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Great American Milk Drive passes million-gallon mark

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

While eggnog is the reigning holiday fare, milk producers and processors are asking people to think milk this season and donate a little of Santa's favorite beverage to hungry families in their communities.

It's as easy as clicking "donate" on the Great American Milk Drive website.

Launched by the National Dairy Campaign and the Milk Processors Education

Program (MilkPEP) in coordination with Feeding America in the spring of 2014, the campaign has now delivered more than 1 million gallons of milk to Feeding America's food bank network across the country.

The Milk Drive effort aligns with the 100-year commitment to health and wellness from National Dairy Council and its dairy farmers, said Jean Ragalie-Carr, president of the National Dairy Council.

"Making sure hungry peo-

ple have access to nutritious foods such as milk is something that is important to all of us in the dairy community. Our farmers are especially passionate about seeing the milk they produce every day help nourish families in need," she said.

Surpassing 1 million gallons donated is a significant milestone, said Victor Zaborosky, MilkPEP vice president of marketing.

"In collaboration with America's milk brands, dairy farmers, retailers, shoppers

and our social media community, our 1 millionth gallon signifies great strides in our fight against hunger — and we're just getting started," he said in a statement to Capital Press.

According to Feeding America, milk is one of the most requested but least donated items at food banks, and children in need are missing out on the essential nutrients and high-quality protein it supplies. Feeding America serves more than 46 million food-insecure people in the U.S., but donations of milk

are providing less than a gallon of milk per person per year, according to Feeding America.

Throughout the holidays, the Great American Milk Drive wants to raise awareness of the issue and encourage people to donate.

"The Great American Milk Drive has created a practical way for food banks to get milk to families in need," said Matt Knott, president of Feeding America.

It allows food banks to distribute vouchers for a free

gallon of milk to families to redeem at their local grocery or convenience store, he said.

"We're grateful for this powerful partnership that enables our network to provide a highly requested food item to families year round. It is especially important during the holidays, when for some families the need is even greater," he said.

In addition to donating online, people can donate through purchases of Cheryl's gourmet cookies and M&M candies at Wal-Mart stores.

In Washington, scavengers play key role in wolf policy

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

Ranchers, county commissioners and environmentalists argued last summer about when to draw the line and shoot wolves in the Profanity Peak pack.

The decision, however, was more influenced by scavengers than anything else.

Several times, GPS collars, tracks and scat placed the pack at the scene of livestock depredations in the Colville National Forest, according to WDFW reports provided to the Capital Press.

In some cases, however, there wasn't a "smoking gun" — the lacerations and hemorrhages caused by wolf bites. Only scattered bones remained. Those cases went down as "probable" wolf attacks and did not factor into whether WDFW would ultimately cull the pack.

If the cases had been confirmed as wolf attacks, the four-depredation threshold for initiating lethal removal of the wolves would have been reached 19 days earlier.

The delay presumably increased livestock losses. Diamond M Ranch co-owner Len McIrvin told the Capital Press that he estimates he lost 70 head of cattle. Some ranchers say earlier intervention would have reduced the number of wolves that had to be shot to deter depredations.

"We need to have a serious conversation about how these probables fit in," said Washington Cattlemen's Association Executive Vice President Jack Field, a member of WDFW's Wolf Advisory Group.

"It's really problematic in a lot of cases," he said.



Courtesy of WDFW

A calf partially eaten by wolves lies Aug. 3 in the Colville National Forest. It was the fourth confirmed attack on livestock by the Profanity Peak pack, triggering the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's culling of the pack. In three earlier cases, only bones remained, leaving too little evidence for investigators to positively identify wolves as the attackers.

"One of the challenges is to ensure producers don't fall into the hole of continuing to have 'probables, probables, probables,' but never have confirmed depredations that trigger lethal removal."

By the end of the summer, WDFW had confirmed 10 depredations by the Profanity Peak pack, with five more classified as probable. To stop depredations, WDFW shot seven wolves. Four pack members remain.

In all confirmed depredations, there was enough left of the cow or calf to detect what investigators called the "signature style wolf attack," often bites around the groin.

Former WDFW wildlife biologist Jay Shepherd, who investigated many of last summer's depredations, said field investigators required strong proof, even when evidence pointed toward wolves.

"You can't just assume they were killed by wolves if you don't have the evidence,"

he said. "But it's hard to stand there and tell the McIrvin that. Some of the depredations are 'probable' and some are 'highly probable.'"

Scavenging birds led WDFW to the first depredation, in fact. A WDFW officer saw the birds and found a dead calf. Enough remained to see that the animal had suffered wolf bites, according to WDFW reports.

On July 14, a bear was seen scavenging a Charolais cow. Ravens were on scene, too, according to investigators. A majority of the meat had been consumed, but there was enough left for investigators to find wounds consistent with a wolf attack.

A third depredation was confirmed July 23 and a fourth on Aug. 3. By then, WDFW had classified three other attacks as probable. Those attacks did not factor into WDFW's decision to initiate lethal removal, said Donny Martorello, the department's wolf policy leader.

"It wasn't part of the deci-

sion-making because we were sticking to the protocol to the letter," he said.

Whether to consider probable wolf attacks in deciding whether to remove wolves will be something for the Wolf Advisory Group to discuss, he said.

"It's a situation that evolved with the Profanity pack. It highlights that we need to have that conversation," he said.

On July 12, WDFW investigated two separate reports of dead calves. Radio collars worn by two wolves showed the Profanity Peak pack had been in the area. Tracks and scat were nearby. "But the evidence had been consumed," Shepherd said.

Only scattered bones remained. "You look at the totality, and it's highly probable. It probably didn't get hit by a pickup, but there's that doubt," he said. "I don't know why they can't have the flexibility to say, 'We have two probables that are highly probable and that these two probables should count.'"

On one day, WDFW investigated three attacks on calves on the same grazing allotment. GPS signals from the two collared wolves showed the pack had been at the scene.

In two cases, the carcasses had been completely scavenged, leaving only skeletal remains, according to investigators, who put the depredations down as probable wolf attacks.

Cheese prices down; butter slips

By LEE MIELKE
For the Capital Press

Cash cheese prices started December heading lower.

Block cheddar dipped to \$1.76 per pound Wednesday, but rallied and closed Friday at \$1.81, still a nickel lower on the week but 29 1/4-cents above a year ago.

The barrels closed at \$1.6150, down 7 1/2-cents on the week and 13 cents above a year ago.

The blocks dropped a nickel Monday and shed 2 3/4-cents Tuesday, dipping to \$1.7325 per pound, lowest price since Oct. 28.

The barrels lost a penny and a half Monday and three-quarters Tuesday, sliding to \$1.5925, the lowest price since Oct. 27, and an unsustainable 14 cents below the blocks.

Cash butter jumped 5 1/4-cents last Monday and did a 13-cent pole vault Wednesday, hitting \$2.23 per pound, the highest spot since Aug. 16, only to give some back Thursday and Friday and close at \$2.1850, up 13 3/4-cents on the week but still 71 3/4-cents below a year ago.

It dropped 7 1/4-cents Monday but regained three-quarters Tuesday, inching back to \$2.12 per pound.

Grade A nonfat dry milk closed Friday at \$1.0075 per pound, up 10 1/4-cents, 20 3/4-cents above a year ago, and the highest since Oct. 7, 2015.

It reversed gears Monday, giving back a penny and three-quarters, and lost another penny and a half Tuesday, dipping to 97 1/2-cents per pound.

Federal benchmark jumps

The November federal order benchmark Class III milk price was announced at \$16.76 per hundredweight, up \$1.94 from October, \$1.46 above November 2015, and equates to about \$1.44 per

Dairy Markets
Lee Mielke



gallon, up from \$1.27 in October and \$1.32 a year ago.

The 11-month Class III average stands at \$14.64, down from \$15.92 at this time a year ago and down from \$22.75 in 2014.

Class III futures, as of Monday's settlements, portended a December Class III at \$17.03; January, \$16.75; February, \$16.83; and March at \$16.79.

The Class IV price is \$13.76, up a dime from October but \$3.13 below a year ago. The Class IV average for 2016 is at \$13.66, down from \$14.24 a year ago and compares to \$22.58 in 2014. It is the lowest November Class IV price since 2009.

California tops federal order

California's November 4b cheese milk price, comparable to the federal order Class III price, is \$17.45 per cwt., up \$3.02 from October, \$3.02 above a year ago, and the highest 4b since November 2014.

It's also 69 cents above the FO Class III price, the first time the 4b price has topped the Class III price since December 2009. The 4b has trailed the Class III by as little as 39 cents in October to as much as \$1.39 in May, despite the temporary state-mandated change in the 4b pricing formula with respect to whey. The gap in 2015 ranged from a low of 53 cents in August to a high of \$2.43 in January.

The 2016 4b average stands at \$14.06, down from \$14.61 a year ago and \$20.40 in 2014.

The November 4a butter-powder milk price is \$13.69 per cwt., up 58 cents from October but \$2.88 below a year ago. The 4a average is at \$13.29, down from \$14.06 a year ago and \$22.49 in 2014.













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