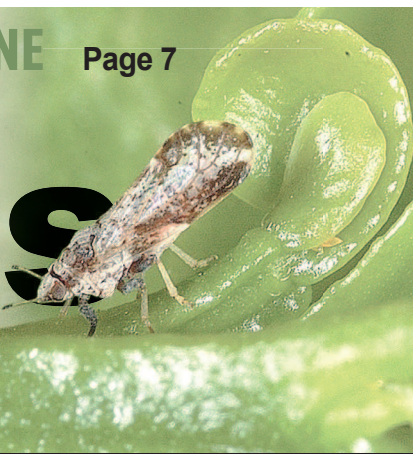




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Farm group launches campaign to counter What's Upstream

EPA: No comment until internal review finished

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

A Washington farm group plans to counter the What's Upstream anti-agriculture campaign with a social media blitz of its own, Save Family Farming director Gerald Baron said May 9.

"We'll use Twitter, Facebook, YouTube — all the channels necessary to reach younger urban voters, who we think are key," he said. "We think, definitely, damage has been done, and we need to correct that."

Save Family Farming was formed this year primarily to defend dairies in northwestern Washington



Courtesy of Save Family Farming

A new video from Save Family Farming, an agriculture advocacy group in Washington, seeks to counter the media campaign What's Upstream by portraying producers as conscientious stewards of the land.

and before the Environmental Protection Agency's support for What's Upstream was widely known.

What's Upstream was funded by EPA grants allocated to restore Puget Sound fisheries, but its theme

was a general call to restrict agriculture.

Baron said the campaign has galvanized producers in Eastern and Western Washington to push back against claims that farmers and

ranchers are unregulated polluters of waterways.

"This is getting attention statewide because it affects all farmers," he said. "It's important to get the message out that farms are very heavily regulated, but more than that, those regulations are effective."

With EPA grants, the Swinomish Indian tribe, based in north Puget Sound, hired a Seattle public relations and lobbying firm, Strategies 360, and collaborated with environmental groups on What's Upstream.

The campaign's push for mandatory 100-foot buffers between farm fields and streams failed to win the Washington Legislature's attention. But Baron said he's concerned that the ongoing campaign will mold voter attitudes.

He noted that a Strategies 360 memo to the tribe described public opinion on water-quality issues as "malleable."

"So many decisions are really driven by the perception political leaders have about where the public is," Baron said. "We're certainly very concerned about the impression that's been left with urban voters who don't have much exposure to farms and don't know what farmers are doing to protect water and fish."

The counter-campaign, called Thank Family Farmers, will be financed by farmers, food processors and agriculture-related businesses, but not producer-funded commodity commissions to avoid the perception of public funding, Baron said.

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65,000 acres designated Oregon spotted frog 'critical habitat'

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**
Capital Press

More than 65,000 acres have been designated "critical habitat" for the Oregon spotted frog, a threatened species at the center of a lawsuit over irrigation.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service says the critical habitat designation in Oregon and Washington, which includes 20 miles of river, provides a "road map" to guide conservation efforts for the frog.

While the federal government claims the designation won't have regulatory impacts on private property, attorneys for natural resource industries say critical habitat does pose a concern for landowners.

Actions that adversely affect or slow the recovery of critical habitat are considered unlawful "take" that's prohibited by the Endangered Species Act, said Karen Budd-Falen, a natural resource attorney in Wyoming.

"If I'm a private landowner, I'm going to be a little nervous," she said.

Several environmental groups are already suing the federal government over the impact that irrigation reservoirs in Oregon's Deschutes Basin allegedly have on the frog.

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AGRICULTURE SLIPS OFF POLITICAL RADAR



www.donaldjtrump.com
Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump.



go.bernieanders.com
Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders.



hillaryclinton.com
Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.

While some observers say agriculture deserves more attention, others say it's a good thing presidential candidates are distracted by other issues

By **JOHN O'CONNELL**
Capital Press

IDAHO FALLS, Idaho — In a crowded gymnasium at Skyline High School, Democratic presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders espoused his many positions for more than an hour on a long list of issues. "We're doing something pretty radical in American politics. We're telling the truth!" the Vermont senator shouted over the cheers of raucous supporters during the mid-March stop. "We can't go forward as a nation unless we honestly discuss the real problems we face."

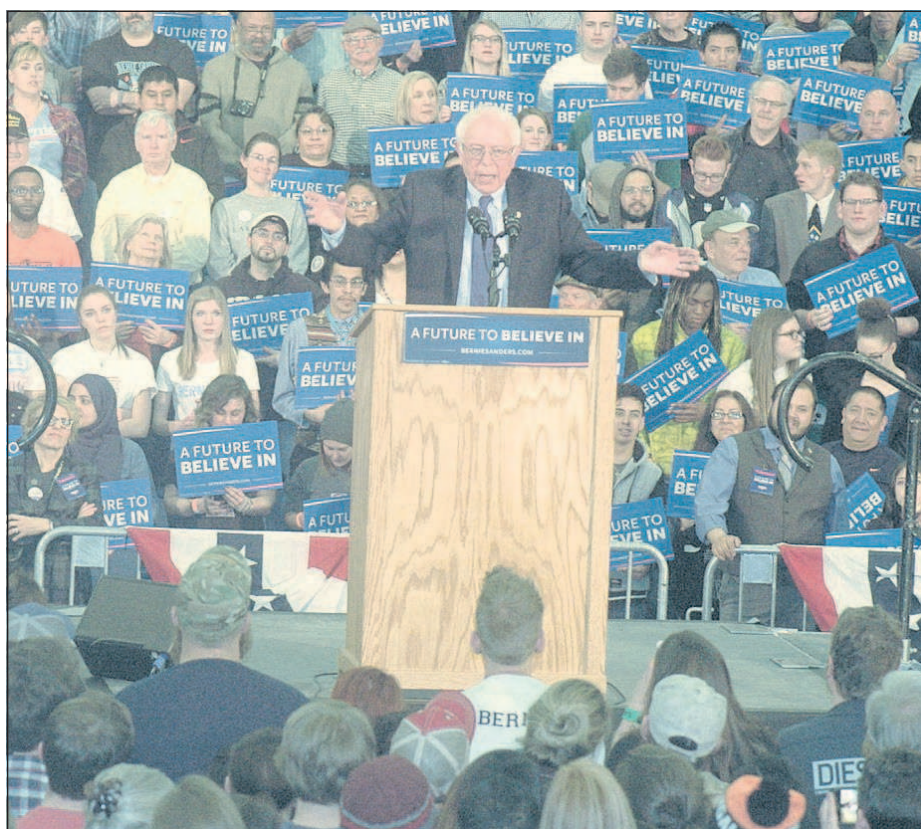
In a hoarse voice, he ticked off a list of his issues: Campaign finance, deteriorating infrastructure, global warming, health care, crime, education, clean water, Wall Street recklessness and other topics.

One notable exception was agriculture. In the middle of Idaho farm country — and near the epicenter of the state's potato industry — farming was not on the candidate's agenda.

Sanders is not alone. The other remaining candidates for chief executive, Democrat Hillary Clinton, a former senator and secretary of state, and Republican businessman Donald Trump have also given agriculture short shrift in their speeches during the long campaign.

Political operatives see 2016 as the continuation of a decades-long slide in which agriculture's influence in presidential politics has been fading.

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John O'Connell/Capital Press

Sen. Bernie Sanders, a Vermont Independent running for president as a Democrat, delivers a March 18 speech in Idaho Falls. Sanders touched on a host of issues during the speech but said nothing about agriculture.



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