



George Plaven/Capital Press  
Nate and Janis Newsom, of Bear Branch Farms near Stayton, Ore., will soon be hard at work planting roughly 900 tomato plants in the farm's greenhouse.

# CULTIVATING

## SMALL FARMS

### Land-grant universities reach out to bolster small farms

By GEORGE PLAIVEN  
Capital Press

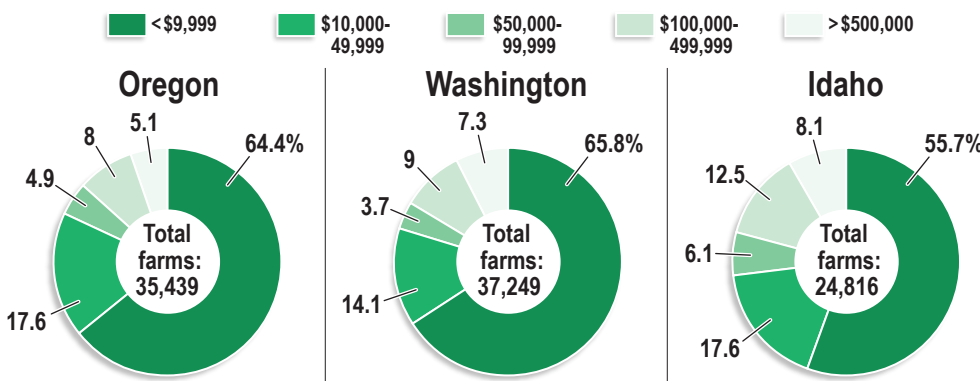
**O**n a frosty Saturday morning in February, Nate and Janis Newsom finished building two new hoop houses that will soon be used to grow fresh, certified organic produce at their Bear Branch Farms near Stayton, Ore. "Thankfully it wasn't windy," said Janis Newsom, wearing a wool hat and Carhartt overalls. But the weekend work is not done. The couple must also plant 900 tomato plants in the nearby greenhouse, which they hope to harvest by mid-May.

Farming brought the Newsoms and their nine kids to Oregon from Southern California three years ago. They fell in love with the 17-acre property along Bear Branch Creek in the Mid-Willamette Valley, and spent their life savings to start a small family farm.

Turn to **FARMS**, Page 12

### Northwest farms by value of sales, 2012

The majority of Northwest farms are small with sales less than \$10,000 annually, according to the U.S. Census of Agriculture. Percent of total farms by value of sales per state:



### Northwest farms by market value of land and buildings, 2012

Farms in all three states combined were valued at more than \$90.7 billion, according to the U.S. Census of Ag.

Value	Oregon	Washington	Idaho
\$1-199,999	7,486	9,700	8,680
\$200,000-499,999	14,775	15,162	7,787
\$500,000-999,999	7,462	6,299	3,406
\$1 million-1.99 million	2,872	2,851	2,148
\$2 million or more	2,844	3,237	2,795

Sources: USDA ERS; 2012 Census of Agriculture

Alan Kenaga/Capital Press

**"It becomes a relationship with the community. They're able to trust we're doing the right thing with their produce."** — Nate Newsom, Stayton, Ore., farmer

### GE creeping bentgrass in Malheur County drops 42 percent

By SEAN ELLIS  
Capital Press

ONTARIO, Ore. — Scotts Miracle-Gro Co. is reporting a large decline in the number of genetically modified creeping bentgrass plants in

Malheur County.

The plant, used on golf courses, was genetically engineered by Scotts and Monsanto Co. to withstand applications of glyphosate, the active ingredient in Monsanto's Roundup weed killer.

It took root in Oregon's Malheur and Jefferson counties after escaping field trials in 2003. A small number of the plants have also been detected in Canyon County, Idaho.

Some farmers and irrigation districts worry the plants could clog irrigation ditches and affect shipments of crops to nations that don't accept traces of genetically modified organisms, or GMOs.

Danielle Posch, a senior research specialist with Scotts,



Sean Ellis/Capital Press File  
A GMO creeping bentgrass plant grows in an onion field south of Ontario, Ore., last year.

regon onion industry during their annual meeting last week that the number of GMO bentgrass plants found in Malheur County last fall dropped by 42 percent compared to the same time in 2016.

"In 2017, we saw a significant reduction in the total

number of glyphosate-tolerant creeping bentgrass plants," she said.

Similar data for Jefferson County isn't yet available.

Posch said the reduction in Malheur County was likely due to the Environmental Protection Agency's approval last year of a special local need label for the use of glufosinate to control the plant.

Glufosinate is the most effective herbicide for controlling the GMO bentgrass but before the special need label, it couldn't be used over waterways.

The plants require nearly constant moisture and can be found mostly near canals and irrigation ditches.

Turn to **BENTGRASS**, Page 12

### Oregon uplists marbled murrelet to 'endangered'

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

PORTLAND — Oregon's wildlife regulators have "uplisted" the marbled murrelet from a threatened to an endangered species, which will likely result in stricter logging limits on state forestland.

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission voted 4-2 to upgrade protections for the coastal bird at its Feb. 9 meeting in Portland.

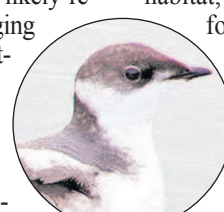
The change to endangered status means that scientists at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wild-

life, which is overseen by the commission, must complete "survival guidelines" for the marbled murrelet by June.

Those guidelines are expected to further restrict logging in the bird's suitable habitat, if existing protocols for state forestland are found to be insufficient.

Though Oregon's version of the Endangered Species Act only applies to property owned by the state government, some private forestland owners worry the uplisting will effectively

Turn to **BIRD**, Page 12



A marbled murrelet

**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](http://www.CapitalPress.com/Newsletters) and sign up today!



7 29467 70125 0



Capital Press  
The West's Ag Weekly