



DOUBLE TROUBLE



Carol Ryan Dumas/Capital Press

Pat Purdy, a partner at Purdy Enterprises, beside stacked hay on the family farm and ranch in Picabo, Idaho on Sept. 8.

Drought hay statistics

Alfalfa and alfalfa mixes, forecast Aug. 1, 2021

Area	Harvested acres (1,000 acres)		Production (1,000 tons)	
	2020	2021	2020	2021
Calif.	475	580	3,420	4,234
Colo.	700	730	2,380	2,920
Idaho	1,010	1,010	4,545	4,242
Mont.	1,900	1,850	4,180	2,590
N.D.	1,220	1,250	2,196	1,125
Ore.	360	380	1,656	1,672
S.D.	1,800	1,600	3,240	1,600
Wash.	410	420	1,804	1,512
U.S.	16,230	16,123	53,067	47,813

All other hay, forecast Aug. 1, 2021

Area	Harvested acres (1,000 acres)		Production (1,000 tons)	
	2020	2021	2020	2021
Calif.	350	335	1,190	1,072
Colo.	680	680	918	952
Idaho	290	280	725	448
Mont.	960	970	1,728	1,067
N.D.	1,000	1,150	1,400	1,035
Ore.	600	540	1,320	1,080
S.D.	1,250	1,150	2,125	1,150
Wash.	280	350	812	805
U.S.	36,008	35,414	73,745	70,927

Source: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service

Drought scorches Northwest hay crop, squeezes beef cattle, dairy producers

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

PICABO, Idaho — Now harvesting his third and final cutting of hay, Pat Purdy is grateful his irrigation water got turned back on and the crop is looking good.

“Our second cutting of hay was off significantly, probably 30 to 40%,” said Purdy, who is part owner of his family’s Picabo Livestock Company.

The reason: Purdy’s irrigation water had been cut off for eight days at a critical time for the crop.

“That definitely put a dent in our second cutting,” he said. The crop missed out on the last one or two water cycles it would normally get.



Carol Ryan Dumas/Capital Press

Freshly cut hay dries on the Purdy farm.

As the region-wide drought and tight water supplies continue to shrink the amount of hay grown this year, it’s hurting the farmers who grow it — and the ranchers and dairy operators who depend on the crop to feed their livestock.

In Purdy’s case, the state

Department of Water Resources curtailed groundwater rights in the lower Wood River Valley until junior irrigators negotiated an agreement with senior surface-water users to get some of their water turned back on.

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Biden administration to review ESA status of wolves

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

The Biden administration will review the status of northern Rocky Mountain wolves, potentially restoring federal protection to wolves in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and the eastern one-third of Oregon and Washington.

The 12-month review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was requested by environmental groups. The agency agreed that the hunting of wolves in Idaho and Montana poses a potential threat to the species.

The review will take in Rocky Mountain wolves that has dispersed into Oregon and Washington. Wolves there were taken off the endangered species in 2011.

The Washington Department of Fish Wildlife says wolfpacks saturate northeast Washington. The department has resorted to killing wolves to stop chronic attacks on livestock.

Northeast Washington rancher Scott Nielsen, president of the Stevens County Cattlemen’s Association, said restoring federal protection would be a foolish political decision.

“The whole thing is really misguided. It’s politics. They were delisted because they weren’t endangered,” he said. “Did something happen to change that?”

The wolf population continues to grow in Oregon and Washington. The recent annual growth rate has been in the single digits.

Center for Biological Diversity wolf organizer Amaroq Weiss said hunting in Idaho leaves fewer wolves to move into Washington and Oregon.

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WDFW

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said Sept. 15 it will review the status of wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains.

EPA admin talks WOTUS, dicamba, new ag adviser

By SIERRA DAWN McCLAIN
Capital Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — U.S. EPA administrator Michael Regan spoke Monday to state agricultural regulators at the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture’s annual meeting.

Regan pledged to work with the agricultural community to rewrite the Waters of the United States, or WOTUS, rule with continued exemptions for farm-



Michael Regan



Ryan Quarles

ing and ranching. Regan also said EPA is considering regulatory action on the herbicide dicamba and will soon appoint an ag adviser at EPA.

NASDA President Ryan

Quarles led the discussion.

WOTUS

Quarles first questioned Regan about the Waters of the United States rule, an Obama-era rule aimed at protecting wetlands and streams from development and pollution.

Farmers and ranchers have long criticized the rule as an example of federal overreach and overregulation. WOTUS also lacks clarity, farm groups say.

“Farmers and ranch-

ers need certainty, and they shouldn’t have to hire a team of lawyers or environmental experts to understand if they’re subject to this rule or regulations or how to comply to it,” said Quarles, Kentucky’s commissioner of agriculture.

Since 1993, regulations have exempted from jurisdiction prior-converted croplands. Asked whether this exemption will remain under a rewritten WOTUS, Regan said “yes.”

“Normal farming, silvi-

culture and ranching activities, as defined by the Clean Water Act Section 404 that could take place in a jurisdictional waterway or wetland, will not require a permit,” said Regan. “This exemption includes many common activities like plowing, seeding and minor drainage as well as activities like construction and maintenance of irrigation ditches.”

Quarles said many farmers are “frustrated” about

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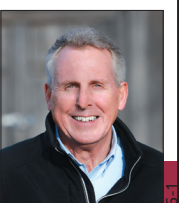
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