

DROUGHT AND ENERGY CRISIS AFFECT HAY SUPPLIES AND RURAL WASHINGTON COMMUNITIES

The drought and energy crisis in the Pacific Northwest is going to dramatically affect hay markets. While spot markets for hay may be higher than average, production costs such as fertilizer, power, and fuel are also increasing. Producers are encouraged to spend time discovering their cost of production per marketing unit before the marketing season begins.

Drought

It's official: the predicted drought is now a reality. At the end of April, the first month of the high-water-use season, the summer water supply remains well below normal. The May 1 early forecast by the National Weather Service showed that the amount of water in Washington's major rivers is currently between 46 and 65 percent of normal. The April forecast for Columbia River flow was revised down to 52.6 million acre-feet. The lowest flow ever recorded in the Columbia River was 51 million acre-feet in 1977.

Department of Ecology Responds to Water Shortage

The Department of Ecology has developed several new programs this spring to address the shortage of irrigation water. Columbia River farmers are now eligible to participate in a drought-relief program that involves a temporary water-right transfer from the Bureau of Reclamation to the state's trust water account. The water was originally purchased by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) to reduce energy demand by the Columbia Basin Project. In return for the water, the state is reimbursing BPA approximately \$800,000 for revenue lost by not generating power with the water. The agreement will provide supplemental water to the

irrigators who participate for up to 12 weeks this spring and summer. In exchange, farmers must agree to measure and report to Ecology and reduce the amount of water they would typically use in an irrigation season.

In late April, Ecology launched a website dedicated to matching people, public utilities, and farmers with water rights they need to get through this year's drought. People who are willing to temporarily transfer part or all of their valid water rights to another person/company may post the information at the Washington Water Exchange website: www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/drought/droughthome.html. Water right transfers will be considered for qualification under the drought emergency that was declared on March 14, in which Ecology must process transfers and changes of existing water rights and

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GET YOUR OWN WSHGA JACKET!

The Washington State Hay Growers Association has jackets available for order. These light-weight, casual jackets are forest green with a khaki lining and feature the World Class Washington Hay logo embroidered on the left chest.

The jacket features a water-resistant shell and lining of 65% polyester/35% cotton poplin, elastic waistband and cuffs with adjustable velcro. There are two front pockets, inner chest pocket with zipper, and full storm and outer placket. The hood is concealed in the collar. The jacket is available in sizes from Small to 3XLarge.

Contact the WSHGA office at 509/547-5538 for more

information or to view a director's jacket.

WSHGA PARTICIPATES IN TRI-STATE
HAY GROWERS MEETING

Members of the WSHGA board of directors met with their counterparts in the Idaho Hay Association and the Oregon Hay & Forage Association for a round table discussion of issues in common in the Pacific Northwest.

Pacific Northwest Water Issues and Impact on Hay Growers - Members of the Oregon Hay and Forage Association reported on the water situation in the Klamath Basin where the Bureau of Reclamation has refused to provide irrigation water in favor of keeping water in the river system for fish habitat. The action affects approximately 200,000 acres and 1200 irrigators. The economic impact is estimated to be \$100 million in lost agricultural crop revenue and a \$200 million impact on the businesses and residents of the Klamath community.

The tri-state group approved a position statement as follows: The Washington/Oregon/Idaho hay grower associations support private property rights, including water rights, and expect and insist that the state governments of Washington/Oregon/Idaho defend those rights.

Members of the Idaho and Washington groups discussed the extensive energy buyout programs in place.

Cereal Leaf Beetle - Oregon and Idaho members discussed the restricted movement of hay due to cereal leaf beetle concerns. California has required beetle-free certification before hay can be moved into the state. The growers will continue to work with their state departments of agriculture and research into natural predators for the beetle is being conducted.

Weed-Free Certification Process

The hay growers compared the weed-free certification programs in their respective states. Idaho is in the

process of revising the program and turn it back to the counties. There will be a meeting in May in Reno, NV, to discuss noxious weed-free hay in the western states.

Creation of a Hay Commission - Dr. John Kugler of WSU made a comprehensive report on the challenges and steps for forming a hay commission. All states expressed interest, but continue to be stumped by the assessment issue.

Pacific Northwest Forage Center - Dr. David Hannaway, extension forage specialist for Oregon State University, reported on OSU's proposal to establish a Northwest Forage and Livestock Systems Research and Education Center at Oregon State University that would conduct forage and livestock-based agricultural systems research and education programs for the region.

Another tri-state meeting will be scheduled for next fall to review the drought and water situations and other common issues.

WSHGA TO SUPPORT
YAKIMA BASIN COMMODITY COALITION
ON WATER ISSUES

Provided by Yakima Basin Commodity Coalition
At their May 1 meeting, the WSHGA board of directors voted to financially support the newly formed Yakima Basin Commodity Coalition to address water rights issues in the Yakima River Basin. The stated mission of the Coalition is **to preserve, protect, and enhance irrigation water supplies in the Yakima River Basin.**

The Yakima Basin Commodity Coalition was formed to actively promote and pursue balanced, meaningful water management in the Yakima Basin. Biased interests are proceeding with and advocating very unfair approaches to water management in the Yakima Basin. As an example, they are advocating the breaching of the Lake Keechelus Dam near Snoqualmie Pass. This lake provides irrigation water to thousands of acres of farmland. It also protects property from flood damage. In addition, it provides water for recreational activities and late year in-stream

flows for fisheries interests.

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Another example is sending the majority of last winter's water flows through the reservoirs without storing any meaningful amount. Does it make sense to "dump" this precious commodity down the river with the potential to put families and businesses at risk for the sole purpose of providing optimum flows for fisheries interests?

To add to the confusion, these groups are advocating that agriculture has a negative impact on ground water levels. This may be true in an area without an irrigation system, but it is not true here. Irrigation districts estimate that their systems have 20 to 30 percent conveyance losses. Where does this water go? It goes into the ground to enhance ground water levels. In many cases, water returning to the river is cooler than when it left, which enhances fish habitat.

The proponents of these interests appear not to care whether agricultural products are produced in the Yakima Basin. They appear to not be concerned about our existing infrastructure that supports our communities and provides jobs for families who live here. Agriculture is the economic base in the Yakima Basin. Without water, agriculture can not function. If agriculture does not function, jobs cease to exist, goods are not purchased, and taxes that run our communities are not paid. These biased interests are attempting to take an unwarranted amount of water away from producers of this valley through manipulation, intimidation, regulation and third party lawsuits.

What are we going to do?

We plan to contract with a water consultant who can assist with formulating balanced approaches to water issues in this basin. This would include providing input on agency directives dealing with water issues, reviewing Bureau of Reclamation river operations procedures, and securing additional water supplies. To accomplish these goals we would be actively working with agency staff and state and federal political leaders. Below is a list of some of the current issues:

- C Minimum pool at Rimrock Lake
- C Minimum in-stream fish flows (current and future)
- C Pulse flows
- C Lake Keechelus Dam repair
- C Groundwater use

This effort will not be free. We are in the process of collecting funds to carry out this initiative. Producers or anyone who derives benefits from agricultural producers in the Yakima Basin water shed should support this effort. Contributions can be made payable and mailed to:

Yakima Basin Commodity Coalition
c/o Hop Growers of Washington
504 N. Naches Avenue, Suite 11
Yakima, WA 98901

TIM WOODWARD HIRED
TO FILL BENTON/FRANKLIN
FORAGE EXTENSION POSITION

Washington State University Cooperative Extension has announced the recent hiring of William T. W. (Tim) Woodward as Extension Forage Specialist in the Franklin County Extension Office. He assumed his responsibilities for Benton and Franklin Counties on May 1, 2001.

Tim Woodward brings expertise in the forage industry and alfalfa breeding to his new position. For the past three years, he has operated a research farm and apple orchard in Velarde, NM, developing alfalfa products for the midwest and New Mexico. Prior to relocating to New Mexico, Tim spent nearly twenty years with Pioneer HiBred International, Inc., where he served as director of the alfalfa research department in Johnston, Iowa.

Dr. Woodward has assumed responsibility for working with WSU-Prosser researchers on the WSHGA alfalfa variety trials being conducted in Pasco, and will assist with operations in Othello as well. He will serve on the WSHGA board of directors as a University Advisor, along with Dr. John Kugler (Grant/Adams Counties) and Dr. Steve Fransen (WSU-Prosser).

NORTHEAST WASHINGTON HAY TOUR ON MAY 19

The Northeast Washington Hay Growers Association will conduct a spring field tour beginning at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 19, near Chattaroy. The tour will visit fields where Velpar and Eptam have been used for weed control, grass has been interseeded into thinning alfalfa and different fertilizer programs have been used. There will be a presentation on hay-sampling devices and the value of hay testing in helping growers sell hay. For information, call 509/466-4501.

LAWSUIT THREATENED

On April 19, Trout Unlimited and other environmental groups sent a notice of intent to sue to the Department of the Interior, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Department of Commerce, and the National Marine Fisheries Service. The groups are alleging violations of the Endangered Species Act involving low stream flow conditions in the Snake and Columbia Rivers. The environmental groups are protesting use of water flows for irrigation or hydroelectric power generation.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE PUBLISHES PROPOSED RULES FOR CHEMIGATION AND FERTIGATION

The Washington State Department of Agriculture has published proposed rule changes for chemigation and fertigation. The proposed rules contain significantly more explanatory provisions than the current rule. Most additional provisions are addressed in the Small Business Economic Impact Statement, including:

1. Manual shutoff valves must be placed on the main outlet of application tanks.
2. Application tanks must contain "who to contact" information in a minimum of two-inch lettering on a contrasting background.
3. Application tanks containing product must be periodically monitored.
4. Chemigation and fertigation applications must be periodically monitored.
5. For chemigation, tank size is limited to 2,500 gallons and a cumulative application tank capacity of 3,000 gallons (with a soil fumigation exception of 6,500 gallons for a 14-day period) per injection site.
6. For fertigation, a tank size restriction of 6,500 gallons and a cumulative application tank capacity of 10,000 gallons per injection site.
7. An inspection port or other access point to assess the integrity and operation of irrigation mainline check valve and the low pressure drain, provided such devices are deemed necessary,

must be installed.

8. Department of Health approved backflow prevention devices must be installed on systems that are cross-connected to a public water supply.

Proposed provisions not specifically addressed in the Small Business Economic Impact Statement include:

1. All system components must be compatible with injected materials, water containing injected materials, or system pressure.
2. The application must be continuously observed whenever sensitive areas are at risk of being exposed to drift, runoff, or overspray.
3. Overflow from an irrigation pond contaminated with product cannot enter a public waterway, off-farm irrigation supply ditch or conveyance system, or sensitive area.
4. Barometric loops can only be used on systems pumping from a surface water source. The barometric pipe loop must be located in the main water line immediately downstream of the irrigation water pump. It must be designed with sufficient elevation differential to compensate for backflow. The bottom of the barometric loop apex must be at least 30 inches above the highest water-emitting device or of any portion of the

irrigation application system. The chemical injection port must be located downstream of and at least 30 inches below the bottom of the pipe loop apex.

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5. Mixing or loading activities cannot occur within and an application tank cannot be placed closer than 20 feet to a sensitive area, wellhead, public waterway, off-farm irrigation supply ditch or conveyance system, and irrigation water source.
6. For a chemigation operation, product can remain in an application tank for a period not to exceed 14 days between chemigation applications; an application tank containing product must be inspected at least daily or monitored with remote access volumetric measuring devices; and an application tank must be removed at the end of the irrigation or application season, whichever is shorter, but in no event to exceed nine months. At the end of this period, the application tank must be emptied, cleaned, visually inspected for integrity, and serviced. The tank must be removed from the site or the tank must be decommissioned and clearly tagged with the words "out of service" or the tank must be managed as a permanent storage facility.
7. For a fertigation operation, product can remain in an application tank for a period not to exceed nine consecutive months during an irrigation or application season; an application tank containing product during the non-application or non-irrigation season is subject to the Secondary and Operational Area Containment Rules; and the application tank must be removed at the end of the irrigation or application season, whichever is shorter, but in no event to exceed nine months. At the end of this period, the application tank must be emptied, cleaned, visually inspected for integrity, and serviced. The tank must be removed from the site, or the tank must be decommissioned as stated above.
8. For a fertigation operation, a person may function as a metering device with a nonpressurized irrigation delivery system. However, the

individual must remain on-site to continuously monitor the application and be immediately available to terminate the application in the event of equipment malfunction.

For additional information, contact the WSDA Chemigation and Fertigation Technical Assistance Program at 509/766-2574 or write: Tom Hoffmann or Byron Fitch at WSDA Pesticide Management, 821 E. Broadway, Suite 4, Moses Lake, WA 98837.

WASHINGTON/OREGON (COLUMBIA BASIN)
WEEKLY HAY - MAY 4, 2001

Tonnage: 1,000 Week Ago: 2,200 Year Ago: 2,755

Compared to last week, not enough current sales for a price trend. Demand moderate on very light offerings of old crop hay. Few producers are talking they could start swathing this week if weather forecasts are favorable late week in the lower basin area. Most feel it will be closer to between the 10th and 15th of May, depending on weather forecast. Feed store and horse sales firm on lightly reported sales, good demand and very light offerings. No new contracts for new crop hay reported this week.

Quality/Bale Size	Tons	Price	Wtd Avg	Comments
Export Alfalfa sales to move in 60 days, tops off:				
Good 2/3-tie	140	80.-85.00	83.21	

860 tons of other hay reported. Good to Premium orchard grass for export 2 tie bales 140.00 FOB covered. Good alfalfa, rain damage 90.00 3 tie bales, covered. Good alfalfa, weeds and grass 80.-90.00 FOB covered 3 tie bales. Fair alfalfa, new seeding with weeds, grass, few oats, ADF 32+ 75.00 FOB covered ton bales. Fair tops and bottoms with weather damage 75.00 FOB 3 tie bales.

Feed store or horse accounts sales covered: Good to Premium orchard, 2 tie 75-100 lb. bale 140.00 FOB. Good orchard and alfalfa blend, 2-3 tie 75-125 lb. bale

120.00 FOB. Good to Premium, mostly alfalfa 2 tie 90-110 lb. bale 110.-120.00 FOB. Good alfalfa and alfalfa and grass 2-3 tie 90-125 lb. bale 110.00 FOB.

USDA Market News

WSU LAUNCHES DROUGHT RESOURCE WEBSITE

Terence L. Day, WSU

WSU has created a website to help Northwest farmers deal with the region's deepening drought. James Zuiches, dean of the WSU College of Agriculture and Home Economics, said "Drought Alert provides a variety of information on the drought and how citizens can conserve water and otherwise cope with impacts of the drought." The state is in a declared drought emergency that affects both eastern and western Washington. "We could be facing the worst drought since our record-keeping began in 1929," said Governor Gary Locke. "The WSU website will be a valuable resource for drought news and tips on water conservation. Working together we can keep our farmers and industry in business, meet the needs of our homes, keep our salmon alive and ensure a pure water supply for our people."

Drought Alert offers news releases, a list of drought-related meetings, and a host of links to other websites maintained by state and federal agencies. The Drought Alert website is located at <http://drought.wsu.edu> and can be accessed by link from the WSHGA webpage at www.wa-hay.org.

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applications for emergency water permits under a streamlined, 15-day process that begins when Ecology receives a complete application.

In the Yakima Basin, farmers who obtain permits to use

emergency drought wells this year will have to pay \$50 to \$100 per acre-foot of water they pump. The state will use the money to buy surface water rights that will be left in the river to offset what Ecology assumes is a loss of groundwater due to pumping (see Yakima Basin Commodity Coalition story on second page). Ecology officials have said the payments are a matter of fairness to help farmers in trouble and, at the same time, protect threatened fish species and other water users who rely on the river. Affected Ellensburg farmer Larry Meilander, already looking at a smaller hay crop and increased operating costs, said he paid \$150,000 for a well in 1994 and now is being told he has to pay again. "I don't understand the logic," he said. "Now I know why kids would rather work at McDonald's than try to farm."

Klamath Reclamation Project

Klamath Basin farmers in southern Oregon and northern California have become casualties of the drought and the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Bureau of Reclamation announced its decision in early April to cancel water delivery contracts to nearly 1,200 irrigators in the Klamath Project, affecting nearly 200,000 acres of irrigated land. Under provisions of the ESA, the water is being held in Upper Klamath Lake for endangered sucker fish and allowed to run down the Klamath River for threatened coho salmon. Thousands of acres of hay production in the Klamath Basin will be affected.

Energy Crisis

With drought conditions throughout the Pacific Northwest, hydroelectric power generation has decreased in the face of the nation's mounting energy crisis. Howard Schwartz, senior energy policy specialist, Energy Policy Unit, Office of Trade and Economic Development (OTED) reports that energy supplies and the potentials for shortages will eventually affect the region. According to OTED's best estimates, the Northwest should be able to meet its energy demands through the summer, but fall and winter brings higher electric usage in the Pacific Northwest and there are no major new supplies between now and winter of 2001. California normally ships power to the Pacific Northwest in the winter, but that supply may not be available.

A battle is brewing over who gets the energy supplies. BPA has proposed that the aluminum industry cease operations for two years to leave more power for others in the region. The aluminum industry is currently running TV and print advertising to build positive public support. The potential shutdown of

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the aluminum industry would be a large economic blow to rural communities. BPA is scheduled to increase its rates in October and many rural PUDs will have to raise their rates as their power purchase costs increase.

Energy Buyout Programs

BPA and other public utilities throughout the Pacific Northwest have rolled out massive buyout programs to encourage reduced energy load from irrigators. Idaho Power and Utah Power have already signed up enough irrigators in Idaho to idle 250,000 to 270,000 irrigated acres. Some of the acreage will be totally out of production, while other acres will be irrigated by diesel-powered generators on pumps. BPA has halted production on 88,000 acres in the Columbia Basin Project. Most hay producers in the program are planning to make a first cutting. Another 17,000 acres south of the Columbia River near Boardman, OR, have also been idled through an energy buyout program.

The reduced production due to drought conditions and energy factors will severely tighten hay supplies this year. Hay growers will need that upward push on prices to cover their increased operating costs.

DAIRY MARKET STRENGTHENS

Dairy market reports are cautiously optimistic with milk, butter, and cheese prices inching upward. Dairy futures show continued strength through August and September.

The dairy industry has reported declining production numbers per cow throughout the nation. Many dairy producers are discontinuing their use of growth hormone

products due to observations of excessive burn-out in their herds.

MANAGED ALFALFA CAN SURVIVE
MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!
DRY SUMMER
2002 WSHGA HAY CONFERENCE

JANUARY 22 - 23
PASCO DOUBLETREE HOTEL

Provided by Glenn Shewmaker, University of Idaho
Alfalfa is a curious crop: it demands 36 inches water from early spring through late fall, yet it survives drought quite well. But producers must manage their established stands carefully in water-short years if they want to take advantage of the crop's ability to survive mid- and late-season dormancy.

Glenn Shewmaker, University of Idaho extension forage specialist, says producers who will lose water early or who intend to move it in mid-season from alfalfa to less drought-tolerant crops should plan to market their hay for feeder/cow use. Dairy hay is best cut just as alfalfa begins to bud, while feeder/cow hay is cut later, after the plant starts to bloom. Harvested as feeder hay, the more mature plant will have had more time to restock its roots and crown with carbohydrates and will be more likely to survive without water until next spring.

Another option may be to harvest the first crop early, as dairy hay, then let the second crop mature and cut it as feeder hay. The carbohydrates used by the plant to start its growth cycle may be replenished in time to survive a dry summer. This plan is somewhat risky and may result in some lost plants.

Shewmaker also adds, "once dormant, alfalfa attracts few insects or diseases. It's an environmentally friendly crop. During a full growing season, it will even fix enough nitrogen from the atmosphere to grow a corn or wheat crop the following year. It's very good for sustainable systems."

WSHGA HAY DIRECTORY
IN MAILBOXES NOW

The 2001-2002 Hay Directory will be in thousands of dairy, beef, and horse industry mailboxes this week. 4000 directories were sent to dairies in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, beef producers, and horse owners. Call 509/547-5538 for additional copies.

Double Issue
April/May 2001