

CORONAVIRUS

# Farmers keep flexible in face of coronavirus impacts

By MATTHEW WEAVER  
Capital Press

SALEM — Growers, co-ops and agencies are figuring out ways to keep farms running amid a wave of coronavirus concerns.

Several farmers and agency representatives spoke during a Washington Young Farmers Coalition web seminar on farm resilience in response to coronavirus impacts that range from restaurant closures to a shortage of supplies.

In Spokane, Washington, the LINC Foods cooperative primarily sells to restaurants and institutions. The majority of those customers are now closed, said co-founder Beth Robinette, who is also a rancher in Cheney, Washington.

The co-op is shifting to its vegetable Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) subscription program as quickly as possible. The program usually begins in June, but LINC is figuring out ways customers can order online sooner, Robinette said.

"It's definitely pretty challenging times," she said. "We're just trying to play out as many scenarios as



Farmer Dan Sproule, left, of Medical Lake, Wash., with LINC Foods co-founder Beth Robinette. Robinette said during a webinar the co-op is shifting to its Community Supported Agriculture program because many of the restaurants it supplies are closed because of the coronavirus outbreak.

Capital Press Photo/Matthew Weaver

possible and be prepared for whatever happens."

Many people are stocking up on meat, which benefits Robinette's custom beef operation that primarily sells directly to consumers. She may explore selling more

beef by the cut, she said.

"Our family ranch was really founded in the midst of the Depression, and we've basically operated with a Depression-era mentality for the last 80-some years," she said. "In a lot of ways, I

think we have been preparing for this moment for a long time."

The ranch is set up to be minimal-input, she said.

"We have just been so averse to having any kind of debt on our ranch, which

I recognize is way easier when you rented and bought land in the 1930s and 1950s than now," she said, noting the operation relies on older vehicles and equipment. "We just really try to be extremely conservative in our financial planning."

Puyallup, Washington, farmer Amy Moreno-Sills said "everything is so new that we're not making any hard-and-fast decisions right now. Everything is business as usual as far as what day-to-day work looks like."

Moreno-Sills raises vegetables for the wholesale market on 30 acres and has 6 acres of U-pick blueberries. Her biggest concern is procuring supplies, such as packaging, she said.

"We've been getting ourselves into a bit of debt to pre-purchase those products we need right now so we'll have them on hand when things become harvestable," Moreno-Sills said.

Labor is up in the air, she said.

"Maybe we'll have a lot of folks looking for work or maybe we won't have (any) at all," she said. "We just have to be flexible, like every farmer is every year." Jennifer Antos, execu-

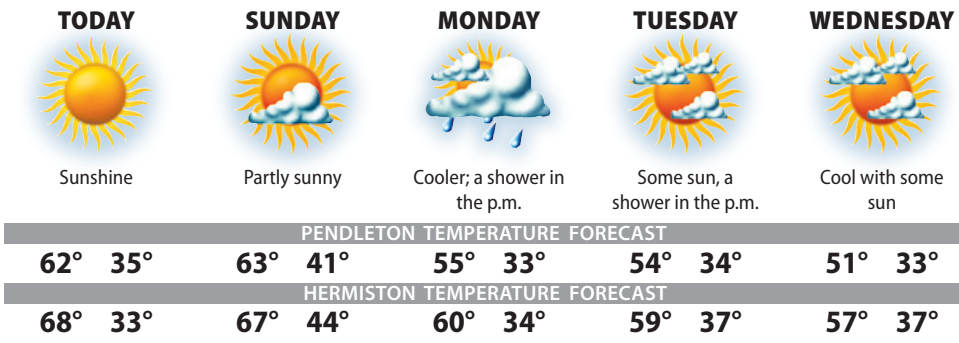
utive director of the Seattle Neighborhood Farmers Market, said her organization is surveying members to gauge immediate impacts and needs. Priorities are working with government to safely reopen permitted and regulated farmers markets and organizing emergency relief funding and fundraising a stop-gap for farms that cannot pivot to new delivery methods, she said.

Farmers who think their businesses could experience economic impacts due to the virus are encouraged to apply for the U.S. Small Business Administration's disaster and economic injury loans, said Laura Raymond, manager of the state Department of Agriculture's regional markets program.

"State, local and federal agencies right now are in fast emergency response mode," Raymond said. "There are a lot of people out there who are ready to help, and they're trying to figure out how. We're all in it together, and there is a lot of action happening."

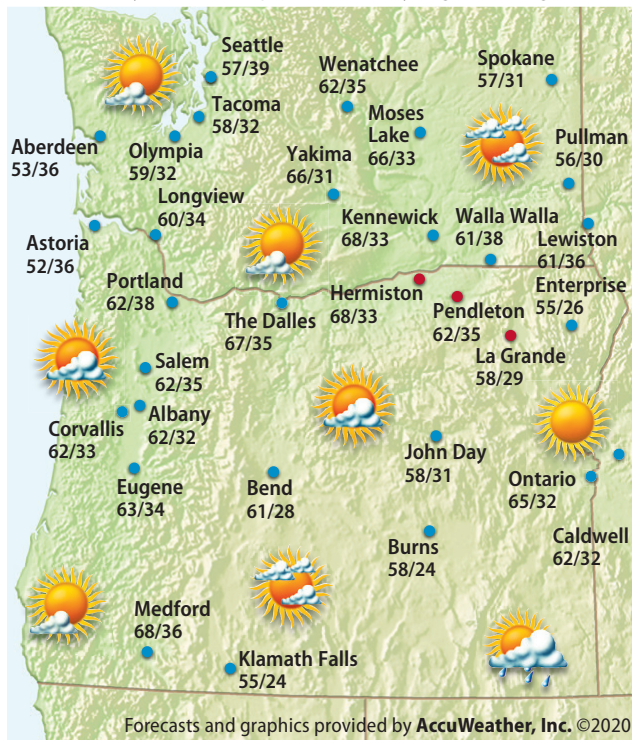
The seminar drew 300 to 400 people. Two-thirds were producers and one-third were service providers.

## Forecast for Pendleton Area



## OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



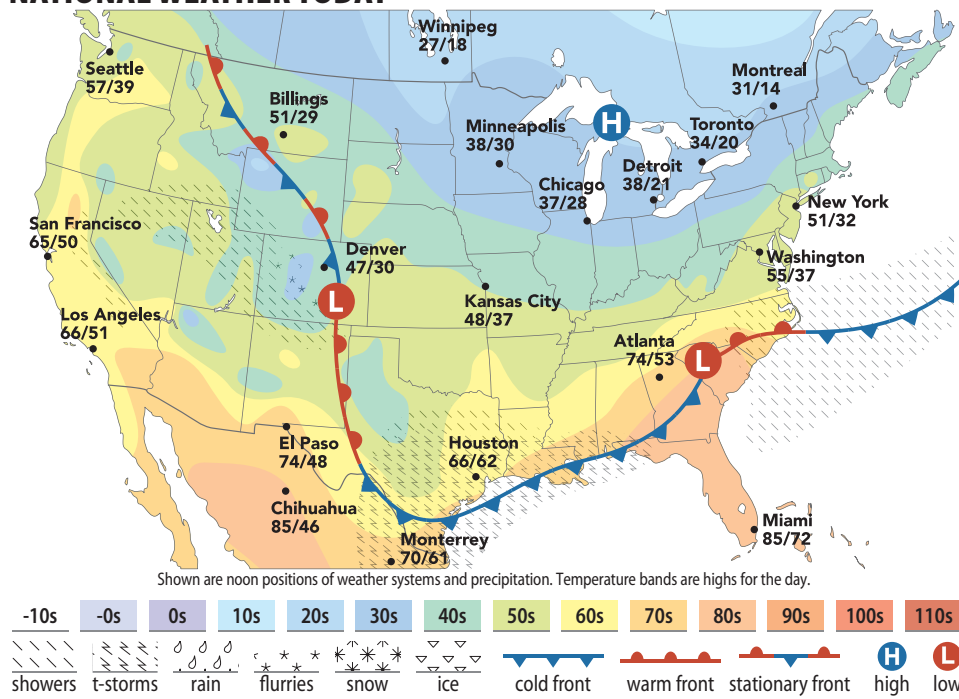
## ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	62°	33°
Normals	56°	36°
Records	75° (1911)	18° (1913)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	0.61"	
Normal month to date	0.87"	
Year to date	4.67"	
Last year to date	5.24"	
Normal year to date	3.42"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	63°	29°
Normals	59°	35°
Records	76° (1947)	19° (1943)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	0.12"	
Normal month to date	0.61"	
Year to date	0.48"	
Last year to date	3.49"	
Normal year to date	2.88"	
WINDS (in mph)		
Today	Sun.	
Boardman NW 3-6	SSW 4-8	
Pendleton NW 6-12	SSW 4-8	
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	6:56 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	7:09 p.m.	
Moonrise today	6:18 a.m.	
Moonset today	4:34 p.m.	

## NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)  
High 90° in Immokalee, Fla. Low -15° in Garrison, N.D.

## NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



## Idaho House ends legislative session

By KEITH RIDLER  
Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho — The Idaho House ended its legislative session on Friday after balancing fears of spreading the coronavirus with potential vetoes of several bills representatives will now be powerless to override.

The House voted 32-28 to end the session a day after the Senate went home. They would have needed to stay five more days to wait out a veto decision by Republican Gov. Brad Little.

"Under ordinary circumstance, we'd have stayed and let, and I believe the Senate would have stayed, and let the five days toll," said Republican House Speaker Scott Bedke. The coronavirus "caused enough concern about the wisdom of going home and coming back on Monday."

One bill that could be vetoed bans transgender people from changing the sex listed on their birth certifi-

cates despite a federal court ruling a previous Idaho ban was unconstitutional, and that the Idaho attorney general's office says could end up costing the state \$1 million if it goes to court again.

The other bill bans transgender women from competing in women's sports despite also getting warnings that such a law is unconstitutional.

Both bills had overwhelming support among Republicans in the House and Senate in numbers great enough to override a veto.

The governor has until next week to make a decision. Little hasn't indicated his intentions. A handful of large Idaho businesses have asked him to veto the bills because they make the state look intolerant. Little on Friday was traveling to health districts around the state to shore up defenses against the coronavirus as new cases are being reported almost daily.

And if Little vetoes any bills?

"We will complain from

home, I guess, because there's no ability to call ourselves back into session," said Bedke, noting the current system could ultimately be changed because it puts the legislative branch at a disadvantage.

Republican Rep. Barbara Ehardt sponsored the bill banning transgender women from competing in women's sports that would apply to all sports teams sponsored by public schools, colleges and universities. She has consistently argued that allowing the practice would negate Title IX, the 1972 law barring sex discrimination in education and is credited with opening up athletic competition for girls and women.

On Friday she voted to keep the House in session. She said she personally felt safe from the virus, but understood the votes of others to go home.

"I support everyone in how they personally felt they needed to vote and what they needed to do," she said. "These are unusual times."

# PUBLIC NOTICE

## OUTREACH FOOD PANTRY

Outreach Food Pantry located at 440 SW Emigrant Ave is changing hours and procedures due to the Coronavirus.

We are doing this for the safety of our clients as well as our staff.

We are reducing hours of food distribution to **Mon - Thurs from 1:30 PM to 4:00 PM.**

We will still distributing a standard food box at those times.

It would be very helpful for existing clients to bring the Link2Feed cards.

All clients need to call in the mornings **Mon - Thurs from 10:00 Am- 12:30 PM** to arrange pick up of food boxes in the afternoons.

**Outreach phone # is 541-276-2878.**

The Outreach Thrift Store will suspend operations until further notice, but food assistance will continue as long as we are able.

We thank the public and our volunteers for their support during this difficult time.



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