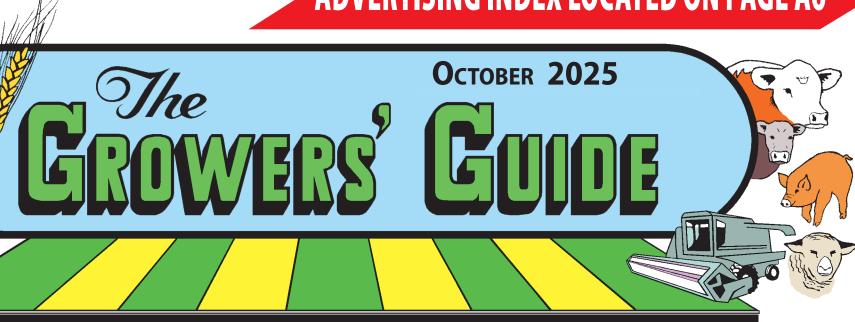
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Number 7



Concentration has led to four major packers in the Oregon hazelnut industry. Growers say they choose to sell to packers based on price, past experience, geographic proximity, and marketing strategy.

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#### By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI

Capital Press

regon's hazelnut industry seems largely unperturbed by a culling process that has roiled other agricultural sectors.

From cranberries to cattle and from peanuts to poultry, consolidation among processors has caused rancor — spawning antitrust lawsuits, federal inquiries and congressional hearings.

Meanwhile, the spirit of cooperation and conviviality on which Oregon's hazelnut industry prides itself still seems intact, despite the dwindling number of packers.

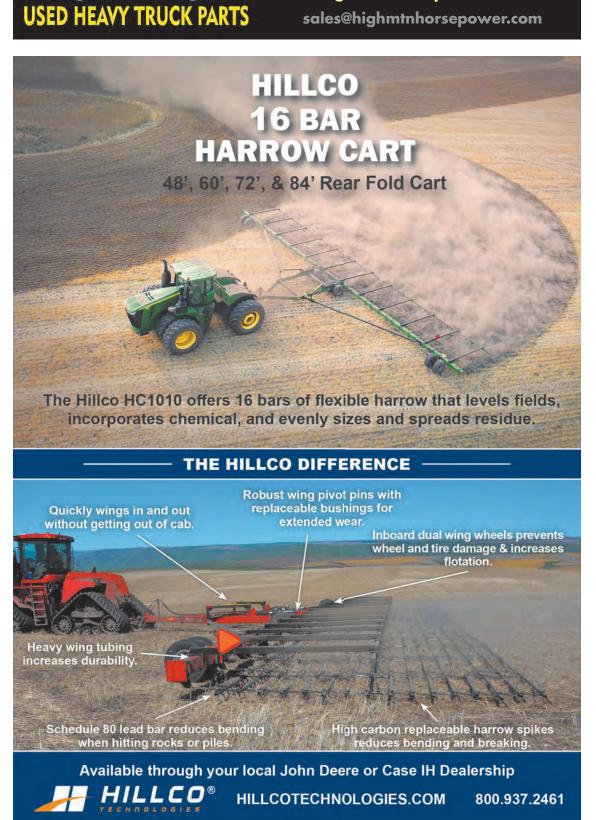
Even as new growers have planted orchards and existing ones have expanded theirs, the hazelnut industry remains "a really small world" with a shared sensibility that "a rising tide raises all ships," said Sean Denfeld, whose family owns the Denfeld Nut packing company.

"There is an amazing, special backbone of cooperation," Denfeld said.

See HAZELNUT, Page A2

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#### **HAZELNUT:**

**Continued from A1** 

The four major processors are also hazelnut growers, leading them to take farmers' interests strongly into account in their business decisions, he said.

"We all have orchards. We all care and are doing the best we possibly can for this industry," he said.

# **Producers** unshaken

Recently, though, the concentration of hazelnut processing capacity in Oregon has taken a major leap forward.

While the winnowing process among packers has mostly occurred over decades, a single transaction last year united two of the industry's biggest competitors.

With the owners of the George Packing Co. buying the assets of the Hazelnut Growers of Oregon cooperative, more than two-thirds of the state's crop is now processed by one family of companies.

It's difficult to imagine the Oregon hazelnut industry erupting into litigation and open antagonism as a result, but the new dynamic has raised questions about the implications for its future.

Consolidation isn't necessarily seen as a worrisome development, however.

Farmers in the Willamette Valley — where most hazelnuts are grown — recognize the grass seed industry's fragmented structure hasn't contributed to its vigor, said Zach Christensen, grower near McMinnville, Ore.

"Just increasing competition doesn't solve it," Christensen said. "Everybody is trying to liquidate for cash, resulting in a race to the bottom."

The takeover of HGO's assets largely hasn't been alarming to farmers due to the "huge trust" in the George Packing Co. and affiliated companies, he said.

"If the leadership and culture of that company changes, I think my attitude changes as well," he said.

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# Cooking with apples

**By DANA** 

October is a perfect time for apple desserts. Here are some recipes from the Washington Apple Commission.

# Washington apple pie

**Ingredients:** 

Crust:

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, frozen

½ cup ice cold water

- ½ Tablespoon white vinegar
- 2 1/2 cups all purpose flour, spooned into measuring cup and leveled

1 teaspoon salt

<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> teaspoon baking powder

#### Filling:

6 cups mixed apples (Granny Smith and Honeycrisp apples), about 6 medium apples

½ cup granulated sugar

- 1/4 cup dark brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 Tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon all purpose flour
  - 1 egg
  - 1 Tablespoon water
- ~1 Tablespoon granulated sugar or large sugar crystals

#### **Instructions:**

1. Chop frozen butter into ½ inch pieces. Return to freezer. Add vinegar to ice water and place in refrigerator.

- 2. Add all dry crust ingredients to food processor bowl with blade attachment. Pulse a few times to combine ingredients. Add cold butter and pulse until you see pea sized chunks of butter (about 10-15 pulses). Pour ice water/vinegar into mixture and pulse again, until the dough sticks together (about 10 pulses). It will look crumbly but not sandy or dusty.
- 3. Place a large sheet of plastic wrap (about 16 in long) on a counter. Transfer dough flattened plastic wrap and form into a ball, pressing any flour bits into dough. Cut ball in half and form two discs, about 5 inches each. Place 2nd disc on another sheet of plastic wrap (about 16 in long). Wrap each disc with plastic and refrigerate for 1-2 hours.
- 4. Right after refrigerating dough, prepare filling by peeling and slicing apples, transfer to large mixing bowl. Add granulated sugar, brown sugar, cinnamon, and salt to apples. Stir cinnamon sugar mixture into apples so all apples are covered. Cover and leave out on counter for at least an hour.
- 5. After about an hour (or just before you plan on assembling the pie), stir apples and pour juice into a small sauce-



#### Washington apple pie

pan over medium-high heat, cook until apple juice is reduced by about ½ (you can also heat it up in the microwave). Remove, and add back to apples. Mix apples and cinnamon sauce together. Sprinkle cornstarch and flour mixture over apples and stir all together until apples are evenly coated.

6. Grab a ceramic or glass

pie pan, place next to counter where you will roll out your dough. Remove one crust disc from fridge and roll out into a 12 inch circle on the plastic wrap. This way you don't have to add extra flour to prevent sticking. Transfer to pie pan, then pour filling into pan, spread filling out so it's even. Place pie in freezer and grab the other crust disc. Roll

top crust out as you rolled out the bottom crust.

7. Grab pie from freezer and gently drape the top crust over the filling. Smooth out the top crust. Cut crust off that extends over pie pan lip. Crimp edge with a fork and pierce 4-5 long slits in the top crust. Return to freezer and preheat oven to 425 degrees.

See KITCHEN, Page A9

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#### **HAZELNUT:**

**Continued from A2** 

The processing operations of HGO now seem solid, whereas it was struggling financially when it was run as a cooperative, said Ken Baker, a farmer near Canby, Ore.

"In contrast, what the Georges have done is working," Baker said.

Another consideration is that HGO's facility and other assets could have been sold to an out-of-state investor unfamiliar with the nuances of the hazelnut industry, he said.

"I'm glad to see it stay local," Baker said.

#### Farmer support

Farmers generally seem to take a sympathetic view of Larry and Shaun George — the brothers who now run the George Packing Co., Northwest Hazelnut and Hazelnut Growers of Oregon.

Of course, growers may think twice about publicly criticizing figures of such outsized influence.

But even in private conversations, the George broth-

ers don't appear to invite the type of whispered vitriol that's often directed at processing behemoths in some other industries.

In fact, a fear of abandonment seems to be the main source of anxiety about the George brothers among farmers who did not wish to be identified discussing the matter.

The worry is that, having gained majority control over the state's packing capacity, the Georges will eventually decide they'd rather retire

See HAZELNUT, Page A7



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press

Workers load pallets of boxes ÿlled with shelled hazelnuts at the Cascade Foods hazelnut packing facility near Albany, Ore. The company is among the smaller processors among the four hazelnut packers left in Oregon.





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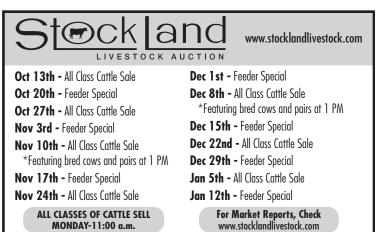
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#### **HAZELNUT:**

**Continued from A5** 

to the Bahamas or engage in other pursuits that don't involve hazelnuts.

At that point, growers have to wonder, will the whole enterprise be sold to a hedge fund or corporate juggernaut who lacks a benevolent view of hazelnut farmers and their interests?

Larry George maintains that's not something growers should lose sleep over: He and Shaun, who are aged 57 and 47, respectively, are already training replacements who will take over if the brothers ever ride off into the sunset.

"Our intent is we'll still own it and it will be run by local, professional staff," he said. "I could keel over from a heart attack tomorrow and the growers really would not see any change — I have absolute faith in my staff."

Regardless of who ends up taking the reins within the George family of companies, the broader industry's status quo is not expected to remain static.

After all, the Georges' disproportionate market share probably won't go unchallenged by the industry's three other processors: Willamette Hazelnut, Denfeld Nut and Cascade Foods.

#### **Competitors** making moves

The second-largest hazelnut processor, Willamette Hazelnut, makes no bones about aiming to be a formidable contender.

"It's important for our company to get larger and stronger," said Michael Severeid,

its CEO.

From the perspective of food manufacturers, it's better to have access to another major source of crop supply, Severeid said.

Beyond the particular circumstances of the Oregon hazelnut industry, any crop sector is healthier when both customers and suppliers have an alternative to the dominant player, he said.

"When you have that much share, there's not much anyone who has leverage over you," Severeid said.

If major hazelnut buyers get nervous about becoming too dependent on the George family of companies, for example, they may feel safer turning to another nut crop, such as almonds, he said.

"They're good business people and understand there needs to be competition, but it needs to be real competition," Severeid said.

Likewise, farmers want to keep their options open, which is why they're likely to split their sales among two or more packers, he said. "It's good to have more than one customer, and I think that message resonates with people."

The company foregoes retail snack products, which have trouble competing against less expensive almonds, instead focusing on supplying "industrial customers" with shelled and in-shell hazelnuts in bulk, Severeid said.

For example, its minimum order for kernels is 20 metric tons, an amount that's more suitable for larger confectioners, bakeries and food manu-

Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press

Larry George operates hazelnut packing companies that represent more than two-third's of the Oregon industry's processing capacity. George says he is a strong believer in packers investing in marketing to build markets.

facturers than mom-and-pop operations.

of bets to develop the small guys," he said.

Apart from emphasizing scale in Willamette Hazel-"You have to place a lot nut's own sales, Severeid said he wants the overall hazelnut industry to revamp its mar-

keting efforts to move substantial quantities of hazelnuts to a greater number of consumers.

See HAZELNUT, Page A8

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#### **HAZELNUT:**

**Continued from A7** 

Specifically, he believes the Oregon Hazelnut Marketing Board should cease its generic marketing efforts and concentrate instead on overseeing crop quality and industry statistics.

"It continues whether it's successful or a failure, and that does not encourage creativity, ingenuity, or accountability," Severeid said.

The organization operates under a federal marketing order, which prohibits polit-

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Courtesy of Michael Severeid Michael Severeid is the CEO of Willamette Hazelnut, the second-largest hazelnut packer in Oregon, which is the top U.S. producer of the crop.

ical lobbying efforts, and it's basically funded as a "tax" on processors who have divergent ideas about marketing, he said.

"The information doesn't flow very well," he said.

Severeid would prefer to start a new group or repurpose an existing one to take over industry-wide marketing efforts, which would be steered directly by growers rather than packers.

Because it wouldn't operate under direct federal jurisdiction, the organization could also freely engage in political advocacy, he said.

"The intentions are good but it's not working. We need to try something else," Severeid said.

To exponentially grow sales, the hazelnut industry needs to find a more effective message, similarly to how consumers have been persuaded that pistachios are



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press

Farmers examine a hazelnut sprayer demonstration at the Nut Growers Society summer tour in Dayton, Ore. Growers say they choose to sell to packers based on price, past experience, geographic proximity, and marketing strategy.

a vital post-exercise snack, he said.

"That drives consumption. We don't have a hook like that and we need hooks like that," he said.

# Small packers serve niche

While Willamette Hazelnut is trying to grow market share with bulk sales, the industry's smallest two packers are not averse to serving niche food manufacturers who correspond with their own modest size.

"It allows us to give a little more attention to them," said Greg Riches, CEO and co-owner of Cascade Foods near Albany, Ore.

One of the company's specialties is organic hazelnuts, which must be processed separately from the conven-

tional crop after its equipment is cleaned to meet federal requirements.

The organic hazelnut industry isn't a major force in the industry yet, but Riches believes investing in the sector is a wager on the future.

"While it's really small right now, it's growing and expanding," he said.

The company provides small- and mid-sized food companies with hazelnuts that have been diced, roasted or turned into meal or flour, sparing customers from having to perform these additional processing steps themselves.

"We're not just selling a raw or natural kernel," Riches said. "Our main concentration is being a supplier of an ingredient." The remaining processors in Oregon's hazelnut industry have enough capacity to handle growing tonnage levels without a lot more investment, with enough "differentiation" among them to serve various client types, he said.

"There's probably a reason there's only four packers left and if I were a new packer coming into Oregon, I would take a close look at that," Riches said.

Cascade Foods believes the industry's processing structure has now stabilized and expects its own sales to increase with "natural, organic growth" as newly planted orchards continue to mature, he said.

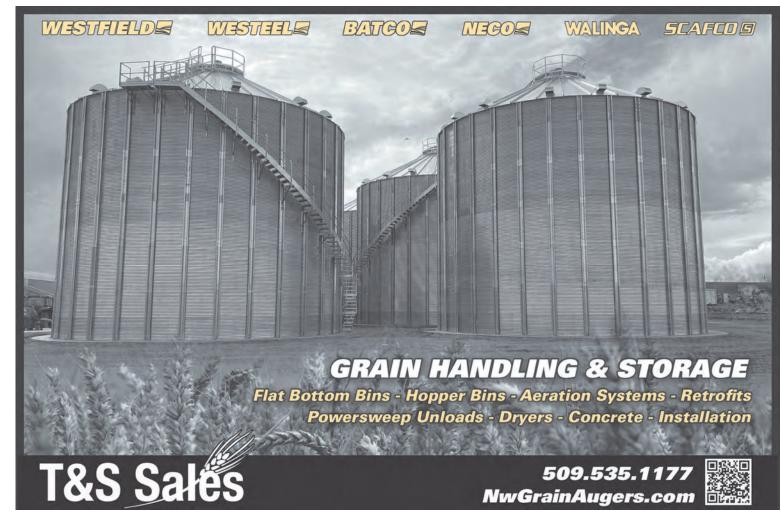
"We're pretty happy with our spot," Riches said. "For the size of company we are, I think people would be surprised at the length of our customer list."

Denfeld Nut likewise considers having a wide assortment of customers "the core of our marketing plan," with none of its top five buyers exceeding 10% of its sales volume, said Sean Denfeld, its manager.

Numerous value-added channels help "cushion" a downturn in any particular business line, he said.

"Diversification is not necessarily for when times are good, it's for when times are bad," Denfeld said. "Diversification equals, in our minds, a safety net."

See HAZELNUT, Page A15



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#### **KITCHEN:**

#### **Continued from A4**

- 8. While oven is preheating, and pie is in the freezer, whisk egg and water in a small bowl. Set aside until oven is ready.
- 9. Once oven is preheated, remove pie from freezer and brush egg over crust. Sprinkle sugar evenly over crust. Place in oven and bake at 425 degrees for 15 minutes. Then decrease oven temperature to 375 and bake for 50-60 minutes. Cover edges with foil if it gets too brown.
- 10. Once crust is browned and filling is bubbling, remove from oven and let it rest for at least 1-2 hours.
- 11. Serve plain, with vanilla ice cream or with caramel sauce.

#### Apple raspberry meringue tarts

**Ingredients:** 

Tart Shell 50 g Unsalted Butter 1 Tbsp Sugar ½ tsp Salt 100 g All-purpose flour 3 Tbsp cold water

#### **Swiss Merengue**

2 Egg Whites ½ cup Sugar 1 tsp Vanilla Salt

#### **Filling**

1 Washington Apple, diced

100 g Brown Sugar 1/4 cup White sugar 1/4 tsp Vanilla Essence ½ cup Whipping Cream 1 Tbsp Lemon Juice 2 Tbsp Corn Starch

#### Raspberry Layer

100g Raspberry puree 2 Tbsp. Sugar 5 g Gelatine 1/4 cup Water

#### **Instructions:** Filling:

brown and white sugar with 3 tablespoons of water. Cook on a high temperature until a caramel is formed. Reduce the temperature to the minimum and slowly add the cream while stirring with the spatula.

Add cinnamon powder, vanilla, lemon juice, diced apple. Mix well.

Increase the heat to medium. Dissolve corn starch in a small amount of water. Add to the apple mixture. Mix until sauce becomes thick.

#### **Swiss Merengue**

In a mixing bowl, mix sugar, egg whites, and salt.

Prepare a small pot with water and place it on the stove at low temperature.

Place the bowl of egg whites on top of the water pot and mix slowly with a whisk.

NOTE: Make sure all the tools and equipment that you are using are dry and clean.

When the sugar has dissolved, remove the bowl from the water pot. Process using an electric mixer at the high speed. Halfway, add the vanilla and keep mixing until fluffy, white and stiff.

#### **Tart Shell**

Preheat oven at 400°F.

In a bowl, add all ingredients and mix using hands until a dough is formed. You can also use an electric mixer to form the dough.

Wrap dough with a plastic wrap and chill for at least 30 minutes. Sprinkle with flour and roll the dough until it's 1mm thick.

Line the rolled dough on the tart mold, and freeze for 30 minutes.

Bake the tart at 400°F for 15 to 20 minutes.

#### Raspberry Layer

In a small pot, heat raspberry puree, water, sugar on medium fire.

Meanwhile, in a small bowl, soak the gelatin in cold water until dissolved.

Add the gelatine to rasp-In a small pot, add berry mixture and stir. Bring mixture to boil.

> the raspberry Let mixture cool before assembling.

#### Assemble

In the tart shell, add raspberry mixture place it in the chiller for 30

Add the apple filling.

Add the Swiss meringue and make it look cloud like.

# It's the Pitts: The Bumpies

#### **By LEE PITTS**

As a lifelong road agent I am excited to introduce an all-new awards show honoring the best bumper stickers going down the road. It is fitting then that the very first Bumpie is for the Driving category. And the nominees are...

Honk if you love peace and quiet; If everything is coming your way, then you're in the wrong lane; Don't like my driving? Then get off the sidewalk; Horn broken, watch for finger; If you drink don't Accidents cause park. people. And the first ever Bumpie goes to Hang up and Drive.

Our next category is The Battle of The Sexes. And the nominees are: This truck belongs to me. Everything else belongs to her; Not all women are fools. Some are single; A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle; Men are idiots and I married their king; Women who want to be equal to men lack ambition. And the winner is, Sometimes



**Lee Pitts** 

I wake up grumpy. Other times I let him (or her)

Judging by the plethora of bumper stickers about chainsaws and diesel engines it's fitting we have a category for the environment. The nominees are:

Hate the dams? Squeeze your oranges by hand; Beautify America. Shoot a greenie; Save the humans. Taking home the Bumpie is: Earth First. We'll screw up the other planets later.

In the Idiots Shall Inherit The Earth Category the nominees are: The gene pool could use a little chlorine; He who laughs last thinks slowest: Four out of three people have trouble with fractions; The lottery is a tax for people who are bad at math. The Bumpie in this category goes to I souport publik edukashun.

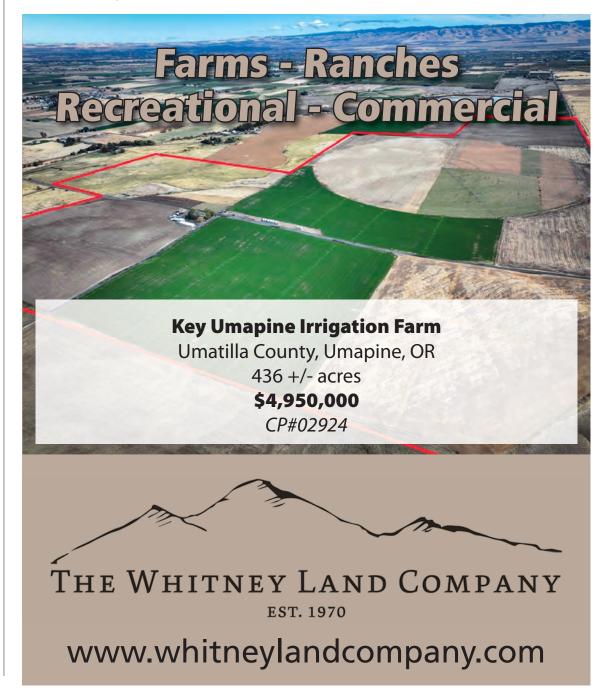
See PITTS, Page A14



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# West Coast politicians pen letter for removal of blueberry trade barriers



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By KYLE ODEGARD **Capital Press** 

A bipartisan group of lawmakers has pushed U.S. officials to prioritize the U.S. blueberry industry as part of broader efforts to eliminate trade barriers.

In a letter to USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins and U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Jamieson Greer, 25 members of Congress highlighted trade barriers in Japan, South Korea and Vietnam that have limited market growth and made it more difficult for U.S. blueberries — including frozen fruit — to compete.

"The U.S. is the world's top blueberry producing nation and increasing exports to markets in the Asia-Pacific Region supports producers in our districts and states, creating good agriculture jobs," the Sept. 17 letter stated.

The letter urged for the elimination of a 9.6% tariff on frozen U.S. blueberries in Japan.

Lawmakers noted that this has caused American exports to Japan to decline, while global competitors, including Canada and the European Union, have gained market share.

In Vietnam, U.S. blueberries face steep tariffs that lawmakers said must be reduced or eliminated.

"U.S. fresh blueberries were approved for import to Vietnam in 2019 and shipments have grown rapidly, reaching over 100 tons in 2024. There is still significant room for growth in this market," lawmakers wrote.

In South Korea, after years of negotiations, market access for U.S. fresh blueberries remains limited only to fruit grown in Oregon.

"Producers in Washington, California and other states want similar access to the growing Korean market for their fresh blueberries and are concerned about the duration of previous market access negotiations on other agricultural products," the letter stated.

The lawmakers' effort was led by Washington Reps. Rick Larsen, a Democrat, and Dan Newhouse, a Republican.

"Expanding market access American products remains a top priority of mine in Congress, and that includes making sure our blueberries can be enjoyed around the word," Larsen said, in a news release.

Other Northwest officials to sign the letter were Sen. Patty Murray and Reps. Suzan Del-Bene, Kim Schrier, and Adam Smith from Washington, and Oregon Reps. Susan Bonamicci and Val Hoyle.

Kasey Cronquist, president of the North American Blueberry Council, strongly supported the letter.

"Eliminating these barriers will expand opportunities for family farmers, strengthen the agricultural economy and ensure the U.S. blueberry industry can thrive globally," Cronquist said, in a news release.

See BLUEBERRY, Page A12



Courtesy U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council

A group of 25 members of Congress penned a letter to U.S. o cials highlighting trade barriers for the nation's blueberry industry in Japan, South Korea and Vietnam that have limited market growth and made competition di cult.

October 2025 The Growers' Guide

# Agency, dam stakeholders split when interpreting fish return numbers

**By MATTHEW WEAVER**Capital Press

Dam advocates point to improved fish populations compared to historic numbers, but an Idaho Fish and Game official says Snake River salmon and steelhead are "not even close to achieving goal."

During a presentation before the House Natural Resources Committee in September, Clark Mather, executive director of Northwest RiverPartners, said that average salmon and steelhead returns are higher at each of the four dams compared to their respective first years.

Mather said it's been more than four decades at Lower Granite since fish returns were less than they were in 1975, and salmon returns are nearly 10 times higher than 1999.

Wildlife managers have a different interpretation.

The numbers dam advocates cite are from times when populations were "severely failing," said Tim Copeland, program coordinator for wild salmon and steelhead monitoring studies for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

"The fact that current numbers are higher does not mean management has been successful, just that we have avoided disaster for the moment," he said.

"We absolutely stand by the numbers that we have been sharing publicly," Mather said. "We think it's an important perspective that should be considered."

The numbers are publicly available, compiled by federal facilities and shared by nationally recognized research institutions, such as the University of Washington's Columbia River data access in real time (DART), he said.

Copeland usually uses the Fish Passage Center, which draws on the same source as DART for the data.

#### **Recovery goals**

The Northwest Power and Conservation Council has a goal for a 10-year average of 5 million fish returning. The current 10-year average at Bonneville Dam is about 1.3 million.

The Columbia Basin Partnership proposed goals at Lower Granite Dam for Snake River salmon and steelhead, agreed to by entities across the region as the benchmark, Copeland said.

They are:

Spring/summer chinook: 235,000 wild; 90,000 hatchery.

Fall chinook: 18,200 wild; 24,800 hatchery

Steelhead: 147,300 wild; 130,100 hatchery

Sockeye salmon: 54,600 wild; Not applicable hatchery.

Coho salmon (goal is at Ice Harbor Dam): 44,100 wild; 4,400 hatchery.

The current 10-year average count of all salmon and steelhead over Lower Granite Dam is about 193,000, most of which are hatchery fish, Copeland said.

"Without getting into the weeds, you can see that salmon and steelhead in the Snake River basin are not even close to achieving goals," he said. "The remaining questions, in my mind, are what would it take to get to those goals?"

See DAM, Page A12



Courtesy Bureau of Reclamation

The Ice Harbor Dam on the Lower Snake River.

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#### DAM:

#### **Continued from A11**

The targets set by the partnership are "not based in science, but in a closed-door political process that included only dam opponents," said Todd Myers, vice president for research at the Washington Policy Center, a free market think tank.

The NOAA Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee convened the Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force in 2017. It included Tribes, fishing, agriculture, conservation, river transportation, port and hydropower interests and the states of Idaho, Montana, Washington and Oregon.

Myers said the Snake River fall chinook run is "almost recovered," while spring and summer chinook runs are still very low and progress is slow.

"There is a lot more work to do to reach recovery but moving the goal posts is evidence that the real-world data aren't matching their predictions," Myers said.

# 'Progress already made'

Myers pointed to claims from dam opponents four years ago that spring and summer wild chinook would be "quasi-extinct" in 2025. Instead, total spring/summer chinook runs were higher than when the prediction was made.

"So the insinuation that management hasn't been successful is obviously wrong," he said. "Returns are higher and repeated predictions of extinction have been consistently inaccurate. It is obtuse to claim we haven't made progress."

"The billions of dollars invested over the years in recovery efforts have made a measurable difference," said Neil Maunu, executive director for the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association. "While we acknowledge that more work remains, it's important to recognize the progress already made."

Maunu cites strides made by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to enhance fish passage, hatchery systems and related infrastructure. One of PNWA's core goals is to ensure that the region's navigation systems and fish populations can successfully coexist, he said.

"Ultimately, the fixation on destroying the dams is distracting from near-term solutions that could help salmon recover," said Myers with the Washington Policy Center. "Instead, we spend massive amounts of time and money on divisive and destructive fights that have now been raging for three decades."

# 'Apples and oranges comparison'

Copeland said the advocates' numbers miss the differences in hatchery production and harvest between 1938 and 2024.

"In 1938, there were no hatcheries and all fisheries were supported by wild populations," he said. "Now the bulk of salmon and steelhead returns are supported by hatcheries."

In 1938, about 77% of salmon and steelhead entering the Columbia River mouth were harvested downstream of Bonneville Dam. That harvest is now "pretty minimal" for most species and stocks, Copeland said

Dam advocates are making an "apples or oranges" comparison, Copeland said.

"Fisheries and harvest are now greatly reduced and it takes millions of dollars to produce what nature once provided for free," he said. "This is the part that gets lost when just looking at dam counts."

#### Working together

"Our entire region cares about salmon, and our region overwhelmingly supports the multiple benefits of the hydropower system," Mather said, citing irrigation, river transportation and flood control. "We think it's really important to have a conversation about all of those things, based on facts, based on information that we can work on together."

Mather looks forward to working with the Idaho department, Tribes and other stakeholders "to find solutions that are fact-based, science-based to move the region forward."

Northwest RiverPartners will continue to reach out to Tribes and other stakeholders to look for solutions, Mather said.

"We think working together in the region, we have a much better chance of finding solutions that will work over the long-term for the millions of people that are impacted and depend on the system here, than going to the courtroom," he said. "We are hopeful that we can find solutions that move everyone forward together."

#### **BLUEBERRY:**

Continued from A10

Chad Don of Oasis Farms in Prosser, Wash., an NABC board member, said strong export markets are critical to maintaining healthy prices.

"These actions will not only strengthen farmgate returns for growers but also support rural jobs and highlight the premium quality and reliability of Washington blueberries to consumers around the world," he added, in the NABC news release.

# USDA trade grant

The U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council recently was the recipient of a \$724,000 grant from the USDA Foreign Agriculture Service.

The agency's Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops program helps producers combat trade barriers, as well as promote and sell their goods internationally.

Awards were announced in mid-September.

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October 2025 The Growers' Guide

# USDA fruit and nut report: Record hazelnut crop, other larger harvests expected

BY KYLE ODEGARD
Capital Press

A record hazelnut crop is forecast this season, and pear, apple, walnut and wine grape harvests also are expected to increase, according to a new USDA Economic Research Service report.

Lower production is predicted for cranberries and peaches.

Overall grower prices in July for fruit and tree nuts increased 7% over the previous year and 11% over 2023.

Consumer prices for fresh fruit in August rose 2% from the same period in 2024, led by increases for apples, bananas and citrus, while other fruits remained unchanged.

Here's a look at selected Pacific Northwest highlights from the Fruit and Tree Nuts Outlook released Sept. 25.

#### **Hazelnuts**

U.S. commercial hazel-



Capital Press file pho o

Hazelnuts are being harvested in this file photo. This season's crop is expected to increase 20% to a record 116,000 pounds and the minimum price for growers is up substantially.

nut production in 2025 this generally means Oregon's Willamette Valley — is predicted to surpass the 2024 record crop of

96,800 tons in-shell.

The Hazelnut Marketing Board's yield survey, released in August, indicated the harvest is expected to jump 20% this season to roughly 116,000 tons based on higher yields and acreage.

Hazelnut acreage has

skyrocketed over the past decade.

From 1980 to 2012, hazelnuts covered between 20,000 and 29,000 acres in Oregon. Acreage reached a record high of 88,000 acres in 2024.

The U.S. exported a record 54 million pounds of hazelnuts in 2024-25, a 20% increase over the previous year.

With top global producer Turkey experiencing frosts that damaged hazelnuts and several other crops, demand for U.S. exports is likely to increase this season, putting upward pressure on prices.

Oregon growers are guaranteed to fetch at least 40% more than last year's minimum price for the 2025 crop.

#### Pears

This season's pear production is forecast 22% higher to 625,000 tons, as Northwest orchards rebounded from a previous crop damaged by

See USDA, Page A14



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#### **USDA:**

#### **Continued from A13**

cold winter weather.

That's a substantial increase if the forecast holds true, but still would be the second lowest pear volume on record since 1972.

Lower pear production in 2024 and 2025 reflects a long-term decline in U.S. pears for processing, mostly for canned fruit.

This summer, Del Monte Foods declared bankruptcy and closed its processing plant and two warehouses in the area of Yakima, Wash.

Fresh pear shipments for marketing 2024-25 fell to the lowest export volume since 1988-89, marking the first year the U.S. was a net importer of fresh pears.

Grower prices were higher in mid-2025 than the previous year.

#### **Cranberries**

The U.S. produces about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the world's cranberries, but the domestic crop is expected to drop 9% to 8.13 million barrels this season.

When adjusted for inflation, grower prices have fallen each year since 2021.

Oregon production is forecast at 560,000 barrels, down roughly 10% from a record 623,000 barrels in 2024.

Top production areas — Coos and Curry counties along the southern Oregon Coast — experienced abnormal drought and dryness starting in June, with conditions worsening through mid-September.

#### Wine grapes

In 2024, West Coast wine grape production declined year over year due to continued dip in U.S. demand for wine.

A slight rebound is anticipated in part of the region this season.

Anticipated increases in California and Oregon wine grape production should offset a decline for Washington in 2025.

California production is forecast at 3 million tons, up 4% from 2024 but 16% below the previous 3-year average.

Washington's harvest is predicted to drop to 120,000 tons, 21% lower than 2024 and down 38% from the previous 3-year average.

Oregon's crop is forecast at 110,000 tons, up 31% over the previous season.

#### **PITTS:**

#### **Continued from A4**

The NRA is sponsoring this lifetime achievement award for the best bumper sticker relating to guns. The nominees are: Keep honking. I'm reloading; I still miss my ex... but my aim is improving; Gun control isn't about guns, it's about control. And the Bumpie goes to... Cover me, I'm changing lanes.

The subject of children has always been a popular one amongst bumper sticker aficionados going all the way back to the Baby On Board placards. This year's nominees for best bumper stickers about children are: Be nice to your kids, they'll choose your rest home; Child in trunk; Insanity is hereditary... you get it from your kids. And the Bumpie goes to, Your kid may be an honor student but you're still an idiot.

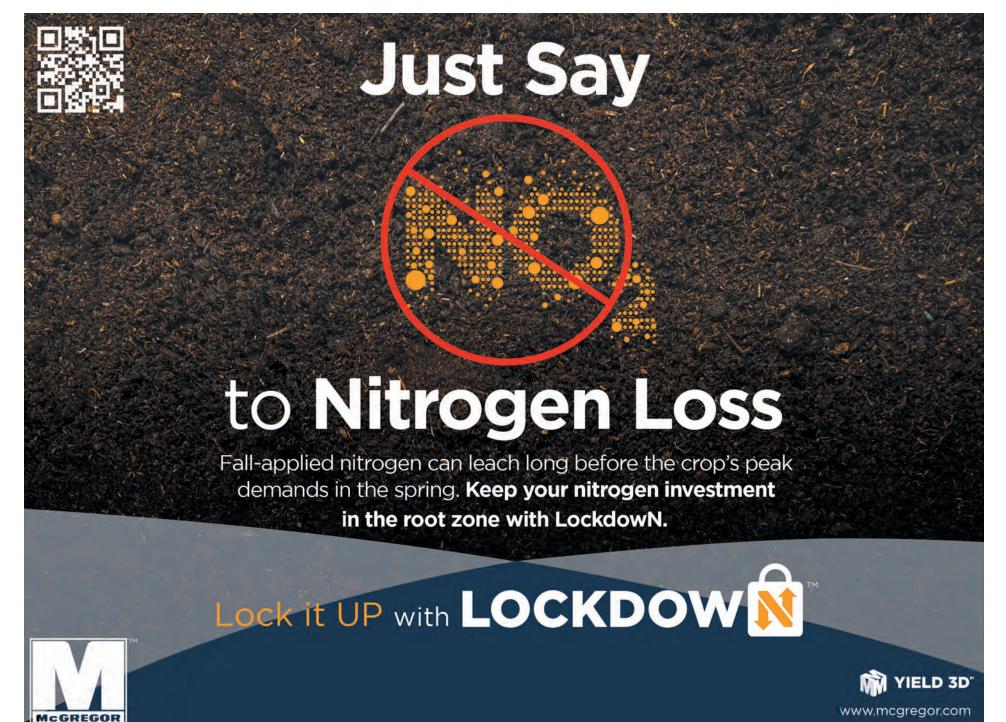
In the Life and Death category the nominees are: We are born naked, wet and hungry. Then things get worse; I'm retired. I was tired yesterday and I'm tired again today; Work is for people who don't know how to golf; Procrastinate later; Trust in God but lock your car; Goodbye tension hello pension; God grant me patience. And I want it now! And the Bumpie goes to, If at first you don't succeed DO NOT try skydiving.

Things got pretty nasty in competi-

tion for the Most Politically Incorrect sticker such as: Nuke the gay unborn baby whales for peace; Eat Well, stay fit. Die anyway; I'm not an alcoholic, I'm a drunk. Alcoholics go to meetings; Cat, the other white meat; Liberals want misery spread evenly; Jesus is coming. Look busy.. It was a close race but the Bumpie goes to: Vegetables aren't food. Vegetables are what food eats.

It's true, we already covered driving but the subject of tailgating deserves its own Bumpie considering the number of bumper stickers that deal with it. For example: I don't brake; I brake for no apparent reason; Caution! I brake for tailgaters. And the Bumpie goes to... If you can read this then you are in range.

The final Bumpie goes to the best bumper sticker seen in the last twelve months. Between talking on their phones, trying to figure what personalized plates mean and reading bumper stickers today's driver barely has time to drive. And because next year will be a mid term election year there will be an avalanche of fresh bumper stickers. (Voters are going to want to remove their Kamala For President stickers if they haven't already done so.) That's why for my choice for the best allaround bumper sticker of the year is... What this country needs is a good five cent bumper sticker remover.



October 2025 The Growers' Guide

#### **HAZELNUT:**

#### Continued from A8

The company's sales are divided among four "legs:" commodity hazelnuts, industrial ingredients, food service and retail, he said.

Commodity hazelnuts offer the opportunity to sell the most volume, but the more specialized sales channels help realize the most value per unit of crop, Denfeld said.

"We're pushing every day to move more into each subsequent channel," from commodity into industrial, industrial into food service, and food service into retail, he said.

The highest value is generated by its retail line of products, but these are also the most expensive to produce, he said.

For example, the company's Laurel Foods brand sells coldpressed hazelnut oil, a suite of hazelnut butters and several types of flavored hazelnut packages through such retailers as Costco.

· "The more diverse we can get, the more profitable a stable of returns our family of growers can get," Denfeld said.

#### **Producers' choice**

Crop prices obviously affect



Courtesy of Sean Denfeld

Sean Denfeld is the manager of Denfeld Nut, a hazelnut packer with its own retail line of products sold under the "Laurel Foods" brand.

a farmer's choice about which packers to do business with, though growers say several other factors influence such decisions as well.

Though final prices for hazelnuts can vary among processors, farmers say packers can't deviate too far from each other — a company won't attract sufficient supplies if they pay half as much per pound, while paying twice as much would be cost-prohibitive.

"Everybody's got to toe the line," said Eric Chambers, a grower near Millersburg, Ore.

Growers also choose packers based on how efficiently their crop has been processed, which affects their revenues, since lost or defective nuts don't count toward the tonnage they're paid for, Chambers said.

Past experience and familiarity inevitably play a role as well, since growers must trust they'll be treated fairly, said Jimmy Lee, a farmer near Albany, Ore.

"It's who you know, mainly," Lee said. "Personal relationships are a lot and transparency is important as well." Growers may divide sales depending on the proximity between individual orchards and processing facilities, and many try to avoid putting all their eggs in one basket, said Zach Christensen, a farmer near McMinnville.

"It's not uncommon at all for someone to split their crop," he said. "I'm sure there are geographical considerations, but it's also just risk mitigation."

Finally, a packer's strategy for selling the crop is an important element for the long-term benefit of the grower and the broader industry, said Larry Christensen, a farmer near Dayton, Ore.

Farmers know that Oregon is competing with foreign hazelnut suppliers and want the state's industry to remain attractive to buyers over time, he said. "You've got to stay on their good sides, so they come back the next year."

Larry George, the state's biggest processor, urges growers not to discount this final factor, as packers who invest in developing new hazelnut customers are crucial for the industry's growth.

George said he has no problem with continuing to fight for the business of farmers and customers, as anything less would be damaging to the industry.

"We've always been supportive of a good rival," he said. "We recognize there need to be alternatives to us."

To that end, George praised the approach embraced by Denfeld Nut and Cascade Foods.

"They're doing really great innovative things and are not necessarily focused on commodity markets," he said. "I'm not sure they get enough credit for the role they play in that."

Since he started processing hazelnuts more than three decades ago, George has seen the number of packers drop from roughly 20 to just four.

That consolidation means none of the remaining companies can afford to neglect efforts to build the industry's long-term markets, he said.

"These small customers turn into big customers, but they're expensive to develop," he said. "The growers have got to hold the processors' feet to the fire. That means the growers need to hold us and all the packers to a high standard for the marketing."



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1996	JD	455	455 DOUBLE DISK DRILLS 35"	N/A	\$23,999	COLFAX
2023	DM	LT42	DEMCOSPRAYTRAILER, QUICK-DRAW, PUMP REMOTE STARTHONDA	N/A	\$116,999	COLFAX
2014	JD	1890	AIR DRILL, 40FT, 7.5" SPACING, SEED BOX, STARTER KIT	N/A	\$169,999	FOUR LAKES
2015	JD	1890-1910	AIR DISC DRILL, 36FT, 7.5" SPACING, 1910 CART	N/A	\$169,999	TEKOA
2023	JD	N540C	AIR DRILL, 40FT, 75° SPACING, CCS, STARTER KIT	N/A	\$242,999	MOSCOW
2022	AP	4712-SL	AGPRO 4712-AL NO-TILL DRILL	N/A	\$304,999	COLFAX
2020	JD	R4045	SPRAYER, 120'STEEL BOOM, FLOATERS	1096	\$349,999	COLFAX
2019	JD	R4045	SPRAYER, 120' CF BOOM, EXACTAPPLY, DUALS	1014	\$399,999	TEKOA
2021	JD	R4044	SPRAYER, 132' CF BOOM, EXACTAPPLY	2048	CALL	FOUR LAKES

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2012 CAT CHALLENGER MT765D,



2012 CAT CHALLENGER MT765D, 4378 hrs, PTO, 3 pt, 350 hp, 75% tracks, Trimble. Good, clean tractor .......\$125,000





CASE 416C BACKHOE W/7783 HRS



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56' WIL-RICH QUADX CULTIVATOR ......
\$25,000



#### **DRILLS**





1996 GREAT PLAINS 2000 20' SOLID STAND DOUBLE-DISC DRILL, 6" spacing, 3 pt.......s12,500



35' JD 455 DRILLS, 8" spacing ... \$27,500

#### **SPRAYERS**



**RIVER BEND 90' BOOMS,** new nozzle bodies 20" sp hydraulic driven pump Trimble system, 3 pt, (2) 500 gal side mount......



2011 APACHE AS1220, self-propelled sprayer, 1200 gal tank, 10-section 120' boom, 2634 hrs, nice machine ready to go





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2005 FEATHERLITE 2-HORSE WALK THRU HORSE TRAILER, tack room, dressing room, nice & clean little trailer

......<sup>\$</sup>4,500







2004 IH WATER TRUCK, 4200 gal stainless steel tank, auto trans, Cummins N14, 370 hp, approximately 128,000 miles \$40.000



**2000 IH 4200 GALLON,** stainless steel, 9 sp, Cummins, approximately 635,000 miles, front & rear spray, pumps...

#### **HARVEST**



HOPPER......\$3,500



**1993 JD 9600 W/30' HDR,** 4930 sep hrs, new tires ......s15,000



**2010 JD 9770,** 4577 sep hrs, 630 Draper header w/cart, clean machine .... \$100,000



2009 JD 9770 W/2017 30' DRAPER HDR & CART, 4WD, 3693 hrs .. \$110,000







2013 BRENT 1082 GRAIN CART, roll tarp, newer tires, PTO drive, great working condition .......\$45,00



**2012 JD S680 LEVEL LAND COMBINE, DUALS,** 2029 sep hrs, w/2012 MacDon 40' D65-S Draper header & cart ........... \$130,000



**2013 BRENT 882 GRAIN CART,** 30.5×32 tires in good shape, well maintained



JD 7850 CHOPPER......560,000

### **QUADTRACS**

'23 CASE IH 580Q, 1257 Hrs, PowerShift Transmission, 36" Tracks, Luxury Performance Cab, Cold Weather Starting Aid, Engine Brake, Front Bumper Weights, True Ground Speed Radar, RH Armrest, AFS Pro 1200, High Cap Hyd Pump, Power Beyond Supply and Return, Performance Lighting, Dual Beacon, LED Cab Roof Work Lights, 2 Pumps Smart Torque, 6 Electric Remotes, 1000RPM PTO, High Cap Bar w/Diff Lock............3469,900 \$439,900

'19 CASE IH 580Q, 5130 Hours, Powershift, Deluxe Cab, LED Cab Roof Work Light Package, Single Beacon Light, RH Window Bar Display, Guidance Ready, Telematics, Cold Weather Starting Aid, Engine Compression Brake, True Ground Speed Sensor, Back-up Warning Alarm, High Capacity Draw Bar, High Capacity Hydraulic Pump 6 Flectric Remotes Power Revond Supply & Return Hi Capacity Bar w/Diff Lock, Undercarriage Scrapers, 36" CAMSO, 650 AG Tracks, Front Bumper Weights......

'18 CASE IH 580Q, 4398 Hours, PowerShift, Deluxe Cab, LED Cab Roof Work Light Package, Single Beacon Light, RH Window Bar Display Ready, Telematics, Cold Weather Starting Aid, True Ground Speed Sensor, High-Capacity Draw Bar, High-Capacity Hydraulic Pump, 6 Electric Remotes, Power Beyond Supply & Return, Hi Capacity Bar w/Diff Lock, Drive Wheel Scrapers, 

### 4WD 150-HP & OVER

4 Hyd Outlets, AutoTrac Ready, 1000 PTO, 3PT...... \$159,900 \$149.900

'98 CASE IH 9370Q, 9711 Hours, Powershift, 4 Remotes, Trimble EZ-Steer, FM750, 2000 hours on reman Engine, Good Tracks,

CASEIH 9380Q, 13,000 Hour, 36" Tracks, 4 Remotes.



'20 JD 9520RX, 3511 Hrs, 36" Tracks, PTO, High Flow Hydraulics, 5 Valves, Premium Cab w/Leather, Refrigerator, Premium Lighting w/Front and Rear HID Lights, Autotrac Ready with 4600 Processor ......

'08 JD 8530, 8200 Hrs. 420/85R34 Fronts, 480/80R50 Rear Duals. 

'11 NH T8.360, 6150 Hrs, 4WD, Duals, Front Weights, Deluxe

'23 CASE IH STEIGER 470 AFS CONNECT, 981 hrs Luxury Performance Cab. PowerDrive, Engine Brake, Cold Weather Starting Aid, True Ground Speed Radar, RH Armrest, AFS Pro 1200, High-Capacity Pump, Power Beyond Supply & Return, Performance Lighting, Dual Beacon, LED Cap Roof Work Lights, 710/70R42 R1 Duals, Wheel Weights, Ballast Package, Rear Weight Support, ..\$3<del>68,000</del>. \$358,000

'23 CASE IH STEIGER 500 AFS CONNECT, PowerShift Heavy Duty Version, Engine Brake, Cold Weather Starting Aid, True Ground Speed Radar, RH Armrest AFS Pro 1200, High Capacity Hydraulic Pump, Power Beyond Supply & Return, Performance Lighting, Dual Beacon, LED Cab Roof Work Lights, Luxury Performance Cab, PTO, Hitch Drawbar, 4 Rear Remotes, Parallel Flow Hydraulic AutoGuidance, Connectivity, Front Ballast, Rear Ballast, Wheel Weights, Rear Weight Support, Tow Cable, 710/70R42 Duals

**'97 Challenger 55,** 25" Tracks, 1000PTO, 11k Hrs............**\$26,900 '22 CASE IH 500W,** 1352 Hours, Luxury Cab, Power Drive, HHP, Engine Brake, Cold Weather Starting Aid, True Ground Speed Radar, RH Armrest AFS Pro 1200, High Capacity Hydraulic Pump, Power Beyond Supply and Return, Performance Lighting, Dual Beacon, LED Cab Roof Work 

> .... \$115,000 '22 CASE IH PUMA 150, 668 HRS, Mechanical Cab Suspension, BlueTooth Radio, 2 Tele/Heat/Rem Adjustable Mirrors, ISOBUS Class 3 Speed Control, 200 Amp Alternator, 3 Electronic Rear Remotes,

> > '12 CASE IH 450W, 4654 Hrs, Luxury Cab, 16 Speed Powershift, 1000 RPM PTO, High Capacity Hydro Pump, 4 Hydraulic Remotes,

'21 CASE IH MAXXUM 125, 1585 Hours, Active Drive 4 Suspended Cab, Telescoping Mirrors, Roof LED's, 200 Amp Alternator, Grid Heater, Rear Wheel Weights, L105 Loader, 3 rd Function, 480/65R28 Fronts, 600/65R38 Rears, Consigned

'14 KUBOTA M59TL, BT 1200 Backhoe, 84" Bucket, 3 Range Hydro-Shuttle, Consigned .....

'21 MF 1835E, 124 Hrs, Hydro, 4WD, Loader, Palletforks, Post 

'81 YANMAR 1610, 4WD, Rear Blade, Good Tires, 16HP, 3PT, 540 PTO 9-3 Trans, Cons.....

### 12 Month Waiver of Interest on ALL Contracts over \$200K (O.A.C.) Call for Details

#### DRILLS

'20 CASE IH 3555, 555 Bushels, High Floatation-Hydraulic Control, Deluxe Auger Screen, 650/75R38 High Float Duals, 8 Run Double Shoot, Light Bar, Amber Rotating Beacon, Bulk Tank Lights, Sectional Command, Rear Ladder w/Folding Steps, Rear Tow Hitch, Tank Fill 

'15 CASEIH FH700, 60'x12", High Floatation, 550LB Trips, 5.5" Rubber Press Wheels, Air TBT, Double Shoot......

'12 CASE IH PH800, 12" Centers, 5" Pneumatic Packer Wheels, Precision Opener, Mud Scrapers, Bourgault Opener & Points, Consigned 59,000

'12 CASE IH ADX2230, Single Shoot, 5 Run, 230 Bushel Capacity, Steel 

'07 FLEXI-COIL 4350, 6430 Bushels, Variable Dual Fan, 10" Auger, Velocity Sensors, 18.4x38 R1 Duals, Transport Lights............. 37,990. \$29,900

'03 FLEXI-COIL 5000HD, 45' single shoot, liquid deep band set-up, 12" spacing, 5.5" rubber press wheels, 5" paired row boots....... \$68,900 '02 FLEXI-COIL 3450, Tow Behind Air Cart, Variable Rate,

...\$15.900 Dual Fan, Consigned.... JD 1910, 3 Tank, 12" Conveyer, Tow Between, New Fan Housing,

Duals, Sinale Shoot..... JD 1890, 60', 7.5" Spacing, Blockage Monitor......\$91,000

'19 NH3 RAVEN SYSTEM CART, Custom Made NH3 Cart w/800 Gallon Bottle, Raven NH3 Components, Shut-Off & Control Valves, TBT,

'13 JD 455, 35'x7.5" Spacing, Grass Seed Box, Skids on 15" Spacing, Hoffman Track Scratchers, Liquid Fertilizer, 400 Gallon Tank, 2x13" Press Wheels.....

'19 NH RB450, 4x5 1.8M Sileage, Endless Belt, Net and Twine, DLX Wrap, 18L1.6 Tires, Dual Wheels, Manual Hyd Pickup Lift 5 Bar Reel, Roller Windguard, Clevis Hitch......... 42,900 \$39,900

'03 NH 580, 16x18 Bale, Hydraulic Pick-up, Bale Extension /4 Turn Chute, Newer Knotters , Consigned .... ....<sup>\$</sup>13,900

'16 NH BC5060, Small Square Baler Twin, Quarter Turn Chute, Less

'13 NH BC5080, 16x18 Chute, Hydraulic Swing, Hydraulic Pickup, Light '02 CASE IH LBX431R, 3x4 Big Square Baler, Apx 30k Bales, Rotor

#### 

JD 946, Mower Conditioner, 13' Cutter Bar, Center Pivot, Flail Conditioner, Hydraulic Angle Adjust, Regular Maintenance, Consigned

#### 

'16 JCB 525-60, 4691 Hrs, 5000LB Lift Capacity, Quick Attach Forks, Airless Tires, New Paint....

#### SKID STEERS

'14 BOBCAT T590, 3251 Hrs, Open Cab, Good Tracks, STD Hydro Foot Controls Traction Lock Over Drive \$30,500

'23 NH C345, EH2 Aircab, 17.7" Tracks, 84" HD Ext Bucket w/ Smart Teeth, Block Heater, HVAC Cab, Air Ride Suspension Seat, 2 Speed E-H Controls, Steel Lights, Glass Door, High Flow PKG, Heavy Duty Rear Door, Eco Disc Mulcher Attachment, Great Condition, Consigned ...\$135.000

#### HARROWS

(6) STOESS 4000, 10 1/2' Rodweeders, No Hitch, Consigned

#### PLOWS

IH 800, 10-bottom plow, walking beam in center, good moldboards, good

(2) IH 770, 5 Bottom, Auto Reset, Good Tires, New Mold Boards Included, \*3.295 EA \$2.595 EA

#### HIMAGDON HEADERSHI

'13 MacDon FD75	. \$ <del>59,900</del>	\$52,900
'15 MacDon FD75	<del>*57,9</del> 00	\$55,900
'15 MacDon FD75	. <del>59,90</del> 0	\$64,900
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ALLEN 8827, Hydraulic Basket Rake, Electric Controls, Newer Tines, Teeth and Bearing are in Good Shape.... TWINSTAR RA-2030, V-Rake, Twin Baskets, 5 Function, Guage Wheels, Control Box ...... VERMEER R2800, Basket V-Rake, 28', Full Hydraulic Control, Rubber Mounted Rake Teeth ..... '21 SITREX SM-300, Hay Tedder Rake, PTO Driven, Like New, '25 Sotrex RP3, 3 Wheel Windrow Turner !!NEW!!....

#### GRAIN CARTS

'93 BRENT 772, 750 Bushell, PTO Drive, Diamond Tread, 30.51-32, Tarp Kit, Consigned ..... '02 CASE IH LBX431R, 3x4 Big Square Baler, Apx 30k Bales,

#### 

'13 MACDON-PW7,16' Rake Up Header. .\$19,900

### SPRAYERS/APPLICATORS

...<del>\*195.00</del>0 \$184,900

1200 gal tank, Aim Command Flex, Case IH Pro 700 auto steer package, 710/70R38 Tires **275,900 249,900** 

'17 CASE IH 4440, 3200 Hrs, 120' Boom, 7 Section, 20" Spacing, Luxury Surveyor Cab, Active Suspension, 280/90R46 Wheels, Manual Adj Mirrors, 3" Front Fill, SS Tank, CR 11 Single Nozzle Body, Boom Flush Valve, AFS Pro700, AIM Command Flex. AutoBoom Height Control. Combo Rate Dual Body Shut-Off

'16 CASE IH 4440, 4100 Hours, 120' Boom, AccuBoom Section Control, AutoBoom Height Control, Pro 700, AIM Command, Foam Marker, Alliance 650/65R38 ....<del>\$179,90</del>0 \$154,900

CASE IH PATRIOT 4430, 3268 Hours, 100' Boom, 6 Section, 20" Spacing, DLX Surveyor Cab, 650/65R38, Tires, Power Adj Mirrors, 3" Fill, AFS Pro 700, AFS 

- '19 CASE IH 4440, 2700 Hrs, 120' Boom, 7 sensor Auto Boom Height Control, FLEXI-COIL S67XL, Pull Type Sprayer, 1500 Gallon Tank, 100' Suspended Boom, Rayen Auto-Room Height control
  - '24 JD 616R, 529 Hrs, Signature Edition, 1600 Gallon Tank, 120' Boom, Exact Apply, Command Drive, Boom Trac Pro 2, Integrated StarFire 7500 Receiver, G5 Plus Command Center Display, LSW 800/55F46 Floats, Set of Skinny's and

SCHABAU SF.8500, 90' Boom, 1500 Gallon Tank, 100 Gallon Rinse Tank, Tripple Nozzle, 5 Section Control, 380/90R46 Tires, AutoBoom Height

'12 AGPRO NH3 APPLICATOR, Custom Built, 1000 Gallon Bottle, 12" Centers, McGregor 25"x1 1/4" Coil Shanks, Rolling Basket Harrow, 11L-15 Tires, Raven Control & Shut-off Valves, Consigned ........

AG 100 FERTILIZER SPREADER, Ground Drive, 66cuft Hopper, Stainless Box, ..\$3,900 Consigned

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**Brad Carlson/Capital Press** 

Armando Falcon shows a darkling beetle via new microscope and software at the University of Idaho Parma Research and Extension Center Sept. 3.

# University of Idaho entomology lab powers up imaging

By BRAD CARLSON **Capital Press** 

An image-detailing digital microscope and a chemical-replacing X-ray scanner improve University of Idaho Extension educator Armando Falcon's ability to promptly supply farmers with detailed, vital information about bugs.

The new equipment "keeps the entomology program functional in a digital era," said Falcon, who is based at the UI Parma Research and Extension center and has space in the Idaho Center for Plant and Soil Health that hosted a grand opening in February 2024.

In addition to farmers, home gardeners can benefit, he said.

"I get people coming in with sam-

ples, and that number is growing," Falcon said.

A gardener, for example, can bring in an apple-dwelling coddling moth and see it in high-definition, three-dimensional form via the microscope, which is equipped with a powerful still and video camera and linked to specialized software.

Falcon used a darkling beetle sample to show capabilities of the new microscope and software, which arrived in late August. He magnified, rotated and tilted the images. Next to a picture, he can record data that stays with the image in the electronic system. The system has autofocus, can change light and remove reflection, and can capture and record measurements.

See ENTOMOLOGY, Page B3



October 2025 The Growers' Guide

#### **ENTOMOLOGY:**

Continued from B2

He was instrumental in confirming the presence of the darkling beetle, an invasive pest, in southwest Idaho in 2024.

A project involving comb-clawed beetles was the first for the new microscope and software. Future projects will involve other pests and beneficial insects. The system also will be ideal for preparing

findings, Falcon said.

"This allows proper identification" even by small structures that can differentiate similar species, he said. "In integrated pest management,

and presenting research need to identify the pest or beneficial insect first."

> UI Parma has an older portable, digital microscope that lacks software and has lower resolution and magnification power but remains applicable for

field use, Falcon said.

"I see a broad-spectrum need for identifying insects in this region" including pests, pollinators and beneficial predators, he said.

See ENTOMOLOGY, Page B5



**Brad Carlson/Capital Press** 

Armando Falcon presents current hop research to a contingent of buyers and dealers Sept. 11 at the University of Idaho Parma Research and Extension Center.

#### TRACTORS



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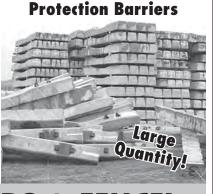
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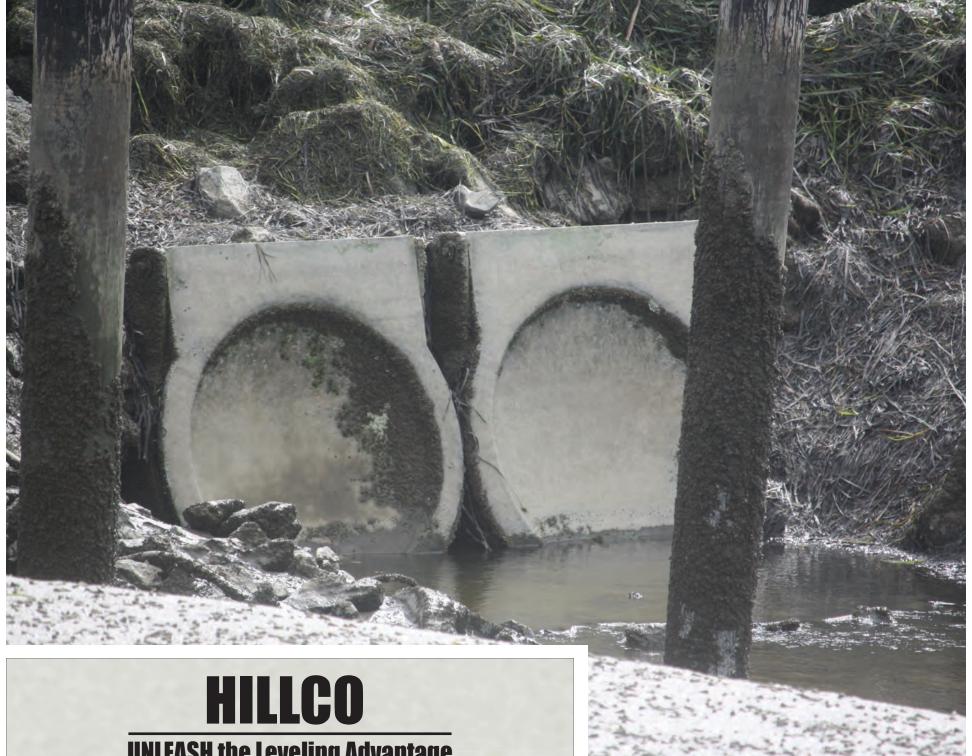
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Don Jenkins/Capital Press

A tidegate at the mouth of No Name Slough keeps Puget Sound saltwater tides from washing over farmland in the Skagit Delta 70 miles north of Seattle. A federal court will allow the Swinomish Indian tribe to intervene in a lawsuit over whether the tidegate can be replaced.

# **Court allows** Swinomish tribe to oppose Skagit **Delta tidegate**

By DON JENKINS **Capital Press** 

A court order has positioned the Swinomish Indian tribe to argue against fixing a worn-out tidegate that protects farmland in the Skagit Delta 70 miles north of Seattle.

Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals Judges Jennifer Sung and Holly A. Thomas signed a one-page

order Sept. 24 allowing the tribe to intervene in a lawsuit between Skagit County Dike District 12 and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

The federal agency and tribe agree the 140-year-old tidegate hurts fish. The tribe told the court it feared the agency's stance, taken under the Biden administration, will change under President Trump.

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#### **SWINOMISH:**

Continued from R4

"The United States no longer adequately represents the tribe," the tribe stated in its motion.

Sung and Thomas didn't comment on the claim, but cited court precedent in granting the tribe's motion to intervene. The tribe will be able to oppose repairing the tidegate, regardless of any change in federal policy.

Without tidegates, Puget Sound saltwater tides would wash over the 70,000-acre delta. The Swinomish tribe says the loss of estuary habitat threatens their treaty fishing rights.

The diking district sued after the fisheries service concluded a new tidegate at No Name Slough could drive Puget Sound salmon and killer whales to extinction.

The tidegate protects

about 200 acres. A new one will prevent farmland from returning to salmon habitat for 50 more years, service fisheries complained.

The diking district claims the fisheries service has overreached and misapplied the Endangered Species Act.

The Swinomish tribe moved to intervene in the lawsuit last year. U.S. Magistrate Judge Brian Tsuchida in Seattle denied the tribe's motion, but later upheld the fisheries service's position.

The diking district appealed to the 9th Circuit, and the tribe again moved to intervene. The diking district and fisheries service both opposed tribe's participation, arguing nothing has changed since Tsuchida kept the tribe out of the

In its motion to the appeals court, the tribe argued upcoming changes to ESA regulations could touch on this case. Modifying habitat will no longer be an ESA violation, according to a proposal by the Trump administration.

"If granted intervention, the tribe will vigorously assert that the ESA prohibits harm to listed species through habitat modification, a position which (the fisheries service) appears to no longer share," the tribe stated.

fisheries vice says the diking district can replace its tidegate if it restores 8.5 acres somewhere in the delta to fish habitat. The district says it's not financially feasible.

Replacing the old tophinged tidegate with a side-hinged tidegate will improve passage for fish swimming between the slough and the bay, according to the diking district.

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## **ENTOMOLOGY:**

**Continued from B3** 

The electronic X-ray scanner with cassette-style cartridge was brought in ahead of the 2025 crop season.

UI Parma staff continue to use an X-ray machine that has been in place for years. For example, a board full of alfalfa leaf-cutting bee cocoon samples is inserted into the machine and an image is taken.

In the old process, the cocoons were X-rayed and a film image was produced. The image on film was developed chemically, which could take hours, Falcon said.

Now, the board with cocoon samples is placed atop the cassette, which is imported into the X-ray machine. After the image is captured — which takes about 15 seconds — the cassette is removed from the X-ray machine and inserted into the scanner. The scanner digitizes the image for immediate, software-assisted analysis.

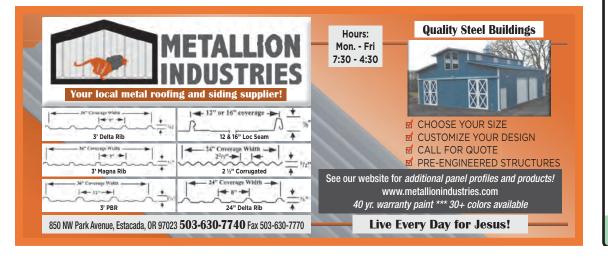
The software can read, magnify and adjust the image, take measurements and make comparisons.

"It saves time and increases the accuracy of testing results," Falcon said.

Using the X-ray scanner and software during the 2025 growing season, results were delivered to farmers faster, he said. Using the system also means finding and buying film developing supplies is not needed.

Falcon started at UI Parma in January 2024. Cost of the equipment — just over \$40,000 and about \$25,000 for microscope and X-ray scanner systems, respectively was part of his program startup funding.

To a group of six hop buyers and dealers from Mexico, he demonstrated the new microscope and software Sept. 11 after giving a presentation on current hop research. The group toured various southwest Idaho hop industry destinations Sept. 10-11, an effort of the Idaho Hop Growers Commission in cooperation with the State Department of Agriculture.



# Simplot changes company name, structure

Capital Press staff

BOISE, Idaho — The J.R. Simplot Co. has changed its name and structure to align with its operating business groups.

The Simplot Co. is a new global parent holding company for all Simplot-affiliated companies, according to a news release. By aligning the overall company organizational structure with its business operations, Simplot can strengthen centralized support and oversight, "enabling consistency and scalability across its expanding global footprint in food and agriculture."

Simplot has grown in recent years, expanding its geographic operating footprint and increasing its workforce around the world, according to the company. As Simplot continues to evolve within the dynamic food and agriculture industries, the restructure allows the organization to align its diverse business operations with long-term strategic planning objectives.

"We have experienced significant growth in recent years," Simplot Co. President and CEO Garrett Lofto said in the release. The change "allows us to better support our businesses, remain agile and resilient, and ensure we are positioned for sustainable access in a complex international landscape."

The new structure provides a more efficient framework for managing Simplot's global footprint and supports longterm planning across all business units, according to the company.



**Brad Carlson/Capital Press** 

See SIMPLOT, Page B9

The J.R. Simplot Co. has changed its name to The Simplot Co.

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# WSU researchers: Plastic bag ban increases plastic waste

By DON JENKINS **Capital Press** 

Two Washington State University economists recommend the state eliminate its ban on single-use plastic bags, incurring the criticism of government regulators.

WSU professors Eric Jessup and Jake Wagner concluded in a study released Sept. 29 that the plastic ban backfired. Thin plastic bags have been replaced by thicker plastic bags, resulting in more plastic waste in the environment, they found.

The Department of Ecology and Department of Commerce remain committed to the plastic bag ban and claim Jessup and Wagner didn't have enough information to effectively evaluate the ban.

Jessup said in an interview he and Wagner submitted the study to Ecology and Commerce months ago and have not heard



Don Jenkins/Capital Press

Two Washington State University economists recommend the state drop its ban on single-use plastic bags. Thicker reusable plastic bags actually increase plastic waste in the environment, they found.

from either since.

"I think they wanted an outcome that wasn't proven," he said. "Universities are not in the business of advocating for things that

the science or the information doesn't prove."

The Legislature banned thin, or single-use, carryout plastic bags at grocery stores and other retailers in 2021. At the same time, lawmakers required stores to charge customers at least 8 cents for a paper bag or a thicker, or multiple-use, plastic bag. The fee will go up to 12 cents on Jan. 1.

Commerce contracted with WSU to study the law's effect. Jessup and Wagner estimated the number of plastic bags distributed by retailers dropped by 50%.

See PLASTIC, Page B9



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#### **PLASTIC:**

#### **Continued from B9**

The reduction in the number of bags, however, was more than off-set by the thickness of the reusable plastic bags. By weight, plastic use increased by 17%, according to Jessup and Wagner.

In a rare rebuttal that accompanied the report, Ecology and Commerce said the WSU economists failed to consider "larger social, economic and environmental implications."

"Single-use plastic bags pose a threat to the environment, both through the harms produced during production and the likelihood of becoming litter," the memo states.

"Commerce and Ecology disagree with WSU's recommendation and remain open to a statewide ban on all plastic carryout bags, as this would be an effective policy to reduce plastic in the environment."

Jessup and Wagner concluded banning all plastic bags would be costly to consumers. The environmental and health benefits wouldn't outweigh those costs, they say.

A reusable woven polypropyl-

ene bag must be reused at least 32 times to have lower environmental costs than a thicker reusable plastic bag, according to their report.

The economists cited studies showing consumers don't reuse the reusable bags often enough to offset the higher emissions and pollution from producing, distributing and disposing of the heavier bags.

Retailers provided information for the study. Jessup stood by the soundness and honesty of the report. "I tried to be upfront — we aren't hired advocates," he said. "I think they wanted a specific outcome."

The House Environment and Energy Committee held a workshop Sept. 29 on plastic bags. Commerce Innovation and Industry Partnerships Director Kirk Esmond told legislators that Jessup and Wagner lacked "robust data."

The department disagrees with the recommendation to drop the plastic bag ban, he said. "It certainly contradicts the law's goal," he said.

Jessup said he didn't know about the presentation and wasn't invited to talk to legislators. He said he would be happy to.

# **SIMPLOT:** Continued from B6

For example, all of Simplot's food division operations around the world are now held by Simplot Global Food Holdings Inc., and Simplot's food operations in the U.S. operate as Simplot Global Food LLC. Other operations will operate under new names and companies as well, while the Simplot Co. will provide central support and oversight across all areas.

The strategic move "underscores Simplot's commitment to building a resilient and future-ready organization, capable of navigating the complexities of a global marketplace while remaining a privately held company," according to the release.

Current employee count is just over 15,000, a number fluctuates because of the seasonal nature of the company's workforce in some industries, Simplot spokesman Josh Jordan told Capital Press.

The new structure "better aligns to our existing operating business groups, but is not related to day-to-day business functionality within these business areas," he said. "So this and any previous or future employment actions are not related to one another."

Simplot's expectation is that the change "streamlines the overarching support we provide across our global food and agriculture activities," Jordan said. "This should have minimal impact on day-to day operations and customer and vendor relationships."

The change enhances Simplot's ability to serve customers and partners with "greater consistency, responsiveness and strategic focus across all markets," he said.



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# Oregon organic industry honors leaders with annual awards ceremony



Courtesy Oregon Organic Colation

Joseph Schneiderhan, sustainability specialist for Mountain Rose Herbs, Cameron Stearns, the company's CEO, and Elise and Jeff Higley of Oshala Farm pose with their Oregon Organic Awards for Excellence.

By KYLE ODEGARD

**Capital Press** 

Oregon organic indus-

advocates were honored earlier this month during the 2025 Oregon Organic Awards for Excellence

Legacy award winners were Tom Lively and the 1980s and co-found-Charlie Tilt.

Lively was a pioneer Company. in the movement, creating one of the state's ored in September by

largest organic farms in the Organic Trade Assoing Organically Grown Lifetime

He also was hon- OTA news release.

ciation with its Organic Achievement Award, according to an

See ORGANIC, Page B11



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### **ORGANIC:**

**Continued from B10** 

Tilt's longtime leadership at Hummingbird Wholesale ensured that the company's business model benefits customers, employees and farmers, according to the Oregon Organic Coalition, which selects the award winners.

Tilt owned Hummingbird Wholesale, a Eugene, Ore.-based producer and distributor, before it transitioned to an employee-owned purpose trust in 2023, according to the company's website.

The farm of the year for field, fiber and orchard crops was Oshala Farm near Grants, Pass, Ore. The 290-acre regenerative organic operation in Southern Oregon grows more than 80 varieties of medicinal and culinary herbs.

One of Oshala's buyers, Mountain Rose Herbs, was named retailer of the year. Under CEO Cameron Stearns' leadership, Mountain Rose has continued to inspire trust and innovation in the organic marketplace, according to a news release from the Oregon Organic Coalition.

The farm of the year for livestock or dairy was Cardoza Dairy near Scio, Ore. Owner Allison and Travis Cardoza's pasture-based system protects soil health and produces healthy, organic dairy for the Organic Valley Cooperative, the news release stated.

The farm of the year for equitable working conditions was Flying Coyote Farm near Sandy, Ore., owned by Lili Tova. The farm grows fruits, vegetables, herbs and flowers, and also raises meat birds and pigs while ensuring fairness, safety and respect for workers, according to the Oregon

Organic Coalition.

The Organic Advocate award went to Chris Schreiner, who dedicated 27 vears to advancing organic agriculture through leadership at Oregon Tilth and national policy work, the news release stated.

The public service award was given to Garry Stephenson, a professor emeritus at Oregon State University who co-founded its Center for Resilient Agriculture & Food Systems and was integral to forming its Organic Agriculture Program.

Comida KIN, farm-forward food truck owned by Rodrigo Huerta and Mary Hatz, was named

the restaurant/chef/caterer of the year. The business is based in Hillsboro, Ore.

B-Line Urban Delivery of Portland received the processor/handler/distributor of the year award. The urban delivery service relies on electronic freight tricycles and has strengthened connections between farmers, food producers and communities, according to the Oregon Organic Coalition.

Rob Schultz, vineyard manager of Lemelson Vineyards of Carlton, Ore., was the scientist/ researcher/conservationist of the year. Schultz has grown premium organic wine grapes for more than

20 years while mentoring the next generation of growers. He's the founder of the Organic Winegrowers Network.

The Oregon Organic Awards for Excellence were announced during an event Sept. 9 at Our Table Cooperative Farm in Sherwood, Ore.

"Our honorees represent the grit, sustainability and creativity that continue to drive Oregon's organic movement," said Amy Wong, executive director of the Oregon Organic Coalition.

"Their work inspires us to envision and cultivate a more resilient future," she added, in the news release.



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# Longtime Spokane news anchor, weatherman returns to family farm during harvest, shares stories on social media

**By MATTHEW WEAVER**Capital Press

Mark Peterson would help out with harvest on the family farm every two weeks during summers.

This year, Peterson "semi-retired" in February after 43 years in broadcast news, including 25 years at Spokane's KXLY TV and radio station, where he was a news anchor and weather forecaster.

That meant Peterson could spend more time on the Scobey, Mont., dryland farm, helping harvest peas, lentils, durum wheat and Haybet hay barley for feed.

They have about 5,000 acres, and planted about 2,000.

The farm also keeps about 120 cattle.

Peterson would often incorporate information about agriculture into his weather forecasts and as a news anchor.

This year, he helped with spring work in April and May, preparing equipment, planting crops for the first time, and then helped with harvest for a month. He shared pictures and posts about working on the farm on Facebook.

"I love talking about it," Peterson said. "It's been a part of my life all my life. Social media drives me crazy, I think it is very divisive. But we can share positive things, which I think is pretty cool. That's what I hope that I'm doing."

See Peterson's posts at https://www.facebook.com/mark.peterson4

#### 'Mental cleanser'

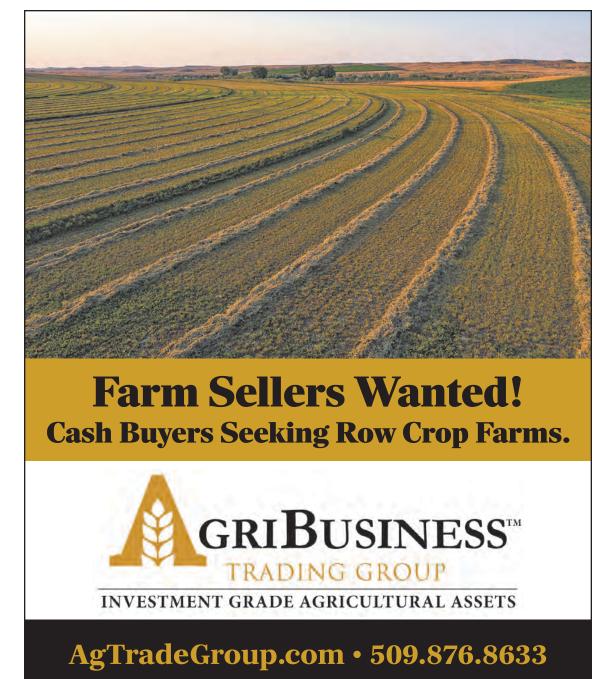
Peterson's grandfather "P.T." migrated from Norway and homesteaded in Montana's Roosevelt County in 1914, near Bredette, Mont.

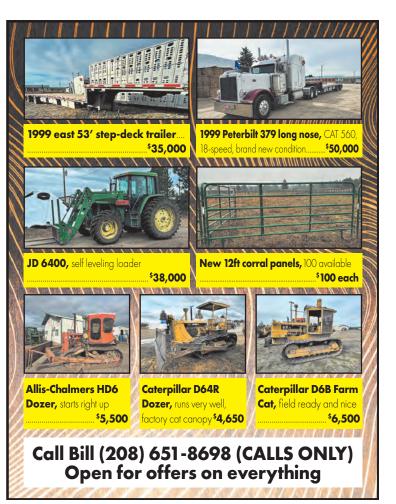
See FAMILY FARM, Page B13



Courtesy Mark Peterson

Montana farmers Robert and Sharon Anderson with Sharon's cousin Mark Peterson, a longtime Spokane weatherman and news anchor. Peterson retired this year and was able to spend more time helping with spring work and harvest on the family farm in Scobey, Mont. "Another day of harvest finished and a long one at that," Peterson shared in a Facebook post. "Wheat is rolling in about average yield of around 20-plus bushels an acre. A great day with no breakdowns."





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#### **FAMILY FARM:**

**Continued from B12** 

The town had a community center, a church and a school.

The only thing remaining today is the community center, a disheveled building changed to hold wheat. It's slated to be taken down in the next year, as it is leaning and falling over.

But Bredette is a map location on Facebook, from where Peterson can occasionally say he is posting.

In the 1930s, his grandmother Lydia became a widow. Peterson's grandfather helped her and her six kids; they married and had two more children, the youngest being Peterson's father, Pete Peterson.

Pete grew up on the farm and became a civil engineer.

The Petersons would go to the farm to help with harvest and for family reunions. Mark kept going back for harvest for about two weeks over the last 30 years.

"It became my mental cleanser, it was a different set of muscles and that connection to the family farm," Mark said.

#### Farm stories

In 2019, Peterson's father became ill with bone cancer. Peterson would visit him every weekend in Nampa, Idaho.

"As he got closer to passing, he changed from the father-engineer to the fatherfarmer," Peterson said. "He really became more interested in telling us the stories of the farm. While I'd always been at the farm, it took on a heightened level because those were the memories he really wanted to create and talk about."

He, his brother and sister own close to 1,000 acres of the farm land, and lease it to Mark's cousin, Sharon Anderson, and her husband Robert.

"That's my ag background, literally being there and learning by doing and learning by breaking," Mark said. "Doing and breaking and fixing that happens all the time."

After his father died and then his sister and his mother, Peterson decided to retire and spend more time at the farm.

"I'm sort of the hired man when I go up there, I'm the third one, there's three of us that do most of that work," he said. "Our equipment is older, we don't have new stuff. So there's always a little repair, replace, fix and what I like to call 'farmify' - when we have to sort of build something to make something work ... It's a different set of muscles than talking on TV and radio."

#### 'Papa's 80'

Peterson's grandfather told Peterson's father that if he could break and grow a crop on a specific 80 acres of land, he would give it to him.

See FAMILY FARM, Page B15



Courtesy Mark Peterson

**B13** 

Longtime Spokane weatherman and news anchor Mark Peterson on "The Duke," a 2008 John Deere 9600 combine purchased used two years ago, during pea cutting. "In John Wayne fashion, he's tough, fair and consistent," Peterson wrote in a Facebook post. "Running great and will harvest beautifully this year. Took a day to get it field ready after a long winter's sleep."





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# Federal policies expected to impede Oregon solar development

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI **Capital Press** 

New federal tax and energy policies are expected to hinder Oregon's solar industry, which has repeatedly butted heads with agriculture over farmland conversion.

The industry is accustomed to the "solar coaster" of rising and falling government incentives, but it's now preparing for a "cliff" as federal tax credits expire sooner than expected, experts said during recent legislative hearings.

"We worry about projects that now are not going to be able to make that deadline. Now, they have to reconsider, is this project even going to pencil out financially?" said Angela Crowley-Koch, executive director of the Oregon Solar and Storage Industries Association. "So, we're very concerned about what commercial solar and utility-scale solar will look like after these deadlines."

Under the "One Big Beautiful Bill" enacted this past



Capital Press file photo

Oregon solar energy projects will be impacted as federal tax credits expire sooner than expected.

summer, to qualify for federal tax credits equal to 30% of their costs solar developers must finish projects by the end of 2027 — five years ahead of schedule.

Not only are financial incentives going away, but the Trump administration has implemented numerous executive orders that collectively discourage the development of solar energy, experts say.

For example, developers will have to show their supply chains don't rely on components from China and other adversarial countries and must obtain the personal approval of Interior Secretary Doug Burgum to move forward with construction on federal property.

These policies are collectively having a "massive chilling effect" on solar and renewable energy projects, most of which require some type of federal authorization that's now unlikely to be forthcoming, said Nicole Hughes, executive director of the Renewable Northwest nonprofit.

"Those agencies are just not answering the phone. They're not processing those permits," she said.

For agriculture, the impediments facing solar development are a double-edged sword.

On one hand, farmers who lease their properties to solar developers are able to diversify their incomes.

On the other, solar projects on Oregon farmland and rangeland have encountered vigorous opposition from neighbors, who argue they'll disrupt surrounding agricultural practices and displace crop and livestock production.

Experts say that Oregon already has a reputation for solar siting difficulties, which will likely be exacerbated by

new federal policies.

Meanwhile, many solar projects that have already been permitted may still not be able to take advantage of tax credits because the necessary transmission infrastructure won't be ready for years, experts say.

Solar and wind projects are still relatively affordable compared to other utility-scale facilities, even without financial incentives, but federal policies that disfavor renewable energy may prove a more stubborn obstacle, said Hughes of Renewable Northwest.

"I don't think the loss of these tax credits are as a big of a deal to our industry as these executive orders are," she said.

Regardless of the conflicts between agriculture and solar development, experts say recent federal barriers may hamper Oregon's ability to keep up with rising electricity demands.

"If these projects aren't able to be built, we're going to have a real reliability problem here in the region," Hughes said.

Apart from the impact on utility-scale solar facilities, federal policies are also expected to inhibit the type of rooftop installations that haven't been as controversial.

See SOLAR, Page B15

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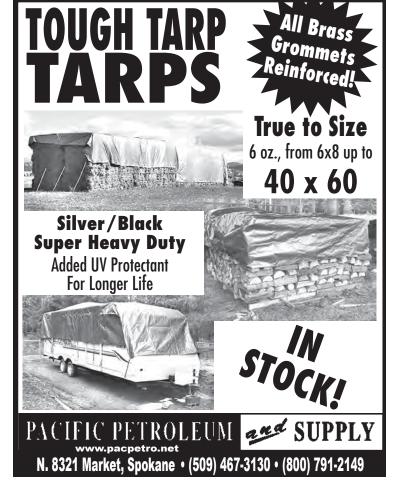












#### **SOLAR:**

**Continued from B14** 

The 30% federal tax credit for residential solar projects is expiring even sooner, requiring panels to be installed by the end of 2025, rather than in 2035 as under previous law.

The federal government has also canceled "Solar for All" grants totaling nearly \$87 million that were aimed at installations for families with modest incomes, but the state government is challenging that decision, arguing the funds were already obligated and cannot be withdrawn.

The potential long-term effects are likely to be "truly devastating" for Oregon solar businesses, but in the near term, they are causing "chaos in the market" as homeowners rush

to install solar panels before the end of the year, said Crowley-Koch of OSSIA.

The short-term boom has only added to the uncertainty for solar companies, who are hesitating to create new positions knowing they'll soon be unnecessary, said John Grieser, owner of Elemental Energy, a Portland-area installer.

"It'd be very easy for me to take this demand and hire two, three, four more crews, but that kind of whiplash is not sustainable," he said. "It's not fair to families, it's not fair to my employees, because those will be jobs that are lost January 1st."

Solar advocates asked lawmakers to assure a "soft landing" for the industry by extending statefunded programs to mitigate the loss of federal dollars.

Lawmakers were also urged to streamline permitting requirements and expedite utility-scale solar projects, improving their chances of qualifying for the federal tax credit before the end of 2027.

"Facility siting and permitting remains a critical barrier, especially for solar energy," according to Max Yoklic, attorney for NewSun Energy, a solar developer. "Although the state has taken minor, step-wise actions to address permitting barriers, a broader and more permissive approach is vital to getting projects to the start of construction in the near term."

During recent legislative hearings, some Democratic lawmakers lamented the Trump administration's aversion to solar development, argu-

ing it adds to electricity output regardless of other political considerations.

Sen. Janeen Sollman, D-Hillsboro, said she was "extremely disappointed" with the federal government's "disheartening" policy changes,

"Even if you're not looking at the climate side of it, right? It's rising costs," she said.

Some Republican lawmakers said they're not personally opposed to solar and renewable energy but defended the Trump administration's decisions, as it's time for these technologies stand on their on legs financially.

"It should be a viable market, where it's market-based and driven," said Sen. David Brock Smith, R-Port Orford. "I mean, it shouldn't need subsidies to be successful."

#### **FAMILY FARM:**

**Continued from B12** 

His father raised flax seed that first year.

"Dad was 12 or 13 at the time," Peterson recalled. "He broke it, he planted it, he got the crop and he had enough money to buy a used car."

While doing so, his father suffered sunstroke and was given last rites.

"He got better of course and finished harvesting his first crop," Peterson said in one of his Facebook posts.

"That 80 acres has always something we've known about — that's Papa's 80," Peterson said.

When Peterson's father and mother passed, the acres went to Peterson's niece. She attended the harvest this year with her son.

how to run a combine and harvest wheat on "Papa's 80," which she now owns.

"That couple of days was my favorite, once again instilling the history of the farm on to my niece, putting my dad through me to her," Peterson said. "She's a genius in human resources ... It's this completely different mindset, and she just took to it. Passing that torch on, there were some tears. It was pretty cool. It was very, very cool."

#### 'A happy place'

year, Peterson expects to extend his time on the farm, both for spring work and during harvest.

"It really is a happy place - it's very annoying and there are a lot of cuss words involved with farming, but there's something about get-Peterson taught his niece ting into a field and you drive away and it's planted or it's harvested," he said. "When you're in broadcasting, you're holding words in your hand, you put these words out all morning long. You've worked, you've done your job, you've told people what the weather's going to be like, what the news is, but

it's not something you can

put your fingers on and go

'Look at that.'"

Peterson recalled the first time his now-wife came out to harvest, when they were dating. She was struck by how the whole family would eat together at a large kitchen table and share stories, something that's missing for many families today.

"This is what farming, this is what family (are),"

Peterson said. "I tell that part of the story when I'm doing public speaking. It's a small kitchen, it's a big table and we're all sitting around sharing a meal. That doesn't happen much, people are amazed at that. That's the part that I really like and I try to get people to understand: We work together and we eat together."

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Love Chisel Plow 15', Paddle wheel leveler\$2,2	235
INTERNATIONAL 24' MODEL 55 CHISEL PLOW,	
18" sweeps, new Morris harrows\$8,5	00

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Raven	\$14,995
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#### **1999 INTERNATIONAL** 8100.

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#### **2008 FORD F350 4X4 SERVICE TRUCK**

6.4L Powerstroke, AT, PS, PB, AC, one owner, tow package, enclosed service body with drawers on both sides, 60% tires 189K miles, runs and drives great



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2500 gal. tank, pto pump, front and rear spray, hose reel, 350hp ser. 60, 9spd., Locker, PS, AB, 50% 11 r24.5's, runs and sprays great



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**Brad Carlson/Capital Press** 

Armando Falcon shows a darkling beetle via new microscope and software at the University of Idaho Parma Research and Extension Center Sept. 3.

# University of Idaho entomology lab powers up imaging

By BRAD CARLSON **Capital Press** 

An image-detailing digital microscope and a chemical-replacing X-ray scanner improve University of Idaho Extension educator Armando Falcon's ability to promptly supply farmers with detailed, vital information about bugs.

The new equipment "keeps the entomology program functional in a digital era," said Falcon, who is based at the UI Parma Research and Extension center and has space in the Idaho Center for Plant and Soil Health that hosted a grand opening in February 2024.

In addition to farmers, home gardeners can benefit, he said.

"I get people coming in with sam-

ples, and that number is growing," Falcon said.

A gardener, for example, can bring in an apple-dwelling coddling moth and see it in high-definition, three-dimensional form via the microscope, which is equipped with a powerful still and video camera and linked to specialized software.

Falcon used a darkling beetle sample to show capabilities of the new microscope and software, which arrived in late August. He magnified, rotated and tilted the images. Next to a picture, he can record data that stays with the image in the electronic system. The system has autofocus, can change light and remove reflection, and can capture and record measurements.

See ENTOMOLOGY, Page B3



October 2025 The Growers' Guide

#### **ENTOMOLOGY:**

Continued from B2

He was instrumental in confirming the presence of the darkling beetle, an invasive pest, in southwest Idaho in 2024.

A project involving comb-clawed beetles was the first for the new microscope and software. Future projects will involve other pests and beneficial insects. The system also will be ideal for preparing

findings, Falcon said.

"This allows proper identification" even by small structures that can differentiate similar species, he said. "In integrated pest management,

and presenting research need to identify the pest or beneficial insect first."

> UI Parma has an older portable, digital microscope that lacks software and has lower resolution and magnification power but remains applicable for

field use, Falcon said.

"I see a broad-spectrum need for identifying insects in this region" including pests, pollinators and beneficial predators, he said.

See ENTOMOLOGY, Page B5



**Brad Carlson/Capital Press** 

Armando Falcon presents current hop research to a contingent of buyers and dealers Sept. 11 at the University of Idaho Parma Research and Extension Center.

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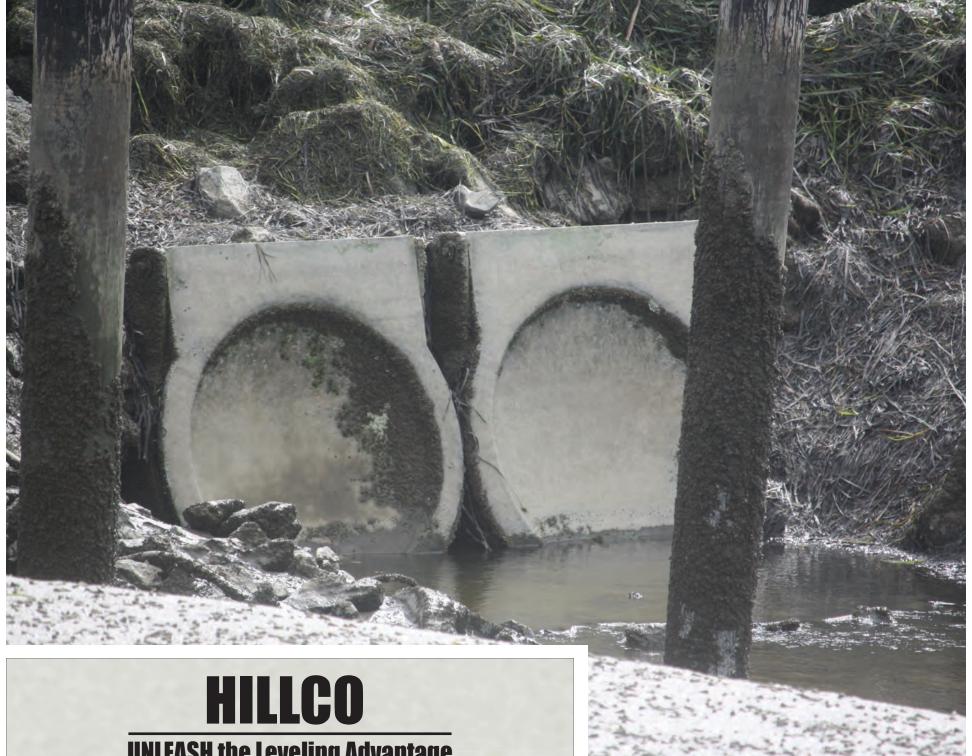
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Don Jenkins/Capital Press

A tidegate at the mouth of No Name Slough keeps Puget Sound saltwater tides from washing over farmland in the Skagit Delta 70 miles north of Seattle. A federal court will allow the Swinomish Indian tribe to intervene in a lawsuit over whether the tidegate can be replaced.

# **Court allows** Swinomish tribe to oppose Skagit **Delta tidegate**

By DON JENKINS **Capital Press** 

A court order has positioned the Swinomish Indian tribe to argue against fixing a worn-out tidegate that protects farmland in the Skagit Delta 70 miles north of Seattle.

Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals Judges Jennifer Sung and Holly A. Thomas signed a one-page

order Sept. 24 allowing the tribe to intervene in a lawsuit between Skagit County Dike District 12 and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

The federal agency and tribe agree the 140-year-old tidegate hurts fish. The tribe told the court it feared the agency's stance, taken under the Biden administration, will change under President Trump.

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#### **SWINOMISH:**

**Continued from B4** 

"The United States no longer adequately represents the tribe," the tribe stated in its motion.

Sung and Thomas didn't comment on the claim, but cited court precedent in granting the tribe's motion to intervene. The tribe will be able to oppose repairing the tidegate, regardless of any change in federal policy.

Without tidegates, Puget Sound saltwater tides would wash over the 70,000-acre delta. The Swinomish tribe says the loss of estuary habitat threatens their treaty fishing rights.

The diking district sued after the fisheries service concluded a new tidegate at No Name Slough could drive Puget Sound salmon and killer whales to extinction.

The tidegate protects

about 200 acres. A new one will prevent farmland from returning to salmon habitat for 50 more years, the fisheries service complained.

The diking district claims the fisheries service has overreached and misapplied the Endangered Species Act.

The Swinomish tribe moved to intervene in the lawsuit last year. U.S. Magistrate Judge Brian Tsuchida in Seattle denied the tribe's motion, but later upheld the fisheries service's position.

The diking district appealed to the 9th Circuit, and the tribe again moved to intervene. The diking district and fisheries service both opposed the tribe's participation, arguing nothing has changed since Tsuchida kept the tribe out of the suit.

In its motion to the appeals court, the tribe argued upcoming changes

to ESA regulations could touch on this case. Modifying habitat will no longer be an ESA violation, according to a proposal by the Trump administration.

"If granted intervention, the tribe will vigorously assert that the ESA prohibits harm to listed species through habitat modification, a position which (the fisheries service) appears to no longer share," the tribe stated.

The fisheries service says the diking district can replace its tidegate if it restores 8.5 acres somewhere in the delta to fish habitat. The district says it's not financially feasible.

Replacing the old tophinged tidegate with a side-hinged tidegate will improve passage for fish swimming between the slough and the bay, according to the diking district.

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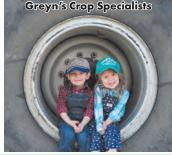


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### **ENTOMOLOGY:**

Continued from B3

The electronic X-ray scanner with cassette-style cartridge was brought in ahead of the 2025 crop season.

UI Parma staff continue to use an X-ray machine that has been in place for years. For example, a board full of alfalfa leaf-cutting bee cocoon samples is inserted into the machine and an image is taken.

In the old process, the cocoons were X-rayed and a film image was produced. The image on film was developed chemically, which could take hours, Falcon said.

Now, the board with cocoon samples is placed atop the cassette, which is imported into the X-ray machine. After the image is captured — which takes about 15 seconds — the cassette is removed from the X-ray machine and inserted into the scanner. The scanner digitizes the image for immediate, software-assisted analysis.

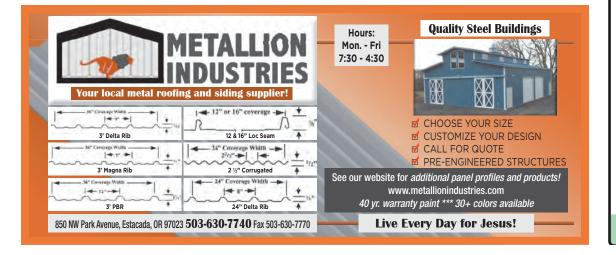
The software can read, magnify and adjust the image, take measurements and make comparisons.

"It saves time and increases the accuracy of testing results," Falcon said.

Using the X-ray scanner and software during the 2025 growing season, results were delivered to farmers faster, he said. Using the system also means finding and buying film developing supplies is not needed.

Falcon started at UI Parma in January 2024. Cost of the equipment — just over \$40,000 and about \$25,000 for microscope and X-ray scanner systems, respectively — was part of his program startup funding.

To a group of six hop buyers and dealers from Mexico, he demonstrated the new microscope and software Sept. 11 after giving a presentation on current hop research. The group toured various southwest Idaho hop industry destinations Sept. 10-11, an effort of the Idaho Hop Growers Commission in cooperation with the State Department of Agriculture.



# Simplot changes company name, structure

**Capital Press staff** 

BOISE, Idaho — The J.R. Simplot Co. has changed its name and structure to align with its operating business groups.

The Simplot Co. is a new global parent holding company for all Simplot-affiliated companies, according to a news release. By aligning the overall company organizational structure with its business operations, Simplot can strengthen centralized support and oversight, "enabling consistency and scalability across its expanding global footprint in food and agriculture."

Simplot has grown in recent years, expanding its geographic operating footprint and increasing its workforce around the world, according to the company. As Simplot continues to evolve within the dynamic food and agriculture industries, the restructure allows the organization to align its diverse business operations with long-term strategic planning objectives.

"We have experienced significant growth in recent years," Simplot Co. President and CEO Garrett Lofto said in the release. The change "allows us to better support our businesses, remain agile and resilient, and ensure we are positioned for sustainable access in a complex international landscape."

The new structure provides a more efficient framework for managing Simplot's global footprint and supports long-term planning across all business units, according to the company.

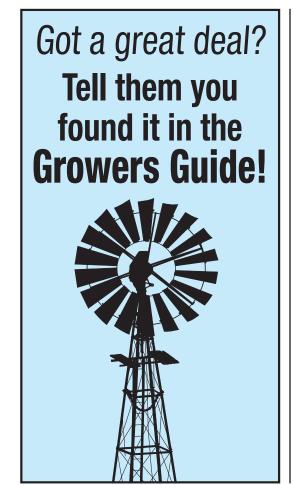


Brad Carlson/Capital Press

See SIMPLOT, Page B9

The J.R. Simplot Co. has changed its name to The Simplot Co.

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# WSU researchers: Plastic bag ban increases plastic waste

By DON JENKINS **Capital Press** 

Two Washington State University economists recommend the state eliminate its ban on single-use plastic bags, incurring the criticism of government regulators.

WSU professors Eric Jessup and Jake Wagner concluded in a study released Sept. 29 that the plastic ban backfired. Thin plastic bags have been replaced by thicker plastic bags, resulting in more plastic waste in the environment, they found.

The Department of Ecology and Department of Commerce remain committed to the plastic bag ban and claim Jessup and Wagner didn't have enough information to effectively evaluate the ban.

Jessup said in an interview he and Wagner submitted the study to Ecology and Commerce months ago and have not heard



Don Jenkins/Capital Press

Two Washington State University economists recommend the state drop its ban on single-use plastic bags. Thicker reusable plastic bags actually increase plastic waste in the environment, they found.

from either since.

"I think they wanted an outcome that wasn't proven," he said. "Universities are not in the business of advocating for things that

the science or the information doesn't prove."

The Legislature banned thin, or single-use, carryout plastic bags at grocery stores and other retailers in 2021. At the same time, lawmakers required stores to charge customers at least 8 cents for a paper bag or a thicker, or multiple-use, plastic bag. The fee will go up to 12 cents on Jan. 1.

Commerce contracted with WSU to study the law's effect. Jessup and Wagner estimated the number of plastic bags distributed by retailers dropped by 50%.

See PLASTIC, Page B9



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### **PLASTIC:**

### **Continued from B9**

The reduction in the number of bags, however, was more than offset by the thickness of the reusable plastic bags. By weight, plastic use increased by 17%, according to Jessup and Wagner.

In a rare rebuttal that accompanied the report, Ecology and Commerce said the WSU economists failed to consider "larger social, economic and environmental implications."

"Single-use plastic bags pose a threat to the environment, both through the harms produced during production and the likelihood of becoming litter," the memo states.

"Commerce and Ecology disagree with WSU's recommendation and remain open to a statewide ban on all plastic carryout bags, as this would be an effective policy to reduce plastic in the environment."

Jessup and Wagner concluded banning all plastic bags would be costly to consumers. The environmental and health benefits wouldn't outweigh those costs, they say.

A reusable woven polypropyl-

ene bag must be reused at least 32 times to have lower environmental costs than a thicker reusable plastic bag, according to their report.

The economists cited studies showing consumers don't reuse the reusable bags often enough to offset the higher emissions and pollution from producing, distributing and disposing of the heavier bags.

Retailers provided information for the study. Jessup stood by the soundness and honesty of the report. "I tried to be upfront — we aren't hired advocates," he said. "I think they wanted a specific outcome."

The House Environment and Energy Committee held a workshop Sept. 29 on plastic bags. Commerce Innovation and Industry Partnerships Director Kirk Esmond told legislators that Jessup and Wagner lacked "robust data."

The department disagrees with the recommendation to drop the plastic bag ban, he said. "It certainly contradicts the law's goal," he said.

Jessup said he didn't know about the presentation and wasn't invited to talk to legislators. He said he would be happy to.

## **SIMPLOT:**Continued from B6

For example, all of Simplot's food division operations around the world are now held by Simplot Global Food Holdings Inc., and Simplot's food operations in the U.S. operate as Simplot Global Food LLC. Other operations will operate under new names and companies as well, while the Simplot Co. will provide central support and oversight across all areas.

The strategic move "underscores Simplot's commitment to building a resilient and future-ready organization, capable of navigating the complexities of a global marketplace while remaining a privately held company," according to the release.

Current employee count is just over 15,000, a number fluctuates because of the seasonal nature of the company's workforce in some industries, Simplot spokesman Josh Jordan told Capital Press.

The new structure "better aligns to our existing operating business groups, but is not related to day-to-day business functionality within these business areas," he said. "So this and any previous or future employment actions are not related to one another."

Simplot's expectation is that the change "streamlines the overarching support we provide across our global food and agriculture activities," Jordan said. "This should have minimal impact on day-to day operations and customer and vendor relationships."

The change enhances Simplot's ability to serve customers and partners with "greater consistency, responsiveness and strategic focus across all markets," he said.



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# Oregon organic industry honors leaders with annual awards ceremony



Courtesy Oregon Organic Colation

Joseph Schneiderhan, sustainability specialist for Mountain Rose Herbs, Cameron Stearns, the company's CEO, and Elise and Je Higley of Oshala Farm pose with their Oregon Organic Awards for Excellence.

By KYLE ODEGARD

**Capital Press** 

Oregon organic indus-

advocates were honored earlier this month during the 2025 Oregon Organic Awards for Excellence

Legacy award winners were Tom Lively and the 1980s and co-found-Charlie Tilt.

Lively was a pioneer in the movement, creating one of the state's ored in September by

largest organic farms in the Organic Trade Assoing Organically Grown Lifetime Company.

He also was hon- OTA news release.

ciation with its Organic Achievement Award, according to an

See ORGANIC, Page B11



GRAPPLE Quick Attach...... \$2150 GRAPPLE ................\$18,750 7200 Series Tractors......



### **ORGANIC:**

**Continued from B10** 

Tilt's longtime leadership at Hummingbird Wholesale ensured that the company's business model benefits customers, employees and farmers, according to the Oregon Organic Coalition, which selects the award winners.

Tilt owned Hummingbird Wholesale, a Eugene, Ore.-based producer and distributor, before it transitioned to an employee-owned purpose trust in 2023, according to the company's website.

The farm of the year for field, fiber and orchard crops was Oshala Farm near Grants, Pass, Ore. The 290-acre regenerative organic operation in Southern Oregon grows more than 80 varieties of medicinal and culinary herbs.

One of Oshala's buyers, Mountain Rose Herbs, was named retailer of the year. Under CEO Cameron Stearns' leadership, Mountain Rose has continued to inspire trust and innovation in the organic marketplace, according to a news release from the Oregon Organic Coalition.

The farm of the year for livestock or dairy was Cardoza Dairy near Scio, Ore. Owner Allison and Travis Cardoza's pasture-based system protects soil health and produces healthy, organic dairy for the Organic Valley Cooperative, the news release stated.

The farm of the year for equitable working conditions was Flying Coyote Farm near Sandy, Ore., owned by Lili Tova. The farm grows fruits, vegetables, herbs and flowers, and also raises meat birds and pigs while ensuring fairness, safety and respect for workers, according to the Oregon

Organic Coalition.

The Organic Advocate award went to Chris Schreiner, who dedicated 27 vears to advancing organic agriculture through leadership at Oregon Tilth and national policy work, the news release stated.

The public service award was given to Garry Stephenson, a professor emeritus at Oregon State University who co-founded its Center for Resilient Agriculture & Food Systems and was integral to forming its Organic Agriculture Program.

Comida KIN, farm-forward food truck owned by Rodrigo Huerta and Mary Hatz, was named

the restaurant/chef/caterer of the year. The business is based in Hillsboro, Ore.

B-Line Urban Delivery of Portland received the processor/handler/distributor of the year award. The urban delivery service relies on electronic freight tricycles and has strengthened connections between farmers, food producers and communities, according to the Oregon Organic Coalition.

Rob Schultz, vineyard manager of Lemelson Vineyards of Carlton, Ore., was the scientist/ researcher/conservationist of the year. Schultz has grown premium organic wine grapes for more than

20 years while mentoring the next generation of growers. He's the founder of the Organic Winegrowers Network.

The Oregon Organic Awards for Excellence were announced during an event Sept. 9 at Our Table Cooperative Farm in Sherwood, Ore.

"Our honorees represent the grit, sustainability and creativity that continue to drive Oregon's organic movement," said Amy Wong, executive director of the Oregon Organic Coalition.

"Their work inspires us to envision and cultivate a more resilient future," she added, in the news release.



'23 CASE IH 8250, 520 Hrs, Harvest Command, 4WD, \$425,000 Chopper, Duals, Lux Cab, #1010.



'21 CASE IH MAXXUM 135 ACT 8, 800 hrs, MFD, 3pt, .\$135,000 PTO, #1342



'23 CASE IH 9250 COMBINE, 755 hrs, Harvest Command,

Chopper, Duals, Lux Cab, #1055.

\$550,000



**'22 CASE IH MAGNUM 280 AFS CONCT CVT,** 1200 hrs, MFD, Susp Axle, PTO, #1383

\$280 000

	00,000
USED TRACKED TRACTORS	
23 CASE IH 540Q AFS CONNECT, 1300 hrs, PTO, 36" Tracks, 6 Rmt, HO Pump, Lux Cab,#1426	<sup>\$</sup> 495,000
23 CASE IH 500Q AFS CONNECT, 1300 hrs, PTO, 36" Tracks, 6 Rmt, HO Pump, Lux Cab,#1427	<sup>\$</sup> 475,000
23 CASE IH 500Q AFS CONNECT, 1800 hrs, PTO, 36" Tracks, 6 Rmt, HO Pump, Lux Cab,#1400	
23 CASE IH 500Q AFS CONNECT, 970 hrs, PTO, 36" Tracks, 6 Rmt, HO Pump, Lux Cab#1428	-
20 CASE IH 500Q, 5140 hrs, PTO, 36" Tracks, 6 Rmt, HO Pump, Lux Cab#1430	
<b>18 CASE IH STEIGER 620Q</b> , 3300hrs, Lux Cab, 36" Tracks, 6 Rmts, PTO, HO Pump #1435	
<b>D8 CASE IH STEIGER 435Q</b> , 8120 hrs, Lux Cab, 30" Tracks, 4 Remotes, #1387	\$150,000
4 CHALLENGER-MT775E, 3004 hrs, PTO, 3pt hitch, 24" Tracks, 5 Remts,#	•
4 CHALLENGER-MT775E, 6025 hrs., PTO, 3pt, 14" Tracks, 6 Rmts, #1313	
11 JOHN DEERE 8410T, 4 Remotes, PTO, Power Shift, Clean unit #1360	
USED WHEEL TRACTORS	
22 CASE IH MAGNUM 280 AFS CONCT CVT, 1300 hrs, MFD, Susp Axle, PTO, #1392	\$280,000
22 CASE IH MAGNUM 280 AFS CONCT CVT, 1200 hrs, MFD, Susp Axle, PTO, #1383	
23 CASE IH MAXXUM 135 ACT 4, 250 hrs, MFD, 3pt, PTO, #1401	\$150,000
P1 CASE IH MAXXUM 135 ACT 8, 800 hrs, MFD, 3pt, PTO, #1342	
21 CASE IH MAXXUM 135 ACT 4, 871 hrs, MFD, 3pt, PTO, #1398	
20 CASE IH MAGNUM 240 CVT, 1840 hrs, MFD, Susp Axle, PTO, Duals,#1424	
<b>78 STEIGER PANTHER 3, ST325,</b> 4-Remotes, Duals, Cat Engine, ConsD62	\$10,000
SPRAYERS	
24 APACHE HS1100 SPRAYER, 120' Booms, 4WD Hydro, Capstan system, #558	scall
24 APACHE HS1100 SPRAYER, 120' Booms, 4WD Hydro, Capstan system, #561	\$CALL
<b>99 JD 4700 SPRAYER,</b> 3700 hrs, 4WD, 90' Booms, 1000 Gal Tank, Raven Guidance, #552	<sup>\$</sup> 39,500
022 APACHE AS1250XP, 1000 hrs. 132' Booms, Raven XRT, Capstan, Diff lock, #573	\$350,000



MEW CDAIN CADI

**'08 CASE IH STEIGER 435Q,** 8120 hrs, Lux Cab, 30" Tracks, 4 Remotes, #1387

\$150,000

\$200,000

\$60,000

NEW GRAIN CARI	
<b>*24 DEMCO 1000</b> Bushel Grain Cart, 900-R32 Tires#	scall
<b>'24 DEMCO 1300</b> Bushel Grain Cart, 1200-R32 Tires#	scali
'19 DEMCO 1102 Grain Cart, Roll Tarp, 1050/R32Tires, PTO #1252	<sup>\$</sup> 65,000
USED COMBINES	
'23 CASE IH 8250, 590 Hrs, Harvest Command, 4WD, Chopper, Duals, Lux Cab,#1010	\$425,000
<b>2023 CASE IH 9250 HILLCO,</b> 736 hrs, Harvest Comnd, 4wd, Chopper, Duals, Lux Cab,#1074	\$550,000
'22 CASE IH 9250 HILLCO, 755 hrs, Harvest Command, Chopper, Duals, Lux Cab,#1055	<sup>\$</sup> 550,000
'16 CASE IH 8240, 2303 Sep hrs, Chopper, 620x42 Duals, 2WD, Lux Cab	\$195,000
<b>2010 CASE IH 7088 HILLSIDE,</b> 2400 hrs, chopper, 4WD, Duals #1069	<sup>\$</sup> 95,000
'07 CASE IH 8010, 2889 hrs, Duals, 4WD, Chopper, #1035	<sup>\$</sup> 95,000
<b>2013 Case IH 9230,</b> 2318 hrs, Duals, 2wd, Chopper, #1072	\$150,000
<b>'13 JD S680 HILLCO,</b> 2025 hrs, Duals, 4WD, Chopper, c/w FD75, 40' #	\$325,000
<b>2004 JD 9660 STS,</b> 2540 hrs, Duals, Chopper, 630 Auger, #1066	<sup>\$</sup> 50,000
<b>2007 JD 9870 STS HILLSIDE,</b> 3248 hrs, duals, chopper, 630 Header #1071	<sup>\$</sup> 70,000
<b>2004 JD 9660 STS HILLSIDE,</b> 2540 hrs, Duals, Chopper, 630 Auger, #1066	<sup>\$</sup> 50,000
USED HAY EQUIPMENT	
<b>*22 MACDON M1240 WINDROWER,</b> 430 hrs, 16ft Rotary Header, #CA249	<sup>\$</sup> 175,000
USED TILLAGE, SEEDING, GRAIN CARTS & MI	SC.

'18 BOURGAULT 5810, 42', 12" Spacing, 5.5" Packers, with L6350 Cart, Double Shoot

'14 HORSCH ANDERSON JOKER RT370, 37', New Blades, #ConsD71#460.



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# Longtime Spokane news anchor, weatherman returns to family farm during harvest, shares stories on social media

**By MATTHEW WEAVER**Capital Press

Mark Peterson would help out with harvest on the family farm every two weeks during summers.

This year, Peterson "semi-retired" in February after 43 years in broadcast news, including 25 years at Spokane's KXLY TV and radio station, where he was a news anchor and weather forecaster.

That meant Peterson could spend more time on the Scobey, Mont., dryland farm, helping harvest peas, lentils, durum wheat and Haybet hay barley for feed.

They have about 5,000 acres, and planted about 2,000. The farm also keeps about 120 cattle.

Peterson would often incorporate information about agriculture into his weather forecasts and as a news anchor.

This year, he helped with spring work in April and May, preparing equipment, planting crops for the first time, and then helped with harvest for a month. He shared pictures and posts about working on the farm on Facebook.

"I love talking about it," Peterson said. "It's been a part of my life all my life. Social media drives me crazy, I think it is very divisive. But we can share positive things, which I think is pretty cool. That's what I hope that I'm doing."

See Peterson's posts at https://www.facebook.com/mark.peterson4

### 'Mental cleanser'

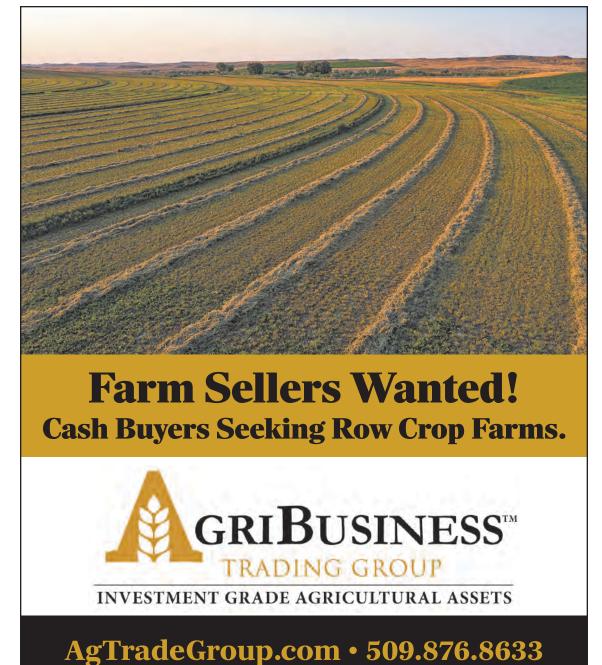
Peterson's grandfather "P.T." migrated from Norway and homesteaded in Montana's Roosevelt County in 1914, near Bredette, Mont.

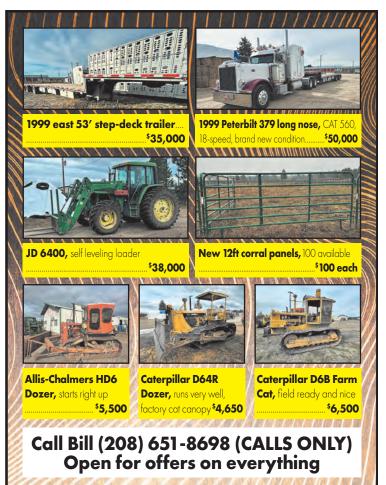
See FAMILY FARM, Page B13



Courtesy Mark Peterson

Montana farmers Robert and Sharon Anderson with Sharon's cousin Mark Peterson, a longtime Spokane weatherman and news anchor. Peterson retired this year and was able to spend more time helping with spring work and harvest on the family farm in Scobey, Mont. "Another day of harvest ÿnished and a long one at that," Peterson shared in a Facebook post. "Wheat is rolling in about average yield of around 20-plus bushels an acre. A great day with no breakdowns."





### **FAMILY FARM:**

**Continued from B12** 

The town had a community center, a church and a school.

The only thing remaining today is the community center, a disheveled building changed to hold wheat. It's slated to be taken down in the next year, as it is leaning and falling over.

But Bredette is a map location on Facebook, from where Peterson can occasionally say he is posting.

In the 1930s, his grandmother Lydia became a widow. Peterson's grandfather helped her and her six kids; they married and had two more children, the youngest being Peterson's father, Pete Peterson.

Pete grew up on the farm and became a civil engineer.

The Petersons would go to the farm to help with harvest and for family reunions. Mark kept going back for harvest for about two weeks over the last 30 years.

"It became my mental cleanser, it was a different set of muscles and that connection to the family farm," Mark said.

### Farm stories

In 2019, Peterson's father became ill with bone cancer. Peterson would visit him every weekend in Nampa, Idaho.

"As he got closer to passing, he changed from the father-engineer to the fatherfarmer," Peterson said. "He really became more interested in telling us the stories of the farm. While I'd always been at the farm, it took on a heightened level because those were the memories he really wanted to create and talk about."

He, his brother and sister own close to 1,000 acres of the farm land, and lease it to Mark's cousin, Sharon Anderson, and her husband Robert.

"That's my ag background, literally being there and learning by doing and learning by breaking," Mark said. "Doing and breaking and fixing that happens all the time."

After his father died and then his sister and his mother, Peterson decided to retire and spend more time at the farm.

"I'm sort of the hired man when I go up there, I'm the third one, there's three of us that do most of that work," he said. "Our equipment is older, we don't have new stuff. So there's always a little repair, replace, fix and what I like to call 'farmify' – when we have to sort of build something to make something work ... It's a different set of muscles than talking on TV and radio."

### 'Papa's 80'

Peterson's grandfather told Peterson's father that if he could break and grow a crop on a specific 80 acres of land, he would give it to him.

See FAMILY FARM, Page B15



**Courtesy Mark Peterson** 

**B13** 

Longtime Spokane weatherman and news anchor Mark Peterson on "The Duke," a 2008 John Deere 9600 combine purchased used two years ago, during pea cutting. "In John Wayne fashion, he's tough, fair and consistent," Peterson wrote in a Facebook post. "Running great and will harvest beautifully this year. Took a day to get it ÿeld ready after a long winter's sleep."







# Federal policies expected to impede Oregon solar development

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI Capital Press

New federal tax and energy policies are expected to hinder Oregon's solar industry, which has repeatedly butted heads with agriculture over farmland conversion.

The industry is accustomed to the "solar coaster" of rising and falling government incentives, but it's now preparing for a "cliff" as federal tax credits expire sooner than expected, experts said during recent legislative hearings.

"We worry about projects that now are not going to be able to make that deadline. Now, they have to reconsider, is this project even going to pencil out financially?" said Angela Crowley-Koch, executive director of the Oregon Solar and Storage Industries Association. "So, we're very concerned about what commercial solar and utility-scale solar will look like after these deadlines."

Under the "One Big Beautiful Bill" enacted this past



Capital Press ÿle photo

Oregon solar energy projects will be impacted as federal tax credits expire sooner than expected.

summer, to qualify for federal tax credits equal to 30% of their costs solar developers must finish projects by the end of 2027 — five years ahead of schedule.

Not only are financial incentives going away, but the Trump administration has implemented numerous executive orders that collectively discourage the development of solar energy, experts say.

For example, developers will have to show their supply chains don't rely on com-

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ponents from China and other adversarial countries and must obtain the personal approval of Interior Secretary Doug Burgum to move forward with construction on federal property.

These policies are collectively having a "massive chilling effect" on solar and renewable energy projects, most of which require some type of federal authorization that's now unlikely to be forthcoming, said Nicole Hughes, executive director of the Renewable Northwest nonprofit.

"Those agencies are just not answering the phone. They're not processing those permits," she said.

For agriculture, the impediments facing solar development are a double-edged sword.

On one hand, farmers who lease their properties to solar developers are able to diversify their incomes.

On the other, solar projects on Oregon farmland and rangeland have encountered vigorous opposition from neighbors, who argue they'll disrupt surrounding agricultural practices and displace crop and livestock production.

Experts say that Oregon already has a reputation for solar siting difficulties, which will likely be exacerbated by new federal policies.

Meanwhile, many solar projects that have already been permitted may still not be able to take advantage of tax credits because the necessary transmission infrastructure won't be ready for years, experts say.

Solar and wind projects are still relatively affordable compared to other utility-scale facilities, even without financial incentives, but federal policies that disfavor renewable energy may prove a more stubborn obstacle, said Hughes of Renewable Northwest.

"I don't think the loss of these tax credits are as a big of a deal to our industry as these executive orders are," she said.

Regardless of the conflicts between agriculture and solar development, experts say recent federal barriers may hamper Oregon's ability to keep up with rising electricity demands.

"If these projects aren't able to be built, we're going to have a real reliability problem here in the region," Hughes said.

Apart from the impact on utility-scale solar facilities, federal policies are also expected to inhibit the type of rooftop installations that haven't been as controversial.

See SOLAR, Page B15

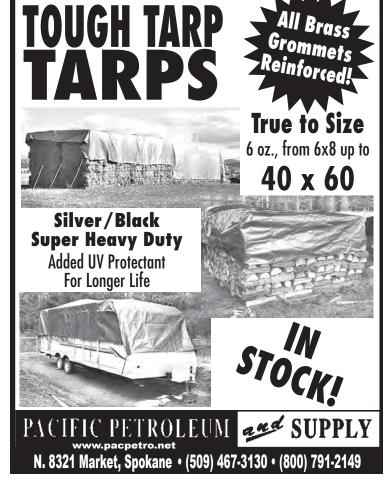


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### **SOLAR:**

**Continued from B14** 

The 30% federal tax credit for residential solar projects is expiring even sooner, requiring panels to be installed by the end of 2025, rather than in 2035 as under previous law.

The federal government has also canceled "Solar for All" grants totaling nearly \$87 million that were aimed at installations for families with modest incomes, but the state government is challenging that decision, arguing the funds were already obligated and cannot be withdrawn.

The potential long-term effects are likely to be "truly devastating" for Oregon solar businesses, but in the near term, they are causing "chaos in the market" as homeowners rush

to install solar panels before the end of the year, said Crowley-Koch of OSSIA.

The short-term boom has only added to the uncertainty for solar companies, who are hesitating to create new positions knowing they'll soon be unnecessary, said John Grieser, owner of Elemental Energy, a Portland-area installer.

"It'd be very easy for me to take this demand and hire two, three, four more crews, but that kind of whiplash is not sustainable," he said. "It's not fair to families, it's not fair to my employees, because those will be jobs that are lost January 1st."

Solar advocates asked lawmakers to assure a "soft landing" for the industry by extending statefunded programs to mitigate the loss of federal dollars.

Lawmakers were also urged to streamline permitting requirements and expedite utility-scale solar projects, improving their chances of qualifying for the federal tax credit before the end of 2027.

"Facility siting and permitting remains a critical barrier, especially for solar energy," according to Max Yoklic, attorney for NewSun Energy, a solar developer. "Although the state has taken minor, step-wise actions to address permitting barriers, a broader and more permissive approach is vital to getting projects to the start of construction in the near term."

During recent legislative hearings, some Democratic lawmakers lamented the Trump administration's aversion to solar development, argu-

ing it adds to electricity output regardless of other political considerations.

Sen. Janeen Sollman, D-Hillsboro, said she was "extremely disappointed" with the federal government's "disheartening" policy changes,

"Even if you're not looking at the climate side of it, right? It's rising costs," she said.

Some Republican lawmakers said they're not personally opposed to solar and renewable energy but defended the Trump administration's decisions, as it's time for these technologies stand on their on legs financially.

"It should be a viable market, where it's market-based and driven," said Sen. David Brock Smith, R-Port Orford. "I mean, it shouldn't need subsidies to be successful."

### **FAMILY FARM:**

**Continued from B12** 

His father raised flax seed that first year.

"Dad was 12 or 13 at the time," Peterson recalled. "He broke it, he planted it, he got the crop and he had enough money to buy a used car."

While doing so, his father suffered sunstroke and was given last rites.

"He got better of course and finished harvesting his first crop," Peterson said in one of his Facebook posts.

"That 80 acres has always something we've known about — that's Papa's 80," Peterson said.

When Peterson's father and mother passed, the acres went to Peterson's niece. She attended the harvest this year with her son.

how to run a combine and harvest wheat on "Papa's 80," which she now owns.

"That couple of days was my favorite, once again instilling the history of the farm on to my niece, putting my dad through me to her," Peterson said. "She's a genius in human resources ... It's this completely different mindset, and she just took to it. Passing that torch on, there were some tears. It was pretty cool. It was very, very cool."

### 'A happy place'

year, Peterson expects to extend his time on the farm, both for spring work and during harvest.

"It really is a happy place - it's very annoying and there are a lot of cuss words involved with farming, but there's something about get-Peterson taught his niece ting into a field and you drive away and it's planted or it's harvested," he said. "When you're in broadcasting, you're holding words in your hand, you put these words out all morning long. You've worked, you've done your job, you've told people what the weather's going to be like, what the news is, but

it's not something you can

put your fingers on and go

'Look at that.'"

Peterson recalled the first time his now-wife came out to harvest, when they were dating. She was struck by how the whole family would eat together at a large kitchen table and share stories, something that's missing for many families today.

"This is what farming, this is what family (are),"

Peterson said. "I tell that part of the story when I'm doing public speaking. It's a small kitchen, it's a big table and we're all sitting around sharing a meal. That doesn't happen much, people are amazed at that. That's the part that I really like and I try to get people to understand: We work together and we eat together."

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fits most combines	\$5,650



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Glencoe Cultivator 42', Depth control, bar harrov	
	\$1,600
JD Cultivator 48', 7" adj. Spacing, harrow	\$1,750
Love Chisel Plow 15', Paddle wheel leveler	. \$2,235
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Raven\$14,995
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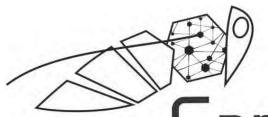


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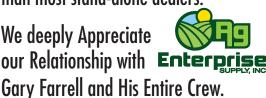
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# Northwest nabs nearly \$9 million in USDA specialty crop grants

Capital Press staff

The USDA announced \$73 million in awards through the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program on Sept. 23 — and Pacific Northwest projects brought home nearly \$9 million for marketing, education and research.

Washington had 20 projects awarded roughly \$4.27 million, Oregon had 14 projects that won \$2.56 million, and Idaho had 14 projects awarded approximately \$1.93 million.

Here's a list of funded projects from the Northwest, courtesy of the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service.

### Washington

Washington State University was awarded nine grants, including: \$250,000 to increase markets for novel winter peas; \$250,000 to develop codling moth biopesticides; \$250,000 for a partnership with the USDA to



Banners hang at USDA headquarters in Washington, D.C. in this May 14 image. The USDA announced new Specialty Crop Block Grant Program awards on Sept. 23. Since 2006, the agency has awarded more than \$1 billion to 13,030 projects through the program.

tools for raspberry production; \$250,000 to optimize legume-rhizobia symbiand crop yield; \$249,000

expand heat mitigation osis to promote pest tol- virus-tested plant mateerance, nitrogen fixation rials for grape growers; \$248,000 for a video series for nurseries to maintain about Varroa destructor

management for beekeepers; \$199,000 for using vacuum microwave drying technology to produce high-quality shelf-stable sweet cherries; \$76,000 to investigate whether viruses in uncultivated stone fruits are a threat to cultivation; commercial and \$51,000 for supplementary food safety training and education for the produce industry.

- The Northwest Cider Association was awarded \$250,000 to drive directto-consumer market access for Washington cideries.
- The Washington Hop Commission won \$250,000 for a study on mitigating downy mildew.
- The USDA-Agricultural Research Service Physiology and Pathology of Tree Fruits Research Unit won \$249,000 to build predictive decision aid tools for pear harvest and storage.
- The Washington Red Raspberry Commission won \$242,000 for efforts to open up the South Korean market.

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Courtesy CWI

The College of Western Idaho and community members celebrated the grand opening of the Agricultural Sciences Complex Sept. 9 in Nampa.

# College of Western Idaho opens ag sciences complex

**Capital Press staff** 

The College of Western Idaho on Sept. 9 celebrated the opening of its Agricultural Sciences Complex on CWI's campus in Nampa.

The 40-acre development at Progress Way and Cherry Lane is a "major investment in agricultural education and workforce training across the Treasure Valley," according to a CWI news release.

The complex, which includes the Simplot Agriculture Building, features two academic buildings, two greenhouses, a barn areas. The space includes a student-designed arboretum to serve as an educational and community resource.

More than 20 courses are offered in the complex this fall across programs such as agricultural business, leadership and education, animal and veterinary science and horticulture technology. The 38,000 square feet of classroom and lab space supports training in horticulture, landscape design, floral science and animal science.

CWI has had nine consecutive semesters of enrollley Smith, executive director bration honored "key comof government and community relations, told Capital Press. "And our ag programs also have seen growth."

"The Agricultural Sciences Complex is a shining example of what happens when a community invests in education," CWI Foundation board chairman Mike Pena said in the release. "This facility will not only transform the lives of students, but also strengthens the agricultural industry that is so vital to our region. The foundation is proud to support CWI's vision and excited to see the impact the

munity partners who played a vital role in making this vision a reality," including legislators and Gov. Brad Little, according to the release. Generous contributions from the J.R. Simplot Co. Foundation and support from Crookham Co. "played a key role in bringing the Agricultural Sciences Complex to life, reflecting their shared commitment to advancing education and supporting

the future leaders of agriculture in Idaho."

Also on the community college's Nampa campus, the Health & Science Building opened recently and the CapEd Student Success Center is slated to open in the fall of 2026.

The college's ongoing Powering the Treasure Valley campaign aims to raise \$30 million for campus development and scholarships, and for enhancing academic programs.





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# Idaho butcher accused of cattle theft sentenced to probation

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI **Capital Press** 

Prosecutors in Idaho have reached a plea deal under which a custom butcher shop owner charged with cattle theft has been sentenced to 10 years probation.

Last year, a criminal complaint filed in Idaho's Adams County accused Sara Ann Willey, the former owner of Cuddy Mountain Custom and Specialty Meat, of felony racketeering and other charges for allegedly failing to pay several victims for cattle valued between \$1,000 and \$22,000.

Under the recent plea agreement, Willey pleaded guilty to eight counts of misdemeanor theft by deception. A judge has sentenced her to a one-year jail term sentence, which has been suspended except for one day of time served.

Willey will also be subject to supervised probation for one year under the deal, followed by a term of unsupervised probation ending in 2035 during which she must "obey all laws."

Adams County Magistrate Court Judge John Meienhofer imposed orders of restitution under which Willey must compensate 12 alleged victims who weren't paid for their livestock or didn't receive meat they'd purchased.

The judge imposed a total financial assessment, which mostly represents restitution owed by Willey but also includes court fees, of more than \$80,000.

Joshua Blake Taylor, who represented Willey in the criminal case, did not respond to requests for comment.

Stewart Russell, a dairyman who wasn't paid for culled cows, said he is fine with the sentence of probation as long as he receives compensation for the livestock, though he has "not seen a dime yet."

"As long as I get paid, I

don't care. I don't care to ruin someone's life," he said.

JJ Nelson, a feedlot owner who also wasn't paid for cattle, said he has a "split" sense of the probation sentence, which he understands is the result of negotiations.

"We feel like she should have went to jail," he said. "At least she's got to pay back all the money."

According to the criminal complaint, Willey accepted cows from livestock producers and money from meat buyers whom she had no intention of providing with promised payments or butchered beef.

Several months before the criminal charges were filed last year, Willey filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy to protect Cuddy Mountain Custom and Specialty from creditors while trying to restructure the now-defunct business, which was based in Council, Idaho.

According to a bankruptcy document filed by Willey, "continued harassment" by several creditors had made it "nearly impossible" for the butcher shop to "continue its business as an ongoing concern."

"The reputation of Ms. Willey was dragged through the mud and has even caused her to have to defend herself from accusations of criminal conduct even though the criminal acts alleged were carried out by the debtor's business," the filing said.

The bankruptcy filings reported the butcher shop owed about \$425,000 in debt to fewer than 50 creditors and had roughly \$320,000 in real and personal property, but the amount of assets was later revised to \$16,500.

However, the bankruptcy case was dismissed after the criminal charges were filed against Willey because the judge presiding over the proceedings said the company had failed to submit a restructuring plan or submit required monthly operating reports.





(Courtesy Snake River Sugarbeet Growers Association)

Sugar beet harvest at Marshall Farms near Jerome, Idaho, in late September 2025.

# Northwest growers happy with sugar beet crop

By BRAD CARLSON **Capital Press** 

BLACKFOOT, Idaho Doug Evans likes the looks of his beets and those that other farmers in his region produced.

. In the relatively high-altitude growing area, word was that sugar content "started off a little low," but then "the beets started to sugar up pretty well," he said. "Now we've got a pretty good crop."

Evans and his fellow Amalgamated Sugar cooperative members this year grew 178,100 acres of sugar beets. Boise-based Amalgamated has three Idaho processing plants and more than 700 grower-owners.

Harvest was "off to a strong and encouraging start" across Idaho, Oregon and Washington, Matt Wheeler, director of agriculture with Amalgamated, told Capital Press.

Based on about 10% of harvested so far, early data shows yields are trending well above the five-year average and sugar content is "currently very close" to the five-year average, he said.

Harvest is progressing "exceptionally well, with healthy stands and efficient harvest operations reported across all Amalgamated districts, Wheeler said.

District-level progress as of Sept. 29 was about 12,000 acres harvested out of 106,500 in Mini-Cassia — in the south-central Idaho region's east end — 4,250 acres out of 33,900 in the Twin Falls district to the west, and 2,500 acres out of 37,700 in Nampa, in the state's southwest.

"The early results are very promising," Wheeler said. "We're seeing strong yields and excellent crop quality thanks to favorable growing conditions this year and the hard work of our growers.

"It's been a great harvest so far, and we're optimistic about the potential of the highest-yielding crop in cooperative history while maintaining solid sugar content," he said.

See SUGAR, Page C7

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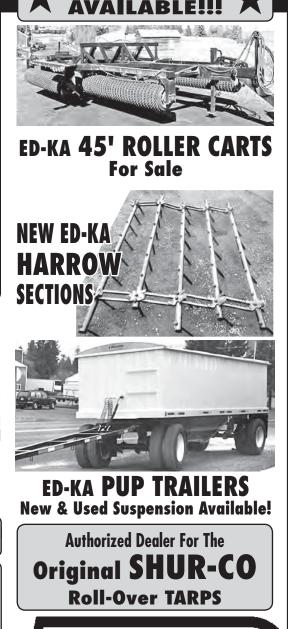
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Matthew Weaver/Capital Press fil

Mary Palmer Sullivan has departed the Washington Grain Commission. The position of vice president was eliminated under restructuring as a business decision. The board recognized Sullivan for her long tenure and contribution to the industry during a recent meeting.





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# Sullivan departs Washington Grain Commission

**By MATTHEW WEAVER**Capital Press

Mary Palmer Sullivan has departed the Washington Grain Commission after 37 years.

Sullivan's position, vice president, was eliminated "as a business decision" and duties realigned in a restructuring, grain commission executive director Casey Chumrau said during a commission board meeting Sept. 23.

Sullivan was informed July 23 that her appointment would be ending and was provided with options, Chumrau said. Her official last day was Sept. 30.

"We recognize and deeply value Mary's many years of service and the positive impact she has made on the Washington wheat and barley industries," Chumrau said. The grain commission board approved a \$146,000 payment to Sullivan.

"The mutually acceptable agreement, including dollar

amount, was reached through negotiations and based on several factors, including Mary's tenure, salary and contributions to the industry," Chumrau said. "Settlement negotiations and agreements are not uncommon in a state agency."

Sullivan began working for the Washington Barley Commission in 1988. The barley commission and Washington Wheat Commission merged to become the grain commission in 2009.

As part of the restructuring, the commission is adjusting roles and integrating new processes to increase efficiency, Chumrau said.

"No programs, initiatives or activities have been dropped," she said.

Sullivan received the Spokane Ag Show Excellence in Agriculture Award in 2019. That same year, Washington State University named the barley variety Palmer, targeted for craft malt and brewing, for her.

### **SUGAR:**

### Continued from C5

"We had just a great year for growing beets," Zach Patterson, who farms in the Paul area in the Mini-Cassia district, said Oct. 1. He serves as Snake River Sugarbeet Growers Association board president.

A dry summer helped, partly because it made for a mostly disease-free growing season, he said. "The beets looked healthy all year."

Compared to last year, Patterson's beets were pressured a bit more by weeds but less by rodents

His sugar beet harvest was about halfway completed as of Oct. 1, when he targeted completion around Oct. 11. Rains on two consecutive nights prompted him to cancel harvest the following days, Sept. 30 and Oct. 1.

Some of Amalgamated Sugar's beets are harvested early, which can benefit factory operations.

"We have finished early harvest. Tonnage looks like it's going to be above average," said Russ Shroll, who farms in the southwest Nampa area.

He plans to start "regular" harvest around Oct. 13 —

these beets look good, he said — and in the meantime harvest high-moisture corn.

"We are a little wet right now with some more rain in the forecast," Shroll said Oct. 2. "Hopefully we get a drying spell" before the 13th.

Sugar beet growing conditions were good in summer, he said. "We had great temperatures, without too many lengthy days in the 100s."

Near Blackfoot, Evans had a neighbor harvest his early beets. That enabled Evans to harvest potatoes.

As for beets, "the crop looks good," he said.

"I'm expecting a better-than average crop when we get going," Evans said. He plans to start the week of Oct. 6.

"Hopefully the sugar keeps coming on and the beets keep growing and maturing," he said.

### **CROP:**

### **Continued from C2**

- Living Well Kent Collaborative won \$233,000 to expand local markets for specialty crops grown by beginning farmers.
- The Washington State Fruit Commission will partner with the Washington State Department of Agriculture and Texas A&M University for a \$200,000 health-related research project on cherries.
- Compliance Services International won \$191,000 to connect producers to resources for endangered species act pesticide mitigation.
- The Organic Seed Alliance, Culinary Breeding Network and The Dry Farming Institute won \$167,000 to develop a market for dryfarmed tomatoes and melons.
- Central Washington University won \$163,000 to examine food safety risks of non-alcoholic hop waters.
- WSDA won \$162,000 to enhance market access through fruit and vegetable inspection training.
- WSDA also was awarded \$342,000 for grant administration.

### Oregon

· Oregon State University had six grants in Oregon, including: \$175,000 to investigate spray coatings to mitigate sunburn damage of berries; \$175,000 for innovative sucker management to minimize labor and herbicide in the hazelnut industry; \$175,000 to understand food safety risks associated with onions; \$174,000 to reduce plastic use by developing biopots made from plant-based fiber waste; \$169,000 to detect Phytophthora and Verticillium species using DNA sequencing; and \$168,000 to develop an artificial intelligence model designed to identify weeds in tall fescue grass seed production.

- The Oregon Farm to School Network won \$175,000 to expand use of specialty crops in child nutrition programs.
- Umpqua Valley Farm to School won \$172,000 to continue the creation of the Southern Oregon Food Alliance into a regional food hub.
- Ground Up Soil won \$171,000 to look at shells as a substitute for peat moss in containerized plants.
- The Community Development Corporation of Oregon won \$156,000 to increase market access, competitiveness and farm business viability.
- Play Grow Learn won \$152,000 to enhance delivery of specialty crops to low income communities in East Multnomah County.
- Rogue Grown won \$121,000 to increase market access for Rogue Valley specialty crops.
- Idiot's Grace Farm and Big Barn Organics won \$73,000 to establish a grower-governed association of organic and transitional orchards in the Columbia River Gorge.
- The Oregon Department of Agriculture won \$199,000 for grant administration.

### Idaho

- Idaho Preferred, a program of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture, won \$291,000 to promote specialty crops through retail, agritourism and education.
- ISDA won \$250,000 to modernize the potato grading process to improve efficiency and quality.
- OSU and ISDA won \$150,000 to examine salmonella and E. coli behavior in damaged and diseased onion bulbs.

- The Idaho Potato Commission won \$125,000 to grow export sales.
- The Idaho Grape Growers and Wine Producers Commission won \$125,000 to elevate the visibility and reputation of Idaho wine and cider.
- The University of Idaho won \$130,000 to develop tools for potato growers to manage powdery scab and potato moptop virus, and \$120,000 to develop novel fungicides for sustainable potato production.
- The Idaho Oilseed Commission won \$100,000 to work with the U of I to research management practices for irrigated yellow and oriental culinary mustard grown for spice.
- The Sunnyslope Wine Trail won \$100,000 to promote its new American Viticultural Area destination.
- The Idaho Bean Commission was awarded \$80,000 to work with U of I to develop sampling and asymptomatic detection for the bacterial wilt pathogen in beans.
  - The Mid-Snake

Resource, Conservation and Development Council won \$60,000 to mitigate the economic impact of codling moth damage to apple and pear trees.

- The Idaho Hop Growers Commission won \$50,000 to build awareness of Idaho hops.
- Sundries Farm Garlic won \$16,000 to introduce and propagate new garlic varieties into Idaho's allium quarantine area.
- ISDA was awarded \$330,000 for grant administration.



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## Water running out for Yakima River basin irrigators with senior rights

By DON JENKINS **Capital Press** 

Yakima River basin irrigators with senior water rights will get cut off Oct. 6, an unprecedented early shutdown that caps a third straight summer of drought in south-central Washington.

The Bureau of Reclamation projects its five reservoirs will be too low by then to release water for irrigators. If irrigation stops, there will be enough water in the Yakima River to meet target flows for fish, according to the bureau.

The cutoff will affect irrigators in the Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District and the Wapato Irrigation Project on the Yakama Nation reservation.

Sunnyside, an 86,000acre district, normally supplies water until Oct. 20. With a water right from 1878, the district hasn't been shut off early since



Don Jenkins/Capital Press

An irrigation canal delivers water in the Kittitas Reclamation District in Central Washington in better times. Even irrigators with senior water rights will be shut o in October.

1994, when it stopped David Felman said stopdeliveries on Oct. 12.

Sunnyside

ping water deliveries two manager weeks early will affect farmers irrigating winter crops and preparing ground for next year. With reservoirs so low, the water shortage may carryover into next year, he

"Looking ahead, we need substantial rain and snow in the basin to climb out of this drought," Felman said.

In response to the water shortage, the Washington Department of Ecology announced Oct. 1 it will prohibit the Sunnyside district and cities in the basin from drawing from streams and rivers between Oct. 6 and the end of October.

Ecology spokeswoman Emily Tasaka said the order doesn't apply to the Wapato district, operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The project has the oldest water right in the basin, dating back to

Although Ecology didn't apply the order to Wapato, there won't be enough water for the project's irrigators and the fish flow, according to the Reclamation Bureau.

The Wapato project plans to stop water deliveries Oct. 10, according to bureau officials. Efforts to reach Wapato were unsuccessful.

Cities will still be able to draw from municipal wells. Kittitas County and six cities issued a joint statement saying they may ask residents to stop watering yards, take shorter showers and look for other ways to conserve

"We urge residents to understand the gravity of the situation and reduce usage immediately," Roslyn city Mayor Jeff Adams said in a statement.

**OEM Prices** 

See RIVER, Page C9





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# New York Canal relining project to resume

By BRAD CARLSON **Capital Press** 

BOISE — A new phase of New York Canal relining work is slated to advance the project through another piece of growing Boise and closer to agricultural uses.

"The challenge is that we've had so much population growth over the years, and a lot of houses have encroached into that plain," said Bob Carter, Boise Project Board of Control manager. "It's our job to keep the canal in the best shape we can, and this project we're doing ensures that the canal will continue to operate efficiently and safely — not only for public safety, but downstream to ensure crops get their water."

The canal conveys water 41 miles east to west, from the Boise River Diversion Dam in east Boise to Lake Lowell in the Nampa-Caldwell area. Water moved irrigates about 165,000 acres.

New York Canal is "a main artery for our system, so it's very vital to our economy as well," Carter said.

Relining work focuses on a six-mile stretch physically above downtown Boise in the city's growing southeast and south-central areas.

The current mile-a-year pace began last fall. Funding sources are the Idaho Water Resource Board, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the Boise

Project — which earlier completed short segments as funding and staffing allowed. Plans to speed up the project prompted Reclamation to complete a public review under the National Environmental Policy Act.

About 1.75 miles have been relined so far, Carter said.

Re-lining all six miles is expected to cost more than \$84 million, he said.

This year, the contrac-

tor is expected to start work Oct. 8, a day after the Boise Project ends irrigation delivery for the season, Carter said.

The one-mile segment of New York Canal to be relined this season starts downstream of Eckert Road and ends underneath and just past Federal Way, adjacent to Boise Project buildings.

Next year, the project will extend into areas characterized by more commercial and industrial uses, Carter said.

Construction of the canal started in the late 1880s, and the canal was enlarged between 1909 and 1912, according to Reclamation. The bureau in 1926 transferred the canal's operation, care and maintenance to the Boise Project, which delivers water to landowners in five southwest Idaho irrigation districts.

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### RIVER:

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The water shortage has been curtailing irrigation all summer. The Roza Irrigation District and Kittitas Reclamation District, with junior water rights, were curtailed to 42% of their normal water allotments.

A portion of Sunnyside's water right also was subject to rationing. The district received about 75% of its full allotment, Felman said.

The Reclamation Bureau in early September said junior water-right holders would get no water in October and warned that even senior water-right holders faced cutbacks.

September failed to bring relief. The basin received only 24% of its average rain for the month.

district told farmers weeks

ago to prepare for an early shutoff. "We're experiencing conditions we haven't seen in over three decades," Felman said.

The Kittitas district, based in Ellensburg, shut down Aug. 13. It normally operates until Oct. 15. District manager Urban Eberhart said the streak of water-short years shows the urgency of projects that store and conserve water.

"If people don't see it now, I don't know when they're going to see it," he said.

The Reclamation Bureau's five reservoirs hold only 27% as much water as usual for early October. The agency projects the reservoirs will bottom out later this month.

"We'll be going into the winter with functionally zero in storage," Roza dis-The Sunnyside irrigation trict manager Scott Revell



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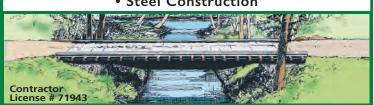
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# Bullish on beef: Ranchers expect high prices and demand, cattle shortage to continue

By KYLE ODEGARD **Capital Press** 

Ranchers feel bullish as cattle prices hit record highs this summer and remain elevated thanks to record low inventory and strong beef demand.

"It bodes well for us right now. If you're a cow-calf producer, you're in a good spot," said Todd Nash, past president of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association.

Experts don't expect this beef cycle to end until 2028 at the earliest, as they believe cattle numbers will continue to shrink.

"When there's a margin to be made, you have to take care of business. That might delay the rebuild," said Cameron Mulrony, executive vice president of the Idaho Cattle Association.

Many producers feel compelled to sell rather than holding onto heifers that could contribute to national herd expansion.

Other ranchers are retaining



Kyle Odegard, Capital Press

Michael Alger, shown at his ranch near Lincoln City on Oct. 1, is the chairman of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association Young Cattlemen's Committee. With record high prices in the industry, younger ranchers just starting out will likely need an o -farm job just to buy cattle, he said.



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calves because low feed costs result in efficient weight gains, but that strategy also tightens supplies.

"There are more guys right now that are playing the weight game," said Chelsea Hajny, executive vice president of the Washington Cattlemen's Association.

According to the USDA, feedlots prefer to hold cattle to heavier weights if supplies are tight to utilize pen space.

That results in a slow pace of marketing and heavier cattle.

Starting in July and through August, weekly cattle slaughter slowed seasonally but to levels that were the lowest since 2015.

While cow-calf producers and feedlots are cashing in, processors are feeling the

pinch, according to an August Rabobank report.

"With cattle prices at new highs and wholesale beef values softening, weekly gross margins for steer and heifer processors are at their lowest level since April 2012," the report stated.

According to that financial firm, per capita beef supplies have been stabilized by larger import volumes and elevated carcass weights.

Insiders said cattle produce far more meat per animal than in decades past thanks to improved genetics and management practices.

A retail price surge is being driven more by demand for beef, which is on track to be at its highest level since 1983, the report stated.

See RANCHERS, Page C11



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### **RANCHERS:**

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### Hanging up their (cowboy) hats

Though prices hit records this summer, margins remain tight, said Bernt Nelson, an American Farm Bureau Federation economist.

Uncertainty lingers with tariffs, increased input costs and high interest rates for producers, many of whom are nearing retirement — their average age is 58.1.

Those factors also make it difficult for agricultural operations to expand or rebuild herds, Nelson said.

"It's a good time to get out and a hard time to get in," he added.

Younger ranchers likely will need off-farm employment, said Michael Alger, chairman of the OCA Young Cattlemen's Committee.

"They're going to have to get a job that pays well just to buy cattle," added Alger, who ranches near Lincoln City and Willamina, Ore.

At the other end of the spectrum, Matt McElligott, Oregon Cattlemen's Association president, said he knew several producers who sold all their heifers and planned to hang up their (cowboy) hats.

"A lot of people are saying, 'This is going to be my last year,' or, 'I'll ride this out until I'm done," McElligott added.

John Nalivka, the Idaho Cattle Association's marketing chairman, said many older ranchers lack succession plans and face pressure to sell agricultural land to developers, further limiting inventories.

Small producers, who could contribute greatly to herd expansion, often have smaller parcels near communities and experience the most urgency to offload acreage, he added.

Debt and deferred maintenance also play into decisions.

"I think there's a lot of guys, they'd gone into debt pretty significantly," Nalivka said.



Matt McElligott, Oregon Cattlemen's Association president, said he knew several producers who sold all their heifers and planned to retire thanks to record high cattle prices. "A lot of people are saying, 'This is going to be my last year,' or, 'I'll ride this out until I'm done," McElligott added.

"This year is one of the few times in our industry that you could totally get out of debt," he added.

### **Opportunity costs** and risks

Many producers, even if they aim to keep running cattle for years, are unloading heifer calves.

Keeping a heifer calf this year presented an opportunity cost of \$2,500 — the animal's approximate sale value of that animal, Nalivka said.

But retaining a heifer calf also presents risk regarding the value she will generate as a bred heifer in a year, or with her own calf two years later.

Producers have to account for how much it costs to run the heifer during that time, said Nalivka, president of Sterling Marketing, a marketing advisory firm for restaurants, packers and feedlots.

There's no guarantee high cattle prices will last or that a heifer will have a healthy calf, and the cost of grains probably won't stay so low, he added.

See RANCHERS, Page C12

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Courtesy Idaho Cattle Association

**C11** 

John Nalivka, the Idaho Cattle Association's marketing chairman, said many older ranchers lack a succession plan and face pressure to sell agricultural land to developers. Debt and deferred maintenance at ranches also play into the decision making process for producers.

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Courtesy Idaho Cattle Association

Cattle in a feedyard pens eat from bunks in this ÿle photo. According to the USDA, feedlots prefer to hold cattle to heavier weights if supplies are tight to utilize pen space. That results in a slow pace of marketing and heavier cattle.





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Courtesy American Farm Bureau Federation

Bernt Nelson, American Farm Bureau Federation economist, said that despite record cattle prices, uncertainty remains with tario s, increased input costs and high interest rates for producers, many of whom are nearing retirement age.

### **RANCHERS:**

### **Continued from C11**

Ranchers feel anxious about when the hot streak will end, since they know the market and Mother Nature are fickle.

"The last time we saw the end of the bubble, in 2014 or 2015, it dropped off so fast. People remember that," said Nash.

Record cattle prices also impact the milk industry, with dairy farmers driven to produce beef-on-dairy calves that have partly propped up supply figures.

However, replacement heifers available to enter the dairy herd hit a 20-year low, according to an



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August CoBank report.

"The national dairy heifer shortage could persist and grow deeper in the next two years," the report stated.

### **Initial causes of** cattle shortage

Experts said several factors led to the U.S. beef cattle shortage, including weather-related problems such as persistent drought that reduced herds and blizzards on the Great Plains that killed thousands of cattle.

Ranchers also lost access to some public lands, making grazing more difficult.

Pandemic supply chain issues caused a beef backlog when feed costs were high and inputs kept increasing with inflation.

With low profitability, it became hard to keep a larger herd and some producers went out of business altogether.

Nelson, the Farm Bureau economist, said the industry contraction started before the pandemic but herd shortages, liquidation and consolidation were amplified by that event.

See RANCHERS, Page C13

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Courtesy Idaho Cattle Association

A rancher tends to cattle in Southwest Idaho in this file photo. Experts don't expect this beef cycle to end until 2028 at the earliest. Many producers feel compelled to sell and take advantage of the hot market rather than holding onto heifers that could contribute to national herd expansion.

### **RANCHERS:**

Continued from C12

### **Record low** inventory

On Jan. 1, the U.S. herd had shrunk to 86.7 million cattle and calves, the lowest figure since 1951, according to the USDA.

In July, the agency estimated the 2025 calf crop at 33.1 million, the smallest on record.

Nelson said there were mixed signals on whether heifer retention was occurring.

Since it takes two years before a cow can have a calf on its own, 2027 would be the first meaningful opportunity for herd expansion — but that's only if ranchers keep heifers, he said.

"It's more likely to occur in the spring of 2028," Nelson added.

Some ranchers kept heifers for next year solely to alleviate taxes and avoid a higher income bracket, said Clint Sexson, marketing committee chairman for the Oregon Cattleman's Association.

He added that the situation is unlike anything he's seen in his

"If you're operating on your own money, you own your property, you're facing one of the biggest tax loads you've ever seen in the cow-calf world," Sexson added.

### Screwworm, imports and exports

Industry insiders anticipated slow growth for America's cattle inventory once the market turns.

The situation is complicated by the threat of the New World screwworm and the closure of the border to livestock from Mexico.

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Capital Press ÿle photo

Randy Fortenbery, Washington State University's Thomas B. Mick Endowed Chair in Small Grains Economics, says Washington's cash receipts from agricultural enterprises are not growing as fast as production expenses.

# **Report shows Washington ag** income has dropped to 43rd place

By MATTHEW WEAVER **Capital Press** 

Washington agriculture fell from a ranking of 28th for national net farm income in 2023 to 43rd in 2024.

"That is a bit concerning," Randy Fortenbery, Washington State University's Thomas B. Mick Endowed Chair in Small Grains Economics, said as he spoke to members of the Washington House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee Sept. 30.

Washington's receipts from agricultural enterprises are not growing as fast as production expenses, Fortenbery said.

Fortenbery's agricultural competitiveness

studied six commodities — dairy; grapes; hops; tree fruit, including apples, cherries and pears; potatoes and wheat. Fortenbery compared how the state's crop sectors compare to national sectors.

Only potatoes had positive changes between 2017 and 2023, Fortenbery said.

"This is a bright spot volume is up, value is up," he said.

Washington Department of Agriculture director Derek Sandison and Raj Khosla, new dean of WSU's College of Agricultural, Human and Natural Resource Sciences, also presented before state lawmakers during the meeting.

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The Growers' Guide October 2025 C15

### **REPORT:**

**Continued from C14** 

the state's top 10 sectors that's currently profitable, Sandison said.

He cited "major pressures" on the state's agricultural industry. main causes are high input costs, particularly labor, and low prices, he said.

Watch the full video https://tvw.org/ here: video/house-agriculture-natural-resources-2025091147/?eventID=2025091147

### **Regulatory costs**

Washington's dairy industry estimated the cost of complying with regulation costs averaged 26% of total revenue.

Total wage and state regulatory costs roughly \$1,327 per head per year. Net returns were -\$2,588 per head, with about half of the loss explained by labor and costs associated with complying with state regulation, Fortenbery said.

The potato industry estimated regulatory costs were about 46% of total revenue, with the largest costs being labor related. Total wage and state regulatory costs were about \$2,537 per acre in 2023, with net returns of \$1,442 per acre. Regulatory costs were about 19% of total revenue for apple producers, with labor being the largest costs. Total wage and state regulatory costs were about \$6,485 per acre. Net returns were about -\$6,095 per acre.

The wheat industry reported the lowest percentage of total revenue dedicated to complying with state regulations, about 9%, with labor the largest cost. Total wage regulatory state costs were \$37 per acre. Based on the budgets the WSU research team put together for one particular wheat farm operation, net returns were positive, about \$102 per acre in 2023, Fortenbery said.

"That certainly wouldn't be true in 2024

or 2025," he said.

Farms across all commodities reported hiring Beef is the only one of of some employees specifically for compliance management, ranging from 10% for wheat firms to 100% for tree fruit and potato producers.

### **Trade** uncertainty

Fortenbery used 2018-2019 information when discussing the impact of tariffs, noting the current trade situation is so "fluid" that it's hard to know how exactly trade will be affected.

"The terms of trade are changing pretty significantly country by country on an almost daily basis," he said.

Based on research conducted before 2018, 1% decline in U.S. wheat exports means a 0.14% drop in the U.S. average wheat price, Fortenbery said. At the current price of wheat, this is about a \$.009 reduction for every 1% reduction in export volume.

"Thus, a 15% drop in export volume would cost wheat farmers about 14 cents per bushel," Fortenbery said.

Many farms can adapt to a change in trading environments that are predictable and stable, but will have more difficulty managing the volatility that comes from continual rule changes, Fortenbery said.

There is often response to the imposition of tariffs that exceeds what one might expect from similar price shock, Fortenbery said. Political responses from governments and emotional responses from consumers can influence trade impacts.

"Trade wars are not easy to win, and determining outcomes [beforehand] is challenging," Fortenbery said. "It is impossible to design compensation schemes that make victims of trade distortions whole ... Once a market is lost, it can be very difficult to get it back."

### **RANCHERS:**

Continued from C13

That country supplies more than 1 million feeder cattle to U.S. feedlots every

Experts said keeping the screwworm out of the U.S. — the pest would cost billions of dollars — is far more important than Mexican cattle imports.

The ban on livestock means Mexico has more cattle to slaughter and beef imports from Mexico were up 14% year over year in July, according to the USDA.

Overall, U.S. beef imports are forecast to hit roughly 5.36 billion pounds in 2025, up 16% from the previous year, and then dip to 4.95 billion pounds in 2026.

Meanwhile, U.S. beef exports are projected at 2.6 billion pounds this year, down 12% from 2024. For 2026, beef exports are forecast at 2.52 billion pounds.

### Strong consumer demand

Strong consumer demand continues, despite increasing retail costs.

Ranchers said higher quality and more consistent meat from better genetics and management has boosted demand.

The average U.S. ground beef price surpassed \$6 per pound for the first time in June, hit a record \$6.25 per pound in July, and climbed to \$6.32 in August, according to the USDA.

"There's only so much the consumer can take as far as high beef prices, but we don't know what that tipping point is," Nelson said.

A CattleFax report from July, prepared for the Beef Checkoff Program, indicated some consumers had started to trade down and show resistance to higher priced beef items.

Alger, who also runs a

butcher shop in Willamina, Ore., said the industry must keep quality high so shoppers won't back away from

"They're still buying for themselves and their family," he said, adding butcher shops in western Oregon currently don't have hook space.

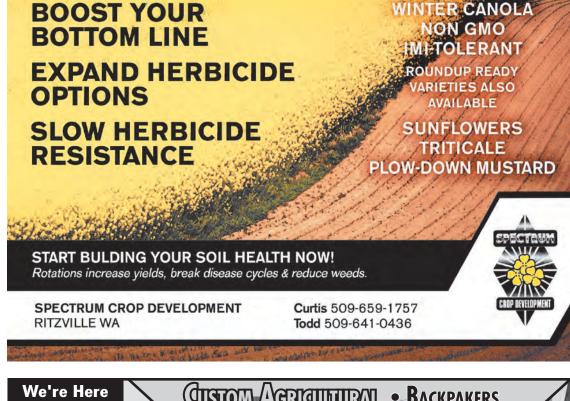
### Not a normal cycle

The beef cycle usually lasts about a decade, and this is year 12. Supply has contracted for seven years.

When cattle prices get high, there's usually a corresponding increase production.

"This isn't your normal cycle," Nelson said, noting record prices, high interest rates, geopolitical issues impacting trade, retiring ranchers and strong demand.

Barring some sort of catastrophic event, experts think the industry's low supply and high prices will continue.





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