



'WE ARE AGGRESSIVE FIGHTERS FOR THE INTERESTS OF OUR MEMBERS, AND WE MAKE NO APOLOGIES FOR IT.'

Bill Bullard, CEO R-CALF



A VOICE FOR RANCHERS

Courtesy of Bill Bullard

R-CALF USA CEO Bill Bullard hopes to preserve and protect the industry's fed cattle cash market. "It is the Holy Grail for our industry in terms of preserving and promoting competition," he said.

BILL BULLARD

Occupation: CEO, R-CALF
Age: 62
Hometown: Pierre, S.D.
Current location: Billings, Mont.
Family: Wife Jeanne, three children, five grandchildren
Education: Bachelor's degree in political science, Black Hills State University, Spearfish, S.D.
Website: <https://www.w-r-calfusa.com/>

R-CALF's Bill Bullard speaks up for independent ranchers

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

When Bill Bullard gets up to speak to a group of ranchers, he's all business. He doesn't open with a joke or a humorous story. He's not there as the after-dinner entertainment.

He's there to tell them why the U.S. is losing its ranches, and why cattle prices are down as consumers continue to pay record high beef prices.

He talks about the legal battles being fought on their behalf in courts, and those that are on the horizon.

For nearly two decades, Bullard,

62, has been the CEO of the national nonprofit Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund United Stockgrowers of America, or R-CALF USA. R-CALF claims it is the nation's largest rancher-only organization, representing about 5,800 cattle and sheep producers in 43 states on trade and marketing issues.

The organization's priorities include mandatory country-of-origin labeling for U.S. meat and dairy products, the right to choose which animal identification technologies to use, animal health and property rights.

Bullard believes in R-CALF and what it stands for. Whether he's meeting with ranchers in a small hotel meeting room or going to court to stick up for ranchers, he says he's all-in.

"It's a part of me," Bullard said. "I'm grounded in it. My first passion was being a cow-calf producer."

Family ranchers

R-CALF got its start in 1998, when three ranchers filed an

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Courtesy of Bill Bullard
Bill Bullard, CEO of R-CALF USA, tends to his horses in Billings, Mont.

Health officials report progress in Washington's No. 1 farm county

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

Health officials are crediting a recent decline in new COVID-19 cases in Washington's top farm county to more people wearing masks in public.

The trend in Yakima County in Central Washington contrasts with rising cases in King, Pierce and Snohomish counties in Western Washington, according to a report led by the Institute for Disease Modeling in Seattle.

Yakima County leads



Elaine Thompson/Associated Press

Cirio Hernández works in an orchard in Yakima, Wash., on June 16.

the state in farmworkers and still leads in per capita cases of the coronavirus. Health officials, however, say that efforts to control the virus since late May are showing signs of success.

"Progress from the peak, though minor at this point, is encouraging," according to the institute's June 25 report.

More than 1-in-4 hired farm laborers in Washington work in Yakima County, according to the USDA's Census of Agriculture. The value of farm goods produced in the county in 2017 was more than \$1.9 billion.

While other businesses were closed, agriculture was deemed essential and kept operating this spring prior to the state writing industry-specific safety rules. Some workers at fruit packing warehouses

in Yakima County struck in May and June over working conditions and hazard pay.

Edgar Franks, political director for the farmworker union Familias Unidas por la Justicia, said Tuesday he did not know of any agricultural workers still striking. Concerns about the virus have been surpassed by unrelated workplace complaints, he said.

The union remains concerned about the enforcement of virus-protection rules set by the state, Franks said. "The work is going to peak in a couple of weeks, and we definitely don't want workers sick."

The state does not track COVID-19 cases by occupation or attempt to trace whether they were exposed at work or in the community.

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Wine grape growers brace for COVID-19 hit, call for federal aid

By SIERRA DAWN MCCLAIN
Capital Press

DUNDEE, Ore. — Wine grape growers are joining the list of agricultural groups calling on USDA for financial relief.

Recent industry research from Gomberg, Fredrikson and Associates, a wine data analytics organization, projected that by the end of 2020, U.S. wine grape growers will lose at least \$5.94 billion.

"Most of our wholesale business evaporated, and we're the lucky ones because we were already mostly direct-to-consumer. I'm hearing stress in the voices of a lot of growers who don't have all their fruit sold for the year," said Donna Morris, a grower and owner of Winderlea Vineyard and Winery in Dundee, Ore.

According to data released in June, California growers are expected to lose \$437 million in sales this year.

In May, Oregon growers lost, on average, 73% of sales in tasting rooms and 45% in wholesale, according to the Oregon Wine Board.

Sara Higgins, advocacy and education manager for the Washington Winegrowers Association, said her organization has contracted a firm to do an eco-



Sierra Dawn McClain/Capital Press

Wine industry associations in California, Oregon and Washington are calling on USDA to include wine grape growers in the next round of federal aid.

nomie impact report for Washington state, which should be ready in August. Anecdotally, she said small wineries especially are experiencing COVID-19 fallout.

Despite these challenges, wine grape growers were left out of the USDA's \$16 billion federal farm aid package, the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, called CFAP for short.

Experts say the reason wine grape growers weren't included is their

commodity has not yet seen a price decline for 2020. Wine grapes will be harvested and crushed this fall, and that is when growers will feel the hit — when they struggle to find a home for their fruit.

Because of the drop-off in wine sales this spring and summer, wine researchers predict that certain wines will not sell in their expected timeframe, slowing grape sales.

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