

Oregon, the most expensive place to farm (cont)

Most Americans buy food at supermarkets, so most farms have to sell to those chains. Just five supermarket chains buy half of the U.S. produce; this monopolistic market pushes down the prices paid to farmers.

The low prices consumers pay for food in the U.S. (just 9% of disposable income, the lowest in the world) create an imbalance for farmers between what they pay for labor, farm supplies, and regulatory compliance and what they receive for food produced.

Every elected official in Oregon says they love and support family farms. But Oregon's constantly increasing burdens of new taxes, government-imposed wage rates and labor policies, and regulatory costs are pushing family farms out of existence.

We want to keep farming, but if our state government policies continue to make us non-profitable and non-competitive, we are left with a sad choice. Leave farming or leave Oregon.

Mike McCarthy is a first-generation farmer in Hood River County and has raised apples, pears, cherries, and cattle in Hood River County for 40 yrs. He is a member of the Oregon Farm Bureau State Board, has an MS from OSU, and a PhD from Michigan State Univ. both in agriculture.