

Producer targets big-ranch market by using genetics

By BRAD CARLSON
Capital Press

NAMPA, Idaho — The heartiness and durability of Mick Boone's bulls belie their birthplace: compact, suburban pasture land in part of the growing Boise metro area.

"They have been raised on long-grass hay, and they are range-ready," he said.

Small producers tap cattle breeding and genetics data — via data bases, artificial-insemination catalogs, scientific reporting and person-to-person networking — traditionally associated with the industry's biggest players, who analyzed their own large sample spaces over many decades.

The approach helped the Nampa-based Boone, 61, build a premium herd.

"This information is all available to the newest guy with his first cow," Boone said. "It evens the playing field for the little guy."

Benton Glaze, University of Idaho Extension beef cattle



Brad Carlson/Capital Press
Cattle producer Mick Boone of suburban Nampa, Idaho, evaluates an irrigation line for repair.

specialist in Twin Falls, sees operations of various sizes tapping sophisticated data.

"In general, producers are taking a closer look at genetics and using the tools available," he said. DNA technology and Expected Progeny Difference trait analysis are among these tools.

Glaze said that while buy-

ing an elite, expensive bull who breeds 25 to 60 cows may not be feasible for a small operation with 15 to 20 cows, "any producer can access elite genetics by purchasing semen and utilizing artificial-insemination techniques."

David Bohnert, director and professor at the Oregon State University Eastern Or-

egon Agricultural Research Center Burns and Union stations, said an extensive track record from many offspring was once needed to determine the accuracy of an Expected Progeny Difference trait. There are EPDs for everything from growth rate and milk production to calving ease and carcass characteristics.

"With the DNA tools we have now, we can get higher accuracy of the Expected Progeny Difference," Bohnert said. And breed associations, he said, have value indices through which producers can look at multi-trait selection based on many years of data.

"Any size operation can take advantage of EPDs and their use," Bohnert said. "And producers should."

Boone said he expects to have 32 registered Angus cows and heifers this year, up from two around 2010. He built this headcount over time, starting when input costs were high, in part by trading bulls for registered heifers.

He said he enjoys the challenge of breeding the most feed-efficient animal.

"You never get satisfied," Boone said, "but in the last four or five years I've really focused on breeding bulls through carefully selected genetics that will pass on the feed efficiency, and yet produce a quality carcass going to market."

He aims to provide quality

bulls and seed stock, with newer genetics and proven sires. He breeds them to thrive in desert climates, on rangeland and in hilly or rocky terrain. They stay a year or two before he sells them to ranchers who keep them five or six years.

"We breed and raise ranch-stock bulls that have not been creep-fed (grain-supplemented while very young) or pampered," Boone said. "They leave here with their working clothes on."

The idea is that the bull gains weight at a slower rate early on, but becomes a more durable and productive adult suited to rugged environments. Boone aims to supply a rancher with a bull that thrives, and passes on desirable traits consistently over time.

He grew up ranching, got out of the industry during a downturn, and got back into it slowly. He kept his rancher's eye.

"We used to ranch just by looks," Boone said. "Now we have the data to prove what we see is actually going into the carcass."



Grant County PUD

Priest Rapids Dam near Desert Aire, Wash. The loss of adhesion between concrete blocks poured at different times has been found to be the cause of a small leak.

Dam leak blamed on adhesion loss

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

DESERT AIRE, Wash. — Initial analysis shows a loss of bonding in a lift joint is causing greater than normal leaking at Priest Rapids Dam, Grant County Public Utility District officials say.

A lift joint is an area between two concrete blocks poured at different times. Investigative drilling has shown a loss of bonding resulting in a flow of 3 to 4 gallons per minute through a lift joint near the base of one of the dam's 22 spillway monoliths. Monoliths are large expanses of concrete supporting piers holding spillway gates. Concrete is porous so there always is some leaking.

The monoliths are stable but merit further investigation, the PUD said in a news release. The dam continues to generate electricity and operate normally. There is no threat to property or people, the PUD said.

Many holes from the investigative drilling show no leakage at all and others have very low flow, said Christine Pratt, PUD spokeswoman.

"As we continue to drill additional holes, we've found that measurable water pressure and flow in the lift joint has been reduced significantly. This is a good sign because it indicates that water that

was once backed up in the lift joint is getting an escape route through the new holes, relieving the pressure inside the structure," Pratt said.

It also indicates that the separation at the lift joint probably doesn't extend all the way through the monolith, she said.

During construction, from 1956 to 1961, the dam was poured in different sections at different times. The river ran over some lift joints for a year before the next lift joint was poured on top of it, Pratt said.

Engineers suspect that surfaces may have been worn smooth, not properly cleaned and not roughed up prior to the next pour on top of them, causing poor adhesion, she said.

Inspection drilling has occurred through about half the spillway and will continue throughout remaining monoliths into May. The PUD officials will determine if remedies, beside the drilling, are needed.

Leaking was detected by inspection drilling the morning of March 28 and the PUD declared a non-failure emergency. Reservoir water behind the dam was lowered approximately 3 feet. The reservoir will remain at the lower level of 481.5 to 484.5 feet above sea level until inspection work is completed. Maximum elevation is 488 feet.

OSU Extension gets go-ahead for education center in Clackamas County

New building will showcase forestry, gardening programs

By GEORGE PAVLEN
Capital Press

Oregon State University Extension is one step closer to a new building for its community programs in Clackamas County.

County commissioners unanimously approved the new OSU Extension Education Center during a work session April 3. The 22,000-square-foot facility will be at the corner of Warner Milne and Beaver Creek roads in Oregon City, within the Red Soils Business Park.

Mike Bondi, regional administrator for OSU Extension and director of the North Willamette Research and Extension Center, said the Education Center will provide much-needed space for programs to flourish — including 4-H, home gardening, forestry and family nutrition.

"It's going to be a great resource for the community," Bondi said.

But first, OSU Extension



Courtesy of Mike Bondi/OSU Extension

Clackamas County commissioners have approved plans for a new OSU Extension Education Center in Oregon City.

needs to secure building permits from Oregon City, a process that could take up to four months and several rounds of public comment. If all goes smoothly, Bondi said they hope to go out for bid for construction by the end of summer.

The project is expected to cost about \$10 million. Bondi said the local OSU Extension Service District should have about \$7 million set aside when the building is finished, and will raise the rest either through private fundraising or seek a bridge loan from the county.

Once completed, Bondi said the Education Center will give faculty and staff a big leg up in serving the public.

OSU Extension is celebrating 100 years in Clackamas County. The program has eight faculty and 16 support staff, and reaches between 50,000 and 70,000 people per year.

Yet since 1982, extension offices have been housed in a relatively old and cramped county building that has, at various times, also been used for the surveyor's office and public health department. Bondi said that building was not adequate to meet their needs then, and it is not adequate to meet their needs now.

"Most everything is done away from the office," he said of their current situation. "We have to go find space and move all our stuff. That's

how we've operated for the last 35 years."

Voters formed the Clackamas County Extension and 4-H Service District in 2008, which collects local taxes to support OSU Extension programs. It was then that Bondi said a new building became a serious possibility.

"We took that seriously and started putting money aside," he said.

By 2014, OSU Extension began designing what the facility would look like. What they came up with was a two-story building with a 150-seat meeting room, test kitchen, outdoor greenhouse and show gardens and a plant diagnostic testing lab for Master Gardeners.

"We're pretty excited about what the possibilities for the building will be," Bondi said.

The Education Center will also be a showcase for the region's wood products and sustainable forestry practices, Bondi said. With more than 3,000 private forestland owners across the county, he said forestry is a big driver of the local economy.

"It's going to be jewel in our crown, as well as the community's crown," Bondi said.

Goats to be topic of 2-day WSU workshop

Farm visit to cap classroom talks

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

Goats will be the subject of a two-day workshop presented by two Washington State University animal experts April 23-24 in Port Hadlock in Jefferson County.

WSU Cowlitz County Extension Director Gary Fredricks said he hoped the 12 hours of instruction will be useful to goat owners and people thinking about raising goats.

"I think we'll have people at all levels. I like to believe we'll have stuff at all levels, he said.

Fredricks and WSU Northwest Live-

stock and Dairy Regional Specialist Susan Kerr have co-presented goat workshops before, but not for several years. The last workshop attracted 21 people, Fredricks said. He said he expects most who attend will be interested in raising goats as a hobby, though others may raise, or eventually raise, goats for milk or meat.

"Goat is a pretty tasty dish," Fredricks said.

As a smaller animal, goats are less of an investment than cows and easy to work with, he said. "Goats are very personable."

Much of the workshop will be on subjects related to caring for goats economically.

"I think foremost everybody wants to have a healthy goat," Fredricks said. "And then it helps if you don't have to spend a whole lot of money on it."

After classroom instruction on the second day, participants will go to a farm in nearby Chimacum for hands-on training on tasks such as hoof trimming and tube feeding.

"If you've never done it, it's hard to have someone just tell you about it, and then do it on your own," Fredricks said.

Topics Fredricks and Kerr will talk about reproduction and kidding, nutrition and pasture, milking and mastitis, and health and disease.

Fredricks said there will be time to ask questions.

The cost is \$40 per person. The workshop will be at the WSU Jefferson County Extension classroom, 97 Oak Bay Road, Port Hadlock. For more information and to register go online to goatintensive.brownpapertickets.com

9th Circuit preserves injunction against state beef council

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

A preliminary injunction that prevents the Montana Beef Council from spending beef checkoff dollars on advertising will remain effective under a federal appeals court ruling.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has rejected a request by USDA to overturn the injunction, which was imposed last year by U.S. District Judge Brian Morris.

Ranchers pay \$1 per head to the USDA when selling cattle. The agency oversees the national beef checkoff program to fund promotions and

research, but half that money goes to state beef councils.

Morris ruled that the Montana Beef Council is a private corporation whose speech can't be subsidized with public dollars collected from ranchers.

The lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the Montana Beef Council's spending of checkoff dollars was filed by the Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund, United Stockgrowers of America.

R-CALF hopes the case will ultimately prohibit beef checkoff dollars from funding other state beef councils, with the aim of cutting off money



Carol Ryan Dumas/Capital Press File

Steaks are displayed in the meat case alongside the beef check-off's "Get Your Grill On" promotional signage. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has allowed an injunction against the Montana Beef Council advertising to stand pending a review of the case.

to the Federation division of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

The NCBA has supported federal policies that R-CALF believes harm independent

cattle producers.

The 9th Circuit has now ruled the injunction against the Montana Beef Council was based on correct legal standards or factual findings.

Because Morris' ruling was not an "abuse of discretion," it should be allowed to stand, a three-judge panel of the 9th Circuit said in a 2-1 decision. Using public money for advertising by the government is constitutional because that speech can be influenced by the political process.

Unlike cases where USDA more directly spent checkoff money, however, the agency "does not appoint any members of the Montana

Beef Council, does not have pre-approval authority over the MBC's advertising, and may only decertify after an action has been taken," the 9th Circuit said.

The 9th Circuit's ruling was issued in an unpublished memorandum, which means it doesn't set a precedent for other court cases.

In a dissenting opinion, Circuit Judge Andrew Hurwitz said the injunction wrongly ignored a "memorandum of understanding" between USDA and the Montana Beef Council, which made clear the federal agency has control over the private organization's spending.