



THE YEAR AHEAD

Three states, three sets of priorities

The legislatures of Washington, Oregon and Idaho will convene in the coming weeks to pick up where they left off last year. Political leaders in each state have a different set of priorities, ranging from Wash-

ington Gov. Jay Inslee's plans to expand his state's environmental efforts to a proposal in the Oregon Legislature to require farmers to pay their employees overtime wages. In Idaho, a major focus will be on water — increas-

ing the holding capacity of a key dam and expanding aquifer recharge efforts in the eastern part of the state. These and other issues will impact the three states' farmers for years to come. Capital Press takes a look at the proposals and what they mean to agriculture.



IDAHO: Water project funding a top priority

By BRAD CARLSON
Capital Press

BOISE — Water storage and delivery infrastructure could get a large portion of Idaho's \$1.1 billion share of American Rescue Plan Act funds that the 2022 Legislature will allocate during the upcoming session.

Gov. Brad Little, a Republican rancher from Emmett, will open the three-month annual session with his State of the State and Budget Address on Jan. 10.

"The governor has made clear his goal is to use it for infrastructure — specifically water, sewer and broadband infrastructure," said Alex Adams, the governor's budget director.

The U.S. Treasury is yet to issue final rules for Rescue Plan Act funds.

"It does appear (aquifer) recharge projects are allowable under the interim Treasury guidance," Adams said. "So that is beneficial as we look to invest in Upper Snake recharge projects."

Brian Patton, executive officer of the Idaho Water



Alex Adams

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WASHINGTON: Inslee presses for 'bold' growth

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

OLYMPIA — The Washington Legislature will convene Jan. 10 for a 60-day session that Gov. Jay Inslee says should be an ambitious one for ruling Democrats.

Over four days in December, Inslee rolled out his proposals for 2022. The agenda includes mandating riparian buffers along streams, phasing out natural gas use and subsidizing solar energy.

"The moment calls for boldness, and it calls for action that is at a scale commensurate with the challenges we face," he said.

Democrats have firm majorities in the House and Senate. During 2021, they passed cap-and-trade, a low-carbon fuel standard and a new capital gains tax.

New spending

Legislators also adopted a two-year, \$58 billion operating budget that went into effect July 1. Inslee has proposed \$4.1 billion in new spending to supplement



Gov. Jay Inslee

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OREGON: Overtime, timber deal on agenda

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

SALEM — Farm groups and labor advocates are expected to be preoccupied with agricultural overtime wages during Oregon's month-long legislative session that begins on Feb. 1.

The prospect of eliminating the agriculture industry's exemption from higher overtime wages got a lot of attention from lawmakers last year, but attempts to negotiate a compromise have been complicated by litigation over the issue.

A lawsuit alleges the exemption lacks an underpinning in state law and isn't constitutional because farmworkers are excluded from "privileges" enjoyed by other employees.

It's been an unsettling experience for farm representatives, who were negotiating in "good faith" with labor advocates who were "looking at us in the eye" while planning the legal attack, said Mary Anne Cooper, vice president of public policy for the Oregon Farm Bureau.



Mary Anne Cooper

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Biden administration targets meat, poultry processors

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

The Biden administration hopes to reel in the costs families are facing by increasing competition across the economy, with a major focus on meat and poultry processing.

"In too many industries, a handful of giant companies dominate the market," President Joe Biden said in a virtual press conference on Monday.

"And too often they use their power to squeeze out smaller competitors and stifle new entrepreneurs,

making our economy less dynamic and giving themselves free rein to raise prices, reduce options for consumers or exploit workers," he said.

The meat industry — in which four big corporations control over 80% of the market — is a "textbook example," he said.

"Without meaningful competition, farmers and ranchers don't get to choose who they sell to," he said.

Producers have to take the price processors want to pay, and corporations can use their power to overcharge grocery stores and, ultimately,

families, he said.

Fifty years ago, ranchers got over 60 cents of every dollar a family spent on beef. Today they get about 39 cents. Hog farmers got 40 cents to 50 cents. Today they get about 19 cents, he said.

"And the big companies are making massive profits," he said.

As those profits go up, grocery store prices go up, and the prices farmers see go down, he said.

"This reflects the market being distorted by lack of competition," he said.

Small, independent farmers and ranches are being driven out of business — sometimes businesses that have been around for generations, he said.

The administration has an action plan to create fair markets and more opportunities for family farmers and ranchers and bring down the price of meat and poultry at grocery stores, he said.

That plan includes investing \$1 billion to expand independent meat

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The White House

President Joe Biden has announced his plan for increasing competition in the meat processing industry.

Researchers warn farmers to prepare for glyphosate shortage

By SIERRA DAWN McCLAIN
Capital Press

University extension services nationwide are alerting farmers to a glyphosate shortage that is expected to worsen in 2022.

Glyphosate is the active ingredient in some common weed killers, including Roundup. According to USDA's Economic Research Service, glyphosate has been the most widely used herbicide in the U.S. since 2001.

The shortage, extension specialists say, will challenge growers who rely on glyphosate, including those planting Roundup-ready crops, those who have no-till systems and those who use glyphosate to terminate cover crops.

"Farmers are worried about how this will impact them," said Bill Johnson, a professor of botany and plant pathology at Purdue University.

Johnson has been surveying pesticide retailers about how much glyphosate they expect to have in stock next year. Some said they will only have 80% of their three-year average volume, others even less. Many retailers are only guaranteeing



Bayer

A Roundup Ready corn field. Researchers and pesticide retailers are warning of a glyphosate shortage. Glyphosate is the active ingredient in Roundup and some other herbicides.

delivery to long-time customers, while others are regulating how many gallons per day a customer can buy.

The shorter supply means higher prices. Researchers estimate glyphosate prices increased from \$10 per gallon a year and a half ago to \$60

per gallon in 2021, and prices are expected to rise to \$80 per gallon in 2022.

A constellation of factors is to blame for the shortage.

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