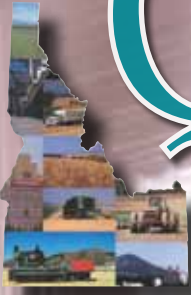


 IDAHO
FARM BUREAU

Quarterly

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Spring 2017 Volume 17, Issue 2



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Art Contest,
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Survey and more
- Inside

Beyond the Fencerows

Farmers and Ranchers Need a Simple, Fair Tax Code

By Zippy Duvall
President American Farm Bureau Federation



I don't know any farmers who work in a perfect environment, free from any risks or elements beyond their control. Sober reminders are all around us these days. From raging wildfires and non-stop rains to the challenging farm economy, many farmers and ranchers are doing their best to hold on for better days. Agriculture is not a

business for the faint of heart—it takes a lot of faith and perseverance, even in the best of circumstances.

Congress can't change the weather, but it can do a lot to improve the climate for running a farm or ranch. Farmers and ranchers grow food, fuel and fiber in a world of uncertainty. We need a tax code that recognizes the unique financial challenges we face, and we need flexibility to run and expand our businesses.

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The President's Desk

Representing the Grassroots: Challenging but Well Worth the Effort

By Bryan Searle
President Idaho Farm Bureau Federation



Our Idaho State Legislature adjourned Sine Die on March 30. There were 540 bills and 75 resolutions and memorials that were introduced and considered. In the end, 342 bills and 49 resolutions and memorials worked their way through the process and were either signed into law or adopted.

The Idaho Farm Bureau had a successful year promoting and defending the policies of the members of this organization. Of the 55 bills and resolutions upon which we actively engaged, 50 were approved or rejected in accordance with Farm Bureau policies.

Among those many bills, one issue stood out in a special way for me and I want to relate the story to our members. When Farm Bureau members met in mid-February for our annual legislative conference, there were two bills on dyed diesel

See SEARLE, page 7

Inside Farm Bureau

Estate Tax Repeal

By Rick Keller
CEO Idaho Farm Bureau Federation



This past year, my wife Alene and I each watched the passing of a loving parent. My father and Alene's mother. My mother is still healthy and blessing her family greatly. Alene's father passed away seventeen years ago. Alene's family is currently going through the process of settling the estate. The estate is a small family farm which raised four generations and is

starting on the fifth generation. Although this small farm is exempt from federal estate tax obligations, understanding the devastation that can come from estate taxes on a farm is real to many farm families across this nation.

Individuals, family partnerships and family corporations own over 97 percent of our nation's two million farms and ranches. America values these family-owned farms and ranches because of the food, fiber, and fuel they produce, the contribution that agriculture makes to

See KELLER, page 12



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Cover: A Lely robot pushes feed up close so
cattle can reach it easier. The small robot works
its way up and down the manger every two
hours, 24 hours a day. See article on page 4.

Photo by Steve Ritter





Loughmiller Dairy near Elba, Idaho. Photo by Steve Ritter

One Farmer's Unique Journey

By John Thompson

ELBA - Heber Loughmiller's dairy could be described as a place only a mother could love. It's not the typical bucolic setting that many of us envision when we think of country living. But Loughmiller is anything but typical.

Unconventional fits and he seems to revel in the fact that his peers might think he's touched. He describes the farm as "a place that bankrupted the last four families that tried it here."

On this particular day in late March, the pastures strewn with softball-sized rocks surrounding his small barn, are struggling to green-up. A stiff breeze from up the valley puts a bite in the air, making us wonder if winter is done here yet. Cassia Creek is running bank-full. It dissects the farm on its way east toward its confluence with Raft River. An Australian shepherd is lying in the sun next to a calf pen that blocks the breeze. He's indifferent about the four strangers who just got out of a pickup.

Loughmiller is an affable sort, witty, confident, and self-deprecating. He owns and oversees a one-employee, 120-cow, organic, robotic dairy, complete with a large, hairy goat that could have just wandered in looking for a free meal, and a dog with a questionable work ethic.

Speaking of work ethic, Loughmiller's lone employee describes his boss's labor contribution as "insignificant." To which Loughmiller says, "I don't disagree, but he's got to understand, I'm management."

On a robotic dairy, the cows set a casual pace and the farm pretty much runs itself, which is vastly different from the bustle of a conventional dairy. In a lot of ways, a robotic dairy is a cow psychology experiment. The cows aren't pressured or herded from one place to another. Whatever they decide to do is their idea.

Loughmiller wants them to come to the robot, give milk, drink water, go to pasture, eat grass and lay down. But Holstein cattle are curious by nature and they don't always do what he wants. They like to patrol

the boundaries of the pasture and some of them are timid. Some value their privacy and won't come to the robot if any other cows are there at the same time – especially if a boss cow that might bully them is in the holding pen.

Although he had never owned milk cows before this dairy originated in June 2015, Loughmiller has farmed all of his life. He has experience with beef cattle and various crops. Needless to say, his banker was a bit puzzled about this plan to start an organic dairy with two robotic milking machines.

"I was not a dairyman," he said. "I had some kids that were under-employed and I had some ground, so we went looking for an opportunity."

Another difference, Loughmiller explained, between his farm and conventional dairies, is his dairy has a Swedish milking attachment system as opposed to the Mexican attachment systems used more commonly down the valley.

Lely Robots are manufactured in Sweden.



Heber Loughmiller owns an organic, robotic dairy near Elba. Photo by Steve Ritter

They are sold and serviced by Snake River Robotics in Heyburn. Interest in dairy industry robotics is brisk, according to Todd Webb, Snake River Robotics owner and salesman. The machines they sell are used to feed cattle, maintain feed bunks, scrape manure and milk cows. All of that combined makes dairies more efficient.

Diverting back to how this plain, little farm in the hills near Elba became a high-tech operation, Loughmiller took a trip about three years ago in search of a way to make this land profitable. It was a trip with no itinerary and he was open to almost any agricultural endeavor. He had the land but needed to find a way to optimize the investment. So he set out, southwest toward Reno. He considered a beef cattle operation but decided buying feed all winter wasn't a workable strategy.

"We even looked at goat dairies, but if I became a goat-milker I wouldn't know which hat to wear to the rodeo," he said. "I watched goats being milked for about two minutes and said no thanks."

Near Eureka, California he looked at a few grazing dairy farms that were grossing

\$10,000 per acre. "There's really nothing we can do up here legally, that will gross \$10,000 per acre but we got interested in a grazing dairy as a way to add value to our land," he said.

Although dairy robotics have been around for about 25 years, Idaho bankers don't have much experience or data to use in making comparisons. One important thing to remember is although the up-front expense is steep, the cost of labor is largely deferred. As a dairy owner, you don't have to pay anyone to milk the cows.

"The robot never misses work," Loughmiller said. "It doesn't ever have a date, it doesn't get sick and it works on Christmas."

In addition, the robot treats every cow the same in the way it scans, washes and uses brushes to both clean and stimulate the udder so the cow will let her milk down. When it begins to milk the cow it tests the milk for color, water content, conductivity or density, udder temperature and various other measurements. If the robot detects blood, or colostrum in the milk, or if the udder has an elevated temperature - sign of

an infection - the milk is automatically diverted either to calf feed or down the drain. Another important measurement it collects is called milk speed. This is the time each cow spends in the robot. Some cows become candidates for culling if they spend too much time at the robot, in spite of how much milk they give, Loughmiller said. All of these features lead to increased milk production and a more efficient operation.

Robotics is key, but without a contract for organic milk in place, the bank never would have approved the loan, Loughmiller said. Organic milk demands a premium in the market and demand is steady. Demand has increased about three percent annually and 83 percent of American consumers say they buy organic products regularly.

In discussions with other farmers, Loughmiller says there are regular disagreements but in his opinion, perception is reality when it comes to marketing food products. "We can argue about which is better," he said. "But if the market perceives there is added value to organic, that's reality."

The milk from this farm is primarily made into string cheese, ricotta cheese and products used in organic bakeries. Some of the milk must be shipped long distances for processing and sourcing organic feed can also be a challenge. Loughmiller believes in sourcing local feed and limiting the distance organic commodities are shipped.

"One of the big problems with the organic industry is sometimes we have to ship an awful long way," he said. "There are dairies here feeding Russian and Turkish organic corn. I have a problem with that. It's cheaper but are we really doing any good by shipping that far? We as organic producers have a responsibility to source feed locally as much as possible. I feel like we ought to at least try and I believe the acres are out there to source what we need."

Loughmiller said even though his dairy is small, he's had good luck with neighbors willing to lease land to him and also to certify to grow organic feed for him. "I'm a big proponent of local," he said. "This little dairy is a big deal for this valley because we are a market for our local producers,

See ROBOT DAIRY p. 6

ROBOT DAIRY

Continued from page 5



Lely Robotic milking machines are made in Sweden. Photo by Steve Ritter

many of whom have switched to organic crops to help supply us. I hope we can lift the local area.”

One downside to organic production relates to animal husbandry. Loughmiller has lost cows and seen good milk producing cows gradually drop off because they couldn't be treated with antibiotics. They sometimes inject honey into udders to help clear up infections and use other natural remedies like poultices for healing wounds but they are frequently unsuccessful and the cows must be sold for slaughter. Another limitation associated with organic production is that he can't use synthetic fertilizer on his pastures and his cows don't produce enough manure to fertilize all of the pasture land.

Another difference from a conventional dairy is the cattle are fed grain fortified with molasses in the barn. That's what keeps them coming back to the robot for milking, he said. Conventional dairies

rarely feed anything in the milk parlor. Loughmiller's cows get corn silage, mineral supplements and alfalfa at a feed bunk or manger outside. However, USDA organic standards require cows to be on grass pastures for not less than 120 days per year.

“I understand what they are trying to do with organic certification, but it's not always the best way to treat your animals,” he said.

Todd Webb with Snake River Robotics said he's receiving calls nearly every day from interested dairymen. “We are working seriously with about ten dairymen right now that are looking at robots, while another list of about 30 or 40 are starting to enquire,” said Webb.

The biggest single factor enticing Idaho dairymen is the labor costs robots can eliminate. However, Webb says the labor savings are about the third most important benefit robotics offer. The Lely system provides for increased individual cow man-

agement. It tracks production and manages individual cow health at a level not possible on a conventional dairy. In addition, the feeding robots manage the feed and work 24 hours a day to keep that feed in front of the cattle.

“It reads the feed bunk and manages the feed around the clock and that increases milk production,” he said.

New dairies are being planned that keep cattle in a climate controlled barn all year long. The barns are ventilated depending on the season and fans are used to pull air from one end to the other. In the cold months, outside air is blocked so the heat from the animals keeps the building warm. In the warm months they install water misters that work with the fans to keep the cattle cool. Each cow wears a computer chip in a collar around her neck. The chip creates a record of nearly everything she does.

See related story, p.40

SEARLE

Continued from page 2

before the Legislature. One would have created a new bureaucracy to regulate and enforce dyed diesel use. The other would have done away with dyed diesel in Idaho. Idaho Farm Bureau opposed both bills. We do not condone the misuse of dyed diesel or tax evasion in any way but in the same light, we don't believe it's a widespread problem. Both of these bills were like using a hammer when a fly swatter would be adequate.

During our meeting I approached Senator Bert Brackett, R-Rogerson, about Farm Bureau's concerns regarding the dyed diesel bill he sponsored. He said we should meet and discuss the matter further and that although we may not agree on everything there is common ground. Senator Brackett was aware of our concerns from early on in the session and regular visits from our lobbyists right up to the day myself and one of our lobbyists visited with him.

There were four specific reasons we opposed the bill, including funding, information sharing with federal agencies that could lead to outrageous fines, the potential for bulk storage tank inspections and significant fines and penalties for first-time offenders. When we met to reiterate those concerns, Sen. Brackett said our first concern was a "non-starter," and he felt the others were already covered in the bill. We asked for some minor clarifying language to ensure farmers were protected and he said he was "not inclined to do so." He asked that I come to the Senate Transportation Committee meeting to testify,

which I agreed to do.

During the Committee meeting, numerous other agriculture groups testified in support. They said it was a wonderful piece of legislation. Supporters included Food Producers of Idaho, Idaho Grain Growers, Idaho Cattle Association and the Idaho Dairymen's Association. Those groups prevailed and the bill passed out of the Committee. Afterward you would have thought it was a funeral for Farm Bureau. Lobbyists from the other agriculture organizations offered their condolences. They told us Farm Bureau is a good organization, but in this case we were wrong.

In spite of those predictions, the bill failed by a 26-8 margin when considered by the full Idaho Senate. Several Senators, including Jim Guthrie, Jim Rice, Steve Bair and Jeff Sidoway spoke forcefully against the legislation. We appreciate their efforts. They pointed out the .6 parts per million testing standard was excessive, they questioned the validity of the fiscal note, and pointed out that no language in the bill prevented any enforcement agency from setting up random inspection stations.

In the end, our organization's death, with regard to this bill, was greatly overstated. I for one, was proud to stand in opposition and to speak on behalf of our grassroots. We never gave up and I appreciate our lobbyists who stood strong and lobbied right up to within minutes before the bill was discussed on the floor. This is the result of strong grassroots and strong lobbyists who passionately defend our policies.

The other important issues from this session I'd like to address are the two stockwater rights bills that were passed and signed into law by Gov. Otter. After ten long years, an important legal precedent will finally be placed into Idaho Code prohibiting federal agencies from owning stockwater rights unless they actually own livestock and can put the water to beneficial use. We appreciate Senators Brackett and Mark Harris and Representative Judy Boyle for sponsoring these important bills. We are especially grateful to both Tim Lowry and Paul Nettleton for traveling to Boise to testify in both the House and Senate.

It is now imperative that the Legislature finish the job and appropriate money to pay the

attorneys who won this important legal precedent. The state refused to do its job to protect Idaho water when this issue first arose during the Snake River Basin Adjudication (SRBA). Unfortunately, not only did the state refuse to assist ranchers Lowry and Nettleton in their fight against the federal government over their water rights, but the state actually assisted the federal government in their attempts to steal water from these Idaho citizens. This egregious behavior must be rectified. If it were not for these two intrepid ranchers standing alone against the federal government, Idaho would have lost a significant amount of its sovereignty over its own water. Now is the time to finish this job.

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Water flows into a recharge site outside of Shoshone. Idaho water managers are stepping up flows ahead of irrigation season.
Photo by Steve Ritter

Water Managers Divert Spring Runoff into Snake River Aquifer

By Jake Putnam

Following floods in February and record mountain snowpack, the Bureau of Reclamation is allowing 15,000 cubic feet per second of water to flow past American Falls Reservoir and Milner Dam to free up reservoir space for spring runoff.

The state has a water right to intentionally recharge up to 1,200 cubic feet per second from the Snake River to recharge the Eastern Snake River Plain Aquifer (ESPA). They hope to double or even triple that number to free up water storage space and restore the ESPA, which has been in a long-term decline. We talked

to Idaho Water Resource Recharge Manager Wesley Hipke on the 2017 recharge:

This has been a good water/snowpack year. What does this mean for Idaho?

We've seen a lot of impacts this year and specifically there's a lot of flooding with higher river flows. From a recharge standpoint this is going to be a great year. There's a lot of natural recharge going on all over the Snake River plain but there's still a lot of snow in the mountains. We'll have a lot more runoff and most of that will infiltrate into the aquifer. For our managed recharge, we wouldn't have this kind of

year without record snowpack in the mountains. This is going to be a great year given the amount of water thus far. With our irrigation partners we've moved a lot of the water into the ground that otherwise would have flowed down the Snake River.

We visited the recharge site outside of Shoshone recently. It looks like an ordinary canal dumping water into a large pond. What's going on at that site?

That's a great area for recharge because it's over an old lava bed. That stretch of land is very fractured with busted up lava flows and it's a perfect site

for a drain field. Areas like this typically have deep crevasses that allow water to infiltrate in the ground. That water trickles down through more than 200 feet of sand and gravel to the water table.

Is that enough to clean up the surface water?

It is. That's what our data has shown thus far. All of our recharge sites are heavily monitored for water quality. Of course, all surface water has bacteria, but what we've found is that the sand and gravel does a good job cleaning the water. In all our monitored wells the water is very good quality and meets the highest ground water

standards.

Since 1913, Idaho farmers have irrigated the Snake River Plain. In the old days water could seep back into the ground. How much ground water have we lost in the past 100 years?

The aquifer has lost a lot of water through the years. Over the past century we've seen a lot of irrigation along with industrial and population growth. We started doing a lot of pumping as pump technology improved. Since the 1950s, due to that pumping and more efficient irrigation practices, less water has recharged naturally through the ground. So that and combined with droughts, the aquifer has lost about 200,000 acre feet per year since the 1950s. Lawmakers and the Water Resource Board set a goal to put water back in the ground every year.

What's that number and is there a chance that Idaho can catch up soon?

The number is 200,000 acre feet on average, every year. An acre-foot is the amount of water it takes to cover one acre of land to a depth of one foot. Our goal is to hit capacity and get the program filled out and we're well on our way. The legislature says that has to happen by 2024 but we're actually hoping to get there by 2020. As far as turning the water deficit around, this is a huge aquifer and it's over 10,000 square miles. So that's a huge order to stop the decline and turn the aquifer around. So even putting 250,000 acre feet back into the ground isn't going to get us back to even. But we can start to build the aquifer back up to historic levels. The agriculture community is doing well in terms of reducing consumptive use and helping

us divert water back into the aquifer. I think we stand a good chance of stopping this decline and building the aquifer back up in the coming years.

This snowpack is epic and one of the best years in decades for recharge, but is it enough?

This is a long-term thing. It's taken us since the 1950s to get to this point. But our recharge program is designed to be a long-term program. It's not like we can say, 'oh we had a good year and we're done,' this is a decades-long solution and it is going to happen every year.

How does the "first in time" doctrine come to play in all this?

It's very crucial to all of this. In fact it jump-started the recharge situation a few years ago when we had water calls. It started because the senior water rights holders were not getting their water and that's water they clearly had a right to use. Water users saw clearly then that something had to be done. They could see that a constant draw on the aquifer without replenishing the aquifer, means that Idaho cannot grow. So it's in the best interest to use water in the most efficient way and to work on this recharge program. We must add this excess water that would otherwise leave the state and we have to do it every year for our future use.

We did well this year with snowpack but that's no guarantee for next year. What's in the Department's crystal ball?

When it comes to weather forecasting, that is— so not my expertise. My crystal ball? When it comes to predicting water years is cracked, its frosty and

never clear. The only thing that we can say for sure is that it is really hard to predict what's going to happen in the future. The last few years we've had drought conditions and here we have a wet year. What's predictable is the variability from year to year. So I think recharge management and this artificial recharge program is crucial in the coming years. We must be diversified to handle these changes. When it's dry we need to capture as much water as possible and when it's wet we must capture as much as possible. So this is going to be a very diverse program. It has to be because of the extremes.

How closely is groundwater tied with economic growth?

With the recharge program the key point is this: if the aquifer

is not replenished, it affects the first-in-time users. They have first rights to water. They can cut all current uses. So if we don't fix this problem, the lack of water could cut potential growth in the future. Water impacts everyone and this aquifer accounts for a third of Idaho's economy. No question about it, agriculture is a big economic driver of the economy. Furthermore because of agriculture we've had a lot of industry come in, which funnels into our cities and allows them to grow. Industry brings in more businesses as they grow. Without water we cannot grow. It's crucial that we handle this problem. We want to make sure that there's always water in the aquifer and with that, room to grow.

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A sign warning boaters about aquatic invasive species at Twin Lakes in Franklin County. Irrigation company managers have threatened to close some Franklin County reservoirs to keep invasive species out. However, they met stiff opposition from boaters and fishermen, many from Utah. *Farm Bureau file photo*

State Approves Invasive Species Bills

By John Thompson

Idaho lawmakers recently increased the amount of funding for on the ground efforts to prevent aquatic invasive species from infecting lakes and rivers. Whether it will be enough to protect Idaho remains questionable.

Utah, Nevada and most recently Montana have lakes and reservoirs contaminated by quagga mussels, an invasive species transplanted into the Great Lakes in the 1980's in ballast water from ships transporting cargo from the Caspian Sea in Eastern Europe. Since then, quagga mussels have been transported on boats and other water craft into 29 states. Quagga mussel larvae were discovered last year in Montana's Tiber Reservoir, Canyon Ferry Reservoir and the Milk and Missouri Rivers.

These aquatic invaders clog water delivery infrastructure and can dramatically increase maintenance costs in culinary and irrigation systems.

Idaho lawmakers approved \$3.14 million in supplemental funding and are asking the federal government to appropriate an additional \$1 million to coordinate state efforts to stop the spread. They also approved an emergency appropriation of \$710,000 in early March to create three new border boat check stations along the Montana line and create three new positions. The emergency appropriation is to increase inspection efforts during the current fiscal year.

On April 6, Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter vetoed a bill to create a new administrator of invasive species policy position in the Governor's office, extend the hours of operation at some border boat check stations and provide penalties for anyone failing to stop at a check station. The bill passed both bodies by a 93-4 margin with six total absences.

"Our focus must be on putting more boots on the ground to enhance the successful boat inspection and decontamination program run by the Idaho State Department of

Agriculture (ISDA)," according to a press release from Gov. Otter's office. "I appreciate the Legislature increasing ISDA's budget to do just that. However, this legislation creating a new position within my office to coordinate our efforts does little to improve our defenses and preparedness for the potentially devastating impact of a mussel infestation."

According to ISDA, prior to the 2016 season, the program operated on a \$1.4 million annual appropriation, funded by revenues from the sale of Idaho Invasive Species Sticker. In the 2016 legislative session, ISDA was appropriated an additional \$1 million from the Invasive Species Fund with direction from the Legislature that the department spend down fund reserves to expand hours of operation and operational days throughout the season. Total spending for 2016 was \$2.4 million.

During the 2017 legislative session, lawmakers approved a budget that adds three new stations and includes funding for four

FOULED BOAT INFORMATION FOR 2017

Fouled Boat #	Location Found	Origin	Destination State	Date Found
1	ISDA Staff	Lake Havasu	Idaho	2/15/2017
2	ISDA Staff	Lake Havasu	Idaho	2/22/2017
3	Hwy 93	Lake Havasu	Alberta	3/20/2017
4	Hwy 93	Lake Havasu	Idaho	3/26/2017
5	Malad	Lake Havasu	Montana	4/1/2017
6	Malad	Lake Havasu	Montana	4/6/2017

new full-time staff and a nighttime station to be operated at the Cotterell Port of Entry on I-84 east of Burley. Additionally, funding was included to hire a new Idaho State Police trooper to provide law enforcement support for that nighttime operation. The FY2018 budget appropriation is \$4.3 million (\$3.1 million in new General Fund money and \$1.2 million from the sticker revenues), and goes into effect July 1.

Several lawmakers support longer hours of operation at check stations including 24-hour seven days a week operations at check stations near Malad on Interstate 15, near the Nevada border south of Twin Falls on Highway 93 and at the Cotterell check station on Interstate 84.

Sen. Mark Harris, R-Soda Springs, said he heard reports of boat owners waiting in Jackpot, Nevada until they knew the Highway 93 check station was closed at 7 p.m. and then entering Idaho with boats that could have come from infected waters. Lake Mead in southern Nevada is one of the infected water bodies as is Lake Powell in southern Utah and Deer Creek Reservoir in central Utah.

Harris said ISDA and the Idaho State Police were reluctant to support increased hours of operation at the check stations, citing safety as their main con-

cern. Harris said during a senate hearing, ISP officials said stopping boats on busy highways is dangerous.

Harris said two things stand out with regard to protecting Idaho from aquatic invaders. First, the check stations need to remain open longer and second, states with infected water bodies need to clean and inspect boats as they leave. “The working group that I am part of wants more cooperation between the federal government and the states on this issue,” he said.

Chanel Tewalt, ISDA chief of operations / communications, said running invasive species check stations at night brings about safety concerns for inspectors and motorists. Many of the station locations do not have adequate lighting, power or ingress and egress to operate safely at night. In an email she wrote: “We work closely with the Idaho Department of Transportation to identify the most practical, safe and cost-efficient sites on which to locate stations. These locations work well during daylight hours, but nighttime stations would need power and more space for ingress and egress. For some locations, the improvements and associated costs would be beyond the scope of the program’s current funding.”

Additionally, she continued,

“Many inspections stations are located in rural areas with limited communication options. There are safety concerns for nighttime operations of stations that may be staffed by one or two employees who would not be uniformed officers and who would have limited ability to protect themselves in dangerous situations. A law enforcement presence at stations for nighttime operations is a critical issue to us.”

Prior to the discovery of quagga mussels in Lake Powell, inspections, boat washing and engine flushing were regularly conducted prior to launching. However, since the invaders were discovered in both Lake Powell and Lake Mead, the two state governments have scaled back to public education campaigns encouraging boat owners to clean, drain and dry all boats leaving infected lakes. But there are no penalties in place for ignoring the recommendations and no mandatory inspections.

“All boats leaving infected waters need to be cleaned and inspected,” Harris said. “That’s not happening and that’s the reason these invasives are spreading. It’s easier for them to do that than it is for us to plug every hole in Idaho where a boat could enter.”

Another bill that passed and was signed by Gov. Otter in-

creases the amount out of state boaters must pay to receive an Idaho invasive species sticker from \$22 per year to \$30 per year. In-state boaters pay \$7 per year for non-motorized watercraft and \$10 per year for motorized boats. These fees have funded the inspection program to date and raised about \$1.1 million per year.

Harris added that he isn’t optimistic about prevention in light of the fact that these aquatic invaders have marched across 29 states and Idaho isn’t doing anything much different than several infected states did.

“It’s been frustrating to me,” he said. “We aren’t doing enough to protect our water.”

A working group on invasive species made up of Idaho legislators recently held a conference call with Department of Interior officials. They promised that concerns raised by Idaho officials would be passed along to Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke.

ISDA encourages all stakeholders to look at the program’s website - <http://invasivespecies.idaho.gov/> . to view statistics for each station and use interactive maps. The data from each fouled watercraft intercepted this season is also available and updated regularly. A fouled watercraft is one where mussels are present, whether or not they are viable/alive.

Individual inspections can be arranged for anyone unable to stop at an inspection station by calling the Invasive Species Hotline at (877) 336-8676 or visiting <http://invasivespecies.idaho.gov/watercraft-inspection-stations/> for more information.

DUVALL

Continued from page 2

Our tax laws should promote the business of farming and ranching, rather than punishing those who commit their lives to working in agriculture. Farmers shouldn't be penalized for having a good year or for building a family business they can pass on to the next generation. When farmers must pay expenses to play defense against estate taxes, rather than investing those resources to make their farm better, we all suffer a loss. Today, about 99 percent of America's farms and ranches are family owned, and Farm Bureau is committed to protecting our ability to pass on a thriving agricultural legacy to the next generation. It's time to bury the death tax, and we're asking Congress to do just that with the Death Tax Repeal Act of 2017.

I'm proud of America's tradition of farms passing from one generation to the next. The entrepreneurial spirit of first-generation farm-

ers and ranchers is another source of pride. With a growing population to feed, we need more young men and women to join in the important work we do. Tax reform can help. Reducing capital gains taxes makes it easier for beginning farmers to buy land, and the business expense interest deduction helps them invest in the equipment they need.

At Farm Bureau, we're pleased to see the U.S. House taking steps to improve our nation's tax code with its blueprint for tax reform. Comprehensive tax reform is critical to boosting the economy for all Americans, and to do that the tax code must include provisions that farmers and ranchers count on to keep our businesses running. That's why we're calling on the House to approve tax provisions that give farmers the flexibility they need, like immediate expensing for our inputs, stepped-up basis, cash accounting and like-kind exchanges.

Agriculture creates jobs on and off the farm, boosts the economy, creates a positive trade balance and plays a vital role in conserving our open spaces and natural resources. When farmers and ranchers have the freedom to reap the harvest of their hard work and then replant that capital back in their businesses and rural communities, we all benefit. Whether a farm is first- or fifth-generation, decreasing the burden of taxes is one area where policymakers can help us offset the many uncontrollable factors we face.

Farmers and ranchers are committed to being good stewards of all the resources we've been entrusted with. We expect our lawmakers to be good stewards as well—to use their authority for the good of the nation and craft laws that protect the hardworking men and women of this country. Tax reform is one way we can all work together to build a better economy now and for our future.

KELLER

Continued from page 2

job creation and the economy. Further, they value the open space that farming and ranching protects. Yet, our nation's estate tax policy can be in direct conflict with the desire to preserve and protect our nation's family-owned farms and ranches.

Farm Bureau believes that tax laws must protect, not harm the family farms that grow America's food and fiber. What is needed are tax policies that do not punish capital-intensive businesses like farms and ranches, and do not hinder sons and daughters from following the agricultural legacy of their parents.

Many farmers and ranchers have benefited from congressional action that increased the estate tax exemption to \$5 million indexed for inflation, provided portability between spouses, and continued the stepped-up basis. Instead of spending money on life insurance and estate planning, farmers are able to upgrade buildings and purchase equipment and livestock. More importantly, they have been able to continue farming when a family member dies without having to sell land, livestock or equipment to pay the tax.

But in spite of this much-appreciated relief, estate taxes remain a pressing problem for some agricultural producers. One reason is that the indexed estate tax exemption, now \$5.45 million, is still working to catch up with the increase in farmland values over the past several years. The value of family-owned farms and ranches is usually tied to illiquid assets, such as land, buildings and equipment. With 90 percent of farm and ranch assets illiquid, producers have few options when it comes to generating cash to pay the estate tax. Recent increases in agriculture cropland values, on average 7.6 percent from 2013 to 2014, have greatly expanded the number of farms and ranches that now top the estate tax exemption. When estate taxes on an agricultural business exceed cash and other liquid assets, surviving family partners may be forced to sell land, buildings or equipment needed to keep their businesses running. This not only can cripple a farm or ranch operation, but also hurts the rural communities and businesses that agriculture supports.

Another reason that farmers and ranchers support estate tax repeal is that farmers know their ability to transfer the family busi-

ness to their sons and daughters is constantly challenged. The administration's proposal to create a new 28 percent capital gains tax that would be imposed at death on carry-over basis is the most recent example. The impact of capital gains taxes on farming and ranching is significant because production agriculture requires large investments in land and buildings that are held for long periods of time during which land values can more than triple. Under current law, capital gains taxes are owed only when inherited farm or ranch land, buildings, breeding livestock and timber are sold and only on the stepped-up value. The imposition of a new capital gains tax at death, combined with the loss of stepped-up basis, would have the same chilling effect on the intergenerational transfer of family farms and ranches as estate taxes.

The death of a loved one can be harrowing, but with faith and understanding, comfort does come. The legacy of the family member should be cherished and treasured, not marred with the selling of that same legacy to satisfy a law that does not comfort nor bless. Permanently repeal estate taxes.

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We know life can be a balancing act.

That's why we're here to help you protect what matters most, your todays and your tomorrows. **Contact your Farm Bureau agent to discuss what's been happening in your world.**

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Photo by Natalie Tsang

State Releases Grizzly Relocation Procedures

By John Thompson

The Idaho Fish and Game Department released a document in early April detailing grizzly bear relocation procedures.

The document outlines how the public will be notified whenever a grizzly is relocated within five miles of the Idaho border. The Fish and Game Department will notify the county sheriff and the local media within five days of relocation.

“The reason and rationale behind the development of these procedures is to put a process in place to inform folks when grizzlies are being relocated,” said Ed Schriever, deputy director of operations for the Idaho Fish and Game Department. “Grizzly bears are currently listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the State does not have authority to manage them. So we are interested in getting this procedure out in anticipation of the delisting of grizzlies in the Yellowstone

ecosystem.”

Schriever said a final rule on delisting Yellowstone grizzly bears is expected from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in June. Once that rule comes out he expects legal challenges from various environmental groups. However, it will be up to a judge to decide whether to enjoin the ruling and proceed with turning bear management over to the state of Idaho, Wyoming and Montana while the court scenarios play out.

According to the new relocation procedure, the public notice will include the date of relocation, number of bears relocated, sex and age of the bears (if known), reason for relocation and the location of relocation by proper name of drainage and estimated number of miles and general compass direction to the nearest municipality.

Idaho Fish and Game will not transplant bears into places where they are likely to cause

human conflicts, Schriever said. “We don’t want to move trouble from one spot to another, and we won’t relocate bears to private property or other places where there is a high probability of more problems,” he said.

The Yellowstone bear population has been thoroughly studied and the individuals are well-known and can be identified through hair samples. Bears with a history of causing human conflict may be euthanized or sent to zoos. Deference is sometimes given depending on the bear’s sex. Fertile females are more likely to be given a second or even a third chance. Relocated bears are fitted with telemetry collars most of the time. But that’s not always necessary with Yellowstone bears because they are well-known by biologists and their lineage has been recorded, he said.

Idaho has one region suitable for grizzly bears that is currently unoccupied – the Selway Bitterroot. Schriever says bears

travel through this region on a transient basis but Fish and Game is not aware of permanent residents. The current State policy is not to artificially introduce bears into that ecosystem.

“I don’t see that policy changing with the delisting of Yellowstone ecosystem grizzly bears,” he said. “If a delisted Yellowstone bear leaves the Yellowstone ecosystem, either volitionally or by action of relocation, that bear would have the protections of the ESA. If grizzly bears were delisted across their range, then each state would have the flexibility to move bears where they saw fit.”

Idaho Fish and Game isn’t relocating bears from Yellowstone to the Cabinet-Yaak or Selkirk ecosystems, he added. However, Montana and British Columbia are relocating bears, sometimes in close proximity to Idaho’s border.

In 2015, numerous reports of

grizzly bear activity were reported in Fremont County. Bears were pilfering seed potatoes from farms in the Ashton area, and were found eating pet food on porches of cabins in Island Park.

In October, 2015 two yearling male bears and an adult sow were trapped near Chester north of St. Anthony. The three bears had previously caused problems in Wyoming and were relocated by Wyoming officials to an area near the Idaho border. From there they made their way south and east into Idaho. Their presence, along with several other reports of bear activity in Island Park and Ashton that summer and fall, caused significant concern in Fremont County.

The sow was euthanized by Idaho Fish and Game officers after being trapped near Chester. The two yearlings were fitted with telemetry collars and released in Idaho but near the Yellowstone border. They dened in early winter 2015, but repeated previous behavior and were killed in 2016 after being caught eating apples, Schriever said.

Idaho has four regions that contain suitable grizzly bear habitat. They include the Yellowstone region, which contains an estimated 700 bears, the Cabinet Yaak and Selkirk regions in northern Idaho, and the Selway – Bitterroot ecosystem.

Idaho officials have voiced concern about other states relocating bears in close proximity to Idaho borders. Wyoming has transplanted problem bears into the Bechler Meadows area of southwest Yellowstone Park in the past.

Schriever said obviously Idaho would prefer Wyoming didn't do that, but it's difficult to find acceptable places to relocate delinquent grizzly bears. "We can't control what Wyoming does inside their borders," he said. "We are collectively looking forward to delisting and less stringent regulatory requirements on what states have to do with problem bears."

After delisting, hunting will be used as a grizzly bear management tool in Idaho. Bears that are considered a risk to human safety will be dealt with swiftly, he said. "There are some differences of opinion and some people think that just seeing a bear is in fact enough of a risk that the bear needs to go away," he said. "I appreciate the differences of opinions on what constitutes a conflict and a problem and we try to err on the side of human safety in those decisions. Ultimately those decisions can be made by a county sheriff. He has primacy on those decisions."

Idaho residents, especially those living or recreating near suitable grizzly habitat, will need to become more bear aware in the future. There are a few websites where people can find grizzly bear resource materials listed at the end of this article. Some years there will be more bear activity in lower elevations than other years. A male grizzly bear will travel over a 200 to 500 square-mile home range, according to USFWS.

Schriever said when the high elevation berry crops fail due to too much moisture or frost when the bushes are flowering, bears will travel down-slope looking for food. A few basic rules for farmers and ranch-

ers are first, secure any potential food sources. Bear-proof grain bins and clean up piles of spoiled grain or potatoes.

Grizzly bears love chicken coops. Bear biologists refer to chickens as bear-heroin – they can't leave chickens alone. Wyoming biologists conducted experiments in 2002 with electric fences as bear deterrents. In most cases, electric fences, charged by solar panels with battery back-up worked. They placed deer carcasses inside an electric fence enclosure and although bears tested the wire, the electric charge was effective in backing them off. They found the fences worked well for chicken coops and bee hives. However, they were less effective in protecting flocks of sheep because of the difficulty

associated with getting the sheep inside the enclosure. The study found it was difficult to herd the sheep inside and then charge the wire without the help of several people. A lone herder would have a difficult time getting the sheep inside by himself.

For more information on grizzly bear awareness, consult the following websites:

<http://igbconline.org/for-farming-ranching/>

http://www.bebearaware.org/Residential/Bear_Smart_Community/bear_smart_community.html

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=livingwithbears.bearfences>

<https://idfg.idaho.gov/conservation/grizzly-bear>



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Carpet One

RENTAL CARS

Hertz - Enterprise
Avis - Budget

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Lagoon
Silverwood
Roaring Springs
Wahooz Family Fun Zone
San Diego Zoo - Sea World
Knott's Berry Farm

WINTER SKIING

Pebble Creek - Bogus Basin
Brundage Mtn. - Silver Mountain
Deer Valley Resort, UT

PROPANE

Amerigas
Suburban Propane

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Office Depot - Office Max

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Salt Lake Express (To or From SLC)

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Walton Feed

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Silver Mountain Resort (Kellogg)
Dwight Baker Orthodontics (Eastern Idaho)
Summit Eyecare (Eastern Idaho)
Felton & Felton Law (South Central)

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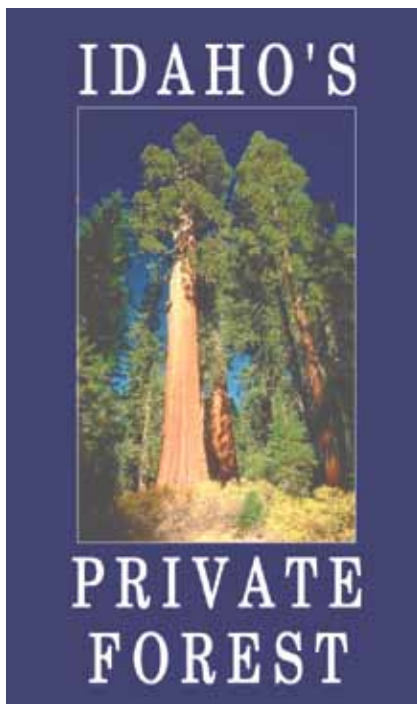
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Private Forests Provide Environmental, Community Benefits



Cost-sharing programs are often used to help forest owners complete pre-commercial thinning.

Article and photos by Chris Schnepf

“Private Forests do the Public Good” proclaims a bumper sticker distributed by a forest owner’s association in Washington State. That bumper sticker applies equally to Idaho family forests.

Over 41 percent of Idaho is forested, with approximately 11 percent of Idaho forests (2.3 million acres) belonging to family forest owners. Family forest acreage in Idaho has been increasing, due to forest product companies selling lands, former pasture or marginal cropland being actively planted back into trees, and land naturally seeding back into forest after tillage stops. The number of Idaho family forest owners has also been growing.

Idaho has the most productive forests in the U.S. Rocky Mountains. Most logs from family forests are processed into wood products in Idaho, supporting living wage jobs in rural Idaho communities. If you are building or renovating a house in Idaho, odds are very good the lumber you are using is “locally grown.” Since 1992, family-owned forests have annually produced 25 percent of Idaho’s timber harvest (much more in some communities).

But family forests produce more than wood. Family forests are also critical to

water quantity and quality, wildlife, and many other public benefits. They also tend to be more concentrated near key locations for ecosystem functions (e.g., along lakes, streams, and in rare low elevation habitats).

The public benefits of private forests have long been recognized, and to some degree, publicly supported. The most commonly used example of this is the lower Idaho property tax rate for forest land, similar to the lower rate for agricultural lands. The primary purpose of the forest-use tax rate is to ensure wood supply for Idaho forest product manufacturers, but this incentive also coincidentally supports other forest benefits. A variety of private forest management incentives are also built in the federal income tax code (see the national timber tax web site: www.timbertax.org).

Cost-sharing programs (also referred to as “financial assistance” programs) are another form of helping private forest owners do the public good. Forest owners often

will not receive an immediate benefit from many forest management activities. For example, most landowners who plant trees will not live long enough to harvest those trees. Other practices improve things forest owners value, but also provide substantial benefits to the public. For example, in addition to the benefits a landowner receives by thinning, this practice can also reduce fire risk on adjoining properties and reduce the likelihood of spending taxpayer dollars fighting costly wildfires. Replacing a stream crossing with one that allows fish passage benefits fisheries through the entire watershed.

When I first came to work in Idaho Extension in the 1980s, there was a veritable alphabet soup of acronyms to describe cost-sharing programs for family forest owners (FIP, SIP, ACP, etc.). Most of these cost-sharing programs were funded through various agencies and partners with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). However, one cost-share program now offers the



Financial assistance is often available to help forest owners restore forest streams.

majority of federal financial assistance for private forest owners: the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (“EQIP”) administered through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (“NRCS”).

The EQIP program can pay for between 50-75 percent of the cost of tree planting, pre-commercial thinning, site preparation, white pine pruning, roadside seeding, wildlife habitat improvement, fuel breaks, wetland enhancement, stream crossings, grazing improvements, and many other forest practices. To explore your options under EQIP, contact your local NRCS office. Most NRCS offices do not have a forester, so they often partner with local Idaho Department of Lands private forestry specialists, or consulting foresters who are certified as “technical service providers” (TSPs) to help landowners work with the program.

The first step to EQIP participation is to develop or revise a forest management plan that meets NRCS criteria. In recent

years, most of the organizations and agencies that work with forest owners (e.g., IDL, NRCS, Tree Farm, etc.) have worked together to come up with a plan format that meets all their criteria simultaneously. For more information, scroll down to “One Plan” at www.idl.idaho.gov/forestry/service/index.html. If your forest management plan follows this template, it should synchronize with all Idaho organizations that use a management plan as a starting point for working with family forest owners.

Occasionally special priorities are made within cost-sharing programs to address key emerging issues in specific regions. For example, the NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is currently putting special emphasis on practices in Idaho and Washington that benefit the greater Spokane river watershed (www.sccd.org/rcpp).

Forest owners may be also able to tap into less commonly used cost-share programs, such as

the Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) administered by Idaho Fish and Game (<https://idfg.idaho.gov/conservation/habitat/hip>). A variety of hunting and fishing organizations sometimes help landowners improve wildlife habitat, particularly at critical places in a large watershed. Financial support isn’t the only type of support they can offer though. For example, members of local Trout Unlimited chapter may be willing to help plant willow cuttings along a trout stream.

Many counties also have programs that help forest owners reduce fire risk next to homes, along well-traveled roads, and in locations that make good strategic fire breaks. These programs go by varied names, such as “Firesmart”, “Bonfire”, etc., and funding often waxes and wanes according to grant availability. For more information, contact your county’s emergency management office.

There may be significant paperwork and up to 1-2-year time frames associated with cost-

share programs. Also, when funds are limited, applications may be ranked, with the highest ranked applications being accepted first. But most landowners I have worked with who have participated in these programs felt it was ultimately worth it. Landowners commonly ask whether cost-sharing participation requires landowners to allow hunting or fishing access to their property. Most cost-share programs do not require that. The exception is for programs that explicitly seek to increase recreational access, such as Idaho Fish and Game’s “Access Yes!” program.

In the future, additional resources may be available to support family forest owners’ active management of a fuller range of forest benefits. The currently popular term for this is “ecosystem services.” For example, in regions where water quantity is limited, forest owners could be paid to manage their forests in ways that increase the amount of snow captured and stored by their forest. There has also been a lot of discussion over the last ten years about paying forest owners to store more carbon.

Most forest owners happily provide these benefits with no expectation of additional compensation. But many of the public benefits of family forests can be increased with some up-front investments. Cost-share programs are a way for the public to help private forest owners do even more public good.

Chris Schnepf is an area extension educator – forestry – for the University of Idaho in Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai and Benewah counties. He can be reached at cschnepf@uidaho.edu

Focus on Agriculture

4-H's Harvest of Life-long Values

By Shiloh Perry

I pledge my head to clearer thinking, my heart to greater loyalty, my hands to larger service, my health to better living, for my club, my community, my country and my world.

The 4-H pledge—for me these words became more than the promise I made to my local club as a kid. The short phrases that make up the pledge explain how to contribute to the greater good with a servant's heart. This is something being a part of 4-H taught me at an early age, and the spirit of the oath has grounded and motivated me ever since.

I remember reciting the pledge at club meetings with my

friends and trying to be the first one of the group to memorize it. While I may not have been the first to memorize it fully, the 4-H pledge is forever engrained in my mind and I am glad it is.

4-H was where I first learned the value of clear thinking, great loyalty, large service and better living—principles that are important to every walk of life. In 4-H, I had the opportunity not only to learn but also to practice these values and grow in my appreciation of agriculture through my involvement.

Preparing for food show contests helped me gain a basic knowledge of the different food groups and the importance of a nutritious and balanced diet.

When cooking or baking certain dishes, I had to think critically about each ingredient and its nutritional value in order to create meals that were both healthy and delicious. Then at the contests I had to concisely present my dish and what I learned from the planning and cooking experience.

From holding leadership positions in my local club, parliamentarian and secretary, I learned the importance of loyalty to a cause, organization, activity or group. I came to see how being dedicated and carrying out the responsibilities of my leadership positions helped our club thrive, or how lacking dedication could harm an organization. Some of my

greatest 4-H memories though are of our club's efforts to give back to our community. We often had community work and beautification days to clean up different public buildings and help neighbors with yard work.

Today, I try to think critically to best carry out my personal and work-related responsibilities, cherish the relationships I have, give back, help others and make healthy decisions. These are things I strive for every day, and working at the American Farm Bureau Federation, I get to see how America's farmers and ranchers do the same.

My involvement in 4-H has taught me valuable life lessons. It began to craft my leadership skills and strengthen my love of agriculture. I am grateful to have been a part of an organization that works to empower youth through agricultural-related hands-on-experiences. I am honored to work at an organization with the same values as 4-H, not to mention whose leader was recently recognized as an outstanding 4-H alumnus and founding luminary. The partnership between the American Farm Bureau Federation and the National 4-H Council is a natural fit as we work together to educate young minds about agriculture and its importance.

Shiloh Perry is a communications assistant at the American Farm Bureau Federation.





Americans Say Agriculture is Sustainable, Favor Incentives Over Regulations

By Mace Thornton

Sustainability: From the notion of a modern farm or ranch being economically able to sustain a family, to the idea of working with the land in a manner that supports food and fiber production for future generations, the word means different things to different people. Even in agricultural circles, definitions of sustainability run far afield, from the environment to economics.

A recent Morning Consult poll asked 1,917 registered voters to give their opinions regarding

agriculture and sustainability. One definition of sustainable agriculture was offered, generally, as defined by the 1977 and 1990 farm bills, a system of agriculture that will satisfy human food and fiber needs, enhance environmental quality, use resources efficiently, sustain the economic viability of farmers and benefit society as a whole.

Almost everyone supports sustainability, by one definition or another. And, while the background noise around this discussion might sometimes suggest otherwise, many

Americans think agriculture and farming are among the nation's most sustainable sectors.

Sustainability, not a Red or Blue Issue

Democrats and Republicans actually agreed on many points in the survey.

For starters, 80 percent of Republicans said they agreed that modern agriculture is sustainable, as did 76 percent of Democrats. There was strong bipartisan support for incentives related to environmental sustainability versus outright government regulation. Sixty-five

percent of Republicans and 63 percent of Democrats favored cooperative incentives that allow government and farmers to work together to address issues, versus 13 percent of Republicans and 15 percent of Democrats who favored more farm regulation.

Fifty-nine percent of respondents said they trust farmers to make the right decisions when it comes to sustainability, while just 24 percent wanted government to make the call. Seventeen percent said they

See AG POLL p. 26



Ron Abramovich, Natural Resources Conservation Service water supply specialist, takes snow measurements near Mores Creek Summit on February 28.

The winter of 2016-17 brought record snowpack and flooding in many areas of southern Idaho. More flooding is expected as this magazine goes to print. In this issue of Idaho Farm Bureau Quarterly we wanted to share some photographs taken by Idaho Farm Bureau photographer Steve Ritter over the past few months.



Snowpack at Mores Creek Summit on February 28.



The ring gate at Owyhee Reservoir, also known as "the glory hole" spills water on April 3. According to the Owyhee Irrigation District, this spring was the first time the ring gate spilled water since 2011. Owyhee Dam is located in Malheur County, Oregon and at the time of construction (1932) was the tallest dam of its type in the world at 417 feet. The reservoir stores more than 1.2 million acre-feet of water that is used to irrigate 120,000 acres of farm land in Oregon and Idaho.



Snow and ice loads caused the collapse of hundreds of buildings in southwest Idaho in January. Here, onions taken from collapsed storage buildings are being dumped at Clay Peak Regional Landfill in Payette County. This photograph was taken on March 13.

Flooded farm, late March in Minidoka County.
Photo by Shad Nalder



Flooded farm, late March in Minidoka County.
Photo by Shad Nalder



Caludron Linn, also known as Star Falls, in Twin Falls County is a place where the Snake River is forced through an opening about 40 feet wide. On March 28, the river was running at about 20,000 cubic feet per second. The area is popular with kayakers during high water events. The Wilson Hunt Party that explored the area in 1811 lost a man and two canoes in this area, according to Southern Idaho Tourism.



An Idaho Department of Water Resources recharge site on the Milner-Gooding Canal, north of the Snake River in Jerome County. IDWR is optimistic about doubling previously estimated recharge amounts this year due to high water. See article on page seven for more details. Photograph taken on March 29.

WORD SEARCH PUZZLE: Invasive Species in Idaho

A	S	I	A	N	C	L	A	M	S	I	W	N	R	B	S	C	E	P
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T	E	K	C	A	J	W	O	L	L	E	Y	N	A	M	R	E	G	E

Quagga Mussel

Asian Clam

Spiny Waterflea

Bowfin

Rudd

Carp

Ruffe

Bullfrog

Nutria

Emerald Ash Borer

Asian Gypsy Moth

Japanese Beetle

Bee Mite

German Yellowjacket

European Paper Wasp

Elm Bark Beetle

Potato Tuberworm

Karnal Bunt

Potato Wart

Nematode

Wheat Smut

Wheat Scab

Potato Ring Rot

Faucet Snail

ANSWERS ON PAGE 29

County Happenings



Members of the Kootenai/Shoshone County Farm Bureau conduct a wheat and dairy presentation each year for the 3rd grade students at Betty Keifer Elementary School in Rathdrum. In the photos here, Farm Bureau volunteers Verland Woempner helps students milk the cow and Linda Rider and her daughter, Sharla Wilson, who is a University of Idaho Kootenai County Extension Educator conduct the wheat presentation. The event took place on March 24th.



AG POLL

Continued from page 21

did not know or had no opinion. Across party lines, the majority of respondents expressed trust in farmers over government mandates, with Republicans at 67-18, Democrats at 55-30 and Independents at 55-23.

By nearly a five-to-one margin, respondents said cooperative incentives would boost environmental sustainability in agriculture over additional government regulations – 62 to 13 percent. Again, there was agreement across party lines, with 65 vs. 13 percent of Republicans and 63 vs. 15 percent of Democrats favoring incentives. More respondents (46 vs. 26 percent) said additional government regulations would hurt sustainability on American farms rather than improve it.

Farmers Winning the Popular Vote

Agriculture and farming ranked as the most favorable industry section among those offered to respondents. Seventy-eight percent ranked it favorable, compared to 76 percent for the technology sector, 73 percent for the hospitality industry, 67 percent for manufacturing, 60 percent for energy, 43 percent for the pharmaceutical industry and 54 percent for airlines.

Agriculture also drew the highest marks when respondents were asked whether it was more “good” than “bad” regarding environmental sustainability – 56 percent said good, 13 said bad, 19 percent said equal and 11 percent did not know or had no opinion. The technology industry came in second with 47 percent good and 15 percent bad.

Modern Farming Knows Green

A whopping 80 percent of respondents said they strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement that “the true success of an environmentally sustainable farming practice depends on whether that practice also leads to economic opportunity for the farmer.”

Seventy-five percent of respondents said they were more likely to say modern agriculture is sustainable with the knowledge that a common goal among farmers and ranchers is to leave the land in better shape for the next generation. Likewise, 72 percent said they were more likely to say modern agriculture is sustainable with the knowledge that many farms and ranches have been operated for generations, and some for more than a century.

The public “gets” it, even if zealots don’t. America’s farmers and ranchers need to build on that reservoir of trust by sharing their stories of what really happens in the countryside. They need to explain the in-the-field work they are doing to protect natural resources while providing for their families. Americans trust you. Show them why they should continue to do so.

Mace Thornton is Executive Director of Communications at the American Farm Bureau Federation.



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INSURANCE MATTERS

MIKE MYERS — *Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Co. of Idaho*

Protect Your Home From Mold



Mold can grow in places where humidity and moisture levels are high, such as behind kitchen cabinets.

Molds are part of the natural environment. Outside they play an important role by breaking down dead organic material, but indoors, mold growth should be avoided.

Molds reproduce by means of tiny spores invisible to the naked eye. Getting rid of all mold spores indoors is impossible; some mold spores can be found floating through the air and in house dust. Mold may begin growing indoors when the spores land on wet surfaces. It can be found where humidity and moisture levels are high, such as bathrooms, kitchens, basements, and on ceilings and walls where water from leaky pipes, windows, or roofs can accumulate. The spores will not grow if moisture is not present, so to prevent indoor mold growth, you should control or eliminate moisture from your home. The following tips can help.

Reduce Humidity In Your Home

- Install exhaust fans in kitchens and bathrooms.
- Control the humidity in your home by using air conditioners or dehumidifiers. The Center For Disease Control recommends levels below 50 percent. Home humidity meters, available at home improvement stores, can measure your home's humidity.
- Consider not using carpet in high-moisture places like bathrooms or basements.

Use Mold-Reducing Products

- Clean bathrooms with bleach or other mold-killing products.
- Add mold inhibitors to paints before application.

Keep your Home and Belongings Dry

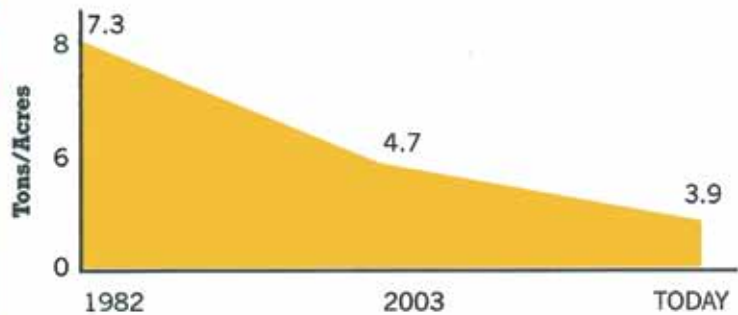
- Inspect hoses, pipes, and fittings attached to:
 - refrigerators, ice makers, and water dispensers
 - water heaters
 - washing machines
 - dishwashers
 - kitchen sinks
 - bathroom sinks and toilets.

Consider replacing hoses to major appliances like washers and dishwashers every five years. A typical water hose costs between five and ten dollars.

Keep rain gutters clear of leaves and other debris, and maintain your roof to prevent water seeping into your home.

Farmers Take Conservation Seriously

Soil Erosion by Wind and Water



Careful stewardship by America's food producers spurred a nearly 50 percent decline in erosion of cropland by wind and water since 1982.

Through the farm bill, funding is provided to farmers and ranchers for conservation and for programs that prevent soil erosion, preserve and restore wetlands, clean the air and water, and enhance wildlife.

Crop rotation, the practice of growing different crops in succession on the same land, is another way farmers take care of the land.

For contour farming, farmers plant crops across the slope of the land to conserve water and protect soil.

Did You Know?

Sand, silt and clay are basic mineral particles that make up soil, which also contains organic matter, water, microorganisms and (sometimes) worms. Farmers often test soil before planting to determine composition, pH and balance of nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. Results are used to determine the proper type and amount of fertilizer to apply.

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Sources: AFBF; USDA National Resources Inventory

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WORD SEARCH

ANSWERS from page 24

A	S	I	A	N	C	L	A	M	S	I	W	N	R	B	S	C	E	P
K	R	B	I	H	S	C	A	R	P	K	H	R	E	A	P	T	M	S
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P	T	L	S	B	N	R	C	D	K	L	A	T	R	S	N	L	R	W
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TOP FARM BUREAU AGENTS

Rookie of the Month:



John Nishimoto
North Idaho Region

Agent of the Month:



Neil Hazelbaker
Magic Valley Region

Agency of the Month:
Hart Agency

Art Winners 2018



Brayli Mattson – 1st Sugar City

The Art Design Contest began in 2000 in an effort to promote the arts and further the understanding of agriculture in our lives. Targeted at grades 6-8, only original designs are accepted. Those winning designs will be used in the 2018 calendar distributed at the Women's Business Meeting of the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation.

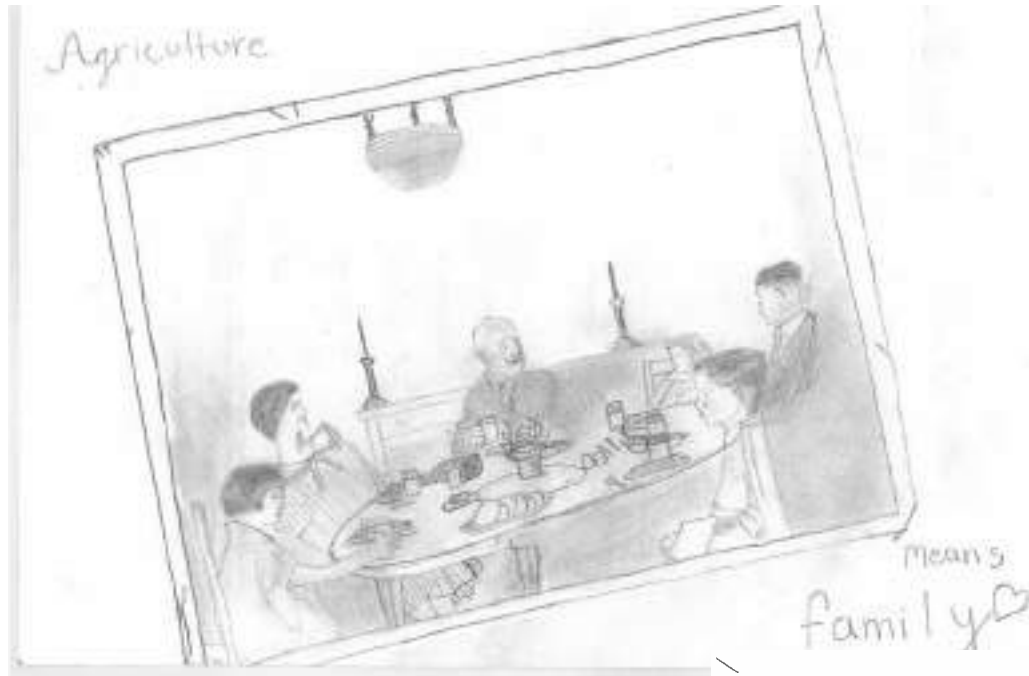


Mary Swore – 2nd , Pocatello

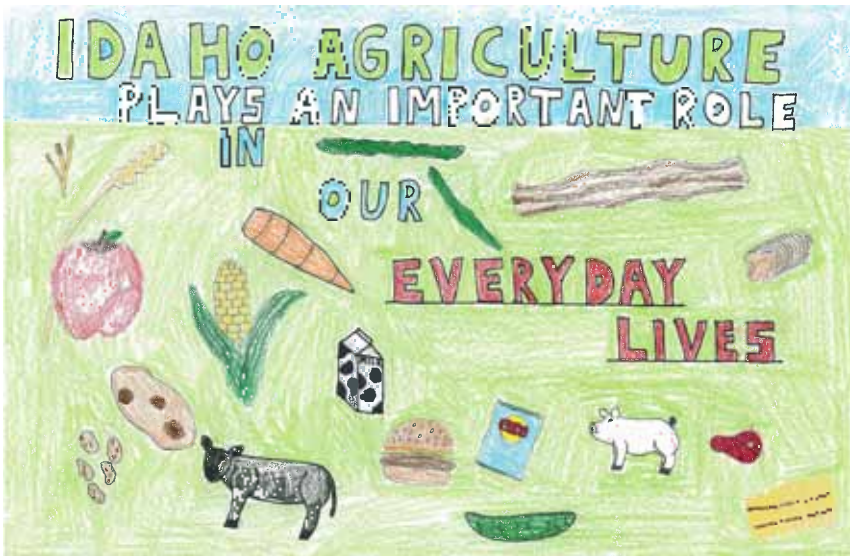


Casey Ashcraft – 3rd , Sugar City

Poster Contest Winners



Blanca Mazo 1st , Ashton



Wiley Turek – 2nd , Challis



Ruby Jordan – 3rd, Pocatello

SPOTLIGHT ON IDAHO FFA—Growing Tomorrow’s Agricultural Leaders

Idaho FFA Elects New State Leadership

Idaho FFA wrapped up the 86th Annual State FFA Leadership conference in Twin Falls on April 8 with the announcement of the 2017-18 State FFA Officer Team.

The new officers began their training in April and will spend the next year serving Idaho’s over 4,500 FFA members, promoting the FFA Organization and advocating for Idaho agriculture.



2017-18 Idaho State FFA Officer Team

(Pictured from left) Lindsey Stowell, State President, Vallivue FFA; Randy Clements, State Vice President, Clark County FFA; Taylor Stephenson, State Reporter, Kuna FFA; Austen Thomason, State Treasurer, Weiser FFA; Sydney Anderson, State Secretary, Nampa FFA; and Peter Towne, State Sentinel, Kendrick FFA.

To learn more about Idaho FFA, please visit:
www.idahoffa.org
www.idffaoundation.org

Idaho Farm Bureau proudly sponsors the Idaho FFA Extemporaneous Public Speaking Career Development Event



2017 Idaho FFA Extemporaneous Public Speaking Champion

Cody Jackson, Jerome FFA

The Extemporaneous Public Speaking Career Development Event challenges FFA members to prepare and deliver a factual speech on a specific agricultural issue in a logical manner – in a short amount of time. Participants draw a topic and have 30 minutes to prepare their four to six minute speeches. A panel of judges uses an additional five minutes to question the speaker on their assigned topic. Through this event, students develop a broad knowledge of current agricultural issues, as well as polish logical reasoning and effective communication skills that will allow them to excel in the classroom and beyond.

Cody Jackson, Jerome FFA, placed first in the 2017 state event held during the State FFA Leadership Conference in Twin Falls in April. He will represent Idaho at the National FFA Convention in October. Austin Grube, North Fremont FFA placed second; Katie Hettinga, Kuna FFA was third; and Jakeb Garrard, Declo FFA was fourth.



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

Monopoly – It’s Not Just a Game

Most people naturally oppose a monopoly. We instinctively understand that monopolies always lead to higher prices and lower quality. We are genuinely upset when we have no choice but to get products or services from the sole provider despite how poorly we are treated.

That is, until the monopoly provider is government. Then, we just roll over and take it. Nearly everyone docilely accepts that government is different somehow. Why?

The inherently wasteful, ineffective and unresponsive nature of monopoly is not magically transformed into being efficient, effective and responsive when operated by government. In fact, it’s usually worse.

A couple of examples will illustrate. This past winter, despite record snowfall, Nampa City refused to plow any residential streets. Shockingly, residents who attempted to plow the streets themselves were threatened with tickets and steep fines. Even hiring private contractors to plow their street was forbidden.

This caused thousands of people to essentially be trapped in their homes by the deeply rutted, impassable, ice covered roads. The city finally capitulated after receiving a firestorm of criticism, but by then many citizens had suffered for weeks by being prevented from getting to medical appointments, grocery shopping, or even getting to work. The City refused to provide the service, but also forbade anyone else from doing the necessary work. How’s that for customer service?

Likewise, since the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), Transportation Security Administration (TSA), or Post Office are the only options available. They don’t have to provide great service, and generally, they don’t. According to The Hill, the TSA has an 87 percent unfavorable rating with frequent travelers!

Finally, legislators and the governor have recently been wringing their hands about schools not training young Idahoans for the

jobs of the future. Predictably, their answer is always more money. However, since the largest monopoly in the state is the public school system, more money will never solve these problems.

As a monopoly, government schools have no incentive to provide the latest innovations, best training or lowest costs. They run one-size-fits-all programs where your address determines the school you attend. Amazingly, private school tuition averages \$4,275 in Idaho while government run schools spend more than double at \$8,559 per pupil; yet test scores are consistently the same or worse at government schools.

The true solution is to allow meaningful competition in schools. This would allow parents and students to choose which school would best equip them for the future. Schools would compete for students by providing innovative training and programs; and it would also save taxpayers a bundle.

There is clearly demand for more choices in Idaho schools. For example, charter schools currently serve over 21,000 students (about 7 percent of the state’s public school students) with more than 10,500 students on waiting lists to get in. Charter schools have more flexibility and provide specialized programs, which parents and students both appreciate.

Although the Idaho Constitution requires the state to “establish and maintain a general, uniform and thorough system of public, free common schools,” it does not require the state to monopolize education, or severely restrain competitors.

Rather, the state could constitutionally be a backstop provider in any areas that don’t yet have a competitive school market. Providing vouchers good for any school would spur additional choices, competition and better education. Property taxes could be significantly reduced for most people as existing schools work harder to compete for students with specialized programs at lower prices.



Russ Hendricks

Sadly, the teacher’s union is firmly opposed to anything which would change the status quo. In their world, cartelized government schools are just fine. They oppose meaningful changes that will actually solve problems, and instead work to entrench the monopoly mentality.

It doesn’t have to be this way. There are cities and states across the nation realizing that competition is the answer to high prices, poor quality and dreadful customer service. They are beginning to privatize any service that they reasonably can. The results have been dramatic. Citizens are paying less, receiving better service and are much more satisfied.

If they don’t like their garbage collector, they can choose another. If they want to switch schools, no problem (14 states have some type of voucher program). If the road maintenance/plowing company did not do well, they can fire them. Several airports have actually fired TSA and hired their own private security personnel, with great success.

Only competition provides the incentive to ensure the customer is in charge. Without options, government quickly forgets that they work for the people rather than the people working for them.



Dusty Wilkins of Rupert gets ready for the 2017 season. This photo was taken from his drone.

Drone Mapping Helps Catch a Major Aphid Infestation

By Jake Putnam

Dusty Wilkins of Rupert bought new equipment for the farm last year about this time.

The small piece of equipment cost close to \$1,000. In the grand scheme of things it's not a major purchase, but it ended up saving him close to 50 times that amount.

The Rupert sugar beet farmer

told everyone he bought a Phantom 3 drone to map his fields, but he secretly wanted to fly the Snake River Canyon and get video of the all spectacular waterfalls.

Wilkins got his video, but a short while later he decided to fly the drone over his farm.

And he also signed up with a high-tech Bay Area company

called Drone Deploy.

"You get a paid subscription with Drone Deploy, they call it Plant Health but it's basically just NDVI, images. NDVI is short for normalized difference vegetation index. With the video that I take, the software just filters out the colors and you can see what's going on with the plants in the fields," said Wilkins.

Last July Wilkins harvested his barley and then flew a routine drone flight over his sugarbeet field across the road. Pests like aphids can live harmlessly in barley fields, but when the barley is cut, farmers have to keep an eye on neighboring fields because pests tend to migrate to greener pastures.

That night he uploaded images from the first sugarbeet field, a

26-acre plot that took just under twelve minutes to fly at 190 feet altitude. When he took a look on the laptop he was shocked at what he saw.

The yellow and red areas (photos accompany article) show aphids covering the plants. Green sections indicate sprinkler lines. Wilkins couldn't believe his eyes so he walked the field, finding the worst aphid infestation he'd ever seen. The plants were so completely covered with aphids, they turned his pant legs black.

Without the drone mapping, Wilkins says his fertilizer agronomist would have found the pests. "But at this point of the season, we had full leaf row closure," he said, "so walking

through the field takes time and it's really hard. The field man wouldn't have picked up the infestation for a week," said Wilkins.

Thanks, to the drone he was able to get an aerial applicator to treat the field shortly thereafter, killing the nuisance pests.

"When I was looking at that video for the first time, I was thinking there's no way that this drone caught it at all," he said. "So after I physically went out and walked the fields I was thinking this is insane. I tell other farmers who have drones to get good drone and software like Drone Deploy, so you can actually process the information you're getting. A lot of people have drones and they go

take a picture from 400 feet up and they have no idea what the picture means."

Because he caught the infestation before any real damage was done, Wilkins got a head start on treatment and prevented significant loss of sugar content to his crop. A typical aphid infestation can cause up to a one-percent loss in the sugar content that amounts to a four-ton loss per acre. He figures with the exceptionally bad infestation he had last summer, he could easily have lost twice the amount of tonnage per acre, had he not found infestation early. At \$40 per ton, multiplied over 185 acres of beets, he could have been out at least \$60,000 in lost revenue.

"So we did 17.3 percent in sugar content. It's not bad. The field was high on nitrates and that affected it. I wish there was a way to show the damage, like spray half a field, and let the other side go, so we could see the actual damage data and calculate the loss. There's no way to calculate damage and loss outside of a test plot, but we did okay with our beets thanks to the drone," said Wilkins.

Wilkins will be using the drone this summer. He put 3,000 miles on the Phantom 3 and this year he bought the updated Phantom 4. He is using it to map fields. He says can't imagine not using a drone now to fight pests and help with fertilizer in his fields outside of Rupert.

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Idaho Potato Commission President and CEO, Frank Muir.

Big Red Truck Reaches Rock Star Status

By Jake Putnam

The Big Red Idaho Potato Truck is back on the road for the sixth consecutive year.

The potato truck travels the nation's highways carrying the iconic, 6-ton Russet Burbank potato. It causes a stir nearly everywhere it goes.

Idaho Potato Commission CEO Frank Muir says the truck is back by popular demand.

"It seems that everywhere we go the Big Red Truck generates additional publicity and neighboring cities in turn call us for their events. Over the years it has steam-rolled. Everyone it seems, wants the truck at their event," said Muir.

The Idaho Potato Commission dreamed up the potato truck promotion to observe the Commission's 75th year in 2009 and Muir says the Truck has far exceeded the Commission's marketing expectations.

"I don't think you can anticipate the success of any program," he said. "We hope

for it but can never anticipate it. It seems that everywhere we went the Red Truck generated additional publicity and other cities started calling to see if we could visit them too."

Early on, Potato Commission officials didn't know what to expect. But it soon became obvious that they had a 'rock star' property on their hands.

"Oh yea! Several major retailers wanted The Big Red Truck to visit all their stores in America," said Muir. "That's when we knew that this promotion had wheels, if I can use the pun. And as we continue to expand, there's naturally more interest across the country and it doubles with each event."

The Truck is pulling down the all-important and powerful social media impression count which includes Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest according to Muir but he says all the impacts are hard to count.

"We used to try and measure it," he said.

"We can measure the TV coverage. As you know, we bought time on CNN and in all the major markets, yet we get news coverage in every market we visit. All the local news stations cover our visits in each and every town at least 95-percent of the time."

Muir says while metrics to measure social media impressions have improved, the truck continues to get rollover impressions that are also very important.

"So we get that coverage from our visits, we also get the follow-up print coverage and often there's live radio programming going on at our events," Muir said. "What's immeasurable is all the social media that we get that we have no control over."

Potato Commission officials wish they could count all the people nationwide who have taken photos of the truck and posted it on social media. Photos that ended up on family Christmas cards. But the Commission is confident that the Red Truck has left an indelible mark with each and every visit, promoting the famous Idaho potato.

“Think of all the families across America that have had their picture taken with the truck, and it ends up an heirloom. And they’re not even from Idaho. We can’t begin to measure those impacts,” said Muir.

Through it all, the Potato Commission’s goal is to raise the profile of the Idaho potato. With millions of impressions a month according to Muir they’re getting the job done.

“When you’re rolling a 6-ton Russet Burbank across the country folks get interested in it. You can’t imagine the age range in terms of people wanting to see the truck. From little babies to grandparents and they all want to see it,” he said.

Muir adds that it’s gotten to the point where people remember where they were when they saw the truck. With the Red Truck promotion the Commission does a media blitz to places where the truck can’t go.

“In terms of the exposure we get, we do a

potato lovers promotion and put up 5,000 huge displays nationwide where our potatoes are sold,” Muir said. “All feature the giant russet potato and the truck. That visibility, along with our commercials and events have raised the profile of the truck, the potato and even our farmers.”

Muir says the truck has become a rock star of sorts and not only turned the Idaho Potato into a celebrity but the truck driver and the farmer that appears in the national ads.

“Mark Coombs grows potatoes out in Caldwell and he’s a genuine, real McCoy potato farmer,” said Muir. “He was on vacation in Florida a few weeks ago with his family and someone asked him if he had found the Red Truck yet. Larry Bathe is a genuine truck driver and this is his 4th tour of duty driving the truck and he couldn’t be happier. He’s so used to people smiling, waving, taking photos of him and the truck he forgets when he’s back home.”

The Big Red Truck campaign has enabled

the Commission to highlight the healthy elements of the potato that are often overlooked by a new generation of food enthusiasts according to Muir.

“On the truck we have all kinds of nutritional messages,” he said. “We also carry the American Heart Association heart checkmark which certifies that Idaho potatoes are heart healthy and we’re gluten free and riding the gluten-free wave as well. We have more potassium than a banana, more vitamin C than apples and shoppers are finding that the potato is a very nutritious food.”

Muir says the Big Red Truck has traveled more than 100,000 miles. Recently it visited Houston for the Children’s Festival. This season the Red Truck will hit more than 60 cities.

The truck will also bring exposure to the Idaho potato at major events like the Kentucky Derby, NFL Hall of Fame Game and the Washington DC Memorial Day Parade.



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Egg-Citing News – Food Prices Down for Easter



WASHINGTON, D.C., – Lower retail prices for several foods, including eggs, ground chuck, sirloin tip roast, chicken breasts and toasted oat cereal resulted in a significant decrease in the American Farm Bureau Federation’s Spring Picnic Marketbasket Survey.

“As expected due to lower farm-gate prices, we have seen continued declines in retail prices for livestock products including eggs, beef, chicken, pork and cheese,” said John Newton, AFBF’s director of market intelligence.

The informal survey showed the total cost of 16 food items that can be used to prepare one or more meals was \$50.03, down \$3.25 or about 6 percent compared to a year ago. Of the 16 items surveyed, 11 decreased, four increased and one remained the same in average price.

Egg prices are down sharply from a year ago and also are down slightly from the third quarter of 2016.

“Egg prices continue to move back toward long-run average prices following the bird flu of 2014/15,” said Newton. “The Agriculture Department is currently monitoring bird flu detections in the Southeast U.S. If detections continue, retail poultry prices could feel an impact due to lower exports or changes in supply,” he said.

“As farm-gate prices for livestock products have declined and remained lower, prices in the retail meat case have become more competitive,” Newton said.

Retail price changes from a year ago:

- Eggs, down 41 percent to \$1.32 per dozen
- Toasted oat cereal, down 15 percent to \$2.83 for a 9-ounce box
- Sirloin tip roast, down 13 percent to \$4.95 per pound
- Ground chuck, down 10 percent to \$3.92 per pound
- Chicken breast, down 6 percent to \$3.17 per pound
- Apples, down 6 percent to \$1.55 per pound
- Flour, down 5 percent to \$2.36 for a 5-pound bag
- Shredded cheddar cheese, down 4 percent to \$4.10 per pound
- Deli ham, down 3 percent to \$5.42 per pound
- Bacon, down 3 percent to \$4.65 per pound
- Potatoes, down 1 percent to \$2.68 for a 5-pound bag
- Bagged salad, up 6 percent to \$2.34 per pound
- White bread, up 2 percent to \$1.72 per 20-ounce loaf
- Orange juice, up 1 percent to \$3.22 per half-gallon
- Whole milk, up 1 percent to \$3.27 per gallon
- Vegetable oil, no change, \$2.55 for a 32-ounce bottle

Price checks of alternative milk and egg choices not included in the overall marketbasket survey average revealed the following: 1/2 gallon whole regular milk, \$2.10; 1/2 gallon organic milk, \$4.20; and one dozen “cage-free” eggs, \$3.48.

The year-to-year direction of the marketbasket survey tracks closely with the federal government’s Consumer Price Index (<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/cpi.nr0.htm>) report for food at home. As retail grocery prices have increased gradually over time, the share of the average food dollar that America’s farm and ranch families receive has dropped.

“Through the mid-1970s, farmers received about one-third of consumer retail food expenditures for food eaten at home and away from home, on average. Since then, that figure has decreased steadily and is now about 16 percent, according to the Agriculture Department’s revised Food Dollar Series,” Newton said.

AFBF, the nation’s largest general farm organization, began conducting informal quarterly marketbasket surveys of retail food price trends in 1989. The series includes a spring picnic survey, summer cookout survey, fall harvest survey and Thanksgiving dinner cost survey.

According to USDA, Americans spend just under 10 percent of their disposable annual income on food, the lowest average of any country in the world. A total of 117 shoppers in 31 states participated in the latest survey, conducted in March.

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16 Items

Apples	Chicken breast	Milk	Sirloin tip roast
Bacon	Eggs	Orange juice	Sliced deli ham
Bagged salad	Flour	Potatoes	Toasted oat cereal
Bread	Ground chuck	Shredded cheese	Vegetable oil

Source/Graphic: American Farm Bureau Federation® newsroom.fb.org

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Are Dairy Robotic Systems a Fad or the Future?

By Jake Putnam

HEYBURN - There was a time when the mention of farm robots was more science fiction than reality. But that fiction has turned into the next big thing in dairy farming.

“I’m getting calls from friends and friends of friends that want to talk robots, every single day,” said Todd Webb, owner and salesman for Snake River Robotics. “I’m probably working every day with dairymen that are dead serious about robotics. I’ve compiled a list of Magic Valley farmers that are not only asking but have taken the first step about robotics.”

Presently, over 35,000 robotic systems are milking cows on dairy farms around the world. But in Idaho, robotics are still in the infancy stage. Webb says robotics can improve a dairy herd’s health and productivity, along with a farmer’s lifestyle. Long-term growth and profit without the need for additional labor are big factors helping to garner attention for the technology.

“You’d think the number one reason for robotics is labor, but it’s actually third,” said Webb who sells Lely Robotic Systems. “There’s been extensive surveys on this issue and farmers put labor down the list. I think its increased herd management, that’s the top. The efficiency of those feeding systems are also one of top selling points for robots. Labor is a huge benefit too, when you talk the overall economics of this.”

Webb adds that robotic systems can pay for themselves over time in labor savings. The dairy industry presents difficulties in labor management due to its around-the-clock, around-the-calendar demands. But robots provide the benefit of a workforce that doesn’t stop for breaks, doesn’t take vacation, and doesn’t require documentation, FICA or other employee related benefits.

Robotic systems are not just milking machines, Snake River Robotics offers a package of services that cut time, worry and hassle out of running a dairy.

“I’ve got a little App here on my phone with blue tooth. We sell Lely systems and I can pull up the Lely controls right here and anyone with a smart phone can operate these systems. Lely has several different devices, we have a robotic feeding unit, there are robotic corral scrapers, and even a robotic vacuum to clean the corrals to go along with the robotic milking systems. And it’s all accessible on the App through a simple blue tooth connection,” said Webb.

The information flowing from the robotic milker includes each cow’s weight, milk temperature in each individual quarter of her udder, the number of steps she’s taken in a 24-hour period (an indicator of whether she’s in heat), her daily milk production, the number of times she gets milked each day, the speed the milk flows from her udder and much more.

The computer profile for a typical cow could show that she’s produced 33 pounds of milk at 6:19 a.m., and when she showed up for another milking at 11:55 a.m., she gave 29.5 pounds.

Software on the app reveals that some cows like to get milked and come back over and over again. Some can produce up to a hundred pounds in a day with little or no herd stress.

Cows milk themselves whenever they want, though they must wait a minimum of four hours between milkings. If it’s less than four hours, the robotic milker will not attach to the udder and the stanchion doors will open.

The cows figure out that if they walk into the robotic milker they’re rewarded with food. It’s an incentive-based

program. The Lely app also lets farmers know if a cow hasn’t been milked in 12 hours so he can find the animal, check her out and correct the problem.

When there’s a problem, farmers are alerted by text message or phone call and can troubleshoot from a smart phone or laptop.

A typical herd averages about 2.6 milkings per day, per cow, and they’re fed accordingly. The best feed strategy for optimal milk production is to provide a fresh, measured and properly mixed ration several times a day. Each group of animals on a fully robotic dairy receive the appropriate ration. Webb says that frees up labor and saves money.

Efficient feeding by the robots has a big effect on cow health and milk yield according to extension studies. Healthy and stress-free cows put more milk in the tank. Robots even offer cows back rubs for extra comfort.

The biggest drawback is the expense. A milking robot costs between \$150,000 and \$200,000. A single robot can milk between 50 and 70 cows.

Studies commissioned before 2014 show milking robots were less profitable than conventional milking systems. But with technological advances in robotic technology everything from milking and herd management to feeding and cleanup has lowered operating costs. Projections in the next few years could bring even greater efficiency according to the USDA.

A survey of 53 Minnesota and Wisconsin robot farms showed that even when total labor is similar, time savings from robotic milking, improved herd health and production. The research shows that farmers can get a lot more done on their farms while growing their operation.

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Animals

Chestnut Stallion - AMHA for sale. \$5,000 or offer. Born June 5, 2012. Registry - Mortana Pat Bloodline, other horses available. Kooskia, Id. 208-926-4611.

Alpacas! Come visit our farm and see these wonderful creatures! We have alpacas, stud service, boarding, handling classes, fleece, and beautiful products for sale. Call Deb at 208-301-2121 in Moscow, ID.

Farm Equipment

John Deere 1948 Model A tractor. Good condition. New tires. \$2,850. Located in Boise, Id. Call Terry at 208-861-7029.

Two quarter mile wheel lines. I have rented my ground for hops and no longer need them, five foot wheels, extra engine, used last year, good shape. \$5,000 each OBO. Wilder, Id. 208-482-7020.

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

Caulkins 36 ft cultiweeder \$3,000; 1940 ford 9N tractor, very good all original \$2,500; White 2-105, 5360 hrs \$9,500; Case 2290, 4850 hrs. \$12,900. Twin Falls, Id 208-731-3246.

Sickel Mower it works, has extra blade. Not needed anymore. \$250.00 Weiser 208 549-1551

Balewagons: New Holland self-propelled or pull-type models. Also interested in buying balewagons. Will consider any model. Call Jim Wilhite at 208-880-2889 anytime.

Challenger MT 755, 2209 hrs, annual service by Western States, Trimble A/S, (reduced) \$135,500.; John Deere 4850, \$22,500. 500hp US Motor, 480 volt, hollowshaft irrigation motor, \$20,000. '74 GMC 10 wheeler truck \$15,000. Call 208-220-5588 or e-mail: deegt@aol.com.

320 New Holland small baler w/complete spare knotter in good shape. 6 ft Rhino blade, 3 pt hitch. 250 gal spray rig, 3 pt hitch. Montpelier, Id 208-847-2748.

J.D #40 manure spreader. 9.00-20 tires stored inside, really good condition. Hazelton, Id 208-731-4181.

Miscellaneous

One burial lot for two with vaults. Memorial Estates, Redwood Rd, SLC, UT \$5,000 208-461-5538.

14x40 Jet geared head metal lathe, 240v single phase 2 HP on stand. Excellent condition. \$4,000. Moscow, Id 208-882-0112.

Used Woodmaster LT45 outdoor wood stove. Lowers your heating bills and increases your home comfort. Stove heats your home and hot water. Works in conjunction with existing furnace or as a stand-alone. No more mess! Contact John 208-781-0691.

Boise based Red Line Recreational Toys' points for sale at 75% of current pricing. Points good thru Sept 2020. Call Bernie at 208-859-4105.

Electrology Equipment, complete setup. Dual capacity machine, foot pedal, probes, etc. Facial Chair, adjustable operator chair, magnifier light, cabinet, towels, neck cushion. \$1,200. Photo available. Rupert, Id. 208-219-9034.

Real Estate/Acreage

40 Acres near Rexburg, ID. Land is cross fenced into 5 pastures, large shop, 4 bay equipment storage, 6 corrals with automatic waterers, 1300 sq. ft. older home. Land can be divided into two 20 acre parcels. \$495,000 208-313-0477.

6.9 acres with 10 water shares can be divided into 1 acre lots for building. Located in prime location Twin Falls just outside city limits. Twin Falls, Id. Call Lony 208-420-6952.

Lot for Sale - 1/2 Acre Country Lot. Building Lot or for New Manufactured Home. City water, Gas, Utilities available. Must obtain permits for water hook-up & septic system. Shelley area. Call 528-5337.

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Log cabin on 1.0 acre of forest. Two bedroom, 1 bath, 1408 sq.ft. Separate 1000 sq.ft. garage/shop. All well-built and landscaped. Outdoor activities abound. Snake River nearby. Ashton, ID. 208-351-4686 text or call.

Real Estate/Acreage

Wannabe Farmer? Four acre, 2 bedroom, furnished farmstead, summer rental with mentorship, available June 15 through Nov 15th. Cross fenced, horse, children, farm dog O.K. Three gardens, utilities included. \$600.00 per month; no drugs, references. Thor Johnson, 208-245-1563.

2 placer mining claims. 20 acres each on Cedar Creek, Superior, Montana. R.V. parking, gated. \$20,000 each. 509-992-7288

Trailers

4'x 8' tilt trailer, good condition \$350.00. 4 1/2 ft x 10 ft cargo trailer, good condition. \$350.00. Heyburn, Id 208-678-1601.

Wanted

Looking for one propane fridge for house. Working order good. 208-368-7475.

Want to buy old antique furniture and condition, (must be antique). American Falls, Id. 208-226-5034.

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

Wanted

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

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

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