

COVID-19 fallout threatens farmers, ranchers

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

IDAHO FALLS, Idaho — The coronavirus pandemic is taking its toll on agriculture with lost markets and declining prices.

Milk is being dumped, produce is being left to rot and some producers are worried they won't have an operation left to hand down to the next generation.

Milk prices have declined 26% to 36% depending on its utilization. Prices have fallen as much as 31% for cotton and hogs, 25% for cattle, 14% for corn and 8% for soybeans, according to American Farm Bureau Federation.

"The entire supply chain is trying to adapt to match supply with the changes in demand. Meanwhile, the markets continue to swing daily," Zippy Duvall, AFBF president, said in a phone conference with reporters on Friday.

Jim Alderman, a produce grower in Southern Florida, has been farming for 40 years and said he's been through freezes, floods and hurricanes but has never seen anything like this.

"What is happening to us today is that the food service industry is basically shut down," he said

Hotels, clubs, all the restaurants are closed — and that's creating a backlog. Squash, for example, has to be picked every day. If it doesn't get picked, it gets too big to sell. The market today is about \$4 and change for a half bushel box of yellow squash or



Alan Reed, owner of Reed's Dairy in Idaho Falls, Idaho, says the free fall in the price of milk is a threat to the industry.

zucchini squash, he said.

"That is way below our cost of picking and packing. ... There's no sense in packing it because there is no sale for it," he said.

Some growers are cutting squash every day and throwing it

on the ground, hoping the market will turn around, he said. A lot of the area's produce typically goes to the food service industry, and prices are down significantly from a couple of weeks ago, he said.

"We're in a bad situation. It's

hard to have a crop out there that you just can't sell," he said.

Alan Reed owns a small dairy in Eastern Idaho and has a home milk-delivery business and four stores selling ice cream and cheese. He also sells into grocery stores

and restaurants.

The home deliveries are doing fairly well, and sales to grocery stores have stayed pretty steady. But traffic at his stores has pretty much stopped, and sales to restaurants are shut down.

He hasn't had to dump any milk yet, but food service closures have led to an oversupply of milk nationally and nowhere to go with it, he said.

"The price of milk is coming down, and it's going to turn into a real hardship for us dairymen," he said.

Peter Bakken runs a cattle operation with his brother in Southwest Minnesota. The cows are calving right now, and it's pretty much business as usual on that front.

"The marketing aspect is what really hurt," he said.

The brothers are just trying to keep the fourth-generation operation going right now, he said.

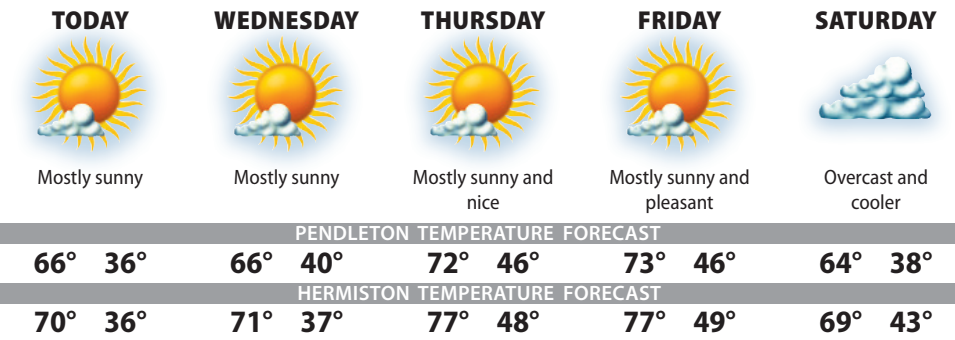
"This is a management nightmare trying to do the best you can and through no control of your own," he said.

He doesn't know if he's looking at a million-dollar loss that puts the operation at risk so the fifth generation can't come back to it, he said.

"I think a lot of people are probably in a similar situation," he said.

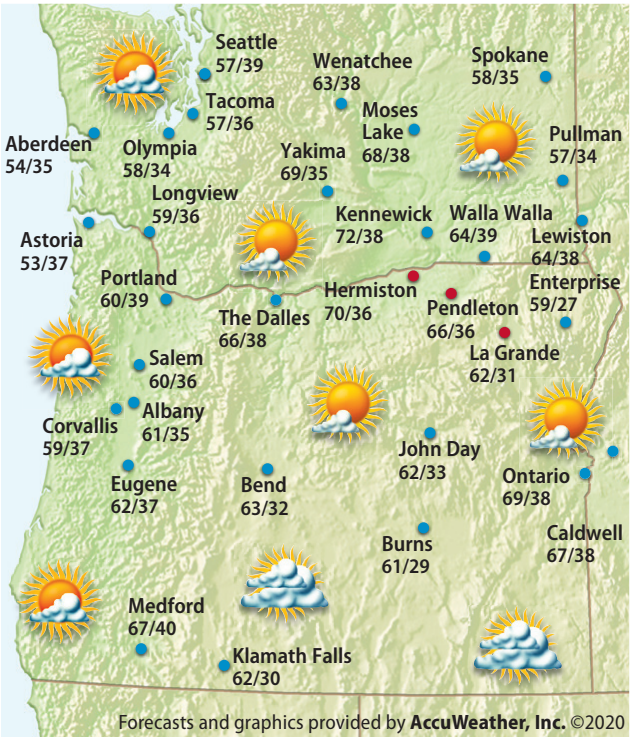
He considers himself a fairly fortunate and well established farmer, but it's going to hurt his business. And for a young person trying to get into the business, it's going to be a real uphill battle, he said.

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

63°

39°

Normals

59°

38°

Records

81° (1934)

25° (1911)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.

Trace

Month to date

0.03"

Normal month to date

0.27"

Year to date

4.98"

Last year to date

6.28"

Normal year to date

4.27"

HERMISTON

through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.

HIGH

LOW

Yesterday

66°

35°

Normals

63°

38°

Records

83° (1952)

22° (1939)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.

0.00"

Month to date

Trace

Normal month to date

0.14"

Year to date

0.48"

Last year to date

3.73"

Normal year to date

3.28"

WINDS (in mph)

Today

Wed.

Boardman

WSW 7-14

NE 4-8

Pendleton

W 7-14

NW 4-8

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today

6:23 a.m.

Sunset tonight

7:32 p.m.

Moonrise today

7:18 p.m.

Moonset today

6:38 a.m.

Full

Last

New

First

Apr 7

Apr 14

Apr 22

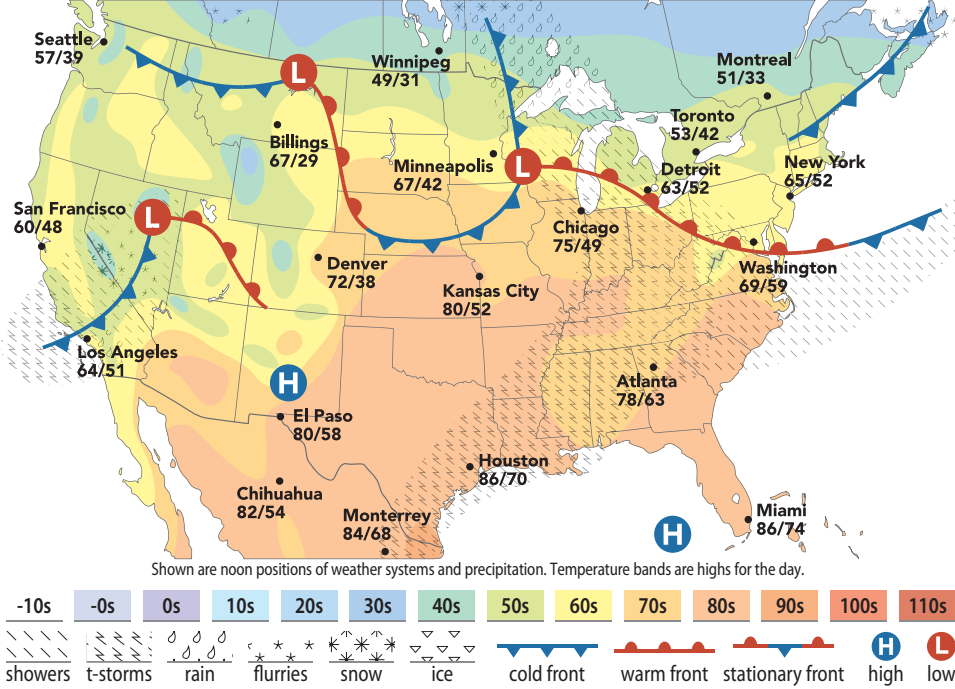
Apr 30

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 89° in Tamiami, Fla. Low 13° in Willow City, N.D.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



California to loan 500 ventilators

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE
Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California's governor announced Monday the state would loan 500 ventilators to the national stockpile for use by New York and other states experiencing a crush of coronavirus-related hospitalizations.

California chose to loan out some of its equipment because it is not yet in as dire a situation as New York, now the nation's epicenter for the crisis, said Jesse Melgar, a spokesman for Gov. Gavin Newsom. Newsom said state modeling shows California will hit its peak of cases sometime in May.

"I know that if the tables were turned and we were experiencing a hospital surge, other states would come to our aid and provide ventilators just as we are today," Newsom said in a statement.

Newsom's decision fol-

lows Oregon and Washington committing to transfer ventilators to New York.

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee announced Sunday that the state plans to return more than 400 ventilators it received from the Strategic National Stockpile, so they can go to hard-hit states like New York.

Oregon announced over the weekend it would be sending 140 ventilators to New York.

California has been on the hunt for ventilators to boost its own supply for weeks. Officials requested 10,000 ventilators from the national stockpile, though it has received none. Los Angeles, the state's most populous city, got 170 ventilators from the stockpile, though many were broken.

As of Friday, California had access to 4,252 ventilators, Newsom said. Melgar said Monday the state is boosting that number by rehabilitating thousands of broken ventilators and procuring thousands more

from other places. But he declined to provide a rough estimate of how many ventilators the state now possesses.

Hydrogen fuel cell manufacturer Bloom Energy has dedicated a portion of its production plants in California and Delaware to repairing old ventilators. As of last week, the San Jose-based company had repaired 515 ventilators, with more on the way. The company says it has the capacity to repair up to 1,000 per week.

Virgin Orbit, billionaire Richard Branson's company that makes rockets, has developed a prototype for a "bridge ventilator" designed to help patients breathe until they can be put on a traditional ventilator. The company is awaiting federal approval before it can begin mass producing the model, which was developed in partnership with researchers at the University of California, Irvine.

BRIEFLY

Three new cases of COVID-19 reported in Walla Walla County

WALLA WALLA, Wash. — Walla Walla County had its largest jump in COVID-19 infections Sunday as three more cases were reported by the Walla Walla County Department of Community Health.

Local cases of the virus climbed by one-third, from nine positive tests Saturday to 12 on Sunday, according to numbers posted on the health department's website.

Of the new cases reported, two are patients in the Burbank/Wallula area and one is in Walla Walla.

That brings the total breakdown of the 12 to five in College Place, four in Walla Walla and three in Burbank/Wallula. Two of those patients have recovered, the website says.

Until now, cases have been reported one at a time and often with days between positive tests.

The Department of Community Health has reported 525 tests have been returned with negative results.

Stay-at-home order legal, Idaho attorney general says

BOISE, Idaho — Gov. Brad Little's stay-at-home order to limit the spread of the coronavirus is legal and clearly defined by law, Idaho Attorney General Lawrence Wasden said.

Wasden said the Republican governor's power to assert such an order is found within Idaho code.

Little issued the 21-day order on March 25.

Some lawmakers and a northern Idaho sheriff had questioned Little's authority to do that, contending it violated the U.S. Constitution.

"The law in this area is clearly defined," Wasden, also a Republican, told the *Idaho Statesman* in a story on Friday. "I have no problems with providing a legal defense of the governor's order and stand ready to do so should the need arise."

Idaho has 1,078 confirmed cases and 10 deaths because of the virus, according to a Johns Hopkins University tally on Sunday morning.

— Associated Press

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