



Capital Press

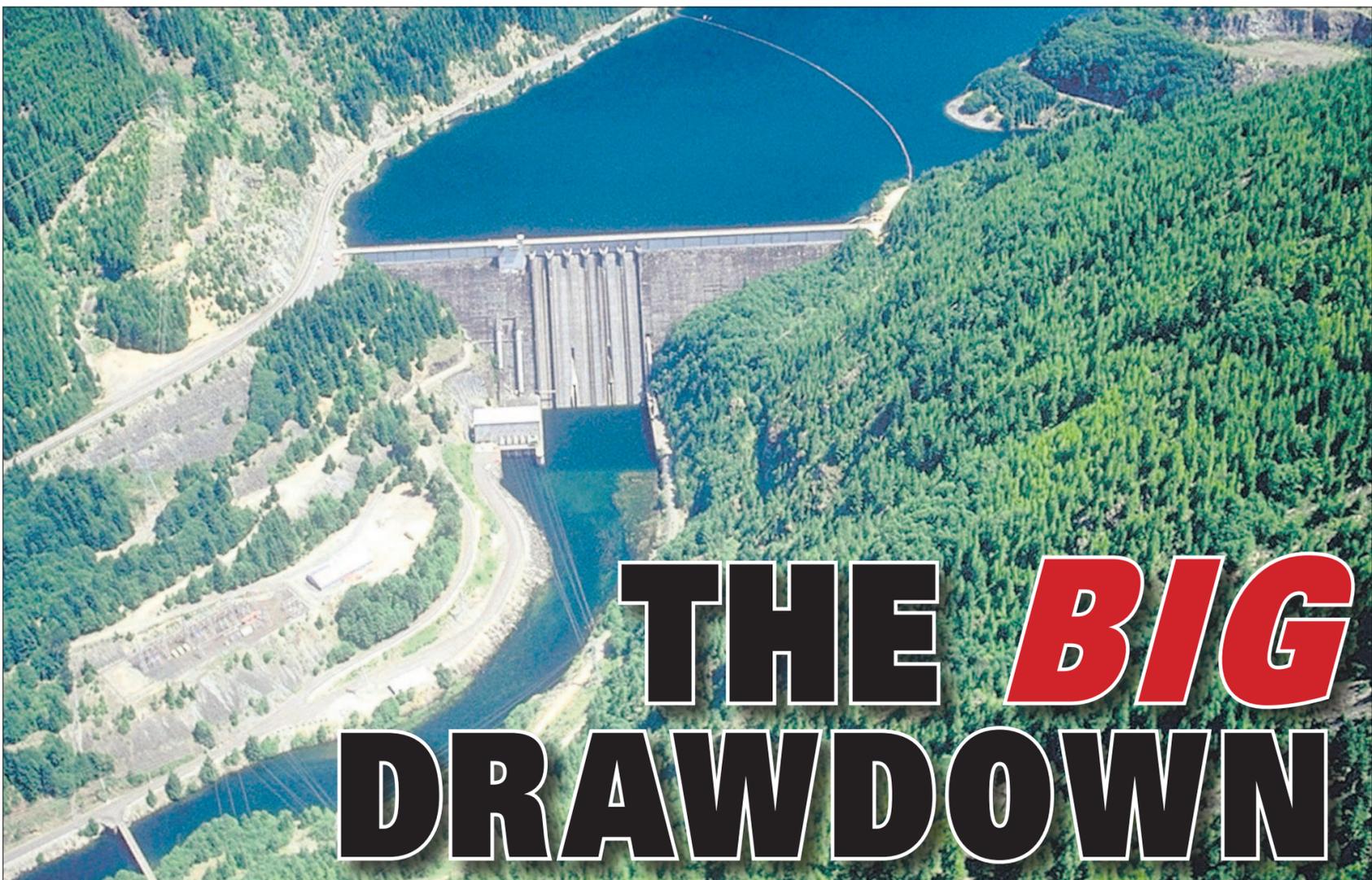
The West's **Ag** Weekly

FRIDAY, JANUARY 26, 2018

VOLUME 91, NUMBER 4

WWW.CAPITALPRESS.COM

\$2.00



THE **BIG** DRAWDOWN

Detroit Dam project could have severe impact on downstream farmers



George Plaven/Capital Press

Gary Butler, co-owner of Butler Farms, stands along the North Santiam River, the source of irrigation water for his vegetables, peppermint, grass seed and hazelnuts. A project proposed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that could drain Detroit Lake, the source of the river's water, for up to two years could devastate local farmers, Butler said.

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
Capital Press

The North Santiam River flows past fields of green grass at Butler Farms west of Stayton, Ore., where Gary Butler and his two brothers grow more than 2,000 acres of irrigated crops. In addition to grass seed, the family farm raises green beans and sweet corn for NORPAC Foods, along with hazelnuts and peppermint. Irrigation is essential to the operation, Butler said. That is why a major proposal 30 miles upstream at Detroit Dam has him so concerned.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which maintains 13 multipurpose dams in the Willamette River Basin, wants to build a 300-foot-tall water temperature control tower and floating screen at Detroit Dam to benefit native fish, including endangered chinook salmon and steelhead.

However, construction of the project may require draining Detroit Lake — the reservoir that feeds into the North Santiam — for up to two full years, leaving farms parched during the dry summer months and vulnerable

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

ABOVE: Detroit Dam on the North Santiam River near Detroit, Ore. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plans to build a water temperature control tower at the dam and drain the reservoir for as long as two years, impacting downstream farms.



Alan Kenaga/Capital Press

Turn to **PROJECT**, Page 12

Deadline approaching for Census of Agriculture surveys

2017 Census will be released in February 2019

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
Capital Press

The deadline is fast approaching for farmers and ranchers to complete their surveys for the 2017 Census of Agriculture.

Chris Mertz, Northwest region director for the USDA National Agricultural Sta-

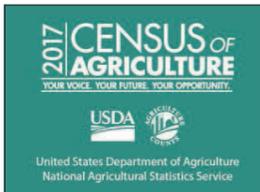
tistics Service in Olympia, Wash., said surveys were mailed out in December to 107,253 producers in Oregon, Washington and Idaho.

Responses are due back to the agency by Monday, Feb. 5. The final 2017 census will be released in February 2019.

Every five years, the Census of Agriculture provides a state-by-state, county-by-county look at farm size, production and demographics across the U.S. Survey questions include things like land use, acreage, cropping practices and infrastructure.

"It's not just government using this data," Mertz said. "A lot of people are using the information on behalf of farmers to make sure they are being successful."

For example, farm groups and lobbyists may use the census to advocate for policies or push for economic



development in rural America, Mertz said. He pointed to the last census in 2012 which included questions about on-farm computer and internet usage. Five years later, President Donald Trump has signed two executive orders aimed at boosting rural broadband access.

"If you think about it, there's a lot of infrastructure investment there," Mertz said.

The census is also beneficial for small farmers, Mertz said, especially at the county level.

Turn to **CENSUS**, Page 12

EPA asks for time to tell farmers about manure air rule

Agency: Producers vulnerable to suits

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

The Environmental Protection Agency was waiting this week to see whether a federal court will give it three more months to prep farmers to report that their animals are releasing gas.

The EPA told the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals that farmers are confused by the mandate. Without more help, farmers puzzled about how to report would be vulnerable to citizen lawsuits, according to the EPA.

A delay until at least April 23 would "provide farms temporary relief from potential legal action while coming into compliance with the reporting requirements," an EPA motion filed Jan. 19 states.

The D.C. court last year



Don Jenkins/Capital Press

Cows graze in a field in Washington. The Environmental Protection Agency has asked a court to delay for three months a manure reporting rule. The mandate, won by environmental groups, could affect even small confined animal feeding operations.

ordered farmers whose animals emit at least 100 pounds of ammonia or hydrogen sulfide per day to report under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, commonly known as Superfund.

Producers will have to register with the EPA and the Coast Guard's National Re-

sponse Center, which coordinates emergency responses to chemical leaks and spills.

The EPA, under the Obama and Trump administrations, argued decomposing manure does not need an emergency response. But the court sided with environmental groups that argued

Turn to **EPA**, Page 12

DON'T MISS OUT!

Subscribe to the Capital Press E-mail Newsletters and stay informed on the topics that matter most to you.

Visit www.CapitalPress.com/Newsletters and sign up today!



7 29467 70125 0



Capital Press
The West's **Ag** Weekly