

## People &amp; Places

## Promoting sustainable ranching

Tracy Schohr puts her background to work to help livestock industry

By TIM HEARDEN  
For the Capital Press

CHICO, Calif. — Tracy Schohr has devoted much of her career to promoting sustainability in ranching.

While at the California Cattlemen's Association, she put on an annual "rangeland summit" that brought ranchers together with environmental experts and climate change policymakers.

She also worked on a program to limit ranchers' risk of facing Endangered Species Act violations if they created habitat on their land.

After going back to school to earn her master's degree at the University of California-Davis, Schohr has become a UC Cooperative Extension livestock and natural resources adviser based in Plumas, Sierra and Butte counties.

"At CCA, I realized that science was really where it's at," said Schohr, 34, noting that science is the basis not only for regulations but for solutions.

"It's exciting and challenging at the same time," she said. "Agriculture does a lot of great things but is really bad at telling the story ... of all that ranchers do for natural resources and caring for livestock."

In her role, she will conduct education programs and research focusing on livestock production and sustainable range and pasture management, according to a news release.

She has plenty of experience as a farmer and rancher, growing up on a farm in Gridley, Calif., that still produces walnuts, rice and cattle. She is a managing partner for Schohr Ranch, handling tasks related to livestock production, accounting, equipment operation, human resources and marketing.



Tracy Schohr, a former California Cattlemen's Association staffer, recently took over as a University of California Cooperative Extension livestock and natural resources adviser based in Quincy, Calif.

"I think it provides a unique opportunity for me" to know what other farmers have to go through to cope with regulations and other hurdles, Schohr said.

Having earned her bachelor's degree in agricultural business from California State University-Chico, Schohr went to work for the CCA in 2004, serving for two years as director of industry affairs.

In 2006, she became director of rangeland conservation for the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition, a collaborative effort to get agriculture and environmental groups and government agencies to promote working rangelands as a tool for caring for the environment.

The coalition's 101 partners ranged from county supervisors and conservation districts to green groups such as the Nature Conservancy. The CCA and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service combined to fund the position held by Schohr, who worked out of the CCA office.

Formed in 2005, the organization sponsors the annual Rangeland Summit, which enables ranchers, land managers, agency officials and conservationists to learn about cooperative conservation,

research results and working landscapes.

Among its other initiatives, the coalition worked with Fish and Wildlife to set up so-called "safe harbor agreements" that would shield private landowners from violations of the Endangered Species Act if they made habitat improvements on their properties.

"There was discussion with the leadership and the officers at the time about trying to develop a greater recognition about how grazing fit in with natural resources," Schohr said. "It really mirrored what the rice industry had done to change the perception of that industry."

But the CCA withdrew its support for one such agreement in Northern California in 2010 after receiving pushback from some members concerned about the deal's impact on non-participating neighboring landowners.

Many farmers and ranchers have shown more willingness to work with agencies and environmental groups in recent years, perhaps spurred on by the severity of the recent drought.

In Siskiyou County, for instance, customers of the Scott Valley Irrigation District ob-

tained a permit to divert high winter flows and apply them to alfalfa fields to help with groundwater recharge.

"I think you can learn a lot of lessons with challenges," Schohr said. "I think recognizing that all of ag isn't the same is one. Also, when you're working with ranchers, two-way communication is key. That's something I'm taking into my new position."

While in Davis, Schohr worked in the Department of Plant Sciences from 2012 to 2014, where she helped with research projects related to irrigated pasture, mountain meadows, livestock predation, annual rangelands and invasive species.

For two years before joining the UCCE, Schohr was a farmer outreach specialist for K-COE Isom, a national agricultural accounting and consulting firm.

As a UCCE livestock and natural resources adviser based in Quincy, Calif., Schohr said she plans to sit down with area ranchers and "develop a short-term and long-term vision."

She'll be conducting a Beef Quality Assurance training session in Quincy and Loyalton, Calif., on Jan. 19-20.



## Western Innovator

### Tracy Schohr

Occupation: Farmer and rancher; University of California Cooperative Extension livestock and natural resources adviser

Age: 34

Hometown: Gridley, Calif.

Family: Significant other Ryan Imbach; son Colton

Website: [ucce-plumas-sierra.ucanr.edu/](http://ucce-plumas-sierra.ucanr.edu/)

Schohr said she's bringing three "key visions" into her new job.

"For one, I will be a resource for ranchers in the area (navigating) regulations and policies," she said, noting that she could let producers know who to contact for predator investigations.

Secondly, her research will focus on helping ranches remain economically successful while also educating those in other fields about the importance of ranching to the overall economy, she said.

And finally, Schohr will be part of a broader network of UC researchers and specialists who are already making a difference for ranchers, she said.

Being a fourth-generation rancher whose family summered cattle up on the Sutter Buttes when she was a child will help her relate to producers and give her a valuable perspective on research, she said.

"It gives me a good understanding when we're looking at developing research ... to recognize how the research fits into the broader world, how it fits in economically and making sure the research being done is of value to producers," she said.

## Washington FFA member chosen for range management forum

QUINCY, Wash. — Erin Brisbine, a senior FFA member at Quincy High School, has been selected by the Pacific Northwest Section of the Society of Range Management to participate in the High School Youth Forum at the society's annual meeting.



Erin Brisbine

This year's meeting is Jan. 28-Feb. 1 in Sparks, Nev. The meeting theme is "Empowerment through Applied Science."

The SRM is an international organization that strives to promote public awareness of the importance of sound management and use of rangeland, the world's largest land base, according to an FFA press release. In 1966 the SRM recognized the need to involve youth in the range-related activities and education provided at the annual meeting.

Since that time, the youth

forum has been a highlight of the meetings. High school delegates are chosen by each of the 21 individual sections of the parent society throughout the U.S., Canada and Mexico based on their degree of interest in the range and natural resources field.

For further information regarding the Society for Range Management log onto [www.rangelands.com](http://www.rangelands.com).

For more information about the High School Youth Forum contact Barron S. Recor, co-chairman of the HSYF subcommittee, at the Extension Ecosystem Science and Management Office at Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas.

## Five vie for Oregon Dairy Princess-Ambassador

SALEM, Ore. — There are speeches to prepare, scrapbooks to finish and current events to brush up on as five young women prepare for the 2018 Oregon Dairy Princess-Ambassador contest later this month.

Hosted by the Oregon Dairy Women, the 59th annual coronation banquet will take place Saturday, Jan. 27, at the Salem Convention Center, according to a press release from the organization.

2017 Oregon Dairy Princess-Ambassador, Kiara Single, will close her year representing the dairy industry and will crown her successor, who will be responsible for continuing the legacy of promotion of dairy products.

For the past year, these five representatives have represented their counties, promoting dairy products, educating the public about nutrition and enlightening



Oregon Dairy Women

The five county representatives stand with 2017 Oregon Dairy Princess-Ambassador Kiara Single, far left, on the steps of the Oregon State Capitol. From left to right are Rachel Jenck of Tillamook County, Stephanie Breazile of Linn and Benton counties, Jessica Monroe of Yamhill County, Megan Sprute of Washington County and Donata Doornenbal of Marion County.

their communities about life on a dairy farm.

The finalists are Stephanie Breazile of Linn and Benton counties, Donata Doornenbal of Marion County, Rachel Jenck of Tillamook, Megan Sprute of Washington County and Jessica Monroe of Yamhill County.

The contestants will participate in three days of speeches

and interviews. The winner will be crowned at the conclusion of Saturday's banquet.

Tickets for the event should be ordered by Jan. 22 from the Oregon Dairy Women by calling (503) 357-9152 or visiting [oregondairywomen.com/events](http://oregondairywomen.com/events). No tickets will be sold at the door. Tickets are \$50 per person and must be paid in advance.

## Calendar

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### Friday, Jan. 19

SAIF Agri-Business Banquet. 6-9 p.m. Salem Convention Center, 200 Commercial St. SE, Salem, Ore. The SAIF Agri-Business Banquet is a celebration of the agricultural community and its impact on the mid-Willamette Valley. Website: <https://salemchamber.org/>

### Through Saturday Jan. 20

Cascadia Grains Conference, 8 a.m.-8 p.m. South Puget Sound Community College, 2011 Mott-

man Road SW, Olympia, Wash. Saturday features a full conference focusing on growing grains in Western Washington. Website: <https://cascadiagrains.com/>

### Saturday, Jan. 20

14th Annual Cattlemen's Workshop. 8:45 a.m.-3 p.m. Blue Mountain Conference Center, 404 12th St., La Grande, Ore. This year's agenda includes presentations on the importance of quality beef programs, how retailers add value to beef, an update on the Pacific Rim beef market, the use of genomic-enhanced EPDs to improve beef quality and the 2016 national beef quality audit. The program, is free. Lunch is included. No pre-registration is required. Website: <http://oregonstate.edu/dept/eoarunion/>

Sheep Producer Workshop — Small Flocks. Flying Mule Farm, 11515 Joeger Road, Auburn, Calif. This is the small flock version of the workshop presented by the California

Wool Growers Association on improving lamb marketing and quality. To register contact [info@woolgrowers.org](mailto:info@woolgrowers.org), (916) 444-8122.

### Tuesday-Thursday Jan. 23-25

Washington-Oregon Potato Conference. Three Rivers Convention Center, 7016 W Grandridge Blvd., Kennewick, Wash. Topics range from cultivar performance to workshops on a variety of topics. Website: <http://www.potatoconference.com/index.html>

FSPCA Preventive Controls for Human Food. 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Riverside Hotel, 2900 W. Chinden Blvd., Boise. Food Safety Specialist and Assistant Professor Jeff Kronenberg of TechHelp and the University of Idaho will host a 2.5 Day FSPCA Preventive Controls for Human Food Course Jan. 23-25 in Boise. Cost: \$725.

Website: <http://www.techhelp.org/events/385/fspcaboise2018/>

### Wednesday-Saturday Jan. 24-27

EcoFarm Conference. Asilomar Conference Grounds, 800 Asilomar Ave., Pacific Grove, Calif. The Ecological Farming Association (Eco-Farm) presents the 38th annual Eco-Farm Conference. Featuring over 70 workshops, intensives, keynote speakers, an exhibitor marketplace, seed swap, live entertainment, mixers and organic culinary fare. To learn more and to register, visit [www.eco-farm.org/conference](http://www.eco-farm.org/conference).

### Tuesday, Feb. 6

Developing or Expanding Your Farm Stand or Agritourism Operation, Part 2. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. OSU Extension, Auditorium, SOREC, 569 Hanley Road, Central Point, Ore. Are you interested in developing or expanding a farm stand or agritourism operation?

Feb. 6 is Starting a Farm Stand/Agritourism Operation. Website: <http://bit.ly/JacksonSmallFarms>

### Tuesday-Thursday Feb. 6-8

Spokane Ag Expo and Pacific Northwest Farm Forum. 9 a.m. Spokane Convention Center, 334 W Spokane Falls Blvd., Spokane, Presentations on the weather, ag economy and the farm bill will be featured in addition to a full slate of workshops and the large display of equipment. An FFA presentation and career fair will be offered. Website: [www.ag-show.org](http://www.ag-show.org)

### Friday, Feb. 16

Pesticide-free Strategies for the Landscape Professional. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Oregon City Pioneer Community Center, 615 Fifth St., Oregon City, Ore. Field session March 14. Cost: \$50 [http://www.pesticide.org/healthy\\_landscape\\_workshop](http://www.pesticide.org/healthy_landscape_workshop)

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Circulation ..... 800-882-6789  
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