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Dairy/Livestock

WSU professor backs curbing lethal removal

Rancher: 'Same nonsense' as before

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

Wolves shouldn't be shot on public lands to protect the livestock of ranchers who refuse to sign government contracts to prevent depredations, according to Washington State University wolf scientist Robert Wielgus, who was publicly upbraided by the school in August for accusing a rancher of baiting wolves with cattle.

Wielgus, director of the university's Large Carnivore Conservation Lab, distributed the recommendation in an email Monday to the Department of Fish and Wildlife's Wolf Advisory Group.

Wielgus restated his position that a ranch put its cattle in harm's way in the Colville National Forest, leading WDFW to shoot seven wolves in the Profanity Peak pack. WSU administrators last summer issued a statement calling Wielgus' description of the events inaccurate.



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press File

Washington State University wolf scientist Robert Wielgus, shown in 2012 at a research center in Pullman, recommends requiring ranchers to sign depredation-prevention contracts before wildlife managers could resort to shooting wolves.

description of the events inaccurate.

"He's putting out inflammatory nonsense," Cattle Producers of Washington President Scott Nielsen said Monday. "It's the same nonsense that got

Rob in trouble last summer."

Efforts to reach Wielgus were unsuccessful.

Wielgus described his email as a press release from a private citizen, but based on his state-funded research.

Wielgus stated that withholding lethal control of wolves would be an incentive for ranchers to sign depredation-prevention agreements with WDFW.

He stated the agreements

could prevent attacks on livestock and noted that the ranch that suffered the most losses last summer did not have one.

The ranch concentrated cattle near the pack's den, according to Wielgus said.

According to a WDFW report, the den's location was not known when cattle were released into the national forest.

Two ranchers lost livestock to the pack, and both met expectations for non-lethal deterrence measures, according to WDFW.

The expectations were set by the Wolf Advisory Group, which includes representatives from the Humane Society of the United States and Defenders of Wildlife.

According to WDFW, 54 livestock producers had agreements in 2016. Ranchers who sign agreements are eligible for public funding to employ non-lethal measures, such as range riders, and gain access to tracking information collected from wolves wearing radio collars.

Agreements are tailored for each rancher, who must also

allow WDFW access to their operations.

Nielsen said that most ranchers, including himself, have not signed agreements. He said ranchers should protect their herds, but shouldn't be forced to invite WDFW to review and comment on their operations.

"I don't begrudge anybody who wants to do it," he said. "But I would argue the department doesn't know one damn thing about raising cows."

Efforts to reach WDFW wolf policy leader Donny Martorello were unsuccessful.

The Profanity Peak pack roams across 11 grazing allotments in the national forest. WDFW captured and collared two wolves in mid-June about 2 miles from where cattle were grazing. Attacks on livestock began a month later.

Wielgus told the Seattle Times in August that a rancher "elected to put his livestock directly on top of their den site." A week later, WSU administrators said the statement had no factual basis and apologized.

Sheep industry leadership school held in Oregon

By JAN JACKSON
For the Capital Press

ALBANY, Ore. — Sheep producers from across the U.S. and Canada attended the 31st annual Howard Wyman Sheep Industry Leadership School held March 13-14.

The school was moved from July to March to showcase Oregon's unique lambing operations that include rye grass field grazing. Oregon lamb producers participated by either hosting the group on their farm, being tour guides on the motorcoach or participating in panel discussions.

Tour stops included the Kalapooia Grass Fed Lamb Processing Plant in Brownsville, Snow Peak Fiber Mill in Hubbard, Hubbard Rose-lawn Hampshire Sheep in Monroe and area seed companies and various ewe and lamb operations.

Denise Bartlett, a 40-year commercial sheep veteran, current president of the Michigan Sheep Producers Association and participant in this year's school, was particularly interested in the way the sheep industry worked in the Willamette Valley.

"It was such a fast and furious two days that I really didn't sort out what I had learned until after I got back home," Bartlett said from her home in Traunik, Mich. "I saw a very unique, symbiotic relationship between the huge grass seed industry in the valley and the generations of sheep raisers who rely on the forage produced, really as a by-product of grass seed production. Many of these sheep producers live in the valley and actually own very little land in comparison to the large acreage operations of the seed farmers."



Jan Jackson/For the Capital Press

Reed Anderson of the Kalapooia Grass Fed Lamb Processing Plant in Brownsville, Ore., fields questions from participants during the 31st annual NLFA Sheep Industry Leadership School.

Online

For more information, visit <http://www.nlfa-sheep.org>

Howard Wyman, NLFA's legendary lamb feeder for whom the school is named, went into the sheep business in Kansas City, Mo., in 1938. He started the NLFA's Sheep Industry Leadership School in 1986 to educate growers about what happened to their sheep after they left the farm. Since that time, schools have been held in Colorado, California, South Dakota, Texas, Pennsylvania and Ohio.

Oregon's debut came about when Tom Nichols, a school veteran, president of the Oregon Sheep Growers Association and owner of Nichols Livestock, decided it was time the industry saw how Oregon producers manage to grow, harvest and market high-quality grass-fed lamb.

"One of the overall highlights of the school seemed to be our lamb industry culture here in the valley," Nichols said. "Most of the participants came from areas where there are great dis-

tances between growers and the number of operations we were able to visit in a 70-mile radius around Albany amazed them. The one thing they all went home with was the desire to have a facility near them that equaled the Kalapooia Grass Fed Processing Plant."

Bob Harlan, a veteran sheep grower and lamb feeder from Wyoming and current president of the National Lamb Feeders Association, had high praise for the job Nichols did directing the school.

"I've been attending these schools for many years and this one was as good as possible," Harlan said. "We had 33 people here from 19 states and Canada eager to learn everything they could to improve their operations at home. The presenters were excellent and getting a first-hand look at the Willamette Valley's unique grass fed system was an opportunity not to be missed."

"As NLFA board members, we ask ourselves if this program as run its course," Harlan said. "After the Oregon school, we know it hasn't."

China dairy firm says it can't contact exec after stock dive

By KELVIN CHAN
AP Business Writer

HONG KONG — A Chinese dairy company whose stock plunged last week, wiping billions off its market value, denied rumors Tuesday of forged invoices and misappropriated funds, but also said it can't contact a key executive.

China Huishan Dairy Holdings Co.'s Hong Kong-listed shares tumbled 85 percent in minutes on Friday morning before they were halted. The reason for the sell-off was unclear.

Huishan's statement to the Hong Kong stock exchange on Tuesday was its first public response since the stock plunge.

The company denied two rumors that it said were making the rounds. One claimed

that an audit turned up a large number of fake bills issued by company members, and another that Chairman Yang Kai had misappropriated 3 billion yuan (\$436 million) to invest in real estate in the northeastern rust belt city of Shenyang, where Huishan Dairy is based.

"The company categorically denies having approved the issue of any forged invoices and does not believe there to be any misappropriation," it said.

It also denied a rumor that one of its controlling shareholders sold off 3.4 billion shares because of a margin call.

The company was the subject of a report in December by U.S.-based short-seller Muddy Waters accusing it of reporting fraudulent profits, but it said then that those ac-

cusations were false.

Huishan Dairy said Tuesday that for the past week, it has not been able to contact its senior executive in charge of treasury and cash operations, Ge Kun, whose work it said intensified after the Muddy Waters report.

On March 21, Yang "received a letter from Ms. Ge indicating that the recent work stress had taken a toll on her health, that she would take leave of absence and does not want to be contacted at this time," the company said in the statement.

Huishan also said it was late on some of its bank loan repayments and has sought to have them rolled over. The company said shares would remain suspended until it got an update on its financial position.

Most dairy prices confound bears

By LEE MIELKE
For the Capital Press

Dairy Markets
Lee Mielke



The bears found enough to feed on last week as spring began, but cheese prices pushed higher. The cheddar blocks closed Friday at \$1.44 per pound, up 4 cents on the week but 5 cents below a year ago. The barrels finished at \$1.39, up 2 1/2-cents on the week and 6 cents below a year ago. Nineteen cars of block traded hands last week at the CME and 23 of barrel.

The blocks inched a half-cent higher Monday but were unchanged Tuesday, holding at \$1.4450. The barrels dropped 2 cents Monday and stayed there Tuesday, at \$1.37, a slightly

higher than normal 7 1/2-cents below the blocks.

FC Stone's Brendan Curran wrote in Monday's Insider Opening Bell that "Growth in milk production, heavy stocks and a lethargic international market all add ammo to the bearish camp, especially with flush on the doorstep. The larger question/issue facing the trade will be whether demand is strong enough to support prices at current levels or if the ensuing tide of milk will wash things out a bit more."

Cheese output in the Midwest is active, reports Dairy Market News. Contractual milk supplies are generally meeting cheesemakers' needs, however, and spot offers continue to come in at Class to \$3.50 under.

Pizza cheese producers reported a seasonal uptick in orders and retail is steady to strong. Some suggest increased advertising and promotions have bolstered orders but cheese inventories are long.

Western cheese production is strong and moving steadily. A few manufacturers suggest sales have drawn down inventories somewhat but the consensus is that stocks are still long, especially for barrel cheese.

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