

Gem State Producer

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IFB® IDAHO FARM BUREAU

Major Chinese cheese buyers visit Idaho

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Mill 95 provides hop growers options

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Don't use Farm Bill as bargaining chip



By Zippy Duvall

AFBF President

American political history is filled with examples of politicians who seemed to forget who put them in office, turned their backs on agriculture and rural America, and paid the price at the ballot box.

In the 2016 elections, an in-

The Zip Line



cumbent member of Congress from Kansas lost his primary race when farmers and ranchers turned out in droves and let him know that voting against the 2014 farm bill was a critical mistake. On the flip side, rural America turned out in a big way in November 2016 and helped put President Trump in office—demonstrating that rural America still packs an influential punch.

Last week, some in Congress voted against the 2018 farm bill. While their goal—forcing the House leadership to have a vote on immigration legislation—is a worthy one, they are playing a dangerous game by using the farm bill as their bargaining chip.

Our nation's farmers and ranchers are not pawns in a political game. They are the lifeblood of

See DUVALL, page 7

Honor traditions while embracing change



By Bryan Searle

President Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

As a young man, I just knew things couldn't get any better than the joy I felt sitting in that good ol' John Deere 4020 boxed cab with an AM radio.

I loved working on that tractor and I was sure that experience couldn't be improved upon. I was wrong.

Today's tractors are far more advanced than that model. They have an efficient engine, comfortable seats with electronic controls, sound-proof cabs, Bluetooth wireless technology and GPS steering.

What lies ahead in tractor technology I can only imagine.

As the saying goes, the only constant is change. With that in mind, we need to honor our traditions but

embrace change at the same time and help mold it.

In Idaho, change in the form of population growth is happening at a rapid rate.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Idaho's population grew at a rate of 2.2 percent from mid-2016 to mid-2017 and now totals 1.72 million. That 2.2 percent growth rate was the fastest in the nation during that period and three times the national rate of .07 percent.

See SEARLE, page 7

IFBF Foyer to the Future - 100 years in the making



By Rick Keller

CEO Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

The week following graduation in May, Idaho Farm Bureau was hosted by the University of Idaho's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences to participate in a ribbon-cutting ceremony cel-

ebrating the completion of the *Idaho Farm Bureau Federation Foyer to the Future*.

The ceremony was a culmination of many years of planning and work by master craftsmen in the remodeling of two foyers in the Iddings Agricultural Sciences building on UI's Moscow campus: the foyer at the main entrance and the foyer to the office of the CALS dean.

In 2015-2016, IFBF and the Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance

Co. board of directors authorized a partnership with UI in major foyers renovations. The partnership was called, *University of Idaho "Inspiring Future Leaders in Idaho Agriculture."*

The first phase of the project was completed in January 2016 with the opening of the dean's foyer.

The second foyer renovation was much more extensive, including adding an atrium to the

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Photo by Sean Ellis

Representatives of major Chinese cheese buyers speak with TLK Dairies owner Terry Ketterling May 11 while touring the Mountain Home dairy operation.

Major Chinese cheese buyers visit Idaho

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

MOUNTAIN HOME – Representatives of major cheese buyers from China looking for additional supply options got a close-up look at the U.S. dairy industry during a reverse trade mission in May.

The multi-day tour, which was hosted by the U.S. Dairy Export Council, included visits to major cheese processing facilities in Idaho and California as well as one-on-one meetings with U.S. manufacturers.

It culminated with a visit to TLK Dairies in Mountain Home, where the trade team, which communicated through an interpreter, was impressed with how much milk each cow produces as well as how the animals are cared for.

“They are really impressed with the way we take care of our dairy cows and how we feed them a balanced, nutritious diet,” said Missha Hu, a USDEC representative in China. “It’s really important for them to know that.”

Hu said that before the visit, the trade delegation wasn’t sure the U.S. dairy industry was focused heavily on exports but that thinking changed as a result of the tour.

“Now they have actually switched their thinking,” she said. “Now they see that we are open to exports and willing to adjust our production to the needs of overseas customers.”

The trade group included major cheese buyers from China who are mainly purchasing product from Oceanic countries.

See CHINA DAIRY, page 4

Cover: Photo by Steve Ritter
Jonathan Steele of Silverline Bees checks on some of his hives in Middleton in early May. Besides making honey, the bees are used to pollinate almonds in California.



CHINA DAIRY

Continued from page 3



Photo by Sean Ellis

Members of a Chinese trade delegation tour TLK Dairies in Mountain Home May 11. Trade delegation members, who represent major Chinese cheese buyers, visited the U.S. to look for more supply options.

“The Chinese cheese market wants to find more supply alternatives from outside of Oceania,” Hu said. “And the U.S. is at the top of the list because we have the capacity to provide the products they need, and we are able to supply them with technical assistance and innovation.”

The Chinese cheese market is booming “and we wanted to provide an opportunity for these important cheese buyers in China to really get to know the great taste, quality, variety and versatility of U.S. cheese,” said Kristi Saitama, USDEC’s team leader for China. “That’s why we brought them here – to see, experience and enjoy first-hand the wonderful abundance of cheese we have in the United States and especially here in Idaho.”

One of the biggest benefits of bringing the representatives here, Saitama said, was so that they could “meet with industry

face to face and see first-hand our commitment and interest in export markets, all the way from the farm to the processors.”

Cheese demand in China is booming, she said, as that nation’s middle class continues to grow. China imported about 13,000 metric tons of cheese from the U.S. in 2017 but the U.S. market share was only about 12 percent.

Estimates are that cheese demand in China will grow by about 15-20 percent a year and the U.S. has a good opportunity to help meet that demand as well as capture a greater market share, Saitama said.

“The U.S. farming community is well suited to grow its milk capacity to meet their cheese demands in the future,” she said.

The U.S. dairy industry exports about 15 percent of its production on a total milk solids basis.

The goal is to increase that to 20 percent “and China will be a very important part of that,” Saitama said.

During their tour of TLK Dairies, which milks 10,500 cows, trade delegation members started punching numbers into their calculators when TLK owner Terry Ketterling informed them the operation’s average cow produces 80 pounds of milk per day and 25,000 pounds per year.

After converting those numbers to metric, one delegation member said, through an interpreter, “The production of milk is quite high.”

Ketterling said the operation has increased its production per cow by one-fourth in the past six years and has achieved that increase by focusing on genetics and nutrition.

Idaho is the nation’s No. 4 milk-producing state and most of that milk is turned into cheese.

Idaho’s 490 dairy farms, which have a combined 580,000 milking cows, produce more than 14 billion pounds of milk per year and the state has 22 dairy processing plants that turn that milk into cheese and other products, such as butter, dry non-fat milk and whey.

The trade mission was a great opportunity to educate potential customers about Idaho’s dairy production capacity, said Cindy Miller, communications director for Dairy West, which partners with United Dairy-men of Idaho and facilitated the TLK tour.

The trade delegation met with Idaho cheese processors before touring the dairy May 11.

“Any time we can invite potential customers to learn more about the dairy industry’s facilities, quality and farmers, that’s good for business,” Miller said.



IFBF photo

Dry beans are harvested in southern Idaho in this Idaho Farm Bureau Federation file photo. The Idaho Bean Commission has opted not to pursue a moratorium on soybean production in parts of Idaho and instead will seek to bring that crop under the purview of the bean commission.

Bean commission switches gears on soybeans

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – The Idaho Bean Commission has dropped its plan to propose a moratorium on soybean production in parts of the state where dry beans are grown.

Instead, the commission will seek to ensure anyone who wants to plant soybeans in Idaho has a source of disease-free seed that is adapted to the region's climate.

Soybean acres in Idaho have fluctuated from a few to a few hundred over the years but some members of the state's dry bean and seed industries believe it's only a matter of time before they are grown in

significant numbers here because of the state's large dairy and cattle industries.

They are concerned that soybeans could bring in diseases such as soybean cyst nematode that could be harmful to dry beans and other crops.

The IBC and the Idaho-Eastern Oregon Seed Association had proposed placing a moratorium on soybean production in southwestern and southcentral Idaho, where the state's bean and seed industries are centered.

But state officials and lawmakers were not receptive to that idea.

The groups last year asked the Idaho State Department of Ag-

riculture to initiate rulemaking that would have led to the prohibition but the ISDA sent them a letter saying the governor's office did not approve the idea because "current rules are in place to sufficiently prevent disease and that banning a crop is not an appropriate role for an ISDA rule."

During a February presentation to lawmakers, representatives of the state's dry bean, seed and sugar beet industries outlined their concerns, but lawmakers also did not embrace the idea of a moratorium.

During a joint meeting with Idaho Farm Bureau Federation dry bean committee members April 28, IBC commissioners said they were dropping the

moratorium idea.

Instead, they will seek to bring soybeans under the purview of the bean commission, which would ensure any soybeans grown here are meeting the same strict testing guidelines that dry beans have to meet.

Bringing soybeans under the IBC's wing will require a change in state statute and the IBC will pursue that option during the 2019 legislative session.

The commission will also seek to ensure that a disease-free source of soybean seed is soon available for anyone interested in growing the crop in Idaho.

See SOYBEANS, page 17

KELLER

Continued from page 2

entrance. (For the many UI alumni, the foyer renovation and atrium are at the Ag Science room 106. This classroom is the largest classroom on campus and hosts students from most disciplines at the university.) The university named the new foyer, *The Idaho Farm Bureau Federation Foyer to the Future*.

The Farm Bureaus are happy to partner with the University of Idaho on this project, enhancing the learning experience for ag students for many years to come.

Farm Bureau in Idaho has a 100-year history of working with Idaho's land grant college, the University of Idaho.

Land grant colleges were established in 1862, during the depths of the Civil War. The response to the industrial revolution and changing social class was substantial in creating a need for institutions of higher education for agriculture, science and engineering. Resources were scarce, so Congress approved the Morrill Act in which the federal government "granted" land under its control to the states for them to sell, to raise funds, to establish and endow "land-grant colleges." The University of Idaho was such a recipient.

At the time of the Morrill Act's passage, 50 percent of the U.S. population was in agriculture. The land grants were successful, but still, the

idea of getting agricultural science to the individual farmers was greatly inhibited by both structure and finances.

In 1914, the Smith-Lever Act was enacted. This federal law established a system of cooperative extension services, connected to the land-grant universities, "to inform people about current developments in agriculture, home economics, public policy/government, leadership, 4-H, economic development, and many other related subjects."

It helped farmers learn new agricultural techniques by the introduction of home instruction. The county extension agent was created with a cooperative financial agreement between federal and state governments and land grant colleges. The county extension agent would work under the leadership and structure of the land grant universities.

The relationship with the university extension agent and Farm Bureau began almost immediately and simultaneously. The earliest record of Farm Bureau in Idaho corresponds with the cooperation with county extension agents. In the foyer of the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation office hangs a digital copy of a front page of the Teton Peaks-Chronicle newspaper. The paper

"Farm Bureau expresses appreciation to the dedicated service of the many extension agents that graced Idaho in the past century. We also express appreciation to the University of Idaho and its continued support in this endeavor."

was published in St. Anthony and dated September 12, 1918. The headline reads: "War Waged on Squirrels". The news article then describes the relationship between the University of Idaho's extension agents and 26 Farm Bureaus in the state in a coordinated and cooperative effort to control a plague of destructive ground squirrels.

Farm Bureau expresses ap-

preciation to the dedicated service of the many extension agents that graced Idaho in the past century. We also express appreciation to the University of Idaho and its continued support in this endeavor. The recent ribbon cutting of the "Idaho Farm Bureau Federation Foyer to the Future" begins another century of working together to better agriculture and the lives of our farm and ranch families in Idaho.

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SEARLE

Continued from page 2

Surely, that means change is coming to the Gem State and what that means for agriculture is yet to be determined.

Idaho's population grew by 27 percent from 2010 to 2015, according to the Census Bureau, and most of that growth occurred in Ada County and adjacent Canyon County, the state's two most populous counties.

While Ada and Canyon grew by 29 and 44 percent, respectively, during that period, the population of rural counties, such as Bear Lake and Caribou, shrank.

As the state's population increasingly shifts to urban areas, that means urbanites, many of whom lack a basic understanding of agriculture, will

wield more and more clout in the Idaho Legislature.

How do we defend our rights in growing our crops and producing livestock products? How do we embrace this change and turn it into a positive or at least prevent it from harming Idaho's farming industry?

One way is by engaging at all levels of government – local, county and state – as well as engaging in Farm Bureau's policy development process.

While doing that, make sure to bring your real-life stories with you and don't be afraid to share them, especially with lawmakers.

The success this past legislative session of a bill that strengthens protection of private property

rights in Idaho happened after a slew of farmers and ranchers took the time to attend public hearings on the legislation and share with legislators their real-life experiences.

Yes, change is constant, but it doesn't have to be pre-determined or harmful. If Farm Bureau members will take the time to engage at all levels, we can help shape what form that change takes and mold it into something that benefits agriculture and the state.

To accomplish that, all Farm Bureau members are encouraged to participate in IFBF's policy development process. To view the organization's policy book, visit our website at www.idahofb.org and click on the "Legislative" icon and then on

"Policy Books."

Every member is more than welcome to offer input on IFBF policies and can do so by contacting one of their county Farm Bureau representatives. To find out who your county representatives are, click on "County Info" at the top of our website and then scroll down and click on your county.

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation is a truly a grassroots organization and the more our members are involved in our policy-making decisions, the stronger and better thought out those policies will be.

The future is ours to write as we go forth and are involved in the many changes facing us today.

DUVALL

Continued from page 2

our nation. A nation cannot remain secure and prosperous without food security. An army cannot march on an empty stomach. And many of our rural communities cannot thrive without agriculture and the many jobs it supports, from food processing and packaging to transportation. And right now, our farmers are hurting. With farm income at its lowest level in over a decade, farmers need a farm bill now.

A farmer or rancher wondering, today, at this very moment, whether to stay in agriculture or put the animals, land and equipment up for sale is going to make that decision based on whether the

future looks stable or unclear. With some in Congress holding the farm bill—and by extension farmers and ranchers themselves—hostage to a separate issue, the future is far from certain for many of our nation's farms and ranches.

I think sometimes our politicians forget that the "issues" they debate mean much more to the people affected by them. For us, the farm bill isn't an issue, it's about our livelihood, our life's calling, and the source of our nation's food security. Be assured that rural Americans will remind them of that every chance we get—including election day.

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Photo by Sean Ellis

Water flows through a canal near Caldwell April 25. Idaho farmers and ranchers should have an ample supply of irrigation water this year, thanks in part to last year's phenomenal snowpack amounts.

With reservoir levels high, water year looks good

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – Farmers and ranchers throughout Idaho should have an ample supply of irrigation water this year.

Last year's phenomenal snowpack levels are still paying off as the runoff from that snowpack was enough to keep reservoirs at high levels heading into the 2018 water season.

“We are looking at an adequate water supply across the state this year,” said Ron Abramovich, a water supply specialist with the Natural Resources Conversation Service.

The abundant snowpack during the 2017 winter primed Idaho's mountains and hydrologic system and have kept streams flowing above normal since last February, he said.

Snowpack levels in basins across the state are mostly above normal but they are well below last year's amounts, which set records or came close in many areas.

But because of plentiful reservoir storage, even basins which received a below-average amount of snowfall this year “will still be able to have an adequate irrigation supply this year,” Abramovich said.

Streamflow forecasts range from 40 percent of average in the Owyhee basin to 120 percent in the Clearwater and Upper Snake basins, according to the NRCS' April 1 Idaho Water Supply Outlook.

“Combining these runoff volumes with current reservoir storage, will provide adequate irrigation supplies for nearly all users (farmers, fish, power producers, river runners and more),” the report states.

In the Upper Snake River basin above Pali-sades Reservoir, snowpack levels were at

133 percent of average on April 24.

“We do have good snowpack, maybe even excellent snowpack,” said Lyle Swank, watermaster for Water District 1, which is supplied with water from the Upper Snake and provides irrigation water for at least 1.2 million acres of farmland in eastern and southern Idaho.

“There will be a good water supply for this upcoming water season,” he said.

There is so much water in the Upper Snake basin that water is being released from the reservoirs to prevent flooding.

In southwestern Idaho, the Payette River basin has 95 percent of normal snowpack for this time of year, said watermaster Ron Shurtleff.

“We're looking quite well,” he said. “Our reservoirs have more water than they can

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Idaho Farm Bureau®

Laura Wilder will be the new Idaho Barley Commission administrator

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

BOISE – Laura Wilder will replace Kelly Olson as administrator of the Idaho Barley Commission, which is tasked with promoting and marketing the state's \$270 million barley crop.

Olson, who is retiring at the end of July after 24 years as IBC administrator, will be sorely missed, barley commissioners told Idaho Farm Bureau Federation.

But in Wilder, who has served as executive director of the Idaho FFA Foundation for the past 10 years, they believe they have found a suitable replacement.

The four-member commission interviewed several good candidates but Wilder's work experience and life-long involvement with Idaho agriculture stood out, they said.

"We interviewed several people and they were all good candidates, but she just seemed to stand out," said IBC Commissioner Wes Hubbard, a North Idaho barley producer. "I'm confident we picked somebody who is really going to represent Idaho barley well."

Prior to taking over as executive director of the Idaho FFA Foundation, which provides financial support to FFA members, Wilder served as executive director and special projects coordinator for the Idaho Beef Council, which, like the barley commission, is supported by farmer

checkoff dollars.

She grew up on a cattle ranch in Caldwell that also grew alfalfa hay, silage corn and pasture, and currently lives on a small sheep farm in Meridian with her husband, Steve, who is an ag education teacher.

Wilder, who was involved in 4-H and FFA programs as a youth, is president of a ditch company and involved with water issues. She has a degree in ag journalism with other major coursework in ag education from Texas A&M University.

"My roots are deep in Idaho agriculture," she said. "Ag advocacy has been a lifelong passion of mine."

Timothy Pella, the industry representative on the commission, said Wilder "has the perfect work experience."

"As a board, we were really impressed with her," said Pella, program manager at Anheuser-Busch's Idaho Falls elevator. "I think working with the growers will come naturally to her."

IBC Commissioner Scott Brown, an East Idaho grower, said board members were impressed with Wilder's knowledge and enthusiasm.

"We think she's a great hire and will be a great replacement for Kelly," he said.

Wilder will start her new job June 11 and work side by side with Olson until she leaves at the end of July.



Photo by Sean Ellis

Laura Wilder, pictured here, will take over as administrator of the Idaho Barley Commission when the current administrator, Kelly Olson, retires at the end of July.

"I'll be trying to learn as much as I can from her because she has been a very visionary and strong leader," Wilder said. "I know that the time spent with her will be time very well spent."

Idaho is the nation's top barley producing state and Gem State farmers produced 48 million bushels of barley last year on 510,000 acres.

About 75 percent of the state's crop is malt barley and used to make beer, while the rest is food barley or used as feed barley for the livestock industry.

While malt barley will continue

to be the biggest segment of the Idaho industry, food barley acres in the state are increasing rapidly and Wilder said she's excited about the opportunity to help that sector of the industry continue to grow.

Last year, Olson and the commissioners created a food barley initiative that seeks to focus on the development of new food barley products.

During her time with the beef council, Wilder worked closely with health professionals and the school food-service industry and she believes that experience will help her promote food barley.

“I look forward to getting the message out about the health benefits of food barley and looking for more marketing opportunities for food barley,” Wilder said. “There are a lot of strong health claims for barley being important to help control heart disease, manage diabetes and control weight. Now we just need more products because the market is growing, not just domestically but internationally as well.”

Brown said the commission sees “a big and growing market for food barley. I think we have an opportunity to sell a lot more food barley than we currently do. It’s just a matter of getting the programs started and getting growers to grow it.”

About half of the commission’s annual \$700,000 budget is directed toward research and Wilder said she looks forward to continuing to ensure grower checkoff dollars are used to help solve growers’ agronomic challenges.

“I feel the barley commission



Idaho Barley Commission photo

has spent their money well in investing in research,” she said.

One of her first orders of business will be helping the commission develop a comprehensive communications plan that seeks to promote barley to the public and communicate with

and educate growers.

Wilder said she believes strongly that farmers have a right to see the value of their checkoff dollars maximized.

“I really love working with growers and I look forward to

doing work that is going to benefit them and help them be more successful,” she said. “I love the opportunity to get out and interact with them directly, to understand what their needs are and then to work on programs to help them in the future.”

WATER OUTLOOK

Continued from page 8

hold and we’ve been making flood control releases all winter long to make space so we can capture the spring runoff.”

Pioneer Irrigation District, which gets its water from the Boise River system, gets by on natural flows in the river for as long as possible and then taps into water it has stored in reservoirs when those flows fall below a certain level.

Snowpack in the Boise River basin is only at 88 percent of normal but the amount of storage water the district has in the

reservoir system will be enough to provide an adequate amount of irrigation water to PID patrons this year, said manager Mark Zirschky.

“We might not be able to rely on natural flow for as long as we normally do this year but ... the amount of reservoir storage we have is looking good,” he said.

Snowpack levels in the Owyhee River basin are at a dismal 27 percent of normal but the Owyhee Reservoir has 582,000 acre-feet of storage water,

enough to guarantee irrigators their full 4-acre-foot allotment of water this year, said Owyhee Irrigation District Manager Jay Chamberlin.

The reservoir provides water to 118,000 acres of irrigated farmland in eastern Oregon and part of southwestern Idaho. Though most of those farms are in Oregon, the agricultural industry in that area is closely linked and many growers have farms in both states.

In-flows into the Owyhee Reservoir are pathetically low,

Chamberlin said. While inflows are normally about 2,600 cubic feet per second at this time of year, they are currently only at 700 cfs.

But, like other basins in the region, the reservoir entered the 2018 season with plenty of water and that will be enough to ensure Owyhee irrigators get a full supply of water this year.

“Our only salvation this year is that we had such a good water year last year,” Chamberlin said.



Photo by John O'Connell

Kim Bowes, rear left, holds her 2-year-old daughter, Annabelle, who is reaching for a container of Annabelle's Crunchers during the May 12 Portneuf Valley Farmers Market in Pocatello. Ariana Bowes holds a tray of Crunchers, with her brother, Jacob, to her front left, her uncle, Mark Ralphs, to her right and her father, Jeff Bowes, at the front right.

Family turns to direct wheat sales to save farm

By John O'Connell

For Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

ROCKLAND – Mark Ralphs and his family have resurrected a childhood treat Grandma used to make from spare grain as part of the bold plan they've concocted to save their small farm.

Annabelle's Crunchers are fried wheat-kernel snacks, tossed in cinnamon-and-sugar or salt-and-pepper. Now operating as Bench View Farms, they also plan to soon offer their own brand of organic wheat kernels and flour, as well as cracked-wheat cereal and organic ancient grains, including einkorn, spelt and emmer.

Rather than continuing to sell wheat for a few bucks per bushel on the commodities market, the family recently began selling directly to consumers, including at the Portneuf Valley Farmers Market. They hope their niche grain products will capture substantial premiums, boosting the revenue potential of their 240-acre farm in south-

east Idaho's Rockland Valley.

Cutting out the middle-man to market specialized agricultural products is time consuming and labor intensive, but the payoff can be significant.

A single ounce of Annabelle's Crunchers sells for \$1.25. A 5-pound bag of locally raised whole wheat flour, priced at \$3.75, brings in roughly the same revenue as an entire bushel of wheat sold on the commodities market. Premiums are also strong for ancient grains.

"If I can make more money selling 1,000 pounds of einkorn versus 100,000 pounds of traditional wheat, that's a no-brainer," said Ralphs, an Idaho Farm Bureau member who also works as a truck driver.

Ralphs, a fifth-generation farmer, explained his father, Del, and his uncle used to farm 3,000 acres together. The need for a drastic change in approach to farming became apparent about four years ago, when the farm was divided and Del was left with just 240 acres. At the time, the family feared they would have no choice but to sell their acres to a larger farm.

"I stepped in and said, 'We'll figure out some way to get you and Mom retired,'" Ralphs recalled. "That's where, with a lot of research and a lot of praying, I came up with this transitioning to organic and doing these ancient grains."

His sister, Kim, his brother-in-law, Jeff Bowes, and his younger brother, Darin, are also involved in the small farming venture. Bowes, who was laid off from Microsoft, had been doing home-based computer consulting but now spends the majority of his time planting, moving irrigation wheel lines and otherwise tending to the farm – and also providing the operation's computer support.

"For me, it's a whole new world. I'm learning on a daily basis," Bowes said. "I'm more or less a city boy who has come into the farm world, and I really

enjoy it."

Darin oversees the family's ranching operation, which includes 28 cow-calf pairs and a bull.

This summer, some of their leased farm ground, on which chemicals haven't been used for at least three years, will be inspected for organic certification. They're also in the process of transitioning their own acreage to organic to further boost premiums. They should have their first certified organic grain, including some organic einkorn, available after this fall's harvest.

Shifting production methods has been a bit of a culture shock for Del, who has always farmed conventionally. Ralphs said controlling weeds has posed the greatest challenge, given that pesticides can't be used on organic farms. They've managed to control their weeds mostly by rotating grain with alfalfa, which out-competes weeds and keeps the weed seed bank in check.

To meet organic standards, they've also shunned conventional fertilizer in favor of specially formulated fish manure.

They've had to be creative in making equipment for small, specialized production, keeping their limited budget in mind. Ralphs fitted rubber paddles on a ceiling fan to serve as a thresher, beating kernels off of grain heads. For a de-huller, he modified a corn grinder with two rubber pads that rub off the wheat hulls.

They've got a small stone mill to grind their own flour, and they've refurbished an antiquated seed cleaner, which Ralphs estimates may be 70 years old, operating it under an awning attached to their dairy barn.

Acquiring seed for raising ancient grains has been a challenge.

They've obtained some seed from USDA's Small Grains and Potato Germplasm Research Unit in Aberdeen. They've also turned to a North Dakota farmer and a nonprofit organi-

zation dedicated to advancing knowledge about field-raised seed crops, the California-based Kusa Seed Society, for their seed supply. The 20 pounds of einkorn seed they planted last season yielded a sufficient crop to plant 15 acres of einkorn this season.

"There have always been those who attack cereal grains as unhealthy human foods," said Lorenz Schaller, voluntary director of Kusa Seed Society. "Lately, the attack has been modified with the allegation that modern breeding has altered the crops, shifting them in artificial and unhealthy directions from what they were in antiquity.

According to this view, the 'ancient' grains are free of this distortion and thus 'health-positive' as compared with modern-bred materials."

Eventually, the family may also expand into quinoa production and branch out into more farmers markets. They anticipate much of their sales volume will be made online via www.benchviewfarms.com, and they expect to also supply organic wheat to a Utah mill and organic wheat and ancient grains to local bakeries.

Regarding their most unique specialty product, they intend to next roll out a peanut butter-and-jelly flavor of Annabelle's Crunchers.

The product is named for Bowes' 2-year-old daughter, Annabelle, who is "addicted" to the snack.

Ralphs recalls how his Grandma Celia used to always have bowls of Crunchers on the table when he visited her as a child. Del suggested bringing back Grandma's famous dessert snack as a unique specialty product with a high ceiling for success. Fortunately, he never forgot her secret recipe.

"There's nobody that we know of that's even selling anything like that," Ralphs said. "That's kind of what we're hoping is going to take off and be a real success is those wheat Crunchers."

2018 Idaho Farm Bureau Scholarship Winners

The following are the recipients of the 2018 Idaho Farm Bureau scholarship awards.

The scholarships are provided by the IFBF Scholarship Fund, Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee, State Women's Committee and Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Co.

Nora Jorgensen

Fremont County



Jordan Pentzer

Nez Perce County



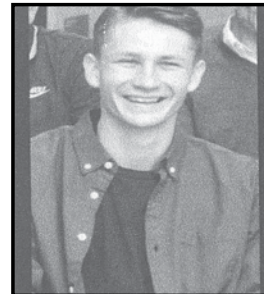
Abby Davis

Boundary County



Jarum Egan

Bannock County



Mason Watt

Bingham County



Samaria Schroeder

Twin Falls County



Myrisa Laufenberg

Kootenai/Shoshone County



Jaidee Beyeler

Lemhi County



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Photo by Sean Ellis

Farm workers prepare a hop yard near Wilder earlier this spring. Idaho hop farmers plan to add about 700 additional acres this year and the state looks to solidify its spot as the No. 2 hop producing state in the nation, which it claimed for the first time last year.

Idaho hop farmers plan to add about 700 more acres

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

WILDER – Idaho will likely solidify its spot as the No. 2 hop producing state in the nation this year, as Gem State hop farmers plan to add about 700 acres in 2018.

Idaho last year became the No. 2 hop producing state for the first time, bumping Oregon into the No. 3 spot. Washington is the unchallenged No. 1 hop state.

Oregon's hop industry is not expecting any additional acres this year, said Oregon Hop Commission Administrator Michelle Palacios.

Idaho hop farmers produced 13.7 million pounds of hops last year from 6,993 acres, while Oregon growers produced 11.9 million pounds from 7,851 acres.

Idaho hop yields averaged 1,968 pounds per acre last year, compared with 1,517 in Oregon.

"I don't expect any new acres this year," Palacios said. "Idaho passed us in production last year and there's a chance they could also pass us in acres this year."

She said Idaho passing Oregon for the No. 2 spot was kind of a non-event and there weren't any hard feelings because the success of Idaho's hop growers reflects the health of the entire industry.

"We're all in this together," Pa-

lacios said. "Individually, our growers are in a good place so whether we're No. 2 or No. 3 in any particular year is just the way the market is."

Idaho, Oregon and Washington, which together produce almost all of the hops grown in the United States, have added an unprecedented amount of hop acres in the past several years but many industry leaders are cautioning against adding more acres in 2018, according to the Hop Growers of America's an-

nual Statistical Report, which was released in February.

Driven by demand for aroma hops from the craft brewing industry, U.S. hop acreage has increased 80 percent since 2012 and production by 77 percent, according to the report.

The 2017 U.S. hop harvest broke the 100-million-pound mark for the first time.

“All key indicators suggest current aroma hop demand has largely been satisfied by the unprecedented expansion of U.S. acreage in recent years,” the HGA report states. “Industry leaders also encouraged brewers to continue contracting for

forecasted hop needs but advised to do so cautiously and pragmatically given the unpredictability of craft consumer demand and the recent slowdown of craft volume growth.”

Given that supply has caught up with demand, “There doesn’t need to be any new acres, for quite a while,” said Idaho hop grower Brock Obendorf, chairman of the Idaho Hop Commission.

“Nationally, there is an oversupply of hops,” said Idaho hop farmer Mike Gooding. “Things will have to balance out for a couple of years.”

He said this year’s additional

acres in Idaho are due to previously signed contracts.

Gooding said the current supply-demand situation will allow him to pull about 100 acres out of production next year to give those fields a chance to rest, and he’s probably not the only Idaho grower who will do that.

“You’ll probably see acres go down 200-300 next year just as a management practice,” he said. “If you can rest the fields for two or three years, it really helps.”

Idaho hop growers have added acres at a rapid pace since 2012, when they totaled 2,423,

according to USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service. They increased to 3,376 in 2013 and then 3,745 in 2014, 4,863 in 2015, 5,648 in 2016 and 6,993 in 2017.

Most of those acres are located around Wilder, Notus and Homedale in southwestern Idaho.

“The growth has been really incredible and everybody locally has noticed it,” said D.J. Tolmie, operations manager of Mill 95, Idaho’s first hop pelletizing plant, which opened last year largely in response to the Idaho hop industry’s rapid growth.

SOYBEANS

Continued from page 5

“The moratorium idea was not well received so we decided to go another direction,” IBC Administrator Andi Woolf-Weibye said during the joint IBC-IFBF meeting. “This way, if someone wants to grow soybeans, we will have Western-grown, disease and nematode-free seed available for them.”

Once a region gets soybean cyst nematode, it can’t get rid of it, she said, and the commission wants to be proactive to protect the state’s \$70 million dry bean industry.

“An ounce of prevention is always worth a pound of cure,” Woolf-Weibye said.

To ensure there is a source of disease-free soybean seed that grows well in the region’s climate, the commission is working with Clint Shock, the retiring director of Oregon State University’s Malheur County agricultural research station in

Ontario.

Shock has been researching soybeans for 30 years and told IBC members during a meeting this year he would be happy to assist their effort.

Working with Shock, the commission should have enough seed in three years for 500 to 1,000 acres of soybeans, said IBC Commissioner Don Tolmie, production manager for Treasure Valley Seed Co. in Homedale.

Tolmie said the commission wants to bring soybeans under its wing “so we can monitor and maintain clean soybeans in the state of Idaho.”

If the soybean industry becomes large enough, “it can take off and have its own commission,” he said. “We are trying to oversee it and help it along and nurture it in the ways of Western seed so we’re producing good seed in the begin-

ning and starting the industry clean. Our ultimate goal is the protection of the dry bean industry.”

About 70 percent of the state’s 50,000 acres of dry beans are grown for seed and Idaho is the nation’s leader in dry bean seed production because of strict guidelines that require dry bean seed to be serology tested and certified as disease-free.

IBC Commissioner and Parma grower Mike Goodson said Idaho bean seed is shipped all over the world “and if we get the reputation of having soybean cyst nematode in our area, our seed value would drop. We don’t want that to happen here.”

“I don’t want to tell a grower they can’t grow a crop that can make them money,” he said. “But I also want to make sure we protect the \$70 million dry bean industry we have built in Idaho. We have a reputation for

clean seed.”

IFBF bean committee member Carl Montgomery, a grower from Eden who participated in the IBC-Farm Bureau meeting, said he agrees with the commission’s direction on the issue.

“I don’t think placing a moratorium on soybean production is feasible. If someone wants to grow a crop, you can’t tell them ‘no,’” he said. “But I think having soybeans come under the purview of the bean commission is a logical direction to go.”

During the joint meeting, members of the state’s sugar beet industry participated via conference call.

IFBF Director of Commodities and Marketing Zak Miller credited the bean commission for inviting other groups to participate in the meeting and discussion about soybeans.

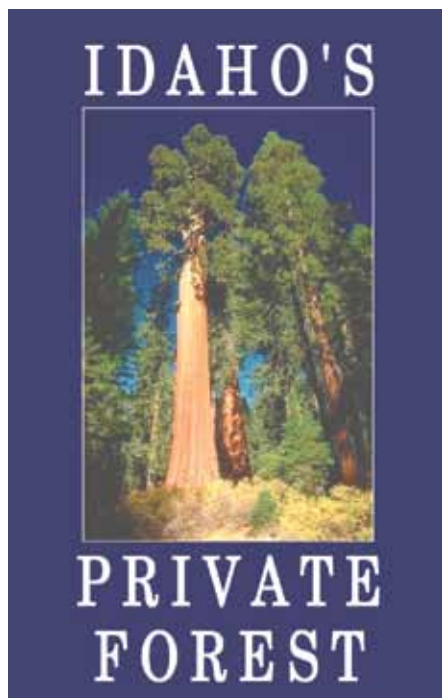


Photo courtesy of the Idaho Big Tree Program
Fred Johnson measures the current state champion *Purshia tridentate* in 1985.

Giants among the big trees

By Yvonne C. Barkley

University of Idaho

There are many impressive things on this big blue ball we call home, but few surpass the magnificence of a soaring, magnificent big tree. Called the superstars of their species, champion big trees have been recognized by the American Forests Champion Trees program since 1940. With more than 700 species in the Champion Trees National Register, these big trees are found in the fields, forests, rangelands and urban parks and yards of America. Idaho has participated in the Champion Trees program since the mid-1960s, with a shared mission of locating, measuring and recognizing the largest individual tree of each species.

Big tree hunters are people of all ages and walks of life who share a love of one of nature's finest accomplishments — a truly

splendid big tree. In the five decades that the Big Tree Program has been active in Idaho, there have been a few big tree hunters that have stood out from the rest — true giants among the big trees.

Fredrick D. Johnson, professor emeritus, University of Idaho

Born in Chicago, Ill., Johnson was schooled in the ways of the woods by his uncles during summers spent in Wisconsin — experiences that generated a life-long passion for outdoor adventure and exploration. A World War II veteran, Johnson was a member of the 502nd Parachute Infantry regiment of the 101st Airborne Division — the famous “Screaming Eagles.”

Mustering out with a Bronze Star, Johnson returned to Chicago where he met the love of his life — Virginia Stichcomb, known by all as Jinny. Married in 1948, Fred and Jin-

ny headed west to Oregon State University, where Fred was awarded a Bachelor of Science in botany. Next stop was Moscow and the University of Idaho, where Johnson was awarded a Master of Science in forestry in 1952. Having both fell in love with the rolling hills and abundant forests of northern Idaho, Fred and Jinny decided to stay in Moscow, and for the next 38 years Fred conducted research and taught at the university's College of Forestry.

As part of his duties at the UI College of Forestry, Johnson acted as the first Idaho Big Tree Program director. The program's archives hold many letters and hand-written notes from Johnson to big tree nominators and owners. He was no slouch when it came to hunting the big ones himself, and the current Idaho Registry of Champion Trees still has Johnson listed as the nominator of 16 state champion trees and



Mike Bowman with *Cornus florida* in Lewiston in 1995.

Photo courtesy of the Idaho Big Tree Program

co-nominator with his dear friend and colleague, Steve Brunsfeld, of an additional nine state champion trees. Johnson passed away August 9, 2014, and is still missed by everyone who knew him.

Steven J. Brunsfeld, professor, University of Idaho

Brunsfeld was born in 1953 and also grew up in the northern suburbs of Chicago, where he was always happiest when outdoors. After high school, he came west and enrolled at the University of Idaho, where he earned two Bachelor of Science degrees, one in forest resources and the other in botany. A master's degree in botany from UI was then added to his resume, soon to be followed by a Ph.D. in botany from Washington State University.

Brunsfeld became a professor at UI in 1990

and also served as the director of the Idaho Forest, Wildlife and Range Experiment Station Research Herbarium.

During his undergraduate years, Brunsfeld met the love of his life, Pam, and they married and raised three children while living and playing in the forests and fields surrounding the Palouse. Brunsfeld was an accomplished scientist and musician and also an avid big tree hunter with his mentor and friend, Fred Johnson. Brunsfeld still has 12 nominated state champion trees to his name on the current Idaho Registry of Champion Trees. He passed away in 2006 after a heroic 11-year battle with cancer. He, too, is very greatly missed by everyone who had the pleasure of knowing him.

Robert Michael (Mike) Bowman - forester and urban forester

Bowman was a well-rounded individual who had a variety of interests, but maybe none greater than trees. Even as a small boy, Bowman knew that he wanted to be a forester. Born in 1935 in West Virginia, Bowman went west for his university training and was awarded a Bachelor of Science from the University of Washington in 1959. During his time as an undergraduate, Bowman trained as a smoke jumper at the North Cascades Smokejumper Base in Winthrop, Wash., and jumped fires for five years out of several different bases in the West.

Following this, Bowman served two years in the U.S. Army as a battery commander in Ft. Niagara, N.Y. Once done serving his country, he started his career in forestry

See UI FORESTRY, page 20

UI FORESTRY

Continued from page 19

with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management in Alaska. He lived and worked in 19 different places during his forestry career, always working for either the BLM or the U.S. Forest Service. Mike was instrumental in the development of the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise as well as the National Fire Academy in Emmetsburg, Md. Bowman's last assignment was for the Forest Service in Missoula, Mont., as the assistant director of fire management. He retired in 1982, after a stellar career spanning

almost 30 years.

Not one to sit around, Bowman looked for something to do in his "retirement" and accepted a position with the city of Lewiston, where he established that city's current Community Forestry Program. This is also when Bowman became interested in big trees and quickly found many trees to nominate to the state and national program. Bowman still has 15 nominated state champion trees to his name on the current Idaho Registry of Champion Trees.

These are three of many who have participated in the Idaho Big Tree Program over the past 50-plus years. There are several big tree hunters on the Idaho Registry who have nominated multiple state champion trees. The newest Idaho State Champion was awarded in 2016 to Aaron and Amanda Black for their red alder. The oldest state record we have was nominated to the state list in 1967 by Fred Johnson and Marvin Newell for their northwestern paper birch.

Idaho currently has two national champion trees residing here

– an English oak nominated by T. Kennedy and J. Lafferty in 2008 and the whitebark pine nominated by T. Williams in 2007. Several trees have been submitted for national consideration this year and we eagerly await the results.

To learn more about how you can participate in the Idaho Big Tree program, go to the University of Idaho Extension Forestry website at: <http://www.uidaho.edu/extension/forestry/big-trees>



Steve Brunsfeld with *Salix lasiandra* in 1982 on the University of Idaho Campus by the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. This tree has since died and been removed.

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IFBF photo
North Idaho farmer Robert Blair, holding drone, participates in a drone demonstration in this Idaho Farm Bureau Federation file photo. Blair's use of drones, GPS equipment, crop yield monitors and other devices is being featured in the Smithsonian Museum's "Precision Farming" display in Washington, D.C.

Idaho farmer featured in Smithsonian 'Precision Farming' exhibit

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – Robert Blair's North Idaho farm is one of four farming operations around the country that are being featured in the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History during 2018.

The operations' use of modern technology is highlighted in a "Precision Farming" display within the Washington, D.C., museum's "American Enterprise" exhibition.

U.S. farmers already know how technology has and is changing agriculture, but the average American has no clue and Blair is one of the farmers the museum is using to provide people a glimpse of how technology is changing agriculture in the United States.

The museum is marking 2018 as the Year of the Tractor and the Precision Farming display within the museum's American Enterprise exhibition helps tell agriculture's story to Americans, many of whom have no idea about how modern agriculture works, said Peter Liebhold, the museum's agriculture

curator.

A green, yellow and red 1918 Waterloo Boy tractor is at the entrance of the American Enterprise exhibition and it highlights the introduction of lightweight gasoline-powered tractors, which, according to a Smithsonian news release, began "a major revolution in agriculture that moved farming firmly into the realm of commercial production."

The Precision Farming display helps people understand how farmers have adapted to technology – location-tracking technology such as GPS, drones, moisture content measurement, crop yield monitors, variable rate application of seed, water and fertilizer, etc. – that is changing agricultural practices in fundamental ways, Liebhold said.

Featuring the faces and practices of real farmers helps demonstrate that, he said.

"We want them to know what real farmers are doing," Liebhold said. "As fewer Americans have a connection to farming, many of them have no idea what's going on. A lot of Americans don't even know what a farm looks like. We pull back the curtain and

show them what's really going on."

The Precision Farming display features Blair's use of drones, GPS equipment, crop yield monitors and other devices "to create a new way of seeing and managing his fields."

Blair, who was an early adopter of this technology and has helped pioneer the use of drones in the U.S., uses an unmanned aerial vehicle, known as a UAV or drone, to keep tabs on changing conditions in his fields.

"From a drone, Blair can take GPS-indexed near-infrared photos of plants in his fields," the display states. "Using these colorful images, he can determine what areas need more nitrogen fertilizer, allowing Blair to save money and avoid environmentally harmful over-fertilization."

Blair said it was a big honor to be included in the exhibit, "although now I have to hear a lot of jokes about me being a fossil and an antique."

He said being included in the exhibit "is a validation of the time and effort I've put into

See SMITHSONIAN, page 29

NFL player explains benefits of dairy to Idaho students

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

TWIN FALLS – Seattle Seahawks tight end Nick Vannett and 230 students from the Twin Falls area joined forces May 9 to highlight the important role that dairy products play in a nutritious diet.

The event was a way to reward Magic Valley schools that are highly engaged in the Fuel Up to Play 60 program, a joint initiative involving the National Dairy Council, NFL, state dairy councils and the USDA.

The program encourages students to consume protein-rich foods, such as dairy products, as well as fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean protein, and to perform some type of physical activity for at least 60 minutes each day.

Vannett, a 6-foot-6, 261-pound tight end for the Seahawks, was the star of the event but dairy was the hero.

“Stand up for the dairy farmers of Idaho,” official Seahawks emcee Ken Carson said, eliciting a loud cheer from the students, who ranged in grade from elementary to high school.

After Vannett took the stage to deafening cheers, he told the students that he believes dairy played an instrumental role in helping him achieve his dream of playing in the National Football League.

He said he drank about a gallon of milk every two days as a youngster.

“I think that helped me to become the big, strong, healthy man I am today,” he said. “I attribute that to drinking milk and eating good, healthy food.”

“I can’t stress enough how important it is to eat healthy and play for 60 minutes,” Vannett said. “I have to be in the best shape to compete at the highest level and it all starts with what I put in my body.”

After the event, which was sponsored by



Dairy West photo/Otto Kitsinger

Nick Vannett, who plays tight end for the Seattle Seahawks, high-fives Magic Valley students May 9 during an event that saw Vannett and other members of the NFL franchise speak about the health benefits of dairy products.

Dairy West, a United Dairymen of Idaho partner, Vannett said he really did go through a gallon of milk every two days as a kid.

“I wasn’t kidding when I said that,” he said. “Every meal I always had a big, 64-ounce glass of milk. I just enjoyed drinking it.”

Five Idaho dairy farming families attended the event and Vannett said he was glad he got a chance to meet and speak with them afterward.

“It all starts with them,” he said. “If they don’t do what they do, then how are we going to eat right? I definitely have a great amount of appreciation for those guys.”

In its most recent round of Fuel Up to Play 60 funding, the Idaho Dairy Council awarded grants totaling \$80,678 to 24 Idaho schools to help them jumpstart and sustain programs that promote the importance of eating healthy and being active.

Dairy West Communications Director Cindy Miller pointed out that Fuel Up to Play 60 is one of many programs supported by Idaho dairy families to promote youth health and wellness.

“It’s important for kids to have a fundamental understanding of nutrition and wellness and Idaho dairy farmers feel this is important enough to spend their dairy checkoff dollars to support,” she said.

John Wright, a dairyman from Wendell, told Idaho Farm Bureau that “the youth are not only our future but they’re our present, too. We’re just trying to instill some good nutrition practices in our youth. There’s no question we’re looking to sell milk, but they benefit from it, too, because milk is a perfect food and it’s important in our diet and they need to know that.”

Having a professional sports figure such as Vannett speak to kids about the role dairy plays in a balanced, nutritious diet helps drive that message home, he added.

“Having a sports figure explaining it to them tends to stick with them a little longer,” Wright said. “They’re an authority who knows their career depends on being in good, physical shape and being in good, physical shape depends on a good diet. They know what they’re supposed to eat and they know the importance of nutrition.”

Marketing our commodities is a 12-month opportunity



Clark Johnston

By Clark Johnston

You can tell that it is spring as things seem to be exciting at this time of the year. Spring farm work is winding down, the crops are in the ground and emerging, and for the most part they are looking good.

The wheat futures markets have also been exciting recently. Since the first week in April, the Chicago September wheat contract has traded from \$4.80 up to \$5.25 in the second week of the month. However, that wasn't the end of the volatility, as the market then corrected and moved back lower to \$4.93 in the third week, only to come charging back higher, trading 59 cents higher at \$5.52 as we moved into the first week of May.

Exciting, huh! Well, we weren't done yet as by the third week of May we once again had a market correction and moved to \$5.04 per bushel. When we totaled up the market moves during this time frame, the market moved \$1.84 per bushel. This is the total of the low to the high and back down again. This is almost enough to make a person dizzy.

Did we have opportunities to contract some of our new crop soft white during these few weeks? And when the soft white market moved so did the market for the other classes of wheat. I know we are all busy during the spring months trying to do the field work around the rain and snow

but marketing the commodities that we produce is a 12-month opportunity.

We do know that some of you did contract new crop wheat during this time frame, locking in your flat price. We also know that some producers used the futures market to lock in the futures side of your price. Depending on your comfort level, either way gives you the opportunity to use the futures markets to your advantage.

In previous columns, we have talked about ways to use the futures markets to your advantage. Using the futures as a means of hedging your commodities isn't as difficult as some have been led to believe and if you are a true hedger and not a speculator, it will be a means of locking in prices that give you the opportunity to be profitable.

Hedging your production just isn't for grains, as cattle producers should also be looking at the opportunities that the futures markets could provide them. Maybe even more so in cattle than in the grain market, cattle producers need to be able to lock in the futures side of the final price at any time during the year. Yes, you can market your calves in the full 12-month period of time even if there isn't anyone there in the cash market to contract with.

All you need to do is look at the feeder cattle market chart in the futures to see just when your opportunity presented itself. At the time I wrote this, the November feeder

cattle futures were trading at \$142 per hundredweight (cwt). I know that many of you would contract some of your calves if you could get \$12 cwt more than the current price. Well, you could have done just that by selling a November futures contract back in the middle of February when the November contract traded at \$154 cwt. Yes, hindsight is very good. However, when you construct your marketing plan and figure the level you will need to contract in order to be profitable, it will be important to use the futures markets to help reach those levels.

Using futures isn't a cure-all or a one-size-fits-all program, but it is and will be important for you to use them in the years ahead when you use your plan in marketing your cattle or commodities.

For more information on using these types of marketing programs, contact Zak Miller or Melissa Nelson in the Pocatello Farm Bureau office.

Clark Johnston is a grain marketing specialist and owner of JC Management Co. of Ogden, Utah. He can be reached at clark@jcmanagement.net

County Happenings



Boundary County Farm Bureau President John Kellogg poses with two of BCFB's three scholarship recipients. Jordan Young, right, plans to study radiology and biology and Victoria Smith, left, plans to study nursing. Abby Davis, not pictured here, plans to study animal genetics.

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Photo by Sean Ellis

Mill 95 Operations manager D.J. Tolmie and Marketing and Sales Associate Amaya Aguirre-Landa stand in one of the hop mill's cold storage facilities April 25. The mill, which opened in 2017, handled about 2.8 million pounds of Idaho hops last year.

Mill 95 provides Idaho hop growers more options

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

WILDER – In 2017, Idaho bumped Oregon to become the No. 2 hop producing state in the nation for the first time ever. Not that many people outside of the industry noticed.

The state also received its first-ever hop pelletizing plant last year – Mill 95 – and that will help legitimize Idaho as a premium hop growing state, said Mill 95 Operations Manager D.J. Tolmie.

There are several other hop mills in the United States, a

majority of which are in Washington, which is the nation's leading hop producing state.

“It helps legitimize Idaho as a hop growing region,” Tolmie said about the opening of the hop mill. “It puts us on the map.”

A large majority of the hops produced in Idaho are processed into pellets for the brewing process. Before Mill 95 went operational last year, all of them were shipped out of state, mostly to the Yakima Valley in Washington, to be pelletized.

“Traditionally, everything was shipped out of the state to be

pelletized and we saw an opportunity to jump in and start processing them here,” Tolmie said.

Mill 95 gives Idaho hop growers the option of having their hops pelletized locally, which can reduce transportation costs.

A typical truckload of hops weighs between 36,000 to 42,000 pounds and each shipment costs between \$900-\$1,400, Tolmie said.

“If you look at the fact that Idaho produced approximately 14 million pounds of hops last year, the shipment costs can start adding up pretty quickly,”

he said.

Mill 95 pelletized about 650,000 pounds of hops last year and it also offers other types of logistical support, such as cold storage. Tolmie estimates the operation handled about 2.8 million pounds of hops last year.

The 20-acre site includes a 10,000-square-foot pelletizing facility and 40,000 square feet of cold storage capacity.

Even for hop growers who choose not to have their product pelletized in Idaho, Mill 95

See MILL 95, page 28

MILL 95

Continued from page 27

offers them the option of getting their product cooled off quickly before being transported, which can improve quality, Tolmie said.

“We can get them cooled off within 24 hours whereas before they could sit in an ambient air warehouse for up to a week before they were transported,” he said. “It’s a quality driven model that works really well for us.”

He said the operation would love to pelletize all Idaho hops, but the reality is that growers “aren’t going to put all of their eggs in one basket and we would never expect that of them. They’re going to keep their profile wide and they are going to have pounds with everybody. But of course we want to have more and more acres as we go on.”

Mill 95 has received a lot of good feedback from local as well as non-local brewers, said Mill 95 Marketing and Sales Associate Amaya Aguirre-Landa.

She said the mill has been told “we’re producing a product comparable to guys who have been in the industry far longer than we have.”

Idaho Hop Commission Chairman Brock Obendorf, a hop grower, said Mill 95 “is a really good concept. I think it’s going to put the Idaho name out there.”

“They’re filling a nice niche here in Idaho,” said hop grower Mike Gooding. “It will be nice to have them here.”

Mill 95 is owned by Jamie Scott, a fifth-generation Ida-

hoan whose family has deep agricultural roots in the area. She still owns a family farm in the region.

“Her primary goal is to be hyper focused on serving our local growers,” Aguirre-Landa said. “Even if we’re not pelletizing their hops, we’re providing them logistical services or other things that are a benefit to them.”

The increase in Idaho hop acres has occurred rapidly, driven by the enormous growth in the craft brewing industry. In 2012, there were 2,423 hop acres in Idaho, according to USDA. That total increased to 3,376 in 2013 and then to 3,743 in 2014, 4,863 in 2015, 5,648 in 2016 and 7,169 in 2017.

Idaho hop growers plan to add an additional 700 acres this year.

The state’s hop industry is centered around Parma and Wilder, about a 45-minute drive from Boise, Idaho’s main urban center. But while the state has become a major player in the U.S. hop industry, few people in Idaho realize that.

“A lot of people had no idea hops even grew in Idaho,” Tolmie said. “Even people who lived in Boise their whole lives never knew hops were grown here in southwestern Idaho.”

Mill 95 hopes to change that.

The craft brewing industry has propelled an increase in hop agritourism where brewers want to come out and see where their hops are grown and who is growing them, Tolmie said.



Photo by Sean Ellis

Mill 95 Operations Manager D.J. Tolmie is shown in the mill’s pelletizing facility April 25. The mill pelletized about 600,000 pounds of Idaho hops last year during its first year of operation.

“They’ve made their own doorway in to communicate with the farmers and we’re here to support that effort,” he said.

Tolmie said the mill’s first year of operation went well, although there are some areas for improvement.

The operation is investing money into projects designed to make the processing line and the bale acceptance process run

a little more smoothly. Another of many projects involves installing truck scales to weigh all products on-site.

“I’m extremely proud of the first year at Mill 95,” Scott said. “We have an amazing team and we hit the ground running. We continue to learn and improve and will focus on best practices, service and quality heading into year two.”

Continued from page 22

this technology” and he credited groups such as Idaho Farm Bureau Federation and Idaho Grain Producers Association with helping him.

“I owe quite a bit to grain producers and Farm Bureau for opening doors,” he said. “You never make a journey by yourself. You always have some help along the way in some way, shape or form.”

Liebhold said most people who tour the exhibit, which opened in January, are astonished to learn how much technology is used by American farmers.

“The average American is absolutely amazed to find out how technical the business is,” he said.

The industrial revolution that tractors brought 100 years ago “is similar to the revolution farming is experiencing now as farmers are adopting GPS, computer analysis and other technology,” Liebhold said. “The new crop of the 21st Century is information.”

About 1.5 million people will visit the agricultural part of the exhibit this year, Liebhold said.

“It’s a pretty doggone good topic and one that all our visitors find interesting,” he said.

The Precision Farming display also features:

- Iowa corn and soybean farmer Roy Bardole, an early adopter of precision farming. “GPS equip-

ment, crop yield monitors and other devices turned his combine into an information control center,” the display states. “His combine has a yield monitor and a GPS receiver so that he can record exactly which portion of the field is most productive.”

- The Burnetts, dairy farmers from Carpenter, Wyo. “At Burnett Enterprises ... every cow wears a computer chip on its neck with a number,” the display states. “The computer records how much milk each cow produces at every milking. Animal health is critical in a dairy. The computer system allows the Burnetts to run reports on cows that are dropping in production, identify cows that need checking for health issues and find

cows being milked in the incorrect pen.”

- Zach and Anna Hunnicutt, who rely on center pivot irrigation systems to grow popcorn, soybean and wheat in Giltner, Neb. “Precision farming – the variable rate application of seed, water, fertilizer and pesticides – helps the Hunnicutts make their farming operations efficient and environmentally strong,” the display states. “Using soil moisture sensors and remotely actuated computerized sprinkler controls, their irrigation system conserves the amount of water needed to turn the dry Nebraska Great Plains into productive farm fields.”

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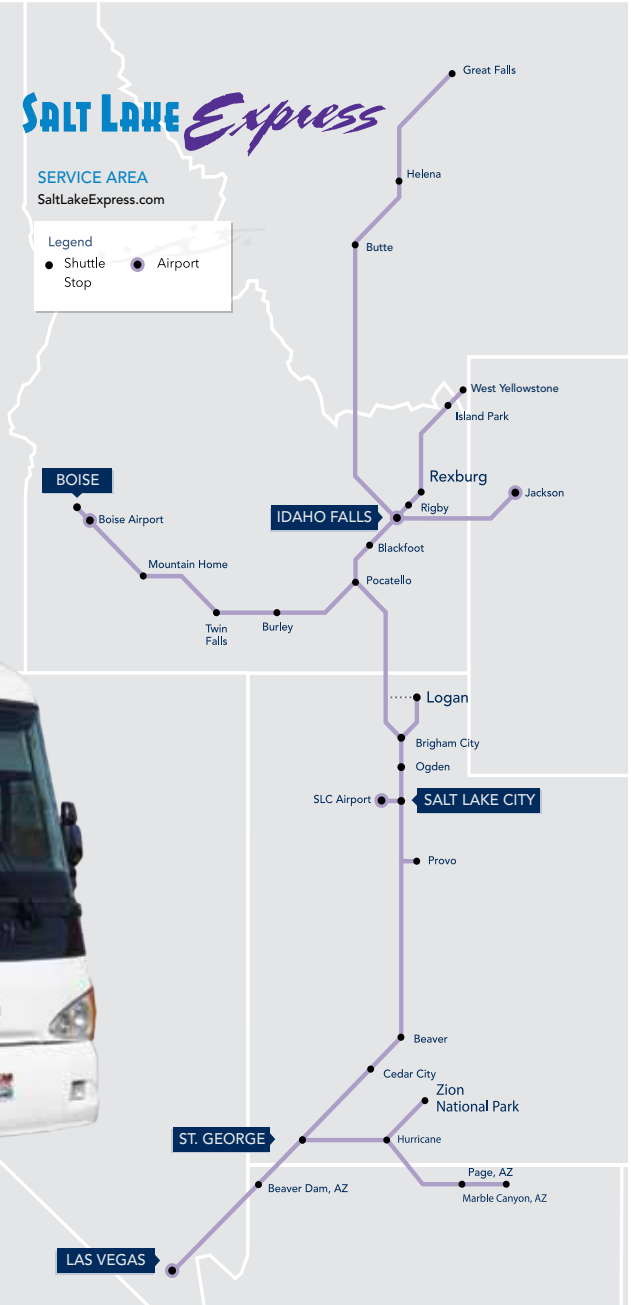
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USGS photo

U.S. Geological Survey hydrologic technician Jayson Blom collects a groundwater-level measurement from a well in this file photo. Groundwater level measurements were recently collected from 1,300 private and public wells throughout the Snake River Plain in southern Idaho.

Groundwater measurements expected to show an uptick in water levels

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – Groundwater level measurements were recently collected from 1,300 private and public wells throughout the 1,100-square-mile eastern Snake River Plain in southern Idaho.

The data will help water managers understand the status of the Snake River plain aquifer as the state enters the 2018 irrigation season.

While the data hasn't been analyzed yet, the measurements are expected to show an uptick in water levels in the eastern Snake River Plain aquifer, which provides irrigation water for 1 million acres of farmland as well as for the state's aquaculture industry, and is the primary source of drinking

water in the region.

The measurements will likely show some water level rebound as a result of Idaho's big water year in 2017, when snowpack levels reached record and near-record levels in many parts of the state, said Sean Vincent, hydrology section manager for the Idaho Department of Water Resources.

After collecting and analyzing the data, officials will estimate the change in the amount of water stored in the aquifer.

Because the aquifer is very deep, it's not known exactly how much water is stored there, Vincent said. However, "you can compute how much storage change there has been based on the fluctuation of water levels."

While the data isn't finalized yet, "I'm

pretty optimistic that we got some rebound," he said.

But the overall trend in water levels in the aquifer since the 1950s has been downward, he added.

"We've had some ups and downs along the way, but the overall trend has been a downward decline in aquifer water levels since the mid-1950s," Vincent said.

From about 1912 to 1950, the amount of water stored in the aquifer increased by about 18 million acre-feet, due in part to flood irrigation and leaky canals, which resulted in more incidental recharge into the aquifer.

But since 1950, the amount of water stored

See GROUNDWATER, page 33

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GROUNDWATER

Continued from page 31

in the aquifer has decreased by about 12 million acre-feet, as many farmers have switched to sprinkler irrigation practices, flood irrigation has become less common in the region and groundwater pumping became more common.

This year's likely rebound "is a good sign but it doesn't mean our problem has been solved," Vincent said. "It's encouraging but it's not indicative of anything significant yet."

The groundwater level measurements were conducted in March and April by employees of the U.S. Geological Survey, IDWR and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

Dave Evetts, assistant director for hydrologic data at the

USGS' Idaho Water Science Center, said the data should be entered into the state database and available to the public by late June or early July.

The agencies measure aquifer water levels every year but undertake mass measurement efforts, like the one conducted this year, every five years.

The data provides state and federal water managers a snapshot of the current state of the eastern Snake River plain aquifer, Evetts said.

The primary purpose of these collection efforts, he said, is to validate and improve the eastern Snake River plain aquifer model maintained and operated by the IDWR and to understand the status of the aquifer.

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IFBF file photo

American Farm Bureau Federation has developed a new risk-management insurance product for dairy farmers that will provide them the opportunity to manage risk by focusing on revenue from milk sales.

Farm Bureau to offer dairy revenue protection insurance

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The American Farm Bureau Federation, in cooperation with American Farm Bureau Insurance Services, has developed a new risk-management insurance product for dairy farmers. Approved by the Agriculture Department's Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, "Dairy Revenue Protection" insurance will provide dairy farmers the opportunity to manage risk by focusing on revenue from milk sales.

"We know that the level of risk

protection available to dairy farmers was inadequate and we saw a clear opportunity to help by specifically addressing the impact of milk price volatility on a dairy farmer's revenue," said AFBF President Zippy Duvall. "This coverage will help shield dairy farmers from unexpected declines in milk prices as well as unexpected declines in milk production by addressing overall revenue. We are excited about teaming up with American Farm Bureau Insurance Services to offer this new risk management tool to

dairy farmers."

As designed, Dairy Revenue Protection will provide several levels of insurance coverage based on the value of the farmer's milk. One option will use manufacturing milk futures prices, and the other option would be based on the value of milk components, such as milkfat, protein and other milk solids. A majority of dairy farmers selling milk in the U.S. are paid based on the amount of milkfat and protein in their milk.

Other than those dairy pricing options, Dairy-RP coverage otherwise functions similarly to area-based crop revenue protection insurance policies. The coverage would offer revenue guarantees based on futures prices, expected production and market-implied risk. The premiums for coverage will be subsidized.

It is expected that Dairy-RP policies will be available in late summer 2018.

Canadian dairy is having its cake and eating it, too

By John Newton

AFBF director of Market Intelligence

Canadian dairy farmers are expected to increase milk production this year by 4 percent, to 21.6 billion pounds. This follows three consecutive years of growth in Canadian milk production. In fact, since 2014, Canada's milk production has grown by more than 16 percent, more than any other major dairy-exporting region. For comparison, from 2014 to 2018, U.S. milk production will grow 6 percent, the European Union is expected to grow 4 percent and New Zealand milk production is expected to remain flat.

Spurred by increasing demand for butter and higher milkfat-containing products, the growth in Canadian milk production does have a downside: increased supplies of less desirable skim milk solids, i.e. nonfat dry milk powder. During 2015, nonfat dry milk powder inventories in Canada reached a 38-year high of 60,000 metric tons.

Partially in response to these growing inventory levels, as well as imports of competitively priced U.S.-produced ultra-filtered milk proteins, Canada introduced a national ingredients pricing scheme designed to lower the price of skim milk solids and reduce dairy product imports from the U.S. The scheme was fully implemented in 2017. Equally trade distorting, the lower prices for Canadian-produced skim milk solids allowed Canada to engage in the export market in a significant way.

In the decade prior to 2016, Canada exported an average of 11.3 thousand metric tons of skim milk powder per year using export subsidies. In 2016, Canadian skim milk powder exports to the world climbed 74 percent year-over-year, to 24,000 metric tons. The 2016 export volume represented approximately 23 percent of Canada's nonfat dry milk production. By 2017, and as a direct result of the national ingredients strategy, total skim milk powder exports from

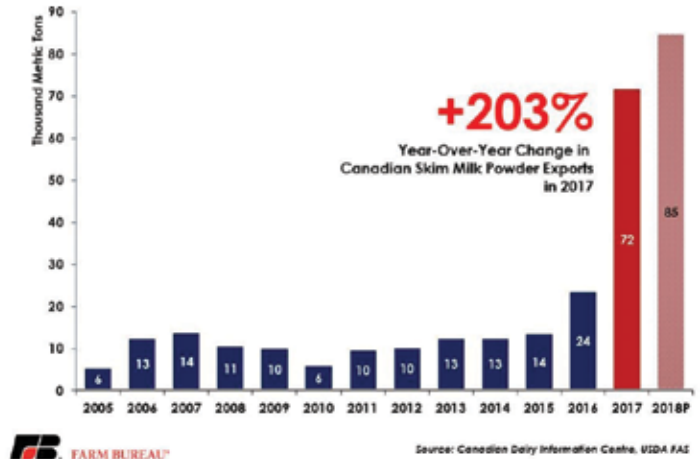
Canada increased 203 percent, to 72,000 metric tons. This trend is expected to continue in 2018, as USDA projects total Canadian skim milk powder exports to increase by 13 percent, to 85,000 metric tons – representing 61 percent of their nonfat dry milk production.

The recent surge in Canadian skim milk powder exports has cannibalized sales of U.S.-produced skim milk powders in foreign markets. For example, during 2017, Canada exported 4,500 metric tons more skim milk powder to Mexico than the prior year – an increase of 122 percent. Meanwhile, U.S. skim milk powder exports to Mexico dropped by 2,500 metric tons. Similar shifts in market share were observed in the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Jamaica, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Uruguay and Sri Lanka.

The largest beneficiaries of Canada's newfound exporting prowess include Algeria, Jordan, South Africa, Uruguay and Sri Lanka. The import volume of skim milk powder from Canada to these countries combined increased 1,000 percent to over 2,000 percent.

In a perfectly competitive market, there would be nothing wrong with Canada's milk pricing and exporting actions with respect to skim milk solids. However, Canada's dairy farmers do not operate in a competitive market like U.S. dairy farmers do. To insulate its domestic dairy market, Canada maintains strict tariffs and import quotas and administers a milk supply management system – effectively making farm-level milk prices, and thus consumer (retail) dairy product prices, much higher than in many other countries.

Figure 1. Canadian Skim Milk Powder Exports



For dairy products that Canada's domestic market desires, consumer prices are artificially higher due to its supply management system. The higher returns from their provincial government-imposed supply management system allow for both the exporting of skim milk solids into international markets and for Canada's milk processors to buy Canadian-produced skim milk solids at artificially low prices. The lowering of prices for Canadian-produced skim milk solids made Canada more competitive in export markets and simultaneously made U.S. imports into Canada less competitive.

The bottom line is that for products in surplus in the market, i.e. skim milk solids, the national ingredients pricing scheme functions similarly to an export subsidy and allows Canada to dispose of the surplus product in global markets at or below international market-clearing prices. That type of trade-distorting policy is one factor that has contributed to lower U.S. milk prices.

There is no doubt that U.S. trade negotiators have this issue, as well as the supply management system, as one of the top agricultural issues to negotiate with Canada in a North American Free Trade Agreement modernization. Repealing the national ingredients strategy will go a long way toward making trade fairer and improving the income of U.S. dairy farm families.

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FARM BUREAU COMMODITY REPORT

| GRAIN PRICES | 4/23/2018 | 5/22/2018 | Trend |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|
| PORTLAND: | | | |
| | | New Crop | |
| White Wheat | 5.71-5.90 | 5.80-5.94 | + .09 to + .04 |
| Hard Red Winter | 6.03-6.18 | 6.45-6.70 | + .42 to + .52 |
| DNS 14% | 7.23-7.48 | 7.78-7.93 | + .55 to + .45 |
| Oats | 240.00 | 250.00 | + 10.00 |

| | | | |
|-----------------|------|----------|--------|
| OGDEN: | | | |
| | | Old Crop | |
| White Wheat | 4.11 | 4.51 | + .40 |
| Hard Red Winter | 4.68 | 5.01 | + .33 |
| DNS 14% | 5.63 | 6.03 | + .40 |
| Barley | 7.45 | 7.45 | Steady |

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|------|----------|--------|
| BLACKFOOT/ IDAHO FALLS: | | | |
| | | New Crop | |
| White Wheat | 3.50 | 4.35 | + .85 |
| Hard Red Winter | 4.90 | 5.10 | + .20 |
| DNS 14% | 5.30 | 5.60 | + .30 |
| Hard White | 5.10 | 5.10 | Steady |

| | | | |
|-----------------|------|----------|--------|
| BURLEY: | | | |
| | | New Crop | |
| White Wheat | 3.87 | 4.39 | + .52 |
| Hard Red Winter | 4.32 | 4.80 | + .48 |
| DNS 14% | 5.36 | 5.65 | + .29 |
| Barley | 5.50 | 7.00 | + 1.50 |

| | | | |
|------------------|------|----------|-------|
| MERIDIAN: | | | |
| | | New Crop | |
| White Wheat(cwt) | 4.73 | 4.90 | + .17 |

| | | | |
|------------------|--------|----------|--------|
| LEWISTON: | | | |
| | | New Crop | |
| White Wheat | 5.60 | 5.70 | + .10 |
| H. Red Winter | 6.12 | 6.45 | + .33 |
| Dark N. Spring | 7.10 | 7.48 | + .38 |
| Barley | 138.50 | 141.50 | + 3.00 |

LIVESTOCK PRICES

| | 4/20/2018 | 5/22/2018 | Trend |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| FEEDER STEERS | | | |
| Under 500 lbs | 145-216 | 150-207 | + 5 to - 9 |
| 500-700 lbs | 125-197 | 135-194 | + 10 to - 3 |
| 700-900 lbs | 115-156 | 117-153 | + 2 to - 3 |

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|-------------|
| FEEDER HEIFERS | | | |
| Under 500 lbs | 133-185 | 127-169 | - 6 to - 16 |
| 500-700 lbs | 124-163 | 125-156 | + 1 to - 7 |
| 700-900 lbs | 109-142 | 110-137 | + 1 to - 5 |

| | | | |
|------------------------|-------|--------|--------------|
| HOLSTEIN STEERS | | | |
| Under 700 lbs | 82-98 | 70-110 | - 12 to + 12 |
| Over 700 lbs | 70-97 | 73-101 | + 3 to + 4 |

| | | | |
|--------------------|-------|-------|---------------|
| COWS | | | |
| Utility/Commercial | 53-81 | 53-78 | Steady to - 3 |
| Canner & Cutter | 50-74 | 53-70 | + 3 to - 4 |

| | | | |
|------------|----------|-----------|----------------|
| Stock Cows | 810-1400 | 1125-1300 | + 315 to - 100 |
|------------|----------|-----------|----------------|

| | | | |
|--------------|--------|-------|---------------|
| BULLS | | | |
| Slaughter | 64-100 | 64-99 | Steady to - 1 |

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| BEAN PRICES: | | | |
| Pinto | 21.00-23.50 | 21.00-24.00 | Steady to up .50 |
| Garbanzo | 40.00-43.00 | 35.00-40.00 | - 5.00 to - 3.00 |

COMPILED BY THE IDAHO FARM BUREAU COMMODITY DIVISION

IDAHO HAY REPORT

USDA Market News, Moses Lake, WA

May 18, 2018

Tons: 1200 Last Week: 500 Last Year: 600

Compared to last Friday, Alfalfa old crop premium weak. No new contracts for new crop reported this week. Trade slow with good demand. Old crop feeder hay is getting cleaned up in the trade area. Retail/Feedstore not tested this week. According to NASS May 2018 hay stocks in Idaho are 29% higher compared to May 2017. Prices are dollars per ton and FOB the farm or ranch unless otherwise stated.

| Alfalfa | Tons | Price | Wt. Avg | Comments |
|-----------------|------|---------------|---------|----------|
| Mid Square | | | | |
| Premium/Supreme | 450 | 135.00-135.00 | 135.00 | Tarped |
| Premium | 1550 | 130.00-135.00 | 133.87 | Tarped |
| Good/Premium | 400 | 130.00-130.00 | 130.00 | Tarped |

Hay Stocks in Idaho up 29 percent from 2017

Hay stocks on farms on May 1, 2018 totaled 660,000 tons in Idaho, up 29 percent from a year ago. May 1 stocks represent 13 percent of 2017 production. Disappearance from December 1, 2017 was down 1.5 million tons. Hay stocks stored on United States farms totaled 15.7 million tons, down 36 percent from a year ago. May 1 stocks are 12 percent of 2017 production. Disappearance from December 1, 2017 totaled down 70.6 million tons.

POTATOES & ONIONS

May 22 2018

Potatoes

UPPER VALLEY, TWIN FALLS-BURLEY DISTRICT, IDAHO -- Shipments 752-711-750 (includes exports of 8-8-8) --- Movement expected to remain about the same. Trading moderate. Prices generally unchanged. Russet Burbank U.S. One baled 10-5 pound film bags non size A mostly 5.50; 50-pound cartons 40-50s mostly 11.50-12.00, 60-70s mostly 13.50, 80s mostly 13.00, 90s mostly 11.00, 100s mostly 10.00.

Onions - Dry

IDAHO AND MALHEUR COUNTY OREGON--- Shipments 39-24-17--- Movement expected to decrease seasonally. Remaining supplies in too few hands to establish a market.

5 YEAR GRAIN COMPARISON

| Grain Prices | 5/23/2014 | 5/18/2015 | 5/20/2016 | 5/24/2017 | 5/22/2018 |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Portland: | | | | | |
| White Wheat | 7.29 | No Bid | 5.22-5.32 | 4.72-4.92 | 5.80-5.94 |
| 11% Winter | 8.11-8.21 | 6.45-6.46 | 5.21-5.29 | 4.77-4.92 | 6.45-6.70 |
| 14% Spring | 7.72 | 6.17-6.32 | 6.17-6.32 | 6.61-6.86 | 7.78-7.93 |
| Corn | No Bid | 4.55-4.61 | 4.68-4.74 | 225.00 | 250.00 |

| | | | | | |
|---------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Ogden: | | | | | |
| White Wheat | 6.15 | 6.27 | 4.32 | 3.77 | 4.51 |
| 11% Winter | 6.52 | 5.45 | 4.09 | 3.72 | 5.01 |
| 14 % Spring | 6.72 | 6.75 | 5.32 | 5.66 | 6.03 |
| Barley | 9.15 | 5.60 | 6.90 | 5.85 | 7.45 |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Pocatello/Blkft: | | | | | |
| White Wheat | 6.50 | 5.91 | 4.10 | 3.75 | 4.35 |
| 11% Winter | 6.99 | 5.64 | 4.15 | 4.05 | 5.10 |
| 14% Spring | 6.76 | 6.50 | 5.05 | 5.55 | 5.60 |

| | | | | | |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Burley: | | | | | |
| White Wheat | 5.81 | 5.76 | 3.95 | 3.37 | 4.39 |
| 11% Winter | 6.45 | 4.86 | 3.53 | 3.30 | 4.80 |
| 14% Spring | 6.60 | 6.15 | 5.08 | 5.18 | 5.65 |
| Barley | 6.50 | 4.75 | 6.00 | 5.00 | 7.00 |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Meridian: | | | | | |
| White Wheat(bushel) | 6.30 | 5.60 | 4.14 | 3.92 | 4.90 |

| | | | | | |
|------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Lewiston: | | | | | |
| White Wheat | 7.05 | 6.05 | 4.95 | 4.65 | 5.70 |
| Barley | 186.50 | 131.50 | 126.50 | 106.50 | 141.50 |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Bean Prices: | | | | | |
| Pintos | 34.00-35.00 | 24.00-25.00 | 25.00-28.00 | No Bid | 21.00-24.00 |
| Small Reds | 39.00-40.00 | 40.00 | No Bid | 36.00-37.00 | 28.00 |

MILK PRODUCTION

May 22, 2018

April Milk Production up 0.7 Percent

Milk production in the 23 major States during April totaled 17.3 billion pounds, up 0.7 percent from April 2017. March revised production, at 17.8 billion pounds, was up 1.4 percent from March 2017. The March revision represented a decrease of 9 million pounds or 0.1 percent from last month's preliminary production estimate.

Production per cow in the 23 major States averaged 1,982 pounds for April, 10 pounds above April 2017. This is the highest production per cow for the month of April since the 23 State series began in 2003.

The number of milk cows on farms in the 23 major States was 8.74 million head, 14,000 head more than April 2017, but 2,000 head less than March 2018.

2017 Annual Milk Production up 1.4 Percent from 2016

The annual production of milk for the United States during 2017 was 215 billion pounds, 1.4 percent above 2016. Revisions to 2016 production decreased the annual total 31 million pounds. Revised 2017 production was up 35 million pounds from last month's publication. Annual total milk production has increased 13.4 percent from 2008.

Production per cow in the United States averaged 22,941 pounds for 2017, 163 pounds above 2016. The average annual rate of milk production per cow has increased 12.5 percent from 2008.

The average number of milk cows on farms in the United States during 2017 was 9.39 million head, up 0.7 percent from 2016. The average number of milk cows was unrevised for 2017. The average annual number of milk cows has increased 0.8 percent from 2008.

5 YEAR LIVESTOCK COMPARISON

| | 5/20/2014 | 5/20/2015 | 5/20/2016 | 5/24/2017 | 5/22/2018 |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Feeder Steers | | | | | |
| Under 500 lbs..... | 170-258 | 245-332 | 137-194 | 135-205 | 150-207 |
| 500-700 lbs..... | 174-241 | 210-295 | 135-180 | 120-183 | 135-194 |
| 700-900 lbs..... | 145-191 | 175-260 | 120-149 | 117-166 | 117-153 |
| Over 900 lbs..... | 106-171 | 169-202 | 108-132 | 95-134 | 123 |
| Feeder Heifers | | | | | |
| Under 500 lbs..... | 189-245 | 230-290 | 137-179 | 125-179 | 127-169 |
| 500-700 lbs..... | 169-221 | 195-265 | 131-160 | 122-167 | 125-156 |
| 700-900 lbs..... | 135-174 | 167-210 | 115-143 | 107-150 | 110-137 |
| Over 900 lbs..... | 114-153 | 135-183 | No Bids | 90-116 | 105 |
| Holstein Steers | | | | | |
| Under 700 lbs..... | 115-158 | 140-229 | 91-109 | 95-122 | 70-110 |
| Over 700 lbs..... | 100-145 | 120-185 | 92-126 | 80-104 | 73-101 |
| Cows | | | | | |
| Utility/Commercial..... | 75-113 | 85-114 | 65-83 | 52-92 | 53-78 |
| Canner & Cutter..... | 74-112 | 78-108 | 55-73 | 48-80 | 53-70 |
| Stock Cows..... | 1200-1900 | 1375-2025 | 950-1500 | 1000-1375 | 1125-1300 |
| Bulls – Slaughter | | | | | |
| | 91-139 | 97-114 | 73-105 | 72-104 | 64-99 |

CATTLE ON FEED

Released May 25, 2018

United States Cattle on Feed Up 5 Percent

Cattle and calves on feed for the slaughter market in the United States for feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head totaled 11.6 million head on May 1, 2018. The inventory was 5 percent above May 1, 2017. This is the second highest May 1 inventory since the series began in 1996.

Placements in feedlots during April totaled 1.70 million head, 8 percent below 2017. Net placements were 1.63 million head. During April, placements of cattle and calves weighing less than 600 pounds were 320,000 head, 600-699 pounds were 230,000 head, 700-799 pounds were 415,000 head, 800-899 pounds were 445,000 head, 900-999 pounds were 205,000 head, and 1,000 pounds and greater were 80,000 head.

Marketings of fed cattle during April totaled 1.80 million head, 6 percent above 2017.

Other disappearance totaled 63,000 head during April, 5 percent below 2017.

CATTLE MARKET REPORT

May 24, 2018

CATTLE MARKET REPORT AND ANALYSIS

Cash Cattle

Packers increased bids first to \$108 then \$110 where a few cattle traded in Kansas. Most sellers were holding for higher prices and packers will continue filling inventory needs today and tomorrow. Sales volumes are very light so far this week and the wild card will be how many cattle are killed on the upcoming holiday Monday.

Corn prices combined with rising interest rates are taking a toll on breakevens for the remainder of 2018 and into 2019. Cattle operators will be living with higher costs of both of these inputs. Interest rates have remained at historic lows for most of the past 10 years and many people are not accustomed to the risk of sharply higher rates and most don't remember the 18% rates of the Carter presidency.

Slaughter volumes hit a new high this past week at 660,000 head. Packer margins are over the top. They have gained additional margins of \$8-10 cwt. from reduced cattle costs while holding box prices together and even seeing some increases in the cutout. Total margins are difficult to estimate but some think are in excess of \$300+/head. The good news is working through the increasing supplies with expanded slaughter volume. Next week packers will be buying for a holiday shortened week on Memorial day. With margins at these levels don't be surprised if they aren't able to squeeze in more volume than a normal holiday week.

Cattle Futures. Futures prices made additional triple digit gains with the spot June lagging. June at \$105 remains under most cash asking prices by up to \$10. The August contract remains the projected low for the summer but held well above a dollar.

Carcass weights are released each Thursday and are a closely watched barometer indicating the position of cattle feeders in the nation's feedlots. The last report released for the week of May 5th, had steer carcass weights down 1# at 849# that still remains 17# over last year. Heifers were down 2# leaving them 17# over prior year with more heifers in the mix. The seasonal low in carcass weights should be soon and then averages will start back up.

Forward Cattle Contracts: There are no cattle feeders interested in pricing cattle off the forward summer contract months. Packer purchases into the forward months are limited to June. Most of the cattle are reported in the current cash trade as reported by mandatory price reporting services. Other cattle bought into June are reported by USDA with no price -- only sales volumes.

The weekly breakdown of fed cattle moving to the beef processing plants is as follows. 1) formulas 55%; 2) negotiated 20% [both live and flat dressed]; 3) forward contracts 25%. Some of the formula arrangements are week to week negotiated prices and not committed cattle to one plant.

The Cutout. The cutout was mixed with choice moving higher. The cutout is nearing a seasonal high and all indications are that beef demand is healthy and sustainable at these levels with some important beef eating periods on the horizon. Packers will continue to hold the large slaughter volumes in order to profit and serve the needs of retail customers.

Beef Feature Activity Index. This is the most active period of the year for beef features. The period will extend past the 4th of July and features will move a lot of beef. Beef features are often planned months in advance. Retailers look at the pricing of live cattle futures for signals of product availability and price. Beef specials serve as drawing cards into the stores and are profit centers. This new link provides perspective on the level of feature activity week by week in the country.

CLASSIFIEDS

Animals

Two registered Longhorns for sale--naturally raised--ready for breeding. Tendoy, Id. Call or Text 208-940-0827.

Farm Equipment

Three-point hitch fits John Deere's A, B, 60 ect. In great shape \$100. Also have a beautiful Singer Vintage sewing machine built into oak cabinet with tools. Serial # D450592 \$500 OBO. Pine, Id. 208-590-4314. New Squeeze chute, green, hand pull, \$1,300. Midvale, Id 208-355-3780.

Balewagons: New Holland self-propelled or pull-type models, parts, tires, manuals. Financing & delivery available. Also interested in buying balewagons. Will consider any model. Call Jim Wilhite at 208-880-2889 anytime. 1956 Ford 850 Tractor. Excellent condition. Includes original Dearborn front end loader with trip bucket, heavy duty box scraper, log skidder, rebuilt carburetor, plus extras. \$3,500. Pictures available. Grangeville, Id 208-983-1417.

Used in great shape firebird sun shade off my 4320 John Deere, bolts on the ROPS! will fit any 35" width rops \$200.00 In Donnelly. Delivery to Boise valley or even Twin Falls area possible. Phone 208-880-6068 can send pictures.

Miscellaneous

Old fashion style pine coffins and caskets. Clear finish. Unlined - \$700.00. Lined - \$850.00. Delivery available. Weiser, Id. 208-549-2239

USA made: Two 12-volt DC covered straight tube all aluminum 48" light fixtures with built in switches. Uses AC tubes. Very efficient and brand new \$50. Also, Fermenter 6-gallon screw top never used includes extras \$40. Grangeville, Id. 208-983-1417.

Old wagon running gear -frame. Hazelton, Id. 208-731-4181.

Real Estate/Acreage

12 acres - 10 miles north of Priest River Id. Approx. 1200 sq ft house. 2-3 bedroom, 2 bath, new roof, paint, 2 wells, 3 car garage, RV garage, outbuildings, fenced garden, greenhouse, \$245,000. Call Gary 208-826-3132.

154 Acres in Grimes Pass. Close to Garden Valley. Surrounded by Boise National Forest. Multiple Potential Building Sites. Less than 6500 per acre, Not to be divided. Call Idaho Joe 208-861-7171.

Lot for Sale - 1/2 Acre Country Lot. New Home or New mfg Hm. City water, Gas, Utilities available. Must obtain all permits. Also Mobile Home for Sale - 1977 14x66 As-Is Condition. Must Move. \$5,000. Shelley Area. 528-5337.

81 acres in Cache Valley, two artisan flowing wells, 3 miles from Logan City and Utah State University. Connects to the Logan-Cache Airport and is 40 miles from Spectacular Bear Lake and the Beaver Ski Resort. Call 208-785-6888 or 435-563-5969.

4.5 acres for sale. Off Hwy 21 Grimes creek area. Established well on property, power, septic, pump house, with sink & toilet. Snow roof covers 30 ft trailer. \$100,000. Michelle, 208-921-4317.

NW of Blackfoot. Beautiful newer 3 bedroom 2 bath 2000sq/ft home. Large garage, great views. 16+ acres lava dry grass land near BLM elk deer antelope. Great views. \$265K. Also large lot Rockland. Two building rights. \$29K. 208-604-2205.

Custom D-log 1500 sq. ft. cabin, 300 feet Payette riverfront property 9609 Packer John Road Smiths Ferry, Idaho 208-258-4708.

Services

Pond stocking, Opaline Aqua Farm, selling bass, bluegill, grasscarp, trout and koi. fishguy@opalineaquafarm.com or call Rich 208-495-2654.

Recreational Vehicles

4 wheelers: 2006 Honda TRX 450 super clean. 2007 CanAm DS 250 automatic. And Ol' Red 1986 Honda 250. Make offer on all or just one. Idaho Falls, Id. 208-521-1596.

Wanted

Want small acres north of I-80 in Nevada. No subdivision or gated parcels. 208-358-7475.

Paying cash for old cork top embossed bottles and some telephone insulators. Call Randy. Payette, Id. 208-740-0178.

Paying cash for German & Japanese war relics/souvenirs! Pistols, rifles, swords, daggers, flags, scopes, optical equipment, uniforms, helmets, machine guns (ATF rules apply) medals, flags, etc. 549-3841 (evenings) or 208-405-9338.

Wanted

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 208-425-3225.

DEADLINE DATES:
ADS MUST BE RECEIVED BY
JUNE 20
FOR NEXT ISSUE.

FREE CLASSIFIEDS

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

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Child/ (Under 60") \$36.99

**Farm Bureau Online
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San Diego Zoo or
Knott's Berry Farm.

