

State legislatures face tough issues when they open for business this month

OREGON



CALIFORNIA



IDAHO



WASHINGTON



• Water • Taxes • Regulations

THE BIG 3

Capital Press

Call them the Big 3. Water, taxes and regulations will dominate Western state legislatures as they convene this month and farmers, ranchers and processors will be watching closely to determine what the impact will be. In Oregon, a \$1.8 billion budget gap will force legislators to look for more revenue — taxes and fees — or cut services. The gap, caused by runaway state employee health care and retirement costs, will force lawmakers to make hard choices as the administration of Gov. Kate Brown settles in for the next two years.

In Idaho and Washington, water issues have floated to the top of the legislative agendas. In Idaho, replenishing the Snake River aquifer that feeds farms and ranches in the eastern part of the state and protecting water rights will take center stage.

In Washington, a different water issue has rural landowners wondering whether they can afford to drill wells as legislators seek a way to accommodate a recent court ruling. The ruling requires landowners to prove new wells won't hurt water sources needed to maintain fish populations. At the same time, Gov. Jay Inslee will continue to his push for a controversial carbon tax as a way to bolster the state budget.

Though water is always an issue to California, the most productive agricultural state in the nation, regulations on overtime for farmworkers and a spate of other issues that impact farmers will continue to take center stage in the state Capitol.

Turn to **SESSION**, Page 12

Photo at right: Members of Oregon's House of Representatives during the 2016 legislative session.

Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press

By the numbers

Oregon

Population: 4.1 million*
 Total state funds: \$70.9 billion (2015-17 biennium)
 Governor: Kate Brown (D)
 State Senate: 18 Democrats, 12 Republicans
 State House: 35 Democrats, 25 Republicans
 Value of ag: \$5.4 billion (2014)
 Number of farms: 34,600 (2015)

*Estimate as of July 1, 2016
 Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Agriculture; www.oregon.gov

Capital Press graphic

By the numbers

California

Population: 39.3 million*
 Total state funds: \$170.9 billion (FY2016-17)
 Governor: Edmund G. Brown (D)
 State Senate: 26 Democrats, 14 Republicans
 State Assembly: 55 Democrats, 25 Republicans
 Value of ag: \$53.5 billion (2014)
 Number of farms: 77,500 (2015)

*Estimate as of July 1, 2016
 Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Agriculture; www.ca.gov

Capital Press graphic

By the numbers

Idaho

Population: 1.7 million*
 Total spent: \$7.6 billion (2015)
 Governor: C.L. "Butch" Otter (R)
 State Senate: 28 Republicans, 7 Democrats
 State House: 56 Republicans, 14 Democrats
 Value of ag: \$8.8 billion (2014)
 Number of farms: 24,400 (2015)

*Estimate as of July 1, 2016
 Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Agriculture; www.idaho.gov

Capital Press graphic

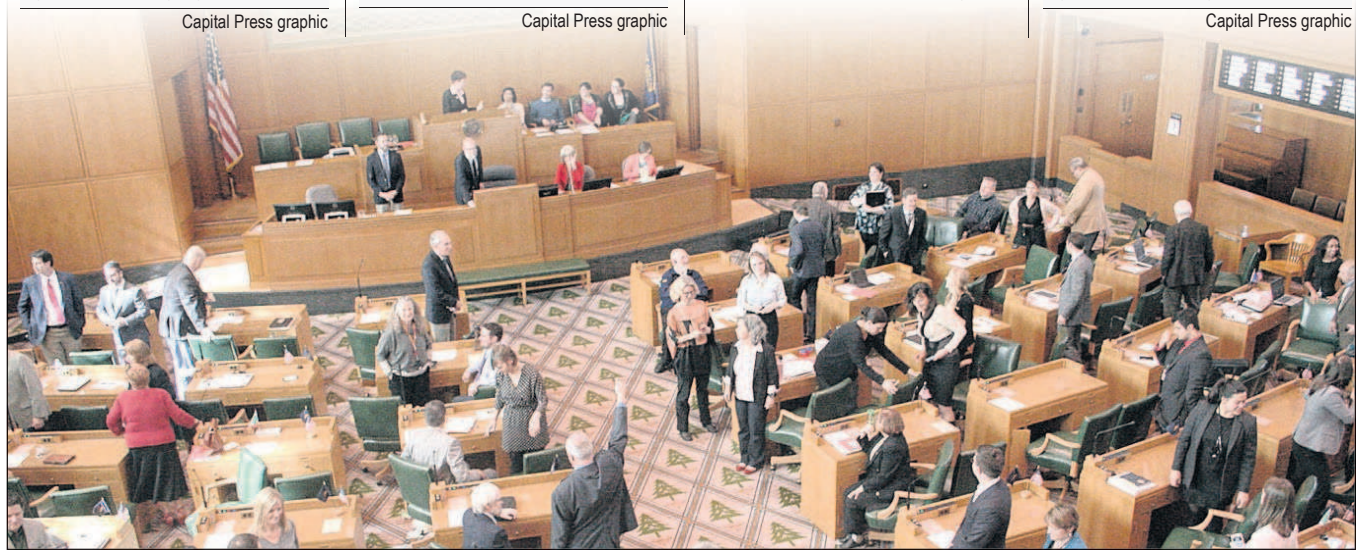
By the numbers

Washington

Population: 7.3 million*
 Total budgeted: \$87.2 billion (2015-17 biennium)
 Governor: Jay Inslee (D)
 State Senate: 25 Republicans, 24 Democrats
 State House: 50 Democrats, 48 Republicans
 Value of ag: \$10.1 billion (2014)
 Number of farms: 36,000 (2015)

*Estimate as of July 1, 2016
 Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Agriculture; access.wa.gov

Capital Press graphic



Analysts: Wheat prices will remain low in 2017

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
 Capital Press

Wheat prices are likely to remain low in 2017 unless severe drought or some other weather catastrophe curtails a significant portion of this year's global crop, market analysts say.

The USDA predicts a to-

tal wheat supply of roughly 992 million metric tons for the 2016-2017 crop year, up from 953 million metric tons last year. That includes 252 million tons of carryover.

"There's going to have to be some sort of crop failure in

Turn to **WHEAT**, Page 12



Dan Wheat/Capital Press

Gary Polson combines wheat on hilly terrain of the family farm north of Waterville, Wash., on Aug. 18. Analysts say wheat prices will likely remain depressed in 2017.

Rural-urban divide missing in Idaho, survey finds

By **SEAN ELLIS**
 Capital Press

BOISE — The rural-urban divide that splits many states hasn't reached Idaho yet, a new survey shows.

The University of Idaho survey found that residents of Idaho's two main urban counties see eye-to-eye with their

rural counterparts in Owyhee County on many natural resource issues, such as public lands grazing and logging.

Owyhee County in southwestern Idaho is heavily dependent on agriculture, particularly raising livestock. Some 80 percent of the county's

Turn to **DIVIDE**, Page 12



iPaper

- Download from the Apple App Store
- Register your account online at capitalpress.or.newsmemory.com
- Free to all Capital Press subscribers

n/subscribe and sign up today!



7 29467 70125 0