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Dairy/Livestock

Restoring grasslands with managed grazing

By **DOUG WARNOCK**
For the Capital Press

Properly managed grazing improved grassland health and productivity in a Washington study coordinated by Steve Van Vleet, Washington State University Extension Educator. The two-year study, funded by a USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education grant involved 295 acres and three ranchers.

The study was conducted on state-owned land located on The Dalles Mountain Ranch in Klickitat County. This land had degraded over the years from lack of use.

"Vegetation was changing for the worse. They were losing wild flowers, diversity and plant communities. They were getting undesirable invasives," said Jim Sizemore, one of the ranchers involved in the project. High density grazing and reseeding with native species were the methods they used to regenerate the grassland.

Results of the study showed

Greener Pastures
Doug Warnock



perennial grass populations either stayed the same or increased and annual grasses either decreased or remained the same. Also, forbs and total forage cover increased and accumulated litter decreased. The grazed forage was more productive and had a higher protein content than non-grazed forage. This indicates the grazed area could hold more cattle and provide more healthy feed than the non-grazed area.

All those connected with the study agreed they wanted to do what was best for the ecosystem. Several groups that initially didn't recognize grazing as a method of restoring rangeland health were convinced by the study of its benefits. This included the Native Plant Society, Friends of the Columbia Gorge and some

Washington state officials.

During the project, Van Vleet's team conducted workshops that trained 230 ranchers, educators and agricultural professionals on rangeland revitalization and management. As a result, five ranchers began working with Van Vleet to convert over 7,000 acres of former Conservation Reserve Program land to grazing.

The success of this project was recognized by SARE and the National Association of County Agricultural Agents in awarding Van Vleet with a Search for Excellence in Sustainable Agriculture Award in 2013. A side benefit of the improved ecosystem health is an increase in visitors to the property, which has a positive effect on the local communities' economies.

Doug Warnock, retired from Washington State University Extension, lives on a ranch in the Touchet River Valley where he consults and writes on grazing management.



Carol Ryan Dumas/Capital Press

Cattle on feed inventories in large U.S. feedlots were up 3 percent on Sept. 1, and marketings of fed cattle coming out of feedlots were down 6 percent, USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service reported.

Butter soars to record high, then drops

By **LEE MIELKE**
For the Capital Press

Cold Storage data provided a backdrop to last week's CME cash dairy markets, where butter set a record high and cheese took a hit.

Spot butter was up the fourth week in a row, closing Friday at a record \$3.1350 per pound, fueled in part by August Cold Storage data, McDonald's recent announcement switching from margarine to butter and consumer rejection of margarine.

The close was up 41 3/4-cents on the week, highest single week increase since January 2011, up \$1.1450 since Aug. 1 of this year, and 8 1/2-cents above a year ago when it was at a record high. Eighteen cars were sold at the CME last week.

But gears whiplashed in the other direction Monday, dropping 8 1/2 cents on five trades and then plummeted 30 cents Tuesday, to \$2.75 per pound, on a single trade.

Central region churning is steady to lower as butterfat components in milk intakes trend lower, says Dairy Market

Dairy Markets

Lee Mielke



News. Spot cream availability for butter production is tight as active aerated cream, sour cream, cream cheese and moderate ice cream-frozen dessert manufacturing draws heavily on regional cream supplies. Manufacturers are looking for bulk butter to fill needs through the balance of the year; however, buyers report there is a scarcity of bulk butter loads available.

Cheddar block cheese closed Friday at \$1.59 per pound, lowest spot price since April 20, down 10 1/4-cents on the week, and 69 cents below a year ago when it plunged 17 cents. The Cheddar barrels hit the lowest price since Jan. 26 on Wednesday, at \$1.46 per pound, but rallied Thursday, jumping 9 cents and renewed a more typical spread. They closed Friday at \$1.55, up three-quarter cents on the week, but 75 cents below a year ago. Four cars of block traded hands on the week and 33 of barrel.

The blocks were unchanged Monday but an unfilled bid marched them 4 cents higher Tuesday, to \$1.63. The barrels lost 2 1/4 cents Monday but regained it Tuesday, returning to \$1.55, but put the spread at a higher-than-normal 8 cents.

Midwest milk intakes continue to slowly decline, reports DMN. Steady cheese production is making a home for all available milk. Consumer cheese demand remains strong. Some cut-and-wrap operations report a seasonal increase in sales, but a few contacts note the strength of the draw has not been as strong as last year. The demand from pizza makers for mozzarella is good. Contacts suggest inventories may be longer than usual for the end of the Third Quarter but manufacturers anticipate stocks can be drawn down by Fourth Quarter.

Grade A nonfat dry milk hit 98 1/4-cents per pound last Tuesday at the market of last resort, highest level since April 7 but closed Friday at 94 cents, up 3 cents on the week but 45 1/4-cents below a year ago. It was unchanged Monday and Tuesday.

Feedlot placements down but pipeline building

By **CAROL RYAN DUMAS**
Capital Press

Placement of feeder cattle into feedlots in August was much lighter than the industry expected, down 5 percent year over year.

But that trend will have to continue and marketings of fed cattle will have to heat up before any price recovery occurs in cattle markets, market analysts say.

Cattle on feed inventories in large U.S. feedlots were up 3 percent on Sept. 1, and marketings of fed cattle coming out of feedlots were down 6 percent, USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service reported.

The report was more of the same with one piece of good news — lighter placements, said Steve Koontz, professor of ag economics at Colorado State University.

Relatively light placement in September and October could improve the supply situation next year, creating an opportunity for price strength next spring. But lighter placements would have to continue, he said.

Marketings of fed cattle have been slow through the summer, and inventories have been substantial. There is a

lot of beef on the hoof in the pipeline that has to be cleared out before any price recovery, he said.

The overall number of beef cattle on the path for slaughter is tight, but marketings have been slow and consequently, carcasses are really big, he said.

Carcasses are now running 20 pounds to 25 heavier than year-ago levels and heading for their seasonal peak in October and November, he said.

"There's just a lot of beef in the pipeline," he said.

After earlier losses, packer margins are reasonably well. But packers are being disciplined in their buying, wanting to ensure profit. In addition, exports of proteins have declined on a strong dollar and economic uncertainty in China and Europe, he said.

So there's a relatively big supply of beef and competing meats, especially pork, and not excellent demand, he said.

Aggressive sales of fed cattle are needed to generate price strength, but that's going to be tough with all the pork that's out there, he said.

Despite August placements below industry expectations, feedlot placements in the last six months are down a total of 3.5 percent year over year

and not providing much help for cattle markets, said Derrell Peel, extension livestock marketing specialist with Oklahoma State University in the university's Cow-Calf Newsletter on Monday.

The large on-feed inventory is increasingly a drag on fed cattle markets, he said.

"What has been a 'situation' for several months is turning into a 'predicament,'" he said.

Struggling with "lousy" margins, feedlots have slowed turnover, adding days on feed and increasing weights. That has resulted in not only growing feedlot inventories but a growing supply of extremely heavy cattle, he said.

"The only real solution is to market our way out of this predicament. You can't rely on lower placements to fix the problem," he said.

Placements are already low and growing feeder supplies indicate placements will begin increasing in the coming months, he said.

"The fed market has turned ugly and the only real fix at this point is to take our lumps, cough up the heavy cattle, and likely make the market even uglier for a period of time," he said.

Idaho dairy farmers chosen for national leadership

Two more Idaho Dairy Products Commission and United Dairymen of Idaho board members have been tapped for national dairy industry leadership positions, according to a press release from United Dairymen of Idaho.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has appointed Kim Korn of Terreton to serve a three-year term on the National Dairy Promotion and Research Board, and Dan Gilbert of Blackfoot was elected to the United Dairy Industry Association's board of directors.

Korn, owner of Korn Dairy, replaces fellow Unit-

ed Dairymen of Idaho and Idaho Dairy Products Commission board member Dave Veenhouwer from Veenhouwer Family Dairy in Jerome on the 38-member panel.

Steve Ballard, owner of Ballard Family Dairy & Cheese in Gooding and a colleague of Korn's on both Idaho dairy groups' boards, was appointed last year to the National Dairy Promotion and Research Board and has two more years to serve.

The United Dairy Indus-

try Association has granted Idaho a fifth seat on its board of directors, and Gilbert, owner of Dan-de-Holsteins, was elected to fill it.

He joins fellow United Dairymen of Idaho board members Tom Dorsey of Dorsey Farms in Caldwell, John Brubaker from Knott Run Dairy in Buhl, Brian Esplin from Diamond Three Dairy in Shelley, and Arie Roeloffs from Southfield Dairy in Wendell on the 43-member UDIA board.



Dan Gilbert



Kim Korn

United Dairymen of Idaho adds to team

By **CAROL RYAN DUMAS**
Capital Press

United Dairymen of Idaho has hired Will Hoenike as a consumer confidence manager.

In addition to promoting the state's dairy industry through events and publicity, Hoenike will manage the organization's website and social media presence, according to a UDI press release on Monday.

"Will's experience will translate well in our industry as we work with various partners in the areas of youth wellness, community relations and digital communications,"

United Dairymen of Idaho CEO Karianne Fallow said. "Plus, he grew up on a farm and is committed to helping Idaho dairies succeed."

Before joining United Dairymen of Idaho, Hoenike spent six years as media and community relations director for the Idaho Steelheads and CenturyLink Arena. He also served as the Steelheads' director of broadcasting since 2011 and its director of season ticket relations for more than two years.

Hoenike spent the prior decade as a sports reporter,



Will Hoenike

anchor, and producer at KIVI-TV Channel 6 in Nampa.

"I loved my time with the Steelheads, but the opportunity for growth was too good for me to pass up," Hoenike said.

He earned a bachelor's degree in communication from Washington State University. He was named ECHL Broadcaster of the Year in 2015, as well as ECHL Media Relations Director of the Year in 2010. He also earned several awards from the Idaho State Broadcasters Association and the Idaho Press Club.

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