

# Beef demand resilient through pandemic

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS  
Capital Press

The COVID-19 pandemic delivered significant disruptions to the beef industry, with slowdowns and shutdowns at meatpacking plants and foodservice. But domestic consumption stayed the same or increased slightly compared to 2019.

The retail fresh beef index was high in 2020, Joel Packham, University of Idaho Extension educator for Cassia County, said during the university's Ag Outlook Seminar.

There was a little bit of fear, and people wanted beef in their freezers, he said.

The retail fresh beef index rose 10 points year over year, according to the Livestock Marketing Information Center.

Wholesale beef demand went off the charts during May and June, he said.

"People were after wholesale beef in a way like never before,"



Capital Press File

**Beef demand remained higher in 2020 than initially projected.**

he said. CattleFax projects beef demand at retail went from 40.6% of combined retail and foodservice demand to 50%.

USDA's all fresh retail beef price was sky high in May, June and July, he said.

That price reached a peak of

\$7.40 a pound, and the annual forecast for 2020 is \$6.35 a pound. The all fresh retail beef price ranged from \$5.70 a pound to just under \$6 in 2019.

Total meat sale tonnage at retail was up 9% January through October, and dollar sales at retail were up 18% or \$11.5 billion. Beef's

share of the increased spending was 43.5% or \$5 billion, he said.

"People were willing to spend more on groceries, and they were really willing to spend it on beef," he said.

As for beef exports, they were forecast to be down 4.5% in 2020 but were up 10% in 2021 with a continuing upward trend. The largest U.S. customers are Japan, South Korea, Mexico and China, and the industry is looking for China to become a bigger player, he said.

Export markets aren't looking for hamburger, they're after choice grade beef or higher, he said.

"They're really enthralled with grain-fed, really high-quality beef from the U.S.," he said.

And quality grade has improved for U.S. beef. From 2009 to 2014, the percent choice and higher was at 70% to 73%. Now it's about 86% to 87%, and producers and breed associations need to be pat-  
ted on the back, he said.

"Those people have put beef on

the board," he said.

On the supply side, the national cattle herd is moving downward. Higher carcass weights are keeping production up, but cow numbers will get to the point where production will drop off, he said.

With cattle numbers dropping and strong exports, the 2021 price outlook for cattle appears on the rise, he said.

CattleFax projects fed steer prices at \$115 a hundredweight, compared to \$110 in 2020. The average price for 800-pound feeder steers is projected at \$145, compared to \$133 in 2020. The average price for 500-pound steer calves is projected at \$168, up from \$160 in 2020.

Bred cow prices are projected up slightly to \$1,600 a head. Cull cow prices are expected to average \$64 a hundredweight, up from \$62 in 2020.

Cow-calf returns are projected positive after being negative for most producers the last couple of years, he said.

# Oregon timber sales canceled to delay environmental lawsuit

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

The Oregon Department of Forestry has canceled two timber sales to postpone proceedings in an environmental lawsuit, which the timber industry considers a troubling development.

In 2018, several environmental groups filed a complaint accusing the ODF of violating the Endangered Species Act by allowing sediments from logging to harm protected coho salmon.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic and other reasons, the agency obtained a stay of the lawsuit in April that suspended the legal proceedings.

The litigation was further delayed after devastating wildfires burned more than 1 million acres of forestland in late summer.

The Center for Biological Diversity and two other environmental plaintiffs have now agreed to again delay the lawsuit until July 15, 2021, in exchange for ODF scrapping two timber sales totaling more than 440 acres in the Tillamook State Forest.

The ODF is working on a "habitat conservation plan" for multiple species in state forestlands, which the environmental lawsuit claims is necessary to avoid violating the ESA.

The agency plans to submit its plan to federal authorities for review with the goal of getting it approved in July 2022, which eventually "will moot this litigation," according to a court document.

The Oregon Forest Industries Council, which has intervened in the lawsuit,



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press File

**Two timber sales totaling more than 440 acres were canceled by the Oregon Department of Forestry to delay an environmental lawsuit.**

didn't object to the postponement but is concerned that environmental groups have "bullied" ODF to cancel the timber sales.

The plaintiffs have manipulated the state's timber harvest schedule to achieve a political compromise, even though those logging projects wouldn't endanger coho salmon, said Sara Duncan, OFIC's communications director.

"We don't think that's how things should be done," Duncan said.

Dropping the two timber sales could be perceived as ODF admitting the logging projects were problematic for protected species, which isn't accurate, said Mike Eliason, OFIC's general counsel.

"We don't think there is any legal basis for doing so," he said.

OFIC thinks the agency's proposed

habitat conservation plan is "overly conservative" but hopes the final version won't be as restrictive in terms of harvestable acreage, Eliason said. Even so, the group sees such plan negotiations as preferable to court battles.

"We want to see a better public process with more balanced outcomes, but that's better than constant litigation," he said.

The two logging projects would be expected to generate nearly 10 million board-feet of timber and more than \$3.2 million in gross revenues. After subtracting the costs of associated stream enhancements and other projects, the net income from the timber sales would be nearly \$2.5 million.

Tillamook County, which intervened in the case and would obtain a portion of that money, did not object to the lawsuit's postponement because ODF "agreed to replace lost timber volume" with alternative sales.

OFIC is nonetheless opposed to the cancellation because it sets a bad precedent, wasn't necessary to achieve the litigation stay and "undercuts the strong evidence that the state is not committing incidental take in violation of the ESA," Duncan said.

The Center for Biological Diversity, lead plaintiff in the lawsuit, pressed for the two timber sales to be canceled because they'd be harmful to coho salmon, said Noah Greenwald, its endangered species director. The plaintiffs are pleased with the deal, even though they also believe the habitat conservation plan should be improved.

# COVID-19 crinkled potato outlook in 2020

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS  
Capital Press

Last year at this time, potato supplies were tight, demand was solid and prices were expected to be strong in 2020, but COVID-19 scrambled that outlook.

"It's been a very big challenge for the industry and for people in general," said Bruce Huffaker, president of North American Potato Market News.

But there are some promising things for 2021, including vaccines and recovery from the depths of the downturn in the early months of the pandemic, he said during the University of Idaho Ag Outlook Seminar.

Looking at the global french fry trade, which is a microcosm of the potato industry, it was running about 11% above a year earlier from October 2019 through February 2020. From April to June it declined 30% below year-earlier levels, he said.

It's been recovering since then and was only down 2.8% in September, although North American french fry exports are still running about 15% behind last year's pace, he said.

Since 2003, global french fry trade has never declined from the previous year except for 2020. It won't be back on trend in 2021, but it might be able to get back there in 2022, he said.

Looking back on 2020, U.S. potato production fell 2.8%. Last spring, processors in the U.S. reduced their contract volumes by 15% to 20%, he said.

"With frozen processing making up about a third of the crop, you would have thought that would result in about a 15% production decline," he said.

Production was down 8.3% in Washington and up 10.2% in Oregon, a fairly minimal combined decline. French fry processors in the region cut contract acreage close to 20%, but yields came out much stronger than expected, he said.

Idaho also saw yield increases, resulting in a 4.3% increase in production,



McCain Foods

**French fries are produced at the McCain Foods plant in Burley, Idaho. Though french fry consumption was down dramatically earlier in 2020, it has greatly rebounded.**

although acreage was down. Some people don't believe the crop is as big as reported, but it's at least as big as last year, he said.

Year-over-year shipments of fresh potatoes in the U.S. were up 6.8% in 2020 to Dec. 1, he said.

"That increase in demand is a result of COVID-19, but it's a mixed bag," he said.

Retail sales of 5- and 10-pound consumer bags are way up, and the government food box program also boosted demand for those potatoes.

On the other hand, shutdowns and slowdowns in foodservice have put a drag on business, he said.

That's created a problem for major shippers in Idaho who are heavily reliant on foodservice, he said.

New-crop potato demand for processed product was down 5.7% to December. One factor is the slowdown backed up potatoes from the 2019 crop. The other is while domestic demand has recovered, export demand is not as good as a year ago, he said.

Processing of both old and new crop was down 11.8% June through November, and that big drop is a concern, he said.

"Although the evidence now is that the biggest part of the decline, at least in the Pacific Northwest, is behind us," he said.

Demand in the region is strong and plants are running near capacity, he said.

"Overall, there is no big change in usage patterns now from what it was a year ago in the Pacific Northwest," he said.

# Feds take comment on phosphate mine proposed in SE Idaho

By BRAD CARLSON  
Capital Press

Federal officials plan to take public comment through Jan. 22 on a proposed phosphate mine in southeast Idaho.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management's Idaho Falls District is preparing an envi-

ronmental impact statement to address Itafos Conda LLC's mining and reclamation plan for the proposed Husky 1 North Dry Ridge phosphate mine.

Itafos proposes to develop several phosphate leases it holds on Dry Ridge, about 16 miles northeast of Soda Springs.

BLM said in a news release that operations at the new mine would be similar to Itafos' Rasmussen Valley Mine and would begin in time to allow a transition as Rasmussen is depleted.

BLM and the U.S. Forest Service will take public comment on the scope of the analysis and on identification of relevant information, studies and analyses.

BLM's Idaho Falls District plans a virtual public meeting from 4 to 5:30 p.m. Jan. 11. District Manager Mary D'Aversa said goals include having the public "let us know what they believe is important for the BLM to address when considering the proposal and developing different management alternatives to address it."

Water quality and the impacts on fish and wildlife, are among the environmental concerns about phosphate mining.

The mines provide minerals for use in products that support agriculture, wildfire suppression and other industries. Mines in the area provide about 22% of the U.S. and 4% of the worldwide

phosphate supply.

The Federal Register notice said the preliminary proposed action plan calls for Itafos to exercise and modify mine leases, operate two open pits, mine in phases and backfill and cover pits with earth or compacted clay to minimize contaminant releases.

BLM and the Forest Service said in the notice that they expect to release of a draft EIS in May, a final EIS in November and the agencies' Records of Decision in February 2022.

Previous plans submitted by Nu-West Mining's Agrium Canada Phosphate Operations are no longer under consideration, and related EIS preparations have ceased, the notice said.

## LEGAL

### PURSUANT TO ORS CHAPTER 87

Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 01/04/2021. The sale will be held at 10:00am by

COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY  
WOODBURN, OR  
2019 TOYOTA COROLLA 4DR  
VIN = 2T1BURHE7KC203364  
Amount due on lien \$1,955.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
METLIFE

SZ21489-1

## LEGAL

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Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 01/04/2021. The sale will be held at 10:00am by

COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY  
WOODBURN, OR  
2018 SUBARU WRX 4DR  
VIN = JF1VA1A62J9810115  
Amount due on lien \$1,835.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
ABRAHAM ENRIQUE ANDRADE  
GM FINANCIAL

SZ21476-1

## LEGAL

### PURSUANT TO ORS CHAPTER 87

Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 01/04/2021. The sale will be held at 10:00am by

COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY  
WOODBURN, OR  
2014 KIA SOUL LL  
VIN = KNDJN2A28E713504  
Amount due on lien \$1,835.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
AARON D LEWIS & SARAH R ORTON  
UNITED FINANCE CO

SZ21440-1

## LEGAL

### PURSUANT TO ORS CHAPTER 87

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY  
WOODBURN, OR  
2019 HARLEY FLHRXS MC  
VIN = 1HD1KVP14KB627400  
Amount due on lien \$1,835.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
RYAN KEITH RICHARDSON

SZ21477-1

## LEGAL

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY  
WOODBURN, OR  
2016 HONDA HR V UV  
VIN = 3CZR6H37GM713525  
Amount due on lien \$1,855.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
MACKENZIE E & RUSSELL D MINTEN  
ONPOINT COMMUNITY CU

SZ21447-1

## LEGAL

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY  
WOODBURN, OR  
2015 LEXUS NX200 UT  
VIN = JTJBARB24F2031784  
Amount due on lien \$1,835.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
TANYA MABEL VIRULA  
ONPOINT COMMUNITY CU

SZ21478-1

## LEGAL

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY  
WOODBURN, OR  
2010 HONDA CIVIC 4DR  
VIN = 19XFA1F6XAE017633  
Amount due on lien \$1,835.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
LINDA L MANNING  
ONPOINT COMMUNITY CU

SZ21448-1

## LEGAL

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY  
WOODBURN, OR  
2013 VW PASSAT 4DR  
VIN = 1VWVNC7A30DC122214  
Amount due on lien \$1,835.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
CASEY JAMES MCKEEVER  
OREGON COMMUNITY CU

SZ21479-1

## LEGAL

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY  
WOODBURN, OR  
2017 SUBARU IMPREZA 4DR  
VIN = 453GTAD68H3708369  
Amount due on lien \$1,835.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
TLC MED TRANSPORT INC/DON CRITES  
JPMORGAN CHASE BANK NA

SZ21454-1

## LEGAL

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY  
WOODBURN, OR  
2014 MAZDA 6 4DR  
VIN = JM1GJ1W65E1143265  
Amount due on lien \$1,835.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
ELIZABETH J & JASON S ELLISON  
CAPITAL ONE FSB

SZ21480-1

## LEGAL

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY  
WOODBURN, OR  
2008 DODGE 1500 PU  
VIN = 3D7K519D88G177357  
Amount due on lien \$1,815.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
ALTERNATIVE POWER SYSTEM LLC

SZ21456-1

## LEGAL

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY  
WOODBURN, OR  
2019 INFINITI QX60 LL  
VIN = 5N1DL0MM9K557797  
Amount due on lien \$1,835.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
MICAH P CASTANEDA  
ONPOINT COMMUNITY CU

SZ21481-1

## LEGAL

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY  
WOODBURN, OR  
2016 KIA SOUL UT  
VIN = KNDJ3A52G7242494  
Amount due on lien \$1,835.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
RICK LEE SOVEREIGN  
SLECO COMMUNITY CU

SZ21459-1