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SPRING RAIN | UNION COUNTY

Spring rain drives drought away from Union County

By KATY NESBITT
For EO Media Group

Drastic differences in weather patterns and markets from one year to the next are keeping farmers in Union County guessing as to the 2022 production outlook.

OSU Extension Agent Darrin Walenta said the weather in May and early June, though helpful, didn't make a major dent in the overall drought.

"The spring rains were certainly beneficial," Walenta said. "There is no doubt it came when we needed it to get crops up and running and filling surface water stor-

age facilities, but it didn't take away all the prolonged effects."

To keep better track of soil moisture profiles, Walenta said meteorology systems called AgriMet were installed that measure evapotranspiration, the combination of two separate processes where water is lost from the soil surface by evaporation, and from the crop by transpiration. AgriMet monitors are installed in Baker Valley as well as near Enterprise. In both locations, when posts were buried three feet down, the ground was dry even after the soggy spring.

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After a damp spring, the fields of the Grande Ronde Valley were lush and green as seen from Mount Emily on July 1, 2022.

Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald