

# State denies reconsideration for mega-dairy

## Opponents may file lawsuit to stop operation

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**  
EO Media Group

Despite concerns of water pollution and contamination, the agencies responsible for permitting a 30,000-cow dairy farm in Morrow County, Ore., will not be reconsidering their decision.

Lost Valley Farm, located on a portion of what used to be the Boardman Tree Farm, was issued a controversial wastewater handling permit March 31 from the Oregon

Department of Agriculture and Department of Environmental Quality, which together administer the state's confined animal feeding operations, or CAFOs.

Opponents of the dairy filed what's known as a petition for reconsideration, asking regulators to take a closer look at whether the permit does enough to protect surface water and groundwater sources. On July 25, ODA and DEQ issued a 10-page order denying the request and potentially setting the state for a future lawsuit.

Ivan Maluski, policy director for Friends of Family Farmers in Salem, issued a statement saying attorneys are

reviewing the order. He said there is a "clear indication that Oregon has a broken system for CAFO permitting," while specifically criticizing ODA, DEQ and Gov. Kate Brown.

"These mega-operations pollute the air with no environmental oversight, they put our limited groundwater at risk, and though Oregon has lost nearly 40 percent of our dairy farms over the past decade with small and mid-sized farms getting hit the hardest, the governor and her agencies are bending over backward to open the door for out-of-state factory farms like Lost Valley," Maluski said.

Lost Valley Farm is owned

by Greg te Velde, a California dairyman who has been milking cows in Oregon since 2002. He used to run Willow Creek Dairy on land leased from Threemile Canyon Farms before relocating and expanding his business, which sells milk to Tillamook Cheese at the Port of Morrow.

In the lead-up to permitting, ODA and DEQ were flooded with 4,200 public comments, mostly in opposition to Lost Valley. The campaign was spearheaded by a coalition of environmental, animal rights and small farm groups including Friends of Family Farmers, the Animal Legal Defense Fund, Center for Biological Diversity, Cen-

ter for Food Safety, Columbia Riverkeeper, Food & Water Watch, Humane Oregon, Humane Society of the United States, Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility and Oregon Rural Action.

They argue that Lost Valley — which at full capacity is expected to generate 187 million gallons of wastewater and manure annually — poses a significant risk of groundwater and surface water contamination, while also exacerbating elevated levels of groundwater nitrates in the lower Umatilla Basin.

Regulators have insisted their permit for Lost Valley is the most protective of any to date, requiring 11 ground-

water monitoring wells and a minimum of three annual inspections.

Te Velde has also defended the farm's management practices. Wastewater is stored in lagoons on site and then mixed at specific agronomic rates with irrigation to help grow feed crops for the cows. Monitoring wells are supposed to ensure the soil is not being overloaded with the nitrogen-rich water.

Lost Valley has been operating for several months now, so far bringing in 16,000 total animals with 8,700 being milking cows. The dairy expects to gradually build its full herd of 30,000 animals over the next several years.

# Farm sponsors 'Goateclipse' fundraiser

By **ALIYA HALL**  
Capital Press

The McPhillips Farm in McMinnville, Ore., is throwing a different type of eclipse party.

Called "Goateclipse," will be a campout with the McPhillips family and their herd of 35 Toggenberg goats at their farm. The event will be from noon Sunday, Aug. 20, to noon Monday, Aug. 21. The eclipse will be the morning of Aug. 21.

Ramsey McPhillips, owner of the 150-year-old McPhillips Farm, said that he had the idea to throw an eclipse party for friends and family, but decided to open it to the public.

"It's like an eclipse petting zoo," he said.

Activities include petting goats, swimming in the Yamhill River and showing movies in the barn and house, McPhillips said. There will also be a bring-your-own-bottle cocktail party, a barbecue and a cowboy blackberry pancake breakfast.

Goateclipse is a fundraiser for the McPhillips family to "offset legal fees necessary to go before the Oregon Supreme Court to stop the expansion



Photos courtesy of Ramsey McPhillips  
Tony Velasquez, one of the cowboys who will be making breakfast, snuggles with one of the goats, Ester.

of Riverbend Landfill in wine country," according to the Goateclipse press release.

The family has been fighting the landfill expansion for the past nine years.

In addition to goats, the McPhillips farm also has 100 sheep and one turkey.

"Goats are like dogs, you can pet them and they're very

### Information

Tickets are \$100 a person and available at <http://bit.ly/2h0Alch>. For more information, call 503-223-7777.

friendly," McPhillips said. "People love goats and it truly is one of the most beautiful farms, if I do say so myself."



The 150-year-old McPhillips Farm has a herd of 35 Toggenberg goats. McPhillips said that goats are like dogs, "very friendly."



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press  
Technician Lynnzie Paulson moves a grain sample July 31 at the Washington State Department of Agriculture grain inspection office in Spokane Valley.

## Early harvest reports: No falling number problems

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**  
Capital Press

SPOKANE VALLEY, Wash. — It might just be a normal year for wheat quality, said Mark Marshall, grain inspection office supervisor for the Washington State Department of Agriculture.

"The first one I've seen in a long time," he said.

The workers at the office are running 100 to 200 samples per day, said Scott Steinbacher, WSDA acting regional manager.

Inspectors will put in six additional hours every Saturday during harvest, if needed, Steinbacher said — and if falling number again becomes a problem this year.

Falling number is a test that measures starch damage in wheat that affects the quality of baked goods, noodles and other foods.

Last year, farmers were caught off-guard when 44 percent of soft white wheat samples and 42 percent of club wheat samples tested below 300, the industry standard.

The problem did not make its way to international buyers. Industry officials estimate the problem cost farmers more than \$30 million in dockage for the lower-quality wheat.

This year, most wheat samples are testing above 300, Steinbacher said.

Fewer places are now asking for falling number samples, he said.

"At first we were, but they were all 350 to 450, so everybody kind of backed off from running every single sample," he said.

The Idaho Wheat Commission said grain handlers are reporting good quality and yields, and no falling number problems.

Oregon Wheat CEO Blake Rowe agreed.

"Falling numbers look fine," Rowe added. "Always a few low tests in the mix, but no broad problem like was seen in Washington last year."

Glen Squires, CEO of the Washington Grain Commission, said he hasn't heard any reports of falling number problems.

"It's always a concern, but it's not raining, so far," he said. "I think people are watching it. There's a whole bunch of harvest still to happen, but so far, so good."

The few samples testing below 300 are from last year's crop, Steinbacher said. Some grain elevators are transferring wheat from 2016 that's been stored, he said.

Steinbacher and Marshall double check any low falling number reading that comes up.

"It was last year's crop but one of us saw it and the first thing we did was say, 'Wait, wait, where's it from? What is it?'" Steinbacher said.

# Washington, Oregon make region a blueberry powerhouse

By **DAN WHEAT**  
Capital Press

MONITOR, Wash. — It's a relatively cool 80 degrees at mid-morning as the Kamen and Hanna families head into Crazy Larry's Blueberry Farm on what will be a 95-degree day.

Owner Larry Rawls demonstrates how to roll blueberries off the bush with his thumbs into his cupped hands.

Jason and Courtney Hanna, of DeKalb, Ill., are visiting his sister, Bridget Kamen, and her husband, of Wenatchee. It's a treat to come pick, Courtney says, because she doesn't know of any blueberry farms in Illinois.

Rawls' 1.75-acre U-pick blueberry farm, in Monitor about five miles northwest of Wenatchee, is one end of the spectrum of Washington's growing blueberry industry. The other end is large commercial producers such as Zirkle Fruit Co., Yakima, a tree fruit leader that branched into blueberries.

Consumer awareness of health benefits of blueberries is driving continuing demand, and pushing production in Washington, Oregon, Michigan and Georgia.

Washington surpassed Georgia to become national leader in 2015. Washington held the title in 2016, at 120 million pounds, and is forecast to keep it this year.

Oregon was a close second in 2016 but is expected to place third this year, behind Michigan, said Alan Schreiber, executive director of the Washington State Blueberry Commission in Pasco.

"It's more accurate to think of Oregon and Washington as a common growing region," Schreiber said.

The two states are similar in attributes, making them a strong force in the industry, he said.

For one, they have a longer production window than most growing regions. Washington picking starts in mid-June and ends in October when the



Photos by Dan Wheat/Capital Press  
Kamen and Hanna family children, with grandma, head out to pick blueberries July 26 at Crazy Larry's Blueberry Farm, in Monitor, Wash.



Bridget Kamen, 34, of Wenatchee, Wash., picks Draper variety blueberries July 26 at Crazy Larry's Blueberry Farm, Monitor, Wash.

only other region still picking is British Columbia.

Washington has a greater capacity than most states to divert fresh blueberries to processing since its industry began on the west side of the state where disease is greater and it was easier to make money by processing, Schreiber said.

Another benefit is the dry climate of the eastern sides of both states, which basically eliminates disease.

Several Oregon fresh packers procure blueberries from Washington, the blueberry commissions of the two states coordinate research and are planning a joint trade mission to Vietnam this fall, Schreiber said.

"Several people on my board have financial ties with Oregon guys. There's a lot of inter-connectivity," he said.

It's not all rosy. Small commercial producers have a hard time competing and one potentially large player, Stemilt Growers, Wenatchee, got in and then got out.

Teri Miller, co-owner of Miller Orchards and fruit stand in Peshastin and a founder of Cascade Farm Lands, an agri-tourism group in the Wenatchee Valley, said blueberries have peaked. Small growers in the valley tried and quit because they couldn't make enough money, she said.

"Blueberries are very labor intensive and all of ag is short on labor," she said.

"Economic pressures of scale exist in blueberries like they do in apples and potatoes and wheat. Particularly in the fresh market, it's hard to be a small blueberry grower," Schreiber said.



**Now Hiring:  
Executive Director**

Job Location: Oregon Aglink  
7360 SW Hunziker St. • Portland, OR

**The Organization:**  
Oregon Aglink, formerly known as the Agri-Business Council of Oregon (ABC), is a private, non-profit volunteer membership organization dedicated to growing Oregon agriculture through education and promotion. Established in 1966, Oregon Aglink seeks to bridge the gap between urban and rural Oregonians.

In bringing together farmers, ranchers, and processors throughout the state, we work to preserve and enhance Oregon agriculture by showcasing its importance to the economy and lifestyle of Oregon. We accomplish this through our Cultivating Common Ground initiative as we share Ag's story.

**JOB SUMMARY:**  
Serve as the Executive Director of Oregon Aglink, provide leadership and oversee day-to-day administration of the association. In addition, this position is responsible for the development and marketing of Aglink's role in agriculture throughout the Northwest.

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Minimum of 5 years of supervisory or managerial experience, preferably with non-profit organizations.
- Excellent organizational, financial, and administrative skills.
- Demonstrate excellent oral and written communications skills, including persuasive presentations.
- Successful experience in fundraising, marketing and familiarity with grant applications.
- Successful experience in coordinating large events, involving volunteers and staff.
- Demonstrates effective relationship building with the board, members, volunteers as well as sponsors.
- Meets deadlines and handles pressure well.
- Familiarity with agriculture and the Northwest is highly desirable.
- BA or BS from an accredited college or university is required.

**MAJOR DUTIES:**

- Responsible for day-to-day administration of the organization.
- Serves as the lead spokesperson for media and other public forums.

- Maintains, develops and implements an effective public relations program.
- Develops and implements fundraising strategies for the organization. This includes event planning and sponsorship solicitation, corporate giving and grant writing/facilitation.
- Provides leadership to staff and evaluates individual / team performance.
- Develops, monitors and communicates budget information in coordination with the Executive Committee, Board of Directors and individual committees.
- Works closely with the association's leadership to implement and meet Strategic Planning Goals.
- Maintains and develops effective communications with the association's membership.
- Develops programs, products and services for membership benefit.
- Provides leadership and promotes an effective membership marketing program.
- Performs other functions as assigned by the President or Executive Committee.
- A team player; willing to do tasks regardless of size or scope of project.

Salary: Competitive salary and benefits based on experience.  
Submit cover letter and resume to [info@aglink.org](mailto:info@aglink.org) by August 31, 2017.

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