

Subscribe to our weekly Idaho email newsletter at CapitalPress.com/newsletters

Idaho

Foreign trade mission fruitful for Idaho commodities

By JOHN O'CONNELL
Capital Press

AMERICAN FALLS, Idaho — The staff at Mountain States Oilseeds has been busy working on bids to supply safflower and flax to Taiwan since two company representatives returned from a state-sponsored trade mission on Nov. 18.

The Idaho governor's office, the Idaho State Department of Agriculture and the Idaho Department of Commerce have for decades collaborated on foreign trade missions to boost demand for Idaho goods.

ISDA's market development coordinator, Laura Johnson, said several Idaho agricultural businesses returned from a recent eight-day mission to Taiwan and Vietnam with promising new leads for marketing their goods.

"Every trade mission we've been on, we come back and make bids and get addi-



Bill Meadows, owner of Mountain States Oilseeds in American Falls, Idaho. "Every trade mission we've been on, we come back and make bids and get additional business," he says.

John O'Connell/Capital Press File

tional business," said Bill Meadows, owner of Mountain States Oilseeds. "You get to meet companies that there would be no way you could meet on your own."

Meadows believes the trade mission could result in 50,000 to 75,000 bushels of additional safflower sales to Taiwan. Meadows estimates he would need to contract with

Eastern Idaho farmers for an additional 2,500 acres of safflower to fill a 50,000-bushel order.

"My feeling right now is that if our bids (in Taiwan)

develop, we will be able to go out and contract the (safflower) acres people want to grow," Meadows said, explaining the domestic market for safflower birdseed has been slowing down. "If they don't, we may need to cut back."

Meadows said a Taiwanese company has expressed interest in buying multi-colored safflower for the birdseed market. Another customer in Taiwan wanted safflower for crushing into cooking oil, and one major buyer was interested in acquiring finished oil, which would represent a new market for Mountain States Oilseeds. Meadows said he would likely work with mills in California or Montana to produce the oil from his safflower, but demand for finished oil could eventually justify opening a small, local crushing facility.

Meadows said he's also submitting bids to supply up to 4 million pounds of flax to a company that uses it for

animal feed and markets the resulting animal products at a premium for the high levels of heart-healthy Omega 3 fatty acids they derive from the oilseed.

Johnson said the mission also bore fruit for other participants. A Vietnamese company that's rapidly growing in the dairy sector, called Vinamilk, announced plans to import 20,000 head of dairy heifers during the next five years and has been "impressed with Idaho," Johnson said.

Johnson said Taiwan flour millers expressed interest in buying more wheat varieties in the future that lend themselves well to boiling and steaming.

Furthermore, she said Mayfull Foods, a food importer, hosted a week-long Idaho foods promotion at the Grand Mayfull Hotel in Taiwan, where customers lined up to try Idaho beef served by ISDA Director Celia Gould, as well as Idaho potatoes, onions and tortillas.

High school senior proposes bill to require ag education classes

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

NAMPA, Idaho — A high school senior will propose a bill during the 2018 Idaho legislative session requiring high school students to complete at least two agriculture education classes.

If it passes, that means every student in the state would have to take at least two semesters of classes that teach them about agriculture.

In other words, they would emerge from those classes with at least a basic understanding of the farming and ranching industry and where their food comes from, said Anna Peterson, 17, an FFA member at Skyview High School in Nampa who is proposing the legislation.

Peterson's proposal was her senior project but she told Idaho FFA Alumni Association members last week during their regular meeting that she is in it for the long haul, even if it takes more than one try to get the bill passed.

"I want to see this effort all the way through," Peterson told Capital Press. "I think it's important and I'm passionate about it. I just want to make sure students know where their food is coming from."

Peterson said she wants the classes to cover animal and plant science as well as agriculture's importance to Idaho's economy and teach students about some of the



Anna Peterson

many career opportunities available in the industry.

Peterson, who will major in ag economics and ag education at the University of Idaho, was born in southwestern Idaho and was not raised on a farm.

However, she fell in love with agriculture after working on a dairy as a milker and learning more about the farming industry.

"I was born with a green heart," said Peterson, who has sent emails to all 105 of the state's legislators informing them of her plan.

Idaho FFA Alumni Association Past President Sid Freeman, a farmer, said the group was impressed with Peterson's proposal and is discussing helping to cover some of the expenses that will be involved with her effort.

"Agriculture education is not just for farm kids; it is for the majority of other kids who are not from the farm," he said. "It may even draw their attention to career opportunities in agriculture as well."

Sen. Jim Rice, R-Caldwell, chairman of the Senate Agricultural Affairs Committee, said it might be a tough sell to require all students to have two ag credits to graduate but he likes the thinking behind Peterson's proposal.

SW Idaho has shortage of housing for H-2A workers

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

CALDWELL, Idaho — Some housing authorities in southwestern Idaho are struggling to keep up with a rising demand for affordable housing that is the result of a large increase in farm businesses seeking temporary foreign guestworkers under the H-2A visa program.

Agricultural producers who use the program are required to provide housing for the workers.

The Caldwell Housing Authority, which operates the Farmway Village public housing complex for domestic farmworkers and low-income individuals, received its first request to house H-2A workers three years ago.

Two years ago, the village housed 25 H-2A workers in eight units. The following year, that total grew to 80 people in 19 units. Next year, Farmway Village will house 214 H-2A workers in 35 units.

"We are scrambling to get all the units together for this next year," said CHA Executive Director Mike Dittenber.

Local farmer Sid Freeman, a member of the CHA board of directors, warned the housing authority three years ago that the need for H-2A hous-



Sean Ellis/Capital Press

Workers sort peaches at a fruit processing facility in southwestern Idaho Sept. 6. An increase in the number of agricultural businesses using the H-2A guestworker program has housing authorities in southwestern Idaho scrambling to find enough housing for those workers.

ing would soon become a tidal wave.

"I think we are at the (beginning) of that tidal wave," Dittenber said.

Freeman said CHA has been contacted by farm businesses that have asked what it would take to rent every room in the Farmway Village complex, which has 225 units.

"Right now, we're just managing the situation," he said. "We're trying to raise awareness among our surrounding communities of

what the situation is because it's going to be explosive."

Meanwhile, CHA is considering building more housing units to help deal with the expected influx of H-2A workers, and it hired Jennifer Uranga, who owns a consulting business that specializes in H-2A issues, earlier this year to keep it apprised of the H-2A housing situation.

"We're trying to stay well abreast of the issue," Dittenber said. "I think there are going to be more and more

H-2A workers in the valley. We want to pride ourselves on our ability to meet the needs of farmers."

Under the H-2A program, foreign guestworkers stay in the United States for up to 10 months and then return home.

But the housing shortage is so critical that many farmers who use H-2A workers are renting units at Farmway Village for the entire year because "they just can't take the risk of not having the housing," Dittenber said.

Thresher upgrades Blackfoot, Idaho Falls seed treatment lines

By JOHN O'CONNELL
Capital Press

BLACKFOOT, Idaho — Thresher Artisan Wheat is upgrading the seed treatment facilities at its Blackfoot and Idaho Falls plants, which should boost their performance and capacity while

enabling farmers to customize their pesticides.

Brett Wilken, Idaho production manager with Thresher, said new seed treatment systems were installed in both plants in 2010. But Wilken said both lines have reached their capacity, and equipment with

better capabilities is now available.

Wilken said Thresher has already installed the seed treatment lines and will finish work on the mixing equipment in late December. Wilken said he discovered the NOVO Seed Care Prescription Management System, manufactured by Agrilead, Inc., of Russell, Kan., a couple of years ago at the Idaho-East Oregon Seed Association's seed show.

The new system should evenly treat more than 99 percent of the seed that passes through it — an improvement of about 5 to 10 percent from the previous system. Wilken said the new systems have the capacity to treat up to 3,000 pounds of seed per minute, enabling Thresher to boost production from a maximum of 1,300 pounds per minute in Blackfoot and 2,000 pounds per minute in Idaho Falls.

Tony Severa, with Syn-genta, said his company is

partnering with Thresher on the upgrades, supplying the chemicals and testing how well the machinery works.

"It ensures a more consistent delivery on seed, and we're testing that to make sure it makes the specs," Severa said.

The previous lines required operators to manually mix water with the appropriate quantities of chemicals. The new system is fully automated, reducing the potential for human error, and its application rates are based on weight rather than seed volume.

"The computer knows how much weight is going through the system and it applies the right amount of chemical," Wilken said.

Wilken believes farmers haven't paid much attention to their seed treatments in the past, reasoning "if it looks pink, it's treated." The new systems will generate reports precisely documenting each treatment for farmers.

THE TILLAGE AND HAY TOOL SPECIALISTS

Harrows

Plows

Mowers

Tedders

KUHN
INVEST IN QUALITY®

KUHN is committed to helping you succeed by building quality machines for seedbed preparation, mowing, conditioning, tedding, raking, and merging.

<p>Pioneer Equipment Palmer, AK</p> <p>Torrence's Farm Implements Brawley, CA Heber, CA Thermal, CA</p> <p>Valley Truck & Tractor Chico, CA Colusa, CA Dixon, CA</p> <p>Fernbridge Tractor Fortuna, CA</p> <p>Gonzales Equipment Gonzales, CA</p>	<p>Quality Machinery Center Hanford, CA Madera, CA Tulare, CA</p> <p>Belkorp Ag Merced, CA Modesto, CA Santa Rosa, CA Stockton, CA</p> <p>Campbell Tractor Fruitland, ID Glenns Ferry, ID Homedale, ID Nampa, ID Wendell, ID</p>	<p>Smith Valley Garage Wellington, NV</p> <p>Robbins Farm Equipment Baker City, OR Burns, OR La Grande, OR</p> <p>Papé Machinery Fall River Mills, CA Aurora, OR Central Point, OR Cornelius, OR Gresham, OR Harrisburg, OR Madras, OR McMinnville, OR</p>	<p>Papé Machinery cont. Merrill, OR Roseburg, OR Salem, OR Tangent, OR</p> <p>Boyd's Implement Tillamook, OR</p> <p>Central Machinery Sales Hermiston, OR Mosco, WA Pasco, WA Sunnyside, WA</p> <p>Farmers Equipment Burlington, WA Lynden, WA</p>	<p>Washington Tractor Chehalis, WA Ellensburg, WA Quincy, WA Sumner, WA Yakima, WA</p> <p>Watkins Tractor & Supply Kelso, WA</p> <p>Okanogan Truck & Trailer Okanogan, WA</p> <p>Adams Tractor Spokane, WA</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Visit your local KUHN Dealer today!</p>
--	---	---	--	--

KuhnNorthAmerica.com

Frost Protection

Authorized Factory Dealer of..
Orchard-Kite® Wind Machines

598 Baseline
Cornelius, OR
Office
503-357-4217
info@hpspipe.com

-- Wind Machines are not only for protecting your crops against frost. They can be critical for assisting in protecting your new plantings. Also additional benefits of, summer cooling and assist in drying.

48-17102