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Brad Carlson/Capital Press

Farmers Cooperative Ditch Co. board Vice President Bill Hartman of Hartman Farms in Parma, Idaho, performs a pre-trip inspection before delivering agricultural equipment to other farms.

Grow with the flow

Small cooperatives merge to create large companies that can serve large farms' needs

By BRAD CARLSON
Capital Press

PARMA, Idaho — Bill and John Hartman and their families have for years run a large farm outside Parma, Idaho, on their own.

But the Hartmans are team players, too, as their participation in cooperatives indicates.

“We belong to several,” Bill Hartman said. One benefit? “Local decision-making,” he said.

The Hartman brothers belong to the supply-and-service-focused Valley Wide Cooperative, Farmers Cooperative Ditch Co. — where Bill is vice president — and have been involved in an area onion-marketing cooperative.

John Hartman said Hartman Farms purchases fuel

from Valley Wide, often in small amounts as day-to-day needs dictate, “just because it’s handy next to us.”

For grain marketing, they recently started working with Pacific Northwest Farmers Cooperative in Genesee, Idaho.

Trend reflects ag

Member-owned, profit-sharing cooperatives are a welcome constant in the ever-changing agricultural industry. Though they are shrinking in number nationwide and getting larger thanks to mergers, cooperatives’ importance to farmers is increasing.

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Brad Carlson/Capital Press

Valley Wide Cooperative CEO Dave Holtom, left, and Controller Derek Brewer at the regional office in Nampa, Idaho.

Bills would classify large Oregon dairies ‘industrial’

Oregon lawmakers will be considering two bills in the 2019 legislative session that would classify large dairies as “industrial,” causing them to lose “right to farm” protections.

Don Jenkins
Capital Press file photo



Affected dairies would lose ‘right to farm’ protections

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

Large dairies would be classified as industrial facilities and subject to new restrictions under two bills to be considered by Oregon lawmakers next year.

At a Dec. 12 work session, the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources voted 4-2 to introduce the two bills during next year’s

legislative session along with a bevy of other “legislative concepts.”

Both pieces of legislation would apply to dairies with more than 2,500 cows, or 700 cows if they don’t have access to pasture.

If they were reclassified as industrial facilities, such dairies would be stripped of protections under Oregon’s “right to farm” law, which prohibits its local governments from imposing

restrictions on farms. The statute also bans lawsuits alleging nuisance or trespass against farms.

The two bills were prompted by the regulatory problems at Lost Valley Farm, a large dairy in Boardman that’s been cited for a multitude of wastewater violations since it began operating last year, said Ivan Maluski, policy director for Friends of Family Farmers, a nonprofit that supports strong dairy regulations.

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2018 Farm Bill a breakthrough for hemp

Lawmakers bullish on crop potential

By GEORGE PAVEN
Capital Press

Northwest hemp farmers scored a major victory last week with the passage of the 2018 Farm Bill, which legalized the crop and defined it as an “agricultural commodity.”

The legislation removes hemp from the list of federally controlled substances, including products made with derivative extracts such as cannabinoid, or CBD, oil.

Hemp is closely related to marijuana, but unlike pot it contains less than 0.3 percent of tetrahydrocannab-



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press File

Hemp grows in an Oregon field. Congress has legalized the crop nationwide.

inol, or THC, the psychoactive component that gets users high. CBD oils promote a host of health benefits, from pain relief to preventing seizures and lowering anxiety. Hemp can also be used to make fiber,

plastic and a building material known as “hempcrete” — a mixture of hemp stalks and lime.

Courtney Moran, a Portland attorney and president of the Oregon Industrial Hemp Farmers Association,

INSIDE: Hemp needs help from Washington lawmakers. PAGE 3

said the bill greatly clarifies hemp’s legal status at the federal level, allowing farmers to sign up for crop insurance, work with banks and do business across state lines.

“It’s very exciting that Congress has realized the economic and agricultural potential for hemp,” Moran said. “It’s an incredible day for cannabis, and for all farmers worldwide.”

Moran spent two years working with U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden’s office on legislation. The law also provides USDA oversight and fund-

ing for hemp research, and allows states and tribes to become the primary regulators of hemp production.

Oregon established its Industrial Hemp Program, overseen by the state Department of Agriculture, in 2016. By the end of the year, 70 growers and 53 handlers had registered with ODA. The program has since grown more than six-fold, with 582 growers and 212 handlers.

Moran said she sees the industry growing significantly more under the Hemp Farming Act moving forward.

“I think it’s an incredible impact,” she said.

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