

Delays create logistics ‘nightmare’ for hay exporters

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
Capital Press

Washington hay exporters and farmers are hampered by continuing container and truck driver shortages.

“A lot of the hay that’s sold has a market to go to, it’s just having a hard time getting off the farm,” said Shawn Clausen, a Warden, Wash., farmer and past president of the Washington Hay Growers Association.

Shipping can be delayed for up to three months, with cancellations and re-bookings, he said.

“It’s been an absolute logistics nightmare for these export companies,” Clausen said, pointing to a truck

driver shortage and higher fuel prices. “It just keeps getting worse for these exporters trying to move this product. They bought it at a fair price last fall, they thought they had it all lined out.”

Shipping and trucking companies are raising prices or exporters are having to offer more incentives, wiping out their margins, he said.

Quality of the hay isn’t affected by the delay, as long as it’s properly stored, Clausen said.

“One problem is you cannot make up time, in a factory where they process the hay,” he said. “They can only get so much production per day. Lost time is lost revenue.”



Capital Press File

Hay growers report exporters are encountering delays in overseas shipments.

Some companies will have some “wiggle room,” if they can get the containers, Clausen said.

“New crop is coming and they’ve got all this money

still invested in old crop that should have been delivered (and) they should have been paid on,” he said.

Exporter delays in payment get passed on to the

farmer, Clausen added.

The USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service reported Washington on-farm hay stocks totaled 220,000 tons, up 38% from last year. May 1 stocks represent 8% of 2020 production.

In Idaho, hay stocks on farms on May 1, 2021, totaled 410,000 tons in Idaho, down 16% from a year ago. May 1 stocks represent 8% of 2020 production.

In Oregon, on-farm hay stocks totaled 290,000 tons, down 27% from 2020. May 1 stocks are 10% of 2020 production.

Clausen isn’t certain the NASS numbers are accurate for Washington.

“I’m not sure I believe

those numbers, that there’s that much hay out there on the farm,” he said. “I don’t believe there’s as strong a carryover as they’re saying.”

Old crop large squares of alfalfa hay bring \$155 per ton in the Columbia Basin.

With the high price of Midwest soybeans and corn and drought conditions, Clausen expects demand for feed hay to increase.

Prices have increased about \$10 to \$20 per ton in the last two months, he said, adding that the industry is in price discovery mode.

“I see the bottom of the market coming up ... and I notice the top price is bumped up,” he said. “I think it still has room to move.”

USDA and Interior Department gear up for dangerous wildfire year

By **SIERRA DAWN MCCLAIN**
Capital Press

WASHINGTON, D.C. — USDA and the Department of the Interior are gearing up for what’s expected to be one of the most intense fire years in recent history.

“May is wildfire awareness month, but these days, it seems as if the fire season is the entire year,” Deb Haaland, secretary of the Interior, told reporters in a press call Thursday.

The National Inter-agency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, predicts 2021 will be another above-average year for wildfire potential in the West.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack told reporters he’s “troubled” the signals suggest the U.S. is “headed into yet another very dangerous fire year.”

Jeff Rupert, director of the Interior’s Office of Wildland Fire, agreed 2021’s fire outlook is bad. Nationwide, 550,000 acres are currently burning, and the Southwest already has five large, active fires in mid-May.

More than 90% of the West is experiencing some level of drought, according to agency data. Rupert said he expects the worst fires across California, where drought is acute, but he also anticipates wildfires will hit the Pacific Northwest in June, July and August.

“The drought now is worse than this time last year, and the fire potential across the West is worse,” he said.

In 2020, more than 10.3 million acres burned across the U.S., a record year and more than 50% higher than the 10-year average.

Haaland and Vilsack told reporters what their agencies are doing to gear up for the season.

The Department of the Interior’s land management agencies and USDA are combining resources for a record-sized fire-fighting team for this time of year, including 15,000 firefighters, more than 500

helicopters, 91 single-engine airtankers, up to 34 airtankers, 360 pieces of heavy equipment and more than 1,600 engines.

These resources will supplement state and local forces.

Vilsack said USDA and the Interior Department staff have been identifying regions where they think the highest fire risks are and pre-positioning people and supplies at those locations.

2021 will probably be better than 2020 in at least one way, said USDA staff. Firefighters who wanted to get vaccinated were able to do so this year, which could relieve some pressure surrounding COVID-19 protocols.

Firefighting last year was a nightmare, agency leaders said, because of social distancing and safety requirements related to COVID-19.

“It was incredibly stressful,” said Patty Grantham, acting director of fire and aviation management at USDA’s Forest Service.

Haaland of the Interior Department said her agency will seek to reduce wildfire risk by confronting climate change, promoting strategic fuels management, investing in new science and technology, hiring personnel, empowering communities to help reduce fire risk and building stronger partnerships with native American tribes.

Vilsack said he’s hopeful President Biden’s American Jobs Plan will pass Congress. It would invest billions of dollars in forest restoration, fuels management and post-wildfire restoration.

But the Jobs Plan, also known as Biden’s infrastructure package, is controversial and lacks bipartisan support because it would increase corporate taxes.

Regardless of what happens with the infrastructure plan, Vilsack said the Forest Service will request more money from Congress to fight wildfires.

Inslee, Murray on Simpson plan: More work necessary

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
Capital Press

U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., and Gov. Jay Inslee say Idaho Rep. Mike Simpson’s plan to remove four Snake River dams cannot be included in federal infrastructure package.

Instead, they’re calling for more regional collaboration.

“While we appreciate Representative Simpson’s efforts and the conversations we have had so far with tribes and stakeholders, it is clear more work within the Pacific Northwest is necessary to craft a lasting, comprehensive solution,” Inslee and Murray said in a joint press release.

U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., told the Seattle Times she also does not support the Simpson proposal, though she does support salmon recovery in the Columbia Basin and across the region and collaborative processes to get there.

Murray and Inslee say regional collaboration is needed “now more than ever.”

Any solution must honor tribal treaty rights, ensure reliable transportation and use of the river; ensure ongoing access for fishermen and sportsmen, guarantee Washington farmers remain competitive and are able to get farm products to market; and deliver reliable, affordable and clean energy, they stated.

Inslee and Murray called



Associated Press File

The Lower Granite Dam on the Snake River near Pomeroy, Wash.

for “a formal, regional process that is based on science, consensus, and ensuring all voices in the region are heard.”

Simpson has not proposed any legislation. He offered his plan in February. It was rejected by agricultural stakeholders and environmental groups.

In a statement, the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association, which supports navigation, trade and economic development on the river system, said the organization is “encouraged” by the Inslee-Murray statement and strongly supports a “collabo-

orative, science-based process that seeks to restore salmon runs and works for all the stakeholders and communities in the Columbia River Basin.”

“Gov. Inslee and Washington’s two senators are right to reject Rep. Simpson’s deeply flawed proposal to remove the four lower Snake River dams,” Sophia Ressler, Washington wildlife attorney with the Center for Biological Diversity, said in a press release.

Inslee and Murray say groups like the Columbia Basin Collaborative — convened by Inslee and the gov-

ernors of Idaho, Oregon and Montana — could help identify a path to achieving consensus.

A 2020 federal report rejected dam breaching.

NOAA’s biological opinion found that breaching the dams would benefit the fish in the long term but would also impact the environmental, socioeconomic and cultural aspects of river operations.

The preferred alternative calls for making changes at the dams to improve passage and conditions for salmon and other fish listed under the Endangered Species Act.

Judges dismiss Cow Palace suit against EPA

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

A Central Washington dairy waited too long to challenge a study linking it to high levels of nitrates in drinking water in the Yakima Valley, a federal court has ruled.

In a decision posted online May 14, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals dismissed a suit filed by the Cow Palace dairy and the Washing-

ton State Dairy Federation against the Environmental Protection Agency.

The suit alleged the EPA misled the dairy about the study’s strength, coercing the dairy in 2013 to undertake extensive and expensive measures to prevent groundwater contamination.

Cow Palace owner Adam Dolsen declared that he didn’t learn about the deception until he met with EPA officials in 2019. He and the dairy federation filed the suit in 2020.

A three-judge panel ruled that the lawsuit should have been filed within 45 days of Dolsen’s meeting with the EPA, the window for challenging EPA actions taken under the Safe Water Drinking Act.

Dairy Federation director Dan Wood said Friday that the dairy and federation initially tried to negotiate with the EPA, rather than sue.

The dairy and federation also needed more EPA documents before deciding whether to go to court, he said.

“The EPA controlled the release of those documents,” Wood said. “Basically, they delayed releasing the information that would have held them accountable, and they got away with it.”

The EPA declined to comment on the ruling. In court, the EPA rejected claims that it duped Cow Palace and other dairies into the agreements, which included lining manure lagoons to toxic-waste standards, costing dairies millions of dollars.

Wood said the ruling likely ends the case. “We could appeal, but it’s too much of a long shot. We’re left with an injustice,” he said.

Cow Palace agreed to operational changes soon after the EPA finished a study linking dairies to contaminated wells.

The report was classified in some EPA documents as “influential,” an official designation reserved for studies with a high level of peer review and used in regulatory actions.

According to the lawsuit, the EPA revealed in a meeting in 2019 that the study had been classified as “other,” a lower category.

“This does not make one confident that we live in a nation of laws,” Dolsen said in a statement.

“How can we trust the actions of federal officials when judges allow them to create false science, lie about the necessary review, delay providing documents that prove their guilt and then claim our complaints are too late?”

The EPA said that the study’s designation didn’t change its findings that linked the dairies to elevated levels of nitrates.

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR 2020 TOYOTA 4RUNNER SW
VIN = JTEBU5JR2L5834149
Amount due on lien \$1435.00
Reputed owner(s)
JOHN FRANCIS SARRAZIN
FIFTH THIRD BANK NTNL ASSOCIATION

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15114 MANNING RD WOODBURN, OR 2016 NISSAN VERSA 4D
VIN = 3N1CE2CPXGL352182
Amount due on lien \$5605.00
Reputed owner(s) FERNANDO MARTINEZ GARCIA
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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR 2016 FORD EDGE UT
VIN = 2FMPK4K90GBB44230
Amount due on lien \$1435.00
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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
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VIN = 1FTKR4EE7BPA69420
Amount due on lien \$1555.00
Reputed owner(s)
JAMES D & LINDA HUGHES
MANOR RESOURCES LLC

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VIN = 5N1AL0MM1DC332067
Amount due on lien \$1555.00
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VIN = WA1JCCF55HR001183
Amount due on lien \$1555.00
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KATHRYN KING ARCHIE
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2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR 2008 DODGE 3500 PU
VIN = 3D7MX38A98G233951
Amount due on lien \$2355.00
Reputed owner(s)
JOHANNA HALE & MITCHELL WALTERS

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2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR 2015 MAZDA CX 5 UT
VIN = JM3KE4DY9F0487555
Amount due on lien \$2655.00
Reputed owner(s)
MARK S & ERIN E ENNIS
JPMORGAN CHASE BANK NA

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR 2019 FORD F 450 CB
VIN = 1FDTF4HT1KDA27572
Amount due on lien \$1555.00
Reputed owner(s)
4C S ENVIRONMENTAL INC
FORD MOTOR CREDIT CO