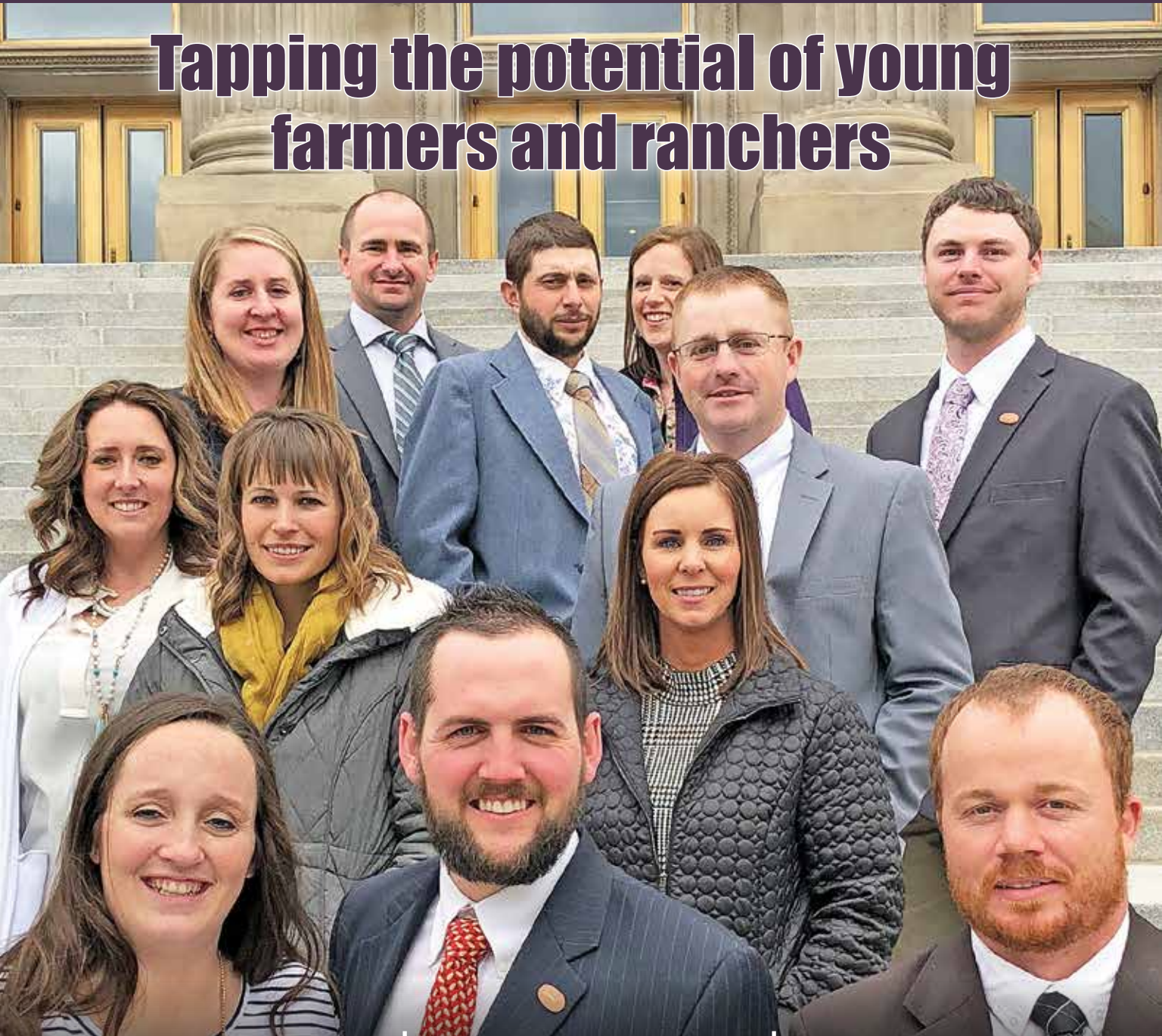


Tapping the potential of young farmers and ranchers



Idaho ag caucus forms, 8

Cattle ranchers fight hunger, 12

Chicken Dinner a winner, 37

The three-legged stool of good rulemaking



Rules are more likely to be followed if they are clear and well understood.

Rules are more likely to be supported if the people who must follow them agree they are needed and they are lawful.

And rules are more likely to achieve their purpose if they meet the prior criteria: people support them and can follow them.

That three-legged stool of good rulemaking is represented by the new Navigable Waters Protection Rule issued Jan. 23 by the Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The new, clearer definition of “waters of the United States” for purposes of federal regulatory jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act will end decades of confusion and litigation over which parts of a farmer’s or rancher’s land require federal permission to farm.

Let’s take a look at the first leg of the stool: clear and easy to understand. The new rule clearly establishes four categories of water or land that are regulated at the federal level. Equally important, it clarifies the categories that are not

See **DUVALL**, page 6

The President’s Desk

By Bryan Searle

President Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

YF&R program helps develop the next generation of farmers



From Jan. 30 to Feb. 1, about 180 young agricultural producers came to Boise to attend Idaho Farm Bureau Federation’s annual Young Farmers and Ranchers Leadership Conference.

These young producers from 18 to 35 years of age came from across the state and they represented most of the farm commodities produced in Idaho.

They represent the future of agriculture and they will also be the future leaders within their city, county and all of Idaho in a rapidly changing

environment. They will also be leaders in their local schools and communities and they are brilliant and full of ideas, energy and enthusiasm.

The YF&R program is designed to help provide these amazing young farmers and ranchers the skills and resources they will need to thrive in the future and become the next leaders of the state’s most important industry.

In order for Farm Bureau to remain strong, relevant and viable, we have to continue to train that next generation.

See **SEARLE**, page 7

Inside Farm Bureau

By Rick Keller

CEO Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

Farmers, ranchers depend on broadband



“Broadband is no longer a luxury, it’s a necessity. While most Americans take broadband for granted, data compiled by the Federal Communications Commission show that 26.4 percent of rural Americans lack access to broadband compared to only 1 percent of urban Americans,” American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall recently wrote to a U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee hearing on improving national broadband maps.

Farmers and ranchers depend on broadband

just as they do highways, railways and waterways to ship food, fuel and fiber across the country and around the world. Many of the latest yield-maximizing farming techniques require broadband connects for data collection and analysis performed both on the farm and in remote data centers.

America’s farmers and ranchers embrace technology that allows their farming businesses to be more efficient, economical and environmentally friendly.

See **KELLER**, page 6

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Photo by Sean Ellis

Members of Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's Young Farmers and Ranchers program chat during a break in the group's annual leadership conference, in Boise Jan. 31.

YF&R program helping develop future leaders

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

BOISE – Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's Young Farmers and Ranchers program has competitions that allow producers to compete for some big awards, like four-wheelers and trips to American Farm Bureau Federation's annual meeting.

But YF&R members say it's the networking opportunities that are the biggest benefit of the program, which is open to any farmer or rancher in Idaho between the ages of 18 and 35.

During the annual IFBF Young Farmers and Ranchers Leadership Conference in Boise Jan. 30-Feb. 1 – the conference was attended by 180 farmers and ranchers – the benefits of networking with other emerging producers was a major topic of discussion.

Photo by Sean Ellis

ON THE COVER: Members of the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmers and Ranchers program are shown on the steps of the Idaho Capitol building Jan. 30. See this page for a story on the program.



Photo by Jake Putnam

Idaho producers participate in a panel discussion during the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation's Young Farmers and Ranchers annual leadership conference, which was held in Boise Jan. 30-Feb. 1.

It's nice to rub shoulders and become friends with other young farmers but the biggest benefit in networking with them is being able to tap their brains for answers and vice versa, said Mitchel Searle, a Burley farmer.

"I find myself calling those individuals saying, hey, can you tell me how you deal with this aspect on your farm?" said Searle.

Searle said that while sitting around the table during lunch or breaks, he's constantly asking questions of other producers: "How do you operate your business, what's your crop rotation like, how many hours to you run your tractors before you trade them in?"

"You feel like you're alone in the world sometimes," he added. "But you're not alone. When you come together at events like this, you realize, there are a lot of other young farmers out there scrapping, trying to make it work, and you can learn from them and you're encouraged by the fact that

you're not the only one."

Paige Nelson, who operates a cow-calf operation with her husband in Rigby, offered a practical example of how networking helped her business.

"We needed hay (last) year and I procrastinated buying that hay until September," she said. She turned to a fellow YF&R member in her area who grows hay. "I call him up and tell him I need 20 tons of hay by next week, can you get it to me, and he delivered it."

"That's the type of networking we're talking about," Nelson said. "It's nice to run shoulders with people but when it comes down to true networking, that means you have friends you can call on when you need help or you need something."

"The networking thing is kind of special because you find out that people are in the same trenches that you are," said Franklin County rancher Jason Fellows, the state YF&R chairman. "You learn

that other people are going through the same challenged and struggles we are as beginning farmers."

While networking is a major benefit of the program, the true goal is to help produce the industry's future leaders and assist them grow personally and professionally, Fellows said.

The YF&R program has a slogan called PLAN, which stands for: Personal growth, leadership development, advocacy and networking.

"We feel those four things give us a great platform for people to be able to plan for success," Fellows said. "It doesn't matter where you are in life – if you're an agriculturalist who is producing a commodity or whether you're a lobbyist for agriculture – that gives you a pretty good plan for success."

"The ultimate goal of the YF&R program is to be able to help young producers develop skills that are going to benefit them in their life and their operation," said Brody Miller, an IFBF regional field

“We have got young farmers and ranchers that are brilliant and we need to help train them, support them in agriculture and provide them the experiences they need to be leaders into the future.”

— Bryan Searle, IFBF President

manager who oversees the program and is a former member himself.

“We try to encourage these young people to get involved and give them the skill sets they need to be able to feel like they are a competent leader so they can get involved, make a difference and be a voice for agriculture moving forward,” Miller said.

He said one of the biggest benefits of being a YF&R member is that you get to be involved in shaping the industry’s path.

“If we don’t get involved, we’re leaving it in somebody else’s hands to make the decisions for the future of agriculture and we can’t afford to do that,” Miller said.

Many members of Idaho Farm Bureau Federation’s board of directors went through the YF&R program, said IFBF President Bryan Searle, a farmer from Shelley.

“In order for Farm Bureau to stay strong, relevant and viable, we have to continue to train that next generation,” he said. “We have got young farmers and ranchers that are brilliant and we need to help train them, support them in agriculture and provide them the experiences they need to be leaders into the future.”

Searle joined the program after a cousin invited him to a YF&R conference and he says the program is a big reason he “developed such a deep love for Farm

Bureau. It’s in my blood.”

IFBF’s YF&R program includes more than 250 farmers and ranchers from across Idaho that represent most of the farm commodities produced in Idaho. The reasons that members have joined the program are varied.

Fellows got involved with YF&R after being asked to give a prayer blessing the food during a Discussion Meet, which is a YF&R contest designed to help young producers hone their public speaking and problem-solving skills during a competition that simulates a committee meeting.

Nelson was lured to the group because she wanted to win the Discussion Meet and win a four-wheeler.

“My initial engagement with Farm Bureau was totally superficial but as I’ve continued to progress through the program, I’ve realized it’s so much more,” she said. “I’ve seen myself grow as a person and I’ve been given leadership and traveling opportunities.”

Others have joined as a way to try to win the group’s Excellence in Agriculture or Achiever in Agriculture awards, which both have four-wheelers as the top prize.

“You have people that are very competitive that will get involved with the program some of the competitive events,” Searle said. “There are others that wouldn’t touch those events with a 10-foot pole and that’s all right. The pro-

gram is well rounded and there are a lot of opportunities for everyone.”

Two new YF&R programs that will begin soon include a mentorship program and one for people interested in governmental affairs.

“There are programs outside of just competitions that can benefit all young producers,” Miller said.

During the annual YF&R leadership conference, the agenda includes a trip to the Idaho Capitol building to attend committee meetings and rub shoulders with lawmakers.

During this year’s conference, participants met with the governor for 45 minutes and attended the House and Senate agricultural affairs committees. They were well received.

“These young people ... are the consummate stewards of our natural resources in the state of Idaho,” Rep. Jerald Raymond, a Republican rancher from Menan who formerly served as the state chairman of the YF&R group, said during a House Agricultural Affairs Committee meeting.

“We appreciate you being here today and we appreciate everything you do for agriculture,” said Rep. Judy Boyle, a Republican rancher from Midvale and chairwoman of the House ag committee.

For more information about the YF&R program, contact Miller at bmiller@idahofb.org or (208) 957-1854. ■

DUVALL

Continued from page 2

“waters of the U.S.,” such as areas of a field that hold water only after a heavy rain.

Wetlands converted to farmland decades ago are excluded. Most upland ditches are excluded. “Adjacent wetlands” covered under the new rule are clearly defined to be directly abutting or connecting to jurisdictional waters.

The lines between what’s “in” and what’s “out” are clear enough that a farmer doesn’t have to hire a team of engineers and lawyers to find out if the land can be farmed.

That’s a big improvement over the 2015 Waters of the U.S. rule, which gave federal agencies too much leeway to declare almost any area of a farmer’s or rancher’s land a water of the U.S., even if it was far away from navigable waters.

I’ve always said that anyone ought to be able to look out on a field and easily see which parts of the land are regulated by the federal government and which areas are not.

Second, the rule is supported by the people who are most directly affected, farmers and ranchers and other landowners.

Clean water is a priority for farmers and ranchers. We know that a new rule is needed both to protect water quality and to provide certainty for landowners. Without this rule, it’s nearly impossible for a landowner to know which parts of the land are considered WOTUS.

In fact, Farm Bureau for years has been calling for federal agencies to issue a rule that provides clarity and predictability.

We’ve called for a rule that aligns with the Clean Water Act and with the direction given by the Supreme Court. What we could not support is a rule, like the now-repealed 2015 rule, that

would create more confusion, risk and bureaucracy for the people who grow our food.

Finally, this new rule will effectively protect clean water. If your arm is broken, the doctor doesn’t put a cast on your leg. But that’s just about what would have happened under the 2015 WOTUS rule.

Instead of focusing on navigable waters and those waters with a direct connection to navigable waters, the 2015 rule was aimed squarely at controlling what farmers and others could do on land miles away.

It was a federal land grab, plain and simple.

The Trump administration’s new Navigable Waters Protection Rule focuses the treatment where it is needed, a large reason why we believe it will achieve its purpose of enhancing water quality.

There’s been a lot of misinformation in the news media about the new rule. It doesn’t “roll back” anything. It provides more effective water protection, with clear lines of authority to make those protections work. And it rightly asks the states to do their part, with the cooperative federalism envisioned by Congress when it passed the Clean Water Act.

Farm Bureau members have worked long and hard for this rule, and we would not have it without their dedicated advocacy efforts.

Rather than taking a victory lap, we should celebrate this win by correcting misinformation about the new rule and letting our government officials know that we support it.

The Navigable Waters Protection Rule is clear, supported by the people it regulates, and designed to achieve its purpose — the three-legged stool of good rulemaking. ■

KELLER

Continued from page 2

Today’s farmers and ranchers are using precision agricultural techniques to make decisions that impact the amount of fertilizer a farmer needs to purchase and apply to the field, the amount of water needed to sustain the crop, and the amount and type of herbicides or pesticides the farmer may need to apply.

These are only a few examples of the ways farmers use broadband connectivity to achieve optimal yields, lower environmental impact and maximize profits.

Rural communities need access to health care, government services, and educational and business opportunities. For many rural communities, access can only be gained by using broadband services and sophisticated technologies that require high-speed connections.

According to the FCC, 39 percent of rural Americans lack access to 25 Mbps/3 Mbps service, compared to only 4 percent of urban America.

Reliable broadband will also contribute to the health and welfare of animals. Digital connectivity is playing an increasingly important role in optimizing animal care. From monitoring feed usage and rations to scheduling delivery of animals, livestock farmers use broadband daily to improve the efficiency of their operations and ensure the health of their herds.

All the data collected can be compiled into production reports, which help farmers make more informed decisions about their farm and ranch.

The main source of funding for the deployment of broadband is the Universal Service Fund, created by the FCC. Recently, Congress voted \$550 million in grant funding for the ReConnect program, which will help expand broadband access to historically underserved communities.

Increasing broadband availability in rural America is a priority of Farm Bureau, which continues to encourage Congress to support rural communities with broadband coverage with increased funding. ■

Continued from page 2

We have many young producers in this state who are brilliant but they also need to develop the personal and leadership skills that will help them take their game to the next level.

The day before the conference began, I joined the YF&R leadership committee, which consists of the state chair and the chair of each of five districts, as they spent the day in our state capitol attending and addressing both the House and Senate agriculture committees. They also visited with the governor in his office, asking him questions and interacting with him.

The Young Farmers and Ranchers program is designed to help train these producers and provide them experiences and opportunities to lead so that they can become the future voice of Idaho agriculture.

Many leaders in the IFBF organization, including members of the group's board of directors, went through the YF&R program, as did many Idaho lawmakers.

I credit my involvement in the program with helping cultivate my deep love for Farm Bureau. My membership in the program led me to serve as a district YF&R chair and eventually as the state program chair.

That led to me being selected to serve on IFBF's board of directors and truthfully, if I had not joined the YF&R program, I probably wouldn't be president of this great farm organization today.

Farm Bureau is in my blood and my involvement with the YF&R program is what cultivated that love for Farm Bureau.

I saw at a young age that Farm Bureau was an organization where my voice and ideas could be heard and amplified through the organization's grassroots efforts. None of us are powerful in ourselves but our power comes when we add in thousands of other Farm Bureau members across the state and we are unified on issues.

That's the power of Idaho Farm Bureau and the Young Farmers and Ranchers program is the platform that allows a lot of younger producers to be introduced to the organization. When we combine our future leaders with the more experienced and seasoned members, we become so much stronger.

The YF&R program has different contests that provide opportunities for members to win some big prizes. But the contests are just one of the many facets of the program, which provides an array of leadership development opportunities.

One of the biggest benefits of the program is that it allows young farmers and ranchers, who are trying to establish themselves in the agricultural industry, to meet and network with other young producers from around the state.

Farming and ranching are tough business and a person can

get discouraged easily when times, and prices, are difficult. The YF&R program allows farmers and ranchers to share experiences with other producers and learn from them.

Many times, advice picked up from another young producer in the program has resulted in a young farmer or rancher improving their own operation's bottom line.


Another big benefit of the program is that it provides young producers an avenue to have their voices heard and have a say in the future of agriculture. As the old saying goes, if you're not at the table, you're probably on the menu.

As an organization, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation has to invest in the next generation and, as Sen. Mark Harris, a Republican rancher from Soda Springs and former

YF&R member, told IFBF members recently, the Young Farmers and Ranchers program is our organization's built-in succession plan.

My message is boiled down to this: Farm Bureau needs you, young farmers and ranchers, and you need us. ■

'The Young Farmers and Ranchers program is designed to help train these producers and provide them experiences and opportunities to lead so that they can become the future voice of Idaho agriculture.'

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Idaho lawmakers form farm and timber issues caucus

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

BOISE — Idaho lawmakers have formed the state's first farm and timber issues caucus, which will focus on issues important to the state's agricultural industry.

Early reaction to the Idaho Farm, Ranch and Timber Issues Caucus has been positive, said Rep. Caroline Nilsson Troy, R-Genesee, one of the four original founders of the caucus.

"I'm just thrilled with the response it's gotten," said Troy, who rents out 400 acres of farm land in a farm partnership.

According to a white paper providing an overview of the caucus, it "will address issues and concerns of the agricultural industry and those citizens, communities and counties who rely on farmers, ranchers, loggers and affiliated industries."

According to a University of Idaho study, agriculture is responsible, directly and indirectly, for one in every eight jobs in the state and 13 percent of Idaho's total gross domestic product.

According to the white paper, the caucus "will explore ways to act together to ensure Idaho has a comprehensive policy strategy to ensure agricultural and natural resource-based communities grow and flourish ... We will be a point of contact for our agricultural and natural resource-based citizens to ensure their voices are heard on every level within the statehouse and across our agencies."

About 25 lawmakers attended the first caucus meeting Feb. 3 and the topic was rural broadband. The group will meet every Monday during the Idaho legislative session and topics could cover a wide range of issues.

"We're hoping to cover lots of topics" in future meetings, Troy said. Those topics could range from value-added processing to economic development, rural health care, education and hemp.



Submitted photo
The four founding members of the newly formed Idaho Farm, Ranch and Timber Issues Caucus, from left: Rep. Sally Toone, D-Gooding, Sen. Bert Brackett, R-Rogerson, Rep. Caroline Nilsson Troy, R-Genesee, and Sen. Janie Ward-Engelking, D-Boise.

Caucus founders said it was important to them that the group be open to members of both parties and both branches of the 105-member Idaho Legislature.

"The uniqueness of a joint caucus can't be overstated," Rep. Sally Toone, a Democrat farmer and rancher from Gooding, stated in a news release. "We will be bringing many perspectives together to focus on issues impacting all of Idaho."

The founding members of the caucus include two Republicans, two Democrats and two members each from the House and Senate.

Besides Toone and Troy, the other founder members of the caucus are Sen. Bert Brackett, a Republican rancher from Rogerson, and Sen. Janie Ward-Engelking, D-Boise.

"We're being cautious not to make it a rural vs. urban caucus," Troy said. "If you eat, you're in agriculture."

Troy said she had been mulling the idea of

starting the caucus for six years and decided that with rural Idaho continuing to lose members and clout in the legislature because of the rapid growth occurring in the state's urban areas, now was the time.

Following the 2020 Census, the redistricting process will begin in Idaho. After the state's legislative districts are redrawn, rural Idaho could lose six to nine seats in the legislature, according to some estimates.

The idea is to help educate urban legislators or others who don't have an intimate understanding of natural resource-related issues about the challenges that farmers, ranchers and other rural residents face in an increasingly complex society and economy, Troy said.

For example, she said, "We could address why the (2018) trespassing bill was so popular among farmers and ranchers. We want to help people understand what the issues are." ■



The U.S. and China have signed a “phase one” trade deal that could result in China purchasing \$40-\$50 billion in U.S. agricultural products in each of the next two years.

U.S., China sign deal that could be big benefit to agriculture

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

POCATELLO — President Donald Trump signed a “phase one” trade deal with China Jan. 15 that representatives from both nations said will result in China purchasing at least \$40 billion in agricultural products from the United States annually over the next two years.

“The farmers are going to be so happy” with the trade deal, Trump said during a signing ceremony at the White House that included top trade representatives from the world’s two biggest economies.

The president said that under terms of the agreement, China will purchase more than \$200 billion in U.S. products over the next two years, “including up to \$50 billion [annually] on agriculture alone.”

During the signing ceremony, Chinese Vice Premier Liu He said Chinese

companies will purchase \$40 billion in U.S. ag products annually. “If the demand is strong, the companies may purchase more,” he added.

If China does follow through on its commitment to purchase at least \$40 billion in U.S. farm products each year, that would be twice the amount of agricultural products that nation has ever purchased from the United States in a single year.

Trump said that when the deal was being negotiated some people told him U.S. farmers and ranchers couldn’t produce enough product to meet the \$40-50 billion goal.

“Let (the farmers) tell me they can’t do it,” he said. “I have no doubt they’ll be able to do it.”

In anticipation of a phase one deal, Trump on Dec. 13 said that U.S. “farmers are going to have to go out and buy much larger tractors because it means a lot of

business.”

Trump mentioned dairy, beef, pork, rice and poultry as examples of how U.S. agriculture will benefit from the deal.

Dairy and beef are Idaho’s top two farm commodities in terms of total farm cash receipts.

This isn’t the first time the United States has announced that China has pledged to buy massive amounts of U.S. agricultural products.

That has happened at least five times over the past two years. However, the difference is that this time a deal has been signed and according to U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, it is enforceable.

The deal, which the Trump administration describes as a contract between the two nations, does not need congressional approval. ■

Wolf population estimated for first time in four years

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

BOISE – Idaho Department of Fish and Game has released an Idaho wolf population estimate for the first time in four years and it's much higher than the last estimate.

But IDFG and other wolf management officials cautioned against making hard comparisons between the 2015 and 2019 estimates because they were arrived at using different methods and calculations.

During an Idaho Fish and Game Commission meeting Jan. 23, IDFG staff estimated there were a peak total of 1,541 wolves in Idaho during the summer of 2019.

That number has since been reduced to about 1,000 because of the number of wolves taken by hunters, trappers, through management actions to eliminate problem wolves and those that died by natural causes.

But that's still much higher than the 2015 estimated of 786 Idaho wolves that was reported in early 2016.

According to an IDFG news release, "Biologists cautioned that comparing the 2015 estimate of 786 ... to the current estimate would be misleading because previous estimates were based on different methods and represented winter counts when the population was closer to its lowest point of the year."

When the 2015 estimate took place, "We knew that was a minimum that we could scientifically prove were out there," said IDFG spokesman Roger Phillips. "We knew there were more."

When the fish and game department's wolf monitoring program was under federal oversight from 2006 to 2015, the department used radio collars to calculate wolf numbers.

Annual wolf estimates stopped after the 2015 count.

Last year, IDFG deployed 569 cameras around the state specifically for the purpose



Idaho Department of Fish and Game photo
A wolf is shown in an Idaho forest in pictures captured by an Idaho Department of Fish and Game remote camera.

of estimating Idaho's wolf population. Those cameras took 11 million photos over the course of a few months last summer.

Of those 569 cameras, 259 detected wolves, according to the IDFG news release.

Using recognition software to rapidly determine photos of animals, wildlife technicians identified species of animals in the photos and biologists and university scientists applied mathematical modeling to produce the wolf population estimate, according to the news release.

"The method of estimating wildlife populations using remote cameras is a new innovation," the IDFG news release states. "As time goes on, the modeling will continue to be refined as biologists use this technique to generate annual population estimates. Going forward, they will also have a better baseline for comparing populations from year to year."

Todd Grimm, the Idaho Director of Wildlife Services, a federal agency that helps solve conflicts between humans and animals, also cautioned against reading too much into the difference between the estimates.

"I don't know that [the 2019 estimate] really says anything just because of the fact the methods used to come up with that number are different than the methods that they used

to get the previous estimates from," he said. "So it's not apples to apples."

But, he added, now that the fish and game department will use the same methods annually, "It will be interesting to see where it goes from here on out."

Gov. Brad Little's recommended fiscal year 2021 budget includes \$408,000 in dedicated and federal funds "to conduct enhanced research on wolf populations and evaluate methods to effectively manage them."

Phillips said the IDFG had to pull funds from other sources within the department last year to pay for a lot of the camera monitoring. The \$408,000 sought for the next fiscal year will be used specifically to continue that monitoring program, he said.

During a meeting of the Idaho Wolf Depredation Control Board last August, IDFG Director Ed Schriever spoke about the effort to install cameras around the state to monitor wolves.

He said the camera network will allow the department to make reliable annual wolf estimates.

"We believe we have a responsibility to communicate to the public how many (wolves) we have, where they are and their management," he said. ■

'The market is always right'

To take a line from an old movie about mountain men, "March is a muddy month down below." Depending on just where you live and farm, this very well could be true.

But it is always good to see a little more daylight each day. The additional daylight gives us hope and enthusiasm for a better crop year as well as good times ahead. After all, we are producers and in the spring the glass is always half full.

Over the years we have all learned that no matter what is going on politically the markets trend higher and they trend lower and let us not forget, "The market is always right."

As we have talked about before in this column, the worst thing that can happen to us in our marketing decisions is for us to think that we are right and the market is wrong. What we need to remember is that in short supply years, as we have seen this year in some commodities, the market only needs to trade high enough to ration the crop.

This rationing could take place domestically but usually the rationing takes place in the world market with exports. This year it is currently estimated that the world will have a 38% stocks-to-use ration for all wheat at the end of the marketing year. This is steady with the previous two years.

However, when we take China out of the equation the stocks-to-use ration drops to 22%. So, China is



currently holding a large amount of the world wheat stocks. Does this piece of information change our minds just a little as we move into the 2020/2021 marketing year?

Now let's visit for a minute about the local grain markets. First and foremost, you should

hang this sentence on your office wall: Just because a grain company is offering basis contracts doesn't mean that it is a good deal.

The companies aren't bad for offering these contracts; in fact, it is good for them and you as it gives you alternative options in your marketing program. However, you still need to know what basis really is and the seasonal trends both higher and lower before entering into these contracts.

This year we are seeing grain companies offering, "hedge to arrive contracts." These are contracts where the grain company will let you lock in the futures side of your price equation and then let you final price your commodity by locking in the basis at a later date.

These are a cash contract with a delivery date for your commodity established at the time you enter into the contract. Here again you need to know the seasonal trends of the futures markets and just how this type of contract could help you.

These hedge to arrive contracts are primarily offered in the wheat markets at this time. If this type of contract

could help you then you need to ask around and find the company that offers this type of program.

When we look at hedging let's remember that we can hedge the futures side of our cash price. We usually visit about wheat but let's not forget about hedging our meat and milk production as well.

The futures market will give you the opportunity to protect the futures side of you cash price against an adverse movement or trend. You could still have other factors in your market that could affect your end price but the futures part could be protected.

In both the meat and dairy markets hedging with futures gives you the opportunity to level the market out over the year. When implementing a hedging program, it is always important to have and keep a positive attitude on what you want to accomplish.

Rather than continually telling yourself the reasons it won't work, you need to look to the opportunities and reasons that a hedging program using futures will help you in the years ahead.

How we produce our grain, meat and milk has changed over the past 10 year but many of us are still marketing the same as we did 10 years ago. Maybe we ought to at least look at alternative marketing opportunities and then make our decision based on what we know.

How you have been marketing isn't wrong but there are other alternatives that should be considered.

Clark Johnston is a grain marketing specialist and owner of JC Management Co. of Ogden, Utah. He can be reached at clark@jcmanagement.net. ■



BEEF COUNTS

Idaho ranchers providing beef to The Idaho Foodbank

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

BOISE – There are more cows than people in Idaho and that is a lot of beef. But not everybody in the state has regular access to that high source of protein and Idaho’s ranching families are doing what they can to change that.

Together with the Boise-based Agri Beef Co., the state’s beef cattle producers have raised enough money since 2010 to provide more than 1.5 million 3-ounce servings of beef to needy families in Idaho through The Idaho Foodbank network.

They have done that through events such

as the Feb. 1 “Beef Night on the Ice” event in Boise, which featured the Idaho Steelheads hockey team. A plethora of activities were held during the game to raise money for the foodbank.

Through a program called Beef Counts, Agri Beef matches, every year, up to \$50,000 raised by the state’s beef producers for the foodbank, which uses the money to purchase and distribute beef to its 400 pantry partners across the state.

The Beef Counts program is a partnership between the Idaho Beef Council, Idaho Cattle Association and Agri Beef.

IBC CEO T.K. Kuwahara said the program is really important to the state’s cattle

producers “because they are producing a high-quality, safe, nutritious product and they want to make sure that every Idahoan has access to that beef.

They want to make sure beef is on the menu at The Idaho Foodbank and that everyone in Idaho has access to it.”

The money the state’s beef industry raises to purchase beef for the needy is critical to the foodbank, said Carlyn Blake, development manager for The Idaho Foodbank.

The foodbank receives a lot of general food donations but not a lot of high-quality protein, she said, and the Beef Counts program helps fill that gap.

“It absolutely goes a long ways,” she said



Idaho Beef Council photos

Hockey fans attempt to “build a hamburger” on the ice quicker than other contestants Feb. 1 during a hockey game in Boise. Idaho’s beef industry teamed up to raise money during the game to benefit The Idaho Foodbank.
LEFT: The Idaho ranching industry’s Beef Counts program raises, through events such as this Feb. 1 hockey game in Boise, money that is provided to The Idaho Foodbank to purchase and provide beef to needy Idahoans.

about the program. “Honestly, I don’t know what we would do without the beef council and their promotion of the Beef Counts program because they have been instrumental in getting beef partners all throughout the state ... to donate so that we have that high-quality protein.”

She said one in eight Idahoans is “food-insecure” and “it’s really important that we’re not only providing those people with things like pastas but that we can also provide them protein as well.”

Many of Agri Beef’s employees volunteer at mobile distribution centers where beef items are provided to the needy, said Liz Moore, the company’s brand marketing specialist.

“Everybody in the company feels like they are invested in the program in one way or another,” she said. “We feel it’s a great way to give back to our communities.”

The Feb. 1 hockey game featured fun events such as a Build a Burger event that had teams of two people trying to build a hamburger on the ice faster than other teams,

and hamburger races on the ice. It also included some beef industry trivia, raffles and half-off hamburgers during the game.

A total of \$6,420 was raised for the foodbank during the event and Agri Beef will match that, raising the total to \$12,840.

Dozens of ranchers from across the state showed up to support the Beef Night on the Ice event, and another three dozen 4-H students were on hand to educate people about the Beef Counts program.

IBC Chairman Jeff Johnson, a fourth-generation cattle rancher from Parma, said Idaho’s ranchers have a strong connection to the state and their local communities.

“We feel really passionate about the product that we produce and the business that we are in and we feel it’s important that we give back to the community and help make people’s lives better,” he said. “Beef Counts is something that a lot of producers are really passionate about.”

Jerome rancher Bill Lickley said Idaho’s beef producers realize they are blessed because even when times are rough financially,

they can go into their freezer and take out some beef.

“Not everybody in Idaho has that opportunity and we want to do whatever we can do to help them,” he said. “Supporting the program is something we can do to help our neighbors and communities.”

Boise is by far Idaho’s largest population center and besides raising money to help fight hunger, the hockey event also served as an opportunity for Idaho’s beef ranchers to educate people about the important role their industry plays in Idaho.

Beef cattle is the state’s No. 2 farm commodity in terms of total farm cash receipts and the economic impact the industry has helps underpin a lot of rural communities in Idaho.

“Tonight’s event is one of the ways we can reach into the largest metropolitan area in the state and tell our story,” Johnson said during the hockey game. “Hopefully, people that come here will learn a few things about our industry and come out with a positive feeling about the beef producers in Idaho.” ■



Photo by Bill Schaefer

Idahoan Britt Raybould, the first woman president of the National Potato Council, speaks with NPC CEO Kam Quarles, left, and NPC Chief Operating Officer Mike Wenkel prior to the potato council's annual conference in January.

Idahoan first woman president of National Potato Council

By Bill Schaefer

For Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

Breaking glass ceilings is a concept that Britt Raybould prefers to not discuss. Though she is the first woman president in the 72-year history of the National Potato Council, Raybould would rather focus on the fact that she is the third member of her family to serve a one-year term as NPC president.

Following in the steps of her grandfather, Dell Raybould, the NPC president in 1978, and her father, Jeff, the 1997 NPC president, Britt ascended to the grower organi-

zation's presidency at the 2020 NPC annual meeting in January.

Growing up on the family farm and being the third Raybould to lead the NPC is an example of the generational strengths that can be found in the history of the potato industry and Idaho agriculture she said.

"I think it points to the fact of how much of the potato industry really does focus on family," Raybould said. "A lot of the longer term operations are family operations.

It's not to say others haven't come in and started something and have gotten it going without having a family tradition but I think it points to the fact that within the potato

industry there's a strong family element."

Raybould Brothers Farms is a textbook example of that strong family element. Britt is the chief financial official at RBF. Together with her younger brother, Jaren, an RBF owner/operator, their father and grandfather and three full-time employees, they manage the daily operations of the farm.

The Rayboulds grow Russet Norkotahs and Russet Burbank potatoes for the fresh market on 800 acres annually, along with 1,400 acres of grain and 150 acres of alfalfa, in Madison and Fremont counties.

"We grow for Five Guys (restaurant) and

we also grow for the open market,” Raybould said. Potatoes that don’t meet fresh grade standards are sold to the Idahoan dehy plant for processing.

Not only has Raybould followed in her grandfather’s footsteps as NPC president, she was elected to succeed him as the Idaho State Representative in District 34, House Seat B for the Republican party in the 2018 election. Her legislative responsibilities include serving on three House committees.

She credits her family and the National Potato Council staff for all their support in helping her juggle and multi-task three jobs at the same time.

“I need to give full credit; it’s my dad and brother that are doing the day-to-day operations along with our really hard working folks who are with us throughout the year,” Raybould said. “I’m very lucky to be surrounded by a lot of supportive people. The staff at the NPC are fantastic.”

Raybould grew up in St. Anthony and is a graduate of Sugar-Salem High School. She has a bachelor’s degree in English with an emphasis in technical communications from Boise State University and followed that with a master’s in professional communications from Westminster College in Salt Lake City.

NPC CEO Kam Quarles said Raybould’s communications background is a great fit with the NPC and coincides with the organization’s use of new tools of communication such “Eye on Potatoes,” a series of podcasts introduced at the 2020 Potato Expo.

“She’s got a lot of good common sense ideas on how to expand the use of technology, how to create an NPC that is an attractive place for younger leaders to come work in,” he said.

“At the leadership level, she brings that kind of younger viewpoint and a lot of technological proficiency,” Quarles said. “At the staff level, we’re trying to really reach out and reset the organization using new technology, new tools, so ... the timing couldn’t be better.”

During her time at BSU and Westminster and afterward, Raybould said, she was non-committal about her future on the family farm.

“I wasn’t 100 percent sure I was going to come back,” she said. “I had degrees



Photo by Bill Schaefer
Idaho potato farmer Britt Raybould, the first woman president of the National Potato Council, and Idaho Grower Shippers Association President Shawn Boyle enjoy a break during the NPC’s annual conference in January.

in communications and I was working in corporate marketing.”

For Raybould, it was a classic example of absence makes the heart grow fonder. After working in marketing for seven years she made the decision to return to the family farm in 2007.

“It was just over a period of time when I decided that this was something that I hadn’t realized I was as invested in and was interested in coming back to,” she said in recounting how she decided to come back and work on the family farm.

“I would still come back here during potato harvest and be around for some of the busier times of year,” she said, “but what really struck me is when I’d been working in an office setting for a number of years and it was really difficult for me to describe what I did for people.”

She found that she missed the elemental satisfaction that comes from production on the farm. It’s not that the office work wasn’t satisfying but she rediscovered that sense of accomplishment and satisfaction that comes from working on the farm with her family.

“When I went to the farm there was this really clear outcome,” Raybould said of her decision to return to the farm. “You worked the land. You harvested the crop. You had

this very visible, very clear outcome for all the hard work that you put into it. It was really surprising to me how much more fulfilling I found the farming side of things.

As Raybould settles in to lead the NPC through 2020, she has set two goals she wants to accomplish in the coming year. She wants to encourage greater participation from growers of her generation and make sure that they know their voices are being heard.

“We’ve managed to accomplish a lot for an organization of our size and I’d like for us to continue being successful going forward but in order to do that we need to make sure that the folks who are my age are coming in, are participating, are learning the ropes and are a part of things,” she said. “If you can only be at one of the NPC meetings a year ... we still want to see you.”

She said that with the growing consolidation of farms, resulting in fewer actual farmers, it’s imperative for the future success of the NPC that the new generation of potato growers actively participate in the NPC.

“We want them there for as much time as they’re willing to be there,” Raybould said. ■

Pilot program aims to bolster late-season flows in the Teton River Basin system

By John O'Connell
Intermountain Farm and Ranch

DRIGGS — Farmers who divert from the Teton River Basin hope a new aquifer recharge pilot program will bolster late-season flows in the system and extend their irrigation season.

The Idaho Water Resource Board secured a \$60,600 grant to fund the pilot in 2020 and 2021. The grant was offered by the Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program, which is funded by Bonneville Power Administration mitigation dollars associated with operating hydropower dams on the Columbia River.

In Idaho, most of the program's funding is invested to benefit anadromous fish in the Upper Salmon, but a small portion is available to address issues in other fisheries. The pilot aims to recharge the declining Teton Basin Aquifer with at least 10,000 acre-feet of surface water during both years.

Grant funds will be used to pay participating canal companies to run water through their canals during the spring — when there's ample excess water in the system — and spill it into adjacent gravel pits, allowing it to filter into the aquifer.

"Part of the emphasis is just to figure out if we can do managed recharge in the spring, if canals will not be frozen," said Sarah Lien, water resources director with Friends of the Teton River. "The expectation is we'll have the two-year period to work out some of the kinks and that it will be a viable strategy."

Hydrology modeling done by an expert with the Henry's Fork Foundation predicts 4,200-acre-feet of additional flows will enter the river through springs between June and October, when it's needed most by irrigators.

The model estimates recharge will boost base flows in the system by 15 cubic feet per second during that period.

As it currently stands, many of the system's tributaries go dry by mid-July, and the local irrigators have junior water rights, which are often targeted by senior users' water calls during dry years. Lien said adding 15 cfs to the system could buy irrigators — most of whom raise grain, hay and seed potatoes — an extra week of watering crops.

"That's the difference between finishing a quality crop or not," Lien said.

Groundwater levels have declined by as much as 55 feet in some parts of the aquifer, which spans from Victor north to Teton, since the 1970s, Lien said. Bolstering late-season spring flows would be a great benefit to native Yellowstone cutthroat trout that live in the system, she added.

The Teton River Water Users Association formed to maintain the basin's health to benefit a variety of stakeholders. Irrigators represent about 60 percent of the association's membership, but it also includes entities such as Teton County, the cities of Victor, Driggs and Teton, the U.S. Forest Service, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Friends of the Teton River and the Teton River Land Trust.

In addition to the new recharge program, the basin has implemented a program to resurrect early season flood irrigation to take advantage of "incidental recharge" from irrigation water that seeps from furrows into the water table.

Lien said the program completed its second year earlier this season and diverted 10,000 acre-feet for flood irrigation from a dozen irrigation diversions. Participating canal companies are paid from a \$40,000 funding pool, comprising contributions from various foundations and conservation grants, based on the volume of their flood-irrigation diversions.

Lien explained aquifer levels have been dropping since the 1970s, when farmers began switching from flood irrigation to more efficient sprinkler irrigation. Lien said irrigators who participate in the program use their most junior rights to flood irrigate in the spring, when water is abundant. Later in the season, when surface water is in short supply, they switch to more senior rights and use efficient sprinklers. ■

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Water rules

EPA, Corps announce new clean water rule

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

BOISE – Federal agencies on Jan. 23 announced a new, final clean water rule that replaces the 2015 Waters of the United States (WOTUS) regulation that many farmers, ranchers and other water users had feared would greatly expand the federal government’s jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act over waters and adjacent land.

Supporters of the new rule said it will provide the regulatory clarity that farmers and other businesses need to make important decisions.

Many agricultural producers and other landowners had feared the proposed 2015 WOTUS rule would have required them to hire a team of lawyers to determine what they could do on their own land.

They were concerned that rule, which was repealed by the EPA last year, would have expanded the EPA and Corps’ regulatory reach to nearly all waters nationwide.

According to an EPA news release, “The (new) rule provides a new, clear definition for ‘Waters of the

United States,’ delivering on President Trump’s promise to finalize a revised definition for ‘Waters of the United States’ that protects the nation’s navigable waters from pollution and will result in economic growth across the country.”

“EPA and the (Army Corps) are providing much needed regulatory certainty and predictability for American farmers, landowners and businesses to support the economy and accelerate critical infrastructure projects,” EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler said in the news release. “After decades of landowners relying on expensive attorneys to determine what water on their land may or may not fall under federal regulations, our new (rule) strikes the proper balance between Washington and the states in managing land and water resources while protecting our nation’s navigable waters, and it does so within the authority Congress provided.”

According to a joint statement by members of the Water Advocacy Coalition, which includes American Farm Bureau Federation: “This new rule does not reduce or remove envi-

ronmental protections of any waters; it simply brings clarity to which level of government oversees which body of water under the federal-state partnership established by the Clean Water Act.”

The coalition’s news release said the new rule clarifies which level of government – federal or state – oversees dry land that is sometimes wet, and does not change who oversees permanent waterways, such as lakes, rivers and streams.

“It does make clear that usually dry areas should not be considered federal waters,” the release states.

American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall, in a statement, said farmers and ranchers care about clean water and preserving the land.

“That’s why we support the new clean water rule,” he said. “It provides clarity and certainty, allowing farmers to understand water regulations without having to hire teams of consultants and lawyers. We appreciate the commitment of the agencies involved and this administration to crafting a new regulation that achieves important regulatory



oversight while allowing farmers to farm. Clean water, clear rules.”

The EPA news release said the new rule ends decades of uncertainty over where federal jurisdiction begins and ends. For the first time, it says, EPA and the Army Corps recognize the difference between federally protected wetlands and state protected wetlands and the rule will give states and tribes the certainty to manage their waters in ways that best protect their natural resources and local economies.

During the Idaho Potato Conference and Ag Expo in Pocatello Jan. 23, the new rule was announced by Rep. Mike Simpson, R-Idaho, Environmental Protection Agency Regional Administrator Chris Hladick and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gen. Pete Helmlinger.

Hladick said everyone in Idaho and throughout the U.S. cares deeply about clean water and a healthy environment.

“I see today’s announcement as opening a new chapter of cooperation and partnership between the federal government, states, tribes and the agricultural community,” he

said. “My sincere hope is that the new (rule) ends decades of litigation and confusion around ‘Waters of the U.S.’”

The new rule’s supporters said it is better for the economy and protects the environment.

The new rule identifies four clear categories of waters that are federally regulated under the Clean Water Act; territorial seas and traditional navigable waters; perennial and intermittent tributaries; certain lakes, ponds and impoundments; and wetlands that are adjacent to jurisdictional waters.

The rule also spells out what waters are not subject to federal control, including features that only contain water in direct response to rainfall; groundwater, many ditches, including most farm and roadside ditches; prior converted cropland; farm and stock watering ponds; and waste treatment systems.

“This action gives states and tribes more flexibility in determining how best to manage their land and water resources while protecting the nation’s navigable waters as intended by Congress when it enacted the

Clean Water Act,” the EPA news release states.

The EPA and Corps received 6,000 recommendations and about 620,000 comments on the new rule while it was being proposed.

“The final definition balances the input the agencies received from a wide range of stakeholders,” the EPA news release states.

More information and fact sheets on the new rule are available online at www.epa.gov/nwpr.

All four members of Idaho’s congressional delegation lauded the new rule in a joint news release.

“After years of overreach and uncertainty, Idaho’s farmers, ranchers and landowners will finally have a rule that doesn’t confuse truly navigable waters with ditches and puddles,” said Sen. Jim Risch, R-Idaho. ■

Photo by Sean Ellis

The EPA and Army Corps of Engineers have announced a new clean water rule that replaces the 2015 Waters of the U.S. rule that many farmers, ranchers and other landowners feared would have greatly expanded the federal government’s regulatory reach over waters.

Idaho Farm Bureau

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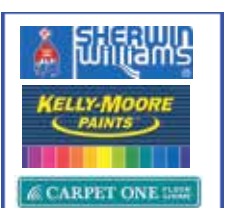
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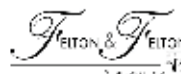


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Cross-laminated **TIMBER**



Growing industry good for forest owners and the environment

By **Chris Schnepf**
University of Idaho

There has been constant discussion in recent years about ways to store carbon to keep it out of the atmosphere.

In forestry and agriculture there is a lot of research underway on practices that sequester more carbon, from using biochar as a soil amendment to managing forests in ways that retain more carbon, within fire safety limitations.

One of the unique dimensions of carbon sequestration in forestry is how materials generated in forest management are used. Forest products are commonly sequestered in wood products – houses, furniture, etc. – for decades or even centuries.

Even paper products can have a relatively long shelf life (how old are your oldest books?) and are frequently recycled for additional longer life. To learn more about carbon life cycles for forest products, see *Life Cycle Impacts of Forest Management and Wood Utilization on Carbon Mitigation: Knowns and Unknowns*. downloadable at https://www.fpl.fs.fed.us/documents/pdf2011/fpl_2011_lip-pke001.pdf

You may have read recently about a class of wood products called “mass timbers.” The American Wood Council defines mass timber as “any product currently permitted for use in Type IV construction, such as cross-laminated timber, structural composite

lumber, glued-laminated timber, and large section sawn lumber.”

Many of these wood products could also be called wood composite materials. The forest products industry has been gluing and joining pieces of wood to form composite wood products for many decades (plywood, laminated beams, oriented strand board, etc.)

What is different with these new materials is their size and how they are used. As the name suggests, mass timbers are much more massive, and that mass stores a lot of carbon.

One type of mass timber that is getting a lot of attention in the Pacific Northwest is cross-laminated timber, or CLT. Cross-laminated timber comes in the form of a wood panel that is manufactured by joining and gluing together three or more layers of boards (usually more) perpendicular to each other.

Cross-laminated timber is used in very different ways than the boards you see in lumber yards. Traditionally, lumber is produced in standardized sizes and used in varied applications.

By contrast, CLT panels are usually engineered for specific building projects. You may have seen articles in the media about buildings 10 stories or higher built with these materials. Such tall buildings are a new market for wood products, as tall buildings have normally been constructed primarily with steel or concrete.

Some people are apprehensive about fire risk with an all-wood build-

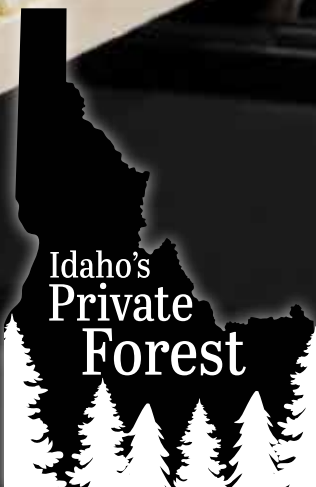




Photo by Chris Schnepf

Cross-laminated timber panels are typically designed for specific building projects.

PREVIOUS PAGE: Cross-laminated timber panels are made by gluing together three or more layers of boards perpendicular to each other.

ing, but experts say these buildings are actually safer from fire than other types of structures—it takes a fire a long time to burn through a really massive piece of wood. Cross-laminated timber panels are also more resistant to earthquakes than other materials.

Cross-laminated timber is a relatively new industry in North America, but CLT use has been growing in Europe since the early 1990s.

The topic is of particular interest in the Pacific Northwest, because several firms here have built plants to produce CLT panels. One firm near Spokane, just five miles from the Idaho border, looks to be the largest producer of CLT panels in North America.

That is good news to forest owners who always welcome larger, more competitive markets for their logs. But it is also good news for climate, as buildings made from mass timbers will sequester and store even more carbon than conventionally constructed buildings.

Cross-laminated timber production also has a smaller carbon footprint than metal or concrete building materials.

At first blush, one might think construction with CLT would be more expensive than construction with dimensional lumber – you are using more wood, right? However, the additional wood cost is off set by the speed of construction using CLT.

Because CLT panels are engineered and cut at the mill for specific projects, struc-

tures built with them go up very quickly. As CLT comes to be used more widely in construction, CLT panel costs are also expected to drop.

Cross-laminated timber has been very popular in the media recently, so an internet search will connect you to a lot of articles and photos of CLT in use.

For an excellent research-based primer, go to the CLT Handbook, available for download at <https://info.thinkwood.com/clt-handbook>

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. ■



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Above left: Thomas Lariviere (left) with his Farm Bureau Insurance agent, Kendon Perry.



Determining Bear River water rights

A bill that would begin the process of adjudicating water rights in the Bear River Basin is moving quickly through the Idaho Legislature.

Bear River Basin Adjudication bill moving through legislature

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

BOISE – A bill that would begin the process of adjudicating water rights in the Bear River Basin is moving quickly through the Idaho Legislature.

As of print time, the bill had passed the House by a 70-0 vote and had made its way to the Senate.

A water adjudication is an administrative and legal process where a court determines, or decrees, water rights.

“This is basically enabling legislation to begin the adjudication of the Bear River,” the bill’s sponsor, Sen. Mark Harris, a Republican rancher from Soda Springs, told members of the House Resources and Environment Committee.

Following a public hearing on House Bill 382 Feb. 5, the committee voted to send it to the full House with a “do-pass” recommendation.

If it passes the Senate also, it would still need to be approved by the Senate and signed by Gov. Brad Little.

The adjudication process would catalog and confirm water rights in the Bear River Basin. The river runs through part of Wyoming, Idaho and Utah.

There has not been a water adjudication process in that basin since 1920, Harris said. Since then, he added, a lot of farms and ranches have changed ownership and there is some confusion about what water is decreed to the land.

He told Idaho Farm Bureau Federation the adjudication “will help clear that up and make sure that the water is decreed to where it’s supposed to be decreed.”

The Snake River Basin Adjudication process, which began in 1987 and officially ended in 2014, decreed 158,600 water rights in southern Idaho.

The Northern Idaho Adjudications process, which is determining water rights in North Idaho, is going on now

and the Bear River Basin Adjudication process would begin after that wraps up, in about three to five years, Harris said. He said the Bear River adjudication is expected to take 8-10 years.

A Bear River adjudication is not expected to take as long as the SRBA but it will still be a large undertaking, determining thousands of water rights.

Roger Chase, chairman of the Idaho Water Resource Board, told lawmakers that the only two basins in Idaho that have not been adjudicated are the Bear River and Kootenai River basins.

He said the water board supports the bill.

“It’s critical for us to do these adjudications,” Chase said, adding that one of the main reasons for a water adjudication is “to make sure we protect that resource in Idaho.”

The bill is also supported by the Bear River Water Users Association and the Idaho Water Users Association.

Harris told fellow legislators the adjudication would cost an estimated \$8-10 million and be conducted over about a 10-year period.

Harris told Farm Bureau some people are concerned about a Bear River adjudication and what it will mean for their current water usage but he said the ultimate goal is to ensure people have secure water rights that can’t be challenged after the adjudication process issues final water rights.

“The fact is, the adjudication will help secure those rights,” he said.

With the massive growth occurring in northern Utah, “They are poking around, they want water and they are looking at the Bear River and Bear Lake,” Harris said.

The Bear River is the largest tributary to the Great Salt Lake.

He said environmental groups are also concerned about brine shrimp in the Great Salt Lake – which some con-

tend is too low – and “they are looking at Bear River water to help fill that up.”

“It’s time to do this to protect what we’ve got because some people want to take it,” Harris said.

He said his main concern is securing unchallengeable water rights for the irrigation water that is the lifeblood of farms and ranches in the basin.

“The land is worthless without water and everybody knows that,” Harris said. “If your crops don’t have anything to drink, they don’t grow. That’s the livelihood of a lot of people in the Bear River Basin.”

A Bear River adjudication would affect parts of Bannock, Bear Lake, Caribou, Cassia, Franklin, Oneida and Power counties within the Bear River Basin.

Unlike the Snake River and North Idaho water adjudication processes, a Bear River adjudication would not include any tribal land.

Harris said people have known for some time that a Bear River adjudication is coming and he acknowledged the concern about that.

“There’s going to be some pain involved, I’m sure of it,” he said. “But I know in the overall scheme of things it will be a good thing.”

The Bear River flows starts in Utah and flows through a corner of Wyoming, the southeast corner of Idaho and then ends back in Utah in the Great Salt Lake.

A lot has changed since water rights were first decreed or licensed in the basin in 1920, Harris told lawmakers.

“The statutory claims on record with (the Idaho Department of Water Resources) have never been confirmed,” he said. “Many beneficial-use water rights exist in the basin but are not recorded ... An adjudication will safeguard Idaho’s water against Utah and Wyoming.” ■



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Photo by Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation members fill the Lincoln Auditorium in the Capitol building in Boise Feb. 12 during IFBF's annual Legislative and Commodity Conference.

Farm Bureau members meet with state, federal lawmakers

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

BOISE —About 150 Idaho Farm Bureau Federation members were able to discuss important issues with state and federal lawmakers during IFBF's annual Legislative and Commodity Conference Feb. 11-12.

The conference brings Farm Bureau members from across the state to Boise to provide them a close-up experience of the state's legislative process.

They attend committee meetings of the Idaho Legislature, hear from and ask questions of lawmakers and meet informally with them during a "strolling buffet" dinner event that seats Farm Bureau mem-

bers at the same table with lawmakers who represent their districts.

They also hear from the state's four-member congressional delegation during a teleconference.

The conference benefits Idaho Farm Bureau Federation members by providing them a hands-on learning experience about the legislative process and allowing them

to ask lawmakers questions about important issues, said Russ Hendricks, IFBF's director of governmental affairs.

"I think the big benefit our members get from the conference is that they get to actually visualize the legislative process," he said. "We talk about it all the time but when you're actually in the committee hearings or watching the floor debate, it's a whole new experience for people."

IFBF Executive Vice President and CEO Rick Keller said many Farm Bureau members want to be involved in the legislative process but don't know how to or are uncomfortable with it.

"To them, the process is very overwhelming," he said. "By bringing them here to the Capitol, we let them watch committee meetings and visit with their legislators and they realize anybody can do it and it increases their comfort level so they can be involved with government."

The conference is also an important way to show elected officials that Farm Bureau represents a lot of farmers, ranchers and others around Idaho, said Zak Miller, IFBF's director of commodities.

"We have staff that works very hard to represent our members but nothing proves our organization's value more than when elected officials hear from our members," he said.

Miller said the event helps show lawmakers that IFBF staff aren't just speaking for themselves, "they are speaking for a whole group of very specialized professionals that understand what they do and can explain their needs in a way that helps water get to the end of the row."

"The real benefit for legislators is that they are able to recognize that we actually do represent 80,000 families that live all around Idaho and that are their constituents and live and work in their districts," Hendricks said.

Legislators "need to know, and they want to know, what's going on back home in their districts," said Keller. "We bring people in who are able to tell their personal stories of struggles



Idaho Farm Bureau Federation members from across the state head to the Capitol building in Boise Feb. 12 during IFBF's annual Legislative and Commodity Conference.

Photo by Sean Ellis

they are going through and how the laws are impacting them and that helps legislators be better informed and make wise decisions."

During the conference, members of

"So, as our policy is developed, we can keep track of what the greater needs of agriculture are without losing sight of the individual needs of agriculture as well."

— Zak Miller, IFBF's director of commodities

IFBF's various commodity groups –beef, water, wheat and feed grain, hay and forage, dairy, potato, sugar beets, dry beans and pulses and forestry – meet to discuss issues important to their industries.

While IFBF is a general farm organization that represents all of agriculture, the discussions held during these individual commodity meetings help Farm Bureau address issues that are specific to certain commodities as well, Miller said.

"That way, we can be a general farm organization and continue to represent the entire agricultural industry but we can also stay laser focused on particular issues," he said. "So, as our policy is developed, we can keep track of what the greater needs of agriculture are without losing sight of the individual needs of agriculture as well."

The conference is open to any Farm Bureau member "and we welcome anybody and everybody who would like to come and participate," Hendricks said. ■

A bullish March



Submitted photo
This is a past bull sale at Spring Cove Ranch in Bliss. A host
of bull sales occur in March on ranches across Idaho.



Bull sale season an anticipated social event

By John O'Connell

Intermountain Farm and Ranch

In the span of less than three hours, Salmon rancher Steve Herbst and his family will generate most of the revenue resulting from a year's worth of hard work.

So they make sure to cut no corners in preparing a memorable feast for friends and customers who attend their crucial bull sale at Nelson Angus Ranch, hosted annually on the third Saturday of March.

Ranches throughout Idaho will host such bull sales throughout March, prior to the breeding season, providing people in the cattle industry a chance to visit with friends, eat well and upgrade the genetics of their herds.

Herbst said his bull sale is in its 69th year. His family will sell 150 top bulls and will feed home-cooked dinners to about 700 guests. Prior to the big sale, his wife, mother-in-law and even some neighbors work tirelessly in the kitchen, preparing homemade desserts, salads and side dishes.

Of course, they also serve generous portions of certified Angus beef.

"The ranching community still likes a social circle where they can gather among their peers and talk and visit and get updates," Herbst said. "It happens to occur at a time when ... the industry has undergone an intense season of calving. Your nose has been to the grindstone a lot, so it's a great time to get away and socialize with fellow livestock producers and have someone else cook lunch for you."

Modern technology is becoming increasingly important in the industry. Roughly 10 percent of purchases during the sale will be made by online bidders, including many from other states.

And nowadays, Herbst said, pure-breed

ranchers must essentially be genetic scientists “assembling genetics to provide improvement opportunities for the commercial beef sector.”

He uses both embryo transplants and artificial insemination as breeding tools, though he’s been doing fewer embryo transplants lately because his cow herd has become more consistent.

A top-end bull still fills a critical role in “cleanup,” he explained. Herbst said 60 to 70 percent of heifers may become impregnated through artificial insemination and bringing in a good bull makes sure the remainder also go on to produce a calf.

All of his bulls have been DNA tested and genetically mapped for desirable traits, such as marbling, udder quality, back fat and yearling weight.

There’s an unwritten rule among bull breeders against scheduling a sale that overlaps with a neighbor’s sale.

“We always have the third Saturday and our neighbor has the third Friday and our other neighbor has the third Wednesday,” Herbst said. “A lot of times we go help our neighbors before and after. We’re competition but we’re also friends in the business, and they come and help us, too.”

Rockland Valley rancher James Udy said his family has been ranching in southeast Idaho since 1919, and they’ll be hosting their 41st bull sale on March 11.

Prior to organizing their own registered bull sale, they sold bulls in small groups on consignment. They’ll sell about 130 bulls and 60 yearling heifers at their upcoming sale.

They artificially inseminate about 400 cows per year and rely on cleanup bulls to follow up with the roughly 40 percent that don’t become pregnant initially.

Of course, they’ll “roll out the red carpet” and serve beef to their guests. His mother, aunt and sisters prepare roast beef sandwiches and baked potatoes for the occasion.

“Everybody is busy calving this time of year and it’s kind of a four- to five-hour break to get away from home and

see your neighbors and visit with them,” Udy said. “We work seven days a week, and you don’t really have a whole lot of time to spend talking to your neighbors and your friends.”

Neal Ward, of Wooden Shoe Farms in Blackfoot, said his grandfather started the family in the Hereford cattle business back in 1945. His family will be hosting just its second bull sale this year, though they’ve hosted an annual cow sale for about 20 years. Prior to last year, when their bull numbers grew large enough to justify a sale, they sold their

“A lot of times we go help our neighbors before and after. We’re competition but we’re also friends in the business, and they come and help us, too.”

— Steve Herbst

bulls through consignment or private treaty.

“It allows us to sell a volume of cattle at one time and at one place,” Ward said.

They’ll be selling about 80 lots, including a few cows. Guests at their sale will be treated to a catered lunch, featuring the Wards’ beef.

About half of the animals they sell are bred using embryo transplants, and about 75 percent were artificially inseminated. They participate in fairs throughout the West to raise awareness about their genetics and build interest in their sale.

“For us, it’s constant research. You’re looking every day for more performance or current pedigrees or intriguing things that excite you,” Ward said. “We find that we want everything maternal. For us, if (animals) don’t have enough udder and teat structure and maternal values, we’re not interested.”

Stacy and Art Butler, with Spring Cove Ranch in Bliss, will be selling 156 bulls and several yearling heifers during a March 9 sale.

Art’s grandfather sold the family’s first registered Angus bull for \$50 in

1920 to a man he picked up in a horse and buggy. The buyer secured the bull in a crate and transported him home on a train.

“The same herd of cows has been calved by the same Butler family for 101 years,” Stacy said.

The family started hosting a bull sale in 1992, collaborating with some other breeders until 1998, when they built their own sale barn.

Selling the bulls from home eliminates the risk of the animals being exposed to illnesses upon being moved. It also gives them the opportunity to show off their ranch to potential buyers.

Stacy said preparing for the sale is “like cleaning your house for company, except you’re cleaning your ranch.”

They’ve been using artificial insemination since the 1960s and started doing embryo transfers in the late 1980s. Every calf born on their ranch undergoes genomic testing. They’re known for their elite genetics, as artificial insemination companies sometimes purchase their bulls for studs.

They’ll video their bulls and open the bidding to online participants, as well. A couple of years ago, a buyer from Nebraska paid \$44,000 for one of their top bulls. Last year, they sold a heifer to a buyer in Iowa for \$21,000.

The cinnamon rolls served at the Spring Cove Ranch sale have become well known within Idaho’s cattle industry. In the early years of the sale, Stacy, along with her mom and aunt, prepared a big meal featuring the family’s famous cinnamon rolls for their guests.

Nowadays, the flank steak meals are catered by another ranching family, but Stacy’s aunt still makes the cinnamon rolls for sale day.

The family makes sure to invite the general public to experience the sale — and the meal.

“We invite locals, even if they don’t need a bull,” Stacy said. “It’s a sense of community, and it’s an opportunity for neighbors to come and see what we’re doing and what the program is all about.” ■



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Idaho lawmakers defend name of Chicken Dinner Road

By Sean Ellis

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

CALDWELL – An attempt by PETA to change the name of Chicken Dinner Road in Canyon County to Chicken Road has failed spectacularly.

A July 3 letter to Caldwell Mayor Garret Nancolas asking him to make the name change was soundly rejected. Even though the road is a county street and the city has no jurisdiction over it, Garret still made his feelings known unequivocally.

Even if it was a Caldwell road, “no way, no chance I would ever consider this truly unbelievable request!” he wrote in a Facebook post.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, a national organization whose motto includes the words, “animals are not ours to eat,” asked for the road’s name to be changed “to one that celebrates chickens as individuals, not as beings to kill, chop up and label as ‘dinner.’”

The request didn’t go over well in Canyon County, which has 2,289 farms, far more than any other county in Idaho.

On Jan. 27, Idaho lawmakers also weighed in on the matter and they overwhelmingly approved a resolution that honors and supports the road’s unique name.

The 70-member Idaho House of Representatives on a voice vote almost unanimously voted to approve House Concurrent Resolution 25, which states that Chicken Dinner Road is of important historic value to Idaho and “that the official name for the former Lane 12 should always be ‘Chicken Dinner Road.’”

The resolution was also approved by the Senate on Feb. 12.

The resolution by Rep. Scott Syme, R-Caldwell, also explains how the road got its curious name, based on an old



Photo by Steve Ritter

The curiously named Chicken Dinner Road in Canyon County is the impetus behind a popular wine label in Idaho. On Jan. 27, Idaho lawmakers approved a resolution that honors and supports the road continuing to have that name.

article from the Idaho Press Tribune.

According to the resolution, Laura Lamb, who lived on the road with her husband, Morris, was famous for her fried chicken, apple pie and hot rolls.

The Lambs were close friends of then-Gov. C. Ben Ross, and during dinner with the governor and his wife one day in 1930, Mrs. Lamb commented about the poor condition of the road.

The governor told Lamb that if she could get the road graded, he would make sure it was oiled.

Lamb did her part, the governor followed through on his promise and the words, “Lamb’s Chicken Dinner Avenue” were painted in big yellow letters on the road.

According to HCR 25, “after school, children started chanting, ‘chicken

dinner, chicken dinner,’ on their way to school” and the name Chicken Dinner Road stuck.

Syme, who was raised on a farm near Weiser and now produces hay and sheep on 43 acres in Caldwell, told Idaho Farm Bureau the effort by PETA to change the road’s name was the impetus for his resolution. But he said it goes way beyond just chickens.

“It’s a much larger issue,” he said. “People are coming here trying to change our history. This resolution is about honoring the historical significance of Chicken Dinner Road.”

“It is an interesting piece of Idaho history,” Syme told fellow lawmakers. “As many of you know, there was an effort to change the name of Chicken Dinner Road to Chicken Road and ... that effort didn’t bother to find out why it was called Chicken Dinner Road.”

“This resolution is not about chickens,” he added. “This is about preserving history in our state.”

He said newcomers to Idaho always comment about how friendly Idahoans are and it’s true. “But when you try to change our history or events of historical significance, that just goes too far. I’m asking for a green light on preserving Idaho history.”

Rep. John Gannon, D-Boise, said he chuckled when he first read the resolution. “But this is very important and serious and something I think all governments and legislatures should do and that is preserve our history.”

After the House vote was taken – only one or two ‘nays’ could be heard following a chorus of ‘ayes’ – Speaker of the House Scott Bedke, a Republican rancher from Oakley, said, “The ‘ayes’ clearly have it and House Concurrent Resolution 25, shall we say, is a winner, winner, chicken dinner.” ■



Photo by John O'Connell

Farm equipment is on display in Pocatello's Holt Arena at the Eastern Idaho Ag Expo.

Optimism abounds at Idaho Ag Expo

By John O'Connell

Intermountain Farm and Ranch

POCATELLO — Vendors at the Eastern Idaho Ag Expo said Idaho farmers are optimistic based on improved prices of a few key commodities, and they're looking to upgrade equipment and procure new services.

The Ag Expo was hosted at Idaho State University's Holt Arena from Jan. 21-23, in conjunction with the Idaho Potato Conference, hosted from Jan. 22-23 at the university's Pond Student Union Building.

The vendors brought their latest technology, which is getting bigger, faster and more efficient. Most of them say their sales have been holding steady or are up significantly, as area farmers have finally caught a break with stronger potato, sugar beet and dairy prices.

"It's been a very good year. We ride that wave with everybody," said Shane Mitchell, marketing director with Blackfoot-based Milestone. "I would say the last two years (business has) been very good. The amount of people who feel comfortable with going ahead with the purchase,

that's been greater this year."

Milestone manufactures potato seed cutters and equipment used for sorting, piling and loading spuds into storage. Mitchell said his company has noticed a sizable increase in customers placing advanced orders.

Burley farmer Eric Searle brought his family to the expo's opening day. He wasn't looking to buy, explaining he had some "hiccups" in his operation caused by rental ground that didn't pan out, but the improved crop prices should help him get his operation back on solid



ground.

“I would say there’s definitely some optimism with the way potato prices are, and sugar prices are up,” Searle said, noting prices of wheat and beans have remained sluggish.

Richard Johnson, a Blackfoot farmer and regional sales manager for Lemken USA, brought a new machine to the expo designed to plow residue and plant a field in cover crops in a single pass, thereby cutting a step for farmers who typically use a fertilizer spreader to plant cover crop seeds after tilling.

Cover crops are planted solely to prevent erosion and benefit soil health, and they’re becoming increasingly popular in the region, especially among potato farmers who like cover crops with natural fumigation properties.

“The dairy prices are up; potato prices are up. There’s a lot more optimism,” Johnson said. “It’s going to make guys feel a little more confident they’re going to heal up a little bit. I think it’s going to be a good year.”

John Deere has a new combine with twin rotors, enabling farmers to harvest at a higher speed, said Clayton Eliason, a precision agriculture specialist with the company.

Case IH contractor Ron Blessing

demonstrated the company’s new computer system, which enables a worker who enters the cab of a farm machine to press a button to implement personalized settings. Blessing said the company is even working to make the seat automatically adjust.

Blessing said equipment makers are pushing the envelope with machines that are bigger, have higher horsepower and cover more ground with less fuel. He believes the recent trade agreement with China, coupled with improved dairy and potato prices, bode well for Idaho agriculture.

Dan Piquet, with the Heyburn-based potato harvesting equipment manufacturer Double L, said the industry’s trend is for machinery that works faster and handles more volume. His company’s equipment has more sensors than ever before and new technology designed to allow farmers to harvest at a faster speed without their machines rocking.

“More money means more purchasing power,” Piquet said, adding Double L orders have risen in correlation with increasing potato prices.

Comfort is also a consideration for equipment deals. Western States Caterpillar brought a new skid-steer loader, fitted with an attachment for removing

rocks from fields. Sales representative Jerad Childers explained it has increased leg room, is designed to be more stable and has a door that swings further open.

“It seems like (farmers) are making a little more and they’re willing to spend a little more, so it’s headed in a good direction,” Childers said.

Bill Nice, territory manager for FEI, was promoting the new DURA-ABS automated direct injection system, which allows farmers to pump several different fertilizers and chemicals into their tanks at once rather than individually, and with greater precision. He knows of a farmer who once spent 45 minutes pumping chemicals who can now do the task in 15 minutes.

“It’s remarkable how much time you can save in the field,” Nice said.

About 200 vendors participated in the expo and a trade show at the potato conference, hosted by Spectra Productions.

Carla Armentrout, with Spectra, said the events are fully booked, and about 90 percent of the vendors return from one year to the next.

“We always have a pretty good waiting list and maybe up to 50 or so vendors trying to make it that don’t get in,” Armentrout said. ■



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*Farm Bureau Bonus Cash is exclusively for active Farm Bureau members who are residents of the United States. This incentive is not available on Shelby GT350®, Shelby® GT350R, Mustang BULLITT, Ford GT, Focus RS and F-150 Raptor. This offer may not be used in conjunction with most other Ford Motor Company and Lincoln Motor Company private incentives or AXZD-Plans. Some customer and purchase eligibility restrictions apply. Must be a Farm Bureau member for 30 consecutive days prior to purchase. Visit FordFarmBureauAdvantage.com or LincolnFarmBureauAdvantage.com or see your authorized Ford or Lincoln Dealer for qualifications and complete details.