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Opinion

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OUR VIEW

Hammond pardons serve justice

Dwight and Steven Hammond have been pardoned by President Trump and are back on their ranch near Burns, Ore.

Found guilty of arson, their subsequent treatment by the government was wrong and they deserved clemency.

Father and son have a long history of disputes with the Bureau of Land Management over grazing allotments.

Dwight Hammond was convicted in 2012 of one count related to a fire in 2006 that burned 139 acres of BLM land. Steven Hammond was convicted of one count related to the 2006 fire, and a separate count related to a fire in 2001. They were fined \$400,000.

Dwight Hammond received six months in prison, his son one year. But those sentences ignored the minimum mandatory five-year sentence prescribed by the federal arson statute. The government appealed, the sentences were overturned and



Associated Press File

Supporters wait for ranchers Dwight and Steven Hammond to arrive at the Burns, Ore., Municipal Airport on July 11. Dwight Hammond and his son, Steven, were convicted of intentionally setting fires on public land in Oregon. They were pardoned by President Donald Trump on July 10.

the Hammonds, who had already served the original sentences, were ordered returned to prison.

A lot of people thought that was unfair and vindictive — payback for the 16 charges against the ranchers the government was unable to prove.

The family and followers of Cliven Bundy, a Nevada rancher who in 2014 led an armed standoff with federal agents over grazing disputes, came to Burns to protest. When they failed to whip the ranchers and the townspeople into a revolutionary

frenzy, they took over and held the nearby Malheur National Wildlife Refuge for 41 days. One of the occupation leaders was killed trying to avoid arrest.

It's a shame the Hammonds find themselves entwined with the Bundys and their followers. The Hammonds did not support the occupation and rejected the militia's "protection" from being returned to prison.

Critics fear the Hammonds' pardons will embolden the Bundys because they may now believe they have a friend in the White House.

The Bundys have never been reluctant to take bold, often criminal, action. We would argue the government's inept prosecution of the various criminal cases brought against them would provide ample encouragement.

Those worried the pardons throw gasoline on a fire fail to recognize who initially stacked the kindling and struck the match. Had the previous

administration, through the U.S. Attorney's Office, allowed the original sentences to stand there would have been no excuse for the Bundys and their supporters to converge on Burns and thus no catalyst to take over the refuge, no one would have been made a martyr and the taxpayers would have been spared the expense and spectacle of a botched prosecution.

But, that's all in hindsight and not relevant to the Hammonds' case.

We are not fans of mandatory sentencing guidelines that deny judges discretion in considering circumstances when fixing punishment. Sometimes, the cause of justice is served by leniency.

The original judge in the Hammonds' case found a mandatory five-year sentence overly punitive given the circumstances of their crimes. So did the president.

The Hammonds served ample time and now they're home. Justice has been served.

Readers' views

A false climate change dichotomy

In his response to my comment regarding lessons from Antarctic ice cores, a letter writer repeats the false dichotomy that one must choose between the conclusions that carbon dioxide affects temperature and that temperature affects carbon dioxide. The evidence supports the conclusion that both affect each other. Carbon dioxide and temperature measurements from the 800,000 year ice core record are highly correlated, with a value of 0.84. The correlation is only slightly larger (0.88) when carbon dioxide lags temperature by 1000 years. If carbon dioxide did not affect temperature the difference in correlation would be far larger.

Correlation is not causation of course, so much more sophisticated analysis is required to identify causality. Such analysis by van Ness published in the journal Nature Climate Change in 2015 concludes, "This analysis is sufficient to demonstrate that temperature influences greenhouse gases, and is consistent with the idea that greenhouse gases drive temperature on a faster timescale."

Global climate modeling provides another line of evidence. He et al. (Nature, 2013) concludes that a climate model can successfully simulate the end of the last ice age, but only when the measured changes in greenhouse gases are used. Simulations with only changes in the earth's orbit produce little climate change.

Email me at steven.ghan@gmail.com for the ice core data and both of these papers to see for yourself.

If I have convinced you that carbon dioxide affects climate, which means fossil fuel use must decrease 50 percent to prevent unprecedented warming and associated impacts on mountain snowpack, sea level, etc., would you prefer heavy-handed government regulations or a revenue-neutral market-based approach that lets the market respond to a steadily increasing price on carbon, and returns equal shares of the revenue to each person so they can afford adjustments to reduce their use of fossil fuel?

Steve Ghan
Citizens' Climate Lobby
Richland, Wash.

If you don't like freedom, move!

Many thanks are due to whomever has brought suit against proposed Proposition 43 — a gun-banning law.

We apparently have citizens who want to destroy the rights and freedoms guaranteed by our Constitution.

Since you disagree with the law of the land, why do you stay in our nation? There are many nations with gun bans that you could move to.

We appreciate the freedoms and rights of self-defense not only for

ourselves, children, families but also our animals.

So, bug off! If self-protection and rights and freedoms are so offensive to you, please go elsewhere and don't destroy the greatest freedoms not experienced elsewhere.

Mrs. M. Novak
Yamhill, Ore.

Exports aren't answer for dairy woes

In a report dated May 31, National Milk Producers Federation President Jim Mulhern writes that NMPF, along with the International Dairy Foods Association and the U.S. Dairy Export Council are joining forces to promote the marketing of dairy products internationally, i.e., exports.

The three organizations' slogan is "Got Jobs?" reflecting their opinion that milk is a cash cow for jobs.

But jobs for who? Not the U.S. dairy farmer, who is making the milk and going broke.

Mulhern makes clear that this collaboration is about the 2018 Farm Bill and to influence politicians to adopt "export-friendly policies" and "an effective safety net for farmers to help them endure tough times."

Encouraging and accommodating dairy farmers to produce an excess milk supply so that NMPF-IDFA-USDEC can export the cheapest dairy products in the world with the cheapest milk in the world, is causing the "tough times" for the U.S. dairy farmer, who sells his milk for less than what it cost to make it.

It is universally recognized that the milk price is given by the marketplace and that the volume of milk delivered to the marketplace is the fundamental driver of the milk price.

The marketplace will give a profitable milk price only when the milk supply is balanced with profitable demand.

Exports that are unprofitable for the U.S. dairy farmer should not be pursued and are only causing the milk volume glut and resulting unprofitable milk prices that are ruining dairy farmers' economic lives and dairy farm families.

Just because U.S. dairy farmers have the ability to produce cheap, surplus milk far in excess of anyone's ability to create profitable demand, they should not do so.

Similarly, neither the U.S. dairy farmer nor the management of their dairy farmer member owned co-ops should support NMPF, IDFA or USDEC in their efforts to expand exports that do not pay a profitable price for milk used in the exported products.

Mulhern further says that NMPF's "own export sales program, Cooperatives Working Together (CWT), is moving large volumes of cheese, butter and whole milk powder into international markets."

Note, CWT is paid for by the U.S. dairy farmer, subsidizing the

cheap export sales in addition to being paid for the milk at less than the cost to make it.

Clearly, NMPF, IDFA and USDEC only want to benefit themselves with more and more and cheaper and cheaper milk, not the U.S. dairy farmer who is going extinct producing an excess milk supply for NMPF, IDFA and USDEC and their exports.

Dairy farmer: You do not need a political safety net for tough times — You need to eliminate the tough times by properly managing the milk you make and your co-ops.

NDPO co-op management policies will help dairy farmers properly manage the milk made so that the milk supply is balanced with both domestic and international profitable demand, thereby generating a profitable milk price for as many dairy farmers as possible and preserving as many existing dairy farm families as possible regardless of size or location.

To learn more about NDPO's co-op management policies, contact Mike Eby, chairman, at (717) 799-0057, mikee@ndpo.us, or like us on Facebook-National Dairy Producers Organization, or www.national-dairyproducersorganization.com.

Bob Krucker
Jerome, Idaho

Policy center sought feedback on proposals

A recent piece in the Capital Press quoting a representative of the Wheat Growers wrongly states the position of the Washington Policy Center is, "Take away subsidies, take away crop insurance, take away the conservation titles," saying, "I haven't heard them come forth with a solution."

Before publicly releasing our policy proposals, we shared them with those who would be most affected — the Wheat Growers — and asked for feedback. Having reviewed our recommendations, she knows we are not proposing removing farm protections. The Wheat Growers also ignored published research on our website where we recommend "policy-makers create a (Farm) Bill that encourages self-reliance and work while offering the insurance needed by farmers who face uncertainty from many quarters."

At our recent Solutions Summit, although the Wheat Growers chose not to participate, panelists recommended increasing spending for agricultural research. Those who attended learned that our panel offered a diversity of views and proposals on the Farm Bill.

It's hard to understand this level of inaccuracy after inviting the Wheat Growers' feedback and participation in our event. She literally had the truth of our recommendations in black and white.

Madi Clark
Washington Policy Center
Kennewick, Wash.

Dairy cows the star of sustainable agriculture

By AUSTIN ALLRED
For the Capital Press

Guest
comment
Austin Allred



With National Dairy Month over, it's an excellent opportunity to reflect on the cow's contributions to society and its vital role in the sustainability cycle of agriculture.

Today we feed more people on this planet on less land than ever before. The decrease in farmland is an accelerating trend here in the United States where we lose an average of 1 million acres of productive farmland each year. The current world population is 7.6 billion, and in just 12 years, another billion humans will require a significant expansion of food production, on even fewer acres.

Man has much to learn about inventing, improving and adopting "Best Management Practices" within the very diversified agricultural production systems. Cows are a great example of adaptation and adoption of practices which make dairy critical in obtaining a genuinely sustainable cycle in the food sector.

While innovative technology can do wonders, it is no match for the natural biological systems built into the dairy cow. Sunlight and carbon dioxide — a greenhouse gas — combined with soils and water to grow forage and grain plants which are consumed by cows in a very scientifically designed diet. Their four-part stomach can digest materials that man cannot — and produce milk, meat and manure in return.

The value of milk and meat is obvious and goes back to creation. However, while the United States had almost 23 million dairy cows in 1950, producing 116 million pounds of milk, by the year 2000 cow numbers had plummeted to 9.2 million, producing a total of 167 million pounds of milk, these animals are incredibly efficient. Today, over 16 percent of this high-quality protein in the form of whey, powdered milk and cheese is exported, much of it to food deficient areas of the world. Regions like Asia have seen incredible benefits recently since starting to eat more of these superior proteins.

What makes the dairy cow the star of truly sustainable modern food production? It all starts with the amazing four-part stomach, able to take in a wide variety of plant-based nutrition and convert it to metabolic energy, milk and meat. Every kind of traditional forage in the form of hay, haylage or silage forms a base in the cow ration.

This is diversified substantially with trim and cull materials from food processing plants — carrots, peas, potatoes, beets, onions, cotton seeds, sweet corn which would otherwise be filling up our area

landfills provides a wide variety of high-quality feed to be mixed into the cow ration. Wet brewers mash from beer makers, dry distiller's grain left over from ethanol production, grape pomace from wine and juice making join all the fruits like apples, pears, cherries and more and add palatability and nutrition to the cows diet.

Some of the energy consumed by dairy cows is lost to metabolic requirements, some is found in the milk, and the remainder — some people have incorrectly labeled as "waste" — we call it manure. This manure can be applied to soils in lots of different ways. Composting is one of the most popular, cow manure makes up the majority of most composts, the consistent source of cow manure allows for high-quality compost that can handle all sorts of green waste, food waste, even paper and cardboard to be mixed in and converted to plant food, again keeping more and more out of our landfills.

Our dairy creates more than 50,000 tons of compost a year. Most of this compost contains different waste products from cities. Testing confirms what common sense tells us — that manure was once plant material — and it contains almost the same ratios of nutrients required for optimum plant growth. Even better yet, these nutrients are naturally slow release when compared with most synthetic sourced nutrients, so they are more likely to stay in the plant root zone and be taken up by the plants for growth.

As the soils warm in the spring and irrigation water is applied, plant growth peaks in late June and July, just when these organic-based nutrients become plant available as the manure or compost breaks down. They also positively alter soil characteristics, increasing the water infiltration rate — reducing runoff, and increasing overall soil water holding capacity.

All in all, it's a perfect circle of recycling that makes this resource truly sustainable and crucial in the whole cycle of the \$28 billion food sector in America. By continuing to increase productivity with fewer cows on less land and improving practices of manure management the cow is taking on more and more of responsibility in making our world work how it was meant to work. These incredible animals are not only feeding the world with arguably the best protein out there, but they are keeping more and more out of landfills and instead creating a critical product needed to grow and manufacture food sustainably.

Austin Allred is the owner of Royal Dairy in Royal City, Wash.