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The Growers' Guide

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Q&A with Derek Sandison, Washington's director of agriculture

By Matthew Weaver
Capital Press



MATTHEW WEAVER/CAPITAL PRESS

Washington State Department of Agriculture Director Derek Sandison speaks with USDA Farm Service Agency Administrator Bill Beam following a press conference Sept. 3 in Reardan, Wash. Sandison will lead the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture for a one-year term.

The longtime leader of the Washington State Department of Agriculture will lead all state departments of agriculture for the coming year.

Derek Sandison was elected 2026-2027 president Sept. 16 during the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) annual meeting in Portland, Maine.

NASDA coordinates the activities of the 50 states' and U.S. territories' agriculture departments "in a way that we're supportive of farmers, ranchers and producers in this country," Sandison told Capital Press. "We seek to create a nonpartisan environment, as much as possible, trying to deal with various issues that face the agricultural industry."

Much of NASDA's work involves coordinating and cooperating with federal partners, including USDA and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, particularly implementing the Food Safety Modernization Act, he noted.

As part of his presidency, Sandison will host NASDA's annual meeting in September 2027 in Kennewick, Wash.

Sandison was first appointed WSDA director by Gov. Jay Inslee in June 2015. Gov. Bob Ferguson re-appointed Sandison in January 2025, in keeping with the industry's wishes.

"Director Sandison's election reflects the strength of Washington agriculture and the important role our state plays nationally," Ferguson stated in a WSDA press release. "I'm proud to see him represent Washington's farmers and producers in this leadership role, and I look forward to welcoming NASDA members to our state next year."

Sandison was previously director of the Washington Department of Ecology's Office of the Columbia River. He was a principal architect of the Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan and played a key role in the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Project.

Sandison spoke to the Capital Press by telephone June 23. Capital Press e-mailed a follow-up question Sept. 8, and received

See **Q&A**, 4A



MATTHEW WEAVER/CAPITAL PRESS

Washington State Department of Agriculture Director Derek Sandison smiles during a conversation following the USDA Farm Service Agency press conference Sept. 3 in Reardan, Wash. Sandison has been elected the 2026-2027 president of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture.

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Trump allows use of dyed diesel on highways

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By Kyle Odegard
Capital Press

President Donald Trump signed an executive order Oct. 5 that will allow the use of farm diesel, or red dyed diesel, on highways until 2027.

The order, to ease high fuel costs for farms and other businesses, also defers the federal highway diesel tax of more than 24 cents per gallon for the rest of the year.

American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall sought similar measures in an Oct. 1 letter to Trump.

"Allowing dyed diesel fuel to be used over-the-road will bring welcome relief for farmers because every cent matters when you're running a fleet of grain trucks or hauling cattle hundreds of miles," Duvall said, in a social media post.

State taxes and fees add another 35.5 cents per gallon on average to highway diesel prices, and several states have taken action to combat diesel prices.

The Iran War, Russia's war with Ukraine, other developments and a lack of refinement capacity around the world have constrained diesel supply.

On-highway diesel prices have receded slightly from record highs in late September, but the action will still bring relief for many producers during harvest.

President Trump also negotiated with Europe to release 100 million barrels of refined diesel from its strategic reserves within the next four months on Oct. 2.



KYLE ODEGARD/CAPITAL PRESS
President Donald Trump signed an executive order seeking to provide relief for high diesel prices.

Tami Kerr, Oregon Dairy Farmers Association executive director, said questions remain about Trump's executive order, including whether West Coast states will allow highway use of dyed diesel.

Many producers use diesel most on their own acreage, Kerr said.

"Obviously, any reduction in expenses will help," she added.

Dairy farmers and ranchers harvest grain and plant forage in the autumn.

"I don't think anybody budgeted six-and-a-half diesel," said Cameron Mulrony, Idaho Cattle Association executive vice president.

He said Trump's actions will be beneficial if they can be implemented.

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'15 CIH 8240, 4405 Sep Hrs, Hillco 27%, 4WD, '17 MacDon FD75-45' $112,900

(2) '12 CIH 3020 TERRAFLEX HEADS, 35' Cart, Harvest Ready ..... $7,000 EA.

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Q&A

Continued from 1A

a response Sept. 14.

The interview has been edited for clarity and length.

Q. Do you have particular goals for the NASDA presidency?

Sandison: We want to support programs that are going to improve viability. A lot of that would be in the "skinny" farm bill, programs that help farmers, whether it's through research … There's a cost associated with regulatory programs. To the extent that we could see offsets for that, we want to encourage and promote that.

I'm still working on the details around what ag viability improvement looks like. That's my principal focus right now. NASDA's very much concerned about the plight of the farmer and rancher right now in terms of, in many cases, basically survival. We know about farms that have gone out of business or sold to out-of-state interests. We're very much in a mode of trying to improve market conditions for our farmers and ranchers.

Q. Is there a biggest need you see?

Sandison: We have an extraordinarily high cost of production right now. A lot of that's driven by inflation. We can't do much about that as an organization.



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE/CONTRIBUTED

Derek Sandison, director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture, second from left, visits a shellfish farm. Sandison will lead the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, serving a one-year term as president.

On the other side, farmers are not getting a very good price for the products they produce. There's a number of different aspects to that, but one of the most important ones is trade. NASDA is very much engaged in the trade picture, we're one of the main contractors for the U.S. Foreign Agricultural Service for the emerging markets program. We do outgoing trade missions and invite trading partners to our country to show them how our products are produced and handled.

We receive funds through the Market Access Program and America First Trade Promotion Program. We're trying to expand, as much as possible, our market opportunities so there's more demand and we get better prices for our products and help offset some of the issues our farmers are facing right now.

Q. Washington farmers ranked last in the nation in farmer take-home pay in 2024. Your thoughts?

Sandison: Yeah, that stimulated certainly a lot of work on our end in terms of trying to address those underlying problems. But we knew about it, we'd had (word) even before.

One of the largest warning signals was the 2022 Census of Agriculture, which demonstrated that in the last five years, we've lost 3,500 farms. We had been sending that warning signal for some time ahead of that 2022 census: 'We don't have the data yet, but we know these things are happening,' in terms of trying to address the many, many different issues that affect cost of production.

It's labor reform, H2A modernization, looking for predictable science-based regulatory programs for pesticides and fertilizers. Also local food-purchasing assistance programs, which allows us to make sure when the federal or state governments are acquiring food, that they're purchasing from their own farmers and ranchers.

> *"But the one area I was most concerned about was vague language around compensation to British Columbia and Canada for various beneficial uses of water in the Columbia River."*
>
> **Derek Sandison,**
>
> *Washington State Department of Agriculture director*

And food system infrastructure, trying to deal with that middle of the supply chain. We saw so many supply chain issues that cropped up during the pandemic, we know there's a lot of improvement that can be done there to make that supply chain more predictable and efficient.

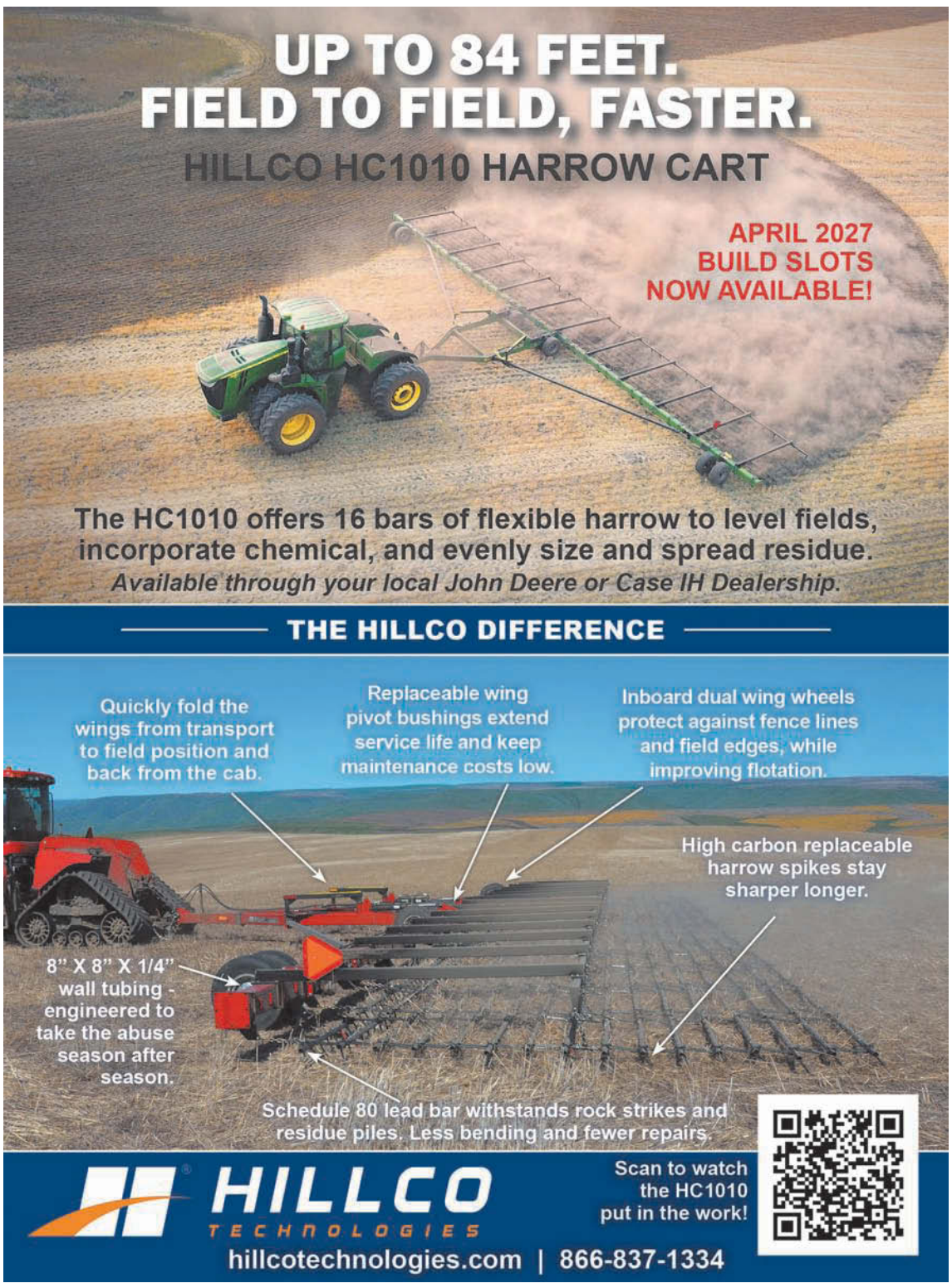
Things we've been working on, things we continue to work on. We're focused like a laser on that viability issue.

Q: You have a long history with water in Washington. How do you feel about where the Snake River Dam issue is now?

Sandison: My read of it is the agreement the Biden administration made with the Tribes was canceled by the Trump administration. So I don't think there's any movement now.

The question is, in future administrations, will you see movement in that arena? I don't know. That's crystal ball gazing. Certainly for now, we're not faced with that particular threat.

See **Q&A**, 5A





Q&A

Continued from 4A

Q. Does the Washington State Department of Agriculture have a policy regarding dam breaching?

Sandison: We're a cabinet agency, so I don't take positions outside of the governor's office.

Q. How do you feel about where the Columbia River Treaty is right now?

Sandison: The agreement that was reached was an agreement in principle between Canada and the U.S. British Columbia is a major player because the provinces have a larger role up in Canada than the states do on this side of the border.

I had some concerns about the agreement in principle in terms of, I want to know the details. Certainly we all want to see a more stable flood-risk management program than allowing it to sort of freefall. We're pleased there was some movement in that regard.

I think the U.S. and Canada are making year-by-year arrangements now to make sure we don't have flood risk problems that get out of control.

But the one area I was most concerned about was vague language around compensation to British Columbia and Canada for various beneficial uses of water in the Columbia River.

Since the treaty was developed, there's been what we call the Canadian entitlement: the value of power generated from water that's been stored in Canada going through turbines on the U.S. side of the border.

That entitlement was strictly focused on repayment for hydropower generation. It was not in the form of money, it was in the form of electricity that was transferred.

When you add in other beneficial uses, like agriculture, irrigation, recreation, navigation, that sort of thing, the question is, how much can pay? What did we actually commit to? That has not been answered in terms of what all that means.

The Trump administration basically put (the agreement) on pause, so we'll have to wait until discussions continue to determine the answers to those unknowns that were left deliberately vague by the agreement in principle.



MATTHEW WEAVER/CAPITAL PRESS

Derek Sandison, director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture, and Paul Gross, farm manager for the Spokane Hutterian Brethren, share a laugh during the USDA Farm Service Agency press conference Sept. 3 in Reardan, Wash. Sandison is the newly elected president of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture and will serve a one-year term.

Q. Any message to farmers and ranchers?

Sandison: We certainly understand they're going through extremely challenging times. And it would be great if I could guarantee some kind of help is on the way.

Just know that we're working as hard as we can in combination with our partners at the federal level to figure out: What are the types of things we can do at this point to help farmers out?

One area was the USDA-provided funding, trade mitigation basically to row crops, $10 billion, but only $1 billion for specialty crops. We're more of a specialty crop state, so that's problematic.

We've been advocating for, 'Hey, help out our tree fruit growers, our specialty crop growers' in a more tangible way. That's a work in progress, but we'll see where it goes.

We're working as many angles as we can to figure out how we improve that bottom line for farmers.

We released the assessment of ag land earlier this year. That basically was the problem statement, we're working right now on Phase 2 of that assessment, which is focused more on what do the solutions look like?

(That will be out) as early September, as late as December. We're trying to keep the surveys open as long as we can to make sure we get as much input from our farmers, ranchers and farmworkers as possible before we put out that report, but we want to make sure that information is available before the next legislative session. It's also intended to be available to Congress as well. Some of the issues we deal with are federal, some are state and some are local.



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE/CONTRIBUTED

Derek Sandison, director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture, with Washington State University President Betsy Cantwell at the annual Taste of the State event. Sandison will lead the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture for one year as president.

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Kitchen corner: Cooking with pork

By Dana

Fall is here, a perfect season for pork. Here are some recipes from the Iowa Pork Producers.

BBQ PORK CHOP SHEET PAN MEAL

INGREDIENTS

1 tablespoon smoked paprika (or regular paprika)
2 teaspoons brown sugar
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon pepper
1 teaspoon chili powder
½ teaspoon garlic powder
½ teaspoon onion powder
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper, optional
4 thick-cut boneless pork chops, at least 1-inch thick
1 ½ pounds red potatoes, cut into ¾-inch cubes
1 ½ pounds red potatoes, cut into ¾-inch cubes
12 ounces green beans
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
1/3 cup barbeque sauce

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400F.

In a small bowl stir together the seasoning ingredients.



IOWA PORK PRODUCERS/CONTRIBUTED

BBQ pork chop sheet pan meal.

Spread the cubed red potatoes out on a rimmed sheet pan and drizzle with two tablespoons of olive oil and sprinkle with the 1 ½ tablespoons of the seasoning. Toss to coat the potatoes evenly.

Bake for 15 minutes.

Remove the sheet pan from the oven and scoot the potatoes to one side.

Season both sides of the pork chops with 1 tablespoon of the seasoning. (The remaining seasoning can be saved for another time.)

Add the seasoned pork chops to the center and then add the green beans on the opposite side of the potatoes.

Drizzle the green beans with the remaining olive oil, salt and pepper. Bake for 20 minutes.

Spread the barbeque sauce over the tops of the pork chops. Bake for 5-10 minutes or until the internal temperature of the pork chops is 145F.

Let rest for 5 minutes before serving.

PORK MEDALLIONS IN MUSHROOM GRAVY

INGREDIENTS

1 pork tenderloin
1/2 cup flour
1 tablespoon seasoned salt
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 tablespoons butter
1/2 cup thinly sliced yellow onion
1 tablespoon minced garlic
8 ounces sliced mushrooms
2 tablespoons flour
1 cup chicken broth
1/2 cup marsala cooking wine*
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1/2 teaspoon black pepper
1/3 cup heavy cream
salt, to taste

Cut the pork tenderloin into 1 ½ inch thick slices and set aside.

In a small bowl, combine the ½ cup of flour and seasoned salt.

Coat the pork medallions in the flour mixture one at a time until they're all coated.

Add the vegetable oil to a sauté pan over medium-high heat.

Sear the pork for 2-3 minutes on each side; remove to a plate.

Turn the heat down to medium and add the butter to the same pan.

See **KITCHEN**, 7A



IOWA PORK PRODUCERS/CONTRIBUTED

Pork medallions with mushroom gravy.

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KITCHEN

Continued from 6A

Sauté the onions and garlic for a few minutes or until the onions soften.

Add the mushrooms and continue to cook for a couple minutes.

Sprinkle the flour into the pan and stir until the vegetables are coated. Cook for 1 minute, stirring frequently.

Slowly pour in the broth and cooking wine while stirring constantly; bring to a boil.

Stir in the Dijon mustard and black pepper.

Reduce the heat to medium-low heat and stir in the heavy cream and salt to taste.

Add the pork to the sauce, cover and cook until the pork reaches 145F.

Serve warm over mashed potatoes, if desired.

*can replace with additional broth

EASY SPIRAL-CUT HAM

INGREDIENTS

One 10-pound spiral-cut, bone-in ham

¼ cup orange juice

½ cup brown sugar

2 tablespoons salted butter

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

Preheat oven to 325 degrees Fahrenheit.

Remove the ham from the packaging and place in a large shallow baking dish.

Cover tightly with aluminum foil and bake for 90 minutes.

While the ham is baking, add the orange juice, brown sugar, butter and mustard to a small saucepan. Whisk together and heat until it begins to boil; remove from the heat.

Remove and discard the foil. Brush the mixture liberally over the ham, giving it a chance to soak into each individual slice.

Bake for an additional 20 to 25 minutes, or until the ham reaches an internal temperature of 140 F.

Let rest for a few minutes and serve warm. Serves about 12 people, depending on the size of the ham.



IOWA PORK PRODUCERS/CONTRIBUTED

Easy spiral-cut ham.





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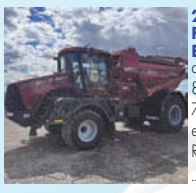
2019 RBR VENTURI 380, Cummins diesel , Allison automatic, 4 wheel drive, air ride, RA-885 Salford 3 bin bed, 72' spread width, electric tarp, Alliance flotation tires, lightbar, Viper 4, 2,724 Hours $153,000



2020 RBR ENTERPRISE VENTURI 400, Case IH Flex Air 810 70' Boom. Raven Viper 4, 4 wheel drive. Electric Roll Tarp. Foot or Hand Throttle control. 2070 Hrs..... $162,000



2018 TERRAGATOR 8400B, Sisu diesel engine, CVT transmission, Air Max Precision 2 dry air flow system, 70' stainless steel boom, electric roll tarp, Raven Viper 4 controller, Raven Smartrax autosteer. 2177 Hours $146,500



2017 TERRAGATOR TG8400B, diesel engine, CVT transmission, Air Max Precision 2 dry air flow system, 70' stainless steel boom, micro ingredient bins, electric roll tarp, Raven Viper 4, Smartrax Autosteer. 3,387 hours $138,000

2016 CASE 4540 FLOATER, DIESEL ENGINE, Allison automatic transmission, 810 Flex Air Triple bin, 70' stainless steel boom, electric tarp, Raven Viper IV, Raven light bar, 3411 Hours $134,500



2017 RBR VENTURI 350, Cummins diesel, Allison automatic, 4 wheel drive, air ride chassis. CaseIH Flex Air 810, 70' boom, electric roll tarp, 380/90R46 tires, fenders, light bar, Viper 4, Smartrax auto steer. 4,951 hours $109,000



2017 CASEIH TITAN 4540, CNH 8.7L diesel, Allison automatic, leather seat, CaseIH 810 Flex-Air, 70' boom, Triple Bin. electric tarp, Viper 4, autosteer. 1986 Hours $162,000



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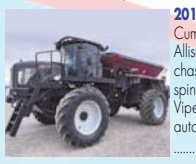
2021 TERRAGATOR TG8400C, low hours,Diesel engine, Raven Viper 4,Electric Roll Tarp, New Leader NL4500G4 Edge - 14' with 4 bin Multibin Applier. 2216 Hours..... $162,000



2016 CASE IH TITAN 3540, Triple Bin, Viper 4, Smartrax auto steer. 1,512 hours $139,000



2017 RBR VECTOR 350, Cummins diesel engine, Allison automatic transmission. New Leader L5000 Viper 4, 2,216 hours. $134,500



2014 RBR VECTOR 300, Cummins 8.9 Diesel Engine, Allison transmission, air ride chassis. L4000G4 14' spinner bed. New Roll Tarp. Viper Pro controller, Smartrax auto steer. 4262 Hours. $86,000



2015 CASE IH 4030, CNH diesel engine, Allison automatic. New Leader L4000G4 spinner bed. Belt over chain. New Roll Tarp. Viper 4, Smartrax auto steer. 3255 Hours $132,500



'15 TERRAGATOR 8400B, 3,222 Hrs, AGCO Power 8.4L 6-Cyl, Diesel, CVT Transmission, Viper Pro, New Leader L4000G4 MultiApplier Dry Box $125,000



2019 TERRAGATOR TG8400C, Cummins diesel, 3446 Hours. Diesel Engine, CVT tr... Viper 4 monitor. Airmax Pre... stainless steel booms. Micro bin with yellow and white rollers. Electric roll tarp $152,000

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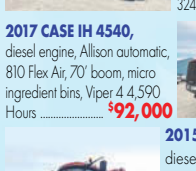


2013 CASE IH 4530 FLOATER, CNH diesel engine, Allison automatic, Case IH 810 Flex Air, 70' stainless steel boom, triple bin, electric roll tarp, Viper pro, AutoSteer. 3512 Hours $108,000



2016 CASE IH TITAN 4540, Case IH Diesel Engine, Allison 6 speed automatic transmission. Fenders, Case IH FLX810, Air Boom Spreader, 70 Ft. Viper 4, Raven Smartrax Light Bar. Electric roll tarp. 3246 Hours..... $96,500

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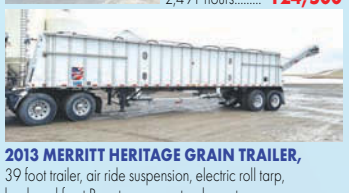
2017 CASE IH 4540, diesel engine, Allison automatic, 810 Flex Air, 70' boom, micro ingredient bins, Viper 4 4,590 Hours $92,000



2015 CaseIH Titan 4530, diesel engine, Allison automatic, CaseIH 810 Flex-Air, 70' boom, electric roll tarp, Viper Pro, Smartrax auto steer, 2,491 hours..... $124,500



2014 TG8400, Airmax Precision 2, 70 foot stainless steel booms, Granular coap bins. Electric roll-tarp. Raven Viper Pro controller, Auto Steer, Air ride cab. 3345 hours..... $98,500



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2019 TERRAGATOR TG8400C, 2648 Hours, Diesel Engine, CVT transmission. Viper 4 monitor, auto steer. Airmax Precision 2 bed. 70' stainless steel booms. Micro bin. Auto greaser, Electric roll tarp $178,000



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Rollins tells dairy board to stop all ESG activities

By Don Jenkins
Capital Press



BRIEN AHO/USDA
Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins waves at the annual FFA Summit July 24 in Washington, D.C. Rollins ordered the National Dairy Board to stop funding social and environmental programs.

Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins has ordered the National Dairy Board to stop funding social and environmental programs, directing the board to stick with promoting the consumption of dairy products.

The USDA gave the board until Sept. 30 to submit a list of its environmental, social and governance (ESG) activities, such as initiatives to cut methane from cows and manure.

"American dairy farmers pay mandatory checkoff assessments to build demand for milk, cheese and butter — NOT to bankroll a radical climate agenda," Rollins said on X.

The dairy board oversees more than $300 million a year in dairy checkoff fees. Dairy farmers sit on the board and have been told to not discuss Rollins' order, according to a person familiar with the matter.

The board will ensure all its activities remain aligned with the law and administration policy, said Scott Wallin, spokesman for Dairy Management Inc., which manages the checkoff program.

"We will work closely with USDA to review our projects and to take necessary steps to modify or terminate contracts and activities as needed while maintaining our commitment to our authorized promotion, research, and consumer information functions," Wallin said in an email.

In a letter in September to board chairwoman Lolly Lesher, Rollins singled out programs such as the Greener Cattle Initiative and Pathways to Dairy Net Zero Initiative for potential elimination.

"USDA will work with you to determine which activities need to be terminated to align with the current policy of the department," Rollins wrote.

BROAD TERM

The term "ESG" is so board that the dairy industry will need more guidance from the USDA before knowing the order's effect, said Rick Naerebout, executive director of the Idaho Dairymen's Association and the Washington State Dairy Federation.

"It's all in the eyes of the interpreter," he said.

On the same day as Rollins' letter went out, a federal judge signed an order suspending a lawsuit between the USDA and three small dairy farmers in Wisconsin.

The farmers claimed USDA was allowing checkoff fees to fund a labyrinth of programs imposing so-called "voluntary" reporting requirements to appease corporations and activists. If left unchallenged, dairy farmers will have to comply or lose access to markets, the lawsuit claimed.

The Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty, which represents the farmers, said in a statement bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., were pushing an ideological agenda.

"Following our lawsuit, the Trump administration is ending a costly and unconstitutional practice of forcing dairy farmers to fund radical ESG demands with the dairy checkoff," institute attorney Rebecca Furdek said.

The lawsuit takes particular aim at the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy, one of several organizations supported by dairy checkoff funds.

The innovation center and USDA agreed in 2009 to take steps to build public trust in the dairy industry's ability to produce nutritious products in a socially responsible way, according to the agreement.

The center's activities were apparently unchallenged during the Obama, first Trump and Biden administrations, but the lawsuit accuses the innovation center of trying to please ESG-minded corporations.

Corporate sustainability initiatives would exist with or without the innovation center, said Naerebout, who serves on the center's environmental stewardship committee.

"It's not like we can stick our heads in the sand and pretend it's not part of our market," he said. "We can find ways to support our industry by saying, 'Hey, we're already doing that.' "

The Wisconsin lawsuit cited an article posted by the center in 2021 under the headline, "Will Removing Dairy Cows Help Stop Climate Change?"

"In other words, America's dairy farmers funded research to study hypothetically eliminating their livelihood," the lawsuit claimed.

The lawsuit did not elaborate on the content of the article, which linked to research by scientists from Virginia Tech and USDA. The lengthy paper was, in fact, flattering to the dairy industry.

Scientists concluded eliminating every dairy cow in America would cut U.S. greenhouse gases by 0.7%, while also eliminating enough protein for 169 million people a year.

And, researchers noted, killing every dairy cow may cause "animal welfare and public perception concerns."

"Although it may be easy to recommend a world without livestock, it is less comfortable to discuss how we might get to such a world," the scientists wrote.

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U.S. ag exports outpacing 2025, 2024

2026 shaping up to be second-best year ever

By Don Jenkins
Capital Press



DON JENKINS/CAPITAL PRESS
A ship waits to load grain on the Columbia River. U.S. farm exports are up over last year and 2024, according to the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service.

U.S. farm exports are up 7% so far this year, defying reports that agricultural trade has collapsed during President Trump's second term.

The value of agricultural exports totaled $120.4 billion though the first eight months, the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service reported Oct. 6.

The value, unadjusted for inflation, surpassed last year's eight-month total by about $8 billion and by about $7.4 billion the same period in 2024.

U.S. farm exports are on pace to have their second highest-value year ever, trailing only 2022, when U.S. exports totaled $196 billion. The record-breaking total was driven by high commodity prices and has not been approached since.

Nevertheless, some media reports say exports are down. Asked Oct. 6 whether farm exports have fallen under Trump, Google AI said, "Yes, U.S. farm exports — particularly to major markets like China — have fallen significantly during Donald Trump's trade conflicts, driven by retaliatory tariffs."

Here's a look at the actual USDA trade figures for top markets and selected commodities:

Mexico — Mexico remains the top market for U.S. farm goods. Mexico imported $20.6 billion worth of U.S. agricultural products through August, up 4% from last year and up 4.2% from 2024.

Canada — Canada has slapped retaliatory tariffs on some U.S. goods, but U.S. farm exports are up 2% to $19.2 million. The total for this year is down 1.7% from 2024.

European Union — U.S. farm exports to the 27-country EU are on record pace. So far, exports total $11.7 billion, a 14% increase over last year and a 27.8% hike over 2024.

China and Hong Kong — U.S. farm trade to China, the only country besides Canada to impose retaliatory tariffs, dropped sharply in 2025, but is running 45% ahead of last year's pace. Exports through eight months this year are $4.1 billion lower than in 2024.

Latin America — Exports total $7.2 billion to-date, up 9% from 2025 and 26.4% from 2024.

Soybeans — Soybean exports slumped in 2025 because China stopped buying them. Soybean exports to China and Hong Kong, however, are up 100% over last year. Worldwide, soybean exports are up 24%, slightly surpassing exports through the first eight months of 2024.

Dairy products — Exports are up 12% over last year and 29.8% over 2024.

Tree nuts — Exports are up 29% from last year and 44.8% from 2024.

Fresh fruit — Exports are up 8% from last year and 5.3% from 2024.

Wheat — Wheat exports are down 10% from last year and 7.6% from 2023.

Corn — Corn exports are up 7% from last year and 37% from 2024.

Farm trade deficit — Through August agricultural imports exceeded exports by $19.1 billion. In 2024, the farm trade deficit through eight months was $27.1 billion.

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Oregon winery started with leap of faith

By Kyle Odegard
Capital Press

RICKREALL, Ore. — Eola Hills Wine Cellars doesn't want to be Napa Valley and price bottles into the stratosphere.

From the very start 40 years ago, the winery has created value products that taste great.

"What's the difference between a $15 bottle of wine and a $150 bottle of wine? The price," quipped head winemaker Steve Anderson.

Quality, lower-priced bottles can sometimes confuse consumers, as Oregon's wine industry has promoted its premium position in the market.

"We wanted people to be able to afford our wines and enjoy them every day," said Tom Huggins, Eola Hills founder.

The low price means margins are great with Eola Hills for restaurants, which often are the first place consumers try new wines.

Restaurant relationships and private labels helped the winery survive.

Private labels were key early on when Eola Hills had far too much fruit.

"Most distributors were tied to California labels and weren't interested," Huggins said.

Eola Hills created wines for Crater Lake National Park, Timberline Lodge and other destinations.

The winery has also handled custom crush services.

When Eola Hills began, there were about 40 wineries in Oregon. There are now more than 1,000, according to the Oregon Vineyard and Winery Census.

RACING PRE, BUYING A WHEAT FIELD

Huggins grew up in Coos Bay, Ore., and ran track at Marshfield High School, regularly besting younger friend Steve Prefontaine.

He also competed at Oregon State University.

After graduating, Huggins worked as an agriculture insurance specialist, helping pioneering Oregon wineries.

He tagged along with farm real estate agents as they scouted a 35-acre wheat field near Salem in 1982.

Huggins made a down payment on the property that day and took a leap of faith.

He could only afford the mortgage, though.

With family and fraternity brothers, he raised funding and planted Pinot noir and Chardonnay, transforming the land into a vineyard.

Eola Hills secured its federal business permit Sept. 11, 1986 and began selling its initial vintage of 1,500 cases.

Today, the winery produces 20,000 cases from about 230 sustainably farmed acres in Oregon's Willamette Valley, mostly within the Eola-Amity Hills American Viticultural Area.

Eola Hills produces a wide variety of wines, including several dessert wines, Port-style offerings and traditional method sparkling.

The business is trying to host more experiences such as regular concerts to bring in more visitors, including younger wine enthusiasts.

The big event this fall was the winery's 40th anniversary celebration Sept. 25-27.

The party starts with live music by Hit Machine at the Eola Hills Legacy Estates Vineyards.

A Cellar Celebration open house with the release of two limited edition 40th anniversary wines was held Sept. 26 at the winery's Rickreall Tasting Room.

Sunday brunch was also held at the Rickreall Tasting Room.

For more information, go to https://eolahillswinery.com/40th-anniversary.



KYLE ODEGARD/CAPITAL PRESS

Steve Anderson, winemaker for Eola Hills Wine Cellars, shows off Pinot noir grapes at the winery's Legacy Estates Vineyards. The business is known for quality, inexpensive wine. "What's the difference between a $15 dollar bottle of wine and a $150 bottle of wine? The price," Anderson quipped.



KYLE ODEGARD/CAPITAL PRESS

Eola Hills Wine Cellars founder Tom Huggins and winemaker Steve Anderson are looking forward to many more years of success. The winery sold its first vintage in 1986 and a three-day 40th anniversary celebration is set for Sept. 25-27.

" Prices subject to change without notice, OAC

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Washington farmer tries companion cropping with peas, oats

By Matthew Weaver
Capital Press

Colton, Wash., farmer Kyle Schultheis has been raising peas with oats for the past few years.

The company ProGene Plant Research approached him, looking to raise a forage pea variety for seed.

When the pea matures, it falls flat to the ground.

"It makes it incredibly difficult to pick up," Schultheis said.

The company suggested combining the variety with oats to keep the peas standing and easier to harvest.

The first year, Schultheis seeded 30 acres of the peas next to 30 acres of the pea-oat combo.

"The peas, like they said, by themselves laid flat as a pancake and were incredibly difficult to pick up and harvest with the combine," he said. "The peas and oats together stayed standing and harvested really easily."

Each year, he plants 50 to 60 acres. Schultheis sends the peas and oats to ProGene as seeds for forage varieties. The company separates and cleans the seeds.



PHOTOS BY PALOUSE CONSERVATION DISTRICT/CONTRIBUTED

Colton, Wash., farmer Kyle Schultheis is raising a forage pea variety with oats for seed. The two crops are benefitting each other, but won't pencil out for farmers without a market for oats, Schultheis says.

OAT BENEFITS

During four years of experimenting, Schultheis learned that oats tend to choke out broadleaf weeds naturally.

"I'm a huge fan of the oats. The oats just have a tremendous ability to clean fields up," Schultheis said.

The oats cushion the peas going through the combine and augers, causing significantly fewer cracks and less damage.

The peas were 5% to 8% larger in the companion crop than by themselves.

"There's some sort of synergy between peas and oats," Schultheis said. "They work well, they play well together."

CAUTIONS

Despite his enthusiasm for the oats, Schultheis doesn't recommend the practice to farmers as a money-maker right now.

"We've run the economics on it, and if you're doing peas and oats together, the economics don't work," Schultheis said. "We don't have a local market for oats around here, and peas are not worth a lot of money. So it does not make sense on a commodity scale for others to do."



Colton, Wash., farmer Kyle Schultheis raises forage peas and oats together for seed. Companion cropping is not common in the area, says Palouse Conservation District research and monitoring coordinator Diana Salguero.

Cleaning costs, separating and binning the crops are also considerations.

Efforts to get insurance through the USDA Risk Management Agency have been unsuccessful.

"I'm not afraid to plant them without insurance," Schultheis said.

OTHER COMBOS

He has also tried combinations of oats and chickpeas, and oats and lentils on a small scale, using a dwarf oat variety, since regular oats might be too tall to go with a short legume.

"If we can cut out some herbicides that are extremely expensive and have been fairly ineffective, maybe we can utilize it there," Schultheis said.

Schultheis and a neighbor have played with a "peaola" combination: peas and canola. They bought a small rotary screen cleaner to screen one crop from the other. But that combination makes it tough to get rid of broadleaf weeds.

It's best to raise a legume with a grain, so one produces nitrogen. Schultheis's champion, oats, would be two nitrogen users in a combination with canola.

LESS THAN 1%

Companion cropping is not very common in the area, said Diana Salguero, research and monitoring coordinator for the Palouse Conservation District. She estimated less than 1% of farmers are doing it.

The district seeks grant funding to help farmers conduct on-farm trials and connects growers with experts, she said.

Farmers have to think about crop compatibility, seeding rations, equipment and available markets, the district said in a Facebook post about the practice.

It is gaining more traction for farmers trying to move away from herbicides, Schultheis said.

He estimates 5% of his total crop is companion cropping.

"We're still experimenting," he said.



Wheat Foods Council leader wants to bring joy to family dinner table

By Matthew Weaver
Capital Press



MATTHEW WEAVER/CAPITAL PRESS

New Wheat Foods Council executive director Sheri Glazier, a cattle rancher, beef farmer and registered dietician, met with Washington Grain Commission board members Sept. 15 in Spokane.

SPOKANE – The new executive director of the Wheat Foods Council, Sheri Glazier, wants to put joy back on the table.

"Our message to consumers is we have a safe, affordable, abundant food supply, and we want to bring the joy back to your table through those wheat foods," she said.

"Wheat foods are part of the plate. It brings a whole sense of joy to the whole thing, outside of the nutritional components and those benefits, including fiber. It's looking at that whole picture. We want consumers to be confident in those purchasing decisions they make when feeding their family."

Glazier joined the council Aug. 18. The farmer-led council focuses on increasing domestic wheat demand.

"Part of that is meeting the consumer where they are and elevating the product as it already stands," Glazier said.

"People love to meet farmers. They love to get to know them," she said. "To be able to connect that and elevate (farmer) voices, so we can actually pull down the veil of what's really going on on the farm and impact consumer confidence, that's what I'm most excited about."

CONNECTING NUTRITION AND AGRICULTURE

Glazier was born and raised on a wheat and stocker cattle farm in Oklahoma. She married into another fifth-generation farm family. She and her husband farm and ranch on 3,000 acres in Oklahoma, raising 250 cow-calf pairs, stocker cattle and hard red winter wheat.

"Beef and wheat are our areas of expertise," she said. "It's what I've known my whole life."

A registered dietician, she founded Dirt Road Dietitian, which offers nutrition advice to rural residents.

"It's always been a passion of mine to connect nutrition and agriculture together via storytelling," Glazier said.

When the council position came across her desk, she thought, "Well, this seems to be a story that's worth telling."

LEADING DOMESTIC COMMUNICATION

The goal is to be the leader on wheat foods communication domestically, through marketing and education, to gain back consumer confidence.

Glazier is traveling to states interested in working with the council, meeting growers and hearing their concerns and goals.

"We are a farmer voice, but we also have to figure out what consumers are demanding too," she said. "Bridging those two pieces will be impactful."

During her presentation Sept. 15 before the Washington Grain Commission, Glazier was asked to respond to Pacific Northwest farmers who wonder about funding the council's domestic efforts, since the majority of wheat produced in the region ships overseas.

"A rising tide raises all boats," Glazier responded. "In the world of agriculture, there's not enough of us to be divided. We all need each other.

"There's an opportunity for all of us to be unified in that messaging," she said. "Every state has their own ag story to tell. I want to bring people here to meet you guys and see what you guys are doing, too."

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Wheat growers: Farmers bear brunt of expired farm bill

By Matthew Weaver
Capital Press

The 2018 farm bill expired Sept. 30, and wheat growers aren't hopeful that there will be a replacement, long delayed, by the end of the year.

"I think it's 50-50," said Gil Crosby, Washington Association of Wheat Growers president and Spokane County farmer. "I don't think there's a lot of optimism it's going to get done … I would hope so, but I would say there's not a good chance."

Crosby hopes a new bill could be done in early 2027.

Without a new law or another extension, Washington wheat growers face renewed uncertainty around federal programs that support farm income, conservation, trade, research, and rural communities, WAWG stated in a press release.

Not every farm program ends immediately. Federal crop insurance is permanently authorized, and some commodity provisions continue by crop year. But authorities and funding for other programs can lapse or become more difficult to administer. The lack of a long-term bill also makes planning harder as growers contend with high fuel, fertilizer, labor and financing costs, and wheat prices below the cost of production, according to WAWG.

"The uncertainty of what's going to happen — we've been pushing this along for a long time," Crosby said. "We're not in a good shape in the state of Washington to begin with, as far as farm viability. All farmers across the United States need a farm bill. Every part of ag is not doing well."



MADDISON DAYTON/WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

Gil Crosby, center, Washington Association of Wheat Growers president, center, listens during a trade team visit to SLR Farms in Rosalia, Wash. Crosby says the Sept. 30 expiration of the 2018 farm bill increases uncertainty for growers already dealing with high fuel, fertilizer, labor and financing costs, and wheat prices below the cost of production.

Emergency aid is no substitute for the certainty of a modern farm bill, WAWG executive director Michelle Hennings stated in the press release.

"If we didn't have some of the bailouts we've had in the past few years, I know a lot of guys wouldn't be farming right now," Crosby said.

FOURTH YEAR IN A ROW

"For the fourth year in a row, Congress has failed to move on a farm bill in a timely manner," said Anthony Peña, National Association of Wheat Growers vice president of policy and communication.

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act in July 2025 covered about 80% of the farm bill's "big-ticket items," Peña estimated.

"What farmers need the most, at this time, they should be fine," he said.

A short-term extension has been discussed, but the One Big Beautiful Bill removed much of the urgency for lawmakers, Peña said.

He cited potential impacts on lending, credit and operating notes.

"It's the message this sends to markets, that the federal government still can't get their act together and farmers are going to have to take the brunt of it as they go back to their farms and look at their financial (status) as they come into the winter and another tax season."

OUTLOOK

Sen. John Boozman, R-Ark., chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, continues to negotiate directly with Democrats and the House.

The biggest sticking point continues to be SNAP cost-share, Peña said.

The legislation would delay the onset of state sharing of SNAP benefit costs by one year, beginning Oct. 1, 2028. Democrats want a two-year extension.

Mid-term elections in November will be "pivotal" in setting the agenda for the lame duck session afterward, Peña said.

"There is still potential for some sort of bipartisan deal to move during the lame duck, until Dec. 18, but a lot hinges on what the mid-term results look like," he said. "If Democrats have a really good night and take both chambers, there could certainly be calculations made from either party on what that looks like proceeding forward."

Democrats would likely want to craft their own farm bill if they have an incoming majority, Peña said.

"I guess we want to stay positive and say yeah, they're going to get something done," Washington's Crosby said. "We've been getting promised that for a while. But I think we're closer than we've been in a long time."

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It's the Pitts: Genetically unemployable

By Lee Pitts

I don't know how it is in your neck of the woods but in my stomping grounds it's getting downright impossible to find help on a cow ranch. The workforce these days seems to consist of loafers, losers, deadbeats and tramps.

I was talkin' to a good friend of mine and I said, "I read there are seven million men between the ages of 25 to 54 who are no longer participating in the labor force. This "flight from work" is a growing problem in America because these slackers are not engaged in civil society, not helping out around the house, or the tent, as the case may be."

"You're telling me!" said my friend. "I've been advertising for a hired hand for six months. The first guy who answered my ad shows up in a ripped and faded pair of jeans that must have had a previous owner because there's no



Pitts

way this guy wore them out. He was looking for work and hoping he didn't find any. I swear, this guy was so lazy he had hair on the palms of his hands."

That's never a good sign," I said. "How long did he last?"

"He never even started. Before I could interview him he asked: 'Do you allow flexible working hours? How many weeks of paid vacation do I get? Would I get time and a half for anything over a four day week?"

"I told him that I'd pay him what he was worth but he said he wouldn't work for that."

"The next guy showed up for his first day of work with a giant hangover. It turned out he was an alcoholic... not to be confused with a workaholic. The only thing he did fast was get tired. Every time I turned around he was either smokin' or talkin' on his phone. To top it off, after I hired him I learned that he was out on bail and had his driver's license revoked. He said he really missed driving and insisted on driving the feed truck leaving me to do all the hard work. He was what I call a 'heel squatter', always on his haunches pondering the mysteries of the universe. Needless to say, he never won Employee of the Month."

"How long did he last?" I asked.

"Three days. On the fourth day he just didn't show up. That's how they quit these days. But he sent his pregnant girlfriend around to collect his wages."

"The third guy was a total disaster. He was a wannabe cowboy who showed up wearing a brand new cowboy hat, boots, Wranglers, a new shirt with pearl snaps and a new pair of deerskin gloves. I hired him even though I'd always had a rule to never hiring anybody who wears gloves. I immediately put him to work helping me clean out spring boxes, laying water pipe, fixing fences and feeding cows but he was worthless and had no basic skills like knowing how to operate a hammer or a shovel. I asked him to help me pull a calf and he was so grossed by the experience he had to take a sick day to recoup from PTSD. The entire time he worked for me he kept asking, 'I thought you advertised for a cowboy. When do we start riding horses and shootin' varmints?"

"I knew better than to leave him alone hammering up new boards on the corral but I had to go to home for just a few minutes to get the trailer to haul some old cows to town. But when I got back I found him flat on his back, out cold in the middle of the corral. An angry cow eyed me anxiously as I threw some water from a trough on my 'cowboy' to wake him up. The first thing he said was, I hope you offer full medical and dental coverage cause I'm gonna need it."

"What happened?" my friend asked his employee.

"Well, I've always wanted to rodeo," said the wannabe cowboy, "and the opportunity to ride that cow presented itself. It's a lot harder than it looks."

"So I took him to the Emergency Ward and they said he'd had a concussion and just to be safe they wanted to do a brain scan."

"Well, good luck finding one," my buddy said disgustedly.



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JD 6155R, 5600 hrs, 155 hp, front 3 pt, $98,000



Case IH 9250, 10,400 hrs, no pto.....$25,000



2012 JD 8360R, duals, 5 valve, pto, 3 pt, 7600 hrs.....$135,000



2012 MF 8670 4×4, 3900 hrs, pto, rear mounted 1500 gal tank front mounted 120′ boom, Weed-It system on middle 80′, outer wings are removable, auto boom height control, nice set-up.....$160,000



2013 JD 9560T, 5396 hrs, pto. ...$150,000



JD 9420T, 3762 hrs, 8345 hrs, pto, Greenstar 3000 guidance $60,000



CAT Challenger 75, PTO, 12,323 hrs. Less than a 1000 hrs on new tracks, rebuilt engine, & new undercarriage. Extra parts. Located 15 miles South of Sun Valley, ID. $60,000



Case IH 7110, MFWD, good shape, new tires, 3 pt, pto, 4821 hrs.....$60,000



Case IH MX270, 4×4, duals, 7500 hrs, new rear tires.....$35,000



Case IH 8950, 4×4.....$30,000



Challenger MT525B, 125 hp $30,000

HAY EQUIPMENT



NEW HOLLAND BC5080 SMALL BALER, good shape $20,000



Circle C Golden Eagle, 18-wheel rake.....$6,000



2008 Stinger 8500 12-bale stacker, 36,000 miles, 1077 hrs, 121,800 total bales..... $165,000

TILLAGE



2023 35′ GREAT PLAINS 3500TM TURBO MAX VERTICAL TILLAGER, has implement command, approximately 8,000 acres on machine, good shape $100,000



32′ BOURGAULT 9400, 12″ SPACING $20,000



JD HZ 16s, Stoess hitch, Barnes bearings, packer wheels, good points, good shape $6,000



2015 VOLVO D13 500 HP, auto trans, 804,500 miles $15,000

SPRAYERS



2012 JD 4940, 120′ booms, 1200 gal tank, 4341 hrs, 2 sets of tires, dry spreader box $100,000



BESTWAY PRO-400 3 PT SPRAYER, 400 gal, 60′ boom, JD 2000 rate controller $15,000



2014 JD R4038 SELF-PROPELLED SPRAYER, 120′ booms, 1000 gal ss tank. 4219 hrs $125,000

TRANSPORTATION



1991 IH SERVICE TRUCK, 21,781 miles, L10, 9 sp trans...$17,000



2008 FORD F550, Crew Cab, leather, 6.4L Diesel, 4×4, duals, 89,000 miles, flatbed with boxes and trailer ball hitch, good tires and aluminum wheels. .....$19,000 OBO



2005 Sterling, tandem axle, 20 bed, 3000 gal poly tank, 375 CAT, 10 .sp $38,500



1994 Volvo CAT 3406E, 13 sp, 1.2 mil miles, wet kit.....$15,000



2008 FORD F450 Powerstroke double winch pump truck $37,000



2004 IH WATER TRUCK, 4200 gal stainless steel tank, auto trans, Cummins N14, 370 hp, approximately 635,000 miles $45,000



1986 Peterbilt Big Cam 400, 15 sp, heavy-duty rear ends, biscuit suspension $18,000

MISC



GENIE GS-3369RT SCISSOR LIFT, 1800 hrs, excellent condition. Platform Height: 33′ Working Height: 39′ Lift Capacity: 1000#.....$27,500



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HARVEST



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JD T670, RAHCO LEVELER, w/JD 625R header, used for alfalfa seed harvesting $98,500



2016 JD S690, Hillco hillside, 2980 eng hrs, 2029 sep hrs, well maintained, great shape $255,000



JD 635F HEADER ON STOESS CART.....$20,000



2012 JOHN DEERE S670 WITH JD 630R HEADER, 3,785 engine hours and 2,804 separator hours.PRWD, straw chopper, tires in good condition, Pre Def machine, Big Top bin extension, stoess header cart $99,000

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'20 JD 9520RX, 3511 Hrs, 36" Tracks, PTO, High Flow Hydraulics, 5 Valves, Premium Cab, Premium Lighting w/Front and Rear HID Lights, AutoTrac Ready w/4600 Processor, AutoTrac Premium Activation..... $379,000



'19 CASEIH 580Q, 5130 Hours, PowerShift, Deluxe Cab, LED Cab Roof Work Light Package, Guidance Ready, Te SOLD Engine Compression Brake, True Ground Speed Sensor, High Capacity Draw Bar, High Capacity Hydraulic Pump, 6 Electric Remotes, 36" CAMSO, 650 AG Tracks, Front Bumper Weights $234,900

'18 CASEIH 580Q, 4398 Hours, PowerShift, Deluxe Cab, LED Cab Roof Work Light Package, Telematics, True Ground Speed Sensor, High-Capacity Draw Bar, High-Capacity Hydraulic Pump, 6 Electric Remotes, Drive Wheel Scrapers, 36" CAMSO Tracks, Front Bumper Weights $224,900

"19 CASEIH 580Q, 3897 Hrs, 36" Tracks, 6 Electric Remotes, Powershift Trans, Lux Performance Cab, Nav 3 w/372 Receiver, Telematics, Cold Weather Pkg, Diff Lock $305,900

4WD 150 HP & OVER

'22 CASEIH 500W, 1352 Hours, Luxury Cab, Power Drive, Engine Brake, True Ground Speed Radar, AFS Pro 1200, High Capacity Hydraulic Pump, Performance Lighting, LED Cab Roof Work Lights..... $379,900 SOLD

'23 CASEIH STEIGER 470 AFS CONNECT, 981 hrs Luxury Performance Cab, Engine Brake, True Ground Speed Radar, RH Armrest, AFS Pro 1200, High-Capacity Pump, Performance Lighting, 710/70R42 R1 Duals, Wheel Weights, Ballast Package, Rear Weight Support, Tow Cable ..... $358,000 SOLD

'12 CASEIH 450W, 4654 Hrs, Luxury Cab, 16 Speed PowerShift, 1000 RPM PTO, High Capacity Hydro Pump, 4 Hydraulic Remotes, 710/70R38 Tires, Wheel Weights..... $199,900

'08 JD 9430, 6250 Hrs, 710/70R42 Tires, Hyd Flow 44 GPM, 4 Hyd Outlets, AutoTrac Ready, 1000 PTO, 3PT..... $149,900

09 CHALLENGER MT655C, 3600 Hrs, 1000 PTO, 3PT, 3 Hyd Outlets, AutoTrac Ready, PowerShift, Front Weights, Tires at 90%, Emissions Elected, Cons $120,000

'11 NH T8.360, 6150 Hrs, 4WD, Duals, Front Weights, Deluxe Cab, Consigned $115,000

'97 JD 9400, 7200 Hrs, 710/70R38 Tires, 4 Hydraulic Remotes..... $62,500

UNDER 150-HP

'22 CASEIH PUMA 150, 668 HRS, Mechanical Cab Suspension, 2 Tele/Heat/Rem Adjustable Mirrors, ISOBUS Class 3 Speed Control, 3 Electronic Rear Remotes..... $164,900 SOLD

'23 CASEIH 75C, 134 Hours, Loader, 3PT, PTO, Shuttle Shift, Cab, 6' Woods Mower, 6' Landpride Rear Blade, Front Pallet Forks, Bucket, Skid Shoes, Premier PPP, 2 Op Manuals, 2 Implement Stands, Hydraulic Link, 3PT Quick Hitch, Consigned..... $64,900

'17 NH BOOMER 24 107 Hrs, 24HP, ROPS, 23x.850 R4 Fronts, 8.3 R4 Rears..... $14,900 SOLD

DRILLS

'15 CASEIH FH700, 60'x12", High Flotation, 550LB Trips, 5.5" Rubber Press Wheels, Air TBT, Double Shoot $145,000

'12 CASEIH PH800, 12" Centers, 5" Pneumatic Packer Wheels, Precision Opener, Mud Scrapers, Bourgault Opener & Points, Consigned..... $35,000

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

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JD 1890, 60', 7.5" Spacing, Blockage Monitor $91,000

'12 CASEIH PH 800, 50', 12" Centers, 5" Pneumatic Packer Wheels, Precision Opener Mud Scrapers, Bourgault Opener & Points, Cons $35,000

'08 JD 455, 35' Box Drills, 7.5" Spacing, 2.13 Press Wheels, 12.5" Discs, Clean Boxes, No Rust, Good Lids..... $33,900

'20 CASEIH 3555, TBT Air Cart, 555 Bushels, High Flotation-Hydraulic Control, Dlx Auger Screen, 650/75R38 High Float Duals, 8 Run Double Shoot, Light Bar, Bulk Tank Work Lights, Sectional Command, Rear Ladder with Folding Steps, Rear Hitch, Tank Fill Indicator, Tillage Mounted Work Switch $174,900

'12 CASEIH PH800/3430, 50' Precision Hoe 800, Double Shoot Loup Elite Blockage Monitor and Seed/Fertilizer Counter On All Runs, 3 Bin Aircart, 142 BU, 102 BU, 186 BU, Set up for Dry Fertilizer, New Red-E Stainless in Bin Housing, New Housing in Front Bin, Tubing Manifold Powder Coated, Extra Fine, Fine, Course, and Extra Course Seed Rolls, Consigned..... $75,000

'24 GREAT PLAINS BD7600, 26', 7.5" Spacing, Narrow Inside Scraper Kit, Heavy Wheel/Tire Bundle, Split Boxes, Hyd Drive, Single Hitch Strap Large, Box Light Kit, Box Divider Insert, Cab Kit, ISOBUS, Harness, Single Marker Kit, Calibration Tray!!NEW!!..... $109,900

BALERS

'23 NH RB450, Silage Special, 1.8m, 4x5, Dlx Wrap, Net and Twine, 540 RPM w/Cut-out Clutch, Endless Belt, 4.80/4.0 Dual Wheels, 5 Bar Pick-up Reel, Incab Density System, Bale Ramp, Clevis Hitch, Std Tailgate, Wind Guard..... $44,900

'03 NH 580, 16x18 Bale, Hydraulic Pick-up, Bale Extension, ¼ Turn Chute, Newer Knotters, Consigned $13,900

'13 NH BC5080, 16x18 Chute, Hydraulic Swing, Hydraulic Pickup, Light Kit, Bale Extention $16,900

TELEHANDLERS

'16 JCB 525-60, 4691 Hrs, 5000LB Lift Capacity, Quick Attach Forks, Airless Tires, New Paint $34,900

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, 177" 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

'21 CASE CX37C, 703 Hrs, Enclosed Cab, 2 Speed, 2 Way Auxiliary Joystick, 4-Way Angle Dozer Blade, 3 Buckets, Rubber Tracks $43,500

PLOWS

IH 800, 10-bottom plow, walking beam in center, good moldboards, good landsides and pads $5,600

(2) IH 770, 5 Bottom, Auto Reset, Good Tires, New Mold Boards Included, Consigned ..... $1,495 EA

!!!HEADERS!!!

'16 MacDon FD75-40' $55,900

'13 MacDon FD75-40 ..... $50,900

'15 MacDon FD75-45 ..... $64,900

'09 CASEIH 2162 40' Header, Level Land, Slow Speed Transport..... $29,900

'14 MacDon FD75 40' $47,900

'13 MacDon PW7 16' Pickup $17,900

HAY

TWINSTAR RA-2030, V-Rake, Twin Baskets, 5 Function, Guage Wheels, Control Box $17,500

'25 SITREX RP3, 3 Wheel Windrow Turner !!NEW!! $1,530

'06 NH HW365, '20 416 Discbine Header, 3370 Tractor Hrs, 800 Header Hrs $42,900

'17 HAYBUSTER 2660, Bale Buster, 14x17.5 Tires, 18" Belt $22,900

CHISELS

'16 CIH ET857, 22' 11 Shank, Sring Reset, Rear Disk Leveler... $69,900

HARROWS

RANKIN 5'x4' Blanket Harrow..... $435

SPRAYERS/APPLICATORS

'24 JD 616R, 574 Hrs, Signature Edition, 1600 Gal Tank, 120' Boom, Exact Apply, Command Drive, Boom Trac Pro 2, 15" Nozzle Spacing, Integrated Star Fire 7500 Receiver, G5 Plus Command Center Display, LSW 800/55R46 Floats, Row Crop 420/95R50 Tires and Matching Fenders Included $569,000

'23 CASEIH 4450, 1362 Hrs, 390 HP, 135', 7 Section, 20" Spacing, AIM Command, Lux Cab, 3" Front Fill, Nozzle Shut-Off, Boom Shut-Off, Boom Flush Valve, Flex II, 2 Additional Auto-Boom Sensors, 3 Cameras, Chemical Eductor $465,900

20 JD R4045, 120' Carbon Fiber Booms, Dual Monitor Display, Starfire 6000 Receiver, G4 OS, 120 Gal Tank, Front Load Valve, Stainless Induction, Air Suspension, 620/70R46 Tires, 20" Nozzle Spacing, Backup Camera, LED Light Pkg, Fenders, Premium Command View, Autotrac Guidance, Rowsense, Section Control, Exact Apply Nozzle Control System $284,900

'20 CASEIH 4440, 2980 Hrs, 125' Boom, 20" Spacing, AIM Command Fles, 650/65R38 Alliance 550 T 700 Monitor, 372 Receiver, Nav II Controller, Auto-Boom H Fence Row Nozzles, Lux Cab w/ Leather, Active Suspension, 3" Front Fill, Boom Flush Valve, Chemical Eductor Pkg, 3 Cameras ..... $272,900 SOLD

'08 CASEIH SPX4420, 6013 Hrs, 100', 6 Section, 1200 Gallon Tank, AIM Command, 5 Turret Nozzles, Front and Side Fill, 650-65 R38 Tires, AutoBoom, Fenders, Active Hyd Susp, Guidance Viper 4 (Ravin) Air Compressor, Extra Set of Tires and Wheels, Cons $85,000

JD 4940, 3892 Hrs, 120' Booms, 1200 Gallon Tank, GS3 Display, Starfire ITC Receiver, Boom Trac Pro, 11 Sections, Air Suspension $84,900

SUMMERS SPRAYER, 1500 Gallon Tank, 200 Gallon Rinse Tank, 120' Boom, Wingout and Boom Controller $21,900

SCHABAU SF.8500, 90' Boom, 1500 Gallon Tank, 100 Gallon Rinse Tank, Tripple Nozzle, 5 Section Control, 380/90R46 Tires, AutoBoom Height $14,900

'23 CASEIH PATRIOT 4450, 2800 Hrs, 120' Carbon Fiber Boons, Dual Monitor Display, StarFire 6000 Receiver, Gen 4 O.S., 1200 Gal Tank, Front Load Valve, Stainless Induction, Air Suspension, 620/70R46 tires, 20" Nozzle Spacing, Backup Camera, LED Light Pkg, Fenders, Premium Command View, AutoTrac Guidance, RowSense Section Control, Exact Apply Nozzle Control System.....**Call NP**

HILLSIDE COMBINES

'25 CASEIH 9260, Harvest Command Automation w/Camera, Power+ CVT Drive, Yield Monitor, Leather Seat, Pro1200 Large Color Touch Screen, Independent Cross Auger Control ..... SOLD

253 Sep Hrs $729,500

353 Sep Hrs $714,500

'25 CASEIH 8260, 249 Sep Hrs, Hillco Leveler, Harvest Command Automation w/Camera, Drive, Yield Monitor, Lux Cab w/Leather Seat, Pro 1200 Large Color Touch Screen, Telematics, Ext Wear Rotor w/Spikes, 50' Unloading Auger ..... $708,500 SOLD

(2) '24 CASEIH 8250, Harvest Command Automation w/Camera, In-Cab Adj Cage Vane Control, Luxury Cab, Auto-Guidance Nav Controller, LED Light Pkg, Block Heather, Upper Cross Auger Control, GPS Antenna/Receiver, Diff Lock, Grain Tank Cover..... $674,000

'23 CASEIH 8250, Luxury Cab w/Leather Seat, Harvest Command, w/Camera, Power+ CVT Drive, Yield Monitor, Pro 700 Nav Controller 737 Hrs $591,500

'23 CASEIH 9250, 497 Sep Hrs, Harvest Command Automation w/Camera, PowerPlus CVT Drive w/Feedrate, Auto Cleaning Fan, In-Cab Adj Cage Vane Control, In-Cab Adj Pre Sieve, Luxury Cab, Pro 700 Large Color Touch Screen, AutoGuidance Nave Controller, LED Light Pkg, Distance Lights, Cross Auger Control..... $579,900

'21 CASEIH 8250, 1209 Sep Hrs, Hillside, Lux Cab, AutoGuidance, Yield Monitor, HVSTC w/Camera, PowerPlus CVT Drive w/Feedrate, 40' Auger w/Pivoting Spout, Upper Cross Auger Control, Large Color Touch Screen, Diff Lock, 650/65R38 Duals..... $524,900

'05 CASEIH 8010, 3554 Engine Hours, 4WD, Leveler, '12 CIH 3020 35' Header Included, Cons $70,000

'06 JD 9760STS, 3704 Sep Hrs, 635F Flex Header, 914 Pick-up Header, 2970S Hillco Sidehill Leveling System, Beaterless Feederhouse Transition, Cons..... $55,000

'04 JD 9760STS, 3607 Sep Hours, 635F Flex Header 914 Pick-up Header, 2970S Hillco Sidehill Leveling System, Beaterless Feeder House Transition, Cons..... $55,000



LEVEL LAND

'08 CASEIH 2588, Level Land, 2598 Sep Hrs, 2WD, 520/85R42 Duals, Chopper..... $49,900

'17 CASEIH 8240, 1484 Sep Hrs, Level Land, Duals, 4WD, Chopper, Guidance, Folding Auger..... $159,900

'13 8230, 2261 Hrs, Header Tilt, Cross Auger Control, Fine Cut Chopper, HID Lights, Diff Lock, AFS Auto Steer, 520 Front Duals, 750/85R42 Rear $115,900

SNOWBLOWERS

'KUBOTA B2782, 63, Snowblower, Front Mount, Cons..... $3,500

'09 WOODMAX SB-60, 60, Snowblower, Cons..... $3,000

Father and son team at Idaho Dairymen's Association witnesses to industry grow

By Brad Carlson
Capital Press

TWIN FALLS, Idaho — By now, nearly 25 years into working for the Idaho Dairymen's Association, Bob Naerebout and his son, Rick Naerebout, know what to expect from one another.

Bob, 74, is the recently retired government affairs director now focused on special projects. Rick, 47, has been CEO since 2017.

"We do complement each other," Bob said. "Rick has strong points I don't have, and I have strong points that Rick doesn't have."

The Naerebouts started at IDA in November 2002 — Bob as executive director and Rick as a management assistant. They have approached their work as problem solvers and learners — fortunate, since the industry grew. Idaho has more than twice as many dairy cows as it had in 2002, Rick said.

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service in August estimated the Idaho milk cow population at 735,000, up from 723,000 a year earlier. Idaho ranks third among the states. The top five are California, Wisconsin, Idaho, Texas and New York.



BRAD CARLSON/CAPITAL PRESS

Idaho Dairymen's Association CEO Rick Naerebout, left, and projects specialist Bob Naerebout outside IDA's headquarters in Twin Falls.

"Rick has a calmer spirit than I had," Bob said of his son. "Rick just has the ability to listen to people, absorb, and refrain from giving a response right away."

Rick enjoys team building and staff management.

"We've always had a strong staff that excels at what they do," he said.

As for Bob, "his best attribute, and what he's most known for especially in the (state) Capitol building, is his authenticity," Rick said.

"You have to respect every legislator in the Capitol building whether you're in agreement with them or not," Bob said. "What I say to you, I'd better be willing to say to anybody else in the building."

He got a head start as a kid in Michigan, where his dad managed labor relations at a large factory. The two went over written grievances at home, with father asking son how he would handle the issue.

Bob earned a bachelor's degree in dairy science at Michigan State University in 1975. He worked on dairies for a few years, and then for about 2 1/2 years managed MSU's Dairy Research and Teaching Center.

In the spring of 1981, he and his wife, Doris, bought a dairy near McBain, Mich. Their family operated the dairy — on which Rick grew up — for about 20 years.

The family moved to Salt Lake City, where Bob worked for Dairy Farmers of America. The cooperative, for which he worked for about three years, transferred him to Idaho in late 2001.



Ohlensehlen

Bob and Doris have six adult children — three biological and three adopted. Rick is the youngest of the biological children.

"Rick is probably the only sibling who could work with his father," Bob said.

Rick said his own job is a good fit for him.

"I'm passionate about the dairy industry, and I want to see

See **DUO**, 3B

DUO

Continued from 2B

Idaho's dairy industry succeed," he said.

IDAHO INDUSTRY GROWTH

Idaho's early growth in the dairy industry largely was a result of California producers pressured by urban growth looking for another location, said Bob Ohlensehlen, a retired University of Idaho Extension livestock and farm management educator in the south-central region.

"What they found in Idaho was inexpensive land initially, feed availability and — the other thing that probably was initially a plus — the lack of urbanization," he said. "We still had some open spaces where people could build. That went away relatively quickly."

Southwest counties Ada and Canyon — which once had a significant number of dairies — did not have the industry growth seen in the south-central region. Land was more expensive in the more populated southwest, and agricultural producers had a wider selection of crops to choose from, Ohlensehlen said.

In the south-central region, the industry's initial growth — driven by dairies relocating from California — was followed by internal growth, he said. This second phase included new or expanded facilities and additional animals. In a third growth phase, next-generation operators expanded, improved and innovated. "And we might consider we are still in phase three," Ohlensehlen said.



BRAD CARLSON/CAPITAL PRESS

The Idaho Dairymen's Association office is in Twin Falls, as is the Idaho Dairy Herd Improvement Association.

"As the dairy industry grew in the area, we ended up with not only more animals, but also new needs as to facilities, waste management, etc.," he said. After his UI career, he moved into consulting focused on livestock and farm management, concentrated animal feeding operations and nutrient management.

Idaho regulations "are not extremely oppressive, but are getting more difficult to meet as time goes on," he said. From nutrient management to facility configuration and siting, "it's harder to do all this as herds get bigger."

As for the Idaho Dairymen's Association, "I don't think it has changed much since we started," Bob Naerebout said. "The focus has always been to do what's best for producers, and it has been producer controlled."

"I will say the image of the industry is vastly improved" since 2002, Rick Naerebout said. "There was a lot of community frustration around the growth of the industry and the interaction between newly arrived dairy farms and some of the communities they moved into.

"There was a lot of conflict," he said. "You went from having dairies that were a few hundred cows to a few thousand cows, and that was at times jarring for the community."

And the industry "didn't always put our best foot forward," Rick said. "We've gotten better in that regard."

FUNDED RESEARCH

IDA-funded research has included university and USDA studies of the industry's environmental impacts to air and water quality. The association has provided substantial funding to UI's dairy-focused Center for Food, Agriculture and the Environment near Rupert.



BILL SCHAEFER/UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO

Calves at Sunview Dairy near Mountain Home, Idaho, in August.

Separately, an ongoing study with USDA's Agricultural Research Service and UI near Kimberly looks at the impacts of applying manure at different rates.

Through funding environmental research, IDA aims to understand the potential impacts of the industry and to mitigate as needed.

"It has all been proactive," Bob Naerebout said.

IDA provides on-farm technical support, offering nutrient management planning and environmental consulting.

CORE MISSION

"In short, we advocate for Idaho's dairy farm families," Rick said. "Most visibly, we do policy work at the state and federal level."

The approximately 350-member IDA is "doing really quite well," he said. "We have a very active board."

"We can't do anything without a board of dairy producers saying, 'This is the direction we want to go,'" Bob Naerebout said.

"Quite clearly, we have become a voice for immigration reform," he said.

The federal guest worker program is seasonal. Dairy is a year-round industry.

"We've always been very vocal about the need for immigration reform and have tried to make people aware that without a foreign-born workforce, the United States can't feed itself," Rick said.

Jamie Neill joined the association as government affairs director last October ahead of Bob Naerebout's retirement April 1. Neill previously worked as Gov. Brad Little's policy director and as Idaho Medical Association government affairs director. He worked in Washington, D.C., for Rep. Mike Simpson, R-Idaho, and for Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash.

IDA also is represented by Boise attorney David Claiborne and D.C.-based lobbyist Charlie Garrison.

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Dry farming research aims to stay ahead of water shortages

By Mateusz Perkowski
Capital Press

Depriving crops of summertime irrigation is sometimes an unfortunate necessity during Western droughts.

But in some cases, farmers and researchers are withholding water by design — and still achieving successful harvests.

For over a decade, Oregon State University has been exploring the practice of "dry farming," which involves purposely avoiding irrigation during the dry season, relying instead on moisture stored in the soil.

The research is partly meant to anticipate a future in which water shortages will become more common, potentially eliminating the option to irrigate for many farmers.

"A lot of us who do this work feel our hand will be forced, so we're trying to get ahead of that," said Teagan Moran, small farms coordinator with OSU Extension Service.



MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI/CAPITAL PRESS

Lucas Nebert, statewide Extension specialist for organic seed and planting stock at Oregon State University, left, discusses the performance of cucurbit crops using dry farming practices. Cucurbits, including zucchini and melons, tend to develop deep root systems that are conducive to farming without irrigation.



MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI/CAPITAL PRESS

Matt Davis, a senior faculty research assistant at Oregon State University, discusses the attributes of dry farmed tomatoes. Dry farming involves purposely relying on naturally stored soil moisture instead of irrigation to produce crops.

HOW IT WORKS

The definition of dry farming is subject to interpretation — among "purists," the crops are never irrigated, while others allow for early-season irrigation to ensure establishment, she said.

However, OSU's research is expected to help farmers even if they don't adopt dry farming practices, by allowing them to use water more effectively.

"It's part of a larger continuum of water resilience work," Moran said. "Can we dial in our irrigation scheduling and precision, so there's no water waste?"

With the use of soil moisture sensors, researchers are measuring exactly how much water crops actually need, which is showing that farmers may be able to reduce irrigation more than they realized.

"A lot of people irrigate based on observation or historical patterns of irrigation," she said. "What a lot of people are finding is they are over-irrigating."

Dry farming generally requires growers to adopt a different approach to cultivation,

See **DRY**, 5B

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DRY

Continued from 4B

effectively training their crops to thrive without supplementing their water intake beyond what's provided by the weather.

For example, farmers can't expect to simply stop irrigating tomatoes that have been spoiled with abundant water throughout their early life, said Lucas Nebert, OSU's statewide Extension specialist for organic seed and planting stock.

"They will die," he said.

Crops with plentiful early access to irrigation are essentially taught to develop their roots closer to the surface, to capture the most of that water.

In dry farming, plants are incentivized to "invest" in sending their roots further into the ground, where water is more likely to remain available even as the soil surface dries up, Nebert said.

"You're trying to take advantage of the soils as much as you can. Every inch you get down, you get more moisture the deeper you go," he said. "The deeper you get, the more access to water you have."

Of course, not all fields are created equal: Sandy soils won't hold as much water, while heavy clays "bind" water too tightly for it to be easily absorbed, he said.

"If your site is good, you get a lot of wiggle room," Nebert said.



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Participants at a recent Oregon State University field day on dry farming examine tomatoes grown with the method, which involves relying on naturally stored soil moisture instead of supplemental irrigation. The system is helping Oregon State University examine how farmers can use irrigation more effectively during water shortages.



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LAB CONDITIONS

The field laboratory near Corvallis, Ore., where OSU conducts dry farming research, appears highly compatible with such practices due to its "Chehalis" silty clay loam soil, said Matt Davis, a senior faculty research assistant at OSU.

"You want lots of residual moisture-holding capacity, and that's what this soil provides," he said.

Plant selection is also crucial, as some crop types — such as squash, zucchini and melons — are naturally adept at "rooting deep," Nebert said. Broccoli, on the other hand, tends to focus on producing "florets" rather than deeper roots, causing it to dry up more rapidly.

Certain cultivars within plant species are also better adapted to dry farming systems, particularly if they've been bred in regions where such practices are more common.

"A lot of these crops are native to other parts of the world and were traditionally dry farmed," Nebert said.

Part of OSU's research into dry farming aims to identify varieties that are suited to the system, such as tomatoes that have been interbred with wild South American species.

Some problems associated with a lack of water, such as blossom end rot, are more likely to arise in tomatoes with certain shapes, for instance.

"If the fruit is elongated, it tends to be more prone to blossom end rot," said Jim Myers, an OSU vegetable plant breeder.

But dry farming doesn't necessarily mean foregoing valuable cultivars, at least for crops that can be grafted.

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See **DRY**, 6B

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DRY

Continued from 5B

of tomatoes onto rootstocks that are conducive to dry farming, OSU researchers were able to significantly improve the crop's performance.

The technique resulted in a 70% reduction in blossom end rot, with the biggest effect seen among susceptible cultivars, as well as an overall boost in production, Davis said.

"Last year, we saw a doubling of the yield," he said.

Nebert said he's not convinced that spacing plants more distantly to reduce competition is as beneficial to dry farmed crops as is often assumed.

Fewer plants in a field necessarily equates to lower yields, while spacing them more densely will generate smaller fruits but still keep production adequate — simply because there's more of them, he said.

In general, growers should anticipate a different growth structure among dry farmed crops, since they must adjust to the lack of supplemental water, Nebert said.

"The plants look different than when they're irrigated," he said. "They're more squat. Their leaves are smaller."



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Organic matter can be incorporated into the soil to enhance its water-holding capacity, but it's also not without potential drawbacks.

Raising the amount of organic matter to a high level can also increase soil fertility to the point that tomatoes suffer from more blossom end rot, for example.

Nutrients cause a crop to grow more "luxuriously" in the early season, but that can lead to plant stress later in the season when water is scarce, contributing to the problem, Davis said.

Farmers can strike a balance in using organic matter, however, and manipulate soil fertility depending on the desired outcome, he said.

Elevating plant stress can make for sweeter, more flavorful fruit, so long as the farmer adjusts for the site's soil type and the crop's rooting depth, Davis said.

Similarly, OSU researchers found that growing tomatoes beneath solar panels in an "agrivoltaic" system allowed them to grow larger, due to the protection offered by shade, but the fruits were "oftentimes not as sweet," he said.

A major benefit of dry farming is the production of crops with higher sugar levels and more concentrated flavors, likely because an abundance of water has dilutive properties, researchers said.

If farmers are able to find niche markets and obtain a price premium for dry farmed crops, it can more than compensate for lower yields in terms of profit, Davis said.

"You want that fruit to blow people's minds, so they're willing to pay a little more," he said.

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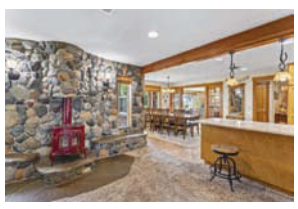
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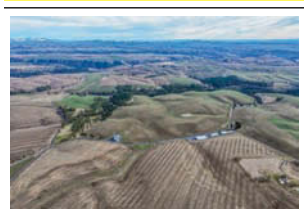
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Retired Idaho professor earns high honor from international horticulture society

By Brad Carlson
Capital Press

Esmaeil Fallahi, a retired University of Idaho professor of pomology and viticulture, received the prestigious International Society for Horticultural Science Fellow Award.

The society presented the award to Fallahi before an audience of more than 2,600 scientists Aug. 26 during the society's 32nd International Horticultural Congress in Kyoto, Japan.

The society's council, whose delegates represent countries and regions, presents the Fellow Award in recognition of the recipient's outstanding contribution to horticultural science worldwide, according to ishs.org. The number of living ISHS Fellows does not exceed 1% of the membership averaged over five years.

Society membership includes more than 70,000 individuals, as well as country and regional members and memberships held by universities, government agencies, institutions, libraries and companies.

Eight countries nominated Fallahi, and all 78 ISHS member countries approved. Nominating countries were the U.S., Israel, China, Australia, Russia, Italy, Germany and France.

He directed UI's fruit research program for more than 33 years following nearly five years leading the fruit research program at the University of Arizona. He retired three years ago.

With UI, where he was based at the Parma Research and Extension Center in the state's southwest, his achievements included pioneering high-efficiency irrigation systems, identifying top-performing rootstocks and cultivars, advancing the science of growth regulators and introducing new fruit crops to the region.

"Fruit growers across Idaho and the United States have expressed immense pride in seeing one of their own receive this distinguished global recognition," Fallahi said in a statement. His wife, Bahar Fallahi, worked in the UI pomology and viticulture program for 30 years.

Esmaeil Fallahi said in an interview that his first goal as a UI professor and state employee was to address Treasure Valley growers' needs. He worked at UI's experimental orchards and vineyards and at growers' sites.

"Water was extremely important, as well as the introduction of alternative fruit," he said.

The Idaho research Fallahi conducted or spearheaded gained prominence nationally and internationally. Over the years, he partnered with other researchers on projects that were funded by sizable grants and involved UI and other universities.



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF HORTICULTURAL SCIENCE/CONTRIBUTED
Retired University of Idaho professor Esmaeil Fallahi received the International Society for Horticultural Science Fellow Award.

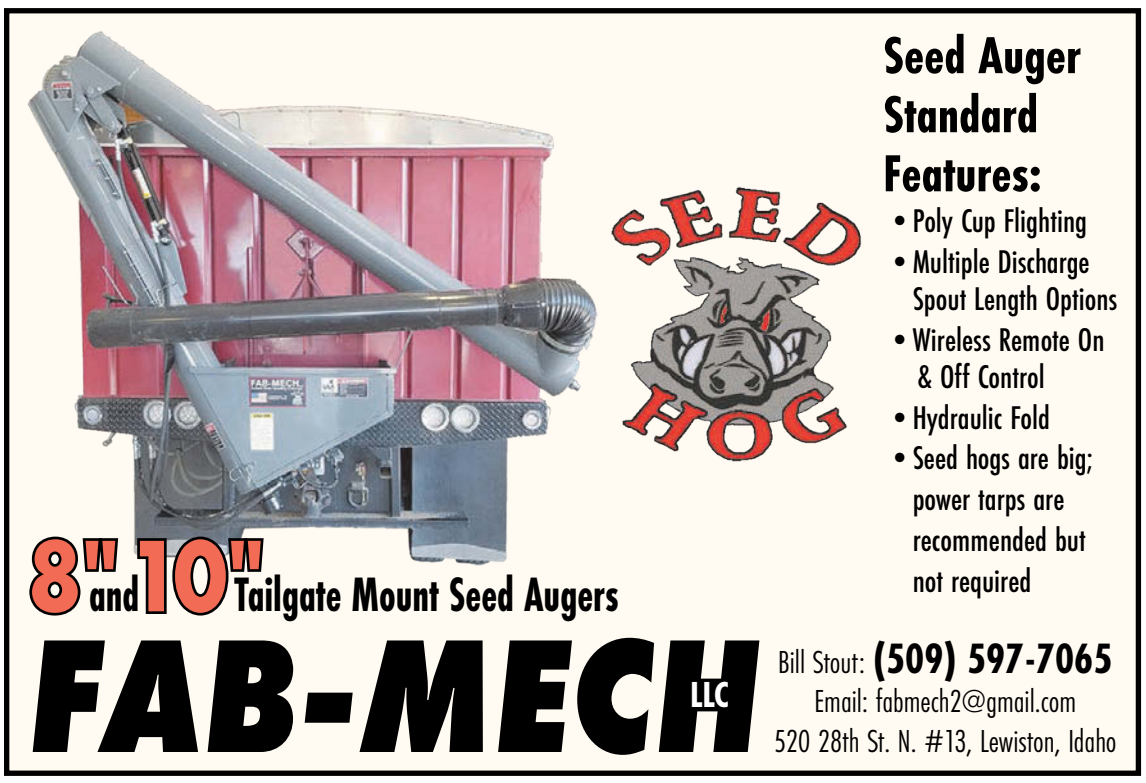
Fallahi's work, and ISHS Fellow Award, "speak volumes for our small corner of the fruit industry," said Patrick Williamson, a Caldwell-area tree fruit and wine grape grower who is the Idaho State Horticultural Society 2025-26 board president. "It's really great that Essie got this, and we are very happy. Idaho fruit growers are kind of punching above their weight class, and are able to work with Essie and benefit from the work he has done."

Fallahi helped raise the profile of the Idaho fruit industry nationally and internationally. "We are recognized for the products we grow and are well known," said Jerry Henggeler, retired manger of a Fruitland-based grower and packer of apples, prunes, plums, nectarines and peaches.

Fallahi, who hosted many fruit research field days and enjoyed sharing his findings in the field and at industry meetings, helped to advance horticulture and to boost demand for local fruit, Henggeler said.

"He has been a great contributor," Henggeler said.

"Essie is still around, helping to do research for the growers," Williamson said.





Cause of low falling number sparks pricing penalty discussion

By Matthew Weaver
Capital Press



ALISON THOMPSON/USDA AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE

Northwest wheat growers and researchers are studying non-alpha amylase induced low falling number (NAIL), which does not appear to affect baking quality and may be easier to blend in than alpha amylase related causes of low falling number, researchers say.

Northwest wheat growers faced a "uniquely challenging" falling number season, Washington State University researcher Amber Hauvermale said.

Falling number is a test that measures starch damage in wheat that reduces the quality of baked goods and noodles. Grain inspectors measure the time it takes two pins on a falling number machine to fall through a ground wheat-water slurry, measuring viscosity. Grain with low falling number is sold at a discount because end-use quality is compromised.

In the past, low falling number has been attributed to late-maturity alpha amylase (LMA) or pre-harvest sprouting, which are associated with elevated alpha amylase activity. The enzyme breaks down starch.

This year, the main driver of low falling number was non-alpha amylase induced low falling number (NAIL). NAIL can result in low falling number without elevated alpha amylase activity.

"The tricky part about it is that samples with NAIL will throw a low falling number," Hauvermale said. "But the thing that we're measuring for, alpha amylase, is absent."

Does NAIL damage the wheat like the other causes of low falling number? More information is needed, Hauvermale said.

Early results indicate NAIL does not appear to impact cake quality. NAIL samples sometimes show low or lower protein.

The researchers don't know yet what causes NAIL. It could be cold temperatures early in grain development, long before an LMA event.

"We had a very open winter — it didn't get cold," Hauvermale said. "So we had a lot of other pressures with disease that were historic this past year. We're really trying to figure out the root cause of NAIL."

'MAY NOT BE A PROBLEM THERE AT ALL'

Agronomists and farmers can determine whether an event is NAIL or the other low falling number causes with an enzyme activity test.

"In NAIL samples, even though you may get a low falling number, the rapid test or another enzyme activity test will tell you there's no activity there," Hauvermale said. "That combination of characteristics can help better assess whether that grain needs to be penalized, when there may not be a problem there at all."

Worried growers or those who have received a low falling number should contact Hauvermale or USDA researcher Alison Thompson to determine whether the grain has alpha amylase activity.

"If it doesn't, and it is NAIL, that is a much bigger conversation with the industry about how discounts apply in that case," Hauvermale said. "This is a brand-new player on everybody's radar."

Wheat breeders are working to eliminate LMA and pre-harvest sprouting.

Growers should read WSU's variety trial results to see which varieties perform the best across pre-harvest sprouting, LMA and NAIL, Hauvermale said.

SAMPLES

Wheat Marketing Center testing detected 118 low falling number samples out of 569. Of those, 94, about 80%, were presumed NAIL.

Some grain elevators applied price discounts to farmers for wheat with low falling number, and some did not.

"It's really at the discretion of the elevators," Hauvermale said. "It also started a much larger conversation from variety trial testing to the Federal Grain Inspection Service about whether the falling number test is an appropriate test to measure grain quality when you have a NAIL event."

Easier to blend?

Alpha amylase-affected samples require a lot of "good grain" to blend away "the bad stuff," a ratio of one to 10, Hauvermale said. For NAIL samples, it's more one to one.

"That's what we're testing right now," Hauvermale said.

The team has applied for a new USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture Rapid Response Grant, although "We're doing it anyway," Hauvermale said.

STORAGE

Storing the grain helps with LMA and, to a lesser-degree, pre-harvest sprouting, because alpha amylase activity diminishes over time, Hauvermale said.

"We think storage will not really impact NAIL-affected grain in the same way, because there is no alpha-amylase activity in the samples," she said.





Vilsack: World investment in ag research has 'lagged'

By Matthew Weaver
Capital Press

The next year will be "pretty risky" for farmers everywhere, former U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said.

Vilsack spoke Sept. 9 during a virtual roundtable on global supply disruption and food affordability, hosted by the nonprofit, nonpartisan Meridian International Center.

Global conflicts and tariffs are causing barriers to fertilizer sourcing, Vilsack said during his keynote presentation.

Investment needs to be made in innovation and agricultural research worldwide, he said.

"We've done an amazing job of investing in AI and other technologies, but investment by the world in agricultural research has lagged, and we've essentially paid a price for that," Vilsack said, citing the need to feed an increasing world population with increased food production.



MATTHEW WEAVER/CAPITAL PRESS FILE PHOTO

Former U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, pictured in 2023, says global conflicts and tariffs are causing barriers to fertilizer sourcing, affecting food affordability and food security. World investment in agricultural research has lagged, Vilsack says.

Today, 733 million people are food-insecure, including 66 million children under the age of 5, he said.

He estimated that one-third of everything grown is lost or not used in the way it was originally intended.

"If we are able to do a better job of making sure people have the inputs they need to be able to produce the food, and we are able to get the food to the people who need it, we will see individuals that are well-fed," he said.

Former Sen. Mark Pryor of Arkansas, a Democrat, and Abubakar Kyari, Minister of Agriculture and Food Security in Nigeria, also spoke during the discussion.

"The market is such that if one input goes up, the other input also follows," Kyari said, speaking of increased fertilizer and seed costs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Vilsack asked Pryor what steps he would recommend for the next 12 months.

Pryor encouraged the Trump administration to reconsider its trade policies to get the trade and tariff world to "settle down."

"More global supply, more open markets, fewer tariffs — to me that's the easiest one to address because you don't have to go through a long legislative process," Pryor said. "The United States can lead with some policy changes there."

COULD IT GET WORSE?

"Could this situation get worse?" Vilsack asked Pryor. "It's pretty bad now, but what would make it worse?"

"If we go from a restricted supply to no supply," Pryor said. "If we ever get to the point where there's a cutoff and a stoppage of certain ingredients of these fertilizers, you really do have a crisis ... (Sustaining) the status quo today makes it really hard for farmers, because they might be able to last one season, one year, maybe, but after that, it gets pretty dire for a lot of these farmers."

CLOSING WORDS

"This is not an issue a lot of people will spend this morning getting up thinking about, but the fact is the food that's on their table is directly impacted by what we talked about today," Vilsack said in conclusion. "They better be concerned about sulfur, urea, potash and all the actions that are taking place. They better also understand and appreciate the extraordinary gift we have in farmers, ranchers and producers, and how difficult their jobs absolutely are. We should be appreciative that anybody wants to take on the challenge of being a farmer, rancher or producer."

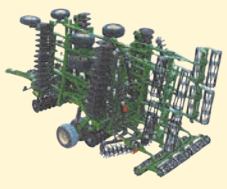

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Washington state agencies break biodiesel mandate again

By Don Jenkins
Capital Press



DON JENKINS/CAPITAL PRESS

Washington law requires state diesel-powered vehicles, vessels and construction equipment use 20% biodiesel. The state fell shy of the mark in 2025, using 1.2% biodiesel.

Washington state government's use of biodiesel dropped to an all-time low last year, despite a law purportedly requiring the state to buy the greener alternative fuel.

The law mandates agencies and universities, excluding ferries, use 20% biodiesel in diesel-powered vehicles, vessels and construction equipment.

The state, however, blended in only 1.2%, the lowest level since the Department of Enterprise Services started issuing annual reports in 2016.

The Legislature set the 20% standard in 2009 as a reaction to global warming. Biodiesel emits 74% less greenhouse gas than regular diesel, according to the U.S. Energy Department.

The state has never met the mark. Biodiesel use was 12.9% in 2016, but has drifted downward since, even as legislators passed other laws to cut fossil fuels in the private sector.

Nevertheless, the law stays on the books, and enterprise services issues annual reports. Rather than transitioning to greener fuels, state government is moving in the other direction, according to the new report.

The law apparently lacks teeth, Clean Fuels Alliance America state government affairs director Jeff Earl said. Biodiesel is available and cost-competitive, especially with the high price of regular diesel, he said,

"Right now we're producing more than we ever have," Earl said. "It's not a failure on our industry's part to supply fuel."

Ferries are required to use 5% biodiesel, instead of 20%. For the first time since 2018, ferries failed to meet the standard and used only 1.8% biodiesel. Biodiesel purchases dropped by 79%.

The ferry system reported no biodiesel-related performance problems, but there was a significant supply shortage, according to enterprise services.

A federal tax credit for blending in biodiesel expired at the end of 2024, and biodiesel deliveries paused from April through September, according to the report.

Other Department of Transportation divisions were the next biggest fuel users. The department bought little biodiesel, but purchased more than 1.4 million gallons of renewable diesel.

Combined, biofuels made up 64% of the department's diesel purchases. The department was the only agency that bought renewable diesel, according to the report.

Other state agencies, though purportedly bound by the 20% standard, used little biodiesel. The volume equaled 0.4% of diesel use.

Enterprises services suggested places that the departments of Fish and Wildlife, Corrections, Parks and Recreation, and Social and Health Services could use biodiesel. The recommendations were identical to last year's report.

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Washington students meet the meat industry

By Matthew Weaver
Capital Press



JUNIOR LIVESTOCK SHOW OF SPOKANE/CONTRIBUTED

Many students move from showing livestock to pursuing careers in the livestock and meat industries, a Texas Tech University meat sciences professor tells Washington youth.



(JUNIOR LIVESTOCK SHOW OF SPOKANE/CONTRIBUTED)

Competing on a meat judging team sets the bar for excellence in necessary meat sciences courses and programs, a Texas Tech University meat sciences professor tells Washington FFA and 4-H members considering careers in the industry

It's the folks involved that make the livestock and meat industries a worthwhile career pursuit, a Texas Tech University meats judging coach told Washington youth in a recent webinar.

"Animal agriculture is very fulfilling and pays very well, but ultimately what makes the livestock industry different from engineering, statistics or working in the medical field boils down to, the heartbeat of American agriculture is the people," assistant meat science professor Blake Foraker said. "We still see that in today's processing facilities, any kind of feedyard or producer-driven operation ... Just being around hardworking people that share a vision for feeding the world is something that charges me up, and a lot of the students we work with."

Foraker spoke Sept. 8 as part of the Junior Livestock Show of Spokane's webinar series focused on career opportunities in meat science.

Many students first get involved showing 4-H and FFA livestock showing, Foraker said.

JUDGING TEAMS

Judging is a "worthwhile endeavor" to learn necessary skills, including working in teams and receiving criticism.

"A lot of students might not know those opportunities exist to a very high degree beyond high school," Foraker said.

Foraker noted that college students are eligible to compete in particular judging categories for one year only. They typically move from judging wool one year into meat and then into livestock, for example.

Judging sets the bar for excellence for the courses that make a student's education well-balanced, including genetics, meat science, reproduction and animal sciences, he said.

He recommends prospective students attend outreach events, contests or summer judging camps to connect with coaches and team leaders.

MEET THE MEAT INDUSTRY

University programs also encourage students to get out and see the industry as part of their coursework, clubs, tours and travels.

Industry leaders attend various events. College students often help behind the scenes.

"Many career-defining moments spur from events like this," Foraker said. "Whether it's cooking the steak or preparing the coffee, there are a lot of opportunities for engagement and interaction."

Students end up with internships, and later careers, with the companies that support Texas Tech's program, Foraker said.

The university offers annual summer livestock and meat judging camps for middle school and high school students.

"It's really no different than the football team, baseball team or the basketball team," Foraker said. "We're trying to harness a group of students to have a shared interest, work towards a common goal and find success."

Most Texas Tech students pursue careers in meat science, particularly ruminant nutrition.

"We're really fortunate to be located in the Panhandle of Texas, right in the heart of feed yard and beef processing country," he said.

REACH OUT

Foraker recommends students contact the department they're interested in directly to set up a meeting.

"Any opportunity that you young people can take advantage of at this stage of your career, whether it be middle school, high school or maybe even younger ... to learn more about opportunities and your future, particularly related to the meat and livestock industry, is a worthwhile endeavor," Foraker said.

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Analysis: Imports haven't dropped consumer beef prices

By Kyle Odegard
Capital Press

Record imports of beef and the suspension of the tariff-rate quota for trimmings haven't substantially lowered ground beef prices for consumers — and the policy should be reconsidered — according to a new American Farm Bureau Federation analysis.

Since beef began entering the U.S. under President Donald Trump's proclamation Sept. 1, prices remained unchanged at roughly 75% of grocers tracked by the Farm Bureau.

"The market fundamentals that raised beef prices have not gone away. Tight cattle supplies and strong consumer demand continue to support higher consumer beef prices," wrote Farm Bureau economists Bernt Nelson and Faith Parum.

The economists added that the proclamation created uncertainty for U.S. ranchers, lowering cattle prices and discouraging them from growing the nation's herd.

"The evidence is clear; the proclamation should be rolled back, and ranchers should have the opportunity to respond to free market signals and reduced regulatory burdens to rebuild our nation's cattle supply," Nelson and Parum wrote.

According to the Farm Bureau, cattle prices are $300 to $400 lower per head compared to two months ago.

Bill Bullard, R-CALF USA CEO, said cattle prices started collapsing after the proclamation's announcement and came as many ranchers brought their annual production to market.

"The timing was particularly bad and the impact is being felt directly by producers," Bullard said.

He added that a comprehensive strategy is needed to rebuild the national herd.

Diana Wirth, Oregon Cattlemen's Association president, said Trump's action wasn't worth the cost.

"It did more damage to our markets than anything else," she added.

Wirth said ranchers still support Trump and applaud his desire to help, but she believed this was a misstep.

"It doesn't matter if it's red or if it's blue — a bad idea is a bad idea," Wirth said.

TRACKING GROUND BEEF AT GROCERS

The Farm Bureau followed daily prices for three weeks at 41 chain supermarkets and independent grocers in 22 states.

"Across our sample, the average price of ground beef barely moved, going from $7.29 a pound on Sept. 2 to $7.13 a pound on Sept. 23 — a reduction of 16 cents or approximately 2%," Nelson and Parum wrote.

Trump's proclamation directs federal agencies to monitor whether qualifying imported beef is sold at a discount and allows the expansion to be reconsidered if price relief does not materialize.

The proclamation temporarily expanded the tariff-rate quote for lean beef trimmings by roughly 660 million pounds.

It encourages grocery stores to sell the beef at a 25% discount.

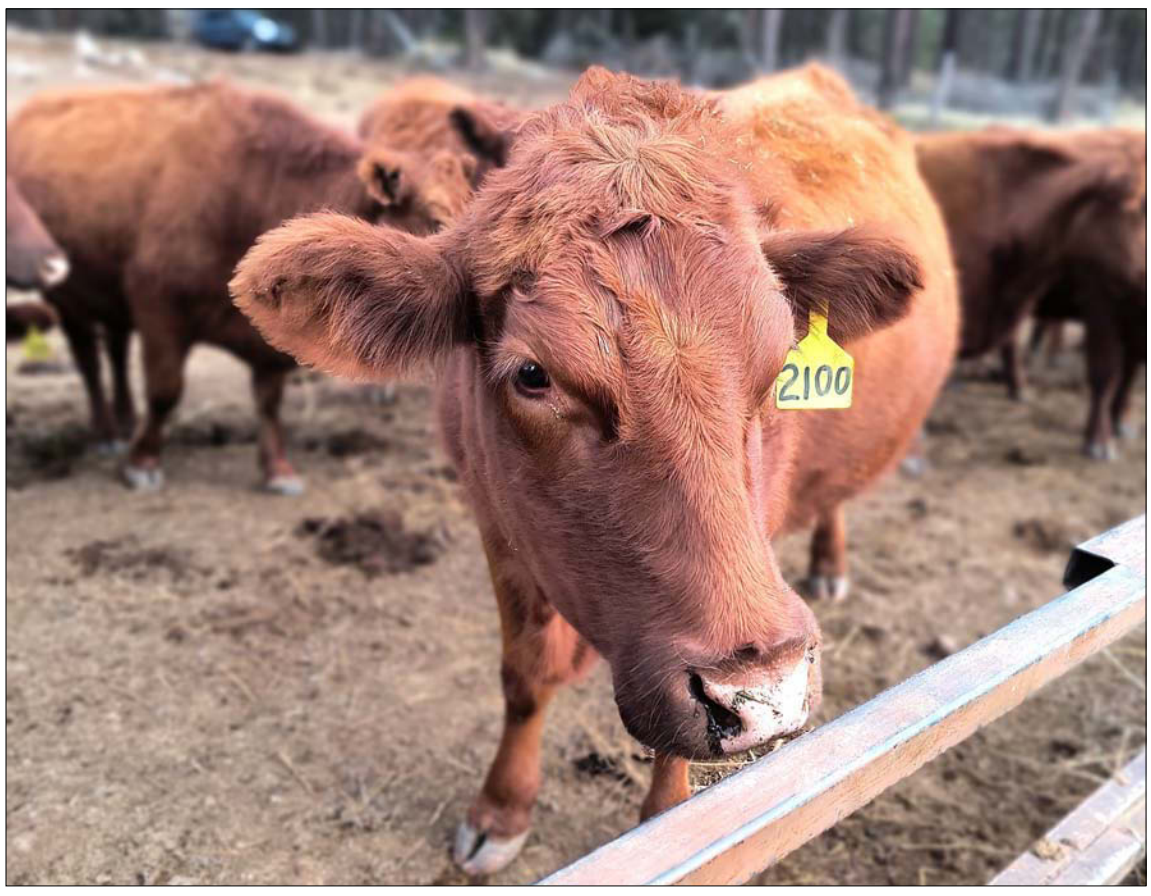
Seven of the grocery stores ended the Farm Bureau's tracking period with lower prices, but only three reached the 25% mark.

Meanwhile, prices rose at stores in four cities.

A new bill seeks to suspend Trump's proclamation.

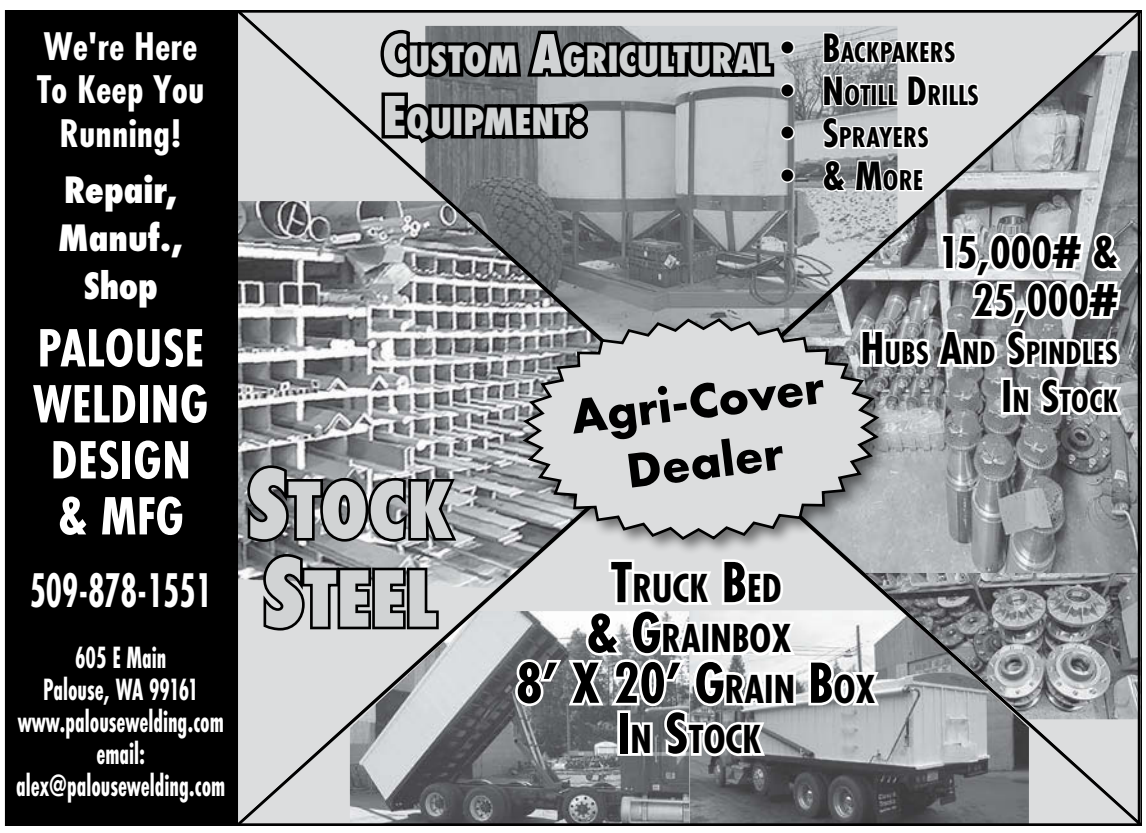
On Sept. 23, Rep. Zach Nunn, an Iowa Republican, and Rep. Gabe Vasquez, a New Mexico Democrat, introduced the Banning External Entry of Foreign Beef (BEEF) Act, which also would require congressional approval before similar increases can occur in the future.

"If we want more affordable beef for the long term, we need more American beef being raised and produced here at home," Nunn said.



DIANA WIRTH/CONTRIBUTED

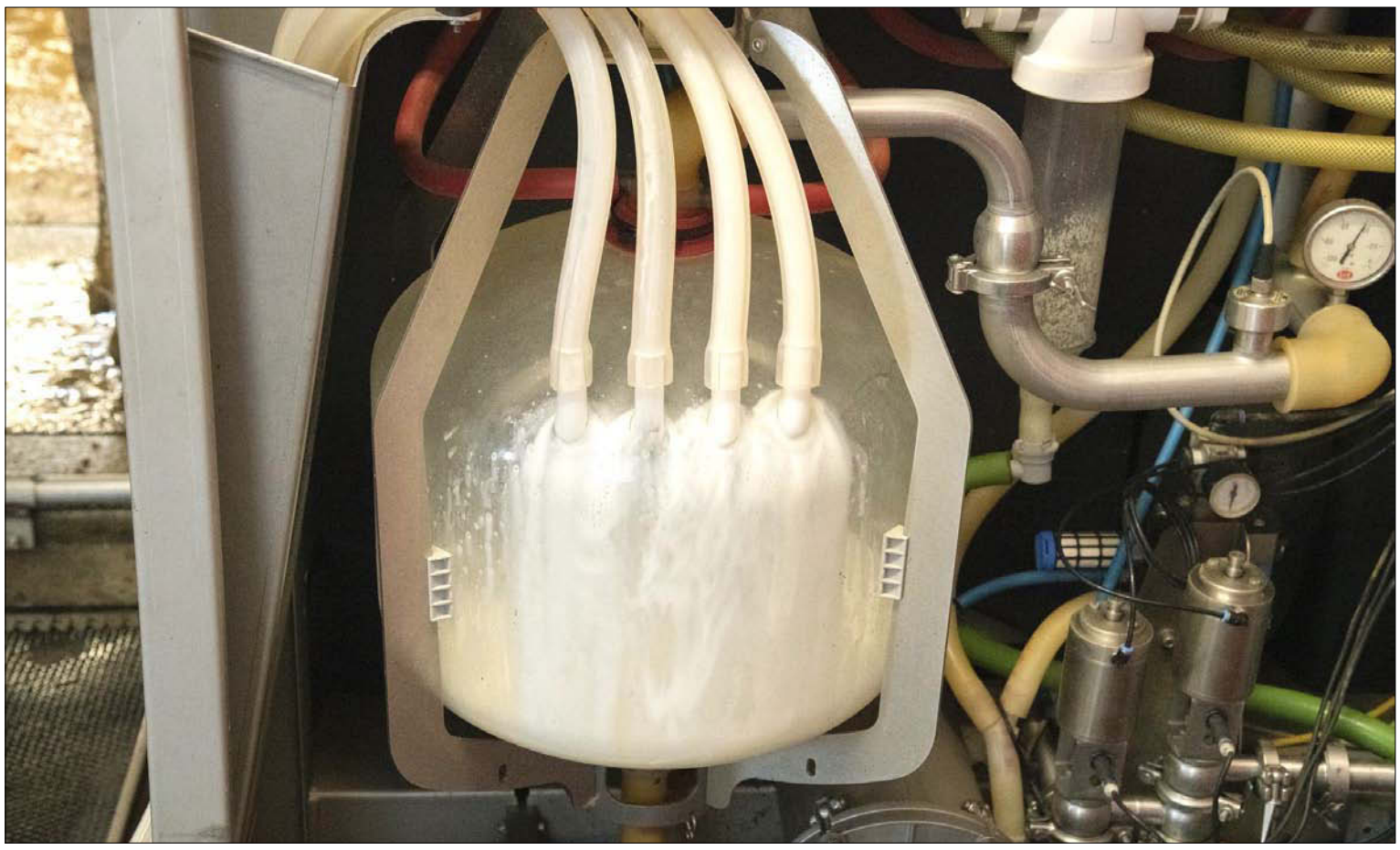
A Red Angus at Meadow Lake Ranch outside Klamath Falls, Ore. Diana Wirth, Oregon Cattlemen's Association president, said ranchers still support President Donald Trump and applaud his desire to help Americans, but she believed a proclamation to increase beef imports was a misstep.





Dairies fight over millions owed by milk broker

By Mateusz Perkowski
Capital Press



USDA/CONTRIBUTED

Dairy farms in Oregon and Washington are trying to get millions of dollars owed to them by a California milk broker.

Numerous dairies in Oregon and Washington are fighting over millions of dollars they claim to be owed for milk sold to a California-based broker, Milk Movers USA.

The dairies appear to be competing with each other, as well as cash advance money lenders, over who has the top priority for repayment, according to state and federal court documents.

Creameries that received milk from Milk Movers USA have also been drawn into the litigation, asking state and federal judges to sort out who they should be paying for the deliveries.

A federal judge recently discharged the Tillamook County Creamery Association of any liability for about $2.7 million that the company turned over to the federal court, which it had owed to Milk Movers for milk deliveries.

The creamery has "at all times been ready, willing and able to pay the funds" to whomever they're owed, but is "aware that there are multiple competing rights and claims" to the money among 11 dairies, as well as several lenders and others, the judge said.

The ruling came after Tillamook County Creamery Association in Tillamook, Ore., filed a "interpleader complaint" in Oregon federal court against Milk Movers and the other parties demanding money owed by the broker.

According to the lawsuit, the creamery would buy milk from Milk Movers, which would contract directly with dairy farms to deliver the milk to the company's facilities in Tillamook, Ore., and Boardman, Ore.

The complaint alleged that Tillamook's facilities accepted milk that Milk Movers had bought from numerous dairies last year, but those farms began complaining in early 2026 that they hadn't been paid for the deliveries.

Similarly, the company has received notices from cash advance lenders that also claimed to be owed money for loans to Milk Movers, which had been secured with future accounts receivable as collateral, according to court documents.

Tillamook told the federal court that it has "no interest in the aforementioned funds," other than to find out whom it should pay, and asked for the parties to "litigate among themselves their respective rights, claims, and priorities."

Similarly, Don Froylan Creamery in Salem, Ore., has filed an interpleader complaint in Marion County Circuit Court against Milk Movers, as well as dairy farms and cash advance lenders who claim to be owed nearly $100,000.

The creamery has asked permission to deposit the funds with the county circuit court while these parties litigate among each other for repayment.

Meanwhile, several dairies — Smeenk Brothers of Sunnyside, Wash.; Riverview Ranch of Mabton, Wash.; Miersma Dairy of Salem, Ore.; and Ever May Farms of Forest Grove, Ore. — have initiated their own legal actions, seeking to foreclose on agricultural liens they'd previously filed against Milk Movers.

Foreclosing on a lien in court is meant to prompt a sale of property to ensure repayment of a debt.

Those lawsuits seek to recover more than $870,000, including sums that Tillamook County Creamery Association may have already paid to a cash advance lender, according to court documents.

Milk Movers USA of Ripon, Calif., did not respond to requests for comment as of press time.

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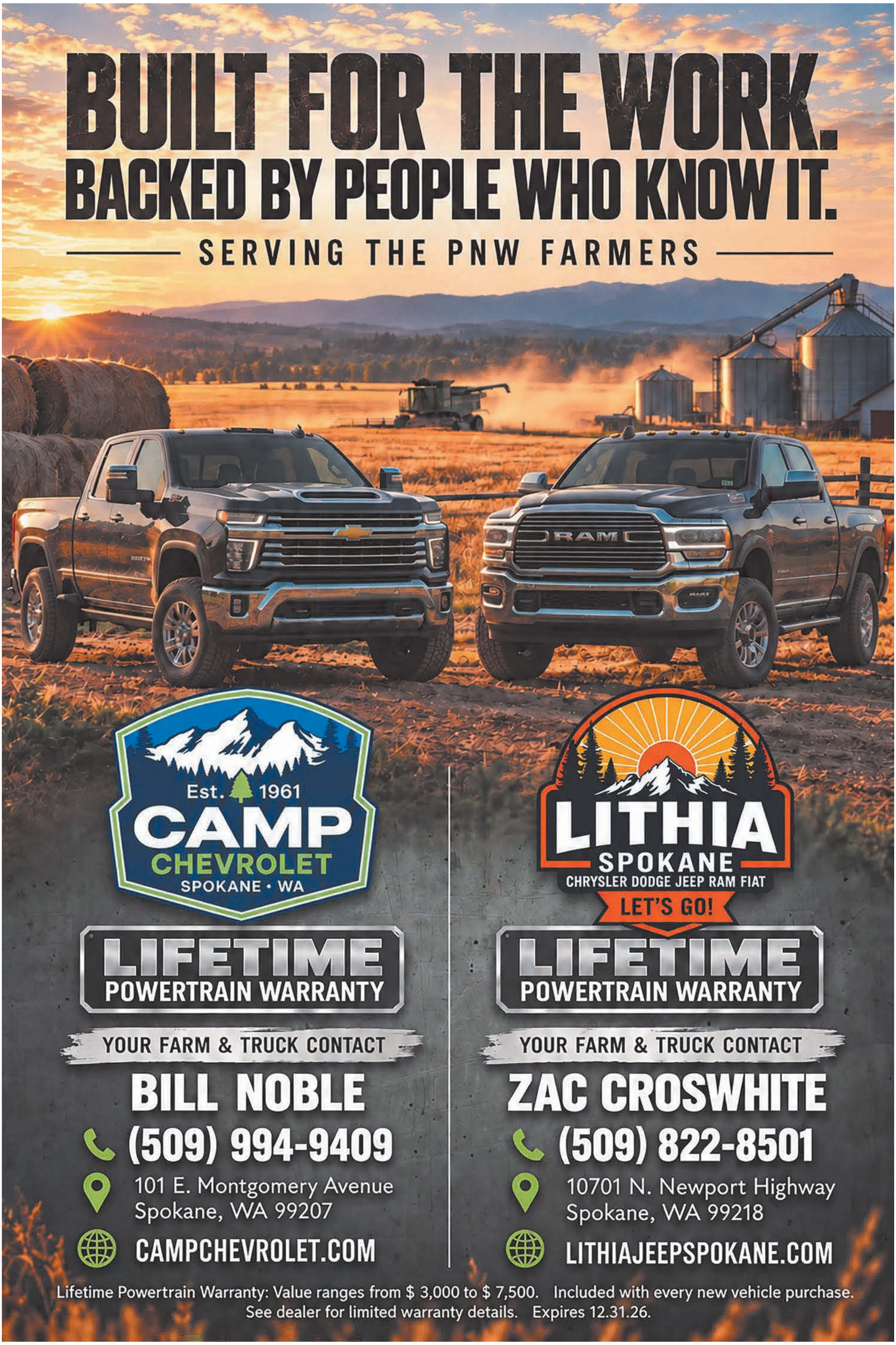
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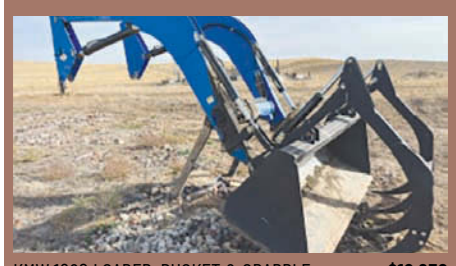
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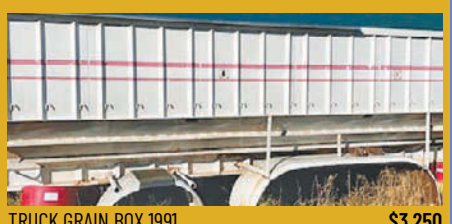
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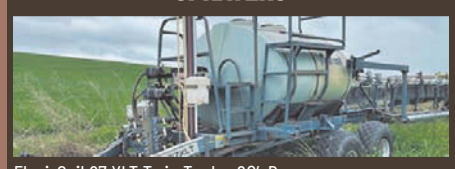


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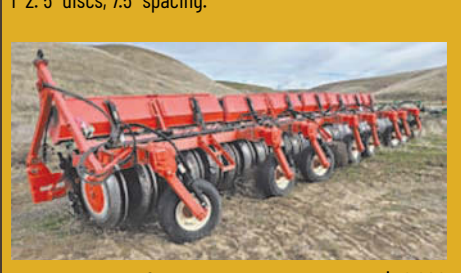


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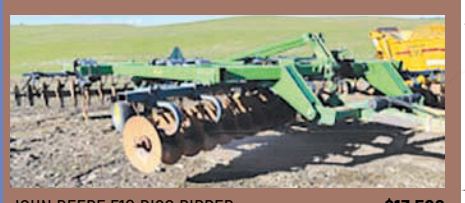


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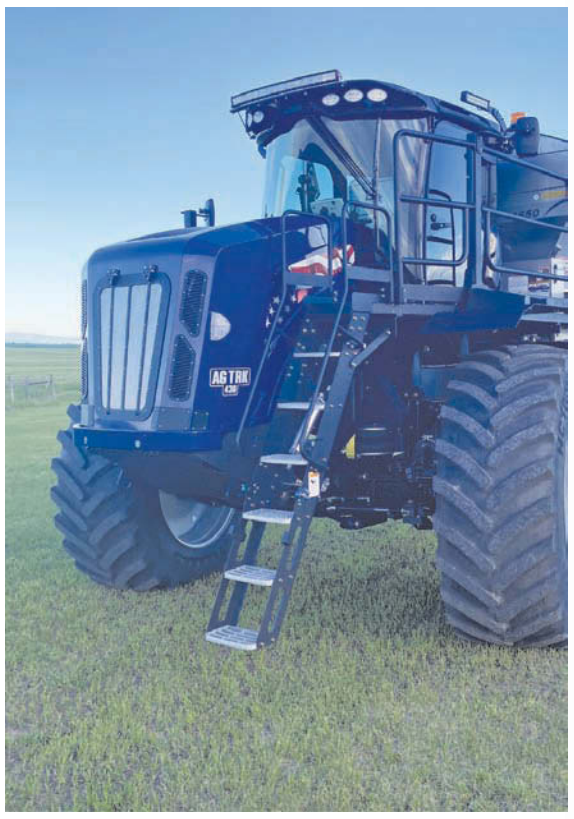
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Brooks named UI Extension director, associate ag dean

By Brad Carlson
Capital Press

The University of Idaho has appointed Randy Brooks as UI Extension director and associate dean of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

An Extension employee for more than 35 years, he starts his new job Sept. 28. He succeeds Barbara Petty, who retired Aug. 31 after nearly 30 years at the university.

Brooks will emphasize helping extension employees, he said in a news release.

"If I'm helping them, they're changing lives," he said.

"The county extension offices are the front porch of U of I," Brooks said. "A lot of stakeholders across the state will never step foot on the University of Idaho campus, but they will step foot on the front porch of that extension office."

Early in his new job, he plans to visit UI Extension offices and facilities throughout the state to listen to his colleagues and learn about their programs and plans, according to the release.

Brooks intends to launch "Removing the Rocks," a campaign that will entail identifying obstacles that prevent employees from achieving their goals and devising strategies to remove them.

Given the current climate of budget uncertainty, he will emphasize documenting Extension's impact on the state and communities to demonstrate the importance of its programs to lawmakers, county commissioners and other leaders, according to the release. He will seek to keep Extension relevant by staying connected with stakeholders, being flexible in its offerings and ensuring the organization makes good on its commitments to build trust.

Brooks received a University Excellence Award for advising in 2021. He is part of an Extension forestry team that won a national award in 2024 for its Idaho Forest Stewardship Program.



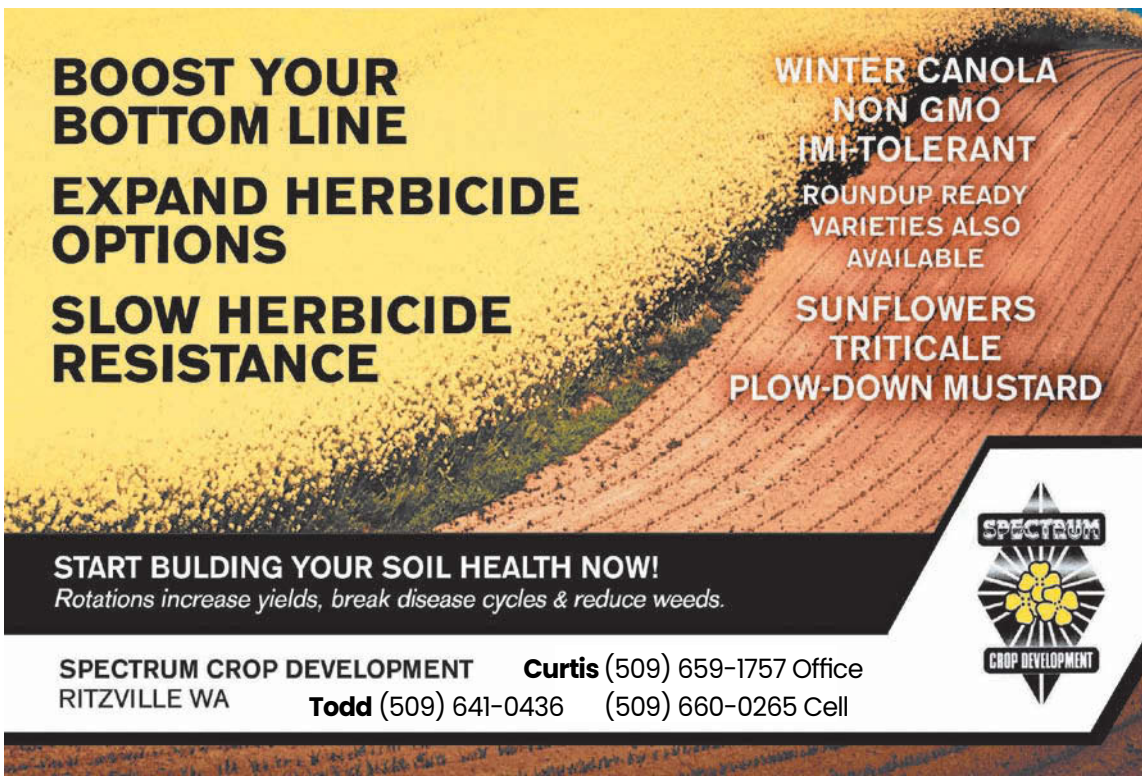
UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO/CONTRIBUTED

Randy Brooks, UI Extension director and associate dean of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

He played a key role in increasing participation in UI's Natural Resources Camp offered near Ketchum in June, according to the university. The camp this year drew 96 attendees this year, up from 30 in 2011.

Brooks started with UI Extension in 1991 as an extension soil fertility specialist based in Twin Falls. Starting in 1993, he worked on a three-year, multi-county water quality demonstration project based at the Cassia County Extension office in Burley. In 1996, he took an area extension forestry job at the Clearwater County Extension office in Orofino.

He earned a bachelor's degree in forest management from Oklahoma State University, and master's and doctoral degrees in forest science from Michigan Technological University.





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USDA/CONTRIBUTED

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Kennedy's department will help review whether the herbicide glyphosate is safe.

Kennedy to participate in EPA's glyphosate review

By Don Jenkins
Capital Press

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy's department will help the Environmental Protection Agency review whether the herbicide glyphosate is safe.

Kennedy was a fierce critic of glyphosate before becoming head of the Department of Health and Human Services. While the EPA will decide whether glyphosate-based herbicides remain available to farmers, the health department will offer its scientific expertise.

"We will ask the hard questions, demand sound science, and follow the evidence wherever it leads," Kennedy said in a statement.

The EPA is reviewing glyphosate's uses, as it does with all herbicides, insecticides and fungicides. The department anticipates finishing its evaluation of whether glyphosate is carcinogenic in early 2027.

Kennedy was an attorney for a California man who in 2018 won a $289 million judgment from a San Francisco jury against Monsanto, makers of glyphosate-based Roundup. The man claimed the weed killer caused his non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and that Monsanto, which was acquired that year by Bayer, failed to warn users of the product.

Kennedy told a Senate committee in April that he still believes glyphosate causes cancer. But he defended an executive order signed by President Trump in February directing the USDA and Defense Department to boost domestic production of glyphosate-based herbicides.

Kennedy said his health department was looking for alternatives. But for now commodities such as corn and soybeans rely heavily on glyphosate-based herbicides from China, he said.

"You have an adversary that could literally shut down the American food supply overnight," Kennedy said.

A robust supply of glyphosate is central to the U.S. economy and national security, according to Trump's executive order.

As the most widely used crop-protection chemical in the U.S., glyphosate-based herbicides are a cornerstone of the nation's agricultural productivity, the order states.

The U.S. Supreme Court in June ruled 7-2 that claims against glyphosate can't be brought in state courts.

The EPA has repeatedly concluded that glyphosate is not likely to cause cancer. The court ruled that warnings to the contrary would violate the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act.

The federal law preempts state's failure-to-warn laws, according to the court.

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ISDA lab busy with bird flu testing

By Brad Carlson
Capital Press

Bird flu testing provided substantial new activity for the Idaho State Department of Agriculture Animal Health Laboratory in the fiscal year that ended June 30.

Staff at the east Boise lab — which ISDA opened in late 2022 to replace outdated smaller facilities — performed 3,530 polymerase chain reaction tests for the avian influenza virus in fiscal 2026 compared to none a year earlier. In the first two months of the current fiscal year, July and August, staff conducted 1,223 PCR tests for the virus in bird or dairy samples.

The ISDA animal health lab is authorized to conduct avian influenza PCR testing as a result of passing a USDA National Animal Health Laboratory Network audit to become certified in June 2025. The nationally coordinated system comprises around 60 federal, state and university-affiliated laboratories.

The tests have primarily been on milk samples from Idaho dairies, said Dan Salmi, ISDA laboratories bureau chief.

"Previously we were sending all of these samples out of state, which takes a lot longer," up to about five days, he said.

Now, with in-house testing, the state veterinarian receives results much faster — a plus for controlling the spread of the virus, Salmi said.

"If a dairy cow tests positive for this virus, we don't want to bring it into Idaho and we don't want it to move around Idaho," he said. "This surveillance is really important for dairy producers."

Based on the first few months of the current fiscal year, bird flu sample numbers have increased significantly from the previous year, Salmi said.

"We are capable of conducting more tests if need be, based on increased efficiency and new equipment" gained in the past year, he said.

The animal health lab conducts many types of tests. According to ISDA, its primary objective has been to support veterinarians and livestock producers, the Idaho departments of Fish and Game and Health and Welfare, USDA and its Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The lab in the July-June fiscal year conducted 377,425 tests for various high-consequence diseases, including for brucellosis and trichomoniasis in cattle, Salmi said. About 95% of the lab's business comes from Idaho veterinarians and producers.

Separately, ISDA Bureau of Laboratories scientists perform microscopy tests for quagga mussel larvae in water samples from the Middle Snake River, where the invasive mussels were first detected in September 2023. The microscopy lab operation, now in its second year, can produce same-day results, he said. Previously, samples were sent to Florida for testing.

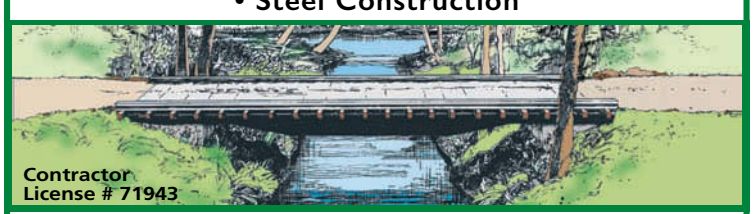
An ISDA chemistry lab in Twin Falls measures copper concentration while the river's infested area is treated with a copper-based chemical.

ISDA's seed lab has been recertified by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. The certification means seed companies can complete required testing in Idaho, and that their products are not subject to additional tests on entering Canada, Salmi said.



GABE BORDER/ISDA

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture's diagnostics-focused Animal Health Laboratory in east Boise.

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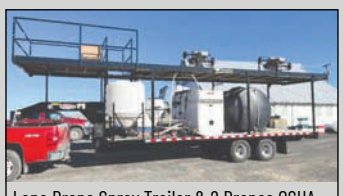

2013 Case IH 8230 Level + Header Everything is near new, 2338, Eng. 1,809 Sep **$125,000**


JD 9600 HILLSIDE + 30' JD 930 HEADER W/CART Rahco 32, 7,010 eng. 5,500 sep. hrs..... **$30,000**

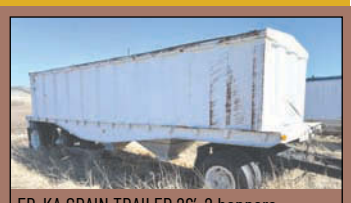

JD 9860 STS - HILLCO 6,100 eng hrs + 35' FLEX HEADER & CART..... **$80,000**

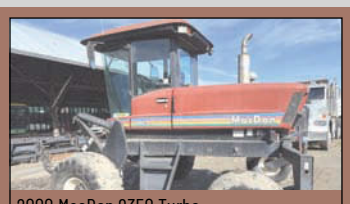

1975 GMC TRUCK W/TANKS **$7,500**
3 tanks & mix cone


2016 JD 455 DRILL 35', 7.5" spacing, many new parts **45,000**

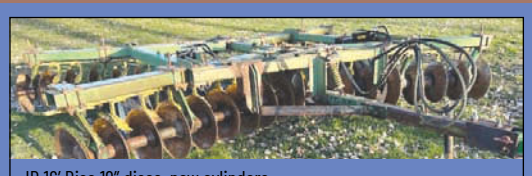

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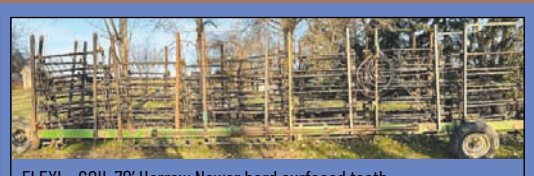

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SUPER HEAVY DUTY BOX BLADE & RIPPER..... **$6,500**
new cond, 7'-4" wide.


MEYERS SNOW BLADE..... **$3,800**
7'-6" w/extensions, E47 pump & remote.

1986 JD 7722 W/HEADER - PARTS $4,000	NEW HOLLAND TRACTOR FENDERS-2 SETS $350	Flexi-Coil 67 90', 1000 gal, hyd. auto-fold $3,500
HEADER CART ..... $2,000 Used for a 21' MacDon	JD 925 2 ROW GRASS P.U. 25' $1,500	Ben Hunt Pull Sprayer poly tank, 80' booms $5,500
FORD 8N TRACTOR $2,950	(2) INTERNATIONAL 810 24' HEADER CART P BAR $850	74' BEN HUNT AQUA FERT. SHANK APPLICATOR, 2000 g. Stainless Steel tank $7,800
MEYER M-9 SNOW PLOW $2,750	OLIVER 6 BOTTOM PLOW. MODEL 568 ..... $1,800	COMMANDER FM 2 WAY RADIO ANTENNA, STAND 3 piece 30' stand, 20' antenna, never out of box $2,600
UTILITY TRAILER ..... $950 15'L x 8'-6"	CALKINS 1600 CHISEL PLOW 18' $4,000	ERSKINE 7' HYD. SNOW BLOWER Never been used, for skid steers $9,750
CAR DOLLEY ..... $750 96"W x 9'L	R & R RIPPER 16', 7 shanks $5,000	2009 SCHULTE SDX-110 SNOW BLOWER $5,500
D R 4 WHEELER ROAD GRADER $1,200	REDE VERTICAL TILLAGE COULTERS - 37. 8 Wave Discs, offset spindles. $8,500	DRAIN TILE TRAILER 23' $250
6' BACK BLADE $450	1990 FORD F450 HOIST & WINCH $11,600	SNOWMOBILE TRAILER 10' X 6' $650
RAZORBACK BUSH HOG BH5 ..... $1,400	2001 CHEV SUBURBAN 245K, A/C, ETC. $1,995	STAINLESS STEEL TANK 2,000 GAL $3,500
LAND PRIDE LANDSCAPE RAKE $1,350	1947 INTERNATIONAL KB5 TRUCK $3,500	1,000 GAL. STAINLESS STEEL TANK $2,500
FORD 951B BRUSH HOG $850	1999 FORD VACUVATOR, Cummins $39,250	ARPS 730 3PT BACKHOE, 2 buckets, 11" & 23", 9.5' dig depth, outriggers $3,400
125 GAL. FUEL TANK W/PUMP $350	JD 7020, Duals, 9,763 hrs, 162 hp $7,500	1500 GALLON VERTICAL WATER TANK $1,250
HOLSCLAW GOLF CART TRAILER $1,200	Farmall H, Ex. cond, new rear tires $2,800	WATER TANK W/VALVES 1500 GAL $1,400
HI-CO SINGLE FURROW PLOW $500	JD 7520, 3 remotes, duals, 13,402 hrs $4,500	2500 GAL. POLY WATER TANK $2,250
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Westgo 8" x 60' auger pto $2,350	INTERNATIONAL 24' MODEL 55 CHISEL PLOW $5,800	1 FIRESTONE 12.75 X 32, 5 RIB $150
Oliver 6 bottom plow, model 568 ..... $1,800	CALKINS FIELD CULTIVATOR 38' $800	1 FIRESTONE 11.2-24. ..... $125
JD 6622 + HEADER $3,800	Rahco Feederhouse, From a JD 9770, fits most combines $5,650	7 TRAILER TIRES & RIMS 10:00-20, 10 bolt wheels ..... $125 each
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MACDON TO CASE IH COMBINE TRANSITION KIT $2,600	International Harvestor Drills, Model 150, starter fert. Lines $4,300	
1982 INTERNATIONAL 1470 PARTS COMBINE $2,700		
1980 INTERNATIONAL 1470 COMBINE $4,500		



IPC/CONTRIBUTED
About 30 chefs and foodservice operators from around the U.S. participated in the Idaho Potato Commission's four-day harvest tour in late September.

Idaho Potato Commission holds annual harvest tour

By Brad Carlson
Capital Press

About 30 chefs and foodservice operators from around the U.S. participated in the Idaho Potato Commission's four-day harvest tour, which stretched from the Boise area in the state's southwest to Idaho Falls in the east.

Idaho leads the U.S. in potato production and is a significant player across market segments — from fresh table stock to volumes grown for processing into fried products.

The late September tour showcased growing, harvesting, and processing facilities, and included a stop at the Idaho Potato Museum in Blackfoot.

Attendees included key culinary and foodservice decision makers from Magna Hospitality, Mooyah Burgers, Logan's Roadhouse, City BBQ and other organizations, according to a commission statement. Retail representatives also participated, giving IPC an opportunity to connect both foodservice and retail partners directly with growers and other participants in the Idaho industry.

"There's no better way to understand what makes Idaho potatoes special than to experience harvest firsthand," commission marketing director Jamie Bowen said in the statement. "The tour gives foodservice leaders a behind-the-scenes look at the people and practices behind Idaho potatoes while giving us an opportunity to build meaningful industry relationships."

Chefs and foodservice operators "work with potatoes every day, but most have never actually stood in a field during harvest, talked directly with growers or seen the entire process from field to finished product," she told Capital Press. The harvest tour "gives them that firsthand experience and a much better understanding of the quality and care that goes into Idaho potatoes."

> *"There's no better way to understand what makes Idaho potatoes special than to experience harvest firsthand."*
> **Jamie Bowen**
> *Marketing director, Idaho Potato Commission*

ONGOING WORK

Relationships built on the tour are just as important, Bowen said.

"Our goal is for this to be the beginning of the conversation, not the end," she said. IPC plans to continue to work with tour attendees on menu development, limited-time offer opportunities, culinary support "and other ways we can help them incorporate Idaho potatoes into their businesses."

The commission wants harvest tour attendees to "have a stronger connection to the Idaho potato brand, become advocates for Idaho potatoes within their own organizations and, ultimately, use more Idaho potatoes," Bowen said. "When someone has experienced harvest firsthand and met the people behind the product, it gives them a story they can take back to their teams and customers."


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Input costs sink farmer sentiment in September

Purdue Ag Barometer survey shows negative view of America's direction

By Kyle Odegard
Capital Press

Farmer sentiment sank in September with worries about high input prices such as diesel and fertilizer, according to the latest edition of the Purdue University-CME Group Ag Economy Barometer Index.

The barometer fell to 123 points, down from 135 in August, and more than half of producers surveyed indicated that the U.S. was headed in the wrong direction.

"There's a growing concern about the economics of operating the farm right now and input costs are playing a huge role in that angst," said Michael Langemeier, director of the Purdue Center for Commercial Agriculture.

Input costs, chosen by a record 52% of respondents, remained the biggest concern for producers.

About 54% said high input costs were the main factor limiting improvement in their farm's financial situation. No other factor hit 10%.

The September barometer shows that the near-term environment, despite improvements for corn and soybean prices, has become more challenging for farmers, Langemeier said, in an online analysis.

"They're less optimistic about their financial performance and they're pulling back when you look at capital investment," he said.

"However, that doesn't mean they've lost confidence in the longer-term value of the assets they own," Langemeier added.

Despite the decline in overall producer sentiment, the Long-Term Farmland Value Expectations Index reached a new high of 168.

That mark seems incongruent, but costs and margins can change quickly and near-term economics don't equal long-term asset expectations, Langemeier said.

"A producer can be concerned about the profitability of the operation today and still believe that farmland will retain or increase its value over time," he added.

The barometer survey of 400 farmers across the nation was conducted Sept. 14-18 and included corn, soybean, wheat and cotton growers and producers of beef cattle, hogs and dairy.

AMERICA ON THE 'WRONG TRACK'

Since July 2025, the survey has asked whether producers believe the U.S. is headed in the "right direction" or on the "wrong track."

The question encompasses far more than agriculture, capturing whether farmers and ranchers have an overall positive or pessimistic view of the country.

In September, only 48% thought America was headed in the right direction, marking the first time the answer was below 50%.

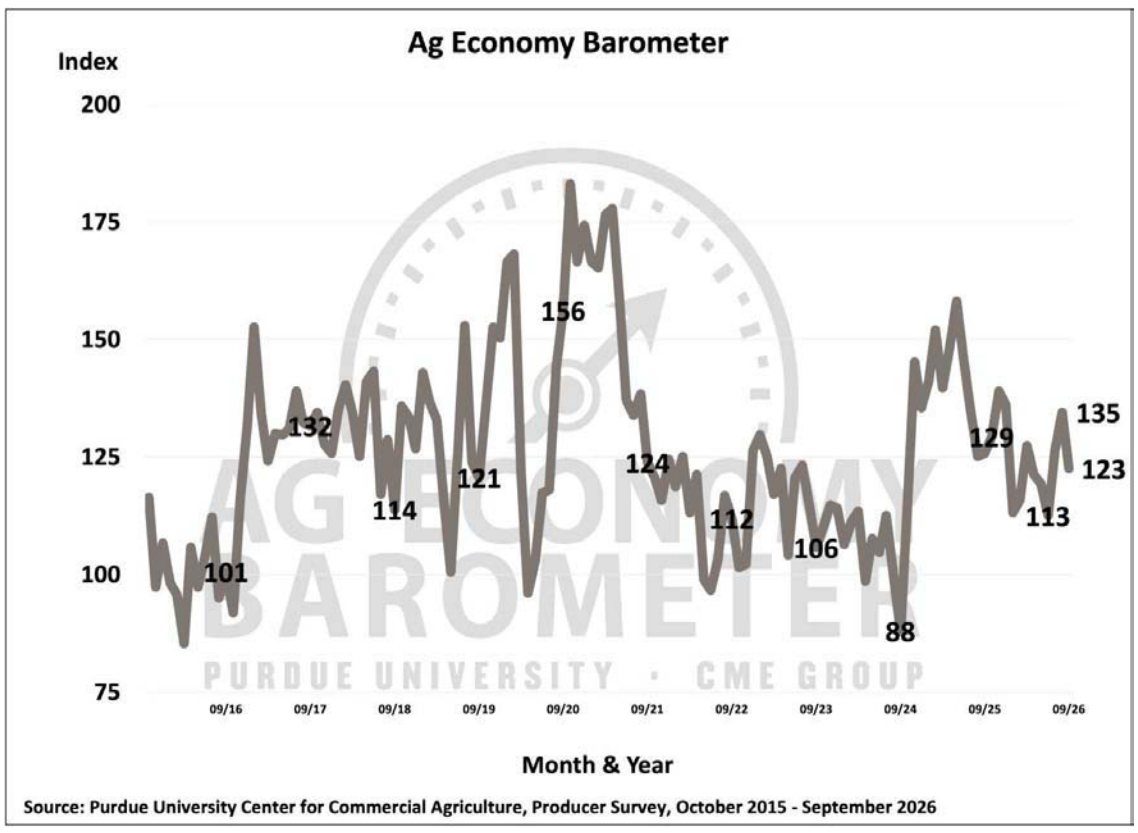
That figure averaged 71% during the second half of 2025 and 62% in the first half of 2026.

Only 22% of producers said they thought their operation would be better off a year from now, while 35% expected things to be worse.

Perceptions vary based on industry, but the gap between farmers and ranchers is shrinking.

Roughly 40% of crop producers thought they would have widespread good times in the next five years, up from 29% in August.

Meanwhile, 55% of livestock producers thought they would have widespread good times, down from 64% the previous month.



PURDUE CENTER FOR COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE/CONTRIBUTED

The Purdue University-CME Group Ag Economy Barometer Index fell to 123 points in September. "There's a growing concern about the economics of operating the farm right now and input costs are playing a huge role in that angst," said Michael Langemeier, director of the Purdue Center for Commercial Agriculture.







Fish named NRCS Idaho state conservationist

By Brad Carlson
Capital Press



NRCS/CONTRIBUTED
Idaho State Conservationist Garrett Fish.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service has named Garrett Fish as Idaho state conservationist.

He will start in the job at the end of November.

"Garrett brings a strong blend of technical expertise and leadership experience to this role," NRCS chief Colton L. Buckley said in a news release. "His deep commitment to locally led conservation will serve Idaho's farmers, ranchers and forestland stewards well as he steps into this new chapter."

"I am excited to lead NRCS in Idaho as the next state conservationist," Fish said. "Agriculture and our working lands are rooted in Idaho's identity and are vital to local and rural communities. I am committed to working closely with our conservation partners to assist our farmers, ranchers and foresters to provide meaningful assistance ensuring these working lands remain healthy and productive."

He will provide agency and natural resources leadership and support to NRCS Idaho, according to a separate release from the state office. That work will include carrying out NRCS priorities, and providing conservation technical assistance and financial assistance on private lands.

BROAD EXPERIENCE

Fish, originally from Troy, Mont., began his NRCS career in 2009 as a soil conservation technician in Ephrata, Wash. Over the years, he has developed broad expertise across technical and leadership roles. He is experienced in business tools and information technology development, data governance and program management.

He has served the agency at all levels, from field offices to national headquarters. "bringing a passion for natural resource conservation it each role," according to the NRCS Idaho release.

Fish moved to Sioux City, Iowa, in 2015 to work as an NRCS business tools specialist. In 2017, he joined the management and strategy team in the Iowa state office, where he supported a statewide reorganization effort.

In 2021, he was selected as NRCS Utah assistant state conservationist for management and strategy, in Salt Lake City. He established a management and strategy team and built new operational and budget processes for the state.

Fish in 2024 joined the NRCS national headquarters staff to support several priorities, including serving with the mission delivery optimization division to advance information technologyu solutions and innovate conservation delivery, according to the NRCS Idaho release.

In 2025, he returned to Utah as assistant state conservationist for programs. He implemented a framework to improve program delivery and strengthen alignment with locally led priorities.

Fish's dedication to long-term sustainability in agriculture and the protection of natural resources underpins his commitment to NRCS's mission," according to the NRCS Idaho release.

After Fish arrives in Idaho, acting state conservationist RaeAnn Dubay will return to her regular position with NRCS California, Mindi Rambo, NRCS Idaho state public affairs specialist based in Boise, said in an email.

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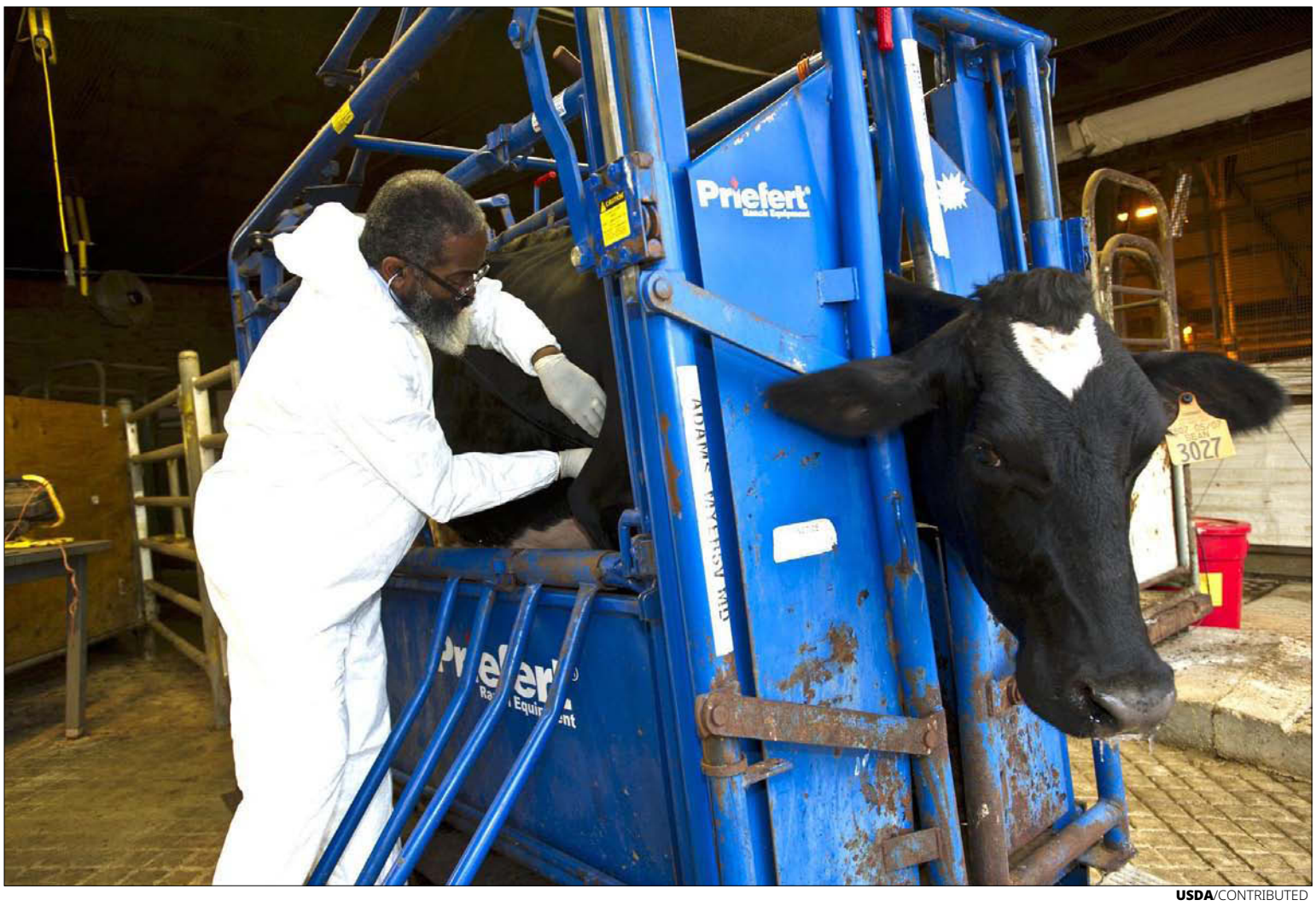
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USDA: Revenues tumble for livestock vets in rural areas

By Mateusz Perkowski
Capital Press



USDA/CONTRIBUTED

An APHIS veterinarian examines a cow. A new USDA report says revenues have dropped dramatically for rural veterinary practices that serve food animals.

Revenues have dropped sharply for rural veterinary practices that work with livestock in recent years, contributing to challenges in areas already facing veterinary shortages, according to USDA.

A recent study from USDA's Economic Research Service has found that "rural practices are not thriving," with revenues falling about 22% between 2021 and 2025 among practices that treat food animals.

"In addition, difficult working conditions including burnout, particularly for food-animal practitioners, can be attributed to lost revenue," the report said.

Rural areas have long contended with veterinary shortages, which government agencies and non-profit groups have been trying to mitigate by offering incentives to attract veterinary school graduates to such regions.

Rural areas have a tougher time recruiting veterinarians due to "economic and lifestyle factors," including "geographic remoteness and limited resources," particularly as urban practices focused on "companion animals" are "more financially attractive," the study said.

Despite programs intended to encourage more veterinarians to settle in rural areas and focus on livestock, the study found they've encountered more "financial pressure" in recent years from declining revenues and incomes.

Between 2021 and 2025, the average revenues of rural veterinary practices devoted to livestock and "mixed animal" treatment decreased from nearly $2 million to roughly $1.5 million, which the study attributed to smaller herd sizes.

Similarly, the annual income of rural food animal veterinarians fell roughly 19%, from about $160,000 to $130,000, between 2017 and 2024, while those focused on companion animals actually increased in both rural and urban areas, the study said.

Since veterinarians often "accrue substantial debt during their education," practices in urban areas and those focused on companion animals are more appealing to recent graduates, according to the report. "These opportunities typically offer higher compensation and are in areas with greater amenities and are less isolated than rural practices."

The study also found that beef cattle operations have more demand for private veterinarians, compared to the poultry and swine industries, which are more vertically integrated.

Poultry and swine operations are more likely to be geared toward "flock health" or "herd health," which means veterinary services can be performed "remotely by analyzing lab results and food and water consumption data," the report said.

Meanwhile, the beef cattle are generally owned by individual farmers who often have smaller operations, rather than by "integrators" who own poultry and swine raised by growers on contract, according to the study.

Though cattle operations have also been consolidating, those with fewer than 500 head still own a larger proportion of cattle than those with bigger herds, the report said.

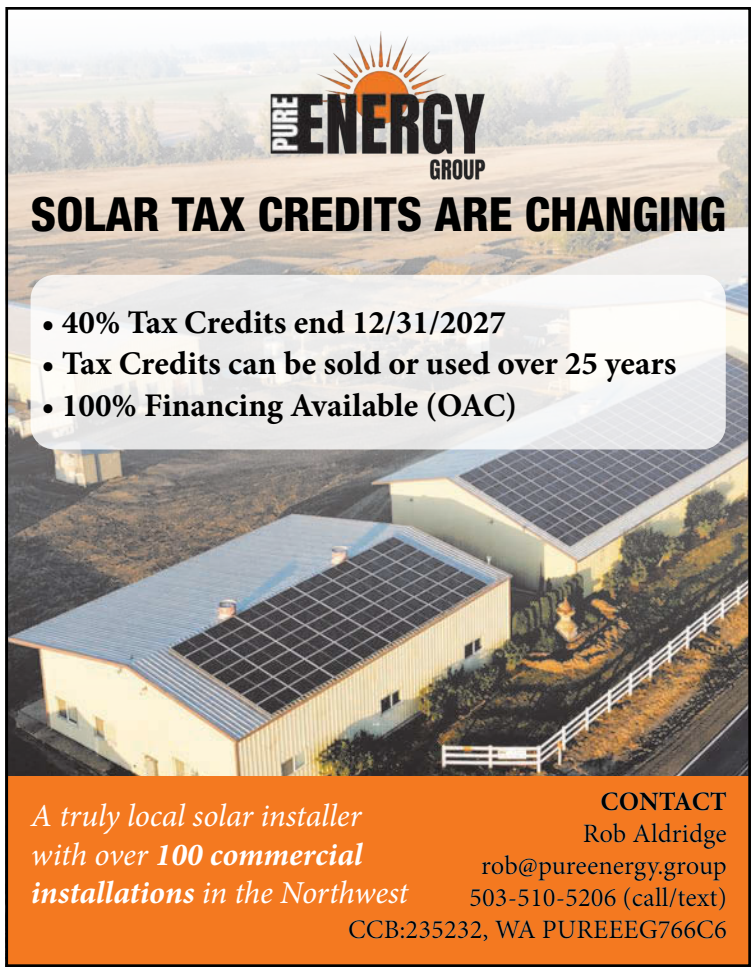
"The structure of the beef cattle industry and the way these operations use veterinary services suggest that cattle are a source of greater demand for veterinary services from private practices than the swine and poultry industries," the study said.

The USDA's report analyzed counties that have been designated as suffering from veterinary shortages and found a "persistent and complex mismatch between where cattle operations are located and the availability of food-animal veterinarians."

Also, incentives meant to recruit veterinarians are still often targeted at relatively populous areas to "attract applicants," which means "many remote and sparsely populated places continue to be underserved," the study said.

"Overall, these patterns highlight that coverage gaps are concentrated in areas with remote locations, small populations, dispersed agricultural activities, and an aging workforce," according to the report.





Dispute over fine heard by WA Supreme Court

By Don Jenkins
Capital Press



TVW/CONTRIBUTED

Attorney Allison Daniel argues Oct. 1 to the Washington Supreme Court that the Department of Ecology illegally fined Grant County farmer Ron Fode, in background.

Grant County, Wash., farmer Ron Fode finally presented his case to the state Supreme Court, more than nine years after being fined for irrigating hay, alfalfa and potatoes without a permit.

Justices pressed Ecology's lawyer, Assistant Attorney General Clifford Kato, at a hearing Oct. 1 to justify the fine, which was originally $618,000, but later reduced to $260,000.

State law requires Ecology to provide irrigators with written technical assistance before lowering the boom. But the only written notice Fode got was a cease-and-desist order.

Kato said the order told Fode what he had to do to stay within the law. But Justice G. Helen Whitener said the order didn't offer any technical assistance.

"It says, 'This is what you're doing wrong.' But as far as I can tell, it (doesn't say) what you need to do to be in compliance," she said.

Ecology fined Fode in 2017 after he persisted in irrigating. Fode later said he had contracts to fill and thought he could work something out with the department.

A prolonged court fight followed, with the Supreme Court agreeing to hear Fode's claim that Ecology failed to provide written technical assistance before fining him.

Irrigators, builders, water utilities and a business group submitted friend-of-the-court briefs to support Fode. The Legislature insisted Ecology help wayward water users before resorting to penalties, they argued.

Fode's attorney, Allison Daniel, said the fine threatens the future of the Fode family farm, and the case raises an important issue for every water user.

Fode's violation triggered Ecology's obligation to provide technical assistance, Daniel said. Instead, "they jumped right into penalties," she said.

"We're not arguing Ecology must invent water rights," Daniel said. "But in order to make that determination, they have to consider the seasonal-transfer application.

"And they simply never did that," she said. "They never looked into whether water rights were available."

Ecology maintains Fode missed a deadline to apply to transfer a water right to land he was leasing. Ecology sent a warning letter to the landowner, and Fode knew about the letter, Kato said. The cease-and-desist order that followed told Fode he had to stop, Kato said.

Once Fode kept irrigating, Ecology was obligated to penalize him, Kato said.

Justices, however, kept coming back to whether written technical assistance preceded the fine. "Where was that done in writing?" Whitener asked.

Kato leaned on the cease-and-desist order and the letter to the landowner.

"She (the landowner) wasn't the violator. So I'm taking it that you don't have an answer to Justice Whitener's question," Justice Sheryl Gordon McCloud said.

Fode also claims the application deadline he missed was a de facto rule that Ecology adopted without public comment. Ecology denies it's a rule, calling it a "flexible office policy."

Justices were more interested in whether Ecology provided written technical assistance.

"Mr. Kato, it sounds like what you're saying is that Mr. Fode would have lost anyway, so (Ecology) is kind of relieved of its obligation to follow the statute," Gordon McCloud said.

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U.S. attorney defends Trump's forced labor tariffs before trade court

By Don Jenkins
Capital Press



WHITE HOUSE/CONTRIBUTED
President Trump addresses the United Nations General Assembly on Sept. 22 in New York. The U.S. Court of International Trade took up his forced labor tariffs Sept. 30.

The U.S. Court of International Trade took up President Trump's forced labor tariffs, the third attempt by the administration to impose across-the-board border taxes on all trading partners.

Deputy Assistant Attorney General Eric Hamilton told the court Sept. 30 that the tariffs target a global problem. He denied the border taxes were merely political.

"Forced labor, unfortunately, remains a persistent practice in the world today," he said.

The attorney for businesses challenging the tariffs said the court shouldn't ignore the tariffs' political history. "Judges don't have to exhibit a naivety that eludes the rest of the public," Pratik Shah said.

The three-member panel in New York City listened to Hamilton and Shah argue for 2 ½ hours over whether the Trade Act of 1974 justifies the 10% or 12.5% forced labor tariffs on 86 countries.

The tariffs went into effect July 24, the moment 10% tariffs imposed to address trade imbalances expired.

The trade-imbalance tariffs replaced the reciprocal tariffs the U.S. Supreme Court struck down in February as too broad. The forced labor tariffs are similar in rates and scope.

U.S. Trade Ambassador Jamieson Greer recommended the forced labor tariffs after an investigation concluded 86 countries imported goods made from forced labor. The global distribution of cheaply made goods undermines U.S. businesses, according to the investigation.

Shah said the investigation was heavy on suspicion and economic theories, but light on country-by-country specifics.

The 1974 act requires taking into consideration each country's level of economic development, he said. The forced-labor investigation, however, didn't distinguish between countries, he said.

"It treats Switzerland or other highly developed economies the exact same as Kazakhstan or Angola or Trinidad and Tobago," he said. "Not all countries are created equal, and this is a country-specific statute."

A United Nations report estimates 27.6 million people are forced laborers. Forced labor is most prevalent in Arab states, according to the report.

Hamilton said accounting for a country's development was optional, but not required.




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Bird flu detected in two dairy cow herds in Washington

Bird flu has been found in two dairy cow herds in Yakima County, Wash., the Washington State Department of Agriculture announced Oct. 8.

The detections are the first cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza in Washington dairy herds. Bird flu has been found in dairy cows in 19 other states since an outbreak began in March 2024.

Cows showed signs over the past week of the sickness, including a drop in milk production. The USDA National Veterinary Services Laboratory confirmed Oct. 8 that cows were infected with bird flu.

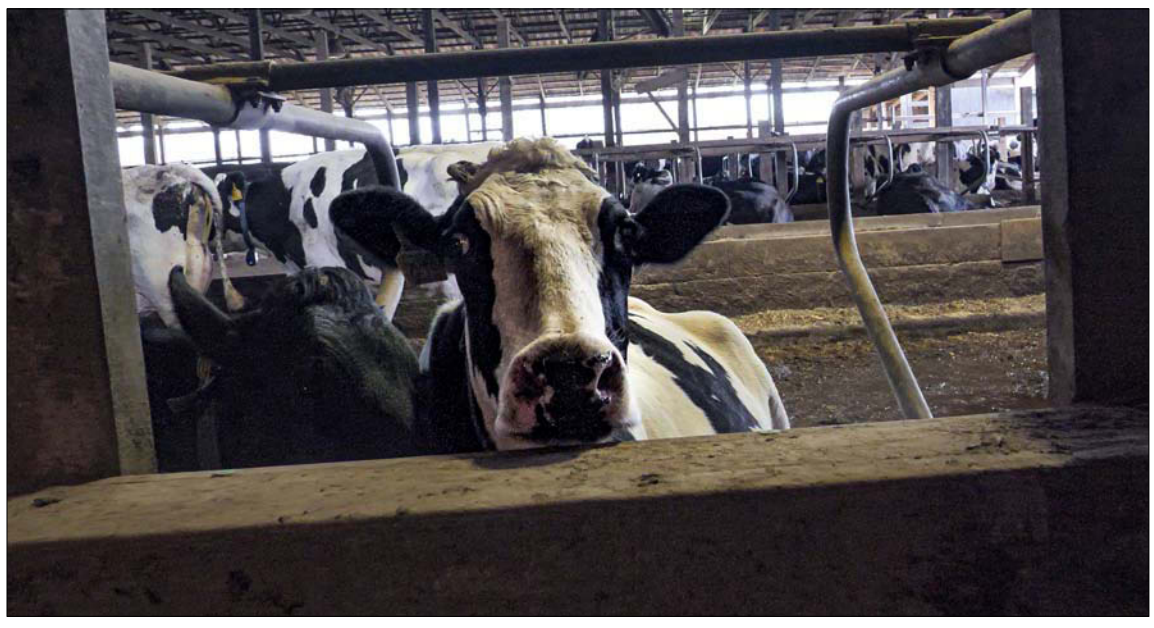
The USDA Animal Health and Plant Inspection Service said it will complete genetic sequencing of the virus as soon as possible. Identifying the strain will help trace the source of the virus.

The two farms are under quarantine, and veterinarians are treating the sick cows, according to the state agriculture de-partment. The Yakima Health District issued a statement saying it was in contact with the dairies and monitoring the health of workers exposed to infected cattle.

The department urged livestock owners to report cows they suspect are sick to their veterinarian. Most cattle recovery in six weeks with care, according to the department

Signs a cow has bird flu include changes in milk appearance (thicker and often yellowish to brown), decreased milk production, decrease in feed intake, fever, respiratory symptoms, change in manure and rumination.

Since 2024, bird flu has been detected in 1,178 cattle herds across the country. California has had the most cases, 773, followed by Idaho, with 177 cases. All cases in both states have been on dairies.



PRESTON KERES/USDA

Bird flu has been detected in dairy cows in Yakima County, Wash.

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CASE IH AGRICULTURE

WA water year sees floods, puny snowpack, irrigation cutbacks

By Don Jenkins
Capital Press

Washington had its 55th-wettest water year in 131 years of record-keeping, but the state still declared a statewide drought and Yakima Valley irrigators were curtailed for the fourth-straight summer.

Although rain and snow totals were in the middling range, temperatures were not. Washington had its second-warmest water year since 1895, according to the National Centers for Environmental Information.

Average temperatures statewide were 3.2 degrees Fahrenheit above normal between Oct. 1, 2025, and Sept. 30, 2026. Only the water year that ended in 2015 was warmer.

December was extraordinarily wet — the fifth-wettest December on reord. But it was also the warmest December on record. Water flooded farms, but the water was soon gone. Snow didn't pile up in the mountains.

By early spring, Central Washington farmers were looking at one of the worse droughts in state history. But from there, things got better. By the fall, irrigators had a surprising amount of water. "It was a very interesting water year," Kittitas Reclamation District manager Urban Eberhart said.

YEAR IN REVIEW

The water year got off to a bad start. In early October last year, the Washington Department of Ecology cut-off irrigators with senior water rights in the Yakima River basin, a rare occurrence.

Normally, irrigators with senior rights get water through October. But by the beginning of the month, the Bureau of Reclamation's five reservoirs, the source of irrigation water, were barely wet.

The low reservoirs portended an even worse drought in 2026. Amazingly, however, rain poured into the reservoirs over the next several months, especially December.

Basins across the state posted impressive rainfall totals for the month: 168% of average in the Yakima River basin; 180% in the Skagit River basin and 206% in the Columbia River above Grand Coulee Dam.

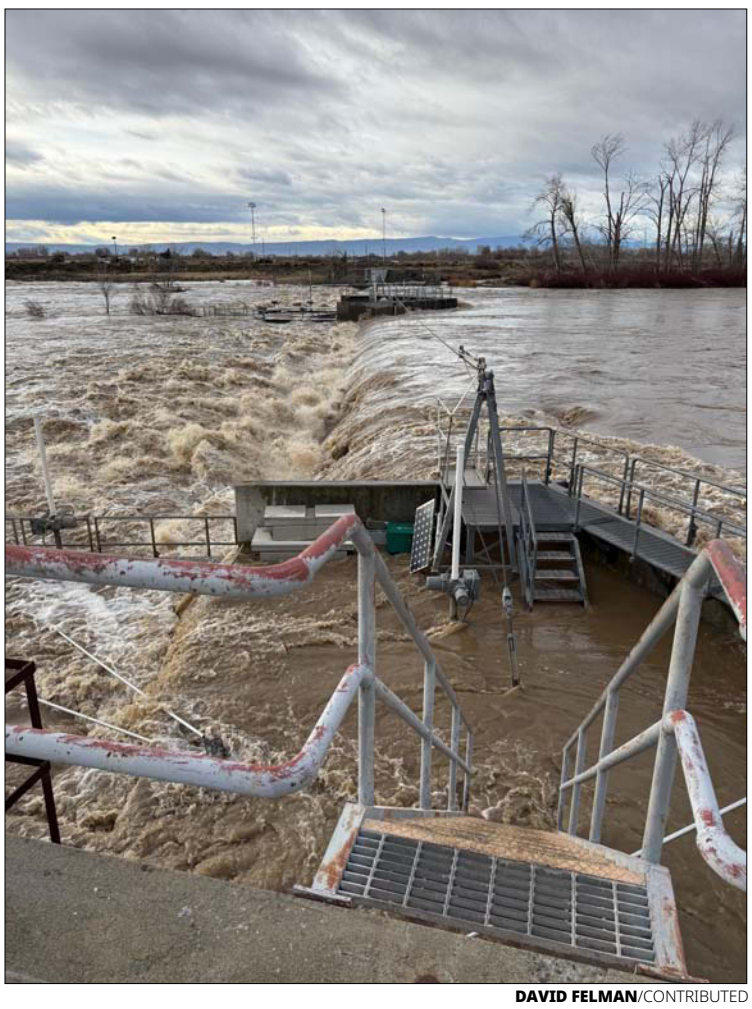
In January and February, the rain tapered. But temperatures stayed above average. By March 1, the statewide snowpack was only 54% of normal, the Natural Resources Conservation Service reported.

In early March, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation projected Yakima Valley irrigators with junior water rights would get 44% of their full allotments of water. In a worst-case scenario, irrigators would get 31%, the bureau warned.

The state proceeded to have its 15th-wettest March on record. But there was no March miracle in the mountains. Average temperatures were still above normal. The statewide snowpack on April 1 was 52% of normal, the smallest snowpack since 2015

Because of the bleak snowpack, Ecology declared a statewide drought in early April. Ecology has now declared a drought in all or parts of Washington in seven of the past 10 years.

See **WATER**, 15C



DAVID FELMAN/CONTRIBUTED

Water washes over the Sunnyside Dam in Central Washington during a very wet December Despite the winter rain, Washington had a statewide drought.

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Longtime California wheat geneticist receives World Agriculture Prize

By Matthew Weaver
Capital Press

Longtime University of California wheat geneticist Jorge Dubcovsky has been named the 2026 World Agriculture Prize Laureate.

Dubcovsky received the award in the category for countries that have a developed economy from the Global Confederation of Higher Education Associations for the Agricultural and Life Sciences (GCHERA).

"It is a nice recognition by peers of the value of our work," Dubcovsky told Capital Press.

He most enjoys planning new experiments, discovering new things, and "interacting with curious and intelligent young people every day!"

"Dubcovsky is internationally recognized as one of the world's most influential wheat geneticists," GCHERA said in a press release. "For more than three decades, Dubcovsky has led innovative research that has significantly advanced scientific understanding of wheat biology and accelerated the application of genomic technologies in crop improvement."

Dubcovsky's work has been instrumental in identifying and characterizing key genes controlling yield, disease resistance, flowering time, nutrient use efficiency and adaptation to diverse growing environments, the organization stated.

"These discoveries have been widely adopted by breeding programs and have contributed to the development of improved wheat varieties cultivated on millions of hectares worldwide," the GCHERA press release states.



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA-DAVIS/CONTRIBUTED

Jorge Dubcovsky, longtime University of California-Davis wheat geneticist, is the 2026 World Agriculture Prize Laureate. His work has been instrumental in identifying and characterizing key genes controlling yield, disease resistance, flowering time, nutrient use efficiency and adaptation to diverse growing environments.

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BREEDING PROGRAM UPDATE

Dubcovsky reported that UC Davis' small grains breeding program is "doing very well."

"New, young and energetic professor" Xiaofei Zhang is taking over Dubcovky's previous breeding program responsibilities; "we are collaborating closely and effectively."

The program is developing dual-purpose wheat varieties for forage and good breadmaking quality, as requested by California wheat farmers.

"This will give growers more flexibility on where to sell their harvest," Dubcovsky said.

Zhang has a new USDA grant to investigate new dwarfing genes developed in Dubcovsky's lab to improve wheat yield "beyond the gains of the first green revolution."

Former PhD. and postdoctoral student Josh Hegarty leads daily breeding operations and making "good inroads" with triticale varieties, Dubcovsky said. The university's triticale varieties Bopak and Atrea are being used "extensively," and Hegarty is releasing three new varieties. In the pipeline are awn-less varieties and varieties with improved breadmaking quality.

BIGGEST NEEDS

The industry's biggest needs, according to Dubcovsky:

1. Dual-purpose varieties intended for grain production and livestock forage.

2. "We need to keep our varieties resistant to emerging pathogens and keep an eye on a new race of stripe rust that defeated one of the two major resistance genes Yr5 and Yr15 we have currently deployed."

3. "Yield, yield, yield."

4. "Without forgetting quality," Dubcovsky said. "We need them all for successful varieties."

'PERFECT COLLABORATION'

Dubcovsky thanked farmers for their support for the last 28 years.

"Grower's funds are essential to keep the breeding program running, since that part is not paid by UC Davis or USDA," he said. "This is a perfect collaboration: Growers provide support to develop their varieties; UC Davis provides knowledge, breeders and facilities; USDA provides funds for research and innovation. If each of us keep doing his part, we have a bright future."

Dubcovsky will be formally honored during the 2026 World Agriculture Prize Award Ceremony Oct. 28 at Nanjing Agricultural University in China.

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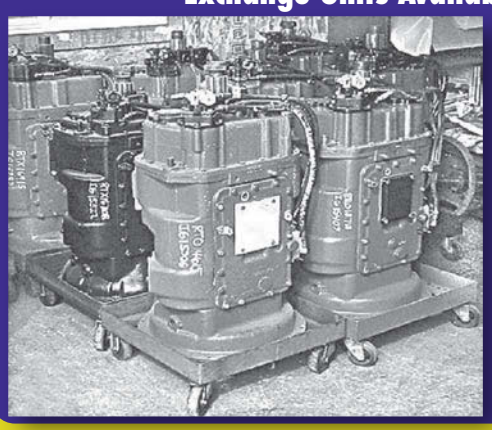
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WATER

Continued from 13C

In May, four Yakima River basin irrigation districts with senior water-rights sent a letter to Ecology saying they didn't want to be cut-off for a second-straight October. If necessary, Ecology should be more sparing with water to irrigators with junior water-rights to protect old water rights, according to the district.

As the summer progressed, however, the irrigation outlook improved. The Reclamation Bureau's worst-case scenario never came to pass. In mid-September, the Reclamation Bureau projected irrigators would get 62% of their full allotments. Irrigation seasons were extended into October.

The winter rain, though not snow, soaked the ground and contributed to late-season runoff, Eberhart said. Also the summer, though warm, did not have extended periods of triple-digit temperature, he said.

Also, the region got rain in September, unlike the year before, he said. At one point, the Ellensburg-based Kittitas district thought it would be out of water by September. Instead, the district delivered water until Oct. 15.

"Things were gradually changing for the better and then they really changed in September," Eberhart said.

The Roza Irrigation District, another Yakima Valley district with junior water rights, also was looking at stopping deliveries by early September. Instead, the district ran until Oct. 12.

"We had favorable weather in June, and we really got a break in September," Roza manager Scott Revell said.

As the water year ended Sept. 30, the bureau's five reservoirs held about 207,000 acre-feet of water. That's well below the long-term average of 313,000 acre-feet. But it's better than the 84,750 acre-feet the reservoirs held on the same date a year earlier.

"I am more optimistic than I was last year at this time. But check back in 90 days," Revell said.

Here is a month-by-month look at precipitation and temperatures as recorded by the National Centers for Environmental Information.

October was the 38th wettest and 58th coldest; **November** was the 65th wettest and seventh warmest; **December** was the fifth-wettest and the warmest; **January** was the 23rd driest and 14th warmest;

February was the 32nd driest and 23rd warmest; **March** was the 15th wettest and 21st warmest; **April** was the 43rd driest and 25th warmest; **May** was the 34th driest and seventh warmest;

June was the 52nd driest and 27th warmest; **July** was the 26th driest and 25th warmest; **August** was the 38th driest and 16th warmest; **September** was the 43rd wettest and 56th coldest.

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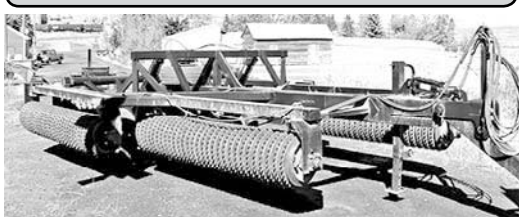
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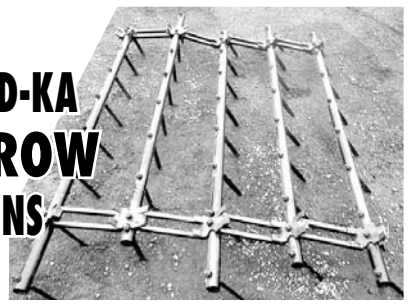
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'22 RBR VORTEX 430, 1123 Hrs, 120' Booms, Hawkeye Nozzles, 2000 Gal SS Tank, 710/70R38 R1 Floater Tires & 380 R1 Skinny Tires, Warranty to 3K Hrs or 11/26/27.....$**425,000**

COMBINES



'24 MACDON FD245 FLEX DRAPER, Top Auger, Contour Max Buddy Wheels, Triple Reel Transport Kit.....$**139,950**



'15 CIH 8240, 4405 Sep Hrs, 4WD, Hillco 27%, '17 MacDon FD-75-45'.....$**112,900**



'21 JD S780, 652 Sep Hrs, 4WD, Pro Drive Trans, IF1250/50R32 Drive Tires.....$**325,00**



'23 JD HD45R, 45', 489 Hrs, Dose Tandem Axle Cart w/ Brakes.....$**115,000**

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'20 JD 2660VT VERTICAL TILLAGE TOOL, 33' 10", Adjustable Gang Angle, Pro Finish Rear Rolling Baskets ...$**79,950**



'15 GREAT PLAINS 8556CF FIELD CULTIVATOR, 56', 7" Spacing, K Flex Shanks, 5 Bar Flex.....$**59,500**



'18 JD 2720 DISK RIPPER, 22.5', 9 Shank, 3 Section Frame, Cushion Gangs, 26" Rear Blades, 23.25" Front Blades, 1500 Total Acres.....$**69,950**



'18 GREAT PLAINS 3500 TURBO MAX, 3K Acreas on New Blades & Spiders.....$**79,950**



'18 GREAT PLAINS 7336DH DISK, 36', Gauge Wheels, 800 Total Acres.....$**57,500**

TRUCKS & TRAILERS



'90 PETERBILT 378, 400 Cummins, 13 Spd, Shows 247395vMi, Lift Axle, 20' Bed/Hoist, Roll Tarp...$**25,000**



'92 IH 9400, S60 @ 450 HP, 13 Spd, Shows 544911 Mi, 19' Body W/ Hoist, Roll Tarp, Seed Auger.....$**22,000**



'17 FORD F350XL DUALLY, 6.2L Gas, AT, 4WD, 83660 Mi, 8' Flatbed, Fuel Tank/Pump, Compressor, Side Boxes.....$**19,950**



'93 FORD L9000, 8.3L Cummins, 6 Spd, 3500 Gal 4 Compartment Aluminum Tank, Air Brakes.....$**14,500**



'96 IH 4900, DT466, 6 Spd, 331K Mi, Air Brakes, 17' Bed/Hoist.....$**9,500**



'91 IH 7100, DT466, 6 Spd, 276K Mi, Air Brakes, 16' Bed/Hoist, Roll Tarp, Seed Auger.....$**14,950**



'96 SHOPBUILT HOPPER PUP, 21', 20' Tongue, Roll Tarp, Hyd Gate.....$**9,500**



'68 ALLOY HOPPER PUP, 21', 20' Tongue, Roll Tarp.. .....$**7,950**



'11 BOURBON HOPPER SET, 25' Lead & 25' Pup, 102" Wide, AirRide, Roll Tarps, All Aluminum Wheels.....$**49,950**



'77 FRUEHAUF HOPPER PUP, 22', New Brakes, Roll Tarp.....$**9,500**

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'20 MF 5711 DYNA 4, 1590 Hrs, MFWD, Loader, 8' Bucket.....$**74,900**



'11 CIH 450HD, 3850 Hrs, PTO, AutoSteer, Big Pump, 6 Remotes.....$**164,500**



'07 JD 9520, 8685 Hrs, AutoSteer, 800 Radials, PTO, Weights, 600 Gal Tank.....$**112,950**



'98 JD 9300, 12512 Hrs, 24 Spd, 710 Radials, Weights, 4 Remotes.....$**29,950**



'63 CAT D6B, D333T, 11' Angle/Tilt Blade .....$**6,500**



'23 MF 8740S, 932 Hrs, CVT, Auto Steer, Weights, (6) Rear Remotes.....$**239,950**



'05 JD 8120, 6950 Hrs, MFWD, (4) Hyd Remotes, AutoSteer .....$**85,000**

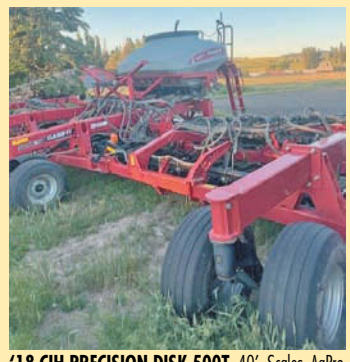


'14 JD 9510R, 3278 Hrs, 1 Owner, AutoSteer, Goodyear 800 LSW Duals, Weight Package Deleted.....$**208,750**



'12 CIH 500 QUADTRAC, 5060 Hrs, 36" Tracks, Axles Checked & Repaired.....$**142,000**

DRILLS



'18 CIH PRECISION DISK 500T, 40', Scales, AgPro Meters, 4Section Control On Seed & Starter...$**150,000**



'14 JD 1890, 40', 7.5" Spacing, 1 Owner, 32K Acres, Blockage Monitors, '13 JD 1910 Cart .....$**129,500**



'19 CIH PRECISION DISK 500DS, 60', 10" Spacing, '19 CIH 4585 Tow Between Cart....$**225,000**



'15 CIH FLEX HOE 700, 60' 12" Spacing w/4" Dutch Precision Points, 3430 Cart, 2450 Liquid Cone Tank, Full Run Blockage Monitors.....$**165,000**

'20 CIH PRECISION DISK 500, 50', 7.5" Spacing, CIH 2280 Cart .....$**135,000**

GREAT PLAINS 3S-4000HD, 40' 7.5" Spacing, Liquid Kit, 500 Gal Tank, 3" Packers.....$**75,000**

'14 GREAT PLAINS 3S5000HD, 50', 6" Spacing, 15K Acres, Track Scratcher, 1 Owner.....$**79,950**

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