

Idaho Farm Bureau. Quarterly

Summer 2019 • Volume 19 Issue 3



**Mini farm
equipment, 4**

**Women in
agriculture, 8**

**Food
barley, 14**

Another year of farm labor shortages



As we enter mid-summer, many of our favorite foods are ripe and ready for harvest. There's fresh corn, fruits and vegetables, peas and beans, and more — all ready to be picked and enjoyed now or preserved for later.

What may not be ready is a workforce that's available when crops need picking. We are entering yet another harvest season with no solution to agriculture's labor shortage.

Every year, there are stories about farms that didn't get workers in time to harvest crops when

they were ready. I'm sure we will be hearing more of those stories this summer and fall.

Farmers and ranchers in every state tell me that the shortage of labor is the greatest limiting factor on their farms. They try to hire American workers, but there are not many takers — and those who do take farm jobs often quit before the season is over.

What farmer in his right mind is going to invest in expanding the farm if he doesn't even know if he can harvest what he already produces?

See **DUVALL**, page 7

The President's Desk

By **Bryan Searle**
President Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

Farmers need to continue to adapt to change



As a Greek philosopher once said, the only thing that is constant is change. Or as people today might put it, things change.

Any way you say it, change is not only inevitable, it's necessary.

I remember when GPS auto steering came out some years back. At the time, I thought it was a luxury but I soon found out that it was much more than that.

Due to the complete accuracy and the repeatability of each operation through the field, there is no seed

overlaps or wide rows. The equipment going across the field is maximized on each and every pass. In other words, no human errors.

So, was GPS steering a luxury or a necessity? I'd say definitely a necessity and an opportunity for a better bottom line due to the efficiency of GPS guidance.

The advent of GPS steering is hardly the only major change to come upon the agricultural industry.

Think for a moment about all of the many changes in farming that have benefited mankind as well

See **SEARLE**, page 6

Inside Farm Bureau

By **Rick Keller**
CEO Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

Do not tolerate the intolerable



On a regular basis, the leadership of the Idaho Farm Bureau travel to Washington, D.C., to meet with the state's congressional delegation and express the concerns and interests of Farm Bureau members.

The most common subjects are agricultural related. This past month's visit was no different. Trade and immigration reform were the primary objectives.

Idaho is fortunate to have a delegation with similar beliefs and values as most in the agricultural community. The reinforcement from the constituents

back home is encouraged to help our elected representatives to continue representing.

In each office, the question of the political reality of meaningful legislation was discussed and in each office the response was similar — it depends on the extremes.

This should be no surprise. All one needs to do is turn on the television, listen to the radio, open the newspaper or do an internet search to be engulfed in the rancor and vindictive rhetoric that exists in the sanctified halls of our nation's Capitol.

See **KELLER**, page 6



Idaho Farm Bureau.

Volume 19, Issue 3

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MAGAZINE CONTACTS:

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

Photo by Steve Ritter

ON THE COVER: Maria McIntyre and her children tend to some of the pasture-raised chickens reared in mobile coops at McIntyre Family Farms in Caldwell. About 2,600 eggs a day are produced at the farm, which also offers beef and pork products. To see a video of this farm, visit the Idaho Farm Bureau website at www.idfb.org and click on "Videos."

Table of contents

- 2** The Zipline; The President's Desk; Inside Farm Bureau
- 4** American Falls man builds mini versions of farm equipment
- 8** Latest Census of Ag data show more women involved with agriculture than previously realized
- 12** New bill that caps amount of depredation claims faces possible legal challenge
- 14** Idaho Barley Commission increases efforts to educate public, food industry about benefits of food barley
- 18** Parma High School art teacher paints 35-foot long agricultural mural at Idaho State Capitol building.
- 24** PETA asks Caldwell mayor to change name of Chicken Dinner Road.
- 25** Word search: Wheat
- 27** A ray of optimism breaks through to Idaho's dairy industry
- 31** Farm groups start pledging financial support for \$7 million upgrade to Parma ag research station
- 36** Classifieds
- 37** Bison raised at McCammon ranch appear in TV show



LABOR OF

Love

Retired farmer builds models of old farm equipment

By John O'Connell
Intermountain Farm & Ranch

AMERICAN FALLS — From old siding, tin scraps and wooden blocks, Leroy Zimmerman assembles miniature versions of the farm equipment he and his father used to use.

The toy-sized potato harvesters, antique tractors, plows and combines built to scale in his shop are so incredibly detailed, they appear to have been created by somehow shrinking real machinery.

Zimmerman, who turns 89 in September, made all of his own toys as a child: He predominately built hand-made tractors and trucks.

“I can remember tracing an old tin can to make a wheel and putting little finishing nails in the wood wheel to make a steel wheel out of it,” he said.

Now in the twilight of his life, the former American Falls farmer has rekindled the hobby of his youth, further perfecting his craft with every vintage Farmall A tractor or disc plow he finishes. Throughout





Photos by John O'Connell

Leroy Zimmerman holds up a miniature version of potato harvesting equipment. He built both the model and the original machine it's based on. **PREVIOUS PAGE:** These are some of the model tractors built by retired American Falls farmer Leroy Zimmerman

the past decade, Zimmerman has made a couple hundred miniature machines and implements, many of which are displayed on shelves in his garage, along with some models that he purchased.

He also donated 17 replicas of potato harvesting equipment to the Idaho Potato Museum in Blackfoot. The museum's director, Tish Dahmen, has a few of the pieces on display in her gift shop and plans to soon show off the full collection in a glass case.

"I think what makes his creations so valuable is the attention to detail, but also his association with each piece is amazing," Dahmen said. "He's like a savant of tractors. He knows what year, what type,

what went into it and how many they made."

Zimmerman's miniatures are also featured in a video about tractors shown at the museum's theater. He's made models based on actual equipment used by his father, John. He recreated a tractor from memory that a neighboring farmer once used. He's even made little replicas of potato harvesting equipment he built himself, back when he farmed with his brothers, Glen and David.

The three brothers followed in their father's footsteps and collaborated on a wheat, potato and sugar beet farm in Pleasant Valley, located between American Falls and Aberdeen. As small-acreage

farmers, they didn't have a large budget for equipment, so Zimmerman often devised his own designs—usually with innovations well ahead of their time—and built equipment from scratch.

In 1954, he built a potato harvester with an "open throat," which enabled the spuds to move up the conveyor without the vines and dirt clogging up the process.

Five years later, he converted the harvester to have a "wrap-around and a vine chain," which rolled spuds onto additional conveyors en route to the bed of the truck, separating vines and clods in the process.

See **TRACTORS**, page 26

KELLER

Continued from page 2

After these observations, one wonders how universal the bitterness actually is?

As we visited with our delegation and listened to representatives from both political parties, it became obvious that among members of Congress there is a distinction between the vocal minority and the silent majority.

The U.S. House of Representatives consist of 435 members – 235 Democrats and 200 Republicans. (The last session of Congress consisted of 194 Democrats and 241 Republicans.)

The bitterness is not universal between the members of Congress as displayed in the media. There are over 300 representatives who have harmonious relationships with members of both sides of the aisle.

They do not agree on all subjects, but are willing to work with, meet with and compromise with members of both parties. They do what they were elected to do – represent their districts back home.

However, there are 30 to 40 representatives each, on both sides of the political

spectrum, the far-left and the ultra-right, who refuse to work with members of the other party. They display malice, acrimony and threaten roadblocks, which keeps the work of the people from happening.

We tend to think this divisiveness is new, but it is not. We become alarmed with the possibilities of the extremes, but because of the silent majority in Congress, who do seek to do the right thing, with calm manners, most of the extreme proposals do not become realities.

As a case in point, look back 75 years ago this year, at a proposed Economic Bill of Rights by the 32nd President of the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1933-1945).

The proposal was a sweeping fundamental change in political philosophy of the day. FDR proposed that every citizen has a right to a living wage; a right to own a home; a right for full medical care; a right to adequate protection from economic fears of old age, sickness, accident, and unemployment; a right to an education and other economic parameters.

(Isn't it interesting that many of the extreme members of Congress today are promoting the same ideologies as 75

years ago.)

But, even though FDR was a popular president, had control of both chambers of Congress, and had a favorable Supreme Court, his proposal never reached fruition. Why? Because it was too extreme, too far from the values of the mainstream citizen of the day. The elected representatives voted accordingly.

Former U.S. Attorney General and U.S. Senator from New York Robert F. Kennedy stated correctly: "What is objectionable, what is dangerous about extremists is not that they are extreme but that they are intolerant. The evil is not what they say about their cause, but what they say about their opponents."

This is what we are witnessing in today's political climate. It is a function of bullying, intimidation, victimization, harassment and oppression to silence open discussion, dialogue, and conversation.

As an electorate, we must not tolerate the intolerable bombast, grandiloquence and tactics used by the extremes. We must let our elected officials know our positions and opinions. If we do so, the silent majority in Congress will continue to prevail, as it is designed to and as it has for so many years. ■

SEARLE

Continued from page 2

as farmers' bottom lines. In the 19th Century, the vast majority of the U.S. population lived on farms and produced their own food. Today, that number is less than 2 percent.

The average American farmer fed 15 people as recently as 1940. Today, the typical farmer produces enough food to feed 165 people.

Over the past century, advances in technology have enabled far fewer farmers to produce far more food. The reason producers were able to achieve that remarkable feat is because they were willing to change and adopt advancements in agriculture when appropriate.

The incredible advancements in farm equipment have enabled farmers to work much faster and produce a lot more food.

The way we raise farm animals has also changed and dairy cows now typically live in barns that provide soft beds to keep them

comfortable. The cows now have nutritionists to make sure they are fed the healthiest possible diets and many of them have access to fans or sprinklers to keep them cool.

Seed and chemical technology has also changed over the years and farmers are now able to use seed and chemicals much more efficiently than even a few decades ago.

Again, that saves farmers money and also enables them to produce more food.

The development of integrated pest management programs has greatly benefited agriculture and plant breeding advancements have allowed for higher plant populations.

Precision planting equipment, better fertilizer formulations, the list of changes that have benefited agriculture tremendously goes on and on.

Over the decades, the role that women play in agriculture has changed as well.

While women have always played an important role in farming, they increasingly hold important leadership positions and the scope of their involvement in agriculture was clarified by the 2017 Census of Agriculture data, which was released this April.

Because USDA expanded its reporting criteria to include more principal operators on a farm, it's not possible to compare the data on women in agriculture to previous census.

However, the reporting change did serve to show a lot more women are involved in farming as important decision-makers than was previously realized.

For example, the 2017 census data showed there were 17,230 female producers in Idaho in 2017. The previous 2012 census put that number at 13,043.

An increasing number of women hold key leadership roles in agriculture and that has greatly benefited the farming industry.

The global population today is around 7.7 billion and it's projected to increase to close to 10 billion by 2050.

Change can be scary sometimes but it is necessary and good.

If farmers are going to be able to feed that many more mouths, and remain viable, they will need to continue to change and be willing to adopt the latest technological advancements. ■

It impacts plans for passing the farm on to the next generation. It impacts decisions about whether to continue farming.

The bottom line: it affects how much of our food will be grown in our own country. I've often said that we are getting to a point where Americans have to decide if we're going to import workers or import our food.

The number of farm workers hired through the H-2A visa program for seasonal agricultural workers has more than doubled in the past five years. Even with the increase, last year's 243,000 H-2A workers filled just a fraction of the more than 2.4 million farm jobs.

So why don't more farmers use the H-2A program? It's expensive and inefficient. Don't get me wrong: we're glad to have an agricultural guestworker program. But we need that program to work much better than it does now.

H-2A requires farmers to pay above-market wages on top of providing free housing and transportation to and from the farm. At that rate, it's difficult for a farmer to make ends meet.

Then there are the delays farmers often experience in getting workers. If it takes too long to process an H-2A application or if the farmer makes the slightest mistake on the paperwork, workers might not arrive in time—and every day of delay matters when crops are ripe.

Finally, H-2A is a seasonal worker program, giving year-round producers almost no options.

An even bigger issue is the undocumented workers who are filling the gaps. It has been estimated that anywhere from a third to half of farm workers are not authorized to be in the United States.

However, most have lived in our country for years, working hard on our farms, raising families, obeying our laws and even paying taxes. They did not come here to depend on government programs. They have demonstrated that they came here to work and help support their families back home. That is a totally different situation from the one that is playing out on our southern border today, and it's important that we not confuse the two. We need to get serious about legislation that allows our experienced, reliable and hardworking farm laborers to remain in the U.S. without fear of deportation.

America's farmers and ranchers need Congress to step up to the plate and fix these problems. We have been working and waiting for a solution for decades now. We truly cannot wait much longer before, I believe, we will pay a steep price as a nation—a deep erosion of our agricultural productivity.

'H-2A requires farmers to pay above-market wages on top of providing free housing and transportation to and from the farm. At that rate, it's difficult for a farmer to make ends meet.'

There are already signs that farmers are cutting production due to the labor shortage, which means more of what we eat will have to come from countries with far less stringent food safety and environmental standards.

These are tough issues for lawmakers, I know. These issues are more politically charged nowadays than ever. But we need Congress to get past the politics and show real leadership.

When I was elected American Farm Bureau president over three years ago, there were just a handful of issues that I felt, "If we can fix this, it will have a huge impact for America's farmers and ranchers."

Agricultural labor is one of those issues. Actually, whether we fix it or not, it will have a huge impact. I just hope and pray we can work together and enact solutions to achieve the right impact for American agriculture and food security. ■

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Women IN AGRICULTURE



Ag Census shows women play important role in farming

By Erica Louder
For Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

The latest USDA Census of Agriculture shows there are more female farmers in the United States than people previously realized.

The census data showed a significant increase in the number of women farmers and ranchers but that was largely a result of a change in how USDA collected data for the census in 2017.

Whereas USDA reported one principal operator of a farm or ranch in the past, in 2017 the department expanded its reporting to include up to four primary decision makers on a farm.

So, while there cannot be an apples-to-apples comparison to previous census, the latest data does provide a clearer picture of the role that women play in agriculture.

The 2017 ag census shows there are 27 percent more female produc-

Photo by Erica Louder

Laurie Lickley is shown on her ranch in Jerome. The former Idaho Cattlewoman of the Year says that "women play an important role in agriculture and complement our male partners very well."

ers than were reported during the 2012 Census of Ag and female farmers currently represent 36 percent of all farmers across the United States.

The USDA's new reporting format found that 56 percent of farms have at least one female farmer who participates in decision-making on the operation, meaning they are involved in one or more of the following: day-to-day decisions, land use or crop decisions, livestock decisions, record keeping and management, and estate or succession planning.

This new data gives us an idea of the involvement of women who farm alongside their spouses as well as the female operators who run their farms on their own.

Idaho women in agriculture

Growth of female farmers is happening in Idaho as well. Idaho has 17,230 female farm operators, with 10,896 being the primary farmer. Women are farming 5.7 million acres alongside another farmer and 3.5 million acres as the primary farmer. In Idaho, 39 percent of farmers are women, up from 33 percent in the 2012 census. These female farmers bring in around \$3 billion in agriculture products sold each year.

We sat down to get the perspective of a two Idaho Farm Bureau Federation members about what being a woman in agriculture means to them.

Laurie Lickley

Jerome County Farm Bureau

Lickley and her husband Bill operate a ranch based in Jerome. The Lickleys have grown their ranch from a herd of 10 animals to over 500 mother cows. They are progressive in their management style and take opportunities to adapt and change their operation to ensure long-term success.

"Bill's family has been (in Jerome) for the last 100 years and our goal is to keep it in the family for the next 100," Laurie Lickley said.

She and Bill have two grown children, Valene and Cole. Laurie has served as the president of the Idaho Cattle Association and was named Idaho Cattlewoman of the Year in 2004. She volunteers with Beef Counts, is the president of Jerome Rotary Club and was recently elected to serve in the Idaho House of Representatives.

"Women play an important role in agriculture and complement our male partners very well," she said. "Whether it's cooking meals for branding or the football team, pulling calves, castrating, pregnancy checking, financial analysis, raising children, moving water, long days on the desert moving allotments, working with the government agencies, or putting on heels/boots to share our thoughts on a variety of industry issues, it's a valuable partnership."

"I also don't think women need to be afraid to both work in agriculture and be mothers," Lickley added. "To me, motherhood is the most valuable job in the entire world. There is no better place

to raise a family. Children learn how to work, the value of life and how to navigate death, and the simple, soft skills of critical thinking and decision-making."

When asked what being a woman in agriculture means to her, she said, "I've never really thought about gender in agriculture. We each bring our own unique skill set. When my alarm rings at 5:30 a.m. every morning and that first cup of coffee waits, I know the job that I have ahead of me that day and every day is a job that I love. I subscribe to the theory that everyone must have food, shelter, and clothing, whether you are a man or a woman."

Jamie Little

Madison County Farm Bureau

Little lives and farms alongside her husband, Dwight, in Newdale. They have five children, four boys and one girl. They raise potatoes, wheat, barley and hay on 1,000 acres of crop ground and run 500 head of cattle.

She volunteers with the FFA and Farm Bureau whenever she can. When she isn't farming, she substitute teaches for her local school district. She is a graduate of Brigham Young University-Idaho in agriculture education.

Describing what farming looks like for her, Little said, "I wear a different hat every day, sometimes every hour. One of my favorite things to do is enjoy nature from the seat of a tractor as I am disking or plowing. Usually I have a small partner that rides with me and we work on learning the alphabet or numbers or just have a good conversation."

"I enjoy seeing the cows out grazing the fields," she added. "I can't say that branding is one of my favorites but it is a job that needs to be done so I put my boots on and go. Potato harvest is fun, most of the time. I enjoy working in the cellar and running the piler or picking rocks. I don't love driving trucks in the fields but I will do it when needed. I like to shuttle trucks during grain harvest and help where I can.

"But, my favorite hat to wear is that hat of farmers' wife and mother. I love that we get to raise our kids in an environment that they can learn hard work and appreciate what they earn. Hopefully, they will appreciate all the hard lessons that have and will come."

She goes on to say, "Being a woman in agriculture means feeding the world. Not just physically but intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. As a woman, we can grow and nurture more than just crops. We can shape the nations. As women with a passion for agriculture, we all tend to have a common goal to educate and lift where we stand. I love agriculture and all the many opportunities it opens. I love being a link between the land and people. There is something gratifying at the end of the day knowing that I contributed in some small way to someone in this world." ■

“Being a woman in agriculture means feeding the world. Not just physically but intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually.”

— Jamie Little, Madison County Farm Bureau

UNIQUE PERSONALITIES

Northern Idaho is home to one of the nation's largest hop farms

By Dianna Troyer
For Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

Hop plants look like endless green waterfalls as they climb up and cascade down 18-foot-tall trellises at northern Idaho's Elk Mountain Farms, the largest contiguous hops farm in the United States.

At 1,700 acres, the farm produces about 2.5 million pounds of hops annually.

General Manager Ed Atkins compares the more than 500 experimental varieties and seven commercial types – grown mainly for Anheuser-Busch – to children.

"They all have their own personalities and specific needs," said Atkins, 54, who has learned of their quirks since he was hired in 1987 when Anheuser-Busch established the farm.

"Hop plants require constant attention and different training for climbing, spraying, and

watering, so it's labor intensive," he said. "Each type is also susceptible to different diseases and pests. We're always developing disease-free, high yielding varieties to fulfill a diverse demand."

For centuries, the storied plant's flavorful cones have given beer complex flavors – whether bitter, spicy, floral, or citrusy.

Anheuser-Busch relies on Saaz, Williamette and Cascade varieties.

"Saaz is one of the world's oldest varieties and has a spicy flavor," Atkins said. "Our Hallertau has a subtle woody aroma."

Other types like pungent and resinous Mt. Hood and citrus-like Centennial are destined for brewers of increasingly popular craft beers.

"In the past 10 years, we've planted more types for the craft market, but Budweiser is still our flagship," he said.

The expansive enterprise fulfilled a quest of Anheuser-Busch CEO August Busch III, who sought a utopia in America to grow hops for his company's beers. He searched for a place to mimic growing conditions in Germany's renowned Bavaria at the 49th parallel.

Tracing the latitude on a map, he pinpointed the vast and scenic Kootenai River Valley near Bonners Ferry 10 miles south of the Canadian border. The climate caters to hops with long sunny days, cool nights, and plenty of water.

Soaking up to 16 hours of sunshine during summer, hop plants can grow up to a foot a day.

Anheuser-Busch is the single largest user of hops for brewing in the U.S. and directly buys roughly 3.7 million pounds of hops annually from growers in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, according to Atkins.

U.S. farmers supply about 70 percent of the hops used by the North America Anheuser-Busch brewing team.

See **HOPS**, page 26

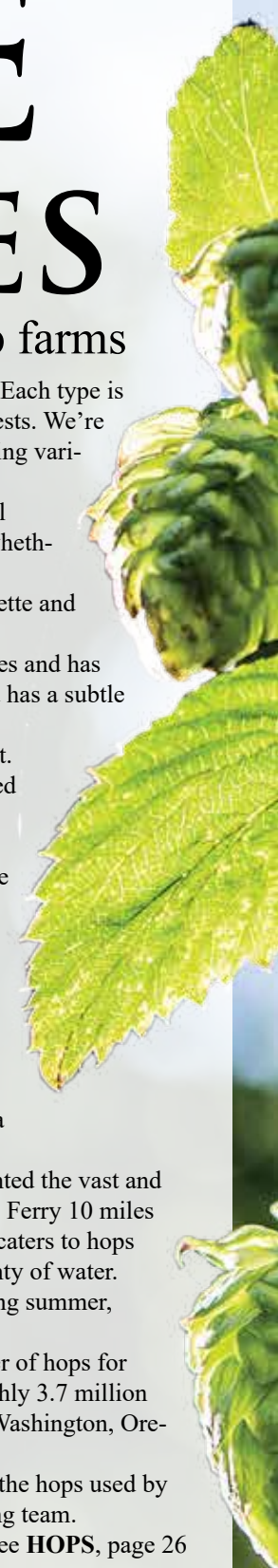
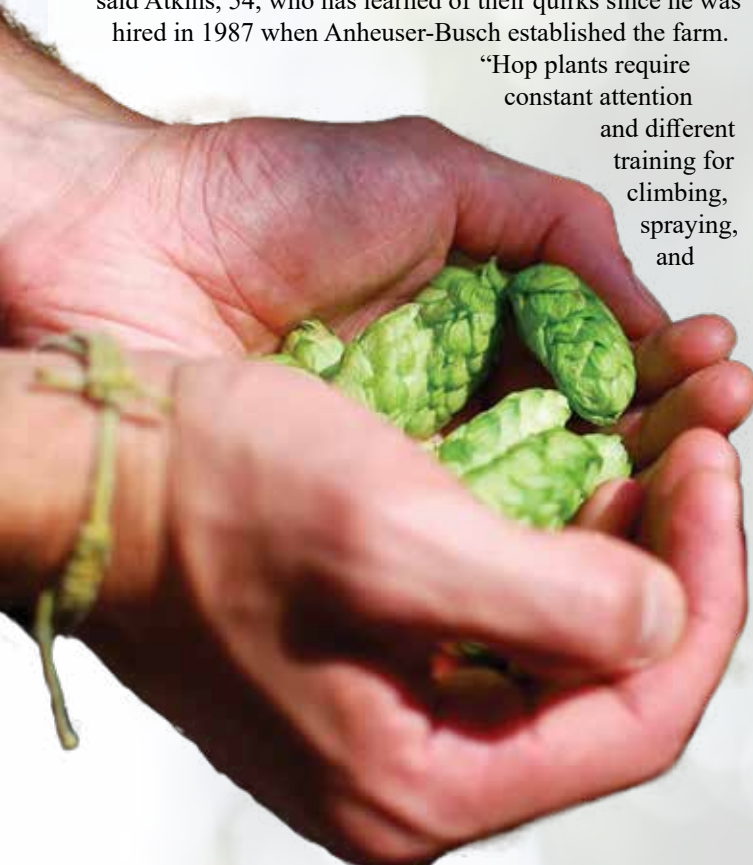






Photo courtesy of Don McFarland

An elk herd migrates across Don McFarland's Little Camas Ranch in Elmore County. A new law that limits how much ag producers can claim from the state for wildlife depredation could face a legal challenge.

Law that caps depredation claims could face challenge

By Bill Schaefer

For Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

A new law that caps the amount that agriculture producers can claim from the state for wildlife depredation could face a legal challenge.

Senate Bill 1151, which took effect July 1, places a cap on the amount paid on any single depredation claim at 10 percent of what's available in the Idaho Department of Fish and Game's annual Expendable Big Game Depredation Trust Account.

The account compensates farmers and ranchers for damages caused by big game.

The impetus for the bill, sponsored by Sen. Bert Brackett, R-Rogerson, was an elk depredation claim for \$1.03 million in 2018 filed by Don McFarland for damage

to organic potatoes and grain at his Little Camas Ranch in Elmore County.

The fiscal year 2019 appropriation for the EBGDTA originally was \$1.1 million but IDFG had to seek additional funding this year to meet the increased total amount of claims for wildlife depredation. The final tally for the program in fiscal 2019 was 86 claims for \$2.4 million.

If IDFG had not been able to secure additional funding this year, it would have resulted in significant prorating for all of the claims and all of the claimants would have received far less than the amount of damages they claimed.

IDFG has not had to prorate any depredation claims during the fund's 29-year history and the 2019 legislation was meant to prevent that from happening in the future by limiting the ability of one big claim to

deplete the fund.

But Boise attorney Jim Jones, former chief justice of the Idaho Supreme Court and former Idaho attorney general, is taking issue with the legislation, claiming it would punish ag producers with claims that exceed the 10 percent cap.

In a letter sent to Brackett, Gov. Brad Little and IDFG director Ed Schriever, Jones stated his concerns for his client, McFarland.

"The statement of purpose of Senate Bill 1151 appears to depart from the idea of 'pro-rating claims for all producers,'" Jones wrote. "That seems to me to depart from the concept of equal protection and benefit of the laws."

Jones is the brother-in-law of McFarland.

"I just wanted to put everybody on notice that there's a problem and we're hoping

that it can be worked out,” Jones said during an interview for this story.

“The Fish and Game people have been very cooperative and very understanding,” he said. “It could be they figure out something or a partial solution. If that doesn’t happen and the damage occurs again, then we’re going to have to see if we can get the criteria on the fund changed to a degree.”

In his letter, Jones said he can appreciate the concern that led to SB1151.

“If one large claim were to soak up all of the money in the depredation fund, leaving smaller claims unpaid, that would not be fair,” he said. “However, if that large claim is fully justified by virtue of depredation activities by state-owned wildlife and not compensated on a basis proportionate with all other claims, that is not necessarily fair either.”

The EBGDTA was created in 1990 to compensate Idaho farmers and ranchers for crop depredation from Idaho wildlife.

Since its creation in 1990, the trust has paid \$8 million to more than 850 claims.

However, the number of claims and the amount paid out has risen dramatically in

the past four years.

From fiscal 2016 to fiscal 2019, there were more than 225 claims with total payment of \$4.2 million to Idaho ag producers.

Jones said in the letter he realizes “that the state has no legal liability to compensate farmers and ranchers for depredation by its big game animals but, when the state establishes a compensation program, all parties with depredation claims should be treated equally.”

Jones advocates either increasing the EBGDTA annual appropriation or establishing a proportional prorating of claims when the dollar amount of claims exceeds the annual appropriation.

“If you have a \$10 claim or a million-dollar claim, you get the same percentage,” Jones said of prorating claims during the interview for this story. “That still puts the guy with the big claim out a lot more money but on the other hand I think it’s a matter of fundamental fairness.”

After receiving Jones’ letter, Brackett said the new law “is simply a stop-loss provision on depredation claims. It’s pretty open-ended and certainly there is always

opening for additional legislation.”

Brackett compared the ceiling on claims imposed by his legislation to the stop-loss provision in insurance policies.

In his letter, Jones said his client would prefer to work cooperatively with the state to solve the problem by eliminating depredation damage in the first place. McFarland and fish and game officials have worked together to try to find possible solutions but have not yet been able to arrive at any, he added.

Finding solutions “would be a preferable avenue for reducing the damage to (McFarland’s) crops and alleviating the need for a large depredation claim,” Jones wrote. “However, if that does not work, it may be necessary to ask that the compensation ceiling be adjusted through legislation so that it comports with the equal protection and benefit concept espoused by the Idaho Constitution.”

Jones wrote that if McFarland and IDFG are not able to find a successful solution, “I would like to ask that we meet later in the summer to consider if there is some agreeable legislative fix.” ■

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Barley:

IT'S NOT JUST FOR BEER

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – In an effort led by the Idaho Barley Commission, food barley industry stakeholders are working together to advance the industry by increasing demand for and production of the ancient grain.

Known as the Pacific Northwest Food Barley Marketing Collaborative, group members seek to develop a vision to build demand for food barley in the U.S. and beyond.

That effort, which includes those who grow, buy, sell and export food barley, kicked off last year and is being coordinated by the IBC, which represents barley growers in Idaho, which ranks No. 1 in the United States in barley production.

“We’re exploring food barley because it has a lot to offer in the way of human nutrition and it also provides opportunities for growers to have another crop they can grow to be more profitable,” said IBC Executive Director Laura Wilder. “So, it’s a win-win for agriculture and for consumers.”

Currently, about 80 percent of the barley produced in Idaho is malt barley,



Idaho Barley Commission Executive Director Laura Wilder helps educate nutrition and dietetics professionals about the health benefits of food barley.

10 percent ends up as livestock feed and 10 percent is grown for food barley.

There is the potential for Idaho barley growers to produce a lot more food barley, which would increase their crop portfolio and give them more opportunities to be profitable, Wilder said.

But first, she added, demand for food barley needs to increase and that’s what

the barley commission’s food barley initiative seeks to accomplish.

“If the market is there and they can get a contract to grow food barley, farmers are all in,” Wilder said. “But right now, there is just not enough market yet.”

Boundary County farmer Wes Hubbard, who has grown food barley for seven years, said Idaho producers will

definitely grow food barley if the incentive is there.

“The supply will come if the farmers get paid to grow it,” he said. “There is no issue there.”

But in order for food barley acres to significantly expand in Idaho, the demand needs to increase and for that to happen, more products need to be offered to consumers, who also need to be educated about the benefits of the commodity.

A lack of marketable products is one hurdle holding back growth in demand for food barley, Wilder said.

That’s one of the things that the marketing collaborative is working toward, she added.

“Those companies that normally would be competing in different areas of the market realize the greater value in moving the whole industry forward and they are working together to advance food barley,” Wilder said. “It’s a matter of having the right products for the right channels that are available.”

There is great potential for food barley in Idaho, said Dave Sanders of Highland Milling, which produces pearl, flaked and flour barley at a facility in Bancroft.

“The key element in growing demand is we have to get someone to take the product from a commodity ingredient and make it into a marketable product that consumers will buy,” he said.

Highland Milling, which is part of the PNW marketing collaborative, gets 100 percent of its food barley from within 25 miles of Bancroft and Sanders said the potential is there for Idaho to grow a lot more of the crop.

“Idaho growers have the potential to grow a lot of food barley,” he said. “But ultimately, it boils down to getting us a market for it.”

One of the main challenges that the food barley industry faces right now is a lack of information about the commodity, and the IBC is leading the effort to help address that.

One way the commission is doing that is by trying to better educate consumers about the health benefits of food barley and teach them how to cook with it.

“Barley has a lot to offer in the way of nutrition and some people are starting to understand that and trying to incorporate barley into their diets,” Wilder said.

The IBC’s goal is to significantly increase the number of consumers who understand food barley, which Wilder says is the most unappreciated whole grain.

Besides being a cereal grain with a chewy texture and mild, nutty flavor, barley is a nutritional powerhouse, Wilder said, with high beta-glucan soluble fiber, the highest dietary fiber of any grain, low glycemic index and antioxidants.

“Even though barley is an ancient grain with a long history of human consumption, people just aren’t aware of the health benefits and versatility of barley,” she said. “We aim to change that through ramped up IBC promotion and market development programs and with help from barley partners in the Pacific Northwest Food Barley Marketing Collaborative group coordinated by the commission.”

Sanders said the main challenge in increasing demand for food barley boils down to consumer awareness.

“Food barley used to not be sexy; now it’s becoming a little

BARLEY 101

BARLEY IS HEART HEALTHY

♥ Barley beta-glucan fiber significantly lowers total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol levels reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease.

♥ Barley has more beta-glucans than any other grain with 1 cup containing 2.5 grams.

BARLEY IS A “GOOD CARB”

♥ Barley has a low glycemic index of 28, slowing carbohydrate digestion and reducing the rise in glucose and insulin.

BARLEY IS A WHOLE GRAIN

♥ The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines recommend individuals make half of all grains consumed every day whole grains.

♥ Of all whole grains, barley has the most fiber with most varieties clocking in at 17% fiber.

BARLEY PROMOTES GUT HEALTH

♥ Barley’s beta-glucans are prebiotic fibers that promote the growth of friendly bacteria in the gut for a healthier digestive system.

For detailed information on the health benefits of barley, visit:

www.eatbarley.com

Idaho Barley Commission
208-334-2090



BARLEY 101

HULLESS BARLEY



Sometimes referred to as hulled waxy barley or naked barley, this minimally processed form of barley is a whole grain that is rich in vitamins, minerals, and fiber. To cook, boil 3 cups of water per 1 cup of barley. Simmer for 50-55 minutes.

PEARLED BARLEY



While not a whole grain, this polished, or “pearled” barley is still rich in fiber and cooks quickly. To cook, boil 2.5 cups of water per 1 cup of barley. Simmer for 50-55 minutes.

BARLEY FLAKES



Similar to rolled oats, barley flakes have a nutty flavor and are packed with nutrients and fiber. Add to your baking, eat them raw, or cook by boiling 3 cups of water per 1 cup of flakes for 15-20 minutes.

BARLEY FLOUR



Perfect for all your baking needs, barley flour adds nutrients, fiber and flavor to any baked treat. Add to any baking recipe by substituting 25% of regular flour with barley flour.

BARLEY GRITS



When barley kernels are cut into several pieces, they become grits yet still retain their beneficial nutrients and fiber. To cook, boil 4 cups of water per 1 cup of grits. Simmer for 20 minutes.



For barley-based inspiration, visit: www.eatbarley.com

more sexy,” he said. “The health benefits are numerous and it’s really just a matter of educating consumers about it and getting it into their hands and mouths. We just need to remind people how to cook with it again. It’s a big education process.”

Another IBC goal is to keep food barley in front of important decision-makers such as chefs, food-service professionals and dietitians.

In April, the commission sponsored a presentation to 200 members of the Idaho Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. That same month, the IBC participated in the Idaho Preferred Farm to Chef Collaborative, which included 50 Boise area chefs, restaurants and food-service directors.

“The goal at these events was to teach health and nutrition professionals about the health benefits of barley and how to incorporate more barley into their menus,” Wilder said.

To learn more about the health benefits of barley, or find barley recipes, visit www.eatbarley.com. ■

MEXI-BARLEY BEAN SALAD

Servings: 8

Serving Size: 1/2 CUP



Nutrition Facts (per serving): Calories 380 | Total Fat 14.1g | Saturated Fat 2.1g | Cholesterol 0mg | Sodium 164mg | Carbohydrates 52.6g | Dietary Fiber 12.4g | Protein 14.4g

MEXI-BARLEY BEAN SALAD

INGREDIENTS

1 cup hulled barley
1 cup canned black beans, drained
1 cup canned kidney beans, drained
1 cup whole kernel corn, cooked
1/2 cup chopped green onions
1 red bell pepper, chopped
1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
4 cups chopped romaine lettuce
1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
1 tsp minced garlic
1 tsp chili powder
1/4 tsp crushed red pepper flakes
1/2 tsp salt
1/4 tsp pepper
1/2 cup olive oil or vegetable oil

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large saucepan bring 3 cups water to boil and stir in barley. Reduce heat to medium low, cover and simmer 60 minutes or until barley is tender.
2. Remove from heat, drain any remaining liquid, rinse and let cool.
3. Combine beans, corn, onions, red bell pepper and cilantro. Add in cooled barley and mix well.
4. To make dressing, whisk together vinegar, garlic, chili powder, salt, pepper and red pepper flakes. Whisk in oil and mix well, then pour over bean barley mixture and toss to coat.
5. To serve, divide chopped romaine onto individual plates and top with barley bean mixture.



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Photo by Sean Ellis

Parma High School art teacher Linda McMillin stands next to a large agricultural-themed mural she painted in underground tunnel beneath Idaho's Capitol building.

Capitol mural shows importance of agriculture

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

BOISE – Parma High School art teacher Linda McMillin recently put the finishing touches on a 35-foot long agricultural mural she painted on a wall in an underground tunnel beneath the Idaho State Capitol building.

The tunnel, which connects the Capitol to nearby government buildings, is used by hundreds of legislators and state employees.

The mural will serve as a reminder to them of the important role agriculture continues to play in Idaho, said Rick Waitley, state director of Idaho Ag in the Classroom, which commissioned the project.

“The location of this mural in this climate and condition will allow it to last for several decades,” he said. “We are excited to have visitors and employees through the tunnel have their walk enlightened by a view of Idaho agriculture and the abundance of great agriculture products produced in this state.”

Waitley said plans are to have a mural dedication and public open house next Feb. 27, in conjunction with the annual Larry Branen Idaho Ag Summit. Details of the open house will be available after the beginning of 2020.

The large mural features the word AGRICULTURE and each of the large letters contains a different farm commodity produced in Idaho. The word AGRICULTURE appears to be planted in a farm field and the Sawtooth Mountains are in the background.

McMillin, who started painting the mural in January and completed it in mid-April, has painted a lot of different murals in her lifetime but said this project was special.

She spent countless hours working on it, over weekends and after school hours, and told Idaho Farm Bureau Federation shortly before adding the finishing touches that she poured her heart into it.

“This is the best work that I’ve ever done,” she said. “I’m trying to show the beauty of all the different agriculture that is here in Idaho. I’m trying to present it in its best form.”

The first letter of the mural, A, contains Russet potatoes, Idaho’s most famous product.

“I was given free reign so of course I started with potatoes,” McMillin said.

The letter G contains wheat fields and the R contains dairy cattle. Onions are depicted in the I, trout in the C and beef cattle in the U.

There are sugar beets in the L, apples in the T, alfalfa hay with leafcutter bees in the U, honey bees in the R and sheep are depicted in the E.

The crops and livestock featured in the mural are just a small sampling of the 186 farm commodities that are produced in Idaho, Waitley said.

“I knew we might take some criticism for not including one commodity over another but in the end, we are just about Idaho ag in general,” he said.

Waitley recently viewed the finished product, along with some other project supporters.

“We are very pleased with it,” he said. “Everything depicted is clear, easily identifiable and appealing.”

Waitley said project supporters gave McMillin a basic idea of what they wanted but left the details up to her. They did make some suggestions as they saw the project develop, including adding hay bales with the alfalfa “because we thought some people might not know what alfalfa was, but would recognize it tied to a hay bale.”

They also suggested adding sheep in honor of Idaho’s current governor, Brad Little, a sheep rancher.

Although Idaho Ag in the Classroom coordinated the project, several ag-related groups and businesses helped support it financially, including Idaho Farm Bureau Federation.

“We want to remind people that agriculture continues to drive the state’s economy and it’s important that lawmakers and others understand this,” said IFBF President Bryan Searle, a Shelley farmer. “We appreciate that the mural highlights the incredible diversity of agricultural commodities that are produced in Idaho.”

Brad Griff, executive director of the Idaho Sugarbeet Growers Association, which also helped sponsor the mural, said his organization believes strongly in reminding people of agriculture’s importance in the state.

“We wanted to show our support of Idaho agriculture and remind legislators and other decision-makers that ag is still the No. 1 sector of our economy and the backbone of Idaho,” he said.

The names of the sponsors are painted next to the mural.

When Waitley asked people involved with the agricultural industry to submit names of possible artists, he received 17 names.

“Then I started getting pitches from the actual artists and some samples,” he said. “However, over and over I heard the name Linda McMillin at Parma High School.”

He and a few other people involved in the project “went to the school, which is full of Linda’s murals, and we liked what we saw,” Waitley said.

He also drove around Parma and viewed some of the other farming-themed murals McMillin has painted on the sides of agricultural buildings, “which inspired me that she knew how to draw agriculture. Some people do and others do not.”

McMillin grew up on a farm in Illinois and is surrounded by agriculture in Parma, where a wide variety of crops are grown. But she said she has learned a lot about farming and ranching through her work on the mural.

“This has been a real education for me,” she said. “I’ve learned a lot about agriculture while doing this.”

For example, “I learned the alfalfa farmers have to purchase the leafcutter bees and that’s how the hay gets pollinated,” she said. “I learned a lot about hay as I was doing that letter.”

She also received some help from experts in the industry, such as Jon Watson, who owns an onion shipping company based in Parma.

McMillin had trouble with the lines on her onions and some looked more like pumpkins so Watson came down to the tunnel and showed her how to draw them so they looked like onions.

The tunnel contains some other wall paintings that were done decades ago and most of them have badly faded with time.

In a Jan. 22 letter to legislative leaders describing the project, Waitley said he believed the mural would “set a new standard for art in the tunnel area.”

Waitley received the go-ahead for the \$8,000 project from Idaho Department of Administration Director Bob Geddes and now other natural resource-themed murals could be forthcoming.

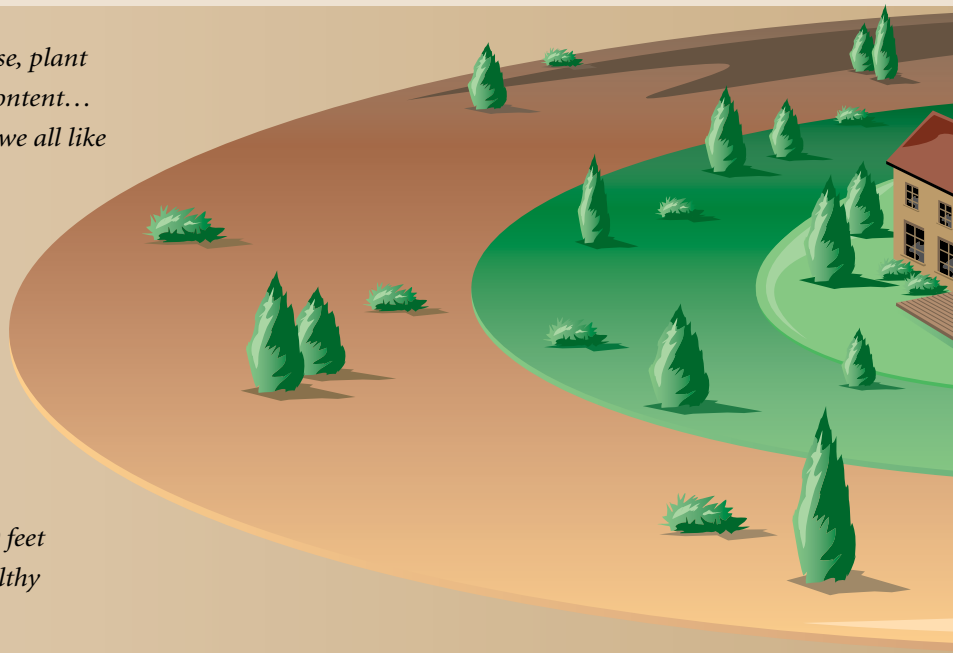
“We are now talking to other natural resource providers – forestry, water, soil, mines, etc. – suggesting that they join with us (on) murals and Linda is standing ready and available,” he said. ■

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ZONE 2: *Low growing fire-resistant ground cover is recommended from 30 to 100 feet from your home. Properly maintained low fuel plants will slow a fire before it gets to your house.*

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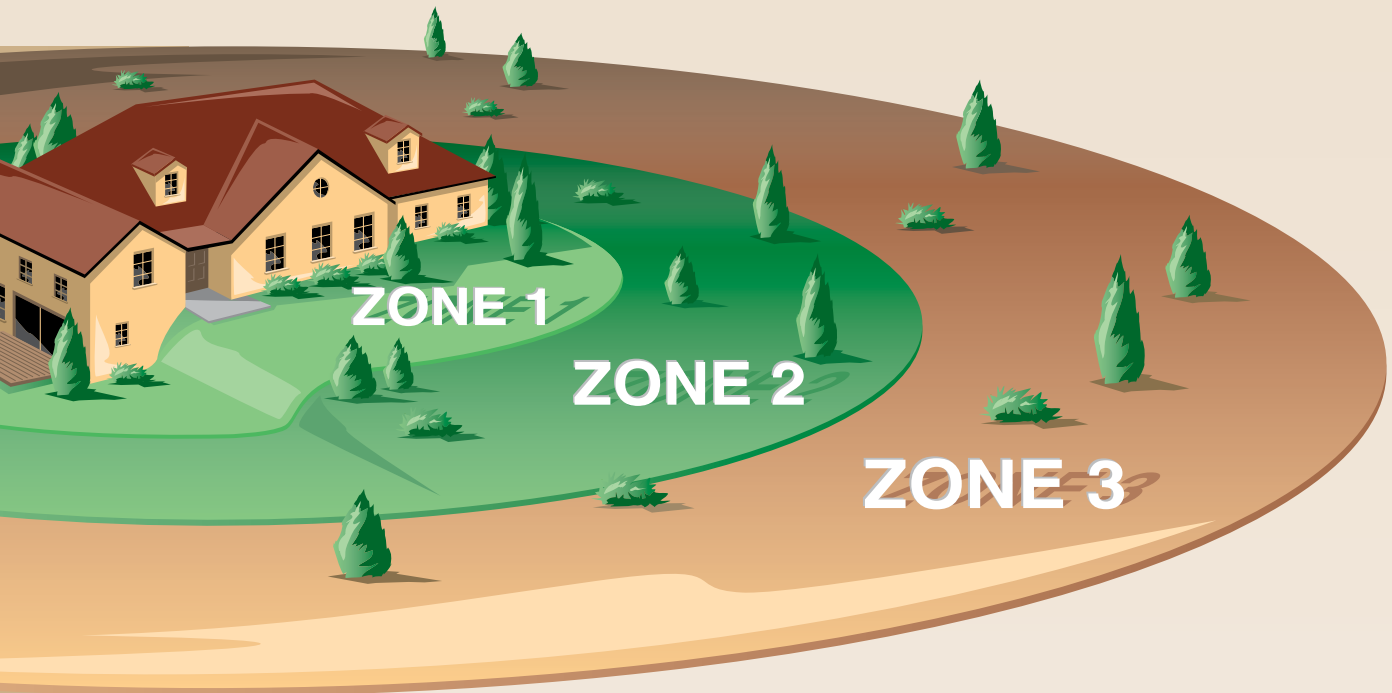
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6. Maintain your irrigation system.
7. Clear your roof, gutters and eaves of debris.

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- 8.** Trim branches so they do not extend over your roof or grow near your chimney
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- 10.** Use only noncombustible roofing materials.
- 11.** Box in eaves, fascias, soffits and subfloors with fire-resistant materials like treated wood, reducing the vent sizes.
- 12.** Apply ¼" noncombustible screening to all vent or eave openings.
- 13.** Install spark arresters in chimneys.
- 14.** Enclose the underside of decks with fire-resistant materials.
- 15.** Cover exterior walls with fire-resistant materials like stucco, stone, or brick. (Vinyl siding can melt and is not recommended.)
- 16.** Use double-paned or tempered glass for all exterior windows.
- 17.** Install noncombustible street signs.
- 18.** Make sure your street address is visible from the street.

Idaho Farm Bureau

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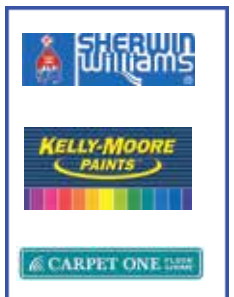
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PETA asks mayor to change name of Chicken Dinner Road

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

CALDWELL – A request by PETA to change the name of the curiously named Chicken Dinner Road didn't go over well in Canyon County, which has the highest number of farms in Idaho.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, a national organization whose motto includes the words, "animals are not ours to eat," sent a letter to Caldwell Mayor Garret Nancolas July 3 asking him to change the street's name to Chicken Road.

"PETA is asking Mayor Nancolas to change this road's name to one that celebrates chickens as individuals, not as beings to kill, chop up and label as 'dinner,'" PETA Executive Vice President Tracy Reiman said in a news release.

In a letter to Nancolas, Reiman asked the mayor to "encourage residents to appreciate chickens as individuals who deserve our respect and cry fowl about this archaic road sign that labels them merely as 'dinner.'"

According to local legend, the street got its current name after a woman who lives on it invited the governor over for a chicken dinner to make her request that the rutted old road be fixed.

PETA's request did not receive a warm welcome in Canyon County, which, according to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, has 2,289 farms, far more than any other county in Idaho.

Winery and vineyard owner Gregg Alger, who lives on Chicken Dinner Road, said his immediate reaction upon learning of PETA's request was, "I thought it was a funny deal."

His next reaction: "Oh my gosh, you have got to be kidding me."

Alger's Huston Vineyards sells wines with the Chicken Dinner Wines label. On the back of the wine bottles is a brief explanation of how the road got its name.



Idaho Farm Bureau Federation photo

PETA has asked the Caldwell mayor to change the name of Chicken Dinner Road. The curiously named road is legendary in Canyon County and even has its own wine label.

"Maybe I need to change my label to say that no chickens were hurt in the production of this wine," he said jokingly. "It's fascinating to me that they would blow something like that name out of proportion."

Vineyard and fruit orchard owner Mi-

"We have many issues to consider, but this is not one of them."

— Caldwell Mayor Garret Nancolas

chael Williamson said he laughed when he heard about PETA's request. "I think it's silly. Chickens can't read, so what do they care."

He said the uniquely named road "is part of the heritage of our area."

"I love animals and I would never

want them to be treated cruelly but farm animals have a purpose and that's to feed people," Williamson said.

The mayor's office didn't respond to a request to be interviewed for this story but Nancolas made his stance on the request crystal clear in a July 3 Facebook post.

"When I first received the letter, I thought it was a joke; I literally laughed," he wrote. "When I realized the letter was for real, it made me extremely irritated that they would waste our time with such a ridiculous request."

Nancolas also pointed out that Chicken Dinner Road is a county road and not within Caldwell's jurisdiction.

"That being said, even if it was, no way, no chance I would ever consider this truly unbelievable request!" he wrote. "We have many issues to consider, but this is not one of them." ■

Word Search

Things made from wheat

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

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Ice Cream
Pudding
Ketchup
Mayonnaise
Mustard

Salad Dressings
Beer
Sweets
Licorice
Chocolate
Biscuits
Muffins
Pancakes

TRACTORS

Continued from page 5

“When I was younger, I remember them hauling in sheet metal and angle iron from Partner Steel and cutting and building those windrowers and side diggers,” his son, Steve, recalled.

Steve also remembers countless modifications his dad made to make farm equipment work better.

While he was still farming, Zimmerman also began restoring antique tractors and old equipment — some of it purchased at scrap prices and some of it given to him from a friend’s fence row. Throughout the years, he’s restored about a dozen machines.

Zimmerman’s life on the farm came to an end in the mid-1980s, when he and his brothers bought some foundation potato seed to plant that was tainted with a devastating pathogen of spuds, bacterial ring rot. The disease destroyed 500 acres of spuds and put the brothers out of business.

“I was wanting to get out of farming anyway,” Zimmerman said. “Even then, you had to get bigger, and bigger and bigger, and then you had to hire help that didn’t understand what you were doing.”

After losing the farm, he moved to Meridian, where he took a job working as a general handyman with WinCo Foods. One day, his manager challenged him to design and install the store’s first spring-loaded gates to hold carts within their racks. The boss was so pleased by the results, he tasked Zimmerman with installing his innovation at WinCo stores throughout the Northwest.

Zimmerman retired from WinCo at age 77 and returned to American Falls.

About a decade ago, when he was physically unable to work on real equipment, he started making his models.

Surfaces throughout his shop are covered with wooden axles, painted tractor wheels and wooden blocks roughly cut in the shapes of tractor bodies. His wife, Barbara, finds photographs of antique tractors online and prints them for him to replicate.

As was the case on the farm, he’s saved money on his model-making by building some of the equipment in his shop. For example, he made his mill from an old drill press. He continues to devise new techniques for making his creations appear as realistic as possible.

“When he’s feeling really well, I’m guessing he’s out there 30 hours a week, maybe more,” Steve estimated. “That’s what he does.” ■

HOPS

Continued from page 10

To care for the crop, Atkins oversees a staff of 20 full-time and 180 seasonal employees whose work is quantified in mind-boggling measurements of millions.

About 63 million feet or 12,000 miles of twine is strung for the hop vines to climb;

Six customized combines, each valued at about \$1.5 million, were built on-site to harvest the cones;

To dry the cones in massive kilns, blowers produce about 9 million BTUs of heat ranging from 130 to 150 degrees Fahrenheit.

Along with ideal daylight hours and evening temperatures, the farm has adequate irrigation.

“Being above the Kootenai River with a high water table and spring runoff from the mountains, some years we have seepage and excess water,” Atkins said. “We had to install drain tiles in the fields to divert water to tanks and drainage ditches.”

To fine-tune water delivery, drip irrigation is used.

“Our system allows us to monitor and regulate specific amounts of water for different varieties,” Atkins said. “It also reduces fertilizer runoff.”

During the intense month-long harvest starting in mid-August, workers rely on six customized combines.

“There are only about 30 of these nationwide,” Atkins said. “What’s unique about ours is they’re locally designed and built with our maintenance staff doing most of the work.”

The 11-foot-wide cutters slowly move along the trellises and can be raised from 16 to 22 feet, depending on the need.

Once harvested, the cones are dried in kilns, then cooled, compressed and wrapped in 200-pound bags before being shipped to a plant in Yakima, Wash., to be made into pellets.

“It’s really challenging to raise hops,” Atkins said, “but there’s nothing I’d rather be doing even after working here 32 years. I grew up farming, so it’s in my blood and exciting every spring to have a new beginning and to see the fruits of your labor in the fall.” ■

Top Farm Bureau Agents

Agent of the Month



Keefan Caron,
Ada County

Rookie of the Month



Jud Harmon,
Twin Falls County

Region of the Month



Magic Valley Region
Scott Badger,
Regional Executive

Idaho's dairy industry finally feeling a bit of optimism

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

After suffering through several years of low milk prices, often below the cost of production, Idaho's dairy operators finally have some reasons to be hopeful.

The prices that Idaho dairy operators receive for their milk has risen above break-even recently and that comes on top of two recent announcements of new milk processing facilities coming to Idaho.

In addition, Schreiber Foods recently announced it plans to expand yogurt production at its Logan, Utah, facility, which sources a lot of its milk from Idaho.

Those developments have combined to give Idaho's 450 dairy operations a ray of hope that hasn't been there for several years.

"Overall, the optimism is a lot better than it has been for several years," said Gooding dairyman Steve Ballard.

The price that Idaho dairies receive for their milk has crept above break-even recently, said Idaho Dairymen's Association Executive Director Rick Naerebout.

That's a great sign but the industry still faces some real challenges, including ongoing trade battles, he added.

"Dairymen are starting to feel a little bit optimistic but they don't want to get too confident," Naerebout said. "There are a lot of headwinds out there, some things that might be able to push it the other way."

Idaho's average milk price had dropped to as low as \$14 per hundred pounds of production – well below the cost of production – at the beginning of 2019 but it has rebounded recently and is now above \$17.

"Prices aren't great but they are the best prices we've seen for three or four years," said Meridian dairyman Clint Jackson. "I think people are optimistic that 2019 will be a good year and the setting is there for 2020, hopefully, to even be better."

Idaho's dairy industry got its first bit of good news this year in February when Gem



Photo by Sean Ellis

Idaho's dairy industry, challenged by several years of depressed prices, has received several small bits of good news this year and a small ray of optimism has returned to the industry.

State Dairy Products announced it will build an aseptic milk processing facility in Twin Falls. Aseptic milk is shelf-stable milk that does not require refrigeration before the product is opened.

Construction of the 200,000-square-foot facility is set to begin this summer and it's expected to be operational next summer.

Before the announcement, Idaho hadn't landed a new milk processing facility since the Chobani yogurt plant in Twin Falls opened in December 2012.

Jetton Biochemistry Co., a Taiwanese dairy product manufacturer, announced in June that it will locate, in Nampa, a new blended powder facility for production of a proprietary dairy formula.

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

are innovative and consistently produce superior-quality ingredients that consumers trust."

Idaho, which has more than 590,000 milk cows, ranks third in the nation in milk production and the state's 450 dairies collectively produce about 15 billion pounds of milk per year.

The recent slight upturn in fortune for Idaho's dairy sector is good news for the state's overall farm economy.

The dairy industry accounts for about a third of Idaho's total farm cash receipts. When livestock feed crops such as hay and corn silage are considered, the dairy industry's impact on Idaho's agricultural sector is huge.

Aseptic milk facilities are not typically high-volume and the amount of milk the JBC facility will use is small compared to how much the average Idaho dairy processing facility uses, but together, those two announcements as well as the Schreiber expansion are great news for Idaho's dairy industry, Naerebout said.

"These are all wins," he said. "Using baseball terms, I would probably call them singles. You win games by getting hits." ■

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Multiple farm groups provide financial support for Parma upgrade

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

PARMA – A growing number of farm groups have pledged financial support toward a proposed \$7 million upgrade of University of Idaho's Parma agricultural research station.

U of I's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences plans a \$7 million renovation of the Parma station, which conducts research on multiple crops, including beans, potatoes, onions, hops, mint, tree fruit, wine and table grapes, cereals and seed crops.

The plan includes raising \$3 million from the state's agriculture industry over five years, as well as \$3 million from the Idaho Legislature. The university, which already invests \$1.5 million each year in the center, plans to provide an additional \$1 million toward the renovation project.

CALS Dean Michael Parrella is making the rounds of different farm commissions and organizations in Idaho and asking for their support toward the project. He told members of the Idaho Barley Commission June 20 that raising that much money is a heavy lift but it's an achievable goal if everyone helps out.

"The commissions can't do it by themselves, the university can't do it by itself and the legislature can't do it by itself," he said. "But collectively, we can."

"This will really be a beautiful facility, something that everybody can be proud of," he said during the Idaho Bean Commission's June 19 meeting. "We're looking at a consortium of ... stakeholders in the ag industry that contribute to the greater good."

The Idaho Hop Commission has agreed to contribute \$525,000 over five years toward the project and the Idaho Bean Commission and Idaho Barley Commission each have agreed to pitch in \$25,000 over five years.

The Idaho Onion Growers Association has verbally committed to provide \$100,000 and the Idaho Alfalfa and Clover Seed Commission is chipping in \$25,000.



Photo by Sean Ellis

Michael Parrella, dean of University of Idaho's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, updates members of the Idaho Bean Commission June 19 on the college's proposed \$7 million upgrade of its Parma agricultural research station.

Crookham Seed Co. and Story Family Farms are also helping financially.

Parrella said the college "is well on our way to formulating a plan to accomplish this goal" and the hope is to break ground on the new facility in 2021.

Part of the project includes adding four new positions at Parma: an extension fruit and viticulture specialist, a weed scientist, an irrigation and soil scientist and a pollination scientist.

That would bring the total number of research faculty at the Parma station to 10 and they would study everything from bugs to weeds, water and soil, things every Idaho farmer deals with, Parrella said.

"We're hoping that no commission is on the sidelines on this because every commission will benefit from it," he said.

The modernized facility would include new graduate student housing, updated labs and equipment and new greenhouses.

Many of the facilities at the Parma station and Idaho's eight other ag research and extension centers are more than 50 years old

and all of the centers are in need of modernized infrastructure and equipment, Parrella said.

He said the goal is to start with the Parma center but CALS plans to refurbish all of its ag research stations.

"We are committed to investing in all our research and extension centers," he said. "We need to update them all. We start with Parma and then move on to the other R & E centers in the state."

The 200-acre Parma center was slated for closure in 2009 during the last recession but a coalition of ag groups formed to help save it.

One of those groups, the Treasure Valley Ag Coalition, recently changed its name to the Idaho Agriculture Research and Extension Coalition to reflect that the research done in Parma will benefit all sectors of the state's farming community.

"The research done there is clearly going to benefit more than just growers around Parma," Parrella said. "It will serve all of Idaho." ■



Paper birch

Native tree benefits many wildlife species

By Chris Schnepf
University of Idaho

The further north you travel in Idaho, the more likely you are to see a forest tree many Idahoans have in their yards – paper birch (*Betula papyrifera*). Though many landscape birches are descended from European varieties, paper birch is native to the Idaho panhandle.

One of the many wonders of northern Idaho is our variety of trees and forest understory plants that are considered “boreal disjuncts” — species that are normally associated with boreal forests in Canada and Alaska. Idaho and Montana are the only states in the Rocky Mountains that have any appreciable numbers of paper birch trees.

Identification

Paper birch’s most distinctive characteristic is its white, peeling bark, which is also distinctive for its large horizontal lenticels, structures that help the tree with gas exchange. Lenticels are also found on choke cherry and bitter cherry shrubs, but birch and cherry leaves are quite different from each other.

Cherries have finely serrate, simple leaves, whereas birch leaves are heavily toothed. Alders have similar toothed leaves, but alder leaves look thicker and more 3-dimensional.

Seed-producing structures also help separate birch from alder. Birch produces seeds on a soft, narrow catkin that falls apart when the seed is mature. This is quite different from the hard, woody, cone-like catkins found on alders that persist through the year. Birch leaves turn



bright yellow in the fall before they fall off the tree.

If you drive south of Coeur d'Alene and see bark and leaves that look like a birch, you are more likely looking at water birch (*Betula occidentalis*), another species in the same genus that lacks the white bark of paper birch.

Water birch bark is more reddish brown (though young paper birch can have bark this color, too) and is a smaller tree. It is often found growing near streams and lakes.

If paper birches are growing near water birches (or some of our other more localized birch species – see “Wild Trees of Idaho” in the references listed at the end of this article), the species often hybridize with each other.

Ecology and silviculture

Paper birch is found all across northern North America. The Idaho state record paper birch, located in Bonner County, is 75 feet tall and 52 inches in diameter. Young paper birches grow very fast, but they tend to die young – they can live up to 140 years, but most die much younger than that.

Birch seeds have tiny wings that help them ride air currents to be spread far and wide. Paper birch is not very fire-resistant – its strategy is to put out lots of far-spreading seed every year to take advantage of moist, disturbed sites whenever and wherever they are available.

Like all of Idaho's other broadleaf trees, paper birch can also reproduce vegetatively. Birches often grow in clumps, and top-killed birch and stumps often produce sprouts.

Paper birches are beautiful trees, but extension offices get a lot of calls on them both in landscapes and forests. They are very vulnerable to the bronze birch borer, an insect that kills the top branches of the tree. If you want to keep older birch trees in a

Photos by Chris Schnepf

LEFT: Paper birch's white peeling bark and large lenticels aid quick identification.

RIGHT: Birch leaves are thin and heavily toothed.



yard, you may have to apply frequent insecticide treatments to deal with this insect.

In a forest environment, lots of birch borer activity is associated with succession. Birches are a very shade-intolerant, seral species in Idaho forests, meaning they tend to be found relatively early in the life of a forest.

Birches are commonly one of the first species to seed into an area that has been disturbed by fire or timber harvest, but eventually they are replaced by more shade-tolerant conifers.

In a sense, succession is what really kills forest birch trees – birch borers are just helping move the process along.

In addition to birch borer, a whole host of other insects and diseases feed on *Betula* species, but they are not usually intentionally managed much.

Deer, elk, and other ungulates are a much bigger problem for anyone trying to regenerate paper birch, as they will happily munch on birch foliage, buds, and shoots.

Benefits

Paper birch benefits many wildlife species. Birches are among the first trees to die in succession. Dead birch trees decay rapidly, making birch snags easily excavated by primary cavity nesters (e.g. woodpeckers).

Birch snags are then used by secondary cavity nesters such as other birds and small mammals. The downside of the rapid decay is that birch snags and logs on the forest floor are relatively short-lived – conifer snags and logs will last much longer.

Birds also like to eat birch seeds, as well as the buds and catkins.

Across its range, birch is used for a variety of wood products including pulp and paper, furniture, core-stock for plywood, baskets, crates, pallets, bowls, and boxes, but Idaho birch is rarely cut into boards.

In communities where there is a ready supply, paper birch is often a preferred source of firewood. Native Americans used birch bark for canoes, baskets, and a variety of other purposes.

Birch is also valued by many for its sap.

Birches can be tapped just like maple trees. The sap can be used to make syrup and is used in soft drinks (“birch beer”).

In some parts of the world, mildly sweet birch sap is even tapped and sold as “birch water” (the next coconut water?)

Conclusion

Many of us smile at least a little bit when we see a birch, because it is such a beautiful tree. Many Idaho forest owners like having some of them around for that reason alone. To learn more about this species and its close relatives, start with the references listed below.

For more information

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Photo by Chris Schnepf
Bronze birch borers commonly kill birch tops in both forests and yards.

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Photo by John O'Connell

Robert and Jenny Perkins try to fend off a bottle-fed bison named "Trooper" at their 120-acre ranch near McCammon, where they have nearly 50 bison. Some of their ranch's bison can be seen in the TV series "Yellowstone."

Dream come true

*Bison raised on
McCammon ranch
appear on TV show*

By John O'Connell
Intermountain Farm & Ranch

MCCAMMON — The bison at the Perkins ranch have a gait, physical features, a way of interacting with people and other distinguishable traits recogniz-

able to their owners.

So when Robert Perkins was in his living room last year in McCammon, he could positively spot two of his bison on the popular new TV Western "Yellowstone," starring Kevin Costner.

Robert loaned some of his bison to

the show, despite great apprehension about temporarily letting go of them. With the four Perkins kids into adulthood, the bison practically filled their place for Robert, who has been enamored with the animal since visiting Yellowstone National Park as a kid and has tended to his own herd for much of this decade.

“The bison is such an iconic animal for North America,” Robert said. “They meant so much to the early history of the United States, so it’s fascinated me as far as that goes. As far as the ranching of it, I really enjoy it. Each bison has its own personality; they’re usually a herd animal and so they do everything together.”

Robert’s wife, Jenny, has presented full-fledged support in the endeavor, like last year when she mothered a calf named Trooper that lost its mother. Trooper, born on Memorial Day, was predominately bottle fed by Jenny for five months, including every two hours for the first month.

That meant in the dead of June nights, the housewife would have to crawl out of bed and go outdoors to feed Trooper, which was kept in an area next to their garage.

“That was an interesting experience that I’d just as soon not have again,” Jenny said. “That was a lot of work. Brand new baby all over again. It was an animal, instead of a little one.”

On two occasions when she was busy, Robert had to shelter the calf in a trailer in the parking lot of his dentist office and pause what he was doing every couple hours to feed Trooper.

Trooper is one of 44 bison on their 120-acre ranch that features a small hill where their house is perched. Robert works about a 40-hour work week as part owner of four dentistry practices, but makes time for ranching when he arrives home. He said the animals raise themselves, but feed has to be dispersed, water lines have to be moved and maintenance is required, among other duties.

“It’s been my dream,” Robert said. “It’s lived up to everything that I’ve dreamed of. It’s away from my daily job. It’s relaxing. It’s just really peaceful to be able to work with the animals.”

At the start, Jenny didn’t know that her husband wouldn’t complete his day until after dark, but she has become acclimated to the arrangement and is an enthusiastic and helpful ranch hand.

“Hauling hay, cutting hay, moving hay — it’s all just hard,” Jenny said. “I just wasn’t prepared for the things that I never thought about or even knew about.”

When all of their children were at least of high school age in 2013, the family decided to partake in ranching and raising bison in Lake Shore, Utah, with Robert spearheading the idea. They started with nine bison and immediately made ranching into a

business called Diamond P Grassroots Bison.

They sell bison meat, and Jenny has begun leading an agritourism division that is starting small with two June wagon rides with the bison.

“Right now, it’s not something that’s an income producer,” Robert said. “It’s more of a hobby. So that’s the animal that I wanted to concentrate on just because of the respect I have for it, and that’s just kind of where it stayed. I don’t really have interest in expanding it a whole lot more. They take all of my time, in a good way.”

The ranch was re-stationed to Idaho four years after they started raising bison. Their McCammon land has trees to shade the animals, a lot of pasture and the Portneuf River running through it.

“We just fell in love with it,” Robert said of what was previously a cattle ranch. “It’s just perfect for what we were doing. We were buying it with our future in mind, but also the future of the animals.”

While the Perkins were living in Utah, the Idaho ranch was prepped from 2014 to 2016, with the installation of about 68 acres of 7-foot perimeter fencing eating up the

most time. The majority of the ranch was prepared by the 26-year married couple, who are both in their 40s.

Jenny was apprehensive about leaving their home state and their adult children in the first place but loves the place now. In Utah, she didn’t get a full ranching experience because the bison were on a different plot of land than their home.

“You are just right there with nature, seeing the Lord’s hand in everything we do. And I think that is a huge positive,” Jenny said. “It’s just a little piece of heaven right there.”

They forged forward and entered a process of transporting bison to their new home around the start of 2017.

The final 12 were shipped right after being used on “Yellowstone,” which was partly shot in Utah.

The Perkins’ bison were on the Paramount Network show thanks to a Utahan who was supplying animals to the TV show and asked Robert to loan his bison for money. The animals appeared in the intro of every episode in addition to playing a role in at least one of the early episodes, where Robert recognized two of his bison.

Robert said he identified a female because it had more of an unusual masculine look, while the other bison was mainly recognizable because of its hump.

They were out of Robert’s custody for about a day and a half for TV production.

Robert said he was a “little nervous” about the arrangement, but Jenny expressed how that was a massive understatement. She said it took hours of discussion to talk him into it.

“You are just right there with nature, seeing the Lord’s hand in everything we do. And I think that is a huge positive. It’s just a little piece of heaven right there.”

— Jenny Perkins



Photo by John O'Connell

Jenny Perkins feeds a bison at her 120-acre ranch near McCammon, where she and husband Robert have nearly 50 bison. Some of their ranch's bison can be seen in the TV series "Yellowstone."

"He thought it would be really neat, but he was nervous because he didn't want anything to happen to these animals," Jenny said. "Once I finally got him on board, then we worked all of the logistics out and then it was a done deal. But it took a little bit of talking. He was so concerned about those animals."

While the TV program is on a little-known channel, it has a wide audience with its season 1 finale drawing over 2 million viewers. Life in the West, away from city life, has been a big draw in the TV industry lately with countless other Westerns flooding the platform, including Ashton Kutcher's Netflix show, "The Ranch."

"I think that's why agritourism is so big because people want a taste of it," Jenny said. "They want to see what the other half does. But there's so much work involved, I don't know if they would actually want to live there, in that world."

The Perkins obviously don't experience the danger some West-

erns convey, as they have not even suffered a bison-related injury. But they experience the tranquility of the open range.

Neither one of them had experienced anything quite like it. Robert's family had cattle and pigs, while Jenny's had a similar arrangement — though it was all minor.

Robert explained how he liked the aura of bison when discussing his entrance into ranching. But how do you go from there to owning a herd of nearly 50?

While Robert could not pinpoint a hard inflection point in which he decided he had to have bison, his wife could.

Jenny said there was a chat between Robert and one of his sons while hunting on a hillside. After discussing his son's hopes for the future, his son turned toward Robert and asked, "What are your dreams?"

"A couple years later, we had animals," Jenny said. ■

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Purchase at select Farm Bureau offices.

ROARING springs

water park

Regular Adult \$34.97 tax included

Farm Bureau Price

\$27.50

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

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

WAHOZ

FAMILY FUN ZONE

Regular Adult \$44.99

**Farm Bureau Online
Discount Price**

\$36.99

Child/ (Under 60") \$37.99

**Farm Bureau Online
Discount Price**

\$31.49



SILVERWOOD

THEME PARK
Boulder Beach
Water Park

Regular Adult \$53.00

**FARM BUREAU ONLINE
DISCOUNT PRICE**

\$47.00

Regular Child/Senior \$30.00

**FARM BUREAU ONLINE
DISCOUNT PRICE**

\$27.00