

Owyhee cattleman embraces all types of change

By **BRAD CARLSON**
For the Capital Press

Cows flash seemingly trusting looks toward rancher Lynn Bachman as they move from one Bruneau River Valley pasture to another, as if to acknowledge that he knows as much about the land as they do.

Bachman stays active in the community as he manages Bachman Land & Livestock, his family's patchwork of owned and leased ground featuring modernized irrigation, a niche herd for a new, high-profile client, and some orchard grass hay for the pet market.

He broadens his perspective and sense of place in part by monitoring an irrigation district's infrastructure, serving with a volunteer fire department and gathering information about an early-stage, multi-stakeholder proposal to restore stream banks.

"Most ranchers want to preserve it for the next generation," he said, referring to the land. "If you are not sustainable, there is no way to do that."

Bachman, at 35 one of the youngest presidents of the Owyhee Cattlemen's Association board in recent memory, exemplifies a generation of environmentally conscious, data-driven ranchers aiming to position a historically commoditized business for sustainable, value-added success. He's the third consecutive Owyhee Cattlemen's president who is younger than 40 and willing to embrace change.

"Lynn embodies the younger person who takes a modern approach, and tries to incorporate and take advantage of newer programs and ways to market cattle," said Murphy-area rancher Chad Nettleton, who preceded Bachman as Owyhee Cattlemen's president. "He's more cutting-edge than maybe old-



Brad Carlson/For the Capital Press

Lynn Bachman checks the moisture content of orchard grass hay.

er ranchers would be. He's pretty well-read, spots trends in the industry, and stays up on the latest ways to add value to cattle."

Ranchers historically used the best data available to manage herds, property, and government grazing allotments, but today's information is more accessible and powerful, said Idaho Cattle Association Executive Vice President Cameron Mulrony. Data analysis helps in assessing grazing needs and forage carrying capacity by "animal unit month," for example, he said.

Analyzing genetic data helps ranchers identify the best bulls and produce calves with the best chance to gain weight efficiently while producing quality beef cuts, said Mick Boone, who has a registered seed-stock Angus herd in south Nampa. Back in a business he left decades ago

the first carcass data we will get — to see how cattle are actually doing end-product-wise."

Bachman transitioned

into managing his family's Bruneau-area operation after a five-year stint in the construction industry, where "I learned a lot of different ways

of doing things, for sure," he said.

"I'm always trying to think of something new," Bachman said.

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