



Courtesy Oregon Cattlemen Magazine

Nathan Jackson, left, was elected president of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, taking over for past president John O'Keeffe during the group's annual convention Nov. 30 through Dec. 2 in Bend.

New president takes over reins of Oregon Cattlemen's Association

Annual convention held Nov. 30 through Dec. 2

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
Capital Press

A new president is saddling up at the Oregon Cattlemen's Association.

Nathan Jackson, general manager for sales and administration at K-Bar Ranches in Myrtle Creek, stepped into the position Dec. 2 during the organization's annual convention in Bend.

Jackson, who served the last two years as president-elect, takes over for John O'Keeffe, who wrapped up his term. The OCA also tapped Tom Sharp as the next president-elect and Todd Nash as treasurer, maintaining the line of succession.

O'Keeffe, a third-generation rancher from Adel in south-central Oregon, said he was honored to represent the cattlemen, and believes they made progress on key issues at the state and federal levels — including the removal of wolves from the Oregon endangered species list in late 2015.

The delisting applies to wolves east of highways 395, 78 and 95, though wolves in western Oregon remain protected under the federal Endangered Species Act.

"We hope to shortly have these wolves delisted statewide," O'Keeffe said. "They're definitely here, and it's time to manage them. We're getting a lot of depredation, and quite a bit of hardship."

The status of wolves remains a hot-button issue for cattlemen, as the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission considers a long-awaited update to the state's Wolf Conservation and Management Plan. O'Keeffe said the plan needs to have reasonable criteria for lethal control of wolves that make a habit of preying on livestock.

"These wolves, if they get in a pattern of preying on livestock, it tends to accelerate," he said. "We would like to get away from that."

O'Keeffe said the new administration in Washington, D.C., is also working to fine-tune protections for sage grouse habitat while balancing the interests of ranchers.

As OCA president, Jackson said he recognizes that he will be the face of the organization and will work to ensure cattlemen have a strong voice at the Legislature. In particular, he said there are restrictions being pushed by groups that "aren't interested in finding a compromise, but that want to put natural resource users out of business."

"Those are the most egregious things we have to look out for," Jackson said.

In addition to legislative work, Jackson said he hopes to strengthen the connection between the OCA and 26 county or regional cattlemen's associations across Oregon.

"We're going to do a fair amount of organizational stuff," Jackson said. "Some of our county organizations need some support and capacity."

The three-day OCA annual convention was held Nov. 30 through Dec. 2 at the Riverhouse on the Deschutes. The

event drew more than 350 attendees, 45 trade show exhibitors and 50 presentations on topics ranging from wild horses to public lands.

Jerome Rosa, OCA executive director, said the wild horse program — led by Robert Sharp, supervisory wild horse and burro specialist with the Bureau of Land Management — was especially well attended.

"The room was packed," Rosa said. It's a real problem in some parts of our state, in particular southeast Oregon. They're really causing a lot of problems on private and public lands, the way the population is really expanding.

Rosa said turnout at the convention was the best it's been in a few years, which he attributed in part to a greater diversity of speakers.

"We tried to appeal to a little more of a broad spectrum of folks than we had in the past," Rosa said. "There was a little bit of something for everybody."

Pending manure rule poses murky math problem

Farmers must calculate amount of ammonia in air

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

Producers are in a "totally confusing situation" calculating whether their livestock emit enough ammonia to qualify as a source of hazardous gas under a new federal rule, a leading authority on estimating manure emissions said Thursday.

University of Nebraska professor Rick Stowell said guidance offered by the Environmental Protection Agency, based largely on research by Stowell and a colleague, has been vague.

"It'd sure be nice to have clarity on this. It's not going to be easy for producers to decide whether to report and what to report, and that's an unfortunate situation," Stowell said.

Animal feeding operations that emit more than 100 pounds of ammonia or hydrogen sulfide in 24 hours will have to register annually beginning early next year with the National Response Center. The center, staffed by the U.S. Coast Guard, coordinates federal emergency responses to chemical leaks.

The EPA had sought to exempt agriculture from having to report. The agency said it was unlikely decaying manure would ever need an emergency response. Environmental groups sued, however. The D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals agreed that knowing where manure was could be useful to emergency responders.

The court is expected to finalize its order Jan. 22. The court has yet to clarify whether farms also will



Don Jenkins/Capital Press

Cows graze in a fenced pasture Dec. 7 in Western Washington. Some livestock producers will have to register with federal emergency officials how much ammonia their animals' manure gives off in a 24-hour period. There is no generally accepted way to calculate the emissions, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

have to report to local and state officials.

The EPA estimates that 44,900 farms will spend \$14.9 million a year to register with the National Response Center. It has not estimated how many cows, pigs or chickens it takes to exceed the reporting threshold.

Instead, an EPA website links to a worksheet finalized in 2009 by Stowell and another University of Nebraska professor, Rick Koelsch. Washington State University animal scientist Joe Harrison, who works with the dairy industry, said the Stowell-Koelsch worksheet is the best science available on calculating ammonia, the gas more likely to reach the threshold.

Nevertheless, Stowell said the worksheet only "crudely estimates emissions." Emissions are affected by factors such as

climate, the seasons, animal housing and manure storage.

Stowell said that his and Koelsch's worksheet should apply to many regions, though producers who use an emissions calculator developed in Texas probably will come up with much different numbers.

"Mirror-image dairies across the road from each other ... can easily come up with different, yet acceptable, estimates," he said. "This introduces a lot of confusion to an already confounding decision."

Koelsch said in an email that although using the worksheet to estimate emissions appears acceptable to the EPA, he advises producers to check with their commodity commissions or trade associations.

EPA says that because there is no generally accepted methodology for estimating emissions, farmers may

need to report their emissions in broad ranges. As of Friday afternoon, EPA had not issued further guidance.

In the absence of such guidance, Stowell said he's been reluctant to say how many barnyard animals it takes to give off at least 100 pounds of ammonia in 24 hours.

"Those sizes are not specified by the EPA, so as soon as we start throwing out those numbers, it's like we're making the rules, and I don't want to do that," he said.

The Waterkeeper Alliance, Sierra Club, Humane Society of the United States, the Environmental Integrity Project and Center for Food Safety brought the lawsuit to force agriculture to report the emissions under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, commonly known as the Superfund law.

Columbia-Snake River Irrigators Association

December 5, 2017
CSRIA Open Letter

Hon. Sect. of Interior Ryan Zinke
Hon. Sect. of Energy Rick Perry
Hon. Sect. of Defense James Mattis

Hon. EPA Adm. Scott Pruitt
Hon. Sect. of Ag. Sonny Perdue
Lt. Gen. John Kelly, WH Chief of Staff

RE: Protecting the Columbia-Snake River System, a Great National Asset

Dear Cabinet Secretaries and Gen. Kelly:

It would seem inconceivable that we should have to request your intervention to protect one of the greatest national assets, the economic engine that comprises the Columbia-Snake River Federal Hydropower System. But events prod this correspondence.

The Federal Hydropower System is a testament to what good men and women can achieve, when guided by reason and the pursuit of economic prosperity and social well-being. The System's non-carbon emitting turbines electrify the region's commerce, serving some of the most influential companies in the world—like Boeing, Microsoft, Intel, Amazon, Nike, and others—and energize the homes of millions of Northwest and California citizens. The System creates an accessible water source for the most productive and efficient irrigated farms on the planet; it offers commercial navigation to ship the nation's wheat to coastal sea ports; it provides for unique recreational opportunities. And the scientists from NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have developed protective measures for salmon and steelhead that overcome harsh river system conditions in unfavorable water-years.

But the political, and bureaucratic, leviathan created by the Endangered Species Act (ESA) has nurtured twenty-five years of Columbia-Snake River litigation, now being encouraged by a single, federal district court judge (Oregon). Worse yet, this judge now refuses to review evidence that points toward the destruction of about two-thirds of Idaho's wild spring chinook run, the lethal product of inept ESA management regimes and failed oversight of the so-called fish managers.

Our prayer for relief is vested in the statutory power of the ESA (ESA Committee review and the exemption process), where an executive directive can be invoked to shield Hydropower System operations from further, abusive litigation, and to adopt System measures that will more than sufficiently protect ESA-listed fish.

While CSRIA is in communication with senior agency and DOJ staff, who are being respectful of our legitimate concerns, the national asset at risk is worthy of your personal attention, and we would request an opportunity to meet directly with you, to better inform your understanding of the situation.

Respectfully,

CSRIA Board of Directors

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