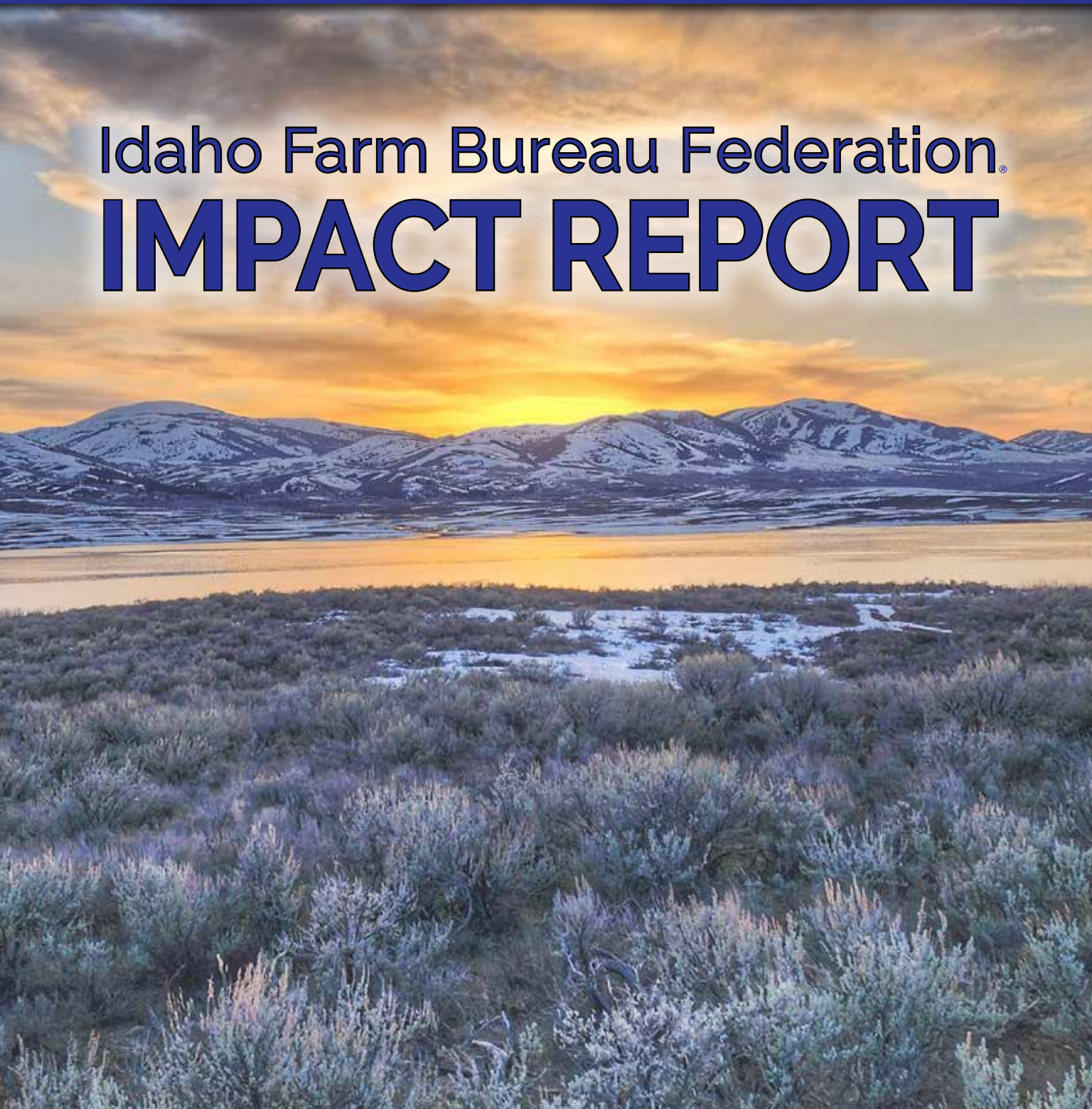


Idaho Farm Bureau. Quarterly

Winter Issue • Volume 25 Issue 1

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation. **IMPACT REPORT**



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Vice President..... Richard Durrant, Meridian
Executive Vice President/CEO Zak Miller

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



Seeing how far the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation has come since its humble beginning in Murtaugh, Idaho, in 1939 is amazing. As the largest general farm organization in the state today, we have never forgotten our purpose of being a grassroots organization that gives voice to Idaho's agriculture industry. Whether a farmer or rancher is just starting out, or runs a multi-county operation, the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation is a tool in their hands to network, learn, and make policies that affect all farms and ranches. We will be the first to admit our organization is not an island to itself. We work tirelessly to make connections with all other industries and organizations that build up Idaho communities. Making safe, nutritious, and affordable food on our store shelves is what we work for year after year. Recent studies have shown that an overwhelming percentage of Americans trust farmers. We hope to earn this trust each day.

In the pages of this magazine, you will find examples of some of the ways that Idaho Farm Bureau helps strengthen and promote the state's agriculture industry. You will also see examples of some of the ways Farm Bureau gives back to Idaho communities. We hope this gives you an idea of how IFBF works throughout the year to benefit agriculture and the state overall.

Bryan Searle

Idaho Farm Bureau President



INTRODUCTION

The Idaho Farm Bureau Federation (IFBF) is a grassroots organization that represents and supports farmers and ranchers in Idaho at the county, state, and national levels.

For over 80 years, the Idaho Farm Bureau has brought farmers and ranchers together to discuss agricultural issues, create policy, and protect the rights of its members.

With a presence in every county in Idaho, Farm Bureau members educate and advocate for agriculture by building relationships with elected officials, consumers, youth, and other agriculturalists.

Idaho Farm Bureau is committed to strengthening relationships with other agricultural organizations and elected officials to ensure that agriculture will continue to be viable for future generations.

OUR MISSION:

“IDAHO FARM BUREAU EMPOWERS IDAHO AGRICULTURE”



IFBF Impact Report 2024 | Year End Review

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation[®] C A R E S



SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

\$227,084



BANQUETS & PICNICS

\$172,170



4-H & FFA

\$290,918



CHARITABLE DONATIONS

\$218,035

The Idaho Farm Bureau Federation, in conjunction with local county Farm Bureaus, donated over **\$900,000** to local communities across Idaho.

IFBF Impact Report 2024 | Year End Review

C A R E S

Although the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation (agriculture organization) and the Farm Bureau Insurance Company of Idaho (insurance) are two separate entities, they share a commitment under the Idaho Farm Bureau brand to support their communities. Here are a few examples of the charitable engagements of the Farm Bureau Insurance Company of Idaho, their employees, and agents. In 2024 Farm Bureau Insurance Company of Idaho raised over \$150,000 to help Idaho and Idaho charitable causes.



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF
SOUTHEAST IDAHO

\$13,000



MAKE -A -WISH IDAHO

\$24,000



IDAHO STATE UNIVERSITY SUMMER
COMMUNITY THEATER

\$30,000



IDAHO RANGELAND FIRE
PROTECTION ASSOCIATIONS

\$45,000



UNITED WAY

\$51,700



Social Media At a Glance



FOLLOWERS

21,000



REACH

748K

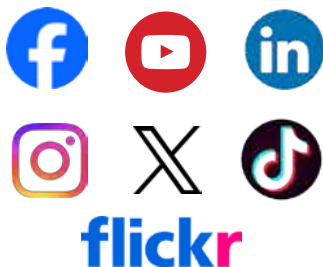


PODCAST DOWNLOADS

28,664

COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS

SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE



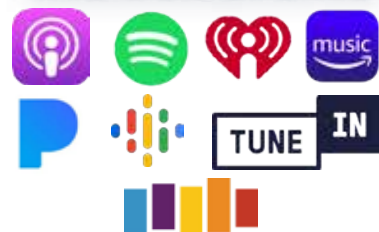
NEWS MEDIA

- Gem State Producer
- Idaho Farm Bureau Quarterly
- Digital Newsroom
- Press Releases
- Capitol Reflections

idahofb.org

BI-WEEKLY PODCAST

DIRT ROAD DISCUSSIONS



2024 Idaho Farm Bureau Scholarship Recipients

Ag Winners Received \$3,000



Emysha Brune
Twin Falls County



Larell Chandler
Washington County



Kacie Clyde
Latah County



Rachel Wandell
Ada County



Brodee Wootan
Elmore County



Rylee Roberts
Washington County



Via Vachon
Bonner County



Lucy Barney
Jefferson County



Tannabe Cecil
Lost Rivers (Butte) County



Elizabeth Michaelson
Bannock County

Non-Ag Winners Received \$2,000

Scholarships are provided by the IFBF Scholarship Fund, and Farm Bureau Insurance Company of Idaho

YOUNG FARMERS & RANCHERS

The Young Farmers & Ranchers program is for men and women between the ages of 18-35. The objective of the YF&R program is to surface, grow, and develop young Farm Bureau members and provide them with opportunities and experiences to strengthen their leadership and ensure effective Farm Bureaus.

2024-2025 YF&R LEADERSHIP

Mitchell Searle - Chairperson

Azdyn Bartschi - District 1

Kyle & Maycee Noorda - District 2

Zane Barckholtz - District 3

Taylor & Justin Roberts - District 4

Trew Rice - District 5

VISION STATEMENT

For the next generation to be prepared and empowered to lead the future of agriculture.

2024 ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

The Achievement Award is designed to recognize those young farmers and ranchers that have excelled in their farming/ranching operations and honed their leadership abilities to superiority.

CAMAS AND MIGUEL VILLAFANA



SPONSORED BY **AgWest** 
FARM CREDIT

2024 EXCELLENCE IN AGRICULTURE

The Excellence in Agriculture Award spotlights young Farm Bureau members who are agricultural enthusiasts but have not earned a majority of their income from production agriculture.

PAIGE NELSON



SPONSORED BY  **Idaho**
Farm Bureau Federation®

2024 DISCUSSION MEET WINNERS

The Discussion Meet is a contest promoted by American Farm Bureau's Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee. This contest is designed to simulate a committee meeting where discussions and active participation are expected from each committee member.

DISCUSSION MEET WINNER DENTON PERKINS



SPONSORED BY VALLEY WIDE

ELIZA DUGAN Collegiate Discussion Meet Winner



SPONSORED BY CACHE VALLEY BANK

THREE LEVELS OF DISCUSSION MEET COMPETITION

- **YF&R-** Members 18-35 years old
- **Collegiate-** Members of the three collegiate Farm Bureau clubs
- **High School-** Any high school student who would like to compete

IDAHO FARM BUREAU COLLEGIATE CHAPTERS

- University of Idaho
- College of Southern Idaho
- BYU-Idaho

LARELL CHANDLER High School Discussion Meet Winner



SPONSORED BY Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

YF&R AWARD PARTNERS



PROMOTION & EDUCATION PROGRAM



The Promotion & Education program was created to give opportunities to share agricultural experiences on and off the farm, in local communities, and with consumers. If you are enthusiastic about agriculture, the Promotion & Education program is for you!

MOVING AG TO THE CLASSROOM (MAC)

The MAC trailer brings a fun and interactive experience for children to learn more about agriculture. This program was specifically designed for children in grades 1-5. However, many of the visual aids could be used for all ages.



MAC STATS

- 3 Trailers
- 5 Learning modules
- 108 Days on the road
- Over 15,000 school children taught by MAC program



2024-2025 P&E LEADERSHIP

Lance & Tess Zollinger - State Chair

Shancy Lusk - District 1

Owen & Jamie Scoresby- District 2

Zane Moser- District 3

Kristie Dorsey - District 4

Jill Bruegeman- District 5

VISION STATEMENT
All will appreciate and support Idaho agriculture.

P&E PROGRAMS AROUND THE STATE

- Moving Ag to the Classroom- MAC Trailer
- Scholarships
- High School Speech Contest
- Photo Contest
- Ag Days/Farm to Table Events
- State and County Fairs

2024 HIGH SCHOOL SPEECH COMPETITION

The P&E Committee hosts a high school speech competition. The top students from each of the five districts came to Boise and presented their speeches at the Legislative and Commodities Conference.

2024 P&E High School Speech Competition Winners

Jacee Fuller - (1st Place-\$1,000)

Brandon Little - (2nd Place-\$750)

Emily Sorensen - (3rd Place-\$500)

Kimber Smith - (4th Place-\$250)

Emily Gosman - (5th Place-\$150)

Pictured Left to Right:

Brandon Little, Kimber Smith, Emily Gosman, Emily Sorensen, Jacee Fuller



2024 Promotion & Education Photo Contest



To share the beauty of Idaho agriculture and the people who make the industry one of the greatest, the Idaho Farm Bureau's Promotion & Education committee sponsored a photo contest. Winners were announced at the annual meeting held in December.



Generations
Jim Parker



Farm Kids
Mitchell Searle



Scenic & Best in Show
Pamela Payne



FARMING
Kirklan Oler



LIVESTOCK
Mitchell Searle



People's Choice
Britney Chandler

2024 AG AMBASSADOR LEADERSHIP PROGRAM



ELECTED OFFICIALS AND AGENCIES VISITED

- Lt. Governor - **Scott Bedke**
- Idaho State Representatives and Senators (Mock Committee for Testifying)
- H2A Consultant - Gem Ag Professionals - **Jenn Uranga**
- State Director of Ag for Senator Crapo - **Casey Attebery**
- Asst. Secretary for Water Resource & Environment Committee - **Dr. Tim Petty**
- Congressman - **Mike Simpson**
- Congressman - **Russ Fulcher**
- Senator - **Mike Crapo**
- Senator - **Jim Risch**
- Ag Workforce Coalition Panel

The Ag Ambassador Leadership Program is designed to train and engage Farm Bureau members to be leaders and to advocate for agriculture at the county, state, and national levels. This program requires its participants to engage in a year-long training that develops relationship and communication skills to effectively tell their story to elected officials and staff. The capstone of the Ag Ambassador Leadership Program is spending time in Washington, D.C., at various agencies, AFBF, and congressional offices. Participants are required to continue to advocate for agriculture and Farm Bureau policies upon completion of the program.

SKILLS TRAINED ON:

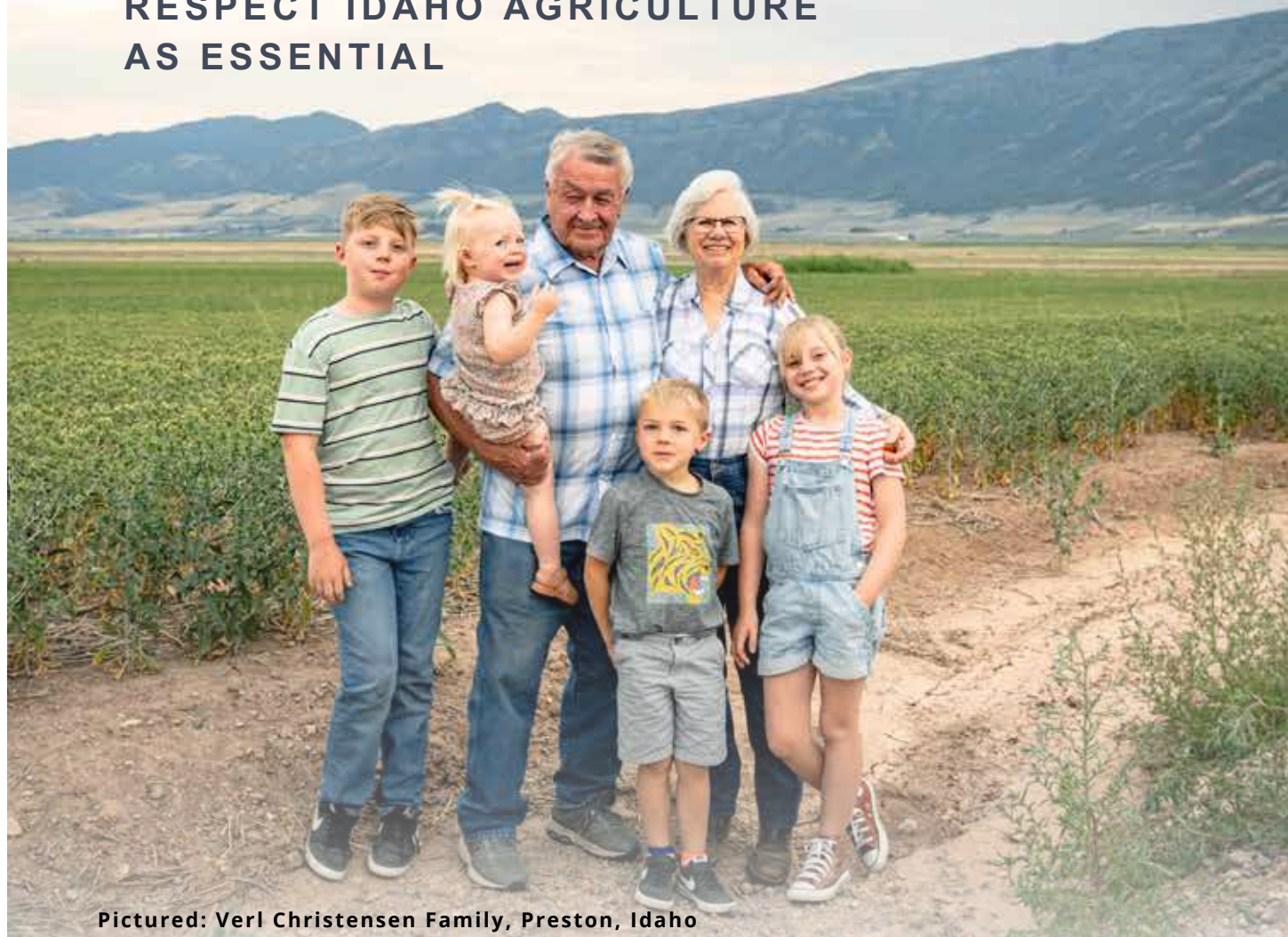
- **TELLING YOUR STORY**
- **STEPS TO TESTIFYING**
- **SPEAKING WITH IMPACT**
- **WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**
- **SOCIAL MEDIA DO'S AND DONT'S**
- **MEDIA INTERVIEWING 101**
- **PROFESSIONALISM IN SOCIAL SETTINGS**
- **POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION**

AREAS EMPHASIZED

- Agricultural Protection Areas
- Ag Labor
- Breaching of the Lower 4 Snake River Dams
- Lava Ridge Wind Project
- Water Resource Development Act
- BLM Conservation and Landscape Health Rule
- Farm Bill - Raising Loan Amounts due to Inflation

THE VISION OF IDAHO FARM BUREAU.

FOR ALL TO RECOGNIZE AND
RESPECT IDAHO AGRICULTURE
AS ESSENTIAL



Pictured: Verl Christensen Family, Preston, Idaho

**9,995 IDAHO MEMBER
FAMILIES INVOLVED IN
FARMING OR
RANCHING**

Farmers and Ranchers

- Focusing on local agricultural issues
- Building relationships within communities
- Protecting agriculture for future generations

IFBF Impact Report 2024 | Year End Review

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

1,380 IDAHO
VOLUNTEERS IN
LEADERSHIP
POSITIONS

37 COUNTY
FARM BUREAUS
REPRESENTING
44 IDAHO
COUNTIES

5 DISTRICTS
COVERING THE
STATE OF IDAHO

19 BOARD OF
DIRECTORS
REPRESENTING
ALL REGIONS OF
IDAHO

State Spring
Resolutions
Committee
Meeting

District
Spring Policy
Meetings

County
Policy
Meetings

State
Summer
Leadership
Policy
Meeting

Counties
Finalize
& Submit
Resolutions

County
Report Back
Meetings

- Farm Bureau member brings an idea for a resolution to a county
- County board discusses and decides to form a resolution
- Resolution goes to a district resolutions meeting for debate and adoption
- Counties discuss and vote on policy at the House of Delegates
- Policy is then worked on in the Idaho State Legislature

District
Resolution
Meetings

County
Grassroots
Contacts
Legislators

Idaho State
Legislature
in Session

**House of
Delegates**
Counties
Debate, Vote
On & Adopt
Resolutions

Counties
Review House
of Delegates
Resolutions

State
Resolutions
Committee
Meeting

IFBF Impact Report 2024 | Year End Review

GRASSROOTS & POLITICAL ADVOCACY

2024 LEGISLATIVE SUCCESS

H292 - THE AGRICULTURAL PROTECTION AREA ACT

The bill established a process by which interested and willing landowners can make an application requesting the creation of an Agricultural Protection Area (APA) over their specified parcel of land to keep it in production agriculture. If approved by the county, such a designation would be for a term of 20 years.

SB1243 - PUBLIC LAND EXCHANGE - Grazing Permits

The bill provides an opportunity for a federal grazing permit, which is recognized in Idaho law as a property right, to be converted to a state grazing permit following an exchange of land between the federal government and the state. This is important to ensure Idaho citizens are not unjustly disadvantaged by a land exchange.



Idaho Farm Bureau closely followed **42 bills** and **10 resolutions or memorials** or more than 8% of all legislation during the 2024 legislative session.

CONVENTIONS

American Farm Bureau Annual Convention- January:

Members had the opportunity to participate in educational workshops to advance their leadership skills, gain deep insight into the trends and realities impacting food production, and build stronger relationships with other state and county Farm Bureaus.

Legislative & Commodity Conference- February:

An IFBF signature event and an important way for IFBF's grassroots members to connect with legislators face to face. Members of the organization's various commodities committees also meet to discuss the latest issues affecting their commodities. This approach of connecting members who are experts in specific areas helps Idaho Farm Bureau have relevant policy that meets the needs of agriculture

Fusion Conference- December:

The Fusion conference is held in conjunction with the IFBF annual meeting. Great speakers, breakout sessions and evening events to bring together volunteer leaders from the Promotion & Education and Young Farmers & Ranchers programs. You leave the conference with new friends, new ideas and new energy for your farm and Farm Bureau.

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation Annual Convention- December:

The Idaho Farm Bureau annual convention is held every year around the end of November or the beginning of December. The primary business of the annual convention is to set policy and elect leaders of the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation. This is accomplished in what is called the House of Delegates. Being a grassroots organization, each of the 37 organized Idaho counties selects two farm or ranch delegates to represent them on the House of Delegates floor to discuss and debate all policies. The annual convention is a three-day event and has many components.

105th ANNUAL CONVENTION

Held January 19-24, 2024

150 Idaho ATTENDEES

IFBF members from around the state attended the 105th Annual American Farm Bureau convention held in Salt Lake City, Utah. That was 50 percent more than normal.

Making the large Idaho turnout even sweeter was the fact that the Big Idaho Potato Truck made an appearance at the trade show and was a huge hit. A steady line of convention participants stopped to have their picture taken in front of the giant spud.

Idaho had strong representation in the Young Farmers and Ranchers competitions with **Braxton and Jamie Crapo**, who farm in Parker, competing for the Achievement Award. **Kevin and Shelby Andrus**, who ranch in Lava Hot Springs, gave their Excellence in Agriculture presentation and **Cole Lickley**, who ranches in Wapello, finished third in the Discussion Meet.

Members had the opportunity to participate in educational workshops to advance their leadership skills, gain deep insight into the trends and realities impacting food production, and build stronger relationships with other state and county Farm Bureaus.





DR. SCOTT LEIBSLE
Idaho State Veterinarian



JIM FREDERICKS
Director-Idaho Fish & Game

LEGISLATIVE & COMMODITY CONFERENCE

HELD FEBRUARY 6-7, 2024



TRENT VAN LEUVEN
2024 Teacher of the Year



Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's annual Legislative and Commodity Conference is one of the organization's signature events and an important way for IFBF's grassroots members to connect with legislators face to face.

The highlight of the conference was a dinner that allowed farmers and ranchers to sit down with legislators and discuss important issues.

During the conference, Farm Bureau members visited the Capitol Building and attended legislative committee meetings.

Members of the organization's various commodities committees also met to discuss the latest issues affecting their commodities. This approach of connecting members that are experts in specific areas helps Idaho Farm Bureau have relevant policy that meets the needs of agriculture.



DAVID ANDERSON
Idaho Program Manager
American Farmland Trust

60 LEGISLATORS
199 ATTENDEES

IFBF Impact Report 2024 | Year End Review

2024 FUSION CONFERENCE

HELD DECEMBER 3-4, 2024

221 Attendees

The Fusion conference was held in conjunction with the IFBF annual meeting. Great speakers, breakout sessions and evening events to bring together volunteer leaders from the Promotion & Education and Young Farmers & Ranchers programs. You leave the conference with new friends, new ideas and new energy for your farm and Farm Bureau.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Jessie Jarvis

Founder of "Of the West"



CONFERENCE PARTNERS



85th Idaho Farm Bureau Annual Meeting

HELD DECEMBER 4-6, 2024



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Rick Rigsby

Former award-winning
professor.
Internationally acclaimed
speaker.

353 Attendees

71 Resolutions added
or amended to the IFBF
policy book

SPEAKERS



Brett Stuart
Co-founder - Global
AgriTrends



Norm Semanko
Water law practice group
leader for Parsons Behle &
Latimer



Matt Bingham
Regional Manager-
Valley Agronomics



Logan Yearsley
Director, Member
Engagement-
American Farm
Bureau



Phil Bass
Associate
Professor — Meat
Science

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2024 PRESIDENT'S CUP

Ralph &
Joyce Dalley

A Toast to the Winners



"As I think of Joyce & Ralph Dalley, a couple of words come to mind: unselfish servants," IFBF President Bryan Searle said when presenting the award during the organization's 85th annual meeting. "They serve, serve, serve, serve."

Ralph and Joyce Dalley previously participated in IFBF's Ag Ambassadors program, which is designed to train and engage Farm Bureau members to be leaders and to advocate for agriculture.

"That lit a fire," Searle said, and they went on to serve on the Bingham County Farm Bureau board and Ralph also served as the BCFB president. "It was just constant service and concern about individuals," Searle said.

The Dalleys attended the annual meeting with their children, some of whom have also served Farm Bureau in various capacities. That includes Chris Dalley, who previously served on the IFBF board of directors.

"We honor and tribute you as an entire family," Searle said.

"We have loved and appreciated the Farm Bureau," Joyce Dalley said while the family was being presented the award in front of several hundred fellow IFBF members. "Thank you, Farm Bureau. This award is very humbling ... We love Farm Bureau. We love you." "Farm Bureau is the way we can make a difference," Ralph Dalley said.

The Idaho Farm Bureau President's Cup is awarded to an individual or couple who have demonstrated a lifetime of outstanding leadership and dedicated service within the organization.

CONFERENCE PARTNERS



IFBF Impact Report 2024 | Year End Review

Meet the BOARD OF DIRECTORS



PRESIDENT
Bryan Searle



VICE PRESIDENT
Richard Durrant



EXECUTIVE VICE
PRESIDENT, CEO
Zak Miller



DISTRICT 1
Kyle Wade



DISTRICT 1
Austin Tubbs



DISTRICT 1
Jason Fellows



DISTRICT 2
Travis McAfee



DISTRICT 2
Scott Steele



DISTRICT 2
Doug Barrie



DISTRICT 3
Rick Pearson



DISTRICT 3
Rick Brune

IFBF Impact Report 2024 | Year End Review



DISTRICT 3
Darren Taber



DISTRICT 4
Cody Chandler



DISTRICT 4
Matt Dorsey



DISTRICT 4
Galen Lee



DISTRICT 5
Marjorie French



DISTRICT 5
Tom Daniel



DISTRICT 5
Tom Mosman



YF&R CHAIR
Mitchell Searle



P&E CHAIRS
Lance & Tess
Zollinger

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IFBF Impact Report 2024 | Year End Review

Hundreds show up for Thank a Farmer event

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

JEROME— Hundreds of community members attended a Thank a Farmer event Oct. 12 that was held to show appreciation to Jerome County's vast agricultural industry.

The free event, hosted by Jerome County Farm Bureau, was meant to provide the community an opportunity to let the county's farmers and ranchers know that they are appreciated, according to the JCFCB President Amy Mitchell.

"We wanted to thank our farmers and ranchers for all they do to provide food for us, and to let our community know that we care about agriculture," she said.

The Thank a Farmer event was held in conjunction with Valley Wide Country Store's Harvest Days event. Attendees were given free hamburgers, hot dogs, mixed sodas and funnel cakes.

Mountain View Equipment provided a large tractor that was displayed at the event and FFA members showed attendees how to make butter.

"Virtually everything that happens in this community is tied to agriculture," said Idaho Farm Bureau Federation field manager Zach Lanier, who works directly with farmers and ranchers in the Magic Valley Region. "This event is a great way to show agricultural producers that the community appreciates them."

**'Everything we do in
this community
involves agriculture.'**

-Amy Mitchell, JCFCB President

Jerome is one of Idaho's mega farm counties. According to the 2022 Census of Agriculture, there were 448 farmers and ranchers in Jerome County during the 2022 census year. The county ranked No. 4 in Idaho in terms of farm revenue in 2022, with a total of \$944 million in farm-gate receipts.

According to USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, there are 180,000 acres of land in farming Jerome County.

According to the ag census, 4,000 acres of hay, 25,000 acres of corn, 22,000 acres of barley and 17,500 acres of sugar beets were grown in the county in 2022.

In addition, there were 269,000 cattle and calves in the county in 2022 and Jerome County is a major player in the state in both beef cattle and milk industries.

The county is also home to numerous processing facilities that add value to crops and livestock.

"Everything we do in this community involves agriculture," Mitchell said.



Photo by Nicole Lebsack

A free Thank a Farmer event in Jerome was held to show appreciation to the county's farmers and ranchers



**Scan QR Code to
Send a Message
Thanking a Farmer!**



Idaho Farm Bureau to donate \$250,000 toward new U of I meat science lab

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

MOSCOW, Idaho— Idaho Farm Bureau Federation will donate \$250,000 toward University of Idaho's new \$14 million meat science facility.

The new 12,750-square-foot facility on U of I's Moscow campus will be four times the size of the current meat science facility, which houses the university's meat science program and was built in the 1960s.

Groundbreaking on the project began last fall and it is expected to be completed in the fall 2025.

The IFBF board of directors voted to support the project with a \$250,000 donation. IFBF is the state's largest general farm organization and represents more than 10,000 people in Idaho who are involved in agriculture.

IFBF President Bryan Searle, who farms in the Shelley area, said the organization appreciates the university's vision to update the facility into what will be a major asset to the state's cattle industry into the future.

"It's a privilege for us to be by their side to see this project through because we believe it will be a big part of the industry's success," he said. "We applaud all that the university is doing on behalf of agriculture."

There are currently more cows—about 2.5 million—than people in Idaho.

Cattle and calves is Idaho's No. 2 agricultural industry in terms of total farm-gate revenue and cattle producers in the state brought in an estimated \$2.3 billion in revenue in 2022.

The new building will be called the Meat Science and Innovation Center honoring Ron Richard in honor of the man who is credited with building the program into what it is today.

The new facility, like the existing one, will be USDA-inspected and will be a modern meat processing facility designed to allow teaching, research, outreach, service and education to occur simultaneously.

Livestock producers in the region can have their animals processed there under USDA inspection, allowing them to direct-market their products, and employees from all segments of the meat supply chain will train there.

"We're thrilled by this generous gift from the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation, and we recognize we're positioned to be operating in our new, state-of-the-art abattoir by the fall of 2025 thanks to the generosity of numerous stakeholders," said Michael Parrella, dean of U of I's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, which oversees the university's meat science program. "New meat processing plants requiring trained staff at many levels have been opening throughout the state, and the new Meat Science and Innovation Center Honoring Ron Richard will enable our college to expand upon teaching programs, research, public outreach and processing plants requiring



Idaho Farm Bureau Federation Photo

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation leaders present a \$250,000 check to University of Idaho officials May 23 to be used to help fund the university's new 12,750-square-foot meat science facility. From left to right: Michael Parrella, dean of U of I's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Phil Bass, U of I meat science professor, IFBF President Bryan Searle, IFBF CEO Zak Miller, and James Nasados, U of I meat science lab manager.

trained staff at many levels have been opening throughout the state, and the new Meat Science and Innovation Center Honoring Ron Richard will enable our college to expand upon teaching programs, research, public outreach and workforce development to meet industry needs."

The new facility will benefit the state's cattle producers and help the industry be more efficient and innovative into the future, said IFBF CEO Zak Miller.

"One of the things our Farm Bureau leaders are always looking for is, how can we support our community and help our producers be more successful," he said.

"Supporting this facility is a natural way to support the university while at the same time support our cattle producers."

Miller toured the current facility recently with other Farm Bureau leaders and said he was very impressed with the ingenuity of the people who work in the university's meat science program.

With the new facility and modern technology, he said, "I really think they'll find innovative and revolutionary ways for Idaho cattle producers to better utilize these animals we have stewardship over."

Country Chuckles

By Jonny Hawkins



"They store the grain in there? I thought, these days, everything was stored in the cloud."

BREAKING NEWS

* **FB News** *

BREAKING NEWS

FARM BUREAU FINANCE COMPANY ANNOUNCES NEW AUTO RATES



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Get **\$25**
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Farm Bureau INSURANCE



*You're automatically entered into our \$500 drawing when you refer a friend, even if they don't purchase a policy. Scan the QR code for complete rules and restrictions. Above left: Jay from Inkom, Idaho, winner of our 3rd Quarter 2024 Refer A Friend, Get A Gift \$500 drawing, with his agent, Derald Armstrong.



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Vexing vertebrates: Management

By Chris Schnepf
University of Idaho

In my January 2025 Gem State Producer column, I discussed the range of damage various vertebrates such as rodents, deer, elk, etc. can cause to forest trees.

The next question people ask after figuring out what caused animal damage is, “how can I stop it?”

First, just because you have animal damage, doesn't mean you have to do anything about it. Some mortality in regenerating conifers should be expected and accepted, especially if you are meeting stocking targets (e.g. 350-400 live seedlings per acre) in spite of it.

For example, deer and elk typically only use a few trees in a plantation to scrape the velvet from their antlers. Beyond that, here are some strategies to follow in assessing and managing forest animal damage.

Know the animal. You can never have too much information about the biology and habits of an animal before you decide to manage damage.

How often does it reproduce? What are its natural enemies? How far does it range? What are its habits during different times of the year? Are there animal signs you should be looking for before you even plant trees?

For example, if you see frequent mounds of fresh dirt in a site you are looking to plant, you should think about knocking back pocket gopher populations (we do not have moles in Idaho forests).

Another example: if you are planting trees on a site that serves as winter range for deer and elk, measures to reduce browsing may be warranted.

It is also important to know when the ani-



RIGHT: Leaving more snags can help hawks and other raptors reduce rodents. Photos by Chris Schnepf

imals are causing tree damage. For example, most of the repellants used to deter deer and elk damage are only effective for a limited time and you want that to coincide with when deer and elk are most likely to nibble on your trees.

It never hurts to contact a local forester for their experiences with animal damage on sites similar to the one you are looking to plant on.

Direct control. For animals that have limited ranges, it may be possible to address the problem by temporarily reducing the local population of responsible critters. There are many methods to do this, including hunting, trapping, and toxicants (e.g. underground strychnine baits for pocket gophers).

Such methods are generally more effective with small vertebrates such as pocket gophers, in part because they do not typically move around as far as other animals.

In undertaking these approaches, don't get carried away. Most of these animals also provide ecological functions and benefits. For example, snowshoe hares serve as food for lynx (and some foresters). Pocket gophers aerate the soil.

Control just enough of the population for just long enough to reduce their impairments to reforestation goals (e.g. removing porcupines only in areas where they are causing lots of damage).

Also check with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game for any applicable state laws.

Repellents. Some vertebrate damage can be abated using repellents. Repellents are most commonly used to reduce deer and elk damage to tree seedlings. There are two broad types.

Area repellents repel by smell, whereas contact repellents repel by taste. Generally, the latter are more effective. They work even better if they also have some area repellant activity.

The key with repellents is to make sure they are applied and active when trees would be damaged. Sometimes repellents may need to be re-applied in the event of rain.

Physical barriers. Physical barriers are most commonly used to prevent deer and elk damage. For high value trees (e.g., a seed orchard), deer and elk can be fenced



Rigid plastic mesh tubes are commonly used to prevent deer and elk damage to tree seedlings.

out of a site. But fencing is very expensive, so it is not commonly used in reforestation.

Instead, the most common approach in the Inland Northwest is to stake rigid plastic mesh tubes over individual tree seedlings. The key in using these devices is to stake them well and follow up in the spring to make sure they are still positioned correctly after winter snow.

Burying rigid mesh tubes a bit at the base of the seedling may provide some additional protection from pocket gophers and other rodents.

Habitat manipulation. In some cases, you can reduce problems by manipulating vegetation. For example, rodent damage can be reduced by eliminating vegetation for at least 3 feet around the base of tree seedlings. Small rodents are less likely to venture out onto bare dirt, where they are more visible to predators.

Eliminating vegetation adjacent to the tree seedling also happily reduces soil moisture stress for the seedling.

There has been some experimentation

with attracting problem species to other sites away from trees by establishing food plots, but such efforts risk attracting more total animals than would otherwise be in the vicinity of the tree seedlings.

Aiding predators. You don't always have to be the only one trying to reduce problematic vertebrates on your forest. Try to support predators of the species you are having problems with.

For example, leaving more snags in your forest operations will aid hawks, owls and other "raptors," which prey on rodents that damage trees.

In some horticultural settings, managers even install artificial perches for raptors for this purpose. Leaving more coarse woody debris helps fishers, a top predator of porcupines and other rodents.

Damage correction. Browsing damage can sometimes be corrected. For example. If sapling trees develop multiple forks from repeated browsing, they can sometimes be pruned to a single vertical trunk, creating a more stable future tree.

As with pruning wounds, do not paint wounds left from rodent feeding on the stem – it may actually trap moisture and foster decay. It is best to let the tree naturally pitch and grow over wounds.

For more information. Ideally, one anticipates animal damage before it happens. Some of the best strategies for dealing with animal damage are preventive.

The "Internet Center for Wildlife Damage Management" (www.icwdm.org) is particularly useful in that regard but extension publication web sites (e.g. <https://www.uidaho.edu/extension/publications>), the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and the Idaho office of the USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection service (APHIS) <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife-state-offices>, are all good resources to get guidance on keeping vertebrates from interfering with forest management goals. ■

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Why are egg prices so high?

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO – Skyrocketing egg prices have reached record levels in some places, causing many consumers to wonder why.

The short answer is bird flu, which has wreaked havoc on the nation's supply of egg-laying hens.

High egg prices have also led to chicken eggs becoming one of Idaho's top agricultural commodities in terms of total farm-gate revenue.

From 2016 to 2021 in Idaho, the chicken egg category brought in between \$30-50 million per year in farm-gate receipts. Farm-gate receipts are what the farmer or rancher receives for their commodity.

That made eggs a "medium" ag commodity in Idaho those years in terms of total farm-gate revenue.

When egg prices first shot up in 2022, Idaho recorded \$125 million in farm-gate egg receipts, and in 2023 that total was \$120 million.

USDA will release the official numbers for 2024 later this summer, but University of Idaho economists are estimating the number could be about \$160 million.

That means eggs could rank in the top 10 among Idaho ag commodities in terms of total farm-gate revenue, and possibly as high as No. 8.

Eggs are currently selling at near-record levels across the U.S., leaving many consumers wondering what has caused them to spike.

"It's definitely the bird flu for sure ... and it's across the country," said Maria McIntyre, marketing manager for McIntyre Pastures in Caldwell, which sells about 5,000 dozen eggs a month directly to consumers through home delivery and an on-site retail store.

Fires at major egg-producing facilities in several states haven't helped.

According to USDA's weekly Egg Markets Overview on Jan. 3, "In 2024, a combination of highly pathogenic avian influenza outbreaks and facility fires resulted in the loss of 39.9 million commercial table egg layers in 12 states...."

It appears high egg prices are a result of the usual suspect: tight supply and high demand.

According to USDA, 43 percent of the losses of egg-layers in 2024 happened the last two months of the year, right when shell egg demand peaks, "resulting in record-high wholesale and retail prices."



Submitted photo

Farms that sell eggs directly to consumers, like McIntyre Pastures in Caldwell, shown here, have experienced increased demand as retail egg prices have taken off.

"With more than 100 million birds affected ... the current outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) has been giving farmers and consumers headaches for nearly three years."

*– American Farm Bureau Federation
Market Intel report*

The USDA's Jan. 10 Egg Markets Overview report had large egg shells selling at \$8.97 per dozen in California.

Demand for eggs has remained high since the holidays.

"Demand for shell eggs eased slightly in the immediate post-holiday period but remained atypically strong in contrast to past year trends when demand retreated from holiday highs into early January," the Jan. 10 report states.

McIntyre said McIntyre Pastures has not raised the price of their eggs, which has resulted in a large increase in customer demand.

"The demand is through the roof," she said.

Kaylee Tuning, co-owner of Broken Felloe Farms in Cascade, which sells about 300 dozen eggs a month directly to consumers, said demand for her farms' eggs shoots up when the price of eggs at grocery stores increases significantly.

"We do see a higher demand when prices go up in the store," she said.

Her farm has also not raised prices.

McIntyre Pastures has not been hit by bird flu and is being proactive to try to ensure it is not in the future, McIntyre said. That includes paying extra attention to things like feed rations to try to boost immunity and ensure their birds are as healthy as possible.

Just like a human, "The healthier the bird is, hopefully the less likely

something would hit it," she said.

"We're trying to be as cautious as we can."

Broken Felloe Farms has also escaped bird flu, and it also takes steps to try to keep it that way.

"We hope we never get hit," Tuning says. "We don't lose sleep over it, but it is something we consider a lot."

According to a Nov. 15 Market Intel report by American Farm Bureau Federation, "With more than 100 million birds affected ... the current outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) has been giving farmers and consumers headaches for nearly three years."

It adds: "It is likely that egg prices will continue to show volatility related to the impacts of HPAI." ■

RIGHT: Retail egg prices have reached record levels in some places, causing many consumers to wonder why.

Submitted photo



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