Nutrient management specialists support Idaho's dairy farmers

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS **Capital Press**

Certified nutrient management planners Megan Satterwhite and Tanya Oldham go to work each day with a mission — to help dairymen be the best environmental stewards.

Dairymen are subject to a lot of environmental rules and regulations, and Satterwhite and Oldham, who work for IDA Consulting Services, help them understand those requirements and stay in compliance, Satter-

"We break it down as to how it affects them and help people work through regulatory issues. It takes a lot of our time," Oldham said.

They also act as a conduit between producers and regulating agencies, facilitating conversations and good relationships.

'That's one of the things she (Oldham) and I do really well," Satterwhite said.

Their primary role is writing or updating nutrient management plans, required by the Idaho State Department of Agriculture for every dairy in the state.

In addition to developing and updating those plans, the two also take soil, manure and lagoon water samples.

"That's not the most glamorous part of the job," Satterwhite said.

It can be dirty and stinky, and a false step can land them knee-deep in cow manure.

You make the best of it and just laugh and shake it off because that's all you can do," she said.

Those samples are necessary to determine nutrient concentrations to make fertilizer recommendations to producers. That allows producers to meet crop input needs and stay in compliance with nutrient management standards.

Their job often takes them to dairies, meeting with producers, doing environmental assessments and taking samples. But Satterwhite and Oldham are also involved in educa-



IDA Consulting Services

Tanya Oldham, left, and Megan Satterwhite while working on soil sampling near Rupert, Idaho, in March 2019.

tion and outreach, putting on producer workshops across the state.

They also attend numerous regional and local meetings on nutrient management and water quality with state agencies, county governments, organizations and advisory groups focused on those issues.

"We just try to represent the producer fairly" and relay the conversations back to producers, Oldham said.

"It's all just trying to get a diverse group of people in the same room to have the conversation," she said.

It also provides IDA Consulting with good ideas and opens up the conversation for everybody else, she said.

Everyone contributes to an environmental issue and it's about working together for a solution today, Satterwhite said.

IDA Consulting has the expertise to offer the science behind some of the discussions and help producers understand the issues, she said.

With science and research backgrounds, Satterwhite and Oldham also participate in research projects with the University of Idaho and USDA Agricultural Research Service.

The university and ARS address the research needs of the industry, and IDA has a really good relationship with both institutions, Satterwhite said.

'Dairy producers are very progressive. They are always open to looking at new technology or changes in cropping rotations," she said.

And there are a lot of advances in manure separation technology and the use of cover crops to increase yields and reduce erosion and runoff. Producers are always open to best management practices to reduce their environmental input, she said.

Oldham said she is amazed at how well dairy producers balance everything on their plate. They have so much to think about, "and the environmental stuff is just one thing," she

But that "environment stuff" is complex and time-consuming, and Satterwhite and Oldham are there to



Western Innovator

TANYA OLDHAM

Position: Nutrient management technician, IDA Consulting Services

Home: Twin Falls, Idaho

Education: Bachelor's degree in plant science with an emphasis in cropping systems, Utah State University, 2017

Family: Single

Background: Grew up on a farm and cattle operation in Levan, Utah; worked for Highland Specialty Grains in Moses Lake, Wash., on a plant breeding program helping to develop new lines of barley, quinoa and buckwheat

MEGAN SATTERWHITE

Position: Director of operations and environmental programs, Idaho Dairymen's Association & IDA Consulting Services

Home: Rogerson, Idaho

Education: Bachelor's degree in agriculture and technology, University of Idaho, 2000; master's degree in natural resources, University of Idaho,

Family: Husband, Kabel; sons Augustus (wife, Colleen), Jacob, Wylie

Other: Part of a family cow-calf operation

Background: Grew up on a farm and cattle operation in Castleford, Idaho; 8 years with University of Idaho Research and Extension Service; involved in research on the long-term impacts of dairy manure applications in a rotational cropping system

ciency," Wiens said. "Just for

Because of their slow growth,

Full-blooded Wagyu cat-

tle normally sell for \$3,000 to

\$30,000, depending on their

pedigree and musculature. Some

of his bulls have brought in more

than \$50,000, with one hitting a

and crossbred Wagyu must be

pasture raised in a low-stress

environment and stay in one

location from birth to slaugh-

ter, the price per pound — up to

\$200 — is substantially more

like other breeds. From birth

to butcher, we put low stress

on every aspect," said Wiens.

"They take more pampering.

I can keep all of the variables

from birth to slaughter the

tle, the price of the meat comes

down, but it is still higher than

commercial meat, as the meat

retains stronger marbling than

other beef. Bryan's custom-

er-base for the meat continues

to grow, as does Wiens' and

"We're trying to give a high

By raising crossbred cat-

'Wagyu can't handle stress

And because both Wagyu

good-tasting meat."

high of \$80,000.

than other beef.

same.'

Homolka's.

the input costs are double.

Capital Press

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Wagyu beef industry small but strong in Kansas The marbling transforms the double any other breed. "They are not bred for effi-

By ALICE MANNETTE The Hutchinson News

money

HUTCHINSON, Kan. (AP) - For Drew Bryan, beef is

In addition to buying the best pork and beef to sell in his butcher shop in Hutchinson four years ago, Bryan decided to add a premium meat — crossbred Wagyu — to the selection.

That's when Bryan, the owner of Jackson Meat, started raising crossbred Wagyu cattle, The Hutchinson News reported. Now, he sells this meat in his

"When we bought the meat market, it gave us the opportunity to raise from farm to table meat," Bryan said. "I always had a small herd (Angus). For me, it's therapy.' Wagyu are a breed of Japa-

nese cattle, valued for their marbled meat. Primarily black, the Wagyu are smaller than most American cattle. According to the American Wagyu Association, approximately 10% of Wagyu are a reddish color. Full-blooded animals have a

pedigree, like dogs, and must be registered with AWA. Each animal has a name, and their heritage can be traced back generations. AWA has more than 700 active members in every state but Alaska.

For crossbred stock, the



Craig Reed/Capital Press File Nori Kanda, left, and Seiya Uezu, pictured in 2018, are the manager and assistant manager of the Masami Cattle Ranch west of Corning, Calif. The ranch is one of a growing number across the U.S. that produce beef from Wagyu and Angus cattle.

rancher buys a Wagyu bull and lets him breed with cows. In Bryan's case, Angus cows.

Other breeds traditionally used for crossbreeding are Holstein and Brahman. In the case of Jim Keller of Terra Cattle of Rose Hill, he is crossing his bull with both Charolais and Angus. Keller is new to this enterprise. He bought his bull two months

"He's very calm," Keller said. "His father was a top sire in Japan."

Like Bryan, Josh Homolka of Scorched Stone Farm in Holyrood, Kansas, near Ellsworth, started his Wagyu operation four years ago. He currently owns two full-blooded Wagyu bulls. Like Bryan, Homolka uses Angus cows for crossbreeding.

Through breeding, he is try-

ing to get from 50% Wagyu to

"Ours are really docile and tame," Homolka said. "They're a good breed to be around."

Some ranchers use artificial insemination, but many who raise Wagyu and crossbred in Kansas prefer to have a bull do the work. When the calves are born, they are half Wagyu and half the other breed.

Consumers pay higher prices for both crossbred and fullblooded Wagyu beef. This is said to be because of its rich flavor and tenderness. Full-blooded Wagyu meat is touted by the industry to have less high oleic acid and lower saturated fat.

The calmer the animals remain, the better the meat.

"You're going to get a better product with less stress on all animals," Homolka said.

flavor, making the meat juicy.

"It's a very high-quality product that no other breed offers," said Robert Williams, executive director of AWA, which is headquartered in Post Falls, Idaho.

Other ranches in Kansas raise full-blooded cattle. Rachael and Bradon Wiens of Meade obtained their first cattle in 2015. One decade ago, brothers Jack and Jerry Cossette of Cossette Farms Gypsum Valley Wagyu near Salina brought their first cows into Kansas.

For Wiens, of Wiens Wagyu, who sells the Wagyu meat directly to the consumer, raising Wagyu is about purity. On his ranch just south of Dodge City, he has several herds of fullblooded Wagyu. Wien also has separate Angus herds.

The Cossettes, on the other hand, have a variety of both half and full-blooded Wagyu. Vince Verland of Bar V Wagyu in Abilene fell in love with Wagyu five years ago. Since then he has expanded his business of selling animals and specimens.

'Our goal at Bar V Wagyu is to furnish the Wagyu world with the top full-blooded embryos genetically available," Verland said. "Our business is selling embryos and semen."

Wagyu, including crossbred Wagyu, head to the butcher after 30 months. This is just about

with participants. Contact: Leanne

Brown, 530-598-4444, sisqbrown@

SATURDAY-SUNDAY,

APRIL 25-26

ily-oriented weekend full of fun-filled

their parents — learn about Oregon

24-25, 2021. Online: http://oragfest.

agriculture. See you next year — April

activities that will help children — and

Oregon Ag Fest Canceled: A fam-

gmail.com

quality product at an affordable price," Homolka said.

> Central Bank Center, 430 W. Vine St., Lexington, Ky. The 36th Alltech Ideas Conference will explore innovative solutions within the global food-supply chain. More than 40 topics are slated for discussion. Website: http://one.all

WEDNESDAY-THURSDAY JUNE 3-4 Stockmanship Clinic: 8 a.m.

Pendleton Convention Center, 1601 Westgate, Pendleton, Ore. This hands-on clinic will focus on practical applications of various livestock handling techniques, why low stress handling is important and helping to design a livestock handling facility for a local ranch. Sponsored by Roots of Resilience and Oregon State University Extension. Contact: Andrea Mann at 509 670-7743 or mannandrea@aol. com, or Beth Robinette at beth@ lazyrbeef.com

Fairgrounds, 110 9th Ave. SW, Puy-

allup, Wash. There will be top quality fleeces and sheep for sale, demonstrations, classes, fiber vendors, and sale of used equipment. Contact: Lin Schwider, 425-432-3455. Email: lin@ shepherds-extravaganza THURSDAY-SUNDAY,

Anaheim Convention Center, 800 W Katella Ave., Anaheim, Calif. California's FFA members will meet and compete and demonstrate their knowledge of agriculture. Website: http://www.calaged.org/stateconvention

Women in Ranching WIRED Program: Yolo Land and Cattle Co., Woodland, Calif. The Northern California Women in Ranching WIRED sympo-

THURSDAY-SATURDAY MAY 14-16 Washington FFA State Convention: Washington State University, Pull-

SUNDAY-TUESDAY MAY 17-19 The Alltech Ideas Conference:

events on www.capitalpress.com or by email to newsroom@capitalpress.com. **SATURDAY, MARCH 28** Goat and Lamb Clinic and Sale:

Submit upcoming ag-related

9 a.m.-noon. Red Pavilion, Scio, Ore.

Learn about animal selection, nutrition and training techniques from guest speaker Jordan Baumgartner. At 1:30-4:30 p.m. a project goat and lamb sale will follow. Clinic registration \$50 or \$100 for family of three or more. Contact: Teri Mckenzie, 503-302-9901, teri@4Mlivestock.com

FRIDAY, APRIL 3 **Biodiversity Conservation Prac-**

tices Conference: 9 a.m.-4 p.m. LaSells Stewart Center, 875 SW 26th St., Corvallis, Ore. A conference on practices that conserve agricultural biodiversity and their benefits in western farming systems for conservationists, farmers and other agricultural professionals. Website: https://bit.ly/2OIDtYW

SATURDAY, APRIL 4 Farm Fest and Plowing Competi-

tion: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Yamhill Valley Heritage Center, 11275 SW Durham Lane. McMinnville, Ore. Yamhill County Historical Society and the Oregon Draft Horse Breeders Association present Farm Fest and Plowing Competition, the largest plowing competition with draft animals on the West Coast. Contact: Raylinda Price, 503-472-2842, events@yamhillcountyhistory.org **FRIDAY, APRIL 10**

AgForestry Class 41 Gradua-

tion Postponed: The celebration the AgForestry Leadership Program's 41st Class will be rescheduled. Contact: Melissa Skomer-Kafton, 509-926-9113 melissa@agforestry.org Website: http:// agforestry.org/graduation-class-41/ THURSDAY-SUNDAY,

APRIL 16-19

Shepherd's Extravaganza: All

day, Spring Fair, Washington State

CALENDAR

APRIL 23-26 California FFA State Convention:

FRIDAY, APRIL 24

sium will be held on April 24 at Yolo Land and Cattle Co. in Woodland, Calif.

Speakers who are experts in their field

have agreed to share their knowledge

man. Washington FFA members will meet and compete, displaying their knowledge of agriculture. Website: http://www.washingtonffa.org