

Wheat acreage leads the field in Pacific Northwest

Region's top crop with 4.1 million acres

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

BOISE — When it comes to farming, Idaho is famous for potatoes, Washington for apples and Oregon for its greenhouse and nursery crops. But when you combine the three states, the Pacific Northwest is, or at least should be, more famous for wheat, said Idaho Wheat Commission Executive Director Blaine Jacobson.



Sean Ellis/Capital Press File

Wheat is harvested in a field near Nampa, Idaho, on Aug. 3. Wheat is by far the No. 1 crop in terms of acreage when Oregon, Idaho and Washington are combined as a region.

With the help of USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service employees, Jacobson found that in terms of acreage, wheat is by far the top crop in the PNW.

NASS data shows that on an acreage basis, wheat was tops in the three-state region in 2016 with 4.1 million acres of winter and spring wheat. Hay was second with 3.3 million acres, followed by barley, grass seed, corn and potatoes.

"It's a wheat region," said Jacobson. "In terms of acreage, wheat is tops in the Pacific Northwest."

According to NASS, Washington growers harvested 2.2 million acres of wheat in 2016, Idaho growers harvested 1.1 million acres and Oregon growers harvested 797,000 acres.

Jacobson also compiled a list of the infrastructure that supports the region's wheat industry.

That includes eight wheat breeding programs, seven wheat breeders and two wheat geneticists and 80 people who work full-time on those wheat breeding teams.

It also includes five wheat quality labs, 35,000 square feet of greenhouse space, 50 wheat nurseries and variety trial locations, and 100,000 test plots.

The wheat industry is supported by a large amount of other resources, Jacobson said, including the PNW Wheat Quality Council, the

National Small Grains Collection, USDA's Agricultural Research Service Wheat Genomics Program and the Wheat Marketing Center.

Jacobson said he has been sharing that information with trading partners to show them how committed the region is to wheat.

"The big story to our overseas customers is that wheat is such a dedicated crop in the Pacific Northwest," he said. "It helps them appreciate the importance of wheat here in the PNW."

Growers and wheat industry leaders contacted by Capital Press said the acreage numbers showing wheat

is the region's top crop are encouraging but they were more impressed with the infrastructure that supports the industry.

All of those resources are in place to ensure the region produces high-quality wheat, which is what enables the region to compete on a global scale, said Idaho wheat farmer Jerry Brown, a member of the IWC's board of directors. "The PNW is extremely committed to quality wheat because that's what our customers are demanding," he said. "The only reason we are competitive in the world is because we sell quality wheat."

Steven Wirsching, director of the U.S. Wheat Associates West Coast office in Portland, said growers invest a lot of money in wheat breeding programs as well as other efforts to ensure high quality. When it comes to wheat, "quality is not an accident, nor is it the result of Mother Nature," he said. "It's the result of the large investment of money by growers over a number of years in land grant universities' breeding programs."

"Quality is the No. 1 priority of all three commissions," said Washington Grain Commission member and farmer Dana Herron. "There are several systems in place to ensure that happens."

Investment firm expands with eye for mechanization

Agriculture Capital buys farms, facilities in Oregon, California

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

Farmworker shortages are a mounting concern for Western growers, but Agriculture Capital has resigned itself to insufficient labor.

The number of skilled farmworkers is likely to continue dwindling, which is why the investment firm is taking a comprehensive approach to reduce its dependence on them.

"We recognize we're not going to have the harvest labor in the future and we need to adapt," said Tom Avinelis, the firm's principal.

The first step involves planting firm blueberries that ripen uniformly and easily detach from their stem, decreasing damage from machine-harvesting.

Those plants are then carefully pruned to encourage strong canes and upright growth, which also eases mechanical harvesting.

Harvesting machines —



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press

Tom Avinelis, left, principal of Agriculture Capital, examines advanced fruit-sorting machinery with Jacob Peters, operations manager of HBF Services. Agriculture Capital owns a new blueberry packing plant near Silverton, Ore., that HBF Services is operating under contract.

which commonly shake bushes to knock off blueberries — are being perfected to avoid losing and injuring the fruit.

Manufacturers are also experimenting with gentler harvesting techniques, such as dislodging the berries with blasts of air.

Finally, computerized sorting machines equipped with advanced infrared optics detect bruised or defective fruit, diverting it for processing while the highest-quality blueberries are packed for the fresh market.

"It's all about systems man-

agement to baby that fruit any way we can," said Avinelis.

Since 2014, the investment firm has bought roughly 4,000 acres of farmland in Oregon and 5,000 acres in California that it's dedicating to high-value crops.

Most recently, the firm converted a Christmas tree seedling facility near Silverton, Ore., into a fresh blueberry packing plant, with plans to double the building's footprint by next spring.

Apart from decreasing its reliance on labor, Agriculture Capital's mechanically ori-

ented approach to blueberry farming addresses another problem: Competition from foreign producers who pay lower wages.

Harvesting blueberries by hand for the fresh market can cost from 65 cents to \$1.20 per pound, depending on the season, Avinelis said. To compare, machine-harvesting blueberries delicately enough for this higher-value market costs from 17 cents to 30 cents per pound.

Blueberries grown on Agriculture Capital's farmland will supply roughly half the capacity of its Silver Mountain Packing Co., so the company expects to help other growers adopt its cultivation practices.

"We see this as investing in the entire blueberry industry," Avinelis said.

Of the investment firm's farmland in Oregon, about 1,400 acres are planted to blueberries and the remainder are devoted to hazelnuts.

"We feel both these industries have tremendous potential," he said.

For now, Agriculture Capital is selling its hazelnuts to other packers. Eventually, it will probably build its own facility in line with the firm's vertically integrated philosophy, Avinelis said.



Sean Ellis/Capital Press File

Idaho FFA members from around the state meet in Boise in January 2016. An initiative approved in 2014 has resulted in a significant increase in FFA enrollment, as well as a boost in the number of FFA chapters in the state and agricultural education teachers.

2014 Idaho initiative has benefited ag education and FFA programs

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

BOISE — An initiative designed to shore up the state's ag education programs has provided significant benefits since it was approved during the 2014 Idaho Legislature, supporters say.

The Idaho Ag Education Initiative garnered more than \$1 million in additional ongoing state funding for agriculture education programs.

It was backed by the Idaho FFA Association, Idaho FFA Alumni Association and Idaho FFA Foundation and was supported by the state's farming industry.

The Legislature approved an annual \$25,000 start-up grant for ag education programs and created common Idaho quality standards for all ag education programs and \$10,000 incentive grants based on those standards.

Lawmakers increased "added cost" funding — money provided by the state for costs associated with certain programs that are above normal classroom costs — for ag education classes from \$10,260 to \$15,000 per full-time instructor.

They also approved funding for a full-time FFA Association executive director. That position had been part-time.

"There has been significant growth in the program since" the initiative passed, said Steve Wilder, an FFA instructor at Meridian High School. "The number of FFA members and teachers has gone up, there has been great reward from those grants and the full-time FFA coordinator has had some definite benefits."

According to Idaho FFA Executive Director Clara-Leigh Evans, there were 3,965 FFA members and 81 chapters in the state in 2014 and there are now 4,708 members and 95 chapters.

During 2014, there were 120 agricultural and natural resource teachers in Idaho and there are 148 now.

There were 45 applications this year for the \$10,000 incentive grants and 30 were awarded, and four new programs were started this year, said Marc Bietia, co-chair of the Idaho FFA board of directors and an ag education teacher at American Falls High School.

"The initiative has been successful. FFA membership has increased and so has overall enrollment in ag education classes," he said.

But Bietia said the real success of the initiative, in his opinion, is increased communication with the local community and agricultural industry that has resulted from the review process that is part of the incentive program.

In his American Falls ag education program, up to 50 local businesses have input into what students are taught and the ag industry directly influences the curriculum.

"I think that the most valuable part of the whole process is the line of communication developed between the program, our administration and our stakeholders," he said. "That was the intent of the (incentive program) all along."

The incentive grants have helped increase the quality of ag education programs, said Shawn Dygert, who teaches ag education classes at Kuna High School.

"We're rewarding programs for pushing toward excellence," he said.

His program is using an incentive grant to help fund a major capital improvement on its greenhouse.

"It's really helping," he said of the initiative. "We're seeing program improvement and enrollment increasing."

Bietia said initiative supporters will meet with other stakeholders to discuss the possibility of seeking additional ag education funding.

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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON FOR THE COUNTY OF MARION
Probate Department
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF
Harold L. Hayes, Deceased
No. 17PB08210
NOTICE TO INTERESTED PERSONS
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned has been appointed Personal Representative of the above estate. All persons having claims against the estate are required to present them to the undersigned Personal Representative in care of the undersigned attorney at: 319 Sixth Street SW, Albany, OR 97321 within four months after the date of the first publication of this notice, as stated below, or such claims may be barred.
All persons whose rights may be affected by the proceedings in this estate may obtain additional information from the records of the Court, the Personal Representative, or the attorney for the Personal Representative.
DATED and first published November 24, 2017.
Personal Representative:
DORIS M. Hayes
1064 Camelot Dr. S. Salem, OR 97306
Attorney:
DAVID B. BECKHAM
319 Sixth Avenue SW Albany, OR 97321

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PUBLIC LIEN SALE U-STORE SELF STORAGE Salem, Oregon
Sat, December 9, 2017 10AM
1501 Hawthorne Ave NE
Keyla Almestica Looney, 2C54; Tina Barlow, 1A04; Gordon R Bean, 2A65; Debra L Bennett, 2B46; Darrin Cragle, 1G17; Tammy Delfino, 1E43; Carmen Rocio Duran Ramirez, RJ14; Linches Esetok, RE14; Amanda Frechin, 2C65; Michell Graves, 1C41; SheaAnn Greaves, 2A50; Amber Jones, 1B15; Jonathon Jones, 2B56; Kevin M Lent, Y1-1; Andrew McMillan, 2E06; Sam Means, 2B58; Lynn Medina, 1F06; Joselyn Oropeza, 2C37; Christy Packer, 1C24; Dustin Patee, 1G16; Haley Potter, RE19; Kimberly Reitzer, 2C52; Erica Salazar, 2C57; Silas Scott, Y1-8; Shallone Sheets, 2G03; Jared Sheridan, 1F42; Brian Siegmund, 2A71, 2A73; Duane W Stateler, 1F34; Keith Weddle Jr, 1F47; Vincent K Wilson, 2D51; Kimberly Wollin, 2B25; Luis Zavala Santana, 2C39

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PURSUANT TO ORS CHAPTER 98
Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 12/11/2017. The sale will be held at 10:00am by
LITTLE J HOOK INC.
15114 MANNING RD, WOODBURN, OR 2016 FORD FOCUS
VIN = 1FADP3K28GL247245
Amount due on lien \$3,320.00
Reputed owner(s)
UTL OR WA CA

Livestock nutrition company wins \$3.85 million from ex-employee

"These actions have deprived the plaintiffs of evidence central to their case and undermined the court's ability to enter a judgment based on the evidence."

Michael McShane, U.S. District Judge

who was found liable for stealing trade secrets. Omnigen Research, which produces feed additives that counteract hemorrhagic bowel syndrome in cattle, was founded by Neil Forsberg, a former Oregon State University professor.

Roughly 20 percent of the U.S. dairy herd is treated with these products, according to Phibro, an animal health company that bought Omnigen for \$23 million in 2012.

Last year, Omnigen filed a lawsuit accusing a former employee, Yongqiang Wang, of using its technology to obtain a patent in China and start a competing livestock nutrition business in that country.

Wang denied relying on trade secrets obtained from Omnigen during his eight years of employment at the company, which ended in 2013, and countered that he was falsely promised a portion of the firm's profits.

In May, U.S. District Judge Michael McShane ruled against Wang because he'd destroyed evidence in the case, including computer files and emails.

"These actions have deprived the plaintiffs of evidence central to their case and undermined the court's ability to enter a judgment based on the evidence,"

used a portion of the firm's profits. In May, U.S. District Judge Michael McShane ruled against Wang because he'd destroyed evidence in the case, including computer files and emails. "These actions have deprived the plaintiffs of evidence central to their case and undermined the court's ability to enter a judgment based on the evidence,"

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PUBLIC LIEN SALE U-STORE SELF STORAGE Albany, Oregon
Sat, December 9, 2017 1PM
1668 Industrial Way SW
Troy Babbit, J017; Teri Barnett, H063; Chelsey LaMora, H021; Richard Miano, H006; Minnie Reimer, E017