

Promotional campaign focuses on social media and the Millennial generation

#ChristmasTree



Checkoff faces test

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

In a humorous video viewed more than 300,000 times on Facebook, a Christmas tree grower named Mark ridicules his own lack of social media skills.

Bantering with his daughter in a field of growing trees, Mark repeatedly mistakes the names of several popular social media applications: “Face Face” instead of Facebook, “Snaptalk” instead of Snapchat, “Tweezer” instead of Twitter.

The video concludes with a positive message, as Mark tells the viewers, “Forget all that. Get your family together, head out and pick a real Christmas tree!”

The light-hearted video also illustrates a real-life dilemma for the Christmas Tree Promotion Board, which produced the video as part of its new social media-driven promotional campaign, “It’s Christmas. Keep It Real.”

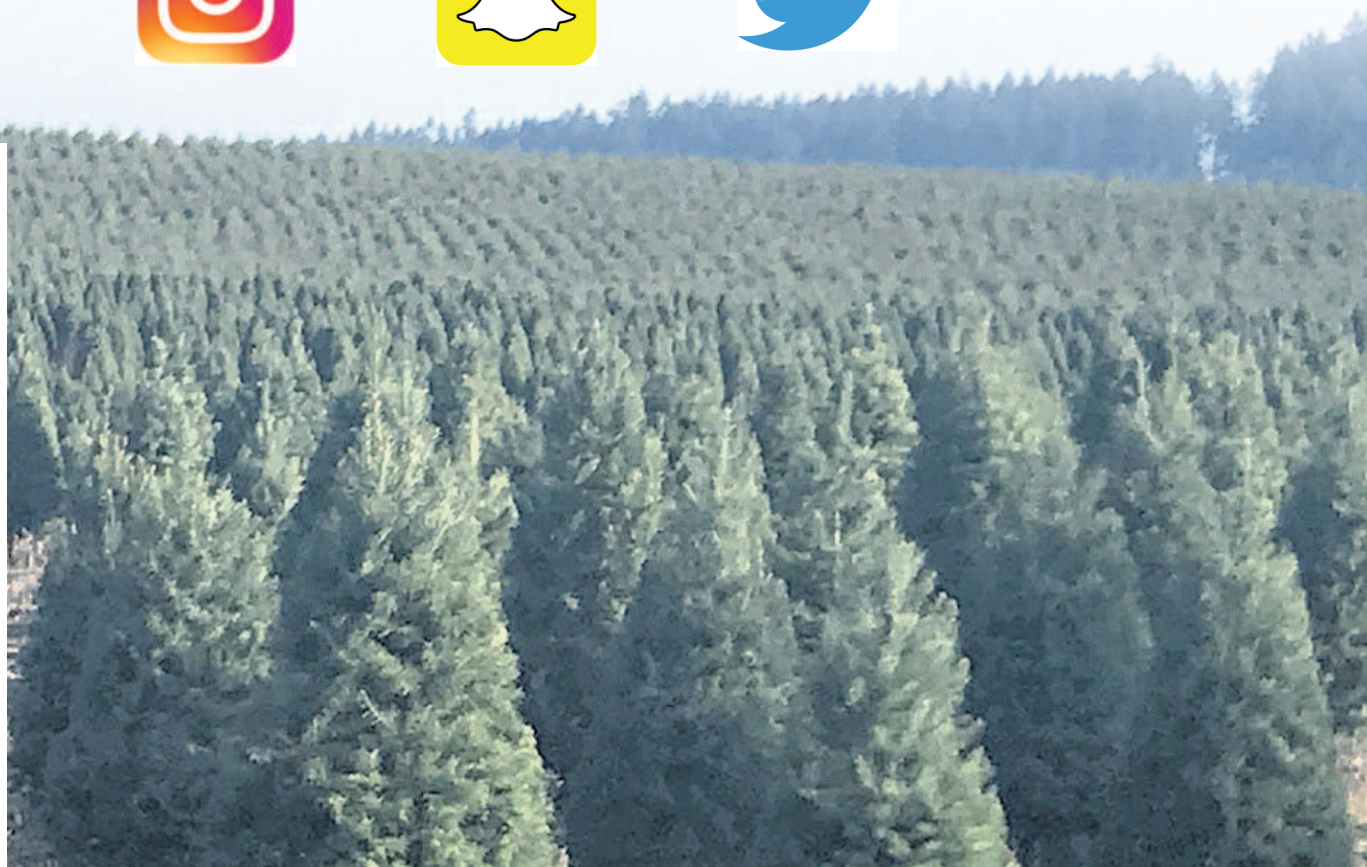
Checkoff takes off

The board was launched by USDA in 2015 at the request of farmers who wanted to raise funds for industry promotions and research with a “checkoff” fee of 15 cents per tree, generating roughly \$1.8 million a year.

But unlike the young consumers who are targeted by its promotional campaigns, some farmers who pay for the program are indifferent to social media. This year, the board invested \$1.1 million in promotions.

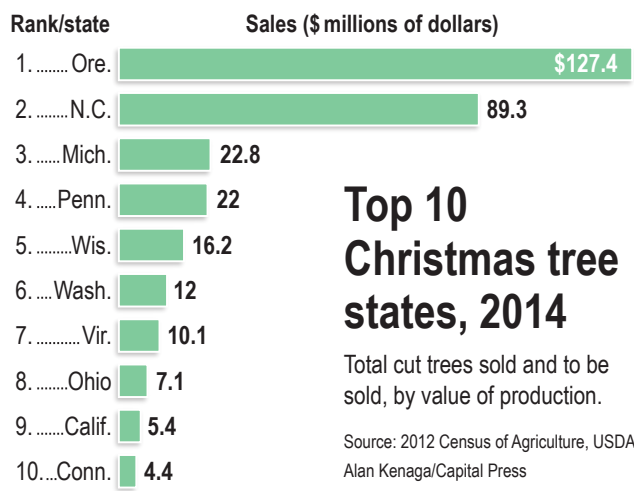
“All these social media things they’re doing, I don’t have a clue,” said Bob Schaefer, manager of Noble Mountain Tree Farm near Salem, Ore.

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Photos by Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press

Christmas trees grow in Oregon’s Willamette Valley. The Christmas tree industry will vote whether to continue a research and promotion program next year. BELOW: Farmer Betty Malone speaks about the Christmas tree checkoff.



Top 10 Christmas tree states, 2014

Total cut trees sold and to be sold, by value of production.

Source: 2012 Census of Agriculture, USDA
Alan Kenaga/Capital Press



Betty Malone, farmer in Philomath, Ore.

“Where I get my information is not where my kids get their information.”

Washington spent \$15,000 to shoot wolf, much more to avoid it



Courtesy Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
A dead calf discovered in Ferry County, Washington, Aug. 24 was confirmed as a wolf depredation.

Funds ran out for cost-sharing deals

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife spent \$15,097 to kill a wolf last summer in the Sherman pack, about one-tenth the amount that was invested in keeping the pack from attacking livestock, according to a department report released Dec. 15.

WDFW paid \$134,170 for range-riders and other preventive measures in the pack’s

territory in northeast Washington. Conservation Northwest, an environmental group, contributed another \$12,880 for range-riders.

The report does not tally costs or losses incurred by ranchers, but some of the state’s spending was dependent on producers employing additional safeguards.

WDFW might have spent more on deterrence, but it ran out

to money to enter into cost-sharing agreements with ranchers, according to the report.

WDFW wolf policy coordinator Donny Martorello said Monday that there is no way to know whether more spending could have prevented the pack from killing calves.

“Certainly, we’d like to be able to help as many individuals with the uptake of those non-lethal tools,” Martorello

said. “The demand is starting to exceed the resources.”

Washington has a growing wolf population, particularly in northeast Washington. The report details efforts to safeguard up to 1,300 cow-calf pairs on 10 grazing allotments that overlapped the Sherman pack’s territory in Ferry County.

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GOP tax bill includes provisions for farmers, ranchers

Congress passed massive overhaul Wednesday

By GEORGE PLAVERN
Capital Press

Agriculture should come out ahead in the massive GOP tax overhaul passed by Congress Wednesday, according to a tax policy expert with the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Patricia Wolff said she has been tracking the proposal for a year and half, and believes most farmers and

ranchers will see a tax break due to lower rates and wider brackets that will go into effect Jan. 1.

Wolff pointed to a number of provisions included in the final version of the bill that she said will help producers match their income with expenses. For example, cash accounting is continued under the law, which she said provides greater flexibility as opposed to accrual accounting.

“You count your income when you receive it, and you record your expenses when you make a payment,” Wolff said.

Growers have huge input costs, yet their incomes can vary greatly from year to year depending on things like weather, markets and plant diseases. Provisions such as cash accounting that match income with expenses are critical to helping farms even out those yearly swings, Wolff said.

A new provision also allows for pass-through businesses — S-corporations, Limited Liability Companies and partnerships where income is claimed on the owners’ personal

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Manuel Balce Ceneta/Associated Press
President Donald Trump speaks about the passage of the tax overhaul bill Dec. 20 on the South Lawn at the White House in Washington.

Christmas early deadlines

For the Dec. 29 print edition of Capital Press

- News display and legal ads deadlined Friday, Dec. 22
- Classified display ads are due by 10 a.m., Tuesday, Dec. 27
- Classified line ads are due by Noon, Tuesday, Dec. 27

