

People & Places

Helping dairy workers stay safe

Ryan DeWit runs unique safety training effort for employees

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

It hasn't been all that long since Ryan DeWit was milking cows on his family's dairy in Friona, Texas, but now he's helping Idaho dairy farmers keep their workers safe through a unique training program.

The Idaho Dairy Worker Safety and Training Program is a collaboration of the Idaho Dairywomen's Association and Idaho Milk Processors Association to provide training to dairy workers across the state.

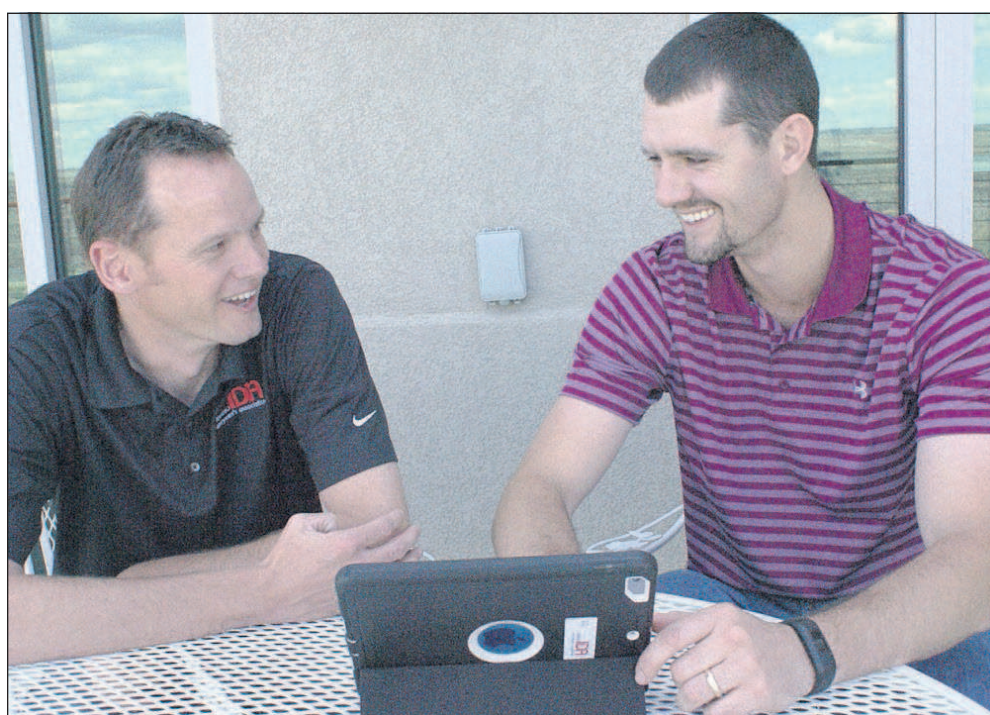
While the first phase of the program was developed with university expertise and continues to be expanded with that expertise, DeWit heads up the practical on-the-ground training to promote worker health and safety.

"We provide dairy workers with training and educational content focused on general farm safety and animal handling," he said.

The goal of the program is to initiate safer interaction between workers and cows and educate workers on farmwide safety when it comes to such things as equipment and electricity. It's aimed at ensuring they go home safely at the end of the day, he said.

Active response

The program is the response by dairy farmers and processors to heighten worker training and safety after a dairy worker fatality in February 2016. That worker drowned in a waste pond after mistakenly driving a feed truck into the pond in pre-



Ryan DeWit, right, dairy worker training and safety specialist with IDA Consulting Services, and Rick Naerebout, executive director of the Idaho Dairywomen's Association.

dawn hours during flooded conditions.

To prevent future tragedies, IDA engaged experts in worker safety and training. Idaho's dairy processors committed to the effort soon after.

IDA contracted with David Douphrate, assistant professor of epidemiology, human genetics and environmental sciences at the University of Texas, and Robert Hagevoort, extension dairy specialist at the New Mexico State University, to develop a program.

DeWit met Hagevoort through the U.S. Dairy Education and Training Consortium, and Hagevoort referred him to IDA to facilitate the training.

DeWit uses iPads with headphones to deliver individualized training in English and Spanish and can deliver that training in groups of up to 20 workers.

"It's always fun for me to explain why I'm here and why it's important to have safety

training," he said.

Bottom line

The bottom line is having workers go home to their families intact, he said.

Some workers are a little intimidated at first, but they soon discover their trainer grew up milking cows and clearing water troughs and respond favorably. And they appreciate that the dairy owner is investing in their training, he said.

The iPad training session is followed by a live animal handling session. Workers often do the "what" of the job but don't know the "why" of safety issues and animal handling. Helping them see things from a cow's perspective allows them to predict the cow's behavior and get the animal to do what the workers want them to and avoid injury, he said.

"At the end of the day, we're helping employees recognize those hazards on the

dairy," he said.

He encourages managers and owners to participate in the worker training because it reinforces how important safety is and creates a dialogue of safety on the dairy.

The mission

"My mission with this role is to help Idaho's dairymen improve the safety culture on their dairies while providing consumers' assurance that our workforce is working in a safe environment and is well-trained," he said.

The program began in August 2017, and DeWit has trained more than 500 workers at 25 dairies with 50 milking barns. But there's more to do, with 500 dairies and an estimated 8,000 employees in the state.

He's also given a three-day "train the trainer" workshop for processor and co-op field personnel and plans more in the future to broaden the reach of the training program and



Western Innovator

Ryan DeWit
Occupation: Dairy worker training and safety specialist
Employer: Idaho Dairywomen's Association, IDA Consulting
Home: Twin Falls, Idaho
Age: 24
Education: Master's degree (2017) and bachelor's degree (2016) in Agribusiness, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas
Family: Wife, Kathryn

reinforce safety concepts. He also offers safety, compliance and record-keeping consulting to owners and managers.

Additional training is being developed to cover a broader array of safety issues on the dairy, such as safe feeding and safe maternity care.

Idaho's program has also caught the attention of National Milk Producers Federation, which has pulled together a task force to address safety issues in response to consumer concerns.

"This is an issue that affects the industry as a whole," he said.

IDA will play a key role in developing a safety manual that will be part of the NMPF's Farmers Assuring Responsible Management program.

"At the end of the day, I think we'll have a solution for dairymen that's workable, effective and user-friendly," he said.

Emmett Earl Pryor, wheat industry leader, dies at age 92

Emmett Earl Pryor, a former chairman of the Oregon Wheat Commission and past president of the National Association of Wheat Growers, died May 11 at his home in Salem, Ore. He was 92.

Blake Rowe, CEO of the Oregon Wheat Growers League and Oregon Wheat Commission, said Pryor was a strong advocate for Oregon agriculture.

"Oregon Wheat notes with sadness the passing of one of its most respected grower leaders," Rowe said. "We extend our deep appreciation for his service and our condolences to his family."

Walter Powell, chairman of the Oregon Wheat Commission and a farmer near Condon, Ore., knew Pryor for 20 years. The two men were friends, neighbors and fellow advocates for the wheat industry.

"We have a tradition in Oregon of growers going to Asia, going to South America," Powell said. "I don't know all the countries Earl went to, but he was as active as anyone."

Powell said that when he thinks of Pryor, he thinks of all the growers from his generation who gave their time — and many times their money — to serve the industry, blaz-

ing the trail for Oregon wheat overseas.

"That's what I think about, is how lucky we are to have these people," Powell said.

As president of the National Association of Wheat Growers, Pryor was featured in the April 1984 cover story of Oregon Business magazine, detailing his role lobbying for the industry in the face of record surpluses, low prices and export difficulties caused by a strong dollar.

In the article, Pryor was described by one agricultural expert as "very dogged. ... He'll be in there fighting and scratching and clawing for his members."

Pryor was born in Condon, Ore., July 12, 1925. His mother, Julia Jones Pryor, preceded him in death when he was 3 years old. He was raised by his father, Emmet Pryor, and his step-mother, Jean Law Pryor.

He graduated in 1943 from Condon High School, where he was student body president and senior class president. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy immediately after graduation. After attending Oklahoma University, he served on the USS Merrimack as engineering officer.

After World War II, Pryor returned to Condon and began



Emmett Earl Pryor spent his adult life working for his community and for agriculture.

farming. He believed deeply in public service and advocacy for agriculture and specifically the wheat industry, according to his family. He once said in a speech that "Every man worth his salt should give back to his community and industry at least 10 percent."

He was as good as his word.

He served on numerous community and industry commissions and boards, including the Gilliam County Assessor Advisory Committee, Gilliam County Board of Equalization, Gilliam County Budget Board, Gilliam County School District 25, the Budget Advisory Board, Gilliam County Board of Review, chairman, Gilliam County Grain Growers as chairman,

Mid-Columbia Production Credit Association, Oregon Highway Federation and the Oregon State Extension Advisory Board.

He was also on the Oregon Agricultural Research and Extension Project Advisory Board, Committee for Senate Bill 100/LCDC Citizen Advisory Committee, Oregonians for Food and Shelter as a founding member, Agriculture Political Action League as a founding member, Oregon Wheat League as president, Agriculture Recovery Council as a founder and chairman, Oregon Wheat Commission as chairman, Council for Economic Development in Oregon as founder and chairman, Oregon Economic Development

Commission, National Association of Wheat Growers as president and the U.S. Commission on Agriculture Trade and Export Policy.

Pryor was preceded in death by his wife of 30 years, Bernice "Peetie" Petroff of The Dalles, Ore.

He is survived by his wife, Laura Pryor of Salem; son, Marc and Paula Pryor of Torrance, Calif.; son, Ty Pryor of Condon; grandchildren, Damon Pryor of Damascus, Brittany Pryor Lodge of Boise, Idaho, and Stephanie Moore of Maryland; and great-grandchildren, Maggie and Grant Pryor of Damascus; nieces and nephews that he was always very close to, Rod and Jean Pryor of Olympia, Wash.; Joyce and Mike Allen of Brewster, Wash.; Scott Pryor of Spokane, Wash.; Larry and Kay Lear of Condon, David and Marlene Johnson of Bend, and Julie Johnson of Florida.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Condon Scholarship Foundation, P.O. Box 385, Condon, Oregon 97823.

A celebration of life was held at the Condon Elks Lodge May 19 for family and friends.

Sign the condolence book at sweeneymortuary.com

Calendar

To submit an event go to the Community Events calendar on the home page of our website at 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. Write "Calendar" in the subject line.

Saturday, May 26

Goat healthcare/nutrition/pack-goat 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 dsemasko@comcast.net. Website: edellweissacres.org

Saturday-Sunday May 26-27

Alpaca Shearing Day & Fleeces 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 fleeces. 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

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. \$12 tasting fee. Website: www.redhawk-wine.com

Wednesday, May 30

Field to Market Workshop. 1-4 p.m. OSU Extension Service, 505 N. Columbia River Highway, St. Helens, Ore. Learn from experts about Oregon Department of Agriculture regulations, recipe selection, labeling guidelines and other issues involved in producing value-added products. Cost: \$25/person, \$40/couple Website: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/columbia/>

Friday-Saturday June 1-2

WSU Beef 200 Course. Okanogan County Fairgrounds, Annex Building, 175 Rodeo Trail Road, Okanogan, Wash. Topics for Friday night session, which will be 5:30-8:30 p.m., include management of lupine on range and beef pairings with wine and beer, with a focus on direct marketing of your beef. Topics for Saturday, which will be 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m., include live animal evaluation and grading, ruminology 101/ beef nutrition, factors affecting beef quality and palatability, carcass and retail cutting demonstrations, grid pricing, team evaluating and auction, and fetal programming. Sponsored by WSU Extension and the Methow Conservancy. Access the information brochure and hard copy registration at: <http://extension.wsu.edu/okanogan/> Cost: \$60/person (additional \$25 after May 21); Friday or Saturday session only: \$40/person (additional \$25 after May 21). Website: <https://okanogan-beef200.brownpapertickets.com>

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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/>

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