

# AgForestry interim executive director: 'So much at stake'

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**  
Capital Press

Vicky Scharlau has been named the interim executive director of the Washington AgForestry leadership program as the organization develops its new strategic plan.

Through her nonprofit association management company 501 Consultants, based in Cashmere, Wash., Scharlau is also executive director of the Columbia Basin Development League, Washington Winegrowers Association and Washington Wine Industry Foundation. She will continue in those roles with her team.

Scharlau replaces Matt Kloes, who will leave at the



**Vicky Scharlau**

end of September after two years as executive director.

The AgForestry program focuses on developing leaders in agriculture, forestry and natural resources. The AgForestry leadership development program lasts 18 months. It includes 11 multi-day seminars. Participants also spend one week in Washington, D.C., and up to two weeks in a foreign country.

The cost to participants is \$6,000. The program spends approximately \$20,000 per participant. The difference

is subsidized by partners and in-kind donations. Class 44 will begin in October 2022.

Scharlau is a graduate of AgForestry's Class 10.

The need for the program has never been greater, she said.

"We have so much potential and so much at stake," she said. "If we don't train those who are in the industry and people who we want to stay in the industry for tomorrow, we're never going to survive here."

Scharlau grew up on a dairy farm in Wisconsin. Her bachelor's degree is in agricultural economics and agricultural journalism from the University of Wisconsin and her master's degree is in public administration from the

University of Washington.

She worked for the Washington Department of Agriculture, then for the Washington Apple Commission and Washington Horticultural Association — now merged into the Washington State Tree Fruit Association — before realizing there was a need for the management company, which she founded in 1994.

"Smaller organizations don't have enough budget or the infrastructure to hire five different staff people," she said. "What we provide is that ability to be everything to a small-ish organization."

The management company provides a spectrum of services to nonprofit organi-

zations, and no organization has to pay full price for anything, she said.

"They're not buying all of my time as executive director, they're only buying a portion of it," Scharlau said.

The company is "very, very intentional" about working with organizations about what they want to accomplish and how much money they have to invest in their goals, Scharlau said.

About 50% of the company's time is spent consulting, including strategic planning, grant writing and management, training for boards of directors and coaching for executive directors, Scharlau said.

"Really any kind of a spot need or spot issue that a non-

profit might have, we can usually help them," she said.

How long AgForestry's strategic planning takes will determine the time Scharlau is in the interim position, she said. The biggest challenge is attracting the industry's future leaders today.

"Right now the board has to determine where the organization needs to grow in terms of meeting the needs not only of our core supporters of Ag Forestry, those people who have been with us from the beginning," she said. "But we also have to recognize that the millennials and younger are the future of our natural resource industry. We have to understand how to help them build a future as a leader."

## Vietnam poised to reduce or eliminate tariffs on U.S. wheat, corn and pork

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**  
Capital Press

Vietnam is poised to reduce or eliminate tariffs on wheat, corn and pork imports from the U.S.

As part of bilateral meetings with Vietnamese leaders, Vice President Kamala Harris said Vietnam is considering a U.S. proposal to eliminate or reduce Most Favored Nation import duties on wheat, corn and pork products. This would allow farmers and pork producers greater access to Vietnam's markets, according to a fact sheet from Harris' office.

An announcement on whether the tariffs will be further reduced or eliminated is expected in September, said Steve Mercer, vice president of communications for U.S. Wheat Associates, the overseas marketing arm for the industry.

"It definitely is an important market and has the potential to grow," Mercer told the Capital Press. "The milling industry and wheat foods industry is one of the fastest-growing in the world."



**Vice President Kamala Harris**

Vietnam particularly wants soft white wheat, which is primarily grown in the Pacific Northwest, Mercer said.

Vietnam is the last remaining Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) country applying a tariff against U.S. wheat imports but not against Canadian and Australian wheat, making the announcement "particularly noteworthy" for U.S. wheat growers, Mercer said.

The U.S. was a member of the original TPP trade agree-

ment with 11 other countries. President Donald Trump withdrew from TPP in January 2017, emphasizing bilateral agreements instead.

The newly announced reduction follows one in July 2020, when Vietnam reduced its tariff on imported U.S. wheat — excluding durum — from 5% to 3% in a revision of its Most Favored Nation tariff rates, according to U.S. Wheat.

U.S. Wheat worked with USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service to reach out to Vietnam's Ministry of Finance. Citing rising prices and a tighter wheat supply, the industry told the ministry that reducing or eliminating the tariff would benefit Vietnamese residents, Mercer said.

Vietnam imports an average of more than 3 million metric tons of wheat per year, primarily from Australia.

Despite the tariffs, Vietnam's imports of U.S. soft white, hard red winter and hard red spring wheat exceeded 500,000 metric tons in the 2020/21 market-

ing year, according to U.S. Wheat.

Vietnam went from importing a high of 93,500 metric tons of U.S. soft white wheat in 2017-2018 to 157,000 metric tons last year, Mercer said.

"That's been a pretty steady increase," he said.

"We are very excited to see this tariff being lifted between Vietnam and the U.S., and we commend the Administration, FAS and Vietnam's Ministry of Finance for their diligence to aid both the U.S. and Vietnam," Chandler Goule, CEO of the National Association of Wheat Growers, said in a press release. "We are eager to see all of the doors this will open for both countries."

Enhanced Vietnam market access is one of the National Pork Producer Council's top trade priorities, said Jim Monroe, assistant vice president of communications.

Vietnam's tariffs on U.S. pork were temporarily reduced for six months in 2020 and farmers enjoyed a "significant increase" in exports there, Monroe said.



**Karianne Fallow of Dairy West, left, Idaho Gov. Brad Little and Erin Fitzgerald of U.S. Farmers and Ranchers in Action.**

## Little proclaims 'Decade of Ag' in Idaho

By **BRAD CARLSON**  
Capital Press

Gov. Brad Little has declared 2020-30 the Decade of Agriculture in Idaho. He is the first governor to issue such a proclamation.

U.S. Farmers and Ranch-

ers in Action, a national coalition of agricultural businesses and organizations, spearheaded the effort after forming more than two years ago. The group calls on agriculture and food system leaders to endorse a shared vision of economic and climate-related sustainability. More than 60 Idaho ag businesses and organizations supported Little's proclamation.

Dairy West CEO Karianne Fallow said in a release that the economic, social and environmental demands of a growing global population require resilient, creative solutions. Idaho agriculture, as the backbone of the state's economy and a national leader, plays an integral role in an economically and ecologically sustainable future, she said.

Many climate-related initiatives that focus on emissions have deadlines of 2030 or 2050, "and in order to advance those, action really needs to start now," Dairy West Senior Vice President Kristi Spence said in an interview. The U.S. dairy industry aims to be at net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

She said the industry has made progress, and is evaluating its emissions as well as current and future technology that could help it reach the goal.

"And dairy in our region has a history of not only being a leader, but also in collaborating with the greater ag sector," Spence said.

Little, a Republican rancher from Emmett, said in the proclamation that Idaho as an agricultural leader is engaged in sustainable practices and in investing in much-needed research. The state is well positioned to "further invest in the potential of its agricultural community and commit to being part of an economically viable and sustainable future."

Necessary growth of agriculture could be impeded by episodic weather events, environmental and climate stressors, loss of farmland from urbanization, regulatory complexity and declining revenue, his proclamation said. The sector currently accounts for 18% of economic output, 26% of exports, and 1 in 8 jobs in Idaho.

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