You've come to the right place. Our AgVision program provides financing for producers age 35 or younger, or who have less than 10 years in the business. Qualified applicants have less restrictive loan underwriting standards, a mentor and an abundance of educational resources.

Ready to build a life in agriculture? We're ready to help.

208.552.2300 | northwestfcs.com

Equal Housing Lender
This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Here to Help You Grow®

It never hurts to plan ahead

Wheat harvest is upon us and as usual we are hearing of yield estimates all over the board.

The surprising news this year was that the early wheat was very good quality. The dry farm winter wheat crop in the southern part of the state didn't come out of dormancy in very good condition but once the ground

warmed up the crop improved. The irrigated crop looks good and headed out in good condition.

The corn acreage has been reduced along with the yield potential. The futures rallied to levels we haven't seen in a few years, leaving some producers that contracted some of their crop early kicking themselves.

However, we know we can only make our decisions based on the current news and trends. Don't ever second guess yourself. There will always be a good number of others that will do that for you.

The market traded the Chicago December wheat futures contract down into the \$4.40's in early May and then put over a dollar a bushel back into the market in about five weeks. This move began giving producers the opportunity to hedge their wheat at levels that were once again profitable.

At that time, it was good to forward contract your hard red winter and hard white, as the basis was trading at some good levels. Soft white on the other hand was looking at softer basis levels, giving you the opportunity to hedge



with futures and wait for the basis to strengthen after harvest.

The hard red spring wheat market has changed over the past few years and now more than in the past should be sold when there is room in the market. The demand for red spring wheat in the local

domestic market has weakened over the past few years, leaving a large amount of bushels still stored on the farm as we moved into the spring.

Let's switch gears and visit about your 2020 crop. For you hard white producers, let's take a look at the Kansas City 2020 contract. At this time, there is a 60-plus cent carry in that market over the December 2019 contract. At the time I wrote this, the 2020 contract was trading at \$5.71 per bushel.

We don't know the basis level for next year; however, if we use the current basis for October delivery in southeast Idaho of 40 over, we can see that we would have the opportunity to final price your wheat at \$6.11 per bushel.

This is compared to the current cash bid of \$5.50. So, the question is still, do the futures markets give us added opportunities that trading in the nearby cash market don't?

Only you can answer that question for yourself but overall it does and it will in the years ahead benefit you in your operation to at least know and

understand the benefits of using these strategies. At this time, you also have opportunities for this same type of strategy in both the soft white and hard red winter markets.

The corn market on the other hand is different as we are currently looking at an inverse in the futures from December 2019 to December 2020. This is telling us that the 2019 crop needs to be rationed.

However, let's not overlook the level that 2020 is trading. Currently the December 2020 contract is trading at \$4.20, which really has been a decent level to begin pricing your crop. Keep in mind that we usually won't have two bad production years in a row.

High prices will increase acreage. Keeping this in mind, we probably won't be able to count on adverse weather for next year and we could very well be looking at an increase in acreage. What would increased acreage and good growing conditions do to the market?

Let's always be looking 12 months into the futures in your marketing program for some of these types of opportunities. I was recently told by a producer that he felt that looking that far out in his marketing plan is very beneficial to him in deciding just what classes of wheat to plant in the fall and spring.

Contact the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation office in Pocatello at (208) 239-4341 or your local representative for more information on how Farm Bureau can assist and benefit you in your marketing.

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



Photo by Sean Ellis

About 55 people with connections to the food industry participated in a June 13 wine and cheese event designed to showcase both commodities and the important role they play in Idaho's economy.

Idaho wine and cheese team up for tasting event

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

MARSING – Idaho's top farm commodity teamed up with one of the state's fastest-growing agricultural sectors during a wine and cheese tasting event designed to showcase the two industries.

About 55 people from a wide spectrum of food-related sectors participated in the June 13 event, which included a dairy

tour and crash course in cheese-making at Nederend Dairy in Marsing, followed by a cheese and wine tasting event at Scoria Vineyards in Caldwell.

June is Idaho Wine Month and it's also National Dairy Month and event organizers said it was a fun way to provide some important thought leaders in the retail and food sectors a hands-on learning experience about the state's dairy and wine industries.

"We wanted to connect them back to

where their food really comes from and showcase the wonderful products that are produced at dairies," said Jenn Nelson, a spokeswoman for Dairy West, which co-hosted the event along with the Idaho Wine Commission.

Dairy West represents Idaho and Utah dairy producers and the wine commission represents wine grape growers and wineries in Idaho.

The event included chefs, food bloggers,

restauranters, retailers, processors and distributors.

“The event really showcases the quality wines that are produced here in Idaho vineyards as well as the fantastic cheeses that are produced not only here locally but in all of Idaho and the Northwest region,” Nelson said.

Dairy is Idaho’s top commodity in terms of total farm cash receipts and the wine industry is one of the state’s fastest-growing agricultural sectors.

It made sense to bring the two industries together to promote both, Nelson said. “They go together like hand and glove. They pair extremely well together. The event was a great way to connect the participants with these two industries.”

During the dairy tour, owner and manager John Nederend explained in detail how the operation’s 8,000 milking cows are cared for.

The cows basically enjoy an all-you-can-eat buffet daily and eat for about six hours every day. When they’re not eating, they are laying on a soft bedding of sand.

“They get to lay on the beach all day long,” Nederend said. “They are very, very stress-free animals.”

The Nederend Dairy has a full-time veterinarian and nutritionist on staff and a camera system installed throughout the entire dairy records everything, with the footage reviewed daily and saved for three months. All employees are required to go through an animal welfare class.

“We care a lot about the well-being of our animals,” Nederend said. “My grandfather said, ‘Take good care of your cows and your cows will take good care of you.’ Our No. 1 priority here is the welfare of the cows.”

Participants were taken to every part of the dairy and allowed to ask any question they wanted.

Nelson said the operation’s emphasis on animal care is common practice at Idaho dairies.

“This was not a staged presentation,” she said. “This is truly what they do day in and day out. Those farm care standards are a normal practice at our dairies.”

Dairy West’s mission is to inspire trust in dairy products and dairy farming and to build demand for those products, said Dairy



Photo by Sean Ellis

A little girl looks at calves during a wine and cheese event June 13.

West CEO Karianne Fallow.

“One of the ways we hope to build trust is by inviting people to a farm,” she said. “There are so many people who, not by their own fault, have become disconnected from agriculture, yet they are very curious about their food supply. Working on behalf of dairy farmers, we feel that we are uniquely positioned to give people that true farm-to-table experience and, hopefully, a better understanding of how agriculture works and where our food comes from.”

During the tour, participants also got a glimpse of the important role that the dairy and wine industries play in Idaho’s economy.

The dairy sector’s impact on Idaho’s economy is in the billions of dollars and the state’s wine industry directly and indirectly

impacts Idaho’s economy to the tune of about \$170 million, according to a wine commission study.

Idaho is third in the nation in total milk and cheese production and Idaho’s dairies produce a combined 15 billion pounds of milk per year. A typical milk processing facility in Idaho is supplied by about 80 milk trucks per day, said Eric Bastian, a Dairy West food scientist.

There are 20 milk processing plants in Idaho.

“It’s almost mind-boggling how much milk we have flowing through these plants,” said Bastian.

Idaho had 11 wineries in 2002 and has 54 today.

“The event was designed to showcase the importance of dairy and wine to the state’s economy,” Fallow said. ■

Farm Bureau holds meetings to hear from potato growers

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation recently held three regional meetings to listen to the needs and concerns of Idaho's potato industry.

The meetings were held in Aberdeen, Rexburg and Burley and attended by a total of 25 growers, as well as a few state lawmakers. Anyone involved with the state's potato industry was invited to attend.

IFBF officials told participants the purpose of the meetings was so Farm Bureau could better represent them by developing a deeper understanding of their issues and needs.

"It's an opportunity to have a discussion about the Idaho potato industry," said IFBF President Bryan Searle, a Shelley spud farmer. "We're looking to strengthen the potato industry."

Searle said IFBF wants to hear directly from potato growers and not assume the organization knows what's best for them.

"It doesn't matter what Bryan Searle thinks," he said. "Our policy comes from the grassroots. Your input is valuable because we're all after the same goal."

IFBF Director of Commodities and Marketing Zak Miller said the comments and information gleaned from the meetings will help Farm Bureau determine what issues and policies the organization should support as it works on behalf of Idaho potato growers.

IFBF, which has 80,000 members, including 14,000 directly involved with agriculture, is Idaho's largest general farm organization and roughly half of the state's farmers and ranchers are members.

"Farm Bureau has the ability to take a position on many things," Miller said. "But we want to make sure that when we do that, it's what the growers want. We try extremely hard to know what the will of our local growers is. That's why we're having these meetings."

Miller said he's hopeful the meetings will be ongoing and it's likely the next set will occur in the fall or winter and not during the growing season.

The major theme of the meetings was the low prices Idaho potato farmers are currently receiving for their spuds and there was a lot of discussion about forming some type of potato marketing association.

"Marketing is a topic people are talking about because they are unhappy with prices," Miller said. "Everyone

agreed it's a concept that needs to be well thought out and evaluated."

The need to bring in more potato processing capacity to Idaho was proposed as one of the main ways to increase spud prices and participants pointed to a recent Idaho Potato Commission-sponsored study that examined all the costs and benefits associated with building a new processing plant in North America and determined that Idaho has the lowest cost of production.

Meeting participants asked Farm Bureau leaders to help promote the results of that study.

"That would be huge to get another potato processor in Idaho," said Travis Blacker, the IPC's industry relations director. "Whatever Farm Bureau could do to help bring in additional processing to Idaho would be" welcomed.

A lot of issues relevant to the potato industry were addressed during the meetings, including immigration reform and current labor shortages, the challenges and expenses posed by the various audits many potato growers have to undergo, and the need for a reliable transportation system.

IFBF has several commodity committees, including a potato committee, that are made up of active farmers or ranchers.

Searle said the goal of the committees and Farm Bureau as an organization is always to hear directly from the grassroots and work to address their concerns and issues.

"It's the grassroots who create Farm Bureau policies, both at the state and national levels, and we always welcome input from them," Searle said. "Any farmer or rancher can become involved with Farm Bureau and have their voices heard."

"We appreciate everyone who took the time to attend these meetings and Idaho Farm Bureau will seriously consider the thoughts, information, ideas and concerns shared by the participants as we continue to support the state's potato industry," he added.

Potato farmer Shaun Blaser, chairman of IFBF's potato committee, said he was happy with the open discussions that took place during the meetings and a lot of ground was covered on a wide range of topics.

"We had a lot of good discussions on what we need to do as growers to make changes in our industry and we talked about ways that both Idaho Farm Bureau and the American Farm Bureau can help out," he said. "As a commodity committee, we now have many things to discuss ... to try to help our potato industry." ■

WHEAT

Continued from page 4

popular soft white wheat variety Brundage as a parent and has been a top yielding variety with good drought tolerance. It contains no beard — referring to the bristly material that protects the kernel.

He said Bulldog, developed from experimental lines, has an excellent test weight — a measure of the density of wheat kernels — and extremely thick and strong straw. In trial plots throughout the region, it's been the highest yielding variety at under 16 inches of annual moisture and has potential under irrigation or on dry land in Southern and Eastern Idaho.

Curtis explained his company speeds up the breeding process by sending samples to its laboratory in France, where genetic markers are reviewed for the presence of specific traits.

Curtis said the partnership has seven additional promising wheat lines in the developmental pipeline. He expects two more varieties to be released next year. Five more varieties are under evaluation for possible release during the following year — all of which are Clear-field lines, developed through conventional breeding techniques to resist the active ingredient in Beyond herbicide.

The initial releases have been bred for conditions in the Palouse, which encompasses parts of northcentral Idaho and southeastern Washington.

However, Cathy Wilson, director of research collaboration with the Idaho Wheat Commission, believes both have potential to

be planted in Southern and Eastern Idaho, including on dryland farms.

She said Frost, for example, is early maturing and resistant to snow mold, which poses challenges for some Eastern Idaho farmers.

“(Limagrain) has really brought the yield, genetics and the knowledge of how to identify and move a product into the market quickly,” Wilson said.

Curtis expects a UI variety Limagrain is marketing, UI Magic CL+, will be the top-planted soft white winter wheat in the Northwest this season.

“After years of being No. 3 behind the Oregon State program and the Washington State program, I predict the UI-Limagrain partnership will make UI the leading public program in the region,” Curtis said.

Growers throughout the state will have the opportunity to view the new varieties, as well as the other seven promising lines, during tours of UI research plots scheduled throughout the summer from Northern through Eastern Idaho.

“Through the partnership with Limagrain ... we have a much broader core of scientists — ours and theirs working together, using advanced techniques and using a little bit of genomics,” said Mark McGuire, associate dean and director of U of I's Idaho Agricultural Experiment Station. “We're maybe at the beginning stages of some real success that has been spurred on by lines like UI Magic that Limagrain has marketed for us.” ■

ELK

Continued from page 25

cool area that has lots of groceries and lots of elk.”

“The piece of property is a wonderful piece of property. Don and his family do a fantastic job of managing it,” McDonald said. “Don takes pride in that he's a real advocate for wildlife. It's not unusual to go up there in the middle of summer and see multiple broods of sage grouse and mule deer and waterfowl and then a whole bunch of elk.”

According to McDonald, IDFG initially tried using various hazing techniques to discourage the elk from McFarland's fields but with little success. They explored using fencing but it was impractical due to the size of the farm and the negative impact fencing has on sage grouse.

“Sage grouse don't navigate fences very well,” he said. “You're left with that lethal option. Going in and removing animals with the hope that you are removing a few targeted animals and that the rest of them decide this isn't the best place to be right now.”

McDonald estimates that from July to early October, around 80 elk were lethally removed.

This coming year, McDonald said they will try changing their methodology and be more strategic in deploying lethal mea-

asures in an effort to cut back on depredation and reduce monetary claims.

John Guthrie, IDFG's Magic Valley landowner/sportsman coordinator, will be coordinating these efforts. As part of his master's thesis, he is studying treatment options to alter elk depredatory behavior in cropland.

“We are going to include that property in my project as a treatment site, where we will lethally remove elk from that herd,” Guthrie said. “Hopefully, it will take two years of that to make those elk realize that it's not a place that they're supposed to be.”

Guthrie will begin collaring elk this summer to monitor their behavior and follow the herd. With the collared elk, Guthrie will be able to know precisely when the herd returns to McFarland's farm to forage and then begin to institute lethal measures.

“We're not expecting this to be the only thing that solves the problem. It's a very high priority for everybody,” Guthrie said.

McFarland expressed a degree of frustration about the damages he's incurred but at the same time he's seeking a collaborative resolution with IDFG.

“It's not our responsibility to manage these elk herds, it's a state responsibility,” he said. “We've worked closely with Fish and Game to try and solve the problem and we will again this year. We have to do our best to keep the elk out of here.” ■

Invest in the Future of Agriculture

How can you help our future leaders? By giving to the Idaho FFA Foundation! Your contributions can help Idaho FFA members in the following ways:

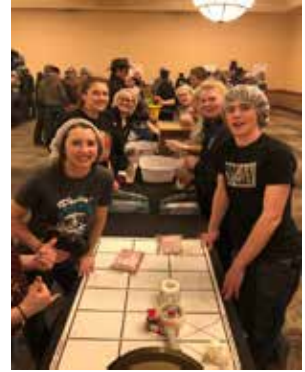
Career and Leadership Development Events

“Competing in CDEs and LDEs has exposed me to the agriculture industry, developed my skills, and helped me find my future career path”
Cassidey Plum, Idaho FFA State Reporter



Community Service Projects

During the Day of Service event at the 212/360 Leadership Conference in Boise, Idaho FFA members packaged **35,000 meals** for Meals of Hope!



Supervised Agriculture Experience Grants

“In both of my SAE projects (commercial salmon fishing and beef production) I have gained necessary skills and been exposed to what real world careers are like and where my interests lie within the agriculture industry”
Katy Doumit, Idaho FFA State Sentinel



Career Success Tours



Idaho FFA members touring L&L Meats and learning about career opportunities in the livestock industry!

I/We would like to contribute \$ _____ to the Idaho FFA Foundation to support Idaho FFA members:

Name _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Check Enclosed Please bill my: Visa or Mastercard

Name on card: _____ Card Number: _____

Exp _____ CVC: _____ Signature _____

Please mail to:
Idaho FFA Foundation
P.O. Box 827
Star, ID 83669

Questions? Phone: 208-869-6594,
or Email: mjedry@idffaoundation.org

**Idaho FFA Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Organization:
Tax ID# 82-0360159**

Best-In-Class* Capability for Work or Play. The Ford F-150 makes tough tasks look easy, whether you're working on the job or heading out on a weekend of recreation. F-150 outperforms every other truck in its class when hauling cargo in the bed or towing a trailer.**

Farm Bureau members receive

\$500 BONUS CASH***



2019 FORD F-150

BUILT

Ford

PROUD

Don't miss out on this offer.
Visit FordFarmBureauAdvantage.com today!

FARM BUREAU
ADVANTAGE
How We're Driving Change

*Class is Full-Size Pickups under 6,500 lbs. GVWR based on Ford segmentation.

**Max payload on F-150 XL Regular Cab, 8' box, 5.0L V8 4x2, Heavy-Duty Payload Package and 18" heavy-duty wheels (not shown). Max towing on F-150 XL SuperDrew[®], 6.5' box, 3.5L EcoBoost[™] 4x2, and Max Trailer Tow Package (not shown).

***Farm Bureau Bonus Cash is exclusively for active Farm Bureau members who are residents of the United States. This incentive is not available on Shelby GT350[®], Shelby[®] GT350R, Mustang Bullitt[™], Ford GT, Focus RS and F-150 Raptor. This offer may not be used in conjunction with most other Ford/Motor Company private incentives or AXZO-Plans. Some customer and purchase eligibility restrictions apply. Must be a Farm Bureau member for 30 consecutive days prior to purchase and take new retail delivery from dealer by January 2, 2020. Visit FordFarmBureauAdvantage.com or see your authorized Ford Dealer for qualifications and complete details.

Classifieds

FARM EQUIPMENT

John Deere 1937 unstyled Model D. Older restoration. Runs. \$3000. Phone 208-365-6188.

4 Tractors 1944 Oliver 60, A/C WD-45, 1940 Farmall \$1400.00 each and 1949 John Deere B \$1000.00. 3 point hitch off of JD A no center link \$100.00. Ladies early 70's John Deere bicycle \$200.00. tncarp53@yahoo.com can email pictures. Pine, Id. 208-590-4314.

Allen 8827 Rake, S/N 880863 double w/hydraulics. Good shape. \$9,800. Also wheel line with all new motor and parts. 32 sections \$4,500. Dietrich, Id 208-420-6524.

Aluminum main line with risers and clamps. 15 of 12 inch by 50 foot and 1 of 12 inch by 25 foot. Good condition. \$1.50 per foot. Twin Falls, Id 208-308-3220.

Chose from JD-2 cyls, Fords and IHC's before 1955. Many unusual options, Wheatlands Hi Crops & Orchard models. Nampa, Id. 208-488-8186.

Old John Deere for collectors. Wire tie baler, 4 cyl engine, not stuck. Looks like new for age. Bales come out the side, \$350 OBO. Parma, ID 208-674-2107.

Semi truck tires total 8: 4 Bridgestone drive 285/75R24.5 7-10/32. 2 Bridgestone drive 285/75R24.5 15-16/32. 2 Michelin steer 275/75R24.5 7-9/32. Price \$125-225. Call

for details. Jerome, Id. Great for farm trucks and local. 208-410-9547.

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. Also interested in buying balewagons. Will consider any model. Call Jim Wilhite at 208-880-2889 anytime.

MISCELLANEOUS

43rd Arts and Craft Fair July 20-21, 2019 in Stanley, Idaho, held by the Sawtooth Mountain Mamas. Over 140 artist vendors and food vendors. 3rd annual Cookie Competition on July 20th. Music each day. Check www.sawtoothmountainmamas.org for more information.

REAL ESTATE/ACREAGE

199 acres on the Fall River near Ashton. 110 acres farmable, sprinkler irrigation. Fishing and rafting access on site. Power in to home site with view of the Tetons. 7 miles to National forest and winter recreation area. Text 208-731-4868.

10 acres near Weippe, ID. Can be divided, taxed ag, hayed, fenced, creek that runs half the year, good drainage, nice home site with 365 degree views, wildlife, where Weippe prairie ends and national forest begins, \$50,000, will carry. 208-315-4662.

Acreage for Sale – 4 Acres (approx.) Country Living. Build

a New Home or New Mfg. Hm. Requires a Well and Utilities to property. Must obtain Septic & All Permits. Shelley Area. 208-528-5337 Leave Message.

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. 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.

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

FREE CLASSIFIEDS

Non-commercial classified ads are free to Idaho Farm Bureau members. Must include membership number for free ad. Forty (40) words maximum. Non-member cost is 50 cents per word. You may advertise your own crops, livestock, used machinery, household items, vehicles, etc. Ads will not be accepted by phone. Ads run one time only and must be re-submitted in each subsequent issue. We reserve the right to refuse to run any ad. Please type or print clearly. Proofread your ad. Ads must be received by July 12 for the August Quarterly.

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

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Membership No. _____

Ad Copy _____

Trial & error



Twin Falls frog farmers fill niche market

By Dianna Troyer

For Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

The bellow of a bullfrog is like the sound of a cash register ringing at Rana Ranch near Twin Falls.

To meet the needs of three dozen loyal clients, Steve Rivas and his wife, Lisa Ault, raise and sell about 6,000 bullfrogs annually for medical research.

Like the metamorphosis of a tadpole to a frog, their business model has transformed considerably – from their living room where they fed maggots to their wild-caught frogs, to an efficient quarter-acre farm where the finicky bullfrogs thrive in temperature-controlled tanks and dine on a proprietary pelleted food.

“We were told it’s impossible to raise bullfrogs as farm

animals, but we didn’t listen and didn’t give up,” said Rivas, 67, who worked as an instructor at the College of Idaho’s aquaculture program in Twin Falls until he retired in 2015.

He and Ault overcame numerous problems while developing Rana Ranch. How could bullfrogs be fed efficiently, considering they are finicky eaters and cannibalistic? How could their growth be controlled to meet clients’ specific size needs? Once mature, how could they be shipped?

Through years of trial and error, the Twin Falls residents devised meticulous protocols – hard-won trade secrets they decline to share.

“We still haven’t perfected bullfrog culture. It’s an art and a science, just like every other type of farming,” Rivas said. “We’ve been successful at developing a small, obscure farm that supplies an obscure and vital niche market. Our clients are

Photo by Dianna Troyer

Steve Rivas and his wife, Lisa Ault, raise bullfrogs for medical research. Clients say they like the frogs because they are accustomed to people.



willing to pay top dollar – an average of \$45 a pound for our clean and robust frogs.”

Their clients include universities, medical schools, hospitals, drug companies, and labs where they are used to research diverse diseases including cancer, Alzheimer’s, hearing loss and nerve damage.

“Many researchers have told us our bullfrogs have helped them to understand diseases, and they’ve been instrumental in developing new treatments and remedies,” Rivas said.

“Besides being used in medical research, our bullfrogs are used to train doctors in surgery including microsurgery,” he said. “They’re also used in dissection, physiology, and psychology labs.”

They have shipped frogs to 43 states not only for biological research but to stock lakes, wetlands, ornamental koi ponds, water gardens, and golf course water features.

“I’ve always liked that distinct bellowing sound they make during breeding season,” Rivas said. “A semi-tame bullfrog can be a real character in an ornamental pond.”

Rivas started Rana Ranch while teaching at CSI, naming it after the frog’s scientific name, *Rana catesbeiana*. His career and the ranch are a natural extension of his lifelong fascination for reptiles, amphibians, and fish he caught and raised as a child. A poster he drew in elementary school showing a frog’s life cycle hangs on his office wall.

After graduating from CSI’s aquaculture program in 1989, Rivas took a leap of faith and caught six wild bullfrogs from the nearby Snake River, believing they could be developed into an aquaculture species.

“We kept them in three plastic garbage cans in our living room for more than a year,” he said. “In 1991, we started raising them at an aquaculture farm about 20 miles from town.”

Three years later, they placed an ad in Reptile Magazine, intending to sell bullfrogs as pets. They only sold a few, but fortunately a university lab employee read the ad and contacted him.

“A lightbulb came on, and we sent flyers to 20 universities,” he said. “Sales took off from there.”

Finicky feeders

As their business grew, their feeding program evolved from raising maggots to a proprietary pellet fed in a specific way.

“Bullfrogs are sight feeders and only eat live food, so for several years we raised up to 100 pounds of housefly maggots a week,” Rivas said. “They grab anything that moves, but if it doesn’t keep moving in their mouth they’ll spit it out. It prevents them from ingesting floating or moving sticks, leaves, or other inedible things.”

The frogs grabbed the experimental pellets, “but getting them to swallow them was the hard part,” he said. “It was a happy day in 1994 after about 100 experiments that Lisa

Photo by Dianna Troyer
Steve Rivas and his wife, Lisa Ault, raise bullfrogs for medical research. They rent space at an aquaculture farm near Twin Falls, where they pipe hot and cold running water from springs to control the tadpoles’ and frogs’ rates of growth.



Photo by Dianna Troyer

Steve Rivas and his wife, Lisa Ault, raise bullfrogs for medical research. Clients order them in four sizes ranging from 4 inches and 4 ounces to super jumbo at more than 5 1/2 inches and 11 ounces.

found a way to get the bullfrogs to eat pellets – no more maggots. I have a lot of respect for the biomass production capacity of housefly larvae, but maggot farming is a disagreeable endeavor.”

A local mill makes the pelleted feed.

“Once we had them on a pelleted diet, we spent several more years doing feed trials to develop nutritious diets for all their life stages and ages,” said Ault, who graduated from CSI’s aquaculture program in 1992. “It’s complicated. Depending on their life stage, they’re two totally different animals: aquatic herbivores or semi-aquatic carnivores. Much but not all of our feed is plant based.”

In 1993, they moved to their present location, where they rent space at a local aquaculture farm closer to home that provides hot and cold gravity-fed water. Cold water, about 55 degrees Fahrenheit, is piped directly from a spring, while 102-degree water flows from an artesian well.

They installed Fiberglas troughs with locked tops to protect the tadpoles and frogs from predators. In each trough, Rivas installed cold and warm water lines, allowing the frogs to grow year-round instead of hibernating.

Controlling growth with temperature

“Hands-on training at CSI and raising them in clean cold and warm water are the keys to farming bullfrogs the way we do,” Rivas said. “Being (cold-blooded), their metabolism and growth can be regulated by temperature. We can put them into semi-hibernation to hold them at different stages of growth to save on feed, maintenance, and time. We’ve spawned bullfrogs as early as March and as late as August.”

Although he started with frogs caught in 1989, “we didn’t have real success with spawning until 2004,” Rivas said. “Before that, we bought wild-caught tadpoles from private ponds and from CSI for years. It wasn’t until 2009 that we were able to supply all of our

tadpoles from our own broodstock.”

With gravity flow of 15 gallons per minute of water, Rivas keeps about 10,000 large late stage tadpoles on hand.

“Tadpoles can take up the whole water column, while bullfrogs take up floor space,” he said. “It’s a more efficient use of our limited trough space to keep mostly tadpoles and morph them into bullfrogs as we need them. Generally, a newly morphed frog that has lost its tadpole tail matures into a 5 1/2-inch frog within about six months.”

He usually maintains about 3,000 bullfrogs in four sizes. They range from medium at 4 inches and 4 ounces to super jumbo, exceeding 5 1/2 inches and weighing more than 11 ounces.

To tend to his farm, Rivas works about two hours a day feeding frogs and cleaning the troughs. Ault spends two to three hours a week counting, measuring, weighing, and sorting frogs for shipment.

Most are shipped during the school year, September to May, with sales slowing down from Thanksgiving through New Year’s.

Having overcome issues dealing with food and rates of growth, Rivas had to figure out how to get the bullfrogs to clients. Relying on UPS Next Day Air, they ship the frogs in six different-sized cardboard boxes. He cuts sheets of RMAX, a rigid foam plastic thermal insulation board, and lines each box.

“The RMAX keeps the temperature moderated and makes the boxes extremely durable,” he said. “Clients tell us they like our frogs because they’re accustomed to captivity and people, tolerate handling well, and aren’t easily startled or stressed.”

Rivas emphasizes the farm is sustainable and no herbicides, pesticides, non-organic fertilizers or electricity are used. Manure is composted and effluent water is used for irrigation.

Having developed their frog-farming techniques, Rivas said they could raise millions of bullfrogs.

“But that would put us into the food market,” he said, “and that isn’t what we want to do at this point in our lives.” ■

Farm Bureau Members Pay Less

www.idahofbstore.com
208-239-4279

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



General Admission Regular Price - \$69.40 w/ tax

Farm Bureau Price

\$52.00

Includes Sales Tax

Purchase at select Farm Bureau offices.



Regular Adult \$34.97 tax included

Farm Bureau Price

\$27.50

*Roaring Springs prices include sales tax. Purchase at select offices or online.

Check website for full information on obtaining tickets and other discounts such as SeaWorld, San Diego Zoo or Knott's Berry Farm.



Regular Adult \$44.99

**Farm Bureau Online
Discount Price**

\$36.99

Child/ (Under 60") \$37.99

**Farm Bureau Online
Discount Price**

\$31.49






Regular Adult \$53.00

**FARM BUREAU ONLINE
DISCOUNT PRICE**

\$47.00

Regular Child/Senior \$30.00

**FARM BUREAU ONLINE
DISCOUNT PRICE**

\$27.00