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## Dairy/Livestock

# Sheep festival preserves, shares herder heritage

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS  
Capital Press

HAILEY-KETCHUM, Idaho — October in Idaho's Wood River Valley, home to world-renowned Sun Valley Resort, means one thing — the Trailing of the Sheep Festival, an annual celebration of the valley's rich history, heritage and culture of sheep ranching.

This year's festival spanned five days, two cities and multiple venues infused with the colors, sounds, tastes, textures, and images of bygone days. It was a reminder of the area's hard-won survival and growth and paid homage to the people and animals that played an integral role.

The valley's history is steeped in the sheep industry, which saved the community and the Oregon Shortline Railroad when the area's mining boom went bust in the 1890s.

Its culture is interwoven with ranch families whose descendants brought sheep to the area in the late 1800s and the descendants of Scott, Basque and Peruvian shepherders who tended the sheep.

In the early 1900s, Idaho boasted a sheep population of 2.65 million — nearly six times the state's human population at the time — and Ketchum was the largest sheep-shipping center in North America and second only to Sydney, Australia, in the world.

More than 1 million sheep were trailed through the towns of Ketchum, Hailey and Bel-



Carol Ryan Dumas/Capital Press

Sheep are moved down Main Street in Ketchum, Idaho, on Oct. 11 during the Trailing of the Sheep Festival, which celebrates the heritage of sheep ranching in the Wood River Valley.

levue twice a year, heading north in the spring to mountain pastures and south in the fall, closer to family ranches.

As with sheep cultures all over the world, the local community celebrated the autumn return of the sheep and the men and dogs who tended the bands.

The Trailing of the Sheep Festival, now in its 19th year, keeps that spirit of celebration alive, sharing the valley's rich heritage with visitors from all over the world.

The festival has grown tremendously from its humble origins as a way to tell newcom-

ers — including the rich and famous — about the place they chose to live and the heritage of sheep ranching in the valley.

Newcomers didn't understand or appreciate sheep coming through the valley on what had become their walking trails through rancher-granted rights of way, said Mary Austin Crofts, the festival's executive director.

"The first time the sheep came through, all hell broke loose," she said.

The festival began simply with local ranchers John and Diane Peavey inviting people to walk the sheep through town

and hear stories of the valley's earlier days, she said.

That has mushroomed into a world-class festival that has an international following, draws a gaggle of travel writers and has been named one of the top festivals in Idaho, the West, America, and the World by a host of travel magazines and associations.

Last year, the festival drew 23,000 people from 35 states and eight countries, Crofts said.

"People love this event; it is so unique and so real. There's something for everyone," she said.

## Dairy industry targets millennial consumers

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS  
Capital Press

Dairymen are going digital to connect with young urbanites in a new campaign to garner consumer trust. "Acres + Avenues," a checkoff-funded initiative, launched this week with entertaining and informative videos to advance the conversation between young dairy farmers and their urban counterparts.

The campaign is targeted at the millennial audience, which gets much of its news and information on hand-held digital devices, said Ray Prock, a California dairyman who serves on the National Dairy Promotion and Research Board.

Millennials are people who were born in the 1980s and early 1990s and are one of the largest generations. They grew up with the Internet, cell phones and computers. They are used to finding information immediately and in different ways than previous generations and share it through

social channels, such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, he said.

Optimizing social media will help dairymen share their stories and connect with a wide audience, he said.

It's about reaching the next generation and building consumer confidence in a different way. The goal is to get the message out to the masses and gain lifelong dairy consumers, he said.

Created by Dairy Management Inc., which manages the national dairy checkoff, Acres and Avenues reveals the shared values of dairy farmers and urban millennials through unique job shadowing experiences that demonstrate the enduring relevance of dairy, DMI stated in a press release.

"Many people, especially young urbanites, are removed from the work we do on dairy farms and where food comes from," Paul Rovey, Arizona dairy farmer and chairman of DMI, stated.

"Acres and Avenues shows how much dairy farmers have in common with others once they walk a mile in each other's shoes," he said.

The campaign is a series of short videos aimed at showing dairy farmers are good people, dairy foods are healthy and that dairy farmers have a lot in common with millennials, he said.

The series is hosted by Jax Austin, an online travel and food personality. Austin joins two very seemingly different people in each of two episodes to uncover their shared values.

In the first episode, California dairy farmer Brian Fiscalini and Nick Pourfard, who builds guitars from recycled skateboards, share how they make sustainable choices that impact their businesses.

The second episode features boxing coach Dana Chubb and New York dairy farmer/registered dietitian Abbie Andrew-Copenhaver, who share a dedication to healthy

living through nutrition and physical activity.

In addition, a call is going out to the general public to help shape future episodes.

The episodes, as well as other material at DMI's online "amplification" hub, are easy to share on social media. The aim is to unite all segments of the industry and allied industry to share a cohesive, dairy-friendly message, he said.

"If you throw multiple rocks in a pond at the same time, all ripples are going to intersect — more people hear the same message at the same time. We want to make sure people enjoy dairy and understand it's healthy," he said.

The episodes are available at [www.DairyGood.org/AcresAndAvenues](http://www.DairyGood.org/AcresAndAvenues), and will be distributed through a paid partnership with AOL and its online outlets. The episodes also will collaborate in a paid partnership with The Huffington Post, Brit + CO and Mashable.

## 'Dairyland' roller coaster continues

By LEE MIELKE  
For the Capital Press

Dairy Markets

Lee Mielke



Cash Cheddar block cheese hit the highest level since Nov. 19, 2014, last Monday, \$1.80 per pound, only to reverse direction the next three days, and then head back up on Friday, closing at \$1.70, still 4 3/4-cents below the previous week and 49 3/4-cents below a year ago.

The barrels rocketed 11 1/4-cents higher last Monday, hitting \$1.73, the highest price since June 11, then headed back down 11 cents on Tuesday, and closed Friday at \$1.62, up a quarter-cent on the week, 48 cents below a year ago, and an above-normal 8 cents below the blocks. Fifteen cars of barrel traded hands on the week.

The blocks inched up three-quarters Monday and then dropped a penny and a half on Tuesday, to \$1.6925 per pound, while the barrels jumped 4 3/4 Monday and also lost a penny and a half Tuesday, slipping to \$1.6525, a more typical 4 cents below the blocks.

Midwest cheese production is easily accommodating regular milk supplies, with little availability of extra milk, reports Dairy Market News. "Customer interest in cheese purchases from manufacturers has slowed, due to fluctuating prices and customer interest in seeing more price stability before committing beyond immediate needs."

Western cheese production is steady to lower and following typical seasonal declines in milk production, though an increase in milk components is helping to boost cheese yields. Domestic demand continues to be strong, says DMN.

Spot butter, after plunging 63 1/2 cents the previous week, shed another 15 cents last Monday but reversed direction Wednesday and finished Friday at \$2.4175 per pound, still 8 1/4-cents below the previous week and 38 3/4-cents below a year ago when it dropped 9 cents, then plummeted 80 1/2

cents the following week, and lost 19 cents the week after that. Eighteen cars were sold last week at the CME.

The spot butter was unchanged Monday but carved off another 6 3/4-cents Tuesday, dipping to \$2.35 per pound.

Butter is arriving in the U.S. in growing volumes, according to the Daily Dairy Report. "The U.S. imported 9.1 million pounds of butter and milkfat in August, a calendar year high. Imports of butter, excluding other forms of milkfat, totaled nearly 6 million pounds, the highest monthly volume since June 2004."

DMN says lower sales volumes, due to fluctuating prices, have manufacturers concerned. Buyers are careful in negotiating First Quarter 2016 contracts.

Cash Grade A nonfat dry milk climbed to \$1.10 per pound last Monday but also retreated from there, closing Friday at 99 1/2 cents per pound, down 6 1/2-cents on the week and 38 1/2-cents below a year ago. Ten cars were sold on the week.

The powder was steady Monday and Tuesday.

### California Class I up

California's November Class I milk price was announced Friday by the California Department of Food and Agriculture at \$17.68 per hundredweight for the north and \$17.95 for the south. Both are up 31 cents from October but are \$6.65 below November 2014 and the lowest November levels since 2009.

That put the year's average at \$17.63 for the north, down from \$24.86 at this time a year ago and \$20.16 in 2013. The 2015 southern average now stands at \$17.90, down from \$25.13 a year ago and \$20.43 in 2013. The November federal order Class I base price will be announced by USDA on Oct. 21.

## Fall assessment of grazing management

By DOUG WARNOCK  
For the Capital Press

Greener Pastures

Doug Warnock



Are the production and health of your pasture or rangeland meeting your expectations? Fall is a good time to assess the results of your grazing management. If you've been monitoring your grassland, you will have an idea of its productivity and its health.

Many producers in the Northwest have dealt with drought and fire this year and it's been a year of lower productivity. When plant stress is high, in years like this, monitoring is extremely important.

The first step in establishing a monitoring program is to write down your goal and objectives. You must have a designated target or goal before you can measure progress. The key to successful management of a grazing operation is good monitoring — know what is happening with the plants and the soil.

Monitoring will provide the information needed for the manager to respond to the current situation and make the best use of the resources available. A number of things can be done to monitor grasslands. It is essential to be observant and to try to understand what is taking place.

Some producers rely only on taking photos on a regular basis. Others also take samples of the forage and measure both forage quantity and quality. Another good tool is the portable grazing cage used to exclude grazing in a small area, so that total plant growth for the year can be measured. All of these monitoring practices can be helpful, but the individual must decide which ones will provide the information needed and match the time and resources

that are available.

What should a manager look for? Key elements to assess:

- Type and diversity of plant species.
- The amount of bare ground.
- The breakdown and incorporation into the soil of manure and dead plant material.
- The relative efficiency of using solar energy to produce plant tissue.

A presence of predominately perennial plants, rather than annuals, and a diverse group of species are characteristics of a plant community with higher forage production and a longer grazing season.

If the soil surface is well covered with healthy plants, the soil will be protected from soil erosion. If the system is working properly, there will be rapid breakdown of manure and dead plant material. This will result in a high level of soil organic matter.

The efficiency with which the solar energy is being used by the plants to produce plant tissue is related to having a diverse population of mostly perennials, having the soil surface covered with healthy and vigorous plants that make effective use of moisture and prevent soil erosion, and having good breakdown of manure and dead plant tissue, which results in high soil organic matter and more fertile soil. When these conditions exist, the result is effective use of the available solar energy. The achievement of these characteristics leads to higher profit and greater biological wealth.

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