

# 2 farm reps added to Idaho ag dean search committee

By SEAN ELLIS  
Capital Press

BOISE — A letter of concern from Idaho's agricultural community has prompted University of Idaho officials to add two more farm industry representatives to a committee that is advising the university in its search for a new College of Agricultural and Life Sciences dean.

The original 12-member search committee included only one ag industry representative: Steve Vernon, vice president of research for J.R. Simplot Co.

The rest of the committee was made up of faculty members and a UI student.

Idaho ag industry leaders sent university officials a letter questioning why more people from the state's farming community weren't included on the search committee.

"Considerable concern and disappointment arose upon learning that the search committee as announced is composed almost entirely of university employees instead of representatives of Idaho's \$9.7 billion agriculture industry," stated a Jan. 19 letter

sent to university officials by Food Producers of Idaho.

FPI represents more than 40 commodity and farm organizations in Idaho.

The names of several people from Idaho's agricultural community were submitted as potential appointments to the search committee, said FPI President Travis Jones, who is also the executive director of Idaho Grain Producers Association.

Yet, only one person selected wasn't a faculty member or student at the university, he told the Capital Press before the univer-

sity added two more ag industry representatives to the committee.

"That definitely caught our eye and made us wonder why," Jones said. "Idaho agriculture has a big stake in whoever the dean is and we feel there ought to be some adequate representation from the ag industry on that search list."

Shortly after receiving the letter, UI officials added two more farm industry representatives to the committee: Joe Anderson, a wheat farmer and secretary treasurer of the IGPA, and Bob Naerebout,

executive director of the Idaho Dairymen's Association.

The addition of Naerebout and Anderson to the committee was a direct result of the FPI letter and concern from Idaho's farming industry, UI spokeswoman Stefany Bales told the Capital Press in an email.

Jones said FPI appreciated the university's quick response to their concerns.

"The committee could be much broader in industry representation; there's plenty of other ag industries besides dairy and wheat," he said. "But it's definitely a

welcome acknowledgement of the need for industry representation on a dean search like that."

The advisory committee will conduct a nationwide search for a new CALS dean.

The search for a permanent dean was underway before the university's president and provost accepted other positions in spring 2013.

The current dean, John Foltz, was appointed in June 2013 to a two-year term to allow time for the new president and provost to get on board.

Foltz said he will seek the job permanently.

## Fight continues against Little Cherry Disease

Wenatchee area a 'hot spot,' researcher says

By DAN WHEAT  
Capital Press

WENATCHEE, Wash. — When it comes to Little Cherry Disease, "the hot spot in the world right now is Wenatchee," says Tim Smith, Washington State University Extension tree fruit specialist emeritus.

He's not saying it's something to be proud of. Growers fear it. The pathogen, that comes in three strains, is incurable and results in small, bitter-tasting fruit that's unmarketable.

About 350 to 400 acres of cherry trees have been torn out in the fight against the disease in the Wenatchee area in the past few years. Orchards have been replanted only to have the disease show up again from roots of the old trees.

Smith says he doesn't know how many more acres will be cleared.

"It could be a scary amount. The potential is very large," Smith said at WSU's North Central Washington Stone Fruit Day at the Wenatchee Convention Center on Jan. 20.

"We have to slow it down before we can know the potential end point. It's getting worse every year or we're simply getting better at finding it," he said.

Malaga, a town south of Wenatchee, was first to get it but got ahead of it, he said. It's worse on Stemilt Hill and Wenatchee Heights and in East Wenatchee, he said.

It's also been found in Rock Island, Sunnyslope and Orondo, all near Wenatchee, and in all the state's sweet cherry producing counties. There's some

in Oregon.

"I rarely fail to find it when someone suspects it. It's getting worse by the number of locations and trees," Smith said.

Andrea Bixby-Brosi, a research associate at the WSU Tree Fruit Research and Extension Center in Wenatchee, told growers the disease comes in two viruses, known as Little Cherry Disease Virus 1 and Little Cherry Disease Virus 2. The third pathogen is a phytoplasma called Western X. Virus 2 and Western X are the most common in the Wenatchee area, she said.

Bixby-Brosi works with Elizabeth Beers, an entomologist at the center, who heads a new three-year research project funded by Washington, Oregon and California to better understand and manage the disease.

Virus 2 is spread by grape and apple mealy bugs and there are differences in their life cycles, which makes them difficult to control, Bixby-Brosi said. They are difficult to control with foliar sprays because they are protected by cotty secretions and hiding spots on trees, she said.

The disease also spreads by roots connecting underground, Smith said.

Molecular diagnosis is reliable but expensive and slow, symptoms aren't always visible and test kits in 2014 had too many false negatives, Bixby-Brosi said. A genetic variant of Virus 2 was found that isn't detected by the kit, she said.

The kit will be refined in 2015 and chemical controls for apple and grape mealy bugs will be studied along with how the bugs acquire and transmit the disease, she said.

## 'Dryland' makes waves across region

By MATTHEW WEAVER  
Capital Press

The documentary film "Dryland" will be shown at 8 p.m. Feb. 6 at the Spokane International Film Festival and its producers say screenings are planned around the Pacific Northwest.

The film follows Lind, Wash., residents Matt Miller and Josh Knodel from the time they were teenagers until they became farmers hoping to join their family operations.

The film will also be shown 3 p.m. Feb. 4 during the Spokane Ag Expo and Pacific Northwest Farm Forum and is slated for screenings at Oregon State University in Corvallis, Ore.; Boardman, Ore.; Coeur d'Alene, Idaho; Moscow, Idaho; Pullman, Wash., and Missoula, Mont., said Sue Arbuthnot, who produced and directed "Dryland" with Richard Wilhelm.

The filmmakers hope the movie sparks "meaningful" conversations about where food comes from, the future of family farming and sustainable agriculture, Arbuthnot said.

"Wheat farming is an essential part of Eastern Washington life, yet most residents of Spokane know little about the day-to-day existence as experienced by area wheat farmers," said Dan Webster, who is on the film festival's board of directors and suggested including the film. "We are hoping that people will be both



Courtesy of Hare in the Gate Productions, LLC

A still photo from the movie "Dryland", a movie chronicling the lives of two Eastern Washington wheat farmers.

### Online

<http://www.drylandmovie.net/dryland.php>

Spokane International Film Festival: <http://spokanefilmfestival.org/>

real resonance there."

However, other viewers have no connection to farming, and are surprised to learn about the values depicted in the film, as opposed to stereotypes they might have picked up, Arbuthnot said.

Arbuthnot hopes to show the film outside the Pacific Northwest.

Arbuthnot and Wilhelm are in the early stages of making another documentary about natural resources and agriculture in the region.

## Washington State University revives its forestry major

By MATTHEW WEAVER  
Capital Press

mand for foresters in the state," he said. "We have an aging population of foresters."

Forestry was popular from the 1960s through the 1980s, but enrollment shrank after that, partly because there weren't many jobs, he said.

Some 3.18 billion board-feet of timber was harvested in 2013 in Washington, according to the 2013 Washington Timber Harvest Report. Lumber production in Washington is second only to Oregon, Blatner said.

About 4.2 billion board-feet was harvested in Oregon in 2013, according to the Oregon Department of Forestry.

"We are called the Evergreen State for good reason," Blatner said.

The job market for foresters has improved in recent years, he said. The number of lumber and pulp and paper mills has declined, but the remaining mills are larger and more automated, Blatner said.

Timber firms, consulting firms and governmental and non-governmental organizations all need foresters, he said.

"We've seen a lot of restructuring in the way lands are held and managed, but there's still a demand for foresters out there to do the work," Blatner said. "It's a different mix of employ-

ers than we used to have."

For the forestry major to be viable, WSU hopes for at least 100 certified majors within the next few years. Forestry students need a good foundation in biology, chemistry, college-level algebra, introductory calculus, statistics, communication skills and computer applications, Blatner said.

"It's always important that our students be field-ready when they graduate," he said. "We'll be stressing having students get some professional experience through summer jobs so they are very comfortable on the ground when they graduate."

## Study rebuts Canada's claim of economic harm from COOL

By TIM HEARDEN  
Capital Press

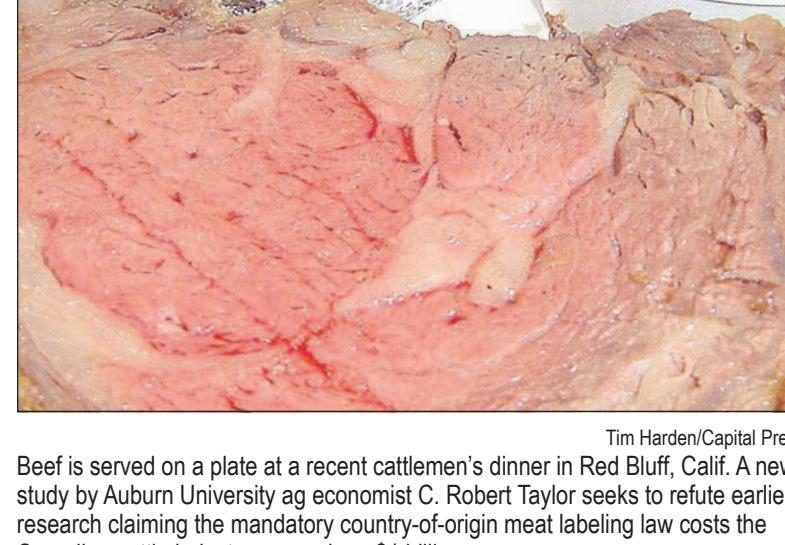
A new economic study commissioned by backers of mandatory country-of-origin labeling of meat seeks to rebut Canada's claim its cattle industry is losing \$1 billion a year because of the rule.

The research by Auburn University agricultural economist C. Robert Taylor asserts that it was the global economic downturn—not the controversial labeling rule—that caused a slowdown of access of Canadian and Mexican cattle to the U.S. market.

Taylor used mandatory price reporting by meatpackers to the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service to determine that the difference in prices paid for imported and domestic slaughter cattle actually decreased after the rule went into effect.

He said he also found no evidence that COOL negatively affected imports of slaughter or feeder cattle and that other factors, such as capture supplies of slaughter cattle and beef demand uncertainty, played a larger role in reducing import demand.

"Mandatory price reporting data is what the packers themselves submit," Taylor said in a conference call with reporters. "It's very detailed, with price, class, grade, acquisition arrangement and time. It's highly detailed and



Tim Harden/Capital Press

Beef is served on a plate at a recent cattlemen's dinner in Red Bluff, Calif. A new study by Auburn University ag economist C. Robert Taylor seeks to refute earlier research claiming the mandatory country-of-origin meat labeling law costs the Canadian cattle industry as much as \$1 billion a year.

is available publicly.

"The fact based on the data packers report is that the price basis actually narrowed somewhat, it did not widen," he said. "This indicates the Canadian cattlemen, in U.S. dollars, are getting the same price for like animals as domestic cattle feeders."

Taylor's study was done at the request of the National Farmers Union,

### Online

Preliminary Estimates of Impacts of U.S. Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) on Cattle Trade: <http://www.nfu.org/images/COOLReport-1132015Final.pdf>

Sumner's work is a basis for Canada's claim that COOL costs the cattle industry there as much as \$1 billion a year.

The problem, Sumner has explained, is that American feedlots and processors must separate streams of cattle from different countries and keep track of them. That has limited access for cattle from Canada and Mexico, as many slaughterhouses stopped accepting foreign cattle or paid a lower premium for them to offset their added costs.

Taylor said Sumner was provided data from the Canadian cattle industry that is not available to the public.

Contacted by email, Sumner responded that he hadn't read Taylor's study but he looks "forward to reading it carefully." He offered no further comment.

The dueling academic studies mark a new battlefield in a fight that has been waged in the legal, political and diplomatic arenas since COOL was enacted as part of the 2008 Farm Bill.

While COOL has been holding up in federal court, the World Trade Organization in November again condemned major elements of the rule, which the USDA revised in 2013 in response to an earlier complaint by Canada and Mexico. The U.S. has appealed the WTO's latest ruling.

If the U.S. loses its appeal, Taylor's study could be useful to the U.S. government in negotiating with its two neighbors over the level of damage that has been caused by the rule, notes Roger Johnson, the NFU's president.

Canada has threatened tariffs on dozens of American agricultural goods, which could affect major Western commodities such as California's \$24 billion wine industry and Washington's \$2.25 billion apple industry. Under international treaty, the level of tariffs can't exceed the harm that was done to Canada's or Mexico's industries, Johnson said.

"One of the arguments from the Canadians is that Canadian cattlemen have suffered this enormous damage—\$1 billion," Johnson said. "We decided it was important to figure out whether that in fact was the case."

Officials from U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman's office did not return an email seeking comment.