

## Environmental groups concerned about mega-dairy

PENDLETON (AP) — A coalition of health and environmental groups is asking Oregon officials to investigate construction of a mega-dairy in Morrow County.

It's unclear whether state agencies will sign off on the controversial 30,000-cow dairy farm, reported *The East Oregonian*. It hasn't been determined whether Lost Valley Ranch broke the law by breaking ground long before it secured the necessary permits.

Representatives from the health and environmental groups plan to meet face-to-face with state regulators in Portland on Friday. The Oregon Department of Agriculture and Department of Environmental Quality are jointly responsible for outlining how Lost Valley will manage the roughly 187 million gallons of liquid manure it generates each year and protect against groundwater contamination.

The agencies said they haven't yet issued a permit for Lost Valley, and the coalition said the dairy doesn't have a construction storm water permit, either.

"We will definitely be considering what our response should be," said ODA Confined Animal Feeding Operations program manager Wym Matthews said.

California dairyman Greg te Velde is developing Lost Valley Ranch. He did not comment on the coalition's complaints other than to say that the company is working through the permitting process.

He also told *The East Oregonian* that Lost Valley Ranch has built milk barns and stalls on site, although he wouldn't say exactly how much money has been spent so far. He would only describe the amount as "a lot."

The coalition is not only concerned that the farm is

hurting the environment — it also believes it the mega-dairy could have violated laws by starting construction even though it still hasn't registered as a business with the Secretary of State's Office.

There is already a Lost Valley Ranch, LLC, in Eastern Oregon. That ranch is registered to Robert and Joan Wade of Condon.

"It suggests the company perhaps doesn't take the permits seriously," said Ivan Maluski, policy director for Friends of Family Farms, one of a dozen groups in the coalition. "That's very problematic as well."

Te Velde did apply for a confined animal feeding operation permit in August 2016. In the application, he described a system that stores liquid manure in six main lagoons and uses the nitrogen-rich wastewater to irrigate 5,900 acres of farmland, growing feed for the dairy's cattle.

ODA instructed the dairy to stop building the wastewater system without its CAFO permit in November, and the dairy did comply with that request, said Matthews. But he said the state can't stop them from building some other structures.

## Contractor builds to last in Sisters

By Jim Cornelius  
News Editor

"I am very particular about what I do," says contractor Ed Cook. "I'm all about detail."

That's an ethic that Cook's father instilled in him from an early age, and one that carried him through a long and distinguished career in building restoration in Virginia.

"My dad was my dad, my brother, my best friend and my teacher," Cook recalled. "And I was taught if you can't give 100 percent, don't get out of your truck."

Cook is now bringing that lifelong commitment to quality work to Sisters as 3 Sisters and Cook Contracting. Cook is quick to emphasize that he isn't trying to elbow his way into the local trade.

"There's so much work that is here," he said. "I'm not trying to take work away from anybody local ... I just want to do what the local guys don't want to do or can't do — you know, they just can't get to it."

He's looking for modest-sized projects that he can take on himself.

"There's nothing I really can't do," he said. "I'm just going to be more selective because I want to be a one-man show out here."

Cook's restoration business in Virginia is 69 years old, and he's worked on historic homes of Founding

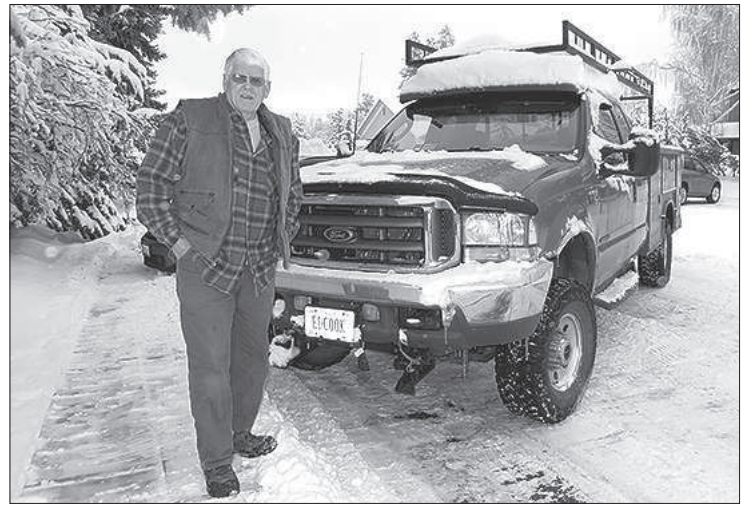


PHOTO BY JIM CORNELIUS

After many years of restoring homes in Virginia, Ed Cook has settled in Sisters and is ready to apply his commitment to quality to homes here.

Fathers, like James Monroe, and the properties of movie stars.

"I worked on some of the finest estates in Virginia," he said.

With so many buildings calling out for restoration, "we never did any new work at all," he said.

Cook is serious about his commitment to quality, and he's not willing to cut corners or cheap-out. He's not the bargain-basement guy — he prides himself on a job well done, built to last. And that offers the best value in the long run.

"I've never cut corners and I never will," he said. "To give a good product, you've got to use good materials. I want to sell the best product I can at the fairest price I can

deliver to them."

Cook has been visiting Central Oregon for two decades, and he has felt most welcomed as he has moved into the Sisters community. He says he's been well treated everywhere he goes.

"The people here — it's hard to explain 'em to people back East," he said. "Everybody's just gone out of their way to serve not just me, but to serve the community."

Cook is eager to find ways to pitch in and serve the community himself.

"I like to help people," he said. "I've been blessed my whole life, and now it's just time for me to give back as much as I possibly can with the time I've got left."

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