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THE GREEN STANDARD

Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement revives spinach industry after outbreak

By **TIM HEARDEN**
Capital Press

SALINAS, Calif. — When a deadly food-borne illness outbreak in late 2006 was linked to spinach from a California field, the industry faced disaster.

Worried consumers nationwide stopped buying spinach as food safety authorities raced to track down the cause.

“I’ve lived through floods, I’ve lived through union strikes and boycotts,” said James Bogart, president of the Grower-Shipper Association of California. “This event ... was the worst thing I’ve ever experienced in 40 years representing the industry.”

Three men were among those who led the effort to save the industry.

Joe Pezzini, now the president of Castroville, Calif.-based Ocean Mist Farms, had just been named chairman of a local growers’ group when the outbreak occurred in September 2006. His farm wasn’t implicated, but he took it upon himself to meet with the press.

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Tim Hearden/Capital Press

Joe Pezzini, president and CEO of Castroville, Calif.-based Ocean Mist Farms, stands near a field in late February that will be planted to spinach. He was one of several people who were instrumental in starting the Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement, which saved the industry after an E. coli outbreak in 2006.

Courtesy of Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement
Spinach is harvested in the Salinas Valley. The 10-year-old Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement imposes standards for handling spinach and other leafy greens to try to prevent food-borne illnesses.

Lawmakers asked to fund manure-into-water technology

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

OLYMPIA — An engineer told Washington lawmakers Tuesday that public funding would spur technology to distill cow manure into dry fertilizer and clean water, making polluted runoff from dairies a problem of the past.

“Wow,” said one legislator. “Yeah, wow,” said another.

The Washington State Dairy Federation arranged back-to-back presentations to the House and Senate agriculture committees by Peter Janicki, CEO of Janicki Bioenergy in Sedro-Woolley, Wash.



Peter Janicki

Janicki has worked with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to convert sewage into drinking water in developing countries. A YouTube video viewed 3.2 million times shows Janicki in 2015 in Africa serving Bill Gates water that five minutes earlier had been human waste.

Janicki said that he could use the experience and knowledge that he’s gained to create new technology for distilling cow manure.

“Boiling something to separate out its constituents is not new science,” he said. “We just figured out how to make it work from the beginning to the end in this application.”

“It makes the dairy farm a zero-discharge dairy,” he said. “You take the water coming out of the back end of the cow and feed it back into the front end of the cow. So there is nothing that ever leaves the barn.”

“There won’t be any (manure) lagoons with this technology,” Janicki said. “There may be lagoons, but they’re going to have clean water in them. They’re going to be like, I don’t know, swimming pools.”

The Washington dairy industry has been searching for improved ways to use manure, a target of new regulations and the basis for lawsuits.

The dairy federation’s policy director, Jay Gordon, said that Janicki caught the industry’s attention just last fall.

“It has the potential to be a pretty big sea change,” Gordon said.

Janicki said industrial customers will be the most-lucrative market for his technology, while dairies will have to wait “without some kind of help in some form or another from a government organization.”

“I am very passionate about getting this on dairy farms. I think it’s a huge opportunity,” he said. “Financially, it’s something that would happen naturally in 10 to 15 years, but not until we saturate the industrial market.”

Janicki estimated that with \$2 million he could build and install equipment to showcase purifying the manure from a 1,000-cow dairy. He predicted

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Owyhee Reservoir set to fill for first time in six years

By **SEAN ELLIS**
Capital Press

ONTARIO, Ore. — Snowpack levels in the Owyhee River basin were far above normal this winter and the Owyhee Reservoir will fill for the first time since 2011.

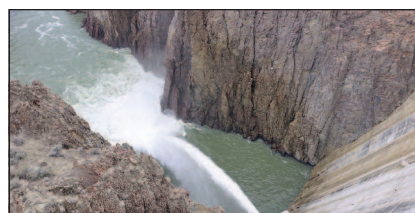
About 1,800 farms and 118,000 irrigated acres in Eastern Oregon and part of southwestern Idaho depend on water from the reservoir. In 2016, those irrigators re-

ceived their full 4-acre-foot allotment of water for the first time in four years.

This year’s water supply outlook is even better and, because the reservoir was built to hold a two-year’s supply of irrigation water, next year looks promising as well.

“It’s as good as it’s looked in a long time,” said Owyhee Irrigation District Manager Jay Chamberlin.

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Courtesy Owyhee Irrigation District

Water is released for flood control purposes from the Owyhee Reservoir dam March 13. The reservoir is expected to fill for the first time since 2011.

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