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Financial collapse

Producers owed millions after Farmers Grain files Chapter 7 bankruptcy

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

NYSSA, Ore. — The collapse of the Farmers Grain brokerage was as sudden as it was shocking to many farmers in Eastern Oregon and southwestern Idaho who sold their corn and wheat to the company. The business, which bought, processed and sold grain, declared Chapter 11 bankruptcy on April 18 and had sought to reorganize and remain in business.

But in August it was forced into Chapter 7 bankruptcy, meaning its assets will be sold in an attempt to pay back creditors, which include dozens of farms in the area.

According to court documents, Farmers

Grain, which opened in January 2013 and is headquartered in Nyssa, Ore., has \$14 million in assets but as much as \$23.8 million in liabilities.

That means some farmers and other ag-related businesses won't be paid the full amount they are owed by Farmers Grain, which had gross revenues of \$31.2 million in 2016 and \$30.6 million in 2015.

The company's financial struggles came as startling news to many of its creditors, including Payette, Idaho, farmer Bruce Cruickshank, who found out about them only after

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Photos by Sean Ellis/Capital Press

Corn is harvested for grain Sept. 28 in a field near Nyssa, Ore. The financial collapse of Farmers Grain, a Nyssa grain brokerage, means that much of the tens of thousands of acres of corn the company contracted with growers in the region for this year doesn't have a home.

ABOVE: Payette, Idaho, farmer Bruce Cruickshank stands in front of bins owned by Farmers Grain, a Nyssa, Ore., grain brokerage that recently declared bankruptcy, in this Sept. 21 photo. Cruickshank and dozens of other farmers and ag-related businesses in southwestern Idaho and Eastern Oregon are owed a combined millions of dollars by the company.

Upcoming canola study frames negotiations on crop's future

Oregon State University study examines impacts of crop in Willamette Valley

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

A highly anticipated study on the impacts of canola production in Oregon's Willamette Valley will soon be released after three years of research.

The report from Oregon State University is expected to frame negotiations over canola's future in the valley,

where most cultivation of the crop is banned until 2019.

Controversy over canola in the region erupted in 2013, when the Oregon Department of Agriculture broke with longstanding precedent and decided to allow 2,500 acres of the crop to be grown along the valley's edges.

Specialty seed producers opposed the rule change, fearing that canola will

disrupt production of related brassica crops grown for seed.

Farmers who want to grow canola, on the other hand, see it as a valuable rotation crop that can be sold on the commodity market — offering flexibility compared to most seed crops, which are grown under contract.

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Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press

Canola is harvested in Oregon's Willamette Valley in this Capital Press file photo. An upcoming report on canola production in the region is expected to frame negotiations over the crop's future and ability to coexist with related brassica species.

INSIDE



Winter Service & Supplies special section

Uneven impacts seen in Oregon spotted frog settlement

Habitat improvement in some areas causes degradation in others

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

A legal settlement intended to upgrade conditions for the Oregon spot-

ted frog is having uneven impacts on the threatened species' habitat, according to federal biologists.

The agreement was struck last year to resolve a lawsuit between environmental groups, irrigation districts and the federal government over the operation of several dams in the region.

While conditions for the spotted frog improved in portions of the ba-

sin during certain seasons, they were degraded in other locations and times under the deal, according to a recent "biological opinion" from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"We call this the push-down, pop-up system," said Bridget Moran, field supervisor of the agency's office in Bend, Ore.

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