

People & Places

Unique Dorper sheep catching on

Catherine Diaz-Khansefid helps South African breed grow in popularity

By JULIA HOLLISTER  
For the Capital Press

GALT, Calif. — Even though college and work took Catherine Diaz-Khansefid away from ranch life and onto a business career path, her ranching spirit always remained.

“I was born and raised in California,” she said. “My father was a horse trainer, and horses and ranching ran in our family for generations. I grew up in 4-H and FFA, raising all kinds of fair projects.”

For 31 years she has been the chief administrative officer in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the University of California-Davis Health. She is also a certified research administrator and president of the Northern California Society of Research Administrators.

But when she’s away from her “day-job,” Diaz-Khansefid returns to her ranch roots. She is president of the Western States Dorper Association, founded in 2013; a member of the American Dorper Sheep Breeders’ Society, founded in 1995; and a member of the Dorper Sheep Breeders Society of South Africa, founded in 1950.

“I maintain 10 acres in Galt, California, with my husband and son,” she said. “My flock name is DK Dorpers. We sell fullblood Dorpers throughout the year to other breeders.”

Unique breed

Over the years, Diaz-Khansefid kept up on different breeds of livestock and farming trends. Then, about 15



Courtesy Of DK Dorpers  
Catherine Diaz-Khansefid lives in Galt, Calif., and raises and breeds Dorper sheep.

years ago, the Dorper caught her eye. About eight years ago, she moved to a small ranch in Galt and started with four Katahdin ewes and one Dorper ram.

“I’m not fond of lamb cuisine, but my husband loves it,” she said. “I found it intriguing that many people claimed Dorper meat to be less ‘lamby’ in comparison to other breeds, so I wanted to learn more. I discovered that meat from this cross was very tasty, productive and affordable.”

She continued to expand her line of Dorpers.

“Because I worked in a full-time and demanding job, I could not keep up with my customer base, which grew faster than I could keep up,” she said. “Harvesting and selling in California is more regulated than in other states, so I scaled back on my meat line and focused on the breed-show quality full-blood Dorper.

“I found this to be significantly more rewarding. It came with a huge bonus of repeat customers and friendships with many wonderful breeders.”

Two years ago, with a few other breeders, she imported semen from a highly reputable Dorper breeder in



Courtesy of DK Dorpers  
Dorper sheep is a breed originally from South Africa that is valued for its meat and sheepskin.

Western Innovator

Catherine Diaz-Khansefid  
Residence: Galt, Calif.

Education: Chief administrative officer in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the University of California-Davis Health.

Occupation: Raises Dorper sheep.

Online: Western States Dorper Association show is May 19 and the sale is May 20 at the Modesto Junior College’s Ace Pavilion. Watch the webcast at: <http://simulcast.events.yosemite.edu/>

Website: [www.wsdorpers.com](http://www.wsdorpers.com)



Australia. Currently there are no protocols allowing the import of semen from South Africa, where Dorpers originated. The current focus is to expand the Australian Dorper bloodline program, and she only harvests Dorper lamb for personal and family consumption.

Popular for meat

Dorper meat is popular at farmers’ markets and with upscale “farm to fork” restaurants. Most Dorper lambs reach market weight of 80-100 pounds at about four months of age, which is faster than other breeds. Mature

Oregon Ag Fest brings farming to youngsters

By BRENNA WIEGAND  
For the Capital Press

SALEM — Oliver Menle is barely a year old and has already hugged a llama.

His mother, Alyssa Menle, said the Oregon Ag Fest April 28-29 at the Oregon State Fairgrounds was an eye-opening experience for the whole family.

“I grew up in the city; this is a new experience for me, too,” Menle said. “Oliver enjoys the animals best, and big brother and Daddy are all about plants and rocks and seeds, so that was their highlight.”

Six-year-old Alyson Drawbaugh never sees calves or pigs or ponies — usually just cats and dogs in her Salem neighborhood. She liked the pony rides best, with being licked by a calf a close second.

“It’s fun to be able to get



Brenna Wiegand/For the Capital Press

Alyson Drawbaugh delights in the calves at Oregon Ag Fest. More than 22,000 people attended the festival to pet animals and take part in numerous family friendly activities geared to engage the public in all forms of Oregon agriculture.

out of the house and come here where we can see a lot of the farm animals up close,” Alyson’s mother, Melissa Walton, said. “I was joking with her that the black-and-white cows are where the swirl ice cream comes from.”

Ag Fest Executive Director Michele Ruby said the

event brings all sectors of agriculture together to make learning about it fun.

“I think one reason our event is so successful is that we stay very focused on our mission, which is to help Oregonians better understand where their food and flora and fiber comes from,” Ruby said.

The festival has dozens of sponsors and more than 800 volunteers that include farmers and ranchers, ag students and 4-H members.

“Oregon is lucky because we have an abundance of farmers and other volunteers that really want to tell their story and engage, and we want to tap into that,” Ruby said. “It’s a grassroots event so it’s easy to love being a part of Ag Fest.”

An estimated 22,000 people attended the two-day event, which boasts 55-plus varieties of farm animals and more than 25 hands-on activities for kids. They can plant seedlings, dig potatoes, grind their own wheat for pancakes and watch chicks hatch.

“Our focus is certainly young families, but we try to have a little something for everyone,” Ruby said.

The antique tractors were a huge hit with 2½-year-old

Sender Romine of Newberg.

“I grew up in a suburb of L.A., so this is a foreign world to me,” Sender’s mother, Tiana Romine, said. “I want my children to have a closer relationship with farming and agriculture. I would like that for them because I think it’s important.

“I think it has a long-running effect, even if they don’t remember all the specifics, maybe in what they choose to do for a career or just their kindness and respect for animals and farmers alike,” Romine said. “We watched the sheep shearing and my son was just riveted.”

Four-year-old Westley Johnson smiled through his entire pony ride. With Daddy out of town, mom Karli Johnson needed a break and the Ag Fest on a sunny afternoon seemed like just the thing.

“I needed a break, too,” Westley said.

Calendar

To submit an event go to the Community Events calendar on the home page of our website at [www.capitalpress.com](http://www.capitalpress.com) and click on “Submit an Event.” Calendar items can also be mailed to Capital Press, 1400 Broadway St. NE, Salem, OR 97301 or emailed to [newsroom@capitalpress.com](mailto:newsroom@capitalpress.com). Write “Calendar” in the subject line.

Tuesday, May 8

Water Rights 102: Irrigation Districts in Oregon. 7-8:30 p.m. Hermiston Community Center, 415 S Highway 395, Hermiston, Ore. April Snell, executive director of the Oregon Water Resources Congress, will present a water rights workshop covering the basics of irrigation districts in Oregon. Cost: Free. Website: <https://oregonwatercoalition.org/events/>

Nickels Soil Lab Annual Field Day. 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Nickels Soil Lab, Marine Avenue, Arbuckle, Calif. Topics include navel orangeworm management, frost protection in almonds, bee biology, almond flower biology and biomass studies in orchards. Website: <https://bit.ly/2Jwr5G>

Wednesday, May 9

Kuna FFAAg Expo. 3-7 p.m. Kuna High School, 637 E. Deer Flat Road,

Kuna, Idaho. The public is invited to attend the Agricultural Exposition Open House, which is part of the FFA’s semi-annual educational program from 4,000 area students.

Thursday-Saturday May 10-12

88th Washington FFA Convention & Expo. Washington State University, Pullman, Wash. Website: <https://www.washingtonffa.org/convention-overview/>

Saturday, May 12

Asparagus Fest and Brews. 5-10 p.m. Middleton’s Six Sons Farms, 1050 Pasco-Kahlotus Road, Pasco, Wash. The festival includes two bands, food trucks, alcohol, meet-the-farmer hayride tours, free samples, fried asparagus, grilled asparagus and pickled asparagus. Cost: \$10

Saturday, May 19

Goat Academy 2018. 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Latah County Fairgrounds, 1021 Harold St., Moscow, Idaho. An all-day conference on all things goat. The event is limited to 200 participants, and pre-registration is required. The full schedule and a registration link can be found under events at [www.palousegoatguild.com](http://www.palousegoatguild.com). Cost: \$50 general/\$25 4H, FFA.

Saturday, May 26

Goat healthcare/nutrition/packgoat seminar. 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Workshop, 7211 40th Court NE, Olympia, Wash. Seminar includes handouts and hands-on time with goats. If you are new to goats or just need a refresher for goat care this is a great event. Instructor has 30-plus years of successful goat care experience. Cost is \$25 for public; \$7.50 for 4-H/FFA members/family/volunteers. For more information contact Donna at 360-742-8310 or [dsemas-ko@comcast.net](mailto:dsemas-ko@comcast.net). Website: [edelweisscresobers.com](http://edelweisscresobers.com)

Alpaca Shearing Day & Fleece Sale. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Alpacas of Oregon, 21345 SW Aebischer Road, Sherwood, Ore. Join EasyGo Farm at Alpacas of Oregon and take a break from the Memorial Day Winery Tours to watch the alpacas get their annual haircuts. Get up close, hand feed them, and handle their luxurious fleece. Shearing Day is Saturday. On Sunday, learn to felt an alpaca gift. Phone Suzanne at 503-348-6954 to reserve a spot. \$25-\$75 covers materials and instruction. Cost: Free. Website: [www.easygofarm.net/AOOMemDay](http://www.easygofarm.net/AOOMemDay)

Saturday-Monday May 26-28

Memorial Day Weekend Festival.

11 a.m.-5 p.m. Redhawk Vineyard & Winery, 2995 Michigan City Lane NW, Salem, Ore. Join us for wine and barrel tasting, food, our incredible view and music. The barbecue will be sizzling once again with homemade sausages and tri-tip sandwiches along with house-made smoked salmon pate, cheeses and salad. Meet the winemaker, sample our current selection of wines and barrel taste a future release. \$12 tasting fee. Website: [www.redhawk-wine.com](http://www.redhawk-wine.com)

Saturday, June 2

81st Annual Marion County Lamb & Wool Show. 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Turner Elementary School, 7800 School St., Turner, Ore. The show is a day of fun with 4-H & FFA events, wool animals and market lambs. The show also includes craft vendors, an ice cream vendor, a local spinning club and plants for sale. Again this year we will start the day with the children’s classes: Most Beautiful Lamb, Young Herdsman and Young Market Lamb classes for children under the age of 10. Website: <http://marioncountylambandwoolshow.yolasite.com/>

Tuesday-Friday June 12-15

Agriculture Transportation Coali-

tion Annual Meeting. Greater Tacoma Convention Center, 1500 Commerce St., Tacoma, Wash. The meeting will be the largest annual gathering of ag shippers sourcing and delivering to foreign markets. Includes an off-the-record best practices session for members, a port tour and sessions on other topics. Website: [www.agtrans.org/events](http://www.agtrans.org/events)

Saturday-Sunday June 16-17

84th Annual Glenwood “Ketchum Kaif” Rodeo. 12:30-10 p.m. The Glenwood, Wash., Rodeo Association is a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization that sponsors this rodeo. Cost: \$10 for adults, \$3 for ages 4 to 12.

Saturday-Sunday June 23-24

Aquaponics in Oregon Conference. Smith Hall, Western Oregon University, 345 Monmouth Ave., Monmouth, Ore. Hear from some of the top commercial growers, innovators and educators in this emerging green industry and discover the challenges and opportunities aquaponics present. Cost: \$135/person. Website: <https://bit.ly/2KdDXSM>

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EO Media Group  
dba Capital Press

An independent newspaper  
published every Friday.

Capital Press (ISSN 0740-3704) is published weekly by EO Media Group, 1400 Broadway St. NE, Salem OR 97301.

Periodicals postage paid at Portland, OR, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: send address changes to Capital Press, P.O. Box 2048 Salem, OR 97308-2048.

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Salem, OR 97308-2048

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