



Dan Wheat/Capital Press

Ranchers, researchers and farmers told the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee this week that they have reduced agriculture's impact on the climate. The biggest agriculture-related impact is consumer food waste, they said.

## Agriculture has key role in climate solutions

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS  
Capital Press

Agriculture, particularly the livestock sector, often gets a bad rap in discussions about climate change, but ranchers and farmers recently told a U.S. Senate committee they have an intimate stake in environmental sustainability and have welcomed advancements that lighten their environmental impact.

Agriculture's role and government support in combating climate change was the focus of a hearing by the Senate Agriculture Committee on May 21.

"I believe agriculture, and American farmers and ranchers who live by the concept of continuous improvement and voluntary-based conservation, can be a model for other industries and other countries..." committee Chairman Pat Roberts, R-Kan., said.

Matt Rezac, a fourth-generation farmer in Weston, Neb., said he knew he had to change his farming practices to stay in business. He now relies on technology to practice precision agriculture that focuses on soil health.

Farmers might not talk about their practices to maintain soil health and water quality and quantity and control erosion as a climate issue, but those goals help provide climate solutions, he said.

"Every day, farmers like me make stewardship decisions that impact more than 1.4 billion acres of rural land ... making a positive difference and leading the way on

climate solutions," he said.

Farmers are embracing technology, and working together they can continue to lead the way on stewardship. A lot of their conservation efforts are paid for and carried out voluntarily, but it is critical that climate solutions make economic sense for farmers, he said.

Providing market and policy incentives that complement farmers' stewardship goals will be "vitally important," he said.

Debbie Lyons-Blythe, who runs a fifth-generation cattle operation with her husband and their five children in the Flint Hills of Kansas, said producers graze cattle on nearly one-third of the U.S. land mass.

Grass, pasture and rangeland for cattle sequester carbon in the soil, aiding the climate. Being good stewards of the land not only makes good environmental sense, it is fundamental for the cattle industry to remain strong, she said.

"Climate change policies that unfairly target cattle producers fail to recognize the positive role of cattle and beef in a healthy, sustainable food system, and misguided policies can threaten the viability of our industry," she said.

Food waste — the majority occurring at the consumer level — is the largest contributor to agriculture's carbon footprint, with 40% of food produced in the U.S. ending up in landfills, Frank Mitloehner, animal science and air quality specialist at the University of California, said.

## Wallowa hires native son and decorated veteran as new history teacher

By Ellen Morris Bishop  
Wallowa County Chieftain

Cody Lathrop loves history. He loves kids. And he loves teaching. Which is all good, because Mr. Lathrop will be Wallowa High School's new history teacher.

"I'll be teaching in the same classroom where I learned social studies from my favorite teacher, Marty Davis," he said. "It's kind of amazing."

Lathrop wants to bring more hands-on learning to his classes in history, social studies and economics. "My big thing is that you have to engage students really well, it's the back-story of history that you have to get enthralled with. And teaching is all about your relationship with your students. You are building a learning community." Lathrop's favorite subjects include military history and ancient European history. But his enthusiasm for teaching and working with students is boundless. "I want students to go to the next level," he said. "I want them to be real world ready."

Lathrop grew up in Wallowa, and attended Wallowa schools through 10th grade. But after his family moved to the upper valley, he graduated from Joseph High School.

"I tried college," he said, "but I just wasn't ready for it." Looking for something more adventurous and hands-on, he joined the U.S. Army and after training as a sniper and a sapper, served as a combat engineer, with two tours in Iraq. "I loved the military," he said. "I wanted to make it a career. It had challenge, structure, and camaraderie." The job of a combat engineer mostly entails driving up and down the roads looking for improvised explosive devices, or IEDs. Lathrop found them. But he also suffered multiple concussions in explosions. "The Army sent me to Germany for testing. I couldn't think. I couldn't formulate sentences. I couldn't remember things. Cognitively I was kind of screwed." Awarded two purple hearts for his service, Lathrop was medically retired.

The loss of what he'd intended



Ellen Morris Bishop

Cody Lathrop, holder of two purple hearts for his service in Iraq, will be Wallowa High School's new history teacher.

as a military career was devastating. He wandered for awhile. Finally he turned to another passion: coaching sports—especially girls' basketball. "I started coaching sports with my Dad in Joseph. Then I began to realize that I loved working with kids," he said. "It seemed like another door was opening."

Lathrop applied to Concordia College, a small liberal arts school in Moorhead, Minnesota. There he found his passion and his niche, graduating Magna Cum Laude. "For me, good grades were few and far between when I was in high school, and it seemed strange, but I really pushed myself to think, to get better," he said.

Armed with a degree in secondary education and freshly-minted teaching credentials, he began searching for a job in Minnesota. There were none. "I applied to places 20 miles, then 60 miles and finally 200 miles from home," he said. "I got about 15 interviews, but no job. Schools tended to hire the teachers with more experience rather than a new degree. It was difficult, especially when you worked so hard to get back from not being able to talk or think."

He and his wife began look-

ing toward Oregon. He found an opening as a Title I Math Aide in Enterprise. He interviewed for it over Skype. And he got the job. "I owe Erika Pinkerton and Kelly Brown a huge debt of gratitude that I'll never be able to repay," Lathrop said. "They gave me an opportunity to come back home and pursue what I wanted to do, when no-one else would."

When the Wallowa history position came open, Lathrop was reluctant to apply. He and his growing family had settled into Enterprise. He had a job, and he'd learned that finding a full-time teaching job was painful and nearly impossible. But with his wife's encouragement, he finally decided to try. "God just kept pushing me. I'm extremely excited that Mr. Howe has given me the opportunity to teach."

"When we interviewed Cody Lathrop for the job," said Wallowa High School principal David Howe, "we all looked at one-another and said 'This is our guy.' There were no questions and no dissent." At its May 22 meeting, the Wallowa School District school board unanimously confirmed Lathrop as its newest faculty member.

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