

# Vet calls for voluntary quarantine to contain equine herpes virus

By ERIC MORTENSON  
Capital Press

The Oregon state veterinarian said horses that competed in a high school equestrian meet in mid-April should be quarantined for 28 days following an outbreak of equine herpes virus.

At least four horses developed neurological symptoms of the disease, and five others that were exposed to the disease have developed fevers, state vet Dr. Brad Leamaster said in a Department of Agriculture

news release. Horses at eight farms were under quarantine as of May 7, six in Marion County and two in Polk County.

The infected animals or other exposed horses from the quarantined facilities were at the Oregon High School Equestrian Team (OHSET) Willamette District meet at the Linn County Fairgrounds, Albany, on April 16-19; rodeo events at Branton Arena, Jefferson, April 19-20; and at High Prairie Arena, Eugene, April 25-26.

Leamaster said horses that

were at the high school event in Albany should not be taken to other shows or meets for 28 days.

“The responsible thing for OHSET Willamette District attendees to do at this time is to stay home and monitor their horse,” Leamaster said in a prepared statement. “Call your veterinarian if you suspect any signs of illness.”

People who own stable mates of the exposed horses should consult their veterinarian to assess the risk of infection, he said.

Equine herpes virus, of EHV-1, is a common respiratory virus among horses. It usually lies dormant or causes respiratory problems, but stress or other factors can cause it to flare up and attack a horse’s nervous system, leading to severe illness.

Symptoms include fever, decreased coordination, nasal discharge, dribbled urine, loss of tail tone, hind limb weakness and poor balance, according to an ODA news release. Sick horses may be unable to rise.

The virus can cause pregnant mares to abort. Severe cases can kill horses. It is contagious among horses, spread through human hands, or infected equipment or clothing.

Candi Borthum, chair of Oregon High School Equestrian Teams Inc., circulated an online survey to competitors and coaches, asking their preference for rescheduling the event in June. Borthum said the annual meet usually attracts 450 to 500 student athletes and 600 horses. It’s held in Red-

mond, in Deschutes County.

In an email to competitors, coaches and families, Borthum said keeping Willamette District horses out of the event did not provide sufficient mitigation to avoid spreading the disease. The sick horses reported to date have been from Marion and Polk counties, in the Willamette Valley, but horses from other districts may have been exposed. Borthum urged horse owners to practice good bio-security and do their best to keep their animals at home for now.

# Shellfish farmers lick wounds, hire PR help

By DON JENKINS  
Capital Press

OYSTERVILLE, Wash. — Third-generation shellfish farmer Brian Sheldon walked onto Willapa Bay at low tide Monday and showed where he had planned to spray in May and seed with coin-sized oysters in July.

Because of negative public reaction, he and fellow growers won’t spray for burrowing shrimp, an aptly named creature that tosses mud to the surface while churning firm tides into goo.

Sheldon said that if he went ahead and put down tiny oysters on this shrimp-riddled 30-acre section, they’d be buried and dead by October. There goes, potentially, 25,000 gallons of oysters, at, say, \$24 a gallon.

“It’s hard to watch ground like this go to hell and not be able to do anything about it,” Sheldon said.

Sheldon and other oyster and clam growers in Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor on Washington’s southwest coast are regrouping after abruptly withdrawing plans to spray up to 2,000 acres of tidelands with imidacloprid, a neonicotinoid pesticide.

The Washington Department of Ecology issued the permit April 16 and public outrage followed.

Shellfish growers know applying pesticides in tidelands is controversial, but Sheldon said they underestimated the potential for backlash.

Getting DOE’s permission was tough, but the agency and growers were portrayed by critics as partners in environmental crime.

“I mean, Wow! That’s unbelievable. I’m sure anybody in agriculture will know what I’m talking about,” Sheldon said.

The plan unraveled. Puget Sound-based Taylor’s Shellfish Farms, the country’s largest producer of Manilla clams and geoducks, announced May 1 that it would not spray its Willapa Bay beds. The company defended the spraying and acknowledged



Don Jenkins/Capital Press

Willapa Bay shellfish farmer Brian Sheldon looks for clams May 11 on tidelands undermined by burrowing shrimp. Because of negative public reaction, growers have dropped a state-approved plan to spray tidelands with a pesticide to immobilize the shrimp, which cause oysters and clams to sink and suffocate in the soft mud.

breaking ranks would affect other growers, but stated it was respecting consumer wishes.

“Our priority is to maintain out longstanding relationship with these customers,” according to a company statement.

Two days later, the Willapa-Grays Harbor Oyster Growers Association told DOE it was giving up the permit. “We felt at the time, it was the best decision we could make. Things were just spiraling out of control,” Sheldon said. “We felt like we had to take a hit and step back.”

Since then, the association has hired a public relations firm to help it respond to criticism.

“What really got us was the social media,” said Willapa Bay shellfish grower Ken Wiegardt, a fifth-generation farmer.

Sheldon said growers are “in a state of shock” over the events. He said he had actually hoped growers would be perceived as being responsive to environmental concerns by using imidacloprid.

Imidacloprid was to replace carbaryl, an older insecticide that has faced lawsuits and increasing regulations and that the Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor shellfish industry agreed to phase out more than a decade ago.

Imidacloprid is widely used on land crops. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Washington State Department of Agriculture approved using it specifically in the bay and harbor.

Shellfish growers were to apply one-sixteenth as much imidacloprid per acre as they did carbaryl, which was used between 1963 and 2013.

Imidacloprid wasn’t going to be as lethal to burrowing shrimp, but growers said they would be more precise about when and where they sprayed.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration recommended DOE deny the permit, arguing that field trials in the bay had not yet conclusively determined that imidacloprid would not be detrimental.

Nevertheless, DOE concluded there would be no significant unavoidable adverse impacts, including to bees that pollinate the Long Beach Peninsula’s cranberry bogs. As a condition to issuing the permit, DOE demanded monitoring of the pesticide’s effects.

With no current permit to spray for burrowing shrimp, it’s unclear what’s next for

shellfish growers.

Washington State University research scientist Kim Patten has spent more than a decade studying how to control burrowing shrimp and hasn’t found a practical alternative to pesticides.

Going back to carbaryl isn’t an option. The EPA no longer registers it as an aquatic pesticide, and DOE has closed off any chance growers could receive their old permit to use it, DOE spokesman Chase Gallagher said.

# WSU Extension hires new tree fruit specialist

By DAN WHEAT  
Capital Press

WENATCHEE, Wash. — A Penn State Extension educator has been hired to succeed Tim Smith as Washington State University Extension tree fruit specialist in Wenatchee.

Tianna DuPont accepted the position May 8 and will start Nov. 1, said Randy Baldree, director of the Agricultural and Natural Resources Extension Program Unit and assistant director of WSU Extension in Pullman.

DuPont could not be reached for comment.

DuPont has been a sustainable agriculture and vegetable and small fruit educator at Penn State in Nazareth, Pa., since 2008.

She works with organics, soil health, cover crops, reduced tillage, grazing and new farmers.

She graduated with a bachelor of science degree in environmental studies from Whitman College in Walla Walla,

Wash., in 2001. She received her master’s degree in integrated pest management from the University of California-Davis in 2008.

From 2002 to 2004, she was an agricultural extension specialist for the Peace Corps, teaching fruit and vegetable production and pest management in Bolivia.

DuPont was one of three finalists for the WSU position and was chosen for her training and experience and being the “best fit for this particular position,” Baldree said.

The job is one of applied research and extension. DuPont will conduct field research with an immediate application to the tree fruit industry.

She will translate and disseminate her own research and research of others to the industry and public.

The position is entirely supported by WSU.

Smith, 66, retired Aug. 1, 2014. He was in the position 32 years and was instrumental in helping the industry control fire blight, cherry fruit fly and replant disease.



DuPont

# Dairies, environmentalists settle lawsuit

By DAN WHEAT  
Capital Press

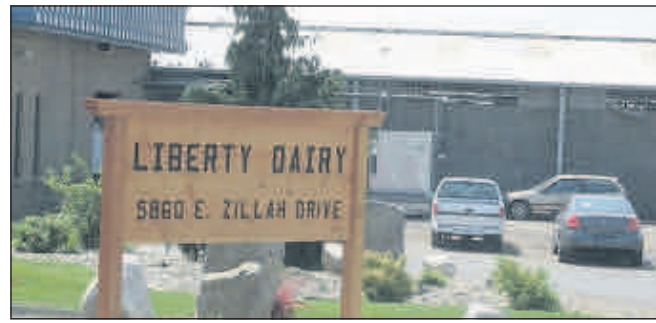
SUNNYSIDE, Wash. — Three Lower Yakima Valley dairies have reached a settlement with environmental groups, ending a lengthy legal battle over groundwater contamination and going, the dairies say, above and beyond federal and state standards for environmental responsibility.

The Cow Palace owned by the Dolsen family, George DeRuyter & Son Dairy, and Henry Bosma Dairy and Liberty Dairy owned by the Bosma family reached individual consent decrees with Community Association for Restoration of the Environment and the Washington, D.C.,-based Center for Food Safety.

The decrees, announced May 11, precluded a trial scheduled to begin in U.S. District Court on May 12.

In January, the court ruled on part of the case involving Cow Palace, saying its operations contributed to groundwater contamination and violated the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. It was the first time a federal court held that manure from livestock facilities should be regulated as solid waste.

“The vast majority of settlement requirements simply duplicate voluntary commitments made to the EPA,” said



Dan Wheat/Capital Press

Liberty Dairy near Sunnyside, Wash., is one of the dairies involved in a May 11 settlement with citizen and environmental groups, ending long legal battles.

Brendan Monahan, a Yakima attorney representing the dairies.

“This case was premised on an EPA study that was fundamentally flawed and unreliable,” Monahan said. Nonetheless, “a sensible balance” has been reached addressing all concerns and allowing the dairies to operate, he said.

“We settled in order to get immediate help to the people directly in harm’s way,” said Helen Reddout, CARE co-founder and president.

“People in the impacted zone will now have safe alternative water until groundwater poisons go away, which could be a long time,” she said.

“This is an important precedent holding mega-dairy factories responsible for the environmental and human health impacts of their waste,”

said Andrew Kimbrell, executive director at Center for Food Safety.

In 2012, the EPA concluded the dairies likely were significant contributors to high nitrate levels in groundwater. In 2013, the dairies entered into an Agreed Order on Consent (AOC) with the EPA agreeing to install 20 groundwater monitoring wells, provide reverse osmosis water filter systems to residences with contaminated water, line manure lagoons and implement stringent protocols ensuring manure application to fields is limited to nutrient needs.

“In recent months, the dairies under the AOC agreed to double line their lagoons,” Monahan said. “The cost of transitioning to double-lined lagoons will be extraordinary.”



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