

# People & Places

## Agricultural voice speaks 'farmer talk'

Benjamin Kelly comes from suburbs to represent ag in halls of state Capitol

By SEAN ELLIS  
Capital Press

MERIDIAN, Idaho — In eight years, Benjamin Kelly has gone from a former suburban kid with no farming background to the leader of several farm organizations and a major voice for Idaho agriculture.

Kelly, 34, is the executive director of four farm associations and lobbies at the Idaho Legislature for eight more.

He's a private consultant and president of his own firm, Kelly Associates, and serves as the executive assistant for Rick Waitley, executive director of Food Producers of Idaho and president of Association Management Group, which represents a several Idaho ag groups.

Despite his non-farm background, "(Kelly) has been adopted by farmers as a good spokesman for agriculture," said Meridian farm-



Sean Ellis/Capital Press

Benjamin Kelly, a consultant and lobbyist for farm groups, stands in front of the Association Management Group building in Meridian, Idaho, on Oct. 7. Though he grew up in the suburbs he has played an ever-growing role representing farmers in the Capitol.

er Drew Eggers. "He's very engaged and involved and he does a great job representing his clients in agriculture as a whole."

Born and raised in Meridian in Southwestern Idaho, Kelly graduated with a bachelor's degree in political science from Boise State University and interned with a lobbying firm at the Idaho Legislature in 2007.

He was noticed by Wait-

ley, who offered to help him with his resume but was secretly taking note of his abilities.

Waitley offered him a job and Kelly's first several years were spent shadowing Waitley during his work with Idaho Ag in the Classroom and organizing the annual Idaho Ag Summit and other farm-related meetings, tours and events.

"Eventually I observed

### Western Innovator

#### Benjamin Kelly

Occupation: Private ag industry consultant, lobbyist

Age: 34

Born: Meridian, Idaho

Education: Bachelor's degree in political science, Boise State University

Family: Single



that he was good at one thing vital to our business — 'farmer talk,'" Waitley said. "If you can't talk 'farmer talk' to a producer, you won't survive. Any farmer or rancher can sniff out a fake."

Waitley slowly handed some of his clients over to Kelly, who represents farm groups during the legislative session on bills they're interested in and tries to bring in farmers and ranchers to testify when possible.

Dennis Tanikuni, assistant director of governmental affairs for Idaho Farm Bureau Federation, said Kelly "does a lot of positive work for the industry ... and I think he'll be around for a long time."

Kelly said his biggest surprises in this career have been the high quality of the people involved in agriculture, and that he couldn't see himself

working with any other industry.

"In other types of businesses, there's a cut-throat atmosphere; I don't find that in agriculture," he said. "A lot of (farmers) do a lot of stuff they don't get paid for and they're doing it to help out agriculture, Idaho and their community."

Kelly said his involvement in agriculture happened by accident "but it really was a fortunate accident."

He believes the biggest challenge facing agriculture now is the industry's need to go on the offensive about what farmers do.

"I think we need to find a way to get past just being on the defensive about our practices and what we do and really ... get on the offensive and be able to get our message out there," he said.

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We want to publish corrections to set the record straight.

## FFA, Les Schwab, Capital Press team up to fight hunger

By EMILY KRAXBERGER  
Oregon FFA

Oregon FFA and Les Schwab stores of Oregon have teamed up in October to drive away hunger.

The 103 high school FFA chapters and 112 Les Schwab stores are working together to collect 250,000 pounds of food for the Oregon Food Bank and local food pantries around the state. Collection bags will be distributed in the Oct. 23 edition of Capital Press.

Community members are encouraged to drop off food donations at any Les Schwab store or FFA chapter in Oregon. In addition to food donations, monetary donations may be made to the local FFA chapters or the Oregon Food Bank. For every dollar donated the Oregon Food Bank is able to purchase four pounds of food.

Food collected will be donated back to local communities through the help of the Oregon Food Bank network. The Oregon Food Bank has several regional distribution centers throughout Oregon to make sure the food gets to those who need it.

The Oregon Food Bank distributed more than 1 million food boxes in 2014. The food boxes consist of enough food to feed a family of four for approximately three to four days.

"That is the equivalent of more than 12 million meals," said Amy Gillette, food resource developer for the Oregon Food Bank. To feed a family of four one meal it would take just over 5 pounds of food, or just over \$1. If you donate \$10, it equals 40 pounds of food that would make 30 meals, which would feed a family of four for more than a week.

FFA chapters are stepping up and thinking outside the box in order to find donations. Gleaning efforts by Adrian FFA members and the Adrian student body have proven to be successful so far. To date, 1,900 pounds of onions have been collected from local fields belonging to WBH



Courtesy of Anna Marie Chamberlain, FFA advisor

Members of the Adrian FFA chapter help with donated potatoes. The food collected by FFA chapters around Oregon will go to the Oregon Food Bank to be distributed to the state's needy families.

#### More online

To follow the food drive efforts visit the Oregon FFA Facebook page and the #TIREdofhunger hashtag. To learn more about FFA visit www.oregonffa.com or www.ffa.org for more information.

Farms and Petersen Farms. Some 38,790 pounds of potatoes have been gathered and redistributed thanks to the generosity of WBH farms and Giant Produce, a processor in Parma, Idaho. Giant Produce also donated a semi-truck load (36,688 pounds) of red and yellow potatoes to the chapter to give to the Oregon Food Bank. This puts the 2015 Adrian FFA totals at over 77,378 pounds.

So far, this year's produce has gone to the school districts and communities in North Powder, Wallowa, Baker City, Prairie City, John Day, Burns, Vale, Ontario, Crane, Jordan Valley and Harper.

Other FFA chapters are also being creative in their

efforts. In addition to raising food at school events, and having a chapter collection contest among members, the Yamhill Carlton FFA Chapter has a student, Liberty Greenlund, who raised fryer chickens. The first batch of fryers was recently processed and donated to the Yamhill Share and Care as well as Joseph Store House (Carlton).

In Southern Oregon, the Phoenix FFA Chapter is planning a dinner where people attending are doing more than just buying their meal, they are also helping fund families in need, with all the proceeds from the event being donated to the local food bank.

To find out what is happening in your area, contact your

local FFA Chapter.

The FFA's official motto is Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live and Living to Serve. This Drive to End Hunger is engaging students in a Living to Serve initiative.

"Having Les Schwab as a partner in this initiative is fitting as they are a company that has been setting the example of serving their communities since their inception," said Kevin White, executive director of the Oregon FFA Foundation.

"Capital Press is the leader in Pacific Northwest agriculture reporting. Our partnership allows us to reach out to some of FFA's primary supporters, Capital Press readers."

White also shared, "This kind of initiative provides students the opportunity to showcase the leadership skills gained in the FFA by being able to organize the varying

food drive activities that ultimately serve their communities, and set an example that is often counter to how people may view our youth today."

The Oregon FFA is part of the National FFA Organization, formerly known as the Future Farmers of America, and is a national youth organization of 610,245 student members — all preparing for leadership and careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture. There are 7,358 local FFA chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Oregon FFA has nearly 6,000 members in 103 chapters throughout the state. The FFA mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

### Calendar

To submit an event go to the Community Events calendar on the home page of our website at www.capitalpress.com and click on "Submit an Event." Calendar items can also be mailed to Capital Press, 1400 Broadway St. NE, Salem, OR 97301.

#### Saturday-Sunday Oct. 17-18

The All About Fruit Show, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Clackamas County Fairplex, Canby, Ore., http://www.homeorchardsociety.org/events/

#### Thursday, Oct. 22

Columbia County, Ore., Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, 6:30-9 p.m., Fultano's Pizza, 770 E. Columbia River Highway, Clatskanie, Ore.

Livestock grazing water quality seminar, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Washington State University Extension rangeland and livestock management specialist Tip Hudson, retired Oregon State University rangeland ecology and management extension specialist John Buckhouse and University of California-Davis rangeland watershed specialist

Kenneth Tate will address ranchers during a livestock grazing water quality seminar. Fairfield Community Center, 218 E. Main St., Fairfield, Wash.

Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District Annual Meeting, guest speaker will be Rufus LaLone of the Weather Cafe, 5:30-9 p.m. Creekside Golf Club, Salem, Ore.

#### Friday-Saturday Oct. 23-24

Montana Farmers Union Conven-

tion, Mansfield Convention Center, Great Falls

#### Friday-Saturday Oct. 30-31

Northwest Farmers Union Convention, Northern Quest Casino, Airway Heights, Wash.

#### Tuesday-Wednesday Nov. 3-4

Practical Food Safety & HAC-CP, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Idaho Water Center, Boise, Idaho, http://www.techhelp.org/events/197/practi-

cal-food-safety-and-haccp/

#### Wednesday-Friday, Nov. 4-6

2015 Weed Conference, Washington State Weed Association, Wenatchee Convention Center, Wenatchee, Wash., www.weedconference.org

#### Wednesday-Saturday Nov. 11-14

Tri-State Grain Growers Convention, Davenport Grand Hotel, Spokane, https://grainconvention.com