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Farmers expected to see lower revenue in 2021

Flat wheat prices predicted

By **THOMAS CLOUSE**
The Spokesman-Review

SPOKANE — Farmers in Washington and across the U.S. likely will see their overall revenue drop this year after a



Randy Fortenbery
WSU ag economist

strong 2020, which set a non-adjusted record for farm income, according to a Washington State University economist.

Randy Fortenbery, an agriculture economist at WSU, gave his annual forecast Wednesday for the Spokane Age Expo and Farm Forum, which for the first time in history went virtual in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

While higher-than-expected exports recently have boosted wheat prices, the overall outlook for area farmers doesn't look great, Fortenbery said. Futures markets predict flat wheat prices for several years.

"Right now, 2021 looks positive," Fortenbery said. "Maybe not quite as attractive as 2020, mostly because of a decline in government payments."

Corn and soybean prices recently have spiked and that has boosted wheat prices as some cattle feeders consider using wheat as a cheaper alternative. However, world wheat supplies are expected to expand, an overall supply which

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Gusts up to 50 mph coming to Wenatchee

By **LUKE HOLLISTER**
World staff writer

WENATCHEE — Strap your hat on and lock your windows down because blustery gusts of up to 50 mph are headed to the Wenatchee Valley starting today through most of Friday.

Thursday's windy weather front may bring with it a mix of rain and snow while keeping on through late Friday, said Ken Daniel, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Spokane. It is pretty common to have this sort of weather system roll through from time to time, he said.

A wind advisory is in effect from 9 a.m. Thursday until 4 p.m. Friday in the Wenatchee and Waterville areas. Gusts could blow down tree limbs and make travel difficult, said Daniel.

Friday's winds are looking like they will be a little stronger than Thursday's gusts, but people should be prepared for high winds on both days, he said. Winds will stay between 20-25 mph, with only the gusts reaching up to 50 mph.

The breezy weather could also bring down power lines and cause outages, the National Weather Service warned in its advisory.

By **SYDNEY BROWN**
Washington State Journal

OLYMPIA — Outrage over deaths of citizens in police custody sparked efforts by lawmakers to address racial equity, hiring and training, and the use of force within law enforcement. Now, nearing the halfway point in the 2021 legislative session, the steps toward major reform of police tactics have gained support from both sides, though not without controversy.

"I wouldn't argue that we have complete agreement amongst all of them but we're continuing to work to bring people together and to move the bills," said House Speaker

Laurie Jinkins, D-Tacoma, in a press conference earlier this week.

Community oversight

The Senate will vote on SB 5089, which raises the qualifying age of a law enforcement applicant to 23, and requires them to hold or be on the way to holding a bachelor's degree.

The Ways & Means Committee members passed SB 5353 Feb. 22, which targets Spokane, Pierce, King, Okanogan, Yakima, Cowlitz, Chelan-Douglas,

Walla-Walla, Benton-Franklin, Grant and Snohomish as recipients for a community-law enforcement engagement grant program. The grant would fund these counties' efforts in neighborhood organizing and youth programs to increase public trust with law enforcement.

Sweeping reform to the Criminal Justice Training Commission will also have a chance to make it through the Senate, with lawmakers putting SB 5051 forward to expand the powers of the CJTC. Currently,

the commission establishes standards and provides training to police and local corrections officers. It has the power to certify, and when necessary, to de-certify, officers. The law would also mandate that the commission must include more members from underrepresented communities.

"The public has the right to know if their tax dollars are paying for officers who have a known history of excessive use of force," said Devon Connor-Green, who testified in support of the bill on behalf of the Washington Black Lives Matter Alliance during its hearing Feb. 1.

A similar bill to adjust training and hiring rules in the CJTC,

city's lawsuit against the Trump administration head to court. "But I much prefer seeing President Biden undo his predecessor's will with a stroke of his pen," Holmes said in a prepared statement. "I'm glad to have this nonsense cleared from the decks considering my office has no shortage of litigation to manage, from the eviction moratorium to hazard pay for frontline workers. Onward."

Biden, on Wednesday, revoked the designation with little flourish.

"The following Presidential actions are revoked," he wrote

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Use-of-force

Lawmakers voted 28-21 to pass SB 5066 Feb. 23, a bill requiring officers to intervene if they see a colleague using excessive force. While it had Democratic support, some Republican lawmakers said it would deter recruitment into law enforcement.

"This bill will help keep communities safe and will provide the tools

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HOPING FOR THE BEST



World photo/Don Seabrook

Francisco Gutierrez, general manager of South restaurant in Pybus Public Market, serves lunch to Mike and Jo Ann Walker, Wenatchee, and their friend Bill Newcomer, Vancouver, on Tuesday. Indoor seating at restaurants opened up when the region went to Phase 2 of Gov. Jay Inslee's COVID-19 reopening plan.

Restaurants reopen to indoor dining, await Friday decision from state

By **OSCAR RODRIGUEZ**
World staff writer

WENATCHEE — Some restaurant owners in the Wenatchee Valley saw more customers returning as soon as 25% of indoor capacity became available on Feb. 14. But restaurants and their customers remain worried over the uncertainty of Gov. Jay Inslee's Roadmap to Recovery reopening plan.

No region in the state is guaranteed to remain in Phase 2, according to the governor's plan. In November when restaurants also opened up to 25% capacity, rising COVID-19 cases shut down restaurants in two weeks.

The next announcement of the region's status is Friday, and the uncertainty of it all makes the process of

reopening difficult and stressful, says restaurant owner Salvador Rubio.

Rubio owns two Mexican restaurants in Wenatchee and Yakima, Ay Caramba Tres Amigos. The restaurants have no outdoor seating, and so relied on takeout orders while under Phase 1. At 25% capacity, Rubio said in Spanish, he brought back around nine employees, all of them part-time, bringing the total close to 20 employees at the Wenatchee restaurant.

While still not profitable with 25% indoor seating, the restaurant makes enough to pay for his employees, he said. But if the region gets shifted back to Phase 1 — losing out on that indoor dining — the restaurant's revenue will not be enough to pay all his employees, according to Rubio.

To deal with the stress, Rubio said he reminds himself that this pandemic is a temporary thing and that vaccines will eventually improve the situation.

Alma's Kitchen saw more people coming to the restaurant as soon as it opened indoor seating, immediately reaching that 25% capacity limit, according to Marco Ramirez, son of co-owner Alma Ramirez.

"I think everybody's ready to get out and enjoy life like we normally did," Ramirez said. "We take those things for granted."

Understaffed, inventory depleted, the restaurant's reopening had its share of challenges, Ramirez said. Among the challenges, Mexican beer

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MARCO RAMIREZ
Alma's Kitchen

Biden undoes Trump's 'anarchist' designation of Seattle

By **DAVID GUTMAN**
The Seattle Times

SEATTLE — First Seattle was an "anarchist jurisdiction." Now, it's not.

All it took was a new president.

Five months after former President Donald Trump's administration dubbed Seattle, New York and Portland as "anarchist jurisdictions" that permit "violence and destruction of property," President Joe Biden revoked the label on Wednesday.

Trump's label, issued last September in the heat of the presidential campaign, carried with it the threat that the admin-

istration could use it as part of a push to withhold federal funding. It also came at a time when Trump's presidential campaign was increasingly focused on protests and riots in liberal cities, like Seattle, Portland and New York.

The three cities quickly filed a lawsuit against the Trump administration, calling the anarchist label "arbitrary and capricious" and arguing it could not be used as a basis for



Jenny Durkan
Seattle mayor

withholding federal funds.

Seattle leaders blasted the designation when it was issued last fall and they did so again on Wednesday.

"Fortunately, Seattle no longer has to face the insanity of a President who governs by Twitter or political threats. President Trump's baseless lawsuits targeted our city for standing up for immigrants, civil rights, and democracy as he further divided our country with hate," Mayor Jenny Durkan said Wednesday, in a prepared statement.

Seattle City Attorney Pete Holmes said that "a small part of me" would like to see the

city's lawsuit against the Trump administration head to court.

"But I much prefer seeing President Biden undo his predecessor's will with a stroke of his pen," Holmes said in a prepared statement. "I'm glad to have this nonsense cleared from the decks considering my office has no shortage of litigation to manage, from the eviction moratorium to hazard pay for frontline workers. Onward."

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Police accountability, reform bills push through state Legislature

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