

# Ag groups urge Senate to move on shipping reform

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS  
Capital Press

Agricultural groups are calling on the U.S. Senate to act quickly on the Ocean Shipping Reform Act, which passed overwhelmingly in the House last week.

The bill, introduced by Reps. John Garamendi, D-Calif., and Dusty Johnson, R-S.D., passed 364-60 in the House.

The Agricultural Transportation Coalition said it looks forward to similar support in the Senate, as well as an energetic response to unreasonable carrier practices by the Federal Maritime Commission and constructive engagement with ocean carriers.

House passage of the bill is a strong start, but there is more to be done “to assure a supply chain that serves not only agriculture exporters but all of U.S. commerce,” the coalition said in a statement. “Our preference remains to find commercial solutions. Legislation should be, and in this case is, the last resort.”

The American Farm Bureau Federation said congestion and related logistical obstacles threaten U.S. farmers’ and ranchers’ ability to meet much-welcome increases in foreign demand.

The bill would provide new oversight and enforcement authority to the Federal Maritime Commission, expand opportunities for shippers to seek redress from ocean carriers and increase transparency



**Krysta Harden**



**Zippy Duvall**



**Julie Anna Potts**

she said. U.S. Dairy Export Council and National Milk Producers Federation said congressional reform of the Shipping Act is one vital piece in alleviating the shipping crisis.

and accountability among ocean carriers and other parties.

“Accessibility to export containers has been further limited by record shipping costs and harmful surcharges. With these factors combined, the ability for farmers and ranchers to fulfill overseas contracts has been significantly impacted, with some estimations nearing \$1.5 billion in lost agricultural exports,” said Zippy Duvall, American Farm Bureau Federation president.

The North American Meat Institute said the bill would improve the Federal Maritime Commission’s ability to enforce its interpretive rule on predatory detention and demurrage fees and prohibit ocean carriers from continuing to unreasonably decline export bookings.

“The problems at our ports have been exacerbated by the unreasonable practices of foreign-owned ocean carriers, including delays of shipments of American-made goods to overseas trading partners,” said Julie Anna Potts, Meat Institute president and CEO.

“These delays result in major costs to meat and poultry companies as their perishable products await transport,”

Reform is needed to “alleviate the short-term congestion and to ensure that the reputation of the United States as a reliable supplier is not further jeopardized,” said Krysta Harden, USDEC president and CEO.

The legislation will help ensure fairer shipping practices and standards for U.S. agricultural exports, said Dave Puglia, president and CEO of Western Growers.

“The ongoing supply chain and marine port challenges are restricting our farmers’ ability to reach overseas opportunities,” he said.

Leah Wilkinson, vice president of public policy and education for the American Feed Industry Association, said the logjams at U.S. ports have blocked the export of members’ products, resulting in steep financial losses and irreversible friction with international customers.

# Idaho Farm Bureau adopts new land-protection policy

By BRAD CARLSON  
Capital Press

Preserving agricultural land as the state population grows is the focus of a new Idaho Farm Bureau Federation policy.

The policy calls for helping legislators develop a plan to preserve farmland. It supports “legislation to protect agricultural land through voluntary agreements and programs based on incentives.”

Voting delegates from county Farm Bureaus across the state adopted it during the Idaho Farm Bureau’s annual meeting Nov. 30-Dec. 2 in Fort Hall. The organization does not yet have a detailed plan but will involve farmers and ranchers in developing one.

“This policy is for Farm Bureau to have a seat at the table with our legislators and come up with a plan,” Washington County Farm Bureau President Tristan Winegar said. “They are asking us to be the leaders. This is just giving us a voice so Farm Bureau can lead the charge and help save farmland.”

He said none of the extensive feedback he received since the Washington County chapter hosted a meeting on the topic last summer was in opposition to preserving farmland. The chapter proposed the policy to the Idaho Farm Bureau, which will add it to its official policy book due out in January.

“People are supportive, but we walk the line between property rights and keeping things viable,” the Weiser-area farmer and rancher said in an interview. “We’ve got an uphill battle, there’s no doubt.”

Winegar said loss of farmland to other uses is happening in Washington County, which is on the northwest edge of a growing Boise metro area that includes Ada and Canyon counties. “It’s not as blatant and obvious as in Ada County, but it is happening all over the state.”

He said developing farm or pasture land into another use stops the ongoing substantial economic benefit production agriculture provides on that site. But “the reason it is becoming houses, shops or hospitals is that



Carol Ryan Dumas/Capital Press File

**The Idaho Farm Bureau Federation is joining the effort to preserve farmland across the state.**

we are not making enough on our crops” comparatively.

A site sold for development can fetch a big premium, “but if it was making enough money, it would never get changed,” Winegar said. A voluntary preservation program that includes a financial incentive to keep ground in ag production could help narrow the gap.

David Anderson, Idaho program manager for American Farmland Trust, said he is “very excited that the Farm Bureau and its membership have come together and are joining the groundswell of desire around protecting Idaho’s farmland and ranch land.”

Farm Bureau’s next step is to start looking at approaches “that meet everybody’s needs here in Idaho and essentially reflect everybody’s priorities.”

He said there are many established farmland-protection programs that have characteristics Farm Bureau wants to see in any policy and “that Idaho leaders can learn from, and subsequently create something that is uniquely our own.”

Conservation easements, which are recorded agreements, are voluntary and do not restrict a seller’s ability to transfer land to other farmers and ranchers, Anderson said.

As for incentives, “the opportunity is at hand to get creative on what types of financial incentives can be created, either at the state or possibly the individual county level, to afford (financially) any type of voluntary land protection,” he said.



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## Idaho FFA members have good showing at national convention

By Kennedy Farden  
Idaho FFA State Reporter

In late October over 60,000 FFA members flooded the streets of Indianapolis, Ind., for the National FFA Convention and Expo. 2021 marked the 94th National Convention and Expo, where members gathered to compete and receive awards, attend sessions and listen to words from keynote speakers, national officers and sponsors.

They also had the opportunities to help with service projects and be exposed to innovations, technology and advancements throughout the agbioscience industry in the virtual learning space called “The FFA Blue Room.”

Idaho FFA members showed great success in Indianapolis with solid placing teams, two chorus members and delegates speaking on many proposed delegate issues.

Five of the Idaho state officers served among the total 475 National Delegates representing every state, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. They voiced their opinion and voted on proposed changes within the organizations.

Idaho FFA is proud to have persistent members — congratulations to all!

Listed below are the top placings from Idaho at the 2021 National FFA Convention and Expo:

**AGRISCIENCE FAIR**

- Plant Systems Division 3: Brooklyn Mann, Parma FFA – **FIRST PLACE**
- Plant Systems Division 1: Emily Cook, Rigby Middle FFA – **FIRST PLACE**
- Food Products and Processing Systems Division 2: Saree Hillstead and Danica Knapp, Hagerman FFA – **SECOND PLACE**
- Environmental and Natural Resources Division 6: Josiah Knapp and John Kinder, Hagerman FFA – **THIRD PLACE**

**CAREER AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

- Farm and Agribusiness Management: Rigby FFA – **SECOND PLACE**
- Milk Quality and Products: Fruitland FFA – **SECOND PLACE** and Luke Barinaga, Fruitland FFA – **SECOND PLACE HIGH INDIVIDUAL**

**PROFICIENCY AWARDS**

- Landscape Management: Tad Nelson, Rigby FFA – **NATIONAL WINNER**
- Forage Production: Porter Hanson, Rigby FFA – **NATIONAL FINALIST**
- Turf Grass Management: Brigham Nelson, Rigby FFA – **NATIONAL FINALIST**



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