

# Running farm requires 'team effort'

By **HEATHER SMITH THOMAS**  
For the Capital Press

Tyler Reynolds farms with his parents, Dave and Karla, near Kuna, Idaho. After he graduated from college in 2011, they bought the dairy next door, remodeled the barn, and in 2012 started milking cows there.

"At that time farm prices were good and land prices here were cheap for the first time since the 1990s. We'd raised a lot of steers and had some extra capital that year so we bought the dairy for me to run," Reynolds said.

"My dad worked as a field man for a fertilizer company, farming after work," he said. "When I was born in 1989 he quit his fertilizer job and farmed full-time. We farmed about 300 acres until my brother, Mac, and I were old enough to help a little, at age 10 or 11, and then we farmed 600 acres. Now we farm 2,000 acres, milk 320 cows and raise 1,300 steers each year."

The dairy cows are mostly Holsteins and a few crossbreds.

"I really like the first generation Holstein-Jersey cross; it's dynamite!" he said. "The crossbreds are super milk



Courtesy of Tyler Reynolds

Tyler Reynolds with his wife, Danielle, and their baby girl, Aurora.

cows, just like the Hereford-Angus makes a super beef cow."

They raise their replacement heifers and buy some extra bull calves (day-old) to raise and finish in their feedlot for Holstein steers.

"I run the dairy and my dad and sister Jessica work with me," he said. "She mostly works in the office, bookkeeping and marketing. We grow alfalfa seed and sell direct to other farmers, so she markets the hay seed and started running a trap line for leafcutter bees."

For a few years after college she worked for North-

west Farm Credit in customer solutions.

"She helped people who needed to fix their situations if they were in financial trouble or went through a rough year," Reynolds said.

Their other sister, Libby, is still a student at University of Idaho.

"We all went there to school — Mom, Dad and all us kids," Tyler said.

Libby wants to be a dietitian, and their brother, Mac, is a marketer at Pacific Northwest Farmers Co-op in Genesee.

Tyler and his wife, Danielle, have a baby girl, Aurora.

hauling dirt, gravel and farm commodities, and have 22 farm employees.

"It takes a lot of team effort," he said. "We grow all our own corn and 90 percent of our hay. We grow all the hay for the dairy but usually buy some feeder hay for the steers and dry cows. This year we will probably have more than enough hay; we are growing hay instead of losing money on wheat."

"We grow about 13 different crops, but when beans get below about 30 cents it doesn't pay to grow them. Here in the Treasure Valley you have to make about \$1,000 an acre to make a profit, unless it's a crop like wheat — in which case you could probably survive on \$750 or \$800 per acre," Reynolds said.

The dairy cows calve year round, for steady milk pro-

duction through the year.

"It's hard to get them bred in July, however, when it's really hot, so there's usually a lull in calving during March-April," he said.

The milk goes to a cheese factory at Nampa, Idaho, 8 miles away.

They are still trying to grow the dairy.

"We started with 25 cows in 2012 and are trying to get to about 500 cows without adding more facilities," said Reynolds.

There's never a dull moment, with so much to do.

"I make a plan each morning, but rarely does my plan come close to what I actually have to do. There are some challenging days, but the good days counterbalance them," he said. "I can't think of anything I'd rather do than farming/dairying."

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