

WSU to break ground for new plant science building

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
Capital Press

Washington State University will break ground next week for a new plant science building that will help researchers investigate the issues farmers face in the crops they grow.

The June 27 ceremony is invitation-only. Construction of the building is slated to be completed in January 2020.

It's the fifth building in WSU's Research and Education Complex and will house plant science researchers, primarily from the Institute of Biological Chemistry.

The institute's researchers are



Washington State University officials will break ground June 27 on a new plant sciences building. WSU received \$52 million in state funding for the building, which is slated to be completed in January 2020.

trying to gain a better understanding of basic plant processes, which form the basis for plant breeding

to help increase crop yields or improve disease resistance, said Rich Koenig, associate dean of WSU's College of Agricultural, Human and Natural Resource Sciences.

The institute is now in an aging facility. Koenig said the new building will have space configured for state-of-the-art plant science research.

One institute researcher is currently studying the biochemistry of starch and starch degradation in wheat, an important issue for the region's farmers. Other researchers are studying potato and wine grape physiology.

The building will house 15 to 18 faculty programs, including technical and support staff and gradu-

ate students. There will be 15 "wet labs," and three "dry labs" to study data and statistics.

Koenig said the \$52 million in state funding is a little short of the total cost of construction.

"The building has been long in the planning, and it's taken a while to get it funded," he said. "The costs of the construction have gone up in the interim."

The university is waiting for final numbers. Koenig said the university can tap contingency funds. Some labs in the building could also be phased in over time, he said.

The plant science building budget request was linked to funding for the second phase of a global

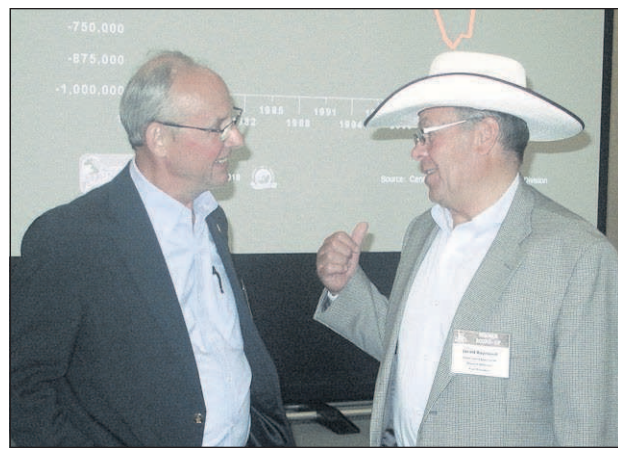
animal health building, to support the Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory.

The university received \$23 million in partial funding for it. The remaining \$15.1 million requested by WSU is still pending, Koenig said.

Both buildings have received support from the agricultural industries, Koenig said.

Growers will have opportunities to tour the new facility when it's completed, he said.

"I think farmers will be really excited to see what's going on in this facility, and how it ties in with some real-life problems they're dealing with," he said.



Brad Carlson/Capital Press
John Nalivka, left, with Sterling Marketing Inc. of Vale, Ore., speaks with Jerald Raymond, past president of the Idaho Cattle Association, in Boise on June 19.

Cattle analyst expects decent market conditions despite volatility

By **BRAD CARLSON**
Capital Press

BOISE — Cattle industry players can expect a continuation of decent market conditions through this year despite volatility, market analyst John Nalivka told an Idaho Cattle Association audience June 19.

Nalivka, with Sterling Marketing Inc. in Vale, Ore., said continued strong demand is cutting into recently higher beef supplies. That demand is helped by a growing economy and the industry's ability to introduce products that keep consumers coming back for more, he said.

The amount of beef coming out of packing houses and ready for consumption will be up by about 4 percent this year, he said. Competing proteins also will be up on continued strong demand — pork by about 4 percent and chicken by 2 to 3 percent.

The total number of cattle on feed was up by about 7 percent in the U.S. year-to-year as of April 1, but that pace won't hold up through year's end, Nalivka said in an interview.

Drought in Texas and Oklahoma prompted many producers in those states to move animals from grazing sites to feedlots earlier than they would have under normal conditions, boosting total on-feed populations, he said. As these cattle head to slaughter and are replaced in feedlots by a

current population of grazing animals that's fewer in number, processors should see a reduced incoming headcount late in the year, which would support prices.

A steer fetched about \$111 per hundredweight during the week of June 11-15, down 14.6 percent from \$130 a year earlier. Nalivka said feedlot margins have been strong most of the year but have been narrowing in recent weeks. Demand is good, and processors are earning high profits.

"We saw all these cattle coming at us, because of the number in the feedlots," he said. "But generally speaking, it's not that bad and it's because of demand. It has held up pretty well."

Cow-calf producers have some opportunities to do well this year depending on their individual operations, Nalivka said. Increased input costs over the past two-plus years challenge producers.

A portion of recently strong demand comes from exports. U.S. beef exports are up about 13 percent year-to-date including a 16 percent rise from April 2017 to April 2018, he said.

Recent conflicts over trade policy "are there and should be a concern, but are not going to affect the bottom line," at least in the near term, Nalivka said.

"Just manage the things that are manageable," he said.

Nalivka spoke as part of ICA's annual summer meetings June 18-20.

Barn fire kills more than 25,000 chickens

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

More than 25,000 chickens died as a barn burned down Monday at Draper Valley Farms in Tenino, Wash., company spokesman Joe Forsthoffer said.

The 35-day-old chickens were being reared at the poultry farm 15 miles south of Olympia, he said. Firefighters were able to prevent the fire from spreading to five other barns with the same number of chickens in each one, he said.

"Thanks to the firefighters, there was no damage to the other barns," Forsthoffer said.

The company and fire officials did not have a cause or total dollar loss for the



South Thurston Fire & EMS
A fire burns June 18 at Draper Valley Farms in Tenino, Wash. More than 25,000 chickens died in the blaze, a company spokesman said.

fire Tuesday.

Draper Valley, a subsidiary of Perdue Farms, raises chickens at farms in Washington for processing in Mount Vernon.

The loss will not disrupt

the company's supply chain, Forsthoffer said. The company likely will rebuild the barn, he said.

The fire was reported shortly after 5 p.m., accord-

ing to Thurston County Fire District 12. The blaze spread to grass in the surrounding area, but that fire was stopped by Department of Natural Resources firefighters.

Timber Innovation Act gains backing in Senate

Bill would aid development of mass timber for construction

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
Capital Press

The Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry is including provisions in its latest release of the 2018 Farm Bill to support research and development of mass timber products used in building construction.

A bipartisan group of senators recently wrote to committee Chairman Pat Roberts, R-Kan., and ranking member Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., urging them to adopt the Timber Innovation Act, which would create a new research and development program under the USDA for mass timber.

U.S. building codes currently do not recognize mass timber as official construction materials, leaving the products without a standard rating system for fire and earthquake resistance, quality and other safety standards.

The bill also calls for studying the environmental footprint of wood building construction, from timber harvest through manufacturing, while analyzing potential impacts on wildlife.

Sen. Jeff Merkley, an Oregon Democrat, co-wrote the letter with Sen. Mike Crapo, R-Idaho. Merkley said he is working to establish Oregon as an industry hub for mass timber products to boost the rural economy, using locally sourced wood.

"This bill supports innovative manufacturing that creates jobs in the rural part of the state, and encourages more sustainable tall wood building construction in urban parts of the state," Merk-



Capital Press File
A worker guides a glulam beam into place Oct. 3, 2017, during construction of the First Tech Credit Union headquarters building in Hillsboro, Ore. The federal Timber Innovation Act would establish a research and development program under the USDA for mass timber products in building construction.

ley said in a statement.

Other senators who signed the letter include Ron Wyden, D-Ore.; Maria Cantwell, D-Wash.; James Risch, R-Idaho; Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn.; Steve Daines, R-Mont.; Roger Wicker, R-Miss.; Gary Peters, D-Mich.; and Angus King, I-Maine.

Supporters of the bill say it will not only create jobs, but establish a new market for small-diameter trees and branches, encouraging more active forest management at a time of increasingly large and destructive wildfires.

"There's a lot of forests throughout the West that are in need of restoration," said Timm Locke, director of forest products for the Oregon Forest Resources Institute. "If we don't remove the timber, those forests are going to go up in flames."

Mass timber construction

is relatively new in the U.S., though it has been popular since the mid-'90s in Europe. In Oregon, the first commercial-size building to use cross-laminated timber came in 2015 at the Oregon Zoo's Elephant Lands habitat.

Cross-laminated timber, or CLT, is made from planks of wood layered perpendicular to one another in large sheets. Mass timber also includes nail laminated timber, glue laminated beams and laminated veneer lumber.

"It's a new way to build commercial buildings, which harkens back to the old days, when almost all buildings were made out of wood," Locke said. "The bill would put money toward product research and development and product performance work, so we can meet the need of code officials to show this stuff actually works."

Locke pointed to a 2017 study by Oregon BEST, an economic development nonprofit for clean technology startups, measuring the economic impacts of cross-laminated timber. According to the study, the market potential for mass timber nationwide could result in an additional demand of up to 6.1 billion board-feet of lumber.

About 15 percent of wood consumed in the U.S. comes from Oregon, Locke said. With another 6.1 billion board-feet, at 15 percent market share, he estimated that

would result in 17,000 new jobs, including 6,000 direct jobs.

"It's all very interesting where this is headed," he said. "The Timber Innovation Act is only going to help that."

Arran Robertson, a spokesman for the Portland-based environmental group Oregon Wild, said he is encouraged the bill will take environmental and wildlife impacts into account, offering the chance to source wood differently from the forests, rather than industrial clear-cuts.

"This is an opportunity to create a marketplace to reward the people who are doing things a little bit different," Robertson said.

Thomas Maness, dean of the College of Forestry at Oregon State University, said there are "significant new market opportunities" for mass timber. Product testing, research and professional training will be key moving forward, Maness said, as the wood products and construction industries transition to using mass timber in taller and more complex structures.

Rob Freres, executive vice president of Freres Lumber in Lyons, Ore., said his business has already staked its future in mass timber.

"New product development provides the means to compete worldwide and gives rural communities the opportunity to prosper," Freres said.

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