



Eric Mortenson/Capital Press

Former Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, shown here during an August 2015 Portland visit. Vilsack is joining the U.S. Dairy Export Council as its president and CEO, effective Feb. 1.

## Vilsack to take top post at U.S. Dairy Export Council

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS  
Capital Press

Tom Vilsack, who resigned his post as ag secretary last Friday, will join the U.S. Dairy Export Council as president and CEO, effective Feb. 1, according to an announcement by USDEC.

Vilsack will succeed Tom Suber, who served as president of USDEC since its founding in 1995 and retired at the end of 2016.

"I've spent my career in public service as a tireless advocate for farmers and American agriculture and can think of no better way to continue this service than by leading the U.S. Dairy Export Council," Vilsack stated

in USDEC's press release on Tuesday.

"Growing the global market for U.S. dairy products is essential to the future of the dairy industry and America's dairy farmers," he said.

Vilsack will provide strategic leadership and oversight of USDEC's global promotional and research activities, regulatory affairs and trade policy initiatives.

That will include working with industry leaders to develop a long-term vision for building sales and consumer trust in U.S. dairy, the press release stated.

Together with the USDEC board, he will create strategies to achieve the shared vision.

He will serve as the organization's primary spokesman and ambassador.

"I look forward to partnering with the dynamic team at USDEC as well as agriculture, food industry and key stakeholders at home and abroad to advance the council's mission and strengthen trust in American dairy," Vilsack said.

"Secretary Vilsack's impressive record of leadership and his proven ability to manage complex issues, combined with his breadth and depth of industry knowledge, made him the preeminent choice to take the helm of USDEC," said Thomas Gallagher, CEO of Dairy Management Inc., the umbrella organization that founded USDEC.

## States argue in court for more say over endangered species

By DAN ELLIOTT  
Associated Press

DENVER — A battle over how to save endangered wolves in the Southwest moved to a federal appeals court Wednesday as judges heard arguments on whether states can block the federal government from reintroducing wildlife within their borders.

The Interior Department is asking the Denver-based 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to overturn a preliminary injunction that bars the department from releasing more captive-bred Mexican gray wolves into the wild in New Mexico without that state's approval.

It's the latest skirmish in the federal government's long and troubled effort to restore the rare wolves to part of their original range under the Endangered Species Act. It comes as the future of the law is in question, with Congress and the White House in the control of Republicans who generally see it as an impediment to jobs and economic development.

New Mexico has multiple complaints about the Mexican gray wolf program, and in 2015 it refused to issue a permit to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service — part of the Interior Department — to release more of the predators in the state. New Mexico also announced it might sue the agency.

Fish and Wildlife decided to release more wolves anyway, citing an urgent need to expand



Jim Clark/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service via AP, File

A Mexican gray wolf leaves cover at the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge in Socorro County, N.M. The Interior Department has asked a Denver-based court to overturn a preliminary injunction that bars the department from releasing more Mexican gray wolves into the wild in New Mexico without that state's approval.

the wild population to prevent inbreeding. New Mexico officials went to court, and a federal judge in New Mexico issued an order last year blocking further releases while the dispute is resolved.

The Interior Department appealed to the 10th Circuit. Appeals court judges generally take weeks or months to issue a ruling after hearing oral arguments.

Even if the court sides with the government, it's not clear whether president-elect Donald Trump's administration will continue to fight after he takes office. New Mexico state attorneys contend the Endangered Species Act and federal rules require the Fish and Wildlife Service to cooperate with the state and not release more wolves without state permis-

ion. They also made a states' rights argument, saying states have the primary responsibility to manage wildlife.

Eighteen other states filed a friend-of-the-court brief siding with New Mexico.

Interior Department lawyers argue the law allows the department to go around the state, if necessary, to save a species. The preliminary injunction against more releases "threatens the survival in the wild of a protected species," they said in written arguments.

A coalition of environmental groups, led by Defenders of Wildlife, intervened on the Interior Department's side. They argue that the state's legal interpretation would wrongly give them veto power over measures to save a federally protected species.

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From left, coach Mr. Steve Wilder and team members Lauren Anderson, Kristin Nesbitt, Hannah Krichbaum, and Loretta Lacy of Meridian's Veterinary Science CDE team.

From left, coaches Mr. Shane Stevenson and Mrs. Lorraine Wikoff, and team members Trace Beaucannon, Alexa Phillips, Zach Phillips and Ashlyn Schiers of Meridian's Dairy Cattle Evaluation CDE team.

From left, coach Mrs. Renee Peugh and team members Nicole Elletson, Kate Johnson and Mackenzie Brown of Meridian's Ag Marketing Plan CDE team.

From left, coach Mrs. Trish Stokes and team members Will Stokes, Karlyn Roberts, Maddie Bennett and Connor Burgin of Meridian's Environmental & Natural Resources CDE team.

## MERIDIAN FFA CHAPTER GOES TO NATIONALS

By Loretta Lacy  
2016-2017 Meridian FFA Reporter

In March and April of last school year, the Meridian FFA Chapter attended the Idaho State Career Development Events (CDEs). Four of Meridian's teams placed first in the state, qualifying them for national competition.

Along with the members of the four qualifying teams, three chapter delegates and two American Degree recipients attended this year's National Convention.

The 2016 National FFA Convention was held from Tuesday, Oct. 19, until Saturday, Oct. 22, in Indianapolis, Indiana. Not only was this convention a place for top state teams to showcase their talents, but it also held the largest FFA store, a college and career show, multiple sessions run by national officers, and several great keynote speakers.

Meridian's Environmental and Natural Resources team placed 3rd in the nation with a gold ranking. This year 42 other teams competed for a total of 168 members. The following members competed for Meridian FFA:

- Maddie Bennett (2nd high individual, gold ranking).
- Karlyn Roberts (gold ranking).
- Connor Burgin (gold ranking).
- William Stokes (silver ranking).

The Meridian FFA Veterinary Science team placed 4th in the nation with a gold ranking. There were 44 other teams that competed this year. The Meridian members were:

- Kristin Nesbitt (2nd high individual, gold ranking).
- Loretta Lacy (gold ranking).
- Hannah Krichbaum (gold ranking).
- Lauren Anderson (gold ranking).

The Meridian Agriculture Marketing Plan team was a semi-finalist with a silver ranking. The team consisted of:

- Kate Johnson (silver ranking).
- Mackenzie Brown (silver ranking).
- Nikki Elletson (silver ranking).

Meridian's Dairy Cattle Evaluation and Management team placed 18th in the nation with a silver ranking. This year 48 other teams also competed in this CDE at nationals. The following members of our team were:

- Ashlyn Schiers (silver ranking).
- Trace Beaucannon (silver ranking).
- Zach Phillips (silver ranking).
- Alexa Phillips (silver ranking).

Meridian FFA also had two American Degree recipients: Kaedy Peck is a sophomore at the University of Idaho majoring in agribusiness and Hayden Turnbough is studying biology in her second year at the College of Western Idaho.

Kaedy Peck, Agribusiness student at the University of Idaho and Meridian FFA member, receives her American Degree.

Hayden Turnbough, Biology student at the College of Western Idaho and Meridian FFA member, receives her American Degree.

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