

Capital Press

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Potato farmer Doug Gross of Wilder, Idaho, says it's getting tougher to buy farm ground in parts of his county.
Brad Carlson/Capital Press

PRICE

PRE\$\$SURE

Growing land values pose challenges

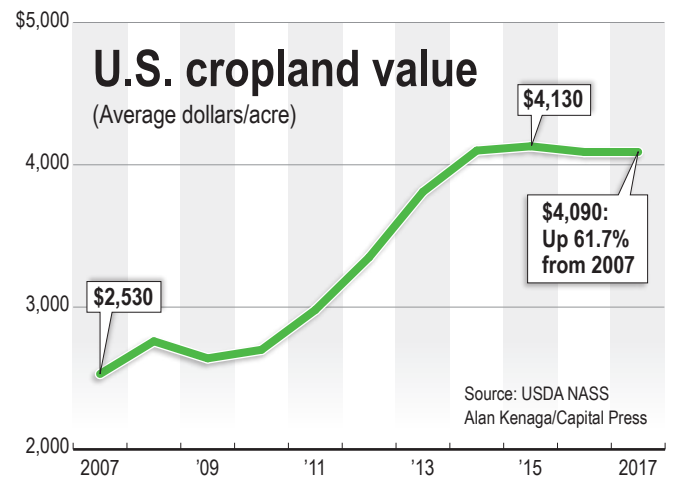
By BRAD CARLSON
Capital Press

Buying farm ground isn't easy these days, as Wilder, Idaho, potato grower Doug Gross was recently reminded. "We tried to buy a farm adjoining us and we were outbid by an institutional investor," he said. Gross put in a bid he thought represented fair-market price. The institutional investor offered "hundreds of dollars more" per acre, he said. He would not elaborate except to say the investor's offer was about 7 percent more than his. But he did say the investor's purchase benefited other

Prices climb, especially as institutional investors join the bidding near fast-growing urban areas

area landowners, in a sense. "It does raise the benchmark land value in our area" including property Gross already owns, he said. Although Wilder is about 40 miles west of fast-growing Boise, Gross sees land in the area drawing more interest lately among institutional investors and "1031 exchange" buyers, who take advantage of the federal tax code to defer taxes on gains from property they have recently sold by purchasing a similar parcel. While it has always been a challenge for farmers and

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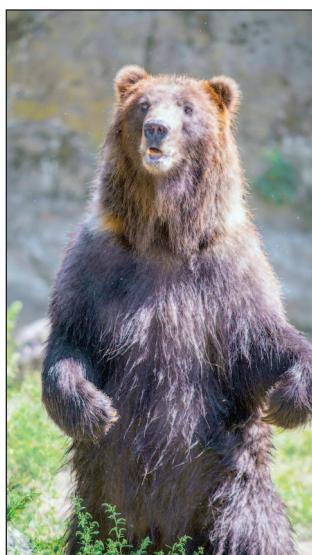


Ranchers advised to fight grizzly reintroduction

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

Ranchers with grazing allotments in Washington's North Cascade Range should do all they can to prevent reintroduction of grizzly bears, the leader of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association says. "My advice is become very active and do everything possible to prevent a reintroduction because once that

happens there's no relief, no satisfactory response," says Jim Magagna, executive vice president of the association in Cheyenne. Grizzlies will kill calves and even cows and are a worse problem for ranchers in the northwest corner of Wyoming than wolves, said Magagna, himself a sheep rancher on the edge of grizzly range. On May 23, the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission approved the state's first grizzly bear hunt since 1974, saying the bears have exceeded recovery criteria since 2004 and that management is necessary. Fall hunts will occur for 13 to 22 bears. Environmental groups have filed lawsuits to stop the hunts. Idaho also approved a hunt and the two states, plus Montana, are working together on grizzly management, said Renny MacKay, Wyoming Game and Fish Department spokesman. Grizzly populations in and around Yellowstone Nation-



USFWS
A Yellowstone grizzly bear.

al Park have increased since they were federally listed as a threatened species in 1975 and delisted last year, Magagna said. There are 718 grizzlies in a suitable habitat area which is

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Mexican tariffs hit U.S. apple exports

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

WENATCHEE, Wash. — A new 20 percent Mexican tariff on U.S. apples means Washington may fall short of its goal of shipping 15 million, 40-pound boxes of apples there this season, the president of the Washington Apple Commission says. "Any tariff is clearly going to have economic impact to our industry, especially when you consider its cumulative effect along with tariffs imposed by China and expected by within the next few weeks from India," said Todd Fryhover, commission president. All the tariffs, he noted, are in retaliation to U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum from those countries. The Trump administration announced May 31 that it will impose a 25 percent tariff on steel and 10 percent tariff on aluminum imports from Europe, Mexico and Canada after failing to win concessions from them. President Donald Trump announced the tariffs in March but exempted Europe, Mexico and Canada to allow negotiations. On June 5, Mexico announced retaliatory tariffs on U.S. apples and other items such as pork. Washington produces approximately 65 percent of all apples grown in the U.S. More than 90 percent of U.S. fresh apple exports come from Washington. Mexico is the top export market for Washington apples. During the 2016-17

season Washington shipped 13.7 million boxes of apples to Mexico valued at more than \$215 million, Fryhover said. Shipments this season have been 13 percent greater and were on track to exceed 15 million boxes worth an estimated \$241.8 million, he said. "This new tariff now puts that goal in doubt," he said. Mexico has imposed tariffs several times over the past 15 years on U.S. apples, usually for alleged apple dumping, selling them at less than cost. Tariffs were imposed from 2009 into 2011 over trucking issues. Tariffs have ranged as high as 47 percent. The last tariff, ranging from 2.44 to 20.82 percent for alleged apple dumping, was imposed Jan. 7, 2016, and was lifted that June. Even with tariffs, shipments have remained around the 10 million-box level. The new tariff will impact growers differently depending on the amount of their sales to Mexico, but collectively Washington growers will see a decrease in returns, Fryhover predicted. The impact of a 15 percent retaliatory tariff set by China in April has been "negligible" so far since it's the time of year China imports more Southern Hemisphere apples, he said. India is adding a 30 percent tariff on top of its regular 50 percent tariff on apples in retaliation for the U.S. steel and aluminum tariffs.



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