



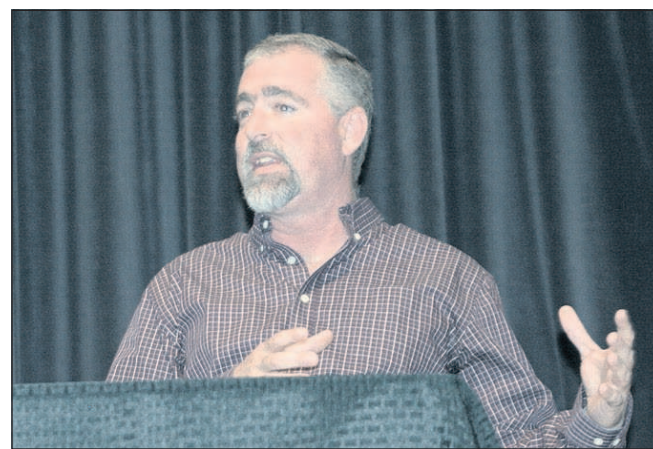
Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Rep. Dan Newhouse, R-Washington, looks to USDA Farm Service Agency Washington office executive director Judy Olson Nov. 6 as they answer audience questions during the agriculture forum in Moses Lake, Wash.



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Derek Sandison, Washington State Department of Agriculture director, makes a point during the agriculture forum Nov. 6 in Moses Lake, Wash.



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Aaron Golladay, first vice president for the Washington State Farm Bureau, fields questions from the audience Nov. 6 during the agriculture forum.

Newhouse forum reaches out to farmers

Leaders address ag concerns, needs

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
Capital Press

MOSES LAKE, Wash. — Fallout from the port slowdown, water, drought, and wildfires are the biggest problems Washington farmers face.

So said expert panelists during Rep. Dan Newhouse's first agricultural forum Nov. 6 in Moses Lake, Wash. Speakers included Derek Sandison, director of the Washington Department of Agriculture; Judy Olson,

executive director of the state Farm Service Agency office; Larry Johnson, state conservation engineer for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Aaron Golladay, first vice president of the Washington State Farm Bureau.

While the ports are back up and running, farmers are still feeling the ramifications of the market loss, Golladay said. He expects the slowdown to drag on the economy for a long time.

"When you talk to a hay buyer today, they're still mad at us as growers, not at the port guys, because we

couldn't supply the hay when they wanted it, and they're not going to forgive or forget," Golladay said.

As for fire management, Golladay said the state and federal government need to re-examine some of the conservation practices previously considered beneficial.

"For years, we haven't been able to touch riparian areas — it was there to protect the fish and water quality," he said. "When these fires would hit the riparian areas, you'd have 20, 30, up to 50 years that you haven't touched anything in those areas. The fuel level was off the

scale. Now you have drought, so it's really dry. Things blew up."

Water quality will be negatively affected as a result, with no filters left to improve conditions, Golladay said. He called for smart management.

Johnson works to help communities recover from natural disasters, including wildfires.

Drought creates prime conditions for wildfires and causes problems in watersheds where fires have occurred, creating a high risk of flooding and mudflows near streams or rivers, Johnson said.

"A five-year rain event now looks like a hundred-year event," he said.

Needs differ depending on the part of the state a farmer lives in, Sandison and Newhouse said.

Olson said the problems can be an ongoing challenge for the future of the industry.

"If there is going to be a new generation of farmers, we have to keep thinking about what kind of pathways we can provide to ensure they have the opportunities," she said. "Looking at the folks devastated by the droughts and wildfires that lost their herds, fences and haystacks,

it's going to be pretty hard for them to make a case to the young people witnessing that this year how they're going to be successful and survive in agriculture."

This was the first forum held specifically for agriculture, Newhouse said. Some of the comments made reaffirmed his work to pass legislation to create positive change, he said.

He plans to hold other ag forums in the future.

"This isn't just a one-off kind of thing," he said. "We'll take suggestions they have, issues they raised, and move forward with them."



Courtesy of Juliet Marshall

These wheat samples are infected with Fusarium headblight. The fungal disease has become a growing problem in Idaho wheat and surfaced this season as a problem in Idaho barley.

Headblight surfaces in Idaho barley

By **JOHN O'CONNELL**
Capital Press

JEROME, Idaho — A fungal disease that has posed a mounting threat to Idaho wheat in recent years finally surfaced at unacceptably high levels in some of the state's 2015 malt barley fields.

Fusarium headblight creates the DON toxin in wheat and barley, which impairs malting and milling quality. Tainted feed can also make livestock sick.

This fall, University of Idaho cereals pathologist Juliet Marshall said testing of barley from the Magic Valley through Ashton confirmed DON levels above what malting companies will accept. Numbers on how many truck loads may have been rejected are proprietary.

"This is the first year we've had really significant (DON) levels detectable (in barley)," Marshall said during

the annual Idaho Association of Plant Protection meeting, hosted Oct. 4 in Jerome. "A lot of our malt companies don't want to see anything higher than 1 part per million."

Marshall explained Fusarium has become more widespread in wheat as acres of corn, a major host plant, have spread in Idaho. She said the rise of Idaho's corn industry has also led to a shift from *F. culmorum* to *F. graminearum*, which produces airborne spores that can travel upwards of 30 miles, as the predominate strain.

"(Headblight) becoming a huge problem, and one of the biggest issues is the environment in which we're producing our small grains," Marshall said. "If we plant small grains after corn, we find higher levels of DON toxin."

Marshall said the best way to control headblight is through preventative spraying of triazole-based fungicides around flowering time.

Idaho beets set yield record despite new diseases

By **JOHN O'CONNELL**
Capital Press

JEROME, Idaho — Amalgamated Sugar officials say 2015 has produced a record sugar beet crop, despite pressure from two diseases that hadn't been a problem for growers in the past.

With a small percentage of the crop remaining to be harvested, Rupert grower Duane Grant, chairman of Snake River Sugar Co., said the company estimates growers produced a record 38 tons per acre, up from 37.35 tons per acre last season.

Grant said the percentage of sugar was also be up, averaging nearly 17.4 percent, compared with last season's levels of 17.25 percent.

Grant said sugar content has dropped somewhat in the late-harvested crops, with recent moisture bulking beets and diluting sugars.

Oliver Neher, an Amalgamated pathologist, said a warm and moist growing season enabled two diseases Idaho beet growers don't normally battle to flare up.

"It's high nighttime temperatures that hurt us, in combination with humidity," Neher said, advising growers to stagger which beet fields they irrigate during the night.

The fungal disease *Cercospora* leaf spot has long plagued growers in Michigan and the Red River Valley of Minnesota and North Dakota, significantly reducing sugar content, yields and storage life. Neher said Idaho growers often see small pockets of *Cercospora*, but this season, fields in the Minidoka area were heav-



John O'Connell/Capital Press

Sugar beets from the 2015 harvest are piled in Aberdeen, Idaho. Officials with Amalgamated Sugar Co. say their sugar content is up from last year and they've set a new record yield at about 38 tons per acre, despite *Cercospora* leaf spot surfacing as a new disease of concern this season.

ily infested, and he suspects infections were widespread throughout Magic Valley.

Complicating matters, Neher said, many Idaho growers used Inspire XT and Eminent in their fungicide programs to control powdery mildew, and *Cercospora* is resistant to both chemicals. Furthermore, powdery mildew is resistant to Headline and Gem, two of the best chemistries for controlling *Cercospora*.

Neher said spraying for *Cercospora* wasn't necessary in the past, but this season, some fields would have benefited from one or two applications.

Neher sees little potential at the moment for planting *Cercospora*-resistant varieties, as other diseases, such as curly

top, are still more economically important. But he advises growers to pay close attention for the tell-tale reddish-brown lesions with light-brown centers and purple margins when scouting fields.

Another new disease to the area could affect beet growers who follow potatoes in their rotations.

At the University of Idaho's Parma Research and Extension Center and in Washington fields, the fungus responsible for black dot disease in potatoes, *Colletotrichum coccodes*, has infected the subsequent crop of sugar beets, Neher said. Neher said the problem first surfaced in 2014.

"We do not have any idea yet what it will do to our sugar beets," Neher said. "If (the

fungus) can grow and multiply on sugar beets that might put additional pressure on potato growers if they have beets and potatoes in the same rotation."

Grant's agronomist, Alan Mohlman, plans to watch the black dot issue closely, as he plants beets following potatoes about 80 percent of the time.

Mohlman suspects Idaho's yield records would have been even greater, if not for *Cercospora*. He said he chose fungicides that are no longer effective against the disease, and he anticipates treating more for *Cercospora* in the future.

"This year, it totally took the canopy down," Mohlman said. "We just got caught with our pants down, basically."

Lawmakers: Stop counting flood control releases against stored water rights

By **SEAN ELLIS**
Capital Press

BOISE — Idaho lawmakers from both sides of the aisle demanded the Idaho Department of Water Resources immediately cease counting flood control releases from Boise River reservoirs against stored water rights.

Treasure Valley irrigators have been fighting the state over the issue in two separate lawsuits, and a bipartisan group of legislators who side with irrigators called on the IDWR to back off on the issue during a Nov. 5 press conference.

"Whatever the game being played here, it has to stop now," said Sen. Grant Burgoyne, D-Boise, who was flanked by nine other lawmakers from both chambers, irrigators and farmers at the Capitol.

"If the (IDWR) director won't reverse course, we appeal to the governor to rein him in and



Sean Ellis/Capital Press

Sen. Jim Rice, R-Caldwell, and other Idaho lawmakers call for the Idaho Department of Water Resources to immediately cease its plan to count flood control releases from Boise River system reservoirs against stored water rights during a Nov. 5 press conference at the Idaho Capitol.

rein him in now," Burgoyne said.

Rep. Thomas Dayley, R-Boise, called the department's decision to count flood control releases against stored water rights "an unjustified and unprovoked

attempt by the state of Idaho to alter the system of Boise River water rights."

"We're asking the (IDWR) to stand down," Dayley said. "Stop doing this."

A special master of the Snake River Basin Adjudication court released a ruling Oct. 9 that sides with Treasure Valley irrigators who believe flood control releases should not count against their stored water rights.

Six days later, IDWR Director Gary Spackman issued an order in a separate, department-initiated contested case hearing that backs the department's position on the issue.

Sen. Jim Rice, R-Caldwell, said Spackman does not have the authority to reverse a court decision.

"Now the director, a bureaucrat, wants to overrule the courts of the state of Idaho because he thinks he has more authority to decide the law than the courts do, and he's wrong," Rice said. "If he disagrees with the court, he's welcome to appeal the court decision (but) he's not entitled to try to overrule the court himself."

Cooper named new Wheat Marketing Center director

Calif. commission looks to fill director position

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
Capital Press

The executive director of the California Wheat Commission will take over leadership of the Wheat Marketing Center in Portland next month.

Janice Cooper's first day on the job is Dec. 1.

She replaces David Shelton, who resigned in early July.

Cooper said she was familiar with the center during her six years at the commission. The California Wheat Commission offers similar services, since it also has a milling and baking laboratory.

Cooper was intrigued with the opportunity when she



Courtesy of California Wheat Commission
California Wheat Commission executive director Janice Cooper will be the new executive director of the Wheat Marketing Center in Portland beginning Dec. 1.

learned of the vacancy at the center, particularly the expertise of center technical director and wheat foods specialist Gary Wood and laboratory supervisor Bon Lee.

"They understand the technical aspects of end-use quality for many classes of wheat," she said. "The opportunity to work with them was appealing."