

Glanbia audits participating producers twice a year

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ventional milk prices. Thanks to the price premium, Wolfley believes the financial valleys that dairymen often endure haven't been nearly as deep for his association members.

"The last year and a half, the milk price has been down low enough that the extra premium has played a big part in helping us have a positive cash flow," said Wolfley, who milks 160 cows.

The standards

The Glanbia pasture-based program mandates that farmers allow cows unfettered access to pasture for grazing. During the winter or when storms arise, farmers also "must provide adequate housing for cows and allow them to seek shelter from the elements — whether it's hot, cold, rainy or windy," according to the Chipotle website.

In addition, minimum calf housing standards must be met and animal byproducts are banned from the diet.

Cows in the milking herd may not be given antibiotics. "If an animal becomes sick and must be treated with antibiotics, it must be removed from the milking herd," according to Chipotle.

Recombinant bovine somatotropin growth hormones are also prohibited.

Glanbia audits participating producers twice a year to ensure they're following the rules.

"This is not an organic program," said Russ De Kruijff, Glanbia's director of milk procurement. "Dairies can still treat cows with conventional methods."

Glanbia, based in Ireland, chose its name from the Gaelic word meaning "pure food."

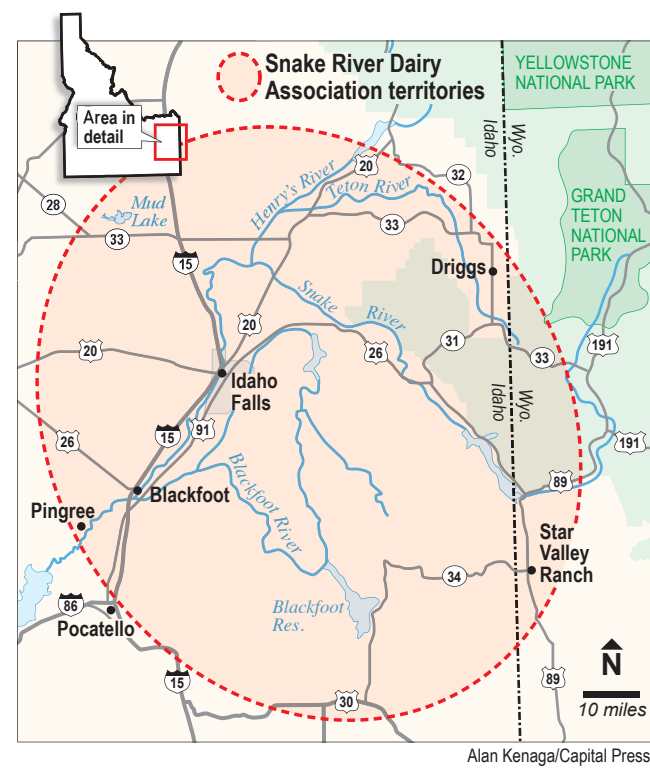
Right location

The opportunity for Eastern Idaho dairies to produce pasture-based milk sprang from Glanbia's decision to build a Cheese Innovation Center in Twin Falls. The research facility, which opened in August 2013, develops experimental products to meet customers' specifications.

De Kruijff explained that Glanbia then purchased the Blackfoot, Idaho, cheese



Calves belonging to Gaylen Clayson, a pasture-based dairyman from Firth, Idaho, are custom fed in special pens designed to accommodate Glanbia's pasture-based size standards at an American Falls feed lot.



Alan Kenaga/Capital Press

plant, mainly to serve as an "incubation" plant for making the first commercial batches of recipes originating at the innovation center.

Plant manager David Bunnell said the facility makes nearly 30 varieties of cheese — even an exotic ghost pepper variety.

De Kruijff said the Blackfoot plant was also the perfect size to make the company's pasture-based cheese. Furthermore, the plant was surrounded by plenty of small, local dairies with lots of pasture.

The plant now processes 800,000 pounds of local milk

per day, about half of which is segregated and goes to make pasture-based white cheddar for Chipotle.

"We're looking for innovative ways to give dairymen additional premiums with niche markets, and this is a way we've seen that we can do it in conjunction with purchasing the Blackfoot plant," De Kruijff said.

Segregating the pasture-based milk poses a challenge, and the company plans to add storage capacity.

De Kruijff said the plant wasn't working at full capacity under the previous owner, but Glanbia has "ramped it up to absolute full capacity."

He said some of Glanbia's other customers have also expressed interest in the pasture-based program.

Bunnell said the plant produces about 600,000 pounds of cheese per week and employs 57 workers.

Dairymen benefit

Wolfley said he once considered converting his dairy to organic production to earn a premium.

"I don't think it fit my operation," Wolfley said, adding

that the pasture-based niche is a better fit.

To become pasture-based certified, Wolfley had to upgrade some of his calf housing and change some of his procedures. But the main requirement is that his cows always have access to pasture. They spend the majority of their summers grazing. In the winter, though they still have access to the outdoors, they mostly feed on a mixed ration of alfalfa and corn.

The cooperative's larger dairy operators such as Gaylen Clayson have added more grass to their production. To meet the pasture-based requirement, Clayson planted a pivot of grass at each of his two dairies.

"It was a real challenge," said Clayson, of Firth, Idaho. He milks about 1,800 cows and switched to pasture-based production two years ago.

Clayson estimates he spent \$400,000 to implement the pasture-based system, and he's already recouped his investment in premiums.

Furthermore, Clayson said the pasture-based premium made it possible to refinance debt.

"When we got this added

bonus on there, it just pushed us over the edge," Clayson said. "Had we not done that, I don't know if we would have gotten refinanced."

A comparison

Glanbia isn't alone in charging a premium for food products derived from cattle that are allowed to graze on grass.

Consumer demand for products labeled as "grass fed" has steadily grown in recent years. For example, a May 26 USDA report estimates a grass-fed ribeye steak sold directly to the consumer would fetch a \$14.06 per pound premium above commodity beef.

For all of the promise of the grass-fed market, Marilyn Noble, a spokeswoman for the American Grassfed Association, believes the lack of a consistent grass-fed standard poses a challenge for the category. As a result, production methods for products labeled grass-fed can vary widely, potentially confusing consumers.

Last year, Noble's organization worked with New York-based Maple Hill Creamery and Wisconsin-based Organic Valley to develop a strict new grass-fed dairy standard. USDA offers no grass-fed dairy certification.

"Organic Valley and Maple Hill saw the grass-fed label on meat had sort of become diluted, and they wanted to develop an industry standard so that doesn't happen with grass-fed dairy," Noble said.

Her association's new grass-fed dairy standards prohibit feeding grain to cows and place strict restrictions on production methods.

Noble said Organic Valley's "grass milk," which is not homogenized, is more expensive than organic milk.

Though grass-fed milk is a somewhat similar concept, De Kruijff emphasized Glanbia's pasture-based program represents a truly unique niche, targeting consumers who believe farm animals should have the freedom to roam.

"Cows get to exhibit their natural behavior by going out on grass on a daily basis," De Kruijff said. "That's the image we want to portray."

Wolf most likely migrated westward across Washington rather than from Canada

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also colonized the North and South Cascades. Wolves are not a federally protected species in the eastern one-third of Washington, but they are in the western two-thirds, including where the wolf was captured.

Martorello said wildlife managers don't know where the wolf came from, but it most likely migrated westward across the state, rather than from Canada. He said more wolves will move west as the packs grow in Eastern Washington.

"This will become more common," Martorello said.

USFWS spokeswoman Ann

Froshchauer said the agency will test genetic samples from the wolf and may be able to trace its origins. The tests are expected to take two to three months to complete, she said.

In the meantime, the radio collar will help wildlife managers position trail cameras to photograph the wolf, and possibly a traveling companion, Martorello said.

A Skagit County resident reported May 17 that one or more wolves were preying on his chickens and sent photos to USFWS.

A WDFW wildlife-conflict specialist went to the residence that day and concluded the chickens were probably at-

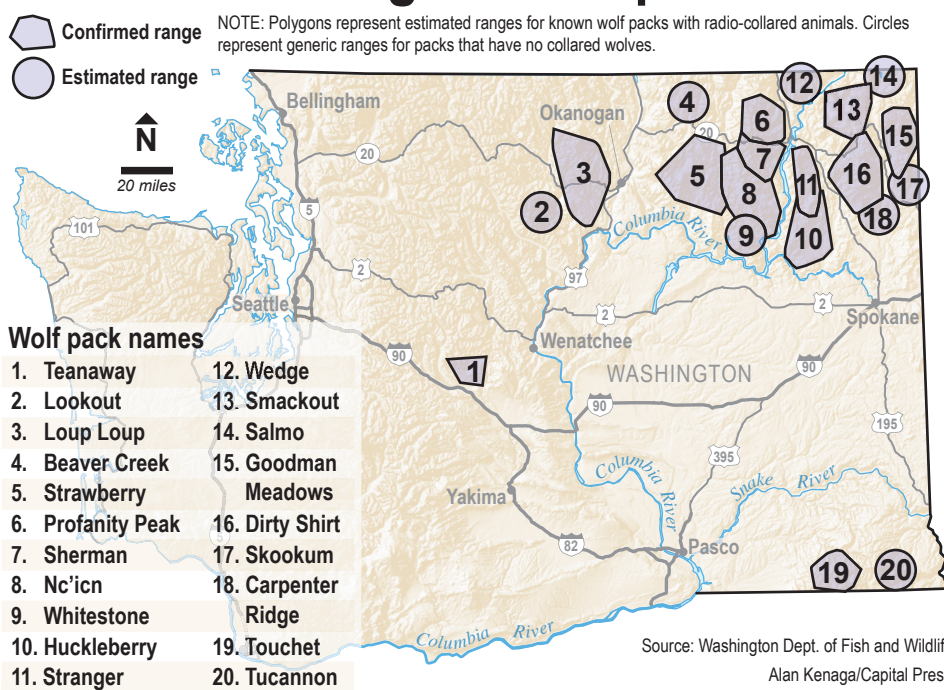
tacked by one or more wolves.

The next day, state and federal biologists set traps and saw what appeared to be a wolf in the distance. Three weeks later, they trapped the wolf.

"As of right now, we can only confirm the one animal that was captured and collared," Froshchauer said.

In 2015, a female wolf that had crossed the Cascades and was within 30 miles of Seattle in eastern King County was struck and killed by a vehicle on Interstate 90. Last year, a wolf wearing a GPS collar crossed the mountains into Eastern Snohomish County, but the collar stopped transmitting.

Known Washington wolf packs (As of Dec. 2016)



Mormon crickets don't fly, but grow up to 3 inches long, hop and crawl in mass formations

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Entomologists hasten to say the insects are neither Mormon nor crickets, but rather a grasshopper relative called the shield-backed katydid. The more common name dates to when the pests leveled the crops of Mormon settlers in the Salt Lake area of Utah in the 1800s.

By either name, they can overwhelm lawns and gardens and decimate fields and pastures. They don't fly, but grow up to 3 inches long and hop and crawl in mass formations that can be startling. Some residents have taken to spraying insecticide themselves and there's talk in Arlington of burning evergreens this winter to destroy eggs, although the OSU Extension agent hasn't recommended that. At least one visitor to town was reportedly catching Mormon crickets to sell as fish bait.



E.J. Harris/EO Media Group

Mormon crickets congregate on top of a wood pile in the yard of a residence on Hemlock Street on June in Arlington, Ore.

The outbreak has long-time residents recalling the infestation of 1942, when Mormon crickets reportedly covered Highway 19 "absolutely solid day after day" for four miles south of town.

Dick Krebs, 89, said the infestation was knocked down by spreading poison bait by airplane. He said the plane

landed on his family's ranch to take on loads of bait, which came in burlap bags. He, his father, John Krebs, and his older cousin, Henry Krebs, helped dump the poison into a hopper inside the plane.

"It was quite an operation; I was on the sack end of things," Dick Krebs said. The aerial applications

worked, and a followup ground campaign did the trick. Arlington hasn't had a serious problem with Mormon crickets for 75 years, although they've always been in nearby Blalock Canyon, Krebs said.

He said the current infestation isn't that bad at his ranch south of town. He and his wife go out with shovels and crush about 40 a day, he said.

Area wheat farmer Walter Powell said he was driving near Arlington recently and "All of a sudden it was like the road was moving" there were so many crickets crossing.

He joked that they also affected play at the annual wheat growers tournament at China Creek Golf Course in Arlington. On the fifth green, Powell said, players had to clear insects from their putting lines. He said Mormon crickets will eat anything; during the golf tourney, he saw some eating companions

that had been crushed by golf cart wheels. "They're cannibals," Powell said.

That's true, said Helmuth Rogg, an entomologist and director of the Oregon Department of Agriculture's Plant Program Area. Rogg said the insect's cannibalistic nature may explain its fabled marching behavior, in which hordes of Mormon crickets move en masse. Ones that falter or get injured are fair game for those coming along behind, "They move on so they don't get eaten," he said.

But Rogg said their presence in the area is not a new phenomenon. The insects thrive in the open sage country around Arlington, he said.

"It sounds like now Mormon crickets are marching into town," he said.

Maley, the OSU Extension agent for Gilliam County, said the outbreak has been building for the past two or three years and might be more seri-

ous than Rogg realizes.

"Plus they're creepy," Maley said. "They're the ugliest insect I've ever seen."

He said treatment options this summer may be limited. Maley hopes to meet with large landowners over the winter and plan a spring campaign against the bugs. He said an integrated pest management approach is the best control method.

Rogg, of the state ag department, said a growth inhibitor insecticide such as Dimilin works on immature Mormon crickets, but adults are best countered with carbaryl, a poison bait marketed as Sevin Dust.

Rogg said Mormon crickets also are a problem in the Jordan Valley area along the Idaho border.

Grasshoppers, meanwhile, are causing problems in the Steens Mountain area and in Malheur County, in southeast Oregon.