Idaho Farm Bureau
Quarterly
Fall Issue • Volume 26 Issue 4



Raising Pumpkins & Christmas Trees

Bread in a Bag, 12

Americans trust farmers, 14

Wheat food page, 20

The Zipline

By Zippy Duvall
President, American Farm Bureau Federation



County Farm Bureaus strengthen their communities

My Farm Bureau journey began at the county level, and that is where I first saw the power of neighbors working together.

That same spirit is alive in county Farm Bureaus across the country today.

Our grassroots leaders identify a challenge, bring neighbors together, and get to work. That local leadership is what makes Farm Bureau strong.

Each year, our County Activities of Excellence program celebrates the dedication and creativity behind outstanding local programs. This year, 23 activities were selected for national recognition.

These winning programs reflect the many ways county Farm Bureaus serve their members, promote agriculture and give back to their communities.

I'm proud to congratulate this year's winners and share a few examples of the work we will celebrate at the 2027 American Farm Bureau Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina.

See **DUVALL,** page 6

The President's Desk

By Matt Dorsey
President, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation



Being a good steward

Buzz words such as "regenerative," "sustainable" or "climate-smart" agriculture have become popular in recent years.

I would point out that farmers have been doing those things for many decades, just maybe not under those phrases. Another way to put it is, farmers and ranchers have always been stewards of the land.

Whether it's planting cover crops to prevent erosion, reducing tillage, using water more efficiently, rotating crops to enhance soil nutrients, or rotating livestock grazing to restore the soil, farmers and ranchers have been adopting so-called regenerative practices for many years.

Farmers love their land. If you can prove to them that a certain practice will help the soil or water, they will try it.

Farmers and ranchers have been protecting natural resources and promoting soil and water health for decades.

See **DORSEY,** page 6

Inside Farm Bureau

By Zak Miller
CEO, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation



Thanksgiving

For many of us, the image of the first Thanksgiving is one of long tables overflowing with food, shared by the Pilgrims and their Native American neighbors.

It is a beautiful picture of friendship and plenty, and an easy one to hold onto as we gather with family and friends to close out another year.

I love the Thanksgiving season for all that it is, and even more for all that it can be. But the real story is humbler and, I think, more meaningful.

In the fall of 1621, the Plymouth colonists celebrated their first harvest with about 90 Wampanoag men led by Massasoit. The gathering lasted three days, and the menu was likely venison, wildfowl, corn and seafood rather than the spread we picture today.

Consider what came before that harvest. The previous winter, about half of the Mayflower's passengers had died from disease, cold and hunger. Those who gathered that fall were celebrating survival more than abundance.

See **MILLER,** page 7

Idaho Farm Bureau

Volume 26, Issue 4

IFBF Officers

President.....Matt Dorsey, Caldwell
Vice President.....Doug Barrie, Idaho Falls
Executive Vice President/CEO .....Zak Miller

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kyle Wade.....Downey
Jason Fellows.....Weston
Kimberly Hobbs.....Franklin
Travis McAffee .....Howe
Alan Clark .....Menan
David Philps.....Challis
Darren Taber.....Shoshone
Rick Pearson .....Hagerman
Paul Marchant.....Oakley
Cody Chandler .....Weiser
Galen Lee .....New Plymouth
Tristan Winegar .....Weiser
Marjorie French.....Princeton
Tom Daniel .....Bonners Ferry
Tom Mosman .....Craigmont
Mitchell Searle .....Burley
Tess Zollinger.....Preston

STAFF

Executive Assistant.....Cara Dyer
VP of Organization.....Justin Patten
Operations Assistant .....Elly MacDonald
Director of Member Benefits.....Betty Inskeep
Project Manager.....Ott Clark
Accountant .....Jonny Lawson
Member Relations Assistant .....Grace Hanning
Dist. I Regional Manager.....Kylee Urie
Dist. II Regional Manager .....Camron Hammond
Dist. III Regional Manager .....Zack Lanier
Dist. IV Regional Manager .....James Gallacci
Dist. V Regional Manager .....Bob Smathers
Dist. V Regional Manager .....Megan Parnell
VP of Governmental Affairs .....Russ Hendricks
Director of Government Affairs .....Braden Jensen
Dept. Director of Governmental Affairs.....Dexton Lake
Boise Office Manager.....Anna Rose Byers
VP of Information .....Joel Benson
Communications Manager .....Kristy Lindauer
Director of Publications .....Sean Ellis
Videographer.....Jacob Christensen
Videographer.....Paul Boehlke

Printed by: Adams MultiMedia, Pocatello, ID

IDAHO FARM BUREAU QUARTERLY
USPS #022-899, ISSN #1557-1270 is published quarterly by the IDAHO FARM BUREAU FEDERATION, 275 Tierra Vista Drive, Pocatello, ID 83201.

POSTMASTER send changes of address to:
IDAHO FARM BUREAU QUARTERLY
P.O. Box 4848, Pocatello, ID 83205-4848.
Periodicals postage paid at Pocatello, Idaho, and additional mailing offices.
Subscription rate: $4.00 per year included in Farm Bureau dues.

MAGAZINE CONTACTS:
Idaho Farm Bureau Federation
EDITOR (208) 239-4292 • ADS (208) 239-4384
E-MAIL: seanellis@idahofb.org
ADS: advertising@idahofb.org
web: www.idahofb.org

COVER: At Spring Valley Family Tree Farm, Christmas trees mix with pumpkins. See story on page 4. Submitted photo

Table of Contents

4 Growing traditions at Spring Valley Farms

10 2026 was a tough growing year for Idaho farmers

12 From wheat fields to bread bags: Idaho students get a hands-on lesson in agriculture

14 Which industry do Americans trust the most? Hint: It has to do with food

15 Idaho top dog in the West in per capita farm income

16 More than a way of life

18 Steve Cote teaches livestock language fluency

20 Wheat: The stable staple of every meal for more than 10,000 years, plus wheat-based recipes

22 Study questions two-year rest period after rangeland fires

23 Idaho's top 10 farm commodities in 2025

24 How forests grow: Disturbance

32 Student turns trespassing problem into sign business

34 Classifieds





Submitted photos

ABOVE AND RIGHT: **At Spring Valley Family Tree Farm, a straw bale maze and pumpkin hunt are both incorporated into Christmas tree fields.**

Growing traditions at Spring Valley Farms

By Nida Mannan
For Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

For Annette and Paul Brusven, Spring Valley Family Tree Farm began with a dream that took nearly a decade to find the right ground.

Annette had grown up around a wholesale Christmas tree operation and knew early on that she loved both growing things and working with people. Paul, whose grandparents farmed in North Dakota and eastern Montana, had long imagined becoming a farmer himself.

When the two met while attending the University of Idaho, those interests began to merge into a plan of their own.

"I kind of always thought that I wanted to do the Christmas tree thing, but do it retail, do it where people would come to the farm," Annette said.

Paul was on board.

The couple spent eight to 10 years looking for the right property, searching for land with good water, the right exposure and enough room to build the kind of operation they envisioned.

By the time they found the 30-acre property that would become Spring Valley Family Tree Farm, Annette admits she had nearly given up looking.

They happened to drive past it one day while fishing at a nearby reservoir.

"Paul's like, 'Oh, that place is for sale. Let's go look at it,'" Annette recalled. "I'm like, 'I'll wait in the car. Just go look at it.'"

Paul came back with a different answer.

"He goes, 'I found our property.'"

They bought it in 2005 and began planting Christmas trees the following spring.

For Paul, the smaller, more intensive operation offered another route into agriculture. He had once pictured himself raising crops such as wheat, peas and barley, but the cost of purchasing enough farmland and equipment to begin a traditional commercial operation made that difficult.

"Maybe I got to change my way of thinking, and maybe we could just be more intense in our farming, but smaller acreage," he said. "So that's the route we went, and I don't regret it one single bit."

The Brusvens began selling Christmas trees in 2012. But a Christmas tree farm is anything but a one-month-a-year business.

Each spring, they plant about 2,500 trees, replacing those harvested the



previous season, replacing losses and continuing to establish new areas.

Then comes the yearly maintenance.

"Every single tree on this farm gets a makeover," Annette said. "Every year that tree got a haircut."

Depending on the variety, a Christmas tree can take years before it is ready for a family's living room. The average tree at Spring Valley takes about eight to 10 years to mature. Some faster-growing species can be ready in six or seven years, while others can take 12 or 13.

After all those years of tending a tree, Annette said watching it leave the farm is emotional but not because she is sad to see it go.

"That's its purpose," she said. "We raise it for the purpose of being somebody's Christmas tree."

Seeing a tree they have raised since it was small, carefully cultivated for years, finally become part of another family's Christmas is the rewarding part.

As the Christmas tree business grew, the Brusvens began looking for ways to make the farm productive during other parts of the year.

That led them to pumpkins.

The couple had seen other Christmas tree growers add pumpkin patches, and in 2016 they decided to try something similar. But with most of their available ground already planted in Christmas trees, a traditional pumpkin patch or corn maze was not going to work.

Their daughter, who was studying entrepreneurship in college at the time, helped turn that limitation into something distinctive.

Together, the family developed what they call the "Pumpkin Hunt."

Rather than walking through a conventional pumpkin patch, children search for pumpkins hidden among the Christmas trees.

"We had to work with what we had," Annette said. "Then we realized, you know, that's what makes us different."

They later added a straw bale maze, also incorporated into the Christmas tree fields.

Their daughter also helped launch another part of the operation that has continued to grow: school field trips.

Annette and her daughter initially went from school to school handing out flyers. That first year, roughly a dozen to 15 school groups came to the farm. This year, they hosted 34 groups.

During weekday visits, the emphasis is educational. Children learn how pumpkins grow, what plants need from the soil and how different varieties can look. Some students have visited during other times of the year to learn about trees and even plant a Christmas tree.

For Annette and Paul, those visits have highlighted just how removed some children are from agriculture.

Annette remembers one child seeing tomatoes in the garden and asking whether they were carrots.

"No, those are tomatoes. Carrots grow in the ground," she told him.

It was a simple exchange, but one that stayed with her.

"There's so many kids that just don't know," Annette said. "It feels so good just to be educating, to be teaching them."

Paul said the goal is to help children understand that what they eat and use begins somewhere.

"Everything we have and enjoy does come from the soil," he said.

On weekends, the focus shifts more toward families coming simply to spend time together.

That, the Brusvens say, may be the heart of what they have built.

Families come for pumpkins in the fall and return for Christmas trees in the winter. Some have been coming long enough that the Brusvens have watched couples marry and begin bringing their own children. The farm has even hosted weddings.

When people choose to come to a farm rather than purchase a pumpkin or Christmas tree from a store, Annette believes they are looking for something beyond the product itself.

"They're looking for an experience," she said. "Something they can do as a family, together, have fun, make memories."

Paul added two words: "Build tradition."

More than 20 years after finding the property Annette nearly refused to look at, that may be the legacy taking shape at Spring Valley Family Tree Farm.

For Paul, the most rewarding part is watching people come to the farm and simply enjoy being there.

"They just know it's a place of peace and comfort and safety and fun and joy," he said.

And with their son and daughter now grown and their first grandchild expected in December, the Brusvens are beginning to think about another generation experiencing the farm as well.

"We want someone to take over this," Paul said. "We want to basically show our grandchildren the culture of farming."

For a farm built around trees that take nearly a decade to mature, perhaps that long view comes naturally. ■

DUVALL

Continued from page 2

Every time I visit with our county Farm Bureau leaders, I'm reminded that no two communities are exactly alike. Our members understand their neighbors because they live and work alongside them. That firsthand knowledge helps volunteers develop programs that make a real difference.

In Florida, Seminole County Farm Bureau is encouraging students to explore agriculture through its Cultivating Innovation Award.

Presented at the county science fair, the award recognizes student projects connected to agriculture, natural resources or food systems. Farm Bureau members help judge the projects, giving them an opportunity to encourage students' curiosity and show how science connects to the work we do on our farms and ranches.

In Michigan, Kalamazoo County Farm Bureau's Doe Derby addresses two local challenges at once: deer damage to crops and hunger. This project provides an opportunity for hunters to donate deer that are processed into venison for local food banks.

In its second year, the effort collected 172 deer, providing about 5,000 pounds of packaged meat to help feed neighbors in need while helping manage the deer population.

'Our county Farm Bureaus are where grassroots leadership comes to life. They bring people together, build stronger communities, and show what can happen when neighbors roll up their sleeves around a shared goal.'

In Virginia, Page County Farm Bureau's Women's Leadership Committee saw a need for a consistent local farmers market and stepped forward to create one. Their "From Farm to Community: Building a Market that Works" initiative gives farmers a steady place to sell their products and connect directly with customers.

It is a practical way to support farmers while helping neighbors discover the food grown and raised in their community.

One of my favorite parts of the County Activities of Excellence awards is seeing successful programs take root in other communities. An activity developed in one county can inspire members hundreds of miles away to adapt it for their own community.

This year's winners will showcase their programs on the trade show floor at the 2027 AFBF Convention. I encourage you to visit their exhibits, meet the volunteers behind these activities, and consider what might work in your own county.

Sometimes, a conversation with another Farm Bureau member is all it takes to spark a new idea.

Our county Farm Bureaus are where grassroots leadership comes to life. They bring people together, build stronger communities, and show what can happen when neighbors roll up their sleeves around a shared goal.

I'm proud of the work our local leaders are doing, and I look forward to celebrating another outstanding group of county programs in Charlotte. ■

DORSEY

Continued from page 2

Farmers being good stewards over the natural resources they have been blessed with is a good way to sum up regenerative, sustainable and climate-smart agriculture.

Being good stewards is a standard that farmers and ranchers seem naturally drawn to because of the nature of their profession. Because of the agricultural profession, being good stewards has been a standard that has been passed down for generations.

Farmers have always striven to be good stewards of the land; we live on the land and raise our families on it.

In agriculture, trying to be a good steward doesn't always work out the way we intend. Calving out cows is an example of stewardship. Sometimes you need to assist the mama cow by pulling the calf. Most times, it's best to stay away and let mama and baby go through this miraculous process on their own.

'Farmers and ranchers strive to take what's been given to them and magnify it and make it better, knowing a financial victory or reward is not guaranteed.'

Farmers and ranchers strive to take what's been given to them and magnify it and make it better, knowing a financial victory or reward is not guaranteed.

That desire naturally carries over into other areas of an agricultural producer's life, such as in their churches and communities. Again, they understand that striving to be a good steward in these other areas doesn't always result in a victory.

But, like in their agriculture world, they strive to be good stewards anyway.

I am blessed, humbled and grateful for the many good men and women who farm the land that I have met over the years. Thank you for the stewardship that you have demonstrated and perfected in agriculture and carried over into your communities and everyday lives.

This drive to be good stewards of everything in their life may be one of the reasons Americans trust farmers and ranchers so much.

According to a national Gallup poll conducted in August and released in September, farming and agriculture is the industry Americans feel most positive about.

According to the poll, Americans feel more positive about farming and agriculture than they do 24 other industries and business sectors.

In other words, Americans trust farmers and ranchers.

[You can see a story about those poll results on page 14.]

Additionally, research by American Farm Bureau Federation shows that four out of five American adults trust farmers and ranchers to make decisions about regenerative agricultural practices.

To those outside of agriculture, thank you for that trust. It means a lot to us farmers to know you like and trust us.

On behalf of America's largest general farm organization, I, along with other agricultural producers, pledge to keep earning that trust by continuing to be a good steward of the resources we have been blessed with. ■

MILLER

Continued from page 2

Today we gather in warm homes and eat well beyond reason — I won't judge your plate if you don't judge mine — but a simple meal shared by people who had barely survived carries a deeper kind of gratitude.

The closer we come to lacking necessities, the more we appreciate them.

For some, 2026 has been a year of good fortune, few worries and great success. To you, I wish nothing but continued happiness as you enjoy those blessings.

For others, this year has brought more challenges and heartbreak. Whether it was a water shortage for crops, disastrous market prices, natural disasters or the health and family trials we all face, I offer my sympathy and my hope for better days ahead.

Those who suffer often understand gratitude best, and I saw that firsthand this year. I watched one of the best men I know fight fire for days to defend not only his own ranch but his neighbors' as well.

He fought with an energy I still cannot comprehend, yet thousands of acres of grass for his cattle and horses were lost, and miles of fence must be replaced. Through it all, his response has never changed: gratitude for everyone who came to help and a focus on what was saved rather than what was lost.

My dear friend's attitude is exceptional, but it is not unique. Many people have faced great loss, this year and in years past, and still found reasons to be grateful.

The examples I come across seem endless, and the optimist in me believes that is because people are good.

Whether this year brought far more smiles than tears, or a flood of tears and a drought of joy, I hope each of us can be a little more like my friend and take time to give thanks, even if, like those first Pilgrims, it is a simple and humble thanks at the end of a hard year.

Hard times are hard, and painful seasons can last too long. Many are like a drought: We cannot hurry them; we can only wait for rain.

But if we can each find something to be thankful for, even now, that gratitude can carry us through. And when the rain comes and the tables are full again, may we remember the humble thanks we gave when times were hardest.

Happy Thanksgiving. ■

Country Chuckles

By Jonny Hawkins



LOW INTEREST LOANS FOR IDAHO SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION

3 % - 4 % - 5 %
Terms 7-15 Years
Up to $600,000

- Sprinkler Irrigation
- No-Till Drills
- Fences
- Livestock Feeding Operations
- Solar Stock Water Pump Systems

IDAHO CONSERVATION LOAN PROGRAM

swc.idaho.gov (208) 332-1790

FLORIDA FARM BUREAU
VOICE OF AGRICULTURE

Sunshine you can Ship!



WWW.FLORIDASBESTFRUIT.COM

BISON TOUGH
STEEL FENCING & GATES

FENCING & GATES





RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL, & GOVERNMENT APPLICATIONS

BISON PIPE

Call or Drop By Today! 208-324-2142

240 E FRONTAGE RD N | JEROME, ID | BISONPIPE.COM

PANELS • JACK FENCE • GATES • CATTLE GUARDS • WIRE FENCING • ACCESSORIES



The people who count on you don't need you to have superpowers, just a plan for their future. Life insurance helps shield your loved ones from financial uncertainty, protecting the life and dreams you've built.

Coverage may be available for **as little as a dollar a day**, so whether you're looking for a first policy or need to add more coverage, we can help.

Contact your Farm Bureau agent today.

Farm Bureau® INSURANCE
A FARM BUREAU SERVICE IN IDAHO

Individual eligibility for all product promotions is subject to underwriting review and approval. Estimated premium payment is for 20-year Income Guard Term Life Plan; Standard; 30-year-old Male or Female; Non-Smoker. Amount is for demonstrative purposes only. Contact your Farm Bureau agent for a quote on your actual monthly premium payment. Farm Bureau Insurance Company of Idaho/Pocatello, ID. Farm Bureau Life Insurance/West Des Moines, IA. LI221 (7-26)



Photos by Sean Ellis

A potato field is irrigated in late June in Power County. Yields for potatoes and some other main crops grown in Idaho are expected to be down, in some cases significantly, in 2026.

2026 was a tough growing year for Idaho farmers

By Sean Ellis
Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – This year's growing season for Idaho farmers was a tough one and average yields for some crops were way below average.

Many Gem State farmers were hard-pressed to get enough water to finish off their crops, but unfavorable weather conditions were the real killer and wreaked havoc on yields.

Some of Idaho's main crops reported near-average yields, but others, especially the small grains, experienced average yields way below normal.

For example, the average yield for wheat fields in Idaho this year was 77.2 bushels per acre, down from 93.5 last year. For barley fields in Idaho, the average yield dropped from 112 bushels an acre in 2025 to 100 in 2026.

"This is probably the lightest grain crop we've cut in years," said Teton farmer Dwight Little. "Environmentally, it's been a struggle the whole year."

He said some farmers planted their crops pretty early because of unseasonably warm weather, but then they were hit with some real hard frosts.

"This spring proved to be one of the most challenging in the Magic Valley and Upper Snake for establishing the crop. The cooperative saw the highest percentage of replants this year due to multiple frost events and wind."

– Holly Luna, Amalgamated communications manager



Average yields for wheat, and some other Idaho crops, was down significantly this year, which proved challenging for many Idaho farmers.

Little got nothing this year from his fruit trees, which include peaches, apricots, apples, plums, cherries and prunes. While his family picked 32 gallons of strawberries last year, they got a total of three this year.

"Everything was just different this year," he said.

North Idaho farmer Bill Flory said farmers in his area had trouble getting rain at the right times this spring "and it really shows on yields. Yields are not stellar on the spring crops."

Winter crops did fine this year, he said, but "it's been a struggle for our spring crops. None of (them) have a lot of glitter to them economically."

Total barley production in Idaho dropped from 55 million bushels in 2025 to 38 million bushels in 2026, while total wheat production fell from 108 million bushels in 2025 to 89 million bushels this year.

"Some areas of the state faced late frost, hail, or extended hot weather conditions that impacted the crop, besides overall contacted acres being down due to supply on hand," said Idaho Barley Commission Executive Director Laura Wilder.

"It was a year of weather extremes," said Brett Wilken, who oversees Scoular's Barley MVP program.

Rockland grain farmer Cory Kress said the lack of water this year didn't help, but it was the spring freezes that did the most damage.

"We went from a record warm spring to ... it seemed like it froze non-stop," he said.

Kress said he knows farmers in his area who ended up re-planting sugar beets three times.

A record hot July didn't help yields, he added. "This is just a year of extremes. It's been one extreme to another. My friend group, we're all looking forward to the end of this year."

Other main crops in Idaho, like sugar beets, also reported low yields and production this year. Sugar beet fields in the state averaged 40.6 tons per acre this year, down from 45.1 tons an acre last year, and total production was 6 million tons, compared with 7.5 million tons last year.

The primary reason sugar production is down this year is that Amalgamated Sugar Co. intentionally reduced sugar beet acreage following an exceptionally large 2025 crop, said Amalgamated communications manager Holly Luna. The goal, she said, was to better align production with market demand and existing inventories.

"With that said, this spring proved to be one of the most challenging in the Magic Valley and Upper Snake for establishing the crop," she said. "The cooperative saw the highest percentage of replants this year due to multiple frost events and wind."

Corn yields in Idaho dropped from 209 bushels per acre in 2025 to an estimated 194 bushels an acre in 2026, average yields for dry edible peas fell from 1,670 pounds per acre last year to 1,550 this year and hop yields fell from 2,281 pounds an acre last year to 2,130.

Although the final numbers aren't in yet, potato yields are also forecast to be down this year.

"Growers report that several frost events, the summer heat, and water availability in eastern Idaho held back (potato) yields …," North American Potato Market News owner Ben Eborn wrote in the Oct. 8 edition.

Eborn is forecasting that average potato yields in Idaho will fall from 445 hundredweight per acre in 2025 to 425 hundredweight in 2026.

Not all crops in Idaho experienced lower than normal yields this year. Canola yields averaged 1,900 pounds per acre this year compared with 1,800 last year, alfalfa yields are expected to average 4.3 tons an acre this year compared with 4.1 last year and dry bean yields are forecast to average 2,900 pounds an acre, up from 2,860. ■

From wheat fields to bread bags

Idaho students get a hands-on lesson in agriculture

By Nida Mannan
For Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

Across Idaho classrooms, fourth graders are getting a lesson in agriculture that begins with a plastic bag, a few simple ingredients and their own two hands.

They pour in the ingredients, work the dough together inside the bag and eventually pull out something recognizable: bread they made themselves.

For the Idaho Wheat Commission, that simple experience is also a way to help children understand where one of the foods they see every day begins.

Bread in a Bag, part of the commission's Wheat in the Classroom program, gives students a hands-on opportunity to make a wheat food product while learning about wheat production, nutrition and agriculture. The program is paid for by Idaho wheat-growing families and reaches more than 7,000 students across the state each year.

"It's an opportunity for teachers to facilitate with their students a hands-on learning experience with a wheat foods product," said Jill Cloward, who works in office operations for the Idaho Wheat Commission.

The commission primarily targets fourth-grade classrooms, although Cloward said participation is not limited to that age. Kindergarten classrooms and 4-H groups have also reached out over the years, and the commission generally tries to accommodate anyone interested in participating.

Each fall, the commission sends registration information to fourth-grade teachers throughout Idaho. Participating teachers receive instructional materials and student booklets, then choose which recipe their class will make. Bread may be the most familiar option, but students can also make pizza, pretzels or tortillas.

The Idaho Wheat Commission website describes the program as an opportunity for students to make a wheat product "from scratch" while learning about the history of wheat and its role in a healthy diet.

The students do much of the work themselves.

Typically, two students share a bag. Ingredients are added to it and the students knead the dough through the plastic before taking it out and dividing it into individual portions.

"They definitely see the whole process," Cloward said.

Depending on the school, the finished product can be baked there or sent home for students to bake with their families.

The experience is paired with lessons explaining how wheat moves from the farm to the foods students recognize. Teachers show the commission's "Amazing Wheat" video, which takes students into wheat fields, shows a combine at work, explains the parts of a wheat kernel and follows wheat as it moves toward becoming food.



Submitted photos

A student shows bread he made himself as part of the Idaho Wheat Commission's Bread in a Bag program.

Some of the farmers and fields shown in the video are from Idaho.

"It's good to just see that these are their neighbors," Cloward said. "I would love to take them to the field and see the fields, too, if we could."

For many children, that connection is not necessarily obvious.

A loaf of bread appears on a grocery store shelf already sliced and packaged. Flour comes in a bag. Pizza arrives as a finished meal. The work that happened before those foods reached the table can be easy to overlook.

Cloward said that although plenty of Idaho children still have connections to farming, many others do not.

"The more that we can get them familiar with it, I think the more appreciation they'll have for the ag community and what it offers to the state," she said.

"They have the ability to create this food item that they enjoy. Just that sense of accomplishment that they can do that on their own."

– Jill Cloward, Idaho Wheat Commission

That education fits within the broader mission of the Idaho Wheat Commission, which works on behalf of the state's wheat-growing families through market development, research investments and educational programs supporting Idaho wheat growers.

Bread in a Bag has been around since at least the 1980s, according to Cloward, and for some Idaho schools it has become an annual tradition.

Participation has remained strong. Cloward said that during the past five years, annual participation has ranged from roughly 7,100 to more than 8,000 students, with around 300 to 345 classrooms and approximately 120 schools taking part in a typical year.

Still, she would like to see the program reach more classrooms.

One challenge is simply finding the right teachers. Fourth-grade teaching assignments change, making it difficult for the commission to maintain an up-to-date statewide contact list. Cloward encourages parents who hear about the program to ask their child's school whether it participates.

The commission also works to keep cost from becoming a barrier.

Schools may use approved USDA food-service funds to purchase ingredients. If a school cannot provide them, teachers can purchase the ingredients and be reimbursed by the commission.

"We don't want teachers to have to try to fund a program," Cloward said. "They already have enough on their plate."

For Cloward, who has watched her own children participate in the program, its value goes beyond teaching students how wheat is grown.

She remembers how excited her children were by the experience and believes lessons children physically participate in can stay with them differently than information on a worksheet.

"There's nothing like doing it yourself," she said.

Students may not be harvesting wheat in a field, but they are taking raw ingredients and turning them into food they recognize and enjoy.

And years later, that may be the part they remember.

Cloward once heard from a former participant who said they were still making the Bread in a Bag recipes years after completing the program.

If students carry away one lesson, Cloward hopes it is the realization that food does not have to be something they simply buy already made.

"They have the ability to create this food item that they enjoy," she said. "Just that sense of accomplishment that they can do that on their own." ■





TOP: **Students begin the process of making bread as part of the Idaho Wheat Commission's Bread in a Bag program.** BOTTOM: **Students eat bread they prepared themselves through the Idaho Wheat Commission's Bread in a Bag program.**

Which industry do Americans trust the most?

Hint: It has to do with food

By Sean Ellis
Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – Farming is still the industry Americans feel most positive about, according to an annual Gallup poll released in September.

Agriculture's overall positive rating in this year's poll dropped six points compared to last year, but farming still topped the poll, 3 percentage points ahead of the No. 2 restaurant industry and 6 points ahead of the No. 3 computer industry.

The national poll, which began in 2001, asks people whether their overall view of 25 key industries and business sectors is very positive, somewhat positive, neutral, somewhat negative or very negative.

The 2026 poll was conducted Aug. 3-24 and released Sept. 17.

Twenty-four percent of poll respondents said they felt very positive about farming and agriculture and 30 percent felt somewhat positive about the industry, giving it a 54 percent total positive rating. The restaurant industry had a 51 percent total positive rating.

Farming and agriculture and restaurants were the only two industries with a total positive rating from a majority of Americans in this year's poll.

The computer industry ranked third with a 48 percent positive rating.

Farming easily had the highest "very positive" rating at 24 points. The computer industry received the next-highest "very positive" rating at 18.

Teton farmer Dwight Little was happy to hear that Americans view farming more favorably than they do any other industry.

"It makes us feel like we're making a difference," he said. "We are making sure people can have a full tummy."

"Either we've done a good job letting people know what we do," he added, "or they really appreciate the fact they can go to the grocery store and buy anything they want…."

Twin Falls County farmer Rick Pearson is pleased with the Gallup poll ranking but he's not surprised that people trust farmers. He said he often makes thousand-dollar deals with fellow farmers with just a handshake.

"We live amongst very good people," he said about farming in general. "It's good to know that people trust us. We must be doing something right."

Though it topped the poll again, farming and agriculture's total positive rating slipped 6 points this year compared with the 2025 poll.

In addition, 24 percent of Americans responding to the Gallup poll felt neutral about farming and agriculture, while 11 percent felt somewhat negative and 10 percent very negative about the industry.



Idaho Farm Bureau Federation photo

A national poll found that Americans feel more positively about farming than they do any other industry or business sector.

Farming's 6-point slip in positive ratings in this year's poll might have something to do with partisanship, according to a Gallup news release announcing this year's poll numbers.

"Partisans' average industry ratings are typically more positive when the sitting president is from their party," the news release states.

It notes that farming and agriculture and the oil and gas industry have generally received higher ratings from Republicans than Democrats, while the movie industry has typically been rated more positively by Democrats.

"Those historical differences are evident in the current ratings," the release states.

The poll reveals a very skeptical American public that doesn't hand out positive ratings willy-nilly.

According to Gallup, "The average positive rating [this year] across all 25 sectors is 36%, marking the sixth consecutive year it has been under 40%. The record-low average rating was 34% in 2008, while the record high was 49% in 2017."

It's of note that the top two industries in this year's poll both have to do with food. However, the grocery industry didn't fare so well, as it only received a 37-point total positive rating and ranked well down the list.

At the bottom of this year's poll were the usual suspects: The federal government, with a 19-point total positive rating, was at the very bottom, followed by the advertising and PR industry (26), pharmaceutical industry (28), and the oil and gas industry (30). ■

Idaho top dog in the West in per capita farm income

By Sean Ellis
Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – Idaho led the West in total farm revenue on a per capita basis last year. No surprise there. The Gem State has been all alone at the top in that category for a long time.

When it comes to total farm revenue, California leads the nation by a lot. But when you break it down per capita – that number is derived by dividing a state's total farm revenue by its total population – Idaho is in a league of its own among the 11 western states.

According to USDA data released in early September, Idaho had a per capita farm income total of $5,887 in 2025. That means the state's farmers and ranchers produced $5,887 worth of farm-gate revenue for every man, woman and child in the state last year.

Montana ranked second in this category at $4,502 and was followed by Wyoming ($4,345), New Mexico ($2,134), Oregon ($1,817) and Colorado ($1,725). California was next at $1,644, followed by Washington ($1,491), Utah ($825), Arizona ($732) and Nevada ($361).

The numbers were crunched by University of Idaho Agricultural Economist Brett Wilder, who said the totals are an important and simple way to show people, especially elected officials, how important agriculture is in Idaho.

"It's always important to recognize that agriculture is extremely important as a standalone industry in Idaho, but also relative to other states," he said. "Dollars from agriculture trickle through our communities and it's an important economic driver for our state. It's something that touches every single one of us."

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation President Matt Dorsey said that per capita income total for Idaho speaks volumes about how important agriculture is to the average state resident.

"That one number is amazing and confirms what many of us already know: Agriculture is the cornerstone of Idaho's economy," said Dorsey, who farms in Canyon County. "I would encourage people to share this number, and the importance behind it, with as many people as they can, especially our local and statewide elected officials."



Photo by Lane Ashby

Idaho easily leads the West in total farm income on a per capita basis.

The data compiled by Wilder shows that Idaho's per capita farm income number has risen even as the state's population has exploded. The state's per capita income total in 2000 was $3,896. Idaho's per capita farm income total has gone up even as the state's population has grown by more than 50 percent since then.

This year's USDA data shows Idaho's 22,000-plus farmers and ranchers produced $11.95 billion in total farm-gate revenue last year. Divided by the state's 2025 population of 2.029 million people, that worked out to $5,887 of farm revenue produced per each Idahoan.

The per capita number is derived from gross farm revenue and not net farm revenue, which is what the farmer actually gets after expenses are subtracted from revenue.

During a recent meeting, Sen. Kelly Anthon, the president pro tempore of the Idaho Legislature, told IFBF members that "agriculture has built this state and it is the lifeblood of this state."

The per capita farm income number shows that statement is still true. ■

More than a way of life

By Nida Mannan
For Idaho Farm Bureau Federation



Idaho Farm Bureau Federation photos

Paul Marchant is shown with his father, Gerald Marchant, on the family ranch in this file photo.

For Oakley rancher, writer and Idaho Farm Bureau Federation board member Paul Marchant, agriculture has always been about more than making a living.



Paul Marchant

On Memorial Day, lightning struck Paul Marchant's Forest Service grazing allotment east of Oakley.

The fire moved through two of the three units where Marchant grazes cattle during the summer. It was early enough in the season that the surrounding vegetation was still green, and his cows had not yet been turned out.

Marchant knows the fire could have gone very differently.

"We were really blessed," he said.

Because Marchant relies on Forest Service land for his summer grazing, the fire created another concern. If the burned allotment had been closed to grazing, even temporarily, he would have needed to find another place for his cattle or purchase additional feed that would have caused a major disruption to his ranching operation.

Instead, local Forest Service officials allowed him to turn out his full herd. Marchant believes the relationship he has built with the agency, and their understanding of how he manages the land, helped.

He admits the outcome left him with what he described as "survivor's guilt" after watching what wildfires have done to other ranchers across the West.

Wildfire is not new to Marchant.

Years earlier, a fire west of Oakley burned close to 90,000 acres, he recalled. He helped neighbors gather cattle and saw firsthand what fire could do to livestock.

"Cows aren't our pets," Marchant said. "But by the same token, they kind of are. We love and respect them and what they do for us."

If grazing land needs years to recover, ranchers can be forced to find another source of feed, another place for their cattle or reduce the size of their herd altogether.

Marchant grew up around cattle and horses and remembers wanting his own livestock for as long as he can remember.

"It really is a lifestyle," he said. "It's more than just an occupation."

As a teenager, saying out loud that he wanted to become a rancher was not as easy as knowing it.

"I was probably a freshman in high school when I dared say it out loud," he said. "Yeah, I want to be a rancher."

Once he said it, Marchant said he knew that was the path he wanted to follow. He did not know exactly what that path would look like, but whether it meant managing ranches or eventually building something of his own, he knew he wanted to stay in agriculture.

Today, Marchant represents the fourth generation of an agricultural family. His grandchildren are the sixth. That legacy means a great deal to him, but he also believes agriculture can sometimes be too quick to "circle the wagons" and shut out people who do not come from that world.

"We need to be as welcoming as we possibly can be to people outside our realm," he said. "We whine because people don't understand this, but we try to exclude them."

His father, Gerald Marchant, served for years in Farm Bureau, including on the county board and as county president. He also served on the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation board of directors. Paul grew up watching that involvement.

"It's more implied than anything," Marchant said. "It was evident early on that that was a priority to him."

The Marchant family was not in a position to give large amounts of money, he said, but they could give their time through civic organizations, church, fire service and agriculture.

Years later, Marchant found himself taking on many of the same kinds of roles.

"If there's not arguments and disagreements, I think you're probably not doing it right. You can still get along and disagree."

– Paul Marchant, rancher/IFBF board member

He has served on the Cassia County Farm Bureau board and eventually became its president after initially turning down the role several times.

Becoming president, he said, "turbo-charged" a fire that was already there.

"I felt like if I'm going to take this on, I need to try to do the best job I can," he said.

Like his father once did, he now serves on the IFBF board of directors.

Marchant has also spent about 25 years on the county fair board and coaches girls basketball at Oakley High School.

His years with Farm Bureau have also brought friendships he did not expect.

"Some of my best friends I've met through Farm Bureau," he said.

He values the debates as much as the relationships.

"If there's not arguments and disagreements, I think you're probably not doing it right," he said. "You can still get along and disagree."

More importantly, he believes Farm Bureau gives farmers and ranchers a collective voice.

Marchant said Idaho Farm Bureau's positions are taken seriously by policymakers and others making decisions that affect agriculture.

What still frustrates him is how little many people know about what it takes to produce food.

"How do we feed America? How do we feed ourselves?" he said. "What could be more important than that?"

For Marchant, writing became another way to talk about agriculture.

Since 2010, he has written for Progressive Publishing's agricultural magazines, including Progressive Cattle, Progressive Forage and Ag Proud in Idaho. He was originally hired to sell advertising.

"I'm a terrible salesman, to be honest," he said.

Writing was different.

For the magazine's first issue, someone asked if he would write a column. Marchant had quietly hoped the opportunity might come.

"I never thought, 'I'm going to be a writer,'" he said. "But when I started with Progressive, it's kind of like I found my calling."

His columns usually revolve around ranch life, the people around him and the small moments that turn into something larger.

His father once gave him advice that has stuck with him: There is always something happening on a ranch to write about.

Sometimes the stories are funny. Sometimes they are deeply personal.

Marchant has written about a period when his son-in-law and daughter-in-law were both battling cancer. His daughter-in-law eventually passed away.

Writing about those experiences, he said, became a way to work through them and connect with readers going through something similar. "If it touches my heart, then I found that it usually touches someone else in a certain way, too."

Even after more than a decade of doing it, Marchant still feels somewhat like an imposter when it comes to writing.

"That's frankly been kind of hard for me to accept, that I am pretty good at this," he said.

When Marchant talks about what agriculture and Farm Bureau have taught him, he keeps coming back to the same thing: service.

He has watched people lead well and watched others get caught up in titles or recognition. The people he respects most are usually the ones who are not worried about who gets the credit.

He sees the same thing in the girls he coaches in basketball.

"When you forget about yourself and worry more about the greater good, then you will be better served," he said. "That, to me, is the biggest lesson in about anything."

It is something he saw in his father long before he understood it as a lesson. ■

Steve Cote teaches livestock language fluency

Low-stress herding method pays off for cattle handlers worldwide

By Dianna Troyer
For Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

Steve Cote cradles a rectangular jade pendant, a gift from a New Zealand friend who learned a low-stress livestock handling method he taught.

The method "changed my life and that of the cattle I work with," the friend wrote on a thank you card. "Three lines are carved across the stone to represent knowledge, leadership, and striving for excellence and care of those in need, in this case, all who work with cattle and the cattle themselves."

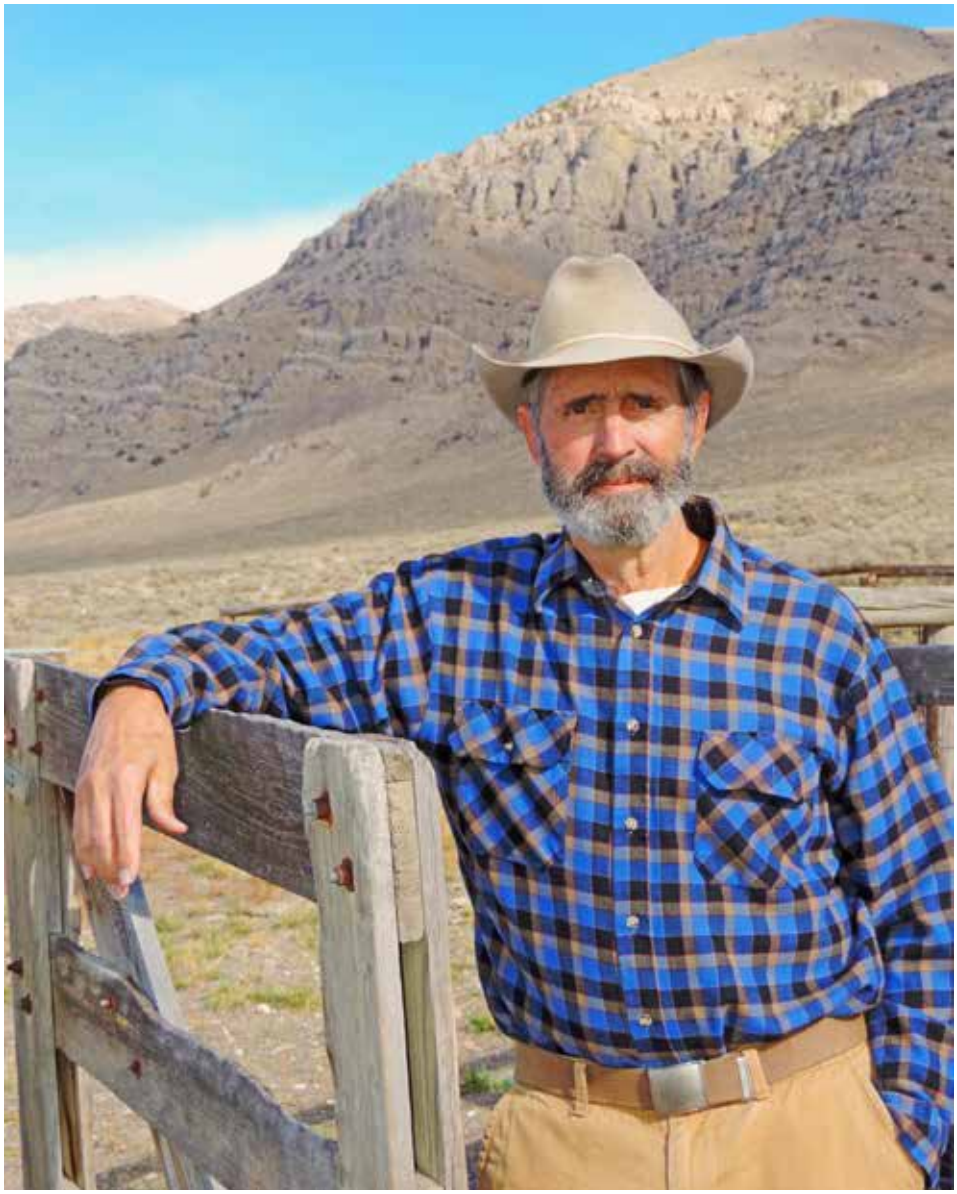
A longtime stockmanship educator, author and private consultant, Cote is grateful for the gifts and friendships he has made during the past 20 years. His outreach has extended internationally with ag teachers or beef producers contacting him from Finland, Germany, France, Australia and New Zealand.

"I've met people from all over the world through teaching this method," said Cote, a retired district conservation officer with the Natural Resources Conservation Service who lives near Arco.

"People tell me they're so glad they learned new ways to handle their cattle," he said. "The method involves principles, behavioral understanding, guidelines and tips. It's gratifying to see people have success and enjoy working with their livestock instead of considering it a chore."

Cote has traveled nationwide for nearly two decades teaching classes. He also has written two books and a pocket guide with more than 30 diagrams covering pasture, range and corral work.

In response to requests, he produced a five-part, five-hour video series showing examples of getting herds calm and working well, driving well, placing and settling stock, weaning and working stock in facilities.

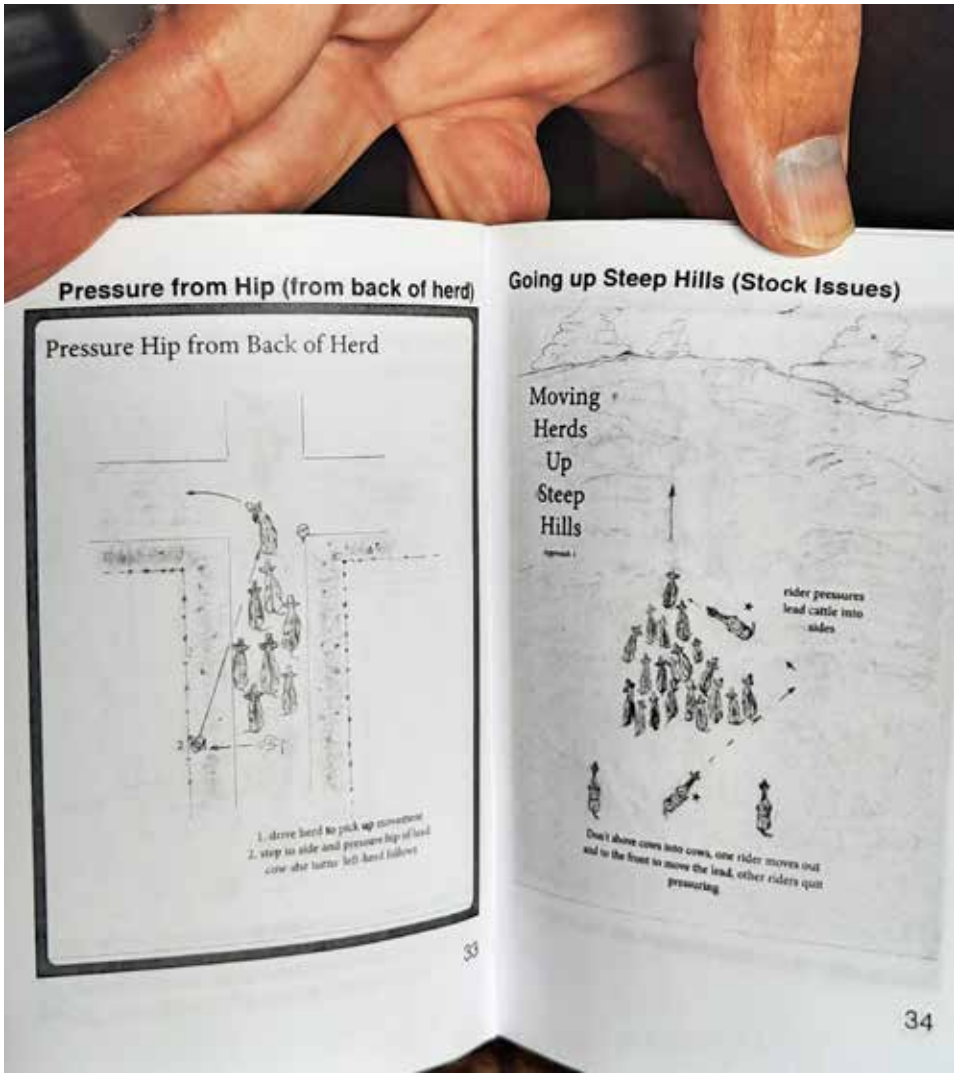


Photos by Dianna Troyer

Steve Cote teaches low stress livestock handling methods that reduce stress in a herd and ultimately lower health care costs, increase weight gains, and reduce or eliminate weight loss in calves at weaning.

"I've had people tell me their cows hardly get sick anymore. Cows are really healthy animals as long as they're not stressed."

– Steve Cote, author/educator/consultant



Diagrams show how cows can be taught to drive as a group, turn, slow and stop.

He also shares the method through social media. Clay Conroy interviewed him for his "Working Cows" podcast. Eric Tucker, a farmer/rancher focused on improving soil through grazing, featured him, too.

Based on ranchers' feedback, Cote said implementing the low-stress livestock handling method is a good financial investment.

"It reduces stress in a herd, lowers health care costs, increases weight gain, and reduces or eliminates weight loss in calves at weaning," he said. "I've had people tell me their cows hardly get sick anymore. Cows are really healthy animals as long as they're not stressed. When they're stressed, their immune system weakens and they become susceptible to illness, just like people do."

The Society for Range Management describes the method as a powerful tool for ranchers to improve vegetation and gain more benefit from grazing. The method also increases carrying capacity though better utilization of hard-to-get areas.

"The range flourishes," Cote said. "You can place livestock without fences to meet utilization goals set for riparian areas on public lands and graze previously unused areas."

How you bring cattle to a new place matters, he emphasized.

"If they're relaxed, they'll stay where they're placed," he said. "They'll go to water and come back to the herd. Riparian areas have remained robust for trout. Sage grouse leks stay in good condition, too."

Cote said he learned the low-stress livestock handling method during a Bud Williams Stockmanship School program in Idaho and wanted to share the information.

"Bud didn't have the time or interest in writing a book to teach people," he said.

In 2004, Cote wrote "Stockmanship – A Powerful Tool for Grazing Lands Management." When asked for more detailed information, he wrote a second book, "Manual of Stockmanship" in 2019.

Cote said he wrote the second book for anyone who works with cows – range riders, ranchers, dairy owners, feedlot operators – to help them reduce stress on the animals, to improve rangeland, and to ultimately reduce their own frustration.

The method is not difficult to learn, he said. "You apply pressure to a cow by walking or riding toward it. As it responds, you ease the pressure or allow the cow to relieve pressure as it does what you ask. The cows can be taught to drive as a group, turn, slow and stop."

A couple of factors are crucial – the angle at which you approach the animal, how close you get to it before it moves away and whether you approach the head, shoulder or hip. You can control the direction in which the cows move by zigzagging or moving back and forth in a straight line perpendicular to the direction you want them to move toward.

Using the method, ranchers can implement a rotational grazing system without fences, much like the first cowboys did when no fences existed in the West, Cote said.

He recalled what some older cowboys in Oklahoma told him during a workshop.

"Kid, you're not saying anything new."

He agreed.

He said that somehow, the original methods of chasing cows have fallen by the wayside and been replaced with shouting cowboys, barking dogs and prods – which stresses the cattle.

"I've been applying the method for years on hundreds of thousands of cattle," Cote said. "It works. Try it, read the manual, work stock, go to a school taught by one of Bud Williams' students, or watch the tape, then go out and see your herd become calm, responsive and more productive."

Cote shares more detailed information at his website, cotestockmanship.com. ■



Wheat

The stable staple of every meal for more than 10,000 years

By Britany Hurst Marchant
Idaho Wheat Commission Executive Director

When someone mentions wheat, your thoughts probably turn to bread fresh from the oven, baked comfort foods, or celebratory desserts.

For thousands of years, families have relied on wheat to be the staple of every meal. Archaeologists have found that humans have been eating cereals, including wheat, for as many as 100,000 years.

Evidence of early bread making dates back nearly 15,000 years. More than 10,000 years ago, domestication and intentional cultivation of wheat by humans led to a permanent change in human dietary norms.

Research throughout time and across the entire wheat value chain – from seed selection to end use quality – has identified six distinct classes of wheat grown in the United States.

These classes are not interchangeable; each class has identifying characteristics ideal for certain uses in specific markets.

While different states and regions across the country grow different classes, the crop is generally limited to two or three classes at most. Idaho's wheat industry is unique, in part, because Idaho's wheat farmers grow five of the six wheat classes – soft white, hard white, hard red spring, hard red winter, and durum.

Wheat is categorized into class based on kernel color (red or white), kernel hardness (hard or soft), and growing season (winter or spring).

One-Hour Dinner Rolls

From wheatfoods.org



Servings: 16 ▪ Prep time: 35 min. ▪ Cook time: 17 min. ▪ Total time: 1 hr

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups warm water
- 1 Tablespoon dried yeast
- 2 Tablespoons sugar
- 2 Tablespoons butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 3 Tablespoons butter, melted for topping

Directions

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook, stir together warm water, yeast, and sugar. Let stand until foamy (this means the yeast has successfully been activated) — about 5 minutes.
2. To the yeast mixture, add the butter, salt, and half of the flour. Mix on low speed until the ingredients begin to come together. Still on low speed, add the remaining flour and mix for 1 minute.
3. Mix on low speed until the final addition of flour is fully incorporated into the dough. Increase the speed to medium and knead until the dough is smooth and elastic, about 6-8 minutes.
4. Transfer the dough into a lightly greased large bowl and cover tightly with cling wrap and a dish towel. Let the dough rise in a warm place until doubled in volume, about 20 minutes.
5. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and form it into an even ball. Using a dough cutter or knife, cut the dough in half. Roll each half of the dough into a long log. Cut each log into 8 rolls. Roll each one into the shape of a ball.
6. Line a baking tray with parchment paper. Place each rolled piece of dough about 1 centimeter apart. Cover the rolls with cling wrap and allow them to rise again while your oven is preheating to 400°F (200°C). This will take around 20 minutes. While the rolls are rising, melt the butter and minced garlic in a small bowl. Set aside.
7. When the rolls have risen for the second time and joined together, lightly brush the rolls with half of the melted butter (reserve the other half for after they are baked). Bake until golden brown, 15-20 minutes. Immediately after removing the rolls from the oven, brush them with the remaining melted butter. After cooling slightly pull apart and serve. Cover and store at room temperature for up to 2 days.

Pumpkin Spice Snickerdoodles

From eatwheat.org



Servings: 24

Prep time: 15 min.

Cook time: 12 min.

Total time: 27 min.

Ingredients

- ½ cup unsalted butter, melted and slightly cooled
- ¼ cup packed light brown sugar
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 6 Tablespoons pumpkin puree (canned pumpkin works great)
- 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- ½ cup white chocolate chips, optional

Directions

1. Whisk the melted butter, brown sugar, and granulated sugar together in a medium bowl until no brown sugar lumps remain. Whisk in the vanilla and pumpkin until smooth.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, salt, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, and pumpkin pie spice. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and mix well. The dough will be very soft.
3. Fold in white chocolate chips, saving a few back to put on top of warm cookies.
4. Cover the dough and chill for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, in a small bowl mix sugar and cinnamon for coating.
5. Remove dough from the refrigerator. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line baking sheets with silicone mats.

Baking Temp: 350°

6. Scoop about 1 ½ tablespoons of dough per cookie, roll into balls, then roll dough balls generously in coating mixture. Arrange cookies 3 inches apart on prepared baking sheets. Using the bottom of a glass, slightly flatten tops of dough balls to about 2 - 2 ¼ inches across.
7. Bake for 11-12 minutes or until the edges appear set. The cookies will still be soft in the middle.
8. Remove from oven and press the reserved white chocolate chips into the tops of warm cookies for the perfect bakery appearance.
9. Cool cookies on the baking sheets for 10 minutes, then transfer to wire rack to cool completely. Store in an airtight container.

Winter wheat is planted in September and October and spring wheat is planted in March and April. Both winter wheat and spring wheat are harvested in July and August in Idaho.

Protein content and gluten strength also influence how each class of wheat is used.

Hard red spring

Known for its very high protein content (15% or higher) and very strong elastic gluten used in bases that need to carry additional ingredients, such as bagels, pizza crust, and artisan or hearth breads with sturdy crusts.

Hard red winter

With a protein content (~12%) with strong gluten, hard red winter wheats are used similarly to hard red spring wheats, but for bases that need more flexibility. This class is commonly used in yeast or pan breads, tortillas, and flat breads. Hard red winter wheat accounts for about 40% of the wheat produced in the United States.

Hard white

Offers similar characteristics and performance of hard red winter wheat but with a milder, sweeter flavor and a lighter bran color, making hard white ideal for whole wheat products with the refined flour taste.

Soft white

With the lowest protein content (9-10%) and low moisture, soft white wheats provide a higher extraction rate when milled. Its flour is tender, mild in flavor, and a bright, vibrant white color. Soft white is grown almost exclusively in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, and has a loyal customer base for cakes, pastries, crackers, and Asian-style noodles.

Durum

The hardest and densest of the wheat classes, durum has a rich amber color. Durum's strength and structure are ideal for foods that need to keep a certain shape, specifically pasta and couscous.

Knowing that each class of wheat is uniquely suited for certain end products helps even home bakers create family classics with consistency. While all-purpose flour works for most recipes, from a sourdough loaf to grandma's best cookies, fastidious bakers reach for bread flour, cake flour, or pastry flour for consistent results in the final product. ■



Study questions two-year rest period after rangeland fires

University of Idaho news release

MOSCOW – When wildfire burns through rangeland, it's standard practice to keep livestock off the land for two years to allow vegetation to recover. But a new analysis of previous studies led by the University of Idaho Rangeland Center suggests that a blanket two-year rest period may not be necessary in every situation.

The study, "Precipitation and Grazing Utilization Influence Postfire Herbaceous Plant Cover: A Meta-Analysis on Grazing After Fire," found that the amount of time burned areas were rested before grazing resumed did not affect perennial grass cover. However, grazing within a few years of a fire slightly reduced perennial grass cover compared with no grazing.

Factors such as average annual precipitation and grazing use influenced the extent of that reduction. The findings suggest that the decision about when to return livestock to burned rangelands may need to account for conditions on the ground rather than rely on a standard two-year time frame.

Fire is a natural and common occurrence in rangelands, but wildfires have increased in size and severity in recent decades. For livestock producers and rangeland managers, determining when and under what conditions to resume grazing after fire can have significant ecological and economic consequences.

"Our research shows a blanket two-year rest wouldn't necessarily improve perennial grass cover after fire," said Eric Winford, interim director of the Rangeland Center, research assistant professor of rangeland ecology and management and lead author of the study. "Instead, average annual precipitation and grazing utilization are the important factors to consider."

Researchers analyzed results from 18 studies on grazing after fire and found that several factors influence the best time to return livestock to the range. Average annual precipitation and grazing utilization — the proportion of available forage consumed by livestock — affected how much perennial grass cover declined. Greater precipitation and lighter grazing were associated with smaller reductions.



University of Idaho photos

A University of Idaho-led analysis suggests that a standard two-year rest from livestock grazing may not improve perennial grass cover after rangeland fires.



Grazing also reduced annual grass cover in some circumstances, with the effect varying according to precipitation and how heavily the land was grazed. The findings highlight the importance of considering postfire precipitation, vegetation recovery and grazing use when making management decisions.

"Well-managed grazing that results in low utilization may be compatible with postfire recovery where there is sufficient precipitation," said Winford. "In areas with low average annual precipitation, more care will be needed."

The analysis also points to areas where more research could clarify how grazing can support postfire recovery. The researchers recommend that future studies include more information about livestock management, including the timing, utilization and season of grazing, and the duration of rest.

This meta-analysis is one of several postfire recovery initiatives from the Rangeland Center. In partnership with the McClure Center for Public Policy Research, the center focused its annual Rangeland Fall Forum last month on postfire recovery, adaptation and restoration.

The event included a field tour of an ongoing postfire grazing study at U of I's Rinker Rock Creek Ranch, led by Jim Sprinkle, a Rangeland Center member and study co-author. ■

Idaho's top 10 farm commodities in 2025

By Sean Ellis
Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – USDA data released Sept. 3 confirms that the cattle and calves sector bumped milk in 2025 to become the top agricultural commodity in Idaho in terms of farm-gate revenue.

Farm-gate revenue, or farm cash receipts, is what the farmer or rancher receives for their commodity.

Milk had been the state's No. 1 ag commodity for more than two decades, but the cattle and calves sector, with cattle prices near record highs, took that spot in 2025, by a whisker.

According to USDA, Idaho's cattle and calves sector recorded a total of 3.878 billion in cash receipts in 2025, while the state's milk sector recorded $3.827 billion in farm cash receipts.

A University of Idaho report titled "Financial Condition of Idaho Agriculture: 2025," expects milk to regain the top spot within a year or two.

"Revenues from milk production are expected to reclaim their place as the highest of all agricultural commodities produced in Idaho in 2026 or 2027," the January report states.

The U of I report had estimated that cattle and calves claimed the No. 1 spot in 2025 and the USDA data released Sept. 3 confirmed that forecast.

Total farm-gate revenue from milk sales in Idaho dipped just slightly in 2025 compared with 2024, while cattle and calves receipts jumped 17 percent year-over-year, from $3.3 billion in 2024 to $3.88 billion in 2025.

The U of I report said most of that increase can be attributed to record cattle prices, but a portion can also be attributed to the ever-increasing quality of beef originating from the dairy sector.

Potatoes again ranked as the No. 3 agricultural commodity in Idaho and the No. 1 crop, bringing in $1.07 billion in cash receipts in 2025, down 11 percent from $1.2 billion in 2024 and 20 percent from $1.34 billion in 2023.

Wheat came in as Idaho's No. 4 agricultural commodity in 2025 with $518 million in total cash receipts, down 15 percent from $610 million in 2024, and sugar beets recorded a total of $460 million in farm cash receipts, a 2 percent decrease from $470 million.

Hay ranked as Idaho's No. 6 agricultural commodity in 2025 with $358 million in cash receipts, down 9 percent from $392 million in 2024, barley was No. 7 ($288 million, down 24 percent from $379 million), and chicken eggs ranked No. 8 ($192 million, up 54 percent from $125 million).

Rounding out the top 10 were onions ($176 million, down 27 percent from $239 million) and corn ($131 million, down 4 percent from $137 million).

Other Idaho crops and the total cash receipts they brought in during 2025: dry beans ($94 million), hogs ($75 million), hops ($63 million), trout ($43 million), floriculture ($31 million), mint ($28 million), canola ($26 million).



Photo by Jill Bruegeman

Idaho's cattle and calves sector was the state's No. 1 agricultural commodity in 2025 in terms of farm-gate revenue, while potatoes again ranked as the state's top crop in that category.

Idaho also produces a decent amount of fruit, but USDA didn't estimate that industry's cash receipt total because of insufficient data to forecast cash receipts for that commodity. The last time USDA estimated cash receipt totals for fruit in Idaho was in 2017, when the department put the total at $14.78 million, which included $8.1 million for apples and $6.6 million for peaches.

The Sept. 3 USDA report showed that Idaho's livestock industry, which includes eggs, hogs, honey, wool and trout, brought in $8.12 billion in farm cash receipts in 2025, an 8 percent increase over $7.52 billion in 2024.

The state's crop sector, however, went the other way. USDA estimates total cash receipts for Idaho's crop sector at $3.83 billion in 2025, down 10 percent from $4.26 billion in 2024.

The USDA data shows Idaho farmers and ranchers brought in a total of $11.95 billion in farm cash receipts in 2025, up 1.5 percent from $11.77 billion in 2024. That is gross revenue and does not show net farm income, which is what the agricultural producer actually takes home after expenses.

USDA shows intermediate product expenses for Idaho farmers and ranchers totaled $6.9 billion in 2025. This includes costs such as feed, seed and livestock purchases, as well as pesticides, electricity, fertilizer, fuel, marketing, storage and transportation, repair and maintenance and irrigation.

The USDA's September report also puts farmers' and ranchers' total payments to stakeholders at $2.2 billion in 2025. This includes hired labor, rent to operator landlords and interest expenses. ■

HOW FORESTS GROW:

Disturbance

By Chris Schnepf
University of Idaho

Forest change is driven by trees' biology, ecology, and the unique properties of the site they are growing on, such as aspect and soils.

But disturbance is also a vital driver of forest growth and development, especially when you measure time in decades or centuries.

There are many kinds of forest disturbances – they can be artificial, natural, or a bit of both. In the southeastern U.S., hurricanes and tornadoes commonly tear up forests.

In western Washington, landslides, avalanches, and floods commonly disturb forests. Animals, insects and diseases can also function as disturbances.

Human activities such as timber harvesting and development also disturb forests.

The most important disturbance driving Idaho trees' evolution was probably fire. Three broad types of fire were common here. Many are very aware of stand replacing or crown fires, which killed (though did not necessarily vaporize) most trees in their path.

But surface fires, that burned through the understory killing understory plants and small trees but leaving most overstory trees alive, were also common, especially on drier sites, where they might occur every few years.

Most fires in northern Idaho forests were mixed severity fires, moving through crowns in some places and through forest understories in others.



RIGHT: **This is an image from the 1910 fire. Fire history is recorded in trees' genes.** University of Idaho photo

Disturbances also occur at various scales. Mixed severity fires create mosaics of different kinds of disturbances. Patches in these mosaics can be quite large.

The 1910 fires burned through millions of acres of forest. In more modest fires, a crown burning portion of a mixed severity fire might be 50 acres or more.

Tree mortality from root diseases and mountain pine beetle is also often measured in acres rather than the number of trees.

Other disturbances can be very small. Bare soil created by a blown-down tree root wad creates a small disturbance that can provide an opening for new trees to seed into newly created mineral soil or an opportunity for shade tolerant trees in the understory to "release" and grow faster to claim space in the main canopy.

Current disturbances are obviously important, but disturbances that have occurred over thousands of years prior may be more so, as adaptation to those disturbances are recorded in trees' genes.

The fast height growth of larch and lodgepole is an adaptation to stand replacing fire – whichever species establishes first on site after a crown fire dominates the site, at least for the first 100-150 years.

Seeds also express fire adaptations. Lodgepole pine puts out lots of seed nearly every year, and at high elevations, where stand replacement fires were the most common, it puts out serotinous cones (cones don't release seed without a fire or other high heat).

Cottonwoods and aspen have small seeds borne on cottony tufts so they can spread far and wide into freshly burned areas, where fire perfectly prepares the seed bed for them.

Some of our shrub species seeds have waxy coatings that help them remain viable for many decades until high heat melts those coatings and the seed germinates. These shrubs thrive in the full sun after a fire.

Other conifers are known for adaptations to lower intensity surface fires. For example, older ponderosa pine, larch, and Douglas-fir have thick bark at the base of the tree which protects the living tissue under the bark from surface fires that frequently occurred on those sites.

Trees are not the only organisms that have evolved in response to disturbance. Morel mushroom hunters often scan web sites that map large wildfires that occurred the previous summer, as some morel species emerge very heavily after wildfires.

In the spring following a big burn, morel buyers often set up shop near such burns. Both huckleberry and elk hunters search for sites with recent burns as they will likely have more of both.

Even species we don't think of as being highly fire adapted have been formed by disturbance. For example, cottonwood and aspen trees are usually killed by fire but roots often remain alive, and such roots frequently often send up shoots immediately thereafter.

This also happens with shrubs. Ever notice how Rocky Mountain maples sprout vigorously after cutting them at the base? That is not an adaptation to chainsaws, it is an adaption to fire!

What does this mean to forest management? Most people would not support allowing extensive stand replacing fires like we experienced in 1910 to burn freely outside of large designated wilderness areas.

But understanding how Idaho trees have adapted genetically to disturbances is critical to managing trees and forests intelligently.



Photo by Chris Schnepf

Clearcuts are designed to reproduce the full sunlight created after a stand replacing fire.

We do not necessarily have to have those same kinds of disturbances to have healthy forests, but we do need to be aware of trees' adaptation to those fires, and in some cases try to mimic those disturbance effects if we want to grow those species.

For example, shade-intolerant species such as larches and pines tend to be more adapted to drought cycles and, consequently, more resistant over the long term to insects and disease.

If we want those species, we must be aware that they are adapted to coming up after a fire. Duplicating the mostly full sunlight their forebearers had after a fire helps us regenerate and grow those species.

We must also be aware of the effects of putting out fires for the last 100 years and try to compensate for that where we can, by preferentially cutting shade tolerant trees and reducing stand density, especially on drier sites.

In some cases, we may even want to enable some less dramatic forms of natural disturbances, if we can manage them to meet our objectives.

For example, if drier site ponderosa pine forests have had sufficient fuel reductions to allow it, and risks to homesites are low, allowing light surface fires to burn through forest understories may be an affordable way to lower stand replacing fire risks.

Continual mechanical treatments of those understory fuels can be prohibitively expensive.

As with so many things in forestry, whether a disturbance is good, bad, or somewhere in between depends on management objectives. What is acceptable in a wilderness area is not likely acceptable in forests where timber growth is a primary objective.

Regardless, taking a long view of how our species have adapted to disturbance is critical to meeting forest management objectives. ■

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

Idaho Farm Bureau®
Holiday Gift Guide

Great gifts. Real Savings.
Only with your
Idaho Farm Bureau
Membership



MOVIE TICKETS

Give the gift of entertainment with discounted movie tickets.

amc · REGAL · CINEMARK · Royal · CENTURY CINEMA · Village Centre



EMERGENCY TRANSPORT MEMBERSHIPS

Give peace of mind with EVACU, Life Flight Network, or AirMed memberships.

evacu · LIFE FLIGHT NETWORK · Portneuf AIR RESCUE



SOUNDGEAR PRODUCTS

Give the gift of protected hearing for hunters, target shooters, and outdoor enthusiasts.

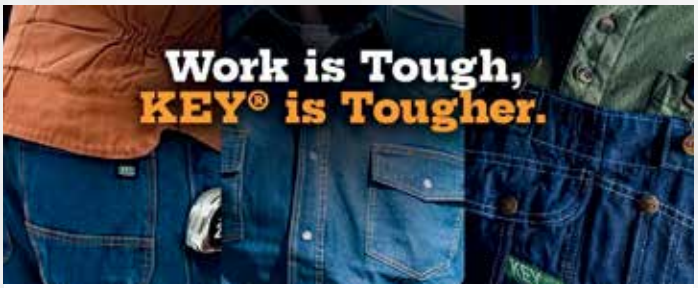
SOUNDGEAR

UNIQUE GIFTS | **REAL SAVINGS** | **MEMBER EXCLUSIVE**

www.idahofbstore.com



Spread Christmas cheer with 12 delicious coffees to brighten every morning.



KEY Est 1908 ®

WRAP UP COMFORT

Give the gift of warmth, comfort, and hardworking style.



PUT ADVENTURE UNDER THE TREE.

Make Christmas memorable with a gift that brings fun and adventure all year long.



GRAINGER®

FOR THE ONES WHO GET IT DONE

GIFTS THAT GET THE JOB DONE.

Practical Christmas gifts for the doers on your list.

Member Gifts

For Everyone On Your List

Shop All Member Benefits!

Idaho Farm Bureau®
MEMBER BENEFITS
www.idahofbstore.com

Being a member has its benefits!



Country Chuckles

By Jonny Hawkins



"Dad says if we have a good breed line ... we won't be standing in a bread line."



LOOKING FOR A NEW PODCAST?

DIRT ROAD DISCUSSIONS

PODCAST

OVER 120 EPISODES!

SCAN ME

Statement of Ownership



UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE ® Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

1. Publication Title	2. Publication Number	3. Filing Date
IDAHO FARM BUREAU QUARTERLY	[illegible]	09/17/2026
4. Issue Frequency	5. Number of Issues Published Annually	6. Annual Subscription Price
QUARTERLY	4 (FOUR)	$4.00

7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4®) — Contact Person: SEAN ELLIS; Telephone (Include area code): (208) 235-4292

IDAHO FARM BUREAU 275 TIERRA VISTA DRIVE
POCATELLO, ID 83205-5615

8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer)

IDAHO FARM BUREAU P.O. BOX 4848
POCATELLO, ID 83205-4848

9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)

Publisher (Name and complete mailing address)
ZAK MILLER
PO BOX 4848, POCATELLO, ID 83205-4848

Editor (Name and complete mailing address)
SEAN ELLIS
PO BOX 4848, POCATELLO, ID 83205-4848

Managing Editor (Name and complete mailing address)
SEAN ELLIS
PO BOX 4848, POCATELLO, ID 83205-4848

10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.)

Full Name	Complete Mailing Address
IDAHO FARM BUREAU FEDERATION	PO BOX 4848 POCATELLO, ID 83205-4848

11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box → ☒ None

Full Name	Complete Mailing Address

12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one)
The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes:
☑ Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months
☐ Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)

PS Form 3526, July 2014 (Page 1 of 4 (see instructions page 4)) PSN: 7530-01-000-9931 PRIVACY NOTICE: See our privacy policy on www.usps.com



UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE ® Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Paid Electronic Copies	0	0
b. Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	83702	83475
c. Total Print Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	83788	83513
d. Percent Paid (Both Print & Electronic Copies) (16b divided by 16c × 100)	99.9	99.9

☑ I certify that 50% of all my distributed copies (electronic and print) are paid above a nominal price.

17. Publication of Statement of Ownership
☑ If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the 11/2026 issue of this publication. ☐ Publication not required.

18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner — Date: 09/17/2026

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including multiple damages and civil penalties).



After the Fire: Working Toward Recovery for Idaho Ranchers

Idaho State Department of Agriculture

For Idaho ranchers, the impact of wildfire lasts long after the flames are extinguished. Fences must be rebuilt, livestock need feed, and grazing ground takes time to recover. The immediate emergency may pass, but the work and expense facing a ranch family can continue for years.

This summer's Tartar Fire near Weiser and the Big Grass Fire in Owyhee County and eastern Oregon brought those challenges into sharp focus. Both fires burned across important ranching landscapes, leaving producers facing difficult decisions about their livestock, their land and the future of their operations.

"Ranchers' stories from this fire season have been heartbreaking," said ISDA Director Chanel Tewalt. "There are two comments that have stayed with me specifically. In the days of the Big Grass Fire, one exhausted rancher told me that those had been the 15 worst days of his life. In Weiser, another rancher recounted to me how his eight-month pregnant daughter worked alongside her family day and night on the fire line. You simply cannot hear stories like that and ignore the call to action for all of us."

For a livestock operation, losing grazing ground creates an immediate problem. Cattle and sheep still need somewhere to go and something to eat. Purchasing replacement feed or finding alternative pasture adds costs, while damaged fences and water infrastructure require labor, materials and time. Those demands arrive while producers are continuing the daily work of running their businesses.

"We are grateful to Brenda Richards with the Idaho Rangeland Conservation Partnership for starting the post-fire conversation in Oreana and for the Idaho Farm Bureau continuing the work in Weiser," said Tewalt.

Those conversations are helping shape the department's work toward practical options for affected ranchers. The ISDA's Range Program is actively working to secure funding under new authority granted to us by the Legislature through the Grazing Improvement Program. The agency also is trying to be thoughtful about existing resources which may have a fire and community recovery nexus. Idaho does not have some of the same disaster assistance programs as a state like Utah.

There are also difficult conversations to have about coordination with the Bureau of Land Management and other federal partners. Producers need clear answers about recovery work, grazing access and the decisions that affect their operations. Frustrations deserve to be heard and addressed, and making progress will require agencies and producers to work through those issues together. Many federal agencies have been open to hearing feedback this fall.

Ranchers bring generations of experience and detailed knowledge of the ground they manage. Their involvement is essential to recovery decisions. Effective partnerships must make room for that knowledge and keep the continued viability of agricultural operations at the center of the discussion.

The Tartar and Big Grass fires have reinforced the importance of preparing for the years of recovery that can follow a wildfire. ISDA will continue working with producers, leaders and agency partners to improve coordination and pursue practical ways to help Idaho ranch families recover.

IDAHO STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

IDAHO PREFERRED

HOLIDAY GIFT BOX

Local from the Ground Up

THE TASTE OF IDAHO AGRICULTURE

Give a little Idaho this holiday season. Behind every Idaho-grown and Idaho-made product is a farmer, rancher, or local producer with a story worth sharing. This holiday season, Idaho Preferred brings together products from Idaho producers in two thoughtfully curated gift boxes. Each purchase directly supports participating producers, introduces their products to new customers, and helps grow opportunities for Idaho agriculture. Whether you're gifting to family, friends, employees, or clients, it's a simple way to share a taste of Idaho while supporting the people who grow, raise, and make the products we enjoy.



Box 1

SAVORY SNACKS, SWEET TREATS & PANTRY FAVORITES

- American Ostrich Farms
- Northern Latitude Foods
- Dorothy's
- Lava's Mineral Water
- Steele Legacy Honey
- Molly's Garlic Goddess Seasonings
- Stewart Family Enterprise
- Snake River Seed Cooperative
- Cross O Meats
- Food Dudes
- Harvest Ridge Organics
- Naughty Fruit
- Snake River Farms



Box 2

SPECIALITY SIPS, BAKING ESSENTIALS & EVERYDAY INDULGENCES

- Free Spirits Beverage Company
- Creekside Mallow Co
- Dillys Pickled Veggies
- Gaston's Bakery
- High Desert Milk
- Kingdom Sunrise Acres
- Symms Fruit Ranch
- Happy Heron Farm
- Snake River Farms
- SoaPriel -Eden Creamery
- April's Green House
- 2 Pawz Up Barkery
- apis

$64.99 + Tax & Shipping

BOXES SOLD SEPARATELY AND SHIPPED BY MID-DECEMBER FOR HOLIDAY DELIVERY.

BOXES CAN BE SHIPPED ANYWHERE IN THE US.
LOCAL PICKUP IS AVAILABLE.

Order here!

IDAHOPREFERRED.COM
IDAHO STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Photo by Leah Reitcheck

From Alaska tourist trinkets to Idaho ranch work, U of I junior Tyler Christner founded Boundary Sign after winning campus pitch contest with durable aluminum signs that resist theft, damage and fading.

Student turns trespassing problem into sign business

By Ralph Bartholdt
University of Idaho

Tyler Christner can adapt.

As a child, he sold beach glass, berries and homemade survival bracelets to tourists in rain-soaked southeast Alaska. After his family moved to Eagle, he worked as a teenage ranch hand on southern Idaho's arid Snake River Plain.

Now a University of Idaho junior earning a bachelor's degree in natural resources enterprise management from the College of Natural Resources and an entrepreneurship certificate from the College of Business and Economics, Christner has turned a problem he encountered on the ranch into a business.

His company, Boundary Sign, makes aluminum no-trespassing signs that slide over metal fenceposts, making them difficult to remove or destroy. He credits U of I mentors with helping him bring the product to market.

"My professors … encouraged me to pursue this sign project and helped me get connected to the right people," Christner said.

Christner won last year's Idaho pitch competition, a fast-paced entrepreneurial event where students pitch innovative product ideas to local business leaders and investors.

His idea to construct aluminum boundary signs that slide over metal fenceposts, making them difficult to remove or destroy, caught the attention of investors who attended the event. The idea was inspired by his work on the ranch of Harry Bettis, a U of I donor and one of the state's biggest cattle producers.

"A lot of people would trespass on Harry's land, drive four-wheelers, build bonfires, bust down fences and shoot up the signs," Christner said.

"These signs just take a couple seconds to install. You slide them over the post and they lock on securely. They are durable and reliable."

– Tyler Christner, Boundary Sign

To address the problem, Christner and his dad came up with the idea of building a more durable no-trespassing sign.

"On the old signs, they would get stolen or destroyed by people. Cows would rub them off or the sun and wind would fade them real bad," Christner said. "I had to install a lot of signs and found there was no way to secure them to a metal T-post."

His dad, Matt Christner, a U of I alumnus who graduated with a degree in architecture, is the one who ultimately came up with the final design.

"These signs just take a couple seconds to install. You slide them over the post and they lock on securely," Christner said. "They are durable and reliable."

The design was tweaked several times, Christner said. Although he and his dad produced signs that were used on the ranch, the production cost was high, so they quit making the signs and the project was put on the backburner until Christner was preparing for the pitch competition.

"I took the idea for Boundary Sign off the shelf, and sure enough the judges and investors liked it," he said.

His U of I mentors helped him find a Spokane manufacturer that could make the signs at a lower cost using higher-quality aluminum, he said.

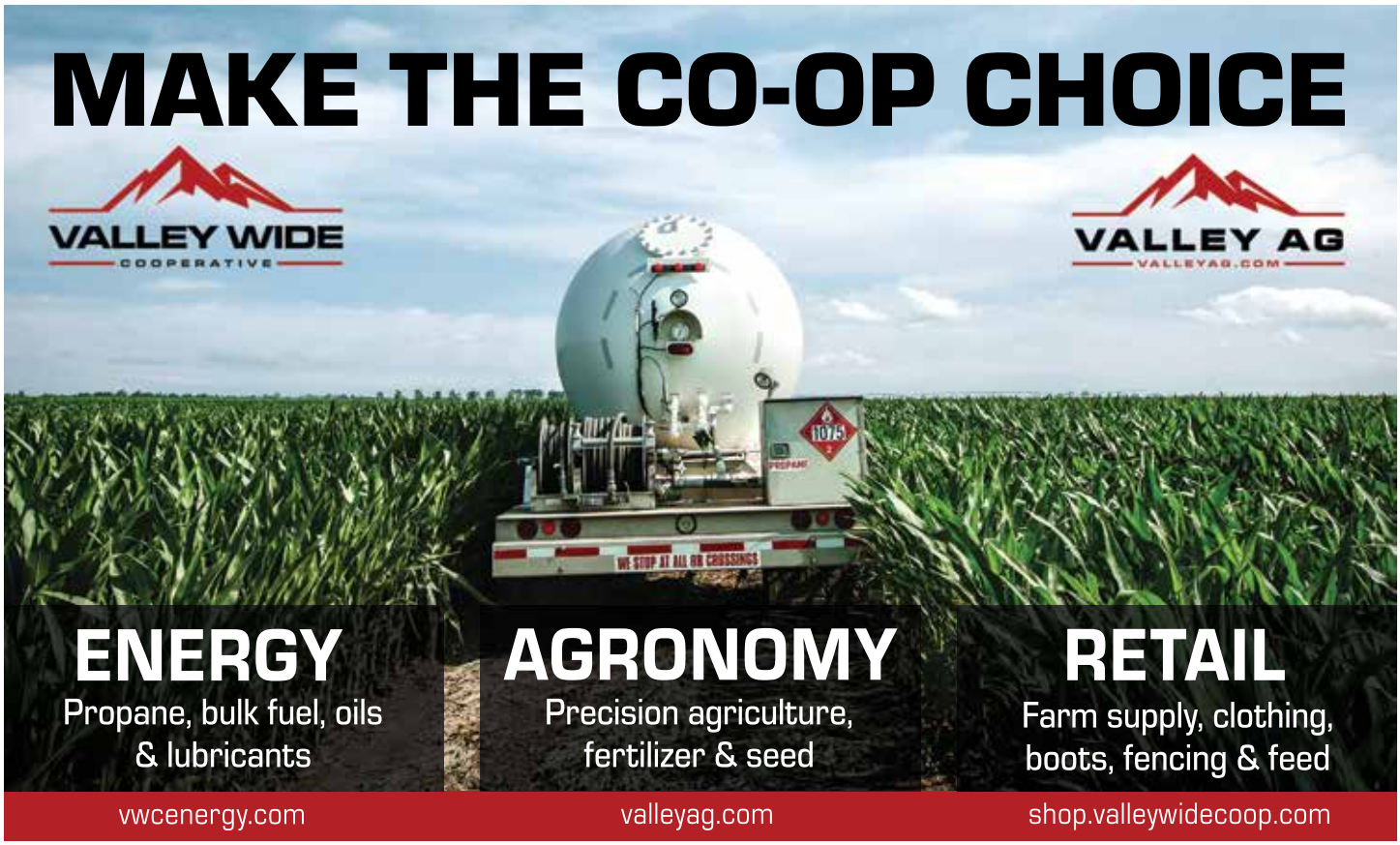
Christner's aluminum fencepost signs are stocked in farm and supply stores in Idaho and Montana, including in Great Falls and Boise, and he plans to expand into neighboring states such as Utah, Wyoming and Washington.

George Tanner, director of Idaho Entrepreneurs and senior instructor of entrepreneurship at U of I, helped develop CNR's natural resources enterprise management curriculum three years ago. He said Christner and his sign company are a great example of what the program strives to produce.

"Tyler has taken a solid idea, created a great company around it and has turned it into a profitable enterprise that combines his love of the outdoors with his passion for independence and the freedom a start-up provides him," Tanner said.

Christner credits his childhood sales ventures and ranch work with helping him develop a strong business acumen and work ethic.

"I did the labor jobs the other ranch hands didn't want to do," Christner said. "It forged my work ethic and problem-solving skills, which I utilize in my current studies and business ventures." ■



Classifieds

WANTED

Wanted old Idaho Patches! Farm Bureau, Farming, Hunting, Idaho Cattlemen Assoc, Idaho Fish and Game. Top Dollar Paid! Call, email, or text pics. Rusty Kramer idahotrapguy@hotmail.com 208-870-3217

I pay top dollar for any type antique advertising signs or promotional items. Will also buy complete estates or complete collections. Buying and appraising all types of antiques. Currently looking for Spool Cabinets, pre 1930 Idaho License plates or?? Let me know what you have. I also do Classic Car appraisals. Call or Text Tom 208-867-9357 I'm in Southern Idaho

---

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

Wanted: WWI, WWII, and Vietnam war souvenirs (medals, daggers, flags, uniforms, etc.) Located in SE Idaho. Call or text 208-201-3351.

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

SERVICES

ROCK CHUCKS EAT YOUR PROFITS. I eliminate them — safe, precision shooting. 1,600 removed since 2024. Retired • Independent • No fee Serving SW Idaho Rick Weidner 986-888-7051

Farmers are in a great position to take advantage of solar energy. Tired of paying utility bills? If you are interested in exploring a solar energy system which can give you FREE fuel and FREE electricity for over 30 years, please contact me 208-303-7115 John D'Angelo.

Are you looking to have a sign painted or a mural on your barn? Need anything drawn or just want something pretty on your walls? I am currently open for art commissions! Contact Seva Kay via email: seva.kay2000@gmail.com

Free Classified ads for Idaho Farm Bureau Members

Send to knlindauer@idahofb.org

FREE CLASSIFIEDS

Non-commercial classified ads are free to Idaho Farm Bureau members. Must include membership number for free ad. Forty (40) words maximum. Non-member cost is 50 cents per word. You may advertise your own crops, livestock, used machinery, household items, vehicles, etc. Ads will not be accepted by phone, Ads run one time only and must be re-submitted in each subsequent issue. We reserve the right to refuse to run any ad. Please type or print clearly. Proofread your ad. Ads must be received by November 16 for the December Producer.

Mail ad copy to:
FARM BUREAU PRODUCER
P.O. Box 4848, Pocatello, ID 83205-4848
or email Kristy at knlindauer@idahofb.org

IDAHO FOUNDATION FFA

Keep Idaho Agriculture Growing.

The next generation of Idaho agriculture is in our FFA classrooms today. With your support, students are gaining the skills, experiences, and leadership qualities our industry depends on.

Your gift funds scholarships, classroom grants, travel assistance, and hands-on learning experiences that prepare young people for successful careers in agriculture.

Now is the time to invest in Idaho FFA. Make your year-end gift before December 31 and help provide scholarships, grants, leadership development, and life-changing opportunities for Idaho students. Every dollar helps prepare the next generation of agricultural leaders.

DONATE TODAY:

GrowIdahoFFA.org



PO Box 827, Star, ID 83669 • 208-856-0288 • EIN 82-0360159



BAUMALIGHT™

SOLD BY EQUIPMENT DEALERS FOR LOCAL SUPPORT

Locate A Dealer Online

BAUMALIGHT.COM

Blake Chapman| 208-260-0522 | blake@ellisequipment.com

MFG OF MINI SKID STEERS AND A VARIETY OF ATTACHMENTS INCLUDING: BRUSH MULCHERS ROTARY BRUSH CUTTERS | STUMP GRINDERS | PTO GENERATORS | AUGER DRIVES TRENCHERS | TREE SPADES | TREE SAWS & SHEARS | PTO POWER PACKS | BOOM MOWERS | LOG GRAPPLES TREE PULLERS | FELLER BUNCHERS | EXCAVATOR ADAPTERS | SCREW SPLITTERS | FLAIL MOWERS