

Attacks by Smackout wolfpack in northeast Washington flare up

Heifers killed on private land

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

Wolves are attacking cattle on private land in Stevens County in northeast Washington, killing at least three cattle within the past two weeks and three in a little over a month, according to the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Fish and Wildlife considers culling a wolfpack after three verified attacks within 30 days or four in 10 months.

The department documented attacks on cattle by Smackout pack wolves on Aug. 20, Oct. 14 and Oct. 21 that wolves killed heifers in territory occupied by the Smackout pack, sources said. The department investigated the death of a third heifer on Tuesday, but concluded the cow had not been killed by wolves, Fish and Wildlife wolf policy coordinator Donny Martorello said.

The department did confirm Tuesday that a calf was killed by the Old Profanity pack, he said. The attack is the second confirmed by the department since shooting two wolves in the pack in September to curb depredations. Martorello said the department has not decided whether to remove more wolves.

The recent attacks by the Smackout pack are occurring about 80 miles from the depredations by the Old Profanity pack.

Wolves have been active this year, attacking cattle in northeast Washington. The Fish and Wildlife Department counted 16 wolfpacks in that corner of the state at the end of 2017.

In response to attacks on cattle grazing in the Colville National Forest, Fish and Wildlife killed one wolf in the Togo pack, as well as the two in the Old Profanity pack.

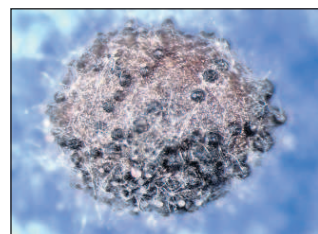
Grazing on federal land is coming to a close for the season, but cattle on private ground remain.

The Smackout pack has a history of attacking livestock. Fish and Wildlife trapped and euthanized two pack members in July of last year to curb depredations. The month before, a ranch hand shot a Smackout pack wolf chasing cattle on Forest Service land. The department ruled the shooting of the state-protected species was lawful under the state's caught-in-the-act law.

The Smackout pack had six wolves survive to the end of 2017, according to Fish and Wildlife. The department reported last year that the pack had attacked livestock belonging to at least three producers in the past four years.

Feared plant pathogens pop up in Western Washington

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press



Lindsey du Toit/WSU

Black leg fungus on cauliflower. Seeds grown in Island County, Wash., tested positive for the pathogen.

Black leg and black rot, plant diseases that Washington agricultural officials have long been on-guard for to protect the vegetable and oil seed industries, appeared this month in Western Washington in separate incidents.

Seeds from an organic radish farm in Island County tested positive for black leg, according to the state Department of Agriculture. Meanwhile, black rot appeared on leaves of a brassica crop in Skagit County.

It's unknown how either disease was introduced, Washington State University plant pathologist Lindsey du Toit said. Growers in both places reported the pathogens, helping efforts to contain them, she said.

"Both have the same repercussions for the seed industry," du Toit said. "I was pleased to see there wasn't an attempt to cover it up."

Black leg is a fungal disease that infects cruciferous crops such as canola, broccoli and cabbage. An outbreak of black leg in the Midwest and eastern U.S. in the 1970s was traced to Northwest-produced seeds, devastating Western Washington's vegetable seed industry. It had not been detected in Western Washington in recent years, according to the agriculture department.

Black rot is a bacterial disease. According to the American Phytopathological Society, black rot "must be considered the most important disease worldwide of vegetable brassicas."

To guard against both, the agriculture department requires crucifer seeds planted in Island County and five

other Western Washington counties to be tested and treated for black leg and black rot. The department extended the requirement to 20 Eastern Washington counties in 2015 after black leg was found in canola fields in Oregon and Northern Idaho.

In Island and Skagit counties, the farmers planted seeds that had been tested, du Toit said. Seeds, however, are destroyed during the test, so samples from seed lots are screened.

Du Toit said she examined plant matter that she collected from the field in Island County, but did not find black leg. The seeds had been harvested about a month earlier, and the disease was discovered in testing at Iowa State University.

Black leg and black rot can be spread in the rain or by wind. The crop in Skagit County will have to be destroyed, du Toit said.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture mandated statewide testing for black leg in 2015 after an outbreak in the Willamette Valley.

The five other Western Washington counties in the quarantine area are Clallam, Lewis, Skagit, Snohomish and Whatcom. The quarantine also covers all of Eastern Washington.

Willamette Valley winemakers help S. Oregon vineyards

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
Capital Press

Oregon winemakers may be fierce competitors in the marketplace, but when it comes to the industry as a whole, they look out for one another.

When a Napa Valley winery rejected 2,000 tons of grapes from Southern Oregon growers just before harvest due to concerns about smoke taint in the fruit, a group of rivals from the Willamette Valley decided to lend a hand.

The coalition — King Estate Winery, Willamette Valley Vineyards, Silvan Ridge Winery and Eyrie Vineyards — purchased over 140 tons of grapes from six growers in Southern Oregon, at full contract price, which they will use to create a 2018 vintage of Pinot noir, Chardonnay and rosé wines under the name "Oregon Solidarity."

Proceeds from net sales will go to vintners in the Rogue Valley who were left with grapes to rot on the vine.

"We are proud to be part of this first-of-its-kind solidarity effort, working with our colleagues to save what grapes we could from this high-quality vintage," said Jim Bernau, founder of Willamette Valley Vineyards in Turner, Ore.

Copper Cane LLC, a winery in Rutherford, Calif., buys grapes from approximately 50 vineyards in Oregon to make Pinot noir and rosé, though it recently rejected orders from at least 15 vineyards worth an estimated \$4 million over smoke taint from the region's wildfires.

Joe Wagner, owner and operator of Copper Cane, said in a previous interview that no contracts were canceled, and the winery will continue to work with Oregon growers in the future. However, those same growers are defending the quality of this year's grapes, and Bernau said independent testing revealed smoke taint at levels below cause for concern.

Because the 2018 rejection



King Estate

Ed King, CEO and co-founder of King Estate winery and vineyard in Eugene, Ore., is part of a coalition of Willamette Valley wineries that bought grapes from the Rogue Valley to produce "Solidarity" wine. The grapes were rejected by a California winery over smoke taint concerns.



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press File

Wine grapes ripen in a vineyard in Oregon's Willamette Valley.

notices came so close to harvest, growers say they did not have enough time to find a new buyer for the grapes, leaving them stranded in the vineyard. Ed King, co-founder of King Estate Winery in Eugene, Ore., said that is when he and other Willamette Valley winemakers came up with the game plan.

"We just decided, rather than sit on the sidelines, we would figure out what we could do to help," King said.

Wineries like King Estate and Willamette Valley

Vineyards already buy some grapes from Southern Oregon, but together the coalition purchased an additional \$323,750 worth of grapes to make the "Oregon Solidarity" wines.

The wines are now fermenting in the wineries' cellars until they are brought together for blending. Customers can pre-order wines online beginning Feb. 1, 2019, with the release dates for Oregon Solidarity Rosé on March 1, 2019, Chardonnay on June 1, 2019 and

Pinot noir on Aug. 1, 2019. King said they expect to produce between 3,000 and 4,000 cases.

Each wine will be labeled from the Rogue Valley American Viticultural Area.

"Labeling these wines with the Rogue Valley AVA emphasizes the high quality that comes from this wine region, and represents our confidence in these wine-growers and vintage," King said.

King said he has no concern about the wine quality, and that it will be "top notch." Smoke taint has been described as producing a "leather," "burnt" or "ash-tray" flavor in the wine due to organic compounds released by fires.

Copper Cane, meanwhile, has also run afoul of Oregon winemakers stemming from allegations earlier this year of misleading labels on its Oregon-sourced wines, such as "The Willamette Journal" and "Elouan." Wagner, the owner, said the winery is working with state and federal agencies investigating the claims, though he feels they are doing nothing wrong.

Weekly Fieldwork Report



Item/description (Source: USDA, NASS, NOAA)

	Ore.	Wash.	Idaho	Calif.
• Days suitable for fieldwork (As of Oct. 23)	6.7	6.8	6.7	7
• Topsoil moisture, surplus	0	0	0	0
• Topsoil moisture, percent short	79%	59%	50%	80%
• Subsoil moisture, surplus	0	0	0	0
• Subsoil moisture, percent short	91%	53%	63%	80%
• Precipitation probability (6-10 day outlook as of Oct. 23)	40% Above	50% Above	33-40% Above	Normal/ 40% Below

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