

Subscribe to our weekly Idaho email newsletter at CapitalPress.com/newsletters

Idaho

Hilt Dairy wins Idaho Milk Quality Award



Sean Ellis/Capital Press

Hilt Dairy owner Chuck Hilt, second from left, is pictured with some of the other 11 finalists for the Idaho dairy industry's 2017 Milk Quality Award, Nov. 8 in Boise during Dairy West's annual meeting. Hilt Dairy won the award.

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

BOISE — Hilt Dairy in Gooding has won the Idaho dairy industry's Milk Quality Award for 2017.

The 500-cow dairy has several times been among the 12 finalists for the award, which is presented annually by Dairy West, formerly known as United Dairymen of Idaho.

Dairy owners Chuck and Monica Hilt credit the operation's success to hard work, good employees and cows that are well cared for.

"Cow comfort and good employees; good milkers," Chuck Hilt said when asked the secret to producing qual-

ity milk. "We work hard as a family and the good Lord has blessed our family dairy."

The award, which has been presented annually since 1989, is based on a dairy's routine monthly tests for somatic cell counts, which are an indicator of quality, and bacteria counts, which reflect the cleanliness of cows and the facility.

Producers are nominated by processors and University of Idaho and Idaho State Department of Agriculture officials then compare the operations' monthly quality tests.

The finalists are chosen among Idaho's 500 dairy farms to compete for the award.

"The milk plants nominate some of their very best producers and we are picking the best of the best. It's very, very competitive," said Rick Norell, who manages the award, along with ISDA, for Dairy West along with the ISDA.

Monica Hilt said the dairy's cows are taken good care of by the three families that run the operation.

"They all work super hard and they adore the animals," she said. "They just love their animals and I think that shows in the production."

Dairy West CEO Karianne Fallow said all Idaho dairies produce quality milk "but these are the standouts. It's a

prestigious award. This award ceremony is really an opportunity to celebrate the quality of all Idaho dairy farmers by showcasing the ones that rise to the top."

Hilt Dairy was nominated by Magic Valley Quality Milk Producers, a producer cooperative that processes about 3 million pounds of milk per day.

CEO Alan Stutzman said he has known the Hilt Dairy owners for 21 years and the operation has always consistently produced high quality milk.

"They're a great group that works hard and produces a very high-quality product," he said.

Chobani expands Twin Falls facility

Construction of a 70,000-square-foot innovation and community center has started

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

TWIN FALLS, Idaho — Chobani is deepening its commitment in Idaho with a 70,000-square-foot innovation and community center.

The \$20 million investment is the latest in a series of expansions the company has undertaken since building a nearly 1 million-square-foot yogurt plant in 2012.

The building is scheduled for completion next summer.

The new construction will house a 15,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art global research and development center, as well as a food incubator to help start-up companies.

The innovation coming out

of the new center is "going to be amazing," said Hamdi Ulukaya, Chobani CEO and founder, during groundbreaking ceremonies last week.

He's hoping it will be a "good education center for our kids," inspiring innovation and entrepreneurship in elementary and high-school students, he said.

The center was designed with people in mind, including Chobani's employees and their families and the community. In addition to a fitness center and wellness rooms for new mothers, the center also has a large gathering place for employees and the public with a designated entrance for visitors.

The energy-efficient center will have an expansive skylight and wrap-around windows to let the outdoors in and provide a welcoming ambiance for visitors.

"There's nothing to hide and a lot to see," Ulukaya said.

The new center brings Chobani's investment in Idaho to \$750 million.

Ulukaya's decision to build in Idaho when he wanted to expand his New York-based operation came from finding a community his company could align with to build something amazing, he said.

"I found a gold mine in this community. The gold mine is the human spirit," he said.

He thanked "Governor Butch" Otter and Twin Falls "Mayor Shawn" Barigar for their support from the start and said Chobani has felt the support of the community all these years.

Ulukaya also thanked "our farmers" and the commitment they made to supply milk to Chobani and the College of Southern Idaho for its partnership in workforce training.

Otter said Chobani's new center is "epic for Idaho" and represents permanence, with its research and development team and others moving from temporary trailers to a permanent structure.

"There is no more question — if there ever was a ques-

tion," he said.

He said Ulukaya and Chobani represent the three things everybody wants in a business partner — trust, commitment and caring about people.

Barigar thanked Ulukaya for the opportunity for the community to grow with Chobani.

"Chobani has made an incredible financial investment in our community; it's the gift that keeps giving," he said.

In 2016, Chobani announced a \$100 million expansion in Twin Falls to invest in new production lines and products and to support distribution to international markets.

The Twin Falls operation employs 1,000 people.

The company receives up to 5.5 million pounds of milk daily from local farmers in New York and Idaho and employs a total of 2,000 people.

It has dedicated more than \$1 billion in capital investment over the past three years across its plants in Twin Falls, upstate New York and South Victoria, Australia.



Carol Ryan Dumas/Capital Press

Hamdi Ulukaya, right, founder, owner, CEO and chairman of Chobani, is joined by Gov. Butch Otter to break ground on the Greek yogurt company's new 70,000-square-foot community and innovation center in Twin Falls, Idaho, on Nov. 9.

Water policy change concerns Upper Snake storage holders

By JOHN O'CONNELL
Capital Press

BOISE — Irrigators with storage in Upper Snake River reservoirs worry a recent change in state water policy will decrease the odds that their water rights will fill in future years.

The Water District 1 watermaster has long allowed for a "reset" of storage water right priorities some time between August and early October, depending on water conditions.

According to the state's historic practice, even in years when reservoirs filled completely and storage irrigators were allocated their full water rights, junior irrigators' natural-flow rights could be curtailed in late summer or early fall to prioritize replenishing storage for the next season.

Irrigators and representatives from the Shosho-

ne-Bannock Tribes have been negotiating during the past couple of years to identify a reset date to best balance the rights of junior surface-water irrigators with the need to fill reservoirs, but have failed to reach an agreement. On Aug. 18, Milner Irrigation District formally challenged the current reset policy.

In response, Idaho Department of Water Resources Director Gary Spackman sent the district's watermaster a letter Oct. 27 ordering that the reset date for this season be moved to Jan. 1, 2018, reasoning the reservoir storage rights identify a "season of use of Jan. 1 through Dec. 31."

Spackman's ruling has been contested and is scheduled for a Nov. 13 preliminary hearing. In his letter, Spackman wrote that the contested case will establish "how the season of use defined by the

decrees interacts with a reset date earlier than Jan. 1."

Even with a Jan. 1 refill date, Water District 1 Program Manager Tony Olenichak explained the state will have the opportunity to capture water that isn't used for other irrigation rights in the reservoirs, under a Bureau of Reclamation refill right, which was established during the recently completed Snake River Basin Adjudication and is subordinate to all other water rights.

Olenichak said water is abundant this season and will have to be released from reservoirs for flood-control anyway, but addressing the reset issue will be critical for future years.

Aberdeen-Springfield Canal Co. General Manager Steve Howser and Twin Falls Canal Co. General Manager Brian Olmstead would support an Oct. 15 reset date.

Limagrain triples fall wheat market share

By JOHN O'CONNELL
Capital Press

FORT COLLINS, Colo. — About 30 percent of the winter wheat planted in the Pacific Northwest is now marketed by Limagrain Cereal Seeds, representing a tripling of the company's regional market share compared to last fall, a Limagrain official said Nov. 9.

Frank Curtis, chief operating officer of the Colorado-based unit of the international farmer-owned cooperative, said Limagrain set a longterm objective of capturing 30 percent of the regional winter wheat market share by 2020 and has met its goal about two years ahead of schedule.

Curtis explained that Limagrain, which has 21 varieties currently on the market, including 15 winter wheat varieties, has a partnership to breed and market wheat in the

Northwest in collaboration with the University of Idaho and Oregon State University. Five Limagrain varieties, including three fall varieties, have been released in partnership with UI, and two fall varieties have been released in conjunction with OSU.

Curtis said Limagrain, Limagrain Europe, OSU and UI will share the roughly \$2 million in royalties collected this year from its wheat varieties sold in the region.

"Most of that money is going to be reinvested in the interest of Pacific Northwest growers, specifically in the breeding program," Curtis said. "It's the largest royalty year we've had since we opened our doors in 2010."

Curtis said Limagrain's head breeder for the region, Jay Kalous, works closely with breeders from UI and OSU. The universities contribute their collections of

locally adapted germplasm. Curtis explained Limagrain helps expedite breeding with its expertise in rapid breeding technologies such as marker-assisted selection, and its ability to accelerate seed increases.

"As a private-sector company, we're prepared to take risks," Curtis added. "The universities are not allowed to do that."

Curtis said the top two Limagrain varieties in the region are now UI Magic CL+, which is a Clearfield soft white winter wheat variety, and LCS Jet, a hard red winter wheat that accounts for nearly 60 percent of the Northwest acreage planted in the class.

Curtis said Limagrain's strong growth should continue next season, when three new soft white winter wheat varieties with high yields and strong disease resistance packages will be released.



Community
BANK

Local Money Working For Local People

Contact a Loan Officer Today
to Discuss Your Financing Needs!

 <p>Adrian Harguess Joseph, OR 541-432-9050</p>	 <p>Mollie Hulse La Grande, OR 541-963-3434</p>	 <p>Cliff Schoenigh Baker City, OR 541-524-7667</p>
 <p>Christina Smith Pendleton, OR 541-278-9000</p>	 <p>John Ngo Hermiston, OR 541-289-4480</p>	 <p>Todd Wood College Place, WA 509-525-9860</p>
 <p>Heidi Zellerhoff Clarkston, WA 509-758-6878</p>	 <p>John Gass The Dalles, OR 541-296-0779</p>	

• Farm Real Estate Loans
 • Ag Operating & Livestock Loans
 • Equipment Loans
 • Farm Service Agency Guaranteed Loans

1-800-472-4292

www.communitybanknet.com

Member FDIC