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AGRICULTURE IN IDAHO

USDA STATISTICS FOR NOVEMBER SHOW IDAHO'S DAIRY INDUSTRY USED EFFICIENT PRODUCTION TO EDGE NEW YORK AND CLAIM THE NO. 3 RANK NATIONALLY IN MILK PRODUCTION. IDAHO DAIRY COWS PRODUCED A MONTHLY AVERAGE OF 1,920 POUNDS OF MILK; NEW YORK'S 1,805. IDAHO'S HERD OF 579,000 MILK COWS PRODUCED 1.112 BILLION POUNDS OF MILK; NEW YORK'S 615,000 COWS 1.110 BILLION POUNDS.

Idaho ag posts strong year financially

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IDAHO'S FARMERS AND RANCHERS POSTED A FOURTH-STRAIGHT RECORD YEAR for projected cash receipts in 2014, according to University of Idaho agricultural economists.

The \$9.7 billion in sales of milk, livestock and crops was a 16 percent increase from 2013 projections.

Net farm income of \$4.53 billion set a second-straight record, too, up 46 percent from 2013. Soaring milk sales projected at \$3.25 billion, a \$677 million or 26 percent increase from 2013, powered much of the rise. Cattle and calf sales surged to \$2.465 billion, a \$552 million or 29 percent increase. All livestock sectors rose to \$5.94 billion, a 27 percent increase overall.

Crops posted \$3.755 billion in projected receipts, a 2 percent increase, with gains for hay, sugarbeets and minor crops helping to offset declines in barley, dry bean, wheat and potato sales.

Idaho potatoes retained their status as Idaho's top cash crop with \$885 million in sales, a 7 percent drop from 2013. Idaho's wheat crop ranked next with \$646 million down 13 percent.

Hay to feed Idaho's growing dairy and livestock sector yielded \$605 million in sales. Economists placed the crop's total value at \$1.1 billion because much of it is produced and consumed on dairy and livestock operations without generating sales. A strong export market fueled by California drought led to record prices averaging \$201 a ton.

The report, "The Financial Condition of Idaho Agriculture: 2014", was authored by Ben Eborn, UI Extension Teton County educator; Paul Patterson, Extension agricultural economist at Idaho Falls; and Garth Taylor, UI Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology economist at Moscow.

Grain researchers respond to crop emergency

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University of Idaho Extension scientists at the Aberdeen Research and Extension Center focused on improving the production and quality of Idaho wheat and barley responded to a weather-related emergency this fall.

Agronomist Juliet Marshall was pursuing her research to improve the quality and reduce the impacts of diseases on ideal-looking crops.

Then the weather changed. Just as the first combines were beginning to harvest, record rains deluged southeastern Idaho. The moisture and delayed harvest caused wheat and barley to sprout in the field. Malting barley, bred to sprout easily to expedite the malting process, sustained the greatest damage.

"It's been a tremendously difficult year for growers. We had a tremendous yield and high quality grain ready to harvest and then disaster struck," Marshall said. "We did the best we could to help growers find uses for their crop in response to the damage." Losses are expected to total in the 10s of millions of dollars.

Wheat breeder Jianli Chen intensified screening for pre-harvest sprouting resistant white wheats to reduce future losses.

Both researchers' work is supported by Idaho Wheat Commission-endowed professorships.

College posts teaching, research, student gains in 2014

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THE UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL AND LIFE SCIENCES celebrated several successes during 2014.

Greg Moller, an environmental chemist in the School of Food Science and 24-year member of the UI faculty, became the college's first recipient of the USDA National Excellence in College and University Teaching Award. He was one of two recipients nationwide. He is among those pioneering doculectures, video lectures that harness the power of audio-visual media to teach.

During a year marked by strong support from agricultural groups, the college added a new agronomist at the Aberdeen Research and Extension Center to focus attention to Idaho's important barley industry.

Christopher W. Rogers joined the UI faculty in July and immediately set to work with growers establishing field trial sites in southeastern Idaho. His work is supported in part by an endowment funded by the Idaho Barley Commission.

The college launched a new internship program for students serving in advancement roles to boost social media, donor relations, video and other areas. The students are funded through the Robert and Alvena Deerkop Endowment Scholarship.

The Deerkops were both World War II veterans who farmed near Harvard, Idaho. He served in the U.S. Army as a master sergeant in the Pacific Theater. She was a member of the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service. They married in 1962.