

GEM STATE **Producer** Idaho Farm Bureau

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# A New Exploration Of **DEEP SOIL**

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## Cultivating the future of agriculture



I believe there's a seed of farm curiosity in everyone, no matter where you're from or what you do for a living. It's in our nature to wonder how things grow and to want to feel a connection to the land.

For some, that seed may spring into a curiosity to learn more about farming with a visit to a local orchard or pumpkin patch.

For others, that seed may help sprout a home garden of fresh herbs and vegetables for the family dinner table.

And for a few, that seed can blossom into

pursuing a career in farming or a related field. As farmers, we know that all seeds need good soil and tending to grow, however.

We don't just scatter them and hope for the best. In that same way, if we want to cultivate an understanding of agriculture and the next generation of leaders in farming, we need to cultivate the seeds of farm curiosity beyond our fencerows today.

You might say that sounds like a big undertaking, and you'd be right. It's not something

See **DUVALL**, page 7

## The President's Desk

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

### Idaho a big player when it comes to agriculture



For its size, Idaho is an agricultural powerhouse.

But even if you take size out of the equation, the state is still a major player nationally when it comes to farm and ranch production.

One amazing thing about that is that a good chunk of Idaho's agricultural production occurs in a desert environment.

Everyone in the Gem State knows, or at least should know, that Idaho is the nation's leader in potato production.

But most people probably don't realize Idaho ranked No. 1 nationally in four other agricultural commodities during 2020 as well: barley, food trout, alfalfa hay and peppermint oil.

According to USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, Idaho ranked No. 2 in the nation last year in sugar beets and hops, No. 3 in milk and cheese production, No. 4 in spring wheat, lentils, dry onions and dry edible peas and No. 5 in all wheat and dry beans.

Idaho ranked in the top 10 in six other

See **SEARLE**, page 6

## Inside Farm Bureau

By **Zak Miller**  
CEO Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

### Is this your time?



What does Idaho's nearly 9% total population growth over the past decade mean to you? In the last 10 years, hardly any part of our state has not seen the ramifications of the 270,000 plus citizens who have been added to our state.

That growth means change, and change is inevitable.

One change that is happening right now is legislative redistricting.

Idaho has 35 legislative districts and each district has two representatives and one senator.

Idaho law requires that all districts be almost equal in population and that county lines be respected as much as possible when drawing district boundaries.

Of course, it is impossible to be perfect at either requirement.

Still, members of Idaho's redistricting commission, which is made up of three Republicans and three Democrats and is responsible for drawing district boundaries for legislative and congressional elections, work to do the best they can.

See **MILLER**, page 6

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**University of Idaho will build a cutting-edge facility that could revolutionize the world of soil research. See page 8 for story.** (Idaho Farm Bureau Federation graphic)



University of Idaho photo  
**A technician works in the University of Idaho's Seed Potato Germplasm Laboratory in Moscow in this file photo. The university will soon open a new \$5.5 million SPGL facility on campus.**

# New seed potato lab will benefit Idaho's spud industry

**By Sean Ellis**

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

MOSCOW – The University of Idaho is close to opening a new Seed Potato Germplasm Laboratory, which is the place where most Idaho potatoes are “born.”

The new \$5.5 million facility is located on the university's Moscow campus and is a major upgrade from the previous facility, which was actually a few classrooms on the third floor of the ag science building.

“This is a really top-end facility,” said Doug Gross, who grows potatoes for the processing industry near Wilder. “It's important for Idaho as the number one potato and seed potato producing state to have a world-class facility that we bring our seed through.”

The facility maintains the germplasm or startup material that Idaho's potato industry uses to produce about 90 percent of the potatoes grown in Idaho. About 60 percent of the spuds grown in the United States also originate from the facility.

See SEED, page 27

# New Idaho wheat variety did well this year despite drought

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

BOISE – A new wheat variety bred with Idaho wheat farmers in mind – “UI Cookie” – performed well in field trials this year compared with other varieties.

But this summer’s severe drought and lengthy early-season heat wave in Idaho had an impact on UI Cookie yields and industry leaders plan to hold more trials during the 2022 growing season.

The new soft white spring wheat variety was developed at the University of Idaho Research and Extension wheat breeding center in Aberdeen by researcher Jianli Chen and it has been licensed by the Idaho Wheat Commission.

About two-thirds of all the wheat grown in Idaho is soft white.

UI Cookie was released by the university last April and the wheat commission started the commercialization process for the new variety this year.

That included growing UI Cookie in field trials across the state during the 2021 growing season, which posed a severe agronomic challenge to all crops grown in Idaho because of the drought and heat wave.

The drought had a major impact on yields of UI Cookie, particularly in dryland trials, but the variety performed very well compared with other varieties grown in the same trials, said Garrett Dudley, research manager for the wheat commission.

“It performed very well in the irrigated trials but it didn’t quite meet expectations in some of the dryland trials,” he said. But even then, he added, when compared with other varieties, “it held its own in the dryland trials.”

“This year was a bad year to judge it” because of the poor growing conditions, Dudley said. “We’ll do some expanded trials next year. We want some more trial data to see how it performs in ... a normal weather and rainfall pattern.”

UI Cookie outperformed UI Stone, the variety it was bred to replace, Dudley said. It has also outperformed UI Stone in previous trials and has performed consistently in trials in Idaho the past two years, he added.

According to IWC officials, the new variety has improved resistance to stripe rust and good tolerance to Fusarium head blight.

IWC Executive Director Casey Chumrau said UI Cookie stands out with easy threshing ability and exceptional end-use quality, particularly, as the name suggests, in cookies.

Chumrau said she was very pleased with this year’s trial results considering the extreme growing conditions in 2021.

“UI Cookie showed that it could be a viable option for growers

in diverse parts of the state,” she said. “There was a very strong response from seed dealers in the southern half of the state and interest continues to grow.”

Chumrau said it’s a long process to get enough seed produced for commercial sale, “but we are really encouraged by the initial demand and excited to see how growers respond.”

“We believe UI Cookie will be a great option for growers for both agronomic and economic reasons,” she said.

The IWC is funded by grower dollars and the commission spends about 30 percent of its annual research budget on wheat breeding programs that develop new varieties that grow well in Idaho.

U of I’s Aberdeen wheat breeding program is primarily funded through IWC dollars and through a research agreement between the two entities, the commission has always had the first right to negotiate an exclusive license for new varieties released by the program.

However, the wheat commission has not exercised that right before because the IWC is not in the seed business.

But with UI Cookie, the commission decided to try a different approach and license the new variety, Chumrau said.

In doing so, the commission can set the parameters and protections around the new variety and act as a bridge between the breeding program and commercial seed dealers.

The IWC decided to make UI Cookie a true public release, which means growers will be able to hold back seed from the variety for their own planting use the next year.

Growers will also not be charged royalties for the variety as they would with other releases.

That will reduce the cost of seed for growers who purchase UI Cookie while hopefully at the same time providing them a new variety that performs well agronomically, Chumrau said.

The seed expansion process takes about three years to produce enough seed for farmers to begin planting UI Cookie on a commercial basis. That means farmers will likely be able to plant UI Cookie on a commercial basis in 2023 if they want to.

Farmers interested in growing UI Cookie next year on a trial basis can call Dudley at (208) 334-2353 or email him at [garrett.dudley@idahowheat.org](mailto:garrett.dudley@idahowheat.org). ■

Idaho Wheat Commission photo

**OPPOSITE PAGE: University of Idaho researcher Jianli Chen looks at UI Cookie in a field. Chen developed the new variety at the UI Research and Extension wheat breeding center in Aberdeen with financial support from the Idaho Wheat Commission, which will manage the commercial release of UI Cookie.**



# MILLER

*Continued from page 2*

With that small amount of background, here is how redistricting affects us all. In 2010, the ideal population per legislative district was 44,788. Following the 2020 Census, the new ideal population is 52,546, an increase per district of 7,758 people.

The new district boundaries are smaller in areas where population growth has been especially high, exclusively the state's large towns and cities. For those of us who live in mainly rural areas that have seen less aggressive growth, our districts have become larger.

The net effect is that more of our senators and representatives serving in the Idaho Legislature will come from our larger cities and towns. This trend is not likely to change.

The numbers are in, the facts are clear, and change when it comes to legislative representation in Idaho is what we have. The question is, what to do with this new legislative map and new reality?

Only two real options present themselves:

1. Do nothing and live in fear and loathing of an increasingly urban representation that is increasingly disconnected from rural life and agriculture making decisions that affect each of us.

2. Make more out of less by finding candidates, especially farmers and ranchers, who will represent Idaho's important agriculture industry and those of us who live and enjoy the rural life.

At a recent meeting with some elected representatives, it was made clear that not enough farmers and ranchers are serving in the legislature in Boise. I love the quote one of these leaders shared: "I can teach a farmer or rancher to be a legislator, but I cannot teach a legislator to be a farmer or rancher."

What a true statement.

Let me be clear: We currently have great representatives that serve us all. Most are not involved in agriculture and many of them are amazing advocates for agriculture.

We recognize that city folks can care about and protect agriculture also.

But there is a major concern that as

time goes on and more of Idaho's legislators come from the state's larger cities and towns, the Idaho Legislature's current recognition of the critical role agriculture plays in the state's economy and way of life will be diminished.

So here is my pitch to you, especially those of you actively involved in Idaho's agricultural industry:

Because of redistricting, there are now many open seats in both the Idaho House of Representatives and Senate. Each of us must take a good long view in the mirror and ask ourselves, "Is it my time to serve?"

That could be a terrifying thought for sure but as you consider doing this, please realize the harshest critic is most likely looking back at you in the mirror.

It will probably surprise you when others who already see your talents and character encourage you to run when you ask their opinion.

I see a lot of farmers and ranchers who doubt themselves far more than their peers do. Please consider taking a chance on yourself and keep Idaho great by serving her. ■

# SEARLE

*Continued from page 2*

agricultural commodities in 2020: corn silage, sheep and lambs, all hay, wool, haylage and honey.

When it comes to farm revenue per capita – this is the total amount of revenue farmers and ranchers get for their commodity divided by the state's total population – Idaho is one of the heavy-weight agricultural states in the nation.

But even without breaking it down per capita, Idaho is a major player in a lot of different farm and ranch commodities.

That is remarkable when you consider Idaho ranks No. 39 in the nation in population with 1.86 million people.

It's even more remarkable when you consider that most of southern Idaho is a desert environment with low annual precipitation. The amount of annual precipitation much of southern Idaho

receives is simply not enough to produce most crops on a big scale.

The reason Idaho's farmers and ranchers can produce so much food in this arid environment is because those who came before us had the foresight to build the reservoir systems that are now such an important part of this great state.

Those reservoirs capture the enormous amount of runoff that occurs when snow in the mountains begins to melt. That water is stored in the state's enormous reservoir systems and is used to provide water to farmers and other irrigators, including subdivisions and golf courses, throughout the dry, hot summer months.

The reservoirs also provide a huge number of recreational opportunities and, of course, help keep our rivers at minimum levels throughout the summer, providing an assist to fish and other wildlife.

Without those reservoirs and the untold miles of canals and irrigation ditches that bring that water to thousands of farms and ranches that use it to water millions of acres of land, Idaho simply would not be what it is today.

That's why it is important not only to support keeping our vast reservoir and water systems in place, but also to support efforts to create more water storage capacity in Idaho, which is the fastest-growing state in the nation on a percentage basis.

The state is constantly exploring options to capture and store more water and Idaho Farm Bureau Federation supports those ongoing efforts.

Kudos to everyone involved in this endeavor and kudos to our forebearers who built the state's important reservoir systems. ■

Continued from page 2

we can tackle alone. That's why at Farm Bureau, we partner with the premier youth and young professionals' organizations that are committed to getting more young people from all backgrounds to engage with agriculture.

We recognize that fewer young people are growing up around farms. Not everyone can come to "farm camp" like my grandkids call it. I sure wish more could.

But that's where organizations like 4-H, FFA and MANRRS are bringing the farm to kids, college students and young professionals in all areas, from rural communities to the suburbs and inner cities.

In fact, 4-H has been doing this work in communities across the country longer than even the oldest Farm Bureaus, reminding us all that change and service begins when we're young.

National 4-H Council CEO Jennifer Sirangelo recently joined me on my Farmside Chat podcast and shared how 4-H has grown and adapted to meet the times.

I am a proud 4-H alum myself and am excited for the opportunities that students of all ages, everywhere, have to take a part in agriculture.

Service projects sure have changed in scope since I was a kid. For example, 4-H students today can be "Tech Change Makers," helping their communities adapt to and adopt new technology from the classroom to the barnyard.

We need these students to keep thinking creatively and bringing innovative ideas to agriculture. They could be the next agriculture researchers, scientists, veterinarians, or even farmers.

National FFA's history runs long and deep as well. Everywhere I travel, I love to meet the students in the blue jackets. Of course, it's not just the uniform that makes FFA leaders stand out, it's also their positive, can-do spirit and heart for service.

These are the future leaders of agriculture. And they aren't waiting for tomorrow to lead either; they have started today.

It's inspiring to hear from FFA members and leaders who have learned about agriculture for the first time through their school's FFA program. My school didn't have FFA when I was a kid, but I would proudly wear the blue jacket any day.

Innovation and leadership in agriculture extends beyond the farm today, as related science and natural resource fields play critical roles in achieving our shared climate goals.

We need the brightest minds and hardest workers in all these fields engaged to bring farming forward to protect our safe, sustainable food, fiber and fuel supply.

*We need these students to keep thinking creatively and bringing innovative ideas to agriculture. They could be the next agriculture researchers, scientists, veterinarians, or even farmers.*

We recently signed an agreement to partner with the National Society for Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS).

This partnership is a natural fit for both our organizations, and I am excited about how this will further expand our Farm Bureau family to students and young professionals from all backgrounds.

Today, farmers as a profession make up less than 2% of the population, and most farmers are not much younger than me.

If we're going to continue to grow tomorrow, together, we must continue to extend our reach to students, young

professionals and beginning farmers from all walks of life.

We can't always tell which seeds will take root, but we can keep cultivating in hopes that the next generation of leaders and innovators in agriculture will exceed even their brightest dreams. ■

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Photo by Sean Ellis

With support from a \$19 million National Science Foundation grant, University of Idaho will build a facility that will enable scientists to conduct soil experiments at depths greater than anywhere else in the world.

# Ecotron will open up a new frontier in soil research

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

MOSCOW – University of Idaho scientists will lead experiments into one of the last research frontiers: deep soil.

With support from a \$19 million National Science Foundation grant, U of I will build a facility that will enable scientists to conduct soil experiments at depths of up to 10 feet.

Most soil research currently involves the first foot of soil.

Construction on the facility, which will be known as the Deep Soil Ecotron, is scheduled to begin next spring and U of I officials plan to have it operational by 2026.

Only 13 Ecotron facilities exist in the world and most are located in Europe. None go to the soil depths planned at the University of Idaho, said Michael Parrella, dean of the



**DEEP  
SOIL  
ECOTRON**

University of Idaho art





Photo by Sean Ellis

**With support from a \$19 million National Science Foundation grant, University of Idaho will build a facility that will enable scientists to conduct soil experiments at depths greater than anywhere else in the world.**

university’s College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

He said the Deep Soil Ecotron will enable scientists to study soil at depths greater than anywhere else in the world.

“It will be the only such facility of its kind that goes this deep,” he said. “We know more about life on the floor of the ocean basically than we do once we get three feet down in the soil. That’s a black hole that we need to fill and that’s what this project is going to do.”

Parrella and several U of I scientists involved in soil research told Idaho Farm Bureau Federation during an Oct. 22 meeting that the Deep Soil Ecotron will open up a whole new world of scientific research.

Processes that are happening deep in the soil are underappreciated and not being accounted for, they said.

“There are a lot of investments in deep

ocean and deep space but our understanding of (deep soil) is not well documented yet,” said Michael Strickland, associate professor of microbial ecology and the project’s lead principal investigator.

*“We know more about life on the floor of the ocean basically than we do once we get three feet down in the soil.”*

— Michael Parrella, dean of U of I’s College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

“Deep soils are probably one of the last research frontiers,” Strickland said. “Soils are inherently important to life on the planet, from supporting plants to driving processes like carbon and nutrient cycling, but a lot of research has been focused on the surface. This facility would enable us to better understand those processes at depth.”

Zachary Kayler, an assistant professor of biogeochemistry and a co-lead investigator for the project, said the U of I Deep Soil Ecotron will be a resource not only for the region but for scientists across the country and world.

“This facility will represent a huge leap forward in our understanding of soil and terrestrial ecosystems, on the level of space and deep ocean exploration after similar investments,” said Kayler, who has conducted experiments at an Ecotron in France.

Parrella said the studies conducted at the Ecotron will improve understanding of how deep soil organisms react to certain conditions, how soil systems respond to agricultural practices and how well they sequester carbon.

The Deep Soil Ecotron will contain up to 24 “eco-units” which will basically be huge columns used to study soil cores and they will include above-ground plants and

below-ground organisms such as insects and microbes.

These eco-units will allow researchers to control a range of variables, from temperature to water to exposure to carbon dioxide.

The eco-units will be used to develop sensors to monitor deep soils in the field.

“The Deep Soil Ecotron is truly a unique asset in the world that will enable researchers to design new types of experiments and ask questions that were previously impossible to examine,” Chris Nomura, U of I’s vice president for research and economic development, said in a news release.

For farmers, Parrella said, the goal is that research done at the facility will enable them to minimize inputs and maximize yields and profits.

To study soils now, scientists often dig pits, which destroys the soil systems as they are uncovered, Parrella said.

“I think this project is going to enable us to do research in soil that is impossible to do anywhere in the world right now,” he

said. “It’s impossible to do replicated studies in deep soil without a facility like this.”

Laurel Lynch, an assistant professor in the university’s Department of Soil and Water Systems, said the research conducted at the Deep Soil Ecotron will allow scientists to get “at these fundamental soil questions that have major implications for farmers and how they are managing their fields.”

Sanford Eigenbrode, an entomologist, said he’s excited about the possibility of the project shedding more light on what’s happening with the arthropod community deep in the soil.

The research could provide scientists and farmers a better understanding of how production practices affect insects in the soil and how these insects in turn affect plant growth, he said.

“What’s going on with the arthropod communities even deeper in the soil is something that I think the “Tron can help us work out for the first time ever,” Eigenbrode said. “All of that stuff, is, so to speak, like a

black box” right now.

The Deep Soil Ecotron will be housed at the JW Martin Laboratory located on the university’s Moscow campus.

From a scientist’s point of view, the project is incredibly exciting because it will open up a whole new world of research, soil scientists told IFBF.

“It’s really, really exciting,” Lynch said. “This could revolutionize” soil research.

“I think we’re all excited,” Kayler said. “This is discovery. This is imagination. We want to know. It’s our chance to be curious.”

While it will be housed on the U of I campus, the Ecotron will have multiple collaborators, including scientists from the University of Colorado, University of Delaware, University of Hawaii, North Dakota State University, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory and University of Wyoming.

One of the project goals, according to U of I officials, is to create a national network of scientists who will conduct experiments at the facility. ■

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YOUNG FARMERS & RANCHERS

# Actor Gary Sinise says Idaho potatoes are the best

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

POCATELLO – Actor Gary Sinise gave a big shout-out to Idaho potatoes during an interview with a young Idaho reporter that was posted for Veterans Day.

“There’s no better potato than the Idaho potato,” Sinise said while being interviewed by Emmy Eaton, an Idaho Falls child who interviews interesting people around the state, nation and world for East Idaho News.

That weekly segment is called, “7 Questions with Emmy” and the interview with Sinise can be found on the East Idaho News website at [eastidahonews.com](http://eastidahonews.com).

During a segment that ran on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, Sinise was asked by Eaton, “Have you ever been to Idaho and tried their famous potatoes?”

Sinise responded: “Yes, I have been to Idaho and I have tried their potatoes.”

The actor also revealed he has a lot of family members who live in Idaho Falls, where Eaton resides, and his parents use to live there.

“There’s no better potato than the Idaho potato,” Sinise said at about the 6:40 mark of the 19-minute segment.

Idaho, which is known globally for potatoes, leads the nation in potato production and produces about a third of the nation’s total spud supply.

Sinise is famous for portraying Lieutenant Dan in the movie, *Forrest Gump*, as well as Detective Mac Taylor in the CBS series, *CSI: NY*. He has also starred in the movies *Truman*, *Apollo 13*, *Ransom*, and *The Green Mile*.

He created The Gary Sinise Foundation to help veterans, active duty military members and emergency personnel such as police officers and firefighters.

Sinise told Eaton he started the foun-



Photo by Sean Ellis

**Potatoes are sorted in an East Idaho field in this Idaho Farm Bureau Federation file photo. During a recent interview that aired on Veterans Day, actor Gary Sinise said there is no better potato than an Idaho potato.**

dation “to help the people that help us. They look after us. The military defends our country. Our first responders protect our cities. I wanted to do something for them.”

He said his foundation has built a couple of homes for wounded service members in Idaho and added, “I have a lot of respect for our veterans.”

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation President Bryan Searle, who farms in Shelley and grows potatoes, said he was happy to hear Sinise give a shout-out to Idaho’s most famous commodity.

But Searle said he was even more impressed to hear Sinise’s warm words for military veterans.

“Yes, Idaho potatoes are the best and everyone knows that and yes, it was fun to hear a famous actor say that,” Searle

said. “But nothing and no one is more important to this country than the military members who protect the United States. I was humbled and proud to hear that Sinise gets that.”

Other members of Idaho’s potato industry also said they loved the potato shout-out by Sinise but were happier to hear about his support for military veterans and emergency personnel.

“Gary Sinise has done so many great things over the years for our veterans and first responders,” Travis Blacker, industry relations director for the Idaho Potato Commission, told Idaho Farm Bureau Federation. “We truly appreciate his service.”

“We loved the question about famous Idaho potatoes and more than that, we loved Sinise’s answer,” Blacker added. ■



Photo courtesy of Emily Mason

The Northwest Cider Club picked two Idaho hard ciders, Spice Queen from Buhl and Cranberry Crosscut from Garden City, for its December sample box sent to subscribers.

# Award-winning hard cider entrepreneurs delight a growing number of devotees

**By Dianna Troyer**

*For Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

Leery of tasting a hard cider crafted from quince, a curious customer asked for advice from Emily Mason, owner of Cedar Draw Cider.

“It tastes a bit floral like an intense pear

but with tropical notes like a guava,” said Mason, who crafted the beverage at her cidery near Buhl in southeastern Idaho. The business includes a processing facility and tasting room.

“It’s one of our best-sellers,” Mason said.

She named it War Worthy because “quince is a little-known ancient

fruit rumored to be the golden apple that sparked the Trojan War.”

Mason buys quinces from Symms Fruit Ranch in southwestern Idaho.

“It’s not a mainstream fruit for many people,” Mason said. “It’s well-known among Basque people because they cultivated quinces to make a traditional thick

jelly called membrillo.”

Mason is among a growing number of Idaho entrepreneurs crafting artisanal hard ciders from locally grown fruit to slake the thirst of an increasing number of devotees.

“Hard ciders are growing in popularity because they appeal to both beer and wine drinkers as well as those who aren’t because there are so many different styles and flavors of cider,” she said.

Hard ciders are as diverse as their makers who develop recipes with various varieties of apple juice as a base, numerous types of yeasts, and diverse aging times in wooden, glass or stainless steel containers.

Most hard ciders have 4.5% to 7% alcohol by volume.

Since Emily and her husband, John, served their first handcrafted hard cider from a keg in 2019, they have increased inventory steadily.

“We’re making about 5,000 gallons a year,” said Mason, who recently quit her job as a registered nurse to focus fulltime on the cidery.

Nationwide, hard craft ciders are blossoming in popularity. Last year, hard cider sales increased 11 percent and amounted to \$494.4 million, according to Chicago-based Information Resources Inc.

Idaho has more than a dozen hard cideries with tap rooms featuring prize-winning, locally made ciders and international imports. Sales surge at the holidays.

In its December Discover Box, the Northwest Cider Association selected two Idaho hard ciders to include in its monthly package sent to subscribers nationwide.

“We’re excited our Spice Queen cider with cardamom was one of six ciders that are featured,” Mason said.

The other Idaho cider is Cranberry Crosscut from Meriwether Cider Co. in the Treasure Valley.

Before launching her business, Mason was a cider hobbyist, making batches at home for family and friends. They encouraged her to launch a commercial cidery.

She has developed more than a dozen recipes. Her Sour Empress is an Italian plum cider. The Cherry Bakewell relies on Santa Ana cherries and has “a burst of cherry followed by a light almond finish.”

The Wickson Vixen is Mason’s personal favorite.



Photo courtesy of Meriwether Cider Co.

**Meriwether Cider Co., owned by Ann, Molly, Kate, and Gig Meriwether, from left, has won more than two dozen awards nationwide for craft hard ciders.**

“I use crabapples from our orchard, fermented with an English cider yeast and aged for six months,” she said. “If you haven’t had cider from non-dessert apples, you’re in for a treat.”

#### **Meriwether Cider reaps awards**

Since opening in 2016 in the Treasure Valley, the Leadbetters – parents Gig and Ann and daughters Kate and Molly – have perfected prize-winning hard cider recipes at their business, Meriwether Cider Co.

It was named for the famed explorer Meriwether Lewis, a distant relative on Ann’s side of the family.

Their ciders have won more than two dozen awards at contests nationwide, including the Great Lakes International Cider and Perry Competitions.

One of their specialty ciders for Christmas and New Year’s is called “... And Everything Nice.”

“It’s a pumpkin spice cider that has all of those beautiful holiday spices in it,” said Molly, media and marketing manager.

The Leadbetters make about 35,000 gallons a year at their production facility in Garden City with Gig developing the recipes.

“That amount has held pretty steady for the past couple of years, but we are seeing an increase in traffic at our two locations

year over year,” Molly said.

To keep up with demand, they have 20 taps at the Cider House in downtown Boise and 13 taps at their taproom in Garden City.

Some longtime clients were once hesitant to taste hard cider.

“My favorite comments are from skeptics who realize they actually enjoy craft ciders,” Molly said. “It’s such a pleasure to hear that people’s eyes and worlds have been opened to a new craft beverage, and that we were the ones who did that.”

The Leadbetters select names that are as entertaining as their recipes.

Cherry Thyme Bomb is tart and sweet and steeped in thyme. Wake Up and Dance is a semi-dry cider made with lemon and a blend of black tea to provide caffeinated energy. Aged in a gin barrel for six months, Dry Humor is “tart and oaky with hints of cardamom and juniper.”

Gig points out the rich history of hard cider in the United States.

“By the 18th century Americans in New England were fermenting 300,000 gallons of cider a year, but by the end of Prohibition, hard cider had almost vanished,” he said.

**Highpoint Cider, New England style**  
In eastern Idaho, brothers Andrew and



Photo courtesy of Emily Mason  
Gig Leadbetter develops recipes at  
Meriwether Cider Co. in Garden City.

Alex Perez launched Highpoint Cider in April because they craved the hard cider of their New England roots.

“Hard cider was once the most popular beverage in colonial America because it was safer to drink than water,” Andrew said. “Everyone made their own.”

Consumption declined due to the Temperance Movement and Prohibition. But it is making a modern comeback.

“In the West, it’s a relatively new beverage like craft beers were years ago,” Andrew said. “It scratches the same itch as craft beers.”

Weary of the corporate world, the New Hampshire natives quit their jobs and relocated to Jackson, Wyo., several years ago.

With an undergraduate degree in biochemistry, Andrew relied on his hard science expertise to experiment with hard cider recipes at home in 5-gallon batches. He varied the types of apple juices, yeasts, and fermentation periods.

After about two years and 250 attempts, he had perfected recipes for the company’s signature ciders named for local ski culture and their move from their New England roots – Transplant, Spur, and Tram-line.

“Spur is infused with ginger for a little kick,” Andrew said, “while Tram-line is citrusy with hops, and the Transplant is a semi-dry New England style.”

Confident of their product, they launched a Kickstarter campaign to fund the year-long construction of their processing plant and adjacent tap room in Victor. In April, they sold their first ciders.

“Response has been positive,” Andrew said. “We sold

See CIDER, page 16



National Hemp Association photo

A hemp plant is shown in this submitted photo. USDA recently approved Idaho's hemp program and Idaho farmers and other businesses can now begin exploring options to grow or process hemp in the state.

# Idaho begins accepting applications for hemp production

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

POCATELLO – The Idaho State Department of Agriculture on Nov. 8 began accepting applications for people interested in growing or processing hemp during 2022.

USDA recently approved the state's hemp program and Idaho is the last state in the nation to allow farmers and other businesses to grow or process hemp.

Hemp is used in more than 20,000 products and Idaho farmers and processors can now begin to figure the market

out for themselves, said Braden Jensen, deputy director of governmental affairs for Idaho Farm Bureau Federation.

IFBF has had policy supporting production of industrial hemp for more than 20 years and Farm Bureau members were involved in helping get a hemp program bill passed during the 2021 legislative session.

“We are happy the program has been approved and growers or processors who are interested in hemp production can begin exploring those opportunities now,” Jensen said. “We’re excited to see the industry is starting here for

those who want to take advantage of the opportunity.”

The legislation that paved the way for an Idaho hemp program is a narrow bill that only allows for people to grow and process industrial hemp if they obtain a license from the Idaho State Department of Agriculture. People can also transport it on behalf of someone with a license.

Industrial hemp, by federal law, must not exceed 0.3 percent of THC, the psychoactive compound that gets a user of marijuana high. According to experts, it is impossible to get high from industrial hemp.

Idaho's hemp program, as required by

federal law, has safeguard to ensure hemp grown in the state does not exceed that 0.3 percent THC threshold.

If a farmer is approved by the Idaho State Department of Agriculture to grow hemp, field checks will be conducted close to harvest time to ensure no hemp plants exceed that threshold.

If a hemp sample tests above that 0.3 percent level, a farmer can opt to have it re-rested. If it still tests about the threshold, the farmer can dispose of the crop or choose to remediate, which could, for example, involve blending it together into biomass and then having it re-rested.

Anyone interested in growing or processing hemp in Idaho needs to begin by submitting an application through an online system on the ISDA website: <https://agri.idaho.gov/main/>

For a farmer, the total application and program costs will run about \$1,000 per year. Costs include \$100 for the application, \$500 for a license and \$250 per lot for pre-harvest inspections.

Lot sizes can run from 2-25 acres and it's up to the farmer to choose how big each lot is.

There is a bit of risk involved for the farmer in choosing how big each lot is because if any hemp sample from a lot comes back over the acceptable level, the whole lot is affected.

So, if a farmer chooses to have one big lot, they risk having their entire hemp crop affected by a sample over the THC limit. If they choose to have several smaller lots, they minimize that risk but they also pay more up front because it costs \$250

per lot for pre-harvest inspections.

"We leave it up to the farmer to decide how they want to structure their lots," said ISDA Deputy Director Chanel Tewalt.

House Bill 126, the Idaho Industrial Hemp Research and Development Act, was signed into law April 16 by Gov. Brad Little after passing the Idaho Legislature by a combined vote of 74-31.

The bill directed the ISDA to craft an Idaho hemp program through the state's negotiated rulemaking process, which allows anyone interested in participating to do so.

The state's hemp program was hammered out over the summer by a diverse group of about 40 stakeholders, a group which included farmers and processors who are exploring the possibility of growing and processing hemp within the state.

"We've appreciated the incredible collaboration we've had," Tewalt said. "We didn't do this in a vacuum. We had a lot of feedback on this program."

Industrial hemp products have always been sold legally in the United States but not until the 2018 farm bill was passed was it legal to grow and process hemp commercially in the U.S. The hemp products sold in the U.S. previously came from other countries.

The farm bill left it up to states to craft their own hemp plans and with USDA's recent approval of Idaho's hemp program, the Gem State became the 50th state in the nation to approve hemp production and processing. ■

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## CIDER

*Continued from page 14*

everything we made for the summer tourist season. People like that it's low in sugar with apple-forward flavor."

With a maximum production of 6,000 gallons per month, they plan to start selling in local restaurants, bars and supermarkets.

### North Idaho Cider

In northern Idaho, hard cider appeals to those who want a natural beverage free of sulfites and added sugar, said Travis Wilkins, general manager of North Idaho Cider in Hayden.

"It's becoming more popular," he said. "We hear more and more comments from people saying they like it because it's gluten free, natural, and made from regionally sourced fruit."

They craft seasonal selections, too.

"We're excited for our caramel apple cider," Wilkins said. "For Christmas, we're making a fruit cake."

Customers like the variety, too.

"There are so many types and flavors to pick from," he said, citing mango and habanero, pineapple elderberry, peach sangria, and hoppy mango.

"We have something for everyone." ■





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Photo by Sean Ellis

Idaho ranchers are looking for ways to keep their livestock fed and healthy without breaking the bank on feed.

# Cattle conundrum

## High feed costs heading into winter, promise of better prices to come have ranchers in a bind

By John O'Connell  
joconnell@journalnet.com

East Idaho rancher Matt Thompson knows there's a payday coming if he can hold onto his cattle, as ranchers continue culling marginal livestock rather than feeding them extremely expensive rations through the winter.

Eventually, a smaller collective beef herd will result in a bullish market. The challenge in the meantime will be finding ways to keep his livestock fed and healthy without breaking the bank on feed.

The high cost of feeder hay — at least \$250 per ton, assuming it can be found at all — is eating away ranchers' profit

margins. So ranchers like Thompson are getting more creative in formulating their rations, and they're hoping for a bit of luck with the weather.

Thompson, who grazes 600 cow-calf pairs in the Goshen area east of Firth, has been stretching his alfalfa hay as far as possible by blending it with more straw, using protein supplements to make up for any deficiencies.

"I'm using some fairly expensive supplements that never made sense before," Thompson said. "Everybody's rations are going to be stretched out. Potato waste, beet pulp, distillers grains — it's all going to be in play."

A mild start to winter would be a big

help, Thompson said, as it would allow him to graze longer on crop residue and to continue running cattle on his private pasture.

"These recent rains have been a blessing. They've greened up a lot of feed in the mountains," he said. "It saved our lives, basically."

Nonetheless, Thompson anticipates the dry summer range conditions, combined with the fact that ranchers have been stretching their rations further, will result in breeding challenges for cows.

This year, Thompson said, it won't make sense to keep marginal livestock or cows that struggle to get pregnant.

"I'm seeing a lot more heifers getting

sold. People aren't keeping replacement heifers. They're marketing them ... just because they don't have feed to go around," Thompson added.

And he's been seeing a lot of calves getting sold before weaning.

Marc Thiel, who has a small cattle herd in Idaho Falls, raises most of his own hay but could be selling it for a substantial profit and has to factor that in when considering the profitability of his cattle.

"It's impossible to maintain any type of margin when you increase the cost of feed by 60 to 70 — in some cases 100 percent," Thiel said.

Jay Smith, a rancher from Salmon who serves as president of the Idaho Cattle Association board, expects to see a spike in the use of protein supplements for feeding cattle this winter.

Based on current feed costs, Smith estimates he'll have to invest up to \$600 to feed each cow through the winter. When also factoring in \$300 per cow in summer feed costs, he said there's no profit margin left for the rancher.

"I've used them in the past but we're going to use them harder to stretch our forage out," Smith said.

But Smith acknowledges cattlemen who stretch rations too thin risk hurting the body condition score of their animals, which could reduce calving rates. He's hoping to avoid doubling his usual rate of open cows this winter.

Like Thompson, Smith is thinking long-term in his planning, knowing better times are ahead.

"With this level of cow harvest, there will be less calves on the market next fall and that will invariably have to trigger a price increase," Smith said. "We've definitely taken a calculated risk to keep as many good cattle as we can to capitalize on what the future will be. We've also culled hard because with a \$500 to \$600 winter, not every animal is worth putting that into them."

Rex Hoagland, director of cattle procurement with CS Beef Packers in Kuna, said ranchers began culling more cattle due to high feed costs about a year ago, and the culling hasn't slowed since.

He said the price dropped 2 cents per pound on Nov. 1, but prices have held



Photo by Sean Ellis

**Idaho ranchers are looking for ways to keep their livestock fed and healthy without breaking the bank on feed. That includes getting more creative in formulating their feed rations.**

steady for the most part at between \$650 and \$1,000, depending on size. In the current market, he noted, even a \$750 cow doesn't make money.

"You're going to see some people possibly feeding some corn stalk bales as a filler and supplementing with high-quality hay," Hoagland said.

Absent the high feed prices, Hoagland said, ranchers would be sustaining their current numbers.

"If the cow is open, you've got to sell them. If a cow has got a calf in her, I have told people they need to try to hold on because there is light at the end of the tunnel," Hoagland said. "The cow kill is up. There's going to be fewer feeders next fall, which should help the market go higher."

Cameron Mulrony, executive vice president of the Idaho Cattle Association, said timely precipitation has renewed optimism among ranchers, who may be able to delay feeding hay by grazing longer.

Mulrony noted that hay is in short supply throughout the West due to drought.

He advises members to consult a nutritionist and have their feed tested to get the most out of it without depriving animals of nutrition.

Mulrony said cull numbers won't be released until January, but anecdotally, he's hearing culls are much higher than

normal.

"We are hearing of higher cull rates coming off of range. We are hearing of lower breed-back compared to normal, but every operation is a little different," Mulrony said. "Those two things are probably related to forage availability and price."

Though meat prices at the grocery store have been going up, Mulrony emphasized ranchers haven't enjoyed a corresponding boost in their returns.

He explained the discrepancy is the result of supply chain bottlenecks: Packing plants are operating at capacity and can't quickly handle the additional culls, and shipping constraints have made it tough for retailers to keep meat on the shelves.

The good news is that several new packing plants are planned in Idaho, Mulrony said. In Jerome, cattle ranchers and feeders are partnering with Agri Beef Co. to launch a packing plant to be called True West Beef.

In Idaho Falls, Melaleuca CEO Frank VanderSloot's Riverbend Ranch plans to open a packing plant, Mulrony said. He's also heard of plans to build plants in Southeast Idaho.

"The cattlemen are resilient and tough people," Mulrony said. "We need ranches and open space to keep Idaho a state we all enjoy living in." ■



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Photo by Audra Cochran

University of Idaho Extension Forestry Specialist Randy Brooks works with forest owners.

# Management planning for family forest owners

By **Audra Cochran and Randy Brooks**  
*University of Idaho*

The end of the year can certainly bring a bit of chaos to our lives. Whether it's from the hustle and bustle of the holidays, projecting for the next year, or making sure we have all the tax docu-

ments in place for year-end reporting, it all adds a little extra to our proverbial plate.

A little forethought can help eliminate some future turmoil, at least regarding your forest planning. One way to make sure you have your documents organized, is to create a management plan for

your forest.

A forest management plan is a written document designed to help landowners manage, protect, and enhance their forest resources to meet their needs and objectives.

Plans help forest owners prioritize goals, make decisions, schedule future

actions, and provide a roadmap in which to accomplish it soundly.

Without a plan, management may be sporadic, spur-of-the moment, or just guesswork. Management plans do not need to be complicated, but they should accurately define and schedule the cultural practices needed to attain objectives.

Plan costs, whether in terms of personal time or consultant fees, should be directly proportional to the plan's detail.

The Idaho Forest Stewardship Program, the American Tree Farm Program and other nationally recognized programs have developed frameworks for plans that will meet most family forest landowners' needs and qualify their land for specific forest land property tax designations, cost-share programs, or forest certification.

Contact your local Idaho Department of Lands office for information on the Idaho Forest Stewardship Program or the American Tree Farm Program. Cost-share payments may be available through the IDL for private consulting foresters to develop Forest Stewardship Plans for family forest owners.

Once a management plan is actively implemented, the property may become eligible for recognition as a Stewardship Forest, an American Tree Farm, or a Certified Forest.

An approved management plan under any of these criteria typically allow the forest to qualify for forestland property tax rates at your county assessor's office.

### Planning steps

The management plan is the product of systematic family planning efforts. It links planning, communications, and effective management with use or enjoyment of your forest resources.

#### Determine goals and objectives

The first step in planning is to develop a list of goals and objectives for ownership of your forest. Goals are broad statements of general intentions, and are usually not something you can measure, see, or hear.

They reflect your basic values, such as having a healthy, attractive forest that



Photo by Audra Cochran  
**University of Idaho Extension Forestry Educator Chris Schnepf discusses weed management with a group of landowners during a forestry workshop. Weed management is important in all forest planning efforts.**

you enjoy visiting or showing to others. In defining your goals, determine what you value and the when, what, and how much you want from your forest.

For example, one goal may be to maximize income from wood production. Aesthetics and wildlife can be examples of non-revenue ownership goals that can be accomplished through activities that also meet other goals like harvesting or thinning.

When you have multiple goals (most family forest owners do), be sure to set priorities.

#### Inventory your forest resources

The second step is to inventory your forest resources. An inventory usually assesses tree species present, stand density, tree age distribution, tree diameters and heights and growth rates.

Tree health, including pathogens,

insects, and diseases, should also be assessed. Other resources, such as soils, wildlife habitat, livestock grazing, and water sources should be included and noted where they are presently located and assessed for their part in future concerns and goals.

These resources can be inventoried with the help of natural resource professionals, or in many cases by knowledgeable landowners with or without assistance from others.

Many tools can be used as a guide for inventories, and your consulting forester will be able to best assist you with choosing the right tools and processes.

### **Identify potential management practices**

Once you have identified your goals and objectives and inventoried your forest, consider all reasonable management practices that will help you achieve your goals.

Some practices to consider include but are not limited to:

- reducing vulnerability to insects and diseases
- tree planting to improve species composition, stocking, or tree qualities (form, disease resistance, etc.)
- improving the timber stand (thinning, pruning, seed tree cultivation, disease sanitation, seedling release by reduction of competing vegetation, etc.)
- improving wildlife habitat
- harvesting timber for profit
- building/improving/maintaining roads and trails
- establishing fire hazard reduction or protection measures around buildings
- controlling brush and weeds
- installing erosion control measures
- fencing for livestock

### **Assess labor and financial resources**

Once you have identified  
See **FOREST**, page 29



Robert Barkley, a private forestry specialist for Idaho Department of Lands, discusses how the Forest Practices Act guidelines can assist landowners with their forestry planning.

Photo by Audra Cochran





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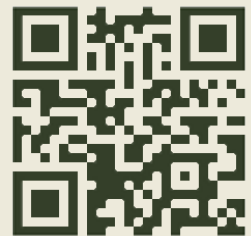
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Photo by Sean Ellis

The University of Idaho's new Seed Potato Germplasm Laboratory in Moscow, shown here Oct. 22, will go operational before the end of 2021.

## SEED

*Continued from page 3*

The laboratory ensures the tissue culture that is used to grow potatoes is disease-free and high quality, said Michael Parrella, dean of University of Idaho's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

Idaho is the nation's top potato-producing state and has a global reputation for producing quality spuds, he said.

"Where does that quality start? It starts here," Parrella said about the seed potato facility. "The industry needs to have healthy plants and they have to be free of pathogens. That's what this facility does."

The facility maintains disease-free tissue culture for about 300 different potato varieties, according to Jenny Durrin, the program director for the Seed Potato Germplasm Laboratory.

"We provide the starting material for the first generation of potatoes that are grown in a greenhouse and then get sold to seed potato growers," said Durrin,

who helped design the new facility.

All potato tissue cultures and mini-tubers that come out of the program are certified disease-free after undergoing a rigorous cleanup process.

There have never been any sanitary issues with the previous facility but because the old facility included common-use spaces and a lot of foot traffic, the possibility existed, Durrin said.

The new facility is designed to make the possibility of contamination basically a non-issue, she said.

"It will just increase confidence in the program overall," Durrin said.

Idaho's seed potato growers invest a lot of money in creating the supplies of seed they sell to the potato growers who produce Idaho's enormous spud crop, said Travis Blacker, industry relations director for the Idaho Potato Commission.

"It's a big-time investment and they want to make sure that what they are getting from the seed potato facility is as pure as can be," he said. "We absolutely need a facility like this that can help us

maintain the quality of Idaho potatoes."

The Idaho Legislature approved \$3 million toward the facility, the IPC has provided \$1.25 million, CALS provided \$1 million and the rest of the money came from contributions from industry and individual growers.

The new facility is much bigger than the previous one and will allow the program to significantly ramp up production as industry requires, Durrin said.

"This facility will allow us to produce about three times as much as we are currently able to produce," she said.

The new facility is expected to go functional before the end of 2021 and CALS officials plan to hold a grand opening next spring.

Gross toured the new facility Nov. 7 and was impressed.

"We're pretty proud of this new facility," he said. "It will give us the capacity that we need to continue to grow our seed potato business in Idaho. Having clean seed is essential for Idaho's potato industry to be successful." ■

# Trapping, wolf hunting under threat

**H**ello, my name is Rusty Kramer and I am the president of the Idaho Trappers Association and a director for the Foundation for Wildlife Management.

This column is about two of the more controversial subjects we have in Idaho: trapping and wolves.

Trapping is under constant threat in Idaho and protecting trapping is something I am very passionate about. The ITA's purpose is to promote, protect and educate about trapping in Idaho.

Our organization, which has 825-plus members spread over 28 states and four countries, does many sportsmen shows, fairs, gun shows and other events with a booth teaching about trapping.

We go to a lot of schools and teach about trapping, especially focusing on fourth-grade Idaho history classes and the fur trade that originally opened up Idaho with the mountain men.

We also go to dog events and set up a booth to show folks how to safely remove their dog from traps and snares they might encounter out in the woods while either hunting or recreating.

*'Even with cheap over-the-counter tags, year-round hunting seasons and six-month trapping seasons, wolves have become extremely resilient and tough to manage.'*

ITA also is very active working with other sportsmen groups, livestock organizations, Idaho Fish and Game and the legislature to protect and enhance trapping rules and laws.

Foundation for Wildlife Management is an organization that helps its members with expenses incurred while wolf hunting and trapping. The organization reimburses expenses (keep your receipts) of \$500 to \$1,000 per wolf, depending on the unit, and

you keep the wolf.

F4WM was formed in 2011, has 5,000 members and is reimbursing for wolves in Idaho and now in Montana. F4WM has funded the taking of 1,135 wolves to date and 267 wolves last season.

Wolf hunting and trapping is an expensive endeavor and to consistently be out in the field pursuing wolves, most people will need help with funding. Funding is raised from membership dollars

(you must be a member to get a payout), fundraising banquets and some grants from Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

Both ITA and F4WM have been working closely with the Idaho Cattle Association, Idaho Woolgrowers Association and Idaho Farm Bureau Federation over the past few years.

We have a lot of common interests with predator management, lawsuits, protecting trapping laws and finding ways that we can work together. Trapping is constantly under attack and some animals must be trapped to manage their populations.

Some of the animals that people are really concerned about with depredation problems are raccoon, fox, coyotes, wolves, beaver, muskrats and otter. Some of these animals can be hunted as well as trapped, but predominantly the most successful tool to manage them is trapping.

Fast forward to Idaho's Senate Bill 1211, the so-called "wolf extermination" bill that was passed by the state's legislature in 2021.

Both the ITA and F4WM worked closely with the three livestock groups to provide more tools to ranchers and sportsmen to manage wolves. I was very proud of the work these five groups did and the outcome of the bill.

Unfortunately, when dealing with wolves a lot of folks use emotion instead of science and the media is the worst culprit of this. Nowhere in the bill does it talk of killing 90%

See **TRAPPING** page 29



*Protecting, Preserving and Promoting Trapping*

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# FOREST

*Continued from page 24*

management practices, evaluate the labor and financial resources necessary to carry them out, and establish a budget. Take into consideration how much time you have available, your schedule, and economic feasibility.

In some cases, it may be feasible to do the work yourself. Other objectives and practices may be more attainable by having contractors complete the job, under the supervision of a natural resources professional.

## Develop an activity schedule

Prepare a schedule that lists management plan activities and when you expect to perform them. This schedule should cover 10 years or longer.

If you have a large acreage, some activities may occur every year, usually on different units. If the land ownership is small,

management activities may occur less often, perhaps once every 5 or 10 years.

The activity schedule should be updated and shared with family members on a regular basis.

## Keep good records

It will be difficult to update your plan and make sound decisions regarding future activities unless you keep accurate records of what was done and when. Records are also important for tax and estate issues.

Records should contain everything mentioned above as well as any timber sales agreements, contracts, insurance policies, easements and deeds, and other important items.

## Write the plan

It is difficult to attain long-term goals without a written plan. The plan should be a working document that covers

long-term (20-30 years) actions. The plan should be flexible.

It should be re-evaluated every 3-5 years for changes in goals, management actions, and natural conditions. Forces of nature may create the need to conduct unexpected management activities.

Documentation should include the goals, inventory data and resource maps. It should also include the schedule and action plan listing what to do, where it should be done and when it should be accomplished.

## Action plan

The action plan lists what to do, where it should be done, and when it should be accomplished.

For additional information on management plans and on-site evaluation for your family forest land, contact our office. We can provide forestry information, referrals, and publications. ■

# TRAPPING

*Continued from page 28*

of Idaho's wolves, which was a popular claim by the media.

All this bill does is give some more tools to harvest wolves, changes some funding dollars around and allows livestock users to use F4WM as a private contractor if they choose to do so.

To the folks saying wolves are going to go extinct because of this bill, a quick fact on wolves in Idaho: The federal requirement for wolves in Idaho is 150. Even with cheap over-the-counter tags, year-round hunting seasons and six-month trapping seasons, wolves have become extremely resilient and tough to manage.

IDFG official counts have shown two straight years of over 1,500 wolves in Idaho. After a record wolf harvest in 2019, the state's wolf population is still on the verge of being out of control.

Essentially, all private and federal wolf control is still only harvesting as many wolves as are being replaced with new pups being born. Idaho has a lot of rugged country and management of wolves in Idaho is much harder than in the Great Lakes states.

Please go to our websites if you want to learn more about our organizations or join as a member to support us. Please contact me if you ever want us to set a booth up at an event, give a presentation, present at a school or if you just want to learn more about trapping or wolf management.

To contact Rusty Kramer, call (208) 870-3217 or email him at [idahotrapping@hotmail.com](mailto:idahotrapping@hotmail.com) ■

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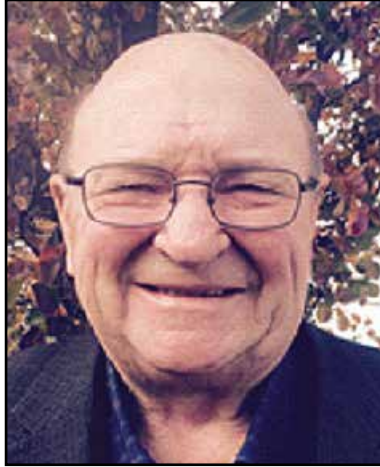
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## Use this time of year to reevaluate your marketing plan for next year

This is the end of another year, a year that definitely had its own unique challenges and solutions. Yes solutions; we may not have been able to correct all of the challenges but we did survive and we will be able to look toward the next growing season.



Between now and the end of March, producers have opportunities to attend meetings and farm shows as well as study on their own, new procedures in farming practices in an effort to lower input costs and increase production.

There are many things I admire about producers and just one of them is that most producers are willing to look at and try something new. New ways to till the soil, plant the crop along with watering and fertilizing and let's not forget rotation.

Let's not forget to look at and study our marketing plan and see if there could possibly be adjustments we could make for the upcoming marketing year.

Recently I attended some meetings on marketing in the northern part of the state. In one meeting a producer said that producers are very good at the production side of their operation but what they could really use help in was marketing their commodities.

In another meeting a producer who had been using futures to manage his price risk in the market said that

he had a weekly phone meeting with his broker.

He said that this meeting would usually last about 30 minutes and it didn't matter if he was out working in his fields, he would shut things down long enough to visit and learn just what was going on in the

markets.

He also went on to say that these few minutes once a week had been very beneficial to his marketing over the past few years.

Another young couple in the southeast part of the state said that they have been studying and using the futures market to protect the price risk with their calves.

What they have done has been beneficial to them and they will tell you that they have invested their time as well as some money in learning just how to use the different tools available.

They feel that what they have learned over the past couple of years will definitely benefit them in the years ahead.

Let's now take a minute to visit about actually marketing into our 2022 crop. The basis for new crop soft white in the Pacific Northwest is 6 over with the basis in southeast Idaho and the Magic Valley is closer to 100 under.

These are both low compared to the nearby levels but that is new crop for you. The basis for 2022 is based on the optimistic outlook for production.

The new crop basis could very well stay near these levels until we get into the spring. Remember, the basis is probably your best indication of the local supply and demand situation.

This year we have experienced very high basis levels but let's not get caught up in believing that these levels are here to stay. With good production the basis for next year will be closer to the historical levels and we should market according to those more normal levels.

The levels to get serious about contracting soft white for next year would be 100 over in Portland and 25 under in the southeast region.

In the feeder cattle market this year we saw the basis for calves move from 20 under in late summer to 20 over in October. Here again, this is a very good example of the local supply and demand.

It is important that as we move forward in our marketing education, we realize that we can protect our price risk in the market using futures while we study and wait on the basis to move in our favor.

Remember, the only way to take advantage of a positive move in the basis is to contract your commodities. We hope you have a good safe winter and a Merry Christmas.

*Clark Johnston is a grain marketing specialist and owner of JC Management Co. of Ogden, Utah. He can be reached at [clark@jcmanagement.net](mailto:clark@jcmanagement.net). ■*



A wheat field is shown in Boundary County. Cereal grains are one of Boundary County's top crops.

Photo by Bob Smathers

# A look at agriculture in *Boundary County*

**By Sean Ellis**

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

BONNERS FERRY – The primary focus of Boundary County Farm Bureau is helping educate the county's youth through farm and ranch programs such as FFA and 4-H.

Increasingly, though, farmers and ranchers in Idaho's most northern county are thinking of ways to educate the newcomers flocking to the area about agriculture.

"There are a lot of new people here who know nothing about agriculture and so far we haven't done much to reach them, but we know we need to do something to ed-

ucate these people about agriculture, too," says Elizabeth Wood, who owns and operates a cattle operation near Naples and is a member of the BCFB board of directors.

Though the growth occurring in the county hasn't reached the almost out-of-control levels seen in some other parts of the state, Boundary County is starting to experience



accelerated growth, says Tom Daniel, who farms hay and wheat in Bonners Ferry.

“We’re seeing what for us is a large influx of people into the county and they’re coming from all over,” says Daniel, a member of Idaho Farm Bureau Federation’s board of directors.

“The price of property has skyrocketed as a result,” he adds. “That makes it hard to buy a piece of land to farm on because the value is way up.”

Daniel says the growth hasn’t caused major issues for the county’s agricultural industry yet, as it has in the Treasure Valley of southwestern Idaho, but it’s starting to get to that point.

“It’s definitely on our doorstep, coming,” he says.

Like most of northern Idaho, Bonners Ferry, the county’s largest city, has been discovered and people are moving into the area in droves, says Bob Smathers, IFBF’s regional field manager in North Idaho.

“Like Kootenai County to the south, land here is being gobbled up and developed,” he says. “This usually does not bode well for agriculture, but fortunately the pace of growth in Boundary County is not as crazy as in other areas in northern Idaho; but it is happening.”

As of right now, the Boundary County Farm Bureau’s big focus is on helping youth, Wood says.

“As a board, that is a big focus, working with 4-H and FFA; we like to go into the schools and teach kids about agriculture,” she says. “Also, a lot of our Farm Bureau members are 4-H leaders or serve on the FFA advisory board.”

“That’s our biggest push, supporting the youth through 4-H and FFA,” says BCFB President John Kellogg, a hay farmer from Bonners Ferry.

Only a tiny percentage of the farmland in Boundary County is irrigated but because much of the county receives an ample supply of rainfall and the valley floor is sub-irrigated by the Kootenai River, farmers here produce a wide variety of crops, including cereal grains, hay, oats, grass seed, canola and hops.

“Too little water is not a problem for farmers here,” says Smathers.

According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, the county’s farmers grew 15,902



Photo by Bob Smathers

**Boundary County is home to a 1,700-acre hop farm, shown here.**

acres of hay during the 2017 census year, 8,378 acres of wheat, 2,333 acres of barley and 3,256 acres of canola.

The county is also home to a 1,700-acre hop farm that supplies hops to Anheuser-Busch InBev.

The county also has a sizable nursery crop industry and because much of the county is forested, timber is a major commodity here and source of employment for many people in the county.

Cattle and calves is another major agricultural commodity in Boundary County and there were 4,914 cattle and calves in the county in 2017, as well as 1,926 sheep and lambs, according to the ag census.

According to the census, there were 348 farms in Boundary County in 2017 and 68,884 acres of land in farms.

The average size of a farm in Boundary County is 198 acres, much smaller than the

statewide average of 468 acres.

Eleven percent of the county’s farms sold directly to consumers in 2017, compared with 7 percent statewide.

Only 79 percent of the county’s farms had internet access in 2017, according to the ag census.

Internet connectivity is not a major issue “but reliable internet that you can afford is,” Kellogg says.

Wood says she has internet service “but there are times when you’re working on a computer and you lose total service.”

Daniel says grizzly bears are increasingly becoming a concern in Boundary County and Farm Bureau members and others “are trying to convince the federal government that they’re not nice, cuddly things. There have been no human interactions with grizzlies here yet but it’s just a matter of time before that happens.” ■

# Classifieds

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1963 Comache 250 airplane with 200 hours on a chrome major overhaul. Has been hangered most of its life. Pilot lost license due to age. Harold, Rupert, ID 208-532-4411.

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Paying cash for old cork top embossed bottles and some telephone insulators as well as other vintage and antique items. Call Randy. Payette, ID. 208-740-0178.

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

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.

## FREE CLASSIFIEDS

Non-commercial classified ads are free to Idaho Farm Bureau members. Must include membership number for free ad. Forty (40) words maximum. Non-member cost is 50 cents per word. You may advertise your own crops, livestock, used machinery, household items, vehicles, etc. Ads will not be accepted by phone. Ads run one time only and must be re-submitted in each subsequent issue. We reserve the right to refuse to run any ad. Please type or print clearly. Proofread your ad. Ads must be received by Dec. 17 for the January Producer.

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Photo by Sean Ellis

A facility being built in Wendell that converts dairy manure to pipeline-quality natural gas could be the first of several such projects in Idaho.

# Idaho dairy manure digester facility could be first of several

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

WENDELL — A recently announced project that will convert dairy manure to pipeline-quality natural gas in Wendell could be the first of several such facilities in Idaho.

Besides helping the state's dairy industry meet environmental stewardship goals, the facilities could provide an economic boost to the state's top agricultural commodity.

Shell Oil Products U.S. is scheduled in December to begin constructing a facility co-located at Bettencourt Dairies in

Wendell that will turn dairy manure into renewable natural gas, or biomethane, which is interchangeable with conventional natural gas and can be used in vehicles powered by natural gas.

The technology to do this has been around for awhile but California's cap-and-trade program, which is part of the

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*“It creates an additional revenue stream for dairymen who are having these facilities built. It creates an advantage for them that other dairymen don’t have.”*

— Rick Naerebout, Idaho Dairymen’s Association Executive Director

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state’s strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, is making dairy manure digesters economically feasible, said Idaho Dairymen’s Association Executive Director Rick Naerebout.

“That’s why we’re seeing Shell Oil Products and other companies pursue those markets here,” he said. “It’s an expanding marketplace and has real promise to make (this technology) finally be economically viable” for dairies.

Naerebout said more announcements of similar facilities being constructed in Idaho are expected soon.

“There are a number of those conversations happening right now, in private,” he said. “I think we’re going to see other large announcements made.”

Besides helping Idaho dairies meet the industry’s environmental stewardship goals, these dairy manure digester facilities will also provide an economic benefit to Idaho dairy operations, Naerebout said.

“It creates an additional revenue stream for dairymen who are having these facilities built,” he said. “It creates an advantage for them that other dairymen don’t have.”

Shell Oil Products U.S. is a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell.

Once the company’s RNG facility in Wendell is operational, it is expected to produce about 400,000 metric million British thermal units per year using cow manure from Bettencourt Dairies.

Headquartered in Wendell, Bettencourt Dairies is a family-owned operation that owns and operates several dairies across Jerome and Gooding counties. The dairy operation produces more than 3 million pounds of milk per day, all of which is processed in Idaho’s Magic Valley.

Dairy is Idaho’s top agricultural commodity in terms of total farm-gate receipts, which is the money that farmers or ranchers are paid for their commodity.

Farm-gate receipts from Idaho dairies accounted for more than a third of Idaho’s total farm revenue in 2020, according to USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service.

Naerebout said manure digester facilities like the one being constructed in Wendell will help the state’s dairy industry meet a major goal: “How do we have manure be a revenue stream for our dairymen?”

Shell’s Wendell project will be known as Shell Downstream Bovarius and, according to a news release, it will be part of a broader set of U.S. anaerobic digester projects for Shell that support the use of low-carbon renewable natural gas for use in heavy-duty, on-road transport.

Shell earlier this year started production of renewable natural gas at its first U.S. biomethane facility, in Junction City, Ore. That facility uses cow manure and excess agricultural residues to produce about 736,000 MMBtu of renewable natural gas a year.

“Shell’s Bovarius project in Wendell is part of our growing portfolio of RNG production and distribution assets supporting low-carbon intensity renewable compressed natural gas as fuel for heavy-duty, on-road transport,” Karel Kapoun, general manager of renewable natural gas at Shell Oil Products U.S., said in a news release. “It’s a pleasure to do business in Idaho, where the dairy industry has demonstrated an eagerness to play a role in supporting decarbonization of on-road transport.” ■

## ***Notice of Annual Meeting of Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Co. of Idaho***

To all policyholders: The 2022 annual meeting for policyholders of Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Co. of Idaho will be held on Friday, Feb. 4, 2022, at 10 a.m. at the company’s home office at 275 Tierra Vista Drive in Pocatello, Idaho. You are invited to attend.

Tom Lyons  
*Secretary*

## ***Notice of Stockholders Meetings***

The following annual stockholders meetings will take place Friday, Feb. 4, 2022, 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

Zak Miller  
*Executive Vice President, CEO*



Photo by Bill Schaefer

Wheat is harvested in an Idaho field last year. According to USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, the total value of agricultural production in Idaho increased 4 percent in 2020, to \$8.4 billion.

# Idaho ag production value rose 4 percent in 2020

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

POCATELLO – The total value of agricultural production in Idaho increased 4 percent in 2020, to \$8.4 billion.

It was the fourth straight year that the state's total ag production value increased, according to data released Oct. 14 by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service.

NASS' ag production value totals reflect the value of all the ag commodities produced in Idaho but they do not factor in input costs, which have risen sharply over the past year.

Milk remained Idaho's top agricultural commodity in 2020 with a production value of \$2.99 billion, which was a 4 percent

increase over the 2019 total and the second-highest total ever behind the record \$3.2 billion recorded in 2014.

Milk production value accounted for 36 percent of the total agricultural value in the state in 2020. That was up from 35 percent in 2019 and 31 percent in 2018.

Despite the increased milk revenue in Idaho, the state's dairies are facing a stiff economic challenge right now, said Idaho Dairymen's Association Executive Director Rick Naerebout.

The price that Idaho dairies received for their milk was up significantly last year but that is not the case this year, he said. Input costs for dairies have also risen significantly this year, he added.

Because milk production is up this year, when it comes to total milk revenue in Ida-

ho in 2021, "It's going to look like a good year, but you have to stack that up against those increased costs," Naerebout said.

Feed costs, which account for more than half of a dairy's total costs, are up substantially this year, he said.

As a result, most dairies in the state "are hovering right around the break-even point, if not a touch below break-even," Naerebout said.

The total value of cattle and calves production in Idaho was \$1.25 billion in 2020, down 10 percent from 2019, according to NASS. Cattle and calves remained Idaho's No. 2 commodity last year in terms of total value of production.

Potatoes were Idaho's No. 3 ag commodity and top crop in 2020 with a total production value of \$981 million, which



Photo by Bill Schaefer

**Sugar beets are harvested in an Idaho field last year. According to USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, the total value of agricultural production in Idaho increased 4 percent in 2020, to \$8.4 billion.**

was a 6 percent decrease from 2019.

Hay came in at No. 4 with a value of production of \$817 million last year, a 2 percent increase over 2019, and wheat was the state's No. 5 ag commodity with \$576 million in total production value last year, up 16 percent compared with the previous year.

The NASS value of production report differs slightly from farm cash receipt rankings because the value of production rankings include those parts of a crop that are used on the farm and not sold. For example, a lot of hay is used on the farm and does not show up in the rankings for farm cash receipts, which is the money producers receive for their product.

That's why wheat ranks ahead of hay in the Idaho farm cash receipts rankings.

Rounding out the top 10 Idaho commodities in terms of total production value in 2020 were sugar beets (\$334 million, up 2 percent from 2019), barley (\$271 million, down 2 percent), corn for grain (\$122 million, down 12 percent), hops (\$99.7

million, up 12 percent) and onions (\$68 million, up 4 percent).

As hop acres in Idaho have soared, the total value of Idaho hop production has increased rapidly, from \$31 million in 2015 to just a tick below \$100 million in 2020.

Dry beans were bumped out of the top 10 rankings by onions in 2018 but they remain an important crop in Idaho as the total value of dry bean production in Idaho increased 61 percent in 2020, to \$51 million.

Another Idaho crop outside the top 10 that increased substantially in production value last year was dry edible peas, which totaled \$12 million, up 89 percent from 2019.

Ag commodities outside the top 10 that declined in value in 2020 included peppermint (down 9 percent to \$35 million), and oats (down 3 percent to \$3.5 million).

According to NASS, the total value of crop production in Idaho last year was \$3.61 billion, up 8 percent from 2019, and the total value of livestock production in

the state was \$4.79 billion, up less than 1 percent.

Idaho's top five ag commodities in 2020 – milk, cattle and calves, potatoes, hay and wheat – had a total production value of \$6.61 billion, which accounted for 79 percent of the total value of all ag commodities in the state.

Those same five commodities in 2019 accounted for 81 percent of the total value of all ag commodities in Idaho.

In 2020, Idaho ranked No. 1 in the United States in value of production for five agricultural commodities (potatoes, barley, alfalfa hay, peppermint oil and food trout), No. 2 in two commodities (sugar beets and hops), No. 3 in milk and cheese production, No. 4 in four commodities (dry onions, spring wheat, lentils and dry edible peas) and No. 5 in all wheat and dry beans.

Idaho also ranked in the top 10 in six other agricultural commodities: corn silage, haylage, all hay, wool, sheep and lambs and honey. ■

# MEMBER DISCOUNTS

PAGES 20 & 21

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