

Drought: 'It caught us off-guard'

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"We expect the impacts to fall mostly on dryland areas," Ecology drought coordinator Jeff Marti said.

Conditions were far worse in 2015. Washington declared a statewide drought that year on May 15. At the time, Ecology had little money on hand for relief, but lawmakers were still in session to appropriate emergency funds.

By late summer, Ecology was able to distribute \$6.7 million for 15 public drought-relief projects. Several irrigation districts received grants.

Ecology called the drought a "learning experience." The

agency wrote a drought contingency plan in 2018. The plan recommended "more certainty regarding the availability of drought funding" for a more timely response.

The Legislature has adjourned for this year. No budget proposal, from the governor's office or Democratic or Republican lawmakers, included money for emergency drought relief.

"We didn't think it was going to happen," Warnick said. "It caught us off-guard."

In passing cap-and-trade and low-carbon fuels bills, the Legislature cited droughts as a reason for passing the climate-change measures.

Organic: Across all categories, growth limited by supply

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with our families, and often cooking three meals a day," said Laura Batcha, the association's CEO and executive director.

"Good, healthy food has never been more important, and consumers have increasingly sought out the organic label," she said.

Fresh organic produce sales rose by nearly 11% in 2020 to \$18.2 million. Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables also jumped with frozen sales alone rising by more than 28%.

Including frozen, canned and dried products, total sales of organic fruit and vegetables in 2020 were \$20.4 billion. More than 15% of the fruits and vegetables sold in U.S were organic.

Pantry stocking was overwhelmingly the main growth driver in 2020. Sales of organic flours and baked goods grew by 30%.

Sales of sauces and spices pushed the \$2.4 billion condiments category to a growth rate of 31%, and organic spice sales jumped by 51% — more than triple the growth rate of 15% in 2019.

Meat, poultry and fish, the smallest of the organic categories at \$1.7 billion, had the second-highest growth rate of nearly 25 percent.

"The only thing that constrained growth in the organic food sector was supply," said Angela Jagiello, the association's director of education and insights.

"Across all the organic categories, growth was limited by sup-

ply, causing producers, distributors, retailers and brands to wonder where numbers would have peaked if supply could have been met," she said.

Ingredients and packaging were both in short supply, as were workers and drivers to transport product.

The organic non-food category did not see the same exceptional growth in 2020 as organic food, but its growth held steady with prior years. Sales of organic non-food products reached \$5.4 billion, up 8.5% and only slightly below the 9.2% growth reported in 2019.

This year's survey was conducted from January through March by Nutrition Business Journal. Nearly 200 companies completed a significant portion of the in-depth survey.

Pulses: 'I think these crops have been just horribly under-researched'

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Today, pulse production has also spread eastward to nearly 2 million acres in Montana, North and South Dakota and Nebraska.

Pulses will continue to generate that same level of growth in the next 10 years, McGreevy predicts.

"We could be at 10 million acres in the United States, and in so many different parts of the country, just because of the aggregates that they bring," he said, referring to the health and soil benefits that pulses provide.

'Never even wore a tie'

McGreevy comes from an agriculture-related family. His father, Dan, started a fertilizer and chemical business, which was purchased by the McGregor Co. Dan worked for the McGregor Co. for 33 years as a plant manager in Pullman, Wash.

His mother, Margaret, studied animal science and went on to become a Whitman County, Wash., commissioner.

The couple met at Washington State College — now Washington State University — in the 1950s and kept a small farm, raising dairy and beef cattle, pigs and chickens.

Tim is the second of nine children. "There's a bunch," he said. Two siblings are also involved in agriculture.

McGreevy's father passed away in 2010, and his mother in 2019.

McGreevy graduated from WSU in 1983 with a bachelor's degree in general agriculture and communications and a master's degree in agricultural economics.

He wanted to be a farmer.

"There was just a deep longing, a deep connection to the ground," he said. "I just loved the work, planting things and watching things grow."

During college and after graduation, McGreevy worked for a farmer and rancher who owned a 600-acre operation not far from the council office where he works today.

"That was just a little bit of serendipity," McGreevy said.

But the Russian grain embargo of 1980 meant commodity prices were "super low" and interest rates were "super high," meaning McGreevy didn't have the capital to buy the farm when the farmer wanted to sell.

"I was devastated, of course, at the time," he said. "My dream of being a commercial farmer on the Palouse was dashed. But we're all on a journey. Instead, my path was to work with farmers."

McGreevy's mother spotted a newspaper advertisement for executive director of the Idaho Wheat Growers Association, which later became the Idaho Grain Producers Association.

"I came right off the combine, got on (my) first airplane ride, ever, never even wore a tie in my life ... and went to Boise, interviewed and they offered me the position," McGreevy said.

McGreevy later helped to form the Idaho Barley Commission using checkoff dollars in 1989 and became its first administrator.

Then he was recruited to apply for the top job at the pulse council.

Growers on McGreevy

Dick Wittman, a retired farmer in Culesac, Idaho, was chairman of the council's grower board at the time.

The council was reorganizing to incorporate six organizations, representing growers, processors and exporters on the county, state and national levels. They needed someone who could focus on many fronts and coordinate the interests of all the groups.

McGreevy was "by far" the top choice, Wittman recalled. But he



Tim McGreevy hauls hay with his son, Mitchell.

initially turned down the job.

"I think we spent three hours on the phone, and by 1 a.m., he said, 'OK, I'm on board,'" Wittman remembered.

McGreevy has "more than" lived up to Wittman's expectations since coming on board in 1994, Wittman said.

"He has never lost his energy," Wittman said. "He has reinvigorated, re-energized and continues to be on the front line of (pulse) issues after almost 30 years in that position."

Wittman credits McGreevy with advancing the industry beyond the Pacific Northwest and forging a united front when speaking to federal lawmakers about policy.

"I can't tell you how many times a congressman has said, 'Why don't the other commodity groups do what you're doing?'" Wittman said.

Andrew Fontaine, chairman of the council's executive board and president of Spokane Seed Co., has observed McGreevy in action for many years.

He recalled McGreevy's efforts in the early 2000s to get peas and lentils included in the Farm Bill. A USDA spokesman told the industry during its annual convention that the crops would never be included because they were just a "small commodity."

"After the speaker left the stage, Tim went up there and said, 'Mark my words, we will be on that bill,' and sure enough, a year and a half later, we were on that bill as a program crop," Fontaine said. "That's really what catapulted us off into these other regions."

Growing crops

The USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council represents roughly 10,000 growers.

It has six international offices, based in the Indo-Pacific region, Latin America, North Asia, South Asia and the Middle East; the Mediterranean and North Africa; and Europe.

Funding for the council comes from the Idaho Pea & Lentil Commission, Washington Pulse Crops Commission, Montana Pulse Crops Committee, North Dakota Dry Pea & Lentil Council, South Dakota Pulse Crops Council, U.S. Pea & Lentil Trade Association and Western Pulse Growers Association.

Each state organization assesses growers 1% of the net sale value at the first point of sale, and the grower organizations also contribute to the council's budget.

The Nebraska Pulse Crops Commission was just created by



Tim McGreevy with his wife, Christine.

the Nebraska legislature this year, and is in the process of joining the national coalition.

The American Pulse Association brings the USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council together with the dry bean industry to work on domestic promotion and research on pulses.

When McGreevy was first hired, the pea and lentil council's annual budget was roughly \$500,000 to \$700,000. Today, the budget is more than \$3 million.

Total sales in 1994 were roughly \$56 million. At the industry's peak, in 2017 and 2018, sales were nearly \$1 billion. As a result of trade tariffs in 2020, sales dropped to \$500 million, but prices are beginning to pick up again, McGreevy said.

Dry bean acreage is similar to peas, lentils and chickpeas, and total crop sales were nearly \$700 million in 2019.

The cutting edge

The council targets its resources to do big things: international and domestic market development, lobbying, research and food innovation.

"We're really on the rise," McGreevy said. "Plant-based foods are really gaining in popularity here in the United States and around the world. We're on the cutting edge of that."

In 2020, total plant-based food sales were more than \$7 billion, a 27% increase over 2019, McGreevy said.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, plant-based meat products grew by 45%, representing almost

\$1.5 billion in sales.

Beyond Meat, the plant-based meat substitute, is more than 50% pulses, he said. Some alternative pastas are 100% pulses.

Peas also play a big role in the plant-based milk category, which had 20% growth last year with \$2.5 billion in sales.

Under the Farm Bill, the industry received \$5 million in dedicated funding for the pulse crop health initiative, focusing on nutrition, functionality and sustainability.

USDA Agricultural Research Service researchers are part of the new pulse crop quality network in three labs across the U.S., including the Western Wheat Quality Lab on the WSU campus. They're studying which pulses work best as ingredients in certain food uses and assisting breeding efforts.

It's something McGreevy's been working on for more than 20 years.

Variety breeding priorities used to be focused on yield, size and color, he said.

"Now we're breeding for protein, starch and fiber content," he said. "Our whole breeding program has shifted because there's such a significant opportunity to use these crops."

Pulses are also one of only a few plants that produce their own nitrogen, he said. Because of that, they play a significant role in long-term agricultural sustainability.

"How many plants bring their lunch box to work?" he said. "They feed themselves, and then they leave an extra half-sandwich for the next crop. There's not many crops that can do that."

The council also led the charge

with counterparts worldwide to have the World Trade Organization declare 2016 an International Year of Pulses. McGreevy called it a "paradigm shift" for the global pulse industry, increasing the use and awareness of pulses.

In the next decade, he wants policy makers and consumers to recognize the importance of pulses.

"I think these crops have been just horribly under-researched for the health and nutrition and sustainability they bring to the table," he said. "Also, they have been under-promoted. ... We need to have a lot more investment in every aspect of these crops."

Small farmer at heart

McGreevy says he's equally passionate about his job, his farm and his family.

He and Christine have four grown children — Maura, Martin, Mitchell and Kadin — and two granddaughters, Finnley and Larkin.

They have been married for 30 years.

The McGreevys live in Moscow. He also owns the farm he grew up on north of Pullman. He raises wheat, pulses, canola and grass-fed beef on about 100 acres. He pays a neighboring farmer to seed and harvest the crops.

"So I'm still a farmer, a small one," he said. "It's just so fun, because I represent farmers."

The future

McGreevy doesn't plan to retire any time soon.

"I'm having too much fun," he said.

The council and American Pulse Association recently held a virtual media event with top social media influencers. A chef from the Culinary Institute of America showcased the nutrition and environmental sustainability of pulse crops.

Consumers in the Millennial generation and Generation Z — those born between 1980 and 2005 — are more environmentally conscious, McGreevy said, adding that pulses have something to offer them and the entire food system.

McGreevy predicts higher demand as ranchers use more pulses in their feed rations, and the industry works to reduce its carbon footprint to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

McGreevy pointed to the industry leaders on the boards he oversees. They're all working to position pulses as a solution to some of the biggest problems that the agricultural world faces, he said.

"It's really exciting," he said. "We are at the very beginning."

Courtesy photo

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