


GEM STATE **Producer**

Idaho Farm Bureau
December 2024 • Volume 28 Issue 8

Idahoans Talk Trade With Japan & Taiwan



What's next
with quagga
mussels? 8

Farm Bureau
celebrates
veterans, 16

Specialty
crop grants,
18



Good agricultural policy, good for the country

It's a new day. No more campaign text messages. No more political ads.

We open a new chapter and prepare for a new dialogue with a new Congress and new president come January.

In full disclosure, I'm writing this column before we have election results, but regardless we can set our sights on some basic truths.

Wherever this post-election period finds you, whatever your job may be, we all rely on U.S. agriculture.

Whether or not you gave agricultural policy

much thought when you filled out your ballot this election, you can be sure that the policy affecting America's farms and ranches will have an impact on you, your family, and the nation.

Farmers are a slim percentage of the population at just 2%, but our work is critical to the security and well-being of 100% of our nation.

Ag policy matters for food security

Farming is tough under the best circumstances, and as we all know, life rarely comes at us with only the best circumstances.

See **DUVALL**, page 6

The President's Desk

By Bryan Searle

President, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation



Idaho launches all-out attack on quagga mussels

Attack of the quagga mussels." That sounds like a horror story.

Actually, if the invasive aquatic species was able to gain a permanent foothold in Idaho, it would become a horror story, for everybody and particularly for the state's agricultural industry.

Quagga mussels were first detected in very small numbers in a small stretch of the Snake River near Twin Falls last September. They were again detected in that area this September, again in very small numbers.

The freshwater mussels can rapidly colonize hard surfaces and can clog water-intake structures such as pipes and screens. They can accumulate in great numbers and wreak havoc on water infrastructure.

That would be a particularly big problem in Idaho, which is heavily dependent on water for so many things, including agriculture, power generation and recreation.

Idaho State Department of Agriculture Director Chanel Tewalt told Idaho Farm

See **SEARLE**, page 7

Inside Farm Bureau

By Zak Miller

CEO, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation



What is in a ranking?

In agriculture, we try to measure everything: yield, weaning weight, peak milk, birth weight, bushel weight, tons per acre, EPDs, PTAs, acres per hour, N per unit, and the list goes on and on.

Yet, some of these most crucial aspects of agriculture defy simple quantification.

There are also those times when a measurement is offered, but it is either not understood or not believed.

Measurements are a lot like brands on cattle; it is a lot easier to trust your neighbor after all

the cattle are branded.

There are other times when a measurement's only value is to validate what is already known but not previously quantified. With that thought in mind, it should feel very valedictory to hear that the University of Idaho's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS) earned the No. 13 ranking in the Niche Best Colleges list for agricultural programs.

This ranking is more than just a number.

See **MILLER**, page 6



Idaho Farm Bureau.

Volume 28, Issue 8

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Photo by Sean Ellis

An onion field is shown in Canyon County, which produces a diverse mix of agricultural commodities.

Canyon County has the most farms in Idaho, by far

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

Canyon County is small in size but big in farming.

The county has the distinction of having the most farms of any of the state's 44 counties, despite being the sixth smallest county in Idaho in terms of total land size.

According to the 2022 Census of Agriculture, which is USDA's attempt to count every farm and ranch in the United States, there were 2,311 farms in Canyon County during the 2022 census year.

That's far more than any other county in Idaho.

However, the average size of a farm in Canyon County – 120 acres – is significantly smaller than the statewide average of 505 acres.

"Because of the smaller layout of the county ... by default the farms here are smaller," says Canyon County farmer Matt Dorsey, who farms west of Caldwell.

Melba farmer Miguel Villafana said one of the reasons that farms are smaller in the county is that land parcel sizes in Canyon County are much smaller than in many other Idaho counties, such as Bingham or Bannock.

"It starts with the smaller parcel sizes," he says. "Out here in Canyon County from the beginning ... the parcels are just smaller."

While the average size of a farm in the county may be relatively small, there is a lot of agriculture production going on in Canyon County.

See COUNTY, page 11

COVER: Members of an Idaho trade delegation, including representatives of the Idaho Beef Council, talk about Idaho beef operations during a media luncheon in Japan. For a story on an Idaho trade mission to Japan and Taiwan, see page 4. Submitted photo

Idaho ag industry fared well on trade mission

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

BOISE – Idaho's recent trade mission to Japan and Taiwan will pay dividends for Idaho's agriculture industry, Gov. Brad Little and other state leaders said Nov. 14 during a media video conference.

"This was a great trip for agriculture," Idaho State Department of Agriculture Director Chanel Tewalt said during the conference.

Twenty-two Idaho businesses and organizations, including Idaho Farm Bureau Federation, joined the governor and ISDA and Idaho Department of Commerce staff on the seven-day trade mission, which concluded in early November.

Idaho sold \$69 million worth of agricultural products to Japan and \$14 million worth of farm products to Taiwan in 2023.

About half the trade mission participants are involved in Idaho's agriculture industry, said Little, a farmer and rancher himself.

The governor said the mission to Taiwan and Japan strengthened trade opportunities for Idaho.

"I think it was very successful," he said Nov. 14, adding that strengthening friendships with existing customers is one of the main benefits of a trade mission.

"It's always good to see our friends there," he said.

During the trip, Little and other Idaho participants met with representatives of the Taiwan Flour Mills Association, which two years ago, in Boise, signed a pledge to purchase \$576 million worth of U.S. wheat over the next two years, much of it from Idaho.

It was basically a "letter of intent" to buy the wheat, and Little said Taiwan followed through on that pledge and actually exceeded the amount they said they would buy.



Idaho Gov. Brad Little addresses people at an Idaho beef luncheon in Tokyo during his recent trade mission to Japan and Taiwan. Twenty-two Idaho businesses and organizations, half of them involved with agriculture, joined the governor on the seven-day trade mission, which wrapped up in early November. Photos submitted by ISDA

Tewalt said it is very important to regularly meet in person with groups like the TFMA.

“In these two countries, I cannot over-emphasize how important it is to meet face to face,” she said. “You have to go in person to continue your relationships with your friends.”

While in Idaho two years ago, Taiwanese delegation members said they purchase wheat from Idaho because they can bank on its quality and consistency.

Tewalt said the Idaho delegation was very well received at that meeting.

“We had an exceptional reception,” she said. “Members of the Taiwan Flour Mills Association have been on farms in Idaho and they understand the quality and consistency of the wheat our growers produce.”

Idaho wheat farmer Justin Place said the Idaho delegation had productive meetings in both nations.

He said it's important to not only build relationships with customers, but to maintain them as well and that's what a trade mission facilitates.

“From the wheat perspective, I felt like we had very successful meetings,” said Place, president of the Idaho Grain Producers Association. “We have good relationships with both Japan and Taiwan and we've been selling wheat to those countries for quite some time.

While in Japan, Little continued policy



Idaho wheat grower Justin Place, president of the Idaho Grain Producers Association, addresses representatives of the Taiwan Flour Mills Association during the recent Governor's Trade Mission to Taiwan and Japan.

conversations on gaining market access to Japan for fresh U.S. potatoes, which could be a \$150 million opportunity for U.S. growers if it happens.

Japan is a major destination for processed potatoes from the United States, but it does not allow fresh U.S. potato imports.

“We worked really hard on that,” Tewalt said.

Member of the Idaho Potato Commission and potato growers were part of those discussions, she said.

“It was a great cross-section of folks advocating on behalf of Idaho potatoes,” she said.

“The Idaho Potato Commission had a very productive trade mission to Taiwan

and Japan ...” IPC President and CEO Jamey Higham said in a news release from the governor's office.

The governor and other members of the trade delegation also attended an Idaho beef luncheon with local culinary and food media to promote high-quality beef in Japan, which is one of Idaho's top export markets for beef.

“Participating in the trade mission to Taiwan and Japan provided an excellent opportunity to create connections with our export partners and reinforce consumer confidence in the quality of Idaho's beef and other agricultural products,” Idaho Beef Council Chairman Steven Taylor said in the news release. “This mission showcased the dedication of our beef producers, ensuring Idaho's reputation for high quality products continues to grow globally.”

Representatives of Idaho's dairy, oilseed and produce industries also joined the trade mission.

“Joining the trade mission allowed us to tell the story of Idaho's dairy farmers – our commitment to quality, sustainability, and family farming,” said Idaho Dairymen's Association President Pete Wiersma. “Building these relationships with international markets is vital, and I'm confident the connections we made will benefit our industry in the future.” ■



LEFT: Gov. Brad Little, left, and Taiwan Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chia-Lung Lin, signed an MOU recognizing Idaho and Taiwan's 40-year relationship.

Continued from page 2

When a storm whips through, markets take a downward turn, or costs and regulatory burdens pile up, farmers and ranchers need sound policy that helps them hang on from one season to the next.

Our nation has a long history of prioritizing policies and programs that keep our nation's food supply stable.

Going all the way back to World War II, in fact, when President Roosevelt called on farmers to continue their patriotic duty of growing food for our nation and allies.

Through our greatest hardships as a country, one of our greatest strengths has been, and continues to be, our ability to grow our own food, fiber, and renewable fuel.

But that ability is only as strong as the policies that ensure farmers have the tools they need to stay in business, reinvest in their farms, hire skilled workers, and keep their farms running from one generation to the next.

Ag policy matters for sustainability

America's farmers and ranchers lead the world in climate-smart practices, with our overall greenhouse gas emissions around just 10% of total U.S. emissions. We are growing more with less thanks to innovation and technology that help us conserve resources and keep the soil healthy.

Farmers are caretakers of the land, preserving green spaces, providing wildlife habitats, and managing forest land.

This means farmers are not only growing the products we all rely on, but they're also playing a role in absorbing carbon and reducing emissions.

We need to see policy changes that

'It begins with each of us understanding how critical agriculture is to our nation, and then calling on our leaders to make agriculture a top priority.'

treat farmers as partners in sustainability and promote voluntary, incentive-based programs to take farmland conservation to the next level.

Farmers want to keep their land healthy and ready for production for the next generation, and we need policies and programs that give us the flexibility to make the best decisions for the health of our farms and ranches.

Ag policy matters to our economy

When we talk about sustainability in agriculture, we also mean economic sustainability. Did you know that agriculture supports more than 48 million jobs in the U.S.?

Farmers and ranchers are growing more than the food for Americans' pantries, they are growing jobs right here on our soil.

That also means there can be a ripple effect when a farm goes out of business. It is not only heartbreaking for the farm family but also worrisome for those relying on that farm business.

The impact starts locally, maybe with their suppliers like the local feed store and equipment dealer. Even if one farm doesn't ripple far, what about one hundred? A thousand?

Over a five-year-span, from 2017 to 2022, we lost more than 140,000 farms in the U.S., per USDA's 2022 Census of Agriculture.

We need policy changes that work to reverse this trend and ensure economic resilience for farm businesses today, as well as for the next generation.

Millions of Americans are counting on us. Fewer farms mean fewer jobs, and even higher costs at the grocery store.

Helping family farms stay in business begins with sound agricultural policy.

It begins with each of us understanding how critical agriculture is to our nation, and then calling on our leaders to make agriculture a top priority.

I can also say with certainty that our elected leaders will need to make agriculture a top priority as we wrap up 2024.

Even as we prepare for new political dynamics in January, we are urging lawmakers to address important and consequential priorities before closing out this year and this Congress.

From passing a five-year farm bill to mitigating the impacts of the current farm labor crisis, much work needs to be done, and we know the election results will have a big impact on the will of Congress to act.

Whomever you voted for in this election, whether your candidates won or lost, whether your party is in the minority or majority, we can all agree on the importance of keeping our food supply secure.

At the American Farm Bureau, we unite around our goal to strengthen agriculture and support our communities.

Whatever today holds, I am confident we will continue this work as we drive forward for our farms, our communities, and our country. ■

Continued from page 2

This recognition validated what Idaho's agricultural community already knows: CALS is a powerhouse of innovation and expertise.

For Idaho agriculture, this recognition is a testament to the en-

during partnership between the University of Idaho, the agricultural community, and supporters.

CALS has proven to be an indispensable resource, providing expertise, research, and workforce development that directly benefit the state's agricultural economy.

Whether through advancements in sustainable crop manage-

ment, livestock health, or food innovation, CALS stands at the forefront of meeting modern agriculture's challenges.

We in Idaho already know that; nonetheless, it does feel good for the rest of the country to see it.

CALS' success results from so many efforts, passions, and vision, but in recent years, none have done more for the college than CALS Dean Michael Parrella, whose visionary leadership has been one of the driving forces behind CALS's rise in national prominence.

Dean Parrella has worked tirelessly to elevate the college's academic and research programs, build partnerships with industry leaders, and expand opportunities for students. His initiatives have enhanced the college's reputation and positioned it as a national leader in agricultural education.

I do not have enough space to list all of Dean Parrella's accomplishments but suffice it to say that from Salmon to Parma, to Moscow, to Rupert, to Sandpoint, and many points in between, Parrella's tenacity has resulted in investment, innovation, and pride, for all Idahoans and especially Vandals.

His impending retirement is notably marked by a significant milestone: a large donation from the J.R. Simplot Co. establishing an endowed dean position.

This generous gift demonstrates the agricultural community's

profound confidence in the college's future.

The Idaho Farm Bureau has long been a proud supporter of the University of Idaho, specifically the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

The Farm Bureau's commitment to advancing agricultural education is evident in its support of the college and the success of the University of Idaho Collegiate Young Farmers and Ranchers chapter.

This chapter, supported by Idaho Farm Bureau, is a model of excellence and a point of envy across the West. It embodies the collaborative spirit that has made CALS a beacon for young agricultural leaders.

For Idaho agriculture, the partnership with CALS is more than just a resource—it's a lifeline. The college's dedication to research, innovation, and student success helps ensure that Idaho's farmers and ranchers can face the future confidently.

The No. 13 ranking affirms what many in Idaho already know: CALS is a national leader and an invaluable asset to the state.

We celebrate this achievement and recognize the collective efforts of Dean Parrella, the University of Idaho, and many stakeholders in making it possible.

Together, they are shaping the future of Idaho agriculture, helping to ensure its success for generations to come. ■

SEARLE

Continued from page 2

Bureau Federation that if the invasive mussels get established here, the cost to try to control or mitigate their damage could easily be in the billions of dollars over 10 to 20 years.

Farmers and ranchers already get by on narrow margins. Adding the added cost of fighting quagga mussels would be extremely detrimental to Idaho's agricultural industry.

Quagga mussels in Idaho for good would mean every irrigator absorbing the cost of constantly fighting the invasive species.

They would also have a large negative impact on power generation in the state, and recreation opportunities in the state would be forever altered in a bad way since they can accumulate in great numbers on docks, buoys, boat hulls and beaches.

Immediately after quagga mussels were found in Idaho last year, the ISDA launched an all-out, all-hands-on-board effort to try to eradicate them.

The ag department has worked in conjunction with other agencies and

'Idaho faces a potential crisis if the mussels do gain a foothold in Idaho waterways and we have a narrow window to try to fight them off.'

stakeholders on this effort and the speed at which they launched a plan to fight the invasive species is truly impressive.

A type of fight plan that would have taken many other states many months to hatch was launched in Idaho in two weeks.

That's because the Idaho Legislature, in conjunction with the governor's office, has provided the money and resources needed to place the state in a great position to fight the mussels when and if they were detected in Idaho.

From the moment they were first detected in Idaho, the ISDA was ready to go, and the department received the full support of the governor, legislators, other agencies and stakeholders, such as Idaho's agricultural industry.

In reality, the quagga mussel fight plan is an Idaho plan and it came together very

quickly with full buy-in from everyone, including the public.

Idaho faces a potential crisis if the mussels do gain a foothold in Idaho waterways and we have a narrow window to try to fight them off.

Farm Bureau has faith that the right plan and the right people are in place to get the job done.

I encourage everyone to continue to support the state's campaign to fight these aquatic critters.

That means adhering to the ag department's advice to "clean, drain and dry" all watercraft and equipment before putting them back in the water. That includes kayaks, canoes, paddleboard, boats and other possible conveyances such as duck decoys, waders and fishing tackle.

Let's get this done Idaho. ■



Idaho throws kitchen sink at quagga mussels

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – For the second straight year, quagga mussels were detected in the Snake River near Twin Falls in September.

And for the second straight year, the Idaho State Department of Agriculture is undertaking an all-hands-on-deck approach to try to eradicate the invasive species.

In fact, Idaho is basically throwing the kitchen sink at them.

Quagga mussels are not a threat to human health but they could potentially cause a lot of damage to the state's waterways and water infrastructure.

The freshwater mussels, which are native to Eastern Europe, can rapidly colonize hard surfaces. They can clog water-intake structures such as pipes and screens and can accumulate in great numbers on docks, buoys, boat hulls and beaches.

An unchecked spread of quagga mussels has the potential to

LEFT: Quagga mussels, which can rapidly colonize hard surfaces, could potentially cause a lot of damage to the state's waterways and water infrastructure. ISDA photos

ABOVE: The Idaho State Department of Agriculture has aggressively attacked quagga mussels, which were detected in the Snake River near Twin Falls in small numbers.

cost Idaho hundreds of millions of dollars in direct and indirect costs, said Gov. Brad Little.

“The state is committed to prioritizing the detection and eradication of quagga mussels in our waterways,” he told Idaho Farm Bureau Federation. “Thanks to our state agencies and legislative partners, Idaho has been able to stand up a comprehensive invasive species program that has been able to rapidly respond to recent detections of quagga mussels.”

ISDA Director Chanel Tewalt said Idaho has a real shot at eradicating the invasive species, but it won’t be easy.

“We definitely still have a chance to eradicate them,” she told IFBF. “That’s why we’re doing this. We would not go through this effort if we did not think it were possible. But it is incredibly difficult.”

It’s bad news they were found in Idaho, but it’s good news they were found early and in small numbers, she said.

“There’s nothing about our planning process that indicates they’re here for good,” Tewalt added.

Quagga mussels were first detected in Idaho last Sept. 18, when the ISDA confirmed the presence of quagga mussel larvae in the Snake River near Twin Falls.

The ag department again detected their presence in that area this Sept. 23.

The ISDA’s all-out frontal assault on the invasive mussels has been done in conjunction with other state agencies, and has been supported by a large number of stakeholders who stand to be harmed if the mussels gain a foothold in Idaho.

Tewalt said Idaho’s fight to prevent quagga mussels from getting established in Idaho borders on the unprecedented and could be likened to a hair-on-fire effort.

The fact that every relevant agency and the state’s elected officials are all on the same page and have been since the mussels were first detected in Idaho last September, has helped significantly, she said.

“This is a uniquely Idaho project,” Tewalt said. “There is not an analog to what Idaho has done on this issue. There’s nothing comparable to this project out there that we know of. No other state, federal entity, or province, has ever implemented a project of this scale in North America. So this was a history-making event.”

She said the mussels are a threat to the state’s agriculture, power generation and recreation industries, as well as anyone who uses water in the state, including for drinking water.

The mussels found in the Snake River near Twin Falls are the larval form of the mussels, which are basically a free-floating baby in the water.

The problem is that as they grow, they want to attach to something and when they start doing that, they can colonize an area to the point they take over pipes and entire ecosystems.

“Every irrigator in the state, every ratepayer who uses power, every recreator, every fisherman, every person who has a nexus with the water, has a stake in this issue,” Tewalt said ... “Over 10 or 20 years, we would easily be talking about billions of dollars in damage.”

She said agricultural producers could be faced with major challenges if quagga mussels establish themselves in Idaho waterways.



TOP AND ABOVE: Quagga mussels can quickly colonize hard surfaces and, if left unchecked, could cause a lot of damage to the state’s waterways and water infrastructure.

“Farmers and ranchers already operate on incredibly thin margins,” she said. “They don’t need any more costs....”

Though quagga mussels could pose a major threat to agriculture, they should be a cause for concern for all Idahoans, said Braden Jensen, director of governmental affairs for Idaho Farm Bureau Federation.

“Whether you are from the agricultural industry or not, this has the potential to impact us all,” he said. “Idahoans love and utilize our state’s water resources to produce our food, to generate our electricity, to recreate, and so much more. This invasive species threatens all of it.”

Besides making life difficult for humans, the mussels are good at creating monocultures and can choke out other aquatic plant and animal life, Tewalt said.

The ag department director said the quagga mussel fight has been an Idaho effort and not just an ISDA one. The close relationships that the state’s various agencies have with each other has made a huge difference, she added.



Because the legislature has provided significant resources to combat quagga mussels, the Idaho State Department of Agriculture was in a position to pounce on the invasive species as soon as it was detected in Idaho. The ISDA plan includes heavy monitoring in Idaho waterways.

“We can communicate really quickly with each other, Tewalt said. “It is not out of the blue for me to call the lands director, the fish and game director, the water resources director, etc. We meet together every Monday, and we do that outside of crises. So we know each other well enough that we can call and ask for help.”

The ag department also has great relationships with other stakeholders, including Idaho Power, the state’s agricultural industry, and other private industries, she said.

“And it’s because we have relationships with all these groups that we can call and ask for the cavalry to come and help us,” Tewalt said.

“I have great confidence in the team at the Idaho State Department of Agriculture and their many partners to continue to address this threat to ensure Idaho waterways and our critical infrastructure remain free from quagga mussel invasion,” the governor said.

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation President Bryan Searle, who farms near Shelley, thanked everyone involved in the quagga mussel fight.

“We applaud the work of ISDA and the other state agencies that are addressing this challenge with the seriousness that it deserves,” he said. “It will take all our efforts to ensure that quagga mussels and other invasive species do not get a permanent foothold in our water resources.”

The ISDA’s treatment plan has included using a copper-based product, Natrix, that is applied at a rate that will eradicate mussels but is below the drinking water standard for humans.

“We know that if we don’t treat this part of the river aggressively and comprehensively, we lose the whole river. And that’s worse.”

—Chanel Tewalt, ISDA Director

The treatment causes mortality in fish, aquatic plants and algae in a small stretch of the river.

Tewalt said department employees are heart-broken by the fish mortality, but doing nothing would be worse. Left unchecked, quagga mussels will create monocultures in water bodies and choke out other fish and aquatic plant species, she said.

“As hard as this is to do, doing nothing is worse,” she said. “We know that if we don’t treat this part of the river aggressively and comprehensively, we lose the whole river. And that’s worse.”

Because the legislature and governor have provided the funds and resources to detect and combat quagga mussels, the state was in a great position to attack them the moment they were detected, Tewalt said.

The legislature began providing significant resources to combat quagga mussels beginning in 2008.

Talented staff at ISDA and other state agencies are also a big help, she said.

“It’s because of those investments, it’s because of that forethought, that ISDA had a program and talented people in place to respond quickly,” she said. “And it is because of hard-working and smart, gritty people that we can actually get this done.” ■

Continued from page 3

According to the ag census, farmers and ranchers in Canyon County brought in a total of \$829 million in farm-gate receipts in 2022. That is the money agricultural producers receive directly for their crop or livestock commodity.

That ranked Canyon County No. 5 in Idaho in terms of the counties with the most farm-gate receipts.

The county's farmers and ranchers produce a wide variety of ag commodities, including seed crops, grains, hay, fruit, mint, hops and onions.

According to the 2022 ag census, there was 47,739 acres of hay harvested in Canyon County in 2022, as well as 38,781 acres of wheat, a combined 47,000 acres of corn for grain and silage, and 22,531 acres of vegetables.

The county is also home to a sizable greenhouse and nursery industry and is one of the main seed-producing areas in the world.

A wide variety of high-value seed crops are produced in the county and they don't need to be grown on large acreages.

The county also is big in beef cattle and dairy. In fact, \$375 million of the county's total \$829 million in farm-gate revenue in 2022 came from livestock production.

According to the ag census, there were more than 139,000 cattle and calves in Canyon County in 2022.

Canyon County is home to some high-quality, productive farmland and the yield potential on that land is really good, Villafana says.

When it comes to agriculture, "This area is so diverse," Villafana says. "It's pretty impressive what we can do in such a small area."

The ag census shows there were 1,056 farms or ranches from 1-9 acres in size in Canyon County in 2022, and 789 were 10-49 acres in size.

But there are still plenty of bigger farms in the county. The census shows there were 122 farms from 180-499 acres in size, 73 from 500-999 acres, and 64 larger than 1,000 acres.



Photo by Joel Benson

This is a panoramic view of farmland in Canyon County, which has the most farms of any county in the state.

When it comes to counties in Idaho with the most farms, Twin Falls came in at No. 2, with 1,169 farms. The average size of farm in that county is 393 acres.

Given the rapid growth and development occurring in Ada County, that county surprisingly ranked No. 3 with 1,142 farms. But the average size of a farm in Ada County was only 99 acres.

A lot of the farms in the county that qualify as farms under USDA's definition are tiny, says Ada County farmer Neil Durrant.

USDA counts as a farm any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold during the ag census year.

"A lot of farms here are tiny backyard parcels of land," Durrant says.

According to the ag census, there were 568 farms from 1-9 acres in size in Ada County in 2022 and 441 from 10-49 acres in size.

There were only 10 from 500-999 acres in size and 23 were more than 1,000 acres.

Durrant says there are still a decent amount of seed crops, including onion,

carrot and sweet corn seed, grown in Ada County, "but it's very minimal when you compare it to Canyon County."

Surprisingly, many of Idaho's main crops are still grown in Ada County, including sugar beets, wheat, alfalfa, corn and mint.

"We still have most of the main commodities grown in Idaho," Durrant says.

Bingham County ranks as the No. 4 county in Idaho in terms of total farms, with 1,082. The average size of a farm in Bingham – 831 acres – is much larger than the statewide average of 505 acres.

Bannock County ranked No. 5 with 1,005 farms during the ag census year. The average size of a farm in the county was 418 acres but the average farm there brought in \$45,000 in total farm-gate receipts in 2022, much less than the statewide average of \$476,000.

Latah (989 farms with an average size of 329 acres) and Kootenai (968, 111) counties came in at Nos. 6 and 7.

The Idaho county with the fewest farms was Shoshone, which had 44 farms with an average size of 36 acres in 2022. ■

Over 230,000 farms face corporate transparency act deadline

By **Samantha Ayoub**
AFBF Economist

Over 230,000 farms are up against a Jan. 1 deadline to file their detailed Beneficial Ownership Information (BOI) with the Treasury Department under the requirements of the Corporate Transparency Act (CTA).

Despite facing steep fines and possible jail time for failing to file, less than 11% of eligible businesses nationwide have filed their BOI.

Efforts to protect small businesses from these invasive requirements and the harsh punishment for noncompliance have stalled in Congress. Let's review what the Corporate Transparency Act means for farmers.

What is the Corporate Transparency Act?

The Corporate Transparency Act was passed in 2021 to combat money laundering and organized crime funding. The CTA requires that registered businesses register any "beneficial owner" of the company with the U.S. Department of Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN).

The BOI filing requirement applies to any small business that files an incorporating document with their state business authority to conduct business in the United States, including corporations, limited partnerships or limited liability companies (LLCs).

The FinCEN classification of a "small entity" is having less than 20 employees and under \$5 million in cash receipts.

While the actual structure of a business – and the process to incorporate – can vary slightly state to state, most farms operate as pass-through entities in which the company's income is passed directly into the owner's individual income, rather than being taxed as business revenue.

When a business files an incorporating document, it is classified as a C-corporation (C-corp) or S-corporation (S-corp). When a business files an organizing document, it is generally classified as an LLC.

C-corps are legally separated from their owners and are taxed at both a business and individual level. S-corps, partnerships and LLCs pass business revenue through to be taxed at the owner level, but they provide liability protection to their owners by operating as independent entities.

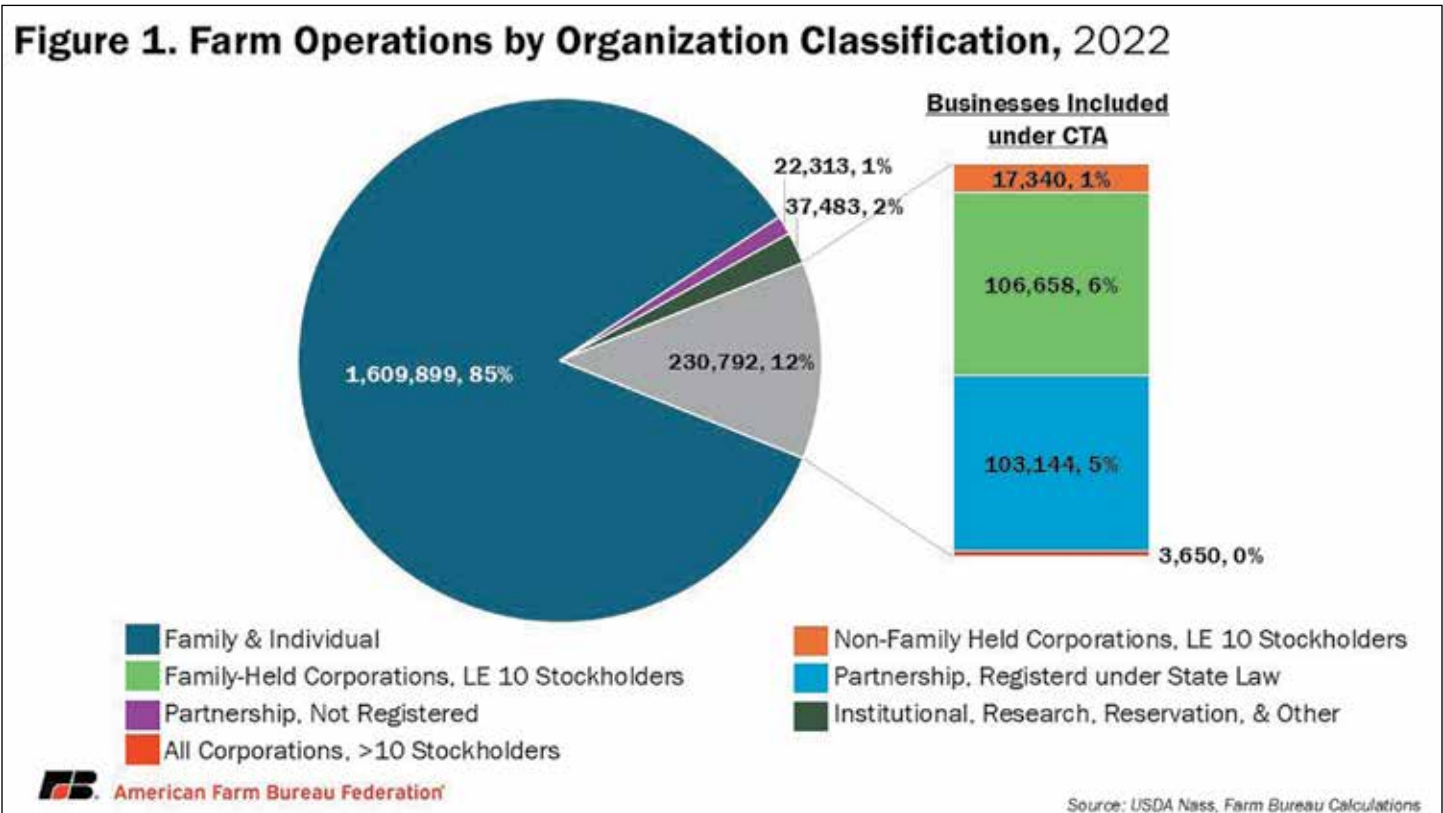




Photo by Kelbie Sweeten

More than 230,000 farms are up against a Jan. 1 deadline to file their detailed Beneficial Ownership Information with the Treasury Department under the requirements of the Corporate Transparency Act.

Beneficial owners include anyone with a significant stake in the company, whether or not they have direct legal ties to the business.

This may include holding at least 25% of a company's shares, having a similar level of control over the company's equity or holding significant influence over the company's decisions and operations (i.e., the authority to exercise substantial managerial control over the reporting company).

Should a business partake in illegal activities, each such stakeholder is accountable for the crimes of the business.

Filings must include all personal information like addresses, birthdays and identification numbers for each owner. While this report does not have to be renewed after the initial filing, changes of address, new driver's licenses or changes of name all require updated filings.

Since having control over a business' operations qualifies as beneficial ownership, a restructuring of job duties, even if the person does not have a legal ownership stake in the company, could also trigger requirements to file updates.

Liabe agricultural firms

The vast majority of farms and ranches operate as sole proprietorships (Family & Individual in Figure 1) and are likely exempt from filing their BOI, but 230,792 farming operations are state-registered businesses, either as corporations or partnerships, according to the 2022 Census of Agriculture.

These 12% of all farm operations operate 33% of farm acres.

Even though these farms may be legally classified as corporations, they are still small family firms. While the vast majority of farms are pass through entities, 85% of farm businesses formed as c-corps are family-owned and fall well under the employee and revenue cap set by the CTA.

Farms and ranches aren't the only agricultural businesses that have to meet CTA requirements. Many feed and supply stores, crop marketers like grain elevators and the greater rural business community are also likely required to file their BOI and subject to penalties if they do not.

The regulatory burdens and potential enforcement crackdowns could have ripple effects throughout the entire food, fiber and fuel supply chains.

Filing delays

As of mid-October, only 11% of the estimated 30 million companies that fall under the filing requirements of Jan. 1, 2025, had successfully filed with FinCEN.

Businesses that fail to file, or do not update records when needed, could face criminal fines up to \$10,000 and additional civil penalties of up to \$591 per day they fail to file.

If the hefty fines are not deterrence enough, failure to file could also lead to felony charges and up to two years in prison, whether or not these paperwork violations are linked to any other crime.

Since these criminal risks also apply to record updating,

tracking these CTA requirements could be a grey cloud for small business owners well beyond Jan. 1.

Corporate Transparency Act speedbumps

A lack of awareness and other permitting and filing requirements are likely the biggest reason farms and other businesses fail to meet the CTA obligations.

Businesses already file registrations with state agencies to operate, leading many to believe their information is recorded with the correct agencies, but FinCEN does not receive ownership information from these agencies.

Many financial institutions require their own BOI reports from customers to absolve themselves of responsibility for fraudulent transactions. However, these do not fulfill the new CTA requirements as they are not reported to FinCEN.

CTA filing deadlines also vary depending on business inception. Jan. 1, 2025, is the deadline for businesses established before Jan. 1, 2024. If businesses were registered in the 2024 calendar year, they only had 90 days to file their BOI upon notification of their business certification.

Businesses established after Jan. 1, 2025, will have even stricter filing requirements; they will only have 30 days after notification of their formation to submit their initial BOI report to FinCEN.

This 30-day window also applies to updates to previously filed information for all registered businesses, adding another chore for small business owners (or those exercising “substantial control”) going through business restructuring, or major life changes, such as a family death or divorce.

While BOI is free to file, business owners should consult attorneys or accountants to determine whether or not they are required to file and, if so, when to ensure they comply with FinCEN’s standards.

This adds another financial burden for farmers already facing significant cash flow problems during a tough year.

However, professional advice may be helpful if you run into problems attempting to file.

Conclusion

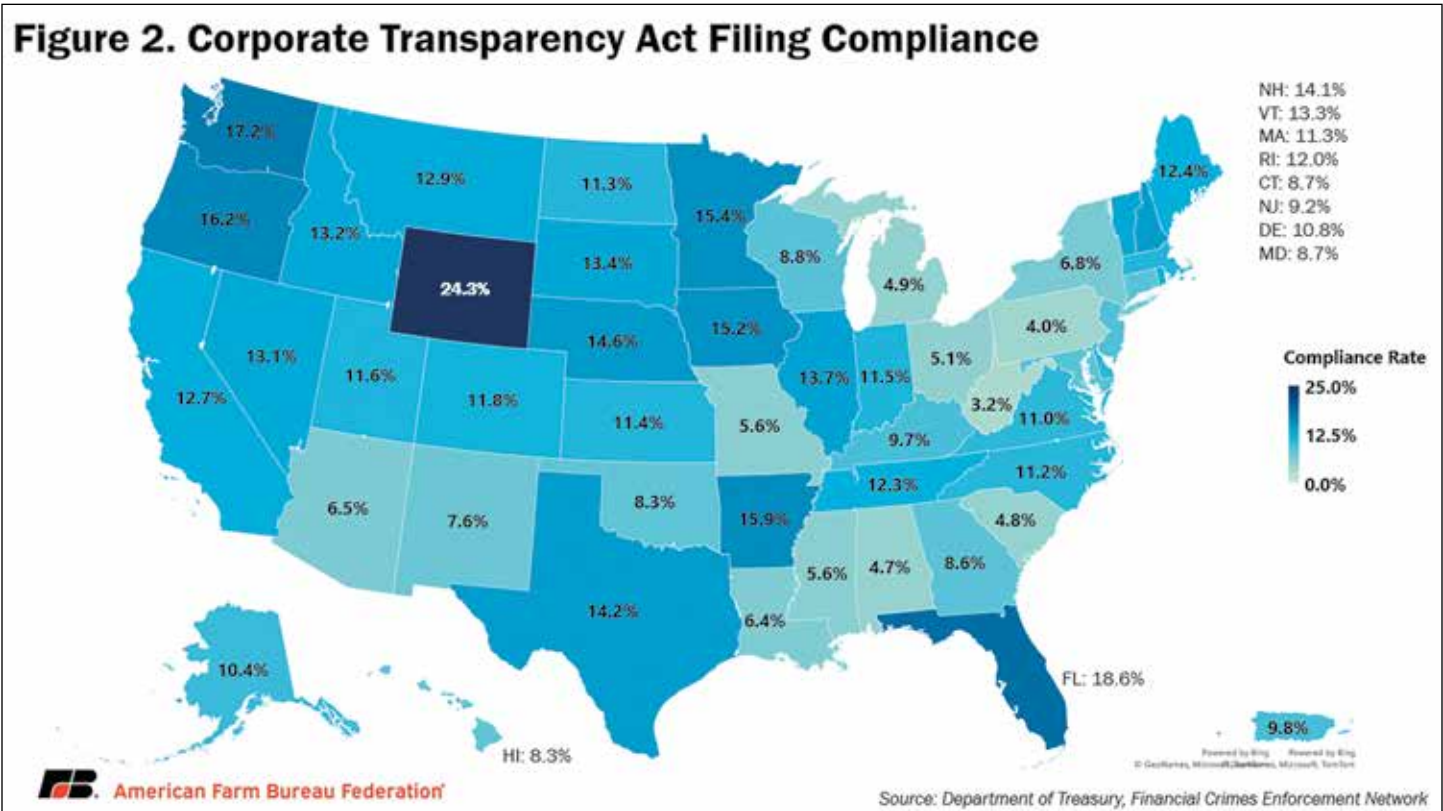
Small businesses often lack the time and the staff to track ever-changing rules and regulations pushed out by the federal government. The Corporate Transparency Act is an added burden for small business owners nationwide, including farmers and ranchers.

With unclear guidance and a lack of public awareness, businesses of all sizes are struggling to comply with new BOI requirements and are quickly approaching a deadline that bears criminal consequences.

There have been unsuccessful attempts to extend the filing period for small businesses, but Congress has a long laundry list of other legislation to pass before the end of the year, including a much-needed modernized farm bill and disaster relief.

For now, business owners should anticipate a crackdown on CTA filings starting Jan. 1 and take steps to ensure they are in compliance.

See the Treasury Department’s BOI filing page at <https://www.fincen.gov/boi>. ■



U of I announces first endowed deanship in its history

University of Idaho news release

MOSCOW, Idaho – The J.R. Simplot Family Foundation has made a significant gift to establish University of Idaho's first endowed deanship in support of the land-grant institution's broad efforts to benefit Idaho agriculture.

The J.R. Simplot Endowed Dean of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS) pays homage to the Idaho-based agribusiness company's founder, the late J.R. Simplot, and the Simplot family's legacy within Idaho agriculture and with U of I.

[The amount of the endowment was not disclosed.]

Annual distributions from the endowment will support the CALS dean's priorities in perpetuity. By providing sustained financial support, an endowed deanship ensures continuity in leadership and a stable foundation for long-term strategic planning.

This stability enables the dean to pursue ambitious projects and invest in innovative initiatives. Such resources help attract top faculty members, improve student experiences and elevate the college's contributions toward supporting and improving the agriculture industry.

"We're grateful for the generosity of the J.R. Simplot Family Foundation," said U of I President Scott Green. "It is fitting to name this deanship after Simplot given the family's legacy in Idaho and agriculture. This is a milestone for the U of I in establishing our first endowed dean's position and we look forward to building on this great partnership."



University of Idaho photo

This photo show University of Idaho's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences on the U of I campus in Moscow.

"We're thrilled to be able to help the U of I continue to lead in agriculture, innovating to find new ways to support farmers and feed a growing world population."

–Scott Simplot, chairman of the board, J.R. Simplot Co.

As the agricultural college for Idaho's land-grant university, CALS is charged to advance the health and welfare of people, animals and the environment through research and education in agriculture, community, human and rural development, natural resources, nutrition and life sciences.

In this role, the college collaborates extensively with stakeholders like the J.R. Simplot Company in fulfilling its mission.

Agriculture is the engine that drives Idaho's economy, representing 17% of the state's total economic output in 2023, according to a report by U of I agricultural economists.

"We're thrilled to be able to help the U of I continue to lead in agriculture, innovating to find new ways to support farmers and feed a growing world population," said Scott Simplot, chairman of the board for the J.R. Simplot Co. and a U of I alumnus.

"My dad was passionate about education and about agriculture so it's fitting that we can combine two of his favorite things with this endowment."

Michael P. Parrella, who will be retiring in June 2025, will be the first to hold the title of J.R. Simplot Endowed Dean of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

The university is embarking upon a national search for a new dean to build on the momentum the college has gained under Parrella's leadership.

Since he became dean in 2016, CALS has enjoyed unprecedented prosperity and made great strides toward expanding and improving its programs and research infrastructure throughout the state.

As a result of these efforts and successes, CALS is listed as the 13th best college of agricultural sciences in the U.S. in recent niche.com rankings for 2025. ■



Photos by Bill Schaefer

Several hundred veterans and community members showed up for the 12th Annual Farm Bureau Salute to Idaho Veterans Nov. 12.

Farm Bureau salutes the service of veterans

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – Hundreds of local veterans joined Idaho Farm Bureau employees Nov. 1 during the 12th Annual Farm Bureau Salute to Idaho Veterans.

The event, which honors the service of U.S. military veterans, is held at the Farm Bureau Insurance Co. of Idaho headquarters building in Pocatello.

Farm Bureau leaders who spoke during the event made sure

veterans knew it was solely about celebrating their service, and not Farm Bureau.

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation President Bryan Searle told the attending veterans they are considered part of the Farm Bureau family.

“You are family. I feel love for you and appreciate you for your service,” he said. “I love America. I love our freedoms. It wouldn’t be possible without your service.”

“Freedom is never free; you know that,” he added. “Thank you for all you’ve done for the United States of America.”

“Your sacrifice and commitment to protecting the ideals and people of this great country are truly respected and cherished by the team members of Farm Bureau, and will never be forgotten.”

– Todd Argall, president, Farm Bureau Insurance Co. of Idaho

Todd Argall, president of Farm Bureau Insurance Co. of Idaho and the son of a Korean War vet, told the veterans that the event is put on by Farm Bureau employees and not an outside production group.

The event is considered the highlight of Farm Bureau employees’ year.

“This is a special event for everyone at Farm Bureau because it gives us the opportunity to say ‘thank you’ to our Pocatello veterans, and all veterans, for your service to our country and for protecting the freedom and liberty of the people of the United States of America,” Argall said. “Your sacrifice and commitment to protecting the ideals and people of this great country are truly respected and cherished by the team members of Farm Bureau, and will never be forgotten.”

The Salute to Idaho Veterans is held before Veteran’s Day so it won’t interfere with the events held on that day by veterans’ organizations.

The guest speaker of this year’s event was former Pittsburgh Steelers running back Rocky Bleier, who told the story of his days on the football field as well as the battle fields of Vietnam.

Bleier was seriously injured during combat in Vietnam. However, he fought back from that adversity to become a starting running back on the Steelers dynasty that won four Super Bowls in the 1970s.



TOP AND ABOVE: Several hundred veterans and community members showed up for the 12th Annual Farm Bureau Salute to Idaho Veterans Nov. 12.

Veterans event was how ordinary people can become extraordinary achievers.

The three winners of Farm Bureau’s Veterans Day essay contest for students – “What my family member’s service means to me” – read their winning entries during the event.

The 1st through 6th grade contest was

Moore, second-graders from Star, who won \$250 for their winning entry.

Barrett Brown, an eighth-grader from Mountain Home Air Force Base, won the 7th through 9th grade category, and \$500.

The 10th through 12th grade contest was won by Jailey Jones, a 12th-grader from Downey, who won \$750 for her winning entry. ■

Idaho ag department gives \$2 million in grant funding to specialty crop projects

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

BOISE – The Idaho State Department of Agriculture will award 17 projects a total of more than \$2 million in grant funding in fiscal year 2024.

The funding is available through ISDA's Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.

The grant money, which is provided through USDA's national specialty crop block grant program, is used to promote, market and conduct research for the state's specialty crop industries.

The program is designed to solely benefit specialty crops, which include vegetables, fruits, tree nuts, dried fruits, nursery and horticulture crops.

"We are pleased to provide this opportunity in collaboration with USDA for organizations of all sizes to enhance the competitiveness of Idaho-grown crops," said ISDA Director Chanel Tewalt.

"This year's specialty crop block grant funding will address several needs for Idaho's specialty crops including innovative research, market improvement, educational initiatives and more."

Since it was created in 2009, the ISDA program has awarded 214 projects a total of \$22.36 million.

The funding has been especially important to specialty crop industries with limited resources, such as the Idaho Bean Commission.

"This grant program has allowed the commission to fund several interesting and valuable research projects that otherwise might have been difficult to fund," said IBC Executive Director Andi Woolf-Weibye. "It has been a real benefit to the state's approximately 500 bean growers."

The bean commission received grant funding for two projects this year, including \$85,000 for a

project that will evaluate the suitability of using bio-char to

suppress soil-borne diseases in beans.

Biochar is produced by burning various materials, usually wood, at a high temperature and low oxygen, and resembles charcoal.

The commission will work with University of Idaho researchers to determine the effects of biochar being incorporated into bean soils.

The IBC also received a \$60,000 grant for a project to develop onsite and confirmatory tests for pathogens of beans.

The project seeks to develop four new isothermal detection methods for key bean diseases.

Idaho ranks No. 1 in the nation in dry bean seed production and sixth in total dry bean production.

"The research funded by these type of grants has helped address several key challenges in the bean world and we are very thankful for the opportunity to help advance the industry," Woolf-Weibye said.

The ISDA also awarded an \$87,000 grant to a project led by the College of Southern Idaho to enhance educational opportunities for students by building an apple orchard with an irrigation system and incorporating trellises.

According to a project summary, "By actively involving students in the project, a pool of future professionals equipped with hands-on experience in trellised apple cultivation will be created. Graduates with this specialized knowledge will be valuable assets to the apple industry..."

The Idaho Apple Commission received a \$70,000 grant to increase exposure and sales of Idaho apples through in-store, social media and website promotions.

The Idaho Cherry Commission received a \$20,000 grant to do the same thing for Idaho cherries.

ISDA awarded an \$86,000 grant to



“Despite the great success and growth Idaho’s wine industry has seen, consumers, especially those who have relocated to Idaho, are still unaware it is a wine producing state ... This project will target the local population with the goal of getting people to realize great wine is within minutes from their homes....”

–Idaho Wine Commission project summary

the Idaho Hop Growers Commission to increase awareness of and demand for Idaho hops through the use of social media, radio advertising and international and domestic tours.

The Idaho Mint Growers Association received a \$19,000 grant to create awareness and foster education about Idaho mint.

Idaho is the nation’s top pepper-mint-producing state.

According to the project summary, “This grant proposal aims to address critical needs within our industry, focusing on raising awareness of Idaho mint, fostering education at various levels, and providing opportunities for open dialogue between growers, consumers, and most importantly end user corporations.”

Three grants totaling \$415,000 in funding will seek to help Idaho’s potato industry.

The Idaho Potato Commission received a \$200,000 grant to help continue a marketing program in Taiwan.

“Idaho potatoes have only begun to scratch the surface of the potential opportunity that exists in this important market,” the project summary states.

University of Idaho received a \$100,000 grant for a project that seeks to develop a novel strategy to achieve pale cyst nematode resistance in Idaho potatoes.

PCN can cause up to 80 percent yield loss in potatoes.

According to the project summary, “Developing an environmentally friendly

and effective approach for PCN disease management for Idaho growers is urgently needed.”

U of I also received a \$115,000 grant for a project to improve the marketing potential of Idaho seed potatoes.

The Idaho Wine Commission received a \$222,000 grant for a project designed to reach Idaho consumers with the story of Idaho wine.

According to the project summary, “Despite the great success and growth Idaho’s wine industry has seen, consumers, especially those who have relocated to Idaho, are still unaware it is a wine producing state ... This project will target the local population with the goal of getting people to realize great wine is within minutes from their homes....”

The Sunnyslope Wine Trail, a group of 20 wineries, received a \$125,000 grant to

increase public awareness of the Sunnyslope wine region.

“Through local advertising, we will increase foot traffic to all local wineries by a minimum of 30 percent, which will impact visitors to other local specialty crop growers and businesses in this area as well,” the project summary states.

ISDA awarded the Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Committee a \$120,000 grant to promote Idaho-East Oregon onions and increase demand through tours, trade shows and trade missions.

The Idaho Nursery and Landscape Association received a \$135,000 grant to evaluate and develop an existing pool of native plant species and determine their medicinal potential.

ISDA’s Idaho Preferred program received a \$295,000 grant to continue to promote Idaho specialty crops.

“The projected outcome is a targeted increase in specialty crop sales to \$42.5 million, reflecting a 5 percent growth over the previous year,” the project summary states.

ISDA’s Bureau of Food Safety, Hemp and Hops received a \$125,000 grant for a project that seeks to combat challenges within the hop industry.

Northwest Nazarene University received a \$66,000 grant to develop a robot operating software platform for robots used in specialty crop production. ■

RIGHT: A selection of award-winning wines on display at Bitner Vineyards. The Idaho Wine Commission received a \$222,000 grant for a project designed to reach Idaho consumers with the story of Idaho wine. Photo by Brian Myrick/Idaho Press





Photo courtesy of Rick Parker

Rick's "Food Systems Science" classes at the College of Southern Idaho in Burley usually fill with students eager to learn to make sausage, jams, and bread.

Rick and Marilyn Parker make ag education edible and entertaining

By Dianna Troyer
For Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

Growing up on a farm near Acequia in southeastern Idaho, Rick Parker received a life-changing gift as a child. It launched his half-century career in agricultural research and education throughout the West.

"It all started with a microscope my parents gave me when I was 11," said Parker, a teacher, researcher, and author. "It triggered my lifelong curiosity to study the science of raising crops and livestock. I wanted a career that

combined agriculture, science, and education."

He points to the microscope on a shelf in a small office building adjacent to his Rupert home, headquarters of the National Agricultural Institute, a company he and his wife, Marilyn, founded in 2012 to enhance ag education.

After earning a PhD in animal physiology from Iowa State University in 1977, Parker taught classes and wrote a dozen high school and college agriculture

“It’s vital for people to know how their food is grown—whether on a large farm or a home garden—and how their bodies process it.”

—Rick Parker

textbooks about varied topics including aquaculture, horses, plants, and soil.

He still teaches a class he devised called “Food Systems Science” at the College of Southern Idaho – Mini-Cassia Center in Burley and uses textbooks he wrote. The class combines farming and food science.

“It’s vital for people to know how their food is grown—whether on a large farm or a home garden—and how their bodies process it,” he said.

Students gain an edible education. After learning how their food is grown and harvested, they make pickles, sausage, pudding, taffy and other food.

“They’re shocked and pleased to realize they can easily make that food at home instead of buying it at a grocery store,” he said.

Parker said people tell him they are surprised he is still teaching at age 75.

“When you love what you do, you never work,” he said. “This fall will be my 17th semester to teach the class. It always fills up with about 20 students.”

For Parker, the thrill of seeing what science reveals has never waned since childhood.

“Watching students understand concepts was exciting while I was a teaching assistant earning my PhD,” he said. “I still see it and never take it for granted.”

Parker felt the thrill of discovery himself, having researched innovations in agriculture.

“I was among the first to do embryo transfers in pigs, cattle, and sheep,” he said.

Parker said he relies on his wife to promote ag education.

“Wherever we’ve lived, Marilyn has been my 55-year support system,” he said. “We’ve always collaborated. Along with being a full-time homemaker, she typed the textbook manuscripts, took photos to illustrate the books, and was the proofreader.”

She maintains a Facebook page, Ag 101, “to promote agricultural literacy one post at a time,” she said. “I find all kinds of fascinating facts about food and inspirational and funny comments from farmers. The page has more than 118K followers without any advertisement.”

To make his textbooks affordable, Parker said he retained the right to self-publish in paperback. “I sell them for \$30 with QR



Photos by Dianna Troyer

TOP: Rick Parker is president of the National Agricultural Institute and has his office in a building adjacent to his home in Rupert. He and his wife Marilyn launched it in 2012 to support and enhance postsecondary ag education.

ABOVE: Marilyn updates a Facebook page called Ag 101 with the goal of promoting agricultural literacy one post at time.

codes that have links to PowerPoints and photos online.”

He stocks some textbooks at home, where he and Marilyn live on property his great-grandfather H.M. Cole farmed in the early 1900s west of Rupert. A towering 50-foot-tall maple tree and rhubarb that H.M. planted still thrive.

They planted an extensive garden and 300 trees, including elm, sumac, hybrid poplar, and an orchard with several varieties of apples, plums, cherries and pears.

“I even have an almond tree,” he said. “People tell me it’s too cold here for almonds, but the tree doesn’t listen and always produce.”

Parker said his goal in and out of the classroom has always been “to make agricultural science relevant. My guiding philosophy is, ‘I hear, I forget; I see, I remember; I do, I understand.’” ■

PVY-resistant spud a game changer for potato breeders

By John O'Connell
University of Idaho

Despite possessing a suite of intriguing traits, Payette Russet and Castle Russet have been mostly overlooked by the potato industry since the Tri-State Potato Research and Breeding Program (PVMI) released them as new varieties a few years ago.

Though they've seldom been planted in commercial fields, a University of Idaho distinguished professor and potato virologist, Alexander Karasev, expects both varieties will fill an essential niche toward ensuring a bright future for U.S. potato production.

In March, Karasev and two of his former graduate students, Cassandra Funke and Lisa Tran, published a paper in *American Journal of Potato Research*, "Screening Three Potato Cultivars for Resistance to Potato Virus Y (PVY) Strains: Broad and Strain-specific Sources of Resistance," finding Payette appears to

have complete immunity to PVY strains. Karasev has begun similar testing on

Castle, which contains the



Photo by John O'Connell

Distinguished Professor Alex Karasev, a plant virologist with the University of Idaho's Department of Entomology, Plant Pathology and Nematology, holds an informational card about Payette Russet, which has strong resistance to potato virus Y.

same R gene that confers resistance in Payette.

Based on the study's findings, the two varieties should see broad use as parents within potato breeding programs seeking to overcome PVY, which is one of the most economically important diseases producers currently face.

"The availability of this R gene that was tested and verified gives the breeders a very good tool to move forward with," Karasev said.

He also sees potential to plant Payette along field borders, where aphids that spread PVY tend to feed first. Aphids lured to the Payette rows would potentially clean their stylets of the disease before moving to feed upon susceptible varieties.

Payette was crossed and selected from the U of I and U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperative breeding program in

Aberdeen and released in 2015. Payette is often slow to emerge from dormancy following storage, which is a major reason why it hasn't been widely planted.

Castle is prone to a tuber defect known as hollow heart and also contains undesirable levels of glycoalkaloids — naturally occurring compounds found in Solanaceae family plants that could pose health concerns when consumed in high concentrations.

Potato Variety Management Institute (PVMI), which is a nonprofit corporation that handles licensing and royalty collections of potato varieties developed by a cooperative breeding program involving the states of Idaho, Washington and Oregon, has touted both Payette and Castle for their strong PVY resistance.

Observations about the varieties' PVY performance, however, were based on natural pressure in the field from common virus strains in the growing area.

Karasev and his team exposed Payette to 18 different isolates belonging to 13 unique strains and genetic variants of PVY from throughout the world. He maintains a



“A lot of work has been done by Idaho Crop Improvement Association and the seed growers to lower virus levels in the seed, but it’s just about impossible to eradicate it, so finding varieties that are resistant is the best option.”

– Rhett Spear, UI Aberdeen Research and Extension Center

collection of PVY strains in tobacco plants within a secure greenhouse, where his team conducted the Payette experiment. Sap from the infected tobacco plants was brushed on potato plant foliage.

“We have many strains of the virus that are not found in the U.S. We applied all of that when we tested,” Karasev said. “To my surprise, we could not break that resistance.”

In addition to Payette, he tested two control varieties that are highly susceptible to PVY. For comparison, he also tested two varieties with N-gene resistance, which is the most common type of PVY resistance gene present in commercial varieties.

N genes trigger plants’ natural defenses to kill infected cells, but in some cases the virus can spread before infected cells die. As a result, prevalent PVY strains are con-

stantly evolving and shifting toward strains that avoid resistance to specific N genes.

Karasev’s team used three to five individual potato plants to test each combination of potato cultivar and PVY strain, repeating the experiment several times at different times of the year.

The recent paper should provide breeders with surety that the R gene in Payette and Castle will hold up in the face of new PVY strains.

“Finding varieties with extreme resistance is one of the priorities of the breeding program because PVY can have an impact on yield and sometimes quality if the variety is susceptible to virus-related tuber defects,” said Rhett Spear, an assistant professor based at the UI Aberdeen Research and Extension Center specializing in agronomic and economic evaluations of new potato varieties. “A lot of work has been done by Idaho Crop Improvement Association and the seed growers to lower virus levels in the seed, but it’s just about impossible to eradicate it, so finding varieties that are resistant is the best option.” ■



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f i t in y

How cold hardiness affects seedlings

By **Lauren King**
University of Idaho

Hello! My name is Lauren King, and I recently joined the University of Idaho Extension Forestry team as the Extension educator for Benewah County.

While I officially began my new role in July 2024, I have been a member of the forestry team for several years, previously serving as the financial and outreach specialist at the University of Idaho's Franklin H. Pitkin Forest Nursery.

I earned my Master of Science in natural resources in May 2024 from the University of Idaho, with a focus on forest nurseries and extension programming.

During my time with Pitkin Nursery, I gained extensive experience educating landowners about nursery operations, seedling care, and forest management practices.

In my new position, I am eager to continue empowering landowners with knowledge and tools to improve their forest's health and sustainability.

I am committed to developing innovative programs that address the unique needs of Benewah County and its residents. I can be reached by email at laurenking@uidaho.edu or by calling (208) 885-8766.

As cold weather sets in, it is the perfect time to start thinking about your spring

LEFT: **Western Larch** after October frost.
Photo by Lauren King



tree planting needs. Planting seedlings is one of the most economical ways to reforest your property.

Planting trees grown in a nursery setting will better set you up for success compared to direct seeding because nursery-sourced plants get a jump start on the growth cycle. Seedlings are also preferable to planting mature trees, which can be more labor-intensive and cost-prohibitive.

Seedlings are either grown in containers or bare-root beds until they are of the desired size, and then they are harvested to be used for planting or placed in cold storage.

Nurseries go to great lengths to produce high-quality seedlings by controlling light, water, fertilizer, and temperature to ensure optimal growing conditions.

Ensuring seedlings are set up for success prior to planting is critical to their survival.

While the lighting, water, and fertilizer are important to a seedling's successful growth, temperature is also a key element. Nurseries will often sow seeds in the winter or early spring, to create warm conditions for germination and influence the early growth stages.

This allows the seeds to be in full growth and flourish into seedlings by late spring and early summer. If the seedlings are kept inside as autumn approaches, the heat is turned down in the greenhouses.

This reflects outdoor conditions and allows the seedlings to start accumulating chilling hours. It is important to slowly transition the seedlings into cooler temperatures or they will not be cold-hardy going into cold storage or winter.

Much like your garden plants, if you were to take an actively growing plant and place it in a freezer randomly overnight, it is not likely to bode well for your plant.

A seedling's ability to withstand freezing temperatures is what's known as cold hardiness. In nature, cold hardiness happens naturally as days become shorter and temperatures decrease.

In a controlled greenhouse setting, cold hardiness is achieved as chilling hours (i.e., hours spent in progressively cooler temperatures) accumulate. Nurseries use these chilling hours to determine when it is time

to harvest seedlings from containers and bedding fields.

If seedlings are harvested and put into freezer storage prior to those chilling hours being met, it can cause physiological and morphological damage.

When seedlings have achieved maximum chilling hours, they are considered dormant, just as they would be going into winter in the field. As a result, placing the seedlings into cold storage does not negatively affect their growth.

Seedlings should only be kept in freezer storage for one season. If left in cold storage for too long, the seedlings may struggle to grow once planted.



University of Idaho photo
Lauren King measuring Douglas Fir seedlings at the Pitkin Forest Nursery

Many nurseries will have their seedlings tested for cold hardiness as a quality control measure to ensure their seedlings are meeting buyer requirements.

It can be challenging to appropriately time the accumulation of chilling hours to achieve cold hardiness during optimal fall planting time.

While fall planting can be completed on favorable sites, you should choose your planting locations wisely and watch the weather forecasts to avoid shocking your trees with a dramatic change in temperature.

Once spring arrives, get ready to plant! If you have your seedlings shipped to you, don't panic if they arrive frozen. Since they have been in cold storage all winter, it simply means that they did not get too warm

during shipment and are still in excellent condition.

Make sure the seedlings are thawed before planting but do so out of direct sunlight to avoid potentially drying them out.

For more information on planting your seedlings, see "Managing your seedlings for success" (Volume 27, Issue 5 of the Idaho Farm Bureau magazine) and "Site preparation before and after tree planting" (Volume 27, Issue 3).

Cold hardiness is not only important for seedlings. Established, mature trees go into dormancy each year and rely on cold hardiness to survive harsh winters.

This is why species that are adapted to warmer climate zones generally do not do well in Idaho's cold winters. During years of sporadic winter weather with dramatic variations in temperature, trees are also vulnerable to winter damage if they break dormancy, and temperatures fall below freezing again.

Ensuring you plant trees that are rated for your USDA Cold Hardiness zone will help with long-term survival of your trees. To find your Cold Hardiness zone, visit the USDA's Plant Hardiness Zone Map (<https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/>).

Another way to set yourself up for tree planting success is knowing where the seed source comes from for your seedlings. Knowing what elevation band is best for your seed source can dramatically impact what cold hardiness that tree can genetically achieve.

When you are planning your next planting, start as early as possible. Many nurseries need orders over a year in advance, especially for large purchases.

Do your research and determine what the best nursery and species is for your project. The University of Idaho Pitkin Forest Nursery is a great resource for your tree planting needs, producing almost half a million seedlings of nearly 70 different plant species (ranging from conifers to forbs) annually.

Seedlings are available for purchase from Sept. 1 through mid-May. To learn more about the Pitkin Nursery or place an order, please visit www.uidaho.edu/cfnr. ■



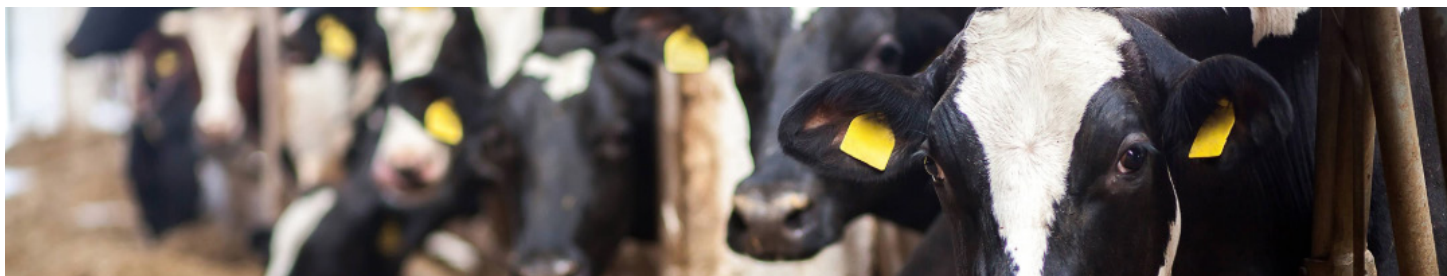
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Idaho's Response to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Dairy Cattle

Dr. Scott Leibsle, Idaho State Veterinarian

April 1, 2024, the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) reported its first ever case of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in cattle. Throughout the outbreak there have been a total of 35 confirmed cases in our state, making Idaho one of fifteen affected states. Idaho's response to the nationwide outbreak highlights how the State of Idaho effectively and efficiently addresses significant regulatory issues, setting a strong example for other state and federal agencies.

ISDA was well prepared to respond to this animal disease event with several tools available including trained staff as well as budgetary resources. ISDA's Animal Industries Division has the financial resources to respond quickly thanks to the agriculture industry - which funds the bulk of ISDA's budget - and the Legislature.

The unprecedented detection in dairy cattle brought several unknowns, making regulatory decisions even more complex but equally as important. The transmission of HPAI is not necessarily linear. Today we know, traceability of HPAI is complex and multi-factorial, the virus is spread through a multitude of paths, not all of which are understood.

Since the beginning of the HPAI outbreak in dairy cattle this spring, the ISDA has been proactive. Among all the states and USDA, Idaho was the first to implement movement restrictions for affected states. Idaho dairies were also the first in the country to observe quarantine measures – well before anything was put in place at a federal level.

After eight months, ISDA's goals remain the same now as they were in the beginning of the outbreak.

1) Safeguard animal health by limiting the spread of the virus among lactating cattle. 2) Work with producers to limit on-farm production losses and maintain business continuity.

ISDA recognizes there are still many unknowns and the various methods in which H5N1 in dairy cattle spreads from one animal or one facility to another are not fully understood. However, it's always important to keep in mind that the solution or treatment for the disease shouldn't ultimately be worse than the impact of the disease itself. Overly onerous or arbitrary restrictions that have not been scientifically validated can damage a producer far more than they protect the industry. ISDA continues to base all regulatory decisions on the management of H5N1 in dairy herds on verifiable data that will actually benefit the industry more than it will hurt it.

As a major livestock state, Idaho cannot forget about what an outbreak like this truly means to the dairymen. Since H5N1 continues to primarily affect lactating cows, reducing milk production, this leaves the greatest amount of financial impact to be borne by the dairymen. Ultimately, the ISDA's actions in response to HPAI are all a part of an effort to contain the outbreak, while safeguarding public health and minimizing economic impacts on Idaho's \$3.5 billion dairy industry.

Going forward, there is an expectation that USDA will be rolling out a mandate for H5N1 testing on all dairies, nationwide, in the coming weeks. The details of the testing requirements have not yet been provided to states, but ISDA will distribute the specifics as soon as they are made public. When the USDA testing mandate is officially implemented, ISDA will continue to collaborate with processing plants and producers so sample collection is done efficiently and in such a way that it does not interfere with normal business practices. ISDA continues to monitor the evolution of H5N1 in dairies and poultry facilities across that state and will provide support to any and all producers affected by the spread of the virus.



Photo by Sean Ellis

Gov. Brad Little and Lt. Gov. Scott Bedke sent a tersely worded letter to the White House Sept. 23 telling the administration to keep its hands off of Idaho's groundwater.

State leaders to White House: Keep your hands off of Idaho's groundwater

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – Gov. Brad Little and Lt. Gov. Scott Bedke sent a tersely worded letter to the White House Sept. 23 telling the administration to keep its hands off of Idaho's groundwater.

“We are deeply concerned about your administration's efforts to increase federal oversight of groundwater in the states,” the letter states.

The letter accuses the President's Council of Advisors on Sci-

ence and Technology (PCAST) of poking around for information about groundwater in western states.

PCAST sent out a letter earlier this year seeking information on states' groundwater, according to the letter.

“We told them we have serious problems with this request for information,” Little told Idaho Farm Bureau Federation. “We wholeheartedly reject the premise that the federal government should be involved in regulating groundwater and responded with serious questions and concerns about their intentions.”

Rep. Mike Simpson, R-Idaho, and Rep. Russ Fulcher, R-Idaho,

also signed a letter along with four of their House colleagues basically saying the same thing.

That letter, dated Oct. 1, states that it was written “in response to (PCAST’s) request for ‘Public Input on America’s Groundwater Challenges’ and apparent ongoing efforts ... to produce a report relating to federal recommendations on groundwater.”

“It is not the role of the federal government to manage or regulate groundwater,” the letter signed by Fulcher and Simpson says. “States, tribes, and local governments have been effectively managing groundwater and water supply for decades without federal intervention ... As members of Congress who represent rural and western districts, we staunchly oppose this effort to impede state, local and tribal regulatory authority.”

The letter from Little and Bedke states that the request for information from PCAST “is alarming to Idahoans, particularly in the agricultural community.”

The letter says the overly broad request for information sought by PCAST “suggests the council has already predetermined the actions needed by the federal government with respect to our groundwater.”

“Namely, it appears the council has already concluded that the agriculture industry needs to be the focal point of your groundwater grab, prior to even receiving any feedback,” the letter states.

Bedke and Little are both ranchers and farmers.

Their letter says the current administration has constantly proposed over-reaching rules that would negatively impact farmers and ranchers, including rules on public lands, wildfire management, grazing and water.

“Based on your regulatory track record, the PCAST public input process is cause for concern in the West,” the letter states.

The letter from Little and Bedke says the federal government has no place in groundwater management.

“Congress has long left those actions up to the states and has limited its involvement to funding of projects and technology advancement,” the letter states. “Your administration should follow suit.”

Little and Bedke wrote that the most alarming thing to them is a direct statement from PCAST that the effort is “to support the development of a report to advance government-wide action on groundwater.”

“It shouldn’t surprise ... you that Idahoans generally reject the term ‘government-wide action,’ especially as it relates to our precious water,” the letter states.

The letter from Little and Bedke concludes by reiterating that water management is a state issue.

“We do not invite or welcome the involvement of the federal government in making decisions about this precious resource,” it states.

“Plain and simple, Idahoans must determine our water destiny, not the feds or other states,” Little told IFBF.

The letter that Simpson and Fulcher signed points out that an April 25 announcement on the PCAST website invited written submissions from the public.

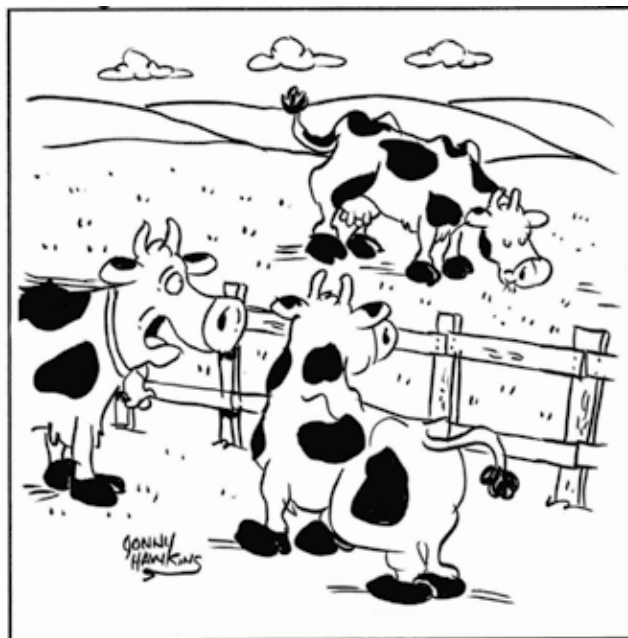
This raises the question, the letter signed by the Idaho congressmen states, of “why this was not published in the Federal Register as a formal Request for Information.” ■

Country Chuckles

By Jonny Hawkins



Aqua Ducks



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Scan the QR code for complete rules and restrictions. Above left: Shay from Kimberly, Idaho, the winner of our
2nd quarter 2024 Refer A Friend, Get A Gift \$500 drawing, with his agent Cindy Packard.

Value of Idaho ag production down 6 percent

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – As expected, the total value of Idaho's agricultural production declined in 2023 compared with the record year of 2022.

According to USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, the value of Idaho agricultural production totaled \$11 billion in 2023, down 6 percent, or almost \$700 million, from the record total of \$11.7 billion in 2022.

The prices that farmers and ranchers receive for their commodities reached record or near-record level levels in 2022. But so did input costs.

While most farm-level commodity prices are now on the decline, many input costs have remained high.

In some cases, such as fuel and fertilizer, costs have decreased a little, but not

near as much as farm commodity prices have, said Rupert farmer Mike Wilkins.

"Our ... costs haven't come down as much as our prices have," he said.

According to NASS, the value of livestock production in Idaho totaled \$6.4 billion in 2023, a 5 percent drop from 2022. The value of Idaho crop production totaled \$4.57 billion in 2023, a 6 percent decline from 2022.

Top 10 Idaho ag commodities

In terms of total value of production, milk remained Idaho's top ag commodity in 2023 with a total production value of \$3.5 billion. That was a 19 percent drop from the record \$4.3 billion set in 2022.

Idaho milk production totaled a record 16.8 billion pounds in 2023, up 1 percent over the previous record in 2022 and up 15 percent since 2017, according to NASS.

Cattle and calves ranked as the state's No. 2 agricultural commodity in 2023 with a record high value of production of \$2.1 billion, a 21 percent increase over 2022 (\$1.75 billion), which was also a record.

Potatoes ranked as Idaho's No. 3 ag commodity in value and were again Idaho's top crop in 2023, with a total value of production of \$1.4 billion. That was a 9 percent drop from the record of \$1.5 billion set in 2022.

Hay ranked as the state's No. 4 ag commodity in 2023 with a total value of production of \$1 billion, a 24 percent decline compared with the record high of \$1.4 billion in 2022.

Wheat came in at No. 5 with a total value of \$613 million, a 19 percent decline from 2022.

Those top five commodities had a combined production value of \$8.65



The value of Idaho agricultural production totaled \$11 billion in 2023, down 6 percent from the record total of \$11.7 billion in 2022. Photo by Sean Ellis



Photo by Sean Ellis

Corn is harvested in a southwest Idaho field in this file photo. Corn for grain was Idaho's No. 8 ag commodity in 2023 in terms of total value of production.

billion, which represented 79 percent of the total value of all ag production in the state in 2023.

Rounding out the Top 10

The total value of Idaho sugar beet production in 2023 soared 38 percent over 2022 to \$600 million, making sugar beets Idaho's No. 6 ag commodity.

NASS placed total Idaho barley value at a record \$469 million in 2023, up 3 percent over 2022.

Corn for grain was valued at \$158 million, a 6 percent drop from 2022, and Idaho onion production was valued at \$110 million, down 15 percent from 2022.

The total value of Idaho hop production was put at \$91 million, down 10 percent from 2022.

According to NASS, most other Idaho ag commodities outside the top 10 dropped in total production value in 2023. That included food trout, which decreased 15 percent to \$37 million, and peppermint oil, which dropped 21 percent to \$21 million.

The value of dry edible bean production in Idaho dropped 5 percent, to \$35 million, in 2023, honey fell 36 percent, to \$4.8 million, and dry edible peas dropped 58 percent, to \$3.6 million.

No. 1 in the United States

Idaho ranked No. 1 in the country in the production of five different agricultural commodities in 2023, according to NASS: potatoes, barley, peppermint oil, alfalfa hay and food trout.

Idaho produced 33 percent of the nation's potato supply in 2023, 33 percent of the U.S. barley crop, 40 percent of the nation's peppermint oil, 9 percent of the U.S. alfalfa supply, and 37 percent of the nation's food trout.

Being top dog in a certain commodity may not make a farmer any more money, but it is a source of personal pride, said Soda Springs barley farmer Scott Brown.

"We're proud to be the No. 1 barley state," he said.

The state also ranked No. 2 in sugar beet and hop production, and No. 3 in milk and cheese production.

Idaho ranked No. 4 in dry onions, spring wheat and lentils, and No. 5 in all wheat, dry edible peas and wool.

Idaho ranked No. 6 in all hay, dry edible beans and sheep and lambs, No. 7 in corn silage, No. 8 in winter wheat, No. 10 in honey and No. 11 in cattle and calves. ■

Classifieds

FARMING/EQUIPMENT

International 656H, early 70s. Runs great, lots of power, new adjustable scraper on back, front loader bucket, good rubber all around. Needs seat & Throttle cable. \$7,000 obo Mike 402-270-2426 St. Anthony, ID.

Late 70s International industrial loader tractor, 2-wheel drive, 4 cylinder gas, 3 point, 4 speed transmission, forward-reverse shuttle. \$7,000 obo call or text 208-681-3581.

For sale: 1952 John Deere 60 series tractor wide front end needs restored. Ran 14 years ago when put in barn. \$1800.00 or best offer call 208 859-6610

Massey Ferguson Compact Tractor with Yanmar mower attachment. GC2300 Sub Compact 4 WD diesel utility tractor. 2005 low hours (929 Hrs) Always been garaged with service records in top condition. Located Middleton Idaho. Call 503-348-1498

AUTO/ATV

1947 Studebaker Landcruiser for sale \$6,500 OBO. The car is partially restored, and it runs, but the engine needs some work. Call Jake 208-421-3311. Gooding, Idaho.

1968 Chevy Caprice 2 door, hard top, 327 engine, 350 transmission. Runs, body is good. \$7,000

obo call or text 208-681-3581.

2000 Chevy Camaro. Runs, body all original paint, and original little faded upholstery with no rips. \$3000 obo call or text 2085398615 Jerome/Shoshone

FOR SALE

2022 32' "Grand Designs Imagine 2670MK Travel Trailer. We bought it to use why we built our house, but instead built a Barndominium to live in. Stored inside a climate-controlled barn - NOT outside, Hardly used - Never towed - Zero road miles - Like new Pick up in Ola. 208-863-7499 \$40,000

For sale: 62 acres in American Falls, ID. Currently zoned ag, but also zoned future residential. Parcel RDP0920-00 located in section 28, Township 7 South, Range 31 E.B.M., Power County, ID. Located just off 184. \$750,000 David 208-220-6730

Full Size Bowie Vet Box (8 ft). Great Condition. Fiberglass. Stored under cover. Lots of drawers and storage capacity. Water storage tank with pump system. Pictures available on request. \$3,500. Contact Sharon. Nampa. 208-899-7715

Beautiful V-tail G-35 Bonanza. Fast, economical, modern radio.s. Custom paint 8 out of 10, leather interior 8 out of 10. Always hangared. VREF value as configured 107,000. Great buy at

88,000. Located in Salmon, ID. Jack 858-518-4622 call/text.

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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. Let me know what you have. I also do Classic Car appraisals and Antique appraisals. Call or Text Tom 208-867-9357 I'm in Southern Idaho

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

SERVICES

4S Welding- Mobile welding for Bingham County and sur-

rounding areas. Fencing, pipe, equipment repair, etc. Carbon and stainless, 20 years of experience. Call Mike 208-680-7372.

Lake City Construction and Flooring. Here to help our neighbors in North Idaho with their new flooring and design. Vinyl, laminate, hardwood and engineered, we do it all. Commercial and Residential. Licensed and insured. Call for an estimate 208-699-6534.

E&E Electric- Local Electrical Business in Post Falls Idaho. We do Residential Commercial and Service work. Please call Eduard for free Estimates. 208-809-6612

Attn: Farmers. Have a rock chuck problem? Retired and responsible, I put safety first. With 1,400 chucks shot in 2024 I'm deadly accurate. References available. Call or text Rick Weidner, 986-888-7051. Donations are welcome.

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LOOKING FOR A NEW PODCAST? DIRT ROAD DISCUSSIONS

Episode 70: Ag With Emma

When Emma from "Ag With Emma" told her dad that she wanted to be on the road with a harvest crew, he did not approve. The interesting part was that her dad himself was once part of these crews that traversed states (sometimes with 50 combines) to help with harvests all over the country. As Emma started this adventure as a young woman in the United States and Australia, she started posting about her experiences, which have gone viral.

