

# Survey finds honeybee losses improve from horrible to bad

By **SETH BORENSTEIN**  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — There's a glimmer of hope for America's ailing honeybees as winter losses were the lowest in more than a decade, according to a U.S. survey of beekeepers released on May 25.

Beekeepers lost 21 percent of their colonies over last winter, the annual Bee Informed Partnership sur-

vey found. That's the lowest winter loss level since the survey started in 2006 and an improvement from nearly 27 percent the winter before.

The U.S. government has set a goal of keeping losses under 15 percent in the winter.

"It's good news in that the numbers are down, but it's certainly not a good picture," said survey director Dennis

vanEngelsdorp. "It's gone from horrible to bad."

Reduction in varroa mites, a lethal parasite, is likely the main cause of the improvement, said vanEngelsdorp, a University of Maryland entomologist. He credited the reduction in the parasite to a new product to fight the mite and better weather for pesticide use.

The 10-year average for winter losses is 28.4 percent.

"We would of course all love it if the trend continues, but there are so many factors playing a role in colony health," said bee expert Elina Lastro Nino at the University of California-Davis, who wasn't part of the survey. "I am glad to see this, but wouldn't celebrate too much yet."

For more than a decade, bees and other pollinators have been rapidly declining

with scientists blaming a mix of parasites, disease, pesticides and poor nutrition.

While usually hive losses are worst in the winter, they occur year round. The survey found yearly losses also down, but not quite to record levels. About one-third of the honeybee colonies that were around in April 2016 were dead a year later, the survey found. That's better than the year before when the annual

loss rate was more than 40 percent.

The survey, originally started by the U.S. government and now run by a non-profit, is based on information from nearly 5,000 beekeepers who manage more than 360,000 colonies. University of Montana's Jerry Bromenshenk said the study gives too much weight to backyard beekeepers rather than commercial beekeepers.

# Field trip mixes fun with facts for first-graders

By **CAROL RYAN DUMAS**  
Capital Press

KIMBERLY, Idaho — About 170 first-graders from Kimberly Elementary School had a ton of fun and learned a little about agriculture at their end-of-the-year field trip to a farm equipment dealer on May 26.

It's the second year Agri-Service has hosted the event, and it's a lot of fun, said Jeri Ahrens, the company's business development manager.

"It's my favorite day of the year," she said.

Starting one interactive session with the youngsters on cows and dairy products, Ahrens asked the children if any of them have cows. One energetic youngster threw up his hand, wiggled in his seat and shouted "We used to, but we ate 'em!"

Wiggling, jumping, smiling and laughing were the order of the day — despite the chilly, overcast weather.

Idaho Farm Bureau sent over its Moving Agriculture to the Classroom educational trailer, along with Maggie the cow, who read the "Big Book of Dairy" and led the dancing



Carol Ryan Dumas/Capital Press

First-graders from Kimberly Elementary School wait eagerly for their hay ride to begin.

youngsters in shaking small containers of cream to make butter.

Ag in the Classroom also pitched in with fun and educational materials for the students' goodie bags.

But climbing in and out of big farm equipment and being taken for hayrides were the stars of the jam-packed morning that kept kids hopping from one activity to the next.

Sitting in the cab of a big tractor — where Agri-Service Safety Coordinator Cody Schnitzius was sharing equipment-safety tips — brought roller-coaster-sized smiles. And the children could hardly sit still waiting for the hay ride to get rolling.

For some of the students, it was their first time around a tractor and first hayride, and many think only milk comes from cows, Ahrens said.

"Agriculture is an amazing industry and one of Idaho's biggest. We literally can't live without it. So our goal today is to promote excitement and awareness around agriculture and show the kids that ag is really cool," she said.

Agri-Service's mission statement is "Together we drive agriculture forward," and "together" not only encompasses the Agri-Service



Carol Ryan Dumas/Capital Press

First-graders from Kimberly Elementary School participate in an agricultural knowledge session with Jeri Ahrens, Agri-Service business development manager, during their field trip on May 26.

team, how it works and supports its customers, but also how the team promotes ag in schools, FFA, 4-H, ag-related groups, tech programs and local communities, she said.

"We love opening our facility up to the kids. They're our future and if we continue to build excitement around agriculture, together we will drive agriculture forward," she said.

Weather for the event could have been a little better, but with all the butter-making dancing and shaking and

climbing up and down on the equipment, everyone stayed warm, she said.

"The best part of the day wasn't just watching everyone laugh and have fun together but also having parents and teachers come up to me and say, 'Wow. ... I never knew that!' when sharing some fun ag facts," she said.

"All of us at Agri-Service had as much fun if not more than the kids. Today was a great day to be in agriculture," she said.

# Cattle grazing plan for Idaho monument draws criticism

By **KEITH RIDLER**  
Associated Press

BOISE — Federal officials on May 26 released a cattle grazing plan for central Idaho's Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve that immediately came under fire from an environmental group.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management's Final Environmental Impact Statement allows cattle grazing on nearly all of the roughly 275,000 acres it administers in the monument.

The document stems from a federal lawsuit filed by the Western Watersheds Project citing concerns about sage grouse and a subsequent court ruling requiring the federal agency to come up with a new plan.

Lisa Cresswell, the planning and environmental coordinator for the Twin Falls District of the BLM, said the document combined with the BLM's 2015 Greater Sage Grouse Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment protects sage grouse habitat while allowing grazing in Craters of the Moon.

"We were mostly trying to direct livestock grazing toward (seeded areas) and away from native sagebrush," she said.

Craters of the Moon con-



Tetona Dunlap/The Times-News via AP

In this 2012 file photo, people hike the North Crater Flow Trail at Craters of the Moon National Monument. Federal officials have released a cattle grazing plan for the central Idaho national monument and preserve that immediately came under fire from an environmental group. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management's Final Environmental Impact Statement released May 26 allows cattle grazing on nearly all of the roughly 275,000 acres it administers in the monument.

tains ancient lava flows of rough and jagged rocks, but some areas not covered by the flows are suitable for cattle grazing.

The plan reduces by 300 acres the amount of cattle grazing area compared with the previous plan, and it reduces the number of cattle by a small amount.

That's not enough of a change, said Greta Anderson, deputy director for Western

Watersheds Project. "Our concerns that the BLM's livestock plans will continue to contribute to sage grouse decline within this National Monument are unresolved," she said in an email to The Associated Press.

Anderson also said that the sage grouse Resource Management Plan Amendments that the BLM cites as providing sage grouse protections in the Environmental Impact Statement are themselves being

challenged in court in a case that hasn't been resolved.

Anderson said BLM's plan will lead to declines of sage grouse and their possible elimination from Craters of the Moon.

Sage grouse are ground-dwelling, chicken-sized birds found in 11 Western states, where as few as 200,000 remain, down from a peak population of about 16 million. The males are known for their strutting courtship ritual on breeding grounds called leks, and they produce a bubble-type sound from a pair of inflated air sacks on their necks.

BLM's publication of the document opens a 30-day protest period available to those who previously took part in the process.

Meanwhile, the Trump administration earlier this month listed all 738,000 acres of federal lands in the monument dating from 1924 as up for possible revocation. Twenty-six other U.S. monuments on the

list only go back to lands designated since 1996 in accordance with an executive order signed by Trump.

The U.S. Department of the Interior in an email to the AP on May 26 said it was checking on the apparent discrepancy but didn't have an immediate response.

John Freemuth, a Boise State University environmental policy professor and public lands expert, said the Interior Department appeared to make a mistake by including the entire monument and preserve. He also noted that 410,000 acres was designated as a preserve by Congress following efforts by U.S. Rep. Mike Simpson, R-Idaho, in 2002. That moved that land from the BLM to the National Park Service. For it to no longer be a preserve would require another act by Congress, Freemuth said.

"They can't touch the part that Simpson got in in 2002," he said.

About 53,000 acres were

designated a monument before 1996, most of that occurring in 1924.

The remaining federal lands of the monument are the 275,000 acres administered by the BLM and the subject of the Environmental Impact Statement.

Ted Stout, Craters of the Moon spokesman, said monument officials have sought clarification from the Interior Department about whether the entire monument is being reviewed by the Trump administration, but they haven't yet received a response.

Many local communities have pushed to have the initial 53,000 acres designated a national park in the hopes of bringing more tourism dollars to the area.

Earlier this year, the Idaho Senate passed a resolution seeking that result, but it stalled in the House amid objections from agricultural interests.

## USDA recalls beef broth made in Washington

### Product shipped without inspection

By **DON JENKINS**  
Capital Press

A young Bellingham, Wash., company has had to recall about 5,163 pounds of organic beef broth products that were sent to customers without the benefit of federal inspection, the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service announced May 26.

Cauldron Broths, which opened about six months ago, sent the products to customers in Washington, the company's general manager, Steven Corson, said. Most of the product was sent in January and February, and no illnesses have been reported, he said.

"Overall, we have little concern," he said. "But we're following through with the recall protocol."

The USDA confirmed no illnesses have been reported by people who consumed the company's products.

The products were packaged between Dec. 21 and May 22, according to the USDA.

Corson said the USDA inspected part of the production, but not all. At the time, the company believed it was in compliance with inspection requirements, he said.

The company is not appealing the recall, he said. "We do not foresee any other issues," he said.

The following products were subject to the recall:

- 24-ounce pouches containing Vital Choice Grass-Fed Beef Bone Broth with best by dates Jan. 15, 2018; Jan. 18, 2018; and March 28, 2018.

- 24-ounce pouches containing Cauldron Broths Beef Bone Broth with best by

dates Jan. 3, 2018, and Feb. 15, 2018.

- 24-ounce pouches containing Cauldron Broths Organic Cauldron's Cure with best by dates Dec. 21, 2018.

- 1 gallon containers of Cauldron Broths Glace De Viande with best by date Jan. 30, 2018.

- 8-ounce containers of Cauldron Broths Glace De Viande with best by date March 4, 2018.

The products subject to recall bear establishment number EST. 45953 inside the USDA mark of inspection.

The items were shipped to retail locations in Washington and to a distributor who sells to consumers nationwide over the internet.

The USDA urged consumers to not consume the products. The products should be thrown away or returned to the place of purchase, according to USDA.



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