



The Growers' Guide



REACHING MORE THAN 13,000 GROWERS IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST SINCE 1983

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The future of barley: Growers, breeders pivot as markets shift

By **Matthew Weaver**
Capital Press

Bob Brueggeman had big plans for malting barley when he arrived at Washington State University as the new barley breeder in 2019.

He brought in the infrastructure and genetics to establish a malt quality lab.

Brueggeman got the quality he wanted.

But the surprise closure of Great Western Malting's Vancouver, Wash.-based plant in late 2024 means the company isn't contracting for dryland malting barley on the Palouse.

"That one hit me like a ton of bricks," Brueggeman said.

Another plant, Skagit Valley Brewing in Burlington, Wash., closed in June 2023. It has since reopened on a smaller scale.

That company had talked with Brueggeman beforehand about expanding operations and bringing in floor malters, workers who harvest barley by hand.

"I was thinking things were looking up," he said. "It wasn't a month or two after I heard that information that I heard they closed their doors. When you have the biggest pure craft malting facility in the nation, I believe it was at the time, just up and close its doors, it's kind of concerning."

Indeed, the closures are a stark example of the decades-long decline of barley acreage nationwide.

U.S. barley farmers seeded a

record-low 2.3 million acres in 2025; this year, they're slated to plant 2.4 million acres, a 6% increase.

Washington farmers grew more than 1 million acres of barley in the late 1980s. This year, they planted 60,000 acres — one of five states planting a record low acreage.

"The state of barley production in Washington is pretty dismal," Brueggeman said. "Malt barley was not the main class of barley that was going to get us acreage, but at least there was 10,000 to 15,000 acres. As soon as they pulled out and quit contracting on the Palouse, it definitely pulled the rug out from under my plans for the program."

'THE EDGE OF THE CLIFF'
"Barley has been on a downhill slope for the last 20 years," Washington Grain Commission chairman Kevin Klein, who represents barley farmers, said during the March board meeting in Spokane.

Great Western Malting represented the majority of the barley market, about 4,000 to 5,000 metric tons a year.

"Our barley acres have pretty much dropped off the edge of the cliff," Klein said during the meeting.

Idaho is the top barley producer in the Northwest, with the most metric tons available to serve malthouses in southern Idaho. North Dakota and Montana farmers serve Coors in

See **BARLEY**, 4A



BOB BRUEGGEMAN/CONTRIBUTED

Washington State University barley breeder Bob Brueggeman hand harvests barley July 24 in Pullman, Wash. Despite shrinking markets and reduced acreage, "I started working with barley here and I will retire working with barley here," Brueggeman says.

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The Junior Livestock Show of Spokane hosts a series of webinars led by Texas Tech University meat science professors, intended for youth, FFA and 4-H advisers and industry professionals.

By Matthew Weaver
Capital Press

The Junior Livestock Show of Spokane will host a webinar series about meat science and beef industry opportunities, led by Texas Tech University professors.

Blake Foraker will speak about meat and livestock opportunities Sept. 8 at 6 p.m. Mark Miller will give international insights on meat industry trends Oct. 6 at 6 p.m. Dale Woerner will discuss innovation and hot topics in meat science Nov. 10 at 6 p.m.

The webinars are free to attend. They're intended for youth, FFA and 4-H leaders and industry professionals alike, said Lori Williams, livestock show executive director.

The sessions “shed a light on some opportunities a lot of kids in our region aren’t aware are out there,” Williams said. “They can

find something to stay engaged in agriculture and be part of the food production chain, even if it's not on the farm."

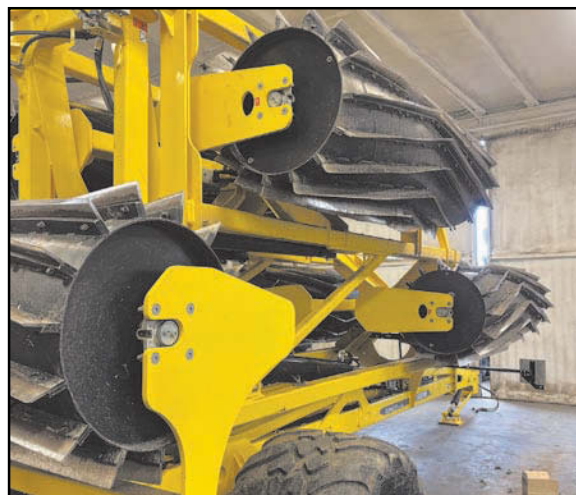
Foraker's presentation will be particularly geared to today's high school students considering college and career pathways and their advisors, she said.

“Opportunities are endless,” Williams said. “Universities are starting to recruit kids specifically from our area because we seem to be emerging with top-tier students who can add benefit to their programs and go on to high careers within agriculture.”

Universities are forging research that can benefit both producers and consumers, Williams said.

"It's important to be an educated producer as well as consumer, to follow the food chain, know how (beef) is produced and where some efficiencies can be gained," she said.

There's special pricing in effect for both **HORSCH** and **Bednar** on all early preseason ordering for **2027**.



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‘21 JD S780, 652 Sep Hrs, 4WD, Pro Drive Trans, IF1250/50R32 Drive Tires \$325,000



‘16 CIH 8240, 4473 Sep Hrs, Hillco 27%, 4WD, ‘17 MacDon FD75-45’ \$119,900

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(2) ‘12 CIH 3020 TERRAFLEX HEADS, 35’ Cart, Harvest Ready \$9,000 EA.

‘99 CIH 2388, 4664 Sep Hrs, 4WD, Hillco, Late Cone/ Cage, Hydros, New Rod, ‘97 CIH 1020-25’ \$35,000

‘99 CIH 2388, 4114 Eng Hrs, Hillco, Duals, ‘04 CIH 1010-30’ .. \$CALL

‘89 CIH 1015, Rakeup Pickup \$3,500

‘17 CIH FD75, 45’, Top Auger, Transport Kit \$29,950

‘04 JD 9760STS, 3625 Sep Hrs, Full Leveler, 4WD, Chopper, ‘07 JD 630R, Cart, ‘06 JD 630F, Cart..... \$49,950

‘99 JD 9610, 5272 Sep Hrs, Full Leveler, 200 Hrs On New Hydro, Chaff Spreader, ‘99 JD 930R, Cart..... \$19,950

‘92 JD 914 PICKUP HEAD, 7 Belt, Hillco Conversion.. \$4,950

(2) CIH 2020 FLEX HEADS, 35’, Cart..... \$3,500 EA.

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BARLEY

Continued from 1A

Colorado.

Washington remains at No. 6 in production.

The larger breweries are supplying malt to smaller regional craft brewers, Klein noted.

LINC Malt in Spokane uses roughly 300 tons a year; Cascadia Malts in Nine Mile Falls, Wash., uses 500 tons. Coldstream Malt and Grain in Nezperce, Idaho, uses 3,500 tons.

“I don’t foresee barley going completely away and completely disappearing in the state of Washington, there’s a lot of small markets spread throughout the state,” Klein said.

PIVOT

Brueggeman isn’t abandoning malt barley, hoping there’s a market in the craft industry. But that’s a pretty small acreage, he said.

With grant funding, he is investing in breeding for food barley, which is growing, but also starting at a “pretty low level.”

“Feed barley is the one that commands the major amount of acreage,” he said. He’s adding in traits like herbicide tolerance to command more acreage, while his big focus is “yield, yield, yield” to make the crop profitable for farmers.

“But the market there isn’t



Longtime Palouse, Wash., barley and wheat farmers Janet and Ben Barstow, second from left and fourth from left, enjoy beer with neighbors Jess and Delaun Smith, first from right and third from right, during the Grainmaker Beer Festival to raise funds for barley marketing Aug. 7 at Brick West Brewing in downtown Spokane. Ben Barstow has represented both barley and wheat farmers on the Washington Grain Commission board.

great, either,” Brueggeman said.

Feed barley is about \$180 per ton, according to Northwest Grain Growers.

Traits of interest in Asian markets are completely different from academic ideas, mostly mill waste. The variety South Korean buyers like isn’t necessarily one Brueggeman would have selected for because it has smaller grain, but it requires less milling to get it down to the size of a rice kernel.

“I feel like we’re spread out all over the place” producing for

niche markets, Brueggeman said.

“We’re doing feed, food, malt, forage — a lot of moving targets.”

‘PERFECT ENVIRONMENT’

Matt Horlacher, CEO of Coldstream Malt and Grain, believes the Great Western facility closed due to a combination of aging infrastructure and logistics — more barley is produced in southeast Idaho.

“I think the state policies on agricultural production are maybe a little bit more favorable



Matt Horlacher, barley sector director for the U.S. Grains and BioProducts Council, stands amid the Grainmaker Beer Festival at Brick West Brewing Aug. 7 in downtown Spokane. The festival is a fundraiser to support barley marketing efforts and concluded the

in Idaho than they are in Washington,” Horlacher said.

“We’re allowed to do what we want to do in Washington from a farming standpoint; when you look at the processors, that’s where the struggle’s happening and the most pressure is.”

Horlacher raises barley on his farm in Latah, Wash. He is barley sector director on the U.S. Grains and BioProducts Council.

He believes the industry should focus on export markets, particularly for food barley in Southeast Asia, South Korea and Japan.

“We just need to focus on making those connections and then providing a product that’s superior to what’s being grown in the rest of the world,” he said.

“Twenty years ago, that was easy, and now a lot of other countries are catching up to our production practices and quality parameters.”

That means supporting uni-

versity breeding programs and bringing in as many trade teams as possible, he said.

The first annual U.S. Malt Summit ran Aug. 3-8, with attendees from Mexico, China, Hong Kong, Tibet, Thailand, Vietnam and El Salvador exploring the beer scene in Seattle and Eastern Washington barley growing regions.

More barley is grown in North Dakota, Idaho and Montana, but those states struggle getting the product to particularly Asian markets, Horlacher said.

“We’re sitting in the perfect environment here in dryland Washington especially to grow barley, to process it, get it loaded in containers and get it shipped,” Horlacher said. “We can compete with the rest of the world if we ship out of Washington or northern Idaho.”

Malt production in northern

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BARLEY

Continued from 4A

Idaho will return at some point, but it will likely be fall-planted instead of spring, Horlacher said. “We just have a better chance of meeting quality parameters with a fall-planted barley,” he said.

FUNDING BARLEY RESEARCH

“I think it’s pretty safe to say that we have one of the best barley breeders in the country,” Horlacher said. “I don’t think there’s a better program. Our biggest problem is we don’t collect enough assessment on barley acres right now to really go above and beyond in the breeding measures.”

The grain commission ended its fiscal year with \$83,000 in barley assessments. The board approved a barley breeding budget for \$126,000.

The commission has money in reserves and will draw on any assessments received in July to December 2026, CEO Casey Chumrau said.

Some food barley markets are highly specialized.

“You’re breeding a barley that doesn’t have tons and tons and tons of potential, but it has enough potential to be important to a company in Washington that might export 40,000 or 50,000 tons,” Horlacher said. “How do you fund that when the markets are not 100,000-acre markets like we’re dealing with in the malt industry?”

Horlacher believes private-public partnerships to develop malting barley varieties for companies such as Anheuser-Busch or Molson Coors set the example for future food barley varieties.

The Make America Healthy Again campaign, diabetes awareness and demand for whole grains are positive signs for future barley demand.



MATT HORLACHER/CONTRIBUTED

Attendees from Mexico, China, Hong Kong, Tibet, Thailand, Vietnam and El Salvador participate in the first annual U.S. Malt Summit in Seattle. They would tour the beer scene in Seattle and barley-growing regions in Eastern Washington the week of Aug. 3.



JESSICA PUPO/WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

The U.S. Malt Summit trade team, hosted by the U.S. Grains and BioProducts Council, visits the Washington Grain Commission office in Spokane as part of their tour of the regional beer scene and barley-growing regions.

“The potential is there to really replace a lot of other grains with barley,” he said. “The Washington Grain Commission is committed

to supporting existing markets and finding new ones for Washington barley,” market development specialist Jessica Pupo said. “The commission remains committed to working hand-in-hand with Washington’s barley farmers and researchers to identify the barriers standing between barley producers and new mar-

HERE TO STAY

Keeping Brueggeman at WSU has been a high priority during industry meetings when discussing the future of barley.

“It feels good to be appreciated,” Brueggeman said with a grin.

He began working with barley as an undergraduate student at WSU.

Barley isn’t a big research community, but it’s a tight-knit one, Brueggeman said. Everyone’s willing to collaborate and share material.

“Washington State’s my home, so there’s no worry about me leaving,” he said. “There’s probably other states and positions that have better funding and better support for barley, but that’s not something I would be looking at, leaving WSU. I started working with barley here and I will retire working with barley here.”

Brueggeman’s message to barley farmers past, present and future: “Thank you. And reach out to me because I need input to understand what you’re looking for.”

Stable, reliable markets are the biggest need, Brueggeman said. Even when there was a malting barley market, it had ebbs and flows with prices and overproduction, he said.

“It’s difficult to get things back once they’re gone,” he said.

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Kitchen Corner: Fall pork recipes

By Dana parsley

Here are some recipes from the Iowa Pork Producers.

BACON CHEDDAR BISCUIT BOMBS

- INGREDIENTS**
- 1 ½ cups shredded cheddar cheese
 - 1 cup cooked and crumbled bacon
 - 1 tube (16.3 oz) refrigerated biscuits, 8 count
 - 2 tablespoons butter, melted
 - ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
 - ¼ teaspoon dried or fresh

- DIRECTIONS**
- Preheat oven to 350°F and grease a 9x13-inch baking dish.
 - In a mixing bowl, combine the cheese and bacon.
 - Scoop about 1 tablespoon of the mixture and form into a ball. You'll need 32 total.
 - Cut each of the 8 biscuits into 4 equal pieces.
 - Flatten each piece of dough and wrap it around a cheese and bacon ball.
 - Place the biscuit bombs seam side down in the prepared pan.



Bacon Cheddar biscuit bombs

Bake for 18-20 minutes, until golden brown.

Combine melted butter, garlic powder, and parsley; brush over the warm biscuit bites and enjoy!

TIP: Freshly shredded cheese works best — it melts smoother than the pre-shredded bagged kind!

PORK MEDALLIONS IN MUSHROOM GRAVY

- INGREDIENTS**
- 1 pork tenderloin
 - 1/2 cup flour
 - 1 tablespoon seasoned salt

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

- DIRECTIONS**
- Cut the pork tenderloin into 1 ½ inch thick slices and set

aside.

In a small bowl, combine the ½ cup of flour and seasoned salt. Coat the pork medallions in the flour mixture one at a time until they're all coated.

Add the vegetable oil to a sauté pan over medium-high heat. Sear the pork for 2-3 minutes on each side; remove to a plate. Turn the heat down to medium and add the butter to the same pan.

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

See **KITCHEN**, 7A

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Pork medallions with mushroom gravy

KITCHEN

Continued from 6A

soften.

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

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

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

Stir in the Dijon mustard and black pepper.

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

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

Serve warm over mashed potatoes, if desired.

*can replace with additional broth

EASY GROUND PORK ENCHILADAS

INGREDIENTS

1½ pounds ground pork

1½ cups frozen (or fresh) peppers and onion mix

One 4 ounce can green chiles

1/3 cup water

One 1 ounce packet taco seasoning

One 16 ounce can refried beans

One 19 ounce can enchilada sauce

8 flour tortillas

2 cups shredded cheese (cheddar, Monterey jack, or Colby jack)

Optional toppings (sour cream, pico de gallo, green onions, avocado, etc.)

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 F and grease a 9×13 baking dish.

In a large saucepan or skillet, cook the ground pork until almost completely browned and drain any excess grease. Add the peppers and onions, green chiles, water, and taco seasoning. Cook until hot and bubbly. Stir in the refried beans and remove from the heat.

In a separate bowl, combine one cup of the meat/bean mixture and the enchilada sauce.

Pour a little bit of the sauce mixture into the baking dish—just enough to coat the bottom of the pan; set aside.

Add ½ cup of the meat/bean mixture to the center of a flour tortilla and top with about 2 tablespoons cheese. Roll up the tortilla and place it in the baking dish seam-side down. Repeat with the rest of the tortillas.

Pour the rest of the sauce over the enchiladas. Top with remainder of the cheese and bake for 30 minutes or until hot and bubbly.

Serve with toppings, if desired.



Easy ground pork enchiladas

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Wheat: The hidden ingredient in popular snacks

By Matthew Weaver
Capital Press

Wheat flour plays a key role in licorice production, and the Washington Grain Commission recently highlighted that fact in a post on social media.

“Wheat flour, a primary ingredient in licorice, acts as a stabilizer, helping give the candy its signature chewy texture,” the grain commission posted on Facebook and Instagram. “During cooking, the natural proteins and starch in the flour help form a chewy matrix when they mix with the sugars, leaving licorice fans with a tasty treat.”

“Wheat is an incredibly diverse commodity, and I love highlighting the fun places where wheat is utilized,” said Maddison Dayton, commission communications and content manager, told Capital Press. “There are some really obvious places where wheat flour is

used—breads, cakes, and cookies—but being able to point out that it’s a central ingredient in other sweet treats, like licorice, is a good way to make education fun.”

Dayton was surprised to learn just how important flour is when giving licorice its texture. “The proteins and starch in wheat flour are critical components that build the licorice structure,” she said

EDUCATING THE PUBLIC

The commission focuses on research, market development and education. Dayton looks for interesting ways to highlight those three areas on social media.

“We want to showcase the hard work of growers around the state, share fun wheat facts that get the general public and potential customers excited about wheat, and share the work that the commission is putting



MADDISON DAYTON/WASHINGTON GRAIN COMMISSION

The Washington Grain Commission touted the role wheat flour plays in licorice production on social media.

in on behalf of grain growers in Washington,” she said.

Often the general public doesn’t know much about “the crops we are driving by every

wheat with people who may not know much about it.”

POCKY IN JAPAN

“It’s really important to highlight the connection between the hard work and dedication that growers put into their crop and the food made from that crop,” Dayton said. “Around 90% of Washington’s wheat is exported each year, and you don’t often think about the wheat here turning into something like Pocky in Japan, but it does, and that’s just one place that Washington wheat goes.”

Pocky are chocolate-coated biscuit sticks, a popular Japanese snack food produced by Ezaki Glico.

Grain commission representatives toured an Ezaki Glico plant in April. The plant uses more than 51,000 pounds of wheat flour in a day and produces 210,000 Pocky boxes a day.

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Exporters weigh impact of Northwest Container’s closure

By Mateusz Perkowski
Capital Press

Agricultural exporters in Oregon have been thrown for a loop by the shutdown of key facilities through which they move containers to Puget Sound ports.

The Northwest Container Services transportation company has sent a letter notifying customers that its locations in Portland, Ore., and Seattle, Wash., will cease operations “effectively immediately.”

For four decades, exporters of hay, straw and other farm commodities grown in Oregon have relied on its Portland facility to switch containers from trucks to rail, sending them to Puget Sound ports on the way to Asian markets.

“It’s a pretty vital gateway for Willamette Valley products to get up to Seattle-Tacoma,” said Alexis Jacobson, international accounts manager for Bossco Trading, a forage exporter near Tangent, Ore.

Northwest Container Services has told customers that its Portland and Seattle locations discontinued truck operations on Aug. 21 and will stop accepting new containers after Aug. 28. Those facilities will require all existing containers to be removed from the sites by Sept. 15.

However, the company noted



Northwest Container Services has sent a letter notifying customers that its locations in Portland, Ore., and Seattle, Wash., will cease operations “effectively immediately.”

that it’s “working with a third party to explore continued operations at the Portland facility,” which may affect the scheduled wind-down of its operations.

Agricultural exporters expect that Portland Container, a transportation company that offers similar services, may be able to take over the operations at the Portland site, but there’s still much uncertainty about whether that will happen and how the new arrangement would work.

Neither Northwest Container Services nor Portland Container were available for comment as of press time.

VIGOROUS COMPETITION

For years, those two companies have been in vigorous competition, which has been good for shippers but likely “rough” on both of them, said Gerry Diercks, general manager of Golden Valley Farms, a straw exporter near Silverton, Ore.

“What’s that going to do to our costs when that competition is

gone? We’ll have to wait and see,” he said.

Golden Valley Farms moves roughly 40% of its straw volume through the Northwest Container Services site in Portland, but Diercks said he’s not ready to “rush to judgment” as to how the closure will affect his company’s operations.

With so much still up in the air, it will take another week or two to put the situation in perspective, he said.

“It really depends on what the ship lines are going to do,” Diercks said.

The ocean carriers who worked with Northwest Container Services to get containers to Puget Sound ports may decide to pull out from serving Portland, he said. “Now that would be really bad news.”

Portland typically struggles to have enough empty containers available for exports, and ocean carriers don’t particularly relish moving them from other ports, Diercks said.

If they withdraw from serving

that market, exporters would likely have to truck their products all the way to the Puget Sound directly, he said. “I don’t think anyone really wants to see that.”

If Portland Container takes over the route used by Northwest Container Services, that would mitigate concerns for exporters, though questions would remain about how long that transition would take, Diercks said.

One concern is whether Portland Container would be able to enter into the same contracts to move product by rail to the Puget Sound, said Jacobson of Bossco Trading.

Rail tends to be less expensive than trucking but is “very contract-based,” she said.

Exporters have heard for a couple of years that Northwest Container Services was struggling, so the closure of the Portland and Seattle facilities doesn’t come as a total surprise, Jacobson said.

“There was a sense of something could happen,” she said.

Agricultural exporters in the Northwest have generally been “less competitive in the global shipping market,” largely due to the high costs of labor and doing business, she said.

Shipping to China through ports in Los Angeles and Long Beach tends to be a fraction of the cost of shipping through the Puget Sound, but it’s not an option due to the long distance and other constraints, Jacobson said.

“No matter what, we’re competing against exponentially cheaper prices,” she said.

Jacobson said she expects that exporters will find a way to deal with the closure of Northwest Container Services’ facilities, though they’re currently faced with a lot of uncertainty.

“Everything in shipping seems to work itself out, it just makes for heartburn in between,” she said.

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CP CENTRAL POWERSPORTS

By Brad Carlson
Capital Press

The Canadian International Trade Tribunal in early April started an expiry, or sunset, review of the measure — which has been in place since June 1984 and may be extended in five-year increments. The review covers aspects including floor pricing given current costs and values.



National Potato Council CEO Kam Quarles

"We do not believe that any justification exists to determine that dumping of U.S. potatoes has occurred in the province of British Columbia or any other."

Kam Quarles

"It strains the laws of economics that Canada is justifying the imposition of dumping against U.S. growers in one province, yet

December requested the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative launch an investigation due in part to recent enhancements to the B.C. measure.

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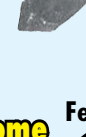
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WAWG leads congressional staffers on annual dam tour

By Matthew Weaver
Capital Press

Washington Association of Wheat Growers led congressional staff members on a tour of the Northwest wheat industry during its fourth annual dam tour last week.

“We try to invite those staffers on committees in Washington D.C. that have a say if the Lower Snake River dams were ever to come up for a vote,” Michelle Hennings, WAWG executive director, told Capital Press.

That includes the House Transportation Infrastructure Committee and House Committee of Natural Resources.

“It’s getting people who hear about our system but have never seen it,” Hennings said. “They see the system in-person. Because otherwise, they read about it. They really can’t picture what it actually looks like, how it performs. When you can show people that, they take that back to D.C., they tell other staffers, they educate their Congressional member on it. Staffers are extremely important to the system in D.C. They are the ones that dive in and do the work.”

The staffers represented Republicans and Democrats, Hennings said. States represented included Idaho, Florida, Georgia, Missouri and Nebraska.

“It’s huge to be able to bring



TRISTA CROSSLEY/WHEAT LIFE
Elliot Shin, a staffer for Florida Rep. Carlos Gimenez, R-Florida, holds a fish during the Washington Association of Wheat Growers annual tour at Lower Granite Dam.

folks out of their offices in D.C., and help them see exactly what the system provides,” echoed

Leslie Druffel, director of outreach for The McGregor Company. “We get really good



TRISTA CROSSLEY/WHEAT LIFE
The jet boat driver stops before entering the Lower Granite Dam lock so Washington Association of Wheat Growers’ fourth annual Congressional dam tour participants can take photos.

questions from the group at every stop throughout the day.”

Following the tour, McGregor’s Druffel feels re-energized.

“It really makes you feel good about the system and sharing the positive pieces that we have in regard to fish passage and fish survival, whether they’re going upriver or downriver,” Druffel said. “It makes me feel very confident in the system, what it offers, why it’s there and what it provides, not just to the economies of the towns right along the river, but the entire Pacific Northwest.”

gation, with speakers from Tidewater Barge Lines and American Cruise Lines; moving through the locks at and touring Lower Granite Dam, particularly the fish ladders that allow for salmon passage; the Port of Lewiston and the importance of the system for fuel, fertilizer, energy and farmers’ costs.

Hennings spoke to the tour’s members about the current economic outlook for Washington growers.

“This is just another burden that would add to the farmers, especially when Washington State is the 50th in the U.S. for farm profit,” she said of removing the dams. “That really hit home, too.”

ECONOMIC IMPACT

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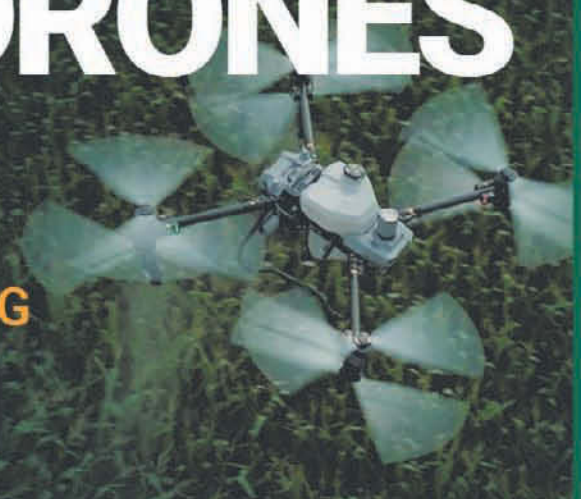
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It’s the Pitts: Weaponizing diarrhea

By Lee Pitts

Here’s some food for thought:

- This past July Taylor Farms de Mexico was linked to the iceberg lettuce believed to be responsible for one of the largest cyclosporiasis outbreaks in American history with at least 15,000 confirmed cases! After Taco Bell had announced that they were voluntarily removing all iceberg lettuce sourced from central Mexico, Taylor Farms soon followed with a recall of their own.

Although it may sound like a mom and pop operation Taylor Farms is the largest global producer of salads and fresh foods, with production facilities across the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and Western Europe and they have a long history of food recalls. In 2012 and 2013, Taylor Farms recalled products six times including a recall of organic baby spinach that caused e coli outbreaks in 39 states. Previously they had recalled romaine lettuce, broccoli, salad kits and packets of salad dressing for listeria contamination and hundreds of cases of cyclosporiasis were linked to their salad mix served at Olive Garden and Red Lobster.

- At a press conference on July 21, health officials in North Carolina, announced a surge in illnesses caused by the parasite



Pitts

cyclospora that sickened 561 people, nearly double the number of cases it recorded in all of 2025. The cause was eventually determined to be tainted parsley and cilantro that probably came from the same area of Mexico that the tainted lettuce came from.

- After Jalapeño peppers were linked to a large, multi-state outbreak of salmonella, Taylor Fresh Farms recalled multiple salsas, dips and guacamole. Some specific products included Diced Jalapenos, Rice and Bean Burrito, Spicy Roast Beef Sandwich, Spicy Pimento Cheese Dip, Pico de Gallo Salsa, Spicy Guacamole, Fiesta Style Salad Shrimp, Salsa Fresca, Pineapple Mango Salsa, etc. which were sold at retailers across 26 states and included Trader Joes, Kroger, Target, Wal Mart, Whole Foods and many others. Federal investigators later said that the

Mexico based supplier Coast Citrus Distributors may have been responsible for the peppers. Chipotle was among the first to pull the Jalapeño peppers from their menu and several other restaurants soon followed. But the damage had been done as at least 345 people across 27 states fell ill in the salmonella outbreak, according to the FDA. Every year, salmonella averages 1.35 million illnesses and 420 deaths in the U.S.

- A shipment of nearly 30,000 pounds of beef from Argentina was recalled after the USDA found that it had bypassed a required import reinspection. The USDA categorized the recall as Class I, indicating a “high or medium risk”. The shipment of 29,628 pounds of raw beef was not presented to USDA inspectors for a mandatory reinspection before it was sent to distributors and retail outlets in Florida and Texas. The American rancher became the fall guy by default because Congress won’t make country of origin labeling mandatory for beef so the American consumer has no way of differentiating Argentinian beef from American beef.

Did you notice a recurring theme to all of the above cases? That’s right... they all involved foreign food.

Thomas Friedman didn’t take

the possibility of international food poisoning into effect when he extolled globalism in his 2005 best selling book, The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century. The book got its name because Friedman said the world was now a level playing field where production of everything would automatically go to the least-cost producer. Although the book won the Financial Times and Goldman Sachs Business Book of the Year Award in 2005, Friedman’s theory has now turned into a nightmare where America sacrificed its manufacturing industry and farmed out the production to foreign producers of 60 percent of fresh fruit, 35 percent of fresh vegetables and

10 to 15% of our beef.

Instead of being called the World is Flat Friedman should have called his book The World is Stupid. How did Americans ever fall for this idea that benefitted BIG BUSINESS but hurt not only Taco Bell and Chipotle but American farmers too because now my wife (and millions of others) won’t eat their beloved Jalapeños or dine at their favorite Mexican restaurant until this dark cloud has passed. And she hasn’t touched a salad in months.

I wonder, did it ever dawn on Friedman, the globalists or the Gay Ayatollah that diarrhea could cause more harm than a suicide bomber or a car bomb.

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By Mateusz Perkowski
Capital Press

However, whether to hold the second



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The program became controversial as soon as it was created in 2011, which critics calling it a “Christmas tree tax” devised by the Obama administration.

Gray said she was “surprised” that a narrow majority of growers voted against the checkoff, but said she didn’t want to speculate about the reasons for that result.

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

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

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'14 KUBOTA M59TL, BT 1200 Backhoe, 84" Bucket, 3 Range Hydro- Shuttle, Consigned.....\$44,900

'17 NH BOOMER 24, 107 Hrs, 24HP, ROPS, 23x.850 R4 Fronts, 6.5 R4 Rears.....\$14,900

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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'09 Case IH 2162 40' Header, Level Land, Slow Speed Transport.....\$29,900

'12 Case IH 2162 40' Header, Adapter for 88/10/20 Series Combines, Hillco Hillside Adapter.....\$43,900

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

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

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

'20 CaselH 4440, 2980 Hrs, 125' Boom, 20" Spacing, AIM Command Fleas, 650/65R38 Alliance 550 Tires, Pro 700 Monitor, 372 Receiver, Nav II Controller, Auto-Boom Height Control, 2 Fence Row Nozzles, Lux Cab w/Leather, Active Suspension, 3" Front Fill, Boom Flush Valve, Chemical Educator Pkg, 3 Cameras.....\$272,900

'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.....\$154,900

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

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

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

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

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Washington farmer raises quail to feed falcons

By Matthew Weaver
Capital Press

Quail skittered back and forth across the floor of one of the “rooms” at Northwest Heritage Quail.

"At 4 a.m., when all these lights come on, it looks like the ground gets up and flies," owner Landon Moore said.

That's usually when the birds would begin their migratory flight in nature, later settling in to eat and recover.

Moore replicates the wilderness as much as possible for the 25,000 to 30,000 quail he raises and sells to falconers across the United States.

The falconers in turn feed the quail to their birds of prey.

Moore, 39, keeps the quail in a facility outside Pullman, Wash., granting easier access for his seven to 10 part-time employees, primarily local college students, to manage the daily work.

"Reproducing the wild conditions under which animals thrive creates very good food," Moore said. "A lot of these natural systems are way more efficient than anybody gave them credit for."

'ALL-IN, ALL-OUT'

The facility has five "rooms," four holding quail at any given time.

"We're an all-in, all-out system, so all of these birds were hatched



MATTHEW WEAVER/CAPITAL PRESS

Landon Moore holds up a quail in the room full of six-week-old birds Aug. 20 at Northwest Heritage Quail's facility in Pullman, Wash. Moore raises quail to sell to falconers to feed their raptors.

within a day or two of each other," Moore said.

Each room is staggered by two weeks. Moore raises them to eight weeks. At roughly five and a half to six weeks, the quail begin laying eggs.

The company collects eggs twice daily. Some eggs are saved and incubated to reproduce the flock. The rest are used as quail food.

“We get plenty of eggs to let each room reproduce itself,” Moore said. “A lot of the fat soluble vitamins in eggs are some of the things we’re hoping the quail stockpile and pass on, so keeping them in the quail is a good idea.”

A room sits vacant for two weeks, to reset the space for the next hatchlings.

"Every single quail rolls over every 10 weeks," Moore said.

FEEDING FALCONS

Last year, Moore shipped 112,000 birds.

Whole-body nutrition is important for raptors, so Moore works to preserve the quail's meat texture for vitamins, minerals and water.

"A lot of raptors don't have to naturally drink, they get all the hydration they need from their food," he said.

For a peregrine falcon, an average-sized raptor, one full



MATTHEW WEAVER/CAPITAL PRESS

Six-week-old quail move about in their room at Northwest Heritage Quail Aug. 20 in Pullman, Wash.

quail is a reliable meal for a day. Peregrines are one of the most popular birds in falconry.

The company euthanizes the quail using carbon dioxide in a manner approved by the American Veterinary Medical Association, according to the website. Each quail is inspected, sorted by sex, arranged in a single layer and placed in the -20 degrees Fahrenheit walk-in freezer. Birds remain frozen through package and delivery.

Moore ships about 2,000 to 2,500 frozen quail each week across the U.S. He sells the most quail throughout the Pacific Northwest.

"There is an unusual con-

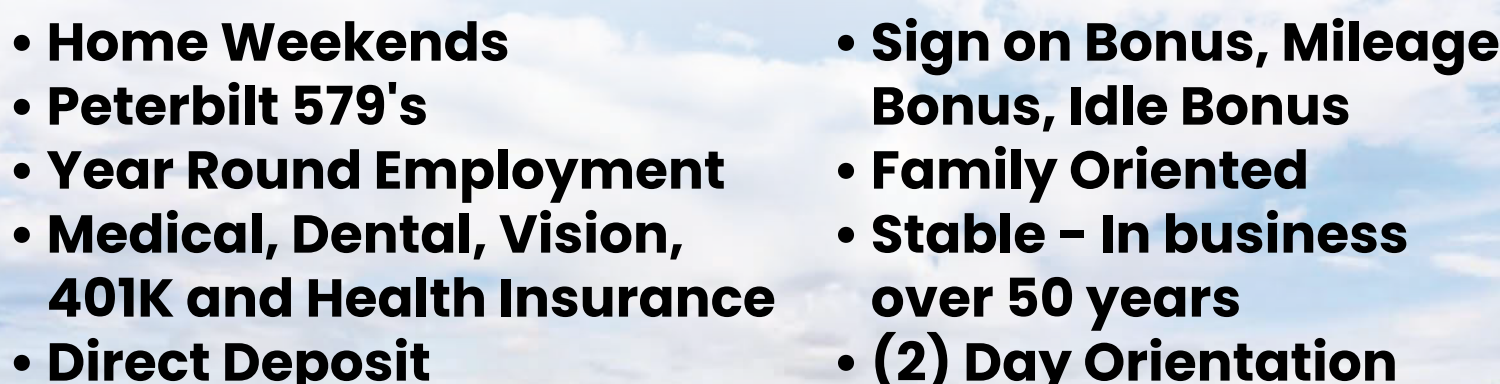
centration of falcon breeders around Spokane," he said, citing Fairchild Air Force Base, the area's game populations and terrain.

The biggest falcon breeders sell the bulk of their production in the Middle East, particularly the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

"Falcons will eat their body weight or more in food every day while they're growing," Moore said. "All of my breeder clients go from their basic maintenance, what they need to keep their breeders alive, and then that will sometimes double or even triple

See **QUAIL**, 4B

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QUAIL
Continued from 3B

when all of their breeders have babies.”

FALCONS FIRST
Falcons came first for Moore. He’s been a falconer for 26 years, since “the first day they could legally ship me my permits” at 14. Moore keeps a hunting falcon and 10 breeding falcons on his Palouse, Wash., farm. He generally flies Aplomado falcons. His father, Paul, is also a falconer, using them to hunt as he grew up with an indigenous group in the coastal jungles of

Ecuador. “While you are doing it, it seems to fill your soul so completely,” Moore said, as his father proudly listened nearby. The family emphasizes a reciprocal relationship with nature. “Falconry is the ultimate expression of that – you’re out there with another animal that is so very different from you, but you have this alignment of purpose,” Moore said. “The two of you have spent time developing this relationship in order to accomplish this goal that is otherwise absolutely unthinkable and illogical — that two completely different species from completely different worlds



MATTHEW WEAVER/CAPITAL PRESS

Landon Moore greets Leslie, the very affectionate cat who works as his resident mouser at the quail facility. Leslie is named in honor of Boyd’s Bird Company founder Les Boyd.

would work together to provide for themselves and each other.” Moore used falcons for agricultural pest abatement in fruit fields, but shifted jobs as he and wife Marcie Logsdon, a WSU veterinarian, started their family.

PRESERVING BOYD’S QUAIL
Moore worked for Boyd’s Bird Company, begun by Les Boyd,

a retired WSU raptor biologist and longtime falconer, as a quail breeding project. The result was a strain of captive Coturnix quail that maintains the wild-type’s size and nutritional density. Boyd’s quail contributed to falconers and breeding projects for decades, including recovery of the peregrine falcon. “He was raising these quail in a completely different way,” Moore said of Boyd, who died in 2019. Commercially producing quail in cages with limited movement and low-quality feed results in birds that are “nutritionally impoverished,” Moore said. The gold standard for nutrition for falconry birds is wild

food — wild starlings, pigeons and game, “all universally considered superior food sources to anything you can farm.” Boyd wanted a reliable, safe supply of wild-quality food for the falcons’ survival and reproduction. As the company closed, “No one else was raising these remarkable little quail that my falcons thrived on,” Moore writes on the Northwest Heritage Quail website. Boyd’s allowed Moore to collect some of the final quail eggs as breeding stock. He gathered “enough former Boyd’s customers to support a

See **QUAIL**, 5B

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QUAIL
Continued from 4B

small business,” hatching his first birds in February 2018.

He secured funding to build the Pullman facility in 2019, and moved in in February 2023.

Moore’s main goal was maintaining Boyd’s genetics and practices, as the public pays more attention to nutritional density of their food and to livestock welfare.

“We’ve found that healthy, happy quail make better food,” he said. “That whole mindset for raising quail would have disappeared with Boyd’s, so I wanted to keep them around.”

LONGTIME FALCONERS APPROVE

Moore’s quail comprise 90% of the diet for Missouri falcon breeder Jeffrey Peters’s 40 falcons.

“I’ve been at this for about 60 years, and during that time, I have tried every imaginable type of diet,” Peters said. “Landon is an exceptional producer ... with immense attention to detail and always looking to do it better and better.”

Falconer Ed Pitcher, 80, of Idaho Falls, Idaho, has been practicing for 57 years. He gives Moore “five out of five stars in his service and for his ethics.”

He bred falcons for 31 years and remains active.

When he switched to the quail raised by Boyd, and now Moore, his hatch rate jumped from 87% to 99%, which Pitcher attributed



Landon Moore holds up a six-week-old quail Aug. 20 at Northwest Heritage Quail in Pullman, Wash.

to the food he fed his breeding pairs.

Had Moore not taken over for Boyd’s Birds, “it would have meant poor-quality food for the people that are concerned about such things,” Pitcher said. “There are people that don’t care as much — they try to get things as least expensive as possible.”

Moore’s quail are about 50% of the diet Pitcher feeds his falcons.

“He is carrying on an excellent history from the past and bringing it into the future,” Pitcher said of Moore.

PEREGRINE PEACE OF MIND

Moore provides quail for the World Center for Birds of Prey, under nonprofit The Peregrine Fund in Boise, Idaho.

The center receives about five boxes, each containing 100 to 150

quail, every few weeks to feed up to 45 birds, said Chelsea Haitz, propagation program manager.

Had Moore not taken over for Boyd’s, it would have left the center scrambling for a food source. Quail are 86% of the birds’ diet.

“What is a huge impact for us and probably all of his clients is the peace of mind Landon offers,” Haitz said. “It’s a really safe source of food, which can be really hard to come by with avian influenza on the rise. It’s a testament to Landon that he has very strict biosecurity, but also very open communication with us. That’s something we highly prize.”

THE FUTURE

With demand increasing, Moore’s bringing in equipment to improve efficiency.



Quail begin laying eggs at 5 ½ weeks. The company collects eggs twice a day, grinding some into a meal to feed back to the birds, capturing vitamins, and incubating others.

He wants to expand markets for the manure and small eggs his quail produce, although he notes it’s “disproportionately expensive” to wash quail eggs for human consumption. Moore’s eggs are sold exclusively for animal consumption.

He hopes to eventually hire a full-time farm manager.

“I have no aspirations of being the quail czar of North America, but I really want to create a system that is sustainable in the long-term, both financially and environmentally,” Moore said. “I’m looking for stability and longevity way more than fast growth.”

QUAIL AT A GLANCE

- Quail are members of the pheasant family. Two types of wild quail live in the Pacific Northwest: the California quail and the mountain quail. People introduced the northern bobwhite to the region years ago, but a wild bobwhite is very rare to find in the Pacific Northwest

today.

- Wild Coturnix quail are known for their ability to stockpile vitamins and nutrients for migration.
- USDA’s 2022 Census of Agriculture estimated more than 4,700 quail farms, with an inventory of nearly 9.3 million birds and nearly 26 million sold.
- Quail lay about 250 to 300 small, speckled eggs per year.
- Falconry is a regulated activity in the U.S., and permits are required to have any raptor in captivity, as they are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, Moore says.
- As of 2025, there are approximately 3,800 licensed falconers in the United States, with the largest populations in California, Texas, and Pennsylvania. More than 70% of falconers fly red-tailed hawks, while peregrine falcons and Harris’s hawks are popular among experienced handlers.



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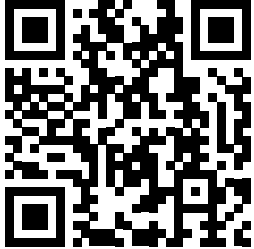
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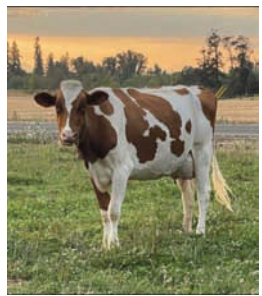
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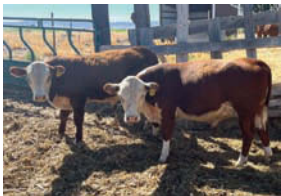
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899 Heavy & Industrial Equipment

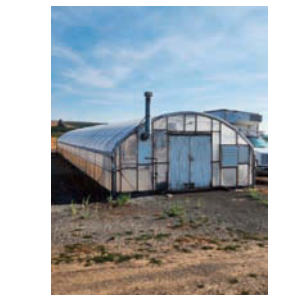
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907 Nursery Equipment & Supplies

30ftx96ft Gable Arch Heavy Duty Greenhouse: Arches 4ft on center, web trusses, heater, vents, rollup sides, irrigation controller, basket drip, \$12,000. Cowiche, WA 509-961-5994, 509-654-2324

30ftx96ft Gable Arch Heavy Duty Greenhouse: Arches 4ft on center, web trusses, heater, vents, rollup sides, irrigation controller, basket drip, \$12,000. Cowiche, WA 509-961-5994, 509-654-2324



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HR50 Northwest Tiller: 14' with crumble roller, excellent condition, new blades, \$14,900. Klamath Falls, OR. Call Rod 541-891-7632.

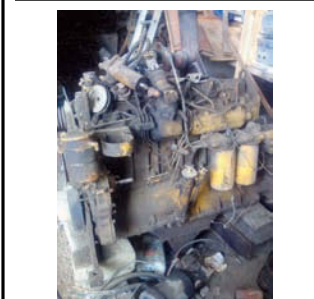
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H-2A wage ruling could deal crushing blow to PNW farmers

By Don Jenkins
and Kyle Odegard
Capital Press

A federal court ruling requiring the U.S. Labor Department to recalculate H-2A wages for the season means farmers who hired seasonal foreign workers can't be sure how much harvesting their crops will cost.

Paying workers the difference between what was in their contract and the department's recalculated wage could total millions of dollars, or nothing. It depends on events out of their control and a future ruling by a federal judge who sees agriculture as highly profitable.

"Geez, it's getting difficult," Yakima Valley apple and hop grower Graham Gamache said. "We'll just keep our head down until someone comes along with a big stick and tells us to get in



Farmworkers pick strawberries in Georgia. A federal judge in California ruled H-2A wages are too low, leaving harvest labor costs to be decided later.

line."

U.S. District Judge Kirk Sherriff ruled Aug. 25 that current H-2A wages are too low to ensure foreign farmworkers are not undermining pay for U.S. workers.

He left the wages in place for now, but ordered the Department of Labor to "promptly" propose new wages. He also ordered the department to notify agricultural employers that they may eventually have to pay workers retroactively.

The so-called "backpay period" begins when the department notifies employers of Sherriff's ruling and when the Labor Department issues new wage scales for H-2A workers.

Sherriff ordered the department to notify employers within a week of his order. The United Farm Workers, who sued to overturn the wages, has indicated it will argue for back pay.

"Until we know more about how this may impact our labor costs, we'll continue doing as much as we can with less money and hold on by fingernails until we just can't anymore," Hood

River pear grower Lesley Tamura said.

The Labor Department referred questions to the Justice Department. The Justice Department has not indicated whether it will appeal Sherriff's decision.

U.S. workers on the same farm will be eligible for the same back pay as H-2A workers

"It's a huge blow," said Enrique Gastelum, CEO of the Worker and Farmer Labor Association, which recruits foreign farmworkers for its members.

"With this ruling, we know the wages are going to go higher. We just don't know the gravity of it," he said.

The Trump administration adopted the H-2A wage scale last October. The administration lowered wages in most states and authorized farms to deduct housing costs from paychecks.

The administration agreed with agricultural employers who said a domestic labor shortage forced them into the H-2A

program, but annual wage increases were making the program too expensive.

Sherriff, appointed by President Biden, said USDA figures undermined that claim. He cited a USDA chart published in February that showed net farm income in 2025 was \$179.8 billion.

The judge, however, didn't note the rest of the chart. The USDA projects net farm income will start dropping after this year — all the way down to \$93 billion in 2035.

Sherriff also cited a congressional report published in 2024 based on USDA data. The judge noted that farm income averaged about \$124.1 billion between 2011 and 2021.

The report, however, also said farm income dropped in 2023 and that profitability varies by crop. Income was driven by major commodities such as soybeans, corn and wheat, as well as livestock.

Gamache said characterizing all agriculture as profitable is misleading.

"I think it shows a large ignorance of what farming truly is," Gamache said. "Every year we're getting closer to shutting the doors."

In the Northwest, labor costs equaled 110% of the revenue for the 2024 apple crop, according to a survey commissioned by the Northwest Horticultural Council.

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Ranchers leave WDFW out of wolf report loop

By Don Jenkins
Capital Press

Northeast Washington ranchers are reporting wolf attacks to their local sheriff rather than state wildlife managers, reflecting discontent with the state’s response to dead and mauled cattle.

Fish and Wildlife has confirmed three depredations in the region since mid-May. Meanwhile, Jeff Flood, wildlife sheriff’s deputy for Ferry and Stevens counties, has investigated 22 other wolf attacks on livestock.

Flood said he told Fish and Wildlife about the attacks, though without naming the rancher or location. The department doesn’t list those depredations in monthly reports released to the public.

Ranchers hesitate to call Fish and Wildlife because they don’t have confidence in the department’s willingness to remove wolves and might be exposed to criticism from wolf advocates, Flood said.

“We allow the department to tell a rosy story, but the producers are trusting me to withhold their information,” he said. “The guys I deal with are just kind of tired of working with the department.”

Fish and Wildlife spokeswoman Staci Lehman said in an email the department knows some producers are not reporting depredations. “We understand that certain producers feel trust with



WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE/CONTRIBUTED

A wolf wakes up after being collared by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Northeast Washington ranchers are reporting wolf attacks to their local sheriff rather than the department. Fish and Wildlife acknowledges some producers have lost trust in the department.

WDFW is broken,” she said.

The public might be getting a false impression about the level of wolf-livestock conflict, but if ranchers don’t report depredations, the department can’t address the conflicts, Lehman said.

Fish and Wildlife hasn’t confirmed a depredation in wolf pack-

saturated northeast Washington since three calves were attacked in May. In response, Fish and Wildlife director Kelly Susewind authorized the department to kill one wolf, but seven days later called off the operation before a wolf was removed.

“What ranchers want to see is some teeth behind the policies,”

Flood said. “If you’re not getting anything out of it, why in the world would you come forward?”

Scott Nielsen, who runs the Cattle Producers of Washington range-riding program, said Fish and Wildlife should report Flood’s investigations in its monthly and yearly wolf reports.

“Jeff is more qualified than any of the department’s investigators,” Nielsen said. “Our problems are far worse than they (state wildlife managers) want to say or have ever documented.”

Fish and Wildlife works with Flood and considers him a “valued community resource,” but does not get enough information to do its own investigations, Lehman stated. “The department only presents its own information in monthly updates.”

Nielsen said it would be good for producers to report depre-

dations to Fish and Wildlife, but he understands why they don’t.

“Most of the ranchers work with WDFW for a while, and then they quit,” he said. “If the department actually removed depredating wolves, you’ll see those guys climb back on board.”

Washington Wildlife First science and advocacy director Francisco Santiago-Avila said it was concerning that ranchers are not reporting depredations to Fish and Wildlife. Without those reports, the department can’t take action, he said. “We certainly don’t want those conflicts to increase,” he said.

Wolf advocates review department records to ensure wildlife managers are being cautious about shooting wolves, he said. “It’s not to out the producer, it’s to make sure all parties are following the protocol.”



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Stakeholders ask Kotek to withdraw from dam litigation

By Matthew Weaver
Capital Press

As Oregon Gov. Tina Kotek declared Aug. 24 “Oregon Hydropower Day,” regional dam stakeholders are asking her to

withdraw from litigation they say threatens the hydropower system. “If Oregon believes those benefits are worthy of recognition on Aug. 24, they should also be worthy of protection

throughout the rest of the year,” the letter states. The letter requests that Oregon withdraw from federal litigation and instead help lead a “non-litigation-based, collaborative conversation” to find



STATE OF OREGON/CONTRIBUTED

Groups representing regional dam stakeholders are asking Oregon Gov. Tina Kotek to withdraw Oregon from litigation they say threatens the hydropower system.

“sustainable, balanced, science-based solutions that work for people and fish.”

“We also reiterate our previous requests of October 2025 and March 2026 that you meet in person for a meaningful conversation with leaders representing Oregon’s consumer-owned utility customers, farmers, businesses, and labor to discuss these issues,” the letter states.

“The Governor has received the letter and is reviewing it,” said Luke Harkins, press secretary for Kotek’s office. “She remains supportive of hydroelectric power consistent with best management practices for the Columbia River’s salmon runs.”

Kotek and the other litigants engaged with the federal government to arrive at an “extensive collaborative, comprehensive settlement agreement that stayed decades-long litigation,” Harkins said. The agreement included the States of Oregon and Washington, Tribal Nations, and non-governmental organizations, and “ensured a plan was in place to responsibly balance hydro-electric power with Endangered

Species obligations to protect Columbia River salmon runs.”

“In 2025, the Trump Administration unilaterally pulled the federal government out of this agreement, effectively scuttling that settlement plan and forcing the parties back into court in order to protect the salmon runs and our commercial and recreational fishing interests,” Harkins said. “Oregon’s salmon fishery is a cornerstone of rural economies and tribal practices that rely on sustainable salmon populations.”

In the letter, the stakeholders say they would “be happy to review” with Kotek the “significant impacts” in the basin resulting from the litigation and discuss “our real and legitimate concerns in depth.”

“It’s just pretty disingenuous of the governor to say those great things about hydro today, and at the same time be involved as a plaintiff calling for the Lower Snake River Dam removal,” said Neil Maunu, executive director of the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association, which oversees the Inland Ports and

See **STAKEHOLDERS**, 11B

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STAKEHOLDERS
Continued from 10B

Navigation Group, which issued its own request to meet with Kotek.

“We think talking with sovereign entities, sovereign states and Tribes and bringing the other coalitions like the one you see on the letter is the path forward,” said Clark Mather, executive director of Northwest RiverPartners. “We can’t control what elected officials decide to do. What we can do is share the overlapping interests we think these elected officials’ constituents have.”

The next court hearing in the ongoing case is Oct. 20 in the U.S. Court of Appeals in San Francisco, Maunu said. Stakeholders are appealing U.S. District Judge Michael Simon’s preliminary injunction requiring increased spill over Columbia River and Snake River dams and lower reservoir levels.

CONVERSATIONS WITH TRIBES

No Tribes are participating in the letter to Kotek. The groups continue to reach out to several Northwest Tribes, Mather said.

“We hope those conversations can lead to more in-depth conversations on how we can work together,” he said. “They have a very important role in this conversation — they have treaty rights that need to be understood and respected. My members are committed to working with them and anyone else to find solutions to move us all forward together.”

“My members care tremendously about salmon,” Mather said. “We think we can find solutions that move the hydropower system forward in a way that both respects the role that salmon have played in culture across the Northwest for thousands of years and for the benefits of millions of people.”

ELECTRIC GRID IMPACTS

“Oregon’s electric rates have dramatically increased in recent years,” the letter states. “And yet Oregon has supported litigation and policies that would diminish the operation and value of the Federal Columbia River Power System, even as average salmon and steelhead returns have nearly tripled since federal dams began operating.”

Oregon-supported litigation will continue to drive up utility customer bills, increase carbon emissions, and reduce reliability of services to Kotek’s constituents, the letter states.

Reducing the output of the carbon-free hydropower system will increase the carbon intensity of the electric grid — “directly at odds with your administration’s stated goals,” the letter states.

Reducing hydropower output will increase the risk of blackouts, the letter states. “Other unintended but real consequences are still being discovered.”

“We have choices that will not increase the cost pressure on everyday people in Oregon, on farmers and businesses,” Mather said.

Lawsuit filed to block Trump’s grazing expansion

By Brad Carlson
Capital Press

The Center for Biological Diversity on Aug. 13 sued U.S. Interior Secretary Doug Burgum and USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins over approval of an expanded livestock grazing plan.

The plan would harm imperiled wildlife including wolves, grizzly bears, Gunnison sage grouse, Mexican spotted owls and spikedeace fish across the West, the center said in a news release.

USDA and its U.S. Forest Service, and Interior and its Bureau of Land Management violated the Endangered Species Act by failing to consult the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries

Service about the grazing plan’s impacts on federally protected species and their designated critical habitat, according to the complaint filed in U.S. District Court in Portland.

The plan was released Oct. 20. A March 31 memorandum of understanding between BLM and the Forest Service stated how the agencies will cooperate and coordinate.

Current cattle headcount that is at a 75-year low amid growing demand for beef drove formation of the grazing action plan, as did a 17% drop in the number of U.S. ranches since 2017.

Endangered species reforms, enhanced disaster relief, increased access to grazing and capital, and affordable risk

management tools are among plan elements aimed at “strengthening the foundation of U.S. cattle production,” according to the plan text. Another goal is to grow the herd while boosting domestic and international demand “so that ranchers are not trapped in the boom/bust cycle that has defined past cattle markets.”

To expand processing, consumer transparency and market access, the plan calls for lowering long-term costs, increasing marketing options, and ensuring consumers have good information about U.S. beef.

See **LAWSUIT**, 13B

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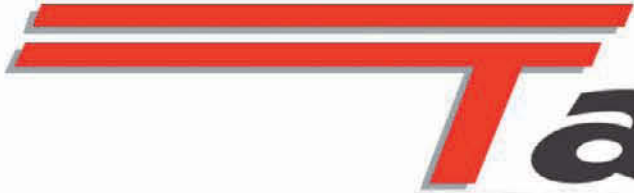
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King to appeal ruling denying him jury trial

By Don Jenkins
Capital Press

A Grant County, Wash., judge has rejected Central Washington rancher Wade King's claim that a jury must decide whether he damaged wetlands.

Judge Melissa Chlarson ruled in favor of the Department of Ecology, which fined King and his wife, Teresa, \$267,540 for allegedly damaging 23 landlocked wetlands in Grant and Douglas counties. King said he was maintaining stock water ponds, a common ranching practice in the arid West.

Ecology also ordered King to restore 14 wetlands, projected to be a multimillion-dollar project. King's lawyers said Aug. 25 that the Kings will appeal Chlarson's ruling.

"Washington should not be able to impose millions of dollars in penalties and compliance costs while denying the Kings their right to have their case heard in a court before a jury," Pacific Legal Foundation senior attorney Oliver Dunford said



KING RANCH/CONTRIBUTED

Central Washington Wade King, shown here with his family on their ranch, will appeal a ruling denying him a jury trial to defend himself against allegations he damaged wetlands.

in a statement.

"We will continue fighting to ensure they get that opportunity," he said.

Ecology welcomed the ruling. "At every step of this process, the Department of Ecology has diligently followed Washington law and worked to protect our state's natural resources," spokesman Andrew Wineke said in an email.

Chlarson's brief order did not elaborate on the ruling, which was issued three months after a hearing. King's attorneys argued Washington's

constitution guaranteed jury trials.

The state argues King must challenge Ecology's fine by appealing to the Pollution Control Hearings Board, a three-member panel appointed by the governor.

Western property-rights groups have come to King's defense, as has Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins.

King is also suing the Washington Department of Natural Resources, which canceled grazing leases. King alleges DNR knuckled under to Ecology.



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LAWSUIT

Continued from 11B

The grazing plan “will bring federal land grazing to the forefront and address the critical needs of grazing permittees,” according to the memorandum. Longstanding relationships among the agencies and public land grazing permittees “have direct, positive impacts on communities and the nation,” and innovation and cooperation are needed to “sustain and protect America’s ranching heritage.”

But by embarking on a program to authorize expanded grazing through the plan and memorandum without consulting Fish and Wildlife and National Marine Fisheries, the agencies have “irretrievably committed resources and foreclosed the formulation or implementation of any reasonable and prudent alternative measures,” an ESA violation, according to the complaint.

“The Trump administration is again putting America’s wildlife and public lands at risk by catering to the livestock industry, so we’re suing to make sure our nation’s most vulnerable wildlife don’t pay the price,” Andrea Zaccardi, the center’s carnivore conservation legal director, said in the release. “Grazing on our country’s public

lands harms vulnerable animals. Letting cattle trample millions more acres of public land isn’t just wrong, it’s also illegal.”

The plan would open up to 24 million acres of additional Forest Service and BLM lands to grazing and would use emergency authorities to fast-track permits, she said. Grazing would be allowed in numerous areas of the West that provide critical habitat designated by U.S. Fish and Wildlife as necessary to recover endangered species.

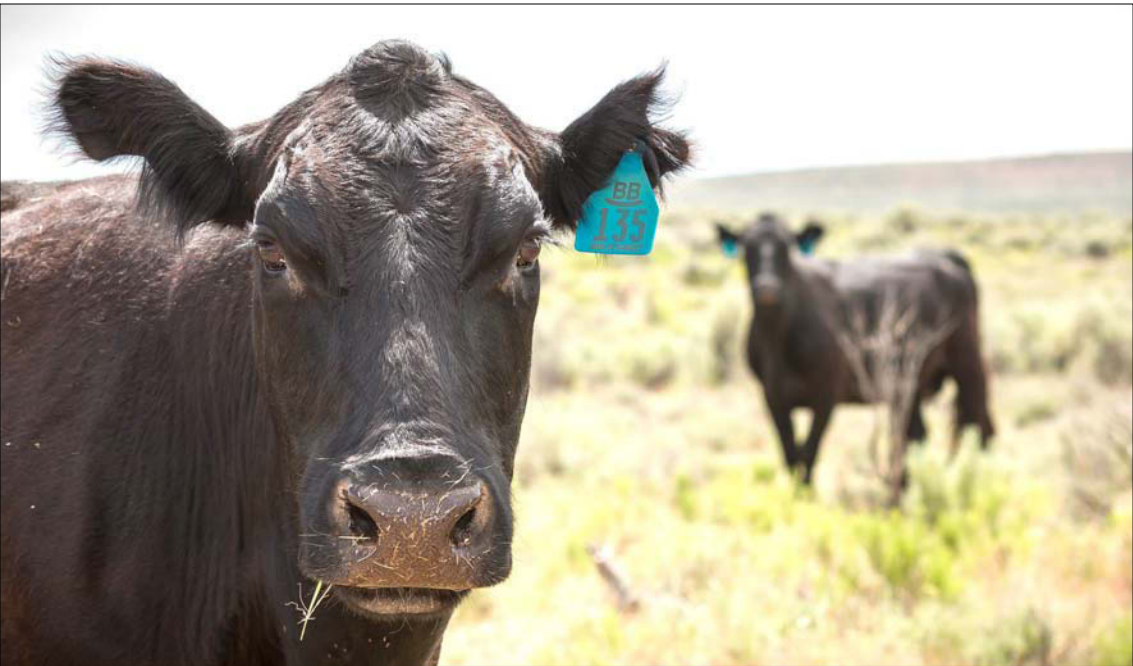
Expanding grazing on federal public lands risks harming important carnivores like grizzly bears and wolves who are too often killed because of conflicts with livestock, according to the release. Grazing “degrades ecosystems across the West and is a top threat to animals and plants at risk of extinction.”

The center, in surveys of endangered species habitat since 2017, found half the areas showed significant damage from livestock.

“The federal grazing program is already a disaster for endangered species and the places they live,” Zaccardi said. “Expanding grazing across 24 million more acres will make that devastation even worse and likely drive more animals and plants to extinction.”

“Grazing on our country’s public lands harms vulnerable animals. Letting cattle trample millions more acres of public land isn’t just wrong, it’s also illegal.”
Andrea Zaccardi

Center for Biological Diversity carnivore conservation legal director



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT/CONTRIBUTED

Cattle graze on a BLM allotment in Oregon. A lawsuit seeks to block the Trump administration's plan to expand grazing on public lands.

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UI, USDA launch crop nitrogen calculator

Capital Press

University of Idaho and USDA researchers have developed a free online calculator to help barley and sugar beet growers determine how much nitrogen fertilizer to apply to produce the highest profit.

Applying more fertilizer than needed can eventually cost more than the additional crop yield is worth. The calculator estimates the nitrogen rate needed to achieve maximum yield and the rate likely to produce the greatest profit, according to a UI news release. Growers enter infor-

mation about crop variety, existing soil nitrogen levels, yield goals, commodity prices and fertilizer type and cost.

UI's Jared Spackman and USDA Agricultural Research Service soil scientist Christopher Rogers led the crop research. UI Extension agricultural economist Patrick Hatzenbuehler led the project's economic analysis.

The calculator is "really helping farmers make better on-farm decisions for their bottom line," Rogers, with ARS in Kimberly, said in the release. "Just achieving the maximum yield may not be the most

profitable for them."

The team also updated nitrogen application guidelines for malt barley. The Idaho guidelines were last updated in 2003.

The calculator enables all data from field trials to be accessed easily online, the Twin Falls-based Hatzenbuehler said.

GROWER INTEREST

"There has been a fair bit of interest from growers as they hear about the project and what we're doing," said Spackman, UI extension specialist and Idaho Barley Commission endowed



UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO/CONTRIBUTED

Jared Spackman, right, discusses barley research with University of Idaho Aberdeen Research and Extension Center operations manager Chad Jackson during an industry tour.

agronomist based in Aberdeen.

Idaho Falls farmer Mar Thiel, who has hosted university cereal trials on his farm for 27 years, plans to test the calculator's recommendations on limited acreage before expanding its use. He routinely uses soil and in-season petiole testing to guide nitrogen applications for higher-value crops such as potatoes but has generally applied a standard nitrogen rate across his barley acres.

"I think it would be great to have some updated data, especially when you can access it online," he said. "The more information, the better."

The calculator's estimates for irrigated spring barley and the recently updated nitrogen guidelines for malt barley are based on field trials from the state's south-central to east regions.

The tool currently includes barley data from 2015 through 2023 and will be updated regu-

larly, according to UI. The team made the tool available in early July, and by February plans to refine it and add data from trials conducted through 2026.

Rogers led barley nitrogen trials while working at the University from 2015 to 2018, and in 2019 while with ARS. Spackman has spearheaded the trials since 2020.

Sugar beet data used in the calculator are from trials conducted by David Tarkalson, an ARS research soil scientist based in Kimberly.

The researchers also have extensive data from Idaho nitrogen trials of mustard, forage grasses, winter barley and several classes of wheat, according to UI. The researchers plan to expand the tool in the future to provide customized nitrogen recommendations for additional Idaho crops.

The calculator and updated guidelines are available at idahocroplnitrogen.org.

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Spotted owls already functionally extinct

By Kyle Odegard
Capital Press

New research has found that northern spotted owls are approaching or have already crossed functional extinction across large areas of the Pacific Northwest, despite decades of conservation efforts to revive the species.

“Northern spotted owls are already functionally extinct in large swaths of their range. It’s not a thing that’s happening in the future, it has happened,” said Damon Lesmeister, a U.S. Forest Service biologist and courtesy faculty member at Oregon State University.

“That doesn’t mean we can’t do

anything. There is still an opportunity for carefully considered management actions,” Lesmeister added, in a news release.

Functional extinction means creatures no longer play a meaningful ecological role or cannot reproduce enough to persist.

Northern spotted owl populations are so low in Washington and on the Oregon Coast that they are approaching functional extinction thresholds.

No spotted owls were detected in the Washington Cascades at latitudes north of Seattle.

Researchers used artificial intelligence and advanced acoustic monitoring methods to assess long-



DAMON LESMEISTER/CONTRIBUTED

A northern spotted owl sits on a branch in this 2015 photo. A new study found that spotted owl populations are so low in Washington and on the Oregon Coast that they are approaching functional extinction thresholds. No spotted owls were detected in the Washington Cascades at latitudes north of Seattle.



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term trends, including for barred owls, which outcompete northern spotted owls for prey and habitat.

“These findings demonstrate that passive acoustic monitoring and machine learning can be used for large-scale ecological monitoring,” Lesmeister said.

“Our hope is that they help shape

conservation strategies and improve conservation outcomes for the northern spotted owl,” he added.

Lesmeister thinks efforts should focus on specific areas.

Study authors cited strategies such as ongoing barred owl removals, conserving landscape well-suited for northern spotted owl nesting and bringing owls into captivity for breeding.

spotted owls across the study, which covered Oregon, Washington and northwestern California.

Scientists randomly sampled areas within the 38,000 square miles of federally managed spotted owl habitat.

Passive acoustic recording devices collected more than 2.1 million hours from 2023.

Recordings were analyzed by research computers at Oregon State University’s Center for Quantitative Life Sciences.

More northern spotted owl calls were heard in the southern portion of the range. Levels ranged from 13% to 17% of sample areas in Washington and the Oregon Coast to 44% in the Klamath Mountains and 91% in California coastal locations.

Barred owls, meanwhile, were present more often in the north, appearing in 100% of sample areas on the Oregon Coast, 94% at the Washington Coast and western Cascades, 72% in the Klamath Mountains and 45% at the California Coast.

Additional monitoring mirrors the study findings.



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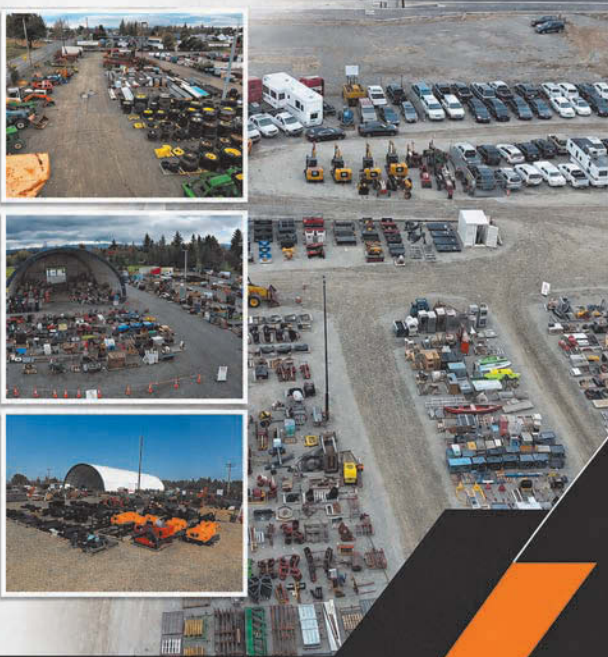
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Northern spotted owls became one of the largest and most visible wildlife conservation issues in U.S. history after being listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in 1990 due to rapid declines in old forest habitats.

Four years later, the Northwest Forest Plan was adopted and reduced the rate of logging of old growth forests on federal lands.

Spotted owl populations have continued to decline due to continued habitat loss from logging and wildfires and competition from barred owls, whose range has increasingly intersected with spotted owls.

Barred owls were heard eight times more often compared to

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USDA’s Ranchers First Program focuses on herds, processing

By Don Jenkins
Capital Press

The USDA rolled out what it branded the Ranchers First Initiative as the administration sought to assure cattlemen it supported their industry even as President Trump encourages foreign beef imports.

Five measures announced Aug. 31 will expand existing assistance programs. More actions are coming to help ranchers, Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins said. “We have a whole series of announcements all week,” Rollins said on The Glenn Beck Program.

Rollins was on Beck’s show less than a week after Beck, who owns a ranch in Southern Idaho, piqued Trump’s interest in giving ranchers more alternatives to major meat packers.

Two days later, Trump posted on social media that he will authorize ranchers to “process their own food.”

The National Cattlemen’s Beef Association and the Meat Institute, which represents packers, issued statements warning against reducing food-safety inspections.

The administration will do nothing that compromises inspections, Rollins said.

“We’re making a lot of changes right now, but none of that is possible unless Americans have full confidence in the safety of what they’re eating. And you can’t do that without inspections,” she said.

Here are the five measures announced Aug. 31:

- The USDA will expand its livestock insurance program to allow ranchers to insure heifers retained to build herds. If the heifer loses value over the next two years, the policy will compensate producers. The insurance policy will encourage ranchers to keep heifers and rebuild herds, according to USDA.

- The USDA will allow producers to repair wildfire-damaged land enrolled in the Grassland Conservation Reserve Program by tapping into the Emergency Conservation Program. The grasslands program pays ranchers to stay off environmentally sensitive grasslands. The emergency program helps rebuild property damaged by natural disasters.
 - The USDA will work with Health and Human Services, the Department of Justice, Veterans Affairs and War Department to sell more American beef to state and federal institutions.
 - The USDA will guarantee loans to small and mid-sized meat processors as part of its Strengthening Processing for U.S. Ranchers program. The USDA announced earlier this year it will spend \$500 million to help processors buy cattle.
 - The USDA will work with the War Department and Veterans Affairs to recruit veterans to enter ranching and farming careers.
- Cattlemen’s groups have criticized moves by Trump this year to increase foreign beef imports in an effort to bring down retail meat prices.
- Beef imports are up 14% so far this year, according to the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service. Trump has lowered beef tariffs for 90 days beginning Sept. 1 to encourage even more imports.
- Nevertheless, Trump reaffirmed his support for ranchers in a Truth Social post Aug. 28. The president condemned the four major meat-packing companies for allegedly hurting cattlemen.
- “There are, essentially, four of them, a very noncompetitive number, and they make life miserable for our wonderful farmers and ranchers, and I can’t let that happen, can I?” Trump posted.
- The U.S. Cattlemen’s Asso-



USDA/CONTRIBUTED

The USDA announced Aug. 31 a Ranchers First Initiative as the Trump administration sought to assure ranchers that the beef industry was a top priority even though President Trump has lowered tariffs on foreign beef.

ciation said Trump interventions are shaking ranchers’ confidence.

“The biggest piece of the herd-rebuild puzzle is consistent market signals, ones that point to a profitable future for the American rancher in our own market,” the association’s president, Justin Tupper, said.



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Cali Hipp is bullish on Idaho, East Oregon hops, onions, fruit

By Brad Carlson
Capital Press



CALI HIPPI/CONTRIBUTED

Cali Hipp leads six specialty crop organizations in Idaho and eastern Oregon.

Cali Hipp sees opportunities for specialty crop producers in Idaho and Eastern Oregon.

“One of the biggest opportunities I see is continuing to strengthen the identity and visibility of Idaho-grown and eastern Oregon-grown agricultural products,” said Hipp, who began serving as executive director of six crop organizations in June. She succeeded Candi Fitch, who retired.

“There are incredible growers and agricultural businesses here,” Hipp said. “We have an opportunity to better tell their stories and help consumers and buyers understand what makes our growing region unique.”

“Research is also an important focus, particularly as growers look at plant health, varieties, production practices and maintaining exceptional quality.”

IDAHO-EASTERN OREGON ONION COMMITTEE

“The Idaho-Eastern Oregon onion industry is a major part of our region’s agricultural economy, and maintaining a strong and reliable market for our growers and shippers remains a priority” for the federal marketing order group, she said. “Promotion, market development, research and maintaining the strong reputation of Idaho-eastern Oregon onions are all important components of that work.”

IDAHO HOP GROWERS ASSOCIATION

“The association provides an opportunity for growers to come together as an industry,” she said. “Communication, collaboration and providing growers with a forum to discuss issues affecting their farms and businesses are important parts of its role.”

IDAHO APPLE COMMISSION

“Idaho has a proud apple-growing history, and our focus is on continuing to build recognition for Idaho-grown apples and the growers behind them,” Hipp said. “Promotion, market development and

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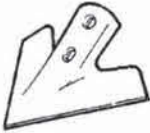
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USDA/CONTRIBUTED
The Trump administration will watch to see whether lowering tariffs will translate into lower retail prices.

Trump lowers beef tariffs to cut ground beef prices

By Don Jenkins
Capital Press

President Trump has officially lowered tariffs on about 661.3 million pounds of beef over the next 90 days and said he expects the retail price of ground beef to start falling.

The proclamation signed Aug. 26 by Trump also encourages exporters who take advantage of lowered tariffs to sell lean beef trimmings, which is mixed with U.S. beef to make ground beef, at 25% below market prices.

The USDA and U.S. trade office will monitor retail prices. If prices don't fall, Trump could cut short the tariff waiver, according to the proclamation.

"As president of the United States, I have a responsibility to ensure that hard-working Americans can afford to feed themselves and their families," the proclamation reads.

The proclamation confirmed plans Trump announced on social media Aug. 21. Cattlemen's groups criticized lowering tariffs as a blow to U.S. ranchers.

With the cow herd at a 75-year low, however, the U.S. can't supply enough lean beef trimmings to keep

the retail price of ground beef reasonable, according to the White House.

The lower tariffs take effect Sept. 1. The U.S. will cut the tariff from 26.4% to about 2 cents a pound on roughly 220 million pounds of lean beef trimmings for each of the next three months.

The White House estimates lowering tariffs will increase the beef supply by about 10%. Cattlemen's groups point out there is no guarantee supermarket prices will fall.

"We are disappointed that the president has taken action to increase the domestic supply of beef with foreign beef that will now compete directly with beef produced by America's ranchers," R-CALF CEO Bill Bullard said.

The White House blamed the ground beef shortage on a tight cattle supply and high consumer demand.

The USDA Economic Research Service projects the U.S. will produce 25 billion pounds of beef this year, about 4% lower than last year. Beef imports are forecast to top 6.1 billion pounds, a 14% increase over 2025. The USDA made the forecast before Trump lowered tariffs.



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UI project to help farmers short on water

Capital Press

University of Idaho researchers received a federal grant to develop free online tools to help irrigators make planting and crop management decisions when water supplies are limited.

USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture funded the work with a \$291,606 Rapid Response to Weather Events grant, according to a UI news release. The grant provides expedited support for urgent needs and crises.

Water shortfalls this season have forced farmers throughout southern and eastern Idaho to make tough decisions. Leaving fields fallow, adjusting planting plans and cutting cereal crops early as forage are examples.

The tools will help irrigators make determinations such as whether enough water remains available to finish crops; the expected deficit



UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO/CONTRIBUTED

Meetpal Kukal, a University of Idaho assistant professor of hydrologic science and water management, works with equipment designed for evapotranspiration research in a farm field.

when supply is reduced or shut off; how water reductions

could affect yields; how crop choices, planting dates and soil type affect results when water supplies are limited; crop combinations that could minimize financial risk; and how to ensure full soil moisture when water supply is limited.

Users will enter their location, crop choice, planting date, irrigation type and system design capacity, the anticipated date of a water-supply reduction and the expected percentage. The tools will retrieve long-term weather data and USDA soil map data for the calculations.

The dashboard will generate field-specific charts comparing water demand with the available supply throughout the growing season for most crops grown in Idaho.

Meetpal Kukal, the project's director and UI assistant professor of hydrologic sci-

ence and water management, has developed a beta version of an interactive online dashboard that houses the tools.

The dashboard, to be linked to the UI Extension website, should be finalized before farmers plant their crops next spring, according to the release.

"We want growers to feel confident using these tools as they weigh the many factors that affect their decisions," Kukal said. "They may ultimately need to decide whether planting a crop is worthwhile."

Extension educator Joseph Sagers and extension irrigation technology specialist Emily Bedwell are co-principal investigators.

Sagers will assist outreach efforts and help farmers learn about the tools.

"Everyone who got any kind of water curtailment in eastern

Idaho is going to show interest in this project," he said. "There are a lot of people who are trying to figure out how they're going to make the acre-feet they're going to get this next year work for them."

Bedwell will help gather farmer input to improve the tools and develop educational materials explaining how to use them. She will work to ensure the tools' guidance reflects actual conditions on farms.

"The tools could say, 'Maybe it's not worth it to plant potatoes at all,'" she said. "Maybe you should consider something that has lower water needs, particularly during that later part of the season when you are more likely to have a curtailment or reduction."

The tools will draw from data sets including Bureau of Reclamation records on evapotranspiration and established crop coefficients. Evapotranspiration is a measure of water vapor leaving soils and leaves. Coefficients estimate a specific crop's water use compared with a reference evapotranspiration value.

The university's Research Computing and Data Services team will refine the tools and adapt them for use on a public-facing website. A Spanish version of the tools is planned.

Researchers anticipate hosting a water irrigation management field day in Kimberly this fall, where they will gather input from growers about the tools' performance and potential improvements. They plan to host several workshops to share the tools with growers.

A more polished version of the tools should be available prior to the start of planting next spring, according to UI.



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strengthening the Idaho apple identity are important priorities for the commission.”

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“Cherries have a relatively short and exciting marketing window, so creating awareness around the Idaho cherry season is especially important,” she said. “We want consumers to recognize when Idaho cherries are available and seek them out during the season.

IDAHO-OREGON FRUIT & VEGETABLE ASSOCIATION

“The association is focused on bringing the broader produce industry together,” Hipp said. “It provides a place for growers, shippers and allied businesses to collaborate on shared issues, develop relationships and strengthen the agricultural industry of our region.”

WORKING TOGETHER

Collaboration among the organizations’ members is another opportunity.

“Although the crops and markets are different, many of the issues affecting agriculture are shared,” Hipp said. Labor, transportation, research, trade, regulation and market development are examples, and “there is a lot of value in working together where it makes sense.”

Agriculture continues to face pressure from rising production

costs, labor availability and costs, transportation, regulation, trade and changing markets, she said.

“Growers are operating businesses in an environment where many of those factors are outside of their control,” Hipp said. “One of the important roles these organizations play is making sure the realities facing growers are understood by policymakers, buyers and the public. Having a strong, collective industry voice is increasingly important.”

She is based in Parma, Idaho. She grew up in Caldwell, attended the University of Oregon on a golf scholarship and holds an MBA from Boise State University. She previously worked for TMN Events, Mission Critical Group and Agri Beef.

“I have always appreciated the community, lifestyle and opportunities we have here,” Hipp said. “Having the opportunity to now represent industries and communities that are such an important part of the region where I grew up makes this role particularly rewarding.”

Since stepping into her new role, she has been impressed with the knowledge, history and pride within the respective industries.

“Many of the people I work with come from families that have been involved in agriculture for generations, and there is an incredible amount of expertise represented on our boards and committees,” Hipp said.



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Wheat leader warns of zero farm profitability

By Matthew Weaver
Capital Press

Kansas farmer Gary Millershaski is blunt in describing the economics of wheat production.

“There has not been any profitability,” Millershaski said. “Our profitability is nothing right now.”

Millershaski took over as chairman of U.S. Wheat Associates in June, and will serve a one-year term. He spoke with Capital Press the morning of Aug. 7.

Millershaski cites increased input costs as a result of first Russia invading Ukraine, and then conflicts with Iran.

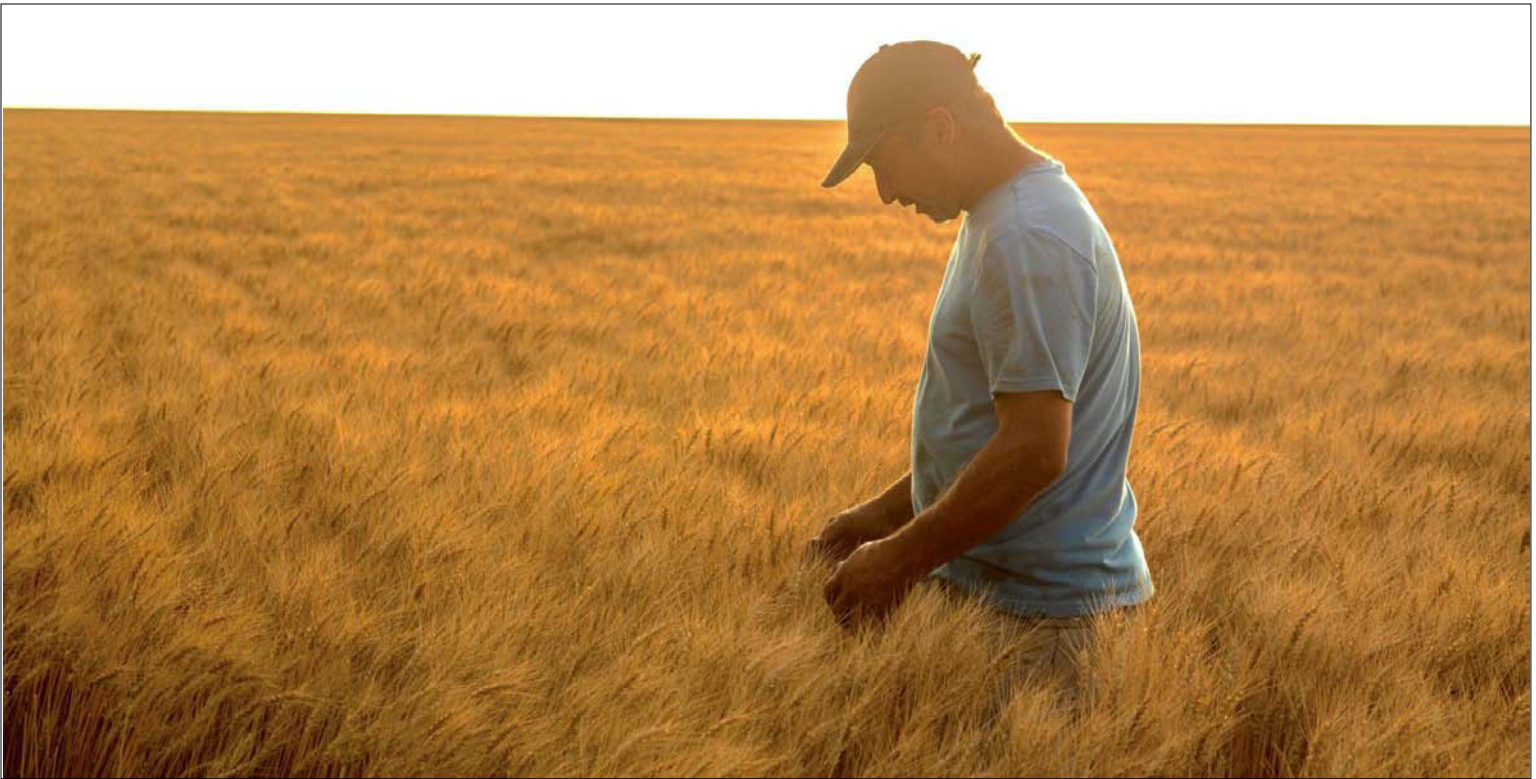
“Our nitrogen went from 60 cents a pound to \$1 a pound; our fuel probably went up \$1.50 a gallon,” he said. “Any time you mess with either one of those, it’s a domino effect that just explodes.”

Machinery parts are also affected.

“We are in a hand-to-mouth society on parts,” Millershaski said. “Freight has just exploded. It used to be, we would get parts on stock order ... that’s almost a thing of the past. If you do that, you may not get it for a month. Nobody inventories anything. A cylinder on my sprayer broke, nobody had one, it came out of Canada. It got tied up in Buffalo, N.Y., it sat there for a week. We can’t do that.”

Overseas millers and buyers always want the best wheat for the lowest price.

“Cheapest price is a thing of the past,” Millershaski said. “If this price, where it’s at, and all of our expenses – it’s not sustainable. There’s going to be more people saying, ‘You know what? It’s not fun any more, I’m retiring. I’m letting it go.’”



Lakin, Kan., wheat farmer Gary Millershaski serves a one-year term as chairman of U.S. Wheat Associates.

U.S. WHEAT ASSOCIATES/CONTRIBUTED



U.S. WHEAT ASSOCIATES/CONTRIBUTED

Lakin, Kan., farmer Gary Millershaski, left, receives the chairman’s gavel from past chairman Jim Pellman, of McCluskey, N.D., during U.S. Wheat Associates’ summer board meeting in Fargo, N.D., in June.

‘WE NEVER GOT ANY MOISTURE’
Kansas farmers try to raise 300 million bushels, but this year they’re at about 191 million bushels, Millershaski said.

It’s the lowest U.S. hard red winter wheat production year in 25 years, he noted.

“Last fall, when we planted wheat, it was beautiful —

perfect conditions, got a beautiful stand, and even caught a rain,” he said. “The problem was, we had the warmest December and January on record. This wheat was supposed to be dormant, but it was tillering and growing. We had a really thick crop out there. We never got any moisture — a few pockets caught a little bit of snow, but they were just average.”

Some farmers abandoned their wheat to grazing, Millershaski said.

“It was only going to make 3 or 4 bushels an acre; when you’ve got \$5 and \$6 diesel, it’s like, ‘Darned if you do, darned if you don’t.’”

‘BORDERLINE DESERT’
Miller farms with his sons in Lakin, Kan. The big family farm is about 5,000 acres; combined they farm roughly 11,000 to 12,000 acres.

“We don’t add it up, we just do it,” Millershaski said.

The farm averages 16 to 18 inches of rainfall a year.

“This is borderline desert,” Millershaski said. “My problem is the heat and wind that go along with that.”

They put a third of the ground into wheat, a third into fallow to preserve moisture and a third split between sorghum and dryland corn.

MESSAGE TO FARMERS
Millershaski tells farmers not to give up.

“The economic times will get better. All things will pass. But it is amazing how if you sell somebody something substandard, they’re going to remember that. We don’t want that to happen. We want to produce good, quality wheat (with) good milling and baking. If you’re raising wheat and you want a decent price for it, you need to take care of it and treat it like a real crop. Let’s raise good wheat, and it will sell itself.”

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University of Idaho hires nematologist for endowed chair

Capital Press

The University of Idaho hired Erika Consoli as inaugural holder of the Saad Hafez Presidential Endowed Chair for Nematology. Consoli will start Nov. 9. She will be based at the UI Parma Research and Extension Center. Hafez, a retired professor, helped develop UI into a national leader in nematology and established the university’s modern nematode diagnostics program, according to a news release.

Consoli will be the university’s first presidential endowed chair, a designation reserved for endowed positions supported by at least \$3 million in funding.

“This is one of the largest nematology endowments, not only in the U.S., but in the world, demonstrating our commitment toward addressing a pressing need for Idaho agriculture,” said Leslie Edgar, J.R. Simplot Endowed Dean of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. “With the help of our stakeholders, we’ve hired an emerging star in the field who brings a breadth of experience and a global perspective.”

Consoli comes to UI from Pennsylvania State University in University Park, Pa., where she’s worked since April 2025 as a postdoctoral scholar.

Her experience includes field and greenhouse research, nematode diagnostics, plant and nematode interactions and molecular techniques, with an emphasis on developing practical approaches to nematode



ERIKA CONSOLI/CONTRIBUTED

Erika Consoli prepares winter wheat seeds for planting in field trials at Montana State University.

management. She has studied and worked in several countries, including Brazil, France, Belgium, Germany and Switzerland.

Consoli, who was raised on a small farm in Brazil, began studying nematodes as an undergraduate at the University of Sao Paulo, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in agricultural engineering in the fall of 2014. She continued her study of nematodes, which she began through an undergraduate internship.

Through a dual-enrollment program with her university in Brazil, she went on to earn a master’s degree in agricultural engineering from the School of Engineering in Agronomy, Food and Environment in Lyon, France, followed by a master’s degree in agricultural and

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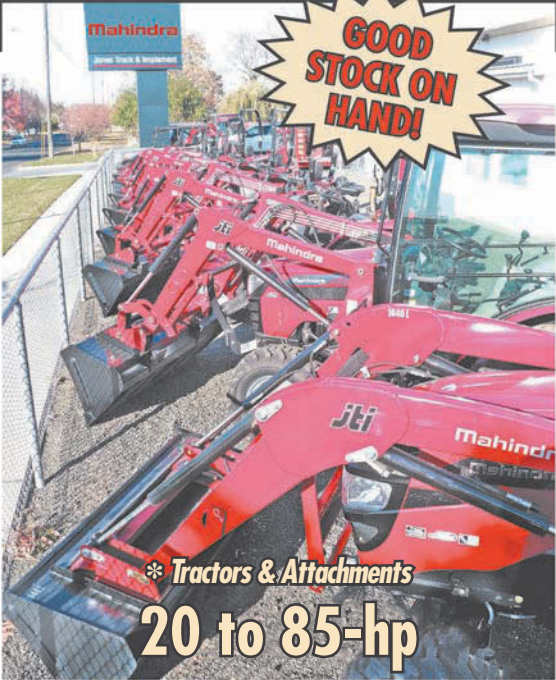


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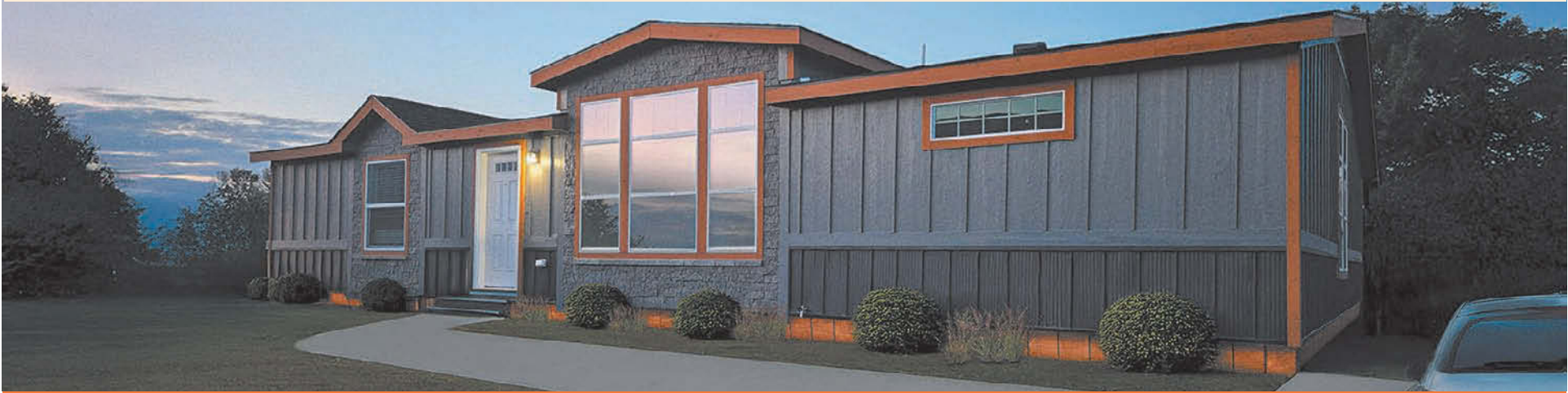


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ERIKA CONSOLI/CONTRIBUTED

Erika Consoli in a Bozeman, Mont., field used for Montana State University research into winter wheat bred to resist root lesion nematode.

UNIVERSITY
Continued from 9C

environmental nematology from Ghent University in Ghent, Belgium. She earned a doctorate in plant sciences from Montana State University, where she worked as a postdoctoral research associate before moving to Penn State.

NEMATODES

Nematodes are omnipresent in Idaho soils and play a surprisingly large role in agriculture, according to UI. The abundant, tiny roundworms live in soil, water, plants and even animals. Most are threadlike, unsegmented and microscopic.

Some nematodes help farmers by cycling nutrients and controlling pests. Other, plant-parasitic, species inconspicuously damage crops, spread diseases and reduce yields.

Nematodes can cause millions of dollars in annual losses to individual farms, but often go undetected and overlooked. According to a UI agricultural economist's 2025 study focused on potato production in Idaho and five other major potato-growing states, nematodes cause \$1.8 million in annual lost economic activity per 100 acres of infested fields.

Consoli will help bring solutions to Idaho producers.

"My goal is to provide growers with timely and accurate diagnostic information that can better

"My goal is to provide growers with timely and accurate diagnostic information that can better support nematode management decisions."
Erika Consoli

University of Idaho's endowed chair for nematology

support nematode management decisions," she said.

"With nematodes, sometimes growers realize something is going wrong in the field, but they can't see the underlying cause because nematode damage can be hard to catch," Consoli said. "It's challenging to bring awareness about nematode issues since they are microscopic, and once they are introduced to a field, management can be difficult."

The Parma center is surrounded by a wide variety of crops affected by nematodes, providing a meaningful laboratory from which she and her team can research issues impacting a broad segment of Idaho farmers, according to UI.

Consoli plans to work with UI Extension county educators to conduct a statewide survey of the distribution of nematode species in Idaho farm fields.



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H-2A ruling leaves growers liable for higher pay

By Don Jenkins
Capital Press

A federal judge in California struck down the Trump administration’s wages for seasonal foreign farmworkers, making growers’ labor costs unknown for the rest of the season.

U.S. District Judge Kirk Sherriff in Fresno ruled wages are too low for hundreds of thousands of farmworkers nationwide and ordered the Department of Labor to develop a new method for setting minimum pay for H-2A workers.

The current wages will stay in place. Sherriff said he didn’t want to disrupt the growing season, but told the department to notify growers they may have to provide back pay for the period between his ruling and when DOL publishes new wages.

“The issue of whether backpay should be awarded, and in what amount, is reserved until DOL issues new (wages),” Sherriff wrote in a ruling released Aug. 26.

The United Farm Workers, UFW Foundation and 18 farmworkers sued to overturn the wages.

“Employers must be held accountable for paying back any difference between the new legal wage and the illegal wage rates still in effect,” UFW President Teresa Romero said in a statement.

National Council of Agricultural Employers President and CEO John Holloy said farmers may not know their 2026 labor costs for months. “That’s going to be the biggest thing on people’s minds,” he said.

LABOR DEPARTMENT RULES

The Labor Department sets minimum H-2A wages for each state or region to prevent the program from lowering pay for U.S. workers. Farm groups argued previous wages were inflated.

The Labor Department adopted new methods for calculating wages last October and also allowed farmers to deduct housing costs from workers’ paychecks. The department projected the revisions would save farmers about \$2.5 billion a year.

The department said it anticipated farmers will have to hire more foreign workers because of the administration’s crackdown on illegal immigration. The H-2A program, however, was too expensive for many farmers, the department said.

The new wages averted a crisis in agriculture, Holloy said. “The ruling reignited the crisis,” he said.

The ruling underscores the need for Congress to pass a farmworker labor bill introduced this year by House Agriculture Committee Chairman Glenn “GT” Thompson, Holloy said.

The bill, titled the Securing Agriculture’s Workforce Act,

proposes putting into law the wage regulations tossed out by Sherriff.

“The fate of farming in America should not be determined at the whim of a single judge in California,” Holloy said.

The Labor Department provided no evidence that escalating H-2A costs were pricing farms out of the program, Sherriff said. Farmers are hiring more foreign farmworkers than ever, he said.

National statistics suggest farming is profitable, according to Sherriff. The judge did not cite statistics on farming profits in states with labor-intensive agriculture and a high number of H-2A workers, such as

Washington.

Sherriff faulted the department for setting wages based on a pay survey that didn’t directly poll farmers and for letting farmers pay lower wages to entry-level workers.

Sherriff also criticized allowing farmers to pay the same wage for lower-level work, such as picking, as higher-level work, such as truck driving. Labor Department regulations do not allow farmers to charge foreign farmworkers for housing, he ruled.

Under the wage rule struck down by Sherriff, Washington’s H-2A wage is \$17.13 an hour after the housing deduction. In 2024, the wage was \$19.82 an hour.



USDA/CONTRIBUTED

Farmworkers weed a pepper field in Fruitland, Idaho. Growers are unsure how much they’re paying foreign farmworkers after a federal judge in California ruled current H-2A wages are too low.



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Tyson to sell WA beef plant, close facilities in Illinois, Utah

By Don Jenkins
Capital Press

Tyson Foods announced it will look for a buyer for its Pasco, Wash., beef plant as part of a restructuring that also includes closing meat processing plants in Illinois and Utah.

The Pasco plant, which Tyson acquired in 2001, is capable of slaughtering about 2,000 head a day and processes most of the fed cattle in the Northwest.

“They’ve been very aggressive in buying fed cattle,” Washington Cattle Feeders Association Director Jack Field said. “The good news is that it’s not being closed. But there’s a certain amount of concern. You kind of wonder who a potential buyer might be.”

The Arkansas-based company said in a statement Aug. 13 that it will consolidate beef packing at three plants in Nebraska, Kansas and Texas.

The company cited a shortage of cattle. USDA cattle counts show ranchers are not retaining heifers to rebuild the country’s historically small herd, the company said.

Tyson said it will move operations to more “strategically located facilities with ample capacity to grow” and add a second shift to its plant in Amarillo, Texas, as cattle become available.

“Collectively, these changes will allow the company to maintain a similar level of cattle harvesting across a more efficient and modern network,” the company stated.

IMPACT ON RANCHERS
Tyson’s geographic concentration of beef packing will hurt



USDA/CONTRIBUTED

Tyson Foods will close beef-packing plants in Illinois and Utah and try to sell its beef plant in Pasco, Wash.

ranchers and feedlots in other areas, including potentially Northwest producers, R-CALF CEO Bill Bullard said.

“There’s no commitment to keep the Pasco plant running if they don’t find a buyer, or certainty they will find a buyer,” Bullard said.

Agri Beef has plants in Toppenish, Wash., and Jerome, Idaho. The next closest major beef-packing plant to Washington is a JBS plant in northern Utah.

“You’re eight hours away on a truck,” Field said. “We need two plants in Washington state. ... I don’t even want to entertain the thought” of the Pasco plant closing.

More small beef processors are opening, but losing the Pasco plant would be a blow to ranchers, Washington Cattlemen’s Association executive vice president Chelsea Hajny said. “Less processing space is not good for producers.”

Tyson will close its packing plant in Joslin, Illinois, and its cutting plant in Eagle Mountain, Utah., where slabs of beef and pork are cut and packaged for retail sales.

The Joslin plant is vital to the Midwest beef supply chain, according to the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association.

“Tyson Foods’ Pasco, Wash., beef processing facility is also critical for cattle producers in the Northwest, and we appreciate the

company’s commitment to seek a buyer rather than pursuing an outright closure,” NCBA CEO Colin Woodall said in a statement.

Tyson’s restructuring is the latest in a series of beef plant closures this year. Tyson closed a plant in Lexington, Nebraska, and JBS closed a facility in Souderton, Pennsylvania. Cargill closed a ground beef plant in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Bullard said the plant closures will discourage ranchers from expanding herds and increase U.S. reliance foreign beef and live cattle.

“This will affect the entire supply chain,” he said. “This is harmful to producers and consumers.”

The consolidation of packing plants comes as the Justice Department probes alleged antitrust activities by Tyson, JBS, Cargill and National Beef. The four companies control 85% of U.S. beef sales.

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Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer recharge projects

By Brad Carlson
Capital Press

The Idaho Water Resource Board has funded two projects designed to increase capacity to recharge the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer.

The board at a meeting in Rexburg Aug. 7 approved about \$8 million for a recharge basin about a mile southeast of Shelley in the Snake River Valley Irrigation District, and about \$6.3 million combined for two recharge infiltration basins in the Blackfoot-based Bingham Groundwater District.

IWRB since 2014 has operated a recharge program on the Eastern Snake Plain between irrigation seasons. The approved projects would increase capacity in the Upper Snake River Valley — a longtime goal — and help the board meet a recently increased annual volume goal, according to a news release.

The legislature in 2025 passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 110, which raised targeted annual average by 40%, from 250,000 acre-feet to 350,000. SCR 110 supported the board’s efforts to address water supply challenges in the region as well as a November 2024 settlement agreement between EPA groundwater districts and a coalition of surface water users with senior rights, according to the resolution’s purpose statement.

Also in 2025, lawmakers approved an ongoing annual appropriation of \$30 million earmarked to help water users meet the terms of the settlement agreement, according to the release. Funding for the recently approved recharge projects is from this appropriation.

“We want to take advantage of every opportunity, when there are excess flows in the river, to put those excess flows in the ground,” Bingham

Ground Water District Manager Alan Jackson told Capital Press.

The project IWRB funded in the Bingham district would be operated and managed for the board by district staff, he said. District leaders have worked with the board to find sites suited for adding recharge capacity upstream of American Falls Reservoir, and “we want to have a good working relationship with the board and support their efforts.”

BINGHAM GROUND WATER DISTRICT PROJECT

The board approved two 32-acre recharge infiltration basins on one site. The project includes buying a 110-acre parcel, excavating two basins, building a dedicated delivery pipeline, improving a canal, and buying grass seed and irrigation infrastructure for construction of nine-foot berms around the site perimeter, according to the release. A groundwater monitoring plan will be created, and submitted to the state Department of Environmental Quality for approval.

“We want to have it in place and ready to use next spring in the event recharge water is available,” assuming arrangements and agreements are completed, Jackson said.

The two basins are expected to return about 67 cubic feet per second into the aquifer when water is available, according to the release. Flow of 1 cfs over 24 hours produces about 2 acre-feet.

SNAKE RIVER VALLEY IRRIGATION DISTRICT PROJECT

IWRB approved a recharge basin project at the site of a former sugar factory. An 85-acre infiltration basin would be created with nine-foot earthen berms around the site perimeter, according to the release. The district would also

build a pipeline of 3,080 lineal feet to move water from its canal half a mile away to the recharge site. When recharge water is available, the site

could send up to about 87 cfs into the aquifer.

Two groundwater monitoring wells would be built at the site to track water quality.

A groundwater monitoring plan will be created, and submitted to the DEQ for approval.



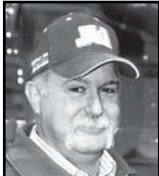
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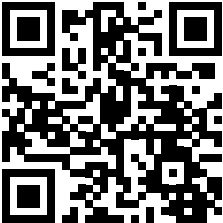


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Jared Spackman, right, discusses barley research with University of Idaho Aberdeen Research and Extension Center operations manager Chad Jackson during an industry tour.

UI, USDA launch crop nitrogen calculator

Capital Press

University of Idaho and USDA researchers have developed a free online calculator to help barley and sugar beet growers determine how much nitrogen fertilizer to apply to produce the highest profit.

Applying more fertilizer than needed can eventually cost more than the additional crop yield is worth. The calculator estimates the nitrogen rate needed to achieve maximum yield and the rate likely to produce the greatest profit, according to a UI news release. Growers enter information about crop variety, existing soil nitrogen levels, yield goals, commodity prices and fertilizer type and cost.

UI's Jared Spackman and USDA Agricultural Research Service soil scientist Christopher Rogers led the crop research. UI Extension agricultural economist Patrick Hatzenbuehler led the project's economic analysis.

The calculator is "really helping farmers make better on-farm decisions for their bottom line," Rogers, with ARS in Kimberly, said in the release. "Just achieving the maximum yield may not be the most profitable for them."

The team also updated nitrogen application guidelines for malt barley. The Idaho guidelines were last updated in 2003.

The calculator enables all data from field trials to be accessed easily online, the Twin Falls-based Hatzenbuehler said.

GROWER INTEREST

"There has been a fair bit of interest from growers as they hear about the project and what we're doing," said Spackman, UI extension specialist and Idaho Barley Commission endowed agronomist based in Aberdeen.

Idaho Falls farmer Mar Thiel, who has hosted university cereal trials on his farm for 27 years, plans to test the calculator's recommendations on limited acreage before expanding its use. He routinely uses soil and in-season petiole testing to guide nitrogen applications for higher-value crops such as potatoes but has generally applied a standard nitrogen rate across his barley acres.

"I think it would be great to have some updated data, especially when you can access it online," he said. "The more information, the better."

The calculator's estimates for irrigated spring barley and the recently updated nitrogen guidelines for malt barley are based on field trials from the state's south-central to east regions.

The tool currently includes barley data from 2015 through 2023 and will be updated regularly, according to UI. The team made the tool available in early July, and by February plans to refine it and add data from trials conducted through 2026.

Rogers led barley nitrogen trials while working at the University from 2015 to 2018, and in 2019 while with ARS. Spackman has spearheaded the trials since 2020.

Sugar beet data used in the calculator are from trials conducted by David Tarkalson, an ARS research soil scientist based in Kimberly.

The researchers also have extensive data from Idaho nitrogen trials of mustard, forage grasses, winter barley and several classes of wheat, according to UI. The researchers plan to expand the tool in the future to provide customized nitrogen recommendations for additional Idaho crops.

The calculator and updated guidelines are available at idahocroplnitrogen.org.

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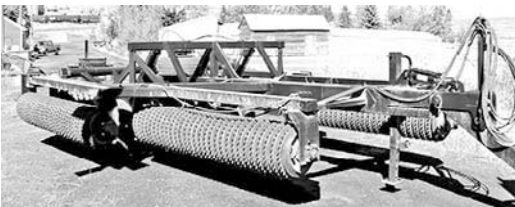
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U.S. beekeepers challenge organic honey import rules

By Mateusz Perkowski
Capital Press

Several U.S. beekeepers are challenging federal regulations they allege offer a leg up to imported honey that's produced under more lenient foreign organic certification standards.

The USDA has enacted rules that allow honey producers in Brazil and elsewhere to bypass organic restrictions that effectively prevent domestic beekeepers from labeling their product as organic, according to the complaint.

The plaintiffs — Royal Honey Farm, Strehlow Bees, Adee Honey Farms and Fischer Honey Farm — allege the USDA's regulatory scheme amounts to "false advertising" that should be stopped to avoid misleading consumers.

"USDA-enabled misuse of the USDA organic seal misleads consumers into purchasing honey labeled as 'organic' only because of the seal's existence on the label, when the honey is unlikely to have the true characteristics of 'organic' in actual fact," according to the lawsuit.

Under the agency's regulations, imported honey can be labeled as "organic" under the Canadian certification system, which is officially considered equivalent to the USDA's system even though it's less restrictive in terms of preventing bee exposure to pesticides, the complaint said.

CANADIAN RULES

In the U.S., beekeepers must keep their hives surrounded by an organic zone with a 1.8-mile-radius, which effectively caps production, while the Canadian rules simply require bees to be kept out of fields that have recently been treated with "agrochemicals," largely relying on the beekeeper's judgment, the complaint said.

Producers from Brazil and elsewhere are then able to obtain organic certification under the Canadian system, allowing their honey to be imported into the U.S. with an organic label to the detriment of domestic beekeepers, the lawsuit said.

The equivalency arrangement between the U.S. and Canada is thus "used as a mechanism for applying the USDA seal to any foreign import into the U.S. from any country, not just Canada," according to the complaint.

Foreign-based organic certifiers are furthermore able to certify groups of honey producers as compliant with organic standards, while U.S. producers are expected to be certified on an individual basis, the lawsuit said. "One obvious byproduct is the lowering of inspection standards because of the elimination or near-elimination of independent, on-farm scrutiny by a third-party certifier's inspector."



USDA/CONTRIBUTED

U.S. beekeepers are challenging USDA rules that allow foreign honey producers to gain organic certification while using less-stringent Canadian rules.

In effect, this "loophole" allows foreign honey certified under Canadian rules to be labeled and sold in the U.S. as organic even though it's not tested for chemical residues and the hives are placed in agricultural fields treated with substances prohibited by the U.S. Organic Foods Production Act, the lawsuit said.

"When used in combination with Canadian group certification, the two exceptions to fertilizer and spray use are a door-opener for foreign honey processors and make it easy for them to use local commercial beekeepers to produce massive amounts of honey that is labeled 'organic' outside OFPA standards, while still applying the USDA seal under the certificate exchange mechanism," according to the complaint.

MARKET LOSS

As a result, U.S. beekeepers have been losing their share of the domestic market to foreign producers who label their product as organic, with domestic producers' sales falling by roughly 20% over nearly two decades even as honey consumption has risen, the lawsuit said.

The lawsuit alleges that USDA has failed to provide domestic beekeepers with equal protection under the law and violated false advertising law, among other federal statutes, which warrants overturning organic equivalency agreements for honey with Canada and New Zealand as unlawful.

The plaintiffs have also asked a federal judge to block the USDA from licensing the organic seal to foreign honey producers who rely on these systems.

The USDA did not respond to requests for comment as of press time, but the agency typically does not comment on pending litigation.

Earlier this year, U.S. beekeepers sought to revive a lawsuit against importers that sought to block import of adulterated or fake honey from overseas, but the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals recently upheld the dismissal of that case for lacking enough "particularity" in its allegations.

Last year, the 9th Circuit also refused to resurrect a lawsuit brought by organic hazelnut

growers who'd challenged USDA's group certification system for foreign producers of the crop, ruling that they haven't proven harm from the regulations.

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'11 BOURBON HOPPER SET, 25' Lead & 25' Pup, 102" Wide, AirRide, Roll Taps, All Aluminum Wheels.....\$49,950



'77 FRUEHAUF HOPPER PUP, 22', New Brakes, Roll Tarp.....\$9,500

TRACTORS



(2) USED CAMSO 30" TRACKS FOR CAT CH35-55.....\$2,500 EA.



'23 MF 8740S, 932 Hrs, CVT, Auto Steer, Weights, (6) Rear Remotes.....\$239,950



'23 JD 2025R, 40 Hrs, MFWD, Cab, Hydro, 120R Loader, 60" Midmount Mower, Frontier 6' Rear Blade\$26,500



'05 JD 8120, 6950 Hrs, MFWD, (4) Hyd Remotes, AutoSteer\$85,000



'14 JD 9510R, 3278 Hrs, 1 Owner, AutoSteer, Goodyear 800 LSW Duals, Weight Package Deleted.....\$208,750



'95 JD 8870, 13029 Hrs, Powershift, PTO, Autosteer, Diff Locks\$55,000



'12 CIH 500 QUADTRAC, 5060 Hrs, 36" Tracks, Axles Checked & Repaired.....\$142,000

AG TRACKS



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DRILLS



'20 CIH PRECISION DISK 500, 50', 7.5" Spacing, CIH 2280 Cart\$135,000



'18 CIH PRECISION DISK 500T, 40', Scales, AgPro Meters, 4Section Control On Seed & Starter ...\$150,000



JD 455, 35', 7.5" Spacing, Liquid Kit, 4" Packers ... CALL



JD 455, 30', 7.5" Spacing.....\$12,500



GREAT PLAINS 35-4000HD, 40' 7.5" Spacing, Liquid Kit, 500 Gal Tank, 3" PackersCALL



'19 CIH PRECISION DISK 500DS, 60', 10" Spacing, '19 CIH 4585 Tow Between Cart....\$225,000



'15 CIH FLEX HOE 700, 60' 12" Spacing w/4" Dutch Precision Points, 3430 Cart, 2450 Liquid Cone Tank, Full Run Blockage Monitors.....\$165,000



'14 JD 1890, 40', 7.5" Spacing, 1 Owner, 32K Acres, Blockage Monitors, '13 JD 1910 Cart\$129,500



FLEXICOIL 8100, 30', 2340 Cart, Extra Parts..\$18,000



'14 GREAT PLAINS 355000HD, 50', 6" Spacing, 15K Acres, Track Scratcher, 1 Owner.....\$79,950

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