

# 'Commodity buffers' pay farmers same as crops

By MATTHEW WEAVER  
Capital Press

SPOKANE — Some Eastern Washington farmers will receive the same income for environmental buffers as they would growing crops on the land under a new program funded by the local, state and federal governments.

The Spokane County Conservation District received \$7.8 million from the USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program, which directs funding for conservation projects to improve water quality, enhance soil health and support wildlife habitat. Matching local and state funds bring the total to \$15.4 million. "This is actually a very big deal," said Walt Edelen, water resource manager for the district. "This is really what you're looking for to help out and benefit the landowner."



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Spokane Conservation District regional conservation partnership program coordinator Charlie Peterson and water resource manager Walt Edelen stand outside the district office in Spokane March 14. The district recently received funding for "commodity buffers."

The program includes a "commodity buffer," which district director Vicki Carter called "a game changer."

Producers would be paid annually for their land used as buffers along streams.

"This will pay them the same annual payment as what-ever crop they have been in for that same strip of land," Carter said.

Edelen said the district will use the USDA Risk

## Online

<http://sccd.org/the-greater-spokane-river-water-shed-project>

Management Agency crop insurance model to determine payments.

"When you want buffers put in place, it's usually your most productive land, and producers aren't very interested in losing that ground," he said. "If you really want water quality, then this commodity buffer will compensate the landowner at the same price they're getting for their upland crop."

Buffer sizes will vary depending on the type of operation.

"If you're a direct-seeder or no-tiller, your buffer really doesn't have to be very big," Edelen said. "Whereas if you're conventional, your buffer may need to be 75 feet."

The project also includes edge-of-field monitoring of nutrients and sediment coming off the land. The data would be documented, Edelen and Carter said.

Edelen said he understands some farmers could be leery, but "we do have landowners who want to know."

The project will cover more than 150,000 acres. They expect more than 300 farmers to become involved over five years.

A signup will potentially be held in the fall, Edelen said.

Farmers should fill out a form on the conservation district website to indicate their interest, Edelen said.

He expects an enthusiastic response from landowners, based on conversations he's already had with several.

"They're like, 'Sign me up — why wouldn't I do that?'" he said.

# Good communication root of successful farming

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS  
Capital Press

TWIN FALLS, Idaho — Farmers have to interact with any given number of people on a daily basis, be it family members, partners, employees, customers or vendors — all with their own personality.

That mix too often results in breakdowns in communication that can detour the success of the operation.

"It can suck the joy out of the business, but it doesn't have to be that way," said Michael Stolp, vice president of customer insights and a family business adviser for Northwest Farm Credit Services.

Stolp and associate Wendy Knopp, vice president of the Farm Credit AgVision program, led a live webinar on improving communication during the multi-location Women in Agriculture Conference, sponsored by Washington State University, on March 19.

Conversation, particularly in a family business, is important, and farmers have to work on it, Stolp said.

Understanding one's own personality and innate communication style as well as the personality and communication style of others in the mix can go a long way in improving communication, he said.



Carol Ryan Dumas/Capital Press

JaDene Palmer, left, a University of Idaho student, and Sue Switzer, a water quality analyst, work on a communications exercise during the Women in Agriculture Conference held in Twin Falls, Idaho, on March 19.

Stolp and Knopp use the DiSC Behavioral Assessment to help their clients identify their behavioral style to improve communication in their operations.

The assessment identifies four behavioral styles — dominance (D), influence (I), steadiness (S) and conscientious (C) — that affect how a

person communicates.

In a nutshell, High "D" people tend to take over, High "I" people are the cheerleaders, High "S" people cooperate, and High "C" people are analytical. They each have strengths and limitations that bring both advantages and challenges to the operation, Stolp said.

Everyone has some of each style, and no one style is better than the other. But being aware of those styles can help people be adaptive in their communications, Knopp said.

"None of us work in a vacuum," Stolp said.

The profiles "help us to understand behavioral ten-

dencies and how they affect others. In addition, they help us identify, understand, respect and appreciate individual differences," he said.

That can help people develop strategies for working together to increase productivity as well as enhancing their effectiveness by improving their relationships with others, he said.

The more people know about themselves, the more "emotionally intelligent" they become, as opposed to being "unconsciously incompetent," he said.

The more they understand themselves and others, the higher the probability of working better with others, he said.

People with very different styles can make a farm operation work, but they still have to be able to respect people's differences and make space for all perspectives, Stolp said.

"Mutual respect is a product of conversation," he said.

The assessment can also be used to allow people to rise to their best use by understanding their needs and motivation, he said.

The bottom line is the behavioral assessment is a tool that can be used to make decisions based on a mutual vision, he said.

# Idaho federal lands management bill passes House

By SEAN ELLIS  
Capital Press

BOISE — Idaho House members by a 53-14 margin have approved a bill that sets basic parameters for how Idaho would manage any federal land it acquires in the future.

The bill, which was sent to the Senate Resources and Environment Committee March 18, would require Idaho to manage those lands for multiple uses, including logging, grazing, mining, wildlife and recreation.

The legislation creates "a very, very basic framework for how we would manage land once it's returned to the state of Idaho," said the bill's author, Rep. Judy Boyle, a

Republican rancher from Midvale.

Dozens of people testified during a lengthy public hearing on the legislation March 16, and support and opposition were about equal.

Boyle supports efforts to gain state control of most federal land in Western states. Supporters of that proposal believe it's possible because all states were granted equal footing with the original 13 states when admitted to the Union.

The bill says that among the rights states possess as a result of their admission to the Union is the right to "the grant of all lands held in trust by the federal government for the states once they are grant-

ed statehood."

"Sister states to whom this guarantee has been fulfilled have control of their destiny and absolute economic freedom and have a distinct advantage over the state of Idaho," Boyle's bill states.

That argument was attacked by Rep. Ilana Rubel, a Democrat attorney from Boise, who pointed to a recent opinion by the Idaho Attorney General's Office that dissents from that claim.

"This premise has no support in the law," a March 14 opinion by Deputy Idaho Attorney General Steven Strack says about the equal footing argument.

During the public hearing, Washington County Commis-

sioner Kirk Chandler, a rancher, disagreed with arguments by sportsmen that having Idaho take control of federal land would ruin hunting, fishing and other recreational opportunities.

"The difference between state management of lands and Forest Service management of lands is like night and day. The state land is managed much better," he said. "The turning back of (federal) lands to the state isn't taking away from the public. It makes it more available to the public."

Lawmakers liked the idea of Idaho managing the lands rather than the federal government.

Rep. John Vander Woude, a Republican farmer from

Nampa, used a farm analogy to counter the argument that Idaho can't afford to manage federal lands.

If a farmer plants corn in a field but doesn't harvest it, of course he won't get a return from the land and that's how the federal government is managing the land it owns in Idaho, he said.

"They are not managing it to yield or get any product off of it," Vander Woude said. "I think this is a good bill and should move forward."

Following public testimony, Boyle said, "You've heard a lot of fear and speculation and a lot of myths and that's exactly why I brought this bill forward; so we can discuss them."

# Idaho would be a top candidate for Materne dairy product facility

By SEAN ELLIS  
Capital Press

NAMPA, Idaho — If French company Materne proceeds with preliminary plans to build a facility in the United States to produce its new dairy-based product, Idaho would be a top candidate, a company official told Nampa business leaders March 16.

It would make sense to build the facility in Idaho for the same reasons Materne North America built its second U.S. fruit processing facility in Nampa two years ago, said Boris Salome, plant manager of the Nampa facility.

But, he told 320 people attending the Nampa Chamber of Commerce Ag Forum, "It's not a promise."

The \$85 million Nampa facility produces the compa-



Sean Ellis/Capital Press

Materne North America's fruit processing facility in Nampa, Idaho, is shown in this March 18 photo. A company official said Idaho would be a top candidate if Materne builds a facility in the United States to produce its new dairy-based product.

ny's squeezable, re-sealable fruit pouches, which are sold in more than 50,000 locations around the country. Materne's first U.S. facility opened in 2008 in Michigan.

The company's new dairy based product, GoGo squeeZ yogurtZ, hit U.S. shelves earlier this month. That product is produced in France.

If it sells well in the U.S.,

the company plans to build a facility here to produce it, Salome told Capital Press later.

"We need to wait a bit to see how well it's going to (sell)," he said. But, he added, "We have been testing this product and it has been received very well."

Salome said one of the main reasons the company chose to locate its second U.S. facility in Idaho is because the state has a highly skilled workforce when it comes to food processing.

When it comes to food processing know-how, "this is definitely the place to be," he said.

Idaho was also ideal because it is strategically located in the nation's top fruit producing region, Salome said.

If Materne does build a

dairy product facility in the U.S., "We would want it to be close to dairy (production) and Idaho is well positioned for dairy activity," he said.

Idaho plays leap frog with New York as the No. 3 milk producing state.

News that the company considers Idaho a top candidate for a yogurt production facility was well received among leaders of Idaho's dairy industry.

"It would be great if that happened," said Milk Producers of Idaho Executive Director Brent Olmstead. "We would certainly do whatever we could do to help them realize that."

Idaho Department of Commerce Director Megan Ronk said the state would "do whatever we can on our end to make that a reality."

# Dairy council sees opportunity for U.S. cheese, whey exports

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS  
Capital Press

Despite a sustained downturn in global dairy trade, world demand will grow as the populations and incomes of developing countries grow, according to a new report by U.S. Dairy Export Council.

Global trade volume in 2020 is forecast at 11.7 million metric tons, up from 9.4 million metric tons in 2014, with a forecasted annual increase of 3.7 percent.

While that represents slower growth than the 6.7 percent annual increase between 2007 and 2014, the U.S. is in a good position to compete for that additional demand and global market share, particularly where it pertains to cheese, USDEC reported.

Other areas of strong opportunity include skim milk powder and whey, but the U.S. will face strong competition from the EU in all three of those product sectors.

Growing cheese consumption in developing countries is driving gains in global cheese imports, which grew 6.2 percent per year from 2007 to 2014 and are expected to grow at least 3.2 percent annually by 2020.

That expected growth, conservatively an additional 463,000 metric tons, opens up major opportunities for the U.S. and EU — dominant cheese producers — as those developing countries typically lack the milk, capacity and investment to manufacture cheese, USDEC reported.

Both the U.S. and EU could increase export volumes of cheese without any major disruption, unlike New Zealand, Australia and Argentina, which would need to completely reconfigure their industries, USDEC said.

With their large cheese industries providing huge volumes of whey for processing, the U.S. and EU are also well positioned to continue their dominance as whey suppliers. Global imports of whey grew at an annual rate of 7 percent from 2007 to 2013 and are forecast to grow 4.6 percent annually through 2020 to reach 2.3 million metric tons, USDEC reported.

The U.S. and EU are also set to compete for the maturity of growth expected in skim milk powder demand, typically dominating skim milk powder exports along with New Zealand — which favors whole milk powder exports.

Global exports of SMP increased 8.6 percent annually between 2007 and 2014 and have the potential to increase nearly 3.6 percent annually to 2020 to reach 2.6 million metric tons.

The U.S. capitalized on the growth in SMP demand, becoming a major player. But U.S. suppliers typically have less price competitiveness than other suppliers in the global market and tend to lose share when those competitors have surplus product, USDEC reported.

Continual improvement in SMP quality, customer service and logistics, however, will allow the U.S. industry to compete in a broader number of markets, USDEC said.

Global demand growth is also expected in butter and whole milk powder, but milkfat is a more marginal U.S. export product and WMP has been a minor U.S. export product, USDEC reported.

The growth of U.S. exports in recent years has been led by cheese, whey and SMP, and the U.S. is well positioned to compete for growth in those sectors. But it will compete head on with the EU for incremental volumes of those products, USDEC concluded.