

# Idaho Farm Bureau. Quarterly

Summer 2021 • Volume 21 Issue 3



## *Women in Agriculture*

## Time to harvest ag labor reform



“**N**ow Hiring” signs keep cropping up all over farm country, especially in the last several months as the job market shifts with more businesses reopening.

Wherever you go, there are jobs to fill. I see these signs in my home state of Georgia and on farms I visit across the country.

Every corner of farm country is impacted by our ongoing labor crisis, and it continues to be the leading concern I hear from farmers across the country.

The crops, the soil and terrain might look different, but the story is the same: “We cannot find enough workers, and we don’t know how we’ll keep the farm going if we don’t have access to the help we need.”

It’s hard not to be frustrated by this long-standing challenge, especially when I hear directly from the men and women struggling to fill jobs on their farms. However, these workforce shortages are nothing new for farmers and ranchers.

See **DUVALL**, page 7

## The President’s Desk

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

### Census data shows impact of women in agriculture



**T**he most recent Census of Agriculture, based on the 2017 farm production year, “found” that 33 percent more women were involved in agriculture compared to the 2012 Census of Ag year.

In response, some headlines and stories incorrectly reported that more women were involved in the U.S. agricultural industry in 2017 than during 2012.

What the 2017 Census of Agriculture actually did was a much better job of capturing how many women are involved as principal opera-

tors of farms and ranches.

The census expanded its reporting guidelines to do a better job of capturing the role that women play in agriculture.

Kudos to the census folks for accomplishing that but those who have been farming or ranching for awhile could have told you all along that women have always played a vital role in the nation’s farming and ranching industry.

In fact, I’d dare say that many women have  
See **SEARLE**, page 6

## Inside Farm Bureau

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

### A letter to my daughters



**A** letter to my daughters:  
Dear girls, I cannot remember a time in my life when I did not want to be a farmer and rancher. The first toys I can remember were toy horses and tractors.

I loved riding in tractors and on horses. I don’t remember my first horse ride; I just remember always riding horses.

Your grandparents provided me with a great life on the farm. I learned to work, take stern directions – your grandpa is much more mellow now – and love seeing things grow.

I was not the best student and didn’t have a grand vision for myself. Grandpa said I should consider my future. I always thought it was on the farm raising my sons the way he raised me. I thought FFA in high school was really all I would ever need.

Fast forward more years than it seems possible, and my life is even better than I thought it would be as a boy on the farm. I know what farming and ranching is, even though I don’t do it as my profession.

See **MILLER**, page 6

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Printed by: Adams Publishing Group, Pocatello, ID

**IDAHO FARM BUREAU QUARTERLY**

USPS #022-899, is published quarterly by the  
 IDAHO FARM BUREAU FEDERATION,  
 275 Tierra Vista Drive, Pocatello, ID 83201.

**POSTMASTER send changes of address to:**

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

Subscription rate: \$4.00 per year included  
 in Farm Bureau dues.

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**COVER:** Women leaders in Idaho's agricultural industry stand on the steps of the Idaho Capitol building July 8. See story about women in agriculture on page 8. Clockwise from top left: Liz Wilder (Idaho Wool Growers Association), Celia Gould (Idaho State Department of Agriculture), Stacey Katseanes Satterlee (Idaho Grain Producers Association), Casey Chumrau (Idaho Wheat Commission), Andi Woolf-Weibye (Idaho Bean Commission), Laura Wilder (Idaho Barley Commission), Moya Shatz-Dolsby (Idaho Wine Commission). (Photo by Sean Ellis)



Photos courtesy of Carla Crane Osborne

Carla reads to her grandchildren in the barn she has cherished since childhood.

# Picture book with pasture-to-plate message wins national award

By Dianna Troyer

*For Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

A first-time author has won a national award for her children's picture book about Idaho farm life.

"Some kids think food just appears on a grocery store shelf and have no idea it's grown on a farm," said author Carla Crane Osborne.

She grew up on a family farm in the Unity area east of Burley. Her brother is the fifth generation to run the business.

In April, Osborne's book, "Under the

Barnyard Light," was awarded the prestigious Ben Franklin Award from the Independent Book Publishers Association in the children's book category.

The program was established to recognize excellence in book editorial and design among independent publishers.

"I'm excited the book received recognition," Osborne said. "My publisher suggested I enter."

The 26-page book took a decade to produce and was published last fall. Its pasture-to-plate message convinced a nationally acclaimed illustrator and publisher

to produce it.

Osborne joked that completing the book was more strenuous and time-consuming than any farm chore she has done and was ultimately gratifying.

While writing the book, she said her goal was "to bring to life a snapshot of the past, so children today can experience a sliver of the magic I knew growing up on a farm with all its wonders – especially the winter sky at dusk. It was a deep blue. I was thrilled to find an illustrator who painted the color of the evening sky perfectly."

While helping her dad care for their livestock, a mercury light cast a soft glow over the barnyard.

“The warmth of the light represented love and security to me,” she said. “It was so still and peaceful.”

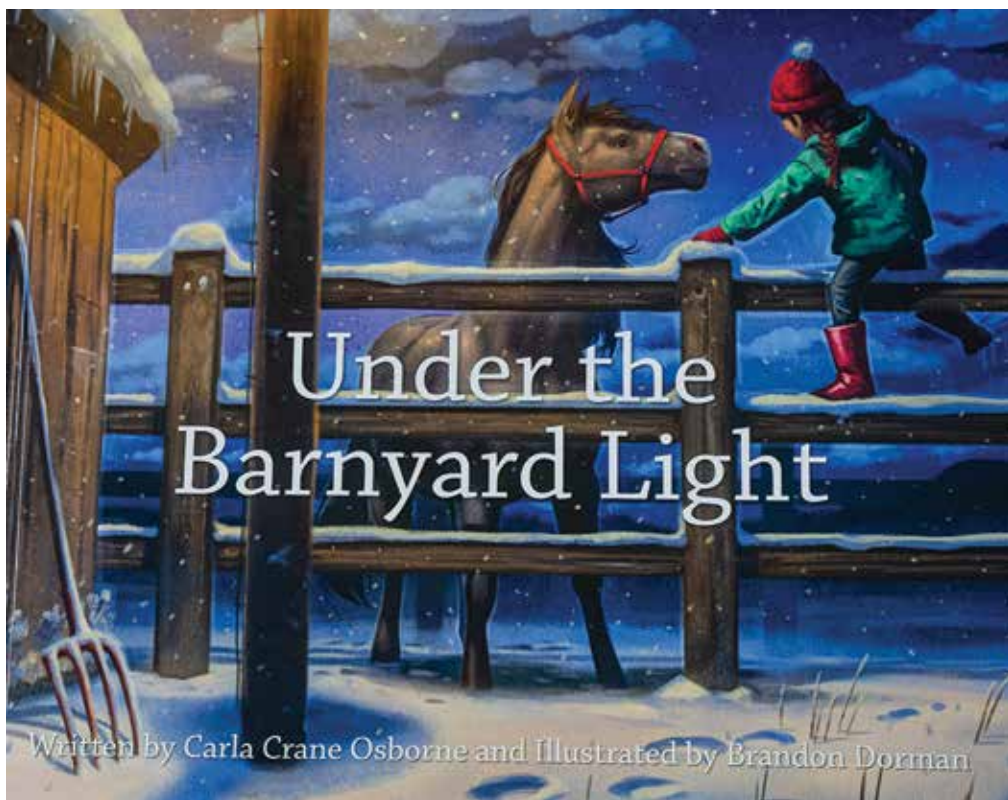
To find the right illustrator, she searched the internet for a year. She finally found Brandon Dorman, who has illustrated two dozen picture books including the covers of New York Times best-sellers “Fablehaven,” “Goosebumps,” and “The Land of Stories.”

She contacted the agency that represents him and sent him a copy of her manuscript.

“Brandon told me he wanted to illustrate my book because he believed in its messages,” she said. “He was contracted to other writers, so he squeezed my book in between other projects.”

It took four years for him to complete the illustrations.

See OSBORNE, page 34



Carla Crane Osborne's first children's book about Idaho farm life won a national award.



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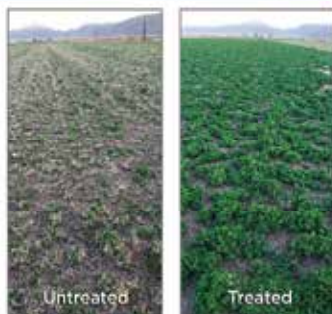


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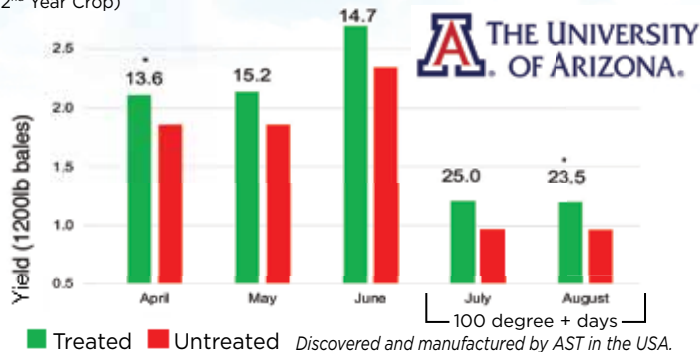
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# SEARLE

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*Continued from page 2*

been one of the biggest driving forces behind the success of agriculture.

[See story about the role women play on the farm on page 8.]

Women have for many decades played critical roles on the family farm, from operating farm equipment and caring for the day-to-day duties and chores, to handling the burdensome and worrisome financial duties on the farm or ranch and making important purchasing and hiring decisions.

Many of them have done this while taking care of and raising a family on the farm.

That is no surprise to anyone actively involved in the nation's important agricultural industry. Women have served as equal partners on the farm for a long time.

What may come as a surprise to many Idaho farmers and ranchers is the important role that women play in leadership roles in Idaho's agricultural industry.

On the front page of this month's magazine are just a handful of the many women who serve as directors or administrators of farm commissions and associations in Idaho.

I personally know most of these women and I've witnessed their visions, knowledge and passion for agriculture.

The photo includes the directors of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture, Idaho Barley Commission, Idaho Wheat Commission, Idaho Grain Producers Association, Idaho Bean Commission, Idaho Wine Commission and Idaho Wool Growers Association.

The list of women serving in top leadership positions in Idaho agriculture is far too long to go over here and if they were all included, the photo would have had to include a lot more than just three steps of the Idaho Capitol building.

It's safe to say that from a percentage standpoint, women make up a solid majority of the director or administrator positions for the many farm and ranch organizations in the state.

That's a great thing and it's obviously working.

While there are still many economic and regulatory challenges, Idaho's agricultural industry has thrived in recent years and the Gem State is a major player in the nation's farming and ranching industries.

This has occurred while women have in large part overseen the state's farm groups.

We see that within our own Farm Bureau. Today, we have more women serving in every leadership position, from county presidents, to county board members, to committee chairs and members, to state board members and the list goes on.

I have witnessed the same on a national level with American Farm Bureau Federation.

Providing opportunities for women to serve within Farm Bureau has created a much stronger and unified organization.

Kudos to the Census of Agriculture folks at the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service for letting the nation know that women play a critical role on the nation's farms.

And kudos to those women for helping to ensure the industry that feeds the state, nation and world continues to roll on. ■

# MILLER

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*Continued from page 2*

I listened to your grandparents and got an education. It has provided me with experiences that I never dreamed I would have.

I learned through Farm Bureau what a leader is (I'm still trying to implement a lot of that). Now I get to work for farmers and ranchers every day to help them with their needs and to reach their potential.

Of course, another thing happened along the way – you wonderful girls arrived in my life and didn't bring any brothers. I am so glad I have all of you.

I admit that I didn't know what I would do with you cute girls and my farm obsession. Your grandmothers and aunts worked on the farm, but my mind was set for boys.

Luckily, that has not been a problem. Girls, I am amazed you can grease equipment, saddle your horse in the dark, drive a big silage truck, take orders from your uncle, muck out stalls, clean dirty barns and still want to wash your show steers just for fun.

You are judging meats and horses in FFA and getting ready to show steers at the fair. I may have planned for boys, but you have proved you can do anything on a farm.

Aside from being "handy on the ranch," you also are doing good in school. I am proud of your report cards, especially in math and science.

Michael Parrella, dean of the University of Idaho's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, encouraged me to urge you to think about careers in the sciences. His words and encouragement made me excited because girls, I know you can and will make your own mark on this world.

Ultimately my hopes for you all are to be happy and stable.

What I ask you, girls, as you pursue your dreams is to never settle. Just look around. We have women farmers, veterinarians and consultants. The director of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture and the directors of most of the ag commissions and associations in Idaho are women. Believe me, they are outstanding examples to look to.

Girls, I am proud of you. Wear that blue FFA jacket with pride; you are so much more than good enough. ■

Demand for H-2A visas has steadily increased over the last 10 years, as farmers struggle to find employees in the U.S. to fill open positions on their farms. In fact, applications for H-2A positions on farms have tripled in the last decade, but this doesn't mean our guest worker program is working fine.

The reality is farmers who currently use the program do so because they have no other options, and those engaged in year-round agriculture such as dairy or livestock production aren't able to access the program due to outdated laws.

Our guest worker program has been broken for decades, with farmers caught in the political crossfire of this complex issue.

But unlike so many challenges in agriculture that are beyond our control like weather and markets, this is a problem that can be solved.

Like anything worth doing well, it might not be easy, but we can find a path forward. That is why the American Farm Bureau is working closely with the Senate to bring forward a bipartisan solution that finally resolves our agricultural labor crisis.

No one questioned agriculture being an essential industry last spring and summer as store shelves emptied. But keeping our farms and ranches running is critical in all seasons to protect our nation's food supply.

It makes no sense to recognize agriculture is essential but then fail to recognize agriculture's workforce is essential. Food only makes it to your dinner table when we have the help we need to raise and harvest it.

Farmers need a guest worker program that allows them to hire workers for both seasonal and year-round farm work, while keeping their businesses economically viable. We need an agricultural guest worker program that provides enough flexibility and access for all of agriculture.

Farmers pay competitive wages for an honest day's work, but the reality is most domestic workers are not interested in farm jobs. Farm work is hard and often transitory.

I regularly hear, "Well, if farmers would just pay more, they would get the workers they need." In fact, farm wages have increased disproportionately to farmers' share of the food dollar.

For example, the Adverse Effect Wage Rate, the rate used to set wages for the H-2A program, has increased 20% nationally over the last five years. Meanwhile revenues for fruits and nuts only increased 1% and revenues for vegetables and melons declined by 5% in that same time.

With margins so slim, farmers are finding it more and more difficult to remain viable.

Farmers are also deeply concerned about the future of our current employees. On family farms like mine, employees become like family. We must ensure the stability of our current workforce.

Our broken immigration system has led to an increased rate of undocumented workers in agriculture and other industries. No one can turn back time, but we can give these hard workers the opportunity to make things right and gain legal status while continuing their important work in agriculture.

It would be senseless and crippling to our food system to embrace an enforcement-only approach to immigration without fixing the guest worker program and providing a path forward for undocumented workers and their families.

We cannot afford as an industry or as a nation to put off finally achieving meaningful immigration reform. If farmers can't fill the jobs on their farms, those "Now Hiring" signs will slowly change to "For Sale" signs as production moves out of the U.S.

We have seen great achievements for our farms and our nation when our leaders come across the aisle and work in a bipartisan fashion. But it is also critical that any legislation from the Senate doesn't create more problems for farmers down the road.

It's time for lawmakers to come to the table and find a real solution that finally gets this right for the security of our food supply, the jobs depending on our industry, and the sustainability of our farms and ranches. ■



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# Women in agriculture



## Women play important role in Idaho agriculture

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

POCATELLO – The 2017 Census of Agriculture showed that about a third more women were involved as principal operators on farms and ranches in the United States compared with the 2012 census year.

Without understanding the census reporting criteria, that statistic is misleading.

In reality, there wasn't a sudden jump in the number of women involved in agriculture in the United States between 2012 and 2017.

What happened is that USDA, which carries out the ag census, expanded its reporting requirements and did a better job capturing how many women are involved as main decision-makers on the farm and ranch.

That women are heavily involved in running the family farm or ranch is no big shocker to people who are involved in agriculture.

"Maybe women weren't counted fully in the census before but they were always partners in the farm," says Stephanie Mickelsen, an Idaho Falls farmer and a member of Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's board of directors. "Most farm wives have always been involved in operating the farm."

The role that women play on the family farm has been underestimated and undercounted over the years, says Laura Wilder, who owns a sheep ranch and also



Submitted photo  
Idaho Barley Commission Executive Director Laura Wilder stands in a barley field in Rupert. Wilder believes the role that women play on the family farm has been underestimated and undercounted over the years, and adds, "Women have always been involved in agriculture as an equal and supporting partner."





Photo by Joel Benson

**Idaho Falls farmer Stephanie Mickelsen, shown here, says women have always played an important role in the running of the family farm or ranch, although their involvement wasn't fully counted until the 2017 Census of Agriculture.**

serves as executive director of the Idaho Barley Commission.

“Women have always been involved in agriculture as an equal and supporting partner,” she says.

The Census of Agriculture is conducted every five years and attempts to count all the farms and ranches in the country.

The 2017 census data showed 32 percent more women involved as principal operators on farms and ranches in Idaho compared with 2012. That increase was a result of a change in how USDA collected data in 2017.

The department expanded its reporting requirements during the 2017 census to include more primary decision makers on a farm. That change allowed USDA to better capture the involvement of women as main decision makers on farms and ranches.

“Women have always played as much of a role on the farm as their husbands have,” says Britany Hurst Marchant, who serves as grower education director for the Idaho Wheat Commission.

Idaho Grain Producers Association Ex-

ecutive Director Stacey Katseanes Satterlee says men and women have long been equal partners on the farm, although their roles have differed depending on their skills. Some are better on the financial and bookkeeping side while others are better suited to handle the operations and logistics side.

“This has long been the arrangement on the family farm,” she says. “It’s just now that the census is picking that up.”

Idaho Wheat Commission Executive Director Casey Chumrau says she believes a lot of women farmers have underestimated the role they play on the farm and in agriculture. They shouldn’t, she adds.

“They are involved in the farm on a daily basis, doing things like driving trucks or doing the books,” Chumrau says. “These are critical roles that aren’t secondary. They are co-main operators and critical pieces to the success of the farm.”

The most recent census showed there were 17,230 female producers in Idaho in 2017 and 27,125 male producers.

When Jamie Kress and her husband, Cory, bought their farm in 2004, she came

to the operation with a degree in accounting and a background helping operate her father’s tire business.

On the Kress farm, Cory handles most of the operations side while Jamie handles most of the financial and bookkeeping duties and tracks equipment repairs.

“I grew up in accounting and with a business background and have a natural affinity for it,” Jamie Kress says. “I stepped in doing the things I was good at and Cory did the same.”

Every farm is unique in how it’s operated but women have long been heavily involved in the operation of the family farm and ranch, she says.

If you are a farmer’s wife, “You can’t avoid being involved in one way or another,” Jamie Kress says. “It’s such a way of life for all of us.”

According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, 75 percent of female producers in Idaho are involved in record keeping or financial management on the farm and ranch, compared with 74 percent of men.

When it comes to estate or succession

planning, 54 percent of women are involved, compared with 56 percent of men.

When it comes to livestock decisions, 59 percent of women are involved and 66 percent of men. When it comes to crop or other land-use decisions, 63 percent of women are involved and 86 percent of men.

The census shows that 79 percent of female producers in Idaho are involved in day-to-day decisions about the farm or ranch, compared with 92 percent of male producers.

What the census data doesn't show is that a very high percentage of women run the state's various farm and ranch commissions and associations.

Most of Idaho's farm commissions and associations have female directors, including the Idaho Wheat Commission, Idaho Barley Commission, Idaho Bean Commission, Idaho Wine Commission, Dairy West, Idaho Beef Council, Idaho Grain Producers Association, Idaho Wool Growers Association, Idaho Rangeland Resources Commission, Idaho Apple Commission and Idaho Cherry Commission.

Jamie Kress recently became the IGPA's first-ever female president.

The director of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture is also a woman. In fact, Celia Gould is the longest-serving ISDA director ever.

That's only a partial list.

That most of Idaho's farm organizations are run by women might come as a surprise to many people but it probably shouldn't.

According to the 2017 Census of Ag, female producers in Idaho make up 39 percent of the state's total ag producers. Nationwide, that percentage is 27 percent.

Moya Shatz-Dolsby, executive director of the Idaho Wine Commission, says she has wondered for a long time why there are so many women in leadership positions in Idaho's ag industry.

"I think a lot of it is because we're organized and people in those positions have to multi-task," she says. "When you manage an ag association or commission, you have to be able to do five million things at once."

Idaho Bean Commission Administrator Andi Woolf-Weibye, who previously served as an administrative assistant for the Idaho Barley Commission and owns a small farm, says the fact that so many women direct the



Submitted photo

**Rockland farmer Jamie Kress is shown here with former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue. Kress, the first female president of Idaho Grain Producers Association, says women who live on a farm "can't avoid being involved in one way or another. It's such a way of life for all of us."**

state's farm organizations is an interesting phenomenon that has accelerated in recent years.

"There has definitely been a real changing of the guard in the last couple of years," she says.

Satterlee, who also serves as president of Food Producers of Idaho in addition to executive director of IGPA, says it's unique that Idaho farm organizations are dominated by women leaders but not surprising.

"All of these women are really smart, hard-working, driven, savvy and really good at what they do," she says. "You can see that by how well all of our ag commissions and organizations are doing. They're thriving"

Wilder says a lot of the women in Idaho who lead farm organizations grew up with a background in agriculture and "we understand all the things that need to be done to promote the industry. We love working with growers to make the industry better."

She says her love for the farming way of life and a strong desire to help tell positive stories about food production, farmers and ranchers led her to study agricultural journalism and ag education in college.

"My personal experiences and education have helped me develop a wide range of skills well-suited to commission work," Wilder says.

She says most of Idaho's ag commissions have a very small staff and their leaders have to be willing and able to handle diverse duties, from business and accounting to marketing and public relations, and they also have to have a strong understanding of science and agriculture, coupled with the ability to work with all types of people, from farmers to industry professionals to scientists, dietitians and consumers.

"As women, we are inherently good at multi-tasking, versatile, and very capable of the demands and needs of commission business," Wilder says.

While women dominate the leadership positions in Idaho's agricultural commissions and organizations, that's not the case when it comes to the actual commissioners and board members.

"I think there's something to be said for the men who serve on the boards of these commissions and associations who allow women a seat at the table," Marchant says.

Chumrau says the next step beyond women serving in leadership roles in Idaho's ag industry is getting more women to serve as commissioners and on boards.

"Most of the commissioners are still mainly men, which is fine, but it would just be nice to have a larger representation of women on those boards," she says. ■

# Drought, heat will impact Idaho barley production

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – Unlike last year, there will be no record set for average barley yields in Idaho in 2021.

Because of ongoing drought conditions and an unusually long heat wave that has gripped much of the state, Idaho barley yields and total production are expected to be down considerably this year compared with 2020.

“It’s going to be a challenging year for sure, especially in the dryland areas,” said North Idaho farmer and Idaho Barley Commissioner Wes Hubbard. “I’d say yields are going to struggle.”

Idaho, traditionally the nation’s No. 1 barley producing state, produced 55 million bushels of barley during 2020, up slightly from 54.6 million bushels during 2019.

Idaho barley farmers set a record for average yield last year at 110 bushels per acre.

This year’s average yield and total production are expected to be down significantly.

Idaho farmers harvested 500,000 acres of barley in 2020 but USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service forecasts that number will fall to 460,000 in 2021, with an average yield of 81 bushels per acre.

That would put total Idaho barley production in 2021 at 37.3 million bushels.

Based on conversations with major barley contractors, Idaho Barley Commission Administrator Laura Wilder expects harvested barley acres in Idaho this year to be between 460,000 and 480,000, with an average yield of 85 to 95 bushels per acre.

That would put Idaho’s total barley production in 2021 between 39 and 46 million bushels.



Photo by Joel Benson

**Barley is harvested in a field near Oakley July 12. Drought conditions and a lengthy heat wave are expected to reduce Idaho’s total barley production this year. But Idaho is still expected to lead the nation again in total barley production in 2021.**

During the IBC’s annual budget meeting in June, commissioners estimated the 2021 crop would be about 480,000 harvested acres with average yields at 100 bushels an acre.

“Since that time, drought conditions have worsened around the state with dryland areas being hit the worst,” Wilder said.

About 80 percent of the state’s barley production comes from irrigated acres and in most of those areas, while growers are facing tough water management challenges, most are reporting adequate water for finishing their 2021 barley crop, Wilder said.

“There has been higher water use and water management challenges for irrigated crops, but barley is coming along well overall with all things considered,” she

said. “Barley doesn’t require as much water as many other crops and most growers will have enough water to finish the crop.”

However, she added, “with early high temperatures forcing early plant flowering and heading, there will be some effects on 2021 barley quality and yield.”

Dryland crops are at greatest risk for yield and quality losses, Wilder said, and in a few extreme cases, some dryland barley fields will not be harvested this year.

“On irrigated acres, I think we’re going to have a pretty much average crop, but there could be some quality issues,” said IBC board member Mike Wilkins, who grows barley near Rupert.

IBC board member Allen Young, who grows barley near Blackfoot, said irrigated barley farms, especially in East Idaho, are

See **BARLEY**, page 33

# Water guardian

A brief history of the southern Idaho water calls

By Steve Stuebner

Over the last 25 years, when there's been a major water conflict on the vast Snake River Plain, Lynn Tominaga has been there defending farmers, ranchers, big dairies and major businesses like Anheuser-Busch, McCain Foods and Jerome Cheese through his leadership as executive director of the Idaho Ground Water Appropriators.

In the last 15 years, it's been particularly tense. When Snake River senior surface water users or Hagerman trout farms made a "water call," the worse-case scenario was that it could jeopardize 5,500 junior ground water users and 1 million acres of irrigated agricultural land, not to mention large dairies, cheese plants, potato processing plants and even cities.

The Rangen fish farm water call in 2014, for instance, threatened to dry up 157,000 acres of land, 180 dairies and 14 cities in a water call for a tiny amount of water – 6 cubic feet per second of water flow.

In times like that, Tominaga and IGWA leadership worked hard to quickly chart a strategy with ground water farmers and raise enormous amounts of cash – \$6 million to build a new pipeline over the Snake River rim and deliver



Photos by Steve Stuebner  
**Lynn Tominaga recently retired as executive director of the Idaho Ground Water Appropriators.**

water to Rangen, not to mention tens of millions of dollars for legal fees and other projects.

Tominaga retired at the end of June after a long career as an Idaho guardian for ground water users. Bob Turner, who has a banking and financial background working with farmers, agricultural interests and the Idaho National Laboratory, will be taking over as IGWA's executive director. He is based in Idaho Falls.

Anyone who knows farmers knows that every farmer is different. They each have their own unique background, each have their own life experience and

opinion, and so the task of organizing a room of very independent people into a cohesive whole could be compared to "herding cats."

"It's not been an easy task," says IGWA Board President Tim Deeg, a farmer and bank executive who is retiring as IGWA board president after 30 years of service. "Farmers are kind of like herding cats. Everyone has a little different idea of how to reach our end goal. And everyone takes their position very seriously."

"We managed to keep everyone on the bus; we kept everyone on the life raft," adds a grinning Tominaga. "That's probably one of the most important things we've done – keeping people together to protect our interests, the interests of Southern Idaho business and agriculture and the whole economy in that area."

Tominaga, Deeg and farmers like Dean Stevenson, who is the chairman of the Magic Valley Ground Water District, are all quite proud of avoiding the potential economic havoc that could have come from widespread water curtailments over the years by taking fast action.

It was a collective effort with strong leadership from IGWA, the farmers and key people in the Idaho Legislature such as House Speaker Scott Bedke and Sen. Steve Bair, R-Blackfoot.



Photo by Steve Stuebner

**Widespread water curtailments in southern Idaho have been avoided over the years by taking fast action.**

“We’ve not had a single well curtailed or a farm dried up,” notes Randy Budge, a water attorney who has represented IGWA through many of those tough water calls.

”There’s nothing quite like getting a certified letter from the Idaho Department of Water Resources stating that your water is going to be curtailed to bring the farmers together,” Stevenson says. “When it gets really serious, the guys are saying, is this going to be enough money? Do we need to increase the amount of the assessments to cover all of our costs?”

Stevenson likened the water calls to having a “gun at your head.”

“It was really hard and intense,” he said.

Why were ground water users vulnerable?

Beginning in the mid-1990s, when IGWA was formed, a whole series of water calls occurred, threatening the ground water users.

Why? In Idaho, water is managed under the Prior Appropriations Doctrine, meaning the farmer who files first in time, is first in line for the water right.

In water law, it’s all about the priority date for when you established your water right. Put another way, in times of shortage, senior water users receive priority over those with junior rights.

Ground water users developed their water rights from 1940 through the 1960s and onward, when the federal government offered cheap farmland

in the Minidoka desert, Idaho Power offered cheap power, and the state encouraged water and farm development.

Those incentives led to the development of about 1 million acres of farmland irrigated with ground water in the Eastern Snake River Plain.

Farmers with senior surface water rights on the Snake River and fish farmers with senior water rights in the Thousand Springs area date back decades prior to the 1950s, and thus, the senior water users could make a call for their water in dry years when water supplies were tight.

At one time, the Lake Erie-sized Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer was thought to be a bottomless source of fresh water for irrigation, drinking water and more in



Photo by Steve Stuebner

**Beginning in the mid-1990s, a whole series of water calls occurred, threatening ground water users in southern Idaho. Despite facing some serious challenges in the face of water calls, not a single well was curtailed or farm dried up.**

the region.

But by the 1990s, the Idaho Water Resource Board documented that the aquifer was being depleted at a rate of 200,000 acre-feet per year. The director of water resources placed a moratorium on new water rights and wells in the Snake Plain region to “stop the drop.”

But more needed to be done.

The Snake River Adjudication, approved by the Idaho Legislature when Tominaga served as a state senator in the mid-1980s to early 1990s, would catalog, confirm and verify all of the water rights in the Snake River Basin, surface and ground water rights in court.

After the water claims were adjudicated, the Idaho Department of Water Resources began managing the Snake River “conjunctively,” meaning that senior water rights

would take priority over all junior rights, including water pumped from the ground.

That’s what led to the series of water calls in court.

IGWA participates in 2015 historic water settlement

In 2015, everything came to a head with IGWA grappling with the Rangen water call, and on top of that, an IDWR curtailment order issued to junior ground water users, informing them that their water could be shut off in the late summer because of below-normal precipitation and water flows.

Then, a court decision held that IDWR would have the authority to shut off ground water irrigators in the middle of the growing season, if water supply conditions worsened.

Things looked extremely bleak.

“We knew we had to make a deal that year or it could have been a total disaster,” Stevenson says.

House Speaker Scott Bedke stepped in as mediator.

He led a series of long and intense meetings with Snake River senior surface water users known as the Surface Water Coalition (SWC), IGWA members and ground water districts across the ESPA region, from the Magic Valley to Blackfoot.

Over a series of months, they hammered out a deal that’s been termed “historic” because it finally ended years of water calls and litigation over water in the ESPA region.

The terms of the deal require IGWA members and ground water districts to reduce their consumptive use by 13 percent across the ESPA region, or about 240,000

acre-feet per year.

This is meant to address the 200,000-acre-foot deficit in ESPA water levels from over-pumping. In addition, IGWA contributes 50,000 acre-feet of surface water to the SWC annually.

In a separate, but complementary action, the Idaho Water Resource Board launched an aquifer-recharge program with a goal of recharging an average of 250,000 acre-feet of water into the ESPA each year during the winter months, when irrigation canals are not being used for irrigation.

During that time, water flows from the Snake River via canals to desert lava recharge basins, where it sinks into the ESPA. The water board has water rights specifically for aquifer-recharge programs.

IGWA meets and exceeds goals of the settlement deal

Ground water sentinel well data over the last 5 years show that the ESPA volume has increased by 2.2 million acre-feet.

IGWA members have been meeting or exceeding the goals outlined under the settlement each year since, according to third-party verification by IDWR.

While the water settlement was big, IGWA members are still sore about having to make any concessions, IGWA officials point out.

“Ultimately, we thought the deal was fair,” Deeg says. “Now our farmers can plan for the future, and we are taking a more sustainable approach to keeping the aquifer healthy.”

Going back to the Rangen water call, IGWA eventually purchased the Rangen hatchery for about \$2 million, a tiny fraction of the original asking price of \$63 million, and used the fish farm water for other purposes, officials said.

“They overplayed their hand,” Stevenson said. “We went over to look at their facilities, and we thought, there’s no way we’re going to pay them anything close to the original asking price.”

Earlier, IGWA purchased the Hardy fish-propagation operations in Hagerman to satisfy a water call with Clear Springs Trout, and IGWA also bought the Sea Pac fish farm to address another water issue.

A total of \$42 million was spent on



Photo by Steve Stuebner

**Over a series of months, ground and surface water users in southern Idaho hammered out a deal that’s been termed “historic” because it finally ended years of water calls and litigation over water in the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer region.**

purchasing the Rangen, Hardy and Sea Pac fish farms, IGWA officials said.

The Hardy fish farm was IGWA’s first major purchase, and that set the tone for other things to follow, Deeg says.

Through all of those tough legal battles, Tominaga is credited with keeping a cool head and helping ground water users work through the cutbacks in the settlement agreement.

He worked with the Bureau of Reclamation to provide \$3.5 million in water-conservation grants, grant money for water-measurement devices, and more than \$35 million for a farmer-compensation program the called the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.

The overall goal of the Idaho CREP program is to retire up to 100,000 acres of marginal groundwater irrigated land, while providing payments to farmers for retiring acres.

Deeg was the group’s lead negotiator in the settlement talks with Bedke.

“Tim is a very sharp negotiator,” Stevenson says. “He knows when to hold ‘em and fold ‘em.”

Tominaga’s leadership on water started

when he served in the Idaho Legislature for 4 terms, while running a family farm in Rupert. And then he served for almost 10 years with the Idaho Water Users Association as a policy analyst before he joined IGWA.

“Lynn has done more for water in this state than just about anyone I can think of,” says former water board Chairman Roger Chase. “We will miss him so much. Big shoes to fill.”

“Lynn and I go back clear to the 1980s on water policy and water law,” adds Clive Strong, retired natural resources attorney for the Idaho Attorney General’s office. “He has been a center of many of the most controversial water disputes over the last 30-plus years. He’s always shown a commitment to finding solutions to these complex situations and issues.

“And he’s always been calm and reflective in the face of adversity and kept the best of interests of his clients to heart. I will miss him.”

*Steve Stuebner is a professional writer who has covered natural resource issues in Idaho for 35 years.* ■

# Idaho chickpea acres jump 44 percent

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

POCATELLO – Total chickpea acres in Idaho jumped considerably this year compared with 2020. But the ongoing drought and severe heat wave could keep production close to last year's level.

Chickpea acres in Idaho were initially forecast to be up slightly over last year's 61,000-acre total.

But prices ticked upward right before planting and now USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service is estimating chickpea acres will total 88,000 acres in the Gem State in 2021.

That is a 44 percent increase over the 2020 total.

"We saw a recovery in price right before seeding ... and some growers switched into chickpeas," said Tim McGreevy, CEO of the U.S. and Idaho dry pea and lentil councils. "We think NASS' acreage numbers are a pretty fair representation of what happened late in the season."

In Idaho, chickpeas, which are also known as garbanzo beans, are grown in North Idaho under dryland conditions and there has been a major shortfall of moisture in the region this year.

Add in a lingering heat wave and Idaho chickpea yields are expected to be down significantly this year, which means total production could actually be close to last year's total, McGreevy said.

Chickpeas are hanging in better than other pulse crops in the region in the face of the heat and lack of moisture, McGreevy said.

But, he added, "if you get the kind of heat we've been getting, you will suffer a yield reduction. We could have substantially reduced yields because of this heat wave.



*Idaho Farm Bureau file photo*

**Idaho chickpea acres jumped a projected 44 percent this year, but a challenging growing season could keep total production close to last year's number.**

We can't catch a rain and the heat has been so intense."

The heat is going to have an impact on yields for chickpeas in North Idaho, as well as peas and lentils, said Dirk Hammond, administrative services manager for George F. Brocke and Sons, which processes pulse crops in Kendrick.

NASS forecasts Idaho farmers planted 37,000 acres of dry edible peas this year and 28,000 acres of lentils. Both acreages are in line with last year's totals.

Chickpeas, lentils and dry peas are all pulse crops and in Idaho, all three are largely grown in the northern part of the state.

The tough conditions "will definitely have an impact on yields for chickpeas, lentils and peas," Hammond said. "How big of an impact we will have to wait and see. It has not been a favorable growing season."

About half of all chickpeas produced in the United States are grown in Idaho and Washington.

Because of strong demand, U.S. and Idaho chickpea acres began soaring starting in 2016, when they reached 325,000, up from 207,000 the prior year. They jumped to a

record 603,000 acres in 2017 and then to 850,000 acres in 2018.

At the time, farm-level prices for the crop were near 40 cents a pound. But then, as prices began falling, so did acres.

Total U.S. chickpea acreage fell to 450,000 in 2019 and then to 270,000 acres in 2020.

Idaho's total planted chickpea acreage expanded from 70,000 in 2015 to 92,000 in 2016, then 118,000 in 2017 and 134,000 in 2018.

Idaho chickpea acreage fell sharply to 88,000 in 2019 and then to 61,000 in 2020.

NASS projects total U.S. chickpea acres at 341,000 in 2021, a 26 percent increase over 2020's total of 270,000 acres.

The decline in chickpea acres happened as farm-level prices fell from near 40 cents a pound all the way down to 16 cents a pound.

Lately, they have rebounded to above 30 cents a pound.

"Prices have been gradually increasing since last fall," Hammond said.

"It's good to see prices come back up a little bit," McGreevy said. "We still have strong domestic demand for these crops." ■





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Photo by Sean Ellis

Hay is baled at the Guthrie Ranch in Inkom in this file photo. The Guthries and other farmers and ranchers in Bannock County are facing a major challenge this year due to drought conditions and a severe heat wave.

# Drought putting the squeeze on Bannock County farmers

**By Sean Ellis**

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

POCATELLO – Each year, Bannock County Farm Bureau members focus a lot of their efforts on educating people in the area, particularly the youth, about agriculture. But at the moment, the main focus is on

the drought, which, coupled with a lengthy heat wave, is threatening to cause severe harm to the county’s agricultural industry this year.

“The biggest issue right now is water,” said BCFB President Brett Casperson, who grows alfalfa and organic wheat and barley near Lava Hot Springs.

Of the total 315,000 acres of land in farms in the county, only 40,000 are irrigated and the rest are dryland farms, which means they depend on natural moisture.

Because of the drought, those dryland farms in particular are under the gun this year.

“There are a lot of dry farmers that are in a bad way,” Casperson said. “It hasn’t rained for a long time.”

The lack of moisture also is affecting pasture and grass land, which makes it hard to sustain all the county’s livestock, he added.

The drought and lack of water is the big focus for farmers and ranchers in Bannock County at the moment, said Downey farmer Fred Burmester, a member of the BCFB board of directors.

“It’s a sad deal at the moment,” he said. “The drought is pretty severe down here. Dryland farmers have virtually nothing and the irrigation is winding down quickly. That’s our main focus at the moment: the fact that we have no water.”

Jim Guthrie, a rancher and state senator from McCammon, said he has never seen the situation so bad in his lifetime and it’s not just the dryland farms; irrigated farms are also facing a severe challenge.

“Everywhere you go, people’s places are burned up,” he said. “A lot of irrigated farms are becoming dry farms. It’s hurt us all.”

Guthrie grows his own hay to feed his livestock and normally sells extra hay to other producers.

“I’m not going to be able to sell any this year,” he said. “I don’t have any to sell because I had to keep what I had for my own stock.”

Casperson said Farm Bureau members and others are beginning to explore whether cloud seeding could work in the Portneuf Basin. He will present the idea at the next BCFB board meeting.

“One thing we’re going to try to do is look at cloud seeding,” he said. “If we get snow, then we’ll have water.”

The drought aside, Bannock County Farm Bureau members spend a lot of their energy focusing on educating youth about agriculture and why it’s important to them personally.

“Bannock County Farm Bureau is really awesome about educating the kids about agriculture,” said Jessica Wade, who runs a custom grazing, feeding and calving operation out of Downey and is a member of the BCFB board. “As we educate the kids and the public, it’s better for us as farmers and ranchers because they understand our industry. They understand that if you don’t



Photo by Joel Benson

**Farmland near Lava Hot Springs in Bannock County is shown in this photo taken earlier this year. A severe drought and lengthy heat wave are combining to make life difficult for the county’s farmers and ranchers this year.**

have farmers, you don’t have food.”

Like in many other areas, there is a big division in the county between country folk who understand agriculture well and people in urban areas who think their food just comes from the store, said Stacy Burmester, chairwoman of the BCFB’s Promotion and Education Committee.

She said Farm Bureau members try to go into all of the schools in the county each year to teach kids about farming and ranching.

“We want to teach them that ag is important and that they couldn’t survive without agriculture; it supplies us with everything,” Stacy Burmester said.

Besides providing \$10,000 worth of scholarships each year, BCFB members also provide mini-grants to different schools looking to institute an ag-related project. They also place farming-related books in school libraries and support, financially and otherwise, the county’s two FFA chapters.

The Farm Bureau organization also hosts an annual Ag Days event at a local farm or ranch and members also hold art and essay contests for kids in schools.

“We do a whole variety of things for kids in the schools,” Stacy Burmester said.

According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, there were 757 farms in Bannock

County during the 2017 census year and the average size of those farms was 416 acres, a little below the statewide average of 468 acres.

Fifty-eight percent of the total land in farms in the county is cropland and 33 percent is pastureland.

Hay is the main crop in Bannock County in terms of total acres, with 34,951 acres, followed by wheat (29,492) and barley (6,553).

Some vegetables, including potatoes, are also grown here, as are oilseeds.

There were 20,981 cattle and calves in the county in 2017, as well as 1,550 sheep and lambs and 1,917 horses and ponies.

Most of the farms in Bannock County are small farms that make a small amount of money from agriculture. For example, in 2017 there were 393 farms in the county less than 50 acres in size and 345 farms made less than \$2,500 from farm sales that year.

However, there are still dozens of fairly large farms in the county. Sixty-eight farms in Bannock County were larger than 1,000 acres in size in 2017 and 51 were between 500 and 999 acres in size.

In addition, 72 farms in the county made more than \$100,000 in farm sales in 2017 and 31 made between \$50,000 and \$99,999. ■

# Idaho Farm Bureau

For detailed information go to: [www.idahofbstore.com](http://www.idahofbstore.com)

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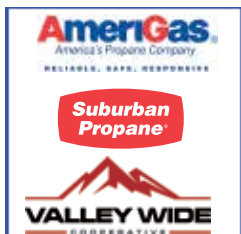
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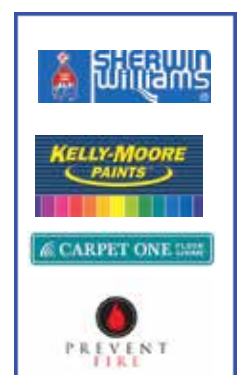
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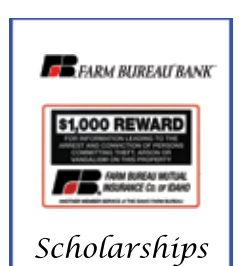
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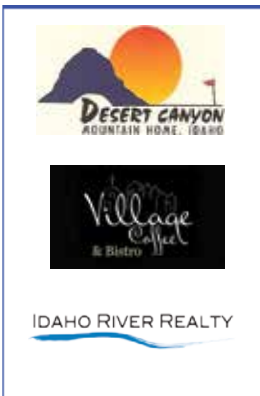
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## EASTERN IDAHO



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## SOUTHCENTRAL IDAHO



## NORTH IDAHO





University of Idaho photo

Michael Parrella took over as dean of University of Idaho's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences in February 2016. He recently announced to Idaho Farm Bureau Federation he plans to stay on for at least a few more years to try to push some major projects across the finish line.

# Parrella to stay on as U of I's college of ag dean

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

POCATELLO – Michael Parrella, the dean of University of Idaho's ag college, will stay in that position longer than anticipated to try to push some major projects through to completion.

When Parrella took over as dean of UI's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

in February 2016, the expectation was that he would remain there for about five years.

But Parrella has also said from the beginning that he didn't become dean to maintain the status quo at CALS.

During his time as dean, Parrella has initiated several major projects at CALS and rejuvenated others that had once held promise but had languished over the

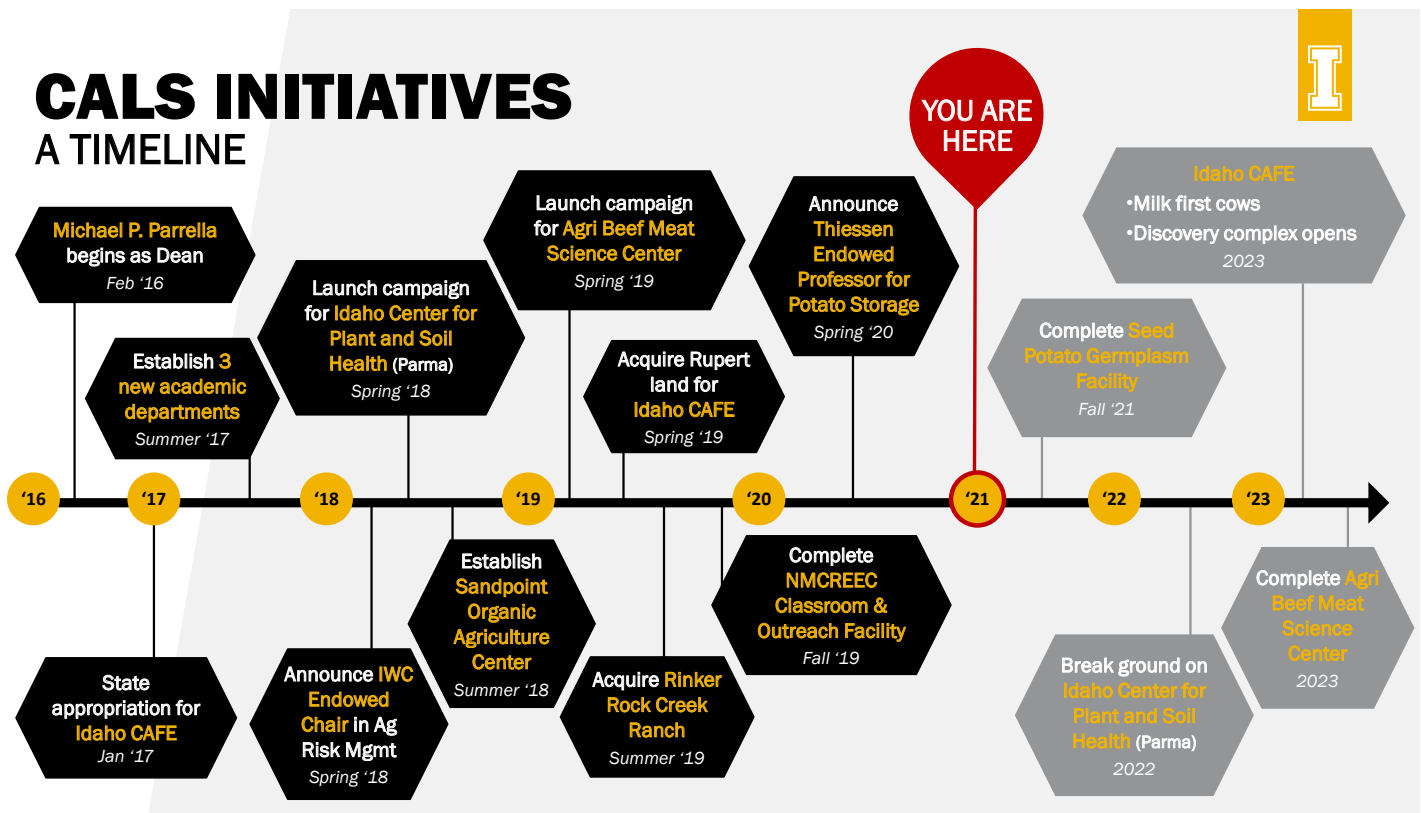
years.

The dean recently told Idaho Farm Bureau Federation he will stay on at CALS for a few more years to try to push some big projects over the finish line.

"I can't (guarantee) it's going to be another five years but we're thinking along those lines," he said. "I love this job. It's incredible. It's beyond anything that I ever really anticipated."

# CALS INITIATIVES

## A TIMELINE



This is a timeline of some of some major developments at University of Idaho's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences during the tenure of Michael Parrella, who took over as dean of CALS in February 2016. University of Idaho graphic

Leaders of Idaho's agricultural industry said they are excited that Parrella has decided to stay on as dean.

"The Idaho Barley Commission appreciates Parrella's results-oriented leadership and is grateful he will stay on at CALS longer than originally planned to see that important CALS projects come to fruition," said IBC Administrator Laura Wilder. "The university, CALS students and all of Idaho agriculture have benefited greatly from Parrella's work and we look forward to working with him more over the next few years."

CALS oversees nine agricultural research and extension centers around the state, where scientists study issues important to Idaho's farming and ranching community.

The ag college also maintains Extension offices in 42 of Idaho's 44 counties and three reservations. In 2019, those offices conducted 440,000 face-to-face contacts in 2019.

U of I's college of agriculture is the only institution in the state to prepare

ag teachers – 97 of the state's 115 school districts have ag programs – and 90 percent of ag teachers in Idaho have a degree from CALS.

Parrella said the CALS project he is most excited about is the Idaho Center for Agriculture, Food and the Environment, a \$45 million project that is being designed to be the nation's largest and most advanced research center targeting the dairy and allied industries.

The main feature of CAFE, as the project is widely known, will be a 2,000-cow dairy that will be the largest research dairy of its kind in the United States.

Besides the dairy, the project will include a demonstration farm, food processing research, workforce development degrees for the state's agricultural industry, and a Discovery Complex that will help educate people about the importance of Idaho's farming and ranching industry.

"That is a transformational project," Parrella said.

The CAFE project has been talked about for a long time but had stalled until

Parrella got it back on track. It is now moving forward quickly and the goal is to begin milking cows there by the end of 2023.

Idaho Dairymen's Association Executive Director Rick Naerebout said IDA had assumed the CAFE project was dead at one point but Parrella "has rejuvenated it and brought some excitement back to it."

"We're glad that for consistency and continuity, he's sticking around to try to see some of these big (projects) through to completion," Naerebout said. "He's a huge catalyst in making sure CALS initiatives get pushed forward and the CAFE project is just a great example of that."

Parrella held a visioning session with industry stakeholders in 2018 about the future of CALS' agricultural research station in Parma.

That led to a \$7 million plan to renovate the center, where scientists conduct a wide array of research on multiple crops, including beans, potatoes, onions, hops, mint, tree fruit, wine and table grapes,

grains and seed crops.

The Parma project will include updated laboratories and equipment, new graduate student housing, new greenhouses and four new positions: an Extension fruit and viticulture specialist, a weed scientist, an irrigation and soil scientist and a scientist that specializes in pollination.

That would bring the total number of research faculty at the Parma center to 10 and they would study everything from bugs to weeds, water and soil.

The college is also building a new \$5 million nuclear seed potato germplasm facility on its Moscow campus. The university's nuclear seed potato program – the “nuclear” part refers to the origin of potatoes – produces plantlets, or mini-tubers, which are then used by growers to produce plants in the field.

The new facility would allow the program to triple production, Parrella said, and from a quality perspective, this facility is where Idaho's potato production starts.

“Quality potatoes start with the plantlets and the mini-tubers and that starts on the University of Idaho campus,” Parrella said. “You start with healthy plants, you're going to get a better quality crop.”

The new seed potato facility will be co-located with a new meat science and innovation center. This \$8 million project replaces an existing outdated facility and will enhance teaching, research and outreach efforts and enhance the college's ability to respond to the needs of the meat industry, Parrella said.

Efforts are underway to rename the road that the new potato germplasm and meat science center are located on to Meat and Potatoes Avenue.

Those projects will be located in a very visible part of campus and remind students and the public what CALS is all about, Parrella said.

“Let's remind the campus that the roots of this campus are based on agriculture,” he said. “Obviously, agriculture is the state's most important industry from an economic perspective. This will constantly remind the campus of that through these beautiful facilities.”

Other projects Parrella has initiated or guided include:



University of Idaho photo

**Michael Parrella recently told Idaho Farm Bureau Federation he will stay on as dean of the University of Idaho's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.**

- The \$3 million Nancy M. Cummings Research, Extension and Education Center's new headquarters facility – designed to enhance teaching, research and outreach to the livestock industry and the local community near Salmon.

- CALS recently opened the Rinker Rock Creek Ranch near Hailey, which is described by UI officials as a 10,400-acre living laboratory that conducts research that will help land managers across the West make informed decisions about how people live, work and recreate on rangelands. Seventeen research projects involving 11 faculty are currently underway there.

- The Sandpoint Organic Center, a 66-acre property in Bonner County that is the first and only USDA-certified organic program for UI. Dedicated to organic and sustainable agriculture production education and outreach, the center includes an organic heirloom fruit orchard, demonstration market garden, U-pick raspberries, meeting facilities, dormitories for visiting faculty and students, a shop and cider house.

“It's just been one initiative after another

that (Parrella) has brought to fruition and that created a lot of excitement around CALS,” Naerebout said.

Parrella said one of the most exciting aspects of these projects is that industry has bought into them and supported them, including financially. He feels some responsibility to help push the projects toward or over the finish line.

“The response from industry has been phenomenal,” he said. “We need to finish these projects.”

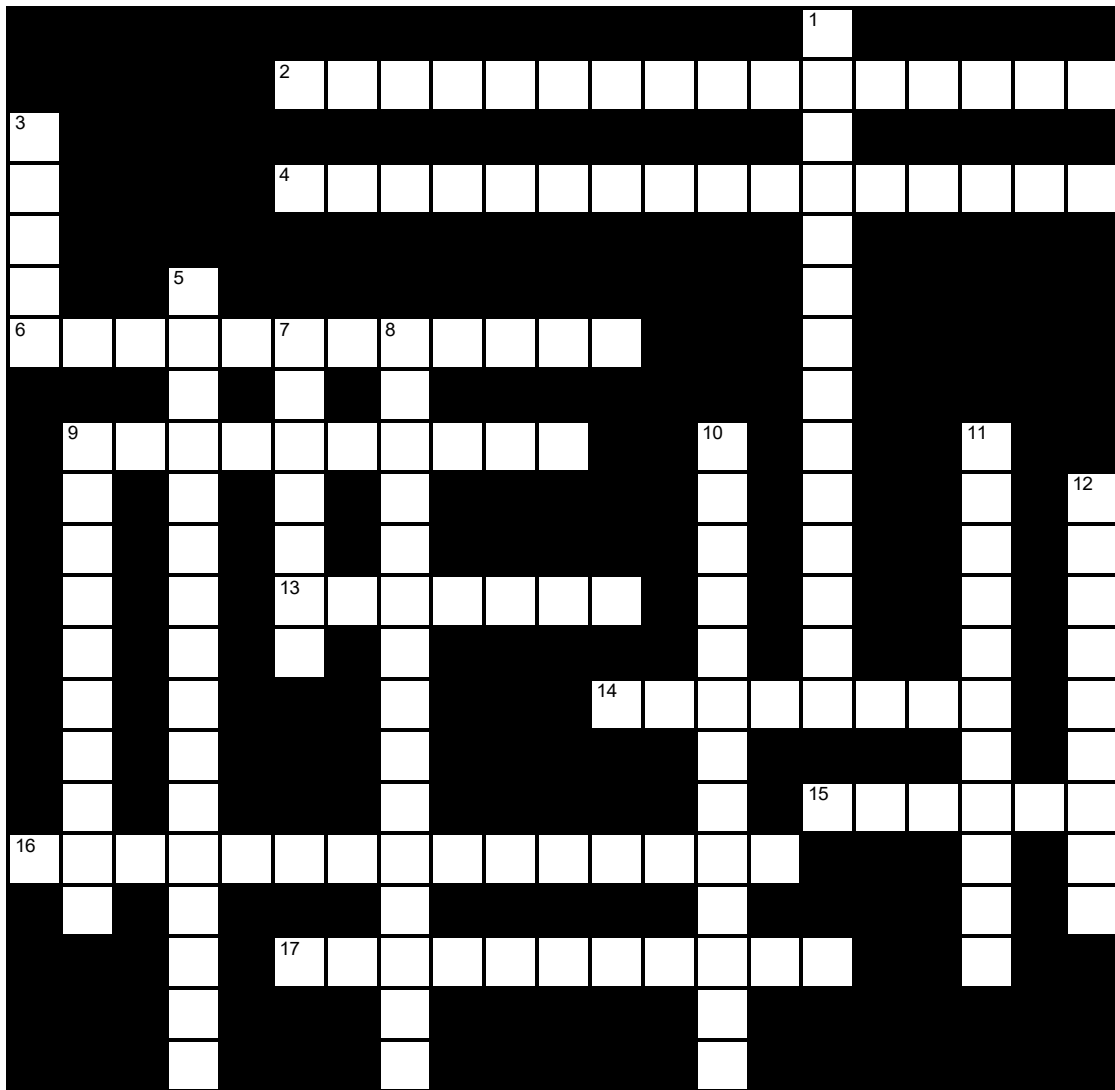
He also credited the entire CALS team for any success the ag college has achieved. There are 220 faculty at the college currently and more than 80 have been hired in the past five years.

“I am only as good as the faculty I represent,” Parrella said. “It's the faculty that are teaching the students, doing the research and they're doing the Extension work. I am here representing them, representing their programs, trying to develop programs and get support to develop capital projects that reinforce what they're doing. If we lose sight of that fact, then we need to get a new dean.” ■



# Crossword Puzzle

## State symbols



### Across

- 2. State Bird
- 4. State Tree
- 6. State Motto
- 9. State Gem
- 13. State Flower
- 14. State Nickname

15. State Vegetable

- 16. State Song
- 17. State Fruit

### Down

- 1. State Fish
- 3. State Capital
- 5. State Insect

7. State Language

- 8. State Raptor
- 9. State Amphibian
- 10. State Fossil
- 11. State Folk Dance
- 12. State Horse

## Summer recipe refresh with barley

*Submitted by the Idaho Barley Commission*

Barley is a delicious, nutrition-packed addition and healthy ingredient swap for many recipes, year-round. Refresh your summer recipe repertoire with these recipes featuring barley. For more barley recipes and inspiration from the Idaho Barley Commission, go to [www.eatbarley.com](http://www.eatbarley.com).



### Charred Corn & Zucchini Barley Salad

#### INGREDIENTS:

##### For the salad

- 3 ears corn, husks removed
- 2 medium zucchini
- 1 medium bell pepper
- 1 cup barley
- 2 tbsp olive oil

##### For the dressing

- 1/4 cup lime juice
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1/4 cup olive oil

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Cook barley on the stovetop. Bring 3 cups of water to boil, pour in the cup of barley, reduce to simmer for 30-45 minutes. When the liquid is absorbed and barley tender, remove from stovetop.
2. Dice zucchini and bell pepper, lathering in 1 tbsp of olive oil, and placing on a kabob stick. With remaining olive oil, lather the corn.
3. Place on heated grill, turning occasionally until all sides cooked and char developed on vegetables.
4. While vegetables are on the grill, combine all dressing ingredients in a small bowl and whisk together.
5. Pull vegetables off the grill. Using a knife, remove the corn kernels from the cob. Combine all vegetables, barley and dressing together. Serve immediately and enjoy.



### Shortcake

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup barley flour
- 1 cup all-purpose white flour
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1 tbsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter or margarine
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup milk

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Spray a baking sheet and set aside.
2. In a large bowl whisk together barley flour, all-purpose flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt.
3. Cut in butter and combine until mixture resembles coarse crumbles.
4. Add in milk, egg, and vanilla. Mix until well combined and shape dough into a ball. Cut dough into 6 even pieces.
5. Place evenly on the baking sheet and place in oven. Bake for 12-15 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from oven and top with toppings of your choice. Serve immediately and enjoy!

# Health benefits of barley

## Heart health

Since 2006, The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has determined that soluble fiber from barley, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of heart disease by lowering low density lipoprotein cholesterol and total cholesterol levels. Whole-grain barley as well as dry milled barley products, such as pearled barley kernels, flakes, grits and flour can make a difference in your heart's overall health.

## Digestive health

Barley contains the most fiber of all grains, with most varieties clocking in around 17% fiber. There are two main types

of dietary fiber – soluble and insoluble, and barley is a good source of both. Barley contains fiber throughout the entire kernel. Processed barley products such as flour, flakes or pearl barley, retain at least 50% of their original fiber content even after the bran or outer layer of the barley kernel is removed. In most grains, fiber is found only in the bran or outer layer of the kernel.

## Body-weight management

Eating fiber-rich foods helps increase satiety (the feeling of fullness) which is important in maintaining a healthy weight. Soluble fiber (beta glucan) mixes with liquid and binds to fatty substances to help remove them from the body. Barley is a complex carbohydrate, which

takes longer to break down, providing a longer lasting energy and reducing post-meal “crashes.”

## Blood sugar management

Barley has the lowest Glycemic Index of all the grains at 28. The carbohydrates in barley are slowly digested, absorbed and metabolized causing a lower and slower rise in blood glucose and insulin levels. Studies show that soluble fiber (beta-glucan) is effective in slowing the absorption of sugar, which, for people with diabetes, may help decrease the need for insulin. Barley and oats are the only two edible grains that contain significant levels of beta-glucan.

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Photo by Sean Ellis

**Wheat grows in a field near Notus in this photo taken in early July. Idaho's total wheat production this year is expected to be down significantly due to drought conditions and a severe heat wave.**

## Idaho wheat production will be down significantly

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

POCATELLO – Idaho's total wheat production and quality are normally very consistent on an annual basis. Because of severe drought conditions and a lengthy heat wave, that could change this year, at least on the production side.

The quality of Idaho's 2021 wheat crop won't be known until harvest is wrapped up but it's a certainty that total production will be down significantly this year compared to recent years.

"I think Idaho production could be off 15-20 percent this year," said North Idaho farmer Bill Flory.

Total planted acres of wheat in Idaho are forecast at 1.25 million, up just a tick compared with 2020, according to USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service.

But yields are expected to be way down.

The average wheat yield in Idaho last year, according to NASS, was a record 96.7 bushels per acre, 5 percent higher than the previous record of 91.9 bushels set in 2018.

There will be no wheat yield record in the Gem State in 2021.

That appears to be written in stone at this point.

Like other wheat farmers around the state, Flory said drought conditions and a severe heat wave have taken a major toll on wheat yields during the 2021 growing season.

"I've been in this business full-time since 1997 and I've seen periods of hot and dry ... but not anything like the duration we're seeing this year," he said. "It's sobering. It's going to be a long summer."

NASS forecasts that total Idaho winter wheat production in 2021 will be 57 million bushels, down 15 percent from last year's total. Spring wheat production in Idaho is forecast at 35 million bushels, down 22 percent from last year.

Idaho's total wheat production last year was almost 113 million bushels but the current NASS forecast would put total production in 2021 at about 92 million bushels.

Idaho is well known nationally and internationally as a state that produces a remarkably stable crop every year when it comes to total production, which is almost always more than 100 million bushels.

This year will be an outlier year for wheat production in Idaho.

Based on crop conditions and reports from around the state, "the (Idaho Wheat Commission) expects this to be one of the lower pro-

duction years in recent memory,” said IWC Executive Director Casey Chumrau.

“The percent of planted acres that are actually harvested will likely be lower than normal and yields are below average in all the early reports,” she said. “It is probably safe to say Idaho will be 20 percent below average.”

Even though the state’s wheat industry will be challenged by this year’s drought conditions and severe heat, Idaho is very lucky that these low production years are rare, Chumrau said.

“With great geographic diversity, consistent crop rotations and a high percentage of irrigated acres, Idaho is one of the most consistent wheat producing states in the country,” she said. “This is a really tough year but farmers are nothing if not resilient. We will get through this year and hope for rain.”

In general, winter wheat in Idaho seems to be doing a little better than spring wheat and, of course, farmers with irrigation are doing better than those who farm in dryland areas.

Especially in dryland areas, “A lot of farms will harvest half of their normal crop,” said “Genesee” Joe Anderson, who farms in North Idaho. “There are some pretty dry pockets” around the state.

“I was on the Palouse (July 6) and the fall wheat is holding up better than I thought,” Flory said. “Spring wheat is another question. The spring crop could be wildly variable.”

The lack of moisture in dryland areas is a major challenge but the ongoing heat wave is exacerbating the situation, said Cory Kress, a dryland wheat farmer in Rockland in East Idaho.

Over the past 12 months since July 6, the Kress farm had received only 5.6 inches of moisture, 10 inches less than what it normally gets. The previous driest period there according to 20 years of records was 8 inches.

“That tells you how dry we are compared to any other time in recent memory,” Kress said. “I’m pretty much banking on 50 percent of my normal production.”

Most of Idaho’s wheat crop is grown under irrigation but even the irrigated farms are up against it this year, he added.

“Because of the heat, I’d be surprised if irrigated wheat yields are not down 10 percent from what they normally are,” Kress said.

The average yield for winter wheat in Idaho last year was 101 bushels per acre but NASS is forecasting that total to be 85 bushels per acre this year. Spring wheat in the state averaged 91 bushels per acre in 2020 but NASS expects it to average 71 bushels this year.

In expectation of reduced production, the IWC during its June budget meeting cut projected revenue for this fiscal year by 20 percent compared with last year’s budget.

IWC exceeded its projected revenue last year thanks to record production and favorable prices that incentivized growers to sell, Chumrau said.

Thanks to the increased revenue in fiscal year 2021, which ended June 30, reduced spending due to pandemic travel restrictions, and commission reserves, “the commission is in a good position to continue the programming that benefits Idaho growers,” she added. ■



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# Benefits of pruning (forest) trees

By Randy Brooks  
University of Idaho

Looking to enhance your forest, the trees in your yard, or do you just like to fiddle around with trees? Would you like to improve the aesthetics or value of your forest?

Consider pruning your trees! Pruning trees in the yard and in the forest can yield many benefits, if it is done correctly.

In a woodland or plantation, pruning helps maintain a central leader, repairs storm damage, or improves the chances of a clear bole to produce a higher grade of lumber that is free of knots.

In your yard, pruning shade trees controls the tree's size or shape, removes undesirable branches, or reduces a hazard posed by dying or broken branches.

Poorly formed branches in the unpruned shade tree can get weaker each year. It is also necessary to prune trees along power lines in both rural and urban settings to prevent damage during storms.

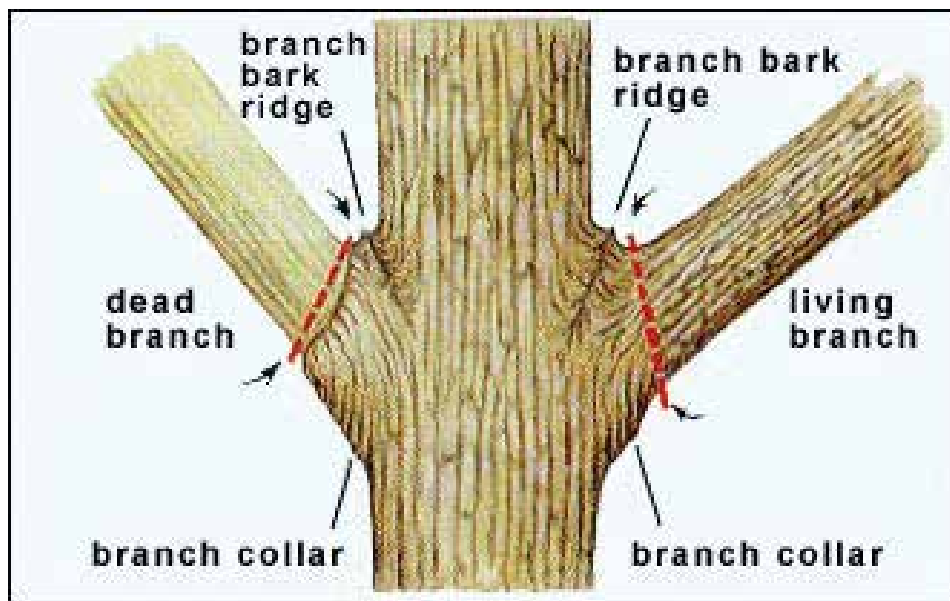
Whether in a forest setting or yard, start proper pruning early in the life of a tree and continue when necessary as the tree grows.

Forest trees can be pruned at any time of the year, but the preferred time to remove live branches is during the dormant season. Start pruning crop trees when they are about 4-6 inches in diameter at the base of the tree.

From the seedling stage on, maintain one central leader on them to promote straight, strong trees. Do not prune the top of the tree and always try to maintain at least two-thirds of the total tree height in living branches.

Excessive pruning of live side branches will reduce leaf area and slow growth rates. In higher quality forest trees grown primarily for lumber or veneer log production, a clear bole length of at least 17 feet is a desirable target.

Pruning large branches on older trees



is usually not recommended. Branches larger than three inches in diameter will generally not heal over fast enough to generate clear logs by harvest time.

Prune only those trees with straight trunks that will be held for 20 years or so. There is no need to prune every tree. Select 150 to 200 of the best trees per acre and concentrate pruning and other cultural activities on those trees.

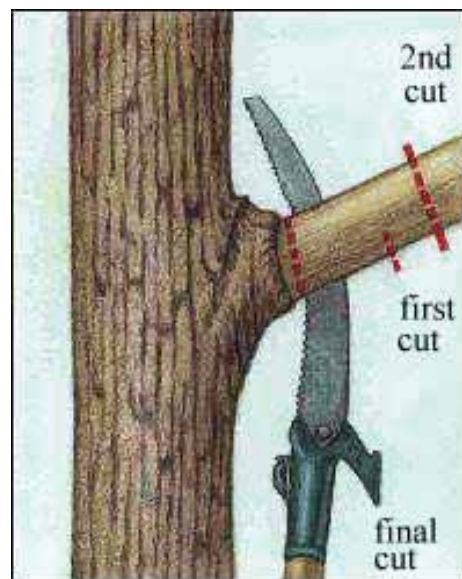
The first pruning should go up 8 feet on the tree. During the second entry – years later when the tree is much taller – prune the trees up to about 18 feet.

When a live branch is removed by pruning, a wound is created on the trunk. The following recommended tips will minimize the damage and promote fast healing:

- Do not use flush cuts (Figure 1). A large callus will have to form to help seal the wound. Branches that have been pruned correctly will have callus material completely encircling the wound rather than in a horseshoe or semicircular pattern.

- Do not leave branch stubs. They will just have to decay and fall off.

- If removing dead branches, do not cut into the collar that has formed at the



TOP: Figure 1. The red dashed line shows where to make a proper cut.

Figure 2. If the branch is too large to support, make a three-step pruning cut to prevent bark ripping.

base of the dead branch. The collar is the raised ring of protective tissue circling the branch and acts as a barrier to further decay.

- Concentrate pruning on the smaller limbs to promote faster healing. Cut



larger branches using a three-step method so the branch's weight will not cause the branch to break and tear the bark below the limb (Figure 2). Relieve the major weight of the branch by using two cuts and then cut at an angle near the branch bark ridge.

- Do not top trees. Even if upper branches are damaged in a storm, make repairs by cutting the branch at about a 45-degree angle or along the branch bark ridge. Remove broken tops and branches as soon as possible after injury.

- Wound dressings have not been proven to increase the rate of wound healing, so use them only for cosmetic reasons.

- Use the proper tools for pruning. Use chain saws only to remove the larger portion of storm damaged limbs; otherwise, use smaller pruning tools that are more easily controlled. Keep pruning tools clean and sharp. Diseases can be spread by tools from tree to tree after you cut an infected plant. To sterilize

pruning tools, clean them in a mixture of one part household bleach to 10 parts water. If branches are too high to reach, use a pole saw or ladder.

Proper tools for pruning include various types of shears or clippers and different types of hand saws. Maintain sharp cutting surfaces on the pruning tools.

Avoid using chain saws for pruning as excessive damage and improper cuts are likely to occur. Chain saws should only be used to remove the major portion of large, storm-damaged limbs. If branches are small, only a clipper or hand saw will be needed for pruning. To remove branches more than 6 or 8 feet above the ground, a pole saw or ladder will be required.

Pruning wounds on the trunk of a healthy tree will heal quickly if the proper cuts are made on small branches. Evidence of a proper pruning cut will be signaled by the healing process where callus material will completely encircle

the pruning wound.

Trees cannot regenerate or repair damaged tissue. A wound is simply walled-off or compartmentalized by the tree. Good pruning techniques and careful handling will promote the tree's ability to accomplish this compartmentalization of wounds.

Forest trees naturally self-prune or lose branches over time. Branches that are heavily shaped will die and finally break off. This process can be accelerated by artificial pruning and clear, high-quality main trunks can be produced much earlier.

Be sure to document when your trees were pruned. Trees with clear wood (no knots) will be more valuable when it comes time to harvest. Documentation also allows you to write the activity off on your income taxes, but that is a subject for another time.

*Randy Brooks is a University of Idaho Extension forestry specialist. He can be reached at [rbrooks@uidaho.edu](mailto:rbrooks@uidaho.edu). ■*

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## BARLEY

*Continued from page 11*

probably going to be OK this year because they have adequate irrigation supplies and he expects no more than a 5-10 percent reduction in yields for those farms.

Idaho overtook North Dakota as the nation's top barley producing state in 2011 and after falling back to No. 2 in 2012, regained the No. 1 spot in 201 and has retained it every year since then.

Idaho barley farmers last year produced 33 percent of the nation's total barley supply, up from 31.9 percent during 2019.

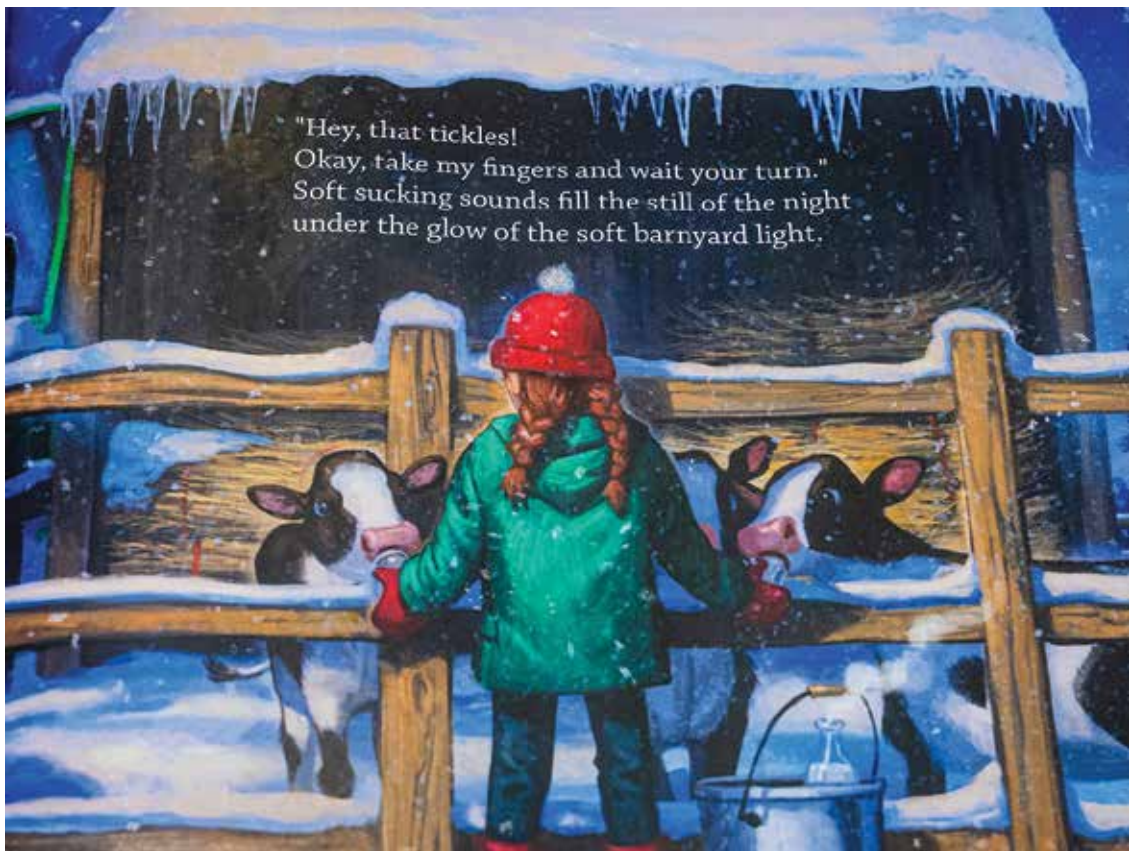
Montana ranked No. 2 last year with 27.6 percent of the nation's supply and North Dakota ranked No. 3 at 17.5 percent.

Idaho has a higher percentage of its barley acres under irrigation than both of those states, which are also facing significant production problems this year because of drought conditions, and Wilder expects Idaho to lead the nation again in barley production in 2021.

"Idaho, with our irrigated acres, is in the best shape of all the barley-growing states," she said. ■



Photo by Joel Benson  
**Barley is harvested in a field near Oakley July 12. Drought conditions and a lengthy heat wave are expected to reduce Idaho's total barley production this year. But Idaho is still expected to lead the nation again in total barley production in 2021.**



"Hey, that tickles!  
 Okay, take my fingers and wait your turn."  
 Soft sucking sounds fill the still of the night  
 under the glow of the soft barnyard light.

Carla's writing takes readers with her while she does evening farm chores.

## OSBORNE

*Continued from page 5*

"It was worth the wait," Osborne said. "When I showed the illustrations to our grandchildren, they told me, 'Hey, that looks like where you grew up.'"

Osborne contacted Aloha Publishing in Eagle, Idaho, to print her book. The company usually publishes business and inspirational books.

"They told me for the first time they would print a children's book because my manuscript's message resonated with them," she said. "They said my writing made them feel like they were there in the barnyard with me pitching hay to horses and bottle-feeding calves."

Instead of dreading evening chores, Osborne said she cherished the work and in her memories can still hear horses nicker and calves moo when they saw her coming to feed them.

"It was a magical time for me," she said. "When I was done, I'd catch snowflakes on my tongue and kiss our horse Dandy goodnight."

Osborne's book is the first in a series, *Go Gona* (pronounced *Go Na*) *Go*, a nod to her nickname.

"My brothers called me Gona because they said I was always going somewhere on an adventure," she said. "I had so much fun with the first book, I decided to write two more."

"Pony Express" will be released soon, followed by "Alex the Lamb."

Besides farm chores, another beloved childhood memory was going to the local libraries with her mother every week. Osborne donated copies of her book to libraries and reads to students in schools.

Osborne said she and her husband, Ron, who grew up in Heyburn near Bur-

ley, will always have a sentimental connection to southeastern Idaho. They live in western Idaho in Meridian where they run their family businesses dealing with real estate, storage units, and insurance.

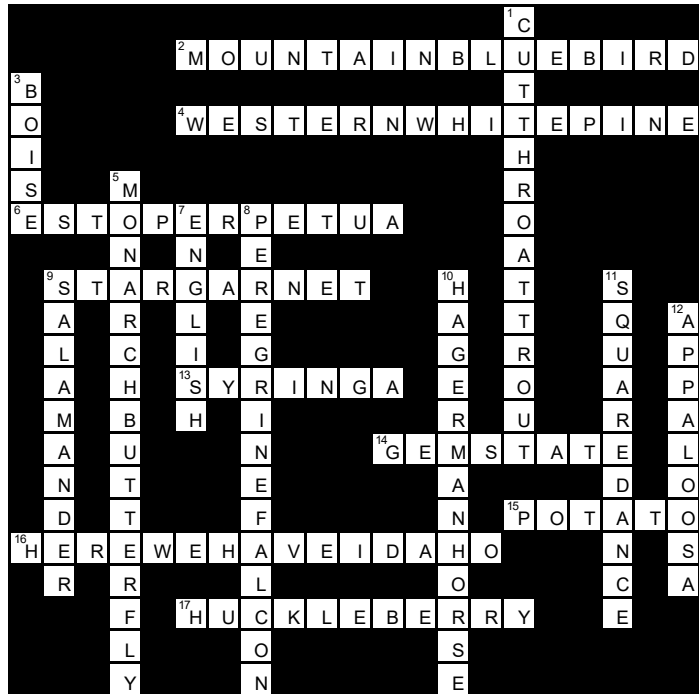
The Osbornes own land near Albion, about 14 miles east of Unity. For years, they returned to the family farm with their children to instill in them an appreciation of farm work.

"We get over to eastern Idaho as much as we can. It will always be a special place for us," Osborne said. "I hope my books foster a love of reading and make children feel like they're at a family farm going on their own adventures."

"Under the Barnyard Light" is available on Amazon. It also has a Facebook page and a YouTube page, *Gona's Reading Ranch*. Carla's website is [www.carlaosbornebooks.com](http://www.carlaosbornebooks.com) and her Instagram is [Carla\\_Osborne\\_books](https://www.instagram.com/Carla_Osborne_books) ■

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Idaho Farm Bureau Federation graphic  
Groups representing U.S. potato growers have sent a letter to the U.S. agriculture secretary and trade representative asking them to adopt a “trust but verify” stance when it comes to negotiations with Mexico on full market access for fresh U.S. potatoes.

# Letter asks ‘trust but verify’ stance on Mexico potatoes issue

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

POCATELLO – Groups representing U.S. potato growers have sent a letter to the U.S. agriculture secretary and trade representative asking them to adopt a “trust but verify” stance when it comes to negotiations with Mexico on full market access for fresh U.S. potatoes.

The letter also asks them to consider using Mexican avocado imports – Mexico exports about \$2 billion worth of avocados into the United States each year – as leverage to get that nation of 130 million people to allow fresh U.S. spuds to be sold in the entire country.

The letter was sent June 28 by the National Potato Council and state potato organizations, including the Idaho Potato Commission, to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai.

Gaining access to the entire Mexican market for fresh U.S. potatoes has been one of the domestic spud industry’s top priorities for more than two decades.

If and when that happens, “It would mean so much to this industry,” said Pat Kole, vice president of legal and government affairs for the IPC.

In a 5-0 ruling April 28, Mexico’s Supreme Court overturned a 2017 lower court decision that prevented

the Mexican federal government from implementing regulations to allow for the importation of fresh U.S. potatoes throughout the entire country.

Fresh potatoes from the United States are currently only allowed within a 16-mile area along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Idaho leads the nation in potato production and gaining access to all of Mexico would be a huge win for the state’s fresh potato industry, as well as potato growers across the U.S.

According to the National Potato Council, Mexico is the third largest export market for U.S. potatoes and potato products and more than \$270 million worth of potatoes and potato products



from the United States were sold there in 2020.

Despite the 16-mile border zone restriction, Mexico is the second largest market for fresh U.S. potato exports, accounting for 106,000 metric tons valued at \$60 million in 2020.

According to the NPC, the U.S. potato industry estimates that if the United States is able to export fresh potatoes into the entire country, it would provide a market potential of \$200 million per year in five years.

The U.S. fresh potato industry estimates having full access to Mexico would increase U.S. fresh potato exports by about 15 percent.

The unanimous decision by the Mexican Supreme Court was greeted by U.S. potato growers with tempered excitement because of the long history by CONPAPA, the national confederation of potato growers of Mexico, of throwing up roadblocks to prevent U.S. fresh potatoes from being allowed into the entire nation.

Despite the court ruling, “there are serious concerns about the long-term prospects for successful market access for U.S. potatoes in Mexico,” the letter from NPC and U.S. potato organizations states. “Our concerns come from a 20-year history of the Mexican potato industry and Mexican government under-

taking actions to undermine agreements made to open the market.”

Numerous examples of that happening were included in the appendix of the letter, which states that CONPAPA is exerting great political power to impede competition with the U.S.

“This causes serious concern among U.S. potato growers that access to the Mexican market will be only temporary before Mexican officials invent a way to halt imports again,” the letter states.

The letter says the most recent indication of this intention occurred in April when SENASICA, Mexico’s version of the U.S. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, unilaterally changed

its U.S. fresh potato import protocol without notice to the United States.

The new protocol involves additional sampling of U.S. potatoes that will be sent to a laboratory selected and paid for by CONPAPA.

“The clear goal of this unilateral change is to manufacture a reason to close the market to U.S. fresh potatoes at some point in the future,” states the NPC letter, which was signed by CEO Kam Quarles.

The U.S. government would never allow a U.S. industry to involve itself in inspecting and overseeing a competing country’s imports, the letter states.

“That is something that has never been agreed to in any trade deal I’ve ever seen,” Kole said.

Mexico’s agriculture secretary is expected to travel to Washington, D.C., in early August to meet with his counterpart, Vilsack, and the meeting is expected to include a discussion of the decades-long issue concerning Mexico’s ban on the full importation of fresh U.S. potatoes.

The NPC letter urges Vilsack and Tai “to maintain a ‘trust but verify’ stance with Mexico.”

It also says that without some sort of leverage, the pattern of CONPAPA using its political influence to cause the Mexican government to close that country’s market to fresh U.S. potatoes will simply repeat itself.

The letter suggests using Mexican avocado exports to the U.S. as leverage in the negotiations.

The U.S. and Mexican governments in 2002 announced both sides would resolve two long-standing market access issue – the U.S. agreed to expand market access for Mexican avocados and Mexico agreed to open the entire country to U.S. fresh potatoes.

The U.S. now imports about \$2 billion worth of Mexican avocados each year while Mexico remains mostly closed to fresh potatoes from the United States.

“Should Mexico continue its historical pattern by delaying reinstating market access for U.S. potatoes or illegitimately restricting the market, we strongly urge

USDA and USTR to move forward with the dispute resolution process under the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement and thereby seek to apply tariffs against Mexican exports to the U.S. such as avocados,” the NPC letter states.

American Falls potato farmer Klaren Koompin, a member of the NPC’s board of directors, has been involved in this issue for more than 20 years and said he believes the only way it will get solved is by using Mexican avocado imports as leverage.

“I guarantee you, if you stop \$2 billion worth of avocados from coming into the U.S., those guys will come to a solution,” he said. “I’m skeptical that it will ever happen without pressure on Mexico from some other point, i.e., no more Mexican avocados into the U.S. until we get this solved.”

The NPC letter concludes: “Success in this matter will lead to hundreds of millions of dollars in additional U.S. agricultural exports and substantial benefits for both U.S. growers and Mexican consumers.” ■

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