

Dear Madam/Sir:

First and foremost, "Thank You!!" for be willing to serve your fellow Oregonians. In these times nothing seems easy so I pray for wisdom for you all.

My name is Evan Thomas. I am a 5th generation farmer in the North Unit Irrigation District (NUID). The 4th (through Sept of this year), the 6th and 7th generations also live and work on the farm. (The 7th take their place in the tractor keeping Grandpa awake while they take their nap). My family homesteaded in Culver in 1907. The rock foundation from the cellar of the original homestead still stands on Juniper Butte.

I am going to make myself vulnerable to you, something I don't do, in this time to show you the dire need to approve the drought Relief package with the allocation of funds for North Unit Irrigation patrons.

We farm 1214 acres. Of those the family in large owns 1054, the other 160 are leased ground. In 2021 we farmed 537 acres, and were not able to plant our normal rotational perennial crops for 2022 (due to drought and water allocation to the Endangered Species Act). We are blessed as over the last century the ground is paid for in full, there are zero equipment payments (yes that means we run older equipment and maintain it), and we have adjustable land rent payments to the individual farm ground owners per water allocation. (Ex. Lease is tied to water. Water right is for 2+ feet of water, we were allotted .8 acre feet in 2021 so our lease payment for 2021 was  $.8/2=.4$  of normal). Most leased land in Jefferson county does NOT have the water allotment tied to rent payment, but just a straight rent amount.

We raise high value crops, use drip irrigation, and don't flood any ground. Of the 5 employees we had this year, (down due to available land we could actually farm) 2 have worked for over 35 years (each) for us without EVER being laid off, 2 were laid off two months early and they both have worked for over 18 years for the farm. Our 2 long term employees were laid off the first week of November (not EVER laid off before). My partner, (My uncle and Lifetime hero passed away in November) retired in September trying to help me into the future.

With that being said, Not having any land or equipment payments (rent equipment from family) , paying a reduced land rent due to lack of water, having long term employees, and being efficient and quality farmers, partners NOT taking a salary, received \$49,379 of CFAP2 income, we were blessed to be just below break even in 2021. Also the only Ag dealers for equipment and fertilizer for the Tri-county area are in Jefferson county. This will make life difficult for farmers in these other irrigation districts in the basin, if these Ag service providers have to close their doors. With this information, and knowing there isn't over 100 years of history on most farms in NUID, this tells a story of how dire the situation is. Farmers can NOT continue on this path. This is the 3rd year of reduced water allotments, and without a miracle winter snow season many of us are done for without some help.

Please consider this when making decisions on this drought relief package. Our future depends on it. Feel free to contact me with any questions. Thank you for your service, and your consideration.

Respectfully,

Evan M. Thomas

T & H Farms, LLC

Culver, OR

541-279-9273