

# Managing manure, mud a challenge

By CRAIG REED  
For the Capital Press

LOOKINGGLASS, Ore. — Whether it is for commercial or comfort reasons, Oregon State University Extension specialists stressed during a recent workshop that management of mud and manure is important for animals.

Shelby Filley, a livestock and forage specialist, and Sara Runkel, a small farms specialist, conducted the Mud & Manure Management workshop Oct. 11-12.

They shared information during a three-hour evening classroom session and then led the participants to three different properties in the Lookingglass Valley west of Roseburg, Ore., the next morning to observe pros and cons when dealing with mud and manure.

The respective sites were



Craig Reed/For the Capital Press

Laurie Phillips, far left, talks to participants in a Mud and Manure Management workshop about issues with those materials outside a horse barn in the Lookingglass, Ore., area. Phillips talked about the importance of having a solid ground foundation at openings to the barn.

home to commercial pigs, recreational horses and commercial cattle.

“Some people are doing a really good job of dealing with those materials and others are at a loss of what to do,” Filley said of manure and mud. “It can be expensive dealing with them, but

for a commercial operation it pays. And people do spend money to provide comfort for their pet animals.

“This workshop is just a chance to get people to think about possible problems with mud and manure,” she added.

“Most people don’t think

about mud until it is ankle deep,” said Runkel.

The management of mud and manure is especially important in western Oregon and Washington. Winter rains in these regions add a lot of moisture to the ground, but it usually isn’t cold enough for long enough

to freeze the ground for an extended time, which would eliminate muddy messes.

Data from the OSU Extension show that a 1,000-pound cow produces 7 cubic yards of manure every six months, a horse produces 5.5 cubic yards every six months, a pig 1.5 cubic yards, a sheep a half cubic yard and a chicken a quarter cubic yard.

For some of those animals, standing around in the muck can have an impact. The extension specialists explained that animals can lose up to 7 percent of a possible weight gain when standing in hoof-deep mud. That percentage increases up to 35 percent when the mud is belly deep. Those percentages were determined by a study conducted by Kansas State University and the University of Nebraska.

Dairy  
Markets  
Lee Mielke



## Cheese prices rebound slightly; butter down

By LEE MIELKE  
For the Capital Press

Mid-October dairy prices at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange were down across the board as traders awaited Friday afternoon’s September Milk Production report. The cheddar blocks closed Friday at \$1.67 per pound, down 3 cents on the week but 2 cents above a year ago, with 13 cars selling on the week.

The barrels finished at \$1.64, down 3 3/4-cents on the week but 7 cents above a year ago, on 27 sales for the week.

Blocks jumped 4 1/4-cents Monday, as traders absorbed the slightly bullish Milk Production report and awaited the afternoon’s September Cold Storage data, but were unchanged Tuesday, holding at \$1.7125.

The barrels were up 2 cents Monday and jumped 4 cents Tuesday, hitting \$1.70.

Midwest cheese producers report continuing declines in milk availability, says Dairy Market News. Western cheese supplies are mixed. Some processors have lower inventories while others have plentiful supplies. Most manufacturing plants are running close to full.

Spot butter closed Friday at \$2.35 per pound, down 2 1/2-cents on the week but 59 cents above a year ago when it hit the bottom for 2016 at \$1.76.

Monday’s butter dropped 3 cents and it plunged 6 1/2-cents Tuesday, to \$2.2550, the lowest price since May 11, 2017.

The global market for milk fat continues to be tight, according to the latest Livestock, Dairy and Poultry Outlook, and DMN says retail butter orders remain robust.

FC Stone says, “It’s a bit of a Catch-22 at the moment for butter, we’re nearly past our peak seasonal demand and international prices are falling but the marketplace remains bullish heading into 2018 with futures holding above \$2.40.”

Western butter makers say production is ramping up for the holiday push but a few say cream is “a little tight.”

Cash Grade A nonfat dry milk closed Friday at 74 cents per pound, down 3 1/4-cents on the week, lowest price since April 19, 2016, and is 14 cents below a year ago.

The powder gained a penny and a half Monday but gave back three-quarters Tuesday, slipping to 74 3/4-cents per pound.

### Milk up 1.2 percent

September milk output was up for the 45th consecutive month, but not as much as expected. Preliminary data show output in the top 23 producing states at 16.2 billion pounds, up 1.2 percent from September 2016, with the 50-state total at 17.2 billion pounds, up 1.1 percent.

Revisions added 8 million pounds to the August 23-state estimate, now put at 17.0 billion pounds, up 2.2 percent from a year ago.

Milk cow numbers totaled 8.74 million head in the 23 states, down 3,000 from August but 73,000 more than a year ago. The 50-state total, at 9.4 million head, is down 4,000 from August but 69,000 above a year ago. Output per cow averaged 1,851 pounds in the 23 states, up just 6 pounds.

California output was below year ago levels for the ninth consecutive month and down considerably, at 3.4 percent, due to 12,000 fewer cows milked and a 50 pound loss per cow. Wisconsin was up just 0.8 percent, on a 15-pound gain per cow. Cow numbers were unchanged.

## Audit finds shortcomings in USDA foreign meat oversight

### Agency disputes some characterization in internal report

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

An internal USDA audit has found shortcomings in the agency’s system for ensuring foreign meat and egg inspections are equivalent to those in the U.S.

The USDA Food Safety and Inspections Service is charged with ensuring meat and egg products imported into the U.S. are subject to equivalent protections against food safety hazards.

Auditors from USDA’s Office of Inspector General said the agency has a “robust system” for scrutinizing countries that apply to export meat and eggs to the U.S. but found fault with its ongoing



USDA

A USDA Food Safety Inspection Service inspector examines a shipment of imported frozen meat at the Port of New Orleans, La. An agency audit has found shortcomings in the agency’s system for ensuring foreign meat and egg inspections are equivalent to those in the U.S.

monitoring of trading partners once they’ve qualified.

The audit said that “without more robust controls” for determining the equivalence of foreign inspections, the FSIS program is “vulnerable to weaknesses that increase the risk of adulterated or

unsafe meat, poultry, or egg products being imported into the United States.”

In response to the audit, FSIS said it was making improvements to enact many of the audit’s recommendations, though the agency disagreed with some of the characteri-

zations in the report.

The report claimed FSIS didn’t consistently follow its own policy for auditing countries based on performance assessments, for example.

Under the agency’s system, countries are rated as “adequate,” “average,” or “well-performing,” the highest ranking.

Of the 31 countries allowed to ship meat and eggs into the U.S., 24 were rated as “adequate” but none received annual audits between 2012 and 2015 per FSIS policy, the report said.

Those “adequate” rated nations included Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Poland, Spain, United Kingdom and Uruguay.

The seven countries rated as “average” — Austria,

Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Nicaragua and San Marino — should have undergone an audit every two years, but only three of them met this requirement, the report said.

No countries were rated as “well-performing.”

Officials from FSIS have been inconsistent in their audit procedures, such as not completing checklists at foreign meat and egg establishments due to time constraints, the report said.

They also had different timeframes for documentation requests from establishments and laboratories, with some asking for 30 days of records while others asked for up to six months of records, according to auditors.

The process for determining whether foreign “individual sanitary measures” were equivalent to those in the U.S. “was not clearly or concisely documented,” the report said.

## Study: Preliminary data show cattle, sage grouse can coexist

By JOHN O’CONNELL  
Capital Press

MOSCOW, Idaho — Spring cattle grazing doesn’t appear to adversely affect sage grouse nesting success on public lands, according to initial findings of an ongoing, exhaustive research project involving ranchers throughout Idaho.

The planned decade-long study has concluded its fourth year. It is led by University of Idaho professor Courtney Conway, who also serves as director of the U.S. Geological Survey Idaho Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit — a partnership of UI, the U.S. Department of Interior and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

Conway described the study as “the most rigorous and thorough of its kind in an unprecedented way” and said it should provide a more scientific basis for future Bureau of Land Management grazing policies in sage grouse habitat.



Courtesy of Courtney Conway

Peter Williams and Jill Wussow hold a pair of sage grouse captured for collaring as part of an ongoing study analyzing how sage grouse and cattle coexist on public lands throughout Idaho. The study should help the Bureau of Land Management update its grazing policies.

Eight ranchers using public lands inhabited by sage grouse south of Bruneau, south of Twin Falls, south of Burley, near Challis and near Arco are participating and have agreed to “substantially change the way they

graze.” The researchers are analyzing different grazing scenarios in 15 pastures, ranging from 2 to 10 square miles each.

Conway explained the study has shown some sage grouse behavior patterns

can’t be discerned by studying small areas. They spent two years gathering baseline data under current ranching practices for each allotment. Beginning in the study’s third year, ranchers were asked to stop grazing a pasture as a control.

Other pastures alternated between spring grazing and resting in even and odd years, or were grazed during both the spring and fall before resting.

“Compared to pastures that were rested that spring, we aren’t seeing a difference in sage grouse nesting success in (grazed pastures),” Conway said.

However, Conway’s data suggest tall grasses improve chick survival, though the lack of impact from cattle could be explained by some sage grouse choosing poor nesting locations. He’s seen no evidence that grouse have a preference for areas either avoided or grazed by cattle. Conway’s team will also

include weather data in its analysis.

“The goal is to find where those tipping points are so policy can be set,” Conway said.

Karen Launchbaugh, director of UI’s Rangeland Center, who is studying grass utilization by cattle involved in the study, said some areas in each allotment have been fenced to compare the health of vegetation that’s been grazed against areas cattle can’t access. Though it’s too early to draw solid conclusions from the study, Launchbaugh is at least pleased there have been no “big red flags” suggesting cattle and sage grouse can’t coexist.

The study has a roughly \$500,000 annual budget, funded by the BLM, IDFG, Idaho Cattle Association, Public Lands Council, Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and Great Basin Landscape Conservation Cooperative.



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