

# GEM STATE **Producer**

**Idaho Farm Bureau**

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## Idaho Farm Bureau Sets 2022 Policy



**New barley  
facility, 3**

**Idaho ag  
exports soar, 4**

**New ag lab, 36**

## EPA muddying the waters again



I know my farmland like the back of my hand.

I can tell you what field our cattle are grazing and under which tree a new mama is tending her calf. I can show you the exact spot my grandkids got their first lesson in feeding goats.

I can tell you the spot where I told my father I wanted to be a farmer just like him. What I cannot tell you now is whether the ditch along my field that only has water in it after a heavy rain will be considered a water of the U.S.

My father farmed this land and his father before him. Our family farm has changed over the decades as we are always looking for ways to do better and protect our natural resources, so our farm survives for generations to come.

So to say that I was disappointed when the Environmental Protection Agency announced its plans to turn back the clock on responsible regulatory reform is an understatement.

Not only are the EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers repealing the Navigable Waters

See **DUVALL**, page 6

## The President's Desk

By Bryan Searle

President Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

### Annual meeting showcases grassroots nature of Farm Bureau



This year's 82nd annual meeting of the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation was a great chance to see and greet old friends and catch up on the latest in their lives.

With last year's meeting being held virtually due to COVID, it was especially gratifying to be able to shake hands with good friends whose faces many of us had not seen in person for a few years.

This year's convention took on a new look of energy and enthusiasm because of a change in the program that allowed more networking

among our members.

The format allowed us to laugh, interact, work, and then debate our policies. My father always taught me the principle of when you work, work hard and when you play, play hard.

We were able to experience this year the building of a unity that we have never experienced before.

The only bad part of this year's annual meeting was having to leave Farm Bureau friends from around the state and return home.

See **SEARLE**, page 7

## Inside Farm Bureau

By Zak Miller

CEO Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

### Fresh tracks



Dirt roads offer a lot of wisdom.

The recent history of a dirt road can be apparent. Whether it is a story of a herd of elk or ATVs crossing it or a simple insect walking across, dirt roads report the story.

Aside from telling the story about their recent past, they also offer history – the road's direction, exact course, obstacles it goes around, the hills it climbs.

These roads are like a regional canvas that can be easily cleaned and restarted. An example I like is when animals trail down or across a dirt

road. All evidence of activity before the animals is wiped away.

There may have been 4 or 400 vehicles across a dirt road before a herd. Afterward, all evidence before the herd is lost. Rain washes things clean. Fresh tracks also replace past stories with new ones.

Human beings are remarkable for so many reasons. Key among those reasons is our ability to keep long and complex memories. Without this ability, we would not be what we are as a species.

See **MILLER**, page 6



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**COVER:** Farm Bureau members from across the state debate a proposed policy change during Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's 82nd annual meeting Dec. 1. See story on page 8. (Photo by Michaela Andrus)



Photo by Sean Ellis  
**JC Olson, Scoular's project leader for a new barley product called Emerge, leads a tour of the company's new barley-production facility in Jerome Dec. 7.**

# Scoular, Idaho ag industry celebrate new barley facility

By Sean Ellis  
Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

JEROME — Officials from the Scoular grain company and members of Idaho's farming industry on Dec. 7 celebrated the opening of a facility that will produce a new barley product.

Idaho is the national leader in total barley production and the new facility will provide additional opportunities for the state's barley farmers, said Idaho Barley Commission Executive Director Laura Wilder.

"This plant is a real opportunity to add value to an already well-established industry in Idaho," said Wilder, who was joined at a ribbon-cutting ceremony by the four members of the IBC board. "We're really excited to be here to support (Scoular)."

Scoular, a \$6 billion agribusiness company that buys, sells, stores, handles and processes grain and other ingredients, announced the new project last August. The facility will produce a barley protein concentrate that is a plant-based alternative protein.

The product, called Emerge, will be sold to the aquaculture and pet food industries. Idaho leads the nation in trout produced for food and is one of the national leaders in aquaculture production.

See SCOLAR, page 15



Photo by Sean Ellis

Two separate sets of data show Idaho export value is in record territory last year and so far in 2021. Dairy is the state's top ag product export.

# Idaho ag export value in record territory

**By Sean Ellis**

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

POCATELLO – Idaho set a record for total value of agricultural exports last year according to one set of data and the state is on pace to set another record this

year, according to another set of data.

According to data released by USDA in late October, Idaho businesses exported a record \$2.32 billion worth of agricultural products to other countries last year, narrowly beating the previous record of \$2.29 billion set in 2013.

A separate set of data released in early November by the U.S. Census Bureau showed Idaho businesses exported \$778 million worth of agricultural products through the first nine months of 2021, which was an increase of 11 percent over the same period in 2020.



That \$778 million total puts the state on track to set a record for ag exports this year, according to the U.S. Census Bureau data. The previous record of \$1.02 billion was set in 2014.

The Census Bureau data is released quarterly and is based on what state a commodity is exported from, so it doesn't capture all of Idaho's farm product exports.

For example, it doesn't capture the wheat from Idaho that is exported out of Portland. But it does show trends and from a percentage standpoint, matches closely with USDA data that is released annually in the fall.

The USDA data captures more of the state's farm exports but it is not as timely as the Census Bureau data.

Both sets of data show that Idaho's agricultural exports are on the rise and in record territory.

"That's a really good sign" of the overall health of Idaho's agricultural sector, said University of Idaho Agricultural Economist Garth Taylor.

The Census Bureau data shows that the value of Idaho ag exports is up substantially this year in most of the state's top markets.

"Severe drought in parts of South America and weather events in other parts of the world are impacting worldwide supplies and creating export opportunities for Idaho's producers," said Doug Robison, the Idaho president for Northwest Farm Credit Services.

"Many commodities are more valuable than they were a year ago, contributing to the overall increase in Idaho's export values," he added.

That set of data shows Idaho companies sold \$253 million worth of farm products to Canada through the first nine months of 2021, which was a 30 percent increase over the same period in 2020.

Canada is by far the top destination for Idaho ag exports.

"The combined factors of drought and supply chain problems are causing Canada to source more supplies from the U.S. that are closer in proximity," Robison said. "Canada has a large food processing sector that will seek to run at



Photo by Sean Ellis

**Potatoes are planted in a Bingham County field in spring 2021. Two separate sets of data show Idaho export value is in record territory last year and so far in 2021.**

capacity despite weak production trends in Canada."

The total value of Idaho farm product exports to Mexico, the state's No. 2 destination for ag products, was \$161 million through the end of the third quarter, up 13 percent over 2020.

Idaho ag export value to China totaled \$58 million, up 11 percent, and it totaled \$43 million to the Netherlands, up 50 percent.

Idaho ag export value through the third quarter of 2021 decreased 23 percent to Japan (\$37 million) and it dropped 32 percent to South Korea (\$36 million). Those decreases could be partially linked to disruptions at West Coast ports.

According to the Census Bureau data, dairy remained Idaho's top ag commodity export this year, as the state's businesses exported \$148 million worth

of dairy products through the end of September, a 7 percent increase over the same period in 2020.

The USDA data shows that Idaho companies exported \$474 million worth of dairy products in 2020, which was a record for that set of metrics, eclipsing the previous record of \$460 million set in 2014.

The USDA data show Idaho wheat exports totaled \$392 million in 2020, Idaho exports of processed vegetables totaled \$264 million and exports of fresh vegetables from the state totaled \$160 million.

Exports of beef and veal from Idaho totaled \$192 million in 2020, according to USDA, while exports of animal feed totaled \$143 million.

Idaho plant product exports totaled \$1.56 billion in 2020 while animal product exports totaled \$754 million. ■

# *‘We shouldn’t have to hire a team of lawyers and consultants to simply plow our field.’*

## DUVALL

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*Continued from page 2*

Protection Rule, but while they work on a new rule, they are reverting to outdated regulations that have caused decades of confusion and litigation.

When the economy is struggling, and the supply chain is at its breaking point, I cannot think of worse timing to create further backlogs with regulatory uncertainty and a cumbersome permitting process.

Using the old significant nexus test, the federal government can now, again, extend its regulatory reach onto more private land.

This “test” allows the federal government to make case-by-case decisions to determine if a ditch or low spot is a

water of the U.S. and subject to federal regulation.

Farmers and ranchers could be required to get Clean Water Act permits for simple things like plowing a field, planting their crops, or building a fence for their livestock.

And if you’ve ever had to deal with a federal permitting process, you know the thick stack of paperwork is more than most farmers and ranchers can handle alone. We shouldn’t have to hire a team of lawyers and consultants to simply plow our field.

As the EPA continues to pursue a new rule to replace the Navigable Waters Protection Rule, the agency must follow through on Administrator Regan’s promise to listen to rural America and under-

stand how its rule will impact farms.

The decision to rewrite the current rule brings uncertainty to farmers and ranchers who have been caught in the regulatory ping pong of the past three administrations.

Farmers and ranchers – and all Americans – need a steady definition of “waters of the United States” that brings clarity and certainty to clean water efforts.

The EPA must recognize the burden of overreaching regulations on farmers and respect the statute by not writing the term “navigable” out of the Clean Water Act.

This rule serves as a crucial test for Administrator Regan as folks across the countryside watch closely, hoping he keeps his promise. ■

## MILLER

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*Continued from page 2*

What makes us special can often be the exact source of what causes challenges and mistakes. Good and learning memories are invaluable, and bad ones limit our abilities and potential.

Perhaps each of us could benefit from some dirt road wisdom.

The here and now is essential, and we must pay close attention to what today brings. The small details matter and we should pay attention to understanding all of today’s finite details.

At the same time, today will shortly be tomorrow, and just like that dirt road, the tracks will change, but the road itself maintains its history while allowing the activities of today to fade.

The most crucial long-term histo-

ry of the road is its purpose, not the details of any one event.

Farm Bureau maintains dirt road wisdom. Its policy and activities are based upon decisions and ideas, both new and old.

Every event and action continues to form the way Farm Bureau functions. At the same time, there is no policy written that cannot be changed. This must happen to ensure that Farm Bureau maintains itself as the voice of Idaho Agriculture.

Every word in our policy book could be altered or removed, just like fresh tracks replace old, but the heart of Farm Bureau’s purpose and identity is like the direction and course of a road.

It continues to be accurate and the same even if the story of today changes. ■

*‘Every event and action continues to form the way Farm Bureau functions. At the same time, there is no policy written that cannot be changed. This must happen to ensure that Farm Bureau maintains itself as the voice of Idaho Agriculture.’*

# *'I think it's accurate to say every "jot and tittle" contained in the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation policy book has been thoroughly thought out and debated.'*

## SEARLE

*Continued from page 2*

This year's annual meeting, which attracted about 260 Farm Bureau members from throughout the state, was also a live demonstration of how truly grassroots this organization is.

It's not the IFBF president or vice president or even our volunteer board members who give the organization its direction.

Our policy book, which gives Idaho Farm Bureau Federation professional staff and volunteers their "marching orders," is developed by grassroots Farm Bureau members who create those policies at the county level.

They then bring the various proposals to add to, delete from or alter the IFBF policy book to the annual meeting. Those policies are debated and then accepted or rejected by voting delegates from each of IFBF's 37 county Farm Bureau organizations.

Each voting member is a verified farmer or rancher and who better to make Farm Bureau policy than actual agricultural producers who know the industry better than anyone?

It is the members of those county Farm Bureaus who are the backbone of this great organization, and it was wonderful to again witness that in action during this year's annual meeting, which was held in Fort Hall Nov. 30-Dec. 2.

(For a story on this year's meeting, see page 8.)

As usual, vigorous debate took place during this year's House of Delegates session, which is where the voting delegates agree to accept or reject proposed policy book changes.

In many instances, this debate is detailed and very specific, which is a testament to the fact that any policy contained in the IFBF policy book has been thoroughly thought out.

Anyone who doubts the grassroots nature of this organization only needs to witness a few minutes of debate taking place during the House of Delegates session to clear their mind of that incorrect notion.

I think it's accurate to say every "jot and tittle" contained in the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation policy book has been thoroughly thought out and debated.

With this sound policy, we will follow these marching orders by working with our elected officials to help implement laws and rules that provide protection and opportunities for farmers and ranchers throughout this state and nation.

I just returned from meetings in Washington, D.C., where Farm Bureau presidents from each state in the nation along with professional staff worked through proposed resolutions for the American Farm Bureau Federation policy book.

These resolutions came from grassroots members across the

nation and will be presented at the annual AFBF meeting next month in Atlanta.

Once resolutions are debated and adopted at the AFBF annual meeting, they will become our national policy, giving our marching orders to defend, promote, and advance agriculture on national issues.

Though our industry faces many challenges, there seemed to be renewed energy during this year's annual meeting and I credit that to the fact there has been increased involvement in IFBF at the county level in recent years.

That, as well as some new leadership at the county and state level, has brought fresh ideas and energy to the table and strengthened the overall Farm Bureau organization.

It's when we get involved and work together for the good of agriculture that we can make an enormous difference. Please consider being involved in your county Farm Bureau and be a part of making a difference. ■



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Photos by Paul Boehlke

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation members from around Idaho enjoy dinner together during IFBF's 82nd annual meeting, which was held Nov. 30-Dec. 2 in Fort Hall.

# Farm Bureau adopts policy about farmland preservation

FORT HALL – During Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's annual meeting, President Bryan Searle thanked Farm Bureau members for the role they play in IFBF, which is the state's largest general

farm organization and represents more than 11,000 families involved in growing agricultural commodities.

"I thank you for being a part of the Farm Bureau family and thanks for your

dedication," he said. "Thanks for your service to the greatest organization there is."

IFBF's 82nd annual meeting, which was held Nov. 30-Dec. 2 in Fort Hall, at-



tracted about 260 Farm Bureau members from throughout the state.

One of the highlights of this year's annual meeting was when IFBF members voted Dec. 1 to adopt a new policy that supports helping state legislators come up with a plan to preserve farm ground.

That policy that supports "legislation to protect agriculture land through voluntary agreements and programs based on incentives."

The proposal was vigorously debated and included concerns about preserving a farmer or rancher's right to sell their property if they choose to.

Supporters of the proposed policy pointed out the policy does not endorse a specific plan but gets Farm Bureau a seat at the table when it comes to the issue of protecting farmland, which is disappearing at a rapid rate in some areas of the state.

Washington County Farm Bureau President Tristan Winegar told fellow voting delegates that state legislators from both sides of the aisle have asked Farm Bureau members to lead the effort to protect farm ground and help come up with a plan to do that.

Details of a plan will be hashed out later, with significant input from farmers and ranchers, he said.

"This policy is for Farm Bureau to have a seat at the table with our legislators and come up with a plan," Winegar said. "They are asking us to be the leaders. This is just giving us a voice so Farm Bureau can lead the charge and help save farmland."

The policy was proposed by Washington County Farm Bureau, which hosted a meeting this summer to discuss the issue of farmland preservation with members of other county Farm Bureaus.

Winegar said he has received plenty of feedback since that meeting was held and he has "not received a letter or email from one person opposed to preserving ag land."

Other delegates who supported the



Idaho Farm Bureau Federation voting delegates from around the state debate a policy during IFBF's annual meeting, which was held Nov. 30-Dec. 2 in Fort Hall.

policy stressed they would never seek to restrict private property rights and they would like to see some type of voluntary, incentive-based program.

Supporters also stressed that farmland is disappearing rapidly in some areas and something needs to be done to offer incentives to producers to keep their land in farming if they choose to.

*"We are investing in the future and we're committed to (our) young farmer and rancher program to build strong leaders long into the future and we look forward to the things they will accomplish."*

— Bryan Searle, IFBF president

"Ag land is very valuable and nothing sickens me more than seeing a nice piece of farm ground with 50 houses on it," said Bannock County Farm Bureau President Brett Casperson.

Franklin County Farm Bureau President Jason Fellows said something needs

to be done to try to slow down the loss of farmland in Idaho.

"We need a seat at the table" in that discussion, he said. "I'm in support of doing something."

During Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's annual meeting, voting delegates from the 37 county Farm Bureau organizations in Idaho meet to vote on

proposed additions, deletions and amendments to IFBF's policy book.

The policies in the book are determined at the grassroots level by people who farm and ranch for a living and they give IFBF's professional staff and volunteers their marching orders.

Delegates addressed a host of issues this year ranging from water to wolves to grizzly bears, dams, salmon, commodity commissions, education and taxes.

Voting delegates adopted a new policy that makes it clear Farm Bureau supports commodity commissions, which represent farmers and ranchers and are funded by them through an assessment. The policy states simply, "We support having commodity commissions in Idaho."



Dean Dryden, president of Valley-Adams Farm Bureau, makes a point during Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's House of Delegates session Dec. 1.

“We all benefit from them for the most part,” said Elmore County Farm Bureau President Nick Blanksma. “We disagree with them from time to time, but saying we support them, I think, would be a good idea.”

Delegates voted to oppose an Idaho Department of Fish and Game program that feeds wild ungulates such as deer and elk because of the consequences it has to agriculture, cities and natural habitat.

That policy was proposed by Valley-Adams County Farm Bureau, which believes that retaining wild ungulates unnaturally in an area by feeding them in the winter when they normally would migrate out of the area has detrimental effects, including attracting and retaining wolves in the area.

“It trains them to come there and get

fed every winter; it's not a good program,” Winegar said.

The delegate body adopted a new policy that supports increased efforts to help landowners and the state control problem wolves.

One of those proposals supports “property owners’ rights in protecting their property [against wolves] in a timely manner using any method that has proven effective.”

The delegate body voted to support a new policy that supports raising of the Lost Valley Reservoir Dam. The policy was proposed by Washington County, which says a proposed plan to raise the dam would increase the water-holding capacity of the reservoir and improve the condition of the water below it.

During the annual meeting, IFBF President Bryan Searle, who farms near

Shelley, said the organization would continue to invest heavily in young farmers and ranchers.

“We are investing in the future and we’re committed to (our) young farmer and rancher program to build strong leaders long into the future and we look forward to the things they will accomplish,” he said.

Searle asked farmers and ranchers to seriously consider running for state office or help find other producers who would. Because of redistricting, he said, there will be a lot of open positions in the Idaho Legislature.

As Idaho’s population grows and farmers and ranchers make up an increasingly smaller percentage of the overall population, ensuring the state has legislators who understand and support agriculture is becoming critically important, Searle said.



“What a great opportunity for us as farmers and ranchers to get involved in (the legislative) process,” he said. “I am here today to invite you to get involved and make a difference.”

IFBF CEO Zak Miller, who farms near St. Anthony, made it clear that while farmers and ranchers adopt policies that support agriculture and their individual counties, they ultimately are supporting policies that benefit the entire state.

“While you consider the needs of your county, you also consider the needs of this great state,” he said at the start of the annual meeting. “We’re here the next few days to work on the needs of Idaho.”

He said every member of Farm Bureau plays an important role in the organization and elected officials and other leaders know that IFBF truly is a grassroots organization that represents thousands of farm families across the state.

“Every one of us has a role to play,” he said. “Leaders listen when Farm Bureau speaks because they know you are Farm Bureau.”

Searle said it’s important to maintain strong relationships with other agricultural organizations in the state, especially as the state continues to grow and the percentage of farmers and ranchers relative to Idaho’s total population continues to shrink.

“We are here to defend and promote agriculture so it’s critical and important that we do everything we can to have a good relationship with them,” he said. “Does that mean we give in on our policy? Absolutely not. We can disagree to disagree while still being friends.”

He also said the county Farm Bureau organizations are the heart of the organization and most of IFBF’s budget goes back to support the organization’s grassroots members at the county level.

“County Farm Bureaus in the state and nation make up the voice of agriculture,” he said. “We appreciate your commitment as counties.”

Todd Argall, CEO of Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Co. of Idaho, said the company is the dominant player when it comes to farm insurance in Idaho.

“And we should be,” he said. “We’ll nev-



Idaho Farm Bureau Federation’s 82nd annual meeting, which was held Nov. 30-Dec. 2 in Fort Hall, attracted about 260 Farm Bureau members from throughout Idaho. TOP: Kelsey Broadie, president of Lost Rivers County Farm Bureau, debates a proposed policy change Dec. 1 during Idaho Farm Bureau Federation’s House of Delegates session.

er take our eye off our farm customers.”

He said new sales are up 17 percent in 2021 compared with the previous year, new policies are up 10 percent and the company’s retention rate is very high.

“The year is unfolding pretty well for us as we focus on growing the organiza-

tion,” he said.

Argall said FBMIC will not settle for just being good enough.

“As we get better and better, we’re not settling for good enough,” he said. “We’re working to be the best possible insurance company that we can be.” ■



Photo by Paul Boehlke

Rick and Alene Keller receive Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's President's Cup Award Dec. 1 during IFBF's annual meeting. This is IFBF's highest award and is given to people who have committed themselves to the organization.

# Idaho Farm Bureau presents several awards to members

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

FORT HALL – During its annual meeting in December, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation presented several awards to young producers, and its highest honor – the President's Cup Award – to former CEO Rick Keller and his wife, Alene.

Rick Keller retired in June 2020 after serving the organization in several capacities for 41 years, including 21 as its chief executive officer.

The President's Cup is the group's highest award and goes to people who have committed themselves to the organization.

"These are two very deserving individuals who gave their entire lives to this organization," IFBF President Bryan Searle said before presenting the award to the Kellers Dec. 1. "We appreciate all of the service (they have) given to this great organization."

Rick Keller reminded people that IFBF's grassroots members who participate in the organization's county Farm Bureaus make

up the backbone of the organization.

"That is where the strength of Farm Bureau is; never forget the strength that you have," he said. "What a wonderful organization that Farm Bureau is."

Alene Keller said her and Rick still have Farm Bureau in their hearts and minds.

"There hasn't been a day in the last year and a half that Rick or I haven't thought about someone in Farm Bureau," she said.

Terry and Ashley Walton of Emmett, who grow corn, hay, wheat and beans, were presented IFBF's Achiever in Agri-



culture Award, which recognizes young farmers or ranchers who have excelled in their farming or ranching operation and honed their leadership abilities.

Matt and Jessica Henderson of Swan Lake were chosen to receive IFBF's Excellence in Agriculture Award, 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.

The Hendersons produce cattle and hogs, grow small grains and started their own butcher shop.

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.

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

Contestants give a presentation to a panel of judges, who ask them questions.

Competitors for the Excellence award are judged based on their understanding of ag issues as well as their leadership experiences and achievements.

Andrew Mickelsen, a potato farmer from Idaho Falls, won IFBF's annual 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.

The topic in the final round of this year's Discussion Meet was how farmers, ranchers and Farm Bureau organizations could proactively promote good mental health in themselves and in their communities.

Mickelsen said just removing the stigma surrounding mental health by addressing the issue more could prove beneficial.

"I think we need to work on (removing) that stigmatism that comes with mental health," he said. "It's OK to talk about it. It's OK to have conversations. Let's keep talking about it." ■



Photo by Michaela Andrus

**Bonneville County farmer Andrew Mickelsen makes a point during the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's Discussion Meet, which was held Nov. 30 during IFBF's annual meeting. Mickelsen won this year's Discussion Meet, which is designed to help young producers hone their public speaking and problem-solving skills.**

**TOP: Terry and Ashley Walton of Emmett, center, are presented Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's Achiever in Agriculture Award Nov. 30 during IFBF's annual meeting. On the right are IFBF President Bryan Searle and IFBF Vice President Richard Durrant and shown on the left are Melissa Durrant, chairwoman of IFBF's Young Farmers and Ranchers committee, and Steve Smith of Northwest Farm Credit Services.**

**MIDDLE: Matt and Jessica Henderson of Swan Lake, second and third from the right with son, Case, are presented Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's Excellence in Agriculture Award Nov. 30 during IFBF's annual meeting. Also shown in this picture are IFBF President Bryan Searle, right, IFBF Vice President Richard Durrant, left, and Melissa Durrant, chairwoman of IFBF's Young Farmers and Ranchers committee. (Top and middle photos by Paul Boehlke)**

# Idaho bean yields up 20 percent despite challenging year

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

POCATELLO – Dry beans are one of the few crops in Idaho that saw increased yields this year.

Yields for almost every major crop in Idaho were down substantially this year because of a severe drought and a lengthy heat wave that began in June.

But dry bean yields in Idaho increased from 24.1 hundredweight (cwt) per acre in 2020 to 29 cwt per acre this year, a 20 percent jump, according to USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service.

"I was pleasantly surprised with our yields this year," said Mike Goodson, who grows dry beans near Parma. "The heat never seemed to affect them too much."

When the heat wave hit in June, Goodson thought his dry bean crop was in big trouble.

"I thought we were heading for a train wreck but I was ... shocked at how well our beans did," he said.

Idaho usually ranks about No. 5 in the United States in total dry bean production but is the country's top bean seed producing state and about 70 percent of the beans grown here are grown for seed.

A large amount of commercial beans that consumers purchase are grown using seed produced in Idaho.

Unlike most other major dry bean producing states, almost all of the bean acres in Idaho are grown under irrigation, said Idaho Bean Commission Administrator Andi Woolf-Weibye. So, while this year's drought conditions posed a major production challenge, she said, most dry beans grown in Idaho had enough water to make it to harvest.

"If growers kept them wet and kept them 'happy,' for the most part they tolerated the heat pretty well," Woolf-Weibye said.

"If you kept them wet, they did well,"



Photo by Darren Krzesnik

**Dry beans are harvested near Parma last year. Despite challenging growing conditions in 2021, Idaho dry bean yields increased 20 percent compared with 2020.**

said Carl Montgomery, who grows beans near Eden in southcentral Idaho. "It was a good growing season and we didn't have any big disruptions."

Early in the season, bean fields in the area looked really poor, Montgomery said. "But once you got water on them, the beans grew well."

He said the heavy smoke from wildfires that blanketed the skies for a portion of the summer didn't hurt dry beans and actually seemed to help by helping cool them off.

Other growers agreed with that assessment.

"When the smoke set in, they got a little reprieve from the heat," Goodson said.

"The smoke definitely helped," said Kimberly farmer Monty Hamilton.

Dry beans in Idaho also faced very little pressure this year from white mold, a plant disease that can limit bean production, Hamilton added.

"If you had water and kept them irrigated, it was a great year for dry beans," he said. "Beans like the heat. It's just a matter

of, can you keep them wet enough?"

Darren Krzesnik, production manager for Treasure Valley Seed Co. in Homedale, said he was pleasantly surprised by the dry bean yields in Idaho this year.

"If you had told me in May that we would have record heat, drought, the earliest smoke in the valley we've seen in years that would linger for almost five weeks, and that we would have (good) yields, I would have said you were crazy," he said. "But we did."

According to NASS, Idaho farmers harvested 55,000 acres of dry beans in 2021, down from 66,000 last year. But the higher yields pushed total dry bean production in the state to 1.595 million cwt, up slightly from 1.592 million cwt last year.

Total U.S. dry bean production in 2021 was 22.6 million cwt, down from 33 million cwt in 2020, according to NASS. The average yield nationally for dry beans this year was 16.9 cwt per acre, down from 19.7 cwt in 2020. ■



Continued from page 3

Idaho's trout industry will be an important customer of the new product, said JC Olson, the project manager for Emerge.

A high-energy liquid feed supplement for cattle feeders will also be produced during the manufacturing process.

"It's a plant-based protein, with high protein, so anybody that can use a plant-based protein can use this product as well," said Joe Andrus, Scoular's senior vice president for feed.

Barley produced in Idaho is being brought into the facility right now and it will begin commercial production in January, Olson said.

He said about 20,000 new barley acres were added in Idaho this year due to the Emerge product and other Scoular food and feed barley initiatives.

"Our expectations are for that to nearly double over the next several years; that's just in Idaho," Olson said.

The facility will initially have the capacity to produce about 1.8 million bushels of barley per year, which is roughly 4 percent of Idaho's total barley production.

Scoular officials said they are hopeful the amount of barley produced at the facility will increase substantially over the next several years.

Idaho farmers typically harvest about 500,000 acres of barley each year and most of the barley produced here is grown for malt for the beer-brewing industry, while the rest is grown for human food or animal feed.

Olson said the new barley product will not compete with the state's well-established malt barley industry.

"We're not here to compete with the malt industry," he said. "Our approach is to compliment the industry and bring more opportunities to the grower."

Because Idaho is a long way from many of the markets the state's agricultural commodities end up in, any time value can be added to a commodity in the state before it's shipped out, it benefits the grower and processor, said Idaho Farm Bureau Federation CEO Zak Miller, who farms in St. Anthony.

"This Emerge facility will be a welcome addition to the state's farming sector and



**Idaho Barley Commission Executive Director Laura Wilder speaks about how Scoular's new barley production facility in Jerome will benefit Idaho barley growers Dec. 7 during a ribbon-cutting ceremony. LEFT: A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held Dec. 7 for Scoular's new barley production facility in Jerome, which is shown here and will produce a new barley product.**

Photos by Sean Ellis

it represents the kind of innovative, forward-thinking mentality that is prevalent in Idaho's agricultural industry," he said.

The facility will mean more opportunities and choices for Idaho farmers, Wilder said.

"It's good news for growers who would like another market for a barley crop," she said. "This facility represents new barley acreage and new opportunities for growers."

In a news release, Scoular CEO Paul Maass, who attended the ribbon-cutting event, said the company has a long history of success partnering with Jerome and its customers in Idaho and is thrilled to make additional investments in the region.

"Scoular is proud to develop this innova-

tive feed product and partner with Idaho's barley farmers and pet food and aqua feed manufacturers to add value throughout the supply chain," he said.

According to the news release, Emerge is the only barley protein for feed customers and is created through a process that concentrates the protein naturally found in whole barley kernels, creating a nutrient-dense ingredient.

The new operation is a partnership between Scoular, which is based out of Omaha, Neb., and Montana Microbial Products, which is based in Montana and developed the technology to create the barley protein concentrate. ■

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## Notice of Annual Meeting of Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Co. of Idaho

To all policyholders: The 2022 annual meeting for policyholders of Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Co. of Idaho will be held on Friday, Feb. 4, 2022, at 10 a.m. at the company's home office at 275 Tierra Vista Drive in Pocatello, Idaho. You are invited to attend.

Tom Lyons  
Secretary

## Notice of Stockholders Meetings

The following annual stockholders meetings will take place Friday, Feb. 4, 2022, at the Idaho Farm Bureau home office, 275 Tierra Vista Drive in Pocatello, Idaho.

The board of directors for each company will be elected at these meetings.

10:45 a.m. - Farm Bureau Marketing Association of Idaho  
11 a.m. - FB Development Corporation of Idaho

Zak Miller  
Executive Vice President, CEO

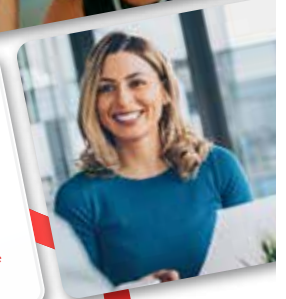
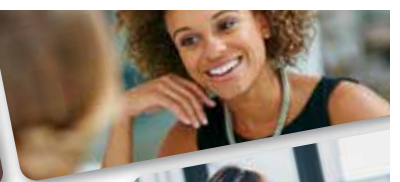
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\*You're automatically entered into our \$500 drawing when you refer a friend, even if they don't purchase a policy. Visit: [idahofarmbureauinsurance.com/refer-a-friend-get-a-gift](http://idahofarmbureauinsurance.com/refer-a-friend-get-a-gift) for complete rules and restrictions. Above left: Debra Street (left), the winner of our third quarter Refer A Friend, Get A Gift \$500 drawing, with agent Trudy Crawford.





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# Idaho Potato Commission names new CEO

By John O'Connell

*Intermountain Farm and Ranch*

EAGLE — A marketing expert who was raised in Shelley and has deep roots in the potato industry will be tasked with maintaining Idaho's reputation for having the world's top taters.

Jamey Higham will become the new president and CEO of the Idaho Potato Commission beginning in early 2022.

Higham will assume the role from Frank Muir, who led the IPC throughout an 18-year period in which the state's potato industry doubled farm-gate receipts to more than \$1 billion. Muir retired in mid-September.

The IPC, a state agency charged with promoting and protecting the renowned "Grown in Idaho" seal, is funded by an assessment of 12.5 cents per hundred pounds of potatoes raised by Idaho farmers.

"IPC has done a tremendous job of stewarding the brand, and I'm very humbled and excited for this opportunity," Higham said in a press release. "I started in the potato industry in 1991, and it's in my blood."

Higham is a graduate of Shelley High School, which fittingly has a russet potato as its mascot, and he served for 12 years on the Shelley school board.

He started his career with Walker Produce in Idaho Falls and then worked for several years in sales with Potandon Produce in Idaho Falls.

He earned a master's degree in international business from Arizona State University and then spent five years working in marketing and sales for Ford Motor Co.

He then returned to Potandon in 2003, where he worked for 13 years, including as vice president of sales. He became president and CEO of Farm Fresh Direct in Colorado in 2016.



**Jamey Higham**

According to a press release, he helped drive "strong growth for the company's conventional and organic potato lines."

Higham is also a current member of the United Fresh Government Relations Council and was part of the 13th class of United Fresh Produce Industry Leadership.

"Jamey is a potato guy through and through, and he really understands the industry," IPC Chairman Brett Jensen, of Idaho Falls, said in a press release. "With his lifelong love for Idaho potatoes, we know he's going to do an amazing job of supporting our growers, shippers and

*"Jamey is a potato guy through and through, and he really understands the industry. With his lifelong love for Idaho potatoes, we know he's going to do an amazing job of supporting our growers, shippers and processors around the state."*

— Brett Jensen, IPC Chairman

processors around the state. We've got a great brand and a great story to tell about our potatoes."

IPC Commissioner Mark Darrington, of Declo, said several top-notch candidates applied for the job, but he was impressed

by Higham's enthusiasm and leadership skills.

Darrington believes Higham will bring fresh perspectives to the IPC, though he said Muir set the bar high.

"I think Idaho growers are the envy of most growing states as far as the notoriety of the Idaho potato and we want to be innovative and capitalize on that investment that's been made over so many years," Darrington said.

Higham will wait to wrap up his job with Farm Fresh Direct before starting with the IPC, explained Travis Blacker, the IPC's industry relations director.

"He's going to be fantastic. I've known Jamey for many, many years, and he's going to be really good in this role," Blacker said.

Blacker said the budget has been set for the year and IPC is poised to continue its high-profile marketing programs for the year.

IPC sponsors the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl, which is carried by ESPN and hosted at Boise State University. The college football game is scheduled for Dec. 21 this year.

Blacker said IPC also plans to have another tour of its Great Big Idaho Potato Truck, which hauls a 6-ton replica of a russet potato.

Blacker said the IPC is planning a unique sendoff for the truck's next trip, inspired by middle school science fair projects in which students power a

lightbulb with a potato.

Instead of starting the truck with a battery for the next trip, the IPC will start with power from a sack of spuds.

Blacker explained the truck will "literally be powered by Idaho potatoes." ■



**This year the Idaho FFA Association had 85 students from 10 chapters compete with 7 top 10 teams and 25 Gold Emblem Individuals at the National FFA Convention and Expo. Congratulations to all of our Idaho winners!**

- Fruitland FFA 2nd Place Milk Quality and Products**
- Rigby FFA 2nd Place Farm and Agribusiness Management**
- Preston FFA 6th Place Food Science and Technology**
- Kuna FFA 9th Place Agronomy**
- Preston FFA 10th Place Agricultural Technical & Mechanical Systems**
- Rigby FFA 7th Place Agricultural Communications**
- Vallivue FFA 7th Place Forestry**



### Gold Emblem Teams

- Kuna Conduct of Chapter Meetings**
- American Falls Floriculture**
- Kuna Parliamentary Procedure**
- Nampa Veterinary Science**

### Bronze Emblem Teams

- Jerome Prepared Public Speaking**
- Middleton Nursery/Landscape**
- Jerome Extemporaneous Public Speaking**
- Rigby Environmental & Natural Resources**
- Twin Falls Employment Skills**
- Filer Dairy Cattle Handlers Activity**
- Madison Agricultural Sales**

### Silver Emblem Teams

- Meridian Agricultural Issues**
- Jerome Creed Speaking**
- West Side Dairy Cattle Evaluation & Management**
- Vallivue Horse Evaluation**
- Kuna Livestock Evaluation**
- American Falls Marketing Plan**
- Kuna Meats Evaluation & Technology**
- Preston Poultry Evaluation**



**Thank you to all of our CDE/LDE sponsors for the National FFA Convention & Expo this year. Our students couldn't have done it without your support!**

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Green tree crowns fading to brown in six months often indicates bark beetles.

Photos by Chris Schnepf

# Brace for beetles!

By **Chris Schnepf**  
*University of Idaho*

Moisture is the most limiting factor to forest growth in the Inland Northwest. But as with so many things in ecology, it's not averages that cause problems, it's the peaks and valleys.

Droughts such as we experienced in 2021 can kill trees outright, but more commonly they stress trees, making them more vulnerable to insects and diseases that take advantage of that stress and kill trees in the process.

This is especially true on stands that are overstocked to begin with, a phenomenon all too common with forests here.

Bark beetles are one of the more capable organisms in taking advantage of moisture-stressed trees. This fall we have been getting lots of calls from people seeing patches of browning trees on their forests.

Broadly speaking, if you see trees turn from green to totally brown within six months, it is likely bark beetles. Root diseases, which are at work every

year, generally kill trees more slowly, with crowns fading from a dark green to yellow and becoming sparser as the fungus overwhelms the roots.

Our recent bark beetle activity has also been exacerbated by last winter's storms that downed many green trees. Some bark beetle species can use downed trees as a springboard to build their populations and attack more trees.

The moisture we got in the fall of 2021 may have slowed the growth of these insect populations; how much depends on the moisture we get over



the winter and spring of 2022 and the general bark beetle population buildup on a given site.

Many different bark beetle species could be at work in these browning trees:

- Western pine beetles (*Dendroctonus brevicomis*) tend to attack larger ponderosa pine. The insect is identified by its large loopy, maze-like gallery pattern from tunneling in the tree's phloem (between the bark and the wood). Another signal of western pine beetles are bright orange trunks, created by woodpeckers flaking off the outer bark to get at western pine beetle offspring that are mining their way through the bark out of the tree as they mature.

- Pine engraver beetles (*Ips pini*, also referred to by their genus name "Ips") are distinguished by a "Y" or "H" shaped main gallery in the phloem. They usually focus on sapling to pole sized ponderosa and lodgepole pines or tops of larger pines. In late spring, Ips beetles will attack pines that have fallen in the winter, breed, and then emerge later in the summer to attack standing green pines. They can produce up to three generations annually in Idaho.

- Douglas-fir beetles (*Dendroctonus pseudotsugae*) are bark beetles that feed predominantly on large diameter Douglas-fir. In spring, Douglas-fir beetles attack and breed in trees that fell in the previous winter's storms. A year later in the following spring and summer, they emerge from the fallen trees to attack standing green trees, individually, or in groups. Standing green trees do not usually fade until one year after attack. If you have winter-fallen Douglas-fir that are larger than 12 inches in diameter, with red-orange boring dust in bark crevices, and upon cutting away the bark find larval galleries, they have been attacked and should be



**Brown boring dust in bark crevices at the base of a Douglas-fir usually indicate attacks by Douglas-fir beetles.**

removed, burned, or debarked.

- Fir engraver beetles (*Scolytus ventralis*) are the primary bark beetles attacking grand fir. Fir engraver beetles sometimes breed in windthrown grand fir and tops of grand fir (over 4 inches in diameter), then emerge to attack new trees from June to September, most often during droughts. Not all of the attacks of standing trees are lethal; some simply kill patches of tissue or kill tops. They are very active during drought periods or in response to anything that stresses grand fir.

Some of the most visible patches of dead trees in northern Idaho family forests are being killed by western pine beetle, but pine engraver has also been active in pines this fall, as are Douglas-fir beetles whose populations have grown owing to last winter's storms.

All of our bark beetle are native insects, a natural part of Idaho forests, always present at endemic levels in most forests.

The primary strategy to prevent tree mortality from bark beetles is to manage forests to be naturally resilient to them by thinning – reducing the number of trees competing for the same moisture.

Favoring species that are the most sustainable for the site over the long term is an important strategy, too. On drier sites that often means favoring ponderosa pine, even if you had pine killed by bark beetles.

Ponderosa pine is the most drought-tolerant species available on most of the sites it tends to grow on. Many times, other species will have even more problems.

If you have beetle-killed trees and want to capture the value of the wood, get them to the mill as soon as possible. Pines killed by bark beetles lose substantial value fairly quickly due to a fungus brought in by bark beetles called “blue stain.”

Blue stain does not affect the structural integrity of the wood, but it usually reduces what mills are willing to pay for it. In some cases, the reduction is large enough it is not worth taking the trees to a mill.

When removing trees that have been killed by western pine beetles within the last six months, shave off the outer bark to check in the bark for grubs and

*‘The primary strategy to prevent tree mortality from bark beetles is to manage forests to be naturally resilient to them by thinning – reducing the number of trees competing for the same moisture.’*

remove or burn the bark if infested.

Unlike other bark beetle species, removing the bark from the tree does not kill western pine beetles.

Douglas-fir killed by bark beetles are not generally affected by blue stain, but the outer wood of the log (sapwood) can be degraded by fungi if you wait too long.

To prevent decay from pouch fungus, try to salvage beetle-killed trees in less than two years. Removing trees killed by Douglas-fir beetle before May of the following year prevents beetles from those trees emerging and killing additional trees.

If a tree has been completely brown for over 12 months, any bark beetles that killed it have already left the tree. If wildlife are important to you, consider leaving such trees unless they are located in places that make them hazardous to buildings, etc.

Many wildlife species use snags for a variety of purposes. These trees provide wildlife and soil benefits for decades or longer, while they are standing, after they fall, and as they decay into the ground.

For more information, see “Managing Organic Debris for Forest Health” available at <http://www.cals.uidaho.edu/ed-Comm/pdf/PNW/PNW0609.pdf>.

If you want to set up a salvage sale, seek assistance from a professional forester, especially if you are deciding on trees which may or may not be near death.

If someone claiming to be a logger or forester knocks on your door and seems to imply every tree with some brown needles will die shortly, ask for credentials and check with a reputable forester to assess the actual threat before cutting trees.

Limited technical forestry assistance is available from forest practice advisors with the Idaho Department of Lands. For more comprehensive assistance, consulting foresters offer timber inventory, timber

sale administration, and many other services for a fee.

As your representative, the consultant's success depends on keeping you satisfied by getting top prices for your logs while meeting your land management goals.

For a guide and directory, see “Working with a Professional Forester” at <https://www.extension.uidaho.edu/publishing/pdf/CIS/CIS1226.pdf>.

If you would like to learn more about bark beetles, root diseases, or other insects and diseases that can kill trees, we have a variety of extension field days coming up in 2022 where you can get hands-on with these insects and interact with foresters, entomologists, and pathologists on site.

To learn more, download the 2022 Forest Stewardship calendar at <https://www.uidaho.edu/extension/forestry/programs>.

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



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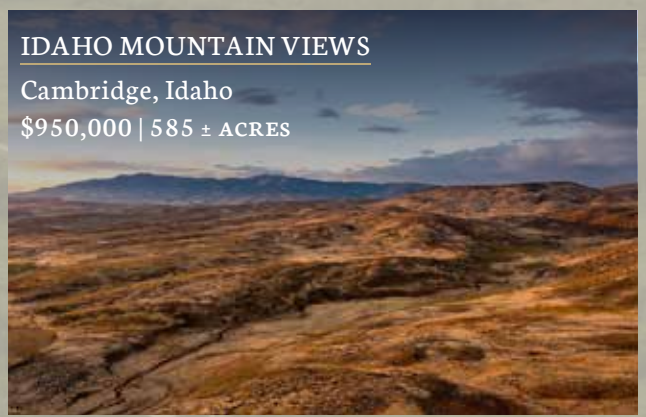
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Photo by Joel Benson

Barley is harvested this year in a southcentral Idaho field. Total barley production in the state dropped 21 percent this year compared with last year but Idaho remains the nation's top barley state.

# Idaho barley production down 21 percent in 2021

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

POCATELLO – Idaho remains the nation's top barley-producing state this year despite total barley production in the state decreasing by 21 percent compared with 2020.

According to USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, Idaho farmers produced 43.6 million bushels of barley

in 2021, down from 55 million bushels in 2020.

The decreased production was due to significantly reduced yields caused by severe drought conditions and a major early-season heat wave.

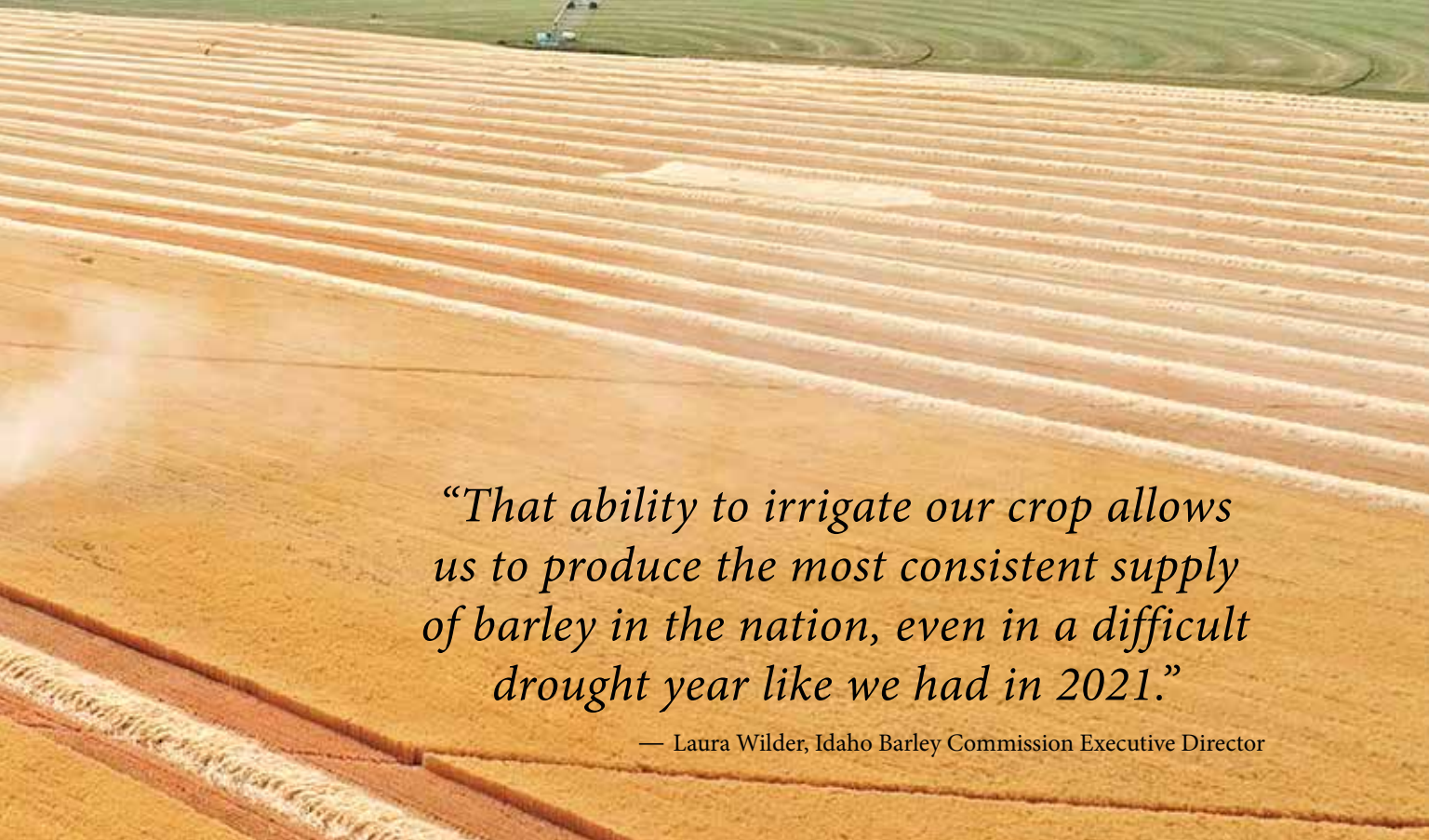
"Yields were off quite a bit from what they should have been," said Teton farmer Dwight Little.

"All of our yields for both wheat and barley were about 60-70 percent of normal,"

said Tim Dillin, who farms under dryland conditions in Bonners Ferry, which normally gets a good amount of rainfall. "We just didn't get the spring rains we normally get and the heat just made it worse."

Gordon Gallup, who farms under dryland conditions in Ririe, said his barley yields were way down this year. He said the lack of precipitation this year was bad enough but a string of 100-degree days in June exacerbated the situation.





*“That ability to irrigate our crop allows us to produce the most consistent supply of barley in the nation, even in a difficult drought year like we had in 2021.”*

— Laura Wilder, Idaho Barley Commission Executive Director

“It was a combination of the drought and heat,” he said. “I never remember 100-degree temperatures in June. If there ever were, it was only for a day or two, not the whole month.”

Barley ranks No. 7 among Idaho agricultural commodities in terms of farm-gate revenue and the state’s barley farmers brought in \$260 million in farm-gate revenue last year.

About 75 percent of Idaho’s barley is malt barley that is used in the beer-brewing process, while the rest is used for human food and as animal feed.

Idaho Barley Commission Executive Director Laura Wilder said growing conditions were tough for the state’s farmers this year, between high spring winds, early hot weather and an extended severe drought.

After a cold spring, “we had a drop-off into a hot, hot summer and record-breaking heat day after day after day,” Little said. “We were breaking records every day for quite a bit of time.”

According to NASS’ Small Grains 2021 Summary that was released Sept. 30, Idaho farmers harvested 490,000 acres of barley

this year, down from 500,000 acres last year.

Idaho set a record for average statewide barley yield last year at 110 bushels an acre. This year, the average barley yield in Idaho dropped to 89 bushels per acre.

Despite the challenging growing season this year, Idaho retained its spot as the nation’s top barley state. In fact, Idaho strengthened its hold on that spot.

According to the NASS report, Idaho produced 37 percent of the nation’s total barley crop this year, up from 32 percent in 2020.

Montana came in at No. 2 in total barley production this year with 23.8 million bushels produced and North Dakota was third with 22 million bushels.

Montana farmers harvested 790,000 acres of barley this year but the average statewide yield was only 38 bushels per acre.

Farmers in North Dakota harvested 460,000 acres of barley this year but the average yield in that state was only 51 bushels an acre.

When it comes to total barley produc-

tion, Idaho is the nation’s leader and it’s because of the state’s system of reservoirs that allow for a high percentage of farming in the state to be done under irrigation.

The fact that most of Idaho’s barley is produced under irrigated conditions is what makes the state such a reliable producer of barley, Wilder said.

“As bad as the 2021 crop year was, Idaho barley was fortunate to fare better than other barley-growing regions affected by drought due to our irrigation system and availability of water,” she said. “That ability to irrigate our crop allows us to produce the most consistent supply of barley in the nation, even in a difficult drought year like we had in 2021.”

Total U.S. barley production fell 31 percent this year, to 118 million bushels, down from 171 million bushels in 2020.

Average U.S. barley yield was 60.4 bushels per acre this year, down 22 percent from 77.2 bushels per acre last year.

Idaho, Montana and North Dakota together produced 76 percent of the nation’s barley crop this year. ■



Photo by Clark Leland

Total wheat production in Idaho decreased by 32 percent in 2021 compared with 2020.

# Idaho wheat production fell 32 percent this year

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

POCATELLO – Idaho’s total wheat production plummeted by 32 percent this year compared with last year.

That means Idaho farmers produced 36 million fewer bushels of wheat in 2021 than they did in 2020.

According to USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service, Idaho growers produced 76.5 million bushels of wheat this year, down from 112.5 million bushels in 2020.

Those numbers were included in the Small Grains 2021 Summary released by

NASS on Sept. 30.

Idaho Wheat Commission Executive Director Casey Chumrau said severe drought conditions in most of the state, coupled with an extreme early season heat wave, took a major toll on wheat yields in Idaho this year.

The IWC knew that production would be down significantly this year and earlier this year commissioners adjusted their budget accordingly.

“As ugly as the NASS report was, we knew that was the reality out there,” Chumrau said.

Wheat is grown in 42 of Idaho’s 44 counties and is the state’s No. 2 crop and

No. 4 agricultural commodity in terms of farm-gate revenue, which is what the producer receives for their commodity.

Idaho wheat farmers brought in \$550 million in farm-gate revenue in 2020.

Idaho typically ranks No. 5 or 6 in the nation in total wheat production and has a reputation among domestic and foreign customers as a state that produces a stable quantity of wheat year in and year out.

The state’s decreased wheat production this year was an anomaly, Chumrau said.

“Because we have the benefit of irrigation in a lot of areas where wheat is grown, Idaho generally produces a pretty



stable quantity of wheat,” she said. “We’ve become known for that and are proud of that but sometimes Mother Nature gets the best of you and there’s nothing you can do about it.”

Farmers said the drought was the biggest factor in Idaho’s significantly reduced wheat harvest this year but the heat wave made it worse.

“The real killer was the drought but the fact that temperatures were not dropping enough at night to provide relief to the crop was the final straw,” Chumrau said.

Dryland areas were the hardest hit this year by the drought conditions but even growers who farm with irrigation saw their yields drop, because of the unusually high temperatures.

Meridian farmer Richard Durrant had enough water for his crops this year but he said the fact that temperatures stayed so high for so long, even during the night, took a significant toll on his yields.

The five-year average for wheat yields at the Durrant farm heading into 2021 was about 150 bushels per acre and the farm averaged 170 bushels in 2019. This year, Durrant figures his wheat yields averaged about 118 bushels an acre.

“I kept saying, at least I had water but with the 80-degree nights, the plants just weren’t able to recover,” Durrant said. “They just didn’t have any ability to play catch-up at night.”

According to NASS, Idaho farmers harvested 1.13 million acres of wheat this year, slightly below the 1.16 million acres they harvested last year.

While Idaho set a record last year for average wheat

See **WHEAT**, page 35



Photo by Kristin Calvert

**A wheat field in North Idaho is harvested this year.**



Idaho Wheat Commission photo

**A wheat field in Firth is harvested this year.**





# Where to begin.

Are you a young or beginning producer with dreams of a successful future in agriculture?

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# Our marketing plan should be one of our top priorities

At the time I wrote this, we had some regions of the state receiving moisture through either snow or rain.

While we still have a long way to go to ensure our needs for water this year, it is a good start to the 2022 farming season, which helps us to stay optimistic.

As we moved toward Christmas, the wheat futures were taking a hit with the Chicago March contract down \$1.12 per bushel between Thanksgiving and the middle of December.

Kansas City and Minneapolis futures were down 99 cents and 45 cents, respectively, in the March contracts. This is not unusual, as the historical charts show us that a trend lower during this timeframe is the norm.

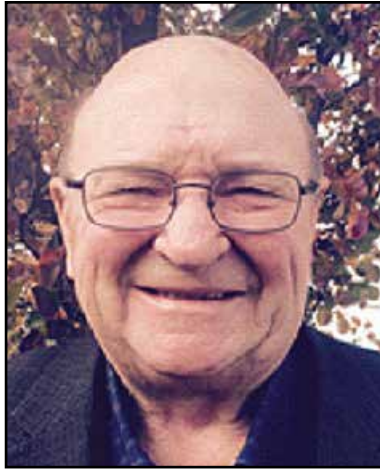
Those same charts show a rebound in prices into the second week of January before once again trending lower.

As you look forward into new crop pricing, keep an eye on the technical indicators in the futures markets. This will take a little time and study on your part to find a technical study that you are comfortable watching and using.

To start with, you may want to look at the Relative Strength Index. It is simple to follow and even though it isn't perfect, it is easy to watch.

The closer the study lines move toward 80, it is telling us the market could begin to see some resistance, and as it moves towards a reading of 20, the market could see some support.

This could assist you in deciding just



when to contract your commodities or lock in the futures price.

Remember, we have talked about locking in the futures and the basis at different time to help you receive the best cash price for your commodities.

Following and using a technical study in your marketing plan will

help you make good decisions and you will be able to look back and see the reasoning behind those decisions.

The historical cattle charts for November and December aren't as defined as the wheat charts but they still show weakness moving into the second week of December before finding some strength into the end of December.

In the March feeder cattle futures, we do see weakness between the first of January and the middle of the month before strengthening into the middle of February.

Even with all the movement higher and lower, it looks as though the middle of February futures prices could be near the same levels we traded the first of November.

With any of these markets, it is important to take the time to study the current trend and see whether it has a correlation with the historical charts.

Using the historical futures and basis charts isn't an exact science but they are both very good indicators of what the markets could do in the weeks and months ahead.

By doing so, you will be able to make good, sound marketing decisions based on what you know rather than what you hope for.

In the agricultural markets, whether it is livestock, dairy or grain, we can say that producers need higher prices for the goods we produce and for the most part we can all agree that we do.

However, the average consumer wants food that is nutritious, tastes good, is safe to eat and is cheap to purchase.

This is quite a balancing act between the farm and the dinner table and while there are a number of hands involved in the process, we usually won't have any control over just what happens once our commodities leave the farm.

The process makes good talking points and should be discussed but how we market our products shouldn't take a back seat to the talking points.

When, where and how are all part of our marketing plan that we do have control over. These should be some of our top priorities.

And just as how we produce has evolved over the years, our marketing and our marketing skills should have also evolved.

As our margins shrink, we all need to be studying the different tools that are available to us and devoting the time necessary to study and learn just how we could possibly adjust our marketing program.

I know this is easier said than done, but it will be necessary as we move forward in our operations.

*Clark Johnston is a grain marketing specialist and owner of JC Management Co. of Ogden, Utah. He can be reached at [clark@jcmanagement.net](mailto:clark@jcmanagement.net). ■*

# Agricultural Profile

Franklin County



Photos by Jason Fellows

After suffering through a severe drought in 2021, Franklin County farmers are hoping for a good snowpack this winter to provide an ample supply of water for the 2022 growing season.

# Franklin County is still heavily agricultural

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

PRESTON – Like their colleagues in other areas of Idaho, farmers and ranchers in Franklin County are still trying to recover from a severe drought that reduced farm production in much of the state last year.

“Drought hit us really hard this last year and we’re still seeing the effects of it. We really need some more precipitation,” says Franklin County Farm Bureau President Jason Fellows.

Recent rain and snow storms have helped

but a lot more is needed before farmers and ranchers in this southeast Idaho county can consider the drought over, he says.

A good snowpack year is desperately needed, adds Fellows, a cattle rancher near Preston who also grows forage crops such as alfalfa and corn.

“The snowpack is what feeds our reservoirs and our reservoirs are what keep us farming,” he says. “We need to pack those canyons full of snow this winter.”

Franklin County is a relatively small county, with a population of about 14,200, but there is still a good amount of farming and

ranching going on here.

According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, \$83 million worth of farm commodities were sold in the county during the 2017 census year.

A big chunk of the total farm-gate revenue generated in the county comes from cattle and dairy, while hay, wheat, barley, safflower and corn for silage are also big parts of the Franklin County agricultural portfolio.

“In our community, we’re pretty diverse when it comes to agriculture,” Fellows says.

While Franklin County is still heavily agricultural – Fellows estimates 86 percent of the



jobs in the county would be gone if agriculture suddenly disappeared – its farming base is starting to feel the effects of rapid growth and development.

A boom in building is occurring as an influx of people from just across the border in Utah flock to the county, Fellows says.

“People like this little corner of Idaho just like they like most of Idaho and we’ve seen a ... housing boom occurring,” he says. “People are moving into our area and taking some of the agricultural land.”

The Franklin County Farm Bureau board of directors is just starting to focus on efforts to educate the newcomers about the various farm-related issues in the community but a lot more needs to be done, says Lance Zollinger, chairman of the FCFB’s Promotion and Education Committee.

“As a board, we’re at the tip of the iceberg as far as what we want to do to reach out to these newcomers and teach them about agriculture,” says Zollinger, who grows hay. “We have got to be out in front of these people more.”

One area where the local P&E committee is already focusing a lot of its efforts on is letting high school students involved with FFA know more about Idaho Farm Bureau Federation’s Young Farmers and Ranchers program, which is open to producers between the ages of 18 and 35.

Zollinger was an FFA state officer but says he didn’t really understand Farm Bureau’s YF&R program until he was 36.

One of the goals of the Franklin County Farm Bureau P&E committee, he says, is to let FFA members and other youth involved with agriculture know that a “natural next step for them can be to be part of Farm Bureau’s Young Farmers and Ranchers program. We want young people to feel it’s natural to jump right into the YF&R piece of Farm Bureau.”

Fellows says another main goal of the FCFB organization is to let everyone in the county know that Farm Bureau can be a valuable source of information and ally for them on a host of natural resource issues, including herd districts and the upcoming Bear River adjudication process.

“We want them to come to us and we would like to educate them on agricultural issues such as the adjudication,” he says. “We really hope people realize they can come to



**Despite being relatively small, there is still a good amount of farming and ranching going on in Franklin County. According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, \$83 million worth of farm commodities were sold in the county during the 2017 census year. TOP: Beef cattle and dairy are two of the main agricultural commodities produced in Franklin County.**

Farm Bureau when they have an issue and we’re their advocate....”

According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, there were 787 farms in Franklin County during the 2017 census year and 228,383 total land in farms, including cropland and pastureland.

The average size of a farm in the county was 290 acres.

The census shows there were 50,308 acres of forage crops grown in Franklin County in 2017, 17,560 acres of wheat, 6,246 acres of safflower, 5,870 acres of barley and 5,189 acres of corn for silage. ■

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# WHEAT

*Continued from page 29*

yield at 96.7 bushels per acre, the average wheat yield in the state this year plummeted to 67.6 bushels per acre.

The drought and heat were a one-two punch that knocked wheat yields down considerably, said Gordon Gallup, a dryland wheat farmer in Ririe.

He said he abandoned some fields because the yields were so low.

“We started cutting and were only getting about 3-4 bushels in some fields so we just plowed it up,” he said. “We did all we could do but Mother Nature just didn’t help us.”

“Genesee” Joe Anderson, a dryland farmer in North Idaho, said most people he talked to ended up with about half of the wheat crop they normally would.

Dryland farming areas in North Idaho typically get an abundant supply of rainfall but Anderson said many of the fields in his region saw basically no rain from Easter to harvest this year.

“A lot of us were kind of surprised to get half a crop considering those fields were never even rained on,” he said.

Dwight Little, who farms under irrigation in Teton, said grain yields in his area were off 30-50 percent in many cases.

“Our wheat was more susceptible to the heat than our barley,” he said. “It’s one of the poorest years we’ve had, for sure.”

Most reservoirs in Idaho had a good amount of carryover water heading into the 2021 growing season, which helped mitigate for the poor snowfall that occurred this past winter in Idaho.

But the amount of water in those reservoirs now is way below their 2020 levels at this point in the year and farmers will be dependent on a good snowfall this coming winter to ensure they will have enough water for the 2022 growing season.

“Now we’re just hoping for rain and snow and a lot of it,” Chumrau said.

Nationwide, wheat production dropped 11 percent this year, to 1.6 billion bushels. The average wheat yield in the United States in 2021 was 44.3 bushels per acre. ■



Photo by Cory Kress

**A wheat field in Rockland this year is shown in this picture. Total wheat production in Idaho decreased by 32 percent in 2021 compared with 2020.**

# Idaho ag department opens new lab

By Sean Ellis

*Idaho Farm Bureau Federation*

POCATELLO – The Idaho State Department of Agriculture is opening a new, state-of-the-art laboratory that serves an important role in ensuring public, animal and plant health in the state.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held for the \$9 million Idaho State Department of Agriculture Diagnostic Laboratory was held Nov. 23 and was attended by members of the state's agricultural industry.

The new facility, which houses ISDA's animal health, plant pathology and dairy laboratories, is 18,500 square feet in size, which is about 30 percent larger than the previous lab, which is pushing 60 years old.

The new facility will allow ISDA to greatly expand its testing capacity if necessary, said Dan Salmi, ISDA's laboratory bureau chief. It also has the latest phytosanitary protocols, he added.

The difference between the old and new lab "really is night and day," he said. "The new laboratory has been designed to accommodate (up to) three times our current sample volume."

"We got feedback from all of our scientists and they were able to identify their exact needs and how the lab should be laid out," Salmi said. "We're all very excited about working in there."

The new lab, which is located adjacent to the ISDA headquarters building in Boise, includes half an acre of undeveloped land that could be developed if the department's mission increases in the future, he added.

Salmi said growth in demand for services the lab provides have exploded in some areas in recent years and that growth is expected to continue to increase.

In 2016, there were no large cattle processing facilities in Idaho. In a year and a half, there will be four, said Gov. Brad Little, a rancher and farmer from Emmett.

"For them to be successful, it is imperative that they have modern, efficient laboratories," he said. "I couldn't be happier about what's taken place here (with the new lab) and it's the right place at the right time to have this facility."



Photo by Sean Ellis

**The Idaho State Department of Agriculture is opening this new, state-of-the-art laboratory that serves an important role in ensuring public, animal and plant health in the state.**

The ISDA conducts laboratory analysis for the state's livestock producers, farmers, veterinarians, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, FDA and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The diagnostics laboratory also conducts the testing required for beef cattle to go to processing plants, as well as the testing required for many animals to cross state lines.

According to ISDA, the lab tested a total of 481,000 animal disease samples in fiscal year 2021.

Voluntary and regulatory testing help ensure safety in the state's food supply, ISDA officials told those who attended the ribbon-cutting.

The governor said the type of animal and plant disease monitoring that ISDA provides is important not only for those who make their living from agriculture, but for everyone in the state.

"Early, efficient, accurate diagnosis is

absolutely imperative for both livestock and human health," Little said. "It is very critical that we have this facility."

The investment ISDA made in the new laboratory will provide additional tools to the state's farmers and ranchers to help them succeed into the future, said Idaho Farm Bureau Federation Vice President Richard Durrant, who farms in Meridian.

"This will be a great asset to the agricultural industry and the whole state," he said.

The lab is critically important to many sectors of Idaho agriculture, including the state's \$500 million seed industry.

That industry produces and exports seed to nations all around the globe and each of those countries has its own requirements for certifying that seed is free of certain diseases, said Lloyd Knight, who oversees ISDA programs related to plant inspection and disease.

"This lab is vitally important to Idaho's seed industry," he said. ■



# Dam assessment just another sales pitch

*(Editor's note: This editorial was re-printed with permission of Capital Press – www.capitalpress.com – a newspaper that focuses on agriculture in Idaho, Oregon and Washington)*

There are assessments, and then there are sales pitches.

The plan of Washington Gov. Jay Inslee and U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., to “assess” taking out the four dams on the lower Snake River is just another sales pitch.

It is a foregone conclusion that the task force they choose will determine that taking out those dams is a good idea.

And here's the kicker: They will come up with a price tag that's less than the \$33.5 billion guesstimate of Rep. Mike Simpson, R-Idaho, who has made a name for himself by pushing the idea.

With the “assessment” in hand, Inslee and Murray will continue to beat the drum about the dams and what a good idea it is to punish farmers, ranchers, barge operators, power customers and others for the alleged benefit of fish.

The Snake River dams have already been extensively studied.

The Bonneville Power Administration studied them in 2007. The Washington Policy Center studied them in 2019. The Pacific Northwest Waterways Association studied them in 2020, as did the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, federal Bureau of Reclamation and the Bonneville Power Administration (again).

They all reached the same conclusion:

Taking out the dams would unravel the regional economy. The dams produce 12% of the region's low-cost hydropower. The locks allow large shipments of grain and supplies to transit the Columbia and Snake rivers as far upstream as Idaho. The reservoirs behind the dams irrigate more the 48,000 acres of fertile farmland.

By the way, the dams do have systems in place that allow salmon to bypass them. Not only that, better fish passage systems are available for a tiny fraction of the cost of taking out the dams.

For example, Whoosshh Innovations, a Washington state company, has demonstrated the effectiveness of its fish passage system, but Inslee and Murray seem to be unwilling to even look at alterna-

railroads and highways to handle the massive increase in rail and truck traffic it would require to replace the barge traffic through the Columbia Gorge.

And farmers will be forced to pay out of their pockets the higher cost of transporting their crops to export terminals. At the same time, many farmers would lose access to irrigation water.

The dams were built in the 1960s and 1970s. Assuming it takes \$35 billion to tear them down and replace their electrical generation, transportation and other facilities, politicians would have spectacularly succeeded in wasting taxpayer money.

While wasting taxpayer money is a specialty of Congress and other politicians these days, this would set a new

*‘The dams were built in the 1960s and 1970s. Assuming it takes \$35 billion to tear them down and replace their electrical generation, transportation and other facilities, politicians would have spectacularly succeeded in wasting taxpayer money.’*

tives that don't cost billions of dollars.

Folks like Inslee, Murray and Simpson instead want to flush the four dams and their benefits down the drain.

The irony included in the concept of taking out the dams is too obvious to miss. Taxpayers have paid billions of dollars to build and operate the dams. Now these few politicians want taxpayers to pay again — to destroy the dams and build 1,000 megawatts of generators and

standard: spending tens of billions of dollars and ending up with no more fish, more pollution, more expensive electricity, more truck and rail traffic through the Columbia River Gorge, fewer jobs and a smaller regional economy.

Considering all that, Inslee, Murray and Simpson could congratulate each other on pushing and participating in one more multibillion-dollar government boondoggle. ■



Submitted

This is an artist's rendering of a proposed facility in Pocatello that would process potatoes into frozen fries and dehydrated products.

# Unnamed potato processing company eyes Pocatello

**By John O'Connell**

*Intermountain Farm and Ranch*

An undisclosed company plans to process locally sourced potatoes into frozen fries and dehydrated products within a refrigerated warehouse to be built at Pocatello Regional Airport, officials said.

Officials with Frigitek Industrial Parks said the tenant planning to locate in the Pocatello refrigerated warehouse intends to process 153 million pounds of raw potatoes per year.

The spuds will be made into more than 76 million pounds of fried potato products and about 9 million pounds of dehydrated flakes, with projected sales exceeding \$30 million.

Frigitek, based in Washington, D.C., hosted a groundbreaking ceremony about a year ago to kick off construction of the 280,000-square-foot cold-storage facility. Amid the coronavirus pandemic, however, progress on the warehouse seemed to freeze in its tracks.

Ken Brown, president of Frigitek, ex-

plained some of the banks and financial partners reneged on their funding commitments, leery of backing a project with no tenants at the time, given the turmoil of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"A lot of folks wanted to see that the project had anchor income and pulled out, we believe, because of COVID," Brown said.

On June 29, a contractor, Idaho Materials, filed a lawsuit in 6th District court seeking more than \$562,000 in back pay, plus 12 percent interest, for work done



on behalf of Frigitek.

Frigitek also fell behind on payments to the city of Pocatello for its lease at the airport's business park.

Now, Brown vows the project is back on track, and he anticipates resuming construction within a few weeks. He hopes to have the warehouse operational by the third quarter of 2022.

"We have no intention other than finishing this building," he said.

Brown said his company has now secured about 70 percent of the necessary financing for construction and is committed to promptly paying its debt to Idaho Materials.

"They've put in a bid for some other work and we'd like to talk to them about that other work," Brown said, explaining it was an oversight on his part to assume financing for the project would remain stable during a pandemic that halted progress on projects nationwide.

Officials from Idaho Materials could not be reached for comment.

Brown said having a tenant on board should help attract additional tenants and investment. City officials have confirmed that Frigitek has also paid its lease for the next year.

"Everybody has been rowing as hard as they can but it's been a bit uphill," Brown said. "Anything tied to the supply chain at that time (during 2020), it was hard to get folks interested in a project."

Frigitek is a real estate developer that currently has five sites related to supporting production requiring cold storage.

Brown said the tenant for the Pocatello facility will use 74,000 square feet of space for its potato processing and storage operation. The warehouse will have a 50,000-square-foot common area, leaving room for up to three additional tenants, Brown said.

He said tenants will have the ability to control temperature as needed and in some cases may turn off refrigeration and use space for dry goods.

Brown believes his tenant will have a freight advantage by being located at the heart of a major potato production area. Finished products will be shipped from the warehouse to markets by rail and truck.

Frigitek has also been working with an export consulting group, which is negotiating to secure an advance commitment for the purchase of 20 percent of the potato products produced at the facility, Brown said.

Brown said his company has been negotiating with a frozen foods operator as a potential second tenant.

He said demand for frozen foods has increased significantly during the pandemic, which has led more people to

were constructed in the public realm in the street infrastructure," McClane said. "It's all public use-type facilities. This isn't anything that is specifically private for Frigitek."

McClane said he feels good about PDA's investment because even if the Frigitek project were to fall through, the site would be prepped and ready for another business.

"I fully expect Frigitek to move forward and all indications are they're

*"I fully expect Frigitek to move forward and all indications are they're going to move forward, but what we have is public infrastructure," McClane said, adding that refrigerated storage will be a "huge asset" to the community.*

— Brent McClane, executive director of PDA

dine at home, and he's also considering building a second refrigerated warehouse at the Pocatello airport once the initial facility is operational.

Brown appreciates Pocatello's stable labor pool and its proximity to Salt Lake City, which he noted is one of the fastest growing cities in the country.

"We think it's prime from a labor and growth standpoint," he said of the Pocatello market.

Frigitek is located within a tax increment financing district and has received a \$4.5 million commitment from Pocatello Development Authority, which administers the city's TIF districts, to help fund critical infrastructure.

In TIF districts, tax revenue generated from the value of improvements made by businesses is diverted from the general tax rolls and used to finance infrastructure serving those businesses.

Brent McClane, a Pocatello city staff member who serves as executive director of PDA, said PDA has already reimbursed Frigitek for \$904,197 in infrastructure, such as sewer lines, water lines and roadways.

"This is reimbursement for things that

going to move forward, but what we have is public infrastructure," McClane said, adding that refrigerated storage will be a "huge asset" to the community.

MiaCate Kennedy I, CEO of Bannock Development Corp., has been heavily involved in the effort to help Frigitek change course.

Kennedy has assisted Frigitek in addressing its funding challenges and developing an investment strategy. She's also offered suggestions regarding additional funding sources.

Kennedy has been participating in weekly Zoom meetings with Frigitek to hear progress updates. She said she feels more positive about the company's prospects than in the recent past.

"I do see them every day making progress toward that future goal," Kennedy said, explaining she's been serving as a "facilitator to help keep this project moving forward."

Kennedy sees untapped demand for cold storage in the community and believes Frigitek's concept is a winner.

"A lot of other cities, their cold storage is doing very well," she said. "I feel from the logistics side it is a good thing." ■

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PAGES 20 & 21

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