

Cattlemen to discuss hot topics over barbecue

Wolves, water quality issues loom in coming year

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
Capital Press

The Washington State Cattlemen's Association will serve up grilled beef and conversation during a barbecue planned for this year's Spokane Ag Expo and Pacific Northwest Farm Forum.

The association will offer samples mid-morning, starting at roughly 10:30 a.m. or 11 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 3, said Mike Poulson, farm forum chairman.

Jack Field, executive vice president of the association, said the event offers a good chance to interact with people involved in agriculture.

"I'm sure we'll be talking to anybody that has an open ear about issues that are in front of us," Field said. "We're looking forward to lis-

tening and talking. We're excited to be there and looking forward to a fun day."

Possible subjects include the state's draft concentrated animal feeding operation regulations or wolves and the state's wolf advisory group, Field said.

Wolves and water quality are the big topics in 2016, Field said. Water quality could include the state Department of Ecology's watershed assessments, non-point pollution rules or total maximum daily load rules.

Field also said he hoped for an update on legal challenges to the Environmental Protection Agency's Waters of the U.S. rule.

"Water quality cuts across livestock or row crop producers," Field said. "That's something I think everybody understands."

The Spokane Ag Expo gives ranchers an opportunity



Capital Press file

Jack Field, left, executive vice president of the Washington Cattlemen's Association, slices a bit of tri-tip fresh off the grill for Sen. Mark Schoesler, R-Ritzville, during Beef Day at the state Capitol in this file photo. Field and the cattlemen will offer beef samples to attendees of the Spokane Ag Expo and Pacific Northwest Farm Forum starting at about 11 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 3. They also hope to encourage a discussion of issues impacting ranchers in Washington state.

to connect with the industry, Field said.

"It speaks volumes when

you look at the number of vendors and producers that are there — just the over-

all impact it has on Eastern Washington and Washington state as a whole," he said.

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