

Millennial daughter operates dairy

By ALIYA HALL
For the Capital Press

CRESWELL, Ore. — Dairy farming never stops, according to Bobbi Frost of Harrold's Dairy.

"You can't ask the cows to take a break," she said.

Frost, 30, is the fourth generation of her family to operate Harrold's Dairy, which was founded by her great-grandfather in 1946. The dairy milks 375-400 cows on 1,000 acres and grows its own feed for the cows.

About 36% of farms are run by female producers, according to the USDA's 2017 Census of Agriculture.

"I always loved growing up on the farm," she said. "My parents wanted me to be



Bobbi Frost

in ruminant nutrition so I could see cows every day but not be at the mercy of farm life."

It was her junior year of college when she spoke with a salesman who had grown up on a farm but his family had sold it by the time he wanted to take it over. He had imparted these words to her: "You can be on a farm every day, but if it's not yours, it's not the same," Frost said. "If you know in your heart that you need to be on the farm — you will never be happy anywhere else."

Originally, Frost's family was from North Dakota. She said that her great-grand-

father had bought a farm in Oregon, but when his family moved, the farm was sold out from under him and they had to find a new property. They found 200 acres in Creswell where they started milking five cows. At the time, all the milking was done by hand, but over the years the farm incorporated newer technology.

Now the farm has a double 12 milking parlor, which milks 24 cows at a time. The cows are milked three times a day, at 3 a.m., 11 a.m., and 7 p.m. and the process takes around six hours. Frost said her grandfather joked that their family is "equal opportunity" when it comes to cows; their herd is made up of Holsteins and Jerseys, as well as some "Hojo"

crossbreeds.

The milk is pumped into a tank and before it leaves on the milk truck two samples are tested for antibiotics and the fat and protein content. Along with quantity, dairy farmers are paid for the amount of protein and fat in their milk as well.

Harrold's Dairy is part of the Darigold cooperative, which is run by a board of directors that are made up of co-op members. Karen Samek, Northwest Dairy Field Manager for the co-op, said that a key component of Darigold is to help farmers feel heard. The co-op also has a program to engage its younger members, farmers under 45, and Samek said that Frost is really active in it.



Aliya Hall/For the Capital Press

Harrold's Dairy milks 375-400 Jerseys, Holsteins and "Hojos" in their double 12 milking parlor. The dairy is part of the Darigold Cooperative.

Whether wolves roam South Cascades remains a mystery

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

Three more months may pass before researchers can report whether wolves occupy the South Cascades, a University of Washington scientist said Wednesday.

The study has been pushed back by budget constraints, ivory poaching probes and time-consuming DNA testing, said Samuel Wasser, director of UW's Center for Conservation Biology.

"It's an unfortunate thing, but we are a small lab, and we do very high-end work," he said.

Wasser has been honored by wildlife advocates for helping track the source of poached ivory through DNA testing of elephant dung and tusks. Washington lawmakers in 2018 charged him with analyzing scat collected in the South Cascades to count wolves and other predators, and learn what they eat.

Dogs last winter sniffed out about 2,000 piles of scat. Preliminary tests on 40 samples found no wolf scat between Interstate 90 and the Columbia River. Wasser told legislators in April that he expected to have complete results by summer.

Wasser said Wednesday that his center has 2.6 positions, excluding himself, and is working on several other projects, including testing for the Department of Homeland Security tusks seized in Hong Kong and Uganda.

The poaching cases require an "urgent turnaround," while the wolf research is "a long-term project," he said.

"So we're kind of fitting this in as we can," he said. "It's not that we don't care. We care deeply."

The state funded similar research by Wasser in northeast Washington between 2015 and 2017.



Don Jenkins/Capital Press

Wolf researcher Samuel Wasser, director of the Center for Conservation Biology at the University of Washington, talks after a presentation to the House Agriculture and Natural Resources April 24 in Olympia.

The research led Wasser to speculate that Washington had more wolves than counted by Fish and Wildlife.

Wasser said he got "push back" from the department, so for the South Cascades project, his laboratory will pioneer additional testing to increase confidence in the results.

"There are all of these steps that take forever," he said. "When we say, there are 'X number of wolves,' we'll be very confident. Frankly, we were confident the last time."

"The last thing we want to do is create animosity with (Fish and Wildlife). We want to be collaborators," Wasser said.

Fish and Wildlife statewide wolf specialist Ben Maletzke said the department and Wasser are working on an agreement to share genetic information about wolves, another time-consuming step.

Maletzke said the department will appreciate information it may get from Wasser's research. He also said the department is grateful for reports filed by hunters, campers and others who spot wolves in the South Cascades.

"We're working hard to find packs," he said. "There could be easily be a pack or two down there."

Lawmakers set aside \$172,000 in 2018 and another \$344,000 this year for the project, according to budgets. A lawmaker who advocated for the funding said he doesn't want to rush the analysis, but he is getting impatient.

"I want a 'yes' or 'no' answer: Are there wolves in the South Cascades?" said House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Brian Blake, D-Aberdeen.

Recovery won't be complete until at least four wolf-packs are producing pups in the South Cascades, according to Fish and Wildlife. The department has not found any pack, let alone one breeding pups.

Finding wolves there would bolster the argument for removing wolves from the state-protected species list, Blake said.

"We have no confirmation of a live wolf in the South Cascades. That seems a little bit crazy to me," he said. "I have to believe wolves are there, and we just haven't spotted them."

USDA advertises for new falling number researcher

Nationwide search will fill key position

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

The USDA Agricultural Research Service is advertising for a key researcher to help farmers address a starch problem that can develop in wheat, costing millions of dollars in lower prices.

The ARS is advertising for a plant molecular biologist, plant physiologist or geneticist, who will work on the Washington State University campus in Pullman.

The salary ranges from roughly \$75,000 to \$115,000 per year.

The posting went up Aug. 29 and will remain open for one month, said David Weller, leader of the ARS wheat health, genetics and quality research unit.

He hopes to have the position filled by the end of the year.

The industry uses the falling number test to detect starch damage caused by alpha-amylase enzyme activity in wheat. A low falling number test result indicates starch damage in the flour, leading to poor

quality in baked goods and other products.

Congress provided \$1 million for falling number research in 2018. The USDA was slated to post the position in January, but was delayed by the government shutdown.

"As always, it takes time for these things to be done, but we're very excited that we're moving forward on what I see as a very important position," Weller told the Capital Press.

"We're really excited about this position," said Mary Palmer Sullivan, vice president of the Washington Grain Commission.

Starch damage doesn't happen consistently. It appears to be related to wide temperature swings or rain at certain points in wheat's growth cycle.

"When it does create problems, it costs the farmers a lot of money," Sullivan said. "We're hoping this position will help alleviate that, answer some questions and potentially work with breeders at WSU and ARS to identify why we're having these problems, so they can incorporate this into their breeding program."

While some farmers this year have experienced low falling numbers, it has not been widespread, nor does it seem to be impacting exporters, Sullivan said.

The researcher will be dedicated specifically to solving the falling number problem.

"This problem, we think, needs to be attacked on the level of very fundamental research," Weller said. "Once you identify and determine those biochemical, plant physiological responses that are occurring and the basic work is done, then you can move forward, applying that knowledge to developing new varieties and new treatments for this."

The USDA is searching nationally, including placing notices with professional organizations and ads in scientific journals.

"I think we're going to get a good cross section of individuals," Weller said.

Candidate applications first go to USDA ARS headquarters, which will send them to Weller.

A committee of ARS and WSU scientists and stakeholders will invite several to campus to interview.

Idaho Preferred takes to the road

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

From Driggs to McCall, the Idaho Preferred Retail Roadshow is making its way across the state on its third annual tour to promote local, seasonal produce.

September is the peak of harvest season, and the roadshow will highlight local produce and the economic benefits of buying locally through events at 29 grocery stores.

Administered by the Idaho Department of Agriculture, the Idaho Preferred program identifies and promotes food and agricultural products grown, raised or processed in the state.

"There are more than 185 different agricultural commodities produced in Idaho," Skylar Jett, manager of the program and a trade specialist with ISDA, said.

"Choosing to purchase these products supports Idaho farmers, producers, communities and the Idaho economy as a whole," she said.

The roadshow kicked off Sept. 6 in Driggs and is making its way across the state, with a final stop in Boise on Sept. 29.

"The Idaho Roadshow has a lot of benefits for producers and agriculture as a whole," Jett said.

It brings awareness to consumers of the Idaho products in their stores, allows them to sample Idaho products and in some cases meet the farmers and ranchers who produce the food, she said.

"Last year's sales of Idaho produce increased \$2.5 million because of the roadshow," she said.

Sales of Idaho-grown produce for participating roadshow retailers in 2018 increased by 150% to 315% during September compared to 2017, according to ISDA.

Since the first year of the roadshow, Idaho Preferred has increased the number of events, participating retailers, participating agricultural partners and the volume of sales.



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