



**'WE HAVE ALL OF THIS DATA, WE KNOW WHERE WE'VE BEEN, WE KNOW WHERE WE'RE GOING AND WE HAVE A RESEARCH TEAM THAT'S PROVEN WE CAN PULL OFF THIS LEVEL OF SCIENCE IN A COLLABORATIVE WAY.'** — Jodi Johnson-Maynard, leader of the new study, Landscapes in Transition

# MAPPING THE FUTURE OF NW FARMING



Melissa Hartley

Jodi Johnson-Maynard leads to new Landscapes in Transition research project aimed at helping farmers thrive as the climate changes.

## Researchers continue efforts to help farmers as climate changes

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**  
Capital Press

**G**ENESEE, Idaho—The weather is different these days than when Eric Odberg was a kid.

There's less snow, wetter springs and hotter, drier summers, he says.

"We have more extremes," the 50-year-old Genesee, Idaho, farmer said. "It seems like we get stuck in a weather pattern for an extended period of time, and it takes a long time to get out of it, and then shift into another extreme."

Odberg is working with University of Idaho researchers to "weather-proof" his farm as part of the Landscapes in Transition project. They are studying cover crops and



rotations of winter peas on 3.5 acres Odberg owns outside Genesee. It's the latest step scientists and farmers are taking to learn what climate change means for growers — and how they can adjust.

### Study in 'bigness'

The Landscapes in Transition study began in 2017 and follows on the heels of a \$20 million, six-year regional study aimed at helping farmers remain profitable in the face of a changing climate. That study was known as Regional Approaches to Climate Change, or REACCH.

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Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Genesee, Idaho, farmer Eric Odberg pauses while seeding canola near the Landscapes in Transition test plots March 23.

## How the \$19 billion in federal aid will help farmers and ranchers

By **SIERRA DAWN MCCLAIN**  
Capital Press

The USDA has announced \$19 billion in federal aid that will be distributed this spring to help farms and ranches across the U.S. survive the plunging prices caused by the COVID-19 shutdowns.

The package, called the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, is part of the \$2 trillion Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act that Congress passed in March.

"The program will include direct payments to farmers, as well as mass



**Sonny Perdue**

purchases of dairy, meat and agricultural produce to get that food to the people in need," President Trump said at a White House briefing April 17.

CFAP will issue \$16 billion in direct payments to farmers and ranchers and \$3 billion in food purchases.

Industry experts say the aid comes at a critical time. Across the nation, farms that have lost restaurant orders and can't divert supply lines in time

are dumping thousands of gallons of fresh milk into lagoons and manure pits, digging ditches to bury produce and plowing under ripe vegetables.

"The losses are devastating," said Michael Nepveux, economist at the American Farm Bureau. "This aid package is so necessary."

But how will USDA officials decide which commodities and individual farmers and ranchers will receive aid?

### Direct payments

Although USDA has not confirmed final numbers for direct payments to

farms and ranches, Nepveux said a leaked copy of an embargoed release gives approximations, including:

- \$9.6 billion for the livestock industry, including \$5.1 billion for cattle, \$2.9 billion for dairy and \$1.6 billion for hogs.
- \$3.9 billion for row crops.
- \$2.1 billion for specialty crops.
- \$500 million for other sectors, including poultry, sheep, hemp and niche sectors.

None of the money will be used for biofuels or ethanol, Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue said at a press briefing Friday.

Nepveux said the Farm Bureau is advising USDA so producers suffering losses, including small farms, won't be overlooked.

"We don't want to leave anyone behind," said Nepveux.

### Direct aid

To qualify for direct aid, a commodity must have declined in price by at least 5% between Jan. 1 and April 15.

According to industry experts, most agricultural products easily

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## Three other applicants compete for Hammond grazing allotments

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**  
Capital Press

Oregon's Hammond Ranches will be vying with at least three other applicants for access to federal grazing allotments that it lost in a court ruling last year.

The company submitted one of four applications to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management to use the 26,000 public acres, where the Hammond family has traditionally grazed cattle near its home base in Diamond, Ore.

However, Hammond Ranches may still reactivate an administrative appeal against the BLM by May 12 that would suspend the competition for the grazing allotments, at least until the legal challenge is resolved.

Steven Hammond, the company's co-owner, said he hasn't yet decided whether to continue that administrative process.



Capital Press File

**Three applicants will compete with the Hammond family for access to federal allotments in Oregon where it's traditionally grazed cattle.**

The BLM said it's not making information publicly available about who has applied for grazing access to the four allotments.

Steven Hammond and his father, Dwight, had been convicted of arson and imprisoned for mandatory five-year terms but were released in 2018

after President Donald Trump fully pardoned both ranchers.

The grazing permit that had been taken away from the Hammonds after their arson convictions was restored by the BLM in early 2019, but that decision was challenged by environmentalists and overturned by a federal

judge in December.

Last month, the agency announced that it'd be accepting applications for access to the four grazing allotments because this would bring about the "most expeditious resolution" to the matter.

The Oregon Cattlemen's Association would have preferred if nobody else competed for the allotments and Jerome Rosa, its executive director, said he was personally surprised that three other applications had been turned in.

"I felt like there was quite a bit of community support and industry support for the Hammonds," he said.

Without knowing who the applicants are, it's possible that some intend to use the acreage for environmental or recreational purposes rather than commercial ranching, Rosa said.

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