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HARVEST



Potato harvest is a unifying social and economic force in Eastern Idaho

OF GOODWILL

By JOHN O'CONNELL
Capital Press

AERICAN FALLS, Idaho — Lee Kress spends nearly every morning of potato harvest inside a makeshift food truck, catering to all of the employees of his family's farm. Kress, 77, has made a point of "staying out of the way" since turning the farm over to his sons, Thomas and Jason. But during a decade of "retirement," he's continued working tirelessly during harvest, and his efforts have been appreciated more than ever.

Together, Kress and his wife, Judy, prepare daily feasts in their "cook shack" — a trailer converted into a kitchen with a grill, roaster, microwave, refrigerators and a turkey fryer. For each meal, they fill more than 30 to-go boxes with heaping portions of spaghetti, sausage-and-spinach pasta, burgers and other house specialties, which potato truck drivers deliver to workers in the fields.

Kress has come to believe that potato harvest is a time to focus on good deeds and service — a rare event that brings out the best in people and unites many communities in Eastern Idaho. His service to the workers is but one of many examples of cooperation and good community fellowship during the "harvest window" from Sept. 9 through mid-October.

Some examples:

A grower in Idaho Falls digs 6 acres of spuds every year so community members can harvest them and stock their pantries for free.

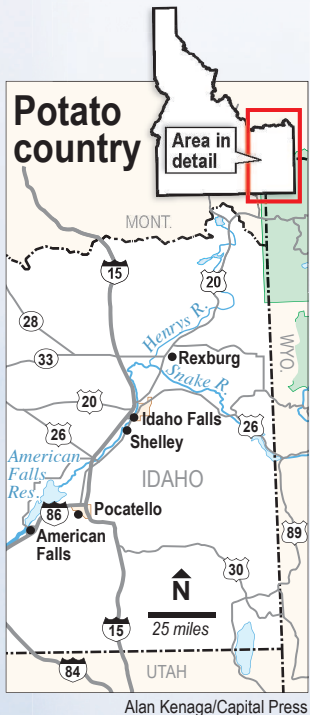
Teachers at a Pocatello charter school never have

trouble finding a farmer to let their students glean spuds to donate to the local food bank.

Each year, Shelley High School crowns a young woman as Miss Russet to serve the community and celebrate a crop that's central to the local economy.

Many of the area's small-scale potato farmers insist they'd be short harvest labor if not for area schools scheduling a

Turn to **HARVEST**, Page 12



Alan Kenaga/Capital Press



John O'Connell/Capital Press

Judy and Lee Kress, of American Falls, Idaho, prepare meals for the farmworkers in their own food truck. They provide hot meals for the employees every day of potato harvest.

TOP IMAGE: Floats celebrating potatoes are featured during the Idaho Spud Day Parade in Shelley.



"It's in our DNA to harvest. I think that's why it's enjoyed."

— Grower, Boyd Foster

NIFA director: Focus research on grower profitability

Ramaswamy praises Perdue, aims to reduce food waste

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

MOSCOW, Idaho — Sonny Ramaswamy says agricultural research programs are thriving under the Trump

administration.

Ramaswamy, director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture and former dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences at Oregon State University, particularly praised U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue for his commitment to agriculture when he spoke at the University of Idaho.

"There is no chaos — there's a pretty good sense of where this is all going, there's a pretty good sense of the need for resources," Ramaswamy said. "My boss, Secretary Perdue, is very single-mindedly focused on those producers. ... Secretary

Turn to **NIFA**, Page 12



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Sonny Ramaswamy, director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, talks about innovation in food systems during his presentation Oct. 6 at the University of Idaho in Moscow.

ODFW expand a kill permit against Harl Butte Pack

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

A select group of Wallowa County ranchers have permission until Oct. 31 to kill four more wolves from the Harl Butte Pack that has repeatedly attacked livestock in the area.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife on Oct. 6 announced it had authorized "lethal take" of wolves by either ODFW staff or by livestock producers affiliated with a grazing association. Ranchers are permitted to shoot wolves on public or private land on which their livestock are currently grazing, and there are no restrictions on the age of animals to be killed. They don't have to be caught in the act of attacking livestock.

Todd Nash, a Wallowa County rancher who lost a calf to the Harl Butte Pack this summer and who is wolf committee chair for the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, said no wolves had been shot as of Monday morning.

Oregon Wild, the Portland-based group deeply involved in wolf management and other issues, condemned what it called

ODFW's "wolf killing campaign."

The group said the area used by the Harl Butte Pack and other "wolf families" is among the wildest landscapes remaining in Oregon.

"If wolves are being killed for eating unattended livestock put right in front of them in a place like this, it's fair to ask if there is anywhere wolves will be allowed to thrive in our state?" the group said in a prepared statement attributed to conservation director Steve Pedery.

ODFW killed four pack members in August after confirming 10 livestock attacks

Turn to **WOLVES**, Page 12





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