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## Dairy/Livestock

### Well-managed grazing improves wildlife habitat

By DOUG WARNOCK  
For the Capital Press

**Greener Pastures**  
Doug Warnock



While visiting a museum of natural history recently, I saw a statement in a display there indicating that farming and livestock grazing had diminished wildlife habitat.

This is one of those all-encompassing statements that is not necessarily true. Just because crops are being produced and livestock being raised doesn't mean that wildlife habitat is being harmed or reduced. Agricultural activities can be used to improve wildlife habitat. Whether habitat is impacted positively or negatively depends on the management practiced by the humans in charge.

A holistic approach to land management will include actions to ensure that wildlife habitat is sustained and enhanced. There are a number of peer-reviewed research projects that illustrate this. The Fleece Coordinated Grazing Program conducted in Montana shows the benefits of collaborative management for both elk and cattle.

The Fleece project was conducted on both public and private land, including 9,920 acres of U.S. Forest Service property, 4,160 acres of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks property and 2,490 acres of pri-

vate land. A coordinated grazing plan was developed for the land, which included 12 total pastures under the three ownerships. Cattle were rotated among the pastures and seasons, using a rest-rotation approach to condition the forage for the elk.

Results of this project:

- Elk numbers increased by 300 head, a 37.5 percent increase, due to the improved forage quantity and quality.
- Cattle grazing was enhanced.
- Monitoring data indicated that rangeland and soil conditions improved.
- Including all ownerships allowed the entire winter elk unit to be managed as a single unit.

The Bridge Creek Wildlife Management Area in Northeastern Oregon was the site of a planned grazing study, whose purpose was to enhance winter elk forage. It resulted in a tenfold—1,000 percent—increase in elk use over a 10-year period. Concurrent with the upward trend in elk use was an increase in cattle grazing and a significant improvement in ecological condition.

### Dairy prices end year on 'up' note

By LEE MIELKE  
For the Capital Press

**Dairy Markets**

Lee Mielke



Santa made a second visit to Chicago last week as dairy prices ended 2015 on an "up" note.

The block Cheddar finished the New Year holiday-shortened week at \$1.5075 per pound, up 5 3/4-cents on the day, up 10 1/4-cents on the week, but 6 1/4-cents below a year ago. The blocks inched up a half-cent Monday on a sale, as traders anticipated the first Global Dairy Trade auction of the New Year Tuesday, but they dropped 2 1/4-cents Tuesday, to \$1.49 per pound.

The Cheddar barrels ended the year at \$1.53, up a nickel on the day, up a dime on the week, a penny below a year ago, and an atypical 2 1/4-cents above the blocks. Nine cars of each traded hands last week.

The Barrels backed down a penny on an offer Monday and lost 4 cents Tuesday, slipping to \$1.48.

Cheese production is scheduled very heavily at most Midwest plants, according to Dairy Market News. Spot milk is readily available at \$3 to \$8 under class and "Cheese is a preferred use for the extra milk not needed for retail fluid markets."

"Consumer demand has been good, but the higher volumes of production during many recent months have overwhelmed demand, with less help from exports than had been hoped for," DMN reported.

The CME butter price ended 2015 at \$2.08 per pound, up a penny and a half on the day, up 4 1/4-cents on the week and 5 1/4-cents above a year ago. Twelve cars were sold last week at the CME.

The spot price dropped 4 cents Monday, with 11 cars trading hands, but was unchanged Tuesday at \$2.04.

FC Stone's Dave Kurzawski wrote in his Dec. 28 Early Morning Update that "Concerns with the California drought and dietary shifts have underpinned (butter) prices and likely raised the floor on this market."

Cash Grade A nonfat dry milk

closed Thursday at 75 1/2-cents per pound, down a half-cent on the week and 24 1/2-cents below a year ago. Thirteen cars exchanged hands in the last week of 2015 at the CME.

The powder inched up a quarter-cent Monday but gave back a penny and a quarter Tuesday, slipping to 74 1/2-cents per pound.

#### GDT auction prices slip

The first Global Dairy Trade auction of 2016 reversed gears after two sessions of gain. The weighted average for all products offered Tuesday dropped 1.6 percent, following a 1.9 percent gain Dec. 15 and a 3.6 percent gain in the Dec. 1 event.

Whole milk powder led the losses, down 4.4 percent, following a 1.8 percent gain Dec. 15. Skim milk powder was down 0.8 percent, after inching 0.2 percent lower last time.

The gains this time were led by lactose, up 11.4 percent, after rising 6.8 percent last time. Butter was next, up 6.7 percent, after jumping 9 percent in the last event. Cheddar cheese was up 3.5 percent, after inching 1.1 percent higher last time.

FC Stone reports the average GDT butter price equated to about \$1.5030 per pound U.S., up from \$1.4226 in the Dec. 15 event. Contrast that, however, to CME butter, which closed Tuesday at \$2.04 per pound. GDT Cheddar cheese equated to about \$1.3442 per pound U.S., up from \$1.2955 last time, and compares to Tuesday's CME block Cheddar at \$1.49.

GDT skim milk powder, at 85.73 cents per pound U.S., is down from 85.77 cents per pound last time, and the whole milk powder average, at \$1.0023 per pound U.S., is down from \$1.0453 per pound in the last event. The CME Grade A nonfat dry milk price closed Tuesday at 74 1/2-cents per pound.

### Mobile slaughter unit designed for Hawaii meat producers

By BRET YAGER  
West Hawaii Today

WAIMEA, Hawaii (AP) — Not many decades ago, the Goliath sugar industry crashed on the Big Island, helping bring a fundamental shift to what residents consider sustainable.

The loss of the cane industry pointed to the weaknesses inherent in big agriculture, but also highlighted new farming possibilities as swaths of land opened up. Small, diverse operations began to flourish — from orange and coffee orchards to tomato farms. Meat also began to be farmed in new ways.

While fruit and vegetable growers have found ready markets, a lack of inspected meat production facilities made the sale of small-scale, locally produced meat cuts almost impossible.

But that could all change now.

On Dec. 23, Paaulo rancher Mike Amado swung open the doors on a shiny new mobile slaughterhouse being stored at a farm in Waimea. The unit, housed in a 36-foot trailer, is just about ready to roll. Equipped with electric winches and refrigeration, a generator, water supplies for two days and a stainless steel processing room, the unit has almost everything needed to bring the slaughterhouse to the herd — instead of the other way around.

Five years after island ranchers started talking about why the facility is needed so that meat can become part of the emerging diversified ag model, the Hawaii Island Meat Cooperative is in the process of hiring a general manager to run the mobile slaughter unit. In January, two head butchers and two assistant butchers will also be trained to operate the unit.

Initial production set to begin in April will be limited to USDA-inspected processing of animals into halves and quarters. Some hurdles remain before the unit can offer complete butchering, processing and packaging at three planned sites around the island.

For Amado, Kohala farmers Carol and David Fuertes — and a lot of others who support the endeavor — it's about getting back to something that's been lost.

The Fuertes family is working up a business plan so that the Hawi farm cooperative Palili O Kohala can be the site of one of the three satellite facilities for processing and packaging meats. The family raises cattle and hogs they would like to process and sell locally.

The Fuertes family would also like to open a retail facility where north Hawaii residents would have access to the best of local beef, mutton, pork or poultry.

"Many locals hunt and fish, but we cannot buy meat unless it's from the big stores, and that's all imported," said Carol



Laura Shimabuku/West Hawaii Today via AP

This Dec. 23 photo shows the new mobile slaughterhouse that will be able to process cattle, sheep, goats and hogs in Waimea, Hawaii. Equipped with electric winches and refrigeration, a generator, water supplies for two days and a stainless steel processing room, the unit has almost everything needed to bring the slaughterhouse to the herd.

Fuertes, who recalled old times when the Hawi and Kapauu area had two local butchers.

"We want to be able to bring that back," she said.

The mobile slaughterhouse will be capable of processing eight to 10 head of cattle per day, 20 to 30 sheep or goats, and 15 to 20 hogs. The cost to the ranchers will be similar to what they would pay if they took their animals to the island's two inspected slaughterhouses in Paaulo and Hilo. That's part of a pledge by the co-op that the unit will offer an alternative to existing facilities without trying to undercut them, Amado said.

The co-op is also working with Kona Raw Pet Food Co-op, which is interested in buying the non-edible products from the slaughterhouse. Amado says that's just one example of how the endeavor can help the island get back to local food production and distribution rather than being prostrated to mainland corporations even bigger than big sugar.

"We're trying to get back to that old model of local butcher shops," said Amado. "We can take a business like this and knit it back into the community and get back to a more sustainable way of doing business."

An initial \$250,000 grant from the state Department of Agriculture served as seed money for the unit. Another \$100,000 grant this year is helping equip and staff the trailer. An additional modular unit for cutting and wrapping meat will probably cost \$200,000, Amado said. The co-op is continuing to seek state funds and would like to base the cut-and-wrap facility at the Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority, a good place to publicly showcase the unit and get cheap electricity.

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