



Capital Press File

Idaho State University geosciences associate professor Ben Crosby stands on a cliff overlooking the confluence of Marsh Creek and the Portneuf River, near Inkom, Idaho. Crosby is part of a study that concluded bank erosion in the lower reach of Marsh Creek is responsible for heavy sediment loads. The Natural Resources Conservation Service has extended the deadline for applications for projects to reduce bank erosion in the area.

NRCS extends Lower Marsh Creek project application deadline

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Idaho has extended to June 22 the deadline for landowners to apply for design and financial assistance in connection with a special project targeting water quality on sediment-heavy Lower Marsh Creek.

NRCS Idaho's field office in Pocatello is leading the project, which will use the Environmental Quality Incentives Program to target water quality concerns along the southeastern Idaho creek. Agricultural producers can get help from NRCS personnel in designing and carrying out conservation projects through

EQIP, which is voluntary and offers financial assistance through an application process.

Marsh Creek is a 56-mile-long tributary of the Portneuf River. It has one of the highest sediment loads of any Idaho stream, said Nate Matlack, NRCS district conservationist based in Pocatello.

Historically, adjacent wetland marshes deposited sediment seasonally onto the flood plain, an effect that decreased as the area population increased and some stream meanders were straightened.

An Idaho State University study found much of the sediment comes from Marsh

Creek's lower reach, generally from Arimo to the Portneuf River confluence, and that bank erosion is a major cause, Matlack said. Land along the lower reach of Marsh Creek includes a mix of residential acreages with some livestock and small hobby farms.

Matlack said \$250,000 is available over the next two years for water-quality improvements along Lower Marsh Creek through NRCS Idaho and partners including Portneuf Soil and Water Conservation District, the City of Pocatello and ISU.

Information: (208) 244-5024 or <http://www.id.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/>

Wineries mull challenge to Washington Ecology rules

Group faces deadline to appeal

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

Small wineries with ambitions to grow will be stifled by new Washington Department of Ecology regulations on discharging wastewater, said Paul Beveridge, president of the Family Wineries of Washington.

The rules will apply to wineries that produce at least 7,500 cases of wine a year, a "tiny" volume in the wine world, according to Family Wineries, an association of small vintners. Wineries above the threshold will have to buy a permit from Ecology and develop a pollution-control plan.

"It effectively puts a cap on rural wineries," said Beveridge, owner of the Wilridge wineries in Seattle and Yakima. "I'll just stay as a small winery."

Ecology announced the rules May 17, but delayed their effective date until July 1, 2019, to give wineries time to prepare. Ecology estimates that about 100 wineries of the state's nearly 1,000 wineries will need a permit.

Ecology says the rules will protect groundwater from winery wastewater laced with stems, grape skins, wine sediment, cleansers and other potential pollutants. Ecology has not documented a case in which a winery polluted



Washington Department of Ecology

An association of small Washington wineries is considering appealing new Department of Ecology rules on how wineries use wastewater. Ecology imposed the regulations, though it has no evidence wineries are polluting groundwater.

groundwater.

Beveridge said he is conferring with a lawyer about appealing the rules to the Pollution Control Hearings Board.

The rules must be appealed within 30 days. Beveridge said he wants to weigh the chances of prevailing and whether association members are willing to bankroll a challenge.

"We need to get a legal fund together real quick," he said.

The rules will limit the volume of wastewater that can be used to irrigate. The number of days will be restricted, too.

The rules will regulate how wastewater is stored in ponds and used to water dusty roads. Permit holders will have to test wastewater, monitor flows, and train employees to prevent, respond and report spills, among other requirements.

Some 14 wineries already have individual permits from Ecology to discharge wastewater. Ecology either required a permit because the winery had the potential to pollute, or the winery sought a permit to head off being penalized for discharging pollutants. The new rules will impose industry-wide standards and bring wineries under a regulatory approach that Ecology applies to other industries.

Family Wineries had asked Ecology to exempt wineries that produce fewer than 105,000 cases a year, the threshold for small wineries to take advantage of a federal tax credit.

The group argued that raising the threshold would relieve small wineries of burdensome rules while still regulating large wineries that have more wastewater and are more likely to pollute.

"They (Ecology) did not change anything," Beveridge said. "Why this expense and monitoring for something you've never found a problem with?"

Ecology maintains that it can't rule out that wineries are polluting groundwater, though it has no evidence. The agency said it wanted to exempt the smallest wineries, but keep the threshold low enough for the rules to protect groundwater.

"Any winery over 105,000 cases likely already has an individual permit," said Josh McDonald, executive director of the Washington Wine Institute, another industry association. Raising the threshold to 105,000 cases "would make Ecology's work moot."

McDonald called the final permit a "vast improvement" over Ecology's earliest proposals, which would have imposed rules on "basically anyone who wasn't just making home wine."

Wineries will have to decide whether to appeal the terms of the permit without knowing how much one will cost. Ecology will consult with wineries and set fees over the next year, a spokeswoman said.

As expected, April feedlot placements down by 8 percent

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

Cattle moving into large U.S. feedlots were down 8 percent in April year over year, following a 9 percent decline in March.

Analysts polled ahead of USDA's cattle on feed report released on Friday expected placements to be down an average of 9.4 percent.

The lower placements are a result of cattle moving into feedlots earlier than usual due to drought in Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas. The drought affected both forage pasture and winter wheat pasture late last year, John Nalivka, owner of Sterling Marketing in Vale, Ore., said.

Year-over-year placements were up 14 percent in November, USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service reported.

Calves that typically would have been placed into feedlots in March and April were already there, he said.

Year-over-year increases in placements continued through February, and a lot of the cattle now in feedlots would typically have been third quarter placements, he said.

Feedlot placements in April were 153,000 head fewer year over year. They were down 16 percent and 75,000 head in Texas, 10 percent and 40,000 head in Kansas and 17 percent and 12,000 head in Oklahoma compared with last year's levels.

Nebraska was the only state of the 12 reporting with an increase in placements in April. They were up 6 percent and 25,000 head over April 2017.

Placements will continue to be lower through the summer with a tighter cattle supply out front, which is

pretty supportive of prices by the end of the year, he said.

The total number of cattle in feedlots on May 1 increased 5 percent and 560,000 head year over year. At 11.6 million head, it's the second highest May 1 inventory since the NASS series began in 1996.

With all the early movement into feedlots, the run of strong cattle prices has been somewhat surprising, Nalivka said.

"It's like everybody is forgetting how much cattle is sitting in feedlots," he said.

But that's changing. Live fed steer prices were \$120 to \$123 a hundred-weight in early May and dropped to \$114 two weeks ago. There wasn't a lot of trade last week, but prices were at \$109, he said.

"We know that where we are on supply we're going to see weaker prices. The question is how much weaker," he said.

Most of the cattle on feed on May 1 will come out of feedlots in May, June and July, he said.

"I don't think we'll see any real price appreciation 'til we get into the fall," he said.

The key will be keeping carcass weights under control. Carcass weights have declined from the start of the year, but they're still higher than a year ago, he said.

The weekly slaughter for the week ending May 19 was 660,000 head and the highest in five years. It was down 2 percent last week from the previous week but was up 4 percent over a year earlier, and beef production is up 6 percent from a year ago.

"Fortunately, the economy is doing really well, which is supportive of demand," he said.

New CAHNRS dean to meet growers at Lind Field Day

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

The new dean of Washington State University's College of Agricultural, Human and Natural Resource Sciences will attend the annual Lind Field Day at WSU's dryland research station.

André-Denis Wright begins as dean June 1.

"(Wright) wants to get in front of growers, have the opportunity to meet them and tell them about what can be expected under his tenure," said Bill Schillinger, research agronomist and director at the research station in Lind, Wash. "We generally have a pretty good turnout and the vast majority of our attendees are regional farmers. It's a good opportunity to meet a lot of agricultural leaders in general."

The field day begins at 8:30 a.m. Thursday, June 14.

On the agenda is an update from USDA Agricultural Research Service plant pathologist Tim Paulitz on whether glyphosate affects soil microbial activity.

Schillinger said Paulitz's work has "worldwide interest."

"He has pretty much the definitive answer on that," Schillinger said.

The field day includes three speakers on winter peas — ARS plant geneticist Rebecca McGee; Howard Nelson, manager of member and special services at Central Washington Grain Growers and WSU weed science professor Drew Lyon — talking about new varieties, markets and weed control.

Winter pea production has increased from zero to at least 15,000 acres in the last six years.

"Easy to grow, unsur-



Washington State University

André-Denis Wright is the new dean of Washington State University's College of Agricultural, Human and Natural Resource Science, effective June 1. He will meet farmers at the Lind Field Day on June 14.

passed emergence, stable, winter hardy — it's got everything going for it except the price is a little low," Schillinger said.

That could change if growers could provide a consistent, high-quality pea to the edible pea market, he added.

The field day also compares winter wheat and winter triticale. Triticale has many benefits, consistently producing more grain than wheat, residue cover, no stripe rust issues and winter hardiness — except for a lower price, Schillinger said.

"We'd like to see a higher price for that," he said.

Other topics include winter and spring wheat breeding program updates.

Schillinger said the annual day typically draws 250 people.

A complimentary lunch, program and ice cream social follow the field tour.

The field day is free and open to the public. Washington pesticide credits have been requested.

For more information, contact Schillinger at 509-235-1933 or william.schillinger@wsu.edu

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