

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Ag Week: Farmers have strong impact

Each American farmer feeds more than 144 people — a dramatic increase from 25 people in the 1960s. Quite simply, American agriculture is doing more and doing it better. As the world population soars, there is an even greater demand for the food and fiber produced in this country.

For 45 years, National Ag Day has recognized and celebrated the abundance provided by American agriculture. Each spring, producers, agricultural associations, corporations, universities, government agencies and others across the country join together in recognition — and appreciation — of agriculture in our country. This year it was officially celebrated Tuesday.

But we're preaching to the choir here in farm country about the work farmers do to keep us well fed at an affordable price. We also know how they support their communities, purchasing equipment and donating to a wide variety of good causes. But on National Ag Day, we learned plenty of information we didn't know, and we decided to share some from the National Agriculture Council with you:

Did you know?

- Hamburger meat from a single steer will make about 720 quarter pound hamburger patties. That's enough for a family of four to enjoy hamburgers each day for nearly six months.



Courtesy Audra Mulken

Kylie Gray of Gray Girl Farms in Othello, Wash, balances being a farmer and a mom.

- Straight from the cow, the temperature of cow's milk is about 97 degrees Fahrenheit.

- Farmers and ranchers provide food and habitat for 75 percent of the nation's wildlife.

- An acre of trees can remove about 13 tons of dust and gases every year from the surrounding environment.

- Americans eat about 125 pounds of

potatoes a year, about half from fresh potatoes and half in processed foods.

- Onions contain a mild antibiotic that fights infections, soothes burns, tames bee stings and relieves the itch of athletes foot.

- One bushel of corn will sweeten more than 400 cans of pop.

- A family of four could live for 10 years off the bread produced by one acre

of wheat.

- Each American consumes, on average, 53 pounds of bread per year.

- Heart valves from hogs are used to replace damaged or diseased human heart valves.

- One acre of soybeans can produce 82,368 crayons.

- One bale of cotton can produce 1,217 men's T-shirts or 313,600 \$100 bills.

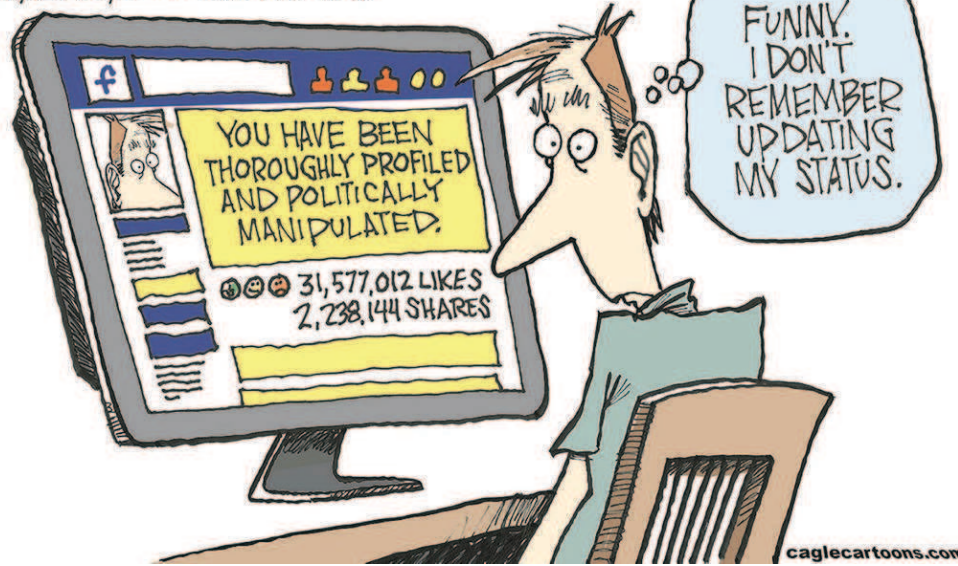
- Honeybees must tap 2 million flowers to make one pound of honey. Each worker honey bee makes 1/12th teaspoon of honey in its lifetime.

- Cotton is a food crop. Almost 200 million gallons of cottonseed oil are used in food products such as margarine and salad dressing. Cottonseed and cottonseed meal are used in feed for livestock and poultry. And even products such as toothpaste, ice cream, and the paper money used to buy them contain by-products of the cotton seed.

- It takes just 40 days for most Americans to earn enough money to pay for their food supply for the entire year. In comparison with the 129 days it takes the average American to earn enough money to pay federal, state and local taxes for the year.

- More than 96 billion pounds of edible "surplus" food is thrown away in the U.S. Each year. It is estimated that almost 27 percent of our food supply is wasted.

Mike Keefe COLO INDY 03-19-18



OTHER VIEWS

BMCC ag connects industry to education

By ANNE LIVINGSTON

Blue Mountain Community College

Agriculture is a big player in the eastern Oregon economy. More than 37 percent of the workforce in Umatilla County is either directly or indirectly employed by the agriculture industry. And farm sales in Umatilla County exceed \$1 billion annually. As the industry continues to grow and become more technologically advanced, producers are finding that working together with a local community college is a wise investment in fortifying their employee teams. The Blue Mountain Community College agriculture department works closely with the eastern Oregon and southeastern Washington region's ag industry.

Training and education is built to suit the needs of agriculture. In the last year, crop producers, irrigation specialists, suppliers and others have worked with BMCC to provide a series of short workshops in specialty areas to advance the knowledge and skills of those already in the workforce. Eight workshops were developed on topics ranging from agricultural safety to soils, irrigation design to base stations and controls, moisture monitoring and remote sensing to managing crop production through proper use of irrigation technology. One workshop focused on welding. The workshops were scheduled through November and February on Fridays for four hours each.

The format of these workshops met the industry need both in length and the "offseason" time of year.

Each of the four workshops in February were delivered using Internet technology (Zoom) which allowed students to benefit from the classes without having to travel. Students ranged in age from 16-75 and participated from as far away as Parma, Idaho, and Othello, Wash. Most workshops averaged 18 participants.

BMCC has plans to continue these workshops. And with continued input from ag industry managers and their BMCC ag advisory board, plans to expand the curriculum to include more topics and students next winter.

In the meantime, BMCC's Precision Irrigated Agriculture Facility, located on the Oregon State University Hermiston Agricultural Research and Experiment Center, and the Facility for Agricultural Resource Management on the BMCC Pendleton campus has traditionally formatted courses that focus on a long list of agricultural topics. Traditional and nontraditional students know that BMCC is connected with industry employee managers, and BMCC is connecting these students with the education they need to keep up with an agriculture industry that is changing every day.

Anne Livingston is the director of Marketing for Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton.

OTHER VIEWS

What holds America together

Last week I went to Houston to see the rodeo. That rodeo is not like other rodeos. It's gigantic. It goes for 20 days. There can be up to 185,000 people on the grounds in a single day and they are of all human types — rural ranchers, Latino families, African immigrants, drunken suburban housewives out for a night on the town.

When you are lost in that sea of varied humanity, you think: What on earth holds this nation together? The answer can be only this: Despite our differences, we devote our lives to the same experiment, the American experiment to draw people from around the world and to create the best society ever, to serve as a model for all humankind.

Unity can come only from a common dedication to this experiment. The American consciousness can be formed only by the lab reports we give one another about that experiment — the jeremiads, speeches, songs and conversations that describe what the experiment is for, where it has failed and how it should proceed now.

One of my favorites of these lab reports is Walt Whitman's essay "Democratic Vistas," published in 1871. The purpose of democracy, Whitman wrote, is not wealth, or even equality; it is the full flowering of individuals. By dispersing responsibility to all adults, democracy "supplies a training school for making first class men." It is "life's gymnasium." It forges "freedom's athletes" — strong and equal women, courageous men, deep-souled people capable of governing themselves.

Whitman had hoped that the end of the Civil War and Lincoln's sacrificial death would bring the nation together. But instead there was corruption, division, demoralization and inequality. For Whitman, America's great foe was feudalism, the caste structure of Europe that Americans had rebelled against, but that always threatened to grow back: "Of all dangers to a nation, as things exist in our day, there can be no greater one than having certain portions of the people set off from the rest by a line drawn — they not privileged as others, but degraded, humiliated, made of no account."

Whitman feared economic and social feudalism, but above all he detested cultural and moral feudalism. He believed that writers, artists, musicians, poets and preachers were the real legislators of mankind, and in America they were detached from the nitty-gritty American experience. They still looked back to Europe — to the parlor, the perfumed courtier and the spirit of gentility — for their models of character, manners and education. They looked down on America's democratic mass.

That left a spiritual vacuum, he believed.



DAVID BROOKS
Comment

Americans had no way to see how their daily exertions contributed to a common spiritual cause. They saw no way to achieve individual salvation through community effort.

America has created a brilliant political constitution, Whitman wrote. It has amassed untold wealth. But it has not created a democratic culture that captures, celebrates and ennobles the way average Americans live day to day.

"The problem of humanity all over the civilized world is social and religious, and is to be finally met and treated by literature." When there is no common sense of mystical purpose, you end up with alienation, division, distrust, "universal ennui," a loss of faith in the American project. "Never was there, perhaps, more hollowness at heart than at present, and here in the United States," he observed.

Whitman was not, however, pessimistic. He had worked as a nurse during the Civil War, watching men recover and die, and the experience had given him illimitable faith in the goodness of average citizens. Average American soldiers showed more fortitude, religious devotion and grandeur than all the storybook heroes, he wrote. They died not for glory, nor even to repel invasion, but out of gratitude to have been included in the American experiment. They died "for an emblem, a mere abstraction — for the life, the safety of the flag."

Whitman spent his life trying to spiritualize democratic life and reshape the American imagination, to help working people see the epic heroism all around them that unites the American spirit.

He didn't mind a little healthy rudeness, what we would call the politically incorrect. He thought that the cause of democracy is sometimes aided not by "the best men only, but sometimes more by those that provoke it — by the combats they arouse."

And above all, he pointed out that the American experiment is young. It is just getting started. "Thus we presume to write, as it were, upon things that exist not, and travel by maps yet unmade, and a blank. But the throes of birth are upon us." True democracy is still in the future.

So much of what he wrote rings true today: the need to see democratic life as an exhilarating adventure, the terrible damage done when you tell groups that they are of no account, the need for a unifying American mythos, the power of culture to provide that mythos and, above all, the reminder that this is still early days. We're still a young country. The times may be discouraging, but the full strength of American democracy is still waiting to be born.

David Brooks became a New York Times Op-Ed columnist in 2003.

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