

GEM STATE **Producer** Idaho Farm Bureau

January 2020 • Volume 24 Issue 1



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hitting pay dirt!**

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Carrying our farm values into the future



As we close out celebrating our centennial at the American Farm Bureau in 2019, we stand at the start of a new decade, and a new century of Farm Bureau.

Many of us are ready for a new year and a new season. Farming is always about looking to the future with the hope the next season will be better than the last.

I am amazed and humbled by how much has been accomplished through generations of farmers and ranchers working together. Some years—or decades—are tougher than others,

but we have always pressed on with diligence and faith.

Here are a few things in farming that I hope never change with the passing years and decades.

Our commitment to our communities

Farmers and ranchers are the lifeblood of our communities. For many of us, our families have been in our communities for generations. Our neighbors are family, and we come together to celebrate the good times and to lift each other up in the hard times.

See **DUVALL**, page 6

The President's Desk

By Bryan Searle

President Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

The power of one voice



It is true that Farm Bureau's biggest strength lies in the fact that its members speak and act with a unified voice — when 14,000 people involved in the state's agricultural industry unite in a single cause, the impact is powerful.

But it's equally true that the policies and stances adopted by Idaho Farm Bureau Federation often begin with one person. That's why it's important to remember that everyone's voice matters.

Here's one example of how one voice can make a difference.

During a recent teleconference town hall hosted by Sen. Jim Risch, R-Idaho, Tracy Walton, a farmer from Emmett, made a point about the effects of trade on the agricultural industry.

The impact of Walton's suggestion obviously made a big impression on Risch, who took the time to comment on Facebook about his exchange with Walton.

See **SEARLE**, page 6

Inside Farm Bureau

By Rick Keller

CEO Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

A farmer's voice is amplified



As the number of farms and ranches continues in a downward decline, the farmer's or rancher's voice is amplified beyond their individual fence rows.

How can that happen? Organizations such as Farm Bureau allow that solitary voice to be heard.

The opinions of the individual farmers and ranchers who tilt back their chairs in the coffee shop are heard only by a few. However, nightly, all over this nation, hundreds of small groups of

farm neighbors gather together around a kitchen table or discuss issues on chat room platforms.

Perhaps there are only six families, perhaps a dozen. They are meeting as an organized group of Farm Bureau and they not only talk about problems, they decide upon solutions and put these solutions into action.

Each group is a working unit of a great organization. Innumerable county and state Farm Bureau meetings are considering the recommendations

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Printed by: Adams Publishing Group, Pocatello, ID

GEM STATE PRODUCER

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

POSTMASTER send changes of address to: GEM STATE PRODUCER

P.O. Box 4848, Pocatello, ID 83205-4848. Periodicals postage paid at Pocatello, Idaho, and additional mailing offices.

Subscription rate: \$6.00 per year included in Farm Bureau dues.

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Photo by Sean Ellis

Potatoes are harvested in an East Idaho field in September.

2019 could be a year to remember for potato growers

By Sean Ellis
Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

IDAHO FALLS — 2019 could end up being a year that Idaho potato growers talk about for a long time.

“This is going to be a year to remember,” Bruce Huffaker, president of North American Potato Market News, said Dec. 10 during University of Idaho’s “Idaho Ag Outlook Seminar.”

Potato production in Idaho and around the U.S. is down this year and that is translating into significantly higher prices for spud growers.

“There is going to be stiff competition between processors and the fresh market for who’s going to pay the most for potatoes,” Huffaker said.

Potato growers who sell to processors have pre-existing contracts and are locked in to previously agreed upon prices, but farmers who grow potatoes for the fresh market are reaping much higher prices on the open market.

Based on current projections, Idaho potato growers should be making about \$12.23 per hundred pounds of potatoes sold right now, Huffaker said. This time last year, they were making closer to \$6.

“We’re talking about almost doubling prices for Idaho potatoes this year,” he said. “Not so much process growers but for (fresh) potato growers, it should be a very good year.”

Photo by Sean Ellis
COVER PHOTO: Potato production in North America is down and potato prices are soaring. See this page for story.

See **POTATOES**, page 15



Dairy West photo

Idaho dairy operators and their families attend Dairy West's annual meeting, which was held Nov. 13-14 in Boise.

Higher milk prices lead to more optimism among dairy producers

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

BOISE — For the first time in several years, there is some optimism creeping into Idaho's dairy industry.

The average milk price in Idaho has risen from \$15 per hundredweight (cwt) in January to \$18 and \$19 in recent months.

The prices that Idaho dairy farmers are receiving for their milk are at their highest level in five years and, more importantly, above the break-even point that dairy

producers need to make a profit.

"There's a lot of optimism right now, with \$18 milk," Wendell dairy farmer Arie Roeloffs said during Dairy West's annual meeting, which took place Nov. 13-14. "How can you not be optimistic? Right now, it's looking great."

Dairy West represents Idaho and Utah dairy producers. Idaho, which has about 590,000 milk cows, ranks third in the nation in milk production and the state's 425 dairy operations collectively produce about 15 billion pounds of milk

per year.

After reaching record levels in 2014, Idaho milk prices fell significantly the next four years and were at or below break-even for most of that period.

They began ticking up significantly in the spring and are now at their highest level in five years. As a result, the collective mood at the Dairy West annual meeting was up as well.

Idaho Dairymen's Association Executive Director Rick Naerebout said producers are more optimistic this year

but he said it was a cautious optimism because of apprehension over how long the higher milk prices will continue.

“There is some caution in that upturn,” he said. “But it is great to be here at an annual meeting where dairymen are once again making money and spirits are better. It’s been a fun few days here to see our dairymen in a more upbeat mood, knowing they are making money today and that’s not been the situation the last few years.”

Gooding dairyman Steve Ballard also said the optimism is cautious.

“Any time you see a bump in milk prices, there is more optimism. That’s always a good thing,” he said. “But the question is, how long will it last?”

During the period of low prices, the number of Idaho dairy operations in Idaho shrunk from just over 500 to 425.

“A lot of people just got tired of it and went out of business. A lot of people quit while they had a little bit of equity left,” Roeloffs said. “It’s devastating when you see your neighbors and others going out of business. It’s been rough.”

After four years of bad news, some good news began trickling into Idaho’s dairy industry in February when Gem 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.

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

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

The recent uptick in milk prices is good news for the state’s overall agricultural industry as well since dairy is the top performer in Idaho’s farming sector in terms of total cash receipts.

Dairy accounts for about a third of Idaho’s total farm cash receipts and when livestock feed crops such as hay and corn silage are considered, the dairy industry’s impact on the state’s agricul-



Dairy West photo

For the first time in several years, there is a ray of optimism in Idaho’s dairy industry as prices have climbed higher in recent months.

tural sector is huge.

While the overall picture for Idaho dairy producers is certainly better this year than it has been in several years, the state’s dairy operations still produce more milk than can be processed in Idaho at the moment and that’s a major concern, said Roeloffs, a member of IDA’s board of directors.

According to IDA, Idaho operators produce about 2 million pounds a day of “excess milk” that isn’t under contract and has to leave the state.

That milk is sold at discounted prices because of the additional transportation costs and the fact that milk not produced under contract is typically purchased at a lower price.

“We don’t have the capacity to process all the milk we’re producing and a lot of milk is leaving our state because of that,” Roeloffs said. “I think we really need to work as a team, through the IDA, to get more processors in our area.”

The recent announcements of more milk processing capacity coming to Idaho help but a lot more processing capacity is still needed, Roeloffs said.

Achieving that is a major goal of the Idaho dairy industry, said Dairy West CEO Karianne Fallow.

“Having processing capacity is a really important part of the equation because we do have so much more milk in the marketplace right now,” she said.

While that challenge needs to be addressed, there’s no doubt that there is more optimism among the state’s dairy operators now compared to recent years, Fallow said.

“It’s been a long road over the past four years and we’ve had some fallout from that,” she said. “But I think the farmers who are dairying today do sense more optimism for the future.”

During those four years of depressed milk prices, it was tough for dairy operators to wake up every morning knowing they were losing money regardless of how well they managed their dairy and took care of their cows, Naerebout said.

“It was been a long four years in that regard,” he said. “But things are much more positive right now. It’s always great to go into the holiday season with an upbeat market and an upbeat perspective.” ■

Continued from page 2

Our commitment to strengthen our communities is another reason we're a part of Farm Bureau. We want to advocate for policies and programs that will keep rural America going strong for our children and our grandchildren.

Our commitment to future generations

Farming gives us the opportunity to work out in God's creation, which reminds us every day that we are not the beginning and the end of the story of our land. We always remember that we are caretakers, and if we take care of the land, it will take care of us.

I am so grateful every day to farm the land that my father and grandfather farmed before me, and I can tell you the soil on my farm is healthier than ever, thanks to modern practices and new technology.

The land I farm today will be productive for generations to come, and I know that same story is told on each of your farms and ranches across this great land.

Our commitment to our families

Farming is a family business. It's no wonder that 98% of U.S. farms and ranches are run by families. Working with my family — first with my parents and brother, then my wife and our children, and now even my grandchildren — is the greatest gift I have known in farming.

We have all faced our share of tough days on the farm, whether that be rain that won't come or storms that won't let up, a truck that won't start or low prices when loan payments are due. But

'Even if the kids don't all come back to the farm, there's a lifelong work ethic and love for the land that'll always be a part of who they are.'

along with the hardship, farm families also get to share in the joys of working together, bringing in a good harvest and seeing new life come into this world.

Even if the kids don't all come back to the farm, there's a lifelong work ethic and love for the land that'll always be a part of who they are.

I am proud of the work we've done together across Farm Bureau this year and this decade, from regulatory reform to new trade deals, from greater access to precision technology to expanding infrastructure for rural broadband.

This important work will preserve America's agriculture and food security.

But no matter what new technology we use, our core values, our faith and family, will continue to be the foundation for the next year, the next decade, and the next century. ■

Continued from page 2

"I promised I would carry his message to the president," Risch wrote. "Yesterday, I did just that during a lunch with the president at the White House. That prompted a lengthy and productive discussion about how we can help the ag industry.

"The president is fully engaged on the issue and he is on our side. My number one priority is representing Idahoans in D.C. and this is a great example of how your input can make a difference."

Think about that for a moment. One comment from one Idaho farmer resulted in his message being taken to the president of the United States.

Walton's message is just one example of how someone can make a big difference just by being willing to speak up and share their idea.

Each December, IFBF members from around the state gather together during the organization's annual meeting to vote on

proposed changes or additions to the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation policy book.

Just as a bounteous harvest begins with one seed or fruit tree planted at a time, or one calf born at a time, Farm Bureau policies oftentimes begin as an idea generated by a single person who takes the time to plant the seed.

When and if that person's idea becomes an official IFBF policy, then the entire organization, all its members, galvanize around that policy and support it.

But the policy itself started as a seed, as an idea in a single person's mind that came to bear fruit only because that person was willing to share that idea and speak up about it.

I encourage all Farm Bureau members to be involved and be willing to share their ideas and speak out about issues important to agriculture.

Think about the potential impact of thousands of people around the state being involved and sharing their ideas about how to protect or improve agriculture. ■

Continued from page 2

which come from these local gatherings. Now your voices are heard, because you speak as one.

The united decisions of individual farmers and ranchers today echoes around the world. Through Farm Bureau, farmers and ranchers translate their opinions into decisions, and their decisions into action.

Individual farmers and ranchers, and community and county groups are, and always will be, most important in Farm Bureau's plan. It is in the individual farmer or rancher and the county Farm Bureau that the strength and power of the organization lie.

Membership in Farm Bureau is unique. It matters not the size of the farm, the number of sacks of potatoes or bushels of grain produced, or the number of cows milked that classifies a Farm Bureau voting member.

A voting membership requires that a substantial portion of the farmer's or rancher's income come from the production of agricultural products. Farm Bureau's membership consists of some of the largest farms in the state to farms with only a few acres, but each meet the criteria established.

The leadership of the Farm Bureau represents a diverse group of farmers and ranchers in size, production, and commodities.

'Members of Farm Bureau have proven that the power and possibilities of such a group, trained to work together effectively, have no bounds.'

Members of Farm Bureau have proven that the power and possibilities of such a group, trained to work together effectively, have no bounds. Teamed up, they can do any job which needs to be done.

Farm Bureau preserves the freedom of the individual farmer or rancher to think or say or work for what he or she believes yet unites the power of all its members in support of one decision made by a majority vote.

You are encouraged to come to your county Farm Bureau and have your voice heard. Your voice is needed, and it needs to be amplified. Farm Bureau can assist. ■

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Photo by Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation President Bryan Searle addresses Farm Bureau members during IFBF's 80th annual meeting, which was held Dec. 3-5 in Coeur d'Alene.

Hundreds of farmers attend Idaho Farm Bureau's annual meeting

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

COEUR d'ALENE — Hundreds of farmers and ranchers from across the state converged on Coeur d'Alene Dec. 3-5 for Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's 80th annual meeting.

Workshops were held on several topics, awards were handed out, friendships renewed and Gov. Brad Little wished IFBF a happy 80th birthday.

But the heart of the three-day meeting, as always, was the House of Delegates

session, where voting delegates from every county Farm Bureau develop the policies that will guide IFBF through the coming year.

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's policy book addresses agricultural-related issues important to IFBF members and those policies guide the organization throughout the coming year.

One of Farm Bureau's strengths is that those policies are developed at the grassroots level, by farmers and ranchers who understand the issues facing the ag industry better than anyone, said IFBF

President Bryan Searle, a farmer from Shelley.

"We are completely driven by the policy that is developed by our members," he said. "Idaho Farm Bureau has been here for 80 years and American Farm Bureau has been here for 100 years. You don't survive that long without having a strong policy development process. That is the strength of the organization and that is how we have survived for that long."

The strength of Farm Bureau is that its policy comes from its members and not from the top down, said IFBF Executive

Vice President Rick Keller.

“Our policy comes from our members,” he said. “They identify areas of concern for their industry and then they get together and develop a collective way to overcome and resolve those things.”

Keller said IFBF staff are not the decision makers in the organization.

“You develop the policies. You set the direction,” he told Farm Bureau members. “My role as executive vice president and that of the staff is to assist in implementing the policies and decisions that are reached.”

Sen. Mark Harris, a Republican rancher from Soda Springs who previously served on IFBF’s board of directors, told Farm Bureau members, “Your policy book is very, very valuable to legislators.”

Searle said it’s not enough just to develop policy, though. Farm Bureau members have to follow through on those policies and see that they bear fruit.

“Once we have sound policy established, it’s just the beginning,” he said. “That seed is planted and now the work begins. Now we build that relationship with legislators and work with them to get laws passed that benefit the agricultural industry.”

“I think it’s really important that organizations develop policy and then follow through with it,” said Idaho Falls farmer Stephanie Mickelsen, a member of IFBF’s board of directors. “Once we decide on a policy, that’s our position and we need to have all of our forces working in the same direction.”

IFBF represents 80,635 families across the state, including 14,000 involved with agriculture, and it takes all different types of members to create a strong, relevant organization, Keller said.

“Farm Bureau is kind of like an orchestra,” he said. “It takes a lot of different instruments.”

While IFBF develops policy, Keller said, it also develops relationships, with elected officials and between its own members and that is another major strength of the organization.

“Farm Bureau is in the people busi-



Photo by Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation voting delegates debate proposed policy changes during IFBF’s 80th annual meeting, which was held Dec. 3-5 in Coeur d’Alene.

ness,” he said. “We develop people and we develop relationships.”

The governor, a farmer and rancher from Emmett, attended the meeting and wished Farm Bureau a happy 80th

industrial hemp, which is expected to be a major issue during the 2020 Idaho Legislature.

Little said he has no problem with hemp as long as it’s not used as a means to camouflage marijuana.

“I have no problem with hemp but I do have a huge problem with ... marijuana,” he said.

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation policy has supported industrial hemp production for more than two decades.

During their policy development session Dec. 4-5, IFBF voting delegates, who are all farmers or ranchers, confirmed IFBF’s position on industrial hemp.

The delegates also tackled a host of other issues important to those involved in the state’s agricultural industry, including water rights, cloud seeding, land use, wolves,

open range and grizzly bears.

While speaking about efforts to reduce state government regulations and rules, Little was applauded three times.

Shortly after addressing IFBF members, the governor’s office sent out a

“Our policy comes from our members. They identify areas of concern for their industry and then they get together and develop a collective way to overcome and resolve those things.”

— Rick Keller, IFBF executive vice president

birthday.

“The Farm Bureau has always had a big part in Idaho and Idaho politics,” said Little. “I know full well you’re the backbone of rural Idaho.”

He also spoke about his stance on



Photo by Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation President Bryan Searle left, listens as Gov. Brad Little, a farmer and rancher, addresses Farm Bureau members during IFBF's 80th annual meeting, which was held Dec. 3-5 in Coeur d'Alene.

news release that says Idaho has cut or simplified 75 percent of its rules and is now the least-regulated state in the nation.

Now that Idaho has the least number of rules of any state, Little said — the governor received more applause for that line — he added, “For small businesses, the long-term cost of operating in Idaho is going to go down and there will be less government friction.”

According to the news release from the governor's office, Little has worked with legislators and state agencies within his administration to eliminate 1,804 pages of the state's administrative code, and for every chapter added, 83 chapters were

cut.

Harris encouraged Farm Bureau members to stay engaged and show up to testify at the legislature if necessary when important issues arise.

“Legislators love farmers and ranchers because you are real,” he said. “I can't put a value on the weight of what you say. Your testimony is invaluable and it carries a lot of weight.”

Running unopposed, Searle was selected to serve his third two-year term as IFBF president during the annual meeting.

Richard Durrant, an Ada County farmer, was picked to serve as IFBF's vice president. He won a two-way race

between himself and sitting IFBF Vice President Mark Trupp, a producer from Teton.

“I appreciate Mark and his many years of service and I congratulate Richard and look forward to working alongside him,” Searle said.

Besides being a time to carry out important policy related business, Mickelsen said, the annual meeting is also an opportunity for a lot of Farm Bureau members to greet old friends and catch up on how their lives are going.

“Farm Bureau has its own family, if you will, and it's amazing how good and supportive of each other the Farm Bureau family is,” she said. ■

Idaho Farm Bureau members receive awards during annual meeting

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

COEUR d'ALENE — Awards were presented to Idaho Farm Bureau Federation members in several categories during the organization's annual meeting Dec. 3-5.

Moj and Kelsey Broadie, who operate a ranch near Moore, were presented with IFBF's Achiever in Agriculture award, which recognizes young farmers or ranchers who have excelled in their farming or ranching operation and honed their leadership abilities.

They received their award in Coeur d'Alene during Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's 80th annual meeting, which was attended by several hundred farmers from across the state.

The Achiever award is part of IFBF's Young Farmers and Ranchers program, which is open to Farm Bureau members between the ages of 18 and 35.

Award contestants are evaluated on a combination of their farming operation's grown and financial progress and their leadership both within Farm Bureau and outside of the organization.

Contestants give a presentation to a panel of judges, who ask them questions.

The Broadies received a Polaris Ranger "side by side" and will compete in the same competition during American Farm Bureau Federation's annual meeting in Austin, Texas, in January.

Excellence in Agriculture

Jerome ranchers Craig and Erica Louder were presented IFBF's Excellence in Agriculture Award, which spotlights young Farm Bureau members who are agricultural enthusiasts but have not earned a majority of their income from an owned production agriculture enterprise in the past three years.

Competitors for the award are judged based on their understanding of ag is-



Photo by Sean Ellis

Jerome ranchers Craig and Erica Louder were presented Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's Excellence in Agriculture Award during IFBF's annual meeting. Erica Louder is shown here receiving the award from IFBF President Bryan Searle.



Photo by Sean Ellis

Moj and Kelsey Broadie, center, who operate a ranch near Moore, are presented with Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's Achiever in Agriculture award during IFBF's annual meeting. On the left is IFBF President Bryan Searle and Kyle Wade, the former Farm Bureau state Young Farmers and Ranchers chairman, is on the right.

sues as well as their leadership experiences and achievements.

The Excellence in Agriculture award, which is sponsored by Northwest Farm Credit Services, is also part of IFBF's Young Farmers and Ranchers program.

The Louders received a Polaris four-wheeler and will compete in the same competition during AFBF's annual meeting.

During IFBF's three-day meeting, Sen. Mark Harris, a Republican rancher from Soda Springs, acknowledged Farm Bureau's Young Farmers and Ranchers program.

"Farm Bureau is the only organization I know of that has a succession program built into it and that is very important for the future of agriculture in Idaho and the country," he said.

New IFBF Vice President Richard Durrant also applauded the YF&R program.

"I see tremendous opportunity through this program to make and grow new leaders," said Durrant, a farmer from Meridian.

Women of the Year

During the convention, IFBF's Women's Leadership Committee presented Women of the Year awards to Ann Moedel of Franklin County, Carol Chamberlain of Custer County, Amie Taber of Gooding-Lincoln County Farm Bureau, Mary Blackstock of Owyhee County and Kathy Riebli of Boundary County.

Blackstock passed away earlier this year.

"What a great woman Mary was. She will be in our hearts forever and we pay tribute to her," said IFBF President Bryan Searle.

The Women of the Year award honors individuals involved in farming or ranching who personify the highest level of professional excellence. It also recognizes, encourages and celebrates the achievements of women in agriculture.

According to the most recent U.S.



Photo by Steve Ritter

Bob Callihan is pictured Dec. 4 with his wife, Cle, during Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's annual meeting in Coeur d'Alene, shortly after being presented IFBF's President's Cup Award, which is the group's highest award and goes to an individual who has committed themselves to the organization.

Census of Agriculture, there were 17,230 female farmers or ranchers in Idaho in 2017.

President's Cup

Bob Callahan, a producer from Latah County, was awarded IFBF's President's

Callihan said Farm Bureau members mean a lot to him and his wife, Cle.

"You're my tribe," he said. "You're my people and I'm not going to forget that."

Discussion Meet

Sydnee Hill, a farmer from Blaine-Camas Farm Bureau, won the Young Farmers and Ranchers Discussion Meet, which helps producers hone their public speaking and problem-solving skills during a competition that is meant to simulate a committee meeting rather than a debate.

The contestants, who moderate themselves and engage each other in a cooperative manner, discuss a pre-selected

topic and are judged based on constructive criticism, cooperation and communication.

Hill won a Polaris Ranger "side by side" provided by Valley Wide Coop and will compete in the AFBF Discussion Meet in January. ■

"Farm Bureau is the only organization I know of that has a succession program built into it and that is very important for the future of agriculture in Idaho and the country."

— Sen. Mark Harris

Cup award, which is the group's highest award and goes to an individual who has committed themselves to the organization.

"Bob's a workhorse and he is very wise," Searle said. "When Bob opens his mouth, you better be listening."

USMCA approval good news for U.S. potato growers

By John O'Connell
Intermountain Farm and Ranch

POCATELLO – The recent approval of an updated trade agreement for North America is good news for U.S. potato growers who do business in Mexico, according to the top official with the potato industry's lobbying organization.

National Potato Council CEO Kam Quarles said approval of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement should “stabilize” potato exports to America's southern neighbor.

More than \$250 million in U.S. potato products are currently shipped annually into Mexico, which is the third largest foreign market for U.S. spuds behind Japan and Canada, according to NPC.

Fries and processed potato products represent the bulk of exports to Mexico, due to the country's current restriction on accepting fresh U.S. potato shipments beyond about 16 miles from its border with the U.S.

Quarles said U.S. spud growers were hurt by retaliatory tariffs Mexico imposed on their products in response to tariffs the U.S. placed on Mexican steel and aluminum. Those tariffs were removed about a year ago, but Quarles said the new agreement should “take uncertainty off the table” about tariffs returning.

Furthermore, the USMCA contains language that should prevent participants from using perceived pest and disease issues as baseless excuses to limit imports.

“They can't just come up with any random so-called expert to defend their own protectionism,” Quarles said, adding the agreement requires international entities to make phytosanitary determinations based on scientific

See **SPUDS**, page 27



New hard white wheat variety could improve yields

By John O'Connell
Intermountain Farm and Ranch

ABERDEEN — As a rule of thumb, Idaho farmers have fetched a small premium per bushel by raising hard white wheat — a class demanded both domestically and abroad for its light color and sweet flavor.

They've typically gotten better yields, however, with hard red wheat.

University of Idaho Extension wheat breeder Jianli Chen has been shaking things up lately, developing new hard white varieties that can out-yield even the best hard reds raised in the region. Chen has especially high hopes for her program's promising recent hard white winter release, called UI Bronze Jade.

Chen devotes about half of her Aberdeen-based program's time and resources toward breeding better, regionally adapted hard white wheat varieties. Though Idaho is already the top hard white-producing state, Chen anticipates her recent varieties and a few others nearing release will further bolster regional interest in the class.

Chen emphasized millers can also produce more flour from every pound of hard white wheat, which is a relatively new market class.

"In general, the number of hard white varieties are much, much less than hard red because hard white breeding started later than hard red and other market classes," Chen said.

In 2011, Chen's program released UI Silver, which is a hard white winter wheat well suited for the area's dryland farms.

"Some customers pay a premium for UI Silver," Chen said.

Last spring, Chen improved upon UI Silver, releasing UI Bronze Jade, which is extremely high yielding, has good resistance to stripe rust and is ideal for both irrigated and dryland fields. She said it also has acceptable end-use qualities.

"In general, hard white yield will be lower than hard red. However, UI Bronze Jade has comparable or higher yield than LCS Jet," Chen said, referring to a Limagrain hard red winter wheat that tends to be the top yielder among hard wheats in area variety trials. "This release showed hard white winter wheat can yield higher than hard red and soft white winter wheat."

UI planted foundation seed of UI Bronze Jade last fall and will make it available for planting next fall. Chen said the university will seek to find a collaborator to license UI Jade.

"The return will help to enhance the breeding program and help when we have a funding shortfall," Chen said.

Chen also has another hard white winter and two hard white spring lines in the pipeline awaiting release. She said the spring



Photo by Bill Schaefer

University of Idaho wheat breeder Jianli Chen speaks at the Aberdeen barley and wheat tour in July. Chen has been developing new hard white wheat varieties that can out-yield many hard red varieties.

lines have improved stripe rust resistance and stronger gluten strength.

Seed of the new hard white spring lines should be available in 2021.

She's also developing a pair of hard white spring wheat lines, which should be released by 2022, with two-gene resistance to Beyond herbicide.

Chen said another point of emphasis of her breeding program has been to incorporate Hessian fly resistance into its elite hard white spring wheat lines to expand the growing area for the class into Northern Idaho and Washington.

She has also been working to add Fusarium head blight resistance to hard white wheat lines, given that the disease is a mounting threat in southeast Idaho.

"My philosophy is I want to release a group of hard white winter wheats that can be grown under different production practices — make it so production can meet (demand of) U.S. markets and overseas markets," Chen said. "The demand of hard white is increasing in the domestic market for whole-grain and overseas use in noodles."

American Falls farmer Jim Tiede grew hard white one year when he was offered a decent contract and was pleased with the results. He believes higher yielding hard white varieties will entice growers to diversify their grain portfolios.

"The hard whites are just coming into vogue," Tiede said, adding the class is especially popular with Idaho's foreign export markets. "Hard whites seem to be in demand a little bit." ■

POTATOES

Continued from page 3

Oakley farmer Randy Hardy, who grows potatoes for the fresh market, said price returns to growers are currently in the \$11.50 to \$12 per hundredweight (cwt) range.

“Prices are significantly higher right now,” he said.

Hardy, who is 66 and just harvested his 48th potato crop, said, “We haven’t seen this kind of price this time of year in my lifetime.”

St. Anthony farmer Zak Miller, who also grows potatoes for the fresh market, said spud prices typically will peak around springtime.

“I’ve never known spud prices to be this high this time of the year,” said Miller, director of commodities for Idaho Farm Bureau Federation. “It’s quite amazing.”

Based on the United States’ reduced potato crop this year, those strong prices could hold well into next year, industry leaders said.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, U.S. spud farmers produced a total of 422 million cwt of potatoes in 2019, down 2.2 percent from 2018.

In states with potato processing capacity, production was down 3.6 percent, to 362 million cwt.

Huffaker said there were a slew of weather-related problems this growing season in several potato growing states across the nation and in Canada. That included the slowest start to planting on record in the Columbia Basin and extremely wet conditions in the upper Midwest.

Up to 18,000 acres of potatoes were unharvested in North Dakota and 17,000 acres were unharvested in Manitoba, Canada.

“There were lots of problems with potato crops across North America this year,” Huffaker said.

Canada is projecting its total 2019 potato crop will be up slightly compared with 2018 but that won’t be enough to meet new processing capacity in that country, Huffaker said.

He also said that it’s likely USDA’s



Photo by Sean Ellis

Bruce Huffaker, president of North American Potato Market News, talks about the 2019 potato crop Dec. 10 during University of Idaho’s “Idaho Ag Outlook Seminar” in Idaho Falls.

potato production total is overstated and doesn’t reflect possible potato storage issues related to the wet weather in the Midwest and a bitter frost in Idaho, which leads the nation in potato production.

That Idaho frost, which hit Oct. 9, came at a time when 10-15 percent of the state’s potato crop was still in the ground. Some fields affected by the severe early season cold sustained 30-40 percent tuber damage, Huffaker said.

According to USDA, Idaho’s 2019 potato crop of 134 million cwt is down 5.5 percent from 2018. Huffaker said that decrease may be understated because many of the frozen potatoes may not be salvageable.

All those production issues in North America have led to a situation where there is stiff competition between processors and the fresh market for raw product, Huffaker said.

That has resulted in significantly higher prices for potato growers that should be more than enough to make up for the losses in potato production that many Idaho farmers sustained, Hardy said.

Potato growers have always known that a small decrease in production leads to an increase in potato prices, he said. “Mother Nature took care of that for us this year.”

“For most potato farmers, whatever you lost, you are more than making up for it with the higher prices,” Miller said.

The higher prices are also good news for Idaho’s economy in general. Idaho potato farmers bring in about \$900 million in farm cash receipts each year. When potato processing and other spud-supporting businesses are included, potatoes are a multi-billion-dollar industry in Idaho.

Huffaker said the type of heavy freeze damage that Idaho potato farmers suffered this year hasn’t occurred since 1985. But the difference between then and now, he said, is that the whole country had a surplus of potatoes before the 1985 frost hit.

“This year, the potato supplies were tight before the frost and that’s only going to make supplies even tighter,” he said.

You have to go back to 1964 to find a year remotely similar to 2019 for Idaho’s iconic potato industry, Huffaker said. And that year, “They were the strongest potato prices any one had ever seen (at that time).”

A recent headline from Bloomberg warned, “America braces for possible French fry shortage.”

Huffaker and Hardy both said that’s not going to happen.

“We’re not going to run out of French fries. This headline is way overblown,” Huffaker said.

“The processors figure out a way to get French fries where they need to be,” Hardy said. “They know how to make adjustments to keep their customers satisfied.” ■

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To all policyholders: The 2020 annual meeting for policyholders of Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Co. of Idaho will be held on Friday, Feb. 7, 2020, at 10 a.m. at the company's home office at 275 Tierra Vista Drive in Pocatello, Idaho. You are invited to attend.

Rick D. Keller
Secretary

Notice of Stockholders Meetings

The following annual stockholders meetings will take place Friday, Feb. 7, 2020, at the Idaho Farm Bureau home office, 275 Tierra Vista Drive in Pocatello, Idaho.

The board of directors for each company will be elected at these meetings.

10:45 a.m. - Farm Bureau Marketing Association of Idaho
11 a.m. - FB Development Corporation of Idaho

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Photo by Steve Ritter

Idaho's wine industry has a \$210 million impact on Idaho's economy, according to a recently completed study.

Idaho wine's economic impact on the state hits \$210 million

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO — The impact that Idaho's wine industry has on the state's economy has grown substantially in recent years.

According to a recently completed economic impact study, Idaho's grape growing and wine making industry had a \$210 million economic impact on the state in 2017.

That's up from the \$169 million impact

the industry had in 2013, according to the last such wine impact study. In 2007, a Boise State University study found the state's wine industry had a \$73 million impact on Idaho's economy.

The results of the latest study "shows that we have had continued growth in the wine industry and that the industry is an important economic driver for the state of Idaho," said Idaho Wine Commission Executive Director Moya Shatz-Dolsby.

"The wine industry is becoming an influential agricultural commodity in Idaho,"

she said. "When you see that (\$210 million) number, it kind of speaks volumes."

That total includes industry operations, downstream distribution and sales and associated wine tourism activities.

The recent study was commissioned by the IWC and funded through specialty crop grant money provided to the commission by the Idaho State Department of Agriculture.

It was conducted by Community Attributes Inc., which is based in Seattle and pulled information from a variety



Photo by Sean Ellis

Wine grapes are harvested in a vineyard near Caldwell Nov. 1. According to a recently completed study, Idaho's wine industry has a \$210 million economic impact on Idaho.

of sources, including the U.S. Census Bureau, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax Trade Bureau and the Idaho State Tax Commission. Stakeholder surveys and interviews also contributed to the study.

When the 2013 study was conducted, there were 50 wineries in the state. There are 60 now. There were fewer than 10 wineries in Idaho around the year 2000.

According to the study, total wine sales within the state nearly doubled from 2011 to 2017. Idaho wine sales within the state increased by 51 percent from 2013 to 2017 and currently, 10 percent of all wine sold within the state is Idaho wine.

“Results reveal tremendous growth and clearly indicate significant opportunities for the future,” an IWC news release said about the study, which can be viewed at the commission’s website at idahowines.org.

The study found that one of the Idaho wine industry’s biggest strengths is that Idaho wines “are price competitive and a great value. Idaho produces premium wines at a price point often below those available from Washington state, California and Oregon.”

This is due to the lower cost of wine

grapes produced in Idaho, even for high-quality grapes. According to the people interviewed for the study, a ton of red wine grapes produced in Idaho sells for \$1,600 on average and white wine grapes sell for \$1,400 per ton on average.

That compares to \$2,400 and \$2,200 per ton in Washington.

Another bright spot for the state’s wine industry is that Idaho has been the fastest growing state in the nation recently on a percentage basis.

“Idaho is growing in population and this growth supports wine consumption,” the study states.

While the study showed there are tremendous growth opportunities for Idaho’s wine industry, it also listed some challenges to growth, including limitations in in-state grape production and the availability of key infrastructure.

Brand awareness was another key challenge.

“According to interviewees, reputation and brand awareness remain two of the largest constraints on growth,” the study states. “Idaho has yet to develop a national reputation for high-quality wines as has been established by Washington, Oregon

and California wineries, which creates downward pressure on prices.”

According to the study, Idaho wines are relatively rare in stores and restaurants outside of the state.

But it also adds, “Though still uncommon, Idaho’s brand as a quality winemaker is growing. Food & Wine Magazine called it ‘the next must-go-see-taste wine destination in the country,’ while Wine Enthusiast says the region has ‘endless potential.’”

The study also pointed out that while it’s growing quickly, Idaho’s wine industry is still tiny compared to other Western U.S. wine growing regions in California, Washington and Oregon.

For example, while Idaho harvests an average of 3,000 tons of wine grapes and produces almost 200,000 cases of wine per year, Washington produced 229,000 tons of grapes and about 13 million cases of wine in 2017.

However, the study states, “Despite its small size, Idaho is steadily gaining a reputation as a producer of award-winning wines and as a destination for wine tourism.” ■

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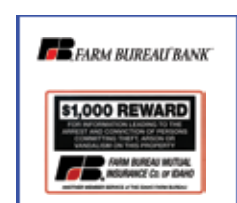
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Photo by Chris Schnepf

Aspen leaves quake due to a flat “petiole” (leaf stem).



Quaking aspen a valuable tree on many levels

By Chris Schnepf
University of Idaho

Quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) is one of Idaho’s two most common members of the genus *Populus* (the other being black cottonwood, *Populus trichocarpa*) and is one of the North America’s most cherished trees.

Identification

Aspen’s most distinctive characteristic is its two-three inch, roundish, mostly smooth-

edged leaves. The leaves are dark green on top and lighter on the underside.

The stem of each aspen leaf (the “petiole”) is flat, which causes aspen leaves to “quake” in the wind. In the fall, aspen leaves turn bright yellow, sometimes with hints of orange. After the leaves have fallen, aspen can be distinguished from cottonwood by aspen’s buds, which are much smaller than the fat, resinous buds of cottonwoods.

Aspen bark is thin, cream-colored (sometimes a little gray-greenish), and smooth when

the tree is young. As aspen ages, it often develops blackish markings on the trunk. Aspen bark does not peel off the tree like the bark of one of the trees it is sometimes mistaken for – paper birch.

Aspen bark also lacks the horizontal lenticels found on birches.

People appreciate the aesthetics of aspen year-round. Even after the leaves have fallen, people enjoy the contrast between aspens' creamy white trunks and the evergreen conifers that commonly dominate Idaho forests.

Aspen is one of the few trees to engage our hearing as well as our vision – aspen is our noisiest tree! When the wind blows through an aspen stand, fluttering leaves slap into each other making a very audible racket.

Ecology and silviculture

Aspen is found throughout Canada, the northern United States, and throughout Idaho, near streams, lakes, meadows or anywhere soils are moist enough to support it.

Young aspens grow very fast, but they do not get particularly tall. The Idaho state record aspen, located in Blaine County, is 87 feet tall and 36 inches in diameter.

Aspen often grows in small groves, sometimes called “copses.” Many people looking at an aspen copse think they are looking at a group of trees, but genetically they are typically all the same tree.

Aspen is often found in copses because it commonly reproduces vegetatively from root suckers. This habit also makes aspen very resilient in the face of fires and other disturbances. The above-ground parts of the tree may be killed, but they are quickly replaced by new sprouts from the roots.

Aspen's capacity for sprouting often surprises homeowners who think they are planting one tree, only to discover multiple aspens sprouting in their yard in following years.

When fire is excluded from aspen groves, conifers may take over the site. To maintain aspen groves, conifers growing amongst them must be removed.

Oregon State University has an excellent extension publication on maintaining aspen groves (see “references”).

To improve aspen saplings' value for wild-life feed, aspen stands can be rejuvenated by fire, harvesting, tillage, or even herbicides.



Photo by Chris Schnepf

Aspens provide a pleasing fall contrast with Idaho's native conifers.

Aspens don't get very old compared to most conifers. They can live up to 200 years, but most individual stems usually die much earlier (60-80 years). That having been said, an aspen copse can exist for hundreds or even thousands of years – individual stems may die but are subsequently replaced by clonal sprouts from the same long-lived roots.

Aspen can also produce lots of seed. Seed is produced on female trees in tiny seeds borne aloft on cottony tufts, upon which the seeds spread far and wide, similar to cottonwoods.

The insects and diseases that feed on *Populus* species are legion, but they are not usually managed for. Deer, elk, and other ungulates are a much bigger problem for



Photo by Chris Schnepf

All of the aspen stems in this copse are most likely genetically identical.

anyone trying to regenerate aspen, as they will happily munch on aspen foliage, buds, and shoots.

In the mountains of the U.S. Southwest, elk are a serious problem when trying to regenerate aspen. Physically protecting aspens from browse is often essential when attempting to regenerate them. On some sites, beavers can also cause extensive damage to aspens.

Benefits

Aspens are very beneficial to many wild-life species. Their soft wood makes them easily excavated by primary cavity nesters, such as woodpeckers. These trees are then used by secondary cavity nesters such as wood ducks, owls, and raccoons.

Beavers use aspens both as food – eating the bark of younger trees – and as a source of construction material for dams, in part, because aspen tends to grow where they live – near water.

Many different bird species use aspen, but the tree is frequently associated with grouse. Grouse are commonly found in or near

aspen stands, as they really like to eat aspen buds in the winter.

Aspen wood is relatively soft. It is not generally used for wood products in the western U.S., but it is very commonly used in the Lake States for paper and other pulp products. Aspen is also sometimes used for matches, pallets, and outdoor benches and signs, as aspen wood does not splinter much in these applications.

Aspen stands also have more understory forage under them than conifer stands do. In addition, aspen stands do not burn as easily as conifer stands, so aspen can act as a firebreak in the landscape.

Aspens also serve the study of history. Pioneer carvings on trees (“arborglyphs”) stay legible on the tree for decades. Be careful about doing this though, so you do not kill the tree.

Conclusion

Aspen is a very valuable tree on many levels. In drier parts of Idaho, aspens near local streams and rivers are the only native trees around, making them something of an “oasis”

tree to many people. To learn more about aspen, start with the references listed below.

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



University of Idaho
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences



Photo by Sean Ellis

University of Idaho Agricultural Economist Garth Taylor makes a point about agriculture being the state's main economic sector Dec. 10 during UI's Idaho Ag Outlook Seminar in Idaho Falls.

Idaho's important farm sector performed well in 2019

By Sean Ellis
Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

IDAHO FALLS – 2019 was a pretty good year for Idaho farmers and ranchers.

Although prices for grain and some other commodities are still lackluster, several of Idaho's main farm commodities fared pretty well in 2019, according

to several presenters who spoke during University of Idaho's recent Idaho Ag Outlook Seminars.

That's a good thing for Idaho's overall economy since agriculture is the state's top economic sector.

"The largest economic driver in Idaho is agriculture and 2019 was a darn good year," said U of I Agricultural Economist Ben Eborn, who organized the

seminars, which were held Dec. 10-12 in Idaho Falls, Burley and Caldwell.

One of the brightest spots for Idaho's agriculture industry this past year was the state's iconic potato sector, which until very recently had suffered through several years of ho-hum prices.

A series of weather-related issues in many of North America's main potato growing regions decreased the 2019 potato

crop and prices have soared as a result.

“If you’re a potato farmer, you’re thankful to be a potato farmer this year,” Eborn said.

For more on potatoes, see page 3.

Idaho’s dairy producers have also enjoyed significantly higher milk prices the past few months. Average milk prices for Idaho producers started out the year around \$15 per hundredweight (cwt) but quickly rose to \$18 and then \$19 cwt in recent months and are now pushing \$20.

The state’s dairy farmers had suffered through several years of depressed milk prices until the recent price surge.

“Dairy prices are good for a change,” Eborn said. “We’ve had four years of not-good prices, so that’s a nice change. In the last two or three months, they’ve been really good.”

Dairy is Idaho’s top agricultural commodity in terms of cash receipts, followed by beef cattle, potatoes and wheat.

The significantly higher milk prices should drive herd expansion and the global milk supply and as a result, milk prices are forecast to start declining early next year, said James Carr, director of West Coast Dairy, which has an office in Twin Falls.

“Idaho milk producer margins are very strong,” he said. “We expect that comes down a little bit as we get into 2020. All in all, I think the dairymen are going to have a good year in 2020....”

The better margins are good not only for dairy producers but for hay producers as well, Eborn said.

“Hay was one of those crops where people actually made money this year,” said Reed Findlay, a U of I Extension crop educator in Bingham County.

Alfalfa hay exports are strong despite some trade headwinds, he said.

“I’m not exactly sure the trade wars have had a huge detrimental movement on the alfalfa exports,” Findlay said. “We still have a good export market ... Export demand was up in 2019 (and) we’re hoping it will be up even higher in 2020.”

He said he does not see hay prices changing dramatically in 2020. “I see them being at least level (with 2019). I see no reason they are going to drop or rise significantly.”

Beef consumption and exports are increasing and that bodes well for the state’s beef cattle producers, said U of I Extension Educator Joel Packham.

“While trade is an issue, we do have really good exports at the time,” he said. “It looks to me like we’re going to have good exports going forward...”

With the U.S. economy performing well, that is good for beef sales because Americans spend more money for beef than all other meats, Packham said.

“I tend to think we won’t see a recession in 2020. There is just a lot of good things going on in the U.S. right now.”

— Riley Griffin, vice president of Northwest Farm Credit Services

“The strong economy favors beef demand,” he said. “We want the good stuff. We want a good eating experience.”

The flip side to that, however, is that if the U.S. enters a recession, that could put a damper on beef demand domestically, Packham said.

Beef products are becoming more of a luxury item and that’s a good position to be in when the economy is doing well, Eborn said, “But what happens if we go into a recession and people don’t have so much disposable income?”

Riley Griffin, vice president of Northwest Farm Credit Services, said the ongoing trade disputes are a big issue right now but he does not think the U.S. is headed for a recession.

There are a lot of positive things happening in the U.S. economy right now,

including high consumer confidence, good job growth and an unemployment rate at historic lows, he said.

“I tend to think we won’t see a recession in 2020,” Griffin said. “There is just a lot of good things going on in the U.S. right now.”

The outlook for Idaho grain growers in 2020 is nothing to get excited about as long as U.S. and global wheat stocks remain high, said Jon Hogge, a U of I cereals Extension educator.

“We’re just way too good at what we do; we’re excellent farmers (and) we’re really good at producing this particular commodity,” he said.

Stocks have declined somewhat and

“we’re kind of moving in the right direction but there is still so much out there it puts a damper on prices,” Hogge said. As long as global and U.S. stocks remain high, “we’re going to have downward pressure on prices.”

The outlook for irrigation water, the lifeblood of Idaho agriculture, is positive heading into 2020, said Terrell Sorensen, a U of I Extension educator.

When it comes to the amount of carryover water left in the state’s important reservoir systems following the 2019 season, “We’re off to a really good start,” he said.

One of the main challenges for Idaho farmers and ranchers heading into 2020 will be steadily rising labor costs, said Ashlee Westerhold, a U of I Extension economist.

“Our unemployment rate is so low (that) it is so hard ... for agricultural producers to find workers,” she said. “I really think the cost of labor will ... keep increasing as long as our unemployment rate is low.”

U of I Agricultural Economist Garth Taylor said agriculture in Idaho accounts directly and directly for about \$26 billion in sales annually and 1 of every 8 jobs in the state.

“That makes us the largest industry in the state of Idaho,” he said. ■

SPUDS

Continued from page 13

standards. “Their job is to call reasonable balls and strikes and set standards all parties have to adhere to and that are verifiable.”

Quarles said a “tremendous amount of disputed science” was used to justify restrictions that have limited fresh U.S. potato access into Mexico. A case to restore full access for fresh U.S. spuds into Mexico is now pending before Mexico’s National Supreme Court of Justice.

“Mexico after a number of years agreed to open its market entirely to U.S. fresh exports. That triggered their potato industry suing their own government,” Quarles explained.

Mexico’s high court will consider the broad issue of whether or not the Mexican government has authority to make decisions about any agricultural imports crossing its borders, Quarles said.

Quarles had hoped a decision from the Mexican high court would be immi-

nent, but he said the timeframe remains in flux. Though NPC is not directly involved in litigating the case, the organization has a legal team that is monitoring developments.

“The U.S. fresh potato industry has addressed all of Mexico’s objections to

“The U.S. fresh potato industry has addressed all of Mexico’s objections to our exports, and it is time for our market to rightfully be opened.”

— Kam Quarles,
National Potato Council CEO

our exports, and it is time for our market to rightfully be opened,” Quarles said.

Officials estimate expanded fresh potato access into Mexico would lead

to \$100 million in additional exports annually, thereby vaulting Mexico past Japan to become the top market for U.S. spud products.

Quarles said USDA has given Mexican avocado growers ample incentive to become allies with U.S. potato farmers in their quest for market access.

About 20 years ago — approximately the same time as U.S. potato growers were pursuing access for their fresh spuds into Mexico — the Mexican avocado industry entered the U.S. market. Quarles said Mexican avocado growers are now seeking to expand access into the U.S. for avocados originating from provinces where there were past pest and disease issues.

“In the intervening decades, Mexican avocados built up a \$2 billion industry, and the U.S. (fresh) potato industry is effectively boxed out of the entire country (of Mexico),” Quarles said. “USDA has said, ‘Look, these two issues need to ride together.’” ■

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Enrique Moreno J. Alvaroda (left) with agent Travis Terry

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COUNTY HAPPENINGS

Submitted photo
Twin Falls County Farm Bureau members donate food to the local food bank. From left: Eric Bennett, Marvin Barnes, Alex Reed and Idaho Farm Bureau Federation President Bryan Searle.

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Don't become complacent in marketing

A new calendar year is always encouraging. In just a few months everyone will be back out in the fields preparing for another crop. Even though it is cold now warmer days will be here before we know it.

It was very encouraging for me to see many of you looking at your 2020 crop during the recent strength in the futures markets. Many of you have been looking at the futures market 9 to 12 months down the road to see if the futures are trading at a level that could be profitable to your operation.

As we have discussed in the past, there are different ways to hedge your crop and protect yourself from the futures market moving lower. You are able to protect the futures side of your price equation by selling the futures using your own trading account in Chicago or entering into a position with a grain elevator or flour mill using a hedge to arrive contract.

A hedge to arrive contract is when you enter into a cash contract where the wheat is unpriced but you have set a level for the futures side of your price. You then have a time frame in which you will need to establish the basis level to finish setting your cash price for the contract.

Neither one of these strategies is perfect; they both have pros and cons.



You simply need to see which or if both will work in your marketing program. However, both will allow you more flexibility in marketing than simply contracting at a cash bid.

Now let's talk about the other part of your cash price

or the basis. I have recently visited with producers who entered into basis contracts with the local grain elevators in late spring and early summer for delivery in the October, November and December time frame.

Historically this is not a good time

'Yes, we could always do better and I feel that commodity prices will be better in this upcoming year as well as a few years to come. If this does come to fruition that doesn't mean that we can then become complacent in marketing.'

frame to be setting your basis level.

The local basis will historically strengthen between July and the end of the year. This will give you your opportunity for marketing your commodity at a decent price for the year. For more personalized instruction on these types of marketing tools contact

your Idaho Farm Bureau regional manager.

I recently visited with a young couple in their home. We talked about their farming operation as well as the alternatives that are available to them in marketing their crops as well as their calves.

Toward the end of our visit they made the comment that they needed to look for opportunities to market a full 12 months of the year and to always be looking into the deferred months as part of their plan. They realize that farming and production practices have changed and so their marketing practices must also change.

There has been a considerable amount of talk this year on the export markets and rightly so. However, the wheat exports this year are currently running at a decent pace compared to the previous year.

Yes, we could always do better and I feel that commodity prices will be better in this upcoming year as well as a few years to come. If this does come to fruition that doesn't mean that we can then become complacent in marketing. It will be just as important to use these tools that are available at this time as well as the possibility of others.

The markets will continue to move higher as well as correcting and moving back lower. Sometimes the strength in the market is fundamental news and other times it is technical trading. The reason for the strength isn't as important as us recognizing the opportunity the market is giving us and then capitalizing on that opportunity. ■

2020 Idaho FFA Foundation

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Canyon County Home & Garden Show	Feb. 7-9	Nampa
Sportsman Show	Mar. 5-8	Boise
Boise Home & Garden Show	Mar. 19-22	Boise



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- Sydney Plum, Idaho FFA State Reporter



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Idaho live animal exports soaring in 2019

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO — Idaho live animal exports are soaring this year.

According to recently released federal data, Idaho exported \$34 million worth of live animals, all bovines, through the first nine months of 2019, a 41 percent increase over the \$24 million total during the same period in 2018.

This year's total through the third quarter is 240 percent higher than the \$10 million total for the same period in 2017.

The totals are based on U.S. Census Bureau data that is provided to the Idaho State Department of Agriculture by a private company.

Virtually all of Idaho's live animal exports this year have gone to Canada, although about 1,100 head have gone to Vietnam and Egypt.

The data that shows Idaho live animal exports does not break it down by dairy or beef cattle but Blair Mickelson, a cattle broker out of Melba, said there's a good number of both heading to Canada.

"A lot of beef cattle are being sent to Canada just to fill the feedlots and a lot of dairy cattle are going up there as well," he said.

Idaho State Brand Inspector Cody Burlile said his office doesn't have a good way of determining the percentage breakdown of how much beef vs. dairy cattle are being exported.

"I know a lot of them are dairy cattle but there is also a lot of beef cattle going there," he said. "I do think it's a mix of both."

Mickelson said each Canadian province has a dairy quota and it moves up or down based on the amount of milk or other dairy product that province needs.

"The Canadians have been releasing a lot more quota," he said. "In order to fill the quota, they have been buying cattle out of the U.S."

He said most of the dairy cattle heading to that country are coming from Idaho and Washington.

Canadian feedlots have a lot of grain



Idaho live animal exports are up 41 percent through the first three quarters of 2019.

feed in storage and can feed cattle more economically this year, said Idaho Cattle Association Executive Vice President Cameron Mulrony.

As a result, "They've been going all over the West, buying cattle and putting them on grain," he said.

When it comes to live animal exports from Idaho, the total can vary wildly depending on a nation's sudden appetite for cattle.

In 2011-13, live animal exports from Idaho and other Northwest states soared

when Russia went on a buying spree in an effort to revitalize its beef and dairy sectors. At that time, Russia had committed billions of dollars to stimulate the country's beef and dairy sectors.

The Russian cattle buying spree caused Idaho live animal exports to increase tenfold in 2011.

"It's kind of hit and miss," Mickelson said about Idaho live animal exports. "You can have nothing for six months or a year and then all of a sudden, it goes crazy and takes off again." ■

Idaho farm product exports on the rise

By Sean Ellis
Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO — Two separate sets of federal data both show that the total value of Idaho agricultural exports is on the rise.

According to U.S. Department of Agriculture data released in late October, the value of Idaho farm product exports totaled \$2.076 billion in 2018, a 4 percent increase over the 2017 total.

A separate report based on U.S. Census Bureau data that became available the first week of November shows that total Idaho agricultural export value increased 7 percent through the first three quarters of 2019 compared to the same period in 2018.

The data show that despite the so-called retaliatory tariffs that some nations have placed on U.S. farm products, “Idaho companies are still finding new customers and new opportunities in global markets,” said Laura Johnson, who manages the Idaho State Department of Agriculture’s market develop-



Photo by Sean Ellis

Onions are sorted at a southwestern Idaho processing facility earlier this year. Two sets of data show that Idaho agricultural exports are ticking up.

“Idaho companies are still finding new customers and new opportunities in global markets.”

— Laura Johnson, manager of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture’s market development division

ment division.

However, she added, “The trade headwinds are strong enough that those numbers should be even better.”

The USDA farm export data for states is released annually, almost 10 months into the next year and is more comprehensive than the Census Bureau farm export data, which is released quarterly and is more timely but doesn’t capture all of the state’s agricultural exports.

For example, the Census Bureau data doesn’t capture Idaho farm products that moved to another state before being shipped overseas. That data, however, does track which nations Idaho’s ag exports are going to, which the USDA data does not.

However, both sets of data are generally close in terms of percentage increases or decreases and both show Idaho ag exports are on the uptick.

Idaho’s 2018 ag export value total of \$2.076 billion is a four-year high and the USDA data shows that Idaho ag export value has now increased four straight years, although last year’s total is still below the record total of \$2.29 billion set in 2013.

The USDA data shows that total U.S. agricultural export value increased half a percent last year, to \$138.9 billion. That is 7 percent below the U.S. record of \$150

billion set in 2014.

The Census Bureau data shows that the total value of Idaho ag exports through the first nine months of 2019 was \$675 million, a 7 percent increase over the same period in 2018.

Dairy is leading the way when it comes to Idaho ag exports.

The USDA data shows that Idaho dairy product exports increased 4 percent last year to \$370 million, making it the state’s top agricultural export.

The Census Bureau data shows Idaho dairy product exports totaled \$146 million through the first three quarters of 2019. Although that total was down 10 percent compared with 2018, dairy was still easily the state’s top ag export through the first nine months of this year.

According to the Census Bureau data, Canada is the top destination for Idaho ag product exports this year, as \$197 million worth of Idaho farm products were sold there through the end of September, a 6 percent increase over the same period in 2018.

Mexico ranked No. 2 with \$152 million worth of Idaho ag exports, a 24 percent increase, and South Korea was No. 3 at \$49 million, a 28 percent increase.

China ranked fourth at \$38 million, an 8 percent decrease, and Japan was fifth at

\$35 million, an 18 percent increase.

According to the USDA data, wheat ranked No. 2 in Idaho in 2018 in terms of exported commodities. Idaho exported \$294 million worth of wheat last year, up slightly from \$292 million in 2017 but well below the record of \$563 million set in 2011.

Idaho companies exported \$263 million worth of processed vegetables in 2018, unchanged from the previous year. This category includes French fries. A record \$157 million worth of fresh vegetables from Idaho were exported last year. This category includes potatoes.

A record \$215 million worth of Idaho beef and veal were exported in 2018 and \$58 million worth of “other livestock products” and \$29 million worth of hides and skins were also exported from the state last year.

Idaho exported a total of \$120 million worth of feeds and other grains last year, up 8 percent compared with 2017.

A total of \$77 million worth of processed grain products were exported from the state in 2018, a 9 percent increase.

According to USDA, a total of \$1.38 billion worth of plant products and \$689 million worth of animal products were exported from Idaho last year. Both totals were up from 2017. ■

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Pre-1970 Idaho License Plates Wanted: Also Revere Ware and Solar-Sturges Permanent cookware, and old signs. Will pay cash. Please email, text, call, or write. Gary Peterson, 115 E D St, Moscow, ID 83843. gearlep@gmail.com. 208-285-1258.

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Rupert dairy wins Milk Quality Award

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

BOISE — Whitesides Dairy near Rupert has been awarded by the Idaho dairy industry for taking milk quality to an extremely high level.

The dairy received the Idaho dairy industry's 2019 Milk Quality Award, which is presented during Dairy West's annual November meeting, which attracts hundreds of dairy operators, their families and industry representatives.

The award is a way to celebrate the hard work and effort the state's dairy operators put into ensuring their cows produce the highest quality milk, said Karianne Fallow, CEO of Dairy West, which represents Idaho and Utah dairy operators.

Quality milk is the result of good animal care, cleanliness and good stewardship on the dairy farm, Fallow said.

"All of the milk produced here is high quality," she said. "The Milk Quality Award is designed to honor those dairy farmers that go the extra mile. As a result, their milk is of the very highest quality."

Whitesides Dairy, which is operated by Steve and Derek Whitesides, was nominated by Dairy Farms of America and beat out 10 other finalists for the 2019 award.

"This is an incredibly competitive contest," said University of Idaho dairy extension specialist Rick Norell, who manages the award for Dairy West. "It's a tremendous tribute to the desire of dairy producers to produce high-quality milk for their customers."

All of the state's 425 dairy operations produce quality milk, he said, but the award recognizes dairies that take cleanliness and quality to the highest level.

The winner of the award is the cream of the crop when it comes to milk quality.

The award has been presented annually since 1989 and is based on a dairy's routine monthly tests for somatic cell counts, which are an indicator of quality, and bacteria counts, which reflect the



Dairy West photo

Harrison Smith, CFO of Whitesides Dairy, receives the Idaho dairy industry's 2019 Milk Quality Award on behalf of the Rupert dairy, Nov. 13 in Boise during Dairy West's annual meeting.



Submitted photo

Employees of Whitesides Dairy near Rupert stand in front of the Idaho dairy industry's 2019 Milk Quality Award, which was presented to the dairy Nov. 13 in Boise during Dairy West's annual meeting.

cleanliness of cows and the facility.

Dairies are nominated by processors and the University of Idaho and Idaho State Department of Agriculture officials then compare the operations' regular monthly quality tests.

Derek Whitesides, who is a partner with his father, Steve, said it was an honor for their dairy to be chosen to receive this year's award.

"We spend a lot of time and energy, as I'm sure other dairy operators do, aiming for good, quality milk and we do a lot of things to try to make that happen,"

he said. "That's part of our business model – to produce good, quality milk."

He said the real recipient of the award should be the employees that handle the day-to-day operations at Whitesides Dairy.

"It is our employees who we really attribute our success to," he said. "Everybody is really passionate about what we do here."

Fallow said one of the unique things about the award is that dairies are nominated by the processors they sell to, "so it reinforces the importance of the partnership between the producers and processors." ■



Photo by Sean Ellis

Farm workers harvest wine grapes near Caldwell Nov. 1. The Idaho Wine Commission will use a \$315,000 grant to promote Idaho wine.

Idaho wine industry receives \$315,000 marketing grant

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

BOISE – The Idaho Wine Commission received a \$315,000 grant this year to promote and market Idaho wine.

The funding was awarded through

the Idaho State Department of Agriculture's specialty crop block grant program, which awards funding to projects designed to help Idaho's specialty crop industries.

The IWC, which represents Idaho grape growers and winemakers, has received several of those grants over

the past decade.

The IWC's regular annual budget is about \$500,000 so the additional grant money enables the commission to accomplish a lot more, said IWC board member Michael Williamson, manager of Williamson Orchards and Vineyards in Caldwell.

“So many people are moving to Idaho and we want to educate those people about Idaho wine.”

— IWC Executive Director Moya Shatz-Dolsby

“Those types of grants allow us to do a lot of things we otherwise couldn’t do, such as bring in an industry vineyard consultant to provide hands-on expertise to our growers,” he said. “They have also allowed us to fund projects like the Idaho Wine Quality Initiative, which has helped us really raise the bar for Idaho wine quality.”

This year’s grant funding will be used to develop an 18-month marketing campaign, with the guidance of public relations firm Fahlgren Mortine, that will include advertising, developing relationships with national and Idaho media and a major social media campaign.

The end goal is to strengthen and increase consumer and media knowledge of the Idaho wine industry, which has grown rapidly in recent years.

Since 1976, when there was one winery in Idaho, the state’s wine industry has grown steadily, increasing from 11 in 2002 to 52 now.

Idaho’s wine grape growers produce about 200,000 16-bottle cases of wine each year and according to a study commissioned by the IWC, the industry has a \$169 million impact on the state’s economy annually.

While the marketing campaign will target consumers in major markets, it will also focus on people living within Idaho, which is one of the fastest-growing states in the nation on a percentage basis.

“So many people are moving to

Idaho and we want to educate those people about Idaho wine,” said IWC Executive Director Moya Shatz-Dolsby.

In addition to those newcomers, “I’m still amazed at how many people who have lived here their whole life don’t realize that wine country is half an hour away” from Boise, she added. “There is still so much work to be done to raise awareness of Idaho wines among people who have lived here a long time.”

The ultimate goal of the marketing campaign, she said, is to expand sales of Idaho wine and wine grape production within the state.

The marketing campaign will continue and expand previous IWC promotion efforts.

According to the IWC’s grant application, the commission had more than 224 million unique media impressions in 2018.

“The more the IWC grows their national footprint, the greater the need to maintain those essential media relationships and keep positive momentum about the wine industry growing,” the application states.

The IWC has targeted key media in New York, San Francisco and Sonoma, Calif., in recent years. The new marketing campaign will target media members and influencers in Seattle.

The largest percentage of people who visit Idaho are coming from Seattle, “so it’s logical that we go to

Seattle and talk to those journalists and influencers there about the Idaho wine industry,” Shatz-Dolsby said.

The campaign will also include a major social media push that will include educational videos about different aspects of the wine industry, including grape growing, harvest and bottling.

“We’ve never had a really good social media push (because) that’s expensive,” Shatz-Dolsby said. “The goal is to increase our followers and get them to come back to our website and interact with us.”

According to the grant application, in a 2018 focus group, the IWC learned that wine enthusiasts are driven to support a winery after connecting with their story. The commission plans to create short videos of 10-12 Idaho wineries that include stories about what makes them unique.

The videos will be used for content on social media, the IWC website, email marketing and paid promotions.

According to the application, 15 national journalists visited the state in 2018, which led to stories in USA Today, CNN and Wine Enthusiast.

“As a result of a concerted marketing effort last year, the IWC and the (Idaho) wine industry had over 224 million unique media impressions,” the application states. “When the IWC makes significant investments in marketing and advertising, the industry grows.” ■



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