



Capital Press

EMPOWERING PRODUCERS OF FOOD & FIBER

Friday, December 14, 2018



CapitalPress.com

Volume 91, Number 50

\$2.00

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE NICHE



Dan Wheat/Capital Press

Ray Norwood, Auvil Fruit Co. director of sales and marketing, on the company's new apple packing line.

Vertically integrated tree fruit company thrives by innovating and carving out a portion of the market

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press



Grady Auvil was the first to introduce high-density apple plantings in the U.S., using a Tatura V-trellis system from Italy.

ORONDO, Wash. — Ninety years ago, the Auvil brothers, Grady, Robert and David, bought 22 acres in this community north of Wenatchee, and began living their dream of owning and operating an orchard.

They cleared sage brush and rocks and planted apple, apricot and pear trees. By 1940, they owned 40 acres. A year later, they were the first to establish Red Haven peaches in the Pacific Northwest.

They kept expanding. Grady Auvil became famous within the Northwest tree fruit industry as a visionary and innovator. Growers looked to him for

horticultural tips and which varieties to plant next. He became a tree fruit leader and by the end of his life was regarded as an industry giant.

Now, 20 years after Grady Auvil's death, the company he started remains comparatively small and is resisting the industry trend of rapid growth or merging with another company to survive the pressures of labor shortages, escalating labor costs and more government regulations. Other companies of similar size have not been as fortunate. Two to the north, Gold Digger Apples in Oroville, and Smith & Nelson in Tonasket, are gone.

See Niche, Page 14



Dan Wheat/Capital Press

Auvil Fruit Co., nestled along the Columbia River 22 miles north of Wenatchee, Wash., has survived by growing, packing and selling only its own premium fruit.

Farmers, ranchers welcome WOTUS rollback

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

Agricultural organizations are applauding the Trump administration's proposal to rein in what they contend was federal overreach by the Obama administration to define waters regulated under the Clean Water Act.

The Environmental Protection

Agency and the Department of the Army on Tuesday announced they are proposing a clear, understandable and implementable definition of "waters of the United States" that clarifies which waterways are federally protected.

The rule also details which waters do not fall under federal jurisdiction — such as ephemeral streams, groundwater, most road-

side or farm ditches and previously converted cropland.

Obama's 2015 WOTUS rule has been one of the most contentious issues in farm country, resulting in numerous lawsuits against the federal government brought by states and other entities.

The new proposal clearly defines the difference between federally protected waterways and

state protected waterways, Andrew Wheeler EPA acting administrator, said.

"Our simpler and clearer definition would help landowners understand whether a project on their property will require a federal permit or not without spending thousands of dollars on engineering and legal professionals," he said.

Agricultural groups were

quick to respond to the announcement, pointing out that farmers and ranchers rely on clean water and are committed to protecting the environment. The previous WOTUS rule, however, created uncertainty about which waters fell under federal jurisdiction and

See Rollback, Page 11

Groups call for 'mega-dairy' moratorium

Air, water pollution among concerns

By GEORGE PLAVERN
Capital Press

A coalition of groups is asking Oregon leaders to put a moratorium on large, commercial dairies, claiming inadequate oversight by state regulators and insufficient laws to protect the environment, animal welfare and small farms.

The request comes after the highly publicized breakdown of Lost Valley Farm near Boardman, Ore., which was permitted in March 2017 for up to 30,000 cows, making it the second-largest dairy in Oregon.

A dozen groups are now seeking to halt new or expanded "mega-dair-



E.J. Harris/EO Media Group File

The Lost Valley Dairy outside Boardman, Ore., has sparked legislative discussions about how large dairies are regulated in Oregon.

ies." The coalition includes Columbia Riverkeeper, Environment Oregon, Friends of Family Farmers, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Human Voters Oregon, Oregon Rural Action, WaterWatch of Ore-

gon, Animal Legal Defense Fund, Center for Biological Diversity, Center for Food Safety, Factory Farm Awareness Coalition and Food & Water Watch.

Ivan Maluski, policy director for

Friends of Family Farms, said the proposed moratorium would cover any dairy with more than 2,500 cows, or dairies with at least 700 cows that do not provide the animals with seasonal daily access to pasture. It would apply only to new permits, Maluski said, and not existing operations.

"We've always believed the real issue here is these huge operations that have thousands, if not tens of thousands, of cows," Maluski said.

Exhibit A in the argument for a moratorium is the state's approval of the ill-fated Lost Valley Farm over the objections of critics who submitted more than 4,200 comments against the facility. Lost Valley

See Dairy, Page 11

