

Idaho farm cash receipts up for first time in three years

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

BOISE — Following two years of declines, total farm cash receipts in Idaho are projected to be up 5 percent in 2017.

Potatoes, the state's most famous crop, helped lead the way with an estimated \$955 million in cash receipts during the 2017 calendar year, an increase of 13 percent over 2016.

Total Idaho farm cash receipts reached an estimated \$7.45 billion in 2017, up from \$7.1 billion in 2016, according to University of Idaho's "Financial Condition of Idaho Agriculture" report, which was presented to legislators Jan. 5.

Total net farm income in Idaho during 2017 is estimated to be up 15 percent to \$1.9 billion, which reverses three straight years of decline, said UI Agricultural Economist Garth Taylor, one of the annual report's authors.

Dry bean revenues were up 33 percent to \$83 million last year and hay revenues



Sean Ellis/Capital Press

Farmworkers harvest wine grapes near Caldwell, Idaho, in September. Total farm cash receipts in Idaho increased last year for the first time in three years, and net farm income increased for the first time in four years.

increased 1 percent to \$357 million.

Because of lower prices for many crops grown in Idaho, "Some farmers are fleeing other crops and putting in dry beans," Taylor said.

But many of the state's other main crops saw revenues decline, including wheat (down 7 percent to \$415 million), sugar beets (down 10 percent to \$271 million) and barley (down 1 percent to

\$265 million).

Revenue for all of the state's other crops combined declined an estimated 3 percent to \$516 million.

"We are up in cash receipts statewide and that's

good news but that doesn't mean farmers are feeling good," said UI Agricultural Economist and report co-author Ben Eborn.

He said many farmers are barely breaking even. "Idaho agriculture is still strong but there are some individual farmers who are really hurting."

On the livestock side, dairy receipts increased 7 percent to \$2.5 billion and cattle and calves increased 5 percent to \$1.8 billion.

Livestock cash receipts accounted for 62 percent of the state's total farm-gate revenues. Total livestock receipts increased 7 percent and total crop receipts rose 2 percent.

Increased potato revenues were one of the few bright spots on the crop side. Idaho Potato Commission President and CEO Frank Muir said 2018 could be another good year for that industry because of higher prices.

"I think the potential is there for 2018 to be even stronger," he said. "I think it will be a very profitable year."

Although dairy revenue was up in 2017, it was a tough year for many of the state's 500 dairy farms, said Doug Robison, Northwest Farm Credit Service's senior vice president of agriculture in Idaho.

"The weak net income within the dairy industry this past year was largely due to the difficult winter of 2016-2017 and an oversupply of milk here in the U.S. and the European Union," he told Capital Press in an email.

While "the 2018 year is expected to see continued positive results in the potato industry and steady results within cattle and other (farm commodities), the 2018 outlook for the dairy industry is substantially weaker than 2017 based on current ... milk futures," Robison said.

"In 2018, state level cash receipts and net income will most likely experience modest declines as a result of weakness in the dairy industry," he said.



USDA

A USDA worker cleans equipment after a poultry flock was destroyed to stop the spread of bird flu May 23, 2015, in Sioux County, Iowa. In a new report, the USDA summarizes financial losses from the worst poultry disaster in U.S. history.

Bird flu cost \$1.3B in exports; broiler market hardest-hit

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

The 2015 bird flu outbreak killed relatively few broilers, chickens raised for meat, but it was that sector of the poultry industry that suffered the most economically, according to a new report by the USDA.

The virus chiefly struck turkeys and egg-laying chickens. Those sectors as a whole, however, did not lose financially. Fewer eggs and turkeys led to higher domestic prices, more than offsetting sales lost in flu-wary foreign markets.

Meanwhile, a still-healthy supply of broilers, which couldn't be exported, lost value.

"The broiler industry suffered the brunt of the losses, which primarily originated in the egg and turkey industries," said James Sumner, president of the USA Poultry & Egg Export Council.

The report issued by the USDA's Economic Research Service summarizes the financial fallout from the worst poultry health disaster in U.S. history. More than 50 million chickens and turkeys were killed by the virus or destroyed to stop the disease from spreading.

Foreign countries reacted by restricting the importation of U.S. eggs and poultry. The USDA found that export revenue in 2015 was \$1.3 billion lower than the year before.

The virus appeared in the U.S. in a wild duck in Washington state. The first backyard flock infected was in Oregon, and the first commercial poultry farm struck was in California. The disease, however, claimed 87 percent of its victims in Iowa and Minnesota.

The virus, spread by migratory waterfowl, reduced the egg-laying population by 12 percent. Egg prices surged. Even though the U.S. exported 45 percent fewer eggs in 2015, the industry saw annual revenues increase by 32 percent, according to the USDA.

Bird flu reduced the turkey population by 12 percent, and exports dropped 41 percent. But turkey prices at home rose, and the industry's overall revenues increased by 8 percent. The USDA report notes that the higher egg and turkey prices did not change

consumer buying habits.

The disease affected less than 0.01 percent of the broiler population, according to the USDA report, but that segment of the industry alone lost \$1.1 billion in exports. Domestic prices fell and revenues were down 12 percent from the previous year, according to the USDA.

The bird flu outbreak ended in June 2015. Sumner said export markets have not fully returned. Some foreign food-makers found substitutes for eggs, and some U.S. exporters in 2015 gave up foreign markets to fill the shortage in the U.S.

And while other countries have lifted restrictions, China has been closed to U.S. eggs and poultry since Jan. 9, 2015, because of the bird flu outbreak.

"We're hoping that changes in the near future, but there's not necessarily any positive indication that will be the case," Sumner said. "We don't think (the closure) has any validity."

In 2014, before the outbreak, China was 7 percent of the U.S. export market for turkeys and 4 percent for broilers.

Coalition aims to bridge 'digital divide' in rural America

By GEORGE PLAVEN
Capital Press

During his speech Monday at the American Farm Bureau Federation convention in Nashville, Tenn., President Donald Trump signed two executive orders aimed at improving broadband internet access in rural America.

A new coalition based in Washington, D.C., is also building local partnerships across the country to lay the regulatory foundation for bridging what it calls the "digital divide."

Connect Americans Now, which launched Jan. 2, believes it can pave the way for high-speed internet in every market nationwide by 2022. That would be a big deal for Northwest farmers and ranchers looking to adopt web-powered precision irrigation tools, such as real-time soil moisture monitors, to increase yields while reducing costs.

"As any farmer will tell you, it takes more than grit and determination to be successful in today's market," said Zachary Cikanek, a national spokesman for the coalition. "We need to let farmers access modern technologies."

Several Oregon counties and farm groups, including the Oregon Farm Bureau and Oregon Cattlemen's Association, have joined the coalition in recent days. Roughly 16 percent of the state population lives in rural areas, according to the USDA Economic Research Service.

More than 34 million Americans are without access to affordable, reliable broadband service, Cikanek said. Of those, 23.4 million live in rural communities.

"This gap is something

we think we can bridge in the next five years if we roll out the right combination of technology," Cikanek said.

The coalition recently announced it will work with the Federal Communications Commission to establish policies that will allow

rural broadband to flourish — namely by using what are known as "TV white spaces."

TV white space refers to unused channels in television broadcasting, which act as interference buffers between active channels. The spectrum ranges from 470 to 790 mega-

hertz, similar to what is used for 4G wireless networks.

If the FCC agrees to leave at least three white space channels vacant in every market, it may lead to more capital investment in rural high-speed internet service, Cikanek said.

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-Located in Harrisburg

\$139,000



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Deluxe cab, PS transmission, 4 remotes, 3pt hitch, no PTO, 620-42 duals, 5,177-hrs, #E0107240
-Located in Salem

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2008
Deluxe Cab, PS transmission, 5 remotes, bareback, 710-38 duals, 4,734-hrs, #7F108048
-Located in Hillsboro

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Sm Grain, Bullet Rotor, JD 615P belt pickup platform, 3,479-hrs, #0S706470
-Located in Tangent

\$115,000



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2013
Premium Cab, Small wire concave, vari stream rotor, JD 615P BPU platform, 1,263-hrs, #D0755808
-Located in Tangent

\$275,000



JD 9670
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Premium Cab, Small wire concave, JD 615P BPU platform, 3,006-hrs, #0S726053
-Located in Tangent

\$150,500



JD S680
2013
Hillco 27% leveler, duals, 4WD, 635Flex platform and cart, 1,003-hrs, #755718
-Located in Colfax

\$362,000



JD S680
2013
Hillco 27% leveler, duals, 4WD, Straw chopper, MacDon header harness, 1,116-hrs, #D0756086
-Located in Tekoa

\$365,000



JD 9870
2009
Rahco 35% leveler, duals, 4WD, straw chopper, 635F platform and cart, 2,335-hrs, #0S730229
-Located in Colfax

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8:45-9:00	Workshop Introductions & Overview
9:00-10:00	"Quality Sells!" (Importance of Quality Beef Programs) <i>Robert Rebholtz Jr., Chief Executive Office & President, Agri-Beef Co., Inc.</i>
10:00-10:45	"How Retailers Add Value to Beef Cuts" <i>Jeff Van Lith, National Retail Sales Manager, Agri-Beef Co., Inc.</i>
10:45-11:15	Break (provided by sponsors)
11:15-12:00	"China/Pacific Rim Beef Export Market Update" <i>Brett Stuart, Founding partner of Global AgriTrends</i>
12:00-1:00	Lunch (provided by sponsors)
1:00-1:45	"Use of Genomic-enhanced EPD's to Improve Beef Quality" <i>Dr. Matt Spangler, Associate Professor, University of Nebraska</i>
1:45-3:00	"Ins & Outs of 2016 National Beef Quality Audit" <i>Dr. Deb VanOverbeke, Interim Assist Dean, Oklahoma State University; Jesse Fulton, Associate Director - Producer Education, NCBA</i>

Note: For more information, please contact Kim McKague at (541) 562-5129 ext 21 <http://loregonstate.edu/dept/leorunion>
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