

RURAL PULSE

Support for Trump remains steady



In this July 24, 2018, photo, corn grows in front of a barn carrying a large “Trump” sign in rural Ashland, Neb. President Donald Trump continues to be popular with many farmers.

THE RURAL VOTE WAS IMPORTANT IN THE LAST PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, AND IT’S GOING TO BE IMPORTANT IN THE 2020 ELECTION.

RURAL VOTERS ACCOUNTED FOR 17% OF THE ELECTORATE IN THE 2016 ELECTION AND TRUMP CARRIED 62% OF THE RURAL VOTE, ACCORDING TO EXIT POLLS.

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

B UHL, Idaho — Three years ago, dairy farmer John Brubaker saw presidential candidate Donald Trump as the lesser of two evils. Back then, Trump wouldn’t have been his first pick — but there was no way he’d vote for Hillary Clinton, the former U.S. senator and secretary of state under President Barack Obama. Fast forward to a cold, windy day checking cows on his dairy, and it’s a different story — Trump is now his top choice. “He has done a lot for rural America, and he has done a lot for the nation, in my opinion,” he said. Brubaker, 65, is one of Trump’s many rural backers, a segment that



Dairyman John Brubaker

helped push the New York real estate mogul and reality TV show boss over the top in the 2016 election. A recent poll by Grinnell College in Iowa shows that Trump’s approval rating among rural voters ranges from 56% to 63% on issues such as his performance as president, the economy and on immigration. Voters’ one caveat is the trade war with China, which has cost U.S. farmers billions of dollars in an already severe agriculture economic recession. Even so, the poll showed a 49% approval rating on China. Frustration over China and how long the trade dispute will linger — with Trump now saying a resolution

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How voters feel about President Trump

This portion of The Grinnell College National Poll illustrates how urban/rural Americans likely to vote view Donald Trump:

Category	Response (by percent)				
	City	Suburb	Town	Rural	Total
Definitely vote to re-elect Trump	31%	32	38	54	38
Consider someone else	12	14	18	10	13
Definitely vote to elect someone else	53	51	42	35	47
Not sure	3	2	2	1	2

Trump approval rate ...	Response (by percent)				
	City	Suburb	Town	Rural	Total
... As president	34%	36	45	56	40
... On the economy	45	48	54	63	50
... On immigration	34	33	45	56	40
... On trade with China	35	31	42	49	38

NOTE: Based on telephone interviews with 1,003 U.S. adults ages 18 or older, including 806 likely voters in the 2020 general election. Responses were adjusted by sex, age, and race to reflect the general population. Margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.
Source: Grinnell College; Selzer & Company, Oct. 17-23, 2019

Capital Press graphic

Tiegs prevails over Simplot in auction for NORPAC facility

Entrepreneur will buy Quincy, Wash., processing plant

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

PORTLAND — Farm entrepreneur Frank Tiegs has prevailed over the J.R. Simplot Co. in an auction to buy the bankrupt NORPAC cooperative’s processing plant in Quincy, Wash., for up to \$107 million. The transaction is significant for

farmers and workers in Oregon’s Willamette Valley because it’s considered necessary for Tiegs to also take over the operations of Oregon processing facilities in Brooks and Salem. Lineage Logistics, a Michigan-based cold storage company, has made a \$49 million offer to buy the bankrupt NORPAC cooperative’s Oregon processing facilities in Brooks, Salem and Stayton. NORPAC Foods has received a letter of intent to purchase the properties from Lineage Logistics, which would likely lease the Brooks and Salem

plants to Tiegs’ Oregon Potato Co., said Albert Kennedy, the cooperative’s attorney, during a Dec. 10 bankruptcy court hearing in Portland. He did not discuss what Lineage Logistics planned to do with the Stayton facility. Tiegs, owner of the Oregon Potato Co., had previously bid on NORPAC’s Oregon facilities and its processing plant in Quincy, Wash., but later backed out, citing environmental and

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Capital Press File

Workers at NORPAC Foods prepare onions for processing.

Hemp swamps market and machinery

Problems dampen enthusiasm for new crop

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

The surge of enthusiasm that spurred a five-fold expansion of Oregon’s hemp acreage this year has been dampened by numerous problems that prevented many farmers from cashing in on the crop.

A shortage of equipment necessary to harvest, dry and process hemp has forced many growers to abandon fields they initially hoped would reap robust financial rewards. “They got caught up in the grand illusion,” said Rick Kozen, a hemp entrepreneur whose Operation:

Hemp Aid is helping distressed growers. “It was almost set up for failure.” Expectations of strong revenues have often proven overly optimistic as the amount of hemp produced in Oregon and elsewhere has swamped the fledgling infrastructure needed to make finished products available to potential buyers.

“People heard there was a lot of money and they went into it fast and furious,” said Mark Taylor, founder of the Southern Oregon Hemp Co-Operative. “Poor planning produces poor results in any commerce.” To compound the logistical issues facing hemp farmers, ill-timed rain downpours, hail storms and freezing weather damaged

the crop’s quality in certain areas. While the 2019 season was bitterly disappointing for some hemp farmers, the turbulence and uncertainty are unfortunate “growing pains” that likely won’t permanently hamper the industry’s potential for profit, experts say.

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