

Livestock research center passes feasibility review

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press



Carol Ryan Dumas/Capital Press File

Cows at the feed bunk at Bettencourt Dairy No. 1 in Wendell, Idaho. A proposed University of Idaho livestock research facility got the go-ahead in a new feasibility study.

A long-awaited livestock research facility got the go-ahead in a new feasibility study commissioned by the University of Idaho.

A large focus of the Center for Agriculture, Food and the Environment will be sustainable milk production. It would include a 2,000-cow dairy with robotic milking machines and 1,000 acres of associate cropland and employ wastewater treatment and nutrient recovery systems.

It would also allow for a food processing facility, offer laboratory space and provide housing for faculty, staff and students.

"It would be the most modern and largest research dairy in the U.S. and likely in the world," said Universi-

ty of Idaho President Chuck Staben.

Taking into consideration land costs, capital costs of construction, production cost, milk prices and research grants and contracts, the feasibility study showed the facility could operate at a "net-

zero-type cost" for the first five or six years, he said.

The price tag to purchase land, build the facility and get it operating is \$45 million.

Gov. Butch Otter and the Legislature have committed \$10 million to the project, with \$5 million more in the offing. It's

up to the university to find the remaining \$30 million internally and externally, he said.

The study also indicated that buying land and building the dairy was a better way to go than buying an existing dairy and retrofitting it for research, he said.

Retrofitting an existing dairy would have pushed the cost \$14 million to \$18 million higher and would have entailed permitting and scientific constraints.

A site has not yet been determined, but the goal is still to have it within about 20 miles of the College of Southern Idaho in Twin Falls, said Michael Parrella, dean of the university's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

Agriculture is obviously important to Idaho, and dairy is a huge component of that, he said. The facility will focus on environmental research to

keep dairy production sustainable.

Efforts to build the research center started about 10 years ago but were sidelined by the recession, he said.

The need for such a facility has increased over time, and the mission has changed to address different needs. The mission now is more regional and will involve more than just CALS and have a greater educational component, he said.

It will involve several of the university's colleges, including engineering, science, natural resources, business and economics, education, art and architecture and letters, arts and social sciences. It will accommodate researchers and students from the university as well as those from other universities and offer distance education and internships.

"I think there's a fair

amount of excitement for this," he said.

The center will hit the trifecta of the university's mission — research, teaching and outreach, Staben said.

"It's exactly the kind of project we need to do," he said.

The university has long supported research into crop agriculture; it needs to step up and extend that support to livestock, he said.

The university is exploring partnerships and collaboration with other Idaho universities and the Idaho National Laboratory. Given the uniqueness of the facility, it's likely to attract industry and academia outside Idaho as well, he said.

The university is moving forward with finding internal funding and is counting on outside support to reach the needed \$30 million. Staben is hoping the center will be operational in about five years.

Don Potts, WSDA grain inspection manager, passes away

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

Don Potts, manager of the state grain inspection program in Eastern Washington, died May 6 of cancer.

Potts died after "a courageous battle with cancer," according to a Washington State Department of Agriculture news release. He was 60.



Don Potts

WSDA director Derek Sandison and deputy director Kirk Robinson said Potts "touched many lives, represented WSDA with the highest degree of professionalism and served our industry partners in ways too numerous to count."

Potts also managed WSDA's grain warehouse audit program and worked with foreign trade groups, the Washington Grain Commission and local educational outreach programs.

Potts' "superb grading skills" made him a valuable resource to other inspectors, Sandison and Robinson said in the notice.

The industry remembers him as a gentleman and "invaluable" resource for farmers.

"He will be sorely, sorely missed," said Glen Squires, CEO of the Washington Grain Commission. "He was a tremendous ally and asset to the wheat industry."

Squires appreciated Potts' outreach to farmers.

"He was always working for the benefit of the grower," Squires said. "He was very patient, very methodical in all his presentations."

Potts was a great resource for the wheat industry during the falling number test problems that surfaced last year, Squires said.

"His door was always open to meet and help the industry move forward," Squires said.

Potts was also the WSDA's representative on the Washington Pulse Crops Commission for 10 to 15 years, said Todd Scholz, vice president of research and member services for the USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council.

"Grades are a pretty important part of selling peas and lentils ... so if the industry had a grading problem, he was our guy we went to," Scholz said. "(He) was a great source of technical information and then just a great supporter of the industry."

Scholz then added: "He was just a really fine gentleman. The industry is really sad today."

Potts is survived by his mother, Laura Lee; sons Taylor, Kasey and Colby; his ex-wife, Sheri; and sisters Debbie, Terri, Lori and Wendy.

Services for Potts will be at 11 a.m. May 20 at St. John Vianney Church, 503 N. Walnut Road in Spokane Valley, Wash.

Oregon's water supply in good shape

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

The state's heavy snowpack and water supply outlook held steady in April, good news especially for five Deschutes River irrigation districts that cut back water use last year after getting caught up in a lawsuit over the Oregon spotted frog.

The latest report from the Portland office of USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service showed that the statewide snowpack in all river basins was 155 percent of average as of May 1.

For comparison, the snowpack was 11 percent of normal at this time of year in 2015, 62 percent in 2014 and 64 percent in 2016. Heavy snowfall and cold wet weather throughout this past winter and spring broke the drought that gripped the Pacific Northwest the past three years.

Julie Koeberle, an NRCS hydrologist and member of the agency's snow survey team, said Oregon's summer water



Eric Mortenson/Capital Press

The John Day River north of Condon, Ore., has a healthy flow this spring. River basins across the state are in good shape this year due to a heavy snowpack and cold spring rain, which is good news for irrigators. The amount of water held in the John Day basin snowpack was 254 percent of normal as of May 1.

supply hasn't looked this good since 2011.

"Everybody's happy this year," she said.

Koeberle said it's unlikely that warm weather will rapidly melt the snowpack and change the water outlook for this summer.

"Not at this point," she said. "The snow remaining is still

above normal. With this much snow left, even if we had a rapid snow melt that occurred, we still have a buffer."

The water outlook is welcome news for the five irrigation districts that were accused in lawsuits of violating the Endangered Species Act by harming the Oregon spotted frog. The complaints were filed by

the Center for Biological Diversity and Waterwatch of Oregon against the federal Bureau of Reclamation, which operates Deschutes River system reservoirs, and the Arnold, Central Oregon, Lone Pine, North Unit and Tumalo irrigation districts.

As a result of a 2016 settlement, the districts agreed to maintain minimum river flows

at a level that provided better habitat for the frogs. To do that in a period of drought and diminished water levels, the districts had to forgo some of the irrigation water they normally would have drawn from the system.

Things look much better this spring.

"At this point we expect users should get full allotments of water," said ShanRae Hawkins, spokeswoman for the districts. "Certainly having more water in the basin is helpful to everyone. It's good for fish, good for wildlife and benefits irrigation users."

She said the snow-water equivalent — the amount of water in the snow — recently measured 117 percent of normal in the Upper Deschutes and Crooked River basins. The Crane Prairie and Wickiup reservoirs, which store irrigation water, are filling with runoff from melting snow. They stood at 87 percent and 83 percent full, respectively, as of May 8.



For quality that matters on many levels

Today, how you protect your crops is just as important as the protection itself. Realize insect control that delivers at every level with DuPont™ Altacor® insect control powered by Rynaxypyr®. It offers fast, long-lasting control of key pests in tree fruits. Plus, with minimal impact on beneficials and flexibility, Altacor® is always ready to help take quality and your operation to new heights. altacor.dupont.com

DuPont™
Altacor®

insect control

powered by
RYNAXYPYR®

Always read and follow all label directions and precautions for use. The DuPont Oval Logo, DuPont™, Altacor® and Rynaxypyr® are trademarks or registered trademarks of DuPont or its affiliates. Copyright © 2017 E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Company. All Rights Reserved. DUPCNS15003_051217_CP