



Agriculture keeps pace with nation's growth

By **Don Jenkins**
Capital Press

The history of U.S. agriculture can be summed up by observing that an ever declining number of farmers produced more and more for an ever increasing number of people.

One out of two Americans worked on farms in 1900. It was one out of six in 1950. Now, it's about one out of 50. Farmers are few, but farm goods are abundant. The U.S. exports more food than any other country.

At home, food doesn't come from supermarkets, but you gawk at food there. On National Agriculture Day this year, American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall marveled, "You can go to Wal-Mart or any other store and buy several different kinds of green beans — 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Where else in the world can you do that?"

The first Census of Agriculture that captured the essential features of U.S. farming and ranching was released



Photographic postcard showing roughly 30 mules pulling a combine harvester down a hill in a grain field on the H. Collier Ranch near Washtucna, Wash.

in 1850. The Commerce Department counted 1.4 million farms, or one farm for every 16 U.S. residents.

By 1900, the country had 5.7 million farms, or one farm for every 13 residents. "This large increase in the number of farms since 1850 is a fact of great social importance and is reflected in all the statistics of agriculture," the department stated in

the introduction.

During those 50 years, the center of U.S. agriculture moved West. In 1850, only 0.5% percent of U.S. farmland was in what are now the 11 Western states. By 1900, the percentage was 4.5%.

Horses and mules made U.S. farmers more productive in the 1800s than European and Asian farmers. The census counted 22 million horses and mules on

farms in 1900. But that era was passing.

"The increased use of mechanical power on farms has influenced agriculture more than any other factor during the present century," the 1950 farm census stated. "With a tractor, the farmer probably turned out twice the amount of farm products for market as his father did with a team of horses 50 years earlier."

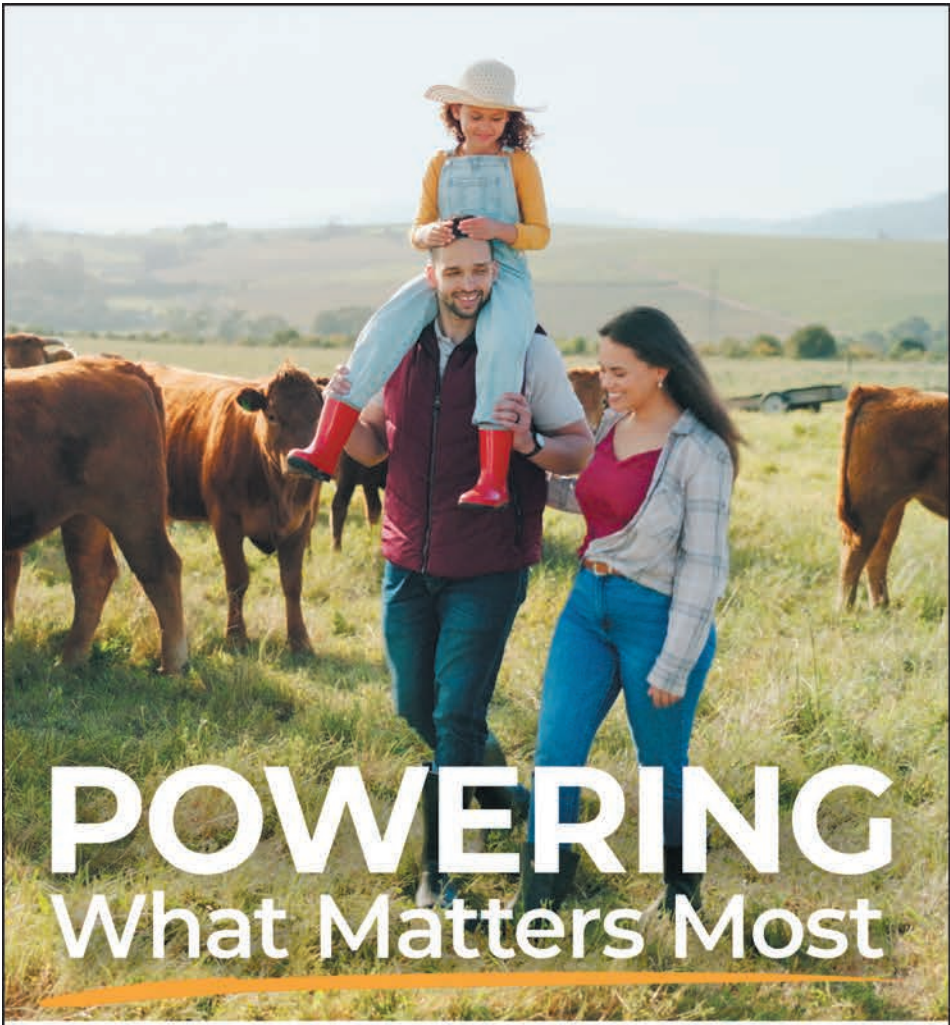
estimated the decline of horses and mules freed up 70 million acres.

The census foreshadowed other changes. Farms got fewer, but bigger. More farmers worked at other jobs. The number of full-time farmers may have decreased by 1 million between 1900 and 1950, according to the census.

In the 1990s, the USDA took over the census. The department cut back on narratives and presented more rows of numbers.

The most recent census, released in 2022, counted 1.9 million farms, or one farm for every 1,750 U.S. residents. Farmers are aging, but slowly. In 2002, the average farmer was 55. Twenty years later, he or she was 58.

Some aspects of farming seem timeless. The Pennsylvania Gazette in 1790 printed an excerpt from a book called "The Gentlemen Farmer." The author observed, "The hopes and fears that attend agriculture keep the mind always awake and in an enlivening degree of agitation."



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Farm, ranch families share their histories

We asked Capital Press readers to share the stories of their family farms. Here are those submissions.

GRIGG FARMS

Grigg Farms is a fourth-generation family farm rooted in the Quincy Valley of Washington, where a legacy that began in 1937 has grown from a small dairy operation into one of the region's leading producers, packers, and shippers of onions.

Built on a foundation of Faith, Family, and Farm, the farm combines decades of tradition with modern agricultural practices to deliver fresh, high-quality produce to tables across the country and around the world. With deep ties to the land and community, Grigg Farms remains committed to feeding families while preserving the values that have guided it for nearly a century."



LUKE GRIGG/CONTRIBUTED

"My great great grandma (Maud) along with my great grandma (Emma Grigg), and my great aunt Sally as their family was constructing their first home on their land."

LONELY LANE FARMS

Lonely Lane Farms, established by John Kloft in 1939 near Mt. Angel, Ore., is a third-generation family operation that today combines direct-to-consumer beef sales with an on-farm USDA-inspected processing facility.

John began farming wheat and oats before adding a Jersey dairy herd. He and his son, Joe, operated the dairy until the late 1980s, when the farm shifted to a beef cattle operation.

In the early 2000s, third-generation farmer Mike Kloft, Joe's son, joined the operation and began selling directly to grocery stores and farmers markets.

Today, Mike and his wife, Patty, raise Hereford cattle and manage the farm's USDA-inspected, on-farm processing facility. The farm has sold



PATTY KLOFT/CONTRIBUTED

John and Joe Kloft on Lonely Lane Farms.

directly to customers and retail partners for over 25 years.

In a full-circle moment, John Kloft originally sold his own meat processing business to begin farming. Today, the family has brought both pieces back together. With a fourth generation coming up, Lonely Lane



ELIN MURPHY/CONTRIBUTED

LaVerne D. Murphy on Murphy Family Farms.

Farms continues to grow as a multigenerational operation rooted in tradition, adapting to today's markets and focused on the future.

MURPHY FARMS

It was the 1850s and the Donation Land Claim Act made possible the birth of the Murphy Farm nestled in Coles Valley of Umpqua.

It was a tough go over the years. Four kids grew up on that 320-acre farm helping milk, gather eggs, hay, lamb and even raise turkeys.

One brother broke off his quarter which is now the Clark Ranch. LaVerne D. Murphy worked with his sisters, Melinda and Louise (my husband Bill's mom), to keep the Murphy Farm going. And, as many good farmers did, he contributed to the community by serving on multiple School, Farm Bureau, Livestock. Co-Op and Educational Service District Boards.

The breakthrough came when LaVerne began working with OSU and established Subterranean Clover, transforming the land into productive pasture for sheep.

Today, lambs are still romping on the land, shared with Pinot Noir, Tempranillo, Teroldago, Cab Franc and Chardonnay. It's called legacy and diversity. I'm proud to have married into this

See **FAMILIES**, 3B

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2012 John Deere 4940 Sprayer diesel engine, hydrostatic transmission, 1200 gallon stainless steel liquid system, 120' boom, stainless steel chemical inductor, Vogelsang front fill, John Deere GreenStar 3 monitor, Auto Steer, 4,421 hours. **\$76,000**

2018 John Deere F4365, 2724 hours w/AB485 Twin air bin system, 70' boom.....**\$162,000**

2017 John Deere F4365, 3435 hours, New Leader DN495 twin bin spinner..... **\$144,000**



2020 RBR Venturi 400, 810 Bed, 1889 hrs**\$199,500**

2020 RBR Enterprise Venturi 400, Case IH Flex Air 810 70' Boom. Raven Viper 4, 2070 Hrs.....**\$162,000**

2017 RBR Venturi 350, FLX810 Bed, 4956 Hrs.....**\$109,000**



2018 Timpte Dry Trailer, 40' aluminum hopper trailer, hydraulic dry tender belt can be run off truck hydraulic wet kit or self contained gas engine, electric roll over tarp, sight glass windows, tandem axle, air ride suspension **\$63,000**

2013 Merritt Heritage Grain Trailer, C39 foot trailer, air ride suspension, Agricovert electric roll tarp, back and front Rapat conveyor tender system, front and rear ladder. **\$134,500**



2016 Case IH Titan 4540, FLX810, 70ft. Viper 4, Smartrax, 3246 hours **\$96,500**

2020 Case 4540, 2511 hrs.

Single bin **\$173,000**

2014 Case 3530 w/16' Chandler Litter Bed, 3255 hours **\$142,000**

2012 Case Titan 3520, 2475 hours **\$85,000**

2014 Case 4530, 4125 hours w/ triple bins....**\$102,500**

2016 Case 4540, Triple Bin, 3411 hrs.....**\$134,500**

2017 Case IH 4540, 4590 hours w/ triple bins... **\$92,000**



2018 TerraGator 8400B, Air Max Precision, Viper 4, Smartrax autosteer, 2177 hours **\$146,500**

2017 TG8400B, 3387 hours twin bin with micro bins **\$138,000**



2019 RBR Venturi 380, Cummins diesel engine, Allison automatic transmission, 4 wheel drive, air ride, RA-885 Salford 3 bin bed, 72' spread width, Alliance flotation tires, fenders, lightbar, Viper 4, 2,724 hours **\$153,000**



Low Hours. 2021 Terragator TG8400C, Diesel, CVT, Viper 4+ NL4500G4 Edge - 14'. New Front Tires! 2118 Hours.....**\$162,000**

2015 Terragator TG8400B, New Leader L400064, 3222 hours..... **\$125,000**

2009 Terragator 8203, 3437 hours **\$73,000**



2017 RBR Vector 350, Cummins Diesel Engine. New Leader 14' Stainless steel dry spreader box, dual spinners, Raven Viper 4, 2,216 hours. **\$134,500**



1974 Beaird NH3, Anhydrous Ammonia Tank. 44'2" Length, 7'10" Diameter. On Skid. 17,621 Gallons. Pump and plumbing included, has a national board number. Tank is purged. Located in Wilbur, WA..... **\$36,000**

2015 CaseIH Titan 4530 Dry Floater, diesel engine, CaselH 810 Flex-Air dry air flow system, 70' boom, electric roll tarp, Raven Viper Pro, Smartrax, 2,491 hours. **\$124,500**

2016 Case IH Titan 3540 Floater 3 Wheel Floater With 810 Air Delivery Box, Triple Bin, Viper 4, Smartrax auto steer. 1,512 hours **\$139,000**



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'12 TerraGator 9300 Airmax Precision, 4302 Hrs **\$77,000**

2015 TerraGator 8400B, 3,222 Hrs, AGCO Power 8.4L 6-Cyl, Diesel, CVT Transmission, Viper Pro, New Leader L4000G4 MultiApplier Dry Box **\$125,000**

Larry Greyn 406-466-5356 • Brian Carlson 406-220-1705 • Choteau, MT

FAMILIES,
Continued from 2B

amazing family 40 years ago and carry on Laverne’s dedication to service through many venues including Oregon FFA and now as Chair of the Oregon Board of Agriculture and Umpqua Community College Foundation.

FOLLETT FARM
Family tradition says, Warren Follett, Jr., in 1903 stopped to visit his wife’s family (Boswells) while moving to Canada.

The Boswells lived in the Pine Grove district outside Elgin, Ore. Warren rode out onto the breaks of the Minam River and saw the river below, with bunchgrass ridges and timber, he declared he didn’t need to travel any further, he had found what he was looking for.

They spent the first winter in a crowded cabin, Warren knew he had to provide his wife Encora a home. He bought adjacent property on the north side of Stubblefield Mountain. They bought property that encompassed the Minam Summit to the old viewpoint area on both sides of the highway.

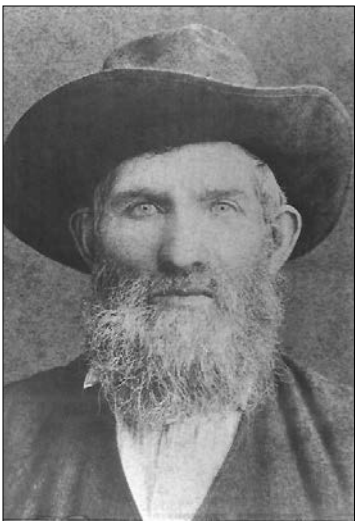
The family raised livestock since the 1600s, in Massachusetts, and moved west as the nation grew into New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, Utah, Arizona and Oregon. The KF brand has been in use since King Follett started using it in the 1800s in New York.

Present ranch ownership is Boyd and Sheree Follett, the fifth generation operating the ranch in NE Union County. The seventh generation is involved with the ranching operation as well. The ranch received Century status in 2005

COLVIN RANCH
Colvin Ranch was founded in Tenino, Wash., in 1854, and is the oldest cattle ranch in Washington still owned and



The Mielke Cattle Company butcher shop in Davenport , Wash., circa 1896-1897.



Ignatius Colvin founded Colvin Ranch near Tenino, Wash., in 1845.

operated by the founding family. The ranch was founded by Ignatius Colvin, who arrived at Fort Vancouver from Boone County, Mo., in 1849. Over the next few years he worked at a sawmill in Tumwater and went

prospecting for gold at Haida Gwaii (formerly known as the Queen Charlotte Islands) before settling on a donation land claim and founding Colvin Ranch.

Today, Colvin Ranch is operated by Jennifer Colvin, the fifth generation to continue the family’s legacy. The ranch is home to some of the last remaining native prairies in Southwest Washington, and is protected by an NRCS conservation easement to ensure it will remain prairie forever. The ranch sells grass-fed, grass-finished beef throughout Southwest Washington direct to consumers, as well as to retailers, restaurants, food banks, and school districts.

In 2025 the ranch opened Colvin Ranch Provisions, its first retail store located at the Tenino Agriculture Business Park. The store features Colvin Ranch beef, as well as a variety of specialty foods grown, raised, and made

in Southwest Washington including organic eggs, dairy products, preserves, snacks, sauces, and seasonal produce.

DRUFFEL FARMS
The Druffel family established deep roots in Washington’s Palouse region as part of the pioneering wheat-farming community of Whitman County in the late 19th century.

Emigrating from northwest Germany, the five siblings — Bernard, Franz, Joseph, Wilhelm, and their sister Mary — ultimately settled in the Johnson-Colton-Uniontown area. There, they joined an established German Catholic community and found opportunity in the fertile, rolling wheat lands that would define their livelihood for generations.

Before acquiring farmland near Colton, the siblings spent nearly a decade moving westward in search of opportunity.

Bernard, Franz, and Mary farmed in South Dakota, while Wilhelm and Joseph worked in St. Louis, Mo. During that time, Joseph was employed at two of the city’s prominent breweries, Griesedieck Brewery and Anheuser-Busch.

By 1887, all five had arrived in Spokane, where they briefly lived in modest conditions on Havermale Island in the Spokane River. Following the devastating Spokane fire of 1889, they intensified their search for a place to put down roots. Drawn by both productive soils and strong cultural ties, the Druffels settled in the Colton area, where they built lasting success.

IMPERIAL STOCK RANCH
Located in north central Oregon, the Imperial Stock Ranch has been raising sheep, cattle, grains and hay since 1871.

Established as a 160-acre homestead claim by Richard Hinton, it grew to be Oregon’s largest individually owned land and livestock holding by 1900.

The original ranch headquarters remain intact, and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In each generation (Hintons, Wards, Carvers), the ranch has maintained its heritage and economic viability, making visionary changes in agricultural practices to ensure the future of the operation.

Since the late 1980s, the Carver family has owned and operated this historic ranch.

Under Dan and Jeanne Carver’s visionary leadership, they implemented a comprehensive management plan that included practices like adapted grazing, no-till farming, and off-stream watering points to ensure the land’s natural fertility. In addition to their progressive approach to production, they successfully transitioned from selling unprocessed commodity wool and lamb to creating,

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FAMILIES,
Continued from 3B

marketing and selling retail products.

The success of their wool marketing earned a partnership with Ralph Lauren for the Team USA uniforms for multiple Olympic Games, and has drawn numerous fashion brand partners to their door.

The Imperial Stock Ranch became the first ranch in the world certified to the global Responsible Wool Standard in 2017, and has helped make Oregon agriculture visible on a world stage.

MIELKE CATTLE COMPANY

In April 1883, 33-year-old Gottlieb Mielke journeyed by train and horseback from Hammond, Minn., to Davenport, Wash., to locate land on which to settle. He found land suitable for farming and raising cattle southwest of Davenport in the Rocklyn area.

Grain crops were farmed with horses while pastureland was used for feeding horses and cattle. Shorthorn cattle were the first breed of cattle raised on the ranch. A butcher shop was established by the family in Davenport to process cattle with their five-point star brand on them.

Faith in God was very important to Gottlieb and his family. He helped start a German Methodist Church near where he built his house. Scripture and lessons learned in the Rocklyn Church through the generations have helped remind them of their purpose on earth.

Family remains central to our farm's longevity of over 140 years. Robert and Kristy Mielke lead our farm's day-to-day operations, supported by Judy Mielke, Art Pizzo, and members of the fifth and sixth generations who con-



The Mielke Cattle Company butcher shop in Davenport, Wash., circa 1896-1897.



Frank Albert Smith, Walther Smith, Given Hicks and Alvin Smith in the 1930s. Marvin Road Farm Stand and Blacksmith Farms is in Lacey, Wash.

tribute as they are able.

Through the years, we have transitioned from Hereford to mainly Angus cattle. With God's help, we hope to keep farming for many more years.

MARVIN ROAD FARM STAND AND BLACKSMITH FARMS

On this nation's 250th anniversary we here at Marvin Road Farm Stand and Blacksmith Farms are celebrating 125 years of the same family farming now in the middle of Lacey, Wash.

Cattle have been the mainstay but over the past few years we have decided

to try and take advantage of being surrounded by houses and apartments with a Washington only produce market.

We grow a certain amount on the property and source everything else from family farms throughout Washington, mainly through the Yakima Valley. — Michael and Nichon Smith Marvin Road Farm Stand, Pau and Margo Thomsen Blacksmith Farms

WARD RANCHES

Clyde Ward came to Oregon from Wyoming with three brothers and a widowed mother in 1903.

He began raising potatoes in 1915. He married Leonora Renz in 1922. They had two sons and a daughter. Alvin returned home from the Portland shipyards, and Ralph returned from the Korean War to farm full-time

with Clyde. Ralph and Alice's sons, Mark and Craig, joined the operation in the early 1980s after graduating from Oregon State.

Today, Mark's son Matt and Craig's daughter Alyssa continue the family farming tradition. Many other family members have had active roles in the farm's success.

Potatoes have always been the farm's primary crop and have been grown continuously since Clyde's first harvest in 1915. In its early years, the farm also raised dairy and beef cattle, hogs, chickens, sheep, horses, wheat, and barley.

From the 1950s through the 1990s, feeder cattle and a cow-calf operation were important parts of the business, supported by alfalfa and grass hay. The early 2000s brought another transition with the addition of peppermint and corn to potatoes, wheat and hay.

We are a quintessential American farm family, grounded in pioneer values of independence and ingenuity, and committed to facing the future with optimism.



Members of the Ward family on the ranch in Baker City, Ore., founded by Clyde Ward in 1903.

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A look at a bygone era

Photos from the collection
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OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY/CONTRIBUTED

Seven men and four horses work in a hay field in Kennewick, Wash., in 1906.



OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY/CONTRIBUTED

Hauling wheat to a depot in Goldendale, Wash., for shipment by rail in the early 1900s.



OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY/CONTRIBUTED

People sitting and standing on the top railings of corrals filled with cattle near Harrisburg, Ore., in the early 1900s.



OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY/CONTRIBUTED

Photograph of farm laborers in the rows of a strawberry field. in Clackamas, Ore., owned by F. Mott. One man holds a baby on his knee.

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January 15, 2021

Jim Zantone
903 N Kings Rd.
Nampa, ID 83687

Re: Fertilizer

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You requested a brief story of my success with your "chicken soup" applied to my grass hay land.

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Very Respectfully,
Owen O. Junayo
General Partner



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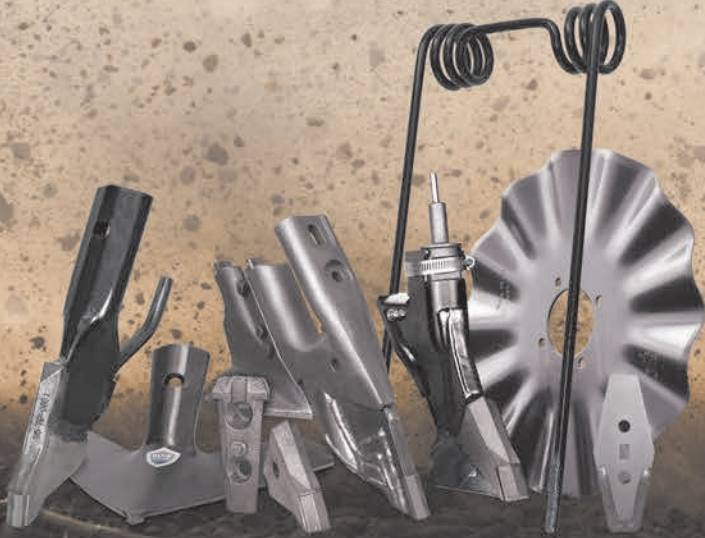
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John Deere's plow 'revolutionary, essential' for farming

By Matthew Weaver
Capital Press

As a blacksmith, John Deere would have been well-versed in repairing farm tools.

“... everything from pitchforks to plow parts to wagon wheels and more,” Neil Dahlstrom, heritage marketing and archives manager for the John Deere company, told Capital Press. “He would have understood how certain types of iron and steel wore down over time.”

Deere heard complaints about soil clogging up plow moldboards, noticed a broken sawmill blade and conceived the idea of incorporating it into a plow’s moldboard.

“Today it’s hard to imagine that a horse-drawn plow would have been so revolutionary, but it indeed was,” Dahlstrom said.

The steel plow cut through the soil more easily than iron and created a surface that through its material and curvature let the soil curl over and off, instead of clogging the surface, he said.

Instead of stopping every few minutes to scrape the soil from the moldboard, farmers could work continuously. It saved time and physical toil.

“Today we call that uptime and efficiency and the reduction of operator fatigue,” Dahlstrom said. “Despite advances in technology and machine forms, the goals have remained unchanged, specifically working to increase productivity with less labor.”

Deere built only one plow in 1837, then two more the following year.

Steel would have been extremely scarce, so it would have been impossible to build large quantities, Dahlstrom said.



John Deere Steel Gang Plow, three bottom, for Portland, July 19, 1916



A replica of the John Deere steel plow.

Deere continued blacksmithing until he entered a partnership in 1843 to build a small plow factory in Grand Detour, Ill.

“Even then, introducing a new technology like steel in a plow was difficult,” Dahlstrom said. “Many farmers thought that steel would

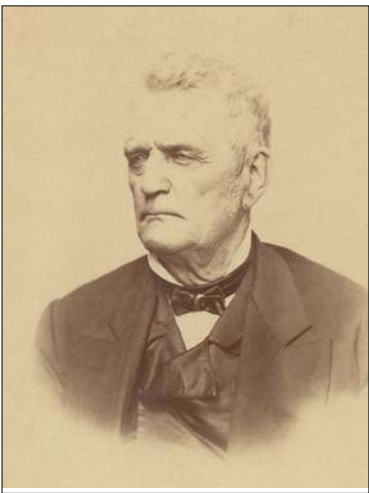
poison the soil and prevent crops from growing in the future.”

Deere began to import steel from England in the late 1840s, and in 1846 the first slab of cast steel ever rolled in the United States, in Pittsburgh, was rolled for Deere based on his specifications.

In 1849, a year after moving to Moline, Ill., and building a new factory, production doubled to 2,136 plows.

Moving to Moline, on the Mississippi River, made it easier to get raw materials and to ship finished plows.

The railroad arrived in 1854, and in 1856, the first railroad



JOHN DEERE/CONTRIBUTED
John Deere, the blacksmith and inventor, circa 1874

bridge across the Mississippi River was finished.

“That meant that customers moving further west could pick up a John Deere plow along the way,” Dahlstrom said. “Historically, as Americans moved west after the Gold Rush, and then had land made available to them as the result of the Homestead Act, the plow was the essential tool they needed to break the land and prepare it for planting.”

Deere’s growth west grew through the establishment of sales branches in San Francisco in 1889 and Portland in 1902, which brought a wide range of products, from plows to corn planters to wagons and buggies and more.

By the early 20th century, more than 30 different types of plows were available through the John Deere Plow Company of Portland sales branch, including specific types for vineyards and timberlands.

“It’s important to recognize Deere’s ability and willingness to constantly improve his products, and that was an advantage that helped his business grow and expand over time,” he said.

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U.S. Grant lost his shirt farming in PNW

By **Matthew Weaver**
Capital Press

Future President Ulysses S. Grant tapped into his Ohio farming background while serving in the Army in the Pacific Northwest.

Grant was with the 4th U.S. Infantry, which had been stationed in various posts around the U.S. and served in the Mexican-American War.

In the summer of 1852, the regiment received orders re-assigning it from New York to the Columbia Barracks, now known as Fort Vancouver in Vancouver, Wash.

Grant served as regimental quartermaster, in charge of food, supplies, clothing, arms and logistics.

“Skills that are going to be really good for Grant later on

during the Civil War,” Nick Sacco, historian and curator for the Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site in St. Louis, Mo., told Capital Press.

FARMING ENDEAVORS

Shortly after, Grant purchased farm property in the area, intending to raise potatoes, cattle and pigs and wood that could be used as fuel for steam boats and firewood.

“All of this is about buying low, selling high, as more people are moving out to the West,” Sacco said. “Now, having said that — each of these efforts fails miserably for one reason or another.”

The weather didn't cooperate. Particularly heavy rains in the spring of 1853 washed away his potato crops. Fearing a similar outcome, he paid to store the

firewood elsewhere, but it cut into his profits.

The cattle and pig operations were also unsuccessful. Grant sold a sow to the regimental drum major. The sow ended up giving birth to a dozen piglets, worth \$40 each.

“So the regimental drum major made a ton of money off this particular sow, but Grant had given up on it, sold the pig, then watched the pig give birth to a dozen other pigs and made no money on it,” Sacco said.

Grant invested in an effort to purchase chickens to be sold at market in San Francisco. The chickens died en route.

Grant and other Army officers invested in 100 tons of ice. They intended to ship it from the Columbia River to the San Francisco markets, but the ship was blown off course by choppy



ULYSSES S. GRANT NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE/CONTRIBUTED
Lt. Ulysses S. Grant, circa the 1840s and early 1850s.

nothing really works in his favor. It's sort of the nature of a very speculative, very volatile economy of the 1850s in the West.”

Even years later, after his victory as a general in the Civil War and serving as 18th president of the United States, Grant “never really gave up the idea of just being a quiet, humble farmer,” Sacco said.

“Grant makes a comment that he considered himself more a farmer than a general,” Sacco said. “... Grant was most famous for being the victorious general in the Civil War, but here he is in the late 1870s after the war and being president, he still sees himself first and foremost as a farmer.”

Oregon nurseries grow to powerhouse farm sector

By **Mateusz Perkowski**
Capital Press

From a “modest but successful beginning” at the cusp of the 20th Century, Oregon’s nursery industry grew into the state’s largest agricultural sector, eventually cracking \$1 billion in yearly sales.

In 1899, nursery crops were only produced on roughly 1,000 acres and generated about \$150,000 in revenues, but the industry’s forefathers had already laid the foundation for future growth, according to the Oregon Association of Nurseries.

Just a decade later, in 1909, nursery acreage

more than doubled and the industry’s sales exceeded \$1 million for the first time. Within thirty years, nursery production was approaching 4,000 acres and earning \$3 million in annual revenues, according to the OAN’s history.

“The Oregon nursery industry seemed destined for greatness from the earliest settlements,” the document said.

Though this destiny was partly “accidental,” benefiting from the good fortune of a mild climate, abundant water and rich soils, the work of pioneering nursery entrepreneurs was instrumental to capitalizing

on nature’s bounty, according to OAN.

“The other key was the cooperative, hard-working spirit of many talented growers who quickly changed the face of Oregon with their orchards and farms, particularly west of the Cascades,” the document said.

The industry’s development was a consequence of Oregon agriculture becoming more varied as the state’s economy grew more complex, said Jeff Stone, the OAN’s executive director.

“The nursery industry is an outgrowth of the farm community in general. Instead of growing

strawberries or other edible products, they found their passion in ornamental horticulture,” he said. “I think it's more of an offshoot of diversification, even in those early years of what farming would look like in the Willamette Valley.”

The nursery industry arrived in the state in 1847, when Henderson Luelling brought 700 plant specimens with him from Iowa on the Oregon Trail, eventually settling at a 5-acre property in what is now Milwaukie.

Luelling — known as the “father of the Pacific Coast fruit business” — was soon emulated by other pro-

ducers who brought in apples, pears, cherries and peaches to supply the region’s nascent orchards.

Ornamental nursery stock followed close behind as nurseries became established in other parts of Oregon beyond the Willamette Valley.

Nursery producers also felt the need to organize, leading them to form the state’s first nursery association in the 1890s, which was eventually absorbed into a broader organization representing the entire West Coast industry.

It wasn’t until 1933 that the Oregon Association of Nurseries was created, largely because producers

needed a more “focused organization” specific to the state, according to the group’s history.

Since the organization’s founding, the nursery industry has recognized that becoming involved in its own regulation would serve its long-term interests, Stone said.

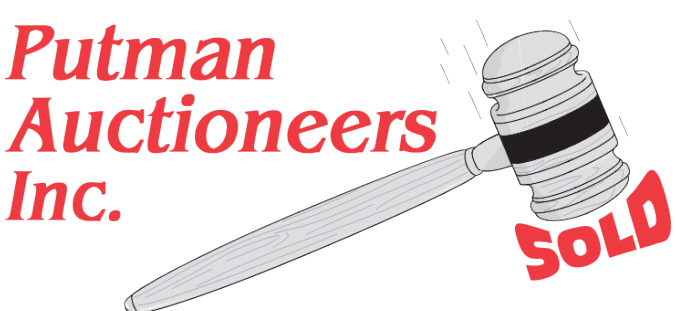
“The best way for us to have the highest quality of nursery stock is to have a high expectation of ourselves,” he said. “And that expectation can be metered out more effectively by the growers themselves rather than some bureaucrat in an office building.”



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Spillman: Washington's first wheat breeder



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William Jasper Spillman, Washington's first wheat breeder and essential founder of the agricultural economics discipline. "He is the only known wheat breeder who was also an undefeated football coach," USDA club wheat breeder Kimberly Garland-Campbell says.

By Matthew Weaver
Capital Press

PULLMAN. Wash. – It makes sense that Washington State University's agronomy farm is named after William Jasper Spillman — the first wheat breeder at the college.

"He was an agronomist and agricultural economist," said Kimberly Garland-Campbell, USDA Agricultural Research Service research plant geneticist and club wheat breeder. "He wanted to figure out how to make farming more profitable."

Spillman was a 30-year-

old science professor in Oregon when Enoch Bryan, president of the new Washington Agricultural College and School of Science, invited him to take a research post in 1894, according to a document written by Rich Koenig, WSU professor and soil specialist, and Caroline Troy, former WSU senior director of development for WSU's College of Agricultural, Human and Natural Resource Sciences.

When Spillman arrived, the region's agriculture was in crisis because popular wheat strains adopted by early farmers "simply did not

have the toughness necessary to survive on the Palouse," Koenig and Troy wrote.

After several years of unsuccessful efforts to introduce new wheat seed collected from other areas of the world, Spillman decided to try and create a special hybrid for the area. This involved brushing the pollen from one parent wheat onto another to combine the characteristics of the two.

Spillman realized that spring club wheats widely grown at the time in the region were susceptible to cold winters, so he made crosses with the most winter-hardy wheat

lines he could find to improve winter tolerance, Garland-Campbell said.

"A decade after his original experiments, Spillman's hybrids were being used all over the Northwest," Koenig and Troy write. "They not only resisted cold weather, but produced 40% better yield. Ultimately they formed the basis for the Northwest's wheat industry."

Spillman resigned from WSU after three years to take a position with USDA, where he "basically became the founder of the discipline of Agriculture economics," she said.

Spillman "made such an impression" that the U. S. Secretary of Agriculture offered him a job in Washington D.C. as founder and director of the Bureau of Farm Economics, Koenig and Troy added.

He is also credited for being the first to suggest the county agent system.

"Spillman personally appointed the first 400 county agents," Koenig and Troy write.

When he died in 1931 at the age of 68, Spillman's ashes were returned to Pullman and spread over the plot where he had grown his famous hybrid wheats.

Chinese farmworker was the Bing cherry's namesake

By Paris Achen
For the Capital Press

Thousands of Chinese laborers helped build Western agriculture, but very few of their names are known to us today. Ah Sit Bing is a notable exception. His name has become synonymous with the plump, garnet-hued sweet cherry found in grocery stores across America.

The Bing cherry originated in 1875 in the orchard of horticulturist Seth Lewelling in Milwaukie, Ore. The cultivar resulted from a cross between the Black Republican and Royal Ann (Napoleon) varieties, according to a 2014 study published in the Journal of the American Society for Horticultural Science.

Bing worked for

Lewelling for many years, often side by side with his employer, and eventually became a trusted foreman, said Linda Ziedrich, author of "First Fruits: The Lewellings and the Birth of the Pacific Coast Fruit Industry."

Bing was the first to recognize the seedling's large, flavorful fruit and brought it to Lewelling's attention, according to a 1939 Federal Writers' Project interview with Florence Olson, Lewelling's stepdaughter.

He lived in Oregon during a period of growing anti-Chinese sentiment.

"Seth's naming the cherry for a Chinese farmworker was a radical thing to do at a time when Chinese people were being driven out of their homes and cities and

often subjected to violence as well as derision," Ziedrich said. "In naming the cherry, Seth was, I believe, making a statement about human equality."

The Bing cherry won first prize at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, according to Ziedrich. It would go on to become one of America's most widely grown sweet cherries.

Bing returned to China around 1889 but was barred from reentering the United States because of restrictions on immigration. There are few other details in the historical record about his life. Although he could not return to his chosen home, his name remains immortalized in one of America's most popular cherry varieties.



CLACKAMAS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY/CONTRIBUTED

Horticulturist Seth Lewelling's house in Milwaukie, circa 1934.



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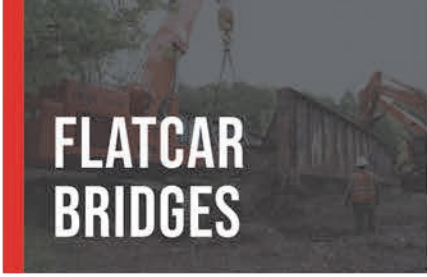
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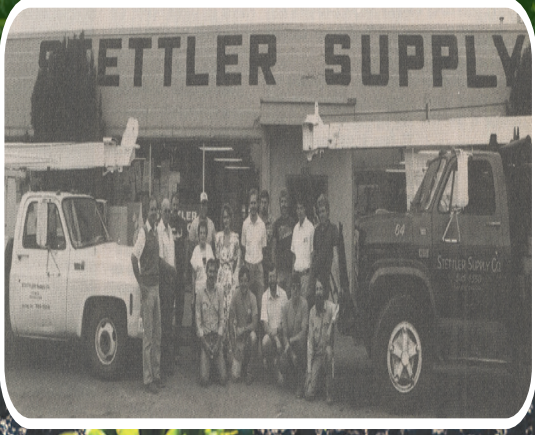
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Simplot commercialized frozen fries

By Brad Carlson
Capital Press

Agribusiness pioneer J.R. Simplot saw the potential of the then-revolutionary frozen french fry his team developed after World War II.

Simplot, who earlier played a big role in large-scale dehydration of potatoes and onions, was instrumental in commercializing the frozen fry.

In early 1941, Simplot worked with food industry and military leaders on opportunities involving dehydrated foods and how they could factor into the

national defense effort. By the early years of World War II, the Simplot Co. had become the largest shipper of fresh potatoes in the country and was selling millions of pounds of dehydrated onions and potatoes to the military.

After the war, he and his team were working on the frozen potato. By 1953, they brought the first viable frozen french fries to market, according to Simplot Co.

“Output has steadily increased” in the industry segment, according to Processing of Frozen French Fried Potatoes and

other Frozen Potato Products, a May 1963 research paper by I.C. Fuestel of the Federal Extension Service and Marcel E. Juilly and W.O. Harrington of the USDA Agricultural Research Service. The industry “is expected to become an increasingly important outlet for potatoes ... Recent years have seen a spectacular increase in the institutional use of frozen potato products.”

At the time, per capita consumption of fresh potatoes had been in decline for reasons including the inconve-

niences of home storage, peeling and cooking, the researchers noted. Moreover, “an important factor favoring consumer acceptance of frozen products is uniform quality from one season to another.”

In 1967, J.R. Simplot and McDonald’s owner Ray Kroc shook hands on a deal for Simplot to provide frozen potatoes to McDonald’s, according to Simplot Co. The relationship continues.

As of 2019, just over one-third of all potatoes grown in the U.S. was manufactured into frozen prod-

ucts — about 85% of which were french fries, according to the USDA Economic Research Service. Frozen fries led the processed potato segment to become a major mover of the potato market, helped by decades of significant growth in the quick-service restaurant industry.

For J.R. Simplot, commercializing the frozen french fry was one of many key moments in his career.

“He went from farming to helping other people farm,” Simplot Co. spokesman Josh Jordan said.



SIMPLOT CO./CONTRIBUTED
Agribusiness pioneer J.R. Simplot had already played a big role in the success of dehydrated potatoes when he and his team developed a viable frozen french fry.

Coastal dairymen build a national brand

By Paris Achen
For the Capital Press

In 1855, a group of Tillamook County dairy farmers launched a 38-foot schooner named the Morning Star, to carry butter and cheese to Portland. Built from salvaged shipwrecks, the vessel provided a way to bypass the rugged Oregon Coast Range and bring their dairy products to the region’s largest market.

Tucked behind a bay on Oregon’s North Coast, Tillamook’s abundant rainfall and moderate climate yielded lush pasture for dairy cows. By the mid-1800s, animals were producing more milk than their community could consume, leading farmers to produce butter and cheese. But with few



TILLAMOOK COUNTY CREAMERY ASSOCIATION/CONTRIBUTED
Farmers delivering milk to the Tillamook Creamery in the horse-and-wagon days. Tillamook is now a national brand.

passable roads through the mountains, it was difficult to transport fresh dairy products to Portland before they spoiled.

Cheese was easier to transport and less perishable than butter. As

farmers increasingly turned to cheese production, Tillamook earned a reputation for high-quality

cheddar that drew the attention of two Portland entrepreneurs, who opened a cheese factory there in 1893, according to Oregon Encyclopedia.

The cooperative spirit behind the construction of the Morning Star carried into the next century. In 1909, local cheesemakers formed the Tillamook County Creamery Association to establish consistent quality and market their products under the Tillamook name.

“Tillamook holds an important place in Pacific Northwest agricultural history as a farmer-owned dairy cooperative built on shared effort, high quality, and responsible stewardship of community, cows, and land,” said Tori Harms, corporate communications director at

Tillamook County Creamery Association.

“Since the formal creation of the Tillamook County Creamery Association (TCCA) in 1909, to the thriving national brand Tillamook has become today, TCCA’s co-op model has for more than a century helped bring quality products to market, protect the reputation of Tillamook dairy, and sustain farming on the Oregon Coast.”

Although the schooner sailed its last voyage in 1860, its image survives in the company logo. The Morning Star appears on every package of Tillamook dairy products, a tribute to the cooperation that made a coastal dairy community one of America’s most recognized dairy brands.







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Idaho's potato industry started in 1838

By Brad Carlson
Capital Press

Idaho potato industry started in the north, took hold in southeast

Beginning in 1838, the Rev. Henry Spalding established a mission near what is now the National Park Service's Spalding site in north-central Idaho. He was a Presbyterian missionary who worked with members of the Nez Perce Tribe.

Spalding is credited with planting and growing the first potatoes in Idaho, according to the Idaho Potato Museum website. He left in 1850.

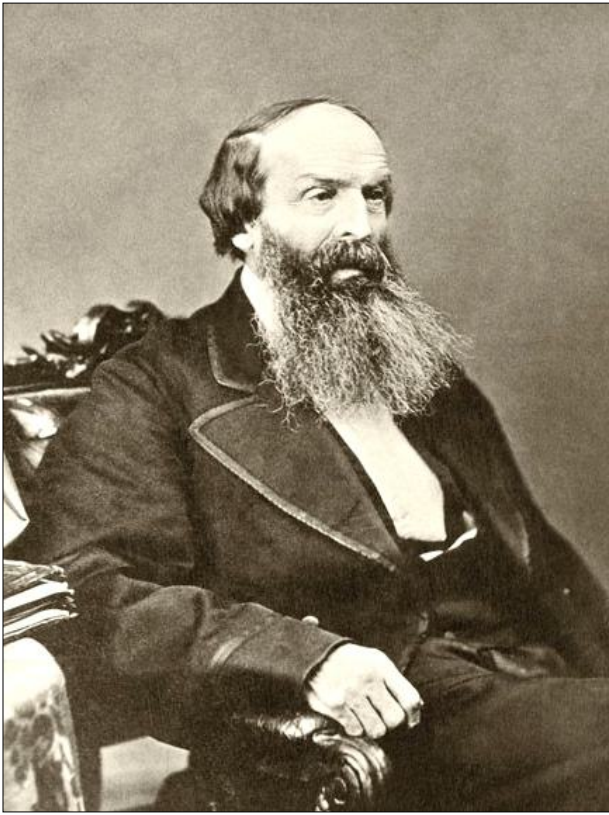
Potatoes again made their way to Idaho, this time by way of Utah.

Pioneers entered the Salt Lake Valley in Utah in July 1847 and quickly plowed and planted 5 acres of potatoes, according to the museum. The first irrigation in the valley benefited the potatoes.

Some pioneers were sent north to settle other areas, one of which was Cache Valley. Some of these pioneers, thinking they were in Utah, had crossed into Idaho and started to establish farms.

Among early settlers was William Goforth Nelson. He settled in what is now Franklin County, Idaho.

"I raised 33 bushels of potatoes, which is all that was raised in Franklin that summer except for a few onions," Nelson recorded in the summer of 1860, according to the museum.



WIKIPEDIA/CONTRIBUTED

The Rev. Henry Spalding is credited with planting and growing the first potatoes in Idaho in 1838.

Nelson's potato planting was the first in Idaho in an area where the settlers remained and where the crop is still grown.

The spread of potato agriculture in eastern Idaho "was only a short matter of time," according to the Blackfoot-based museum.

Records show potatoes were introduced to Blackfoot, which grew to become one of the state's principal production areas, through Henry E. Jenkins.

Jenkins hauled a load of potatoes from Farmington, Utah, to Blackfoot. The recipient was a judge whom Jenkins encouraged to plant the potatoes. This potato planting is believed

to be the first in the Blackfoot area, and the judge's successful crop encouraged more potatoes to be planted, according to the museum.

Taking advantage of river valleys where water was diverted easily and rich volcanic ash soil, "these hearty people raised a few more potatoes than they needed and found that the extra potatoes resulted in a good cash crop. From this small beginning, Idaho's farmers became leaders in the potato industry and are the top producers of potatoes in the United States," according to a museum narrative.

Grange works to unite rural communities

By Matthew Weaver
Capital Press

Grange was created to unite rural communities, provide education and give farmers a collective voice to advocate for their needs.

The organization provides a social connection, Christine "Chris" Hamp, president of the National Grange, told Capital Press.

"It's been that place where you join in something bigger than yourself," she said. "The concept that working together, you were able to get more accomplished than by yourself. I think that still rings true. That is in many ways what a lot of folks who come and find us are looking for."

Historically, the Grange became one of the most influential grassroots movements in American history, said Phil Vonada, Grange communications director.

It helped farmers organize for fairer economic conditions, leading efforts that contributed to the regulation of railroads and grain storage, Rural Free Delivery, rural electrification, and laying groundwork for cooperative business models.

Today, the Grange is a broad-based, non-partisan advocate for rural and small-town America. Priorities include community service and local impact; rural healthcare access and affordability; broadband expansion and infrastructure; food



NATIONAL GRANGE/CONTRIBUTED

Grange delegates at the 1928 national session in Washington, D.C., posed at the White House with President Calvin Coolidge, standing, holding hat and paper, in front row, right of National Grange President Louis J. Taber. This is only a small portion of the crowd captured in a panoramic photo, according to the National Grange.

security and sustainability and civic engagement and grassroots advocacy.

"The organization has evolved from primarily serving farmers to serving entire communities while still ensuring that agricultural voices remain heard," Vonada said.

All policy at the National Grange starts at the grassroots level, being vetted and voted on by members at the local, state, and national levels to guide advocacy work.

FRATERNAL ORGANIZATION FOR FARMERS

Oliver Hudson Kelley, a Minnesota farmer and USDA employee, led the Grange movement. President Andrew Johnson tasked Kelley to survey agricultural conditions in the South following the Civil War.

There, he realized that despite being a northerner, he was able to move freely

among the agricultural community by being a Mason, Vonada said.

"He believed that a similar fraternal organization for farmers would be a huge help for the community," Vonada said.

Grange offers a safe place to civilly discuss issues in a non-partisan manner and find local solutions, Hamp said.

"The role hasn't changed, there's still a need for that," she said.

Grange is uniquely positioned to continue bridging gaps—between rural and urban, tradition and innovation, and local needs and national policy, Hamp and Vonada said.

"I don't want the so-called 'experts' making decisions for rural America without involving rural America," Hamp said. "We're not making policy for rural America, we're making it with rural America."

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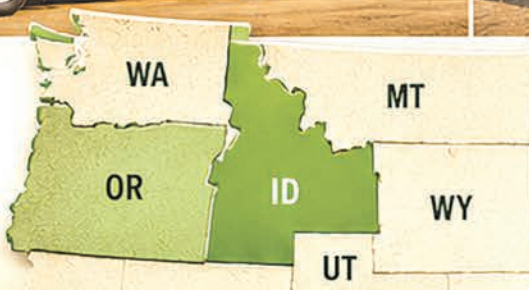
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Oregon Farm Bureau grew from need to organize

By Mateusz Perkowski
Capital Press

If rugged individualism often drove pioneering farmers to settle the West, their need to work together compelled the rise of organizations such as the Oregon Farm Bureau.

The great westward migration of Americans in the 1800s was fueled by both idealistic and practical factors, intertwined in the urge to claim land for an expanding nation.

Much as the federal government spurred the settlement of the West with donation land claims, it later convinced farmers to formally organize for the long term.

With the creation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and land grant universities, which partnered in agricultural instruction, farmers were given an incentive to “organize and pledge financial and moral support” to be assigned a local Extension agent, according to OFB’s history.

“The recognition of banding together to advance some common interests was really core and coming to fruition at that point,” said Greg Addington, OFB’s executive director.

The “grass roots” nature of the national Farm Bureau, which continues to emphasize membership-driven policy decisions, was



thus instrumental to its formation. Farm Bureaus began as local and state institutions that gradually coalesced into a national organization.

“We cherish that grass-roots aspect to the organization and it definitely proves out in the history,” Addington said.

“There’s a real democratic process with policy ideas and positions starting with the county level and with members going to their county Farm Bureau. It’s a good filter system. By the time an idea works up through the county Farm Bureau, state Farm Bureau, national Farm Bureau, it’s been debated over and over,” he said.

In Oregon, Umatilla County served as the “cradle” of the Farm Bureau, followed by Clackamas County, which together “welded together” the statewide organization

in 1932, led by Mac Hoke — the Oregon Farm Bureau’s first president — and other influential early leaders.

Eight years later, the Oregon group signed the first documents officially affiliating it with the American Farm Bureau Federation.

From its earliest years, the Oregon Farm Bureau sought to speak on behalf of farmers in the state Legislature, which remains one of its key functions, and in the 1940s the group became involved in providing insurance to growers.

At the state level, the organization became alarmed by legislation that acted as a de facto tax increase on farmers, as well

as by bills affecting wage and hour rules for agricultural workers, which foreshadowed further controversy over farm labor unionization.

In the 1970s, conflicts sprang up between Oregon growers and environmental advocates over such issues as coyote population control. Farmland preservation and the “right to farm,” in the context of increasing urbanization, also became increasingly prominent during this era.

“Those are still things that producers deal with today. How do we handle predators and what’s the public sentiment about that?” he said. “And so I do think history repeats itself a little bit.”

Extension brings information to rural America

By Matthew Weaver
Capital Press

The throughline for Cooperative Extension has been dissemination of knowledge to all residents, said Larry Landis, Oregon State University archivist.

Passage of the federal Hatch Act in 1887 established experiment stations at each land-grant college/university, and provided monetary support for teaching and research.

Oregon Agricultural College established farmers’ institutes in 1888 to provide practical information on a variety of agricultural topics. Initial institutes drew “modest crowds,” Landis said, but by the mid-1890s they were drawing 500 attendees.

In 1914 Congress passed the Smith-Act, creating a partnership between the USDA and Land

Grant institutions to bring practical agricultural and home economics knowledge directly to farmers and homemakers. It also led to the establishment of 4-H for youth programming.

It set up a funding mechanism that shared expenses between federal, state and county governments to establish county agents in local communities.

“Practical instruction through Extension continues today,” Landis added. He pointed to OSU’s annual Small Farms Conference, which typically draws more than 800 farmers, farmers market staff, ag educators and others from throughout the region.

“Extension has published thousands of print publications (most now available in digital form) over the years,” Landis said.

Trusting relationships between



Photo shows the short course students and some of the tractors which were used in the one month and three month tractor courses offered by the Extension Service in 1915.

farmers and Extension make the partnership work, Barbara Petty, UI Extension director, said.

“They trust us to give them research-based information that’s going to help them to improve

their lives, operations, the lives of their families, to make them more viable economically and our environment, too,” she said. “At Extension, our strength is that we like to work with people and

help them succeed, because when they succeed, we succeed.”

“Extension has turned research into results, because it only matters when it reaches the people who can use it,” said Vicki McCracken, WSU Extension director. “We are hand-in-hand, we are side-by-side with the people who can use the research.”

Karen Lewis retired May 1 as Washington State University Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources Program Unit director in Grant County, after 38 years in Extension.

“The best of research comes with the best of Extension, the best of Extension comes with the best of research,” Lewis said. “That’s where the impact happens, we’re working hand-in-hand with individual growers or industry as a whole as collaborators.”

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