

# Washington's wolf peacemaker ends her tenure

## Money runs out for contract

By **DON JENKINS**  
Capital Press

ELLENSBURG, Wash. — High-profile mediator Francine Madden this week wrapped up her three-year mission to corral the conflicts humans have over wolves in Washington.

Madden succeeded in getting people with different views to collaborate, but money to fund her contract has run out, Department of Fish and Wildlife wolf manager Donny Martorello said. Madden teared up Tuesday after leading a meeting of the department's Wolf Advisory Group.

"I'm going to miss the people in this state a lot," she said. "They are passionate, hard-working and deeply com-



Don Jenkins/Capital Press

Meeting leader Francine Madden talks to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's Wolf Advisory Group on July 10 in Ellensburg.

mitted to their communities." Madden's departure comes as the department shifts the focus of the advisory group from current policies to proposing a plan to manage a stable statewide population of wolves. The department's current handling of wolves continues to

be criticized by cattlemen and conservationists.

The department signed the Washington, D.C.-based Madden to a nearly \$1.2 million contract in 2015 and to a \$425,000 extension last year. Her in-person services cost \$8,000 a day, plus travel ex-

penses. She previously had an \$82,000 contract to write a report for the department on social conflicts over wolves.

Madden's work to reconcile opposing views was praised by people on different sides, though the Cattle Producers of Washington said the department should refocus on managing wolves, not people, and left the advisory group in 2015.

The group, including its members from conservation organizations, agreed in 2017 on when wolves would be killed to stop attacks on livestock. Environmentalists not on the panel, however, argue the policy violates the law because it didn't undergo a formal public review.

Madden said conflicts will ebb and flow and cited her neutral status in declining to assess the state of discord over wolves. "It's not for me to

judge," she said.

Martorello said the department will look for money to hire another person to lead wolf meetings, though funding is uncertain. In any event, the agency is better able now to preside over contentious talks, he said.

"At some point, we wanted to learn that skill set and take it upon ourselves," Martorello said. "As (Madden) parts the system, we will carry on the strategies she has taught us."

If the department allocates money for a facilitator, the position will be put out to bid, Martorello said. Madden didn't rule out seeking a new contract. "I can't predict the future," she said.

The wolf advisory group spent Tuesday roughly outlining steps toward submitting a plan to manage wolves after they've been taken off the state's endangered species list.

Recovery appears to be at least several years away.

"We are asking the (wolf advisory group) to focus attention on a post-delisting plan because it is such a high priority for us," Martorello said.

Some wolf advisory group members said they wanted to also talk about current policies.

"We can't forget the people who are being affected as we discuss what we're going to be doing in five years," said Garfield County rancher Samee Chariere.

Kettle Range Conservation Group director Tim Coleman said the group should talk about topics such as how the department assigns depredations to packs and applies the law that allows ranchers to shoot wolves caught attacking livestock. "I want to talk about what's going on now," Coleman said. "We need to understand each other."



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Washington State University wheat breeder Mike Pumphrey says the Hessian fly is a growing problem in spring wheat varieties.

# Hessian flies on the rise in Washington spring wheat

## Pest damages spring wheat

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**  
Capital Press

Hessian fly is on the rise in spring wheat varieties, a Washington wheat breeder says.

"This year I've seen it pretty much everywhere," said Mike Pumphrey, Washington State University spring wheat breeder.

The insects have continued to increase in recent years.

They create abnormal growth in the wheat plant, Pumphrey said.

"They're basically telling the wheat plant to feed it, instead of the wheat plant feeding itself," he said. "You won't see any chomping or typical sort of predation, but you will see abnormal growth, stunting and weak stems due to Hessian fly."

Hessian fly is almost exclusively a spring wheat pest, affecting 30 to 80 percent of farm income, although it can affect winter wheat, reducing

yields by a bushel or two per acre.

Some cropping systems or rotations favor Hessian fly, Pumphrey said.

Seed treatments with systemic insecticides can have an early impact, but resistant wheat varieties are most useful. Certain market classes have some good varieties that are susceptible, Pumphrey said.

"We have some really good varieties of spring club wheat," he said as an example. "They get planted because there may be a premi-

um — they yield well, they have good disease resistance otherwise. Then all of a sudden Hessian fly comes in and takes away any hope of a premium or maximizing profit."

If primary weather patterns continue, Pumphrey said, Hessian fly resistance should be a primary consideration as farmers select wheat varieties.

Pumphrey seeks resistance in his breeding program, screening materials to ensure resistance and using different types of resistance to avoid losing it down the road.

# Owyhee Irrigation District eyes its modernization opportunities

By **BRAD CARLSON**  
Capital Press

A study funded by a recent grant aims to help the Owyhee Irrigation District determine how and where to modernize.

OID General Manager Jay Chamberlin said the approximately \$250,000 grant, through Energy Trust of Oregon and Pacific Power & Light, is funding the evaluation by Hood River, Ore.-based Farmers Conservation Alliance.

"They are looking at every aspect: hydro potential, gravity pressurized sprinkler potential, canal lining, water conservation. ... Really, the project is being completely evaluated and assessed," Chamberlin said. "It's almost an inventory of what we are doing now and what we can do to improve."

Farmers Conservation Alliance spokeswoman Marla Keethler said Owyhee Irrigation District enrolled in its Irrigation Modernization Program, "and we are currently working with them to understand their district's needs and goals as we work toward developing a system improvement plan and eventually a modernization strategy."

Chamberlin said the modernization study will help identify the best opportunities to maintain and improve function even as OID deals with current facility needs and some recent changes in how customers use water.

After irrigation season ends each fall, the Nyssa, Ore.-based district starts projects such as repairing or automating infrastructure, and replacing some sections of open canal with pressurized pipeline.

An upcoming major project aims to stabilize more than one-third of Malheur Siphon, an above-ground, 80-inch steel pipe that runs for more than four miles north to the Malheur River. Chamberlin said the approximately \$750,000 project is expected to start in early October and conclude in early March, ahead of the 2019 irrigation season's start.

"This phase will complete the most difficult section of



Jay Chamberlin

repairs," he said. The pipe, whose foundation legs have been moving in unstable clay soil, is wrinkled in three different locations, he said. Additional phases will be completed later as OID builds its reserve funds.

The Owyhee Irrigation District serves about 120,000 irrigated acres and more than 1,200 customers in Oregon and Idaho. Its annual budget is about \$4 million, funded by a customer charge per acre of \$65 — up from \$62 last year and including \$1.50 special assessment for the siphon project.

Chamberlin said the district in the last decade has seen client farms become fewer in number, but larger overall.

"It really changes the distribution of water," he said.

Many of the larger farms grow one crop on 100 acres instead of three or four, and use pivot irrigation systems that in the long term can reduce total water usage but in the short term run frequently, Chamberlin said. "With pivot and sprinkler irrigation, you can't get behind because you don't have the deep percolation."

Similarly, drip irrigation rarely shuts down altogether as it moves water across different zones in large acreages. Chamberlin said this constant, level irrigation flow means peak demand periods are less pronounced and water can stay longer in Owyhee Reservoir.

Owyhee Reservoir was about 60 percent full in mid-July, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation reported, including water left from the heavy snowmelt of 2016-17. OID customers this year received full allotments of water, Chamberlin said, but the district has tried to stay conservative and leave as much in the reservoir as possible in the event low snowpack materializes again this year in the large Owyhee River drainage.

# New tariffs chill U.S. beef export potential

By **CAROL RYAN DUMAS**  
Capital Press

Import tariffs on U.S. beef to Canada and China are top of mind for the U.S. beef industry.

Canada implemented a 10 percent tariff on some U.S. beef products on July 1 after the U.S. moved ahead with tariffs on U.S. imports of Canadian steel and aluminum.

"Unfortunately we are the direct victims of trade retaliation," Kent Bacus, director of international trade and market access for National Cattlemen's Beef Association, said in the Beltway Beef podcast on Thursday.

The tariff applies to prepared and preserved beef, representing \$170 million of the \$800 million in U.S. beef sales to Canada in 2017. They were a small but significant part of sales to Canada, he said.

"It's a tough situation for us," he said.

A 10 percent tariff is not a lot but added to a strong U.S. dollar compared to the Canadian dollar, it makes U.S. product more expensive and less competitive, he said.



Associated Press File

New tariffs on U.S. beef will impact trade with Canada and China, analysts say.

"So there's a disincentive to buy American. If the whole point is to buy American, this is not really going about it the right way," he said.

While it might bring some short-term victories to the U.S. steel and aluminum industries, beef producers are going to carry a big part of the retaliation, he said.

Across the globe, China raised its 12 percent import tariff on U.S. beef to 37 percent on July 6. The tariff comes as the U.S.

is just starting to make inroads into China's grain-finished beef market after being banned for 13 years.

It's a small market, but U.S. beef was doing a good job in taking market share from competitors.

U.S. exports grew at a steady pace from zero sales to \$30 million in sales in just six months, he said.

The U.S. Meat Export Federation was forecasting those sales to grow to \$70 million in 2018 and reach up to \$400 million in three or four years.

"And that's with all those restrictions on hormones, beta agonists, traceability," he said.

Without those restrictions, USMEF projects U.S. beef exports to China could reach \$4 billion annually in the next five years, he said.

"That's huge. Last year, we exported \$7 billion total, and now we're talking about a market with that much potential. But we're not going to be able to realize that as long as we're going to be in the middle of this tit-for-tat tariffs," he said.

# Washington agency looked, didn't find underfed farmworkers

By **DON JENKINS**  
Capital Press

A state agency was unable to verify complaints last summer that meals served workers at Sarbanand Farms in northwest Washington were meager and poor, according to newly available records.

The Employment Security Department started asking workers about food shortly before a worker's death drew other agencies into probing conditions at the farm. The ESD records do not include

a report summarizing the department's findings, but an official wrote that workers said that they had enough to eat.

"We were unable to substantiate the concern regarding the quality or quantity of the food provided," ESD agricultural services director Craig Carroll wrote in an email sent last Aug. 7 to others in the department.

Government agencies conducted multi-part investigations at Sarbanand, a blueberry farm in Whatcom County owned by California brothers

David and Kable Munger. The farm continues to be the target of activists, a lawsuit filed by Columbia Legal Services and critics of the seasonal H-2A guestworker program.

The Department of Labor and Industries cleared the farm of any wrongdoing in the worker's death and found no evidence to support claims that workers were exposed to pesticides. L&I did fine the farm for serving meals late and missing rest breaks. A judge last month ordered the fine be cut in half to \$74,825

The ESD documents, released in response to a public records request from the Capital Press, shed light on allegations that meals for the farm's some 600 workers were inadequate. L&I recorded complaints from workers about undercooked food and scant meals, and the pending lawsuit includes allegations that Sarbanand failed to provide sufficient food. Sarbanand denies the claim.

"Sarbanand tries to take good care of all of its workers, and someone is always going

to complain about food when you're feeding 600 workers," a farm representative, Tom Pedreira, said Monday.

ESD received a second-hand complaint about the food at Sarbanand in late July, according to department records. In response, ESD farm-worker outreach specialist Jennifer Lund talked to four H-2A workers walking on a road and all said they were receiving enough food.

"I talked with them independently, and all of them seemed confident in their re-

ply that the meals being provided were adequate," she wrote in a July 31 email to colleagues.

According to Carroll's Aug. 7 email, Lund followed up and spoke with other workers, including many H-2A workers who were fired after going on strike. Lund wrote in another message to colleagues, "I asked about the food and indicated that I was hearing concerns about not enough food, but that I could not find a worker that wanted to file a complaint."