

# Southern Idaho grower raising hay with buried drip

By JOHN O'CONNELL  
Capital Press

RAFT RIVER, Idaho — Farmer Todd Garrett believes water has become a precious enough commodity in south-east Idaho to justify his investment in costly buried drip irrigation at a commercial scale.

On April 15, Garrett finished installing drip lines buried a foot deep and spaced 36 inches apart on an 80-acre field. He'll plant alfalfa this season, but Garrett said the spacing of the drip lines makes drip potato production a future possibility.

He's seeking solutions to address a water shortage within a designated critical area of the Raft River Aquifer, knowing he could soon be expected to dry 200 acres irrigated by so-called expansion water rights — in which growers who didn't fully utilize groundwater rights years ago were allowed to add new pivots elsewhere.

In addition to buried drip, he'll experiment this season with a pivot dragging



John O'Connell/Capital Press

Workers on Todd Garrett's farm in Raft River, Idaho, install drip tape on an 80-acre field in rows buried a foot deep and 36 inches apart. Garrett is experimenting with buried drip and other novel approaches to irrigation to help conserve groundwater.

drip tape and Low Elevation Spray Application. LESA, which entails running pivots with low-pressure nozzles dangling about a foot off the ground, was developed by University of Idaho irrigation specialist Howard Neibling and his Washington State University counterpart, Troy Peters.

Garrett will use identical water meters on each system, plus a standard pivot with a new irrigation package as a control, to evaluate which option provides the most per-gallon water savings for the money. Each field has similar soil and will be planted in alfalfa. He'll host a field day in mid-July, after his second

cutting, to share his results.

"I want to see what is going to be the most economical for me, the most user-friendly and the most maintenance-friendly," Garrett said. "I wanted to do it in full-scale-production-sized fields so it's real-world, real-life scenarios."

Based on prior testing, Garrett said buried drip —

which recycles unused water in a closed system — should cut his water use by 40 to 60 percent, compared with 15 to 20 percent with LESA and 20 to 25 percent with drag-drip.

Garrett said buried drip costs about \$2,000 per acre to install, and he'll likely soon expand to 160 acres, which would equal the capacity of his new buried-drip sediment filtration system. He hopes to lease the buried-drip ripper he purchased to other regional growers installing buried drip, or to custom install for them.

Neibling, who will help Garrett evaluate data, explained surface drip systems are widely used in high-value crops, such as mint and onions, in Western Idaho, but buried drip systems are a rarity in the state. In Western Idaho, Neibling said rodents have posed an obstacle to buried drip, and he anticipates LESA and drag-drip will provide Garrett the best return for his investment.

Neibling said all three options should provide ample water savings, but growers will likely adopt "the easiest

option to install and manage and the cheapest, particularly because it's something they're used to."

Butte Irrigation, the Israeli drip-irrigation manufacturer Netafim and buried-drip expert Jerry Funck, with Professional Water Management Associates in Lubbock, Texas, are also helping Garrett set up the trials. Garrett traveled to Lubbock to see growers' water-efficient systems and was impressed that many buried-drip systems were still working well after more than 15 years. He'll run rodenticide through his drip lines to prevent chewing, and herbicide to keep roots from growing into lines, and he'll use an additive to avoid calcium deposits. He'll limit tillage to no deeper than 4 inches.

Funck said his state has about 600,000 acres of buried drip, and they've boosted yields while curbing water and power use. He said systems also precisely deliver fertilizer exactly where crops need it.

"I think it's ripe for drip in Eastern Idaho," Funck said.



www.CoastalFarm.com

## PROUD TO SUPPORT Members & Families of 4-H

Albany - Eugene - Roseburg - Woodburn - Cornelius - Oregon City - Gresham - The Dalles  
White City - Redmond - Klamath Falls, OR Yakima - East Wenatchee - Auburn - Mount Vernon, WA



17-2/#5

★ Custom Heavy Duty Truck Beds, 8' to 26'  
★ Harsh Hoist 6 to 36 Tons  
**SALES & INSTALLATION**

Also Available:  
Pickup & Truck Accessories  
RV Accessories



**Pummel Truck Supply Co.**  
2310 Hoyt St. SE • P.O. Box 12066  
Salem, Oregon 97309  
(503) 581-2437  
or 1-800-695-6996

17-2/#1TD



**AG WEST SUPPLY**  
Now Tire Factory  
in Silverton, OR

**PROUD SUPPORTER  
OF 4-H**



**9055 Rickreall Rd.,  
Rickreall, OR  
503-623-2363**

17-2/#1TD



**MARION COUNTY  
FARM BUREAU**

www.marioncofarm.com  
**Proud to Support**



17-2/#1TD



**Branson  
TRACTORS**

Proud Sponsor  
of 4-H



**THE TRACTOR STORE**  
(541) 342-5464  
5450 W. 11<sup>th</sup>, Eugene, OR  
www.capitalpress.biz/hosted/tractorstore

17-2/#1TD



**IOKA  
MARKETING**




**503-873-6498  
877-FOR-IOKA**  
www.iokafarms.com  
Silverton, Oregon

**Proud  
Supporter  
of 4H**




17-2/#1TD

## 4-H'ERS MAKE 'CUDDLE ME CLOSE' BLANKETS FOR NEW MOTHERS



*Kathy Keatley Garvey/UC-Davis photo*  
Ryan Anenson of the Tremont 4-H Club, Dixon, Calif., sews a "Cuddle Me Close" blanket.

*Kathy Keatley Garvey/UC-Davis photo*  
4-H leader Audrey Ritchey of the Tremont 4-H Club, Dixon, Calif., shows Lillie Sheppard of the Vaca Valley 4-H Club, Vacaville, Calif., how to make a "Cuddle Me Close" cover-up.



17-2/#1TD

By KATHY KEATLEY GARVEY  
University of California-Davis  
DIXON, Calif. — You can't get any closer than "Cuddle Me Close."

It's a soft, flannel blanket or cover-up that provides privacy to breastfeeding mothers and their newborns, but it's much more than that.

It's a 4-H project launched in 2013 by longtime Dixon 4-H leader Audrey Ritchey, an X-ray technician at the North Bay Medical Center in Fairfield. It helps promote breastfeeding and its many health and bonding benefits. To date, Solano County 4-H'ers, under Ritchey's direction, have sewn 1,000 one-yard blankets for the new moms at North Bay.

"I was told that one mom started to cry when she got the cover-up," Ritchey said. "She stated that it was the only thing she had for her baby."

"Two years ago, a Girl Scout troop donated \$250 from their cookie sales. Many nurses have donated their Christmas gift cards to the project."

Ritchey, a co-community leader of the Tremont 4-H Club in Dixon and vice president of the Solano County 4-H Leaders' Council, recalled that "three years ago I thought that 4-H was missing an opportunity to share the 4-H program with new moms at North Bay."

She contacted a director at North Bay and learned about "a baby-friendly program that encourages new moms to breastfeed and have skin-to-skin contact with their newborns."

So Ritchey, along with some 4-H members and their parents, gave birth, so to speak, to the "Cuddle Me Close" cover-up project using her own pattern and sewing machines.

"The five youth currently in our service-learning project make many blankets each time we meet," she said. Many other 4-H'ers of all ages in Solano County make them during countywide events or at home, she said.

Ritchey applied for and received a Revolution of Responsibility grant. They've toured the North Bay Medical Center. They've given presentations at the hospital and at club and community events.

The project is closely linked to the 4-H Pledge — "I pledge my head to clearer thinking; my heart to greater loyalty; my hands to larger service; and my health to better living — for my club, my community, my country and my world."

Ritchey says the youngsters in her project not only learn how to sew, but learn to connect with one another, learn to budget and fulfill a public service need.

Studies show that breast milk contains antibodies that help babies fight off viruses and bacteria and lowers the risk of allergies, ear infections, respiratory illnesses and bouts of diarrhea. Breastfed babies have a lower risk of childhood obesity.

Ritchey said the project "promotes mother-baby bonding through skin-to-skin contact, supports positive and physical and mental development, is healthier for mother and child and is inexpensive in comparison to formula."

"As long as I have youth that want to do this I will keep making them," Ritchey vows.

In addition to the sewing project, Ritchey teaches a number of countywide 4-H projects, including poultry, rabbits and cavy (guinea pigs).

For information on the Solano County 4-H Program, access <http://cesolano.ucanr.edu/> or contact Valerie Williams at [vaWilliams@ucanr.edu](mailto:vaWilliams@ucanr.edu) or (707) 784-1319. For donations of fabric or funds to the "Cuddle Me Close" 4-H project, contact Audrey Ritchey at [ritcheysribbitts@gmail.com](mailto:ritcheysribbitts@gmail.com)

## 2016 Polk Flea Market Dates

**First Sundays of the Month**  
**9am-3pm**  
Sat. set-up 12pm-3pm

**May 1 • June 6 • July 3**

**Adult Admission: \$1**  
**12 and under: FREE**

**FREE PARKING**



**Deb Thomas, Owner • Cell: 503-428-8224**  
www.polkfleamarket.com • polkproductions@minetfiber.com

17-2/#1TD



**Stockland Livestock Auction wants to thank and congratulate all the dedicated 4H groups making a difference.**

**Your passion for agriculture is the future of our industry.**



**CALL ANY TIME!**  
FOR INFORMATION OR TO CONSIGN:  
• Kale McGuinness 508-703-3981  
• Jack McGuinness 509-703-3982  
• TOLL FREE 800-372-6845

*"We'll work hard for your business and harder to keep it."*

17-2/#1TD