

People & Places

Point man on elk intrusion

Randy Good represents cattlemen in Washington's battle over elk

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

To focus minds on the damage caused by elk, Western Washington cattlemen Randy Good talks to decision-makers, organizes bus tours, seeks allies and attends meeting after meeting.

He's been at it for several years. Asked if he's seen results, he says "no," but that he won't give up.

"I learned a long time ago, you just keep at it and sooner or later, you'll hit the right person," said Good, 70.

Good has been at the forefront of a long-running struggle by eastern Skagit County landowners to get elk off their pastures and fields. Farmers report extensive damage to fences, pastures, hay bales and plants. They worry about elk droppings contaminating crops and elk spreading hoof disease to livestock.

An ongoing survey of farmers suggests elk are causing roughly \$1.5 million damage to agriculture a year, according to the Skagit County Assessor's Office. Good estimates his losses at \$46,000 a year because he's had to abandon raising beef cattle in a field occupied by elk. "It's a sad, sad situation," he said.

Fish and Wildlife and Native American tribes imported elk from Mount St. Helens in 2003 and 2005 to enlarge the North Cascades herd. The plan worked. The department agrees too many elk have moved from the hills, where they were released, onto agricultural land.

Fish and Wildlife and



Don Jenkins/Capital Press

Sedro-Woolley, Wash., rancher Randy Good stands in his field and by a fence damaged by elk. Elk are a continuous problem for farms in eastern Skagit County, as Good continuously reminds the state Department of Fish and Wildlife.

tribes have helped landowners haze elk and put up fences, but landowners say the problem has outgrown hazing and fences.

The department issues some kill permits to let landowners shoot an elk, but the permits are meant to control damage and are too few to stop the herd from growing. At least some of the nine tribes involved in managing the herd oppose more hunting.

Lawmakers directed Fish and Wildlife to reduce the number of elk on farmland, but the department has not had any apparent success.

State Sen. Keith Wagoner, a Republican who represents eastern Skagit County, said Good and allies have kept the issue in front of wildlife officials.

"They have their attention. I'm sure they do," said Wagoner, who said he's interested in testing beefed-up fencing to keep elk off farms. "I think it's been very helpful. Randy has been persistent to the point of annoyance."

Good's remarks — written and verbal — about Fish and Wildlife's inability to

move elk are pointed. He delivers the comments as a landowner, vice president of the Skagit County Cattlemen's Association and president of the Friends of Skagit County, a group founded to promote protection of rural land.

Asked if he's enjoying the political arena at all, he says no.

"I'd rather be home farming all the time," he said.

For more than three decades, Good and his wife, Aileen, had a dairy farm. Good now raises beef cattle on a field not occupied by elk.

In lobbying Fish and Wildlife for action, he's joined by other landowners, such as beef rancher John Jonasson, who figures elk have breached his fences 25 to 30 times.

"Randy does most of the actual coordinating," Jonasson said. "He's doing an outstanding job. He's been staying in their face about it. He's not going to back down if he knows he's right."

Good organized a bus tour in early December for new Fish and Wildlife Director Kelly Susewind to

see the elk. Good said he was hoping for four hours, but got two. The tour ended at a library, where farmers described the damages.

"Randy did a great job on that. He had everything timed down to the minute," Jonasson said.

Good has organized other bus tours and also gone to Olympia.

Last April, Good, Jonasson and three other Skagit County residents went to a Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting and spoke during the period when people have three minutes to talk about whatever they want.

Good presented the case in his typical way.

First, he reminded the commissioners of their role. "You are our only voice with the DFW," Good said. He stated the problem: "Our frustrations are at a tipping point in eastern Skagit County with the intrusion of elk onto our agricultural valley floor for the past 10 years."

Then, he quoted state law: Nothing in Fish and Wildlife's mandate shall be construed to infringe on



Western Innovator

Randy Good
Age: 70
Job: Rancher, former dairy farmer
Positions: Vice president of Skagit County Cattlemen's Association, president of Friends of Skagit County
Education: Skagit Valley Community College
Cause: Getting elk off farms and ranches, including his, in eastern Skagit County, Wash.

landowners controlling their property.

"Please advise the DFW to follow the law as mandated," Good said.

Several Fish and Wildlife commissioners agreed something should be done.

Jonasson said their cause usually gets a good reception in Olympia.

"We do feel generally pretty good when we leave there," he said. "But at some point, a human being needs results, not just talk."

Good said he learned a lot about working in the public arena beginning in the early 1990s by being on a committee that advises a high school agricultural program.

"You don't want advisory committees to be a rubber stamp for the government," he said.

Good's tips for farmer involvement include: Document everything, attend every meeting possible, find allies who are willing to speak up and get to the top officials.

"I learned many years ago you have to get to the right person and inform them, or otherwise you're spinning your wheels," he said.



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SATURDAY-SUNDAY, JAN. 26-27

Two-Day Consigned Machinery Auction: 9 a.m., Woodburn Auction Yard, 597 S. Pacific Hwy., Woodburn, Ore. Saturday: tools, lawn and garden implements, machine tools, cars and trucks, tractors, excavators, attachments, trailers. Sunday: Field equipment and attachments, hay equipment, livestock gates, chutes and panels, irrigation https://woodburnauction.com.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 30

Cattlecon19: Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, 900 Convention Center Blvd., New Orleans. https://bit.ly/2ycMLDW.

Central Oregon Forage Seminar: 8:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m., 4-H Clover Club Building, 502 S.E. Lynn Blvd., Prineville. Sponsored by Central Oregon Hay Growers' Association and OSU Extension Service. RSVP to OSU Crook County Extension Service (541-447-6228) or email to Kim.herber@oregon-state.edu by Jan. 25. http://www.oregonhaygrowers.com.

THURSDAY, JAN. 31

Cattlecon19: Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, 900 Convention Center Blvd., New Orleans. https://bit.ly/2ycMLDW.

Quincy FFA Donkey Basketball Game: 7-10 p.m., Quincy High School, 16 Sixth Ave. SE, Quincy, Wash. The Quincy FFA will host the Donkey Basketball Game as a fundraiser. Information: Contact the FFA officers or advisors at 509-787-3501. \$8 for adults, \$6 students (ages 7-12) and kids \$4. All seats are general admission and are available at the door for \$1 more. http://rcool@qsd.wednet.edu.

FRIDAY, FEB. 1

Cattlecon19: Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, 900 Convention Center Blvd., New Orleans. https://bit.ly/2ycMLDW.

SATURDAY, FEB. 2

Public Car Auction: 8 a.m., Oregon State Fairgrounds, 2330 17th St. NE, Salem. Petersen Auto Group Classic and Specialty Automobiles http://petersen-collectorcars.com/

Pesticide Collection Event — Washington County, Ore. 8 a.m.-3 p.m., Valley Agronomics, 986 N. Holladay St., Cornelius. Forms are available on the Tualatin SWCD website. Submission details are included in the form. Information: Contact Mike Mason of Clean Harbor Environmental Services at (503) 742-7105 or mason.michael@cleanharbors.com. Charlotte Trowbridge, charlotte.trowbridge@tualatinswcd.org, 503-277-3709. https://www.swcd.net/event/free-agricultural-commercial-pesticide-collection/.

SUNDAY, FEB. 3

North American Strawberry Growers Association Conference: Wyndam Orlando Resort, 8001 International Drive, Orlando. http://www.nasga.org.

MONDAY, FEB. 4

North American Strawberry Growers Association Conference:

Wyndam Orlando Resort, 8001 International Drive, Orlando. http://www.nasga.org.

Oregon Blueberry Conference: 7:55 a.m.-6 p.m., Salem Convention Center, 200 Commercial St., Salem. A season recap and market projections, export markets, trade show and industry reception are among the many topics and events scheduled for this year's conference. http://oregonblueberry.com.

TUESDAY, FEB. 5

Lawyer Nursery Auction: 11 a.m., Musser Bros. Auctions and Real Estate, 7515 Meridian Road SE, Olympia. A 169.58± acre farm is offered at public auction. Lawyer Nursery has operated a successful root-stock nursery at this location since 1988. https://mbauction.com/.

North American Strawberry Growers Association Conference: Wyndam Orlando Resort, 8001 International Drive, Orlando. http://www.nasga.org.

Spokane Ag Expo and Pacific Northwest Farm Forum: 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Spokane Convention Center, 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., Spokane, Wash. The annual Spokane Ag Expo provides a showcase for agricultural equipment and related products to the farmer, rancher and customer. Pacific Northwest Farm Forum spotlights major speaker events during the show, and seminars ranging across a wide spectrum of current topics of interest to full-time and part-time farmers, ranchers and agricultural producers. http://AgShow.org.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 6

North American Strawberry Growers Association Conference: Wyndam Orlando Resort, 8001 International Drive, Orlando. http://www.nasga.org.

Soil Health Workshop: 9 a.m., Best Western Burley Inn, 800 N. Overland Ave., Burley, Idaho. Featuring Jay Fuhrer, a soil health specialist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Bismarck, N.D., who will talk about regenerative agriculture. Also featured is a presentation on carbonics by Keith Burns, a no-till farming and seed expert. ewcs@gsd@gmail.com, 208-572-3369.

Spokane Ag Expo and Pacific Northwest Farm Forum: 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Spokane Convention Center, 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., Spokane, Wash. http://AgShow.org.

THURSDAY, FEB. 7

Spokane Ag Expo and Pacific Northwest Farm Forum: 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Spokane Convention Center, 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., Spokane, Wash. http://AgShow.org.

SATURDAY, FEB. 9

Heavy Equipment & Public Construction Auction: 9 a.m., Commercial Industrial Auctioneers, 13231 SE Division St., Portland. Heavy equipment, trucks, trailers, cars, tools, city and county fleet vehicles and bankruptcy items. www.commercialindustrialauctions.com

TUESDAY, FEB. 12

Produce Safety Rule Course: 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Clarion Inn Ontario, 1249 Tapadera Ave., Ontario, Ore. The Pro-

CALENDAR

duce Safety Rule is part of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's efforts to carry out its Food Safety Modernization Act. The course is slated to cover identifying microbial risks, reducing risks, and how to best start using recommended produce-safety practices on the farm. Instructors will discuss a safety plan's parts and how to start writing one. They will detail the rule's requirements and how to meet them. \$35. https://www.eventbrite.com/e/produce-safety-alliance-psa-grower-training-tickets-53020538859.

Walla Walla Food Producers Workshop: 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Walla Walla County Fairgrounds Community Center, 363 Orchard St., Walla Walla, Wash. The meeting with food producers will include a discussion on the feasibility of a Walla Walla food hub, covering a 400-square-mile distribution area. Jeff Mathias, jeffm@bmacwv.org, 509-524-5218. https://slceep.wufoo.com/forms/walla-walla-food-producers-workshop-registration/

Lost Valley Farm: 5 p.m., Martella Livestock Market, 16140 CA-99, Tipton, Calif. 2,500 Head Jersey & Cross Heifers from 4 months to 10 months. Also selling 500 Holsteins from Frings Ranch. Heifers will be sorted by size, age and breed and vet checked for reproductive soundness prior to sale. http://www.amlivestockauction.com/.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 13

Changing Hands in Baker City — Workshop on Farm/Ranch Transfer and Access: 8 a.m.-3:45 p.m., Geiser Grand Hotel, 1996 Main St., Baker City, Ore. Join Rogue Farm Corps for "Changing Hands: A Workshop on Farm Transfer and Access to Land." This workshop is a part of a series that will bring together retiring and aspiring farmers for a full day of training on land access and succession planning. We will also have facilitated networking throughout the day to introduce landseekers to landowners. If you are a retiring farmer, come learn from experts about how to pass on your business to the next generation and assess its profitability. If you are an aspiring farmer, come learn about creative ways to start your farm business with topics on finding and leasing agricultural land, business planning and accessing financing. The workshop starts with breakfast at 8 a.m. The program begins at 8:30 a.m. and goes until 3:45 p.m., with breakfast and lunch included. Ashley Road, ashley@roguefarmcorps.org, (971) 409-6806. \$20. https://bit.ly/2MexZIW.

THURSDAY, FEB. 14

Organicology 2019: Hilton Portland and Executive Tower, 921 SW Sixth Ave., Portland. Organicology seeks to bring all of the stakeholder groups to the table to not only develop skills in their own areas of activity but to gain exposure to the challenges and accomplishments of those in other areas of the trade and movement. http://www.organicology.org/welcome/.

PNW Pollinator Summit and Conference: 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., CH2M Hill Alumni Center, Oregon State University, 725 SW 26th St., Corvallis. A two-day conference and an additional day of workshops designed to "connect-the-dots" between research, extension and application. This meeting is for extension agents, natural resource profes-

sionals, land managers, educators, as well as pollinator enthusiasts who want to develop or enhance the pollinator programming in their area. Conference talks will be mixed with discussion sessions, allowing participants to network and identify local knowledge and education gaps. https://www.oregonbeeproject.org/pnwpollinators2019.

FRIDAY, FEB. 15

Organicology 2019: Hilton Portland and Executive Tower, 921 SW Sixth Ave., Portland. http://www.organicology.org/welcome/.

PNW Pollinator Summit and Conference: 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., CH2M Hill Alumni Center, Oregon State University, 725 SW 26th St., Corvallis. https://www.oregonbeeproject.org/pnwpollinators2019.

Bosma Milk Co. Complete Dairy Dispersal: 10 a.m., 13805 Ave. 160, 13805 Avenue 160, Tipton, Calif. 3,500 head Jerseys Milking and Dry, 3,500 head Jersey heifers. Selling in conjunction with the World Ag Expo http://www.overlandstockyard.com/

SATURDAY, FEB. 16

Organicology 2019: Hilton Portland and Executive Tower, 921 SW Sixth Ave., Portland. http://www.organicology.org/welcome/.

PNW Pollinator Summit and Conference: 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., CH2M Hill Alumni Center, Oregon State University, 725 SW 26th St., Corvallis. https://www.oregonbeeproject.org/pnwpollinators2019.

2019 Organic Agriculture Research Forum: 9 a.m.-7 p.m., Hilton Portland and Executive Tower, 921 SW Sixth Ave., Portland. The forum will feature innovative presentations from researchers across all disciplines related to organic farming and food systems. https://ofrr.org

SATURDAY, FEB 16

Farm Transition Play & Workshop: 4-8 p.m., Jessie Mays Community Hall, 30975 NW Hillcrest St., North Plains, Ore. Who's going to get the farm? And what are they going to do with it? Will your future plans for your land create harmony or strife for your family? Or have you even started to think that far ahead? Join the Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District, Rogue Farm Corps, and instructors from Oregon and Iowa to learn how to plan for the future of your farm. Free event with dinner included. Agenda includes a performance of "Map of My Kingdom," a play about the issue of land transition followed by a discussion and a presentation and Q&A with attorney Maria Schmidkofer of Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt. Charlotte Trowbridge, charlotte.trowbridge@tualatinswcd.org, 503-277-3709. https://www.swcd.net/event/farm-transition-workshop/

SUNDAY, FEB. 17

"Map of My Kingdom" — Hood River: 6:30-8 p.m., WyEast Middle School Auditorium, 3000 Wyeast Road, Hood River, Ore. Who's going to get the farm, and what are they going to do with it? Will your future plans for your land create harmony or strife for your family? Or have you even started to think that far ahead? "Map of my Kingdom," a play commissioned by Practical Farmers of Iowa and written by Iowa's Poet Laureate Mary Swander, tackles the critical issue of land

transition. In the drama, Angela Martin, a lawyer and mediator in land transition disputes, shares stories of how farmers and landowners she has worked with over the years approached their land successions. Doors open at 6 p.m. with the one-hour performance beginning at 6:30. The event includes a brief panel discussion facilitated by Mary Swander. A \$10 donation is requested. This event is made possible with generous contributions from Gorge Grown Food Network, Columbia Gorge Winegrowers, Six Rivers Mediation Center, Best Western Plus Hood River Inn, Solstice Wood Fire Cafe & Bar and several private donors. 10. https://www.facebook.com/events/359649488192946.

TUESDAY, FEB. 19

Changing Hands in Medford: Workshop on Farm/Ranch Transfer and Land Access: 8 a.m.-3:45 p.m., Central Point Extension, 569 Hanley Road, Central Point, Ore. Join Rogue Farm Corps for "Changing Hands: A Workshop on Farm Transfer and Access to Land." This workshop is a part of a series that will bring together retiring and aspiring farmers for a full day of training on land access and succession planning. We will also have facilitated networking throughout the day to introduce landseekers to landowners. If you are a retiring farmer, come learn from experts about how to pass on your business to the next generation and assess its profitability. If you are an aspiring farmer, come learn about creative ways to start your farm business with topics on finding and leasing agricultural land, business planning and accessing financing. The workshop starts with breakfast at 8 a.m. The program begins at 8:30 a.m. and goes until 3:45 p.m., with breakfast and lunch included. Ashley Road, ashley@roguefarmcorps.org, (971) 409-6806.\$20. https://www.eventbrite.com/e/changing-hands-in-medford-workshop-on-farm-transfer-and-access-to-land-tickets-54297683834.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 20

Redmond Ranch/Farm Transfer Workshop: 1-5 p.m., Deschutes County Fairground, North Hall, Ochoco Room, 3800 SW Airport Way, Redmond, Ore. Learn how to pass your farm or ranch to the next generation at this free event. Agenda includes a performance of "Map of My Kingdom" and discussion with the author and a presentation and Q&A with an attorney about ranch/farm succession planning and a presentation by the Deschutes Land Trust about how a working land easement can be part of a succession plan. "Map of My Kingdom" is a play commissioned by Practical Farmers of Iowa and written by Iowa's Poet Laureate, Mary Swander. It tackles the critical issue of land transition. In the drama, Angela Martin, a lawyer and mediator in land transition disputes, shares stories of how farmers and landowners she has worked with over the years approached succession planning. Some families almost came to blows struggling to resolve the sale or transfer of their land — dissolving relationships. Others found peacefully rational solutions that focused not only on the viability of the family, but also of the land.RSVP to nellie @roguefarmcorps.org or 971-409-6806. Nellie McAdams, nellie@roguefarmcorps.org, 9714096806. https://www.facebook.com/events/2109485942423212/.

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