

Gem State Producer



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IDaho FARM BUREAU



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Time to get all of Rural America up to Speed with Broadband

By Zippy Duvall

AFBF President



When we start talking about infrastructure improvements, most Americans can easily think of a local highway they'd like to see widened and smoothed out or a nearby bridge that needs upgrading. Farmers and ranchers are no exception when it comes to taking an interest

Beyond the Fencerows



in better roads, railways and waterways: We depend on safe and reliable infrastructure to get our products to market. But in today's fast-paced global economy, high-speed internet has become just as critical a pathway to customers near and far. That's why Farm Bureau is urging the administration to address rural America's broadband needs as it develops its infrastructure im-

provement plan.

Too often, rural America has been left in the dust when it comes down to actual spending on infrastructure. Communications infrastructure is no different. We're working to make sure that the administration brings rural America up to speed. Rural communities connect our farmers and ranchers to the

See DUVALL, page 6

Harvest Season is Upon Us

By Bryan Searle

President Idaho Farm Bureau Federation



Harvest is an exciting time of the year. It's a hectic period but also full of anticipation, celebration and reflection.

When it's over we evaluate what happened and why, we feel relieved that

much of the hard work is behind us for a few months and we make plans for improvements in the future.

Recently we attended a farm tour in southwest Idaho and observed some of the many crops being harvested in one of the most unique agricultural areas in the country. The Treasure Valley is aptly named. A mild climate with a long growing season, good soils and of course irrigation, allows for production of crops not possible in other parts of Idaho.

We watched as softball-sized onions

were sorted, packed and prepared for shipping to restaurants and grocery stores across the country. We handled and smelled aromatic hops blossoms as they were harvested and prepared for sale to brewing companies. We also saw trees hanging heavy with peaches and apples, sweet corn being harvested for seed, and vineyards with grapes ripening in the sun. Meeting the farmers and others who are part of a supply chain that is the envy of the world was an education.

It made me think of the incredible

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Tax Reform - Health Insurance Tax

By Rick Keller

CEO Idaho Farm Bureau Federation



Farmers and ranchers have two major concerns related to health insurance; cost and access. The Health Insurance Tax (HIT Tax) increases health insurance costs for farmers, ranchers, and other small businesses by imposing a

levy on the net premiums of health insurance companies. This additional cost is passed on to consumers who obtain their health insurance through the fully insured market.

The HIT Tax was passed as part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). It has nothing to do with reforming the health care insurance system but was included in the ACA as a way to raise revenue to offset the cost of the legislation. The HIT Tax which is an excise tax levied on a health

insurance company's net premium, raised \$8 billion in 2014, the first year the tax was collected, and \$11 billion in 2015 and 2016 each.

Most farmers and ranchers and other small businesses are not self-insured because they do not have a large enough pool of employees. Instead, small employers purchase health insurance in the fully insured market. Because fully insured health plans are the only plans factored into the equation that determine how much HIT

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Cover: Potato harvest is underway at Mickelsen Farms near Osgood in late September. For a complete video story on early potato harvest and lots of other Idaho agriculture news, check out our website at <https://www.idahofb.org>
Photo by Steve Ritter

Mixed Onion Harvest in Idaho and Oregon

By Jake Putnam

After one of the most disastrous winters in history, the region's battered onion industry is back up and running.

Despite a slow start and low yields, strong market prices have growers enthusiastic.

"This is the second highest price I've ever seen," said Shay Meyers of Owyhee produce. "Onions are selling for \$10 per 50-pound sack. Last year they were going for \$4 dollars. We have a long way to go but we're cautiously optimistic this season because we think we have a manageable crop."

Last winter Idaho and Oregon suffered through a heavy winter. By the end of January more than six feet of snow collapsed 60 onion storage sheds in Canyon, Washington and Malheur County, Oregon.

The storms also wiped out a good chunk of last year's bumper onion crop causing more than a \$100 million of damage and collapsed buildings.

Last year at this time onions were selling for \$3.50 a sack. When a third of the crop was lost, demand in February pushed the price past the \$10 mark.

This year the onion trucks started rolling two and a half weeks late. The crop got a late start due to wet, cold spring weather. Four weeks later a change in the weather created a 6-week heat wave. Meyers says because of the challenges this crop won't top last season's bumper yields.

"We're late with harvest this year because of that cold spring. It was hard to get planted in all of that mud. Right now we're starting to lift the onions out of the dirt and the hot days are good for drying them on the warm ground," said Jon Watson of the JC Watson Company out of Parma.

Packers are dealing with the lower yields, rebuilding sheds and budgets are tight.

Myers said Owyhee Produce lost four storage sheds. The main packing house was damaged but continued operations through the winter. Myers said eastern Oregon was hit first so their buildings were the first to be rebuilt and they're off to an earlier start than Idaho neighbors.

"In terms of storage, all of our buildings have been rebuilt. We were fortunate in our misfortune and were able to rebuild first. We're ready now for storage. We were affected first, our storages are complete" said Meyers.

See ONION HARVEST page 4

Correction

In the last issue of Gem State Producer Magazine, part of the last sentence of an article titled "Farmer Finds Niche in Hay Market," on page 4 was omitted.

The sentence should read as follows:

They cut alfalfa three times each summer on the Rathdrum Prairie and harvest timothy twice.

ONION HARVEST

Continued from page 3

In Parma JC Watson Company had a partial collapse of one of their main sheds in January.

"We're rebuilding and everything is updated and state of the art," Jon Watson said. The new sheds he refers to are climate controlled and can adjust to weather conditions. Onions, potatoes and many other stored vegetable crops require humidity, a constant temperature and either low-light or no light. The technology can adjust to outside climactic conditions to keep the crop in prime condition prior to shipping.

"Over the past five years we've been building new multi-tasking storing sheds that can handle the heat and the cold and we can change the climate at different times of the year for a reason. We have the ability to turn storage climates into weather conditions that we don't have at the time, things like turn night into day," Watson said.

Spanish bulb onions grown in Idaho and Oregon make up a third of the total US crop. They're typically stored and sold later in the marketing year. Market prices are improving because of the late harvest and several other factors.

"California got done early, Washington is just getting started and we're going to be late," said Watson. "Because of the late start we are probably going to see a smaller size profile. Add the lateness to harvest and there's not as many onions offered for sale right now."

Treasure Valley and eastern Oregon onion farmers grow



more than 1-billion pounds of onions each year, making this the nation's largest onion-growing region in terms of volume.

At least 90 percent of the onions grown in the region are yellow, while the rest are red and white varieties. Harvest usually starts in August and wraps up by the end of October.

There are 36 packing sheds in the region and the industry's annual economic impact is an estimated \$1.3 billion.

Onion acreage is close to 20,000 this year but production estimates are well off last year's record season.

"Compared to 2016 we'll see a 30 percent reduction in yields," said Meyers. "Last year we had record yields that were 15 to 20-percent over normal yield

averages. And this year we're 10-15 percent below an average year."

From restaurants to big box stores, Watson says this year's crop will impact major retailers across the nation.

"We ship our product all over the country," he said. "We're servicing outlets like Walmart and Taylor Farms. Taylor makes fresh cut onions for all of the major restaurant chains. Today we're packing for Outback restaurants and they're big onions but not as many as last year."

Producers stress that it's still early in the season and the most worrisome part of the year will start when they move onions into storage. They say storage will be tight with no guarantees that prices will hold.

"The market today is between \$9 and \$10 dollars," said Watson. "We hope they'll stay. We hope that stays throughout the storage process. We haven't harvested one onion for storage yet. They're still out on the ground and some of the crop is still growing."

2017 is a year of wild contrasts for onion producers. They had one of the biggest crops ever in storage followed by 40 inches of snow. The collapses took a big chunk of the bumper crop and caused \$100 million in shed damage.

"Prices are good, but like I said before we need two years profit this fall to make up for last year's losses. I know it is a lot to hope for but it's all we've got," said Meyers.



Ranchers and state officials met in late September to discuss elk depredation in Butte, Custer and Lemhi counties.

Photo by Steve Ritter

Elk Depredation Threatens Cattle Industry Viability

By John Thompson

Tension is building between ranchers and state wildlife managers due to marauding herds of elk and a lack of effective management tools.

Established ranches in Butte, Custer and Lemhi counties that didn't have elk depredation problems until the mid-90's and later, are under siege and could be facing a third consecutive difficult winter because hungry elk are eating haystacks, damaging crops, tearing down fences and threatening the future viability of ranches throughout the region.

Some ranchers angrily threatened to take matters into their own hands, during a recent meeting sponsored by the Idaho Farm Bureau, if the state doesn't find a better way to manage the population. They simply cannot afford to feed the State's elk herd and maintain their businesses.

Several ranchers stated they didn't have

elk on their property before wolf reintroduction in the mid 1990's during the meeting / tour held in late September. The tour made stops in Moore, near Challis and near Salmon.

One rancher said when his livestock get loose, he's held accountable. He's been building eight-foot tall fences and wrapping his haystacks with straw bales to try to keep elk out and he wonders why the liability of taking care of the State's elk falls on landowners.

Idaho Fish and Game Commissioners Derrick Attebury and Jerry Meyers attended the tour but offered few comments aside from mentioning they enjoy elk hunting and eating venison. From the ranchers' perspective there is a dearth of concern that comes from the hunting community regarding this problem. Hunters obviously enjoy large elk populations and Fish and Game profits from the sale of elk tags while ranchers pay dearly to keep the elk

alive during the winter months.

One rancher from the Challis area, said he is out of patience waiting for the State to take care of the problem. It's come down to his livelihood vs the State's elk. He told those who attended the tour that his only remaining option is to violate the law and start killing the elk. Those attending included Fish and Game law enforcement officers, Fish and Game Deputy Director Ed Schriever and several state legislators.

Tom Curet, Idaho Fish and Game Salmon Regional supervisor, said it's likely to take three to five years to bring the elk population down to the department's established target level. In hunting unit 50, near Mackay, elk population estimates are near double the target level.

Reasons why the state's elk management strategies aren't working was a major

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DUVALL

Continued from page 2

rest of the world. The speed and bandwidth of those connections play a part in the efficiency of our nation's food, fuel and fiber production. It's hard to believe in today's digital age, but 39 percent of rural Americans today still lack access to the Federal Communications Commission's defined broadband speed of at least 25 Mbps/3Mbps. Without those respective download and upload speeds, rural Americans are left behind, unable to stream and share real-time data, images and videos. By comparison, only 4 percent of urban Americans are without that same access.

A lack of access shouldn't be confused with a lack of demand either. Research shows that the rural broadband industry has boosted our nation's economy by \$24.1 billion and has led to the creation of nearly 70,000 jobs.

I recently visited several farms in Maine, where an organic potato seed grower told me that he depends on the internet for 75 percent of his sales. However, he lacks high-speed internet and the cost to bring it to his farm is too high. His ability to benefit from e-commerce is limited.

High-speed internet shouldn't be a luxury. It has become as basic to daily life and business in the 21st century as electricity became early on in the last century. For most urban and suburban Americans, it's a given that they can fire up their phones and computers to instantly connect to the world around them.

Today, online tools bring educational programs, health services and business resources right to our doorsteps. This kind of access is especially critical in rural America where folks can be far removed from resources that can improve

their way of life and help boost their local economy. A rural entrepreneur in North Carolina can get training to improve her business and reach clients hundreds—even thousands—of miles away. A family living 50 miles from the nearest town in southwestern Idaho can receive a virtual house call from a doctor via video chat. And a farmer on the Kansas prairie can upload field data straight from his farm equipment to analyze his crops and apply just the right amount of fertilizer exactly where it's needed.

Modern farming has made great strides in the last several decades thanks to developments in precision ag tools and technology. Yet, in the same way a smartphone is nothing more than a mobile phone when it's not connected to a high-speed wireless network, precision ag equipment cannot reach its full potential without access to broadband in the fields. If

we're going to continue reducing our environmental impact and growing more with less, we must be able to optimize the latest technology to analyze our inputs and yields and connect to resources and services that help make our farms smarter and more sustainable.

Broadband is not a luxury for a farmer who wants to stay competitive in today's marketplace; it's a necessity. An urban business wouldn't go hours, much less a day, without access to high-speed internet. Why are business owners across rural America expected to get by with far less? Getting all of rural America connected to high-speed internet, and the services and opportunities that brings, can strengthen our rural communities and help farmers produce more of the American-grown products we all enjoy.

KELLER

Continued from page 2

Tax an insurance company pays, the cost of the HIT Tax is passed through to small businesses that purchase those plans.

This new tax is pushing insurance costs even higher than they already are, making it harder for farmers and ranchers to purchase coverage for themselves, their families and their employees. A recent report estimates that the HIT will force families purchasing coverage in the small group market to pay an additional \$500 on average in premium

costs next year. Worse, more than half of the entire tax is paid by those with incomes between \$10,000 and \$50,000.

The consolidated appropriations bill that passed Congress in December 2015, imposed a one-year moratorium, for 2017, on the collection of the HIT Tax. Since the cost of the HIT increases year-over-year, Americans will see temporary relief in 2017 only to face an even higher HIT impact on premiums in 2018. Providing relief from HIT is a welcome and critical first step, but

Americans need the certainty of full repeal.

After the House passed legislation to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act earlier this summer, the Senate failed to muster the 50 votes needed to pass the bill using FY 17 budget reconciliation. Budget reconciliation is a procedure where a bill is protected from a Senate filibuster and can pass with a simple 51-vote majority.

With the path to repeal blocked and the expiration of reconciliation approaching, several senators and house members

have been working on legislation to change the ACA before the September 30 deadline.

Farm Bureau believes that one of the primary goals of health insurance reform should be to reduce costs. Farm Bureau opposes the HIT Tax and supports its repeal. Until the HIT tax can be repealed, Farm Bureau supports an extension of the moratorium on the collection of the tax.



SEARLE

Continued from page 2

range of agriculture pursuits not just across Idaho but across this great nation. We all want a successful and safe harvest. But we also need to prepare to shift gears and engage in another harvest of sorts. We need to continue to work toward reforms at the federal government level. You and I are members of the largest agriculture organization in this nation the American Farm Bureau which is made up of all the state Farm Bureaus. There are roughly six million members with a strong presence at our nation's capitol. The American Farm Bureau Federation has chosen tax reform as a priority issue and I take from their web site what our united stand is.

Farmers and ranchers need a tax code that recognizes their unique financial challenges. Farm Bureau supports replacing the current federal income tax with a fair and equitable tax system that encourages success, savings, investment and entrepreneurship. We believe that the new code should be simple, transparent, revenue-neutral and fair to farmers and ranchers.

Tax reform should embrace the following overarching principals:

Comprehensive: Tax reform should help all farm and ranch businesses: sole-proprietors, partnerships, sub-S and C corporations.

Effective Tax Rate: Tax reform should reduce rates low enough to account for any deductions/credits lost due to base broadening.

Estate Taxes: Tax reform should repeal estate taxes. Stepped-up basis should continue.

Capital Gains Taxes: Tax reform should lower taxes on capital investments. Capital gains taxes

should not be levied on transfers at death.

Cost Recovery: Tax reform should allow businesses to deduct expenses when incurred. Cash accounting should continue.

Simplification: Tax reform should simplify the tax code to reduce the tax compliance burden.

Pass-through Businesses: Any tax reform proposal considered by Congress must be comprehensive and include individual as well as corporate tax reform. More than 96 percent of farms and 75 percent of farm sales are taxed under IRS provisions affecting individual taxpayers. Any tax reform proposal that fails to include the individual tax code will not help, and could even hurt, the bulk of agricultural producers who operate outside of the corporate tax code.

Effective Rates: Any tax reform plan that lowers rates by expanding the base should not increase the tax burden of farm and ranch businesses. Because profit margins in farming and ranching are tight, farm and ranch businesses are more likely to fall into lower tax brackets. Tax reform plans that fail to factor in the impact of lost deductions for all rate brackets could result in a tax increase for agriculture.

Cash Accounting: Cash accounting is the preferred method of accounting for farmers and ranchers because it provides the flexibility needed to optimize cash flow for business success, plan for business purchases and manage taxes.

Accelerated Cost Recovery: Because production agriculture has high input costs, farmers and ranchers place a high value on immediate expensing of equipment, production supplies and pre-productive costs. This includes fer-

tizer and soil conditioners, soil and water conservation expenditures, the cost of raising dairy and breeding cattle, the cost of raising timber, endangered species recovery expenditures and reforestation expenses. Farm Bureau also places a priority on Sect. 179 small business expensing and supports bonus depreciation, shorted depreciation schedules, and the carry forward and back of unused deductions and credits.

Estate Taxes: Farm Bureau supports permanent repeal of federal estate taxes. Until permanent repeal is achieved, the exemption should be increased, indexed for inflation and continue to provide for portability between spouses. Full unlimited stepped-up basis at death must be included in any estate tax reform. Farmland owners should have the option of unlimited current use valuation for estate tax purposes.

Capital Gains Taxes: Farm Bureau supports eliminating the capital gains tax. Until this is possible, the tax rate should be reduced and assets should be indexed for inflation. In addition, there should be an exclusion for agricultural land that remains in production, for transfers of farm business assets between family members, for farmland preservation easements and development rights, and for land taken by eminent domain. Taxes should be deferred when the proceeds are deposited into a retirement account. Farm Bureau supports the continuation of stepped-up basis.

Call on Congress to reform the tax code at the following address: <https://www.fb.org/issues/tax-reform/agriculture-and-tax-reform/>

Let's work together for a successful harvest both in our farming and ranching operations and tax reform.

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\$ 5,000 - \$ 9,999	Rate .750 Yield .750	.850	.950	1.05	1.35	1.65	1.95	
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Hops, spread out to dry at Obendorf Hop Farm near Wilder. *Photo by Steve Ritter*

Hops Growers Struggle with Difficult Growing Season

By Jake Putnam

At Obendorf Hop Farm outside of Wilder trucks started rolling in August bringing in an aromatic crop that is a critical flavor component to one of the world's most popular beverages. Workers will keep up a brisk pace until the last vines are stripped and the fields are bare.

"All in all, it's a good to average year," said Brock Obendorf. "Our baby crop was below average due to the wet spring. The hot summer has brought some mites and it'll be interesting to see how this harvest turns out."

Idaho hop producers are content with an average harvest after one of the most challenging growing seasons of the decade.

They faced a cold, wet spring then a dry, scorching hot summer. But through it all, hop growers are optimistic in a very tough year.

That's because the craft beer market has pushed hop demand to new highs and there's no end in sight. Obendorf says brewers want the taste and aroma that hops bring to beer and they're constantly looking for new and different brews.

"We're now farming 2,800 acres, we're trying to keep up with demand," he said. "Our harvest is a lot longer because we planted more acres this year. But we should be done by September 25th, as long as the weather holds and we can keep the trucks rolling."

A report from Hop Growers of America estimates an 11 percent increase in production over last year. The nation's hop farmers grew 87.1 million pounds of hops in 2016 and this year's harvest could be close to that mark. The rise of American craft breweries and their heavy use of hops means each barrel uses 10-times more hops than traditional beers.

Because of that, Idaho hop growers now rank third in the nation and are chasing Oregon in total hop acreage. This year producers strung a record 7,000 acres in hops in Idaho according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service.

Brock Obendorf is the current president of the Idaho Hop Commission and he says to

keep up with the craft beer demand, Idaho planted 1,500 more acres than last year, an increase of 27 percent.

"There are more breweries every year and there's a higher hopping rate in the craft beers," he said. "This new crop of brewers have completely changed the industry, especially in the past five years."

Obendorf Hop Farm and other Idaho producers have no trouble finding a market for quality hops.

"We sell to brokers out of Washington and from there they go all around the world," said Eric Obendorf. "With all these breweries springing up it's a competitive market. Beer drinkers are always looking for the next great IPA."

The approximate month-long harvest is progressing at break-neck speed. Workers cut the 14-30 foot vines in the field and drop them onto waiting trucks. Once loaded, the trucks rush to a giant hop shed where the vines are lifted and stripped. The hops fall onto a conveyor belt and are then sent to large dryers. They're heated up to 140-degrees and then cooled to 70 degrees in a warehouse.

"Once they're baled they go to the processor or even directly to the brewer and are added into the brew," said Eric Obendorf. "Before that in our process we cool them off for 12 hours. We have a slot in the floor that we pump fresh air through to cool them off faster. We have to cool them down before we bale them."

The giant bales stand in the cool warehouse until they're loaded onto Washington bound trucks. Brock Obendorf says they pack different varieties and different grades of hops.

"We sell by the pound and it ranges everywhere from a \$1.50 a pound to \$6-bucks. Prices have been good, but this time of year they level off. And all the acres we put in to keep up with craft demand could level off the market but we won't know until we get past harvest," he said.



Hops are baled and prepared for shipping at Obendorf Hop Farm near Wilder.
Photo by Steve Ritter



Idaho Inks Wheat Export Deal with Taiwan

By: Jake Putnam

Idaho Governor Butch Otter signed a half billion dollar wheat deal with the Taiwan Flour Mill Association in late September.

Taiwan Flour Mills Association Chairman Tony Chen and Director General Vincent Yao of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Seattle were joined at the Statehouse ceremony by Gov. Otter, Idaho Wheat Commission Vice-Chairman Bill Flory and Idaho Department of Agriculture Director Celia Gould.

"The United States has long been Taiwan's most important supplier of agricultural products," said Yao. "That makes Taiwan the seventh largest overseas market for U.S. agricultural exports. Among the states, Idaho is one of the most important and reliable partners of Taiwan in terms of agricultural trade. Taiwan's consumers benefit a lot from the high-quality agriculture products of Idaho."

Taiwan prefers Idaho's soft white wheat for noodles, cookies, and crackers according to the Idaho Wheat Commission. But over the past few years Taiwan has also bought more of Idaho's hard red wheat for bread. To date at least 5 percent of Idaho's wheat production is purchased by Taiwan.

"Export markets are critical to Idaho's economy and our wheat growers," Otter said. "We welcome the Taiwan Flour Mills Association back to Idaho and appreciate their loyalty as a customer. We appreciate that the Taiwan milling industry recognizes the quality of Idaho wheat."

U.S. wheat producers have had a working relationship with Taiwan buyers for more than four decades according to the Wheat Commission. The Taiwan Flour Millers Association imports wheat for twenty flour mills. The United States supplies more than 80 percent of Taiwan's total wheat imports each year.

"The consumption of wheat foods in Taiwan now surpasses rice and we appreciate that the Taiwan milling industry recognizes the quality of Idaho wheat," Otter said.

Bill Flory grows wheat in Idaho's Palouse prairie and says the deal benefits producers.

"The partnership between Taiwan's millers and U.S. wheat producers is enduring and very successful," said Flory who also serves as the vice chairman of the Idaho Wheat Commission. "The importance of maintaining a trade relationship with this valued customer can't be overstated."



Idaho Gov. Butch Otter recently helped negotiate an agreement to export more wheat to Taiwan.



Net Farm Income Does a Dead Cat Bounce

By: American Farm Bureau

A common phrase used often when talking about markets that recover slightly after a precipitous drop is called a “dead cat bounce.” A quick Google search suggests it was coined following a slight recovery after a large market drop in the Singapore and Malaysian markets. The idea is that if you throw even a dead cat on the ground, it will bounce a little.

Farm incomes in 2012 and 2013 were high relative to historical standards, but have dropped substantially since then. The recent projections of farm income released by USDA’s Economic Research Service in their 2017 Farm Sector Income Forecast suggest that we may have hit bottom in 2016 and are looking at an uptick in both net farm and net cash income in 2017 to \$100.4 billion and \$63.4 billion, respectively Figure 1.

ERS last released farm income projections at the end of February, so it is interesting to compare and contrast this projec-

tion versus their earlier forecast. Both crop and livestock sectors are projected to have higher cash receipts than ERS projected in February. Crop cash receipts are now projected at \$190 billion versus \$187 billion earlier this year, an increase of 1.6 percent. The changes in crop cash receipts are spread throughout a number of crops and are all relatively minor.

The big change in expectations for farm cash receipts comes on the livestock side. Livestock cash receipts are now projected at \$176 billion, compared to \$168 billion in February, an increase of 4.8 percent, Figure 2. Cattle cash receipts are now projected \$4 billion higher than in February, with hogs and poultry up by \$2 billion and just under \$2 billion, respectively. Despite projections for higher milk prices, dairy receipts are surprisingly slightly lower than February figures.

Cash expenses are also essentially unchanged from the earlier figures and still hold at \$309 billion. While up \$5 billion

from 2016 costs, cash expenses are \$30 billion below that observed in 2014. But do not forget that one of the larger categories of cash expenses are feed costs – money that comes out of one of agriculture’s pockets only to go into another.

One other interesting feature of the August numbers is on the debt side. Total farm debt is projected at a record-high at \$390 billion, with \$242 billion representing real estate debt and \$148 billion representing non-real estate debt, Figure 3. An interesting observation on the non-real estate debt is that ERS projected this figure \$7 billion lower this month than they did earlier this year - \$148 billion as opposed to the earlier \$154 billion figure. No details are provided to back up the change but it does suggest farmers and ranchers are continuing to keep an eye on the debt side of the ledger. The net impact of lower debt levels and higher farm income in 2017 is the debt to asset ratio in 2017 is projected at 12.68 percent, marginally higher than 2016, but well below levels experienced in the 1980’s.

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Idaho Farm Bureau®

Cattle Prices Improving

By: Jake Putnam

After setting a new low in early September, live cattle futures moved higher with help from improved wholesale beef prices, according to traders on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange.

"I think the market is where it should be," said Cameron Mulroney of the Idaho Cattle Association. "This summer the seasonal dip we usually see in August happened earlier and it took away any price momentum we'd normally see heading into Labor Day weekend. Hopefully we'll see increases like we've seen today but there is still a lot of speculation at this point in the cattle market and those low prices."

December futures got added support from buyers after the contract topped the 10-day moving average of 109.648 cents per cwt. October live cattle finished up 0.275 cents per pound at 104.700 cents, and December closed 0.425 cents higher at 109.800 cents.

According to the Mercantile Exchange, some grocers bought beef to avoid shortages after plants closed for the U.S. Labor Day holiday, and that caused a spike in prices.

Mulroney says the beef demand softens after Labor Day because it's the last big barbecue holiday of the summer. After Labor Day shoppers begin to buy more back to school-type food.

"We're not overly concerned right now, prices will come back," he said. "Beef is the best



protein in the world and people enjoy a good steak. We know that demand is still there and in the meantime we'll continue to improve our market."

Bannock County Rancher Kyle Wade is keeping his cattle on pasture until prices improve.

"I'm holding on right now just trying to stay pat right now," Wade said. "I might have the opportunity to buy a few more cows. I've looked down that avenue and waiting seems the right thing to do until prices get back to where they were in the spring."

Allendale Market strategist Rich Nelson says buyers may want to see if cash prices can stabilize before making any further moves on the futures end of the market.

Cattle buyers waited until after the Labor Day weekend sale of

market-ready cattle in the U.S. to buy and the market fetched \$103 to \$105 per hundred-weight. Bullish traders think packers will pay at least \$105 per cwt. for supplies with better wholesale beef prices and higher profit margins for packers.

Low prices are expected at this time of year at any auction yard in America. But Wade knows things will turn around and he'll wait for the best time to sell.

"There's a lot of promise in the future," he said. "As of right now we have seen a little dip in the past two weeks or a month with cattle prices as well as meat prices but there could be a good future in the long run. Hopefully, we'll see that sooner than later."

Market skeptics say too many slaughter cattle at heavier

weights means more meat in the retail sector and that means weak prices. But by mid-September technical buying and live cattle futures advances pulled up the feeder cattle contracts. By Wednesday, September 13, the market closed at 1.250 cents per pound higher at 143.300 cents.

"I'll sell all of my calves by November," said Wade. "We come off our range in November and we try and sell that first two weeks after we are home. So I think prices will be better by then. With hurricane Harvey recovery and the opening of the Chinese market, I think there will be pressure on the futures market to move prices up. There's another storm off the Atlantic and I think the future for beef is bright, but right now we're holding on."



Hurricane Harvey Relief

By: Texas Farm Bureau

The Texas Farm Bureau has established a relief fund to address the agricultural losses inflicted by Hurricane Harvey. The category four storm struck Texas with a vengeance, flooding Texas farm communities, small towns and major cities. Those farm and ranch families are now left facing overwhelming odds following high winds and unprecedented rainfall.

"It's an historic storm and a disaster for many farmers and ranchers. The torrential rainfall wreaked havoc on Texas agriculture at the worst possible time—harvest season," Texas Farm Bureau President Russell Boening said. "Hurricane Harvey struck an area of the state known for cattle, cotton and rice, and other row crops."

There's much work ahead in rebuilding, but that's what farmers and ranchers intend to do.

Texas Farm Bureau's Agriculture Research and Education Foundation has established the Hurricane Harvey Relief Fund to aid in the recovery efforts following the devastating storm.

Tax-deductible donations can be made to the foundation to assist farmers and ranchers. Donations to this fund will be dispersed via an application process directly to the farmers and ranchers affected by the hurricane.

The area declared as a disaster by Gov. Greg Abbott contains about 1.2 million cattle, which is roughly 27 percent of the state's cowherd.

Boening noted the cotton crop on the Texas Gulf Coast was expected to be a good crop, which was needed after several years of low prices and high costs. The losses from Harvey will reduce the expected two million bale harvest by as much as 400,000

bales, according to estimates from the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

"Texas agriculture suffered major losses," Boening said. "Some of that will be covered by other means, but much of it will not. Farmers and ranchers are left to pick up the soggy pieces."

Harvey was the strongest storm to hit the U.S. since 2004, dropping several feet of rain.

"Harvey roared into Texas and overstayed his welcome," Boening said. "But now we look ahead—to recovery and rebuilding the farms and ranches in that part of our great state."

Go to the Idaho Farm Bureau website or follow the link below to make a tax-deductible donation: <http://texasfarmbureau.org/texas-farm-bureau-hurricane-harvey-relief-effort/>

County Happenings

Bannock County YF&R Scholarship Winners



← \$300 Livestock

Scholarship went to Keston Pallesen. Keston showed a market hog this year at the Bannock County Fair. He has been working with market hogs for six years. Keston loves rodeo, hunting, camping and basketball. He is a freshman at Marsh Valley High School.

\$200 Livestock

Scholarship went to Langton Payne. Langton showed a market hog this year at the fair. He has been in 4-H for six years. Langton likes playing football, basketball, piano and the ukulele. He is a sophomore at Century High School.

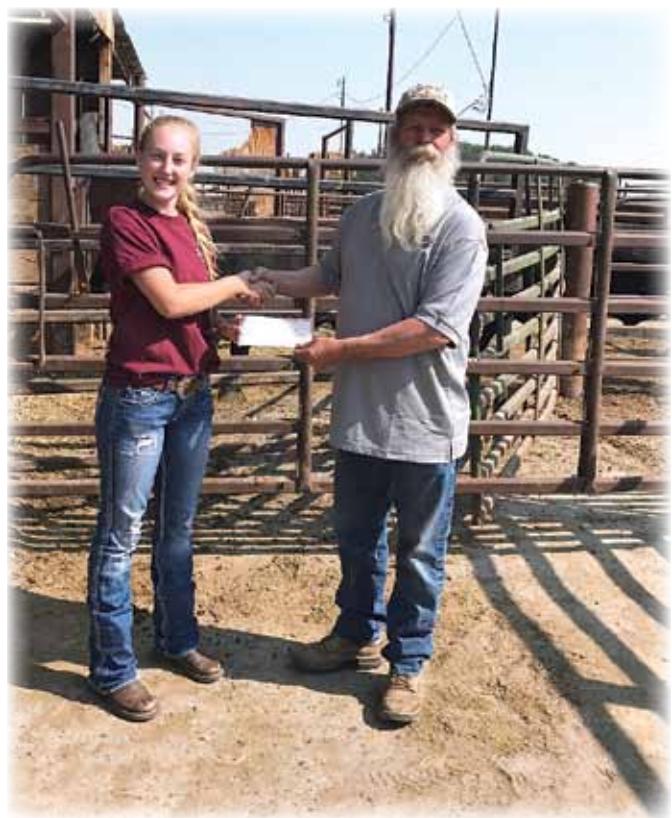


← \$100 Livestock

Scholarship went to Seth Barnes. This was his second year showing market hogs. Seth likes riding his dirt bike, camping, hunting and raising his pigs. He is a 5th grader at Downey Elementary.



Right: Bingham County Farm Bureau President Gary Judge awards a scholarship check to Megan Dance.



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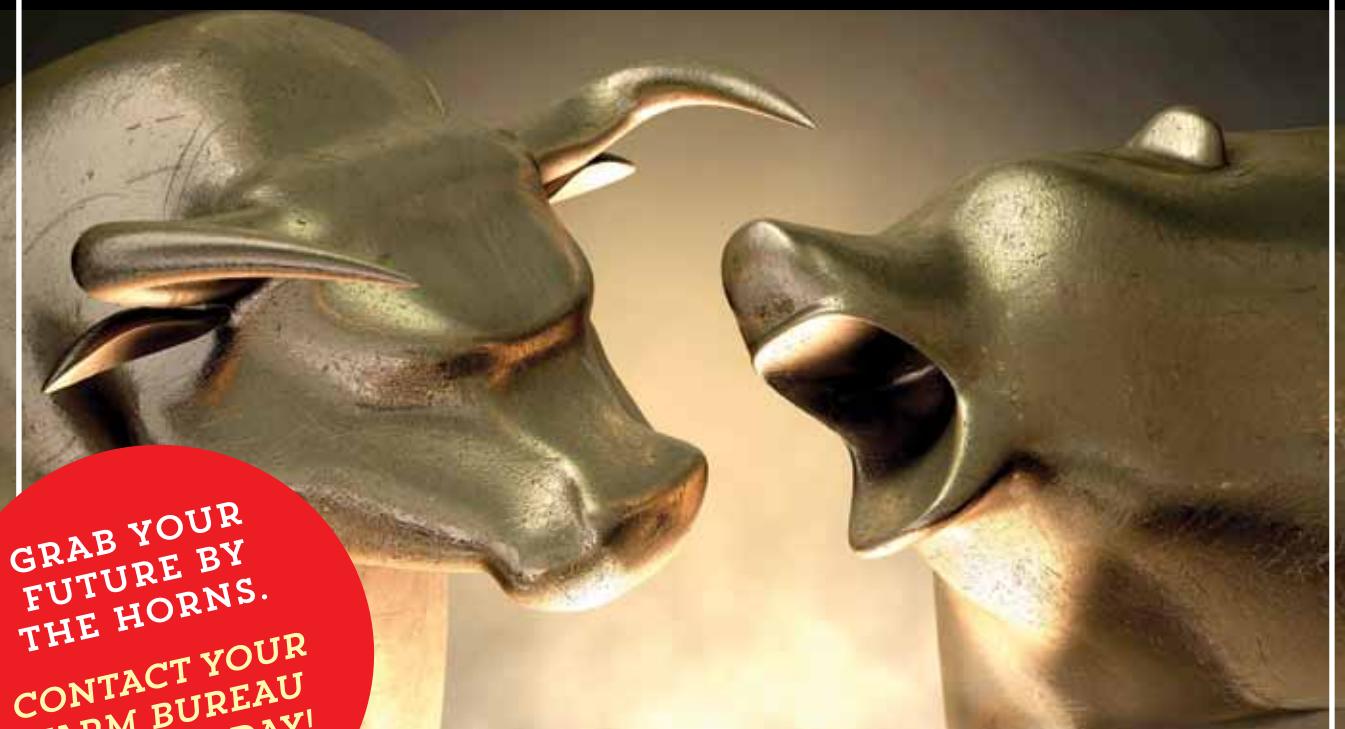
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IDAHO'S



PRIVATE FOREST

By Yvonne C. Barkley

The blue skies and crisp nights of fall in Idaho sees many traditions – football, leaf raking and, for many, gathering firewood. Wood provides radiant energy that can bring quick comfort to a cold room and will dispel an early morning or evening chill more economically than a large heating system. And should a storm interrupt services, your wood stove or fireplace will always be available to keep you warm and provide you the means to serve up a hot meal.

Permits

Most Idaho state and federal agencies allow you to gather wood on their land.

Permits provide information to managers on how many people are gathering wood off of their lands and also gives them a way to contact you about fire danger, locations of active timber harvesting or changes in road conditions. Get a map with your permit so you know where the boundaries are.

Many private landowners will also let people harvest firewood from their land. Get permission from the land or timber owner before removing any wood as all wood, whether alive or dead, is their private property. Make sure you fully understand where and what you are allowed to collect. It is also a good idea to get a “Bill of Sale” from the landowner

before you transport your wood on public highways.

Firewood Selection

Gathering firewood to heat or supplement heating in your home can use a considerable amount of your time and energy. All wood is not equal. Know what kind of wood will best suit your purposes and get the good stuff. For example, you might select a mix of grand fir and white pine if you want an aesthetically pleasing fire that is easy to start and will only last a few hours. When you want maximum, long-lasting heat, choose Douglas-fir or western larch. Many like to mix fast-burning wood, such as pine, with slower fuels, such as larch, for a fire that will heat up a room quickly but last all night. Harder wood makes better coals - this is important if you want a long lasting fire. Other types of wood throws a lot of sparks - maybe not the best to choose if you have an open fireplace. Most wood splits fairly easily, but some types are near impossible to get an axe into. Some are fragrant and a few smell pretty bad. Table 1 provides fuelwood characteristics for the most commonly used tree species in Idaho.



Stack and store your cut and cured firewood at least 30-feet from your home and other outbuildings.
Photo by [Horia Varlan/Flickr/Creative Commons License](#)

Heating with Wood

Harvesting Firewood

If you are harvesting your own firewood, wear protective clothing and make sure your chainsaw has been sharpened and serviced. Be prepared to prevent fires by including a good supply of water, a bucket and a shovel on your truck at all times. In addition:

Keep spare parts and fuel for your chain saw.

Use a large truck to haul your wood; the cost/cord/mile will be lower provided it is filled to capacity.

Tow a trailer behind your truck. You will be able to almost double your wood hauling capacity at a fraction of the cost.

Do not abuse your vehicle. Vehicle breakdowns can result in very expensive firewood.

Curing and Storing Wood

Cure and store your wood properly. Fully cured wood has small cracks at the ends

and is much lighter than green wood. Locate your main wood pile at least 30-feet from your home and any outbuildings to minimize fire danger and insect damage to structures. Carpenter ants are large, black, or black and red ants and are commonly found in firewood throughout Idaho. They nest in dead wood – this means not only your firewood pile but the wood used to build your home or outbuildings – and have the potential to do more structural damage than any other insect found in the state.

Stack your wood neatly on pallets on level, well-drained land. If fully seasoned, completely cover your wood with a tarp to keep it dry. If your wood still needs to cure, cover the pile but allow air to circulate around the sides. Have a space near your pile for splitting wood and kindling and another closer to the house for easy access to a day or two's supply.

Many love to gather and cut firewood – it's a wonderful tradition and gets family and friends together to enjoy some time out in the woods. And the heat from a well-built fire warms like no other heat source. And as the old saying

goes, "chop your own wood and it will warm you twice."

Yvonne Barkley is an associate extension forester for the University of Idaho. She can be reached at yvonne@uidaho.edu



546286

Carpenter ants can do more damage to the structure of your wood home or outbuildings than any other insect found in Idaho.

Photo by: Sharon Lilly, International Society of Arboriculture, Bugwood.org



UGA1169023

Always wear protective clothing and use well-maintained equipment when falling trees.

Chris Schnepp, University of Idaho.

Idaho Farm Bureau Online

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Planned Giving: An American Tradition

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With the complexity of our nation's tax structure, it's more important than ever to plan your charitable gifts carefully. The need for planning is two-fold: one, to insure your gift will be put to the best possible use and, two, to ensure your gifts meet your financial needs and objectives.

Planning a gift to Idaho FFA can be an exciting and rewarding experience. The process involves asking yourself a few questions:

- What are my personal and financial needs?
- What assets do I have available for funding my gift?
- What is the best way to make my gift and fulfill both my family and my charitable objectives?

As you review your situation and explore the different ways to give, the Idaho FFA Foundation would welcome the opportunity to assist you with information about planned giving opportunities with Idaho FFA.

The type of asset you give will determine the tax and financial benefits resulting from your gift.



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- Gift Annuities
- Bequests



In addition, the Idaho FFA Foundation works with the Idaho Community Foundation in establishing endowment funds to permanently provide for our mission of promoting premier leadership, personal growth and career success of Idaho FFA members and agricultural education students by providing strategic financial resources for the Idaho FFA Association, or as designated.

The Idaho FFA Foundation accepts and establishes Named Endowment Funds with a **minimum gift of \$25,000**. Named endowment funds allow donors to leave a personal legacy or honor specified individuals, and provide important funds for either general Idaho FFA program use, or specific designated Idaho FFA state or local programs, **forever**. In addition, these funds provide a venue for others to add memorial or honor gifts. The total gift for establishing a named fund may be given over a 5-year period.

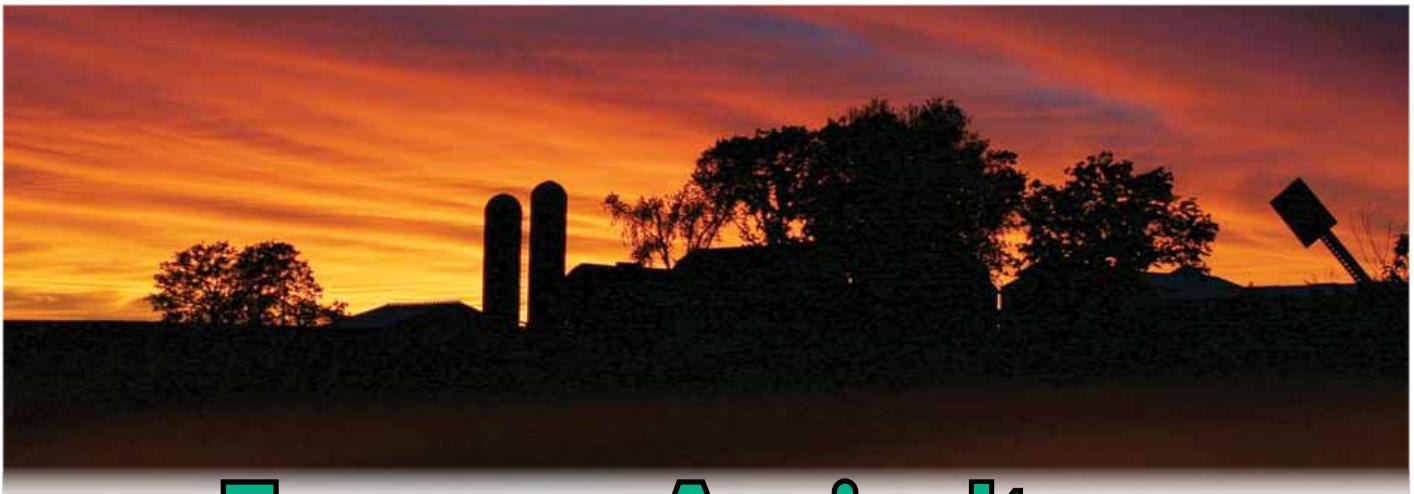
Current Named Idaho FFA Foundation Endowment Funds:

- **Idaho FFA Foundation Wayne and Blanche Kuhlman Kuna FFA Scholarship Fund, 2013**
- **Idaho FFA Foundation Sara Braasch Schmidt Endowment Fund, 2016**
- **Idaho FFA Foundation Don and Mary Johnson Kuna FFA Scholarship Fund, 2016**

To learn more, please contact Laura Wilder, Idaho FFA Foundation Executive Director at 208-861-2467 or lwilder@idffafoundation.org.

Or visit: www.idffafoundation.org

FFA—Growing Leaders, Building Communities and Strengthening Agriculture



Focus on Agriculture

Staying Above the Fray on Social Media

By Kari Barbic

Keeping a discussion on social media constructive can be a real challenge, especially when the other side goes negative, or even hostile. But nobody wins in an online shouting match. So how do we advocate and educate on controversial issues without getting drowned out by the noise?

1. Find your common ground.

This may be easier said than done, but we can usually find some level of common ground with people who hold opposing viewpoints. Granted those people may have some harsh opinions and unkind words as the conversation heats up, but chances are the discussion would look far different if they weren't shielded by their computer screens. As you prepare to address a topic, consider opposing views and the types of people who may disagree with your stance. When it comes to agriculture, there's no shortage of opinions— informed or not. This shouldn't surprise us. The people who would tell you how to run your farm may have equally strong opinions on how their doctors and mechanics should do their jobs as well. We don't have to make sense of everyone else's viewpoints but we can evaluate their perspective and find broad areas to agree on. Take a mom who's anti-GMO.

Do you both want safe, affordable food for your families? It's probably safe to assume the answer is yes. You may differ in how to arrive at that goal, but you can lay the groundwork for a productive discussion if you at least share the same starting point.

2. Keep your facts front and center.

Be sure to have solid examples and numbers on your side from the start. It's not hard to rally like-minded peers around an issue, but if you want to engage in a thoughtful debate with opposing viewpoints, do your homework and triple-check your facts. Bringing facts straight from your farm can help educate your audience far more effectively than broad generalizations. When you're advocating for regulatory reform, talk about the specific steps you've taken and farming techniques you've adopted that have improved your farm's sustainability. Show the difference in the amount of water and pesticides you use thanks to advances in technology. Even better, show your audience pictures or videos of what a modern sustainable farm looks like, or use Facebook Live or Instagram Stories to bring visitors to your farm in real time. You may not win over your opponent with one compelling photo or clip, but you'll leave them with something to think about as you

set the stage for your next interaction.

3. Acknowledge when the other side has a valid point (and learn from them).

We may learn a thing or two by studying our opponent's playbook. Are there specific strategies and messages that seem to be working for them? To help sharpen your own tools, take some time to consider what makes their messages effective. None of us can be right about all the things all the time. But we can go a long way in establishing credibility with others who may be listening in on our debate if we give credit where it's due when the opposing side makes a good point. If you stay focused on building your reputation as a credible resource, you have a better chance of making all your words count, even if you don't get the last word.

Few of us have been persuaded to change our opinions after just one discussion. Keep that in mind and relieve yourself of the pressure of trying to change a person's opinions and habits via just one Facebook thread.

Kari Barbic is a media specialist at the American Farm Bureau Federation.



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Expect a Wheat Futures Rally Soon

By Clark Johnston

The markets really haven't moved much since the last time we visited. If we want to look on the bright side, the markets have at least stabilized somewhat allowing us to take a deep breath and regroup.

Keep in mind that the historical trends show us that there is a very good chance we will see a rally in the futures market over the next three to four weeks. If we add into the equation the fact that the local basis strengthens between now and the end of November we could very well see the cash bids for wheat get better in the short term.

Last month we talked about doing what the market will allow us to do. This is a mindset we all need to remember and then use it daily in your marketing plan. I know that once you have contracted your commodities they are gone and you won't have another opportunity to produce more until the next season. Knowing this often gets in the way of making good sound marketing decisions.

Let's take a look at an increasing market and how to take the emotion out of our decisions. For instance if the cash bid was to move 30 cents higher you should look at why it strengthened. Did the strength come from the futures market or from the basis or a combination of both? If the strength was mostly from the basis it will be important to remember that the basis is an indica-

tion of the local demand.

When the flour mills need to fill their demand they will increase their bids thus a strengthening basis. As soon as they have filled that need, the cash bids will move lower thus a weakening basis. The only way for you to take advantage of a strengthening basis move is to sell your commodities. When the basis is moving higher is not the time for us to ask, "How much higher do you think it will go?" But rather, our mind should look at the move and say, "the market is paying more today than it was a few weeks ago and by the time we get to December the basis has usually ran its course."

Now you have taken the emotion out of your decision and have replaced it with facts and knowledge. You may still not like the cash price but, you are doing what the market will allow you to do for this time frame in this marketing year.

Watch the local bids closely for fast moves higher caused by a strengthening basis and contract your wheat. Remember there is a good supply of local wheat this year and someone is going to fill the need in the market. Don't be standing on the outside looking in at the market moving back lower after a rally.

Now let's look at the futures side of the equation. The December 2018 Chicago wheat futures contract is trading at \$5.25



Clark Johnston

per bushel. If we use the current basis level for soft white in southeast Idaho of 65 under the futures we get a cash bid of \$4.60 per bushel compared to the current bid of 3.80.

All things being equal the market is giving you the opportunity to sell your 2018 soft white 80 cents per bushel higher than the current bid. Would an additional 80 cents per bushel for your soft white work in your budget for next year?

At this time the market is allowing you the opportunity. Here again the question is, what is the market allowing me to do? By thinking outside of the box and perhaps adjusting your normal marketing procedures, (the same as you adjust your producing practices) you will be able to use the market to your advantage.

Often we are asked how can I take advantage of the market like the large companies do. Well this is just a couple basic ways for producers to give themselves an opportunity to be profitable today and in the future.

Clark Johnston is a grain marketing specialist who is on contract with the Idaho Farm Bureau. He is the owner of JC Management Company in Northern Utah. He can be reached at clark@jcmanagement.net

AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION NEWS

Coalition Asks Senators to Put HIT Relief in Health Care Bill

More than 30 organizations representing small business owners, their employees and the self-employed are urging a group of senators to include relief from the health insurance tax in their Affordable Care Act repeal and replace bill. At a minimum, a one-year delay of the HIT would provide critical relief to the millions of hardworking Americans struggling to afford the cost of rising premiums, the Stop the Hit Co-

alition said in a letter to Sens. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), Bill Cassidy (R-La.) and Dean Heller (R-Nev.).

"We've heard from constituents throughout the country who've shared personally about the crushing impact of the HIT. By forcing millions of Americans to pay a sales tax on their coverage, the HIT drives up the cost of premiums on more than 29 million small business owners and their nearly 60 million

employees, as well as middle-class families, Medicaid beneficiaries and those purchasing coverage in the individual market," wrote the coalition, of which the American Farm Bureau is a member.

With premiums being finalized by the end of September, urgent action is needed to address health insurance cost and access problems, the groups said, noting that both Republicans and Democrats backed

HIT relief in 2015, when nearly 400 Senate and House lawmakers from both parties came together to suspend the HIT for 2017.

Graham, Cassidy and Heller's proposal repeals the structure and architecture of the ACA and replaces it with a block grant given annually to states to help individuals pay for health care.

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Florida's Farm Families Recovering from Losses

Florida Farm Bureau

The resiliency of Florida's farmers and ranchers is on full display in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma. They are working to restore food and fiber production for this state and the nation, despite the widespread destruction of crops, buildings, fencing and other property lost to wind and water damage.

Like many other Floridians, farm families are contending with significant failures in the electric power grid. Many face weeks of rebuilding and replanting before full operations can resume.

The entire peninsula suffered major damage. The most severe overall destruction occurred in Southwest Florida. Early estimates indicate that in some areas of the primary citrus belt at least 60 percent of green fruit was knocked off the trees, raising the likelihood that the 2016-2017 crop will be much smaller than expected. Those farmers who had already planted fall vegetables, including tomatoes, report a near-total loss.

Agriculturists throughout the region and elsewhere face the general task of either repairing or restoring irrigation systems, machinery and other equipment.

Scattered assessments among ornamental plant growers indicate that many greenhouses and shade covers were either partially standing or unusable. Some nursery owners have less than 50 percent of their plants in marketable con-

dition.

In Hendry and Glades counties, observers have found hundreds of sugarcane plants submerged in water, buried in sediment or blown away. Palm Beach County sugarcane appears to be shredded, but farmers there say that new growth is possible and along with it, a partial harvest.

Standing water is a challenge for agricultural producers throughout the entire peninsula. Flooding has blocked access to fields and groves and limited access to beef cattle in pastures marooned by the storm. In east Florida's Brevard County, for example, an estimated 50,000 acres of ranchland is under water, likely imposing a weight loss in calves shipped for processing.

As far north as Putnam County, west of St. Augustine, vegetable growers cannot enter fields because there is no access. Blueberry producers from south-central Florida north to Gainesville are struggling with acreage that has turned into lakes or muddy bogs.

Official economic loss totals will be available soon. Informal estimates suggest that the total agricultural cost of the storm will be in the billions. In south Florida's Okeechobee County, for example, an informal evaluation places the local loss at a minimum of \$16 million.

Florida Farm Bureau President John L. Hoblick expressed his grateful appreciation to farm families for their ability to

survive a catastrophic hurricane and continue with their livelihoods. "Our farmers and ranchers show their true strength under the pressures of adversity," Hoblick said. "I ask all Floridians to join me in applauding their dedication, hard work and willingness to work through very difficult circumstances so that they can continue operations that support us all."

Hoblick called upon federal officials to provide emergency assistance to achieve full recovery. "A farm disaster of this magnitude requires exceptional action," Hoblick said. "Farm families need our

help. I urge the Congress and the Administration to endorse immediate financial support for Florida agriculture. We appreciate all aid that you can provide during this crisis."

Twenty-five members of Florida's Congressional delegation have already asked Congressional leaders to appropriate adequate funding for this purpose. In a Sept. 12 letter the lawmakers wrote that "the destruction caused by Hurricane Irma throughout Florida means that Congress must again act swiftly to ensure the availability of additional funding needed for recovery efforts."

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NRCS Announces Application Deadline for Popular Program

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Idaho has set an Oct. 13, 2017, application deadline for its Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

"We accept applications for these programs on a continuous basis however, only the applications received by Oct. 13 will be considered for funding this fiscal year," said Morgan Bennetts, NRCS Idaho Assistant State

Conservationist for Programs. "We will evaluate the applications received by this date and award contracts based on available funds."

Applications received after the deadline will be reviewed in subsequent or special funding cycles.

EQIP helps agricultural producers complete resource conservation projects and make conservation-related management changes

on their farms or ranches. Conservation program participation is voluntary and helps private landowners and operators defray the costs of installing conservation practices.

"The Environmental Quality Incentives Program continues to be a very successful program in Idaho, offering both financial and technical assistance," said Curtis Elke, NRCS Idaho State Conservationist. "There is a

long list of available practices that planned and implemented to address farm production and environmental needs, which benefits the land and the landowner."

For more information on these programs as well as eligibility requirements, stop by your local USDA service center or visit NRCS online at <http://www.id.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/>.

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AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION NEWS

Cow Slaughter Surges

Cow slaughter figures have been running higher this year, showing year-over-year gains all but three weeks of 2017. Year-to-date, the number of total cows moving through the system is about 7 percent higher. Weekly slaughter rates were averaging 5 percent above a year ago through April, and 8 percent above a year ago April to July. Since then, slaughter rates have expanded to 10 percent above a year ago.

Both the beef and dairy herds are sending cows to slaughter at a higher rate than in 2016, and rates across both herds have increased in the later part of the year. Dairy cow slaughter year-to-date is 4 percent higher than 2016 and in recent weeks has averaged 7 percent higher com-

pared to the 1 percent higher seen in the first third of the year. The beef herd, on the other hand, has seen some heavier culling this year. Beef cow slaughter is 11 percent higher through mid-September of this year. Weekly slaughter rates have increased by double-digits nearly every week since mid-June. During that timeframe, beef cow slaughter averaged about 14 percent higher than a year ago.

The increase in cow slaughter, particularly on the beef side, comes a little early this year. Many cow-calf operations time weaning in the fall months, skewing the trend of increased cow slaughter until much later in the year. This can be seen in the seasonal decline in cull cow prices, which typically are

the lowest in fourth quarter. At least some of the reason behind this early surge in beef cow slaughter is the northern Plains drought, which has been in the background of this cattle market since June. This not only caused cattle on rangeland to come to market faster, but it also likely shortened the window for when producers pregnancy check and opted to cull cows in a limited feed situation.

This does appear to be aggressive culling on the domestic beef side as Canadian imports of slaughter cows is down significantly this year by 32 percent. The dairy cow herd inventory is holding relatively steady over the summer and has grown since the beginning of the year, adding 43,000 head. Beef cow

slaughter, as well as heifer cow slaughter, have been above year-ago levels since the beginning of 2016. Early in this process, the cow herd was refreshing its aging herd after holding onto breeding stock during the price run-up in years before. Older cows were retired and producers were winding down the number of replacements held compared to years past. However, now nearly two years later, those volumes are increasing and the economic incentive today's cattle prices has changed the motivations. This culling is more likely a signpost for the transition away from the expansionary phase of the last several years. This means as early as Jan. 1 2018, the cowherd could decline for the first time in four years.

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ELK DEPREDACTION

Continued from page 5



A herd of elk resting on private property near Mackay Reservoir. *Photo by Steve Ritter*

topic of discussion, but new ideas and potential solutions are difficult to come by. Fish and Game officials support hunter harvest as a management tool, but many ranchers expressed concern and bad past experiences. In sum, most ranchers believe most hunters are ethical and capable, but it only takes one bad apple to create problems that exceed the value of hunting.

Custer County Rancher Steve Bachman said hazing and hunting are the main techniques in use, but neither are effective solutions. "Hunters killed about 20 elk on our place last year but when you have 400 elk it's a drop in the bucket," he said.

Bachman added that he won't allow hazing on his property during bull elk season because of "slob hunters" and the fact that he doesn't want his house, family employees etc. in the line of fire of irresponsible hunters.

The comment sheds light on the fact that some residents in the region enjoy having elk on their properties which creates a sanctuary that exacerbates the overall problem. This point is consistently raised by Fish and Game officials when discussing the problem.

Hazing is another tool in use, but with questionable results. The elk leave one ranch and run to another, tearing out fences along the way. One rancher joked that it's much easier to haze the elk later in the winter after the fences are gone.

Lemhi County Rancher James Whittaker

suggested allowing ranchers to sell elk tags provided to them by Idaho Fish and Game as a way to compensate for losses. In the past this idea has been met with major opposition from the hunting community. Yet hunters don't object when Idaho Fish and Game auctions trophy big game tags for as



An example of the damage caused last winter to haystacks and fences in Lemhi County.
Farm Bureau file photo

much as \$350,000.

Deputy Director Schriever explained that Landowner Appreciation Permits (LAP) program overlaps the controlled hunt program. Therefore, landowners must draw these permits, which is a bone of contention among some of the ranchers who spoke during the tour. Schriever said LAP tags for bull elk and buck mule deer are always fully subscribed, or in other words there is significant interest in those tags. However, for doe mule deer and cow elk, interest wanes and large numbers (thousands according to Schriever) of these tags are under-subscribed, or not drawn or purchased. Landowners shouldn't have any problem drawing cow or doe tags, he said.

In addition, landowners with serious depredation problems are given depredation tags and those hunts generally take place in December or even as late in winter as January or February.

Whittaker said landowners should be given LAP tags commensurate with the damage they receive instead of holding a draw for the tags. He also criticized the Fish and Game department for being inconsistent and unfair with the awarding of elk tags to certain individuals but not others. Fish and Game officials at the meeting did not refute the claim.

Another landowner said he has drawn only

one LAP tag for elk in the last 12 years and has never drawn a LAP tag for antelope although he "feeds 30 to 40," every winter.

Ranchers also raised concern about wolf baiting. They believe wolf baiting, the same as bear baiting, could be a valuable management tool. Schriever said trapping rules allow for the use of bait but hunters cannot place bait under current rules. He added that a naturally occurring gut pile is not considered bait and hunters can use gut piles.

Meyers, the Fish and Game Commissioner representing the Salmon Region, said when the Commission considered wolf baiting earlier this year they received a barrage of email from animal rights groups from all over the world. They received 22,000 email messages in opposition to wolf baiting. He explained that the issue generates money for these groups and Commission members feared adopting the measure would empower the animal rights groups.

"We feared it would generate a lot of money for their war coffers and we may lose in court which could have spillover effects on bear baiting regulations," he said. "We made the decision to pull back the wolf baiting bill because it's not worth jeopardizing everything else we have in place."

Idaho Farm Bureau lobbyist Dennis Tani-kuni, said during the last legislative ses-

sion, a bill was passed that increased big game hunting fees by \$5 for residents and \$10 for non-residents. That money goes into a depredation account that is used to buy fencing materials and reimburse landowners for other losses. When the account reaches a set limit, the funds go into a prevention account where the focus on depredation losses remains, rather than channeled into a general fund that could be spent elsewhere.

Yet another problem raised during the discussion was the ability of the elk to adapt to control strategies. Many ranchers said the animals have become nocturnal haystack raiders, making it difficult for hunters or hazing to work.

In spite of the economic hardship the ranchers are facing, most do not place blame solely on the Idaho Fish and Game Department. Many of them complimented the Fish and Game Department's efforts in spite of the ineffectiveness in many cases. One rancher suggested creating management plans for individual ranches and allowing longer windows for control measures. Each property is unique and has individual challenges. "We need to get tags in time to deal with the problem before we have hundreds of elk on our property," he said. "We need to make decisions for each property because they all have unique problems."



Elk linger near haystacks last winter in Lemhi County. *Farm Bureau file photo*

AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION NEWS

Tax Code Revamp Should Support Agriculture

As Congress gets to work on a tax code overhaul, Farm Bureau is calling for a fair and equitable tax system that encourages success, savings, investment and entrepreneurship for all farm and ranch businesses.

Lawmakers' overarching goal for tax reform should be reducing effective tax rates, the organization said a statement submitted for the record to the Senate Finance Committee.

"Because profit margins in farming and ranching are tight, farm and ranch businesses are more likely to fall into lower tax brackets. Tax reform plans that fail to factor in the impact of lost deductions for all business entities and for all rate brackets could result in a tax increase for agriculture," Farm Bureau cautioned.

The organization emphasized the importance of various cost-recovery tools like

business interest expensing, cash accounting, Sect. 1031 like-kind exchanges and deductions for local and state taxes.

"Farmers and ranchers need to be able to match income with expenses in order to manage their businesses through challenging financial times. Expensing allows farm and ranch businesses to recover the cost of business investments in the year a purchase is made," Farm Bureau said.

Cash accounting allows farmers to improve cash flow by recognizing income when it is received and recording expenses when they are paid, while like-kind exchanges allow them to defer taxes when they sell assets and purchase replacement property of a like-kind.

Farmers and ranchers typically rely on borrowed money to buy production inputs, vehicles and equipment, and land and build-

ings, making interest expense deductions also very important.

Farm Bureau renewed its call for estate tax repeal, the continuation of unlimited stepped-up basis and the reduction of capital gains tax rates.

"Capital gains taxes are owed when farm or ranch land, buildings, breeding livestock and some timber are sold. While long-term capital gains are taxed at a lower rate than ordinary income to encourage investment and in recognition that long-term investments involve risk, the tax can still discourage property transfers or alternatively lead to a higher asking price," Farm Bureau said.

The organization would also like to see a capital gains tax exclusion for land that remains in production.

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Cash Rents Move Lower Across Corn Belt Irrigated Cash Rents Are Record-High

With lower commodity prices in recent years, many have wondered when asset values in cropland, farm real estate and cash rents would begin to decline in proportion to the declines in farm cash income. Prior to 2013, the correlation between cash rental rates and net cash income was nearly 90 percent. However, since 2013, a much lower level of correlation -- driven by low real estate interest rates -- has been observed at 22 percent, Figure 1. USDA's most recent survey of cash rents along with the annual Land Values Summary confirmed that cropland, farm real estate and cash rental rates remain slow to adjust to this new period of lower farm income.

The 2008 farm bill mandated that USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service provide mean rental rates for all counties with 20,000 acres of cropland plus pasture. USDA's most recent survey of cash rents and annual Land Values summary indicated the average value of cropland in 2017 was unchanged from 2016 at \$4,090 per acre. The value of farm real estate, a measurement of the value of all land and buildings on farms, averaged \$3,080 per acre for 2017, up \$70 per acre or approximately 2.3 percent from 2016.

While the average value of cropland and farm real estate did not decline, the U.S. average cash rent for non-irrigated cropland did decline. Non-irrigated cash rents averaged \$123 per acre, down \$2 per acre from 2016, and down \$10 per acre from the record-high observed in 2015. Irrigated cropland rents averaged a record-high of \$212 per acre, up \$6 per acre from 2016. Combined, the U.S. average cash rent for cropland was \$136 per acre, unchanged from 2016, but down \$8 per acre from the record-high in 2015 of \$144 per acre.

Cash rental rates varied across the U.S. and followed closely the productivity of agri-



Credit: Nicholas A. Tonelli // CC BY 2.0

cultural land and the cropping practice. For non-irrigated cropland the rental rates ranged from a low of \$5 per acre in parts of California and Texas to a high of \$289 per acre in Logan County, Illinois, Figure 2. Rental rates were the highest in the Corn Belt where dryland productivity and the weather is the most favorable for growing traditional field crops such as corn and soybeans. In general irrigated cropland cash rents are expected to be higher than non-irrigated rents in similarly situated counties. Irrigated cash rents ranged from a low of \$26 per acre in Eagle County, Colorado, to over \$2,400 per acre in Orange County and Ventura County, California, Figure 3.

At the state-level, average cash rents ranged from a low of \$31.50 per acre in Montana to a high of \$325 per acre in California. In the "I-States" the average rental rates were observed at \$231 per acre in Iowa, \$218 per acre in Illinois, and \$195 per acre in Indiana. These rates reflect the distribution of cropland by practice (irrigated and non-irrigated) and by crop production practice.

Due to the continued decline in many commodity prices, it was anticipated that cash rents would move lower in the Corn Belt. As evidenced in Figure 4, average cash

rental rates in 2017 moved lower across many corn, wheat and soybean producing states. In areas where cropland returns are higher, the average rental rates moved higher. Much of the variability in cash rents is due to farmland productivity and profitability.

This cash rent data provides a way to benchmark and to determine competitive cash rental rates for upcoming crop years. Growers can use this information when negotiating with landowners and for putting together crop budgets for the upcoming crop years.

While many commodity prices are expected to be at their lowest levels in a decade, cash rents remain well above levels experienced prior to the commodity price supercycle that began in 2006. For example, as shown in Figure 1, 2017 cash rent is 74 percent higher than the average cash rent in 2005. As evidenced, these cash rents will be slow to decline. However, given expectations for a record soybean crop and the third-largest corn crop for the 2017/18 marketing year, additional downward pressure on cash rents in 2018 is anticipated.

Higher June Lamb Exports, Not the Cause of Higher Priced Lambs

Lamb is a very small portion of the U.S. meat export portfolio, surpassed by all the major categories including mutton. Most months of the year lamb exports remain under 100,000 pounds. However, this June saw numbers hit 140,000 pounds, compared to June numbers last year of only 10,000 pounds. Mexico is one of the more consistent buyers of U.S. lamb, and their purchases grew by 39,000 pounds compared to last year. The Dominican Republic and Honduras were two other large buyers jumping in this month. Honduras purchased 65,000 pounds, while the Dominican Republic bought 23,000 pounds.

Most of the lamb raised in the U.S. is consumed domestically, as along with fairly high levels of imported lamb. Last year the U.S. imported 188 million pounds of lamb on a carcass weight, compared to exporting only 828,000 pounds. While the June numbers were good, year-to-date lamb exports are actually running below a year ago by 87,000 pounds, about 23 percent. Lamb exports vary throughout the year. The June 2017 export volume is the largest total since October 2016.

Although exports were up in June and total exports on the year are down, per capita consumption is expected to be down slightly for sheep and lamb, hovering around that one pound per person per year. Even with these less than stellar demand issues, domestic lamb prices have gained ground. The second quarter of 2017 showed prices up 19 percent for slaughter-weight lambs with similar gains seen in feeder lambs. So why have prices seen gains in the first half of 2017?

It's largely been a supply story in 2017. January's Sheep and Lamb Inventory report estimated the sheep herd was down 2 percent or 100,000 head. A resulting smaller lamb crop has been reflected in



Credit: Laura Wolf/CC By 2.0

lower slaughter levels. Weekly slaughter for lambs and yearlings is down nearly 5 percent and is coupled with lower dressed weights which are down a full 2 percent year-to-date. Further adding to the tightness is a slow decline in stock inventories that had built up last year. June inventories are 34 percent below a year ago.

This tightening on the supply side has led to stronger prices. The 3-market feeder lamb price hit an all-time high earlier this year topping \$260 per hundredweight. The previous record was \$244.75 per hundredweight set back in May of 2011. Prices remained over \$200 per hundredweight for the second quarter and have since eased off to the \$180s in recent weeks, closer to last year's prices. Fed lamb prices peaked in the second quarter and have been trailing ever since.

Higher lamb prices have translated into higher meat prices across the lamb complex. The lamb cutout has hit lofty highs on a weekly basis and seen some tremendous strength. Weekly cutout values took

off starting in April 2017 and have gained \$80 per hundredweight since, reaching well over 20 percent above a year ago for the last 11 weeks. Racks, loins, shoulders and legs have also shown great gains from a year ago and have not eased off the same way live prices for fed and feeder lambs have.

Livestock Marketing Information Center is one of the few groups independently forecasting lamb production and prices. They expect robust prices to continue in feeder lambs, averaging over \$210 per hundredweight for 2017, or 14 percent higher than 2016. Slaughter weight lambs are also expected to close 2017 with higher prices, averaging just over \$300 per hundredweight or 7 percent higher. Looking beyond 2017, LMIC forecasts production increasing and on balance a slight slip in prices, about 1-2 percent down in feeders and slaughter lambs. Lamb consumption is expected to hold relatively steady at one pound per person per year.

Bacon and Chicken Up, OJ Too

WASHINGTON, D.C., September 25, 2017 – Higher retail prices for several foods, including bacon, chicken breast, orange juice, sliced deli ham and flour resulted in a slight increase in the American Farm Bureau Federation's Fall Harvest Marketbasket Survey.

The informal survey shows the total cost of 16 food items that can be used to prepare one or more meals was \$51.13, up \$1.43, or about 3 percent, compared to a survey conducted a year ago. Of the 16 items surveyed, 12 increased and four decreased in average price.

Several foods showed significant retail price increases from a year ago, including bacon, chicken breast and orange juice, according to Dr. John Newton, AFBF's director of market intelligence.

"Bacon was up significantly because of the lower inventory and higher prices of pork bellies. We saw a rally in wholesale bacon prices this summer and fall which is being reflected at the retail level," Newton said. "Bacon is a sexy food item in restaurants and everywhere else, creating an inventory decline and thus a price increase."

"Supply and demand for chicken breasts is tight, which is why retail prices are higher," Newton said. In addition, he said the price increase for orange juice is related to the lower supply of oranges, which could worsen due to the impact of Hurricane Harvey.

Consumers saw a slight decline in egg prices. "Egg supplies are fully rebuilt from what we saw a few years ago and we are seeing egg prices continue to come back to where they were prior to the bird flu a few years ago," Newton said.

Price checks of alternative milk choices not included in the overall marketbasket survey average revealed the following: 1/2 gallon regular milk, \$2.07 and 1/2 gallon organic milk, \$4.27.

For many food items, the year-to-year di-



rection of the marketbasket survey tracks with the federal government's Consumer Price Index report for food at home. As retail grocery prices have increased gradually over time, the share of the average food dollar that America's farm and ranch families receive has dropped.

"Through the mid-1970s, farmers received about one-third of consumer retail food expenditures for food eaten at home and away from home, on average. Since then, that figure has decreased steadily and is now about 15.6 percent, according to the Agriculture Department's revised Food Dollar Series," Newton said.

Using the "food at home and away from home" percentage across-the-board, the farmer's share of this \$51.13 marketbasket would be approximately \$8.00.

AFBF, the nation's largest general farm organization, began conducting informal quarterly marketbasket surveys of retail food price trends in 1989. The series includes a Spring Picnic survey, Summer Cookout survey, Fall Harvest survey and Thanksgiving survey.

According to USDA, Americans spend just under 10 percent of their disposable annual income on food, the lowest average of any country in the world. A total of 81 shoppers in 25 states participated in the latest survey, conducted in September.

The following items showed retail price increases from a year ago:

bacon, up 19 percent to \$5.24 per pound
chicken breast, up 9 percent to \$3.13 per pound
flour, up 7 percent to \$2.37 per 5-pound bag
orange juice, up 6 percent to \$3.46 per half-gallon
vegetable oil, up 5 percent to \$2.52 for a 32-ounce bottle
sliced deli ham, up 3 percent to \$5.62 per pound
sirloin tip roast, up 3 percent to \$5.17 per pound
whole milk, up 3 percent to \$2.93 per gallon
white bread, up 2 percent to \$1.61 for a 20-ounce loaf
toasted oat cereal, up 1 percent to \$2.84 for a 9-ounce box
shredded cheddar, up 1 percent to \$4.11 per pound
apples, up 1 percent to \$1.61 per pound

These items showed moderate retail price decreases compared to a year ago:

bagged salad, down 16 percent to \$2.41 per pound
ground chuck, down 3 percent to \$3.99 per pound
eggs, down 3 percent to \$1.44 dozen per dozen
potatoes, down 2 percent to \$2.68 for a 5-pound bag

Farm Bureau Members Pay Less For Choice Hotels!



A \$80 room will be closer to

\$64

A \$90 room will be closer to

\$72

A \$100 room will be closer to

\$80

1.800.258.2847

FARM BUREAU DISCOUNT CODE
00209550

ADVANCED RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

CHOICE HOTELS™



FARM BUREAU COMMODITY REPORT

GRAIN PRICES	8/24/2017	09/20/2017	Trend
PORLAND:			
Soft White Wheat	4.84-5.25	5.10-5.30	+.26 to +.05
Hard Red Winter	4.40 - 4.75	5.18-5.63	+.78 to +.88
14% DNS	7.30 - 7.60	7.11-7.31	-.19 to -.29
Oats	215.00	215.00	Steady
OGDEN:			
Soft White Wheat	3.59	4.09	+.50
Hard Red Winter	3.58	4.18	+.60
DNS	6.43	6.09	-.34
Barley	6.20	6.20	Steady
BLACKFOOT/ IDAHO FALLS			
Soft White Wheat	3.40	3.65	+.25
Hard Red Winter	3.75	4.45	+.70
14% DNS	6.05	5.65	-.40
Hard White	4.20	4.55	+.35
BURLEY:			
Soft White Wheat	3.60	3.74	+.14
Hard Red Winter	3.50	3.75	+.25
DNS	6.10	5.65	-.45
Barley	5.50	5.50	Steady
MERIDIAN:			
White Wheat (cwt)	3.95	4.20	+.25
LEWISTON:			
White Wheat	4.75	5.05	+.30
Hard Red Winter	4.88	5.29	+.41
Dark N. Spring	7.53	7.19	-.34
Barley	111.50	116.50	+.50
LIVESTOCK PRICES			
8/25/2017 09/20/2017			
FEEDER STEERS			
Under 500 lbs	135 - 188	140-209	+5 to +21
500-700 lbs	125 - 180	100-163	-25 to -17
700-900 lbs	97 - 150	97-146	Steady to -4
Over 900 lbs	88 - 136	93-122	+5 to -14
FEEDER HEIFERS			
Under 500 lbs	130 - 175	135-168	+5 to -7
500-700 lbs	114 - 151	125-148	+11 to -3
700-900 lbs	110 - 138	115-136	+5 to -2
Over 900 lbs	100 - 129	81-121	-19 to -8
HOLSTEIN STEERS			
Under 700 lbs	77 - 88	70-90	-7 to +2
Over 700 lbs	77 - 89	70-95	-7 to +6
COWS			
Utility/Commercial Canner & Cutter	73-82 60-76	60-74 55-65	-13 to -8 -5 to -11
Stock Cows	1,100-1,275	970-1,200	-130 to -75
BULLS			
Slaughter	60-116	64-99	+4 to -17

COMPILED BY THE IDAHO FARM BUREAU COMMODITY DIVISION

IDAHO HAY REPORT

USDA Market News, Moses Lake, WA

September 15, 2017

Compared to last week, domestic and export Alfalfa steady to firm in a light test.

Timothy not tested this week. Trade moderate with good demand as the hay season begins to wind down. Prices are dollars per ton and FOB the farm or ranch unless otherwise stated.

SEPTEMBER 15TH

Type	Tons	Price
Alfalfa		
Good	6400	125.31 Export
Fair	3250	97.62 Tarpred
Utility	1600	80.00
	500.00	85.00 Tarpred

Alfalfa hay test guidelines, (for domestic livestock use and not more than 10% grass), used with visual appearance and intent of sale. Quantitative factors are approximate and many factors can affect feeding value.

	ADF	NDF	RFV	TDN-100%	TDN-90%	CP-100%
Supreme	<27	<34	>185	>62	>55.9	>22
Premium	27-29	34-36	170-185	60.5-62	54.5-55.9	20-22
Good	29-32	36-40	150-170	58-60	52.5-54.5	18-20
Fair	32-35	40-44	130-150	56-58	50.5-52.5	16-18
Utility	>35	>44	<130	<56	<50.5	<16

POTATOES & ONIONS

September 19, 2017

Potatoes

UPPER VALLEY,TWIN FALLS-BURLEY DISTRICT, IDAHO (2017 CROP) ---Shipments 632-558-727 - (includes exports of 3-2-2)--Movement expected to remain about the same. Trading carton 40-70s slow, others moderate. Prices baled generally unchanged, others lower. Russet Norkotah U.S. One baled 10-5 pound film bags non size A mostly 6.50; 50-pound sacks 40-80s 10.00-12.00, 90s 10.00-11.00, 100s mostly 10.00.

Onions – Dry

IDAHO AND MALHEUR COUNTY OREGON---Shipments 136-229-292---Movement

expected remain about the same. Trading active. Prices Yellow super colossal, Yellow colossal, Yellow jumbo and Red jumbo higher, others about steady. Yellow Spanish Hybrid 50-pound sacks super colossal mostly 13.00, colossal mostly 12.00, jumbo 10.00-11.00, medium mostly 6.00; White 50-pound sacks jumbo 20.00, medium 18.00; Red Globe Type 25-pound sacks jumbo 9.00-10.00, medium mostly 8.00.

5 YEAR GRAIN COMPARISON

Grain Prices..... 9/26/2013..... 9/23/2014..... 9/21/2015..... 9/23/2016..... 9/20/2017

Portland:

White Wheat.....	7.13.....	6.69.....	5.45.....	4.74-4.89.....	5.10-5.30.....
11% Winter.....	No Bid.....	6.78-7.08.....	5.76-5.90.....	4.81.....	5.18-5.63.....
14% Spring.....	8.24.....	7.97.....	6.41.....	5.98-6.28.....	7.11-7.31.....
Corn.....	No Bid.....	No Bid.....	260.00.....	225.00.....	215.00.....

Ogden:

White Wheat.....	6.53.....	6.11.....	5.51.....	3.84.....	4.09.....
11% Winter.....	7.17.....	5.80.....	4.60.....	3.86.....	4.18.....
14 % Spring.....	7.98.....	6.82.....	5.68.....	5.03.....	4.18.....
Barley.....	7.95.....	4.90.....	6.35.....	5.55.....	6.20.....

Pocatello:

White Wheat.....	6.30.....	5.75.....	5.20.....	3.40.....	3.65.....
11% Winter.....	7.42.....	5.75.....	4.15.....	3.80.....	4.45.....
14% Spring.....	7.32.....	6.09.....	5.30.....	4.85.....	5.65.....
Barley.....	No Bid.....	No Bid.....	4.75.....	4.00.....	No Bid.....

Burley:

White Wheat.....	6.30.....	5.65.....	5.19.....	3.65.....	3.74.....
11% Winter.....	6.77.....	5.25.....	4.25.....	3.45.....	3.75.....
14% Spring.....	7.00.....	6.11.....	4.98.....	4.82.....	5.63.....
Barley.....	8.00.....	5.20.....	6.00.....	5.00.....	5.50.....

Nampa:

White Wheat (cwt).....	10.33.....	9.75.....	9.53.....	6.08.....	7.00.....
(bushel).....	6.20.....	5.85.....	5.72.....	3.65.....	4.20.....

Lewiston:

White Wheat.....	6.84.....	6.20.....	5.35.....	4.55.....	5.05.....
Barley.....	144.50.....	136.50.....	136.50.....	101.50.....	116.50.....

Bean Prices:

Pinto.....	40.00-42.00.....	40.00-42.00.....	22.00-24.00.....	28.00-30.00.....	24.00-25.00.....
Small Reds.....	No Bid.....	No Bid.....	30.00.....	28.00.....	No Bid.....

MILK PRODUCTION

September 19, 2017

August Milk Production up 2.1 Percent

Milk production in the 23 major States during August totaled 17.0 billion pounds, up 2.1 percent from August 2016. July revised production, at 17.2 billion pounds, was up 2.1 percent from July 2016. The July revision represented an increase of 31 million pounds or 0.2 percent from last month's preliminary production estimate.

Production per cow in the 23 major States averaged 1,948 pounds for August, 26 pounds above August 2016. This is the highest production per cow for the month of August since the 23 State series began in 2003.

The number of milk cows on farms in the 23 major States was 8.73 million head, 66,000 head more than August 2016, but unchanged from July 2017.

August Milk Production in the United States up 2.0 Percent

Milk production in the United States during August totaled 18.1 billion pounds, up 2.0 percent from August 2016.

Production per cow in the United States averaged 1,919 pounds for August, 24 pounds above August 2016.

The number of milk cows on farms in the United States was 9.41 million head, 71,000 head more than August 2016, but unchanged from July 2017.

5 YEAR LIVESTOCK COMPARISON

5 Year Livestock Comparison

	9/25/2013	9/22/2014	9/21/2015	9/21/2016	9/20/2017
Feeder Steers					
Under 500 lbs.....	148-198.....	250-390.....	220-305.....	120-176.....	140-209.....
500-700 lbs.....	130-174.....	210-288.....	170-247.....	120-142.....	100-163.....
700-900 lbs.....	119-157.....	180-245.....	150-211.....	107-131.....	97-146.....
Over 900 lbs.....	105-138.....	160-212.....	146-180.....	89-123.....	93-122.....
Feeder Heifers					
Under 500 lbs.....	142-186.....	235-340.....	220-265.....	110-153.....	135-168.....
500-700 lbs.....	121-160.....	190-287.....	165-232.....	101-127.....	125-148.....
700-900 lbs.....	102-144.....	167-230.....	145-198.....	95-124.....	115-136.....
Over 900 lbs.....	90-133.....	150-207.....	145-165.....	85-119.....	81-121.....
Holstein Steers					
Under 700 lbs.....	71-113.....	150-234.....	120-182.....	75-110.....	70-90.....
Over 700 lbs.....	75-102.....	135-206.....	120-154.....	75-107.....	70-95.....
Cows					
Utility/Commercial.....	58-86.....	89-124.....	75-105.....	52-80.....	60-74.....
Canner & Cutter.....	50-73.....	80-109.....	68-97.....	49-68.....	55-65.....
Stock Cows.....	N/A.....	1300-2100.....	1200-2300.....	N/A.....	970-1,200.....
Bulls – Slaughter.....	69-95.....	104-151.....	93-136.....	70-104.....	64-99.....

CATTLE ON FEED

Released September 22, 2017

United States Cattle on Feed Up 4 Percent

Cattle and calves on feed for the slaughter market in the United States for feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head totaled 10.5 million head on September 1, 2017. The inventory was 4 percent above September 1, 2016.

Placements in feedlots during August totaled 1.93 million head, 3 percent above 2016. Net placements were 1.88 million head. During August, placements of cattle and calves weighing less than 600 pounds were 360,000 head, 600-699 pounds were 285,000 head, 700-799 pounds were 418,000 head, 800-899 pounds were 485,000 head, 900-999 pounds were 270,000 head, and 1,000 pounds and greater were 110,000 head.

Marketings of fed cattle during August totaled 1.98 million head, 6 percent above 2016.

Other disappearance totaled 49,000 head during August, 20 percent above 2016.

CATTLE MARKET REPORT

2018 Beef Production Forecast at 2.3-Percent Growth

USDA forecasts 2.3-percent growth in U.S. beef production in 2018, based on larger 2016—and expected 2017—calf crops that are projected to support increases in cattle placements in late 2017 and early 2018. Marketings of fed cattle are expected to be higher during 2018, supporting higher slaughter during the year, while carcass weights are also expected to increase.

Dressed Weights Limit Beef Production on Higher Slaughter

Commercial beef production for April 2017 was fractionally below a year ago. However, with 1 less slaughter day in the month, meatpackers slaughtered 2 percent, or 54,000 head, more cattle than last year. According to the USDA/NASS Livestock Slaughter report released in May 2017, dressed weights for steers and heifers slaughtered under Federal inspection declined 25 and 22 pounds, respectively, year over year. The decrease in the average carcass weight more than offset the increase in the number of cattle slaughtered and kept production from increasing. The USDA report on beef production under Federal inspection for the week ending May 27 indicates that average dressed weights for steers and heifers continue to decline, falling another 9 and 13 pounds, respectively, from the week ending April 29. Weights are expected to move higher seasonally, but gains will likely be limited while there are incentives to market cattle as rapidly as possible.

The demand by meatpackers likely contributed to that price surge. Relative price strength is likely to persist as demand for beef remains strong. However, as summer demand winds down, packer margins will likely decline and cattle prices will be pressured. Third-quarter fed prices are expected to decline seasonally, averaging \$118-\$124 per cwt, up from \$113.26 in third-quarter 2016.

Third-quarter production is forecast at 6.8 billion pounds, and USDA revised its 2017 commercial beef production down slightly to 26.2 billion pounds. For 2018, beef production was adjusted upward to 27.1 billion pounds on the expectation that more steers and heifers would be available for slaughter next year due to the higher forecast



CLASSIFIEDS



Animals

Yearling Beefmaster bulls for sale. Quality and performance. \$1800. Nampa. Call Jody at 208-573-3209.

Farm Equipment

New Squeeze chute, green, hand pull, \$1,300. Midvale, Id 208-355-3780.

Balewagons: New Holland self-propelled or pull-type models. Also interested in buying balewagons. Will consider any model. Call Jim Wilhite at 208-880-2889 anytime.

Farmall International Harvester Tractor. Runs good Model M. Serial#171417, 1595RPM max idle speed with Delco Romy 11D7448 8H26. \$2000. All metal in good condition. 208-267-2857.

2012 Massey Ferguson/Hesston 9740 Swather, 718 hours (like new) 16 ft. sickle head; R23A Vermeer Rake. Challis, ID 208-339-2434.

Miscellaneous

Dividing perennials. \$1 per shovel. Iris, hollyhock seeds, bachelor buttons, creeping jenny, vinca, penstamin, and more. Call 208-466-5917.

Sunset Memorial Cemetery Twin Falls. 2 plots with 1 open/close pd for, and a 24x32 grave marker paid for. \$3,000 for all. Call 208-733-0195 or 208-733-5938.

Woodmaster outdoor wood stove. Comes with pump and draft fan. Stove heats your home and hot water. Works in conjunction with existing furnace or as standalone heat. Lower your heating costs and increase your comfort. Horseshoe Bend, Id. John 208-781-0691.

Miscellaneous

Three minimally used whole body vibration machines. Save \$500 on each machine, made in America. They're high quality, made with steel and Pennsylvanian Cherry Wood. They are very nice, very quiet and don't rattle. Comes with new warranty. Caldwell, ID 208-407-2406

1947 Piper PA-12 Super Cruiser Lyc 290-D2 All Alaska Mods Super Cub Wings/Tail feathers TTSN approx.. 3200 hrs \$60k 208-869-5277.

Woman's Saddle. Handmade 1980, small adult, clean, good condition, western style. \$300 OBO. Call Karen 208-305-6635.

Vehicles

1988 Mazda RX7 Convertible. \$3200. 1.3 L R2 Motor. 5 Speed manual overdrive transmission 208-793-3685

Real Estate/Acreage

Horse property in N. Idaho 19+acres, hay or pasture, 4B 3b 3600 sq ft home. 40x80 barn 4 indoor stalls, +covered feed area. 20x30 heated shop, 42x60 equip. shed. \$629,500. Deary, ID. Terry 208-699-0816 or ctmaple@deary-id.com.

2007 26x60 Manufactured Home, cedar style siding, red metal roof, large covered porch. Pocatello, ID 208-237-5748

Lot for Sale - 1/2 Acre Country Lot. Building Lot or for New Manufactured Home. City water, Gas, Utilities available. Must obtain permits for water hook-up & septic system. Shelley area. Call 528-5337.

Wanted

Older Farm Bureau member looking for a Farm Bureau member that will allow me to hunt deer on their land. The property owner can specify time, place, weapon, etc. call 208-584-3662.

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

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

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

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

Wanted

Our Idaho family loves old wood barns and would like to restore/rebuild your barn on our Idaho farm. Would you like to see your barn restored/rebuilt rather than rot and fall down? Call Ken & Corrie 208-425-3225.

Wanted Propane Refrigerator for Cabin. 208-358-7475

DEADLINE

DATES:

ADS MUST BE RECEIVED BY

October 20

FOR NEXT ISSUE.

FREE CLASSIFIEDS

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

Mail ad copy to:
FARM BUREAU PRODUCER
P.O. Box 4848, Pocatello, ID 83205-4848
or e-mail Dixie at: dashton@idahofb.org

Name: _____

Address: _____

City / State / Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Membership No. _____

Ad Copy: _____

**FREE
CLASSIFIED ADS
FOR IDAHO FARM BUREAU MEMBERS
send to: dashton@idahofb.org**



JOHN DEERE

NEW

Use your Idaho Farm Bureau membership number for GreenFleet at JohnDeere.com/FarmBureau. You will have access to the following benefits:

**IDAHo FARM
BUREAU FEDERATION**
P.O. Box 4848
Pocatello, ID 83205-4848



\$350-\$3,200 off Commercial Mowing

\$100-\$250 off Residential Mowing

\$200-\$350 off Utility Vehicles

\$200-\$350 off Tractors

\$500-\$3,700 off Golf & Sports Turf

17% off MSRP – Commercial Worksite

- Combine GreenFleet equipment savings with National Offers
- Special parts savings delivered to their inbox
- 10% off Home & Workshop Products, including air compressors, generators and more!
- 10% off apparel and accessories at JohnDeereStore.com

Other Details and Restrictions

- GreenFleet Loyalty Rewards benefits are **only available at John Deere dealerships**. Purchases from Lowes or Home Depot will count towards GreenFleet status, but are not eligible for a GreenFleet discount.
- There is no minimum length of Farm Bureau membership to receive the GreenFleet benefit.
- Members need to sign up once for the GreenFleet Loyalty Rewards program, then renew or reactivate their membership approximately every two years.
- GreenFleet members can manage their account at MyJohnDeere.Deere.com.
- For full GreenFleet Terms & Conditions, visit JohnDeere.com/GreenFleet.

**Quick access to links at
www.idahofbstore.com**