

People & Places

Dean speaks out to keep cattle industry viable

David Daley fills dual role as academic, officer of state cattle group

By TIM HEARDEN
Capital Press

CHICO, Calif. — Where David Daley is concerned, the student is the teacher.

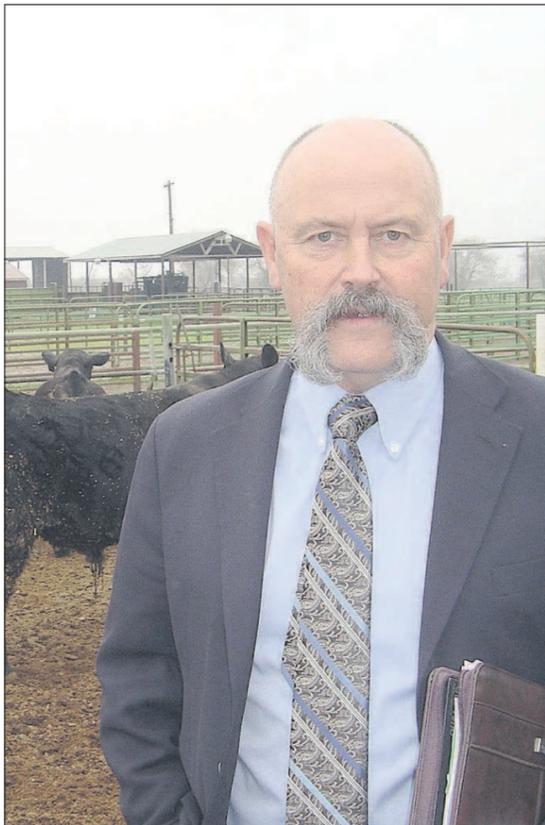
A cattle producer and interim dean of the College of Agriculture at California State University-Chico, Daley considers himself “still a student” as he works to preserve the long-term viability of the ranching industry.

He’s learned about the public image of animal agriculture from urban students who didn’t grow up around farms, and he’s become nationally known for speaking out on several high-profile issues that can be touchy subjects for ranchers, such as animal welfare and the use of antibiotics in livestock.

“I deal a lot with urban students, and seeing that disconnect gave me the chance to step into that kind of role” of fostering a better understanding about the livestock industry, said Daley, who is also first vice president of the California Cattlemen’s Association. “I also try to understand people who have different viewpoints.”

A 25-year instructor and researcher at Chico State, Daley returned to the campus in 1990 after having been an undergraduate student here in the late 1970s. He began in the beef cattle program, drawing on his family’s history of ranching in Butte County since the 1850s.

Daley runs several hundred mother cows in the rolling hills near Oroville, Calif.,



Tim Hearden/Capital Press

David Daley, a rancher and interim dean of the California State University-Chico College of Agriculture, has been a leading voice on many issues facing the livestock industry in recent years.

and on U.S. Forest Service land in Plumas County. His children are involved in the operation as sixth-generation ranchers, he said.

Some of Daley’s early research helped lay the groundwork for animal traceability, as he worked with Harris Ranch to use DNA to identify and track animals to see how different sires performed in various range conditions, he said.

“I think some of the things we did were forerunners to the discussions we’re having now,” he said. “Certainly I don’t think we solved anything, but we had some good

exploration and dialogue and increased some understanding in some of these areas.”

Lately, Daley has gained national attention for his role in educating the public — and the industry — about several thorny issues. In 2012, his vocal rebuke of animal abuse caught on an undercover video at a Central California slaughterhouse raised some eyebrows in the meatpacking industry.

Federal regulators temporarily shuttered the Central Valley Meat Co., in Hanford, Calif., after a video released by Washington, D.C.-based Compassion Over Killing,

Western Innovator David Daley

Age: 57

Occupation: Cattle producer and interim dean, California State University-Chico College of Agriculture

Residence: Oroville, Calif.

Organizations: First vice president, California Cattlemen’s Association

Website: <http://www.csuchico.edu/ag/>



an animal welfare group, showed cows that appeared to be sick or lame being beaten, kicked, shot and shocked in an attempt to get them to walk to slaughter.

Speaking on behalf of the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, Daley said most cattlemen adhere to best-animal-care guidelines and that industry leaders “firmly believe that those knowingly and willingly committing any abuse to animals should not be in the business — period.”

What upset some in the meatpacking industry, he said, was that he made no complaints about the propriety of the undercover video itself. But he said he realized he had a short window of opportunity to get an industry message across to non-agricultural media and consumers, and he didn’t want to say anything that appeared to defend the slaughterhouse.

Since then, farm groups in Washington state and elsewhere have given generally cool receptions to proposed “ag-gag” bills that would bar undercover taping at agricultural operations and criminalize harming an operation’s image. One such law that passed in Idaho is being challenged in federal court.

On the issue of antibiotics, Daley has said the onus is on livestock producers to show the public they’re concerned about the issue and that they

know what they’re doing when dispensing the drugs to their animals.

“What I’m really interested in is our long-term viability as cattle producers,” he said.

Today Daley often meets with consumer groups and speaks to the public about the livestock industry. “It’s more about pulling together the pieces and working with diverse groups (to educate them) about what we do,” he said.

He also keeps studying the issues. One day recently he attended a rangeland water quality summit at the University of California-Davis, gaining more knowledge about an issue that “has huge impacts on our business,” he said.

“I consider myself still a student,” he said. “I’m still learning how to resolve a lot of these issues.”

Daley said he enjoys his dual role as university dean and CCA officer, noting that it gives him plenty of exposure to both the private sector and academia. “It’s a nice combination,” he said.

“My problem is I’m interested in everything,” he said. “It’s probably fair to call me a jack of all trades and a master of none, but as a producer I think that’s important. ... You really need to have an understanding of how it all fits together.”

Ag in the Classroom spotlights bees

CORVALLIS, Ore. — Franklin Elementary School in Corvallis was buzzing Tuesday as third- and fourth-grade students participated in a kick-off event for Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation’s annual statewide literacy project.

Honey bees and beekeepers are this year’s featured topics.

The foundation’s literacy project is designed to engage young readers and expand their knowledge of agriculture, according to a press release from the organization. Each year the project features a book with

ties to agriculture and a related hands-on activity that reinforces the book. This year’s book is “The Beeman.”

The kick-off event featured Carolyn Breece, from the Oregon State University Honey Bee Laboratory, who showed students equipment and sample hives. Retired teacher Carol Young read the book for the students.

The literacy project is an annual volunteer-powered event. Members of the agricultural community donate their time to schools across the state. The volunteers visit their local

schools and read to students in kindergarten through fourth grade. Last year’s literacy project — the seventh year — had nearly 600 volunteers read to over 18,000 students from across the state participate.

A related activity, completely prepared by AITC, follows the reading. Volunteers share their knowledge about local agriculture and make a personal connection to the book. Start to finish, it takes about 45 minutes.

A copy of the book is donated to the classroom after the reading and each student gets



Courtesy of Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom

Carolyn Breece, faculty research assistant at the Oregon State University Honey Bee Laboratory, shows students an example of what a capped brood looks like.

a bookmark and a honey stick donated by GloryBee. All materials and supplies are made possible through the generosity of the program sponsors: The

Ford Family Foundation, Oregon Women for Agriculture, NORPAC Foundation and Oregon State University College of Agricultural Sciences.

A good loader tractor maintains domestic tranquility

By RYAN M. TAYLOR
For the Capital Press

TOWNER, N.D. — I’ve been planning a trip to Boston for a couple of months. Actually, the invitation was for a meeting that was supposed to be held in February, when they got their first epic blizzard, and it was rescheduled. I think they’ve had an epic blizzard every week out there this winter. It makes me glad to live somewhere with a reputation for nice winters — like North Dakota.

Being gone for a couple of days when we’re feeding cows means maintaining good relations with my wife, who’ll be feeding cows by herself in my absence. It also means maintaining good equipment to make sure the work goes as smooth as

possible while I’m gone.

Being thoughtful

I guess that’s one of the reasons I bought a pretty modern loader tractor several years ago. Knowing that I would occasionally be depending on others — like my wife and friends and neighbors who I want to remain my wife, or friend, or friendly neighbor after they’ve done me a favor with chores — I broke down and bought a tractor with a comfortable cab, a good heater, a nice radio, front wheel assist to assist it out of any tight spots, and all the little levers and

knobs and joysticks that make it as easy to drive as car and as fun to operate as a video game.

Really, that’s the only reason I bought it. It wasn’t for me. It was for them. If I get any joy or coziness out of running the outfit the 95 percent of the time that I’m in the seat, it’s just collateral, coincidental comfort.

When it’s 20 below zero and the heater has it warmed up so good in the cab that I take off my cap and gloves while I’m feeding, I just think to myself, how nice that will be for my wife and ranch partner when she’s in the same air ride seat.

Technical problems

So, it’s easy to understand my concern when just days before my departure, the front wheel assist quit assisting and the loader

joystick began requiring some extra wiggling for the electric toggle switch to make the grapple fork grab a bale. I drove it to the dealer’s shop in town pronto, in hopes that it might get turned around and be back in service before I abandoned ship and boarded the airplane.

We do have the backup loader tractor. I quickly installed the new alternator that’s been sitting in its cardboard box since December to make things like starting the motor a little more effortless. I checked the forecast, and if the nice weather stays like it’s supposed to, I think my replacement will be able to get by with the tractor replacement. Not having a good heater may be all right if the sun is shining and wind isn’t blowing.

If we don’t get a bunch of

new snow, the two-wheel-drive should manage to get the job done. Somehow, cows on the ranch got fed for 100 years without a four-wheel-drive tractor.

Pitchfork works, too

Still, I know our marriage will be stronger, and my trip will be more enjoyable, if I don’t get a text message in the middle of my meetings from my wife that says the tractor’s stuck, or it won’t start, or the radio wouldn’t tune into her favorite station without a lot of static.

If any of that happens, she probably won’t even be able to appreciate the new pitchfork handle I put on the pitchfork for the barn horses.

Let’s hope the “good tractor” is on its way back to ranch when I’m on my way to the airport.

Calendar

MARCH OREGON
March 16-17 — Oregon State University Blueberry School, LaSells Stewart Center and CH2M Hill Alumni Center, OSU campus, Corvallis, <http://osubblueberry-school.org/>
March 17 — What To Do with My Small Farm? Oregon State University Extension Small Farms, Jackson County, 541-776-7371, ext. 208 paula.burkhalter@oregonstate.edu. Cost: \$25 Register: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/soec/farms>
March 20-23 — Oregon FFA State Convention, Silverton, www.oregonffa.com
March 20-22 — Northwest Horse Fair & Expo, Linn County Fair and

Expo Center, Albany, www.equinepromotions.net
IDAHO
March 27 — Forestland grazing workshop, 1 to 5 p.m., Federal Building meeting room, Seventh Avenue and College Street, St. Maries, 208-245-2422, <http://www.uidaho.edu/extension/forestry>
CALIFORNIA
March 17-18 — Fruit Ripening & Retail Handling Workshop, University of California-Davis, <http://postharvest.ucdavis.edu/Education/fruitripening/>
March 22-24 — California Fresh Fruit Association Annual Meeting, The Grand Del Mar, San Diego, www.CA-FreshFruit.com

APRIL OREGON
April 18 — Oregon Women for Agriculture Auction and Dinner, Linn County Fair and Expo Center, Albany, 503-243-FARM (3276), <http://owaonline.org/>
April 25-26 — AgFest, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday, Oregon State Fairgrounds, Salem, \$9 for adults, under 12 are free, <http://www.oragfest.com>
CALIFORNIA
April 18-21 — California State FFA Conference, Selland Arena, Fresno, www.calaged.org/stateconvention
IDAHO
April 8-11 — State FFA

Leadership Conference, College of Southern Idaho, Twin Falls, www.idffafoundation.org/
WASHINGTON
April 4 — Washington State Sheep Producers Lambing and Management School, Sprague, \$50 (member), \$60 (non-member), 509-257-2230, dvm@feustel-farms.com
April 6-11 — Washington State Sheep Producers Shearing School, Moses Lake
April 16-19 — Washington State Spring Fair, Puyallup, 2-10 p.m. Thursday, 10 a.m.-10 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Sunday, <http://www.thefair.com/spring-fair/>

MAY WASHINGTON
May 14-16 — Washington FFA Convention, Washington State University, Pullman, www.washingtonffa.org/convention
CALIFORNIA
May 1-2 — Forest Landowners of California annual meeting, Holiday Inn, Auburn, www.forestlandowners.org/
JUNE CALIFORNIA
June 15-26 — Postharvest Technology Short Course, University of California-Davis, <http://postharvest.ucdavis.edu/Education/PTShort-Course/>

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