# Precision ag by way of boot straps

## **Barry Peterson** helps bring a game changer to the marketplace

By ERIC MORTENSON Capital Press

When Pacific Northwest farmers and ranchers walk into Papé Machinery dealerships later this month, they'll be able to peruse John Deere equipment as usual. But they'll also be able to check out the latest precision ag offering: A twin-camera, 5-pound drone they can toss in the back of the pickup and program to fly their fields.

Papé has reached an agreement to sell the AgDrone, designed and manufactured by HoneyComb Corp., of Wilsonville, Ore. For about \$21,000, the buyer gets a full package of plane, case, spare parts, training and, most critical, data processing.

The arrangement underlines Papé's embrace of advanced agricultural technology. Data from the AgDrone can be downloaded seamlessly into John Deere equipment, officials with both companies say, with real-time machine to machine communication probably on the horizon.

The man at the center of Papé's move isn't your classic computer geek with a university degree. He's not an electrical engineer or software developer.

Nope. Barry Peterson, Papé's Integrated Solutions manager, came out of the company's equipment rental division and didn't go to college.



Courtesy of HoneyComb Corp.

The AgDrone, shown in flight, is manufactured by HoneyComb Corp. of Wilsonville, Ore. It uses dual cameras to collect field data and map crop problems.

He worked for an electrical sign company before joining Papé 24 years ago.

He is primarily self-taught on computers. Recognizing he needed to get up to speed in an equipment industry transformed by "tele-matics," he sought out information technology specialists for insight. It became clear agriculture and technology were merging.

"Early on, one of the things that kept coming to the surface is the population is growing, and they're building where farms used to be," he said. "We've got to figure out a way to feed billions of people with less land. One of the best avenues to do that is through precision agricul-

He's immersed himself in remote diagnostics, automated controls and the production and operational data gathered by modern farm machinery, "Connectivity is really the key," he said.

In preparation for selling the AgDrone, Peterson learned how to do mission planning — programming the



Courtesy of Papé Machinery Barry Peterson rose through the ranks and as integrated solutions manager is taking Papé Machinery into the drone age.

drone's flight over fields. Papé sales reps will train buyers how to use the drone system.

The potential uses appear endless, Peterson said. High-resolution imagery, mapping and the ability to geo-tag problem areas in fields are available to produc-

Growers will have an additional layer of data to monitor crop health, he said, and precise GPS data can be used

and plunged into the world of computers. The job puts him at the convergence of agriculture and technology. Outlook: "When I was

Western

**Innovator** 

**Barry Peterson** 

Solutions manager, Papé

Family: Wife, Valerie, mar-

ried 30 years; has two sons

gene, Ore., bounced around

graduated from McNary High

Background: Born in Eu-

to other Oregon towns,

School in Keizer in 1982.

Began work for Papé 24

Notable: Not an electri-

cal engineer or software

developer. Realized early on

he needed to be tech savvy

er in January 2013.

years ago and was named

Integrated Solutions manag-

Position: Integrated

Age: 52 in February.

and a grandson.

Machinery.

approached to take on the position, I didn't know where it was going to go but I knew we had to start placing our focus on this."

The takeaway: "I love it. It's been one of most challenging, one of most rewarding jobs I've ever had."

to pinpoint visual inspection, guide machinery and provide variable rate treatment.

"This next step is definitely a game changer," Peterson

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#### To Reach Us

Ioll free	800-882-6789
Main line	503-364-4431
<sup>=</sup> ах	503-370-4383
Advertising Fax	503-364-2692

**News Staff** N. California 530-605-3072 E Idaho John O'Connell.. . 208-421-4347 Idaho

Carol Ryan Dumas Boise Sean Ellis

Matthew Weaver

Alan Kenaga..

Oregon

208-914-8264 **Central Washington** Dan Wheat. . 509-699-9099 E Washington

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. 800-882-6789

Eric Mortenson 503-412-8846 Mateusz Perkowski ..... . 800-882-6789 **Graphic artist** 

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# New Mexico is first to issue plans to sue EPA over mine spill

By RUSSELL CONTRERAS and SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — New Mexico plans to sue the federal government and the owners of two Colorado mines that were the source of a massive spill last year that contaminated rivers in three Western states, officials said Thursday.

The New Mexico Environment Department said it filed a notice of its intention to sue the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency over the spill, becoming the first to do so. The lawsuit also would target the state of Colorado and the owners of the Gold King and Sunnyside Mines.

An EPA cleanup crew accidentally unleashed millions of gallons of contaminated wastewater in August at the inactive Gold King Mine near Silverton, Colorado. It fouled rivers in Colorado, Utah and New Mexico with contaminants including arsenic and



Jerry McBride/The Durango Herald via AP People kayak in the Animas River near Durango, Colo., on Aug. 6 in water colored from a mine waste spill.

lead, temporarily shutting down drinking-water supplies and raising concerns about long-term effects on agricul-

The spill sent a yellow plume through the Animas Valley and into New Mexico and the San Juan River, forcing farmers and municipalities to shut off their taps. Farmers and ranchers on the Navajo Nation were left without a key water source for their crops and livestock for weeks.

The New Mexico regulators said they will sue if the EPA does not begin to take meaningful measures to clean up the affected areas and agree to a long-term plan that will research and monitor the effects of the spill.

"From the very beginning, the EPA failed to hold itself accountable in the same way that it would a private business," said Ryan Flynn, state Environment Department cabinet secretary.

The federal agency is reviewing New Mexico's plans to sue, spokeswoman Christie St. Clair said.

"EPA is working closely with the states to develop a long-term monitoring plan to evaluate potential environmental impacts from the spill and will be meeting with representatives in early February," St. Clair said. "EPA is also reimbursing state and local agencies for response-related costs associated with the

Larry Perino, a reclamation manager for Sunnyside Mine, said the mine was not involved in the spill and has no responsibility.

"We will vigorously defend ourselves from any potential legal action," he said.

A representative for Gold King Mine did not immediately respond to an email request seeking comment.

Roger Hudson, a spokesman for the Colorado attorney general, said the office has not yet seen the notice and had no comment. Hudson did not say if Colorado also planned to sue the EPA.

said Colorado Flynn

mas River watershed that the two states share. In fact, Colorado asked New Mexico to pay about \$20,000 for a public record's request, he said. The Navajo Nation has said it may consider legal ac-

balked when New Mexico

asked for information about

the spill's effects on the Ani-

tion against the EPA but nothing formal has been filed.

The spill occurred when workers for the agency and its contractor, Environmental Restoration LLC, started excavation work intended to allow them to safely drain the mine.

Some criticized the EPA for failing to take adequate precautions despite warnings that a blowout could occur. But Interior Secretary Sally Jewell said a review by her agency showed the spill was 'clearly unintentional."

People who live near the idled and leaking Gold King Mine say local authorities and mining companies have spent decades spurning federal help to clean up the site.

# Calendar

To submit an event go to the Community Events calendar on the home page of our website at www. capitalpress.com and click on "Submit an Event." Calendar items can also be mailed to Capital Press, 1400 Broadway St. NE, Salem, OR

### Saturday, Jan. 23

2016 EcoFarm Conference, Asi-Iomar Conference Grounds, Pacific

### Monday, Jan. 25

Oregon Blueberry Conference,

### Red Lion Hotel, Portland.

Tuesday, Jan. 26 Northwest Agricultural Show, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Portland Expo Center, 2060 N. Marine Drive, Portland, Ore., www.nwagshow.com

WAFLA Workforce Summit, Clackamas County Event Center, Canby, Ore.

Washington Growers League's Annual Meeting and Labor Conference, Yakima Convention Center,

Washington Oregon Potato Conference, Three Rivers Convention Center, Kennewick, Wash.

Wednesday, Jan. 27 Northwest Agricultural Show, 9 a.m.-8 p.m., Portland Expo Center, 2060 N. Marine Drive, Portland, Ore., www.nwagshow.com

Washington-Oregon Potato Conference, Three Rivers Conven-

tion Center, Kennewick, Wash.

Cattle Industry Convention and NCBA Trade Show, Convention Center, San Diego.

# **Thursday, Jan. 28**Northwest Agricultural Show, 9

a.m.-3 p.m., Portland Expo Center, 2060 N. Marine Drive, Portland, Ore., www.nwagshow.com

Washington-Oregon Conference, Three Rivers Convention Center, Kennewick, Wash.

Cattle Industry Convention and NCBA Trade Show, Convention Center, San Diego.

Organic Farming Conference, The College of Idaho, Caldwell, 208-850-6504. The conference will feature reduced tillage systems in organic production, organic certification and record keeping tips, crop insurance options for organic producers, and virtual farm tours.

WAFLA Workforce Summit,

Central Washington University, Ellensburg.

# Friday, Jan. 29

Cattle Industry Convention and NCBA Trade Show, Convention Center, San Diego.

Organic Farming Conference The College of Idaho, Caldwell, 208-850-6504

### Monday, Feb. 1

Native Tree Identification Class, University of Idaho Extension Office in Kootenai County, Coeur d'Alene, 208-446-1680.

### Tuesday, Feb. 2

Spokane Ag Expo & Pacific Northwest Farm Forum, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Spokane Convention Center, Spokane, Wash.

# Wednesday, Feb. 3

Spokane Ag Expo & Pacific Northwest Farm Forum, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Spokane Convention Center, Spokane, Wash.

### Thursday, Feb. 4

Spokane Ag Expo & Pacific Northwest Farm Forum, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Spokane Convention Center, Spokane, Wash.

Klamath Bull & Select Ranch Horse Sale, Klamath County Fairgrounds, Klamath Falls. Admission tickets for the Event Center will be available for purchase before the event at several local retailers and online at www.klamathbullsale.com. Pre-sale tickets will be \$6 and include admission to the Event Center both Saturday and Sunday.

#### Friday, Feb. 5 Klamath Bull & Select Ranch

Horse Sale, Klamath County Fairgrounds, Klamath Falls. Admission tickets for the Event Center will be available for purchase before the

#### event at several local retailers and online at www.klamathbullsale.com. Pre-sale tickets will be \$6 and include admission to the Event Center both Saturday and Sunday.

Swine Information Day, Pillar Rock Grill, Moses Lake, Wash., 509-754-2011, ext. 4313. Registration is \$25 per person. All-day youth registration is \$15 for 4-H and FFA

# Saturday, Feb. 6 Klamath Bull & Select Ranch

Horse Sale, Klamath County Fairgrounds, Klamath Falls. Admission tickets for the Event Center will be available for purchase before the event at several local retailers and online at www.klamathbullsale.com.

#### Sunday, Feb. 7 Klamath Bull & Select Ranch

Horse Sale Klamath County Fairgrounds, Klamath Falls, Ore. Admission tickets for the Event Center will be available for purchase before the event at several local retailers and online at www.klamathbullsale. Thursday, Feb. 18

#### WAFLA Annual Labor Conference, Central Washington Universi-

ty, Ellensburg.

Wednesday, Feb. 24 Southern Idaho Direct Seed Workshop, Shiloh Inn Conference Center, Idaho Falls, (208) 334-2353.

# Saturday, Feb. 27 Mid-Valley Winter Ag Fest, Polk

County Fairgrounds Rickreall Ore., Rickreall, 503-428-8224. The Polk County Fairgrounds and Event Center, Ag First and the Polk County Museum are hosting.

Tuesday, March 1 22nd Fruit Ripening & Ethylene

#### Management Workshop, Postharvest Technology Center, Davis,

Wednesday, March 2 22nd Fruit Ripening & Ethylene Management Workshop, Postharvest Technology Center, Davis,

# Friday, March 4 Ag Chemical Collection Event,

Redwood Transfer Station, Grants Pass, Ore. 541-690-9983. Pre-registration is required. Saturday, March 5 Ag Chemical Collection Event, Rogue Disposal Transfer Station,

White City, Ore. 541-690-9983

Pre-registration is required.

#### Friday-Sunday March 18-20

Northwest Horse Fair & Expo 2016, Linn County Fair and Expo Center, Albany, Ore. 765-655-2107. The largest equine expo in the Northwest will feature horses of various sizes, breeds, colors and uses.

# If you see a misstatement,

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set the record straight.