

Washington wolf-control plan set for 2nd season

County commissioner: Policy 'set up to fail'

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

ELLENSBURG, Wash. — The policy on culling wolfpacks to stop attacks on livestock will be the same as last grazing season, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife wolf policy coordinator Donny Martorello said last week.

The department resolved a year ago to intervene sooner in hopes of killing fewer wolves to stem depredations. The department took three wolves compared to seven the year before.

Martorello said one year is not long enough to judge the policy, but added, "from the department's perspective, it was an improvement from prior years."

The lethal-control protocol was a major subject last year

for the department's Wolf Advisory Group. The 18-member panel, which has five new members, met for the first time this year on March 21.

The group began what will be a long and slow process of developing a plan to manage wolves once they have met the state's recovery goal. The goal — wolves breeding over a large portion of the state — likely won't be met for several more years. Wolves remain concentrated in northeast Washington and have made only slight progress in colonizing other parts.

The group touched only lightly on existing conditions and management policies.

Stevens County Commissioner Don Dashiell said the current lethal-removal policy gives wolfpacks with a history of depredations too much leeway.

"It still allows too many depredations to occur," said Dashiell, during a break. "It's set up to fail again."



Don Jenkins/Capital Press

Dan Paul, Washington state director of the Humane Society of the United States, talks March 21 in Ellensburg at a meeting of the Department of Fish and Wildlife's Wolf Advisory Group as Stevens County Commissioner Don Dashiell, right, looks on. Paul and Dashiell were co-presenting comments made by themselves and others in a breakout session on managing wolves in the future.

If a wolfpack attacks livestock three times within 30 days or four times within 10 months, the department will consider lethal removal. The old threshold was four "confirmed" depredations. The department now also counts "probable" depredations.

As a result, the department gets to lethal removal quicker, but with plans to shoot one or two wolves and pausing. In the past, the department waited longer and ended up targeting several wolves, or an entire pack.

Twice last year, the de-

partment used this incremental approach. Both times the depredations stopped long enough for the wolfpacks to have their records wiped clean, though the Smackout pack killed a cow in Stevens County a little more than a week after coming off probation.

The pack had six wolves survive to the end of the year, according to the department. The department's policy allows the pack three more depredations over the coming six months.

"Does something have to die before we do something?" Dashiell asked.

Tim Coleman, director of the Kettle Range Conservation Group, said he also was concerned about the Smackout pack. He questioned, though, whether the department will do enough to keep wolves and cattle apart before depredations start.

Martorello said the department recognizes that some

packs are particularly worrisome. "The department wants to work with the community to be as preventive as possible," he said.

Dashiell said ranchers may be less reluctant this year to defend their livestock with lethal means.

Two wolves were shot by ranchers protecting cattle last year. The department ruled the shootings were lawful because the wolves were "caught in the act." It was the first time the department had cited that law.

The cases showed ranchers that they can legally defend their cattle, Dashiell said.

"I think people are swinging to that mode of thinking, that they have the right to do that. I think before they were questioning themselves," he said.

Martorello said wolves are elusive. "I wouldn't expect that caught-in-the-act (shootings) is a new trend that is going to occur," he said.

China tariffs hit pork exports hardest

Hikes also include nuts, tree fruit

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

China is retaliating against U.S. tariffs on Chinese steel and other goods with tariffs on what it says are \$3 billion worth of U.S. agricultural and steel products.

The announcement came March 23, the same day a 25 percent tariff on imported steel took effect in the U.S. Steel from Mexico and Canada was excluded. It was one day after President Donald Trump announced tariffs on an additional \$60 billion worth of Chinese goods, including clothing, electronics and agricultural equipment.

Of the \$3 billion targeted by China, about \$2.2 billion was agricultural products, mostly pork but also including apples, oranges, cherries, grapes and nuts.

The rate is 25 percent on pork and recycled aluminum. It is 15 percent on fresh and dried fruits, nuts, wine, denatured ethanol, American ginseng and seamless steel pipes.

China did not say when its tariffs would take effect but urged Trump to negotiate a prompt settlement to avoid a trade war. China's actions also caused a slump in the financial markets.

U.S. Wheat Associates and the National Association of Wheat Growers issued a statement of concern about



Pork Checkoff

China has imposed new tariffs on U.S. agricultural products, including pork, tree nuts, cherries and fruit.

Trump's tariffs on the additional goods but said they agree Chinese policies create unnecessary trade distortions that hurt U.S. farmers and other industries.

R-CALF USA — the Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund, United Stockgrowers of America — lauded all of Trump's tariffs, saying the U.S. is finally beginning to defend itself against unfair and imbalanced trade. The U.S. steel tariff was recommended in a Jan. 11 U.S. Department of Commerce study that found quantities and circumstances of steel imports are "weakening" the U.S. economy and "threatens to impair national security."

The \$3 billion figure is China's estimate of the value of its imports, from January through October of 2017, of the U.S. commodities it is targeting.

The top import is \$1.5 billion worth of pork of various cuts and variety meat, waste

and scraps.

Dan Halstrom, president and CEO of the U.S. Meat Export Federation, noted China is saying the commodities could be subject to tariffs and that it's "a cause for great concern in the pork industry."

Jim Heimerl, president of the National Pork Producers Council and a producer in Johnstown, Ohio, said tariffs will harm the rural economy.

"No one wins in these tit-for-tat trade disputes, least of all the farmers and consumers," Heimerl said.

Last year, the U.S. pork industry exported \$1.1 billion of product to China, making it the No. 3 value market of U.S. pork, he said.

U.S. tariffs come after an inquiry by the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative into China's practices related to technology transfer, licensing and intellectual property rights.

USTR's investigation under Section 301 of the 1974

Trade Act determined that U.S. companies have lost billions of dollars from being forced by China to disclose intellectual property and to transfer technology.

"When it comes to trade, we expect all countries to follow international rules and to trade fairly," Heimerl said. "We also expect all countries to resolve trade disputes in a way that doesn't harm businesses, farmers and consumers."

China's retaliatory list includes \$228 million in almonds, walnuts, pistachios and macadamia nuts. It also includes \$170 million in cherries, \$88 million in citrus, \$41 million in grapes, \$36.7 million in apples, \$26 million in plums, \$2 million in strawberries and \$1.6 million in pears.

B.J. Thurlby, president of Northwest Cherry Growers, said a Chinese tariff would have a "serious negative impact" on Northwest growers.

Of the \$170 million worth of cherries exported to China last season, about \$135 million is from the Northwest and the rest is from California, Thurlby said. About 3.2 million, 20-pound Northwest boxes went to China and Hong Kong last season, he said.

"The U.S. Apple Association is extremely disappointed that apple growers have been caught in the crosshairs of what seems will be a trade war between the White House and the Chinese government," said Jim Bair, president and CEO of the U.S. Apple Association.



Carol Ryan Dumas/Capital Press File

Beef cattle at a feedlot near Burley, Idaho. An omnibus bill Congress passed Friday exempts livestock operations from having to report the amount of methane livestock emit.

Omnibus spending bill includes manure reporting exemption

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

Producer groups representing the beef, pork, milk, sheep, poultry and egg industries applauded passage of the \$1.3 trillion spending bill signed into law Friday.

Several provisions in the bill, which funds government through FY 2018, address threats to those industries that producer groups have been working to eliminate.

The bill includes several provisions that represent major victories for U.S. cattle producers, Kevin Kester, president of National Cattlemen's Beef Association, said in a statement to the press.

"First, we were able to kill the notion that our farms and ranches will be regulated like a toxic Superfund site under the CERCLA law," he said.

The bill restores a 2008 rule by EPA exempting agriculture from emissions reporting under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, or CERCLA.

That rule was rejected by a federal Circuit Court of Appeals last year, and as many as 200,000 farmers were facing a May 1 deadline for reporting emissions.

"This is fantastic news for hog farmers," Jim Heimerl, president of the National Pork Producers Council, said in a press release.

The appeals court ruling would have forced livestock farmers to "guesstimate" and report the emissions from manure on their farms and subject them to citizen lawsuits from activist groups, he said.

The reporting was unnecessary, impractical and unwanted by federal agencies

and emergency response authorities, he said.

Restoring the exemption is one of the most visible and essential demonstrations of support for U.S. farmers, the National Turkey Federation, National Chicken Council, U.S. Poultry and Egg Association and United Egg Producers said in a joint statement.

"Our deep appreciation for this action and bi-partisan cooperation cannot be overstated," they said.

The bill also includes another delay for livestock haulers for complying with the electronic logging device mandate. The bill pushes the deadline back to Sept. 30, giving the Department of Transportation time to educate livestock haulers on ELDs and industry time to find a solution to the hours of service rules that limit time behind the wheel, the groups said.

Dairy and sheep producers also praised those provisions and a few specific to their industry.

National Milk Producer Federation claimed a major victory in language that directs FDA to enforce labeling standards affecting plant-based products that imitate dairy, such as soy milk.

"It's high time that we end blatant disregard for federal labeling standards by marketers of nutritionally inferior imitation dairy products," Jim Mulhern, NMPF president and CEO, said.

Important provisions for the sheep industry include retention of language directing the Department of Interior and U.S. Forest Service to rely on USDA for the best science on pathogen transmission and risk of contact regarding bighorn sheep before making decisions that impact domestic sheep grazing.

Economists forecast slow recovery for milk prices

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

While U.S. milk prices showed some improvement in March, it's going to be a long road to recovery — and largely dependent on domestic milk production this summer.

While spring might be a time of optimism, there are still some serious concerns looming. Increasing milk production in the U.S. and Europe, relatively high stocks of U.S. dairy products and trade uncertainties are a few, according to economists at the University of Wisconsin.

U.S. milk production was up 1.8 percent in January and February year over year, and that's a lot of milk, Bob Cropp, an economist at the university said in the latest Dairy Situa-

tion and Outlook podcast.

Low milk prices are taking a toll in some areas of the country, such as the Upper Midwest and the Northeast, but aren't slowing production in other areas, he said.

Stocks of butter and cheese increased from January to February and are up 7.2 percent year over year, maybe not burdensome but on the heavy side, he said.

But exports improved at the end of 2017 and were pretty good in January. Exports were up 3 percent for powder, 19 percent for cheese and 30 percent for dry whey.

Only butter exports were down, he said.

Exports and domestic demand will increase milk prices in March, he said.

He's looking for a 90-cent

per hundredweight increase in Class III prices over February to \$14.30 and a 40-cent increase to Class IV prices to \$13.25.

"We're probably at the bottom of our prices; we're climbing our way back," economist Mark Stephenson said on the podcast.

"But we don't see anything that looks like a major explosion in price increases yet, and it may not be until we get well into 2019," he said.

U.S. dairy products are competitive right now, with prices below the world market. That's good for exports but doesn't translate well as far as milk prices, Cropp said.

Milk production is down in New Zealand, and recent fires took out about 4,000 cows in Australia. Production in the

EU is still very strong, however, and will more than make up for any losses in Oceania. But the world economy has improved a little, he said.

"If China is in there, I still think there's an opportunity to grow our exports some. But it's going to be a competitive year to expand those exports," he said.

What the U.S. doesn't need are any trade wars, Stephenson said.

"If we have just a little bit more marginal product staying at home, that's not going to be a good thing when we're trying to recover," he said.

Cropp said he also has concerns along that line. Every time he picks up the newspaper, he reads that the EU is trying to make a new trade deal with somebody.

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NOTICE OF CLOVER COMMISSION PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING

Notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held pursuant to ORS 576.416 (5), on Wednesday, May 9, 2018, at 7:00 a.m., at West Salem Roth's IGA, Founder's Room "O," 1130 Wallace Road, Salem, Oregon upon a proposed budget for operation of the Clover Commission during the fiscal year July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019. At this hearing any producer of Oregon grown Clover seed has a right to be heard with respect to the proposed budget, a copy of which is available for public inspection, under reasonable circumstances, in the office of each County Extension Agent in Oregon. For further information, contact the Clover Commission business office, PO Box 3366, Salem, Oregon 97302, telephone 503-364-2944. The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. Please make any requests for an interpreter for the hearing impaired or for other accommodation for persons with disabilities at least 48 hours before the meeting by contacting the Commission office at 503-364-2944.

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NOTICE OF OREGON BLUEBERRY COMMISSION BUDGET HEARING

Notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held pursuant to ORS 576.416 (5), on Monday, April 23, 2018 at 12:00 noon at Chemeketa Events at Winema, Room 210, 4001 Winema Place NE, Salem, Oregon, upon a proposed budget for operation of the Oregon Blueberry Commission during the fiscal year July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019. At this hearing any producer of Oregon Blueberries has a right to be heard with respect to the proposed budget, a copy of which is available for public inspection, under reasonable circumstances, in the office of each County Extension Agent in Oregon. For further information, contact the Oregon Blueberry Commission business office, P.O. Box 3366, Salem, Oregon 97302, telephone 503-364-2944. The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. Please make any requests for an interpreter for the hearing impaired or for other accommodation for persons with disabilities at least 48 hours before the meeting by contacting the Commission office at 503-364-2944.

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PURSUANT TO ORS CHAPTER 87

Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 4/2/2018. The sale will be held at 10:00am by

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