

Idaho agriculture shatters cash, income records

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BOISE -- Idaho farmers and ranchers shattered the state's former records for total cash receipts and net farm income in 2011.

The University of Idaho estimates the state's total farm-gate receipts in 2011 at \$7.4 billion, a 29 percent increase over the \$5.73 billion total in 2010 and far above the previous record of \$6.22 billion set in 2008.

Seven of the state's largest farm commodities set records for cash receipts: dairy, cattle and calves, potatoes, wheat, hay, sugar beets and hay. Onions were the state's only major crop that saw a decline in cash receipts during the calendar year.

More importantly for producers, Idaho's farmers and ranchers raked in a record \$2.64 billion in net farm income, which was 88 percent more than the \$1.4 billion they made in 2010 and \$903 million more than the former record of \$1.73 billion in 2008.

The estimates, contained in UI's annual "The Financial Condition of Idaho Agriculture" report, are based on U.S. Department of Agriculture data and are calculated on a calendar year.

"This annual report shows the economic importance of Idaho agriculture to the state's economy," said UI College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Dean John Hammel, who released the report to lawmakers Jan. 5 at the Statehouse.

Dairy remained the state's most lucrative agricultural commodity with an estimated \$2.44 billion in 2011, which was 28 percent more than 2010 and \$344 million more than the former record set in 2008.

Cattle and calves brought in a record \$1.47 billion in 2011, 23 percent and \$247 million more than the former record in 2010.

"It was one of the best years we can recall," said Wyatt Prescott, executive vice president of the Idaho Cattle Association.

Potatoes retained its spot as the state's top cash crop with \$912 million in sales. That was a 32 percent increase over 2010 and shattered the previous record of \$770 million set in 2008.

Wheat was Idaho's No. 2 cash crop in 2011 with a record \$766 million in sales, 42 percent and \$225 million above the former record set in 2010.

Hay was next with \$665 million in total sales, 76 percent more than 2010 and \$56 million more than the former record set in 2008.

Sugar beet sales totaled \$325 million, 16 percent and \$46 million more than the previous record in 2010.

Barley receipts totaled \$232 million, which tied the record set in 2008 and was 15 percent more than 2010.

Dry bean sales totaled \$73 million, 14 percent more than the previous record of \$64 million in 2010.

Onion sales totaled \$41 million, a 43 percent drop from 2010 and well below the record of \$73 million in 2007.

Hammel told lawmakers that cash receipts for Idaho agriculture in 2012 are forecast to decline to between \$6.5 billion and \$7 billion, and net farm income could fall to between \$1.7 billion and \$2.2 billion. However, those totals would still be at or above the former records.