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## Dairy/Livestock

### Dairy Markets

Lee Mielke



## Cash cheese prices continue to strengthen

By LEE MIELKE  
For the Capital Press

Cash cheese prices strengthened the second week of July. The cheddar blocks finished Friday at \$1.6750 per pound, up 12 1/4-cents, the highest price since June 2 and a penny and a half above a year ago.

Monday saw the blocks climb 2 cents and a penny and a half on Tuesday, hitting \$1.71, as traders absorbed the Global Dairy Trade auction and awaited Thursday's June Milk Production report.

The barrels closed Friday at \$1.4750 per pound, up a dime on the week and 27 cents below a year ago. Seventeen cars of block traded hands last week at the CME and 50 of barrel.

The barrels were up a penny Monday and stayed there Tuesday, at \$1.4850, with the spread growing to a whopping 22 1/2-cents.

Milk intakes are mixed among cheesemakers in the Midwest, according to Dairy Market News. Some report milk is still available, although storage capacity concerns are hindering some producers from taking extra milk. Others report taking spot milk from flat market to \$3.00 under Class III. Cheese sales generally range steady to slow but the block to barrel price gap is "distressing for the overall market."

Western cheesemakers report active manufacturing, although milk production is slowing to some extent. Stocks are still long, but demand is starting to catch up to production. Marketers remain hopeful that the lower U.S. cheese prices, compared to world markets, may boost export opportunities.

Lots of butter made its way to Chicago last week and the price dipped to \$2.5850 per pound Wednesday. But it closed Friday at \$2.60, up a penny and a half on the week and 28 cents above a year ago, with 67 cars sold on the week, highest volume in over 10 years.

The spot price gained a penny and a half Monday and was up 3 cents Tuesday, to \$2.6450.

FC Stone broker Dave Kurzwski wrote in his July 13 Early Morning Update, "U.S. butter weakness seems counter-intuitive in the face of the recent strengthening of EU prices, and discount to those of Oceania, as the growing spread in values will attract export interests which would constrain future domestic supplies."

DMN says butter sales are "steady to strong." Western butter makers report steady to lower production.

Cash Grade A nonfat dry milk closed Friday at 86 1/4-cents per pound, down a half-cent on the week and 1 1/4-cents below a year ago. Sixty-one cars sold last week, highest weekly volume ever and included a single-day record of 31 loads on Tuesday.

The powder was down a penny Monday and held there Tuesday at 85 1/4-cents per pound.

### GDT reverses

Tuesday's Global Dairy Trade auction reversed two events of decline. The weighted average for all products offered inched up 0.2 percent, following a 0.4 percent slip on July 4 and 0.8 percent on June 20.

Butter led the gains, up 3.4 percent, after it slipped 0.1 percent last time.

Cheddar was up 1.6 percent, after it dropped 3.2 percent last time. Whole milk powder was up 0.3 percent, following a 2.6 percent advance last time.

# Dairymen to tee off for charity

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS  
Capital Press

TWIN FALLS, Idaho — Dairy producers will be enjoying an afternoon of golf and camaraderie while raising money for a good cause — fighting domestic violence and sexual abuse and supporting victims in their community.

The goal is to raise \$25,000 for Voices Against Violence, a Magic Valley nonprofit organization that provides free shelter and services to victims, said Todd Cook, relationship manager with Rabo AgriFinance.

Rabo and Western States Caterpillar are sponsoring the VAV Invitational golf tournament with \$10,000 each, and 25 teams of dairy producers are putting up a \$500 entry fee. Other sponsors in the community are contributing as well, and there will be plenty of opportunities for golfers to donate additional funds on the course through



Carol Ryan Dumas/Capital Press

Todd Cook, left, relationship manager at Rabobank in Twin Falls, and Evan Roth, agricultural law attorney and board member for Voices Against Violence, wrap up some details on July 18 for a dairy producers' charity golf tournament to raise funds for VAV.

competitive challenges and hole sponsorships.

Dairy producers support their community in many ways, but the charity golf tournament is a means to reach out in a big way, Cook said.

It's a "great way to show the willingness of our clients" to be a part of what VAV does for the community, he said.

Cook teamed up with local attorney Evan Roth, a VAV board member and fourth-generation dairy farmer, who brought the needs of the organization to his attention.

VAV provides shelter, clothing, meals, counseling, case management, legal advocacy and other services and resources for victims — and

those numbers are staggering, Roth said.

"We always run at a deficit and never have as much money as we need," he said.

The organization operates on federal money, in-kind donations and cash donations, which are important in the event of inconsistent federal funding so VAV can keep the doors open and operations going, said Donna Graybill, VAV executive director.

In 2016, VAV served nearly 1,500 individuals impacted by violence, and cash donations accounted for \$115,000, she said.

"We are very much indebted to the support of dairymen and agriculture; they are our No. 1 source of cash donations," she said.

In addition to its secure short-term shelter, VAV is opening a new facility for longer-term independent living, Roth said.

"We're providing more and more services every year and have to keep increasing

funding. As the community grows, the need grows," he said.

It's huge for a group like Rabo's dairy clients to want to help fill that need, and the golf tournament is providing an opportunity for dairymen to participate, he said.

The tournament isn't just about the funds it will raise. It's also about raising awareness to the issue. VAV will have a booth set up at the event to tell players what the organization is about, Cook said.

"It's not a fundraiser, it's a friend-raiser," Roth said.

Dairymen and other farmers have really rallied around the event, and everything about it will focus on VAV, Cook said.

The event will be at Blue Lakes Country Club on July 31 with lunch at 11 a.m., tee time at 1 p.m. and dinner following the tournament.

For more information, call Cook at (208) 316-8076 or Roth at (208) 954-3955.



Courtesy of Washington State Dept. of Agriculture

Water with high levels of fecal coliform surround homes March 1 in Outlook, Wash. The Washington State Department of Agriculture has cleared one dairy and continues to investigate a second dairy involved in the incident.

## In flood's wake, WSDA urges dairy to block off manure

### Flood cited in federal lawsuit

By DON JENKINS  
Capital Press

The Washington State Department of Agriculture has ended its investigation into the release of fecal coliform-laced water that flooded a Yakima County community last winter, recommending that a dairy block off a manure compost pile or move it to higher ground.

Snipes Mountain Dairy was not fined or ordered to take action, but WSDA will inspect the farm in the fall, department spokesman Hector Castro said Thursday.

If the dairy doesn't respond to WSDA's concerns, the department could refer the case to the Department of Ecology, which also has jurisdiction over the dairy.

The dairy also could face more severe penalties by WSDA if it discharges polluted water again. "It certainly would be a factor,"

Castro said.

WSDA's notice to Snipes dairy stems from a March 1 flood that actually began on another farm, DeRuyter Brothers Dairy.

Melting snow breached a berm around a DeRuyter field and flowed onto the Snipes dairy. The floodwater wasn't polluted until it washed into the pile of manure, according to WSDA's investigation. The contaminated water eventually surrounded several homes a half mile away in Outlook.

WSDA cleared the DeRuyter dairy of any violation, saying the breach was caused by severe weather, not human error.

WSDA, however, issued Snipes a formal notice that recommends moving the compost pile or building a berm to shield it from water.

Snipes dairy owner Henry Haak declined to comment Thursday.

According to WSDA's investigation, the water also covered a field of triticale at the Snipes dairy. But no manure had been applied on the

field since May 2016, and the field was not the source of the pollution, according to WSDA.

Snipes is the target of a federal lawsuit filed in April in U.S. District Court for Eastern Washington by the Community Association for Restoration of the Environment and Friends of Toppenish Creek.

The two groups, which have sued other Yakima County dairies, notified the dairy and government agencies in early February that they planned to sue, alleging manure from the dairy is polluting groundwater.

The groups reference the March 1 flood in their complaint. The dairy has yet to file a response.

The case has been assigned to Judge Thomas Rice, who ruled in 2015 that manure could be considered discarded solid waste and subject to the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. The ruling led dairies to agree to a costly settlement, which includes double-lining manure lagoons with synthetic material.

## Dairyman gets cows back; animal abuse charges reduced

### Veterinarian says confiscated cows looked OK

By DON JENKINS  
Capital Press

A Washington dairy farmer accused of abusing livestock will get four calves and two cows back and have one year to show he can take care of his animals, according to an agreement with Whatcom County prosecutors.

Seth Daniel Snook, 35, of Ferndale was charged in April with five counts of felony animal cruelty after the Whatcom County Humane Society seized two dozen cattle from his dairy. Authorities said the animals were starving to death, and most of the animals were euthanized.

Snook's attorney, Emily Beschen, argued that the Humane Society put down the animals before their conditions could be fully evaluated.

In a deal finalized Tuesday, prosecutors dropped three counts of first-degree animal cruelty and downgraded the other two counts to second-degree animal cruelty, a gross misdemeanor.

The remaining two counts — involving cows that a veterinarian examined in late June and declared healthy — will be dropped in a year if Snook's dairy passes monthly inspections.

A veterinarian inspected the dairy Tuesday morning and said it was in good shape to take the cows. Superior Court Judge Raquel Montoya-Lewis approved the agreement Tuesday afternoon and ordered the animals returned to Snook within 48 hours.

Beschen said Wednesday that she was confident Snook would have been exonerated at a trial, but the agreement will allow him to get animals back from the Humane Society this week.

A trial was set for the end of July, but could have been

delayed, she said.

"We didn't want to have the cows held up for that period of time," Beschen said. "He's very happy that the cows are coming home."

Deputy Prosecutor Eric Richey declined to say why he agreed to reduce the charges.

"Given our case, we made a reasonable agreement to resolve this," he said. "There's a plan to make sure the animals are safe."

Snook's arrest drew the attention of dairy groups, which lauded the investigation into allegations of months-long neglect at Snook's dairy. Authorities said Snook had failed to follow through on offers from other dairy farmers to help.

At a court hearing, the defense said Snook struggled to keep up the dairy after his wife underwent surgery last year, The Bellingham Herald reported.

Snook's defense reprinted in a court document text messages between Snook and an animal-control officer suggesting Snook was preparing to auction his animals shortly before authorities seized them.

Animal-control officers, acting on a tip from a USDA Farm Service Agency loan officer, went to the dairy March 29 and reported seeing emaciated animals, according to court records. Animal-control officers seized cows and calves on April 19.

While most of the animals were euthanized, six went to an animal refuge in Snohomish County. A veterinarian who watched videos taken April 20 and 21 declared in a court document that they appeared to be "bright, alert and responsive with good temperaments."

Snook has filed a claim against Whatcom County, seeking unspecified damages and alleging authorities defamed him and illegally interfered with his business. The county has yet to respond.

## Settlement suspends grazing in Sawtooth allotments

By JOHN O'CONNELL  
Capital Press

KETCHUM, Idaho — The settlement of a conservation group's lawsuit has forced a minimum two-year suspension of livestock grazing within two scenic allotments along the Salmon River.

The 2016 lawsuit, filed in federal district court by Hailley-based Western Watersheds Project, alleged the U.S. Forest Service allowed ranchers to violate environmental laws and disregard provisions of the forest plan governing the Upper and Lower East Fork allotments on the river.

As a result, stream health

standards have been compromised, affecting endangered salmon, steelhead and bull trout, the lawsuit alleged.

Grazing organizations that have followed the case, however, argue it's yet another example of conservationists seeking to overwhelm the Forest Service with litigation, seeking to end public lands grazing through "death by 1,000 cuts."

"What we've learned over and over again is it is never going to be enough for these (environmental) groups," said Ethan Lane, executive director with the Washington, D.C.-based Public Lands Council. "The only thing they're interested in is

removing human activity."

Under the July 3 settlement, cattle will be kept off the allotments this year and in 2018, and they won't be allowed to return until stream health standards are met. The Forest Service also agreed to pay the plaintiffs \$35,000 in legal fees.

Four ranchers had leases within the two allotments, grazing an unspecified number of cattle. According to the lawsuit, the Forest Service renewed grazing permits in 2012 and 2013, even though the ranchers allowed cattle to trespass into closed areas, continue grazing during unauthorized times and overgraze vegetation.

"For a really long time,

the Forest Service on the East Fork has been managing livestock grazing really to optimize ranching operations at the expense of fish habitat, and now they'll have to reverse that calculus and prioritize conservation of stream habitat for native fish first," said Erik Molvar, executive director of Western Watersheds.

The allotments are within the Sawtooth National Recreation Area, and portions of them lie within the new White Clouds Wilderness.

Idaho Cattle Association policy director Karen Williams said both allotments are eligible under the wilderness legislation for voluntary buy-outs to per-

manently retire grazing allotments.

"This is how the extremists are able to create what are called willing sellers," Williams said, adding at least one of the permit holders plans to sell.

If ranches fail due to the loss of public lands grazing, Williams said the private ranch land could be subdivided for housing.

Kirk Flannigan, area ranger for the Sawtooth National Recreation Area, said the ranchers were involved in settlement discussions and had ample notice to make arrangements for their cattle before the agreement was finalized.