

People & Places

No slope too steep for this rig

Andrew Siegmund invests in unique new tethered logging system

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

A tethered logging system requires fewer workers, but eliminating timber jobs wasn't why Andrew Siegmund invested in the technology.

As the number of loggers decreases over time, those who remain in the industry are best deployed to areas that are inaccessible to machinery, said Siegmund, head of Siegmund Excavation & Construction of Stayton, Ore.

"It can't do everything. You still need timber fallers, you still need choker setters," he said. "There's less and less of them, so you want to utilize them where they're most needed."

With the system used by Siegmund, a feller buncher can descend slopes of up to 100 percent while attached by two heavy cables to a modified excavator "base machine," which serves as an anchor.

To compare, regular untethered logging machinery can operate on slopes of up to 30-50 percent.

A major advantage of logging with machinery is speed. A feller buncher can extend a 30-foot boom outfitted with a grapple saw quickly from tree to tree, instead of a logger walking to from one to the other.

"From one position, he can cut multiple stems," Siegmund said. "There's less fatigue. Timber fallers usually work a six-hour day, while he can work 10 and be less exhausted."



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press

Andrew Siegmund, head of Siegmund Excavation & Construction, stands next to tethered logging machinery that can be used on slopes of up to 100 percent, compared to 30 to 50 percent for regular machinery. The company invested in the system shortly after returning to the logging industry.

The operator is also safer inside an enclosed cab with a rollover protective structure — a tree limb that could maim or kill a timber faller will only ding the machine's paint job.

In addition to being equipped with a hitch to which the cables are fastened, the cutting machine's track is lengthened by two feet and the track's cleats, or "grousers," are elongated by two inches for better traction.

The base machine's counterweight is replaced with a winch assembly that's controlled remotely from within the feller buncher, unfurling and rolling up the cables as necessary. A single operator controls both machines.

Eric Luscher, Siegmund's cutting manager, tries to avoid soil with poor traction and spreads woody debris over certain areas to improve the track's grip.

"I walk a lot of the units and look for that kind of stuff," he said.

While the operator is strapped in with a four-point harness, "almost like a

NASCAR driver," tipping over the machine would still be dangerous due to the possibility of fire, Siegmund said. Leaking oil can ignite when coming into contact with a hot engine.

If an accident blocks the door, the cab has two escape hatches for the operator to get out.

In a situation where the feller buncher remains upright but can't climb back uphill, the operator may look for an escape route downhill or wait for another machine to create a suitable trail.

"I'm still learning what it can and can't do," said Luscher. "Knock on wood, I've never got in a spot where I couldn't get back out."

Operating the tethered logging system required a regulatory variance from Oregon's Occupational Health and Safety Administration, for which the company had to write an in-depth operations manual describing best practices and safety procedures.

The company also submitted a plan for alternative practices with the Oregon De-

partment of Forestry, whose stewardship forester had to sign off on environmental practices.

Heavy machinery cannot leave deep ruts on hillsides, which can cause large amounts of soil to wash down the slope during a rain storm.

To mitigate such ruts, the cutting machine sweeps a log across the ground, raking away the depressions. A mound cutting diagonally across the slope, known as a water bar, also minimizes erosion.

Regulators have generally been open to the modified machinery and techniques, Siegmund said. "We're all learning together. It's a brand new technology, so we're writing the playbook as we go."

Before making the \$1.5 million investment in the tethered logging system, Siegmund was initially skeptical about the technology.

"If you buy it, will there be work for it or is it a passing fad?" he said.

Interest among large timberland owners worried about long-term labor shortages, as well as the machinery's safety



Western
Innovator

Siegmund
Excavation &
Construction

Hometown: Stayton, Ore.

Employees: 48

Founded: 1970

Services: Logging, road building, excavation, quarry development, portable crushing and trucking.

mechanisms, ultimately convinced him to take the leap.

"It looked like good, robust equipment," Siegmund said. "We viewed it as a real opportunity."

Siegmund's grandfather, Ralph, founded a logging company in the late 1930s. It spawned the excavation company begun by his father, Lou, in 1970.

The two firms worked in tandem until his grandfather retired and closed the logging outfit in 1994. The excavation company kept its roots in the timber industry by building forest roads but did not return to logging until 2015.

After the downturn in the timber economy, many companies that specialized in removing trees for roads went out of business, Siegmund said.

Siegmund decided to take over that task, which required investing in machinery that could also be used for logging, he said. "It was a natural segue."

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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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1 year 4-H, FFA students and teachers\$30

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Visa and Mastercard accepted

To get information published

Mailing address:

Capital Press

P.O. Box 2048

Salem, OR 97308-2048

News: Contact the main office or news staff member closest to you, send the information to newsroom@capitalpress.com or mail it to "Newsroom," c/o Capital Press. Include a contact telephone number.

Letters to the Editor: Send your comments on agriculture-related public issues to opinions@capitalpress.com, or mail your letter to "Opinion," c/o Capital Press. Letters should be limited to 300 words. Deadline: Noon Monday.

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Correction

An article in the Friday, June 1, edition of the Capital Press, "Basin on the Brink," incorrectly stated which agency runs the Klamath Basin Sucker Rearing Program at the Gone Fishing facility in Klamath Falls, Ore. It is run by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Capital Press regrets the error.

Washington to crown new dairy ambassador

Coronation set for June 23 in Bellevue

Capital Press

Five contestants will vie for Washington State Dairy Ambassador positions June 23 in Bellevue.

The contenders are Rebecca Ford of Lewis County, Jacoba "Cobi" Van Slageren of Yakima Valley, Abigail Zurcher of Mid-Columbia, Agathe Lopez of King and Pierce counties and Bailie Schultz of King and Pierce counties.

The outgoing State Dairy Ambassador is Anna Teachman of SeaTac. The alternates are Juliana LeClair of Mount Vernon and Claire Leininger of Everett.

"They have been a pleasure to work with and done a wonderful job representing the Dairy Farmers of Washington," state ambassador adviser Tammi Schoenbachler said in a statement.

The young women chosen to be Washington's "Ambassadors for Milk" receive college scholarships, internships and training in communications, according to the Washington State Dairy Women, the sponsoring group.

The program will begin at 6 p.m. Saturday, June 23, at the Bellevue High School Performing Arts Center, 10416 S.E. Wolverine Way. Doors will open at 5 p.m. Refreshments will be served at intermission.

Tickets ordered by June 12 are \$20 for adults and \$10 for students. Tickets purchased after June 12 and at the door will be \$25 for adults and \$15 for students. Children 6 and under will be admitted free.

For ticket information, contact Gloria Edwards at (360) 273-7313 or by email at gloria.wsdw@hotmail.com. Tickets may be picked up at the door.



Abigail Zurcher represents the Mid-Columbia region. She is the daughter of Ed and Heather Zurcher from Mesa. Growing up on her family's dairy, Abigail has a passion for agriculture and dairy. She is active in 4-H and FFA, showing heifers at the county fair and competing in dairy-related FFA contests. Abigail is a 2018 graduate of Connell High School where she was involved in student government, sports and was on the honor roll. Her plans include attending the University of Idaho to major in elementary education and teaching kindergarten through third grade students in a small rural school district surrounded by agriculture.



Jacoba "Cobi" Van Slageren represents the Yakima Valley. She is the daughter of Dirk and Carol Van Slageren of Granger. Cobi grew up on her family's dairy farm, where she is now a part-time employee. She has been a member of 4-H for nine years, completing 9 dairy and 3 market steer projects, winning awards at local fairs and livestock shows. Cobi is a 2018 graduate of Sunnyside Christian High School where she was a member of the honor society, honors choir and sports. Her plans include attending Dordt College to earn an elementary education degree with the goal of teaching elementary school and helping children learn life skills and about the agricultural community.



Bailie Shultz represents King and Pierce counties. She is the daughter of Sheila Shultz of Renton. Bailie did not grow up on a dairy farm, but her grandparents, mother and uncle are retired dairy farmers and have always encouraged her to keep her connection with dairy. She is a member of 4-H, where she now shows dairy heifers and rabbits, earning many awards in both. Bailie is a 2018 graduate of Liberty High School where she is active in sports and the school newspaper. Her plans include attending Oregon State University to attain a degree in animal science and sustainability with the goal of helping farmers and making our world a more sustainable place.



Rebecca Ford represents Lewis County. She is the daughter of John and Rochelle Ford of Chehalis. Rebecca did not grow up on a dairy farm but found her love of dairy while working on a local dairy farm where she milked cows, fed calves and assisted with healthcare of the animals. She is involved in FFA, holding an officer position as well as competing on the state level. Rebecca is a 2018 graduate of W.F. West High School. Her plans include earning a degree in animal science from Washington State University and continuing her education at the WSU College of Veterinary Medicine with the goal of becoming a veterinarian.



Agathe Lopez represents King and Pierce counties. She is the daughter of Michel and Nelly Lopez of Carnation. Agathe did not grow up on a dairy farm but has always enjoyed being around farming and animals. She got interested in 4-H by watching her friend show dairy cows and helping her at a dairy. Agathe is now an officer in her 4-H club and shows her friend's dairy cows at local and county fairs. She graduated from Cedarcrest High School in 2017 and is currently attending Bellevue College to attain her associate degree with plans to attend Pierce College to attain her veterinary technician degree.

Courtesy WA State Dairy Women

Calendar

www.agtrans.org/events

Wednesday, June 13

Sherman County Field Day. 8:40 a.m.-noon. Sherman County Station, 66365 Lone Rock Road, Moro, Ore. Topics include wheat breeding and variety testing, weed control, disease control and agronomy. Website: http://cbarc.aes.oregonstate.edu

Forestry Shortcourse. 9 a.m.-noon. Sandpoint Orchard, 10881 N. Boyer Road, Sandpoint, Idaho. This is the first session of a six-session course on forest ecology, silviculture, wildlife habitat, and other forestry topics. Cost: \$38. Email: cschnepf@uidaho.edu

Saturday-Sunday

June 16-17

84th Annual Glenwood "Ketchum Kalf" 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.

Wednesday, June 20

Forestry Shortcourse. 9 a.m.-noon. Sandpoint Orchard, 10881 N. Boyer Road, Sandpoint, Idaho. This is the second session of a six-session course on forest ecology, silviculture, wildlife habitat, and other forestry topics. Cost: \$38. Email: cschnepf@uidaho.edu

Saturday, June 23

2018 Washington State Dairy Ambassador Coronation. 5 p.m. Bellevue High School Performing Arts Center, 10416 SE Wolverine Way, Bellevue, Wash. Five candidates are vying to become the Washington State Dairy Ambassador for the coming year. The doors open at 5 p.m. and the program begins at 6 p.m. Tickets ordered by June 12 are adults \$20, students \$10 and 6 and under free. Tickets purchased after June 12 or at the door will be adults \$25, students \$15, under 6 still free. Tickets will be available for pickup at the door. For ticket information, please contact Gloria Edwards by email at gloria.wsdw@hotmail.com or 360-273-7313.

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.

Monday-Tuesday

June 11-12

Water Law & Resource Issues Seminar. Sun Valley Resort, 1 Sun Valley Road, Sun Valley, Idaho. Brenda Burman, the Bureau of Reclamation commissioner, will provide updates on the agency

including the ongoing discussions about infrastructure and title transfer. A variety of other presentations is also planned by the sponsoring Idaho Water Users Association. Website: www.iwua.org

Tuesday-Friday

June 12-15

Agriculture Transportation Coalition 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. The agenda includes an off-the-record best practices session for members, a port tour and sessions on other topics. Website: