

# AgKnowledge

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## COLLEGE—CALS wrestles with budgets; two new studies show ag's importance to Idaho

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CHALLENGING ECONOMIC TIMES affect the University of Idaho's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences just as they test Idaho's people, from students to retirees and those who still report to work to pay the bills and contribute to society.

The college is working to find ways, despite those challenges, to meet the state's needs and to serve Idaho's agriculture and communities, said John Hammel, college dean.

Two new UI studies document the importance of agriculture to Idaho. Each study shows the state's agricultural economy is both an important contributor to the state and offers economic stability year after year.

*The Financial Condition of Idaho Agriculture: 2008 projections* (see it at [www.ag.uidaho.edu/aers/resources.htm](http://www.ag.uidaho.edu/aers/resources.htm)) shows cash receipts from Idaho's farms rose 11 percent to a record \$6.3 billion in 2008.

*The Contributions of Agriculture to Idaho's Economy: 2006* (see it at <http://info.ag.uidaho.edu/pdf/CIS/CIS1144.pdf>) examines how and why Idaho agriculture is the biggest single contributor to the economic base of Idaho. The publication compares agriculture's contributions with nine other Idaho economic sectors in sales, jobs, and impact on gross state product.

"Idaho agriculture consistently shows modest growth. It's very stable because Idaho Agriculture is diverse. There's a bright future, and agriculture is something that should be invested in," Hammel said.

As in every economic sector, the sacrifices that must be made to keep the college solvent are difficult, Hammel said. "We're down to where we have no fat. We've hired some excellent young faculty, but now we're having to make decisions on both faculty and staff about what positions to eliminate long term."

The college also invested federal funding in a new equipment shop at its Palouse Research, Extension and Education Center in Moscow to address infrastructure needs. A formal partnership with Washington State University to jointly form a new School of Food Science effectively doubles the faculty and staff available to address the needs of businesses and consumers on both sides of the border, Hammel added.

## Idaho high schoolers now eligible for dual credit ag classes for UI degrees

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HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ACROSS IDAHO are now eligible for University of Idaho credit through agricultural education classes. High school and UI College of Agricultural and Life Sciences faculty are working closely together to develop course content and track student success.

The college's Department of Agricultural and Extension Education invited high school agricultural education teachers and college professors from several departments to team up last summer in Moscow to develop the new system.

The initiative is part of the University of Idaho's broader effort to increase its dual credit program to help high school students take college-level classes.

"This exceeded my expectations, and I had high expectations going in," said Lou Riesenberger, Professor of Agricultural and Extension Education, who leads the effort. Classes currently involve plant science, agricultural economics, agricultural education, and animal and veterinary science, "with considerable expansion planned," says Riesenberger.

## Freshman enrollment jumps thanks to new recruiting focus

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A RECORD FRESHMAN CLASS in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences provides a promising outlook on the college's future, said John Foltz, the college's associate dean and director of academic programs.

The college enrolled 247 freshmen for the fall semester, a 12 percent increase from fall semester 2007. Foltz attributed the increase to a number of factors, including intensified recruiting efforts, increased support for students, and an increased interest in the college's agricultural and life sciences disciplines.

The strong freshman class and retention of continuing undergraduate students nearly offset the 29-student decline in graduate enrollment. Overall college enrollment dipped by one student to 1,126 from fall 2007.

Graduate enrollment softened as tighter grant funding reduced research assistantships.

The number of international students followed a national trend lower in the aftermath of the World Trade Center attack.

### DID YOU KNOW?

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NUMBER OF IDAHO HIGH SCHOOLS OFFERING AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION STUDENTS UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO COLLEGE CREDITS

Source: Lou Riesenberger, 2009