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The Growers' Guide

July 2025

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'Not your grandpa's Grange'

National Grange president advocates for 'stronger tomorrow' for longtime organization

Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Christine "Chris" Hamp, president of the National Grange, stands in her backyard outside of Spokane the morning of May 29. Hamp's priorities include increasing membership and advocacy as she works to usher the long-time organization into a "stronger tomorrow."

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

SPOKANE — Christine "Chris" Hamp recently visited three North Carolina farms as part of her duties as National Grange president.

One farm rotated between raising corn, soybeans, cotton, tobacco and peanuts. The next had pivoted from Christmas trees to shipping wreathes worldwide. The third farm milked a thousand dairy goats twice a day; kept 200 Black Angus and was contracted to provide 2,500 weaner pigs a week. "Three totally different operations, all with multiple generations that are engaged in the operation," Hamp said.

The Grange is a nonprofit grassroots community organization advocating for rural America and farming communities.

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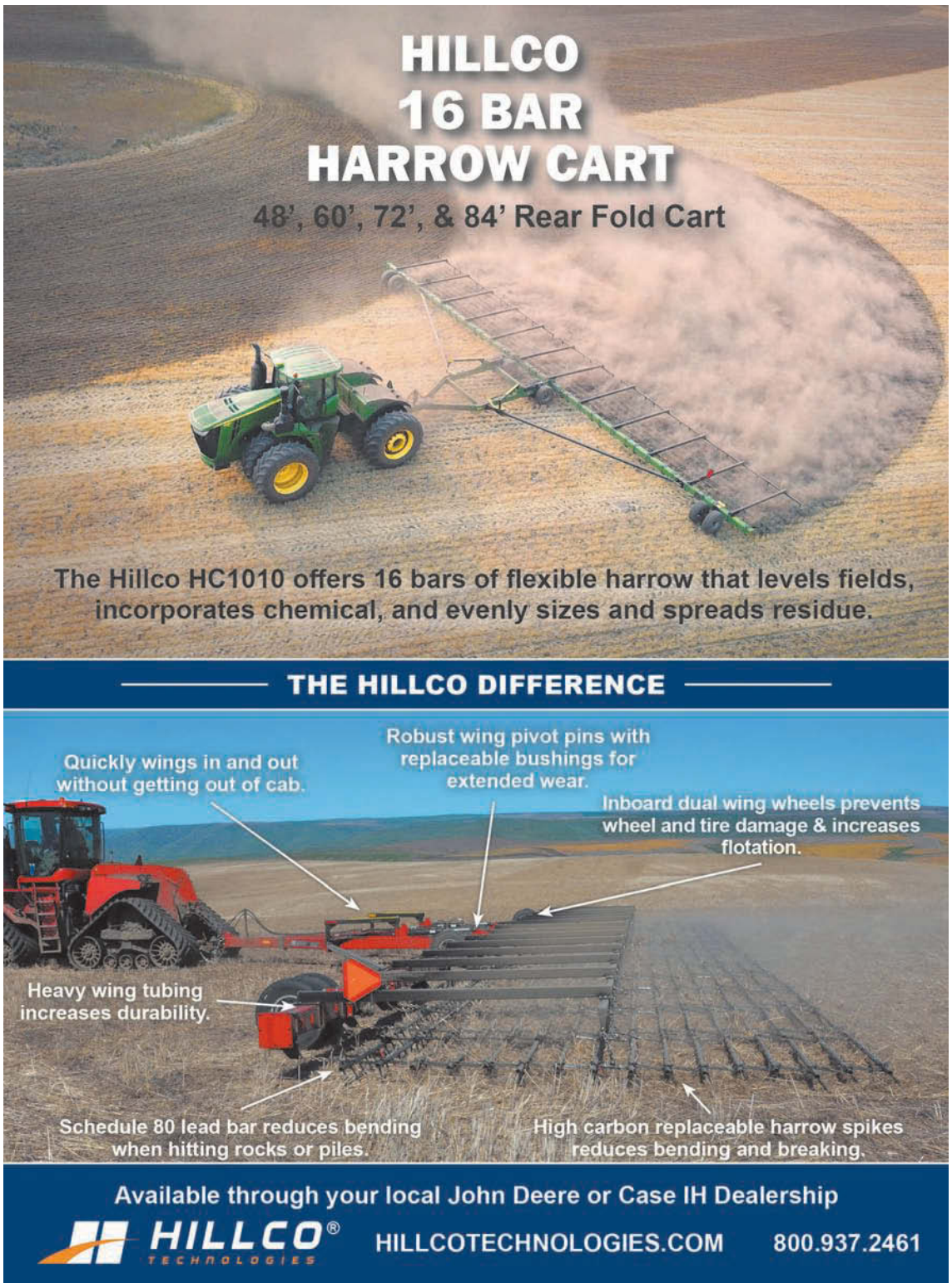

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Hamp wants to be sure that the Grange's focus and policies allow farmers, their children and grandchildren to continue in the face of heavy regulations, estate taxes and other challenges.

"The goal every single day is for the Grange to be stronger tomorrow than it is today," she said. "Every single action we take as an organization needs to have a purpose, it needs to be relevant. And it needs to resonate not only with our current members, but it needs to resonate with those folks who aren't members yet."

'Creating calm out of chaos'

Hamp, 57, stood in the middle of the 20-acre property outside of Spokane that she and husband Duane purchased in 2021.

She spent more than 30 years in state and local government, retiring in early 2023. She originally planned to be a city manager. During the fire storms of 1994, she got involved with state emergency management part-time and fell in love with the fire service.

She particularly enjoyed being on the incident management team.

"It's creating calm out of chaos," she said. "It's going into communities that have been absolutely devastated and finding a way to help, getting their feet back on the ground."

She's been in Grange even longer.

She is a fourth-generation member, growing up on a dairy farm originally homesteaded by her great-grandfather in Monroe, Wash.

When she was 5, she joined Tualco Junior Grange #341, and then Tualco Grange #284. She was elected Grange national president in November 2023.

"There's not very many days in my entire life that I haven't thought about or somehow been impacted by the Grange," Hamp said. "The commitment has to be to leave it better than I found it."

Membership on the rise

There are about 1,400 local Grange halls, and 140,000 members nationwide. While many civic and social organizations have seen massive losses over the past decades, the Grange has experienced the opposite, with a net gain in membership for 2022 and 2023, and holding steady in 2025.

Another net gain is predicted for 2025, said Phil Vonada, National Grange communications director.

Membership was highest in the 1870s, when nearly every farmer was a Grange member, Vonada said.

Hamp uses the expression: "This is not your grandpa's Grange."

"In grandpa's Grange, people had more time than money," she said. "A lot of these Granges, every project was done by the membership. Need a new roof? Members showed up Saturday morning, worked all day. Maybe some of the women were in the kitchen making lunch and dinner. Over and over, everything that happened was done with your own hands."

Dues were suppressed because members paid with their labor in many cases. Today, most people would say that time is their most precious commodity, Hamp said.

"Our members don't have a ton of time; that's not the resource that they have to give," she said. "What we do ask them to do, we have got to make sure it's on point – that the meetings are relevant and don't go for hours and hours."

Hamp envisions a rural-centric conference that encompasses all the important issues — commodities, education, health care, transportation, infrastructure and insurance.

She challenges members to invite new folks into their Grange halls. That includes mentoring and preparing the next group of members, she said.

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GRANGE:

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"This is why we need you, and why you need the Grange," she said. "They can't be the best-kept secret."

Leadership style

Hamp balances the Grange's history and traditions with a "fresh and clear vision of what our future can be," said Joe Stefenoni, a National Grange board member and president of the California Grange.

"Chris is a consummate teacher," he said. "If you want to know something, she is more than willing to bring you into that circle to teach and to grow that new leadership."

Policy recommendations are adopted in local Granges, passed by state Granges and moved to the National Grange, which advocates in Washington, D.C. with Congress and other federal agencies.

Hamp has embraced that bottom-up model, said Beth Westbrook, a member of the Grange's advocacy board.

"She's a good listener," Westbrook said. "She's the type of leader that says, 'Here's my vision. What are your thoughts about it?' She allows things to be tweaked and evolved, until she has consensus."

Grange members are responding to the opportunities Hamp is presenting, Westbrook said.

"She has the ability to mobilize people to start solving the problems," she said. "It's her firewoman hat she's wearing at that point."

Advocacy

Hamp has written opinions about a variety of key topics as president, including investment in rural healthcare, rural broadband and the farm bill.

She believes advocacy will be the new big draw to the organization.

"I think a lot of Granges have gotten away from it," she said. "A lot of granges are not known for their advocacy work, they're known for their community service work."

Some folks believe advocacy is harder, don't think anyone would listen to them or dread a confrontational conversation.

"Standing behind the counter and serving pancakes, it's kind of hard to get somebody's tail knotted up," she said. "But if we sit down and start talking about policy, people get a little itchy about that."

See GRANGE, Page A5

CHRISTINE HAMP

Title: President, National Grange

Age: 57

Hometown: Monroe, Wash.

Current location: Spokane

Education: Bachelor's degree in public policy and administration, Western Washington University in Bellingham, Wash.; master's degree in public administration, The George Washington University in Washington, D.C.; associate degree in fire command administration from Edmonds Community College in Edmonds, Wash.

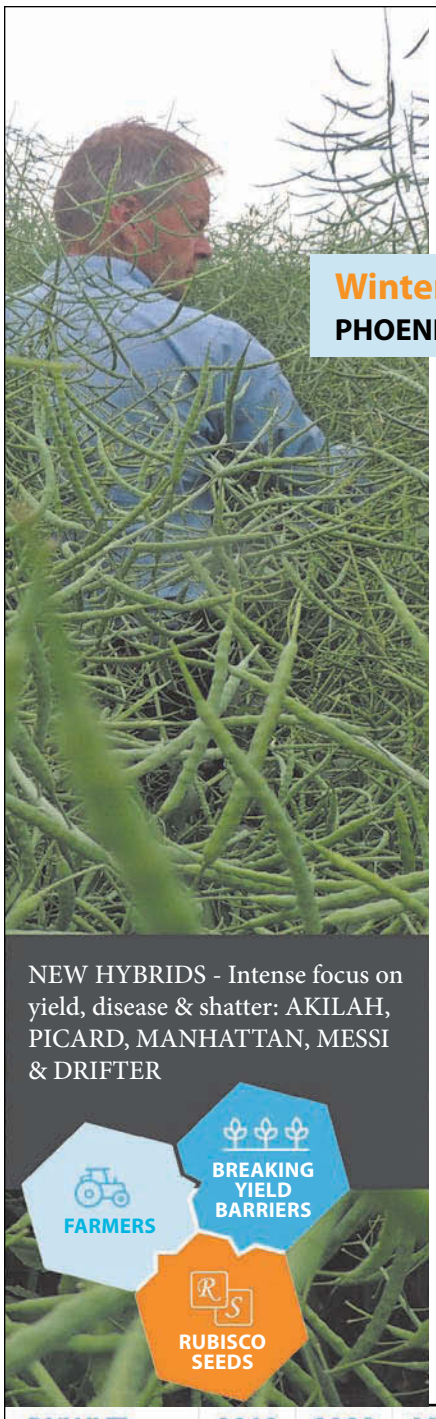
Family: Husband, Duane, married 24 years. Duane is a past president of the Washington State Grange.

Hobbies: RVing, travel, hiking, biking, kayaking.

Website: https://www.nationalgrange.org/

Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Christine Hamp stands in the back half of the 20-acre property where she and husband Duane live the morning of May 29 near Spokane. A longtime member of the Grange and the current national president, Hamp retired in 2023 after 30 years in state and local government, including the fire service.



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PNWVT	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	PNW	2023	2024
				LBS PER ACRE					
Control Mean	4086	3743	3399	2683	3128	4711	Private trials		
Rubisco Seeds' Hybrids									
KICKER	--	4972	4701	4383	3505	5841	KICKER	4678	6667
MERCEDES	5145	4419	4359	3756	3881	5393	MERCEDES	4945	6569
AKILAH						5876	AKILAH	5686	5455
PHOENIX CL	4900	4611	4043	3398	3454	5093	DRIFTER	4856	6795

Data courtesy University of Idaho, Control Mean = Athena, Dwarf Essex, Ericka

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GRANGE:

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Advocacy means speaking up for those three-generation farm families and saying, "This is why we do it," she said. "So they can continue to live the life the way they've done it for generations. That has got to be doable."

Favorite memories

"When you talk to the grandpas, the thing that gets the sparkle in their eye is, they're talking about the dance, how they met Grandma in the parking lot," Hamp said. "Everything that brings that sparkle to their eye is some of the shenanigans and fun — that's where they went to have their social piece."

Somewhere along the way, a lot of the fun disappeared, she said.

"All of a sudden, people are thinking Grange is supposed to be serious business, and we can't do that," she said. "I've been through our bylaws and there's nothing in there that says we can't have fun while we get this work done."

For the first time, the Grange national convention Nov. 8-16 will be on a cruise ship, departing from Miami, Fla., to the ABC islands in the Caribbean.

Hamp's two-year term will end at that meeting. It's up to the delegates to re-nominate her.

"I serve at the pleasure — if they like what we're doing, then great," she said. "And if they don't, then that's perfectly fine, too."

Hamp's own favorite Grange memories harken back to when she was a kid.

The Monroe Grange hall was an old schoolhouse with a crawlspace that the youth would set up as a Halloween haunted house.

"It was just a dirt floor, musty and damp and cobwebs everywhere — it was perfect for that," Hamp said. "We'd be down there for a couple of weeks, scurrying around and dragging crap in and making this walk people would have to go through."

At the same time, Hamp says, they were learning about working together. How to vote in favor of or against something, even if it was to vote against something your best friend suggested. How to decide in a meeting what to do with the money you raised. How to be a good neighbor. How to be a good citizen. The importance of being part of the process.

"It's all these things about life that you learned," Hamp said. "I just happened to learn them in Grange."

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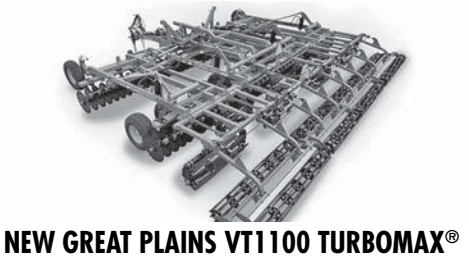

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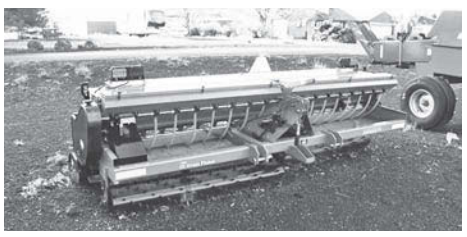

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Idaho Food Bank Fund accepts grant applications

Courtesy Idaho Food Bank

The Idaho Food Bank's main warehouse and administrative offices are located at 3630 E. Commercial Court, in Meridian, Idaho.

Capital Press staff

The Idaho Food Bank Fund will accept grant applications July 1-31.

The fund issues grants to qualifying Idaho nonprofit organizations that provide hunger relief and/or promote healthy eating. Grant proceeds can be used to operate programs, purchase food, buy nutrition education materials, expand capacity — such as by installing new freezers and shelves and adding transportation — or to provide access to people in need such as underserved or marginalized populations.

Most grant awards are between $2,500 and $5,000, according to a news release from The Idaho Foodbank, which administers the fund with Catholic Charities of Idaho. This year's grants are to be awarded in November.

The legislature established the fund in 2009. The fund is financed by taxpayers' voluntary donations as marked on state income tax returns.

Grants in 2024 totaled $178,718 combined to 72 nonprofits that provide "critical education and hunger relief services across the state," according to the release.

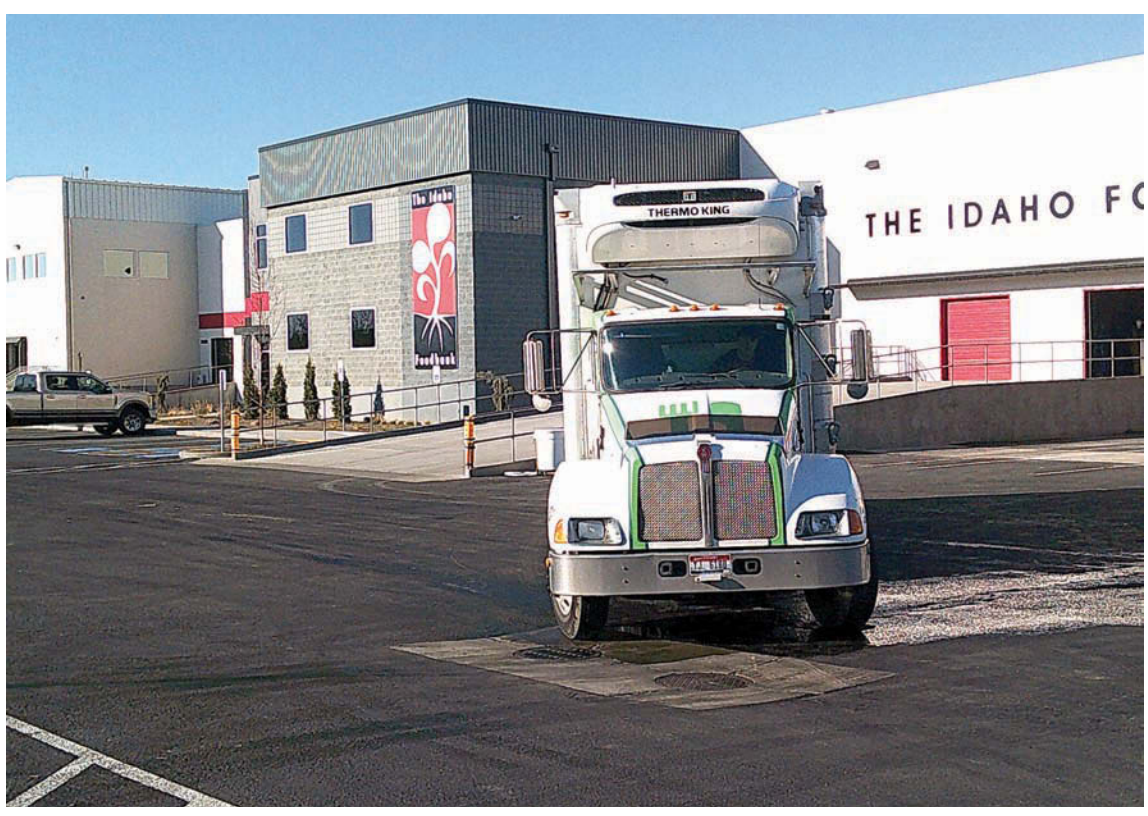
"Food insecurity touches every community in Idaho," Theresa Vawter, Idaho Foodbank public relations and government affairs manager, told Capital Press. "Thanks to the generosity of Idaho taxpayers, Idaho Food Bank Fund grant money goes to local organizations working on the front lines of food insecurity."

The fund "is an important tool for helping Idahoans who are food insecure," she said.

High costs continue to drive the need for food assistance, including in rural areas, Vawter said.

To learn more

Grant and program detail: grants@idahofoodbankfund.org or 208-336-9643.



Brad Carlson/Capital Press file

Idaho Foodbank headquarters in Meridian.

Bee deaths caused by mites with pesticide resistance

By KYLE ODEGARD
Capital Press

Scientists believe massive honey bee die-offs were caused by alarmingly high levels of viral infections from parasitic Varroa mites — the tiny arachnids had genetic resistance to the most common treatment used against them.

The USDA Agricultural Research Service conducted a study that analyzed samples from six major commercial beekeeping operations affected by colony losses.

Samples were collected in February as bees were being staged for California's almond season.

"While viruses are a likely end-stage cause of colony death, other stressors such as nutritional stress and agrochemicals may have also played significant roles," stated a manuscript submitted by USDA-ARS researchers to a scientific journal.

"Now that they've released the analysis, beekeepers can better understand what happened and take action," said Matt Mulica, facilitator of the Honey Bee Health Coalition.

"We understand more analysis is occurring and we look forward to learning more about the other potential causes of these significant colony losses," he added, in a news release from the organization.

About the study

Researchers found high levels of deformed wing virus and acute bee paralysis virus in pooled colony samples or in individual bees shaking and other signs of morbidity.

Experimental inoculation further confirmed these viruses as the likely cause of mortality in collapsing colonies.

All Varroa mites collected from affected colonies tested positive for a genetic marker linked to resistance to amitraz, the most commonly used miticide in commercial beekeeping.

New treatments needed

The study's findings underscores the urgent need for new tools and integrated pest management strategies.

"This is a critical moment for honey bee health," said Patty Sundberg, president of the American Beekeeping Federation.

"We continue relying on a single line of defense against Varroa. These mites are evolving quickly and our management tools must evolve just as fast," she added, in the news release.

Help may be on the way.

The Environmental Protection Agency has proposed registering a new type of insecticide to control Varroa mites, which are originally from Asia.

Massachusetts-based GreenLight Biosciences developed the active ingredient vadescana for an insecticide that interferes with Varroa mite reproduction.

Pouches containing the product would be placed directly into hives. The USDA has said that the new insecticide could replace more toxic treatments.

Important pollinator

Nationwide, more than 60% of commercial hives have been lost since summer 2024, representing a total of 1.7 million colonies and an estimated financial impact of $600 million, according to the USDA.

Honey bees pollinate a wide variety of crops and more than ⅓ of U.S. produce.

The value of crops that require bee pollination is estimated at more than $20 billion annually in the U.S. and $387 billion globally.

"Our nation's food supply thrives, and is sustained, by the work of our pollinators," said Joon Park, acting ARS administrator.

"USDA scientists continue to research major stressors and new parasite treatment strategies, which will help reduce the agricultural challenge presented by the Varroa mites in honey bee colonies," Park added, in a USDA news release.

Courtesy photo, USDA

A parasitic Varroa mite is attached to a European honey bee. Varroa mites, which spread diseases, have become widely immune to the most common insecticide used against them.

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Kitchen Corner: Recipes for fresh cherries

BY DANA

July is a month for fresh cherries. Here are some recipes from Cherries Northwest.

Northwest cherry pie

Ingredients

•2 Pie crusts, prepared

•2 tbsp Cornstarch

•2 tbsp cherry juice, reserved from pitting (fresh) or from rinsing/rehydrating (preserved)

•7 cups Northwest Cherries pitted

•3/4-1 cup sugar*

•1 tbsp almond extract or bourbon-vanilla bean infusion

Instructions

Using a fork, whisk together the cherry water and cornstarch in a small bowl, then set aside.

Stem and pit the cherries, if not already done.

Fill pie dish with cherries and blend the remaining volume (about 2 cups or 1/4 the total volume) into a puree. Pour the remaining whole cherries into a mixing bowl and return to the refrigerator (if using frozen cherries).

Using a heavy-bottomed pan, gently heat the puree and sugar over low heat until the volume has reduced by 1/3 to 1/2. Constantly stir across the bottom to prevent burning.

Once reduced, remove from the heat and stir in the cornstarch slurry until the mix regains translucency. Gently and briefly reheat if needed. Stir in the extract and let the mixture cool to room temperature.

Pour the cooled mixture over the whole cherries, gently stirring to incorporate. Pour the final cherry mixture into a 9 or 10-inch prepared pie crust, and top with a second crust. Pinch, crimp and vent the top crust. Brush with a beaten egg if so desired and sprinkle lightly with coconut sugar.

Northwest cherry pie

See RECIPES, Page A9

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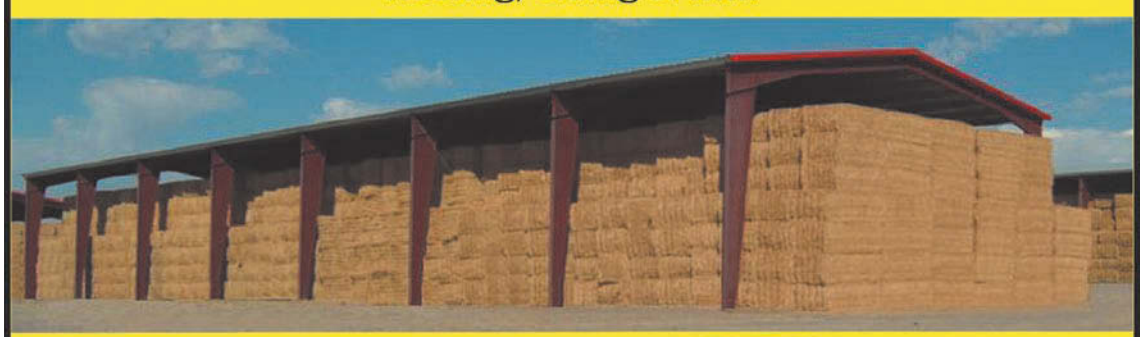
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RECIPES:

continued from A8

Bake at 375 degrees for 55-60 minutes, or until the crust is golden brown and the filling is steadily bubbling. Aluminum foil may be used around the crust edges to prevent browning during the second half of the bake. Transfer the pie to a cooling rack, and most importantly, allow the pie to cool completely before serving (3-4 hours).

*sugar may be substituted for 3/4 - 1 cup coconut sugar (Grandma later changed this to lower-glycemic coconut sugar)

Sweet cherry almond bars

Ingredients

About 14 ounces of pitted cherries, halved or rough chopped (about 2 1/2 cups)

•2 Tbsp sugar

•Juice of 1/2 lemon

•1/2 tsp almond extract

•1 tsp cornstarch

Shortbread dough

•1 cup flour

•1/4 cup almond meal or almond flour

•1/2 cup sugar

Pinch of salt

•1/2 tsp baking powder

•1 egg yolk

•1 tsp almond extract

•1 stick (1/2 cup or 4 ounces) cold, unsalted butter cut in pieces

Topping: 1/4 cup sliced almonds

Instructions

Set oven to 350F

Lightly spray an 8x8 baking pan

Stir together the cherries with the sugar, lemon juice, extract, and cornstarch. Set aside, tossing occasionally to encourage some of the juices to start flowing.

Put the flour, almond meal, sugar, salt, and baking powder into the bowl of a food processor and pulse to combine.

Add the yolk, extract, and butter, and pulse or process to combine just until the dough comes together, it will be crumbly.

Press 2/3 of the dough into the bottom of your pan to form the crust. Top with the cherries. Then crumble the remaining dough evenly over the cherries. Top with the sliced almonds and bake for about 40 minutes until the dough is just golden and the filling is bubbling.

Let cool before cutting.

Notes

If you don't like almond extract, use vanilla extract instead.

You can make your own almond meal by grinding whole almonds in a food processor.

Fresh cherry crisp

Ingredients

For the Cherry Layer:

•2 1/2 ball pounds fresh cherries, pitted and halved

•1/4 cup granulated sugar

•3 tbsp all-purpose flour

•Juice of half of a lemon

For the Crisp Topping:

•1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

•1 cup oats

•1/2 cup granulated sugar

•1 tsp baking powder

•1 tsp salt

•8 tbsp unsalted butter, melted

Instructions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. In a medium bowl, add the cherries, sugar, flour, and lemon juice. Stir until combined. Transfer to a greased cast iron skillet or 9 X 13-inch cake pan.

In a mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, oats, sugar, baking powder, and salt until well combined. Pour the melted butter into the dry ingredients mixture. Use a fork to mix until combined.

Pour the cherry mixture into the cast iron to create an even base layer. Cover evenly with the crisp topping.

Bake the cherry crisp for one hour until the cherries are bubbly and the top is golden. Serve warm with a scoop of vanilla ice cream or gelato.

Fresh cherry crisp

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Senators hear market concentration causes ranchers to drop 'like flies'

Courtesy of Senate Judiciary Committee

R-CALF CEO Bill Bullard testifies June 24 before the Senate Judiciary Committee. Bullard told senators concentration in the meat-packing industry hurts ranchers.

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

R-CALF CEO Bill Bullard got a sympathetic and bipartisan reaction as he told a Senate committee that beef and sheep ranchers are being exploited by meat-packers, a claim disputed by a trade group that represents the packers.

Bullard testified June 24 at a hearing on competitive markets held by the Senate Judiciary Committee. He said a handful of meat-packers have all but eliminated competition in the beef and sheep industries.

"Ranchers at one end of the supply chain and consumers at the other are being exploited," Bullard said. "Our cattle and sheep markets are fundamentally broken, and we ask Congress for its intervention in rigorous enforcement of our antitrust laws and the Packers and Stockyards Act."

The packers' trade group, the Meat Institute, was not represented at the hearing. Institute spokeswoman Sarah Little said in an email that industry figures show packers lost money per head in 2024 and losses have continued so far in 2025.

"On the other hand, cattle producers are making record profits," she said. "This is due to simple supply and demand. There are not enough cattle to meet strong consumer demand."

Bullard agreed in a post-hearing interview that cattle prices are high because consumers want beef, while the U.S. cattle herd has shrunk. But ranchers have seen prices spike before and then collapse, he said. "That doesn't happen in a competitive marketplace."

Four companies handle 85% of all steers and heifers, according to the USDA Economic Research Service. Bullard said market concentration and "unrestrained globalism" have thrown the cattle industry into a crisis.

"For decades, our ranchers have been dropping like flies," he told senators.

Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Missouri, agreed with Bullard's take on the marketplace.

"If you're a cattle rancher, you're not getting paid for your product. If you are a consumer at the grocery store, you're paying an arm and a leg for some hamburger," he said. "Who's really making out like a bandit here? It's the monopolists. It's the four companies that control 80% of beef processing. That's not competition."

New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker, the committee's top-ranking Democrat, said he agreed with Hawley.

Bullard said he was encouraged that senators from both parties were sympathetic.

"Clearly, there is an awareness of what the cattle industry is facing," he said.

See RANCHERS, Page A14

* Prices subject to change without notice. OAC

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'14 JOHN DEERE 680 RAHCO, 4WD, 635 ..... $215,000
'14 JOHN DEERE 670 HILLCO, 4WD, 635 ..... $205,000
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'04 CASE IH 450, PTO, 36", 7340 hrs $130,000
'03 CASE IH 450 QUAD, PTO, 36", 10,700 hrs $110,000
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New strawberry, lost in paperwork shuffle for years, continues late plant breeder's legacy

By KYLE ODEGARD
Capital Press

AURORA, Ore. — A new strawberry called Finnito is on the verge of being released and continues the legacy of Chad Finn, a USDA Agricultural Research Service berry breeder.

Finn, who worked and collaborated at Oregon State University in Corvallis, Ore., developed new strawberries, blackberries, raspberries and blueberries for 26 years.

He created numerous selections that have become industry standards, including Columbia Star and Black Diamond blackberries and the Tillamook and Sweet Sunrise strawberries.

"He was just really prolific," said Ted Mackey, a retired USDA ARS research technician.

Finn was working on the berry that would become Finnito before he died in 2019.

Kyle Odegard/Capital Press

Jenyne Loarca, the new blueberry and strawberry breeder for the USDA Agricultural Research Service, made the Finnito strawberry a top priority after she was hired by the agency in September.

A few years later, growers started asking for the strawberry, which has good sweet and acid balance, high yields and vibrant red external and internal color.

"He would be grinning if he knew how well it's been received," Mackey said.

The strawberry was stuck in the paperwork shuffle until September, when Jenyne Loarca was hired by the USDA ARS as a blueberry and strawberry breeder.

Loarca — who was fired in federal budget cuts in February, then rehired — said she made Finnito a top priority.

"There was so much excitement from the strawberry grower community," she said.

Finnito ripens later in June than most strawberries and could slightly extend the season's finish.

The variety was meant to help Pacific Northwest growers diversify into the fresh market, as processed sales, traditionally the main channel for the fruit in Oregon and Washington, have been slipping for decades.

OSU's strawberry open field tour on June 11 at the North Willamette Research & Extension Center included a "blind" flavor and appearance test for nine new varieties.

Finnito seemed to be a crowd pleaser, though that should come as no surprise given Finn's track record.

Colleagues described Finn as a gregarious guy who loved getting together with family and friends over food.

His work will continue to feed future generations.

During the five years before Loarca was hired to replace Finn, a private breeder helped fill the void, experts said.

See FINNITO, Page A13

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Photo courtesy Oregon State University

Chad Finn, a USDA Agricultural Research Service berry breeder, and Bernadine Strik, an Oregon State University berry breeder, had huge impacts on the Northwest's berry industry, according to experts. Finn died in 2019 and Strik died in 2023.

FINNITO:

continued from A12

Matt Unger is mostly retired, but he and his wife Kathy Unger still grow berries and run MK Unger Farms in Cornelius, Ore.

In his spare time, he has been breeding strawberries, one of his favorite crops.

"I'm trying to get good flavor with a variety that's pretty and large. I'm shooting for a fresh market berry," Unger said.

Unger created about 30 selections, narrowed it down to six and is making more crosses.

Several of his berries were featured in the open field tour's taste test. OSU also is growing some of his varieties to get data.

"The strawberry industry will be really excited about these," Mackey said.

Ella Cole, a USDA volunteer, sampled strawberries and listed her favorites. They turned out to be fruit from Unger's varieties.

As they walked through test plots, Loarca suggested Unger patent some of his strawberries.

"There's a couple of them," Unger responded, then paused to reconsider. "Three, four, maybe six."

Kyle Odegard/Capital Press

Ella Cole, now a USDA volunteer — her job doing tissue cultures for a virology lab was eliminated during federal budget cuts in April — sampled strawberries during Oregon State University's annual strawberry open field tour, marking down her favorites on a clipboard.

RANCHERS:

continued from A11

Bullard shared the witness table with four others, including Roger Alford, principal deputy attorney general in the Department of Justice's antitrust division.

The Justice Department is suing Agri Stats, alleging the Indiana-based data consulting firm is violating the Sherman Act by monopolizing information that allows packers to control the meat supply.

"We absolutely agree that agriculture and antitrust are fundamentally important," Alford said.

Congress passed the Packers and Stockyards Act in 1921 to prevent meat-packers from taking advantage of thousands of ranchers. The Biden administration proposed making it easier for individual ranchers to bring claims under the act, but withdrew the rule.

While R-CALF supported the new regulations, other farm groups, including the American Farm Bureau and National Cattlemen's Beef Association, argued the rules would prevent meat packers from offering tailored contracts to individual producers.

Several ag groups praise federal budget law

Capital Press staff

Several agriculture groups praised the federal budget reconciliation package — known as One Big, Beautiful Bill — which President Donald Trump signed July 4.

Cattle

"This comprehensive piece of legislation includes several issues that USCA has long advocated for and we will continue to engage in discussions as this moves forward," U.S. Cattlemen's Association president Justin Tupper said in a statement.

In the new law, the livestock indemnity program establishes a payment rate for losses due to predation at 100% of market value and for losses due to adverse weather or disease at 75%.

The law introduces additional payments for unborn livestock death losses incurred on or after Jan. 1, 2024, at a rate determined by the agriculture secretary not exceeding 85% of the payment rate for the lowest class of livestock. The livestock forage disaster program allows for two monthly payments and specifies eligibility criteria based on grazing periods.

The law also provides emergency assistance for cattle with specific payment rates and eligibility criteria and specifies funding allocations for foreign animal disease prevention programs.

Dairy

The law will "create several key opportunities for dairy," National Milk Producers Federation president and CEO Gregg Doud said in a statement. The law calls for investments that will "benefit dairy farmers and the cooperatives they own."

The law renews the dairy margin coverage program through 2031 and updates its production history calculation based on the highest production year of 2021, 2022 or 2023 and extends producers' ability to receive a premium discount for locking in coverage.

The law provides funding for USDA to conduct mandatory dairy processing cost surveys every two years to provide better data to inform future allowance conversations and folds remaining Inflation Reduction Act conservation money into the Farm Bill baseline. This will result in increased long-term funding for oversubscribed programs such as the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program, according to the federation.

The law provides new trade-promotion funding based on current programs and increases funding for animal health programs that help to prevent, control and eradicate animal diseases such as H5N1 (bird flu) in dairy cattle.

Wheat

The law "will empower America's wheat producers to invest in their operations, remain globally competitive, and support national food security and economic resilience," National Association of Wheat Growers president Pat Clements said in a statement.

Reference prices are increased for Agricultural Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage safety net programs, with an inflation adjuster and improved price escalator to keep pace with rising market and input costs.

The law boosts funding for supplemental disaster assistance programs and expands access to affordable crop insurance options.

Specialty crops

The law's investments "are a key piece of the puzzle to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crop growers, but there is still work to be done," according to a statement from the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance.

The law increases funding for the Specialty Crop Research Initiative and Specialty Crop Block Grant, Market Access, and Plant Protection Act pest and disease programs.

Senate rules "prohibited the inclusion of many of the innovative policy initiatives that we proposed, such as investing in mechanization and automation, modernizing procurement rules to include more high-value fruits and vegetables, and reforming crop insurance that would provide many of our growers with an affordable and effective safety net for the first time," according to the alliance's statement.

"We stand ready to work with Congress to enact the remainder of our priorities at the earliest opportunity and look forward to advancing future farm and food policy in the context of comprehensive, bipartisan farm bills."

Fertilizer

Officials with The Fertilizer Institute said the new law's tax provisions and farm safety net enhancements will benefit the industry.

See BUDGET, Page A15

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BUDGET:

continued from A14

"Policies that provide for industry growth, expansion and innovation are critical for the continued success of the U.S. fertilizer industry," president and CEO Corey Rosenbusch said in a statement. "Our competitiveness on the global level comes in part from certainty and the ability to plan and invest in the future. The tax policies included within this legislation will allow our industry to continue providing our farmers with the crop nutrients they need to grow the food that feeds our country."

Equipment

The Senate version of the legislation improved upon the earlier House version "by making key pro-growth provisions permanent," according to a statement from the Associated Equipment Distributors. "By permanently extending and restoring pro-growth, capital-investment-incentivizing tax policies, the Senate is ensuring long-term tax code certainty that will benefit the equipment sector and the broader economy," president and CEO Brian McGuire said.

Gary L. West/Capital Press

A variety of tractors are seen parked on the dealership lot for RDO Equipment in Hermiston, Oregon, in June 2025. The president of Associated Equipment Distributors said the equipment sector will benefit from some of the tax code provisions of the One Big Beautiful Bill that President Donald Trump signed on July 4, 2025.

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2020	MD	FD140	MACDON FD140 40' PLATFORM	N/A	$93,999	MOSCOW
2021	MD	FD145	MACDON FD145 45' PLATFORM	N/A	$101,999	COLFAX
2022	MD	FD240	MACDON FD240 40' PLATFORM	N/A	$101,999	COLFAX
2011	CA	7088H	CASE IH, SM GRAIN, PRWD, HILLCO LEVELER, PLATFORM	3387	$122,999	COLFAX
2019	JD	S780	SM GRAIN, PRWD, HILLCO LEVELER	1873	$422,999	FOUR LAKES
2021	JD	S780	SM GRAIN, PRWD, HILLCO LEVELER	846	$513,999	MOSCOW
2023	JD	S780	SM GRAIN, 2WD, DUALS, LEVEL LAND	317	$559,999	FOUR LAKES
2021	JD	S780	SM GRAIN, PRWD, HILLCO LEVELER	483	$588,999	MOSCOW
2022	JD	S780	SM GRAIN, PRWD, HILLCO LEVELER	432	$630,999	MOSCOW
2023	CA	9250H	CASE IH, SM GRAIN, PRWD, DUALS, HILLCO, FD140 HEADER	408	$724,999	COLFAX

SPRAYERS & IMPLEMENTS

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FOUR LAKES
AIR DRILL, 40FT, 7.5" SPACING, SEED BOX, STARTER KIT

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2011	SU	ULTIMA	SPRAYER, SUMMERS ULTIMA, 1500 GALLON, 90' BOOM, GRC	N/A	$14,999	FOUR LAKES
2023	DM	LT42	DEMCO SPRAY TRAILER, QUICK-DRAW, PUMP REMOTE START HONDA	N/A	$120,999	COLFAX
2015	JD	1890-1910	AIR DISC DRILL, 36FT, 7.5" SPACING, 1910 CART	N/A	$174,999	TEKOA
2023	JD	N540C	AIR DRILL, 40FT, 7.5" SPACING, CCS, STARTER KIT	N/A	$242,999	MOSCOW
2022	AP	4712-SL	AGPRO 4712-AL NO-TILL DRILL	N/A	$309,999	COLFAX
2020	JD	R4045	SPRAYER, 120' STEEL BOOM, FLOATERS	1096	$349,999	TEKOA
2019	JD	R4045	SPRAYER, 120' CF BOOM, EXACTAPPLY, DUALS	1014	$399,999	TEKOA
2023	JD	P556-1910	AIR HOE DRILL, 56FT, 12" PAIRED SPACING, FERT, 1910 CART	N/A	$427,999	TEKOA

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FOUR LAKES: 509-483-2868 | PONDERAY: 208-265-7282

TRACTORS

2022 JOHN DEERE 9RX590 **$654,999**
TEKOA
FOUR TRACK, 36" TRACKS, PTO, HOURS: 914

Year	Make	Model	Description	Hours	Ad Price	Location
1999	JD	9300	4WD, DUALS	9458	$51,999	MOSCOW
2010	CH	MT665C	CHALLENGER MFWD, DUALS	4627	$89,999	COLFAX
2009	JD	8345RT	TWO TRACK, 3PT/PTO, NEW IVT	8066	$126,999	MOSCOW
2011	JD	8260R	MFWD, IVT, ILS, SINGLES	7073	$136,999	FOUR LAKES
2013	JD	8335R	MFWD, IVT, ILS, SINGLES	6293	$186,999	FOUR LAKES
2023	JD	6175M	MFWD, PQD, TLS, SINGLES	376	$194,499	TEKOA
2015	JD	8370R	MFWD, IVT, ILS, DUAL FRT, TRIPLE REAR	4583	$202,999	COLFAX
2016	JD	8370RT	TWO TRACK, 3PT/PTO, 30" TRACKS	3183	$209,999	COLFAX
2014	JD	9510R	4WD, PST, TRIPLES	3413	$229,999	MOSCOW
2017	CA	IH380	CASE IH ROWTRAC, 24" TRACKS, CVT, 3PT/PTO	2588	$242,999	TEKOA
2021	FD	930	FENDT MFWD, CVT, DUALS	650	$303,999	TEKOA
2024	JD	7R250	MFWD, IVT, TLS, SINGLES, 700M LOADER	591	$339,999	FOUR LAKES
2023	FD	938 MT	FENDT VARIO 938 MT	1127	$349,999	COLFAX
2023	FD	943 MT	FENDT VARIO 943 MT	1338	$377,999	COLFAX
2022	FD	1151 MT	FENDT VARIO 1151 MT	1972	$384,999	COLFAX
2023	JD	8R340	MFWD, IVT, ILS, DUALS	178	$459,999	TEKOA
2023	JD	9R440	4WD, PST, HIGH FLOW, PTO, DUALS	537	$469,999	TEKOA
2021	JD	9620RX	FOUR TRACK, WIDE GAUGE, 36" TRACKS, PTO	2008	$518,999	COLFAX
2023	JD	6140M	MFWD, IVT, TLS, SINGLES	329	CALL	FOUR LAKES

HAY EQUIPMENT

2023 JOHN DEERE W235M **$184,999**
FOUR LAKES
WINDROWER, 16' HAY HEAD, STEEL CONDITIONER, HOURS: 215

Year	Make	Model	Description	Hours	Ad Price	Location
1989	JD	375	BALER, ROUND	NA	$3,999	COLFAX
2008	NH	499	MOWER CONDITIONER 12'3" CUT WIDTH	NA	$11,999	FOUR LAKES
2011	NH	BC5080	BALER, SQUARE	NA	$19,599	PONDERAY
2015	JD	830	MOWER CONDITIONER 9'8" CUT WIDTH	NA	$19,999	TEKOA
2016	MD	M155E4	WINDROWER, 16' DOUBLE AUGER HEAD	2101	$65,999	TEKOA
2018	JD	L341	LARGE SQUARE BALER, TANDEM AXLE	N/A	$89,999	FOUR LAKES
2017	NH	SR260	16' HAY HEAD, RUBBER/URETHANE	1003	$119,999	FOUR LAKES

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2013 CASE 105U TRACTOR, 890 hrs, PTO, 3 pt, nice tractor.....$55,000

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

VERSATILE 855, 7224 hrs, runs good.... .....$17,500

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TWINSTAR HAY RAKE, everything is tight, good shape.....$9,000

3 BALE BIG BALE FORK $4,000

60' SUMMERS SUPER HARROW, heavy duty , 20"-21" times, good shape... .....$15,000

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CASE SRX160 105' 1600-GALLON, hooded sprayer, all electronics, heavy-duty bearings $15,000

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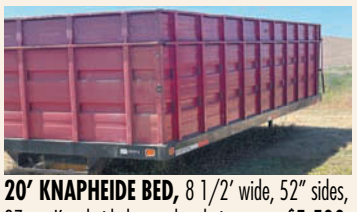

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2003 STERLING L70, 20' b, h, st. 245,000 miles, CAT diesel engine, air brakes, 7 sp.....$12,500

2005 FEATHERLITE 2-HORSE WALK THRU HORSE TRAILER, tack room, dressing room, nice & clean little trailer $8,000

1998 WILSON ROAD BRUTE 53' SPREAD AXLE TRAILER.....$14,000

1981 GMC 7000, V8, 5×2, 28,000 miles, 18' bed, hoist, slip tank $5,000

1983 48' WILSON ALUMINUM CATTLE TRAILER, floors 50%, brakes 50%, 11×24.5 radials 50%.....$10,000

COMBINES

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

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

2014 CASE IH 3152 30' DRAPER HEADER, excellent shape.....$14,000

1996 GLEANER R72 W/30' MACDON HEADER & CART, 4WD, rear wheel assist, chopper, rear tires like new $25,000

2001 MACDON 962 30' HEADER & CART, adapter fits both JD & Gleaner. Header is in good shape $7,500

1993 JD 9600 W/30' HDR, 4930 sep hrs, new tires $15,000

1995 GLEANER R72, approx 4300 sep hrs, 27' platform header & cart, 4WD, chopper..... $20,000

QUADTRACS

'23 CASE IH 580Q, 1024 Hrs, PowerShift Transmission, 36" Tracks, Luxury Performance Cab, Cold Weather Starting Aid, Engine Brake, Front Bumper Weights, True Ground Speed Radar, RH Armrest, AFS Pro 1200, High Cap Hyd Pump, Power Beyond Supply and Return, Performance Lighting, Dual Beacon, LED Cab Roof Work Lights, 2 Pumps Smart Torque, 6 Electric Remotes, 1000RPM PTO, High Cap Bar w/Diff Lock $469,900

'19 CASE IH 580Q, 5130 Hours, Powershift, Deluxe Cab, LED Cab Roof Work Light Package, Single Beacon Light, RH Window Bar Display, Guidance Ready, Telematics, Cold Weather Starting Aid, Engine Compression Brake, True Ground Speed Sensor, Back-up Warning Alarm, High Capacity Draw Bar, High Capacity Hydraulic Pump, 6 Electric Remotes, Power Beyond Supply & Return, Hi Capacity Bar w/Diff Lock, Undercarriage Scrapers, 36" CAMSO, 650 AG Tracks, Front Bumper Weights $234,900

'18 CASE IH 580Q, 4398 Hours, PowerShift, Deluxe Cab, LED Cab Roof Work Light Package, Single Beacon Light, RH Window Bar Display Ready, Telematics, Cold Weather Starting Aid, True Ground Speed Sensor, High-Capacity Draw Bar, High-Capacity Hydraulic Pump, 6 Electric Remotes, Power Beyond Supply & Return, Hi Capacity Bar w/Diff Lock, Drive Wheel Scrapers, 36" CAMSO Tracks, Front Bumper Weights $224,900

4WD 150-HP & OVER

'08 JD 9430, 6250 Hrs, 710/70R42 Tires, Hyd Flow 44 GPM, 4 Hyd Outlets, AutoTrac Ready, 1000 PTO, 3PT $159,900

'98 CASE IH 9370Q, 9711 Hours, Powershift, 4 Remotes, Trimble EZ-Steer, FM750, 2000 hours on reman Engine, Good Tracks, Consigned $65,000

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

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

'08 JD 8530, 8200 Hrs, 420/85R34 Fronts, 480/80R50 Rear Duals, MFWD, 4 Hyd Outlets, 1000 PTO, 3PT $139,900

'97 CHALLENGER CH55, 11,390 Hours, 25" Tracks, 1000PTO $26,900

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

'23 CASE IH STEIGER 470 AFS CONNECT, Luxury Performance Cab, PowerDrive, Engine Brake, Cold Weather Starting Aid, True Ground Speed Radar, RH Armrest, AFS Pro 1200, High-Capacity Pump, Power Beyond Supply & Return, Performance Lighting, Dual Beacon, LED Cap Roof Work Lights, 710/70R42 R1 Duals, Wheel Weights, Ballast Package, Rear Weight Support, Tow Cable $368,000

'23 CASE IH STEIGER 500 AFS CONNECT, PowerShift Heavy Duty Version, Engine Brake, Cold Weather Starting Aid, True Ground Speed Radar, RH Armrest AFS Pro 1200, High Capacity Hydraulic Pump, Power Beyond Supply & Return, Performance Lighting, Dual Beacon, LED Cab Roof Work Lights, Luxury Performance Cab, PTO, Hitch Drawbar, 4 Rear Remotes, Parallel Flow Hydraulic, AutoGuidance, Connectivity, Front Ballast, Rear Ballast, Wheel Weights, Rear Weight Support, Tow Cable, 710/70R42 Duals $399,500

'22 CASE IH 500W, 1352 Hours, Luxury Cab, Power Drive, HHP, Engine Brake, Cold Weather Starting Aid, True Ground Speed Radar, RH Armrest AFS Pro 1200, High Capacity Hydraulic Pump, Power Beyond Supply and Return, Performance Lighting, Dual Beacon, LED Cab Roof Work Lights, Luxury Performance Cab $389,900

'22 CASE IH PUMA 150, 578 Hours, Mechanical Cab Suspension, BlueTooth Radio, 2 Tele/Heat/Rem Adjustable Mirrors, ISOBUS Class 3 Speed Control, 200 Amp Alternator, 3 Electronic Rear Remotes, ... $171,900

'12 CASE IH 450W, 4654 Hrs, Luxury Cab, 16 Speed Powershift, 1000 RPM PTO, High Capacity Hydro Pump, 4 Hydraulic Remotes, 710/70R38 Tires, Wheel Weights $215,900

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'21 CASE IH MAXXUM 125, 1585 Hours, Active Drive 4 Suspended Cab, Telescoping Mirrors, Roof LED's, 200 Amp Alternator, Grid Heater, Rear Wheel Weights, L105 Loader, 3 rd Function, 480/65R28 Fronts, 600/65R38 Rears, Consigned $130,500

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DRILLS

'20 CASE IH 3555, 555 Bushels, High Floatation-Hydraulic Control, Deluxe Auger Screen, 650/75R38 High Float Duals, 8 Run Double Shoot, Light Bar, Amber Rotating Beacon, Bulk Tank Lights, Sectional Command, Rear Ladder w/Folding Steps, Rear Tow Hitch, Tank Fill Indicator, Tillage Mounted Work Switch $185,000

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

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

'12 CASE IH ADX2230, Single Shoot, 5 Run, 230 Bushel Capacity, Steel Tank, 30.5L-32R Tires, Consigned $23,000

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

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'02 FLEXI-COIL 3450, Tow Behind Air Cart, Variable Rate, Dual Fan, Consigned $15,900

JD 1910, 3 Tank, 12" Conveyer, Tow Between, New Fan Housing, Duals, Single Shoot $74,900

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

'19 NH3 RAVEN SYSTEM CART, Custom Made NH3 Cart w/800 Gallon Bottle, Raven NH3 Components, Shut-Off & Control Valves, TBT, Consigned $15,000

BALERS

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

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

JD 468, Mega Wide Plus Round Baler, 21.5l-16.1 SL Tires, 540 PTO, Twine Only, Wid Picku-up, Monitor $12,900

MOWERS

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'20 RHINO 6200, 20', 2\"-16" Cutting Height, Chain Guards Front & Rear, H29x9.0-15 Tires, Minimal Acres, Consigned $26,500

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, 17.7" Tracks, 84" HD Ext Bucket w/ Smart Teeth, Block Heater, HVAC Cab, Air Ride Suspension Seat, 2 Speed E-H Controls, Steel Lights, Glass Door, High Flow PKG, Heavy Duty Rear Door, Eco Disc Mulcher Attachment, Great Condition, Consigned $135,000

HARROWS

ED-KA, 16' HARROW $29,900

'15 MCFARLANE WDL-2070, 70' Harrow Cart, 16 Bar Flex Harrow, ED-KA Wheel Kit, Cons $29,900

(6) STOESS 4000, 10 1/2' Rodweeders, No Hitch, Consigned ..... $2,000 EA

'21 Hillco HC1010, 84' Width, 16 Bar Flex Harrow, Premium Tire Package $65,900

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 ..... $3,295 EA

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'13 MacDon FD75 ..... $59,900
'15 MacDon FD75 ..... $57,900
'15 MacDon FD75 ..... $74,900
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VERMEER R2800, Basket V-Rake, 28', Full Hydraulic Control, Rubber Mounted Rake Teeth $19,500

'21 SITREX SM-300, Hay Tedder Rake, PTO Driven, Like New, Consigned $5,495

GRAIN CARTS

KINZE 800, 30.51-32 Flotation Tires, Front E/Vertical Auger Tube, Good Tarp, Cons $20,000

SWATHERS

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

SPRAYERS/APPLICATORS

'21 CASEIH PATRIOT 4440, Luxury Cab, 380/90R36 Tires, 135', 7 Section, 20" Spacing, AIM Command Flex, Autoboom Height Control, 1 Camera, AFS Pro 700, AFS 372 Receiver, Nav II Controller $294,000

'20 CASE IH 4440, 3047 Hrs, 135' Boom, 1600 Gallon Tank, Raven Monitor $269,000

'19 CASE IH 4440, 2700 Hrs, 120' Boom, 7 sensor Auto Boom Height Control, 1200 gal tank, Aim Command Flex, Case IH Pro 700 auto steer package, 710/70R38 Tires $275,900

'19 CASE IH 4440, 2882 Hrs., Luxury Surveyor Cab, Active Suspension, 380/90R46 Tires, 120' 7 Section, 20" Spacing, AFS Pro 700, AutoBoom Height Control, Combo Rate Dual Body Shut-Off, Nav II Controller, Intake Flow Meter $275,900

'17 CASE IH 4440, 3200 Hrs, 120' Boom, 7 Section, 20" Spacing, Luxury Surveyor Cab, Active Suspension, 280/90R46 Wheels, Manual Adj Mirrors, 3" Front Fill, SS Tank, CR 11 Single Nozzle Body, Boom Flush Valve, AFS Pro700, AIM Command Flex, AutoBoom Height Control, Combo Rate Dual Body Shut-Off $195,000

'16 CASE IH 4440, 4100 Hours, 120' Boom, AccuBoom Section Control, AutoBoom Height Control, Pro 700, AIM Command, Foam Marker, Alliance 650/65R38 Turf Tread $179,900

CASE IH PATRIOT 4430, 3268 Hours, 100' Boom, 6 Section, 20" Spacing, DLX Surveyor Cab, 650/65R38, Tires, Power Adj Mirrors, 3" Fill, AFS Pro 700, AFS 372 Receiver, AutoBoom Height Control $132,900

FLEXI-COIL S67XL, Pull Type Sprayer, 1500 Gallon Tank, 100' Suspended Boom, Raven Auto-Boom Height control $14,900

'24 JD 616R, 529 Hrs, Signature Edition, 1600 Gallon Tank, 120' Boom, Exact Apply, Command Drive, Boom Trac Pro 2, Integrated StarFire 7500 Receiver, G5 Plus Command Center Display, LSW 800/55F46 Floats, Set of Skinny's and Fenders to Match $589,900

SCHABAU SF.8500, 90' Boom, 1500 Gallon Tank, 100 Gallon Rinse Tank, Tripple Nozzle, 5 Section Control, 380/90R46 Tires, AutoBoom Height $16,900

'12 AGPRO NH3 APPLICATOR, Custom Built, 1000 Gallon Bottle, 12" Centers, McGregor 25"x1 ¼" Coil Shanks, Rolling Basket Harrow, 11L-15 Tires, Raven Control & Shut-off Valves, Consigned $34,000

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

HILLSIDE COMBINES

(2) '23 CASE IH 8250, Harvest Command Automation w/Camera, Luxury Cab, Pro 700 Large Color Touch Screen, Call FF for More Information and Hrs ..... $674,000 EA

(2) '23 CASE IH 8250, Luxury Cab w/Leather Seat, Harvest Command w/Camera, Power Plus CVT Drive, Yield Monitor, Auto Cleaning Fan, In-Cab Cage Vane Control Adjust, Pro700 Nav Controller, Engine Block Heater, Upper Cross Auger, Diff Lock, Grain Tank Cover, Hillco Leveler ..... $591,500 EACH

'21 CASE IH 8250, 1063 Sep Hrs, Luxury Cab, Auto Guidance, Yield Monitor, HVSTC w/Camera, Power Plus CVT Drive w/ Feedrate, 40' Auger w/Pivoting Spout, Upper Cross Auger Control, Large Color Touch Screen, Diff Lock, 620/70R42 Duals, 750/65R26 ..... $524,900

CASE IH 9240, 1736 Sep Hours, Hillco Hilside, 4WD, Deluxe Cab, Diff Lock, Auto Clean Fam, Fine Cut Chopper, AutoGuide Ready, Trailer Hitch, Power Fold Grain Tank Ext, Folding Unloading Auger for 50' Header, Pivoting Unloader Spout, Yield & Moisture Logging, 650/65R38 Alliance 550 Duals, 28LR26 Alliance 390 Steering Tires, Winter Overhaul Records Available.. ..... $359,900

'18 CASE IH 9240, 1648 Rotor Hours, Hillco Hillside, 4WD, Deluxe Cab w/Cloth, Diff Lock, Auto Clean Fan, Fine Cut Chopper, Auto Guide Ready, Trailer Hitch, Power Fold Grain Tank Ext, Folding Unloading Auger for 50' Header, Pivoting Unloader Sprout, Yield & Moisture Logging, 540/65R38 Alliance 550 Duals, 286R26 Alliance 290 Steering Tires, Winter OH Records Available $349,900

'14 CASE IH 8230, 1924 Sep Hours, 520/85R42 Duals, 600/65RS8 Rears, Chopper, GPS $129,900

'05 CASE IH 8010, 3554 Engine Hours, 4WD, Leveler, '12 CIH 3020 35' Header Included, Cons $119,900

IH 1470, 2100 Series Handle, New Style Fan, 1010. Header, 2300 Series Cage, Newer Tires, Consigned $9,900

CASE IH 1680, 6900 Engine Hours, Hillco 2000 Leveler, Rear Weights, Great Condition, Consigned $12,000

'02 GLEANER R72, Duals, 2WD, 30' Header Included, Consigned $29,900

LEVEL LAND

'17 CASE IH 8240, 1484 Sep Hrs, Level Land, Duals, 4WD, Chopper, Guidance, Folding Auger.. ..... $179,900

'15 CASE IH 9240, 2297 Rotor Hours, Level Land $199,900

'13 CASE IH 8230, level land, 2261-Sep-hrs, header tilt, rock trap, cross-auger control, fine cut chopper, HID lights, Diff lock, AFS autosteer, 520 front duals, 750/85R42 rear $124,900

'02 CASE IH 2388, 3458-Sep-hrs, level land, feeder reverser, single spd hydro, 2WD, 20.8x42 duals, 18.4x26 rears, new rub bars, Field Tracker $24,900

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Courtesy Michael J. Locati

A worker harvests Walla Walla sweet onions at Walla Walla River Farms in Walla Walla, Wash. Yields range from average to above-average, but market uncertainty and a larger overall market supply are keeping onion prices soft, said Michael J. Locati, grower and president of the Walla Walla Sweet Onion Marketing Committee.

Walla Walla sweet onion farmers power through uncertainty

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

WALLA WALLA, Wash. — Washington's handful of Walla Walla sweet onion farmers are right in the thick of harvest.

"I would say we have an average to slightly-above average crop," said Michael J. Locati, president of the Walla Walla Sweet Onion Marketing Committee.

Harvest kicked off June 5, about a week to 10 days earlier than usual, Locati said. It will run through the first week of August.

About 10 farmers raise the popular niche specialty on 500 acres. Walla Walla sweets are protected by a federal marketing order, which regulates the handling of sweet onions grown in the Walla Walla Valley of southeast Washington and northeast Oregon.

See ONIONS, Page B2

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ONIONS:

Continued from B1

Prices are comparable to last year, at about $24 for 40 pounds.

"There's a bit of deflation out there," Locati said. "There's a lot of onions on the market right now. There's been a little slower demand. We're trying to adjust harvest accordingly."

Farmers have been able to find workers to hand-pick the onions, he said. With temperatures predicted to hit more than 100 degrees for several days during the week of July 7, harvest start times may move back from 4 a.m. to earlier, he said.

"We're blessed to have a crop, we're blessed to have the people here to help take care of it," Locati said.

More onions

"Margins are getting squeezed as inflation goes up and we keep the same price as last year," Locati said. "We're trying to move more units, and then it's tough because then there's a lot of onions on the market."

It can be hard to demand a price premium when there's uncertainty in the marketplace, he said.

"Uncertainty creates a lot more uncertainty," he said. "It doesn't help that there's more onions out there."

When there's more onions than they can sell as Walla Walla sweets, farmers sell the extras at the regular fresh onion market price.

"When you're trying to get a premium and you're hand-harvesting, and then the general onion market is mostly machine-harvested …" Locati said. "When the discrepancy between the regular onion market and your premium gets larger, it gets harder to sell the premium."

Last year, that fresh onion price was about $14 for a 50-pound sack. This year, it's about half of that, Locati said.

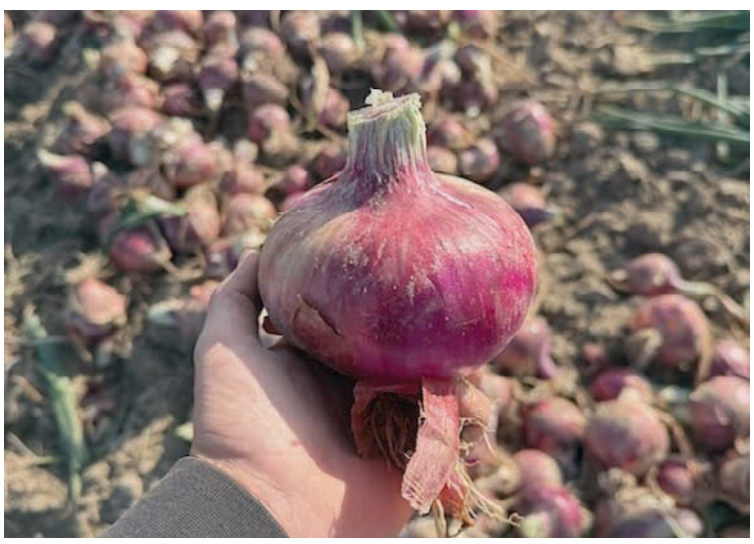
"When the regular onion market supply exceeds demand, the price of all onions suffers," Locati said.

Reddish-hued rosé Walla Walla sweet onions represent up to 15% of the market. Harvest began two weeks early for the sub-section of the niche onion.

Locati was just finishing up harvesting some July 2, and will harvest some later-transplanted rosés for the rest of July and the summer.

Courtesy Michael J. Locati

Newly picked Walla Walla sweet onions sit in a bin at Walla Walla River Farms in Walla Walla, Wash. Yields range from average to above-average, but there's an abundance of onions on the overall market, making it tough for Walla Walla sweets to compete with the lower fresh market price.



Courtesy Michael J. Locati

Walla Walla Sweet Onion Marketing Committee president Michael J. Locati holds up a rosé Walla Walla sweet onion June 30 at Walla Walla River Farms in Walla Walla, Wash. The reddish-hued subsection represents about 15% of the market for the niche onion. Locati first released them in 2018 after 10 years of development.

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Courtesy Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

A Chinook salmon. Under a stipulated settlement agreement filed June 26 in U.S. District Court's Portland division, NOAA Fisheries has until Nov. 3 to determine whether listing Oregon and California coastal salmon as threatened or endangered is warranted, and Jan. 2 for Washington coastal salmon.

NOAA Fisheries weighing ESA protection for Chinook salmon

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By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

The National Marine Fisheries Service, or NOAA Fisheries, will determine whether spring-run Chinook salmon in the Pacific Northwest warrant protection under the Endangered Species Act beginning in the fall.

Under a stipulated settlement agreement filed June 26 in U.S. District Court's Portland division, the agency has until Nov. 3 to determine whether listing Oregon and California coastal salmon as threatened or endangered is warranted, and Jan. 2 for Washington coastal salmon.

"We are unable to comment on matters of litigation," NOAA Fisheries spokesman James Miller told the Capital Press.

The plaintiffs — the Center for Biological Diversity, Native Fish Society, Umpqua Watersheds and Pacific Rivers — sued the agency for the decision in February.

By pressing for an ESA listing determination, the plaintiffs are recognizing "broad West Coast impacts" to salmon runs, said Darryll Olsen, board representative for the Columbia-Snake River Irrigators Association.

"The common denominator here with Columbia-Snake River salmon runs is ocean conditions, separate from harvest impacts," Olsen said.

The "overpowering force" of ocean conditions on all West Coast runs, including Columbia-Snake river fish, was documented in a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers report in 1994, Olsen said.

That report "provided indisputable data/evaluations that ocean conditions were the key driver affecting salmon production trends, with greater robustness than other fresh water survival factors," Olsen said. "This empirical observation remains constant."

The center in a statement called the deadlines an "important legal victory."

"The government has taken far too long deciding whether to protect these imperiled Chinook salmon, but these deadlines will hold officials accountable," center legal fellow Jeremiah Scanlan said.

USDA ordered to re-evaluate grasshopper spray program

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

Courtesy USDA

A migratory grasshopper, eating a Russian olive tree in a shelterbelt beside a farm field, in Malta, MT, on July 17, 2021. A federal judge has ordered the USDA to re-evaluate its grasshopper and Mormon cricket spray program.

A federal judge has ordered USDA to re-evaluate the environmental impacts of its grasshopper and Mormon cricket suppression program in the West within two years.

The agency's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service must correct deficiencies in its 2019 review of the program, requiring a greater focus on "integrated pest management" techniques and the cumulative effects of pesticide use, among other factors, according to U.S. District Judge Marco Hernandez.

The federal suppression program is important for Western farmers and ranchers, as outbreaks of grasshoppers and Mormon crickets can severely damage crops and forage for livestock.

About three years ago, the environmental nonprofits Xerces Society and Center for Biological Diversity filed a lawsuit against the agency, arguing its spray program violated the National Environmental Policy Act.

"APHIS's widespread, routine application of pesticides on public and private rangelands to manage grasshoppers — many of which never reach economic infestation levels — harms not just grasshoppers but also numerous non-target insect species critical to ecosystem functioning and productivity," the lawsuit claimed.

Last year, the judge agreed with the environmental plaintiffs that USDA had put too much emphasis on direct suppression of the pests with insecticides and did not adequately evaluate the use of preventative measures.

Despite this finding, Hernandez did not overturn USDA's legal authorization for the overall spray program to continue.

Since then, the federal government and environmental plaintiffs have been debating how to remedy the shortcomings in USDA's previous "environmental impact statement" about the program's consequences.

Though APHIS argued imposing a two-year deadline to correct the EIS was unnecessary, given the time-related requirements of NEPA, the judge said it was appropriate to provide the environmental plaintiffs with "a remedy should there be a delay."

"This is particularly appropriate where, as here, the legally inadequate EIS will remain in place indefinitely without action by APHIS," Hernandez said.

While the judge agreed with the environmental plaintiffs on the deadline, he did not grant several other requests, such as requiring the USDA to completely redo the study instead of merely supplementing the 2019 version.

The judge also denied an injunction that would've required the USDA to issue "real-time, application-specific notifications of APHIS spraying activities" before the new review is complete, since this remedy is "not sufficiently tailored" to the violations and goes "far beyond what NEPA requires."

Finally, Hernandez refused to overturn the environmental assessments for state-specific suppression activities in Wyoming and Montana until after the 2025 spraying season is finished, as this could "result in significant harms to the local community due to drought conditions and damage from last year's wildfires."

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Although producers, processors and industry experts say there haven't been widespread immigration enforcement operations in the Pacific Northwest, immigrant workers are nonetheless fearful.

PNW hasn't been targeted for raids, but workers are scared

Capital Press staff report

Farmers, processors and industry experts say that while there haven't been U.S. Immigration Customs and Enforcement raids or sweeps at farms, packing houses and processing facilities in the Pacific Northwest, many immigrant workers are afraid.

Even while advocating mass deportation of illegal immigrants, President Trump has suggested that he would support a program that would grant legal status to farmworkers under certain conditions. Earlier this month, he said on social media that he expected to issue an order to ICE regarding immigration enforcement actions against farmworkers.

The administration has yet to propose a plan for exempting farmworkers from immigration enforcement, or clearly said it won't conduct random raids on farms.

Save Family Farming, an advocacy organization, issued a press release drawing attention to the possibility that a labor shortage will develop. Contradictory statements from the Trump administration won't help, said Ben Tindall, executive director of Save Family Farming.

"The administration and Congress must sit down with farmworker advocates and agricultural leaders to craft immigration policies that actually protect the people and communities feeding this country," he said.

Jon DeVaney, Washington State Tree Fruit Association president, said reports of federal agents nearby, whether true or not, have caused disruptions for some agricultural operations.

"I have heard reports of ICE arriving at farms or processing facilities looking to carry out warrants for specific individuals, but not broader raids here in Washington," DeVaney wrote in an email.

Idaho Dairymen's Association CEO Rick Naerebout said immigration enforcement raids have not been seen in the industry in the state but have occurred elsewhere, such as at Outlook Dairy Farms in New Mexico early this month.

See WORKERS, Page B8

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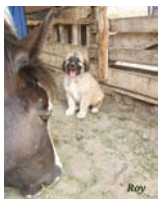

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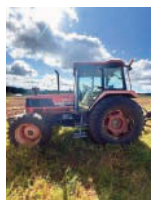

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WORKERS:

Continued from B6

"We know enforcement actions are happening in other states," he said. "We're fortunate it hasn't happened here, so the concern is merited. There are more unknowns than knowns at this point."

Jennifer Uranga owns Mountain West Ag Consulting, a southwest Idaho business that specializes in federal H-2A guest worker applications and in farm human resource needs.

"I think there have been cases where the workers have been staying away when they heard there are rumors of ICE enforcement" in Idaho, Washington and Oregon, she said.

Cherry pickers needed

With a bumper cherry crop, Northwest producers say they are facing a shortage of pickers this season. It's unclear, however, how much the potential for enforcement actions is contributing to the shortage.

"The shortage is worse than I would expect in a big crop. Growers are having trouble meeting their usual number of people picking," said Mike Omeg, director of operations for Orchard View Farms, headquartered in The Dalles, Ore.

"To make the shortage worse we have a big crop of cherries this year," he said in a text message exchange.

Lesley Tamura, Columbia Gorge Fruit Growers board chairwoman and a pear farmer, said Hood River, Ore., was included in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's list of Oregon sanctuary jurisdictions and that's making workers especially nervous.

"Cherry growers in harvest right now are short in their labor force because so many people are terrified of coming up from California, so our growers and employees are definitely feeling the impact," Tamura said in an email.

Tamura wasn't sure if there's an ICE presence in the area or if there are simply rumors stemming from fear and panic.

Carlos Torres, owner of PLM Orchards in Wenatchee, Wash., grows cherries, apples and pears, and he's facing a shortage of workers, so employees he has are working as late as they can every day.

"We all, here in the valley, are down on workers," Torres said.

He expects the shortage to continue throughout the late summer and into fall during the harvest for apples and pears.

Torres said big growers are increasing wages to get more help, so smaller growers with fewer resources will face tougher times.

Charlie Lyall, who grows cherries, apples and concord grapes, said he was almost finished with cherry picking and faced a labor shortage.

"A lot of the California guys, and probably from other states, they were late coming up, and I don't think some of them came up," said Lyall, owner of Lyall Farms headquartered in Mattawa, Wash.

"Once you get behind, you just can't catch up. We're going into thinning for apples. I'm expecting a tough time getting enough workers," he said.

No impact on processing

ICE reported detaining more than 70 illegal aliens at a meat-packing plant in Omaha, Neb. They used stolen Social Security numbers to get jobs, according to ICE.

There have been no reports of raids in Northwestern processing plants.

"Outside of what's been on broadcast media, I haven't heard anything from any of my members or from anything that's occurred in the Columbia Basin or Central Washington," said Jack Field, executive director of the Washington Cattle Feeders Association. "Thus far, I haven't had any reports from feedyards having any issues. It sounds like so far, everything's been business as usual."

Jacki Madill, executive director of the Washington Beef Commission, agreed.

"Both of our major packers have not expressed any concerns," Madill said.

Fear is real

"We had one case last week where one worker did not want to work in a field harvesting because they saw a truck they thought was an ICE truck — it wasn't," Alan Schreiber, executive director of Washington Blueberry Commission, said in an email.

Natalie Collins, California Association of Winegrape Growers president, said there was a lot of general unease in agricultural communities.

The association is ensuring that growers have the most up-to-date information on enforcement actions and that each member knows what to do if ICE enters their property.

"We also want to ensure that our workforce knows their rights, and that we are actively communicating with them," she said, in an email.

Snake River Sugarbeet Growers Association executive director Samantha Parrott said the issue highlights a broader concern.

"Agriculture across the country relies heavily on a workforce that's estimated to be 50% undocumented," Parrott said. "If that workforce disappears, how will we continue to produce food? Food security is national security and we need real solutions that recognize the realities of labor in agriculture."

Capital Press reporters Don Jenkins, Kyle Odegard, Matthew Weaver and Brad Carlson contributed to this report.

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Irrigation specialist enhances farmer efficiency

By BRAD CARLSON
Capital Press

Courtesy Washington State University

Troy Peters delivers a field presentation on irrigation sensors.

Before irrigation researcher Troy Peters helps farmers decide which sprinkler setup or other efficiency-enhancing technology to use, he thinks about how a single drop of water gets to its ideal spot in a crop field.

"Any time you can reduce the amount of time that droplets are flying through the air even by fractions of seconds, it just increases efficiency tremendously," the Washington State University Extension irrigation specialist said.

Using pivot sprinkler irrigation, even converting from a mid elevation spray application system five to10 feet off the ground to a low elevation spray application system a foot off the ground can increase application efficiency by 15-20%, the Prosser-based Peters said.

"And this makes a huge difference, especially when there's drought — when the grower doesn't have enough water for the season or could use the water somewhere else," he said.

A big-picture problem in the arid West is that while soil, sun and other conditions are good, "we just don't have enough rainfall to grow things without irrigation water," Peters said. "So being as efficient and effective with the water we have is the idea — and then using more technology and tools that are being developed to make that happen, to be better with that."

Variable-rate irrigation is one recently popular approach to further increasing the efficiency of sprinkler systems, he said. Center pivot sprinklers apply different volumes of water to different areas, and "the idea is to get the right amount of water to the right areas of the field."

See FARMERS, Page B10

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FARMERS:

Continued from B9

Also using sprinklers, one way to minimize drift and get droplets into plant canopies and soil as efficiently as possible is to move the application point closer to the ground. Irrigators may need to add sprinkler heads — decreasing spacing between each — to improve application efficiency and uniformity, Peters said.

In a low elevation spray application system, nozzles are placed just above the canopy. But in a low energy precision application system, sprinklers or bubblers are placed on or just above the ground. And in a mobile drip irrigation system, drip tubing is attached to a center pivot and dragged.

Usage of these systems can reduce pumped volume and pumping costs because the water doesn't have to travel as far from its source, Peters said.

"All of these technologies have the ability to improve efficiency significantly, but they also come with their own challenges," he said. "You have to manage that irrigation system a little differently."

Name: Troy Peters
Age: 53
Title: Washington State University Extension irrigation specialist, director of WSU Center for Precision Agriculture and Automated Systems.
Home: Prosser, Wash.
Education: B.S., manufacturing engineering, Brigham Young University; Ph.D., Utah State University.
Hobbies: Reading, camping, board games.

Technological advancement continues in remote monitoring and control of sensors in the field and integrating real-time data into management programs, Peters said. Soil moisture and irrigation pressure can be tracked and pumps controlled from a mobile phone, for example.

"When growers can do that, they can do a better job of managing their water," he said. "Instead of getting into the truck and driving 10 minutes to the pump and messing with a pivot point, the farmer can read the sensor and make a decision based on that. All that is becoming much more integrated."

Chemigation-related monitoring and control systems also are improving, helping irrigators precisely track application of chemicals through irrigation water, Peters said.

He has been working on a smartphone application that uses weather data to help growers track and manage irrigation and nutrients. A just-released test version models nitrogen in soil, a feature designed to help the farmer determine when and how much to fertilize.

Peters also has an irrigation scheduler app that uses data from an ag weather network to model crop water use and in turn help growers decide the best times to turn water on and off to optimize efficiency.

"The more growers have the right information and the controls readily available in hand on their phones, they are going to make better decisions, make more money and save energy," he said. "Everybody wins. That's where we're going more and more."

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FUNDAMENTAL MARKET SHIFT

Kindwall-Moore connects farmers, buyers by overhauling supply chain

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

COEUR D'ALENE, Idaho — Joni Kindwall-Moore likes to bring people together.

"You literally can't do business well without understanding that humans need connection, and networks drive everything," she said. "If we start looking at things as interactions instead of just transactions, we can create more resilient models that are better for the economy and better for people."

Kindwall-Moore founded Snacktivist Foods, a food innovation company, in 2015, designed to elevate underused crops and farmer-connected supply chains.

She helped found the North American Millets Alliance in 2022, to help promote millets as a crop and ingredient in food processing, in conjunction with the United Nations' International Year of Millets.

Now she is launching the Ryzosphere, a platform for producers, processors, buyers and farmer-focused support services.

Kindwall-Moore wants to help farmers make connections within the supply chain.

"We underestimate the power the markets have over what farming actually is," she said.

"Farmers are some of the most educated, resourceful segments of the population. They're incredible — they're businesspeople, but they're also land stewards. But their hands are tied. They don't have democratized access to markets."

See BUYERS, Page B12

Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Joni Kindwall-Moore, founder of the Ryzosphere and Snacktivist Foods, stands outside a coffee shop in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, the afternoon of April 24. The Ryzosphere is a new platform designed to connect farmers and customers, slated to launch widely in early 2026.

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Courtesy Joni Kindwall-Moore

Ryzosphere and Snacktivist Foods founder Joni Kindwall-Moore and daughter Alena Moore,19, display a regenerative potato field near Odessa, Wash., June 2. She's helping farmers find a market for 18 million pounds of regeneratively grown potatoes. "We had to develop a brand-new business model for how to figure this out, because there are no norms for regenerative premiums in the market, at all," Kindwall-Moore said. "We had to completely rethink the whole deal."

BUYERS:

Continued from B11

Kindwall-Moore often asks farmers what they wish they could be doing on their farms. The answer often comes tied within the reality of what's profitable. But most farmers feel a "deep need" to make sure their practices benefit the entire ecosystem, she said.

"The markets must fundamentally shift if we ever want to support a sustainable model on farms," she said.

People and plants

Kindwall-Moore is an ethnobotanist, a scientist who studies the relationship between people and plants for food and medicine. She was a researcher in health sciences and then became an ICU-ER nurse, a position she held for 15 years until 2019.

"I was really troubled by the fact that so much of our patient population was there for preventable health-related disease," she said.

Snacktivist focuses on innovation around grains such as millet, sorghum, buckwheat and teff, which don't require as many inputs, are drought resistant and rich in nutrients.

"Once we bring back healthier rotations to farms, the health will impact the economics and will impact the environmental outcomes," she said. "You cannot solve one — they all come together. We've tried to do reductionistic models of fixing systemic problems, and it just fails again and again."

Upbringing

Kindwall-Moore grew up on a small farm between Tillamook, Ore., and Salem.

"Timber, fishing, farming was my upbringing," she said.

Her parents both worked off the farm. She'd work harvest in the summer, driving commercial double-axle, 18-speed diesel trucks at 16.

See BUYERS, Page B13

Courtesy Joni Kindwall-Moore

Ryzosphere founder Joni Kindwall-Moore showcases a field of regeneratively grown potatoes near Odessa, Wash., June 2. She's helping farmers find customers for such alternative crops.

BUYERS:

Continued from B12

While living in Alaska, she saw the tug of war between wild fish, farmed fish, nutrition, rural economics, sustainability and natural resources extraction.

"All of the things in my life have brought me back to the connections between human and food," she said. "I really enjoy this work a lot. I feel like I can make a difference."

Updating food and ag

Kindwall-Moore first developed the Ryzosphere business plan under a different name in 2016-17, pitching it as a technology incubator to potential investors.

She was told at the time there was no need for transparency in the food system, or digital automation, and that health and climate didn't matter.

"And then they said, 'You're a mom and a nurse — you should probably just make cookies if you want to do something impactful,'" she said.

Food and agriculture stubbornly cling to analog tools from the 1980s, she said.

See BUYERS, Page B14

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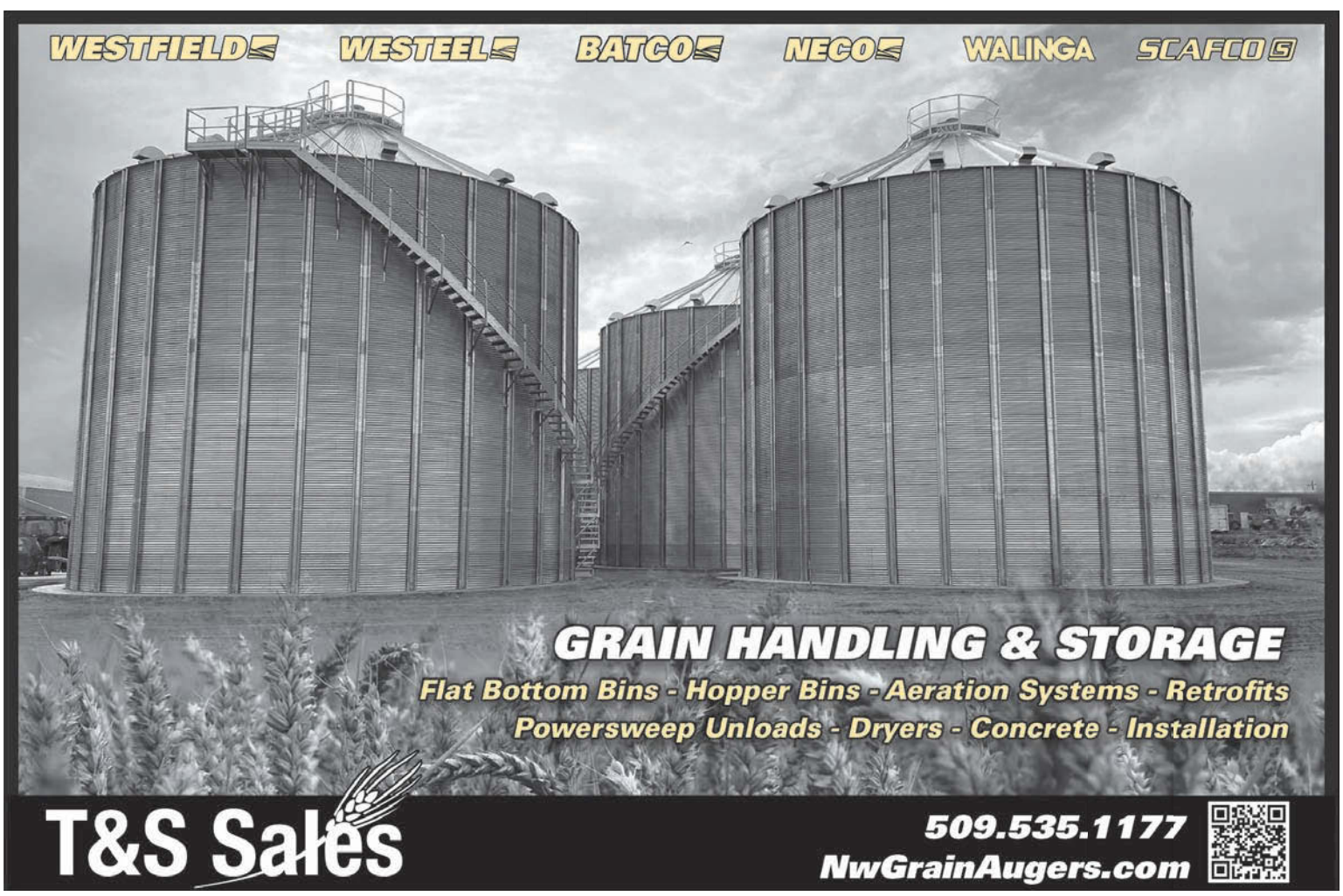

BUYERS:

Continued from B13

"We've not embraced consumerization that transformed real estate, travel and consumer purchasing, like Amazon," she said. "It's transformed everything but food and ag."

Connecting to the right farmer

By "automating diligence," there's less risk for farmers, she said.

For example, she worked through Snacktivist to buy sorghum from a grower, but didn't ensure the grower's farmhands knew that the sorghum needed to be gluten-free, which required a double-wash on all of the harvesting equipment.

"Because we hadn't put all of the steps in place, they didn't know, they went out and harvested it, and it was all contaminated, I couldn't buy a single bag," Kindwall-Moore said.

Fortunately in that instance, the farmer had another place to sell his sorghum.

"But we've had situations where that could have been catastrophic," she said. "Now a farmer is sitting on a crop they can't sell. That's economically disastrous. And, when those deals fall through, why don't we have a place where we can say, 'Hey, we've got an excess of something,' or there's a purchaser who says, 'I'm short on something because my (crop) got ruined by hail. Where can I find somebody who's growing this crop under these management practices, under these criteria?'"

The Ryzosphere is slated to launch by invitation only in September for early adopters, and then more widely in early 2026.

It's not just for the so-called "most perfect organic farmer in the world," Kindwall-Moore said.

"If you want to do better, and you can demonstrate that year after year you're making an improvement, you're our people," she said. "Different buyers have different needs, and our job is to connect them to the right farmer."

'Processing is the center of the universe'

As co-founder of the North American Millets Alliance, Kindwall-Moore has been an advisor on CIVC, which is working to expand and establish a processing facility in Montana for organic and regeneratively grown gluten-free oats, millet and buckwheat in Montana.

Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Joni Kindwall-Moore, founder of the Ryzosphere and Snacktivist Foods, stands outside a coffee shop in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, the afternoon of April 24. Kindwall-Moore wants to improve healthful crop rotations, farm economics and the overall ecosystem. "You cannot (just) solve one — they all come together," she says.

She's raising awareness around millets for purchasers and farmers. It's a good example of how Ryzosphere will help support new processors, she said.

"Processing is the center of the universe for us, because processing is where it all stalls out," she said. "That's how the consolidated giants of the field exercise their dominance over the industry, they control the manufacturing. If we can shine a light on independent processing and manufacturing, we can start to actually grow our own market."

There's room to work with the larger companies, she said. But "robust" independent processors would make the food system more "nimble."

"The big guys can't shift very quickly — for a number of reasons, I'm not expecting them to," she said. "But if we could have all of these independent processors popping up doing niche work that represent a critical need in the food system, it's a really big market signal that the tides are shifting towards more diversity, higher-quality food. That's how we're going to get the big guys to change. Eventually they're probably going to acquire a lot of these smaller niche processors."

Processing is the most significant barrier, Kindwall-Moore said. "A lot of great projects just can't move forward because they can't get through that value chain."

Regenerative potatoes

Through Snacktivist, Kindwall-Moore is helping Hutterian farmers in Odessa, Wash., find prospective buyers for their regeneratively grown potatoes. They're trying to move 18 million pounds raised on 13,000 acres: https://tinyurl.com/prkhhr7r .

The "Low-Chem-Pact" potatoes are grown using significantly less pesticide, water and nitrogen fertilizer compared to those grown using conventional methods.

"That's what makes me so excited about this project," Kindwall-Moore said. "If you can put something as humble and simple as a potato in front of somebody and say,

'This is radically different from the potato you grew up with' …. you're winning," she said.

The spuds are now sold in various avenues, including as french fries in a Las Vegas casino and a large hospital food service management company.

"We had to develop a brand-new business model for how to figure this out, because there are no norms for regenerative premiums in the market, at all," Kindwall-Moore said. "We had to completely rethink the whole deal."

So far, the project has helped sell 6 million pounds, she said. "I'm really hoping next year at this time I can say we've helped move 20 million pounds," she said.

She wants to help other regenerative potato farmers connect.

"Once we get the market's attention, we're going to be glad that we have each other," she said. "If you're trying to fill a large contract, chances are, you might have to reach out and aggregate."

Pearl millet

The millets alliance recently offered a special series on pearl millet, a "globally significant" crop that's "very insignificant" in the U.S.

See BUYERS, Page B14

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BUYERS:

Continued from B14

It's a diabetic-friendly grain, high in fiber, and tastes like rice. Kindwall-Moore cites its nutritional value, drought resilience and soil health properties.

Research shows that use of pearl millet in rotations of potatoes, strawberries or tobacco dramatically decreased nematode damage because it interrupts the pests' life cycle.

It's used for dairy cattle feed because of its high calcium.

"Why don't we have processing infrastructure for that?" she asked. "Farmers would love to grow it, we have germplasm that will grow here. We just don't have the market path for it."

Make America Healthy Again

Much of Kindwall-Moore's goals and approach align with the Make America Healthy Again campaign.

"I'm really grateful for it," she said. "I do believe sometimes it's a little misguided from the perspective of me being both a health care professional, a trained scientist and a true food system innovator. I wish they'd spend more time talking to people like me, and they don't."

She believes it's a positive for farmers, but falling short of what it could accomplish with a more holistic approach.

"Having access to a safe food supply, that's as fundamental as it gets," she said. "Why we as a nation have been totally neglecting that and allowing outside interests, like private corporations or special interest groups, to corrupt that, is something that Americans have got to wake up to."

'You just want to be around her'

Mansfield, Wash., farmer Douglas Poole met Kindwall-Moore while working to improve the soil health of his farmground by diversifying his crops beyond a wheat-fallow rotation.

"Every time I turned around, Joni knew somebody — she knows everybody," Poole said. "You just want to be around her. I've sat countless times watching her in a room, and everybody is on the edge of their seat. She could probably call the president of the United States and in five seconds, she'd have him hooked."

He's working with Kindwall-Moore to raise sorghum.

"First and foremost, to be able to grow a crop rotation that actually has a market," Poole said.

"Wheat is wheat is wheat, and then we got real lucky with canola; the crusher's 90 miles from my ranch," Poole said. "But from there, it kind of just falls off for where we can take some of these products. If I can find a market for something I need to be doing anyway, that's great."

Poole plans to participate in the Ryzosphere. Just the networking aspect of it is a "huge deal," he said, giving him the chance to compare experiences with other growers.

"It's fun watching her work her tail off to find those markets for us," Poole said of Kindwall-Moore. "Anything she does, I think is going to turn to gold. She truly is looking at humanity, and just wants to do better by that."

'Progress out of chaos'

The Ryzosphere is raising $2 million by the third quarter of the year to get up and running, amid a tough funding environment and trade uncertainty.

"What we're building is a really great opportunity to create progress out of chaos," Kindwall-Moore said.

"My 'why' is, I know we can do better," she said. "I know we can change the way food does business, so that it is supportive of farmers' lifestyle and their business, but still produce better-quality food. I truly believe that is possible."

She believes farmers get caught in the crosshairs of political arguments surrounding food.

"They need to make a living and it's our job to make sure that they can while doing the best work," she said. "That's what I'm trying to achieve."

JONI KINDWALL-MOORE

Title: Founder, Ryzosphere; founder, Snacktivist Foods.
Age: 49
Hometown: Dallas, Ore.
Current location: Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.
Education: Botany degree, University of Montana; nursing degree, SUNY-Binghamton
Family: Married, three children. Husband Roy is co-founder of Snacktivist. They have been married 25 years.
Hobbies: Hiking, kayaking, skiing, art.
Website: https://ryzosphere.io/

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Writing rancher does what she loves for decades

By DIANNA TROYER
For the Capital Press

Sometimes weak or sickly calves are being nursed in the living room so they can be turned out to graze with the herd in spring. Deadlines for articles and books always loom. Cattle and horses need to be fed.

It's a lifestyle that is perfect for Heather Smith Thomas at Sky Range Ranch south of Salmon in east central Idaho.

For six decades, Thomas has written more than 15,000 articles for horse and cattle publications along with 23 books about horse training, livestock care, and life on the ranch she has called home since childhood.

"It's not often that you get to do the things you love," she said of writing, training horses, and raising cattle with her husband, Lynn, along Withington Creek beneath the Lemhi Range.

She still writes for more than 25 publications, getting up before dawn to write or do interviews on the East Coast before helping with chores, then squeezing in writing when possible during the rest of the day.

"I'm still enjoying my relationship with cattle, still trying to learn everything I can about these marvelous animals and sharing my experiences with my readers," she said.

Her current project is a book called "Raising Cattle

See RANCHER, Page C3

Photos courtesy of Heather Smith Thomas 1a

Heather Smith Thomas checks fences on Sky Range Ranch south of Salmon, where she and her husband, Lynn, have been raising cattle since 1967. She also has written more than 15,000 articles and 23 books about ranching and livestock care.

Bill Schaefer photo courtesy University of Idaho

A tour group visits the Idaho Center for Agriculture, Food and the Environment in Rupert.

UI to hire operations, finance director for dairy-anchored CAFE

Capital Press staff

The University of Idaho seeks applicants with dairy management experience to serve as director of operations and finance at a major research facility under development near Rupert.

The Idaho Center for Food, Agriculture and the Environment, slated to be the nation's largest research dairy, is expected to start milking by early 2026 and to eventually have a herd of more than 2,000 cows, according to a news release. Research at the facility will focus on addressing complex issues pertaining to environmental sustainability.

The new job will entail oversight of all dairy operations including cows, feed, employees, equipment and monitoring daily activities to ensure quality.

"Hiring a director of operations and finance for CAFE is a crucial step for several reasons, particularly as we prepare to milk cows in 2026," Mireille Chahine, acting head of the UI department of animal, veterinary and food sciences, told Capital Press.

The director will help recruit and hire "a high-functioning team needed to start milking cows and support both research and production" and will "help ensure that all the moving parts operate smoothly and efficiently."

The university "has already been working diligently to hire faculty positions associated with CAFE," she said.

UI already hired assistant professors and extension specialists Izabelle Teixeira, who has expertise in dairy sustainability and nutrition; Gilbert Miito, who has expertise in air quality; Pramod Acharya, who is focused on forage agronomy; and Emily Bedwell, who specializes in irrigation.

In hiring an operations and finance director for CAFE, the university requires candidates to have at least five years of experience managing a dairy of comparable size or larger, according to the release. Other required experience

See UI, Page C3

UI :

Continued from C2

includes managing crop production and applying dairy byproducts, managing staff and operating heavy equipment.

Candidates should have an agricultural background or a bachelor's degree in dairy science.

Applications received by July 1 will receive first consideration, officials said. The salary will be $100,000 or more, depending on experience.

CAFE has been made possible by a partnership involving UI, industry and government, according to the university.

In 2017, the legislature appropriated $10 million from the state's permanent building fund to help finance the project.

In September 2022, the state board of land commissioners awarded $23.25 million toward CAFE from the sale of UI endowment land in Caldwell that was no longer being used for experimental farming.

During the 2025 legislative session, the legislature appropriated $250,000 toward building maintenance funds for the new milking parlor.

"We are excited to see this project come to fruition and are looking forward to cows being milked at the facility," Chanine said. "The support from our partners and stakeholders has been overwhelming and truly appreciated."

John O'Connell/UI

Mireille Chahine of the University of Idaho at the Idaho Center for Food, Agriculture and the Environment June 24.

RANCHER:

Continued from C1

on Your Homestead Farm."

Many of her stories are still posted at smallfarmersjournal.com. Her blog that she wrote for many years is also still posted.

Thomas' father, a Methodist minister who always wanted a small cattle ranch, finally fulfilled his dream along Withington Creek, instilling in his daughter a desire to one day run the family ranch.

In high school, Thomas launched her writing career.

"I started writing to express my interest and passion about animals, especially horses and cattle," she said.

Her articles helped pay for her education at the University of Puget Sound. During the summer between her sophomore and junior years, she wrote the manuscript for her first book, "A Horse in Your Life: A Guide for the New Owner."

It was published in 1966, the year she graduated from college with degrees in history and English.

After college, she and Lynn, who had known each other in high school and dated in college, were married in March 1966. They ran a small dairy farm near Gooding with the goal of saving enough money to eventually return to Withington Creek to run her dad's ranch.

In 1967, they returned and started purchasing his ranch "as well as half the ranch where we're living now. For 40 years we leased the other parcels, putting it all together. With hard work and my writing, this was enough land to have enough cows to create a livelihood."

Sky Range Ranch stretches for 5 miles along the narrow creek canyon.

"It was a tremendous challenge — to create new ditches and repair old ones, and build more than 10 miles of new fences and repair the old ones on parts of these ranches," she said. "There are more than 25 miles of fence and 10 miles of ditches on this strung-out place."

Thomas describes their ranch as "beautiful country but not very productive with steep hill pastures and limited hay ground in small meadows along the creek. To maximize our grazing potential, we have cross fences to facilitate pasture rotations and bought extra hay."

With crossbred bulls of several breeds, they developed a herd with genetics suited to the high altitude pastures.

A few years ago, the

See RANCHER, Page C4

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Facing soft sales, tractor dealerships focus on service and upgrades

By KYLE ODEGARD
Capital Press

New farm tractor and combine sales continue to lag in 2025 after a slowdown that started the previous year, according to the latest report from the Association of Equipment Manufacturers.

Soft sales led savvy dealerships to focus on service and aftermarket upgrades such as precision agriculture technology, said Curt Blades, AEM vice president.

SS Equipment New Holland, headquartered in Pasco, Wash., focused on deals with winter overhaul programs, said Jay Herbers, corporate sales manager. The economy has been tight, limiting sales of tractors, combines, swathers and bailers, he said.

"The biggest thing in this economy is selling your business as a whole," Herbers said.

Salesmen need to promote the dealership's parts and service out in the field.

Chad Hochstetler, general manager for Rickreall Farm Supply, a Kubota dealership in Rickreall, Ore., said farmers and ranchers were making investments in their existing equipment.

"People are trying to be resourceful," he said.

In some cases, that means seeking versatility and using tractors as "Swiss Army knives."

"How can we make our tractors do more things? That's some of what is occurring in the market right now," Hochstetler said.

Hochstetler was hopeful sales would improve in the third and fourth quarter of 2025 as agricultural uncertainty regarding trade and other matters is resolved.

Herbers said there was optimism.

"When you're able to get a quote to a guy, it's trending upwards," he said.

Farmland Tractor in Tangent, Ore., sells tractor parts and when the economy is tough, parts sales increase, said Ty Raschein, whose family owns and operates the business.

"Nobody is buying new, they're fixing old, so that's better for us," he said.

Raschein said margins are tight across the country, including in Linn

See TRACTOR, Page C4

RANCHER:

Continued from C3

Thomases sold sections of the ranch to their son Michael and daughter Andrea.

"We're still doing what we love — just on a smaller scale," she said.

Along with technical books, Thomas wrote a three-book ranch series "in the James Herriot tradition," according to an editor at "Gulf Coast Cattleman." She describes heart-warming bonds with livestock, pets, and wildlife in "Horse Tales," "Cow Tales," and "Ranch Tales."

Whenever Thomas checks off another story on her list, often two will replace it.

"I'll never run out of things to write about."

Her books are available on Amazon or by contacting her at P.O. Box 15, Salmon, Idaho 83467.

TRACTOR:

Continued from C4

County, Ore., where grass seed isn't moving.

Blades said uncertainty, higher input costs and higher interest rates continue to hamper tractor sales.

Preliminary data also indicates that the fleet age for tractors and combines is relatively young, with many farmers, ranchers and rural residents making larger purchases within the past eight years.

During the pandemic, for example, dealerships experienced record high sales of tractors less than 40 hp as people were stuck at home.

Combine sales are sharply down, but were strong just a few years ago thanks to advancements with precision agriculture.

AEM data showed sales of tractors from 40 hp to 100 hp suffered the smallest percentage drop year-to-date in 2025.

Herbers said mid-range tractors sales for machines from 75 hp to 100 hp were decent, in part because ranchers use those machines and beef is a hot segment.

Hochstetler said the sweet spot for sales at Rickreall Farm Supply was from 40 hp to 80 hp.

"It isn't bad. It's down slightly," he said.

Total farm tractor sales through May hit 80,332, down 12.8% from the first five months of 2024.

Self-propelled combine sales — measured as a separate category by AEM — were down 43% to 1,253 year-to-date.

In 2024, tractor sales fell 13.2% compared to the previous year, while combine sales dropped 24.3%.

FARM TRACTOR SALES

Total tractor sales: 80,332, down 12.8%

Two wheel drive tractors: 79,328, down 12.3%

< 40 hp — 53,379, down 11.2%

40 < 100 hp — 18,768, down 9.4%

100+ hp — 7,181, down 25.6%

Four wheel drive tractors: 1,004, down 37.8%

Self propelled combines: 1,253, down 43.3%

Year-to-date data through from Association of Equipment Manufacturers

Gary L. West/Capital Press

Farm equipment is shown at the SS Equipment New Holland location in Hermiston, Ore. With machinery sales slow, the dealership, headquartered in Pasco, Wash., focused on deals with a winter overhaul program to bring value to customers.

Supreme Court stops universal injunctions, strengthens Trump's orders

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that district courts can't issue universal injunctions, ending an increasingly common way

See INJUNCTIONS, Page C6

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Fred Schilling, Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States, file

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled 6-3 on June 27 that district court judges can't issue universal injunctions, a ruling sought by the Trump administration.

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

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

'22 CASE IH 9250 HILLCO, 755 hrs, Harvest Command, Chopper, Duals, Lux Cab,#1055..... **$550,000**

'22 CASE IH MAGNUM 280 AFS CONCT CVT, 1200 hrs, MFD, Susp Axle, PTO, #1383... **$280,000**

'08 CASE IH STEIGER 435Q, 8120 hrs, Lux Cab, 30" Tracks, 4 Remotes, #1387 ..... **$150,000**

'18 CASE IH PUMA 150, 1950 hrs, Powershift, MFD, Loader w/Grapple, #1384..... **$150,000**

USED TRACKED TRACTORS

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'23 CASE IH 500Q AFS CONNECT, 1300 hrs, PTO, 36" Tracks, 6 Rmt, HO Pump, Lux Cab,#1427 ... **$475,000**
'23 CASE IH 500Q AFS CONNECT, 1800 hrs, PTO, 36" Tracks, 6 Rmt, HO Pump, Lux Cab,#1400 ..... **$459,000**
'23 CASE IH 500Q AFS CONNECT, 970 hrs, PTO, 36" Tracks, 6 Rmt, HO Pump, Lux Cab#1428 ..... **$525,000**
'20 CASE IH 500Q, 5140 hrs, PTO, 36" Tracks, 6 Rmt, HO Pump, Lux Cab#1430 ..... **$250,000**
'18 CASE IH STEIGER 620Q, 3300hrs, Lux Cab, 36" Tracks, 6 Rmts, PTO, HO Pump #1435 .... **$395,000**
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'14 CHALLENGER-MT775E, 3004 hrs, PTO, 3pt hitch, 24" Tracks, 5 Remts,# **$180,000**
'14 CHALLENGER-MT775E, 6025 hrs., PTO, 3pt, 14" Tracks, 6 Rmts, #1313 ..... **$135,000**
'01 JOHN DEERE 8410T, 4 Remotes, PTO, Power Shift, Clean unit #1360 ..... **$50,000**

USED WHEEL TRACTORS

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'22 CASE IH MAGNUM 280 AFS CONCT CVT, 1200 hrs, MFD, Susp Axle, PTO, #1383 ... **$280,000**
'23 CASE IH MAXXUM 135 ACT 4, 250 hrs, MFD, 3pt, PTO, #1401 ..... **$150,000**
'21 CASE IH MAXXUM 135 ACT 8, 800 hrs, MFD, 3pt, PTO, #1342 ..... **$135,000**
'21 CASE IH MAXXUM 135 ACT 4, 871 hrs, MFD, 3pt, PTO, #1398 ..... **$120,000**
'20 CASE IH MAGNUM 240 CVT, 1840 hrs, MFD, Susp Axle, PTO, Duals,#1424 ..... **$180,000**
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'22 CASE IH 8250, 610 Hrs, Harvest Command, 4WD, Chopper, Duals, Lux Cab,#1021 ..... **$395,000**
'22 CASE IH 8250, 700 Hrs, Harvest Command, 4WD, Chopper, Duals, Lux Cab,#1029 ..... **$375,000**
'22 CASE IH 9250 HILLCO, 795 hrs, Harvest Command, Chopper, Duals, Lux Cab,#1047 ... **$550,000**
'22 CASE IH 9250 HILLCO, 755 hrs, Harvest Command, Chopper, Duals, Lux Cab,#1055 ... **$550,000**
'16 CASE IH 8240, 2303 Sep hrs, Chopper, 620x42 Duals, 2WD, Lux Cab **$195,000**
'15 CASE IH 8230, 2100 Hrs, 620 Duals, Chopper, 4WD, #1062 ..... **$185,000**
'11 CASE IH 8120, 2500 hrs, Duals, Chopper, 2WD, Field Ready #1067 ..... **$115,000**
'10 CASE IH 8120, 2790 hrs, Duals, Chopper, 4WD, Field Ready #1068 ..... **$115,000**
'07 CASE IH 8010, 2889 hrs, Duals, 4WD, Chopper, #1035 ..... **$95,000**
'13 JD S680 HILLCO, 2025 hrs, Duals, 4WD, Chopper, c/w FD75, 40' # **$325,000**
'12 JD S690, 2290 hrs, Duals, 2WD, Chopper, #1037 ..... **$130,000**

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INJUNCTIONS :

Continued from C5

for lower-court judges to block polices nationally.

The 6-3 decision on June 27, which could strengthen President Donald Trump's ability to govern by executive orders, was hailed by Trump. District courts have issued about 25 universal injunctions blocking, at least temporarily, Trump's orders, including several imposing tariffs.

"It was a grave threat to democracy, frankly," Trump said.

Conservative justices, in prior rulings, have urged the court to review whether district court judges can issue injunctions that apply to other jurisdictions and to parties not involved in the case before them.

Three nationwide stays, including one by a judge in western Washington, against Trump's order ending birthright citizenship gave the court the opportunity to take up the issue.

Writing for the majority, Justice Amy Coney Barrett said universal injunctions have no historic pedigree. The first universal injunction was issued in 1963, more than a century after the Founding Fathers passed the Judiciary Act of 1789.

Barrett cited a study that found 123 universal injunctions were issued between 1963 and 2023. Some 96 were issued during the presidencies of George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Joe Biden and Trump.

"Nothing like a universal injunction was available at the founding, or for that matter for more than a century thereafter. Thus, under the Judiciary Act, federal courts lack authority to issue them," Barrett wrote.

Trump said the ruling will prevent courts from overriding an elected president.

"In recent months, we've seen a handful of radical-left judges effectively try to overrule the rightful powers of the president to stop the American

See INJUNCTIONS, Page C7

Potato acres this season are mostly flat

By BRAD CARLSON
Capital Press

Potato acreage is down by about 9% in Washington and unchanged from year-earlier totals in Idaho, Oregon and California, according to a midyear report by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service.

The nationwide total of about 912,000 potato acres planted — including 315,000 in Idaho, 145,000 in Washington,

See POTATO, Page C8

File photo courtesy Kamren Koompin

Potato planters near American Falls, Idaho.

INJUNCTIONS:

Continued from C6

people from getting the policies they voted for," Trump said.

Groups from across the political spectrum, including farm groups, have sought universal injunctions. Farm groups supported a universal injunction last year against the Corporate Transparency Act, which mandated businesses to report to federal financial crime investigators.

Also last year, a district court judge issued a universal injunction against a Biden-era rule giving guest foreign farmworkers union rights. A federal court in 2015 issued a universal injunction against an Obama administration rule that extended the reach of the Clean Water Act to low spots in farm fields isolated from waterways.

Chief Justice John Roberts and justices Clarence Thomas, Samuel Alito, Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh joined Barrett in the ruling. The ruling did not address the constitutionality of Trump's order ending birthright citizenship.

Justices Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jackson dissented. Writing for the three dissenting judges, Sotomayor said Trump's order was plainly unconstitutional.

The ruling means that no matter how illegal a law or policy is, courts can never simply tell the executive branch to stop enforcing it against everyone, she wrote.

Only individuals who are parties in a lawsuit will have their constitutional rights protected, according to Sotomayor.

"No right is safe in the new legal regime the court creates," the dissent reads. "Today, the threat is to birthright citizenship. Tomorrow, a different administration may try to seize firearms from law-abiding citizens or prevent people of certain faiths from gathering to worship."

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POTATO:

Continued from C7

43,000 in Oregon and 20,000 in California — is down by just over 1.9% from 930,000 in 2024, according to NASS survey-based estimates.

Northwest acres contracted by fry processors dropped by a higher percentage than total planted acres, "meaning there will be a lot of potatoes trying to find a home at harvest time" in fresh and open markets, said Dale Lathim, Potato Growers of Washington executive director.

Also in the region, "it looks like we are going to have a phenomenal crop" with yields and quality well above historical averages in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Alberta, he said. If a strong crop materializes, the number of potatoes entering the market would increase proportionately.

Given overall demand, carryover storage and reduced processor orders, "we should have reduced planted acres significantly more than we did," Lathim said.

As for potatoes grown earlier and stored, "my gut tells me there are going to be less to work through this year than last year," Idaho Potato Commission CEO Jamey Higham said. "It's too early to tell."

Growers make their own decisions about which crops to plant in which amounts, he said. And with prices down for potatoes and assorted other crops, "there are not a lot of good options out there in any of the commodities," a factor in Idaho potato acres essentially staying flat from 2024.

IPC field counts produced an estimate of 313,045 acres planted this year, including 32,859 designated for seed production, according to the commission website.

With planted acres similar to that of 2024, commission board members likely will set a budget "that is also fairly flat" for the fiscal year that starts Sept. 1, Higham said.

NASS has had total Oregon planted acres at about 43,000 for some time, and "it is very unlikely that we still have 43,000 planted potato acres in Oregon," said Gary Roth, executive director of the state's potato commission. "Our largest segment is processed-potato acres in the Columbia Basin, and those farms have seen contracted acre cutbacks."

Oregon's current planted-acre total probably is below 43,000 given processors' reduction of about 8,500 contracted acres over the last few years combined, he said.

"We may have had some increases in chipping potatoes, but not nearly anything that would offset 8,500," Roth said.

The U.S. continues to see increased pressure from foreign competition, "and it remains unclear what future planted acres could be," he said.

NASS covers many crops in its annual acreage report for the U.S., released June 30.

Find it all online
CapitalPress.com

Idaho potato equipment company sells assets as part of bankruptcy

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

An Idaho company that manufactures potato planting and harvesting equipment has sold substantially all of its assets for more than $2 million as part of bankruptcy proceedings.

Double L of Heyburn, Idaho, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings last year to shield its assets from foreclosure while continuing operations, citing several years of financial losses in the millions of dollars.

The company said it'd experienced "consistent, disastrous negative cash flow," with losses ranging from $5 million to $11 million in recent years, and considered a sale the best option to prevent a sudden closure that would endanger its employees' livelihoods.

Earlier this year, the U.S. Trustee's Office that oversees bankruptcy cases urged the judge presiding over Double L's bankruptcy to convert it into a Chapter 7 liquidation based on its "continuing loss and unlikely rehabilitation, gross mismanagement, unexcused failure to file timely reports of sale," and other problems.

Among other issues, the U.S. Trustee's Office complained that it did not believe the asset sale had been completed despite being approved by the bankruptcy judge, as the company had not filed a report of sale, which "may be related to difficulties accounting for raw materials or inventory items."

The company responded by filing financial documents showing that its assets had been sold for nearly $2.2 million to the Barclay Limited Family Partnership of Idaho.

Double L's initial bankruptcy documents said the company planned to sell its assets to BTR Manufacturing of Paul, Idaho. Filings with the Idaho Secretary of State indicate the Barclay Family Limited Partnership is an affiliated entity with the same registered agent as BTR Manufacturing and other companies involved in truck parts and repairs.

Despite the report of sale, the U.S. Trustee's Office has objected to a Chapter 11 plan of reorganization filed by Double L, saying an associated disclosure statement "fails to provide adequate information" and arguing it doesn't sufficiently explain the plan's benefits compared to a Chapter 7 liquidation.

The bankruptcy judge recently ordered the company to amend its disclosure statement and has scheduled hearings on a possible conversion to Chapter 7 liquidation for July 17 and on its Chapter 11 bankruptcy plan for Aug. 22.

Contributed photo

A two-row potato harvester manufactured by Double L of Heyburn, Idaho, is shown in this file photo. More than $2 million worth of Double L assets have recently been sold as part of a bankruptcy proceeding.

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Washington teen develops one of world's first hydrogen tractors

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

CENTRALIA, Wash. — Pedro Picazo has liked to take stuff apart to see how it worked and put it back together ever since he was little. "I've always liked to be hands-on," he said.

Picazo, 18, has converted a 1940s-era John Deere Model B tractor to hydrogen power.

"As of right now, I have (one of) the world's first" hydrogen-powered tractors, Picazo said.

Picazo bought a hydrogen-powered Toyota Mirai at a salvage auction, took it apart and configured the parts for the tractor.

"It's cool, but it's a little weird," Picazo said.

John Deere produced the Model B tractor from 1935 to 1952.

Hydrogen interest

Picazo moved to Centralia about four years ago. His family has a 5-acre ranch in California, raising corn, sheep and horses. While playing volleyball there, a cousin showed up in a Toyota Mirai and told him it runs on water.

"I wanted to know how that worked," Picazo said.

While discussing clean energy in freshman science, Picazo asked teacher Kendra Meek why hydrogen wasn't used more in Washington.

"We both started digging more into it," he said.

Picazo first built a hydrogen-powered go-cart from scratch as he studied what is needed to create a hydrogen generator.

Picazo asked to use one of the engines at the back of Meek's classroom for the go-cart, for an FFA district competition.

"She told me, 'As long as you can make it work with hydrogen,'" Picazo said. "That's basically where it all started."

Meek said she made the suggestion "kind of as a joke."

"Oh, no — those kids by the end of the year, they had that engine working on hydrogen power," Meek said. "By July, he had a go-cart made."

Picazo was 14 or 15 at the time, she noted.

"And then in his junior year, he comes to me a couple of months later and says, 'Hey, I think I'm going to build a truck,'" Meek said.

The next thing she knew, Picazo was moving forward on the tractor project. He'd made various connections while attending a state alternative energy conference with the high school principal.

The tractor took about a year in planning, designing and looking for sponsors. Picazo received about $23,000 from various sponsors.

Germany-based company Fendt International displayed a hydrogen tractor during a February 2023 hydrogen summit.

Blue Fuel Solutions and New Holland promote the H2 Dual Power as available to order, built in Italy but converted to dual power in the Netherlands, using a combination of hydrogen and diesel.

"He was told by innovative people that he was on the forefront of that in the agriculture industry," Meek said. "This kid's got connections worldwide now. It sounds very much that it could be the world's first."

Close, but not quite first.

Germany-based company Fendt International displayed a hydrogen trac-

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tor during a February 2023 hydrogen summit.

Blue Fuel Solutions and New Holland promote the H2 Dual Power as available to order, built in Italy but converted to dual power in the Netherlands, using a combination of hydrogen and diesel.

CNH Industrial in 2009 introduced a concept hydrogen tractor that is not currently commercially available, said Kristina Post, external communications specialist for the company in North America. The company pivoted to methane, compressed natural gas and liquefied natural gas tractors.

"We're excited to hear more about the FFA student who is diving into such a neat project!" Post said of Picazo.

Picazo graduated June 6 from Centralia High School, where he was the treasurer for Centralia FFA.

Photo courtesy Kendra Meek

Pedro Picazo poses with what he believes is the world's first hydrogen-powered tractor, which the recent Centralia High School graduate created out of a John Deere tractor from the 1940s.

Hydrogen at a glance

A hydrogen tractor basically has instant torque, Picazo said.

"It's not really the horsepower you're looking for, it's torque," he said.

There's no emissions, the only byproduct of hydrogen is water, he said. "So it's completely renewable."

The Douglas County Public Utility District sells hydrogen for about $4 per kilogram. About 6 kilograms are needed to fill a vehicle, Picazo said. "And you get 500 miles out of it," he said.

Hydrogen is much more expensive in California, about $33 per kilogram, he said.

Hydrogen infrastructure is growing as more companies get interested.

Picazo wants to demonstrate hydrogen's potential as a fuel, and that a 17-year-old can work with it. He turned 18 on June 29.

Does hydrogen fuel require extra precaution?

"Yes and no — if it's not done correctly, yes," Picazo said. "The tanks hold 10,000 [pounds per square inch], but they're rated for 40,000, four times what the working pressure is going to be. The majority of times, tanks don't see 10,000 psi; they see around 7,000 to 9,000."

The amount of pressure depends on the fueling station, he said.

"It's not something (the public) should be scared of," he said. "When you mention hydrogen, people think about the Hindenburg and accidents

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that have happened, and they think it's a ticking time bomb. But if you look back, when electric vehicles first started, they were catching on fire. Same with gasoline vehicles. Nothing's 100% safe, there need to be all the safety precautions to do it."

Software in hydrogen-powered vehicles will detect leaks. Hydrogen-powered vehicles have been on the road for years now, he said.

"The government won't let something that's not safe be on the road, especially coming straight out of the factory," he said.

The carbon footprint is smaller than an electric vehicle, which requires time to charge and can only run for a certain amount of time before needing to cool down.

There's not enough infrastructure to power all the electric vehicles, Picazo said.

Photo courtesy Kendra Meek

Pedro Picazo shows the motor of his hydrogen-powered tractor, which he built using a John Deere tractor from the 1940s and the motor out of a Toyota Mirai be bought at a salvage auction.

Hydrogen requires electricity to make it, but "it's basically just like a gasoline vehicle," he said. "You plug the nozzle in, five minutes tops to fuel up to a full tank and it's got another 400 to 600 miles on there."

Potential farm use

Farmers can place shipping containers on their farms and purchase hydrogen generators, Picazo said. They could have separate fueling stations on their property and fuel up at little to no cost, he said.

"They just hook up to water and electricity and they could be producing their own hydrogen, and if they really wanted to, they could sell it to other farmers, too," he said.

Picazo foresees hydrogen-powered tractors being produced and sold. He's working on a conversion kit for vehicles.

Hydrogen would be more affordable than diesel and would not require delivery, he said.

A 10-gallon tank would require about $40 to fill up on diesel at $4 per gallon, he said. If the Douglas County PUD is selling hydrogen at $10 per kilogram, it would cost $60 to fuel up the tractor.

"You're going to get a lot more run time, you're going to be following emissions regulations and it's a lot cleaner," Picazo said. "You get (the same), if not more performance out of it, depending on the size of the electric motor, and there's little to no maintenance."

'Amazing young man'

Meek said it was "very cool as a teacher and advisor to watch an individual that literally takes an idea and in the four years of high school grew that idea into something that was pretty big, pretty cool."

Washington farmers are getting pushed to consider alternative energies, she said. She could see Picazo becoming a consultant to help make those kinds of conversions.

"What an amazing young man," said Dave Warren, founder of the Washington Green Hydrogen Alliance, who met Picazo after he built the go-cart. Warren is helping Picazo find a hydrogen-compatible fuel line hose for the tractor.

Warren encourages future employers to hire Picazo for their research and development or innovation units.

"The fact that (Picazo) himself designed a go-cart to run on hydrogen as a self-learner, picking people's brains — the best engineers in the world are working on that right now, how to make hydrogen-powered fuel cell electric vehicles, big trucks and buses," Warren said.

The fact that Picazo did it while still in high school, "to me, that's genius,' Warren said. "I'm an engineer by training, and I'm in awe of what he's done."

FFA message

Meek encourages other FFA members to similarly think outside of the box.

"The message to advisors is, 'Don't hold them back,'" she said. "If you have a kid who comes to you with some crazy idea like Pedro did, you've just got to step back and let them go, give them the support they need and let them grow."

"He knows all of the different alternative energies and he can give you all the reasons why hydrogen power is the way to go," she said. "He's done his research, he's asked his questions, he's gone out there and talked to people that are in the field doing it. Don't hold anybody back. Even the craziest ideas can sometimes be something."

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Don Jenkins/Capital Press

An irrigation canal carries water to farmers in the Yakima River basin. The Bureau of Reclamation projects farmers with junior water rights will receive 45% of normal allotments.

Yakima irrigation outlook steady, but steadily poor

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

Yakima River basin farmers with junior water rights can expect 45% of their full water allotments, as the irrigation outlook for the south-central Washington region held steady over the second half of June.

The water rationing projected July 3 by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation was the same as the

See YAKIMA, Page C14

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Future plans

Picazo keeps the tractor at the King Agriculture Museum, which displays antique tractors,in Centralia. He hopes to connect with farmers for demonstrations and display the tractor at fairs and parades.

He has his own company, Picazo Industries, working on buildings under 200 square feet.

He plans to attend a technical college, go into wildland firefighting and work as a field mechanic. Picazo expects agriculture will turn to hydrogen more often.

"Once there's actually somebody producing a hydrogen-powered tractor, I feel like farmers will find it a better alternative than letting their equipment charge all night, and then it dying in the middle of the day while they're using it," he said.

WESTERN INNOVATOR

Name: Pedro Picazo

Age: 18

Title: Founder, Picazo Industries

Hometown: Visalia, Calif.

Current location: Centralia, Wash.

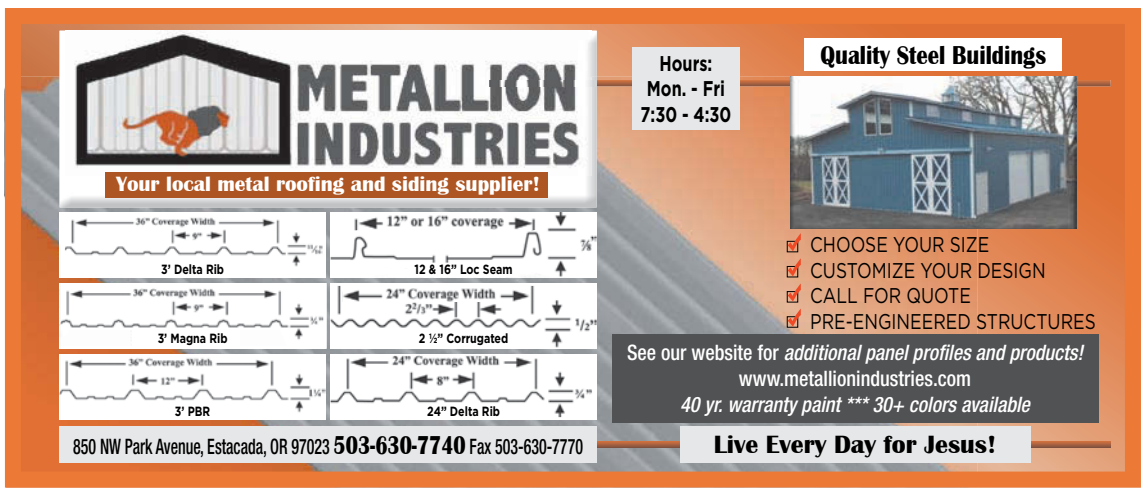
Education: Centralia High School graduate

Family: Mom, Simona Carranza; dad, Pedro Picazo; two sisters, Daisy and Dania

Hobbies: Welding, framing and wrenching on vehicles

Video: Picazo was a finalist for Washington FFA's Washington Star in Agriscience: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0d5xYFnScY

Website: https://picazoindustries.com/



Vietnam agrees to eliminate tariffs on U.S. farm goods

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

President Trump said Vietnam has agreed to eliminate tariffs on U.S. goods, potentially creating trade opportunities for Pacific Northwest crops such as apples, cherries and potatoes.

Trump announced the trade deal in a social media post July 2. The U.S. will impose a 20% tariff on Vietnamese products shipped directly to the U.S., while Vietnam will let in U.S. products duty free, Trump said.

"It will be a Great Deal of Cooperation between our two Countries," the president said. "... Vietnam will do something that they have never done before, give the United States of America TOTAL ACCESS to their markets for Trade.

"In other words, they will 'OPEN THEIR MARKET TO THE UNITED STATES,' meaning that, we will be able to sell our product into Vietnam at ZERO Tariff."

The White House did not immediately release any other details about the agreement, including when it would take effect or whether any goods would be exempted from the deal. Trump imposed a 46% tariff on Vietnamese goods on April 2, one of the highest of the "Liberation Day" tariffs. The tariff was suspended while the U.S. and Vietnam began trade talks.

The Vietnamese government said in April it expected to reach an agreement to stabilize trade relations between the countries. Trump said he made the deal after speaking with Vietnamese General Secretary To Lam. "Dealing with General Secretary To Lam, which I did personally, was an absolute pleasure," Trump wrote.

The U.S. exported $3.85 billion worth of agricultural products to Vietnam in 2024, making it the ninth-largest foreign market for U.S. farmers and ranchers, according to the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service.

U.S. farm exports to Vietnam could increase significantly under an agreement that eliminates tariffs, according to farm groups.

Vietnam generally imposes high tariffs on U.S. farm goods. Other agricultural exporting countries — such as Australia, Chile and Canada — have tariff-free trade agreements with Vietnam, putting U.S. exports at a further price disadvantage.

Vietnam lets in frozen fries tariff-free from Canada, Australia and New Zealand, but imposes a 12% tariff on U.S. frozen fries. The U.S. exported $3 million worth of fries to Vietnam in 2024, but the market could grow to $40 million a year if the tariff was eliminated, the American Potato Trade Alliance estimates.

Vietnam places an 8% tariff on U.S. apples and a 10% tariff on cherries and pears. Eliminating the tariffs could increase apple and cherry sales by $10 million to $25 million a year and pear sales by about $10 million, according to the Northwest Horticultural Council.

Vietnam is a potential high-growth market for blueberries, but only if its 15% tariff on fresh blueberries and 30% tariff on frozen and dried blueberries are lowered or eliminated, according to the North American Blueberry Council.

The U.S. sold less than $600,000 worth of cranberry products to Vietnam in 2024. Vietnam could be a $5 million to $10 million a year market if it eliminated its 25% tariff

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agency predicted in mid-June. Depending on the weather, the supply could rise as high as 48% or drop as low as 41%, according to the bureau.

The Roza Irrigation District plans to stop delivering water on Sept. 28, 23 days earlier than usual. If the water shortage worsens, the district's board will have to decide whether to shorten the season more, reduce flows or do a combination, district manager Scott Revell said.

"I'm always nervous it's going to drop," he said.

The Reclamation Bureau's five reservoirs store water to irrigate some 464,000 acres. Farmers with senior water rights will receive full allotments, but this is the third straight summer that junior water-right holders have been cut back.

Only once in the past 55 years have the reservoirs been this low at the start of July. They hold only 67% as much water as usual.

In better water years, Roza, an 86,000-acre district based in Sunnyside, delivers water until Oct. 15 to irrigate fruit and hops. Farmers are fallowing ground to stretch the water out, Revell said. "They're having to make tough, tough decisions."

The Reclamation Bureau projected at the beginning of June that irrigators would be cut back to 43% of normal. The bump up in mid-June to 45% helped hay farmers with their first cuttings, said Urban Eber-

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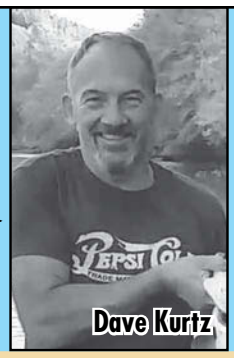
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Agriculture secretary pledges quick action on farm labor

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins said the Trump administration will act quickly to legalize more farmworkers to protect agriculture from mass deportations of illegal immigrants.

Rollins said she has been working with Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRember and deputy chief of staff for policy Stephen Miller to streamline the H-2A foreign farmworker program.

"We're going to make it cheaper, more efficient and more effective for those farmers," Rollins said July 3, standing next to President Trump as he was leaving Iowa after giving a speech at the state fairgrounds in Des Moines.

"We will have a 100% legal work force very, very soon, thanks to President Trump's leadership," Rollins said.

Trump publicly asked cabinet officials three months ago to develop a program that allows farms to keep valued workers who are in the country illegally. The administration has not yet announced a plan, nor did Rollins offer any details.

The USDA estimates about 40% of U.S. farmworkers are illegal immigrants. For several years, some U.S. House members have promoted the Farm Workforce Modernization Act as the path to legalizing undocumented farmworkers.

The legislation proposes that undocumented farmworkers without criminal records be allowed to become "certified agricultural workers" and eventually a "lawful permanent resident."

The H-2A program addresses a shortage of U.S. farmworkers. Foreign workers are issued temporary visas to work for a particular farm. Federal law requires the workers to be housed and paid at least a minimum wage set by the Labor Department.

Trump has repeatedly said he wants farmers to be able to retain workers, even as his administration calls for the deportation of all illegal immigrants.

"I'm not going to be abandoning my farmers," Trump said June 30 in Florida. "We're strong on the borders, but we're also strong for the farmers, but also for others, in the hotel industry, etc.

"They're not going to have citizenship, but they'll be working. They'll be paying taxes," he said. "We're going to put our farmers in charge of those people that are under them. They know the people, and I think it's going to work out really well.

"We're going to take care of our farmers, but we're going to take the criminals out," Trump said.

Courtesy USDA

Brooke Rollins, U.S. secretary of agriculture, appears on stage at the state fairgrounds in Des Moines, Iowa, where she launched a program called the Great American State Fair, which will travel across the country to existing state and county fairs leading up to the 250th anniversary of the United States' founding on July 4, 2026. Rollins unveiled a proclamation calling on states across the nation to celebrate America's proud agriculture heritage by implementing America 250 programming at every state fair.

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hart, manager of the 72,000-acre Kittitas Reclamation District in Ellensburg.

"Two percentage points is actually incredibly helpful when we're this short," he said.

The district hopes to deliver water until Sept. 1, but will have to ramp down water deliveries this month, Eberhart said. Most of the district's fruit growers have wells to draw from, he said.

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