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# Opinion

## Editorial Board

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## OUR VIEW

# Farm Bureau's loss is USDA's gain

We'd like to take a moment to wish Barry Bushue well in his new position as Oregon state executive director of the USDA Farm Service Agency.

Bushue operates a small farm in Boring, Ore., where he and his family have a farmstand and grow berries and pumpkins.

For nearly two decades Bushue served as president of the Oregon Farm Bureau. He served as vice president of the American Farm Bureau for eight years.

In those roles he has served the farmers and ranchers of Oregon well. During his tenure he has been at the forefront of issues vital to agriculture — labor, immigration, “hot goods,” water, regulation — on the national stage as well as here in the Pacific



Barry Bushue, long-time president of the Oregon Farm Bureau, is the new state executive director of the USDA Farm Service Agency.

Northwest.

His leadership at the national level included service on the AFBF Nursery & Greenhouse Committee, AFBF Trade Advisory

Committee, a national labor taskforce and a National Food Quality Protection Act workgroup.

Bushue served on the USDA Advisory Committee on

Biotechnology & 21st Century Agriculture, the Executive Committee of the United States Biotech Crop Alliance, and the Board of Directors of the Generic Event Marketability & Access Agreement Biotech Accord.

In Oregon, he served on the Executive Committee of Oregonians for Food & Shelter, a coalition that protects and advocates for access and safe use of pesticide, fertilizers and biotech tools for the agriculture and natural resource communities. He has worked on numerous task forces at the request of the governor, the state legislature, and with natural resource agencies on critical issues, including water quality and quantity, pesticide use, biotech, labor, navigability, public land grazing and wildlife

degradation.

In 2014 he was named Agriculturalist of the Year by the Oregon Agri-Business Council, now Oregon AgLink.

Bushue said he hopes to increase awareness of the many loan programs the Farm Service Agency offers through its county offices, including direct operating loans, microloans for small and beginning or non-traditional farmers, direct farm ownership loans and emergency loans.

“I think the programs are useful, they are valuable, they are important, they provide critical safety nets for folks,” Bushue said.

We think USDA has picked the right person, with the right background, for the job. We wish him all the best in his new role.

## OUR VIEW



Idaho Potato Commission

The Big Idaho Potato Truck makes promotional tours around the U.S. It's part of a national marketing campaign to set Idaho potatoes apart from others.

# Marketing, big potato truck recipe for success

Last June 9, as participants in the Rose Festival Parade lined up in downtown Portland, a truck drew most of the attention. It wasn't just any truck; it was the Big Idaho Potato Truck, a 72-foot-long semi with a 4-ton fiberglass potato on its flatbed.

Welcome to world of marketing. The truck and its big, whopping potato stem from a famous postcard of a giant potato on a truck with the caption, “We grow 'em big here in Idaho.”

As it turns out, there's no better way to attract attention than to show up with the Big Idaho Potato Truck staffed by the Tater Team — Jessica, Kaylee and Ron the driver.

In the case of the Rose Parade, upwards of 1.2 million people saw the truck, which certainly sparked conversations about, of all things, Idaho potatoes.

And that's the point. Raising public awareness of a crop isn't easy. Once you get beyond the basics — “Potatoes are good for you,” “Potatoes taste good,” “Potatoes are versatile” — you have to do something to keep up the conversation.

That's where marketing comes in. The Big Idaho Potato Truck is just one part of the toolkit the Idaho Potato Commission has developed to get the Idaho Potato brand in front of the public. The commission sponsors a college football bowl game, buys national

advertising, does promotions and uses dozens of other tools to promote the state's potatoes. Processors are even adopting the Idaho brand as part of their advertising and labeling.

While some may call it into question as an added expense, marketing, done right, makes money. The biggest brands in the nation use it. Banks, consumer goods manufacturers, car makers, retailers all use marketing as their game plan to raise the public's awareness of their products and services and to set themselves apart from the crowd.

And it's hard to argue with success. During the last 15 years the farm-gate revenue from Idaho potatoes is up more than 80

percent. Not bad. Considering the alternative — selling a straight commodity — marketing has done a good job for Idaho potato growers.

“There is more brand recognition for Idaho potatoes than for almost anything in the country,” Potato Growers of Idaho Executive Director Keith Esplin told Capital Press reporter Brad Carlson. “If they would quit that, in a few years potatoes would be a generic product.”

The Idaho Potato Commission and its president and CEO, Frank Muir, brought the marketing campaign to life. Starting 15 years ago, they recognized the need to make Idaho potatoes stand out from other crops and

cause consumers to seek out Idaho potatoes.

“Were these potatoes grown in Idaho? That is what we want people to ask,” Muir said.

Other crops and agricultural products also market themselves — think Tillamook cheese, Washington apples, Walla Walla onions, Hermiston watermelons, California milk, among many others. Those farmers understand that there's more to it than growing a high-quality crop or producing a high-quality product. Marketing and advertising attract, inform and motivate customers.

That's where the Idaho Potato Commission — and many others in agriculture — excel.

## Readers' views

### Recreation area poorly maintained

Welcome to your, the public's, Hells Canyon National Recreation Area.

Hells Canyon National Recreation Area was created by an act of Congress in 1975. Part of this act reads: “to assure that the natural beauty, and historical and archeological values of the Hells Canyon area ... are preserved for this and future generations, and that the recreational and ecologic values and public enjoyment of the area are thereby enhanced...”

The HCNRA is managed by the Oregon Wal-

### Letters policy

**Write to us:** Capital Press welcomes letters to the editor on issues of interest to farmers, ranchers and the agribusiness community.

**Letters policy:** Please limit letters to 300 words and include your home address and a daytime telephone number with your submission. Longer pieces, 500-750 words, may be considered as guest commentary pieces for use on the opinion pages. Guest commentary submissions should also include a photograph of the author.

Send letters via email to opinions@capitalpress.com. Emailed letters are preferred and require less time to process, which could result in quicker publication. Letters also may be sent to P.O. Box 2048, Salem, OR 97308; or by fax to 503-370-4383.

Iowa-Whitman National Forest, although it encompasses Nez Perce and Payette National Forest lands in Idaho.

Here are a couple of examples of the neglected landscape the public is intended to enjoy in this 652,488-acre “recreation area:” a vault toi-

let is closed for public use and visitors to the Kirkwood and Historical Ranch are greeted by a locked and brush-covered gate at the entrance.

Do you get a feeling of enjoyment or enhancement?

Shelley Neal  
Lucile, Idaho

### Cattlemen's Association, Farm Bureau endorse Buehler

The Oregon Cattlemen's Association and the Oregon Farm Bureau encourage Oregonians to vote for gubernatorial candidate Knute Buehler in the governor's election.

Knute has demonstrated he understands and cares about the challenges facing rural Oregonians and he'll serve our needs to help us overcome those challenges. It's essential for natural resource stakeholders to unify behind our candidate.

Your vote does make a difference. The mindset that “only Portland votes count” is not true. In the 2010 election, the number of rural voters who voted, but left the governor slot blank, was larger than the difference between John Kitzhaber and Chris Dudley. Your vote matters.

This race may be closer than ever before. Not voting, or writing in a name, is a vote against the values of rural Oregonians and it's a vote for more of the same in Salem.

The stakes are too high to risk. A quote from Ronald Reagan:

“Die-hard conservatives

thought that if I couldn't get everything I asked for, I should jump off the cliff with the flag flying — go down in flames. No, if I can get 70 or 80 percent of what it is I'm trying to get. ... I'll take that and then continue to try to get the rest in the future.”

The Oregon Cattlemen's Association and the Oregon Farm Bureau support Knute Buehler for Governor and encourage you to vote in this crucial election.

Jerome Rosa  
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