

AgKnowledge

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COLLEGE—Plans move ahead to support Idaho's robust livestock, other ag sectors

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THE CENTER FOR LIVESTOCK and Environmental Studies may be one of the most prominent initiatives by the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences to serve the state and its agriculture in recent years. Last summer, President George W. Bush signed legislation to allow University endowment land to be sold, raising funds to build the center on a site nearer Idaho's Magic Valley dairies. National legislation allows more flexibility in how endowed lands can be used to support research priorities.

The need is clear for the new center's research and education capabilities. Idaho agriculture collected a record \$5.6 billion in cash receipts during 2007. Nearly 60 percent resulted from beef and dairy cattle. The new center is the college's effort, with the Legislature's strong support in 2007, to help Idaho address environmental issues that go with the livestock industry.

The Nancy M. Cummings Research, Extension and Education Center near Salmon continues to build its beef research capacity. The college is locating a beef extension specialist there this year and is shifting positions to meet needs at other UI R&E centers across Idaho.

Research, extension, and teaching are the University's mission. Amin Ahmadzadeh, associate professor of dairy management, collected one of six regional teaching awards given by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and National Association of State Universities and Land-grant Colleges. In addition to excellence in the classroom, Ahmadzadeh maintains a close working relationship with the United Dairymen of Idaho and Idaho Dairy Association.

Potatoes and wheat, the other two main sectors of the agricultural industry, paid off handsomely for growers this year, in part because of college varietal development and other agronomic efforts. Oilseeds and biofuels are a growth industry college scientists are also working hard to nurture.

The Food Technology Center at Caldwell, which legislators toured last summer, serves the state food entrepreneurs and mid-size companies. The college is developing a unique partnership with Washington State University to develop a joint food science program that will build on strengths of both schools.

"I think we're making solid gains to meet current and future needs of Idaho's ag industry," said CALS Dean John Hammel. "We're doing the best we can with what we have to work with industry and to serve agriculture in transition."

Cummings Center near Salmon gets new superintendent and new facilities

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IMPROVEMENTS ARE ACCELERATING at the University of Idaho's 1,100-acre Nancy M. Cummings Research, Extension and Education Center north of Salmon.

Donated to the university in 2005 by the Auen Foundation, the center is dedicated to the study and teaching of sustainable, forage-based beef production and to providing educational opportunities for area youth and adults.

What's new? Two center-pivot irrigation systems covering 320 acres, two modular

dormitories housing up to 12 visiting students and faculty, plus farming equipment. This spring, cattle-handling facilities will be relocated to higher ground and construction will begin on a new dormitory-conference center.

Incoming superintendent and beef specialist John B. Hall, from Virginia Tech, envisions Cummings becoming a "premier center" for Western beef production and management. "There's a tremendous future here and a lot of opportunity to make that happen."

Innovative \$250 scholarships help CALS enrollment grow

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A FOCUS ON RECRUITING NEW STUDENTS to the UI College of Agricultural and Life Sciences produced success during 2007. Even in difficult times, college enrollment grew. An innovative \$250 Visitation Scholarship provided one key to that success.

The new scholarship was accepted by 40 of the 48 new freshmen and transfer students who were offered it after they toured the Moscow campus, met with faculty and staff, then enrolled in CALS majors. The new students who accepted the scholarship came from Idaho and surrounding states.

The new scholarship proves that students who came to the Moscow campus and took a look at the college liked what they saw.

The scholarship, to be offered again this year, targets students who might not otherwise visit the University of Idaho. Most come from Oregon, Washington, and California. The scholarship helped students to justify the expense of an exploratory trip to Moscow.

DID YOU KNOW?

\$15 MILLION

IN GRANTS WERE BROUGHT INTO THE STATE BY UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL AND LIFE SCIENCES RESEARCHERS DURING 2007.

Source: University of Idaho Research Office