



Michael LoBiondo/AFBF

American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall speaks Jan. 9 during the organization's national convention in Atlanta. "We should not need a team of lawyers and consultants just to be able to farm our land," he said of the Waters of the U.S. regulations.

WOTUS WORRIES

FARM BUREAU: Uncertainty over latest set of regs may require Supreme Court to sort out issue



Courtney Briggs

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

ATLANTA — As farmers contend with the latest change in federal Clean Water Act authority, their best hope for clarity may lie with the U.S. Supreme Court.

Growers should speak out against the Biden administration's proposed expansion of federal "waters of the U.S." jurisdiction, or WOTUS,

See more stories from the **American Farm Bureau Federation's annual convention.**

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according to speakers at the American Farm Bureau Federation's annual convention in Atlanta, Ga.

"We should not need a team of lawyers and consultants just to be able to farm our land," said

Zippy Duvall, AFBF's president, on Jan. 9.

The extent of the federal government's ability to regulate farmland under the Clean Water Act has a long and contentious history.

Fifteen years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that wetlands with a "significant nexus" to a navigable waterway come under the government's authority, but that didn't resolve the controversy.

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Here's how inflation puts squeeze on farmers



Courtesy of Audrey Raschein
George Meyer, left, with daughter Audrey Raschein. The family grows hazelnuts and grass seed. Raschein is a full-time employee of her father's business, GM Meyer Farms, and farms her own acreage as well. Like most farmers, the family is facing inflation-related pressures in 2022.

By SIERRA DAWN McCLAIN
Capital Press

JEFFERSON, Ore. — U.S. inflation hit a 39-year high in November, according to the consumer price index, and prices continue to soar in 2022.

One mid-sized farm in Jefferson, Ore., is juggling spiraling costs for everything from diesel fuel to fertilizer, illustrating inflation's impact on agriculture.

George Meyer, 65, grows hazelnuts and grass seed at GM Meyer Farms. He and his daughter, Audrey Raschein, 35, are making difficult decisions in advance of planting season in an effort to control costs.

This isn't Meyer's first taste of inflation. He started farming in 1979

and endured the 13.5% annual inflation of the early 1980s.

"I know what it was like in the eighties. It wasn't very much fun," said Meyer.

He laughed wryly.

Looking at a single farm can't tell everyone's story, in part because suppliers often charge lower prices to longtime customers. But it can illustrate a broad trend: Prices are going up almost everywhere on almost everything.

To trace rising costs, the Capital Press worked with GM Meyer Farms to analyze purchasing data from previous years compared to projected costs for 2022.

For example, in 2021, the farm paid \$33.27 per gallon for the herbicide Lifeline. In 2022, the sup-

plier quoted \$77 per gallon, a 131% increase.

In 2020, the farm spent \$375 per ton on a fertilizer blend containing urea and ammonium sulfate. In January 2022, the same product is quoted at \$882 per ton, a 135% increase.

Used in a large volume, the cost adds up quickly. Raschein estimated the farm this spring will use 135 tons of the fertilizer mix for a total cost of \$119,070. In 2020 the same volume cost \$50,625.

The farm hasn't even been able to get a quote on Gly Star Original, a glyphosate-based generic version of Roundup, because of an deepening shortage of the herbicide. The farm paid \$17.20 per gallon in 2021, up

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Farmland values strong but variable

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

Higher commodity prices, strong farm profitability and low interest rates have put upward pressure on cropland values across the U.S.

Nationwide, those values were 7.8% higher in 2021 year over year, but the state-level increases varied from a high of 13.9% in Kansas to a low of 1.7% in Arkansas and Louisiana, according to USDA.

Many factors influence farmland values, said David Widmar, an agricultural economist and co-founder of Ag Economic Insights.

"The two big ones are



USDA

The value of farmland rose last year in most of the U.S.

income and interest rates," he said.

That boils down to how much can be generated

from the farmland and the return on the purchase of farmland, he said.

Low interest rates typ-

AVERAGE CROPLAND VALUE PER ACRE IN 2021

California:	\$13,860
Idaho:	\$4,450
Oregon:	\$3,310
Washington:	\$2,700
U.S.:	\$4,420

ically push farmland values higher as buyers are willing to bid up prices and accept a lower rate of return. When interest rates are higher, investors are looking for higher rates of return and, in turn, aren't as eager to bid

asset value up, he said. "Current conditions are good for those looking to sell farmland," he said.

"Another factor that is really relevant is local supply and demand" — the amount of farmland for sale and the number of buyers interested in purchasing it, he said.

There are also geographic factors. Drought and crop failures, especially if seen over several years, can affect local supply and demand. Local economic conditions and the commodity grown play into the equation as well, he said.

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