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Lane honored for contributions to livestock industry

By CRAIG REED
For the Capital Press

ROSEBURG, Ore. — For his years of sharing about the science of forages, soils and pastures, Woody Lane was recently presented with a Distinguished Service Award by the Douglas County Livestock Association.

Lane has been an educator in the livestock industry since moving to the Roseburg area in 1990 and establishing Lane Livestock Services.

He has been key in organizing the Umpqua Valley Forage Study Group, the Forage and Nutrition Group along Oregon's south coast and the Willamette Valley Grazing and Nutrition Group.

"The goal is to improve our management on forage-based ranches, to increase profitability and sustainability on forage-based ranches," he said. "We share information, experiences, new techniques. We want to build on what we know. That's what we do.

"Knowledge is power," he added. "The more we know gives us a better chance at making good decisions."

Lane admitted he was surprised when he was informed he was to be a recipient of the 2019 Distinguished Service Award.

Craig Reed/For the Capital Press

Woody Lane, a livestock nutrition and forage specialist, has helped establish three forage study groups in southwestern Oregon. His work in helping farmers and ranchers with forage management was recently recognized. He was presented with a Distinguished Service Award by the Douglas County, Ore., Livestock Association.

"To have the folks in the livestock association think that my work and what I try to do is important to them is flattering," he said. "I'm honored to receive the award. It's a great honor."

Lane earned his master's degree and his Ph.D. in animal nutrition from Cornell University in New York.

The livestock nutrition and forage specialist has conducted hundreds of classes on forage management in southwestern Oregon, in other western states and in most of the Canadian provinces. He's been a guest presenter at numerous national and international workshops and has written many magazine articles and several books on his specialty. He has another book, "Capturing Sunlight," due out within the next couple of months.

The three study groups he helped establish and now facilitates have 18 to 28 farm or ranch members in each. The total number of monthly meetings or field trips that the three groups have held is 646.

"Having the members get together and share what they're doing on their places helps the others make better decisions for their own places," Lane said.

Diane Swingley Huebner, who has a small Angus operation on a century farm near Days Creek, Ore., is a charter member of the Umpqua Valley Forage Study Group. She presented the award to Lane at the Douglas County Livestock Association's annual dinner meeting.

"His life is the very definition of a pioneer," Huebner said of Lane. "He enriches that definition by energetically and passionately teaching the science of ruminant nutrition, forages, soil health, grazing and pasture management, all with the focus on profitability. He delights in watching us apply that science successfully, most of the time, to our soils."

Lane has scheduled numerous outside expert speakers to present their views and knowledge at the meetings of the study groups.

Bill Hoyt, who runs cattle and sheep on both sides of the Douglas-Lane county line, credits Lane with starting the study groups. Hoyt is a member of the Umpqua Valley group. He said the groups are unique because the members are willing to share.

"Unlike many agricultural areas where there's not a lot of sharing of information, people here are readily willing to talk about their successes and failures, what they've tried that has worked and not worked," he said. "It's a continuing educational experience."

Historic 17,000-acre Wyoming ranch has new owner

By NICK REYNOLDS
Casper Star-Tribune

One of the most important agricultural properties in Wyoming history has a new owner.

The Bixby Ranch – a sprawling, nearly 17,000-acre parcel outside Glenrock – was recently sold to Casper-based True Ranches, who on Saturday became the ranch's third owner since it was founded in 1876. One of the oldest continuously-running cattle ranches in central Wyoming, the property features eight homes on the site, a guest cabin and breathtaking vistas lined with 15 miles of riverbank and pocked with 14 reservoirs and ponds.

The property is also home to the Carey Mansion, the home away from home for both Wyoming's eighth governor, Joseph Maull Carey, and his son, Robert: both of whom served as Wyoming's chief executive as well as one of its representatives to the U.S. Senate.

Courtesy photo/TownNews.com Content Exchange

True Ranches has purchased the historic Bixby Ranch, which sits outside of Glenrock, Wyo.

Both men eventually made their homes and reputations in the cash-rich cattle town of Cheyenne and the smoky halls of Washington D.C. But the Bixby Ranch – which has undergone a number of name changes over the years – served as the Carey family's foundation in Wyoming, with a history intertwined with that of the state itself.

After seven years of service in the judicial branch of the Wyoming Territory, the elder Carey – an easterner – left the bench to try his hand at cattle ranching in 1876, trailing approximately 12,000 head of cattle up from Austin, Texas, to the first-ever ranch founded in the area: the legendary CY Ranch. A humble but extensive property, a parcel of the ranch along the North Platte River would eventually became the location of the original Casper town site, with the ranch itself serving as the namesake of one of the city's main thoroughfares.

GREENER PASTURES
Doug Warnock

Animal ag that works

By DOUG WARNOCK
Greener Pastures

Earlier this year, a colleague and I were asked to assess the plant community of a rangeland pasture in Central Oregon. The area in question was fairly steep, mostly native pasture that had perimeter fencing and minimal cross fencing in place. The area had been moderately grazed with a small herd of cattle in recent years.

The landowner wanted to improve the quality and quantity of the forage, and the goal included improving water quality in the stream that flowed through that area.

Our assessment revealed that the upland areas had an excellent stand of bluebunch wheatgrass that had been underutilized, resulting in accumulated old growth that was slowly oxidizing. There were small patches of medusahead in disturbed upland areas. The pasture adjacent to the stream had previously been overgrazed and was currently composed of annuals and unpalatable shrubs.

Properly managed livestock offer a tool that can be used to improve the nutrient cycle and water cycle of the rangeland and improve forage quality for both domestic animals and local wildlife.

This introduces the concept of targeted grazing. Targeted grazing is the application of a specific kind of livestock at a determined season, duration and intensity to accomplish defined vegetation or landscape goals. Grazing animals can provide a very efficient tool to modify and enhance landscapes when properly managed.

Our recommendation was to increase the number of grazing animals to about three times as many as had been grazing the upland areas. These animals need to be bunched to get hoof action and trampling of the old plant material into the ground. The placement of salt and protein blocks can be used to get excited behavior where livestock will trample the perennial bunchgrasses. While increased cross fencing would help accomplish this type of grazing pattern, herding by people on horseback offers a more direct control on where the animals are grazing and seeing that they are moved at the most appropriate time.

In the riparian area with the history of overgrazing, cattle can be used to manage the population of undesirable plants. Livestock can be put into those areas for short periods of time when the plants are most susceptible to grazing. This will help to keep the plant populations low and control their expansion.

The most critical aspect of successful targeted grazing is to control herd density, the time of grazing each area and ensuring adequate plant recovery time following grazing before being grazed again. Targeted grazing is a means of regenerating land that was neglected or over used and promoting the growth of the more desirable perennial grasses and forbs that offer the higher quality and more nutritious forage. The success of targeted grazing depends on pre-planning and careful observation of the land needing regeneration.

Doug Warnock, retired from Washington State University Extension, lives on a ranch in the Touchet River Valley where he writes about and teaches grazing management. He can be contacted at dwarnockgreenerpastures@gmail.com.

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