



Capital Press File

A California FFA Foundation fundraiser brought in enough money to purchase nearly 600 blue jackets for members who can't afford them.

California FFA's Giving Tuesday fundraiser nets nearly \$45,000

GALT, Calif. — Donors to the California FFA Foundation's jacket fundraiser stepped up in a big way on Nov. 28, as they teamed with Blue Diamond Growers to raise enough money to purchase nearly 600 blue jackets for members who can't afford their own.

At \$75 for each jacket with a tie or scarf, that's nearly \$45,000.

The organization nearly met its goal of raising

enough for 668 jackets, or two for each of California's 334 FFA chapters, the foundation explained on its website.

That's a big jump from the \$6,500 goal the California FFA set and reached on Giving Tuesday in 2016. A big reason for the increase was Blue Diamond Growers, which matched individuals' donations.

The push started last year as FFA advisers realized

some members didn't have the means to purchase their own trusty blue-and-gold jackets and had to borrow them for competitions and other events.

The FFA held its first jacket fundraiser in conjunction with the Sacramento area's Big Day of Giving in May 2016, during which local residents and businesses donated more than \$22,000 to support FFA and agricultural education.

Giving Tuesday is a United Nations Foundation-sponsored movement to encourage philanthropy at the beginning of the holiday season. Started in 2012, Giving Tuesday always falls on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, on the heels of Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

California has about 88,000 FFA members statewide and is led by more than 760 advisers and agriculture teachers.

Pacific Northwest wheat exports grow as total U.S. wheat exports decline

Region ships 100,000 metric tons each year

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

PORTLAND — Wheat exports from the Pacific Northwest have increased by 100,000 tons per year even as total U.S. wheat exports have declined by 630,000 metric tons.

Shawn Campbell, deputy director of the West Coast office for U.S. Wheat Associates, says that's because the types of wheat grown in the region — soft white wheat and hard red spring wheat — have very little competition on international markets.

Wheat exports from the Pacific Northwest — Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Montana and North Dakota — have continued to grow each year, said Campbell, who is based in Portland. The region caters to markets across Asia, the most densely populated region in the world.

"People's stomachs are only so big, but if you have a whole lot of people, they can buy a whole lot of stuff," Campbell said.

Soft white wheat and hard red spring wheat grown in the Pacific Northwest are at the low and high end of the protein scale. They represent 75 percent of the wheat the region exports, Campbell said.

"If you're trying to sell a product in a very crowded market, differentiation is a huge way to actually sell more," Campbell said. "There's not a lot of competition for soft white wheat in the world market, similar to hard red spring."

Growing those types of wheat is more difficult in other parts of the world, requiring the right climatic conditions or more resources, Campbell said.

"So far most of our competitors seem much more happy just growing yields as much as they can," he said.

Most of the growth in world wheat production has happened in hard red winter wheat, he said.

The U.S. is well-known as a reliable seller, but often has a higher price compared to competing countries. U.S. Wheat works with buyers to show them how a high-quality wheat may have a higher price, but other factors make it a better deal, Campbell said.

Wheat quality in Canada and Australia is fairly comparable. Other countries, such as Russia, are improving their wheat quality, although they are not up to the U.S. level yet, he said.

"One of the things we always have to fight is maintaining quality even though the market pays mostly for yields," he said. "If we don't maintain our quality, it erodes even faster that advantage we have."

Other advantages for U.S. wheat include supply reliability, independent inspection through the USDA's Federal Grain Inspection Service and chemical residue testing. Other countries might not be able to provide information in a manner that's as trusted, Campbell said.

The region's emphasis on quality is another benefit, Campbell said, including dockage discounts, when farmers receive reduced prices for wheat with low falling number test scores.

"The reason those discounts exist is because they incentivize the market to grow a better quality wheat, which makes it more competitive overseas," he said.

Campbell spoke during a Washington Grain Commission export tour and wheat quality workshop Nov. 28-30 from Spokane to Portland.

Idaho farm cash receipts, ag exports projected to be up in 2017

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

BOISE — The condition of Idaho agriculture is improving, with farm exports and farm cash receipts expected to be up this year compared to 2016.

And Idaho agriculture is on a different, better track than U.S. agriculture as a whole when it comes to cash receipts and net farm income.

That was the message University of Idaho Agricultural Economist Garth Taylor delivered Nov. 28 during the Idaho-Eastern Oregon Seed Association's annual meeting.

The value of Idaho foreign farm product exports had declined 20 percent from 2014 to 2016 but they are up 12 percent through the first nine months of 2017, Taylor said.

"We've turned a corner on a lot of ag exports," he said.

UI ag economists forecast that Idaho farmgate receipts, which totaled a revised \$7.2 billion in 2016, will increase 2 to 7 percent this year, after declining each of the past two years.

Based on USDA Economic Research Service data, Taylor said, farm cash receipts in Idaho have outgrown the U.S. as a whole by 40 percent since 1980 when converted to real dollars.

During that same time, net farm income in Idaho has outpaced the U.S. as a whole by 100 percent.

"Idaho is growing far faster than the U.S. overall," he said.

Taylor used the state's potato and dairy sectors to show that growth is based on yield increases rather than price increases.

Potato prices have declined 45 percent since 1980 when adjusted for inflation, while dairy prices have declined by 59 percent, yet both those sectors have seen large increases in total farm cash receipts.

"The growth comes from production, not price," he said. "It's the innovation that you bring to the table that's propelling agriculture."

In terms of farm Gross Domestic Product as a percentage of a state's total GDP, Idaho ranks fourth in the nation, behind South Dakota, Nebraska and Iowa, Taylor said.

While those other three states had negative overall GDP growth during the second quarter of 2017, Idaho GDP increased by 2.7 percent, led by the stability of

the state's agricultural sector, Taylor said.

"It's agriculture that is dragging those states' economies down," he said. "I'm not really worried when Midwest states have heartburn (because) we're on a different track than they are."

Idaho farm GDP has grown 259 percent since 1997, while

total state GDP has grown 172 percent since then and GDP from the state's food manufacturing sector has grown 120 percent.

So, while Idaho's recent string of new food processing facilities may attract the ribbon cutting ceremonies, that sector "has not grown as fast as mom and dad, grandma and

grandpa on a tractor," Taylor said.

But Idaho's farming sector is not necessarily a new job creator because farmers are doing more with less, he said. While total Idaho jobs increased by 28,000 from 1997 to 2016, the state's total farm jobs increased by only 100 during that time.

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