

# People & Places

## Lender saw future in Idaho dairy

Dave Stout has been involved in industry during its rapid growth

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS  
Capital Press

TWIN FALLS, Idaho — Landing in southern Idaho as a newbie credit officer in 1979, Dave Stout knew nothing about milking cows or the financial needs of dairymen.

And Idaho was not the behemoth milk producer it is today.

Back then, the state had 141,000 cows and produced 1.7 billion pounds of milk annually as the 18th largest dairy state. Today, the state's dairymen tend about 600,000 cows, producing 14.7 billion pounds of milk and vie for the No. 3 spot in the nation.

Stout was not only part of that phenomenal growth, he championed the financial backing that would fuel it.

After graduating from the University of Idaho in 1978, he landed a position with the Federal Land Bank, which later became Northwest Farm Credit Services.

"When I got to Gooding, the dairy industry was just kind of getting going in the valley. My boss at the time ... did not want to do dairy loans," he said.

Seeing opportunity, both in the industry and lending, Stout didn't give up on trying to convince him that dairy was a good bet.

"We had pretty good discussions about it, and finally he agreed that we should get into dairy lending and that it had a pretty bright future for the Magic Valley," he said.

But the dryland farm boy from Genesee, Idaho, knew nothing about dairy opera-



Carol Ryan Dumas/Capital Press

Dave Stout, a 40-year veteran of agricultural financing, in his office at Rabo AgriFinance in Twin Falls, Idaho.

tions. Local dairymen mentored him and taught him about the business.

In 1987, he moved to the company headquarters in Spokane, Wash., to further his career. But he was only there nine months before the farm financial crisis put him back in the field to help the company survive.

"The company survived under new leadership and did very, very well," he said.

Farm Credit's philosophy of working with farmers — who are willing to work with the company — through tough times remains a tenet of how he does business, he said.

But the company's philosophy changed after the 2009 dairy crisis.

"The company wanted to reduce exposure and back away from the dairy industry a little bit," he said.

It was a tough pill for Stout to swallow, and he became frustrated and discouraged.

"We worked hard to build that dairy business. We built a very good portfolio that I probably had my heart and

soul in," he said.

### Square one

His wife, Londa, told him he needed to make a change or retire, reminding him "it was not my bank," he said.

Rabobank approached him about switching companies not long after, but it was a tough decision. He had worked with Farm Credit for 33 years. The company had treated him well, and he was loyal.

But he hit it off with John Ryan, then CEO of Rabo AgriFinance, and liked his leadership style. The CEO asked what it would take to get Stout on board. The answer was being able to bring his team — loan officer Jon Maughan and financial specialist Maria Deschane — with him.

"I wouldn't have come without them," he said.

Ryan approved and told Stout to go build business.

That was 2011, and Stout transitioned from being determined not to let Rabo get a foothold in the area when he

worked with Farm Credit to building that foothold.

"Jon (Maughan) and I knew everybody in dairy and quite a few farmers, and we were able to start building business," he said.

Rabo's business in Idaho has grown ever since, from nine employees when Stout took the reins to 32 today.

"Our growth has been pretty phenomenal. In seven years, we've grown to about the same size as Farm Credit," he said.

That success comes from great staff — those who took a leap of faith and switched companies with him and the young staff he's been able to hire and "teach all my bad habits," he said.

But he's winding down his career. He was 55 when he went to work for Rabobank and promised the company he would give a year's notice before he retired. He did that last August and turned down the company's offer to be its new business development manager, saying it wouldn't be fair to take the position

**Western Innovator**

**Dave Stout**  
Business: Agricultural financing

**Company:** Rabo AgriFinance

**Career:** Northwest Farm Credit Services, 1978-2011, credit officer, regional credit officer, dairy team lead and vice president; Rabo AgriFinance, 2011 to 2016, team lead and vice president, Twin Falls, 2016 to present, senior relationships manager and vice president, Twin Falls

**Education:** Bachelor's degree in agricultural business from University of Idaho, 1978

**Home:** Kimberly, Idaho

**Family:** Wife, Londa, children Kelly and Clay (both graduates of Stout's alma mater, University of Idaho)

knowing he was retiring.

"I've been very fortunate to work 40 years with two very good ag lenders and spend most of my career in the Magic Valley," he said.

He also said he feels fortunate to have worked with great staff and customer-producers who have treated him so well, he said.

He's seen a lot of changes in agricultural financing over 40 years, but it's still all about building relationships and trust, he said.

"At the end of the day, it's still a people business," he said.

## Four Washington FFA state officers tour South Africa

Four FFA leaders from Washington state recently returned from a 12-day educational and cultural experience in South Africa.

State reporter Kelci Scharff of Cheney, treasurer Sydney Klaveano of Pullman, vice president Mollee Gray of Medical Lake and secretary Taylor Enns of White River participated in the 2018 International Leadership Seminar for State Officers, an annual international opportunity through the National FFA Organization.

The trip allows FFA members to experience a foreign culture, learn about international agriculture and become more knowledgeable about the global marketplace, according to a Washington FFA press release.

Seventy-four past and present state FFA officers



Kelci Scharff, Washington FFA state reporter



Mollee Gray, Washington FFA state vice president



Sydney Klaveano, Wash. FFA state treasurer



Taylor Enns, Washington FFA state secretary

representing 24 states left the U.S. on Jan. 4. The group traveled throughout South Africa while surveying the agricultural landscape. FFA officers met with U.S. Embassy officials to learn about U.S. and South African trade relations; toured crop and livestock operations; met with business and industry leaders; and explored a private game reserve that is home to lions, leopards, elephants, rhinos and buffalo. The group also met with fruit

exporters, abalone producers and others.

The experience was truly once in a life time, the officers reported.

"It was interesting to see how extra virgin olive oil was made — I use it often to cook, but never realized how complex the process is," Klaveano said.

The trip included opportunities they would not get to see in Washington.

"Getting to see the differ-

ent types of animals on the safari was truly thrilling, as I've only ever seen them in the zoo," Gray said.

"The embryo transfer facility that we visited interested me as it is a potential career option for me," said Scharff, who raises cattle.

"The indigenous plants in South Africa were extravagant, as we use many of them here as medicine," Enns stated.

"We hope that through a structured experience like ILSSO, students will not only see the importance of agriculture on an international level but understand it is essential to feeding the world," Eric Nelson, program manager with the National FFA Organization, said. "This seminar exposes students to culture and food production practices beyond what they are

accustomed to in the United States."

Before departing the U.S., the students completed eight weeks of online coursework related to cross-cultural adaptability. The program was made possible by corporate sponsors Bunge North America and John Deere. Students shared their experience throughout their trip on Twitter and Instagram.

The National FFA Organization provides leadership, personal growth and career success training through agricultural education to 653,404 student members who belong to one of 8,568 local FFA chapters throughout the U.S., Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The organization is also supported by 345,812 alumni members in 2,051 alumni chapters throughout the U.S.

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**Saturday, March 3**  
BEEvent Pollinator Conference. 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Linn County Fair & Expo Center, 3700 Knox Butte Road E, Albany, Ore. The 2018 BEEevent will focus on "Creating a Pollinator-Friendly Landscape." Learn how to make a more friendly habitat for pollinators. This conference is a full day of speakers, vendors and citizens who are concerned about the plight of our pollinators. Visit <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/linn/beeevent> for a more detailed schedule and speaker information. Hosted by Oregon Bee Project and Linn/Benton OSU Master Gardeners. Cost: \$30, with \$10 lunch option. Website: [www.linnmastergardeners.com/tickets.html](http://www.linnmastergardeners.com/tickets.html)

**Tuesday-Thursday March 6-8**  
FSPCA Preventive Controls for Animal Food. 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Hilton Garden Inn, 1741 Harrison St. North, Twin Falls, Idaho. The new FSMA

regulation requires every processing facility to have a trained resource person who has completed a specialized training course (such as this one) developed by the Food Safety Preventive Controls Alliance that is recognized by the FDA. Cost: \$720/Individual or \$648 per person for 2 or more. Website: <http://www.techhelp.org/events/400/fspca-animal-food-2-5-day-course-twin-falls/>

**Wednesday, March 7**  
Walnut Training and Breeding Update. 9:30-11:30 a.m. Nichols Ranch, 128 Nichols Road, Wheatland, Calif. Website: <http://cesutter.ucanr.edu/>

**Thursday, March 8**  
Part 2: Farm & Ranch Succession Planning Workshop. 6-8:30 p.m. Clackamas Small Business Development Center, 7726 SE Harmony Road, Milwaukie, Ore. This workshop can be accessed remotely from anywhere in the state. This program is offered and taught by the Clackamas Small Business Development Center, along with guest presenters such as attorneys and CPAs. In addition to informative topics and experienced ag professionals, courses include confidential, one-on-one business counseling. A complimentary light dinner will start each evening at 6 p.m. To register, call 503-594-0738. Cost: Free. Website: <http://bit.ly/2CX1jvl>

**Friday, March 9**  
Farm, Ranch, and Forest Succession Planning Workshop in Douglas County. 5-8 p.m. Lookingglass Grange, 7426 Lookingglass Road, Roseburg, Ore. To help growers take the next step in planning, Douglas County Farm Bureau, OSU Extension, and Rogue Farm Corps are coordinating a Farm and Ranch Succession Workshop. Cost: Free (dinner included). RSVP: to Nellie McAdams: [nellie@roguefarmcorps.org](mailto:nellie@roguefarmcorps.org), 971-409-6806

**Saturday, March 10**  
Farm and Ranch Succession Planning Workshop. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Klamath Community College, Building 6, Room H138, 7390 S. Sixth St., Klamath Falls, Ore. To help growers take the next step in succession planning, OSU Extension, Klamath Community College, Klamath Small Business Development Center, Klamath Watershed Partnership and Rogue Farm Corps are coordinating a farm succession workshop. Presenters will include Diana Tourney of the Oregon Small Business Development Center Network on how to create a plan with your family, attorney Joe Hobson of Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt on how to prepare your estate, local farmers who have been through the process, and Nellie McAdams, Farm Preservation Program Director at Rogue Farm Corps. The event is free and lunch is

included. RSVP to help make sure we provide enough food. Cost: Free. Contact: [nellie@roguefarmcorps.org](mailto:nellie@roguefarmcorps.org) or 971-409-6806 Website: <http://bit.ly/2EvUzPB>

**Monday, March 12**  
Farm Land Access and Succession Planning Workshop. 2:30-8:30 p.m. Pine Grove Grange, 2835 Van Horn Drive, Hood River, Ore. Rogue Farm Corps, Gorge Grow, OSU Extension, Hood River Soil & Water Conservation District, Wasco Soil & Water Conservation District, Friends of Family Farmers and the Small Business Development Center are coordinating a farmland access and succession workshop for farmers and ranchers throughout the Columbia River Gorge. The afternoon session will concentrate on land access, followed by dinner at 5 p.m. The farm succession workshop will follow dinner. RSVP by March 5 or send any questions to Nellie McAdams, [nellie@roguefarmcorps.org](mailto:nellie@roguefarmcorps.org), 971-409-6806.

**Friday, March 16**  
Ten Acres and a Dream small acreage workshop. 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Ponderay Events Center, 401 Bonner Mall Way, Suite E, Sandpoint, Idaho. Topics include living on the land, growing crops, raising livestock, managing pastures and forestry fun-

damentals. Cost: \$15. Website: <http://bit.ly/2Gxia5S>

**Saturday, March 17**  
Ten Acres and a Dream small acreage workshop. 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Centennial Distributing Co., 701 West Buckles Road, Hayden, Idaho. Topics include living on the land, raising crops and livestock, managing pastures and forestry fundamentals. Cost: \$15. Website: <http://bit.ly/2Gxia5S>

**Sunday, March 18**  
Fruit Propagation Fair. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Clackamas County Fairgrounds, 694 NE Fourth Ave., Canby, Ore. The fair offers attendees hundreds of varieties of free scions and cuttings. If you graft, this is paradise. Or you can choose custom grafting by experts for only \$5. Free with admission are hundreds of varieties of apple, pear, cherry, plum and persimmon scions. There will also be cuttings of grapes, kiwis and figs to root. Arrive early for the best selection. Home Orchard Society experts will be available to answer your fruit-growing questions. Mason bee supplies are available for sale, as well as fruit-growing publications. Cost: \$7 per person or \$12 per family for non-members. Website: <http://homeorchardsociety.org>

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