

## People &amp; Places

## Drone makes ranching easier

By DIANNA TROYER  
For the Capital Press

Rancher Carson Kelly has become a trendsetter in central Idaho, flying a drone to help raise breeds of cattle originating in Scotland.

Kelly, 29, began flying a DJ Mavic Pro drone in 2016 to check on his cattle year-round near Moore in the Lost River Valley.

"I'd read about them on the internet and how they were making life easier for ranchers, so I thought I'd give it a try," he said.

Besides ranching, Kelly works as a construction foreman for North Wind, a contractor at the nearby Idaho National Laboratory.

"With working a full-time job, flying my drone to take care of the cattle has saved me so much time," he said. "It's another tool for me to use, plus it's fun to fly."

As Kelly kept checking on his herd with his whirling aerial assistant, a neighboring rancher noticed.

"He talked to me about flying a drone and bought one, too, to make life easier."

Kelly said he chose the DJ Mavic Pro because it was affordable, compact and durable. If a propeller or camera malfunctions, it is easy to replace the parts.

Learning to fly it was easy, too, he said.

"It only took me about an hour to read the owner's manual, watch some videos on the internet and start flying it," he said.

To become registered to pilot it, the software required him to correctly answer a short series of safety questions. The drone must



Photos by Dianna Troyer/For the Capital Press  
**Carson Kelly relies on his drone to check on his herd in the Lost River Valley of central Idaho.**

**LEFT: Carson Kelly's cell phone slips into a control module, enabling him to see how the cows are doing in a distant pasture.**

remain in the pilot's line of sight and cannot fly higher than 400 feet or in restricted airspace.

Set to a regular mode, it automatically avoids objects. Once clear of buildings and obstacles like trees, he puts it in the sport mode of about 40 mph to fly it out and back within the 20-minute lifespan of the rechargeable battery.

It is programmed to return to its launch site if its battery is running low. If it does go down, its location can be traced with GPS.

During calving season in winter and spring, Kelly said the drone is vital for check-

ing on his herd in a pasture near his home.

"Some cows like the shelter of shrubby willows and cottonwoods, so it's easy for me to check on them with the drone."

He relied on it when he introduced some distinctive breeds to his herd recently. In 2018, he bought several Scottish Highland cattle and last year added Miniature Belted Galloways. To make sure they were settling in with his Angus cattle, he flew the Mavic to check on them.

"We found the Scottish breeds on Craig's List in Utah and started raising

them for people who like the novelty of owning them," he said.

Originating in Scotland's Highlands and Galloway regions, the breeds are prized for their hardiness and docility. The naturally polled Galloways have a white band at their midsection and produce marbled beef.

The Highlands have an auburn shaggy coat, long horns and produce lean meat low in cholesterol.

After calving season, Kelly relies on his drone with its acute airborne vision to check on his cattle as they graze in a remote canyon

**Western Innovator**

**CARSON KELLY**

**Age:** 29

**Education:** Animal science degree from Brigham Young University-Idaho

**Family:** Wife

south of Arco.

"The only way to get around in there is on horseback," he said. "It used to take hours of riding to find them."

Since buying the drone, he drives on a road fairly close to the canyon's rim, flies it, and finds them in about an hour.

With its four whirring propellers, the drone sounds like a swarm of buzzing bees.

"Sometimes I've used it to herd them to the canyon entrance to make it easy for me to pick them up and move them to another pasture."

After fall roundup, it helps him find missing cows.

"There are always about 10 cows grazing in overlooked areas that are hard to access, so the drone lets me see where to ride to bring them home," he said.

Whenever he checks on his cattle, Kelly takes his drone with him.

"It's been a really good investment," he said.

## Training Latino farmers in sustainable ag

## Adelante Mujeres receives USDA grant for sustainable agriculture program

By GEORGE PLAVEN  
Capital Press

FOREST GROVE, Ore. — Growing up on his family's 2-acre farm in Guatemala, Alejandro Tecum came to despise the arduous chore of hand-tilling fields to plant crops such as corn, beans and squash.

Though he didn't know it at the time, Tecum said he was also hurting the soil by robbing it of nutrients and organic matter needed to grow healthy food.

"We have destroyed the soil to an extreme that what we eat, it doesn't contain nutrition anymore," Tecum said during a recent interview from his office in Forest Grove, Ore., west of Portland. "We have killed all the life in the soil that provides the nutrients to the vegetable, for example."

Tecum, 59, now teaches regenerative farming practices for Adelante Mujeres, a nonprofit organization that supports Latina women and their families through adult



Adelante Mujeres

**The sustainable agriculture program of Adelante Mujeres recently received a \$400,000 USDA grant to help Latino farmers learn regenerative practices.**

education and youth outreach programs.

Last year, Adelante Mujeres received a \$400,000 grant to expand its sustainable agriculture program, working with five other groups in Western Oregon to help minority farmers start their own businesses, while learning to care for the land.

The project includes Rogue Farm Corps based in Ashland; Huerto de la Familia in Eugene; The Next Door in Hood River; Our Table Cooperative in Sherwood; and Zenger Farms in Portland.

A teacher by profession, Tecum was hired as the sustainable agriculture education manager for Adelante

Mujeres in 2005. He has embraced regenerative farming, which he says goes beyond organic, and sworn off the conventional growing practices and chemicals he once used nonchalantly.

"It is the care we give to the soil," Tecum said. "We feed the soil with every single organic matter that we can find."

The 12-week course, taught entirely in Spanish, covers soil biology, pest management, disease management, composting and irrigation. That includes several hands-on workshops at the local Forest Grove Community Gardens.

"I have seen many changes in the participants,"



Alejandro Tecum

Tecum said. "The best reward for me is when I go to their garden, their farms, and I see they are putting into practice the techniques that we are teaching them. When I see the soil becoming richer every year, or when they say, 'Oh, I cannot eat vegetables from the store now, because of the flavor,' that's the kind of compliments I get."

The real challenge, Tecum said, is convincing people to join the program. Most of the Latinos that come to Adelante Mujeres are trying to get away from farming — either they have already spent years working as a farm laborer, or because farming it is seen as a second-class job.

"I tell them that agriculture or farming is a science, and an art," Tecum said. "I tell them that, if you come to the class, you may change your mind. And they do."

The USDA grant will help them to reach even more Latino and Hispanic farmers by partnering with other nonprofits, forming the Western Oregon Sustainable Agriculture Collaborative, Tecum said.

According to the latest USDA Census of Agriculture, Latino or Hispanic producers owned land on 1,666 Oregon farms and rented or leased land on 345 farms in 2017, accounting for about 5% of all farms statewide. That is roughly double the number from five years earlier, when Latino or Hispanic producers owned land on 803 farms and leased land on 186 farms.

Washington County has the highest percentage of Latinos in Oregon, rising from 50,000 in 2000 to almost 90,000 in 2014. Adelante Mujeres originally began as a program under Centro Cultural de Washington County, Oregon's oldest Latino nonprofit, before spinning off as its own group in 2002.

The sustainable agriculture program started in 2005, in conjunction with Adelante Mujeres relaunching the Forest Grove Farmers Market.

From providing jobs to introducing healthier eating habits, Tecum said the program has proven invaluable to the community.

"I think it is necessary, if we want to live a good life, to eat healthy food," Tecum said. "The only way to eat healthy food is to take care of the soil."

## CALENDAR

lett@techhelp.org, (208) 731-9363.

**TUESDAY-THURSDAY, FEB. 4-6**

**Spokane Ag Show:** 9 a.m., Spokane Convention Center, 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., Spokane, Wash. Spokane's annual celebration of all things agricultural, with a large ag equipment show and full schedule of presentations that will be of interest to all ranchers and farmers. Online: www.agshow.org

**SATURDAY, FEB. 8**

**Oregon Pork Producers Annual Meeting and Workshops:** 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Oldfield Animal Teaching Facility, 3521 SW Campus Way, Corvallis, Ore. Please email your RSVP by Feb. 1 to ensure enough seminar materials and lunch. Contact: oregonporkproducers@gmail.com

**WSU Extension Forest Owners Winter School:** 9 a.m.-4 p.m. WSU Vancouver Library, 14204 NE Salmon Creek Ave., Vancouver,

Wash. This Forest Owners Winter School will provide an opportunity for landowners to gain experience from experts on a wide variety of topics related to forest management and stewardship. Classes will cover wildfire, forest health, climate change, soils, native tree identification, tribal uses of forestlands, mushroom cultivation, landowner assistance programs, thinning, planting, wildlife, and more. A complete list of classes will be available at forestry.wsu.edu prior to the event. Cost is \$35 per person or \$45 per family. Information: forestry.wsu.edu. Contact: 360-740-1213 or patrick.shults@wsu.edu.

**TUESDAY-THURSDAY, FEB. 11-13**

**World Ag Expo:** 9 a.m., International Agri-Center, 4500 S. Laspina St., Tulare, Calif. World Ag Expo is the world's largest annual agricultural exposition. More than

1,500 exhibitors display the latest in farm equipment, communications and technology on 2.6 million square feet of exhibit space. Free seminars focus on a variety of topics important to dairy producers, farmers, ranchers and agribusiness professionals. www.worldagexpo.com

**WEDNESDAY-THURSDAY, FEB. 12-13**

**Food Processing Expo 2020:** Santa Clara Convention Center, 5001 Great America Parkway, Santa Clara, Calif. California League of Food Producers presents the state's top processing show. Contact: California League of Food Producers, 916-640-8150 Website: www.food-processingexpo.org

**THURSDAY, FEB. 13**

**Landscaping for Fire Prevention:** 1-4 p.m. UI Extension Office, 6447 Kootenai, Bonners

Ferry, Idaho. Rural homeowners can lessen the risk of wildfire damage by modifying their houses and landscaping. Those wishing to pre-register should sign up at the UI Extension office in Boundary County by Feb. 11. Questions: 208-267-3235. Contact: cshnep@uidaho.edu

**TUESDAY, FEB. 18**

**26th Annual Larry Branan Idaho Ag Summit:** 7:10 a.m., Red Lion Downtowner, 1800 W. Fairview Ave., Boise. The 26th Annual Larry Branan Idaho Ag Summit will kick off on Feb. 17 at Boise Centre East with the All Idaho Strolling Supper with Idaho legislators. Feb. 18 at the Red Lion Downtowner features a full agenda of speakers and award presentations for those who have contributed greatly to Idaho agriculture. The keynote speaker is Todd Van Hoose, president and CEO of the Farm Credit Council. Website: www.idahoagsummit.org



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to set the record straight.

Submit upcoming ag-related  
events on www.capitalpress.com  
or by email to newsroom@capital-  
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**MONDAY, FEB. 3**

**Oregon Blueberry Conference:** 8 a.m. Salem Convention Center, 200 Commercial St. SE, Salem, Ore. This is the Oregon blueberry industry's annual meeting and features a variety of presentations and other informational sessions. Contact: http://oregonblueberry.com 503-364-2944

**TUESDAY, FEB. 4**

**Create a FSMA Compliant Food Safety Plan:** 1-4 p.m., Idaho Falls, Idaho Falls. The IFSC is a free program that helps small food processors (500 employees or less) create a FSMA compliant food safety plan during six afternoon sessions spread over 2 months. Idaho Falls course takes place 1-4 p.m. on Feb. 4 and 18, March 3, 17 and 31 and April 14. Janna Hamlett, jannaham-