

GEM STATE **Producer** Idaho Farm Bureau

April 2019 • Volume 23 Issue 3

# IDAHO AGRIBUSINESS

123,100 Idaho jobs, approximately 1 in every 8 jobs in the state  
\$26.4 billion in sales, 18% of Idaho's total economic output  
\$9.6 billion in value added, or 13% of total Idaho GSP  
The extensive impact of agriculture on Idaho - Page 3

New dairy processing facility, 8

\$7 million Parma center upgrade, 12

'Potato D.C. Fly-in,' 18

## The soil of ag trade is fertile



Customers around the world know that “American-grown” means top quality, so it’s no surprise the U.S. exports more agricultural products than we bring in.

For more than 50 years, our industry has carried a trade surplus because our farmers and ranchers grow and produce the best food, fuel and fiber in the world. Not only that, our success lifts the whole economy as ag exports support more than one million U.S. jobs. We have a lot to be proud of, and a lot more to accomplish, when it comes to trade.

We also need to bring stability back to our trading relationship with our nearest neighbors by working with Congress and the administration to ratify the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement as quickly as possible.

America’s farmers and ranchers have experienced tremendous gains from the North American Free Trade Agreement, and we’re ready to build on those with the new USMCA.

Deals like this are good for agriculture and our whole economy. According to the Office See **DUVALL**, page 7

## The President’s Desk

By Bryan Searle

President Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

### Report emphasizes agriculture’s impact on Idaho’s economy



Agriculture is important to Idaho’s economy. Everybody knows that.

But did you know that agriculture directly and indirectly accounts for one in every eight jobs in the state, or that it accounts for 13 percent of Idaho’s total gross state product?

Did you know that agriculture in Idaho accounts for \$26 billion in sales annually, or 18 percent of the state’s total economic output?

If you knew those answers, you obviously have seen University of Idaho Extension’s recent “Economic Contribution of Idaho Agri-

business” report, which is based on 2017 data.

It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to know that farming and ranching play an important role in the state’s economy. Even a newcomer to the state who drives by farm after farm after farm can figure that out rather quickly.

But the U of I report really drives home just how important agriculture is to Idaho.

It shows that agriculture accounts for a far greater share of Idaho’s economy than it does in all of its neighboring states, and agriculture’s

See **SEARLE**, page 6

## Inside Farm Bureau

By Rick Keller

CEO Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

### Farm Bureau leaders place wreath at Tomb of the Unknowns



Several times each year, leaders from Farm Bureau travel to Washington, D.C., our nation’s capital, to represent farm and ranch members back in Idaho. The visits may be in the offices of Idaho’s congressional delegation, the offices of the USDA, U.S. Forest Service, EPA, BLM or even the U.S. Department of Energy.

Sometimes the visits are to testify before a congressional committee and visit with congressional staffers to clarify ramifications of laws and regulations. Other times, foreign embassies are approached to discuss trade issues or common interests.

Farm Bureau leaders also sometimes visit with other ag groups’ representatives to collaborate and discuss strategies on implementing complimentary policies.

Whatever the reason, the visits to Washington, D.C., are to represent the members of Farm Bureau and the policies they developed. These leaders know that they represent the many farm and ranch families back home that are busy taking care of their own farms and businesses and trust that Farm Bureau will represent them.

See **KELLER**, page 6

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# Report: Ag critical to Idaho's economy

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

POCATELLO — Agriculture is critically important to Idaho's economy, according to a recent University of Idaho Extension report.

It is based on 2017 data and updates a previous report based on 2014 data.

According to the report, "Economic Contribution of Idaho Agribusiness," agriculture was directly and indirectly responsible for 123,100 jobs in 2017, or one in every eight jobs in the state.

Agribusiness, which includes crop and livestock production and the processing of agricultural products, also generated 13 percent of Idaho's total gross state product in 2017.

"We're talking 13 percent of the state's economy. That's a significant sector of Idaho's economy," said the report's author, Philip Watson, an associate professor in U of I's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

The report, which was published in January and is based on several sources, including data from USDA and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, found agriculture was also responsible for \$26.4 billion in sales or 18 percent of Idaho's total economic output.

"By that measure, it makes agriculture the largest sector in the state of Idaho," said U of I Agricultural Economist Garth Taylor. "That is an astounding number."

One in every \$9 in wages paid in the state of Idaho can be attributed to agriculture, according to the report.

Agriculture's impact on Idaho's economy in 2017 actually decreased slightly from the previous report that was based on 2014 numbers. But Watson pointed out that 2014 was a record year for Idaho agriculture in terms of total farm cash receipts and it was anticipated that agriculture's impact, on a percentage basis, would be down a little.

Idaho farmers and ranchers brought in a record \$8.8 billion in farm cash receipts in 2014 but that number dropped to \$7.2 billion in 2017. Total net farm income in Idaho was \$2 billion in 2014 but \$1.23 billion in 2014.

"The impact is down slightly from that high in 2014 but agriculture is still a very big player in Idaho's economy, that's for sure," Watson said.

In calculating how important different sectors are to the state's economy, Watson attributed every dollar generated in state GSP to a specific sector, so there was no double counting.

For comparison's sake, technology manufacturing, which includes computers, electronic equipment and other electron-



Photos by Sean Ellis

Hay is baled at the Guthrie ranch in Inkom last summer. A University of Idaho report shows that agriculture accounts for 13 percent of Idaho's total gross state product.

**RIGHT:** Potatoes are harvested in a field near Aberdeen last year. Agribusiness, which includes crop and livestock production and the processing of agricultural products, was responsible for \$26.4 billion in sales or 18 percent of Idaho's total economic output in 2017, according to a recent University of Idaho report.

ics, accounted for 7 percent of Idaho's total GSP.

Agriculture's total impact on the state's economy includes its indirect impacts on other sectors. For example, it would include the sale of a tire tractor to a wheat producer.

"There are lots of segments of Idaho's economy that we wouldn't have if we didn't have agriculture," Watson said.

Taylor said that every industry sector has indirect "multiplier" effects on the

economy but the indirect impacts from agriculture are bigger because almost all the food produced in Idaho is exported to other states or nations.

According to the Idaho State Department of Agriculture, if Idahoans had to consume all the farm products produced within the state, they would have to eat, every day, 43 potatoes, 2 pounds of cheese, 180 slices of bread, two onions, 2 pounds of beef and three cups of beans.

"It is the exports that create new wealth

in an economy," Taylor said. "Agribusiness is creating a lot more exports and has a bigger multiplier than other industries. Obviously, we cannot consume the milk, potatoes and other products we produce. It's almost all exported out of the state."

Watson said one thing that jumps out of the data that was used to create the report is that the percent of Idaho's GSP that comes from farm production is higher than the percent of state GSP that comes from food processing.



That, he said, is not the case for most big farming states. “That’s a very unusual phenomenon,” he said. “It is ma and pa farmer doing the lion’s share of the work.”

A separate report by Taylor found that total Idaho GSP from production agriculture grew twice as fast as the state’s overall GSP from 1997-2017, while the food processing sector’s percentage of total state GSP increased slightly during that time.

As he told lawmakers in January, Idaho agriculture’s GSP growth is being driven largely “by grandma and grandpa on a tractor.”

Watson’s report shows that agriculture’s importance to Idaho’s economy is much greater than it is in surrounding states and the U.S. as a whole.

It found that agriculture’s importance to Idaho’s economy is 12.4 times greater than it is in Nevada, 4 times greater than in Utah, 3.9 times greater than in Montana, 3.4 times greater than in Washington, 2.7 times greater than in Oregon and 3.3 times greater than in the U.S. overall.

A report prepared last year by U of I Agricultural Economist Ben Eborn showed that when it comes to farm cash receipts on a per capita basis, Idaho is an unchallenged No. 1 among the 11 Western states.

That report, which was based on USDA Economic Research Service data, found that in 2017, Idaho agriculture generated \$4,287 in farm cash receipts per person in the state, far more than California (\$1,266), which leads the nation in total farm receipts. No other state was even close to Idaho in that category.

According to Watson’s report, Idaho ranked in the top five among the states in the production of 16 farm commodities, based on National Agricultural Statistics Data from 2017.

That included No. 1 in four commodities, (potatoes, barley, trout and Austrian winter peas), No. 2 in five commodities (sugar beets, hops, alfalfa, peppermint oil and wrinkled seed peas), No. 3 in cheese, No. 4 in five categories (milk, onions, lentils, spearmint oil and number of milk cows) and No. 5 in dry beans. ■

# SEARLE

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*Continued from page 2*

share of Idaho's economy is 3.3 times greater than the U.S. as a whole.

Washington is a major agricultural state, yet agriculture is 3.4 times more important to Idaho's economy than it is to Washington's economy.

The report also shows that Idaho ranks No. 1 in four agricultural commodities (potatoes, trout, barley and Austrian winter peas), No. 2 in five commodities (sugar beets, hops, alfalfa hay, peppermint oil and wrinkled seed peas) and No. 3 in cheese production.

In all, as the report shows, Idaho ranks in the top five in 16 farm commodities.

A story on that U of I report can be found on page 3.

As members of Idaho Farm Bureau Federation, the state's largest general farm organization, each one of you are supporters and protectors of the state's important agricultural industry.

Agriculture is the engine that drives Idaho's economy and Idaho Farm Bureau members serve an important role in promoting, protecting and serving that industry.

IFBF's membership includes 15,000 people around the state who are involved with agriculture. Together, they form a strong web that provides support to the state's farming and ranching industry.

In every county in the state, Farm Bureau members constantly work to craft and promote policies that support and benefit agriculture and when an issue arises that threatens the ag industry, they respond accordingly.

The value of that web of support cannot be overstated.

Without it, farmers and ranchers and the state's food processing industry would be vulnerable to the countless attacks that

are constantly being launched against the industry.

Because of the grassroots nature of our organization and its members' direct involvement in the issues that impact the farming industry, Farm Bureau truly does serve as the voice of Idaho agriculture.

So, let's keep up the good work and continue to promote, protect and serve the industry that drives Idaho's economy and way of life.

Other stories in this magazine also help highlight the importance of agriculture in Idaho and some of the exciting things happening in the sector.

A story on a research project that will use artificial intelligence to estimate fruit yields can be found on page 10, and an article about U of I's \$7 million plan to revitalize the Parma agricultural research and extension station starts on page 12.

Idaho's dairy industry, which has suffered severe financial challenges recently due to depressed milk prices, received a shot of good news Feb. 25 when Gem State Dairy Products announced it will build a 200,000-square-foot milk processing plant in Twin Falls. A story on that development is on page 8.

Recent estimates by U of I agricultural economists show that Idaho farmers and ranchers are less reliant on federal government payments than U.S. agriculture as a whole. A story discussing that situation is on page 16.

Turn to page 26 for a story about how Idaho agriculture has grown much faster than U.S. agriculture as a whole over the past two decades.

Taken together, the stories in this April edition of Idaho Farm Bureau's Producer magazine show that not only is agriculture the most important part of Idaho's economy, but the sector is also vibrant and doing some innovative things. ■

# KELLER

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*Continued from page 2*

Each Spring, as nature awakes from its winter slumber, Idaho Farm Bureau leaders from around the state set aside the hustle, bustle, and confusion of travel and meetings, to reverently place a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Of the many great accomplishments Farm Bureau achieves, perhaps the greatest is to represent Idaho's farmers and ranchers – members of Farm Bureau – in honoring and showing respect to America's fallen.

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is a monument on the hallowed grounds of Arlington National Cemetery, with the remains of three U.S. service members who have died without being identified. One is from the trenches of World War I, one from World War II and the third unknown fought in Korea.

Each received the nation's highest honor, the U.S. Medal of Honor, and each represent other unknowns never identified or found. Words inscribed in the monument above the crypts

state: "HERE RESTS IN HONORED GLORY AN AMERICAN SOLDIER KNOWN BUT TO GOD."

The unknowns are guarded 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by tomb guards, handpicked and rigorously trained. The tomb guards are part of the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment, "The Old Guard."

This elite group religiously watch over their charges during the hottest of days and coldest of nights, rain or snow, even during hurricanes; they remain diligent. Each guard describes their service as a privilege and honor.

Idaho's farmers and ranchers humbly recognize they are stewards of the land only because of the sacrifices of the men and women in uniform who have preserved the freedoms allowing us the privilege of living and working in this country.

Members of Farm Bureau honor and recognize the sacrifices of those that serve and have served by presenting their greatest respect in laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns. ■

# DUVALL

*Continued from page 2*

of the U.S. Trade Representative, the U.S. enjoyed a trade surplus of \$12 billion in countries where we had a trade agreement in 2015, but we only had agreements in force with 20 countries. And that remains the case today. We need to keep moving forward by expanding our market access, before we get left behind as other countries form agreements without us.

Unfortunately, it hasn't been all good news with trade over the last year. Farmers have gotten caught in the crossfire of a year-long trade war with China. If we're honest, however, we know a trade war has been going on much longer there.

The U.S. trade deficit with China was \$375 billion in 2017 alone—that number doesn't include money lost from China's unfair business practices. We all know a fair deal when we see one, and you can't call that kind of an imbalance fair.

No doubt, farmers and ranchers are hurting from lost markets as tariffs have escalated back and forth, but we are hopeful that the administration's tough stance will yield long-term rewards for our country's economy, including rural communities that have suffered from economic hardship.

This spring we are beginning to see a ray of hope as talks continue with China. This has been a long road, and I know we're all eager to see the situation resolved. From positive reports in recent days, it seems we are getting closer.

We have been encouraged by the announcement of more purchases of U.S. ag products by China, as well as by the president's decision to delay indefinitely another tariff increase on Chinese imports that had been planned for this month.

If we're going to keep agricultural trade successful, we must hold our trading partners accountable and move forward with new deals—and that's just what the administration is doing.

With the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for the Trans Pacific Partnership already ratified by Australia, Canada, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand and Singapore, USTR's upcoming trade talks with Japan could not come soon enough.

The Pacific market is an amazing growth opportunity for U.S. agriculture with Japan already a top five market for our ag exports. We cannot afford missing out here.

The American Farm Bureau estimated that the original TPP would have increased net farm income by \$4.4 billion and would have added more than 40,000 jobs to our economy had we joined the agreement. It's time to get a trade deal with Japan that will reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers and improve science-based sanitary measures to bring our farmers greater access to this booming market.

We are also eager for USTR's planned talks with the European Union and United Kingdom to break down agricultural

barriers and bring balance to trade across the Atlantic.

For too long, the EU has set unfair, non-scientific barriers on our farm products, resulting in a negative trade balance of \$70 billion over the last decade. This is unacceptable treatment of American farmers and ranchers who abide by the highest safety and quality standards in the world.

Farm Bureau is grateful that the administration is once again sticking by farmers and ranchers: They have made it clear that there will be no deal without including agriculture.

There's no question 2018 was a tough year for many of us in farm country, and part of the reason for that is the turbulence on the trade front. But we can come out on the other side stronger than ever, and I believe we will. In fact, President Trump personally has assured us of that.

American farmers and ranchers will continue to be leaders in every market where we have fair access to customers. Let's keep up the good work of planting seeds for ag trade by making our voices heard with Congress and the administration. We are already seeing good results, and a harvest of new and growing markets will come if we don't give up hope. ■

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Dairy West photo

Gem State Dairy Products will build a 200,000-square-foot aseptic milk processing plant in Twin Falls. The announcement came as welcome news to Idaho's dairy industry, which has suffered through several years of depressed milk prices.

# Idaho dairy industry lands a new milk processing facility

**By Sean Ellis**

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

TWIN FALLS — News that a new milk processing facility will be built in Idaho has brought a ray of optimism to the state's dairy industry, which has suffered through several years of depressed prices.

Gem State Dairy Products announced Feb. 25 it will build one of the largest

aseptic milk processing plants in the United States in Twin Falls.

Construction on the 200,000-square-foot facility is scheduled to begin this summer, according to a company news release, and it's expected to be operational in the summer of 2020.

"It's a big deal for Idaho's dairy industry," said Idaho Dairymen's Association Executive Director Rick Naerebout. "It gives us some optimism. We are in the

midst of a pretty severe downturn in the dairy industry and any bit of optimism helps right now."

Idaho, which ranks third in the nation in milk production, hasn't had a new milk processing facility since the Chobani yogurt plant in Twin Falls opened in December 2012.

"It's a welcome headline for sure," Dairy West CEO Karianne Fallow said

See **DAIRY**, page 25



# SUPPORT THE NEW CLEAN WATER RULE

Take a Stand for Clean Water and Clear Rules

We've been waiting for this rule for more than 3 years!

## **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE NEW WATERS OF THE U.S. (WOTUS) PROPOSAL:**

EPA has proposed a revised definition of "waters of the United States," which would clarify regulatory authority under the Clean Water Act. You would not need a lawyer or consultant to know what is, and what is not, regulated.

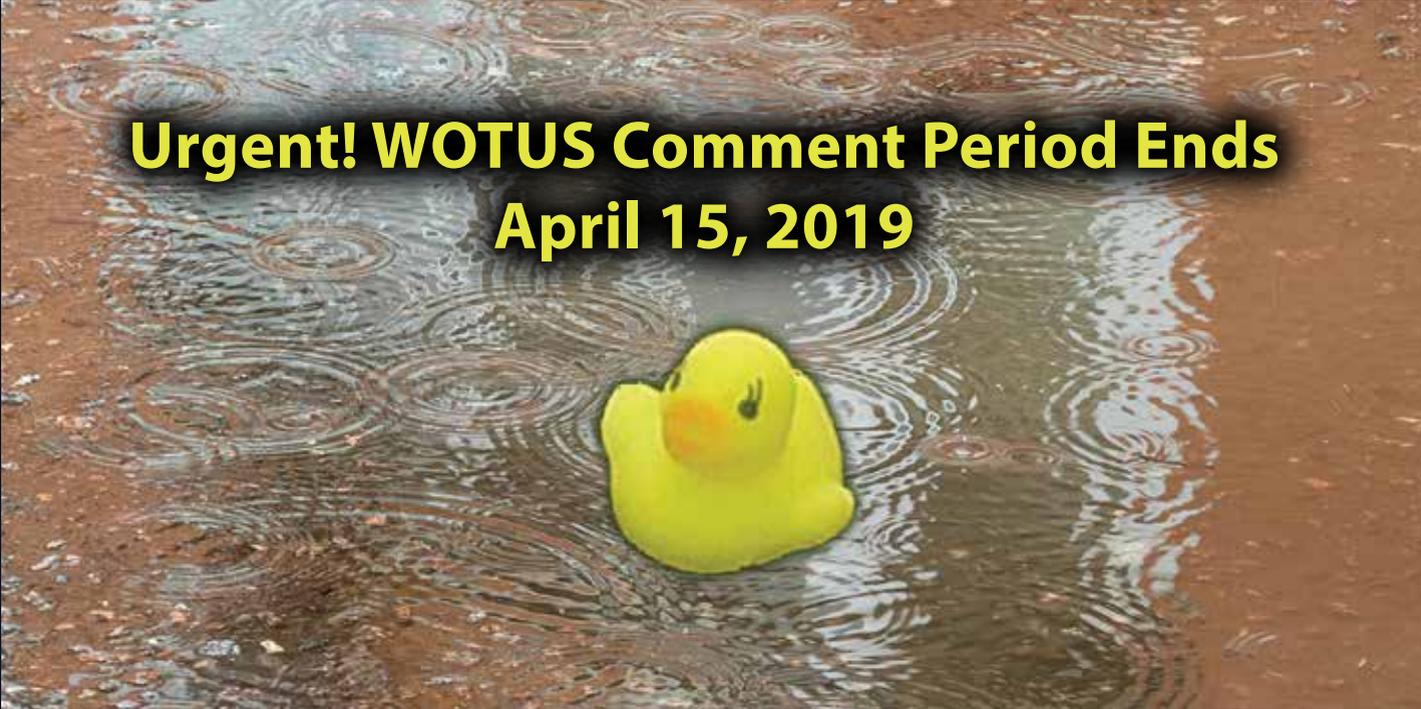
Farmers know best when it comes to enhancing the environment they rely on. Good farming and a good environment go hand in hand! That's why we need both clean water and clear rules.

Farmers and ranchers care about clean water and work hard to protect our natural resources. As farmers and ranchers continue to reduce the environmental footprint of farming and ranching, they need a new common-sense water rule that protects water quality and gives them clear rules they can follow.

We know ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST GROUPS desperately want to impose and enforce the over-reaching 2015 Obama Rule. Predictably, they are gearing-up their fundraising and mass-comment campaigns to stop EPA which would leave you with a complex rule requiring lawyers and consultants to determine if and how you can farm!

We cannot let the voice of the opposition drown out your voice. Farmers and ranchers are calling for a clear rule that protects agriculture AND clean water.

**Now is the time to show your support for the new Clean Water Rule!**



**Urgent! WOTUS Comment Period Ends  
April 15, 2019**

To take action, go to [www.idahofb.org/actionalerts](http://www.idahofb.org/actionalerts)

# Ag tech

## Using artificial intelligence to estimate fruit yields

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

NAMPA — Northwest Nazarene University researchers are working on a project that seeks to use artificial intelligence to more quickly and accurately make early season fruit yield estimates.

NNU Professor Duke Bulanon last year received a \$65,000 specialty crop grant from the Idaho State Department of Agriculture for the project, which will develop a deep learning algorithm to more accurately estimate fruit yields early in the season.

The current practice for making early season fruit yield estimates is to manually count fruits on a select number of trees and then use the average number of fruit to calculate yields.

This method is time consuming, labor intensive and includes only a limited sample size, limiting its reliability, Bulanon said. Using artificial intelligence to perform that task will improve the fruit yield estimate by enabling faster counting over a wider range of trees in an orchard, he said.

Having a reliable early season fruit yield estimate will allow growers to better plan their harvesting operations and resources in advance, and better prepare post-harvesting logistics when it comes to ordering boxes and fruit covers, setting up storage equipment and reserving packing houses.

Growers will also be able to better pre-market their fruit, which could result in them obtaining more competitive prices as much as 15 percent better, Bulanon said.

“Predicting the fruit yield, especial-



Photo by Sean Ellis

Northwest Nazarene University professor Duke Bulanon, center, and undergraduate research assistants Tyler Hestand, left, and Connor Nogales demonstrate a platform they are developing that will use artificial intelligence to estimate fruit yields.

ly early in the season, is very important for farmers because if they market their fruit late in the season, the price of the fruit goes down,” he said. “If they have a reliable fruit yield estimate early in the season, they will have a more competitive price.”

According to Bulanon’s grant proposal, “This project ... will position Idaho in the forefront of precision agriculture technologies for specialty crops.”

To develop this type of artificial intelligence tool, Bulanon and his team of robotic vision researchers at NNU will teach a deep learning algorithm to correctly identify fruit on the tree between the blossom period and fruit maturity.

That will include taking thousands of images of blossoms and unripe fruit and feeding them into a computer.

“It’s like teaching a baby, this is a ball,” Bulanon said. “It will learn how to recognize what an apple is. Artificial intelligence mimics the way a human learns.”

“We have to tell the machine, ‘This is an apple,’” said Connor Nogaes, an undergraduate research assistant who is working on the project. “When it learns that, it can do that autonomously and a lot faster than a human.”

He said it’s more accurate to call the process “machine learning,” because it “doesn’t actually have its own intelligence. We’re just teaching it what to do.”

Tyler Hestand, an undergraduate research assistant, said the algorithm will predict fruit yields much faster than any human ever could.

“You just take a picture and seconds later it spits out an estimate of how much fruit you’re going to have,” he said. “The speed is definitely a major advantage with artificial intelligence.”

Bulanon and his team will work on the project with local fruit growers.

Chad Henggeler, field manager for Henggeler Packing Co., one of Idaho’s largest fruit companies, said having reliable yield estimates very early in the season could prove particularly beneficial to the Fruitland company when it comes to marketing its fruit.



Photo by Sean Ellis

**Northwest Nazarene University professor Duke Bulanon, right, and undergraduate research assistants Tyler Hestand, left, and Connor Nogaes demonstrate a platform they are developing that will use artificial intelligence to estimate fruit yields.**

“If it works, it would help growers have the information we need so we know how much to market,” he said.

When it comes to setting up things like storage, boxes and labor, “All of those things would definitely make a difference,” he added.

Michael Williamson, manager of Williamson Orchards and Vineyards in Caldwell, said most of the company’s fruit is pre-sold.

“We get the best return if we line up those sales in May or June,” he said. “If we can predict our yields very early in the season in a precise kind of manner, that would be very helpful.”

This isn’t the first time Bulanon has led projects designed to benefit Idaho farmers. He and his team of researchers are also working on a robotic platform called “IdaBot” that could be a low-cost

way of helping farmers control input costs through the use of robotic automation.

The goal of that project is to create a simple robot that can navigate an orchard or vineyard autonomously and be used to apply chemicals.

Bulanon has also spearheaded a project to develop an unmanned aerial vehicle that takes multispectral images that farmers can quickly analyze on their computers to determine if their plants are suffering from diseases, water stress or nutrient deficiency.

He said projects like those and the current one are long-term efforts that could help Idaho producers in the future.

“We may not be impacting the growers in Idaho right now, right away, but we may be in 10 or 15 years from now,” Bulanon said. ■



Photo by Sean Ellis

Michael Parrella, dean of University of Idaho's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, second from left, speaks with farm industry leaders Feb. 21 about a \$7 million plan to modernize the university's Parma ag research center.

# U of I plans \$7 million renovation of Parma ag research center

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

PARMA — The dean of University of Idaho's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences has proposed a \$7 million plan to renovate U of I's Parma ag research station and add four new research positions.

The university's Parma Research and Extension Center in southwestern Idaho conducts research on multiple crops, in-

cluding beans, potatoes, onions, hops mints, tree fruit, wine and table grapes, cereals and seed crops.

During a meeting with more than 30 agricultural industry leaders and representatives Feb. 21, CALS Dean Michael Parrella said the plan is to continue that work and he pointed out that the research conducted at the Parma station benefits every farmer in the state, not just the Treasure Valley.

The modernized Parma research center

is "going to be something that benefits all of Idaho agriculture," Parrella told members of the Treasure Valley Ag Coalition, a group that formed in 2009 to save the Parma center when it was slated for closure. "We are not changing the research mission of the Parma station. We're going to add to the work already being done here."

TVAC members, who represent a wide swath of the state's farming sector, voted unanimously to rename their group the



The

Photo by Sean Ellis

**This is an artist's rendering of a \$7 million plan by University of Idaho's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences to modernize the university's Parma ag research center.**

Idaho Agriculture Research and Extension Coalition (IDAREC). The new name was purposely chosen to reflect that the research that will be done at the rebuilt Parma station will benefit all sectors of the state's farming community.

The modernized facility would include new graduate student housing, updated labs and equipment, new greenhouses and four new positions: an Extension fruit and viticulture specialist, a weed scientist, an irrigation and soil scientist and a pollination scientist.

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

"Every farmer in the state of Idaho deals with all of those components," she said.

Many of the facilities at the Parma station and Idaho's other eight ag research and extension centers are over 50 years old and the centers are in substantial need of modernized infrastructure and equipment, Parrella said.

The dean said the university plans to refurbish all of its ag research stations.

The goal to modernize U of I's Parma research center "is not diminishing any of the other R and E centers," Parrella said. "The plan is to enhance all of the centers and we are going to start at Parma."

Parrella admitted the timeline to complete the project is ambitious: the university hopes to break ground on the project in the fall of 2020.

The funding would come from the university, the state legislature and Idaho's agricultural industry and Parrella likened the funding effort to a three-legged stool.

"None of us can do it by ourselves but collectively we can combine resources and do it," he said. "We need all three legs of that stool to come together. If everybody contributes, we can do this."

"This is an unprecedented attempt to pool resources for the common good; you all would benefit from the expansion of this facility," Parrella said. "All of Idaho benefits from the expansion of this facility."

IDAREC Chairman Jon Watson said the

university and committee members would immediately begin contacting industry to rally support for the project.

People who were at the meeting said later they were excited by Parrella's vision and they agreed with him that the goal of raising funds for the facility from industry was possible, especially if a large number of industry groups and members chipped in.

"I think it's doable," said Mike Goodson, a farmer who is also a commissioner with the Idaho Bean Commission.

But Goodson and others also said that farm groups and commissions are going to have to see a solid plan first and be convinced the project will benefit all of Idaho agriculture.

"For me as a grower, I'd be willing to support that effort," Goodson said. "As a commissioner, I will need to see a plan and have a little more dialogue with the university about it."

"It's an exciting plan," said Bob Simerly, an agronomist and IDAREC member. "I think it's attainable." ■

# Farm Bureau commits \$100,000 toward CAFE project

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

POCATELLO — Idaho Farm Bureau Federation will contribute \$100,000 to University of Idaho's proposed Center for Agriculture, Food and the Environment.

IFBF will contribute \$20,000 a year for five years toward the project, starting in August.

The project, known as CAFE, will conduct cutting-edge research related to the state's dairy industry and it will also conduct research on virtually every aspect of the agricultural industry, from water use and efficiency to soil health and fertility, forage cropping and agronomy, animal genetic improvement, labor management and precision agriculture.

The plan to create what will be the nation's largest research dairy took a major step forward Feb. 14 when the Idaho State Board of Education voted to allow the university to buy land near Rupert for the \$45 million project.

U of I will pay \$2.5 million toward purchase of the 540-acre parcel of land and the Idaho Dairymen's Association will pay \$2 million. The Whitesides family, who owns the land, will donate another 100 acres, bringing the total acreage to 640.

IFBF President Bryan Searle said Farm Bureau members are impressed with the university's vision for CAFE.

"This CAFE project is going to be an incredible center and the university's vision for it is exciting," said Searle, a farmer from Shelley. "It's a privilege for Idaho Farm Bureau to be involved with it."

In a letter of support for the center that Searle sent U of I officials in December, he said, "Projected to be the largest integrated research facility focused on dairy and allied industry in the United States, CAFE will enhance a national and international reputation that will reflect the size, quality and importance of the industry it represents and



Dairy West photo

**Idaho Farm Bureau Federation has committed \$100,000 toward University of Idaho's proposed Center for Agriculture, Food and the Environment. The center will conduct cutting edge research on dairy and other farm-related issues relevant to the state's agricultural sector.**

strengthen Idaho's position on the map as a center for agricultural and food innovation and technology."

Searle also said that IFBF "recognizes the impact CAFE will have across our entire agricultural industry and the value that will provide to our members and all Idaho producers."

According to a recent U of I study, agriculture directly and indirectly accounts for about 16 percent of Idaho's total gross domestic product and one in eight jobs in the state.

"In a state where agriculture plays such a vital role in our state's economy, what is good for Idaho agriculture is good for Idaho," Searle said. "It is evident that CAFE is good for Idaho agriculture."

Michael Parrella, dean of U of I's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, who is leading the CAFE effort, said Farm Bureau's contribution means a great deal to the project, and he reiterated the university's pledge that the center will benefit all of agriculture.

"Obviously there is a huge focus on dairy but all of agriculture will benefit from the re-

search, outreach and education that is going to be done there," he said.

The project will be anchored by a 2,000-cow dairy that will conduct a host of research related to dairy, which is Idaho's largest farm industry in terms of total farm-gate revenue. About a third of the state's total farm cash receipts come from dairy farmers.

It will also include a food processing pilot plant that will be located on the College of Southern Idaho campus in Twin Falls, and an outreach and education center to be located on a 6-acre parcel of land at the crossroads where Interstate 84 and Highway 93 meet near Twin Falls.

The outreach and education center will conduct agricultural advocacy and teach Idahoans where their food comes from.

Searle said that is an exciting component of CAFE because "that's what Farm Bureau is all about: advocating for agriculture."

The center will be funded through a combination of state and U of I funds as well as money from industry partners, including farm organizations and commissions. ■



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Photo by Sean Ellis

Sugar beets are harvested in a field near Burley last fall. Idaho farmers are less reliant on federal government payments than U.S. agriculture as a whole.

# Idaho farmers less dependent on government payments

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

POCATELLO — Idaho farmers and ranchers are less reliant on government payments than U.S. agriculture as a whole.

That means that any impacts on agriculture from the federal government shutdown would, on a percentage basis, be felt to a lesser degree in Idaho.

University of Idaho's annual "Financial Condition of Idaho Agriculture" report projects that federal government payments to Idaho farmers and ranchers declined 19 percent to \$132 million in fiscal year 2018.

Report co-authors Garth Taylor and Ben Eborn estimate

that payments from the federal government accounted for 21 percent of total U.S. net farm income in fiscal 2018. They accounted for 15 percent of Idaho's total net farm income.

Just on a percentage basis, that means Idaho farmers are about 25 percent less reliant on government payments than the average U.S. farmer is.

Idaho, which is a major agricultural state, ranks third among the 11 Western states in total farm cash receipts and ranks No. 1 in the production of four farm commodities (potatoes, food trout, barley and Austrian winter peas), No. 2 in five commodities (hops, sugar beets, alfalfa hay, peppermint oil and wrinkled seed peas), third in milk and cheese production

See **PAYMENTS**, page 38



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Photo by Bill Schaefer

Members of Idaho's potato industry pose for a photo with Rep. Mike Simpson, R-Idaho, in his Washington, D.C., office. They met with Simpson during the National Potato Council's annual "Potato D.C. Fly-in" to discuss issues affecting potato growers in Idaho and the United States.

# Potato industry leaders promote spuds in D.C.

By Bill Schaefer

*For Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The National Potato Council's "Potato D.C. Fly-In" Feb. 25-28 brought more than 200 potato growers and industry supporters together to hear the latest news and prognostications from "inside the beltway" pundits, government officials and elected representatives.

The annual event brings the nation's potato growers, processors and complementary industry associates to Washington, D.C., to not only lobby their congressional representatives but to catch up on the latest legislative, regulatory and political issues.

It includes a day and a half of lobbying on Capitol Hill and

the corridors of the EPA and the USDA.

Topics addressed during the four days included immigration reform, revisions to the H-2A temporary guest worker program, the significant increases this year in the H-2A adverse effect wage rate in some states, improvements to the infrastructure of the nation's transportation system, and truck and driver shortages due in part to requirements for monitoring hours of service with electronic logging devices.

Idaho, being the nation's number one producer of potatoes, consistently sends the largest state delegation to the Fly-In. This year, 24 growers and industry representatives came from the Gem State to stand up for potatoes in the nation's capital.

Leading the Idaho group through the halls of the congressional office buildings was Pat Kole, vice president of legal

and governmental affairs for the Idaho Potato Commission.

“We have been so fortunate over the years because our elected officials have given us generous amounts of their time,” Kole said of Idaho’s four-member congressional delegation.

Kole said the Fly-In is an opportunity to reaffirm the potato industry’s relationship with its elected officials.

Randy Hardy, a potato grower from Burley, has been coming to D.C. every year of the Fly-In.

“I think it’s really important for our congressional people to see us there,” Hardy said. “They know our issues and support us but still, it’s good to go in with an Idaho group and be able to explain to them why we believe the way we do.”

Along with visiting Sen. Jim Risch, Sen. Mike Crapo and Rep. Mike Simpson, the Idaho delegation spent time with the newest member of the state’s congressional delegation, Rep. Russ Fulcher.

“We are off to a very productive and positive start with our new congressman, Russ Fulcher,” Kole said. “He demonstrated an openness and a willingness to listen that was really refreshing.”

In conjunction with the Fly-In, the Potato Industry Leadership Institute brought a group of 24 potato growers and industry representatives to D.C. following a week-long educational tour of Oregon’s potato facilities.

The PILI is a leadership development program that introduces and educates the next generation of industry leaders. Attendees spent a week in Oregon visiting farms, research centers and processing plants to learn the intricacies of the potato industry.

They then traveled to Washington, D.C., for intensive media training and public policy discussions and joined their individual state organizations to lobby their congressional representatives on Capitol Hill.

This year’s PILI’s grower leaders were Jason Stoddard of Stoddard Farms in Grace, and Eric Jemmett of J&S Farms in Parma.

In the PILI class, from Idaho, were: Justin Jones of Burley, Blake Matthews



Photos by Bill Schaefer

**TOP: R.J. Andrus, the National Potato Council’s vice president of grower outreach and industry research, introduces Sen. James Risch, R-Idaho, during the general session of the NPC’s “Potato D.C. Fly-In.”**

**USDA Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue speaks to members of the nation’s potato industry Feb. 26 at the “Potato D.C. Fly-In.”**

of Oakley, Jolyn Rasmussen of Boise and Jeff VanOrden of Blackfoot.

Kole extolled the PILI training as laying the foundational ground work for developing the next generation of potato industry leaders.

“What we get out of it is the training of our new emerging leaders in developing the capacity to identify and communicate what the needs are of the potato industry in our state to policy makers first-hand,” he said. ■

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University of Idaho photo

At high label rates, Esplanade F mixed with post-emergent herbicides can injure grasses like intermediate wheatgrass shown here. Looking to the right you can see the ventenata (short green grasses) between the wheatgrass plants.

# Managing annual grasses in forested areas

By Timothy Prather  
*University of Idaho*

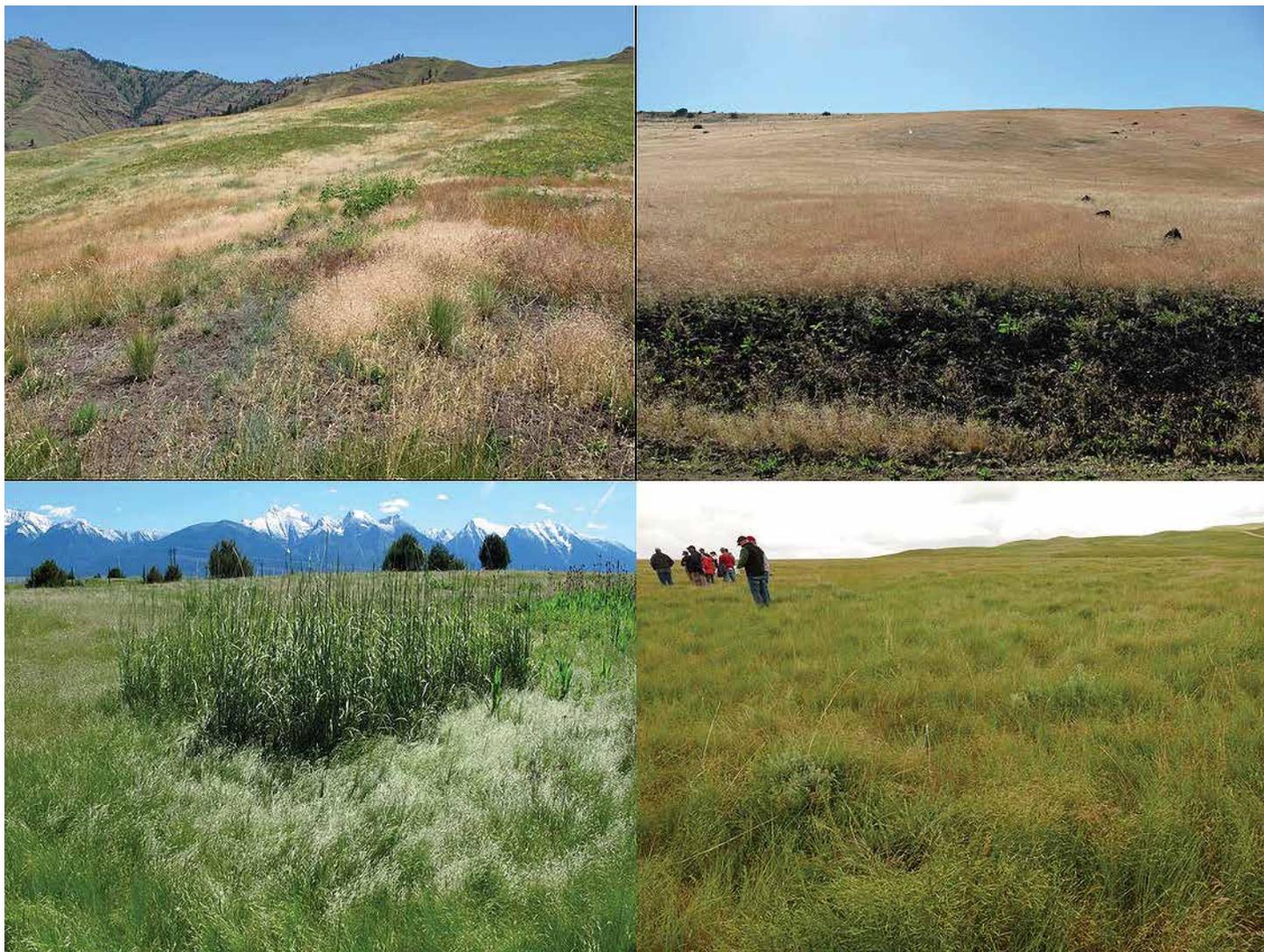
After a woodlot has been harvested, preparation for replanting may include management of other plants that may compete with the trees, limiting their growth.

While shrubs may pose a significant problem for tree growth, forbs and grasses can also contribute to decreased tree growth in the first three to five years after planting.

Many of the grasses will be establishing from seed, particularly the annual grasses, and these grasses compete with young trees after planting and also compete with seedlings from natural tree reseeding.

In addition, private forest landowners often have meadows used by wildlife and possibly also by livestock. I am going to focus on grasses although some forbs may also be controlled after use of herbicides to manage these grasses. Further, I will present





University of Idaho photo

**In addition to meadows and wood lots after harvest, ventenata is found in canyon grasslands (top left), rangelands (top right), grasslands in Western Montana (bottom left) and the Great Plains near Sheridan, Wyo. (bottom right).**

results from studies my lab has done on ventenata, the up and coming annual grass of concern. Much of what I will cover for control will apply to other annual grasses and some seedlings of perennial grasses as well.

Ventenata (*Ventenata dubia*) is a growing problem in the Pacific Northwest. We have studied ventenata in the canyon grasslands of Northern Idaho and sage steppe through Southern Idaho and Eastern Oregon. In both of those systems we found as ventenata increased at a site, plant species diversity decreased.

We have found with increasing ventenata, other annual grasses decline in addition to decreased overall plant species diversity. We all look to having well-functioning

forest lands so decreases in plant diversity goes against that goal. Ventenata is rooted shallowly so its soil-holding ability is less than other plants with more extensive root systems. Sites dominated by ventenata after harvest may be susceptible to surface soil erosion.

Pre-emergent control of grasses can be achieved with herbicides. Pre-emergent herbicides don't actually kill seeds, the herbicides kill the seedlings soon after germination and usually before the plants emerge from the soil. One of the new herbicides that is starting to be used for control of seedling grasses is a chemical called indaziflam that is sold with the tradename of Esplanade F.

Indaziflam acts by inhibiting the de-

velopment of the cell wall within plants. Plant growth is reduced in the developing seedling without the structure the cell wall provides and the seedling soon dies without cell walls. Esplanade F can be used for plantings of ponderosa pine, Douglas fir and western larch.

In addition to grasses, there are forbs that are controlled and include some plants in the sunflower family and as well as plants in the legume family.

The research we have done with indaziflam has included several different annual grasses and university faculty at other universities have conducted studies in other states to measure control of other plant species. Because indaziflam is applied before germination to grasses, timing of

application is important.

We want to be sure the herbicide is applied before germination so with ventenata we look for conditions where one inch of rain has been measured with soil still moist until one inch has been received and soil temperature is above 48 Fahrenheit.

Those are the conditions for germination so if it has been more than a couple of weeks since one inch of rain with soil temperature above 48, then we should think about adding a post-emergent herbicide. One of the Roundup or Roundup-like products as well as/or Plateau/Panoramic can be used to kill some of the emerged grass seedlings.

We can achieve up to 100 percent control of annual grasses with the Esplanade F.

Our research in moist meadows has shown that the herbicide can result in long-term control with our experience demonstrating at least 27 months of control.

Since much of the competition from grasses and forbs declines after four to five years, getting control for at least 27 months can release those young trees from their herbaceous competitors.

We have started a site prep and planting study for larch with Esplanade F. We will plant trees later this spring and add to the herbicide application done already to measure larch tolerance to Esplanade F and to measure grass control. I will report back after we have completed that study.

We will conduct a second study of

aerial application to identify how many gallons per acre of water are needed to be able to effectively control the target grasses. Low application rates like two to three gallons per acre do not distribute the herbicide evenly enough to get good control.

While we don't know the minimum required for good control, I can suggest using the highest carrier rate for the aerial application that is feasible. I will report back on that information once we have begun that study.

*Timothy Prather is a professor in University of Idaho's Department of Plant, Soil and Entomological Sciences. He can be reached at [tprather@uidaho.edu](mailto:tprather@uidaho.edu). ■*



Ventenata plants are small and close to the ground before flowering.

University of Idaho photo



# DAIRY

Continued from page 8

of the new facility. “Our dairy operators have been facing a tremendous amount of pressure in the marketplace. This is definitely some welcome news.”

The new facility, which will create more than 100 milk processing jobs, will be one of the largest aseptic milk processing plants in the industry and will produce a variety of milk products for Gem State Dairy Products’ customers.

Aseptic milk is shelf-stable milk that does not require refrigeration before the product is opened. The milk is made shelf-stable by pasteurization at a high temperature.

That type of milk is more common in some other nations and could be a good product to export from Idaho because it doesn’t require refrigeration, Fallow said.

There are about 592,000 milk cows in Idaho and the state’s 450 dairies collectively produce more than 40 million pounds of milk per day or 15 billion pounds per year.

Dairy accounts for 33 percent of Idaho’s total farm cash receipts and the state’s 20 dairy processing plants export about 2 million pounds of milk from the state every day.

According to a recent University of Idaho study, Idaho

exported about \$356 million worth of dairy products to other nations in 2017.

“Idaho is known globally for its high-quality and readily available milk supply,” Naerebout said. “Gem State will be a welcome addition to the existing milk-processing landscape in Idaho.”

Idaho’s dairy industry produces a variety of dairy products, including milk and whey protein powders to cheese, butter, yogurt and fluid milk. Three percent of the state’s milk stays in fluid form, while the rest is made into ingredients that make their way to store shelves throughout the United States and around the world.

“This vertically integrated bottling facility will be one of the newest and largest aseptic processing facilities in the country,” said Tom Mikesell, a spokesman for Gem State Dairy Products. “That will allow Gem State to provide its customers with high-quality and lower-cost alternatives for milk and dairy-based beverages.”

Fallow said Idaho’s dairy industry “can best be described as innovative and forward-thinking. This new facility exhibits those qualities and is poised to serve the emerging needs of domestic and global customers.” ■



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# Idaho ag growing faster than U.S. as a whole

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

POCATELLO — When it comes to farm cash receipts, Idaho agriculture has grown much faster than U.S. agriculture as a whole over the past two decades.

Based on data from USDA's Economic Research Service, total farm cash receipts in Idaho from 1997-2017 grew 53 percent in real dollars, which are dollar values adjusted for inflation.

During that same time, U.S. farm cash receipts grew 21 percent, University of Idaho Agricultural Economist Garth Taylor said during UI's annual "Idaho Ag Outlook Seminars" Dec. 11-13 in Idaho Falls, Burley and Caldwell.

Idaho's growth in farm-gate receipts is due largely to the huge increase in income from the state's dairy sector, he said.

Idaho's dairy sector, the state's top farm commodity in terms of cash receipts, began to explode in the late 1990s and farm cash receipts from milk in Idaho have grown 173 percent since 1997.

"Idaho agriculture is growing faster than the United States overall in cash receipts and it's largely due to milk," Taylor said.

While many states grow a lot of the big

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Photo by Sean Ellis

**A sugar beet pile near Pingree is shown in this fall 2018 photo. Idaho agriculture has grown much faster than U.S. agriculture as a whole over the past two decades when it comes to total farm cash receipts.**

# *Idaho's growth in farm-gate receipts is due largely to the huge increase in income from the state's dairy sector.'*

farm program crops such as corn and soybeans, more than half of Idaho's farm cash receipts come from the livestock sector, primarily dairy and beef cattle.

When hay and other livestock feed, such as potato waste, sugar beet pulp and corn silage, are added in, "We're looking at 75-80 percent of our state's agricultural economy being related to livestock," Taylor said. "Idaho is a different breed of cats than the U.S. a whole when it comes to the structure of our agriculture."

Within Idaho, total state gross domestic product from agriculture has increased 242 percent since 1997, based on U.S. Department of Commerce and Bureau of Economic Analysis data, Taylor said. During that same period, Idaho's total GDP has grown 81 percent and food processing GDP has grown 14 percent.

The 242 percent growth in Idaho farm GDP "Is from farming, not agribusiness," Taylor said. "This is stodgy old grandpa and grandpa out on a tractor."

He said he and fellow UI Agricultural Economist Ben Eborn had a hard time believing those numbers at first. "We ran these numbers and did it again and again and again," he said.

Other highlights of Taylor's presentation include:

- When ranked by farm GDP as a percentage of a state's total GDP, Idaho ranks No. 4 in the nation, behind South Dakota, Nebraska and North Dakota.
- Idaho is an unchallenged No. 1 among the 11 Western states when it comes to total farm cash receipts on a per capita basis. No other state is even close. Idaho generated \$4,287 in farm cash receipts per person in 2017, almost quadruple the total in California, which leads the nation in total farm receipts.
- Agriculture and agribusiness is the state's largest industry and generate, directly and indirectly, 16 percent of Idaho's

total GDP, 14 percent of its jobs and 20 percent of its sales.

Taylor said all these different data points show how important agriculture is to the state's economy.

"We're an ag-dependent state," he said. "Farming and ranching are extremely important to Idaho." ■

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Photo by Sean Ellis

**More than 74 percent of Idaho farmers responded to the 2017 Census of Agriculture survey, ahead of the 71.8 percent response rate for the United States as a whole.**

# Release of Census of Ag data delayed until April

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

BOISE — The release of data from the 2017 Census of Agriculture has been delayed because of the government shutdown.

USDA had planned to start releasing data from the census beginning Feb. 21 but has changed that date to April 11.

The census is taken every five years and is a complete count of every farm and ranch in the United States that produces or would normally produce at least \$1,000 worth of farm products during the census year.

It includes information on land use and ownership, production practices, income, expenditures and operator characteristics for every county in the nation.

“A lot of people are interested in that data and are looking forward to it,” Randy Welk, Idaho state statistician for USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service, told Food Producers of Idaho members recently.

He told Farm Bureau later that in his first six months as NASS’ Idaho state statistician, “I have received more inquiries about the Census of Agriculture than about all other (NASS) programs combined.”

The census data contains a host of information down to the county level about farm production.

“There is no other publicly available agricultural dataset containing this level of detail down to the county level,” Welk said. “Inquiries have come from University of Idaho staff, commodity groups, industry folks, producers, legislators, etc. Anyone interested in Idaho agriculture data is interested in the Census of Agriculture.”

While the 2017 census was being conducted, NASS officials said they planned to capture more data about female and young farmers and ranchers as well as military veterans who are producers.

A significant amount of federal and state funds is allocated to the

agricultural industry based on Census of Ag data and it also is used to help shape farm programs and policies.

“It’s used by a lot of businesses as well,” said Chris Mertz, director of NASS’ northwest regional field office. “A lot of people use that report.”

He said NASS officials have been contacted by a lot of people about the 2017 report since its release was delayed.

“It’s been nice to see that many people contacting us looking for that information,” he said. “It shows that a lot of people are using the report to help promote and advocate for agriculture.”

USDA collected data for the recent census during 2017 and part of 2018.

Idaho ranked No. 12 in the nation, up from No. 25 during the 2012 Census of Ag, when it came to the percentage of farmers and ranchers in the state who returned a 2017 census survey.

Idaho finished with a 74.3 percent response rate, which was down slightly from the state’s 2012 rate of 74.7 percent but ahead of the overall U.S. response rate of 71.8 percent, which was down from 74.6 percent in 2012.

By comparison, Oregon’s response rate was 73.4 percent, down from 76.7 percent in 2012, and Washington’s rate was 71.4 percent, down from 76.1 percent.

Welk said NASS will conduct follow-on census surveys for aquaculture, irrigation and water management, horticulture and organic production. Data collection for those surveys is either under way or will begin later this year.

The organic survey information will be of particular interest given that sector’s rapid growth, Welk said.

“I get so many calls on organic right now,” he said.

Data collection for the organic follow-on survey will begin in December. The only question asked about organic production during the 2017 Census of Agriculture was on total gross value of sales. ■

# Marketing takes time, effort

What a great time to be in the ag industry. I realize that some years are better than others and right now may not be as good as in years past, but at the same time it is better than other years.

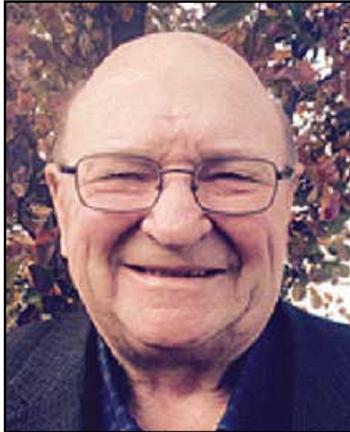
When I began working in the grain industry, wheat prices would fluctuate maybe 5 percent during the year. Now, the market moves 10 to 20 percent higher and the same percent lower, all during the same marketing year, giving us the opportunity to be profitable.

When we study the markets and the local basis, we will automatically have more tools to work with as we compile our strategy for marketing our commodities.

Marketing does take time and effort just the same as the other areas of our operation. Production is vital and should take a large percentage of our time, along with managing our money and equipment.

However, as we visit with producers across the state we have discovered that marketing really doesn't receive as much time and effort as other areas. We see this as we travel around and notice the number of producers who attend meetings on production compared to meetings on, say, money management and marketing.

This isn't bad – we all need to learn new technology and how it has the potential to help us increase our production using less



of our time and resources. But the same thought process also applies to marketing. Are there tools available to us that we haven't necessarily looked at in the past? If we have looked at them, did we walk away feeling

more confused than we did before? The answer is, yes!

Just look at what has happened in the wheat market during the last half of February and the first week in March. On Feb. 14, the Chicago December 2019 futures contract closed at \$5.47. On March 8, the contract closed at \$4.72. This was a 13.7 percent drop in prices in just three weeks.

What could we have done, if anything, to protect us from this type of adverse move in the market? Is there anything available to us to help us avoid this type of movement in the market? Here again, the answer is, yes.

The protections that are available to us aren't new but will be foreign to some of us. However, just like advances in production as well as advances in technology, we learn it and decide how to use these advances in our operation. Using new ideas isn't one size fits all.

Let's go back and look at the middle of February again. We could have forward contracted our wheat with the local elevator, we could have bought a put option to protect us or we could have simply

sold a futures contract for that protection. All of these strategies would have protected us from at least some of the adverse move in the market.

At this point in time, there is a possibility that we will put at least some of this money back in the market. We need to be ready to implement our marketing plan when this happens. In order to make good informed decisions, there will be a few things that we need to have in place. First is a budget that will give us a good feeling for our cost of production.

Once this is in place, making our decision on just how to manage our price risk will allow us to make that decision based on what we know. This should be very exciting to all of us as we move forward in deciding just what to do. None of the strategies we mentioned are perfect. They all have their good points as well as those points that may not be so good.

However, I can promise you that they will all work to your benefit at some point in time during the year and they will all work very well. All of you are diversified in your production and you also need to be diversified in your marketing.

Contact Zak Miller in the Farm Bureau office in Pocatello at (208) 239-4341 for more information on the marketing and educational programs that are currently in place to assist you in your operation.

*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). ■*



Photo by Sean Ellis

Farm workers prepare a hop field near Notus last spring. Idaho hop production continues to soar and the state is now ranked second in the nation in total hop production and acres.

# Idaho hop production up 16 percent in 2018

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

POCATELLO — Idaho hop production continues to soar, as Idaho farmers harvested 1,000 more hop acres in 2018 than they did in 2017.

Idaho farmers harvested 8,140 acres of hops in 2018, 14 percent more than the 7,125 acres they harvested in 2017, according to data released Dec. 19 by

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service.

Idaho produced 16.2 million pounds of hops in 2018, according to NASS, up 16 percent from 14 million pounds in 2017.

That increase enabled Idaho to solidify its spot as the nation's No. 2 hop producing state, ahead of Oregon and behind Washington.

Idaho passed Oregon in 2017 to nab the No. 2 spot for the first time and since then

has strengthened its hold on that ranking.

According to NASS, Oregon farmers produced 12.9 million pounds of hops in 2018, up slightly from 12.5 million pounds in 2017. Oregon farmers harvested 7,725 acres of hops in 2018, down from 8,216 acres in 2017, but the state's total production was up because of higher yields.

Idaho passed Oregon in total production but not acres in 2017 but in 2018,





Photo by Steve Ritter

**Hops are processed at a facility near Wilder last year. Idaho hop production has skyrocketed in recent years and the state now ranks No. 2 in the nation in total hop production and acres.**

Idaho also surpassed Oregon in total acres as well.

Yields in Idaho hop fields averaged 1,995 per acre in 2018 compared with 1,675 per acre in Oregon.

Washington remains the nation's unchallenged No. 1 hop-producing state with 39,170 harvested acres in 2018 and 78 million pounds of production.

Idaho hop acres have increased 236 percent since 2012, when they totaled 2,423.

From 2015 to 2018, the total value of Idaho hop production has increased 177 percent, from \$31 million to \$86 million.

In 2016, the crop for the first time jumped into the list of Idaho's top 10 farm commodities in terms of cash receipts. Hops ranked No. 10 in 2016 and 2017.

NASS will release the data showing Idaho's top 10 farm commodities for 2018 next October but based on NASS' 2018 estimate for hop value of production, the crop could move into the No. 9, which was held by dry beans in 2017, and possibly the No. 8 spot, which was held by corn for grain.

Idaho hop industry leaders have said the rapid increase in hop acres is being driven mostly by increased demand from the craft brewing industry for aroma varieties.

Hop production in Idaho has increased so rapidly in recent

years that University of Idaho agricultural economists are considering covering hops for the first time in their annual "The Financial Condition of Idaho Agriculture" report, which is released in January and estimates the state's total farm cash receipts and net farm income from the previous year.

That report estimates cash receipts and net farm income for the state's top eight farm commodities in terms of cash receipts and lumps everything else in under the "other" category. But hops might debut in that report soon.

"Hops hasn't been on the radar in the past but we may have to take them into consideration," said UI ag economist Garth Taylor, one of the report's authors.

According to NASS, total U.S. hop production was up 1 percent to 107 million pounds in 2018. Virtually all of that came from Washington, Idaho and Oregon.

Total U.S. harvested acres in 2018 hit 55,035, up 2 percent from 53,989 in 2017. But total value of U.S. production was down 1 percent to \$583 million due to slightly lower yields, which fell from 1,956 in 2017 to 1,943 in 2018, and slightly lower prices.

The average hop price per pound fell 2 percent, from \$5.60 in 2017 to \$5.46 in 2018. ■

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# China agrees to buy \$30 billion more in U.S. ag products

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

POCATELLO — In an effort to avoid an escalation of the ongoing trade war between the U.S. and China, Chinese trade officials have apparently, once again, pledged to buy tens of billions of dollars' worth of additional U.S. agricultural products.

“Yesterday, there were reports China is going to buy \$30 billion in additional agricultural products, mostly soybeans,”

Charles Payne said Feb. 22 during his regular “Making Money with Charles Payne” television show on the Fox Business channel.

The show was one of several national media outlets that reported China was promising to import \$30 billion in additional U.S. farm products in an effort to reach a trade deal with the United States.

China imported \$21 billion worth of U.S. agricultural products in 2017, Making China the No. 2 export market for U.S. farm products, behind Canada (\$22 billion).

The two nations last year announced hundreds of billions of dollars in tariffs on each other and China's tariffs largely targeted the United States' agricultural sector. The amount of U.S. farm goods China purchased dropped significantly last year as a result of that development.

If the U.S. and China reach an agreement and China follows through on its pledge to buy an additional \$30 billion worth of U.S. farm products, “maybe those farmers who had to suffer through this will be rewarded after all,” Payne said.

This is the third time since last May that Chinese trade negotiators have pledged to buy massive additional amounts of U.S. farm products.

In May, the White House issued what it called a joint statement between the two nations that said both sides agreed on significant increases in U.S. agriculture and energy product exports to China. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue followed that announcement up by telling reporters the U.S. was pushing China to increase the amount of ag commodities it purchases from the United States by about \$25 billion annually.

President Donald Trump tweeted at the time, “China has agreed to buy massive amounts of ADDITIONAL farm/agriculture products — would be one of the best things to happen to our farmers in many years.”

He also tweeted, “Under our potential deal with China, they will purchase from our Great American Farmers practically as much as our Farmers can produce.”

Following that announcement, the trade talks frayed and Trump said the U.S. would increase tariffs on \$200 billion

worth of products from China from 10 percent to 25 percent.

On Dec. 1, the White House again announced that China had agreed to start buying substantially more farm products from the United States. In return, the president agreed to leave the U.S. tariffs on \$200 billion worth of products from China at 10 percent and not raise them to 25 percent.

At that time, the two sides agreed they would try to have an agreement completed by March 1. If that didn't happen, U.S. officials said, the tariffs on Chinese products would be increased to 25 percent.

At the time, Trump tweeted, “Farmers will be a very big and fast beneficiary of our deal with China ... We make the finest and cleanest product in the world, and that is what China wants. Farmers, I love you!”

Following four days of trade talks that began Feb. 21, and with the March 1 deadline looming, Trump announced the U.S. will delay increasing the tariffs.

“I am pleased to report that the U.S. has made substantial progress in our trade talks with China on important structural issues including intellectual property protection, technology transfer, agriculture, services, currency and many other issues,” Trump tweeted Feb. 24. “As a result of these very productive talks, I will be delaying the U.S. increase in tariffs now scheduled for March 1. Assuming both sides make additional progress, we will be planning a Summit for [Chinese] President Xi [Jinping] and myself, at Mar-a-Lago, to conclude an agreement. A very good weekend for U.S. & China!” ■

*‘The White House issued what it called a joint statement between the two nations that said both sides agreed on significant increases in U.S. agriculture and energy product exports to China.’*

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# Dairy West becomes a premiere partner with U.S. Speedskating

Dairy West news release

SALT LAKE CITY – US Speedskating and Dairy West on March 7 announced a strategic partnership designed to bring high-quality dairy products to speed skating Olympic athletes and hopefuls.

Dairy West, which represents dairy operators in Idaho and Utah, has supplied dairy nutrition to USS athletes since 2012 to fuel healthy training and recovery, but this new partnership creates an opportunity for the organizations to bring a dynamic focus to health, community engagement and the value of good nutrition when it comes to high performance.

"We're thrilled to partner with Dairy West and provide our athletes with local dairy products that will help our athletes reach their optimal performance levels," said USS Executive Director Ted Morris. "Nutrition is a critical part of reaching greatness on the ice. Our partnership with Dairy West will ensure our athletes are physically ready to go every time they step on the ice."

Part of this collaboration will include hosting an annual sports nutrition symposium at USS' new training facility at the Utah Olympic Oval. The symposium in August 2019 will feature top speed skating athletes, quality speakers from the health and fitness industry, brief training sessions and access to the Dairy West Fueling Station.

In addition to a shared mission of promoting healthy, nutritious foods for optimum performance, the two organizations will also focus on community engagement with local schools, educating students about the benefits of championship-level nutrition and fuel.

"Through the investment of local dairy farm families, Dairy West is proud to partner with US Speedskating and fuel the athletes with local, nutrient-rich



Photo by ThunderBunny Studios

**Casey Dawson, pictured here, a senior at Park City High School in Utah, officially made Team USA and the US Speedskating men's long track team in November. US Speedskating and Dairy West, which represents dairy farmers and processors in Idaho and Utah, on March 7 announced a strategic partnership that will bring high quality dairy products to speed skating Olympic athletes and hopefuls.**

dairy products to fuel greatness," said Heidi Martin, Dairy West's vice president of health and wellness.

## ABOUT U.S. SPEEDSKATING

U.S. Speedskating grows and nurtures a sport where all ages can experience the thrill of speed and the camaraderie of the skating community. US Speedskating is responsible for the development of speed skating from grassroots to the highest elite racing programs and is recognized by the United States Olympic Committee and the International Skating Union as the governing body for the sport of speed skating in the United States.

The Organization has won 88 Olympic

medals, making it one of the most successful sports in U.S. Olympic history.

## ABOUT DAIRY WEST

Dairy West is a regional dairy promotion organization established in 2017 to represent dairy farmers, processors, and supply chain partners in Idaho and Utah. The organization raises awareness of the importance of dairy farming, promotes the health and nutritional benefits of dairy foods, and encourages global demand for Idaho and Western U.S. dairy foods through coordinated marketing and communications efforts, nutrition counseling, and research programs. Visit [DairyWest.com](http://DairyWest.com) for more information. ■

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# PAYMENTS

*Continued from page 16*

and fourth in the production of bulb onions, lentils and spring wheat.

But Idaho received less than 1 percent of total federal government payments to U.S. agriculture last year.

“Farmers in Idaho do not farm the government,” Taylor told lawmakers Jan. 3 while discussing the highlights of the “Financial Condition of Idaho Agriculture” report.

Most of the government payments Idaho farmers and ranchers received last year came from conservation programs and from the Price Loss Coverage and Agriculture Risk Coverage programs, which help compensate growers when commodity prices are low.

PLC and ARC are revenue protection programs that are based on yields and prices and if they fall below certain levels, that triggers payments to producers.

Eborn said most of the ARC and PLC payments Idaho producers received in fiscal 2018 were related to low grain prices.

Idaho also received a small amount of milk program and disaster program payments. ■



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Old Harmony Guitar \$200; Four old cast iron wheels. \$175. McCammon, ID 208-254-3609.

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Old License Plates Wanted. Also key chain license plates, old signs, light fixtures. Will pay cash. Please email, call or write. Gary Peterson, 130 E Pecan, Genesee, Id 83832. gearlep@gmail.com. 208-285-1258.

Our Idaho family loves old wood barns and would like to restore/rebuild your barn on our Idaho farm. Would you like to see your barn restored/rebuilt rather than rot and fall down? Call Ken & Corrie 208-530-6466.

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