

# Foundation promotes ag advocates online

## Bloggers connect with non-farm audiences

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**  
Capital Press

AIRWAY HEIGHTS, Wash. — Aspiring agricultural bloggers got a crash course in writing for an audience that doesn't know much about farming — but often thinks it does.

"I have a good friend who thinks everything about 'Big Ag' is terrible, farmers are doing it wrong, and he knows how to fix it — he can't even weed his yard," said Sara Duncan, a stay-at-home mom who writes the It's MomSense blog. "I think that's a really common feeling among consumers, but it's not their fault. Whose job is it to educate the consumer about where their food comes from? I think it's



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

The Pinke Post blogger Katie Pinke delivers the opening keynote address to the AgChat Foundation Pacific Northwest conference April 27 in Airway Heights, Wash.

our job."

Duncan spoke during a panel discussion at the Ag-Chat Foundation's Pacific

Northwest Agvocacy conference about using blogs and such social media sites as Twitter or Facebook.

### Online

**AgChat Foundation:** <http://agchat.org>

**It's MomSense:** <http://www.itsmomsense.com>

**The Pinke Post:** <http://thepinkepost.com/>

Most consumers are seven generations removed from the farm, Duncan said.

"Assume they know nothing," she said. "I'm a very facts-based person, but facts don't convince people. Emotions convince people, values convince people. You have to connect with them. I use the fact that I'm a mom to connect with other parents: 'I also want my kids to grow up in a safe, healthy environment. We care about the same things, we're not that different, you and me. We just have different ideas on how to get there.'"

Keynote speaker and North Dakota farmer Katie

Pinke uses her Pinke Post blog to talk about life on her farm and in a small town and important political topics. As a result, Pinke and members of her family have found themselves trusted sources for information.

Efforts to make a change globally have to begin locally, and farmers can build trust by getting involved beyond their agriculture circle, Pinke said.

"We don't need to be defensive, we already have enough of that," she said. "You can't just be one voice in a silo, you have to have a community."

Duncan recommended having a thick skin.

"The biggest mistake I see is aggression and people being really angry, creating conflict and picking a fight — that's not productive," she said. "You're never going to talk anybody into something when you're mean."

The panelists and audience

members discussed sharing potentially hot-button, easily misunderstood images like cattle castration or branding with an audience that's never been exposed to the daily operations on a farm or portrays agriculture as cruel. Duncan said context is critical.

"Don't be afraid to tell (consumers) the truth — a lot of people want to know more, they don't want you to say, 'I don't want you in the chicken house,'" she said. "Let them in, but make sure they know what they're seeing. Consumers ask for things, but they don't know what they're asking for. If you're going to show that stuff, do it, but couch it right."

Audience member and Eastern Washington dairy farm blogger Krista Stauffer recommended putting the farmer's name, logo and detailed information on photos, so they can't be used by agriculture opponents in misleading ways.

# GMO labels constitutional, federal judge says

## Ruling rejects arguments by food manufacturers

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**  
Capital Press

Proponents of mandatory labeling for genetically modified organisms believe they've landed a heavy blow for the legality of such laws with a favorable court deci-

sion in Vermont.

A federal judge has rejected several legal arguments by food manufacturers who claimed the state's GMO labeling statute violated the U.S. Constitution.

While the ruling may be appealed, it marks the first time that a GMO labeling law has withstood constitutional scrutiny in federal court, said George Kimbrell, attorney for the Center for Food Safety, which supports the statute.

"This is a critical first step in securing the public's right to know, not just for Vermont but for all Americans," he said.

Several other states are expected to vote on GMO labeling in 2016, so the Vermont decision affirms they can legally require such disclosures, Kimbrell said.

"There is no legal reason why states can't require the labeling of genetically engineered food," he said.

When Vermont passed its GMO labeling law in 2014, the Grocery Manufacturers Association and other groups filed a complaint alleging the statute unconstitutionally violates their free speech rights and interferes with interstate commerce.

Chief U.S. District Judge Christina Reiss has dismissed the plaintiffs' interstate commerce claims and a portion of their First Amendment claims. She also indicated

they probably won't fare better with the remainder of their freedom of speech arguments.

The plaintiffs argued GMO labeling will burden interstate commerce because they will have to create Vermont-specific packaging and distribution channels.

Even if the statute does create such a problem for manufacturers, it doesn't rise to the level of being unconstitutional, she ruled.

The law doesn't impose

greater burdens on companies outside Vermont than those within the state, doesn't require GMO labeling nationwide and doesn't conflict with laws in other states, she said.

Reiss said the controversy over GMOs does not "convert a disclosure requirement about a food product into a political statement," and thus doesn't represent unconstitutionally compelled political speech.

# Farm Market Report

## Hay Market Reports

Compiled by USDA Market News Service • St. Joseph, Mo.-Portland

Hay prices are dollars per ton or dollars per bale when sold to retail outlets. Basis is current delivery FOB barn or stack, or delivered customer as indicated.

Grade guidelines used in this report have the following relationship to Relative Feed Value (RFV), Acid Detergent Fiber (ADF), TDN (Total Digestible Nutrients), or Crude Protein (CP) test numbers:

Grade	RFV	ADF	TDN	CP
Supreme	185+	<27	55.9+	22+
Premium	170-185	27-29	54.5-55.9	20-22
Good	150-170	29-32	52.5-54.5	18-20
Fair	130-150	32-35	50.5-52.5	16-18
Utility	<130	36+	<50.5	<16

### WASHINGTON-OREGON HAY (Columbia Basin) (USDA Market News) Moses Lake, Wash.

This week FOB	Last week	Last year
930	1,200	1,330

Compared to April 17: All grades of Alfalfa steady in a light test. Trade very slow for domestic and export markets. Light new crop harvest was noted this week in the south basin region. Demand light to moderate. Retail/Feedstore steady. Demand remains good.

	Tons	Price
Alfalfa Large Square	200	\$210
Alfalfa Mid Square	Fair/Good	500
Alfalfa Small Square	Premium	60
	170	\$250

### OREGON AREA HAY (USDA Market News) Portland, Ore.

This week FOB	Last week	Last year
1,567	1,285	1,989

Compared to April 17: Prices trended generally steady compared to the same quality last week. Trade activity and demand picked up slightly this week. The continued good weather in several areas of Oregon has slowed down demand, as pasture grasses are growing causing end users to be able to turn animals out on pasture rather than purchase and feed additional hay. Export hay business seems to slowly be picking up, however, continued issues with few containers available and back-up of containers needing to be loaded at the shipping ports continues to slow down the ability to export hay overseas. Most producers have sold all that they plan to sell for this season.

	Tons	Price
CROOK, DESCHUTES, JEFFERSON, WASCO COUNTIES		
Alfalfa Large Square	Fair	700
Small Square	Supreme	2
		\$160-175
		\$275

	Premium	2	\$250
Orchard Grass Small Square	Premium	20	\$250-260
Grass Mix-Five Way Small Square		46	\$260-270
LAKE COUNTY			
Alfalfa Large Square	Supreme	67	\$250
	Prem./Sup.	35	\$240
	Good	499	\$170
Small Square	Prem./Sup.	30	\$240
	Premium	30	\$220
Alfalfa/Oat Mix Large Square	Premium	60	\$150
Forage Mix-Three Way Large Square	Good	36	\$150

EASTERN OREGON: No new sales confirmed. HARNEY COUNTY: No new sales confirmed. KLAMATH BASIN: No new sales confirmed.

### IDAHO HAY (USDA Market News) Moses Lake, Wash.

This week FOB	Last week	Last year
2,400	2,400	2,200

Compared to April 17: All grades of Alfalfa weak in a light test. Trade remains slow. Demand light to moderate. Most areas of the trade area are reporting drier than normal conditions and an oversupply of unseed feeder hay.

Some exporters are turning previously bought supplies back to producers. Heavy mice infestations this year are reportedly ruining range and hay fields. Retail/feedstore/horse not tested this week.

	Tons	Price
Alfalfa Large Square	Premium	500
	Utility/Fair	400
		\$165
		\$120-130
		\$80-120

### CALIFORNIA HAY (USDA Market News) Moses Lake, Wash.

This week FOB	Last week	Last year
18,115	13,088	19,022

Compared to April 17: All classes traded active on good demand. Milk prices remained in the mid-teens, which affected the demand from dairies for test hay. According to U.S. Drought Monitor, in northeastern California, exceptional drought (D4) was expanded across the northern Sierras this week, while in northern Modoc County, a one-category improvement (from D4 to D3) was rendered to the depiction to more accurately reflect local conditions. Alfalfa export hay in region 6 is \$6 lower this week and premium Alfalfa is steady. Prices reported FOB at the stack or barn unless otherwise noted.

	Tons	Price
Alfalfa Large Square	Premium	500
	Utility/Fair	400
		\$165
		\$120-130
		\$80-120

REGION 1: North Intermountain  
Includes the counties of Siskiyou, Modoc, Shasta, Lassen, and Plumas.

No new sales confirmed.  
REGION 2: Sacramento Valley  
Includes the counties of Tehama, Glenn, Butte, Colusa, Sutter, Yuba, Sierra, Nevada, Placer, Yolo, El Dorado, Solano, Sacramento.

	Tons	Price
Alfalfa	Premium	50
	Good/Prem.	100
	Good	150
		\$220-250
		\$100

REGION 3: Northern San Joaquin Valley  
Includes the counties of San Joaquin, Calaveras, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, Mono, Merced and Mariposa.

	Tons	Price
Alfalfa	Supreme	300
	Premium	180
	Good	200
		\$260
		\$250
	Good/Prem.	300
		\$235
		\$150
		\$265
		\$180
		\$350-\$335
		\$280

REGION 4: Central San Joaquin Valley  
Includes the counties of Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, and Inyo.

	Tons	Price
Alfalfa	Supreme	400
		\$250
		\$180
		\$250
		\$250
		\$205

REGION 5: Southern California  
Includes the counties of Kern, Northeast Los Angeles, and Western San Bernardino.

	Tons	Price
Alfalfa	Supreme	375
	Premium	175
	Good	175
		\$263
		\$250
		\$215

REGION 6: Southeast California

	Tons	Price
Alfalfa	Prem./Sup.	1150
	Good	800
		\$222-230
		\$220
	Premium	4300
		\$210-220
		\$222-223
		75
		\$235
		\$200
		\$232
	Good/Prem.	100
		\$120
		\$150
		\$205
		\$147

Bermuda Grass  
Klein Grass

## California Egg Reports

Compiled by USDA Market News Service • Des Moines

Shell egg marketer's benchmark price for negotiated egg sales of USDA Grade AA and Grade AA in cartons, cents per dozen. This price does not reflect discounts or other contract terms.

### DAILY CALIFORNIA SHELL EGGS (USDA Market News) Des Moines, Iowa

	Size	Range	Size	Range
Jumbo	219	Extra large	193	
Large	186	Medium	155	

Benchmark prices are steady. Asking prices for next week are 2 cents higher for Jumbo, Extra Large, and Large with Medium and Small prices steady. The undertone is steady. Offerings are light to usually moderate on moderate to fairly good demand. Supplies are light to moderate. Market activity is moderate to active. Small benchmark price \$1.35.

Prices to retailers, sales to volume buyers, USDA Grade AA and Grade AA, white eggs in cartons, delivered store door.

	Size	Range	Size	Range
Jumbo	211-223	Extra large	174-186	
Large	171-180	Medium	135-144	

## Cattle Market Reports

Compiled by USDA Market News Service • Oklahoma City-Des Moines-St. Joseph, Mo.-Moses Lake, Wash.

Cattle prices in dollars per hundredweight (cwt.) except some replacement animals per pair or head as indicated.

### NATIONAL SLAUGHTER CATTLE (Federal-State Market News) Oklahoma City-Des Moines

Compared to April 17: In the Southern Plains, live sales have sold \$2-5 lower in the Texas Panhandle and \$2-4 lower in Kansas. Few dressed sales reported in Nebraska steady to \$3 lower. Boxed beef prices April 24 averaged \$252.31, which is \$2.07 lower than April 17. The Choice/Select spread is \$9.37. Slaughter cattle on a national basis for negotiated cash trades through Friday afternoon totaled about 48,325 head. Last week's total head count was 69,979 head.

Midwest Direct Markets: Live Basis, Steers and Heifers 35-80 Percent Choice, 1200-1400 lbs. \$159-160; Dressed Basis, Steers and Heifers \$253-260.

Slaughter Cows and Bulls (Average Yielding Prices): Slaughter cows and bulls steady to \$1 higher.

USDA's Cutter cow carcass cut-out value Friday afternoon was \$234.28 up \$1 from April 17.

### NATIONAL FEEDER AND STOCKER CATTLE (Federal-State Market News) St. Joseph, Mo.

This week	Last week	Last year
211,600	307,600	264,100

Compared to April 17: Yearling feeder cattle sold mostly \$5-8 lower with instances \$10 lower with the most declines on those weighing over 800 lbs. Steer and heifer calves traded unevenly steady to mostly \$5 lower, with unweaned and fleshy calves trading \$10-15 lower. In the Southeast calves sold mostly \$2-5 lower with instances \$10 lower.

Prices have leveled off the last couple of weeks with the fed cattle market struggling to hold its ground and most of the more-aggressive stocker orders having been filled.

Farmer-feeders have now fully moved into planting season mode and most will have little interest in the cattle market until they put their planters away. Good margins do not exist for either the packer or the cattle feeder at this time.

April 17, live cattle and feeder cattle futures fell out of bed with aggressive selling pressure with live cattle futures down the limit, and feeder cattle contracts trading near limit losses.

Over the last three weeks live fed prices have lost \$8/cwt seeing significant price erosion going into May. Packers have kept the lid on cattle slaughter which has been particularly light over the last several months as they have struggled with poor margins. Packers have drastically cut kills, bought cattle for 3-4 weeks out, now have the leverage over the cattle feeder and will want to guard it with determination.

Feedlots have shown that with higher break-evens for feeder cattle placed on feed they are willing to keep cattle on feed longer, stretching out marketing windows as steer carcass weights are at 871 lbs. for the week ending April 11, 21 lbs. heavier than last year at this time.

Supplies of beef, pork and poultry were significantly higher than a year ago. This is a result of higher production especially of pork and chicken, lower exports and higher imports of beef.

Total beef in cold storage was 479.8 million pounds ending March 31 compared to year ago

totals of 405.8 million lbs. Pork supplies in cold storage ending March 31 were 668.6 million lbs. compared to year ago totals of 575.5 million lbs. Chicken had supplies of 751.9 million lbs. ending March 31, compared to year ago levels of 591.6 million lbs. The afternoon Cattle on Feed Report had April 1 inventory at 100 percent; placements at 100 percent and marketings at 98 percent. Inventory was slightly higher than expected, with placements larger than expected and marketings close to expectations. Auction volume included 54 percent over 600 lbs. and 41 percent heifers.

### AUCTIONS

This week	Last week	Last year
168,400	221,700	174,200

WASHINGTON 2,400. 75 pct over 600 lbs. 46 pct heifers. Steers: Medium and Large 1-2 550-600 lbs. \$255.76; 650-700 lbs. \$242.31; 750-800 lbs. \$211.20. Heifers: Medium and Large 1-2 500-550 lbs. \$242.56; 550-600 lbs. \$242.11; 650-700 lbs. \$224.53; half load 720 lbs. \$210.

DIRECT  
This week Last week Last year  
36,000 44,800 49,800

SOUTHWEST (Arizona-California-Nevada) 200. 100 pct over 600 lbs. 48 pct heifers. Steers: Medium and Large 1-2 Del May 875 lbs. \$204. Heifers: Medium and Large 1-2 Del May 825 lbs. \$204.50.

NORTHWEST (Washington-Oregon-Idaho) 3400. 76 pct over 600 lbs. 21 pct heifers. Steers: Medium and Large 1-2 Current FOB Price 700-750 lbs. \$235 Idaho; 850-900 lbs. \$195-202 Idaho-Oregon. Current Delivered Price 850-900 lbs. \$198-202 Idaho. Future Delivery FOB Price 550-600 lbs. \$234-250 Idaho-Oregon for September-November; 600-700 lbs. \$228-240 calves for October-December Washington-Idaho-Oregon. Heifers: Medium and Large 1-2 Current FOB Price 700 lbs. \$228 Idaho. Current Delivered Price 900 lbs. \$196 Idaho. Future Delivery FOB Price 500-600 lbs. \$229-245 for October-December Idaho-Oregon.

### NORTHWEST DIRECT CATTLE (USDA Market News) Moses Lake, Wash.

This week	Last week	Last year
3,350	1,600	2,450

Compared to April 17: Feeder cattle steady to \$4 lower. Trade slow this week as most of the Northwest is current and feedlots are at capacity levels. More activity was noted for calf contracts for fall delivery. Demand remains good. The feeder supply included 79 percent steers and 21 percent heifers. Near 76 percent of the supply weighed over 600 lbs. Prices are FOB weighing point with a 1-4 percent shrink or equivalent and with a 5-10 cent side on calves and a 3-8 cent side on yearlings. Delivered prices include freight, commissions and other expenses. Current sales are up to 14 days delivery.

Steers: Medium and Large 1-2: Current FOB Price: 700-750 lbs. \$235 Idaho; 850-900 lbs. \$195-202 Idaho-Oregon. Current Delivered Price: 850-900 lbs. \$198-202 Idaho. Future Delivery FOB Price: 550-600 lbs. \$234-250 Idaho-Oregon for September-November; 600-700 lbs. \$228-240 calves for October-December Washington-Idaho-Oregon