

GEM STATE **Producer** Idaho Farm Bureau

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GRANT TARGETS
BEGINNING RANCHERS





The big picture of U.S. ag with the 2022 Census

From a window atop my grandfather's old barn, you can see my family's whole farm, from the hay fields to the chicken houses to the pasture where the mama cows are grazing.

I love watching the sunrise from there, taking in the big picture. But even from that bird's eye view, I can only see so far.

I can't see across the country, my home state, or even my whole county. That's where USDA comes in, bringing us all the big

picture of U.S. agriculture with its Census of Agriculture.

Every five years, this census offers a sweeping view of America's farms and ranches, and USDA released its latest data on Feb. 13.

So, what did we learn about the farm landscape from the 2022 ag census? A key takeaway is an overall decrease in the number of family farms across the country. While the number of producers held steady, the number of farms and ranches is down 7% from 2017.

See **DUVALL**, page 6

The President's Desk

By **Bryan Searle**

President, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation



2024 AFBF conference was a home run

From the first day to the last day of American Farm Bureau's 105th Annual Convention, it was an exciting, informative, constructive and well-run event.

From the quality of presenters, speakers and competitions to the safety, cleanliness and location of the convention, the event, in my mind, gets an "A" in all categories.

I don't believe I'm alone in feeling that way. Based on all the conversations I've had with others from across the nation who attended, most people give it a five-star review.

It was just a good, all-around event and probably one of the best AFBF conventions ever. From the get-go, it just seemed to flow and click on every level.

What made it particularly special for me was that a larger-than-normal contingent of Idaho Farm Bureau members attended the 2024 AFBF convention, which is no big surprise given it was held in Salt Lake City this year.

The event, which was held Jan. 19-24 at the Salt Palace Convention Center in downtown

See **SEARLE**, page 7

Inside Farm Bureau

By **Zak Miller**

CEO, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation



Extinction from regulation

Every five years, a new census of agriculture is published.

I always find reviewing the data interesting as it creates an opportunity to see how quickly and, at times, dramatically the landscape of agriculture changes.

The 2022 ag census data was released Feb. 13.

Of all the data the census includes, when I saw the current number of farmers in Idaho, compared with the 2017 ag census year, I was sad but, unfortunately, not surprised.

The census shows that from 2017 to 2022, Idaho lost 2,119 farms. That equals out to more than one farm going out of business daily in that five-year span.

The landscape of farming has been shifting for over 100 years with the consolidation of farms. We lose farmland to development but not nearly as fast as we lose farmers, and the most significant number of farmers exiting are small farmers.

See **MILLER**, page 6



Idaho Farm Bureau.

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Idaho Farm Bureau Federation file photo

Barley is harvested in a field near Soda Springs in this Idaho Farm Bureau Federation file photo. Idaho lost 2,119 farms between 2017 and 2022, according to the 2022 Census of Agriculture, which was released Feb. 13.

Ag Census shows Idaho lost 2,119 farms

POCATELLO – Idaho lost 2,119 farms, or 8.5 percent of its total farms, between 2017 and 2022, according to the 2022 Census of Agriculture.

Data from the 2022 ag census was released Feb. 13 and it showed there were 22,877 farms and ranches in Idaho during the 2022 census year. That was down from 24,996 farms during the 2017 census year.

The data shows there were 1.9 million farms and ranches in the United States in 2022. That was 7 percent, or 142,000, fewer farms than during 2017.

The Census of Agriculture is conducted every five years and is the only source of uniform, comprehensive and impartial agricultural data. It provides millions of potential data points on U.S. farming, down to the county level.

The 2022 census shows there was 11.55 million acres of total farmland – this includes crop and pasture land – in Idaho during the recent census year. That is a 1.2 percent, or 144,000-acre, drop from the 11.69 million acres of total farmland in the state in 2017.

Nationwide, the amount of total farmland in 2022 was 880 million acres, down 2.2 percent from 900 million acres in 2017.

- The average size of a farm in Idaho during 2022 was 505 acres, up 8 percent from 468 acres in 2017. Nationally, the average size of farm in 2022 was 463 acres, up from 441 acres in 2017.

- Canyon County had the most farms in Idaho in 2022, with 2,311. Twin Falls County ranked second (1,169), followed by Ada County (1,142) and Bingham County (1,081).

- When it comes to total value of agricultural production, Cassia County ranked No. 1 among the state's 44 counties with \$1.15 billion in 2022. Twin Falls County ranked second (\$1.14 billion), followed by Gooding County (\$1.12 billion), Jerome County (\$944 million) and Canyon County (\$829 million).

(See the April Producer magazine for a full story on the ag census data.)

COVER: See page 11 for a story about a \$479,000 grant University of Idaho's meat science research team will use to provide training to beginning ranchers. Photo courtesy of Jim Parker



Photos by Sean Ellis

Two-thirds of Idaho's 105-member legislature attended Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's annual Legislative and Commodity Conference, which was held Feb. 6-7. During a legislative dinner, legislators mixed with Farm Bureau members and other ag industry leaders to discuss issues important to the industry.

Two-thirds of legislature attends Farm Bureau conference

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

BOISE – About two-thirds of the 105-member Idaho Legislature attended Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's annual Legislative and Commodity Conference Feb. 6-7.

The highlight of the conference is the “legislative dinner,” which mixes lawmakers with Farm Bureau members and other agricultural industry leaders.

There is no program or agenda for the dinner. It's simply a chance for legislators to engage in face-to-face discussions with Farm Bureau members from their districts.

That event is “especially good for legislators who live far away because we like to see people from back home,” said Sen. Mark Harris, R-Soda Springs. “It's good to sit down with them and learn what's going on.”

He said the annual event is a highlight of the legislative session for many lawmakers.

“For me, it ranks near the top because Farm Bureau people are

“Our members are the foremost experts on how proposals will affect their farming and ranching operations. It is always great to see our members interacting and engaging with their legislators.”

– Russ Hendricks, vice president of governmental affairs, IFBF

my people,” said Harris, who previously served on the IFBF board of directors. “For many legislators, it’s one of those must-attend events.”

Russ Hendricks, IFBF’s vice president of governmental affairs, said many legislators have told him the legislative dinner is their favorite event of the legislative season.

“They really enjoy the relaxed atmosphere and the opportunity to just visit with folks from back home,” he said. “It is always great to see our members interacting and engaging with their legislators.”

Hendricks said lawmakers appreciate hearing how various proposals would affect producers’ farming operations.

“Our members are the foremost experts on how proposals will affect their farming and ranching operations,” he said. “It is always great to see our members interacting and engaging with their legislators.”

Rep. Doug Pickett, R-Oakley, addressed Farm Bureau members during the conference and told IFBF later he appreciates hearing directly from them how they feel about important issues.

He said the flow of information and level of detail needed for lawmakers to understand every complex issue that comes before them is beyond the capacity of any single person.

“We rely on organizations like Farm Bureau to study important issues and give us accurate feedback on what the impacts of potential policy changes are and the ramifications to their industry,” he said. “So, to have Farm Bureau or any other organization representing their industry here, is very valuable to me.”

During the two-day conference, members of IFBF’s various commodity committees met to discuss the latest issues affecting their commodities and float possible solutions.

IFBF has committees dealing with beef, water, wheat and feed grains, hay and forage, dairy, potatoes, forestry, and federal and state lands.

Farm Bureau members also visited the Capitol building, where they attended committee meetings and were briefed on important issues by lawmakers and industry leaders.

“The purpose of the IFBF legislative conference is to help Farm Bureau members

better understand the legislative process so they know how they can engage to make sure their voices are heard,” Hendricks said.

“We appreciate you taking the time to be here,” IFBF President Bryan Searle told Farm Bureau members as the conference was winding down. “I hope you have become more comfortable over here at the Capitol and I hope you would be willing to come back and testify” on important legislation.

During the conference, members of Idaho’s congressional delegation addressed IFBF members by video.

“We interact with state Farm Bureau people all the time; you are a great ally,” said Rep. Russ Fulcher, R-Idaho. “I don’t think a week goes by where I or a member of our staff doesn’t interact with Farm Bureau. We’re on the same page.”

A high school speech contest and Discussion Meet were also held during the conference. The Discussion Meet helps young producers hone their public speaking and problem-solving skills during a competition that is meant to simulate a committee meeting rather than a debate. ■

RIGHT: Farm Bureau members walk through Idaho’s Capitol building during Idaho Farm Bureau Federation’s annual Legislative and Commodity Conference, which took place Feb. 6-7.



Continued from page 2

This decrease largely hit small- and medium-sized farms, with the number of large farms up slightly.

We have all seen the for-sale signs pop up across farmland, so this number is likely not a surprise to most farmers.

From rapidly increasing regulatory requirements to inflation to skyrocketing labor costs, it's getting harder for small- and medium-sized farms to hold on, and we're starting to see an increase in consolidation of farms.

This big picture from the Census of Ag should serve as a wakeup call to our lawmakers. These aren't just statistics to farm and ranch families across the country: they are deeply personal stories of heartbreaking decisions.

Farm and ranch families, and the men and women they employ, cannot hold on for long-overdue reform on issues like the farm bill, tax reform, and farm labor, to name a few.

Now, it's not just dark clouds on the horizon. I firmly believe we can find hope when we look at the big picture, and it's no different here.

I, for one, am encouraged by looking to the future with the growing number of beginning farmers. According to USDA, in 2022, the number of beginning farmers

'The big picture of agriculture should matter to all Americans, because we are all counting on the success of America's farmers and ranchers.'

was just over 1 million. That's up 11% from 2017.

That said, the average age of a farmer ticked up again, to 58, so we need to find ways to encourage more young people to get involved in farming or to come back to the farm.

With expenses and high startup costs, such as interest rates up 43%, young farmers need more tools to keep them farming rather than obstacles that drive them out of business.

We need to keep exploring ways to ensure that farming is economically sustainable for all farmers.

The importance of the farm bill cannot be overstated here. So, I'll say it again: we need a modernized farm bill in 2024, one that helps family farms stay in business during difficult times and keeps our food supply secure in all seasons.

The Census of Ag data isn't just about the big picture, however. The census gets down in the weeds with 6 million data points. That level of detail (all confiden-

tial) is critical for USDA in their work to ensure farms of all sizes and types have the support they need.

The big picture, and all the details in it, helps USDA allocate funds down to the county level to support farms and ranches of all types and sizes.

In the days to come, you'll also see insights from our team of economists as they dive into this important research.

And you'll see Farm Bureau employing USDA data along with our analysis throughout the year, from sharing the great strides farmers are making in sustainability to helping consumers better understand where their food comes from.

But none of this research and analysis would be possible without participation across the country by farmers and ranchers. The Census of Ag is another critical tool in sharing our farm and ranch stories.

The big picture of agriculture should matter to all Americans, because we are all counting on the success of America's farmers and ranchers. ■

Continued from page 2

Few choose to farm for easy and lucrative opportunities; thus, when a farmer can no longer farm, it is sad because a dream has been lost or put on hold.

The causes for farm exit are many: financial, ecological, and health being among them. However, there is also a challenge that inhibits farmers' ability to succeed, and neither nature nor markets can be blamed for it.

That terrible curse, especially for the small farm, is insidious over-regulation!

Over-regulation can be a death sentence to a small farm, and it comes in two ways, both of which originate from noble intent but

can quickly become devastating as onerous regulations grow and are added to.

The two forms of over-regulation are governmental and industry regulations. Of course, we want to know where our food comes from, that it is safe, healthy and does not harm the environment or the people producing it.

It is justifiable to ask for safeguards to ensure a guilt-free food source. (A person's relationship to calories is for another article.)

However, when regulation is added on because of a social demand or a competitive advantage sought by a large customer, which then often spurs competition amongst customers as to who can make the greatest claims by demanding more guarantees, all farms experience substantial costs.

The number of audits, waivers, affidavits, contracts, and prom-

ises a farmer or rancher must sign, maintain, and report on is truly obnoxious. Such excessive requirements raise production costs, increase consumer costs, and create additional job titles for a farmer who already has so many.

The burden of onerous regulations for larger and very large farms is real but they can at least spread the burden and often hire someone dedicated to managing the regulation. However, the small farmer usually trying to gain a toehold in the marketplace can only add to their list of tasks that must be done.

When a farmer must ration their time growing a crop due to demands to satisfy over-the-top regulations so that a store or brand can make a social claim, the farm suffers and sometimes cannot survive.

SEARLE

Continued from page 2

Salt Lake City, was attended by about 4,500 Farm Bureau members from across the United States.

About 150 Idaho Farm Bureau Federation members attended the event, which is about 50 percent greater than normal for the annual AFBF convention.

It was impressive to see that and the Idaho contingent had a very visible and vocal presence, especially during Young Farmer and Rancher competitions that included Gem State participants.

Everywhere I went during the event, I saw Idahoans.

I am proud of the way Idaho Farm Bureau members participated in the convention and supported their fellow state members during the YF&R competitions.

[See page 8 for a story on the AFBF convention.]

For the Idaho contingent, it was a nice treat to be able to visit the Big Idaho Potato Truck, which set up in the trade show portion of the event.

As usual for the giant potato wherever it goes around the United States, it created quite a buzz and there was a regular line of people waiting to get their pictures taken in front of the four-ton spud.

People were in awe of the massive potato and it was fun to see that, especially for a potato farmer like me.

As usual, the conference included a good number of workshops and lined up some quality speakers, including, as always, AFBF President Zippy Duvall, who spoke

about the importance of Farm Bureau members sticking together and pushing through obstacles.

The theme of this year's convention was "New Frontiers."

"We reach new frontiers together, one step at a time," Duvall told convention participants during one of the event's general sessions.

There are some obstacles we can see and there may be some we can't yet see, "But we press on (and) we press on with courage," Duvall said.

Then there were the YF&R competitions, which are designed to help sharpen the skills of the nation's young agricultural producers.

Kudos to Idaho Farm Bureau member Cole Lickley, who took third in the YF&R Discussion Meet, which helps young producers hone their public speaking and problem-solving skills during a competition that is meant to simulate a committee meeting rather than a debate.

Lickley, who ranches in Wapello, was on his game during the four rounds of the Discussion Meet and it was exciting to follow his trek to the final four. A sizable Idaho crowd showed up for each round to support him.

Braxton and Jamie Crapo, who farm in Parker, competed in the Achiever Award competition, which recognizes young farmers or ranchers who have excelled in their farming or ranching operation and honed their leadership abilities.

Kevin and Shelby Andrus, who ranch in Lava Hot Springs, competed in the Excel-

The public loves to express their appreciation and love for farmers, especially small ones. Unfortunately, they are also far too quick to agree to demand additional promises and guarantees, which often are far more fiction than fact when it comes to creating any real value.

We need to help remind the public that if they love farmers so much, they must also trust their farmers with simple, reasonable regulations.

We can support our farmers by being vigilant in controlling excessive regulations from government and food processors, or we can continue to lament the loss of more farms, especially small farms, that may have died due to our own hands due to the vile, destructive temptation of excessive regulation. ■

lence in Agriculture competition, which spotlights young Farm Bureau members who are agricultural enthusiasts but have not earned a majority of their income from an owned production agriculture enterprise in the past three years.

These young producers represented Idaho well during their respective competitions.

Of course, the heart of the AFBF annual convention is always the policy development process that occurs during the House of Delegates session, which includes voting delegates from around the nation who vote on proposed changes to AFBF's policy book.

These voting delegates are all real farmers and ranchers who understand intimately the challenges that agricultural producers face.

During the policy development part of the convention, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation achieved a victory when AFBF voting delegates accepted an IFBF policy proposal that would provide the American Farm Bureau Federation a little flexibility when considering proposals from Congress dealing with possible visa caps for a year-round agriculture visa program.

During IFBF's annual convention in December, voting delegates passed this and other labor policies to better position AFBF to address the dire labor situation of the agricultural industry. ■



Idaho Farm Bureau Federation photos

About 150 Idaho Farm Bureau Federation members, many of them shown in this photo, attended the 2024 American Farm Bureau Convention, which was held Jan. 19-24 in Salt Lake City.

Idaho turnout for 2024 AFBF Convention was big

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

SALT LAKE CITY – Idaho Farm Bureau Federation sent a much larger than normal delegation to American Farm Bureau Federation's annual convention this year and it was noticed.

About 150 IFBF members from around the state attended the 105th Annual American Farm Bureau Convention, which was held Jan. 19-24 in Salt Lake City and attracted 4,500 Farm Bureau members from across the nation.

The Idaho turnout was about 50 percent more than normal.

"Everywhere you went during the convention, you were seeing Idaho people," said Idaho Farm Bureau Federation Vice President Richard Durrant, who farms in southwestern Idaho. "We definitely had a lot of people there."

"Our members are the epitome of what Farm Bureau is and to see the biggest

number of Idahoans we've ever had at AFBF convention just shows how strong our organization is," said Idaho Farm Bureau Federation CEO Zak Miller. "To be 50 percent above normal in turnout was just awesome."

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

"That was awesome," IFBF member and southeast Idaho farmer Stacy Burmester said about the appearance of the four-ton Idaho potato. "What a way to showcase Idaho."

IFBF President Bryan Searle, a spud farmer from southeast Idaho, said the giant potato created a lot of buzz at the convention.

"People were in awe of that," he said. "I had multiple comments on that."

"We reach new frontiers together, one step at a time. There may be some obstacles we can see and there may be some obstacles that we can't. But we press on (and) we press on with courage."

– Zippy Duvall, president, AFBF

The AFBF conference included competitions for young farmers and ranchers, workshops, guest speakers, a trade show, and many other events.

"There are lots of opportunities to learn at the convention," said Durrant.

Burmester, who has attended a lot of

AFBF annual conventions, said one of the biggest benefits of the event is being able to interact with other farmers “who have the same stories, the same trials you have ... and they are just trying to make a living, like you are. Sometimes, you can find solutions from them to help with your own farm.”

“It’s not just your local farmers,” she added. “You’ve got farmers from around the nation. They have the same passion and values you have and they are good people.”

Durrant said sharing some “elevator talk” – those fleeting moments when you get to say hi to a Farm Bureau member from another state while riding up or down the elevator – and getting to know other producers, albeit for just a moment, is one of the highlights of AFBF conventions.

“Those ‘elevator talk’ moments are short and sweet but it’s definitely good to know we have a united organization of people from across the U.S. to rely on to help us deal with all the various issues facing our industry,” he said.

Searle agreed with Durrant and encouraged the IFBF delegation to meet and get to know Farm Bureau members from other states.

“Enjoy the convention; take time to meet people from across the United States,” he told them during a special breakfast for the Idaho delegation.

The theme of this year’s convention was “New Frontiers” and American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall reminded participants during one of the



Idaho Farm Bureau Federation member Cole Lickley competes in the final round of the Discussion Meet during the American Farm Bureau Convention. Lickley finished third in the nation in the event.

convention’s general sessions that AFBF has six million members in 2,800 counties.

“We reach new frontiers together, one step at a time,” he said. “There may be some obstacles we can see and there may be some obstacles that we can’t. But we press on (and) we press on with courage.”

Duvall told Farm Bureau members that “it takes boldness to step up, to climb that mountain, not knowing what might be on the other side. But if we don’t persevere, we’ll miss out on some amazing opportunities.”

On a personal note, Duvall spoke about mental stress in the agriculture industry and told members that “you don’t need to go through hard times alone and Farm

Bureau’s going to be right there with you. That’s what Farm Bureau is all about. That’s why we come together for each other, in our communities, because we care and we know that we are stronger together.”

A big focus of the 2024 convention was rallying Farm Bureau members across the United States to keep pressing for a new farm bill, and sooner rather than later.

“We achieved the Farm Bill extension, but we need to be even louder,” Duvall said. “We also need ... farmers to urge (Congress) to pass a new, modernized farm bill and that’s just what we’re going to be asking you to do this week.”

During general sessions, participants were reminded by several speakers of the important role they play in this country.

“I appreciate the opportunity of being in here to visit with America’s farmers and ranchers,” U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack told Farm Bureau members. “I think at the foundation of our economy and our value system is American agriculture; the farmers and ranchers and producers across this great country that work hard every single day to provide extraordinary diversity of product. I think it’s important for us to recognize as a



LEFT: About 4,500 Farm Bureau members from across the United States attended the 105th Annual American Farm Bureau Convention, which was held Jan. 19-24 in Salt Lake City.

“We owe it to the men and women who came before us and to the farmers and ranchers who will carry on after we are gone to leave American agriculture stronger, more resilient and ready to face the challenges ahead.”

– Rep. Frank Lucas, Oklahoma farmer

country the incredible contribution that is made by farmers and ranchers....”

Vilsack said the value system of the country was represented at the convention.

“It’s a value system that rewards hard work, that understands that nothing is given, that everything is earned,” he said. “It is a value system that understands and appreciates the concept of community.”

Speaker and author Jack Uldrich encouraged agricultural producers to think the unthinkable, especially when it comes to new and emerging technologies.

“We have to imagine unimaginable futures,” he said. “There’s a world of technology coming at us. You have to use your hands and hearts to probe these new frontiers.”

Rep. Frank Lucas, R-Okla., who was presented with AFBF’s Distinguished Service Award, said Farm Bureau members understand it is their responsibility to ensure the country is able to feed not only itself, but the world.

“We owe it to the men and women who came before us and to the farmers and ranchers who will carry on after we are gone to leave American agriculture stronger, more resilient and ready to face the challenges ahead,” said Lucas, a fifth-generation Oklahoma farmer.

Three young producers from Idaho competed in the various Young Farmer and Rancher competitions during the AFBF convention. All three won their respective competitions during IFBF’s annual convention in December.

Braxton and Jamie Crapo, who farm in Parker, competed for the Achievement Award, which recognizes young farmers or ranchers who have excelled in their farming or ranching operation and honed their leadership abilities.

Achievement award contestants are evaluated on a combination of their farming operation’s growth and financial progress and their leadership both within Farm Bureau and outside of the organization.

Kevin and Shelby Andrus, who ranch in Lava Hot Springs, competed for the Excellence in Agriculture Award, which spotlights young Farm Bureau members who are agriculturalists but have not earned a majority of their income from an owned production agriculture enterprise in the past three years.

Competitors for the Excellence award are judged based on their



Kevin and Shelby Andrus, who ranch in Lava Hot Springs, competed for the Excellence in Agriculture Award during the American Farm Bureau Convention. Kevin Andrus is showing here presenting to competition judges during the event.

understanding of ag issues as well as their leadership experiences and achievements.

The Achiever and Excellence awards are both part of IFBF’s Young Farmers and Ranchers program, which is open to Farm Bureau members between the ages of 18 and 35.

Cole Lickley, who ranches in Wapello, finished third in the nation at the AFBF Discussion Meet, another YF&R competition which helps young producers hone their public speaking and problem-solving skills during a competition that is meant to simulate a committee meeting rather than a debate.

The contestants, who moderate themselves and engage each other in a cooperative manner, discuss a pre-selected topic and are judged based on constructive criticism, cooperation and communication.

During each of the four rounds Lickley competed in, a sizable Idaho contingent showed up to support him.

During the third round, Lickley’s group was asked how Farm Bureau can help address water management challenges and seek long-term solutions for farmers and ranchers.

Lickley pointed out the AFBF policy book has more than 30 pages of policy related to just water and there are more than 400 instances where water is referenced in the book. For context, he said, agriculture is referenced about 200 times.

“Water is and will continue to be one of the greatest challenges facing U.S. agriculture,” he said during that round. “While water issues vary depending on geography and use, we all need to be engaged on this important topic in order to find long-term solutions.”

IFBF member and southeast Idaho farmer Fred Burmester said he enjoyed following Lickley’s march to the final four of the Discussion Meet competition.

“I was really impressed with how talented the competitors are,” he said. ■

U of I to host workshops to train beginning ranchers

By John O'Connell
University of Idaho

A University of Idaho meat science research team has secured a large federal grant to provide training for beginning ranchers throughout the Northwest.

The three-year, \$479,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture will fund a series of regional workshops titled "Beef 101: Pacific Northwest Beginning Rancher Development Program."

The team's goal is to host about six workshops serving roughly 180 producers combined per year. One-day workshops will focus on specific issues relating to livestock production.

A comprehensive, multi-day workshop will be hosted in late May in Moscow, covering a host of relevant topics, such as livestock breeding, genetic selection, animal health, grazing, land management, diversifying a business, financial planning, beef quality assurance, vaccinations, food safety, beef markets and livestock evaluation.

The U of I team includes Jessie Van Buren, Michael Colle, Lauren Christensen, Meranda Small, Audra Cochran, Brett Wilder and Phil Bass.

Participants in the workshops will have the opportunity to have soil and forage samples from their operations analyzed.

The grant will also pair new ranchers with experienced mentors in the industry and will cover site visits, during which experts from the team will go to individual operations to make assessments.

A stipend will be offered to the program's mentors, and scholarships will be available to help participants cover mileage, hotels and other travel costs.

Grant funds will also help Bass and other meat science researchers travel and present at relevant previously existing educational programs, such as Lemhi County's annual beef school. Furthermore, grant funds recently helped Small travel to provide training to young producers with the Student Idaho Cattle Association.

Some funds will be used to purchase teaching tools and props, such as a replica cow used to demonstrate fetal dystocia, which occurs when abnormal fetal size or positioning complicates delivery.

"This is really taking the mission of Extension and just accentuating it, and it's given us that license to go out and do the job that



University of Idaho photo

Phil Bass, shown here, is principal investigator for a \$479,000 USDA grant the University of Idaho meat science research team has received to provide training for beginning ranchers.

"It's a challenge across agriculture as a whole to get young people involved at a meaningful level. I think we're going to be able to accomplish a lot."

– Brett Wilder, U of I Extension educator, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology

we were tasked with doing and to be very effective at it," said Bass, who is principal investigator on the grant.

The Idaho Cattle Association authored a letter of support for the grant, vowing to help recruit beginning producers to participate.

"Everybody on the team has connections with younger producers in the state, so that was one of the targets," said Van Buren, a UI Extension Educator serving Latah County, who had the primary responsibility for writing the grant.

Wilder, an area Extension educator with the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, will present ranch business management tips, such as when to buy or replace heifers, how to set up a small business, how to have a conversation with a lender and how to manage risk.

"It's a really exciting grant they spearheaded," Wilder said. "It's a challenge across agriculture as a whole to get young people involved at a meaningful level. I think we're going to be able to accomplish a lot." ■

Net farm income forecast to be down 25 percent in 2024

By Daniel Munch

American Farm Bureau Federation Economist

On Feb. 7, USDA released the first insights into net farm income expectations for 2024. The latest report anticipates a decrease from 2023's forecast of \$155 billion to \$116 billion – a drop of nearly \$40 billion, or 25.5%, and the largest recorded year-to-year dollar decrease in net farm income.

The decline marks the second consecutive drop since record-high farm income levels in 2022 (\$185.5 billion). When adjusted for inflation, net farm income, a broad measure of farm profitability, is expected to decrease 27%, or \$43 billion, from 2023.

If realized, 2024 net farm income would be below the 20-year average (2003-2022) in inflation-adjusted dollars.

A \$21 billion expected drop in cash receipts for agricultural goods and a \$17 billion expected increase in production expenses explain 95% of the forecast decline.

The forecast for 2023 net farm income in this report was also updated from December's report, increasing marginally from \$151 billion to \$156 billion.

Net farm income reflects income after expenses from production in the current year and is calculated by subtracting farm expenses from gross farm income.

A year-to-year drop of this magnitude parallels a recent decline

in general farmer sentiment as lower expectations set in for commodity prices in 2024.

Importantly, this is still a very early measure of farm financial health. Countless factors will shape supply and demand conditions over the course of the next (9) months.

Direct government payments are estimated to decrease by \$1.9 billion, or 16%, between 2023 and 2024 to slightly over \$10 billion and about 9% of net farm income.

This marks the fourth consecutive annual decrease in government payments for producers since the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and would represent the lowest value since 2014, even without adjusting for inflation.

Ad hoc and supplemental program payments, which include payments from the Emergency Relief Program (ERP), Quality Loss Adjustment Program and other farm bill designated-disaster programs, are expected to decrease from \$6.54 billion to \$5.84 billion, an 11% decline and \$5.49 billion less than paid out during 2024.

The previous announcement of limited additional funds to extend ERP to cover 2022 disaster losses have reduced expected payments in this category, which is reflected in the lower values. Pandemic era programs that contributed to as much as 48% of net farm income in 2020 no longer contribute to farmers' cash flow.

Commodity insurance indemnities, included for comparison to ad hoc disaster programs, are forecast down slightly in 2024,

FIGURE 1: NET FARM INCOME

With and Without Federal Support

U.S. Farm Sector Net Farm Income, Billion Dollars

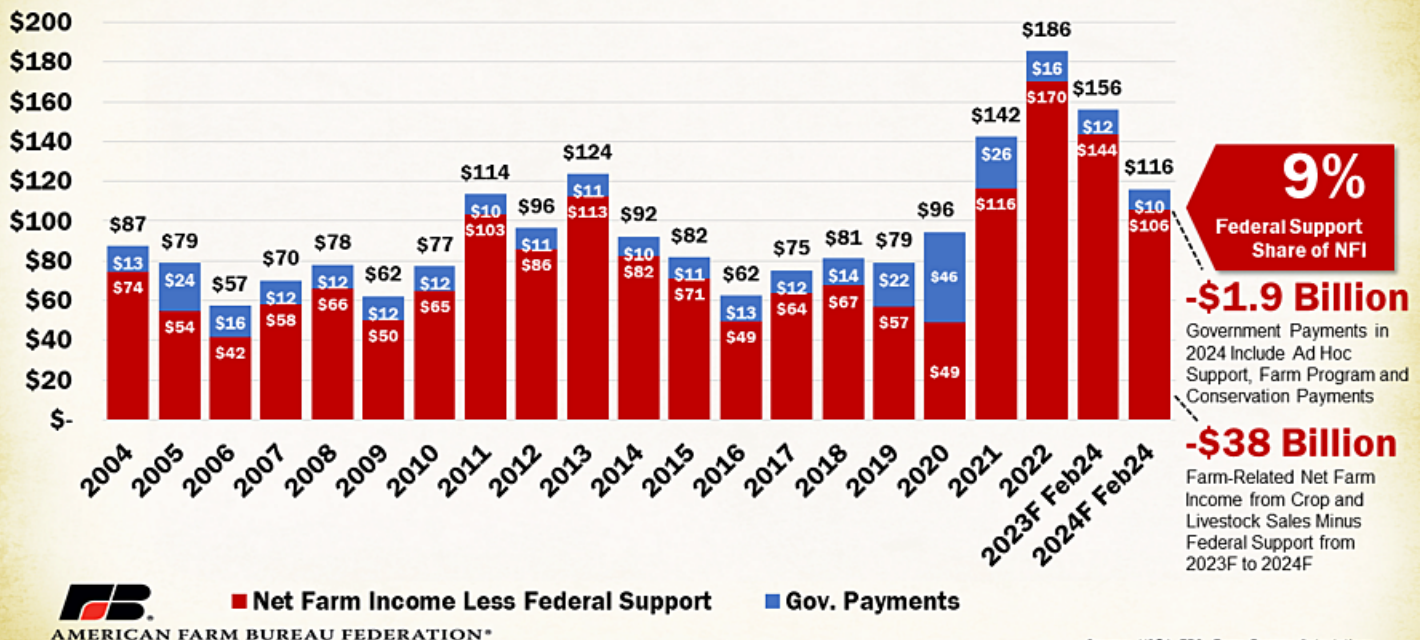


FIGURE 5: U.S. FARM INCOME | SELECT PRODUCTION EXPENSES

February 7 Release | F = forecasted



Source: USDA ERS, Farm Bureau Calculations

moving from \$21.77 billion to \$20.78 billion but remaining well above the prior 10-year average of \$12.72 billion.

The number of crop insurance programs has increased and along with it the total value of liabilities across sold crop insurance policies.

Increased participation and difficult weather have resulted in higher-than-average indemnity payments the past several years. Additionally, ERP still requires those who receive payments to enroll in crop insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program coverage (when crop insurance is not available) for the next two available crop years.

This pushes up crop insurance participation further, contributing to additional indemnities as more farmers are encouraged to manage their risks.

Crops

Cash receipts for crop and livestock sales are expected to move from \$507 billion in 2023 to \$486 billion in 2024 for a loss of \$21 billion (4%). The forecast decline in crop receipts explains nearly 80% of this difference, signaling a weaker incoming year for row crop prices.

Receipts for all crops are forecast to drop to \$16.7 billion (6%). Corn receipts are forecast down \$11.3 billion (14%) and are responsible for much of the expected crop receipts decline.

Corn futures prices have recently dropped to a three-year low on expectations of high global supplies. Soybean receipts are expected down \$6 billion (10%), hay receipts down \$800 million (8.3%) and wheat and vegetable and melon receipts .5% or less.

Cash receipts for fruits and tree nuts and cotton buck the trend of crop-related income declines. Fruit and tree nut receipts are

expected to increase \$800 million (2.8%) and cotton receipts are forecast to increase by \$100 million (1.6%).

Heavily traded grain commodities face strong supply dynamics that have weakened price outlooks for the year, substantially contributing to the \$16.7 billion expected difference between 2023 and 2024.

Livestock

Cash receipts for livestock are also forecast down between 2023 and 2024, though not to the same magnitude as crops. Total animal product receipts are expected to decrease \$4.6 billion (1.9%) from \$244 billion to \$239 billion. After several years of gains, receipts for cattle and calves are expected down \$1.6 billion (1.6%) – the largest drop among the livestock categories.

With the smallest cattle inventories in the U.S. in 73 years, prices for beef will likely be strong but largely offset by limited production.

Turkey producers are expected to face a rough year, according to these numbers. Cash receipts for turkeys are expected down \$1.4 billion (21%). Growing flocks less impacted by avian influenza and weaker-than-expected consumer demand may explain this grim outlook.

Similarly, cash receipts for chicken eggs are expected down \$1.7 billion (12%) for likely similar reasons. Receipts for dairy products and milk are expected down \$900 million (2%) primarily linked to lower expected prices.

Growing inventories of cold stored cheeses and larger supplies globally create downward pressures against strengthening prices. Broilers and hogs are the only categories expected to see increases, up \$700 million and \$300 million respectively.

Though any positive number is welcome, hog producers faced record losses in 2023 that will not be substantially offset by a \$300 million across industry gain. Strong demand from consumers for chicken meat continues to boost prices in the broiler arena.

For most livestock categories, the forecast difference in cash receipts between 2023 and 2024 is quite small especially as compared to the difference from 2022.

This suggests that many livestock producers can expect similar pricing dynamics to 2023 for 2024 (aside from turkey and egg producers).

Production expenses

Behind a drop in cash receipts, the most significant contributor to an expected farm income drop is attributable to higher production expenses, estimated to increase 4%, or \$16.7 billion, over 2023 for a total of \$455 billion across the farm economy.

This marks the sixth consecutive year of production expense increases and fourth consecutive year production expenses hit a new record high. Production expenses are expected up across almost all categories.

These rising production expenses have left many farmers exposed in 2023 and beyond to the limitations of farm programs that are focused on fixed reference prices, or slowly adjusting price and revenue histories, which are among the issues up for discussion in the current farm bill debate.

The largest percent production expense increases between 2023 and 2024 are expected between marketing, storage and transportation (up 12%), the cost of labor (up 7.5%) and the cost of pesticides (up 7.2%).

After a year of declines for fertilizer, USDA expects a 4.3% increase between 2023 and 2024 (from \$30.4 billion to \$31.7 billion) though still quite a bit lower from the \$36.8 billion spent in 2022.

Even with improving inflationary conditions, interest expenses are expected up \$230 million (about 1%), meaning relief around the cost of capital and servicing that capital is not expected for much of 2024.

The Federal Reserve has held the federal funds effective rate at 5.33% since August 2023 with indications that lower rates could be many months away. This dynamic is reflected in USDA's estimations that interest expenses will increase for farmers and ranchers.

The only main expense category forecast to decrease is fuels and oils, expected to drop over 7% (\$1.21 billion) across the farm economy as fuel prices continue to recede from record levels in 2022.

Farmers and ranchers will see no relief on the expense side of their balance sheet, according to these early numbers.

Other farm income, which includes things like income from custom work, machine hire, commodity insurance indemnities and rent received by operator landlords, is estimated to decrease by \$100 million, from \$54.1 billion in 2023 to \$54 billion in 2024.

When all factors influencing income are accounted for, the resulting expectations for a sharp net farm income decline become apparent.

Summary

USDA's most recent estimates for 2024 net farm income provide

a very early forecast of the farm financial picture. For 2024, USDA anticipates a decrease in net farm income, moving from \$155 billion in 2023 to \$116 billion in 2024, a decrease of 25.5%.

Much of the forecasted decline in 2024 net farm income is tied to lower crop and livestock cash receipts and continued increases in production costs.

It is important to highlight the early nature of this forecast. For example, net farm income numbers for 2023 will not be finalized until August 2024 and have already been adjusted by over \$18 billion since the first estimates were released in February 2022.

USDA digests new information and data as it becomes available, shifting calculations from estimates to actual values. This means there is still much uncertainty in final 2024 net farm income.

Numerous supply and demand conditions must unfold before economists can have confident expectations for the year's farm income.

With an early expectation of significant revenue declines, though, it becomes all the more important for producers to have clarity on rules that impact their businesses' ability to operate and for producers to have access to comprehensive risk management options.

Farmers and ranchers will have a resounding voice, as they should, in the formulation of vital legislation such as the farm bill, which can either complicate or streamline their ability to contribute to a reliable and resilient U.S. food supply. ■

Country Chuckles

By Jonny Hawkins



"The last time I rolled around in math problems I got arithme-ticks."

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Drones accelerate noxious weed control in E. Idaho

Fremont County Weed Department shares innovative technique with partner agencies

By Steve Stuebner

The South Fork of the Snake River, near Idaho Falls, is a treasured, native Yellowstone cutthroat trout fishing stream and a popular recreation area.

Multiple agencies work together to combat noxious weeds in the South Fork Canyon via the Upper Snake River Cooperative Weed Management Area.

Last year, a 5-acre steep hillside needed treatment for Hound's Tongue and Musk Thistle in the South Fork canyon.

The Fremont County Weed Department treated the weeds with their big DJI T40 drone.

"There was one large hillside where a



TOP: Fremont County's large drone has a 10-gallon tank for treating multiple acres of land
 ABOVE: A variety of noxious weeds found in Idaho. Photos courtesy of Idaho Rangeland Resources Commission

full crew with backpack sprayers spent 4 days on it. We took the drone up there, and took care of it in a couple of hours," said Chase Hirschi, Assistant Weed Manager for Fremont County and the drone pilot.

Officials with the Caribou-Targhee National Forest agreed.

"We have an area that's really hazardous to walk, cruise up with a backpack, you can't drive a vehicle on it, so we said, let's try this out," said Greg Hanson, Range Management Specialist for the Caribou-Targhee.

"It was great. I got to sit at the bottom of a hill and watch 5 acres get treated without

hiking up and down 200 vertical feet through lava rocks to treat the weeds."

Fremont County has been making big strides in its noxious weed control program by adding three drones to their fleet.

The drones allow Fremont County to treat more than 6,000 acres a year while also assisting partner agencies to treat weeds on state and federal lands.

The use of drones in natural resources management and agriculture is growing rapidly. Fremont County officials want to be on the leading edge of that trend.

"The drones have found their place in our county. They've performed well. We

enjoy using them. They've done a good job," Hirschi says.

"We'll do contract work, the county work, roadsides, barrow pits, also rangelands, also have contracts with the Forest Service, BLM, railroad, highway, we do all of that work as well."

Managing noxious weeds and preventing the spread of new weed species is a big job for Idaho counties statewide. The spread of noxious weeds on Idaho's Rangelands is considered one of the top 3 threats to the shrub-steppe ecosystem. Noxious weeds can out-compete native plants, reduce natural food sources for birds and wildlife and increase the threat of destructive large wildfires.

"Rangeland pastures and non-crop are our specialty," Hirschi says.

Fremont County invested in its first drone two years ago.

"We had a landowner who showed interest in it, and Bryce, my boss, wanted to stay current with technology. The landowner heard about that, and he said, hey, this could be really beneficial to me as well. I'll help put in for it, and let's get going!"

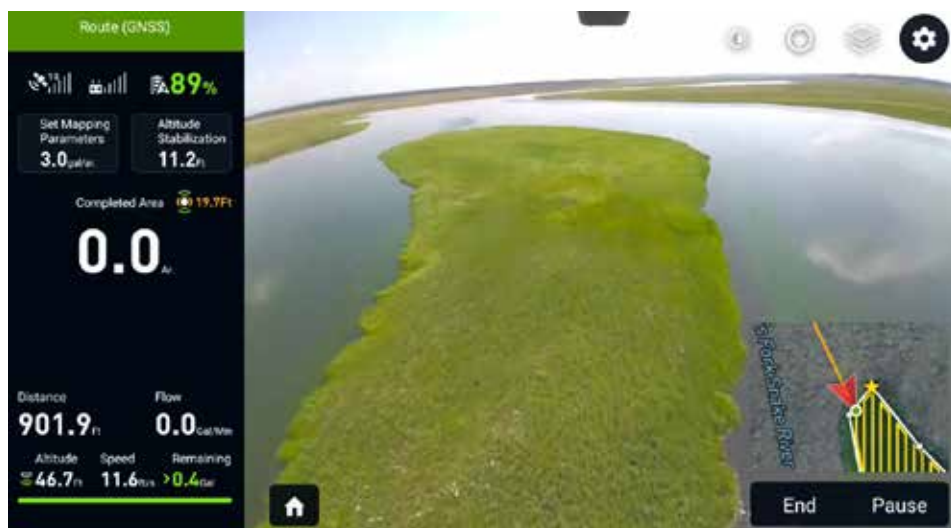
The landowner contributed to the cost of the first drone, liked the results, and the Fremont County crew was off and running.

"He had cattle and rangeland. We sprayed a lot of his rangeland. Hard to reach areas for leafy spurge," Hirschi says.

The county's drones come equipped with tanks for holding herbicides approved for noxious weed treatment. The county's smallest drone comes equipped with a two-gallon tank. That's enough to cover one acre of ground. Their other drones hold 5 gallons and 10 gallons each. The bigger the drone, the faster you can cover a field.

"A lot of the jobs this small one has taken on, we used to do with backpacks. A backpack carries about a quarter-acre of herbicide at a time, you spend hours hiking. This knocks it out in minutes," Hirschi says.

Another drone project that worked out well was treating weeds on the face of Island Park Dam. "They used to spend all day, backpacking across that dam. This goes back and forth and does it all in 10-20 minutes," he says.



View from the drone control dashboard as Fremont County treats noxious weeds on Henry's Fork islands.

Fremont County also carefully sprayed the islands on the world-renowned Henry's Fork of the Snake River, a blue-ribbon trout stream.

"In the past, there's been no weed control on those islands. And it's all being taken over by Canada thistle. Fly fishermen complain about it," Hirschi says. "Took the drones out there, I could map them from the aerial map and what not, flew the drones in, sprayed all of those islands, super easy got it all taken care of."

"We've done that for a couple of years in a row now. Helping in those areas."

The drone controls allow the operator to map the perimeter of the area you'd like to treat. Hirschi explains. "Most of the jobs I just set a boundary, it will grid it out, and I basically click Go. From takeoff to landing, I just monitor it," he says.

Hirschi tracks the spray area and saves the digital image to keep track of areas that have been treated.

The drones do a more complete job than a human operator can do, he said. "I've actually seen more effective control with drones, in my opinion. Better coverage, no skips over overlaps, plants are reacting faster; I'd say they're doing great."

The drones help reduce damage to all-terrain vehicles used to spray weeds as well.

"People take their 4-wheelers to places where they shouldn't as well. With 4-wheeler accidents, you have repairs, workmen's comp, all of that comes in," he says. "If the drone crashes, no one is at

risk, no one's hurt, the equipment is not being broken, it saves a lot of money there as well."

Hanson says the Caribou Targhee will be looking to create its own aerial weed control program in the future. The forest's long-range management plan has been updated to allow aerial control of noxious weeds.

"We're looking forward to getting a drone program of some type," he said. "We've probably got enough acres we could treat with a drone all summer and maybe not get it all then."

The same drones come with an attachment for spreading seeds to replant or reclaim a site.

The Jenkins family, for example, worked with the county to seed the banks of a gravel pit.

"That was a big step forward to reclaiming it and putting back the vegetation we need to hold the slopes," said Neal Jenkins, owner of Jenkins Gravel, near St. Anthony. The gravel pit was initially developed after the failure of Teton Dam.

"I was telling you how great the county guys are, the county commissioners, everyone in the county is great to work with," Jenkins says. "Taking ideas and doing something about it, and not just talking about it. Kind of putting their neck out there a little bit, why can't we do it?"

"I think they're doing a great job."

For more information, contact Fremont County Weed Control office at 208-624-7224 or fremontweed@gmail.com. ■

Nationally significant, historic Minidoka Dam irrigates 'Idaho's Breadbasket' in southeastern Idaho

By Dianna Troyer

For Idaho Farm Bureau Federation



If you eat, you're involved in agriculture," a billboard reminds southeastern Idaho motorists in Cassia County.

Thinking of its message along with seeing rows of sprinklers during irrigation season, Cody Sibbett drives to his job in Heyburn, where he works as operations and maintenance planner at the Bureau of Reclamation's Upper Snake Field Office.

He and other BuRec staff maintain the Minidoka Dam, the first embankment dam built by the U.S. Reclamation Service, an agency President Theodore Roosevelt established in 1902 to irrigate the arid West.

"Seeing that along with the irrigated fields and knowing the water comes from our system and enables farmers to grow our food gives me a lot of job satisfaction," he said. "It's personal to me because I know the farmers from having grown up in the area and my dad working for a canal company."

While not a household name like Hoover Dam and dwarfed in size by comparison, the Minidoka Dam 20 miles northeast of Heyburn has a large impact. It enables farmers to grow a colossal amount of food for countless households nationwide.

Farmers in two local irrigation districts, Minidoka and A&B, depend on the dam to fill canals and to provide electricity to pump water to irrigate nearly 160,000 acres.

The dam is the main reason agriculture has an economic impact exceeding \$1 billion in adjoining Minidoka and Cassia counties, nicknamed "Idaho's Breadbasket."

The historic dam is not only BuRec's first dam but also holds the distinction of being the agency's oldest operating hydroelectric facility nationwide.

The original power plant, completed in 1909, was the first federal power plant in the Northwest. In 1974, it was named to the National Register of Historic Places.

Tours of the facility start at a conference room in part of the original power plant that has been preserved as a small museum to pay tribute to visionary farmers' accomplishments. Historic photos show them toiling in their fields.

Sibbett said the grand finale of the tour, the cavernous Allen E. Inman Powerplant, often leaves visitors standing in silent awe.

"The sheer size and magnitude of the structure and internals — the force of the river spinning turbine blades to power generators and produce electricity — are really impressive," Sibbett said.

During tours of the dam and adjoining power plants, Sibbett said, people often say they no longer take electricity and food for granted.

They also have a deeper appreciation for the complexity of electrical production and the behind-the-scenes employees who maintain the dam, its accompanying infrastructures, and the farmers who produce their food.

From a viewing deck inside the Inman powerplant, visitors look down 30 feet to where two massive 10-megawatt horizontal shaft Kaplan generating units emit a steady, powerful hum.

Combined with two other units nearby in the original power

LEFT: Dan Davidson, manager of Minidoka Irrigation District, oversees water delivery through more than 400 miles of canals, laterals, pipelines and drainage systems. Photo by Dianna Troyer



Photo by Dianna Troyer

Dan Temple, a longtime manager of the A&B Irrigation District, shares his knowledge of the district with his son, Justin, who was appointed the new manager when his father retired.

plant, the four units have a generation capacity of 28.5 megawatts with a combined flow of 8,670 cubic feet per second (cfs).

Above the monoliths, a massive 20-by-38-foot U.S. flag drapes from the wall, a tribute to the federal government's foresight and American engineering ingenuity that established the Minidoka Project more than a century ago.

The Minidoka Dam and irrigation canals, completed in 1906, are the cornerstone of the vast project, which encompasses seven dams in eastern Idaho and western Wyoming and hydroelectric power plants at Minidoka and Palisades.

Sibbett and his colleagues describe the dam's storied history. Beginning in 1904, engineers and laborers toiled two years to build the dam at Minidoka Falls.

The stalwart dam is 86 feet tall, 736 feet long, 412 feet wide at its base with an impressive 2,300-foot-long spillway, nearly one-half mile.

Colossal crops

Little did the laborers and engineers foresee at the time, the dam would one day irrigate a colossal amount of crops.

Cassia and Minidoka county farmers are renowned for the variety, volume, and value of yields they produce.

In Cassia County, farmers and ranch-

ers brought in \$927 million in farm cash receipts in 2017, making it the top county in Idaho in that category, according to the 2017 Census of Agriculture.

That number will approach \$1.5 billion when the 2022 Census of Agriculture data is released this year.

The county ranks as a top producer of potatoes, dry edible beans, sugar beets, corn silage, alfalfa, wheat and barley.

Minidoka County is first statewide

“It’s amazing what those farmers accomplished. It’s an honor to be part of the team that continues what they started and to serve communities by providing irrigation and electricity.”

– Kerry Strunk, dam and power plant facility manager

in sugar beet and sheep production. Its farmers and ranchers tallied \$354 million in farm-gate receipts in 2017. Again, that number will be substantially higher when the new census of ag data is released.

During irrigation season from March to October, water flowing through the Minidoka power plant system is tracked to the acre-foot on a daily basis, and water orders change frequently.

While the dam and canals were originally built for farming, the project's mission soon expanded when a power plant was finished in 1909. Irrigation water could then be pumped to more areas, and electricity could be provided to Heyburn, Rupert and Paul, the nearby townsites the bureau laid out.

“Some people don't realize they were among the first rural towns in the United States to have electricity,” said Kerry Strunk, the dam and power plant facility manager.

In 1914, Rupert High School students had electrical tools in their woodshop and electric stoves in their domestic science programs, a technological feat for that era.

Students and teachers relied on electricity to heat and illuminate the building.

“It's amazing what those farmers accomplished,” Strunk said. “It's an honor to be part of the team that continues what they started and to serve communities by providing irrigation and electricity. I enjoy the complexity and range of my work.”

Strunk leads visitors through the plant to the five original generating units, which were retired in 1995 and replaced with two rebuilt units.

In 1997, two additional units began operating in the Allen E. Inman Powerplant, named for a dedicated employee who passed away in a plane crash with other Reclamation employees before the facility was completed.

To keep the system maintained and modernized, “we're always monitoring structures and prioritizing projects,” Sibbett said.

The spillway was replaced with 15 radial gates, a four-year project completed in 2015.

“We're dedicated to keeping the Minidoka Project operating, just like those who came before us,” Sibbett said.

Local irrigation districts

Like Sibbett, managers of two irrigation districts headquartered in Rupert are thankful for their forefathers' foresight in establishing the systems, which are maintained and upgraded after the irrigation season ends in October and before it resumes in March.

Decades ago, when farmers formed a board of directors overseeing the A&B Irrigation District and the Minidoka Irrigation District, they envisioned eventually owning the systems. They operated and maintained the infrastructure and gradually repaid the BuRec for construction costs.

In 2021, their vision became reality when the bureau transferred title to the districts. The districts were the first in Idaho and among the first four nationwide to transfer title.

With the title transfer complete, the districts are no longer required to obtain permission from the bureau when making changes in the system.

"The transfer removed a layer of administration, streamlining operations," said Dan Temple, 68, who worked as A&B manager 24 years before retiring in 2021.

The title transfer enables the districts to obtain financing from several sources and to also convey water for entities outside the district, said Dan Davidson, manager of the Minidoka district.

In both districts, dedicated employees enable farmers to grow sugar beets, potatoes, beans, corn, alfalfa, wheat, and malt barley.

Minidoka Irrigation District serves approximately 3,100 water users with more than 502 miles of canals, laterals, and drainage systems. The A&B district has about 600 water users.

Minidoka district

In the Minidoka district, two wooden scoop wheels, designed and installed in the early 1900s, still lift water as much as 4 feet to flow into canals.

"We're proud to continue operations that pay respect to our predecessors," Davidson said. "As far as I know, they're the only ones of their kind still in use statewide. They're amazing and move a lot of water with little energy."

A 30-horsepower motor powers a wheel that moves 10 to 40 cfs of water.



Photo courtesy of Gary Schorzman

Future homesteader Forrest O. Son of Heyburn drew a farm unit during a public drawing at the Rupert Square in 1953.

"The wood has been replaced, but the structure itself continues to play a crucial role in water delivery," Davidson said.

For more than a century, he said, "the district's staff has been dedicated to ensuring agriculture is a sustainable enterprise for everyone – from the backyard gardener to large-scale producers."

The district's 26 full-time employees deliver water to 77,225 acres.

"It's satisfying to meet with people, solve problems, and work through issues," Davidson said.

A&B district

In the A&B office, photos taken 70 years ago show the district's first ecstatic homesteaders. On Aug. 3, 1953, at the Rupert Square, veterans were given preference to draw farm units.

One photo shows parents with their toddler, Jim Plocher, who became a ditch rider and welder for the district.

"We've had three generations of farmers and employees working together," said Justin Temple, the district's manager. He oversees 28 full-time employees who deliver water to 82,600 acres.

The district is unusual, he said, because it is operated totally by pumping – from the Snake River in Unit A and from wells tapping the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer in Unit B.

To modernize the system, in some places water is conveyed through pipelines instead of canals. Several years ago in the off-season, a \$12 million 100-cfs river pumping station was built with 19 miles of buried pipeline.

To maintain pipes, the district uses an innovative wraparound coupling with a patented hydraulic pressure-assisted gasket.

Infrastructure has steadily been upgraded since the board appointed Justin's grandfather, Virgil Temple, as the first manager in 1966.

"He was familiar with the area, having drilled some of the first wells on the project," Justin said.

When Virgil retired, the board appointed his son Dan as manager. At age 22, Dan began working for the district in canal maintenance and later was an electrical mechanical foreman.

"Dad shared all his knowledge with me," said Dan, manager from 1997 to 2021. "In return, I passed that knowledge to Justin, which is invaluable in a pumping district."

Before becoming manager, Justin, 42, worked in canal maintenance and was a mechanical foreman.

"Having grown up here, I've known the farmers my entire life," Justin said. "It's great being able to help friends and neighbors." ■

Tapping into Nature's Fertility Solutions

by PAUL SCHNEIDER JR., AG-USA

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Why not let nature supply more of your NPK, Ca, moisture, etc. Nature has many answers for fertility; it is simply our job to cooperate with it.

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MycorrPlus-A is a biostimulant that contains nitrogen-fixing bacteria. It takes 4 to 5 months for these bacteria to transform the soil enough to meet the nitrogen needs of most plants. The wise use of legumes and manures further supply the nitrogen needed by the plant.

MycorrPlus helps to stabilize a nitrogen application so it doesn't wick off or leach out, so you can apply less.

Tapping into Phosphorus

A good acre of farm ground contains enough phosphorus to last a hundred years. But phosphorus is quick to get tied up; once that happens it is not available to the plant. But nature has the solution, and MycorrPlus helps nature do its work.

First, mycorrhizal fungi digest phosphorus. This breaks the chemical bond and makes phosphorus available.



Before, poor growth, after, "a carpet." MycorrPlus helped this pasture fill in.

Second, although phosphorus is not mobile in the soil, mycorrhizal fungi are able to transport it from far and wide directly into the plant's root. MycorrPlus gets the plant the phosphorus it needs.

Because of current farming practices, it is actually rare to find mycorrhizal fungi in farm land. Here are some of the things that hinder Mycorrhizal fungi.

1. Plowing. Working the soil breaks up fungi networks. Minimal tillage protects them.
2. Bare soil. Mycorrhizal fungi get their nourishment from sugars supplied by plants. Cover crops help.
3. Phosphorus applications. When phosphorus is low in the root zone, the plant is highly motivated to sequester sugars in exchange for phosphorus. Applying phosphorus fertilizers hinders Mycorrhizae.
4. "Cides" kill microbes. Pesticides,

nematicides, fungicides and herbicides all harm soil microbes. MycorrPlus-A is able to break these down and restore soil life.

Give it time. Applying MycorrPlus each year helps establish a more complex mycorrhizae organism. Third and fourth year customers are amazed with the differences they are now seeing with pH, yields, clover growth and soil tilth. If you give MycorrPlus the time it needs to work, it has great potential to transform your soil.

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U of I research targets grapevine trunk diseases

By John O'Connell
University of Idaho

Idaho grape growers are apt to blame winter kill or herbicide damage when established grapevines die mysteriously within their vineyards.

Madeline Kinnear, a University of Idaho master's student studying plant pathology, and her advisor James Woodhall, an Extension specialist at the U of I Parma Research and Extension Center, are targeting through their research an often-overlooked culprit — a group of fungal pathogens known as trunk diseases.

Grapevine trunk diseases are found throughout the world and attack the woody trunk and vine tissue of grapevines, entering through wounds such as pruning cuts.

A single vine may be infected by a plethora of trunk disease species. In California, trunk diseases have caused billions in estimated losses due to the replanting of sick and dead vines.

For her master's thesis, Kinnear has taken samples from sick grapevines at several area vineyards, isolating and culturing the fungi they contain to diagnose which trunk diseases are present.

The project also entails inoculating grapevines in a greenhouse with those fungi to assess which trunk disease species are most aggressive, which ones may be innocuous and whether certain grape varieties may be more or less susceptible than others.

They intend to develop assays for the rapid detection of the most economically important trunk diseases they identify, and they'll be trapping spores throughout growing seasons to pair with weather data, which they'll include in modeling to provide growers with management guidance.

"Grapevine trunk diseases are kind of like a silent killer. You can't really see them but eventually the whole plant dies over a protracted period. It may take a few years," Woodhall said. "It's really important we do this work locally for Idaho so we know what we get here and we know how the diseases will develop in Idaho conditions."

Kinnear visited 10 area vineyards, taking tissue samples from 80 individual grapevines that showed signs of decline potentially associated with trunk diseases.

She found a wide variety of trunk disease associated with viticulture in both cold-weather and warm growing environments, including three of the industry's top four trunk diseases of concern.

She grew cultures of about 200 fungi species, 16 of which



Photo by John O'Connell

Madeline Kinnear, a University of Idaho master's student studying plant pathology, discusses her work on grapevine trunk diseases inside of a greenhouse where grapevines are growing at the U of I Parma Research and Extension Center.

appear to be pathogenic. Of those, 10 were confirmed as known trunk diseases affecting grapevines, and the remainder either affect the roots of the plant or haven't previously been associated with losses in grape production.

Two of the species she isolated from several locations in southern Idaho are known to cause problems for grape growers in the Middle East but hadn't previously been confirmed in the U.S.

"The wine industry in Idaho is only getting larger. Really the importance of this is for the longevity of the industry," Kinnear said. "These growers are hoping to put a vine in the ground and keep it there for up to 40 years, and if we don't have an idea about pathogens that could prevent our growers from reaching their goals, then we're not really doing any favors for the industry."

This past fall, Kinnear began inoculating grapevine cuttings in a greenhouse with many of the trunk disease strains she's isolated, which should help her determine which ones are most aggressive and pathogenic.

A final component of the project will involve working with Oregon State University researchers to find better biological control options for combatting trunk diseases.

During surveys, the U of I researchers have isolated a genus of fungi called *Trichoderma* that's been deployed for biocontrol of trunk diseases.

Rather than using general *Trichoderma* strains supplied by biological chemical companies, they plan to evaluate local strains, which may be more active against trunk diseases.

The project began in July 2022 with a \$100,000 grant from the Northwest Center for Small Fruits Research.

Their efforts to develop testing assays and best practices for managing trunk diseases have been funded through the Idaho State Department of Agriculture with \$90,000 in U.S. Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant funding. ■

Study finds benefits of drilling cover crops between corn rows outweigh harm

By John O'Connell
University of Idaho

University of Idaho Extension Educator Steven Hines believes he's found an effective way for farmers who interplant cover crops between corn rows to significantly boost forage production.

Prior to his research this season, Hines' method of applying cover crop seeds in inter-cropping studies was to broadcast them onto the soil surface, which resulted in relatively poor germination. He chose to research an alternative based on a conversation last winter with a group of soil health-minded Magic Valley farmers.

"We were talking about some of the challenges of getting cover crops established when you broadcast on the ground and don't have a way to get it into the soil," said Hines, who is based in Jerome County. "The question two or three of the producers I was talking with came up with was, 'What if you just ran a grain drill over the corn when it was fairly small?'"

The growers feared the drill would damage cornstalks, outweighing any improvements in cover crop germination.

Based on his trial at the U of I Kimberly Research and Extension Center, Hines is already confident that drilling cover crops is worth the effort and needn't damage much corn.

"I predict there will be no significant difference in corn yield with drilling because there's not enough plant damage," Hines said. "I would not hesitate to recommend inter-seeding and drilling a cover crop."

However, he predicts he'll quadruple cover crop yields in his project's drilling scenario compared with broadcasting cover crop seeds.

"I'm really thrilled with the drilled cover crop," Hines said. "There is some cover crop coming where it was broadcast but nothing like where it was drilled."

Several growers in the Magic Valley have been exploring inter-planting corn and cover crops as a way to provide their cattle with fall forage after taking a corn harvest.

In prior inter-cropping research, Hines found that broadcasting cover crops between widely spaced corn rows provided extra forage without adversely affecting corn yields.

In fact, the presence of cover crops actually boosted corn yields when corn rows were spaced 44 inches apart.

Interplanting cover crops appears to be the answer for southern Idaho farmers who haven't been able to find a short-season crop capable of producing much forage when planted just after grain harvest.

"By inter-seeding you get that forage up and going," Hines said. "The corn grows over the top of it, so it slows that cover crop down until it's harvested off. The sunlight gets back to the cover crop, and by a couple of irrigations you've got forage ready to go for the cattle."

Hines planted corn for last season's inter-cropping experiment on May 23, following with cover crop seed on June 15 at the V3 stage. By that date, corn had emerged but the growth point of

plants – a sensitive area from which new cells are developed and elongate – was not yet pushed above the soil surface.

Hines planted scenarios with corn and no cover crops, corn and cover crops broadcast in between rows and corn and cover crops drilled between the rows. Rows were spaced either 30 inches or 60 inches apart – his drill was unable to accommodate the 44-inch spacing that produced the best results in prior research regarding corn yields.

Hines used a 3-point drill, which attaches to a tractor's 3-point and is lifted so only the tire that engages the drill mechanism touches the ground.

He made certain that tires passed between corn rows. It's critical for success that the tires of a drill don't

run over corn. A commercial interseeder drill is ideal, but Hines was also interested in finding ways to interseed cover crops using equipment most growers already have.

Another benefit of drilling was that it allowed Hines to include larger seeds in his cover crop mix. Large seeds, such as peas, don't germinate well when broadcast onto fields.

"There are very few peas that are coming up in the broadcast plot, but in the drilled plot it's a nice stand of peas like everything else," Hines said.

His cover crop blend also includes clover and annual rye grass, which can produce additional biomass after winter for spring grazing. Furthermore, cover crops provide winter cover, trapping snow for moisture and preventing wind erosion.

"I really see the producer who would adopt this is somebody who is looking for additional forage or someone who is looking for soil-health benefits," Hines said. ■



Photo by John O'Connell
Steven Hines discusses his intercropping trials during a July 2023 field day at the University of Idaho Kimberly Research and Extension Center.



IN THE SHADOW OF GIANTS: IDAHO'S BIG TREE PROGRAM

By Randy Brooks
University of Idaho Extension

Before we dive into our article today, I want to introduce the newest member of the University of Idaho Extension forestry team: Madeline “Maddie” Goebel, who will also be writing some of our articles for Farm Bureau’s magazines.

Maddie joined us in October 2023. She grew up in northeast Ohio and went to Ohio State University to study environmental science and sustainability before her first move out to Idaho in 2019.

She completed a master’s degree in natural resources at the University of Idaho in 2021, where she studied perceptions of environmental contamination and then headed back east to work at the National Drought Mitigation Center in Lincoln, Neb.

There, she worked with various stakeholders, including ranchers, on drought planning and recovery. Now a part of University of Idaho Extension Forestry, Maddie is excited to learn more about Idaho’s forests and work with folks interested and invested personally in forestry.

As part of her position, Maddie will be serving as the director of the Idaho Big Tree program (www.uidaho.edu/extension/forestry/big-trees), which is part of a national effort to find and document the largest living specimens of America’s trees – the National Champion Trees Program (www.nationalchampiontree.org).

Originally administered by American Forests, the program is now under new direction and headquartered in Knoxville, Tenn., at the School of Natural

Resources at the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture.

Despite the change in management, the program's overarching goal remains the same – “to protect, preserve, and keep record of the largest trees in the United States of America.”

So why do we care so much about big trees? Besides being a spectacular sight to see, big trees are important to forest ecosystems.

To grow so large, these trees must out-compete their neighbors for resources like sunlight, nutrients, and water. In forests where competition for light is fierce, the biggest trees might also be the tallest.

Where water is harder to come by, the biggest trees have larger root systems that enable them to take up as much water as possible.

Trees that have grown to large sizes have proven their ability to withstand varying conditions over long periods of time, from hundreds to thousands of years depending on the species.

These giant trees also produce more seeds than smaller trees, which helps ensure the future of forests. Additionally, big trees help store more carbon and provide vital habitat for forest wildlife.

Beyond their ecological value, big trees are also indicative of our country's diverse environmental landscape. They also help connect us to our history and can serve as symbols of conservation.

While the Champion Tree Program does not offer official protection for champion trees, formally recognizing them helps to emphasize their value.

City tree protection ordinances can also be used to help safeguard champion trees by requiring special permission to remove or otherwise alter a protected tree.

In Idaho, we currently have 117 Champion Big Trees located across the state (see “Idaho's Registry of Champion Big Trees on our website at [www. https://www.uidaho.edu/extension/forestry](https://www.uidaho.edu/extension/forestry)).

However, many of our current state champion trees need to be re-visited and updated. For example, the western white pine (the official state tree of Idaho, if you didn't know!) state champion, located in Clearwater County, was nominated and added to the national registry in 1992.

It's very possible that this tree and others on the list are no longer alive or have been eclipsed by a larger tree. Many were also measured too long ago to submit for national status.

As the national program transitions into a new home and new era, now is a timely opportunity to revitalize the Idaho program.

Here's where you, the reader, come in. We'd like to enlist your help in seeking out our state's gentle giants. Anyone is eligible to find and submit a new record for existing Idaho records. The trees should be measured by a forester or other qualified person, although we are happy to help walk you through the process.

New nominators will be added to a list of previous individuals who



Submitted photo

Maddie Goebel, associate Extension forester for the University of Idaho.

have measured and submitted a specific tree to the registry. You can also submit a new tree if you believe you have found one that might rival a current champion.

Our champion trees are spread across the state, both on public and private lands. We are more than happy to share the locations of our records, although those located on private land will require permission to share their exact location.

Currently, most of the locations are listed as township, section, and range, so we would love to get the GPS coordinates for all our listed champions so it will be easy for others to find them.

To nominate a tree, you must complete a nomination packet which can be found on the UI Extension Forestry Idaho Big Tree Program webpage under the *Nominate a tree* section.

If you don't have reliable internet access or would rather have a printed version, we can also mail you a copy. The nomination form includes a variety of measurements that must be recorded.

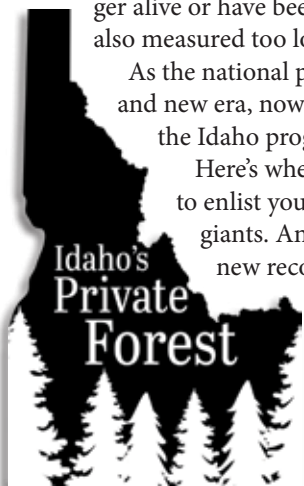
It's important to note that these measurements must be verified in the field by a qualified forester. GPS coordinates and photographs are also required by both the state and national programs.

When completed, you can email the nomination form to Maddie Goebel at extfor@uidaho.edu, who will verify the information and tally the points. If the nominee has enough points to challenge the current national champ, records are then forwarded to the national level by the Idaho director.

Note that some of our champions are on private land and will require landowner permission before visiting. Many are accessible via public lands.

You can go to our website to see our current champs, some of which need verification that they are still alive.

In closing, look at the list of Big Trees and see if you can help us by locating them and telling us their condition. Consider it tree-ocaching – like geocaching but for trees. ■



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Rulemaking Update

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture

Administrative rulemaking is a critical function of any state agency, and the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) is no exception. While the Idaho Legislature establishes policy direction for agency activities through statutes, administrative rules specify how programs and activities are implemented.

Gov. Brad Little has directed state agencies to review their rules as part of an effort entitled Zero Based Rulemaking (ZBR). ZBR requires agencies to open every rule chapter, review for relevance and clarity, ensure compliance with statutory authority, and gather input from stakeholders to ensure continued value.

ISDA rulemakings are negotiated, meaning rulemaking meetings and processes encompass a broad range of stakeholders. Two meetings for each rule are conducted both in person and virtually, ensuring that stakeholders from Bonners Ferry to Bear Lake all have the same opportunity to participate in the process. At the conclusion of rulemaking, the agency completes rule language based on the consensus of participants.

ISDA facilitated negotiated rulemaking on 12 rules in 2023. The rulemaking process was then completed during the 2024 legislative session as the rules were presented to the House and Senate Agricultural Affairs Committees for review. Below are two rules of interest from ISDA's 2023 rulemaking that have been passed and will be implemented into State Code beginning Jan. 1, 2024.

IDAPA 02.06.10 – Rules Governing the Growing of Potatoes - This rule governs the procedures for all potato management within seed potato crop management areas and establishes the procedures of identifying, handling and testing uncertified seed potatoes to be planted in Idaho. These rules also seek to prevent the spread of Pale Cyst Nematode and the introduction and/or spread of CMS and subsequently bacterial ring rot throughout Idaho and the U.S.

This rule was presented for authorization as part of the ISDA's plan to review each rule every five years, with redundant language removed in accordance with the Governor's ZBR Executive Order. Several changes to this rule were proposed throughout the rulemaking process. With the direction of industry, ultimately no major amendments or additions were made to this rule.

IDAPA 02.03.03 – Rules Governing Pesticide and Chemigation Use and Application - This chapter governs the use and application of pesticides; licensing of pesticide applicators; registration of pesticides; and responsibilities for chemigation in Idaho.

This rule was presented for authorization as part of the ISDA's plan to review each rule every five years, with redundant language removed in accordance with the Governor's ZBR Executive Order. Outlined below are the updates to the rule.

Licensing Categories – Pesticide license categories have been reduced from 26 to 19 categories. This change provides consistency with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) expectations, but also provides for less individual exams as applicators wish to apply and take exams for license categories.

Licensing Credits – Industry stakeholders requested a change in the number of instruction minutes required to earn a continuing education credit. The rule reflects a change from 60 minutes to 50 minutes per credit. This more closely aligns with training agendas for entities offering training. In addition, it was recommended by stakeholders that the total number of credits required in a year change from 15 hours to 16 hours. This change will align Idaho with the standards of other states.

License Timeline – For professional applicators, the license year for renewal purposes will move from a calendar year to 365 days between issuance and expiration.

Chemigation – Historically, chemigation has been licensed the same as all other applicator classifications. However, it is not a function that EPA regulates and is entirely a state matter. As such, the chemigation section of the rule was largely removed in favor of handling licensing for these applicators outside of this rule. There is legislation that is being considered by the legislature that would further amend how chemigation is regulated in Idaho.

To view ISDA's full list of 2023 ZBR rules and more information about the 2024 rulemaking process, visit agri.idaho.gov.



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Sources: Agricultural Marketing Resource Center; California Strawberry Commission;
Kansas Wheat Commission; National Cotton Council of America



Photos by Sean Ellis

ABOVE LEFT: About 350 FFA students and their guests, which included Idaho lawmakers and agricultural industry leaders, attended the annual Cenarrusa Day on the Hill luncheon Jan. 29. ABOVE RIGHT: During the annual Cenarrusa Day on the Hill luncheon Jan. 29, Gov. Brad Little, right, was presented with an Honorary American FFA Degree during the event for his lifelong support of agricultural education and the FFA program.

Sea of blue jackets descends on Idaho Capitol

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

BOISE – A sea of FFA members wearing their iconic blue jackets mingled with lawmakers, statewide elected officials and farm industry leaders Jan. 29 during the organization’s annual Cenarrusa Day on the Hill event.

During the event, hundreds of FFA members meet face-to-face with state lawmakers and ag industry leaders. One of the main goals is to help sharpen the students’ leadership skills and provide them with a first-hand experience of the legislative process.

“The main purpose of this (event) is to bring legislators into contact with the ag ed students, the FFA students, throughout the state of Idaho,” said Canyon County farmer Sid Freeman, scholarship raffle chairman for the FFA Foundation.

He said the Day on the Hill event is extremely important for FFA students because “it kind of breaks them out of their shell and lets them know at a young age that they can sit down with legislators, have lunch with them, visit with them and talk with them about important issues.”

About 350 FFA members and guests attended a luncheon that kicks off the event. Guests included the governor,

lieutenant governor, state attorney general, state controller, superintendent of public instruction and director of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture.

“This organization, to me, is incredibly important because it stimulates an interest in agriculture, leadership and life-long learning,” Gov. Brad Little told FFA members during the luncheon. “It’s a pathway to traditional higher education and innovative careers...”

The FFA program becomes more important as the percentage of Americans involved in production agriculture continues to shrink, said Little, a rancher and farmer from Emmett.

“I’m a big supporter and I will always continue to be a big supporter of (FFA),” he said. “I am very optimistic about the future of rural Idaho and the future of agriculture, particularly when I’m in a room like this and see all of your faces.”

Little was presented with an Honorary American FFA Degree during the event for his lifelong support of agricultural education and the FFA program.

Freeman said the FFA program is also important for the state’s agricultural industry because many people who go through it will fill important jobs in the state’s farming and ranching industry in the near future.

“The continuing growth of the FFA and agricultural education is extremely important because the average age of the farmer just keeps getting higher and higher and there’s not enough folks in the pipeline to take our places,” he said. “I just came out of a meeting earlier this morning where they were talking about how agribusinesses are looking for students to fill their pipelines.”

The luncheon is named for former Idaho Secretary of State Pete Cenarrusa, who died in 2013 and whose 51 years in the legislative and executive branches of Idaho government make him the longest-serving public servant in state history.

Cenarrusa, a sheep rancher, started the first ag classes at Cambridge and Carey high schools and was known as a champion of Idaho agriculture.

During the Day on the Hill luncheon, the Northwest Agriculture Cooperative Council, which sponsors the event, presented Friend of the Industry awards to Sen. Linda Wright Hartgen, R-Twin Falls, and Rep. Jerald Raymond, R-Menan.

NACC lobbyist Rick Waitley said the annual awards are given to legislators who have demonstrated outstanding leadership for Idaho agriculture and have been supportive of rural cooperatives. ■

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LOAN PROGRAM



A canola field in Lewis County.

Submitted photos

A quick look at agriculture in Clearwater, Lewis counties

By Sean Ellis
Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

Clearwater and Lewis counties are very different when it comes to agriculture, but they are both heavily dependent on natural resources.

Clearwater-Lewis Farm Bureau represents farmers and ranchers in both counties, which border each other. Lewis is much smaller in size but much bigger when it comes to total revenue from farming and ranching.

While Clearwater still has 273 farms and ranches, it is small when it comes to total farm revenue. However, the county is big when it comes to timber.

According to a U of I study, timber accounts for about 6 percent of the county's total gross domestic product and 9 percent of its jobs.

"Timber is still really big in our community," says Audra Cochran, who runs cattle in the county and is a University of Idaho Extension forester in Clearwater. "We are predominantly a timber county."



“It’s a unique blend that we get to do a little bit of cereal crops, a little bit of hay, some cattle, but also a good amount of forestry. It’s a healthy blend.”

- Audra Cochran, Clearwater County rancher, U of I Extension forester

who serves as the president of Clearwater-Lewis Farm Bureau. “Here in Lewis County, we grow a lot of different crops. We have quite a bit of rainfall and there are quite a bit of different soil profiles in the county.”

Supporting the counties’ youth is a big focus of CLFB and the organization does that through a variety of ways, including supporting the local FFA and 4-H programs and providing scholarships to high school students.

The organization also donates to the counties’ fair boards to help them with operating costs.

The local Farm Bureau organization helps support an annual farm and forest fair for fifth graders that is hosted by University of Idaho Extension and draws students from Clearwater, Idaho and Lewis counties and teaches them about the principles of farming and forestry.

The CLFB board is diverse and represents virtually all aspects of the counties’ natural resource community, from farming to livestock production to timber, Hasselstrom says.

“Because we come from two counties, we have a very diverse board that together represents almost all aspects of our county,” she says.

Hasselstrom says the board is very involved with the different issues facing the counties and has a good relationship with local officials, including legislators, county commissioners and sheriffs.

“We have a very good relationship with all of our representatives and their staff and we try to have regular calls with them and visits ... to stay abreast of what’s going on in other aspects of the county other than just agriculture,” she says. ■



ABOVE: Cows graze in forestland in Clearwater County.
LEFT: A farmer checks depth and placement of seed before fall planting in Lewis County.

culture, there are 273 farms and ranches in Clearwater County and 66,230 acres of land in farming. The average size of a farm in the county is 243 acres, much smaller than the statewide average of 505 acres.

Farmers and ranchers in that county brought in \$8.5 million in farm-gate revenue during the 2022 census year.

By comparison, farmers and ranchers in Lewis County brought in \$76 million in farm-gate receipts in 2022. There are 219 farms in that county and 249,000 acres of land in farming. The average size of a farm in Lewis County is 1,137 acres.

“We’re pretty much all agriculture here in Lewis County,” says Sheila Hasselstrom, who grows hay, wheat, barley, oats, feed grains and canola in Winchester.

According to the ag census, the main crops in Lewis County are wheat, field grass and seed crops, hay and lentils. There is also a decent amount of canola and chickpeas grown there.

The cattle and calves sector also brings in a sizable amount of farm-gate revenue in the county.

“We’re a pretty diverse county when it comes to agriculture,” says Hasselstrom,

About 89 percent of Clearwater County is made up of forest land, which amounts to about 1.4 million acres.

“We are really that cusp between farm and forestry,” says Cochran, who serves on the Clearwater-Lewis Farm Bureau board of directors. “The individuals that are farming or (engaging) in agriculture in some capacity are doing some of both. It’s a unique blend that we get to do a little bit of cereal crops, a little bit of hay, some cattle, but also a good amount of forestry. It’s a healthy blend.”

According to the 2022 Census of Agri-

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F1 Black/white Aussiedoodle. Molly is 5, spayed, in

perfect health. She has been in my breeding program and now retired to country living with a family with kids. She sleeps in kennel, lived inside and outside. Diane-Caldwell 208-407-2406

MISCELLANEOUS

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 208-530-6466

WANTED

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

WANTED PAYING CASH FOR GERMAN & JAPANESE WORLD WAR 2 ITEMS. Rifles, pistols, swords, daggers, uniforms, helmets, flags, medals, hats, scopes, binoculars, machine guns (ATF rules applies), etc 208-405-9338.

Pre-1970 Idaho License Plates Wanted: Also Revere Ware and Solar-Sturges Permanent cookware, and old signs. Will pay cash. Please email, text, call, or write. Gary Peterson, 115 E D St, Moscow, ID 83843. gearlep@gmail.com. 208-285-1258

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

SERVICES

4S Welding- Mobile welding for Bingham County and surrounding areas. Fencing, pipe, equipment repair, etc. Carbon and stainless, 20 years of experience. Call Mike 208-680-7372.

Nailed It Tree Service - Hazardous removals, tree trimming, full clean up, fire mitigation, fruit tree pruning & tree assessments. Serving Custer county, Salmon, Idaho, willing to travel farther depending on job. 17 years in industry. Wesley Matthews 208-292-9079

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

If Rock Chucks & Varmints are a problem allow me to donate my services. An accomplished marksman I hunt alone, safely targeting Rock Chucks and Diggers. Call or text, Rick Weidner 986-888-7051. References Available.

Nat's Farm Yard Care- Brush hogging, rototilling, scraping manure, and stump grinding. Servicing Bingham County, Power County, and surrounding areas. Text or leave a voicemail for Natalie 8am-5pm M-F 208-917-2726

Ranch made items- Personalized Stainless Steel Shovels with your name stamped on it. Dependable Chain Oilers- for harvesters, planters, every chain on earth. Custom Portable Stainless Steele Tilting Bathtubs- With sliding seat for home care. Rocking Cowboy Piano-Chassis 21" wagon wheels. Weiser, ID call 208-550-4619

FREE CLASSIFIEDS

Non-commercial classified ads are free to Idaho Farm Bureau members. Must include membership number for free ad. Forty (40) words maximum. Non-member cost is 50 cents per word. You may advertise your own crops, livestock, used machinery, household items, vehicles, etc. Ads will not be accepted by phone. Ads run one time only and must be re-submitted in each subsequent issue. We reserve the right to refuse to run any ad. Please type or print clearly. Proofread your ad. Ads must be received by March 15 for the April Producer.

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

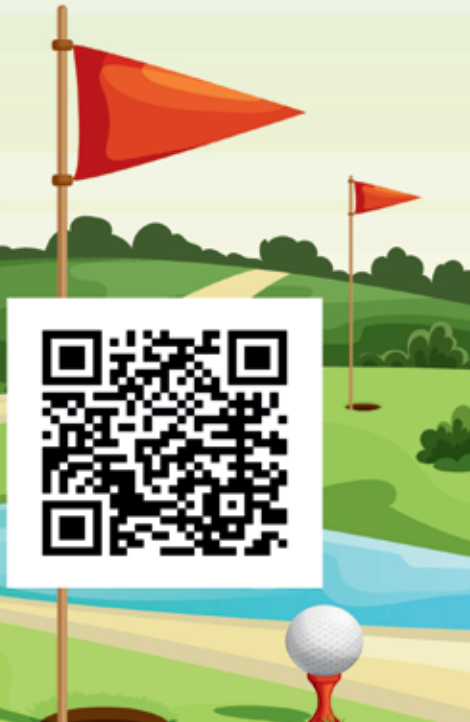
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Support over 6,000 Idaho FFA members from 100 chapters across the state. Funds go to scholarships, grants, FFA program support and more.



MAGIC VALLEY

May 22, 2024

Canyon Springs Golf Course
Twin Falls, Idaho

120 PLAYING SPOTS AVAILABLE!

NORTH IDAHO

June 5, 2024

Univ. of Idaho Golf Course
Moscow, Idaho

80 PLAYING SPOTS AVAILABLE!

TREASURE VALLEY

June 20, 2024

Shadow Valley Golf Course
Boise, Idaho

144 PLAYING SPOTS AVAILABLE!

EAST IDAHO

June 27, 2024

Sand Creek Golf Course
Idaho Falls, Idaho

100 PLAYING SPOTS AVAILABLE!

QUESTIONS:

For information about
registration and sponsorships

CALL: 208-779-2334

growidahoffa.org/golf-scrambles/

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LOOKING FOR A NEW PODCAST? DIRT ROAD DISCUSSIONS

Episode 50: Keeping It Real On The Farm

People all over the country follow Andrea Flemming on social media for one main reason - she keeps it real when it comes to farming. If there are days to cry over sick animals, she talks about it. If there is a success, she talks about it. Most importantly, she does not shy away from discussing the importance of mental health in a challenging industry. Known as "ThatFitAgvocate," Andrea, a fifth-generation farmer from Minnesota, shares how her social media posts started as a hobby but have grown to so much more.

