

New leaders emerge from REAL Oregon

First-ever class in the books

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
Capital Press

Just two weeks after completing the first Resource Education and Agricultural Leadership Program, otherwise known as REAL Oregon, Matt Mattioda was able to put his newly refined skills to the test.

Mattioda, who works as the chief forester for Miller Timber Services in Philomath, Ore., was informed by a client that Oregon Treasurer Tobias Read was interested in touring a project site to better understand how trees are harvested on the landscape.

"I had a chance to show him what we're doing," Mattioda said of the visit. "If we don't reach out and engage folks ... then whatever comes our way, we're just going to have to deal with it."

Thanks to REAL Oregon, Mattioda said he is comfortable advocating for his industry to a high-ranking state official. The program was



Courtesy of Greg Addington/REAL Oregon

The first REAL Oregon class meets at an orchard in southern Oregon.

conceived by businesses to engage natural resources professionals in career and leadership training — everything from government relations and conflict resolution to public speaking and presentation.

Over the course of five months, Mattioda and 29 others attended two-day sessions around the state, each with a local focus.

The first class graduated March 8, which included 10 agricultural producers, three forestry workers, four government employees and 13 people from natural resource support industries.

In addition to leadership training, Mattioda said REAL Oregon provided an opportunity to network and build bridges across industries.

"I have really grown to appreciate what other folks do in natural resources, whether you're a rancher or a farmer," Mattioda said. "We're all in this together. Even if some folks have differences in opinion, let's rally around and focus on those things we have in common."

REAL Oregon was established in 2017 and is similar

to programs in 34 other states around the country, including neighboring Washington and Idaho. Greg Addington, program director, said the sessions are meant to break people out of their "silos," and understand the bigger picture for natural resources.

In hindsight, Addington said the first year could not have gone any better.

"I think we're on to something here," he said. "There's a big need for it in the state."

Addington, who owns a consulting company in Klamath Falls, Ore., and is the former executive director of the Klamath Water Users Association, said he already has a list of more than 200 names recommended for future classes. He is now working on the applications and curriculum for the class of 2018-19.

Last year's program kicked off in November with a trip to Ontario, Ore., where participants learned about production agriculture. The group then traveled to Newport in December for a session on commercial fisheries; Medford in January for timber; Salem in February for the

legislative session; and Pendleton and Boardman in March for irrigated farming and livestock.

"The networking that occurs with such a diverse group of people is just awesome to watch," Addington said.

Megan Thompson, director of field services for Cascade Cherry Growers and Sage Fruit Co. in The Dalles, Ore., said the networking was especially valuable for her.

"At some point, we're all fighting a very similar fight," Thompson said. "We all have similar causes, and similar drives, and we all need to work together for those causes."

Thompson added the field trips they took on location further drove home the point.

"It was a great experience," she said. "I think it's made 30 new advocates for agriculture."

More information about REAL Oregon, including an application form, is available online at www.realoregon.net. The program costs \$5,000 per person, though half of the funding is covered by business sponsors.

Brazilian firm acquires control of National Beef

By **CAROL RYAN DUMAS**
Capital Press

Brazil's Marfrig Global Foods has reached an agreement to acquire 51 percent of National Beef Packing Co. for \$959 million, the company announced on Monday.

National Beef is the fourth-largest beef processor in the U.S., and the acquisition will make Marfrig the world's second-largest beef processor, with anticipated consolidated sales of \$13 billion.

"The acquisition of National Beef represents the realization of a unique opportunity," Martin Secco, CEO of Marfrig, said in a press release.

"With the transaction, we will have operations in the world's two largest beef markets, will gain access to extremely sophisticated consumer countries and will be able to grow while maintaining rigorous financial discipline," he said.

The acquisition consolidates Marfrig's strong position in the beef industry, which is the Marfrig's original core business. A leader in the U.S. beef industry, National Beef exports to 40 countries, including Japan, a market currently closed to beef exports from Brazil.

The transaction will be financed by a loan from Rabobank.

Founded in 1992, National Beef reported sales of \$7.3 billion in 2017 and, since 2011, has been controlled by Leucadia National Corp., which currently holds a 79 percent interest.

National Beef has a slaughter capacity of 12,000 head of cattle per day and is headquartered in Kansas City. It has two slaughterhouses, in Dodge City and Liberal, Kan., and accounts for about 13 percent of total U.S. cattle slaughter capacity.

Once the transaction closes, Leucadia will transfer control to Marfrig and remain a minority shareholder in National Beef with a 31 percent interest. U.S. Premium Beef, an association of 2,100 U.S. producers, will hold a 15 percent interest. Other shareholders hold 3 percent interest.

Leucadia and the other investors have agreed not to sell their shares of National Beef for at least five years.

The key executives of National Beef, including CEO Tim Klein, will continue to manage and remain at the company.

The board of managers of National Beef will consist of nine members, of which five will be nominated by Marfrig, two by Leucadia and two by the other minority members.

State Wheat Commission announces \$2 million gift to University of Idaho

By **SEAN ELLIS**
Capital Press

BOISE — A \$2 million gift to the University of Idaho from the Idaho Wheat Commission will be used to expand educational opportunities focused on managing agricultural market risks.

The \$2 million will be used to establish an endowed chair of risk management at UI's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

CALS and the College of Business and Economics collaborate on a capital management and trading program that provides students the opportunity to learn about risk management strategies using

money. Students in the program manage commodity margins and trade in agricultural commodities and use a wide variety of tools, including futures and options trading and the use of securities markets to counterbalance agricultural risks.

The endowment will significantly expand the scope of the program, university and commission officials said during a press conference.

One of the most important parts of any agricultural business is the marketing of products, said Clark Hamilton, a Ririe, Idaho, farmer and IWC chairman.

"It's money well-spent,"

he said about the endowment. "I think this will come back to (benefit) the farms and I think it's a great investment for the future. It's a big shot in the arm for Idaho agriculture."

"It will give the wheat growers of Idaho an additional resource in the marketing of their grain," said IWC Executive Director Blaine Jacobson.

A UI news release said the endowment will enable the university to attract a chair with "considerable depth of experience in conducting research related to agricultural commodity and financial security markets on a global, national and regional scale."

"The endowed chair will also provide outreach to commodity groups, agribusinesses, producers, financial institutions, market participants, policy makers and others who use active risk management practices," the release said.

The wheat commission gift "is profound and will have a lasting impact," said CALS Dean Michael Parrella. "What they are doing is literally transformational."

Jacobson said the state's wheat growers should be thanked because their assessment dollars made the endowment possible.

"That's who really deserves the credit for this gift," he said.

The commission will give UI \$1 million now, and the other \$1 million will be provided over the next five years.

Jacobson said the gift is being funded out of surplus funds generated by the state's wheat assessment over the past several years, and the commission does not anticipate having to raise the grower assessment to pay for it.

The endowment will not affect the amount of money the commission has in its annual budgets in support of research, market development and information and communications, said Cathy Wilson, the IWC's director of research collaboration.

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