

Klamath Bull Sale a success despite pandemic

By HOLLY DILLEMUTH
For the Capital Press

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. — The annual Klamath Bull Sale generally draws thousands of attendees, but not this year, and for organizers, that's OK.

During the pandemic, the 400 to 500 people attending the sale still made for a strong market, according to Stan Gorden, Klamath Bull Sale organizing chairman and president of the Klamath Cattlemen's Association. While some events were missing Feb. 6 from the 61st Annual Klamath Bull Sale — a horse sale, stock dog trials and ranch rodeo — organizers saw just as many consignors and buyers as in years past.

The bull sale netted a combined \$452,000 in gross sales, according to organizers.

It brought in buyers from the Klamath Basin and around the state, as well as California, Washington and Nevada. About 110 bulls and four pens of five heifers sold at market, with bull prices averag-



Courtesy of Cameron Duncan

The Supreme Champion Bull and Champion Halter Bull, consigned by Country Inn Cattle Co., was bought by Craig and Maria Sharp of Montague, Calif., on Feb. 6. The bull was one of 110 sold at the 61st annual Klamath Bull Sale.

ing \$3,705 and heifers averaging \$2,275.

Chiangus, Lim-Flex, Angus and Red Angus, Charolais, Simmental and Hereford and Polled Hereford were among the breeds brought and sold.

Gorden said he was humbled to see how the industry continues to draw support from com-

munities near and far, despite the pandemic.

"We had bulls from everywhere and we sent bulls back those directions, too," Gorden said. "They're half of the equation of a cow-calf operation. You cannot have a calf without a bull ... and no matter what pandemic's going on, they need bulls in order to create the

beef product that we need to feed America."

For the second year in a row, the sale had an online bidding option, and organizers saw a boost in use.

He emphasized the importance of holding the sale in-person, however, in order to keep the beef industry moving along.

"(Cattle ranchers') livelihoods depend on it," Gorden said.

The bulls sold at the sale are in their prime at two years old and were raised as breeding stock.

"These animals don't sit on a shelf like toilet paper and can't be sold six months from now," he said.

Gorden said the profits may be down slightly this year compared to last, but that won't keep the committee from fulfilling its commitment to fund scholarships for eligible Klamath Basin students. Students can apply as early as March.

"Even though there's a pandemic, that's not going to change the fact that these students are still in need to pay for education and to

continue their education," Gorden said.

Despite the lack of event center activities, organizers still held a trade show with "essential vendors" for the sales of cattle equipment, feed and other products. The Klamath Cattlemen's Association also held a ticketed, drive-thru dinner instead of a sit-down spread.

Organizers believe the changes followed state safety guidelines. Signage encouraged hand sanitizer and masks, with masks available on site, as well as more seating than the sale has ever had. The roll-up doors were all open, Gorden said, promoting air flow during the events.

Glenda and Lee Stilwell of Klamath Falls area-based Country Inn Cattle, consigned the supreme champion bull and champion halter bull at the sale. The bull was purchased by Craig and Maria Sharp of Montague, Calif.

"Glenda serves on our committee also to help put on this bull sale," Gorden said. "They do a tremendous amount of work to pull this off."

Pandemic forces change in animal protein industry

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a historic shift in the U.S. to eating at home, which impacted various sectors of the animal protein industry differently.

With an expected slow recovery in some segments of foodservice, some in the industry will have to realign their marketing plans, return to value-added processes or reduce costs and supply until foodservice normalizes, according to a new report by CoBank.

Foodservice sales declined by more than half in April year over year. They improved in the summer to a decline of 15%, but they were down 22% in December, Will Sawyer, lead animal protein economist with CoBank, told Capital Press.

Those slower sales are



Agri Beef

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted various sectors of the meat industry differently.

really concerning, he said.

Full-service restaurant sales were down 36% year over year in November and 35% to 40% in December, he said.

"Full-service is quite weak, and that's where we're seeing the closures as well," he said.

The National Restaurant Association estimates 110,000 restaurants closed in 2020, and that number will probably increase in the first quarter of 2021 and into the summer, he said.

CoBank expects it'll be the back side of 2022 before foodservice gets to pre-pandemic levels, but there is some good news on that front, he said.

"We don't see COVID going away in its entirety, he said.

But large chain restaurants are saying if restaurants survived and have capital, they'll be able to expand more easily than before the pandemic because of lower real estate costs, he said.

"What's great is that food demand has remained really strong," he said.

In addition, consumers still want convenience. They didn't become great cooks during the pandemic, so they still want value-added products and take-out, he said.

But the pandemic resulted in fewer value-added and convenience products, such as boneless hams. Many of those products still demand a human hand, and absenteeism is a significant issue in meat plants, he said.

Northwest Farm Credit gives \$2 million to UI ag programs

By BRAD CARLSON
Capital Press

Northwest Farm Credit Services has donated \$2 million to the University of Idaho College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, UI announced Feb. 2.

Michael Parrella, the college's dean, mentioned the gift in a Feb. 2 presentation to the Idaho Senate Agricultural Affairs Committee. When industry partners contribute to the college's facilities and programs, investments by the college and Legislature go farther as benefits to local economies, students and the state's agricultural sector increase, he said.

The gift includes \$925,000 to support the planned Agri Beef Meat Science and Innovation Center Honoring Ron Richard, which is planned on the Moscow campus and will serve as the new home for Vandal Brand Meats.

It also included \$25,000 to establish a chapter of national student organization Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences; \$25,000 for student scholarships; \$500,000 for the Idaho Center for Agriculture, Food and the Environment in the Magic Valley;



Michael Parrella

\$500,000 for the Wayne Thiesen Potato Research Professorship Endowment; and \$175,000 for the Idaho

Center for Plant and Soil Health at the Parma Research and Extension Center.

UI "has been an excellent resource for farmers and ranchers throughout the state," Northwest Farm Credit Services Idaho President Doug Robison said in a release. "In addition to providing cutting-edge research, the university provides direct support to Idaho's producers through their extension programs."

He said the contribution to UI will "boost their research efforts and their ability to strengthen all of Idaho's ag sectors. We are excited to see the benefits of our gifts on the university's projects and research."

Parrella said the long history of support from Northwest Farm Credit has helped UI and the college solve problems and identify opportunities for agricultural producers through research and outreach.

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Local Work Group Meeting for Marion County
February 26th, 2021 • 9:00am - 11:00am
650 Hawthorne Ave SE, Suite 130, Salem, OR
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Meeting ID: 818 9324 7527 • Passcode: 099612

For more information call: Les Bachelor 971-273-4816
NRCS will hold their annual Local Work Group Meeting to gather input from farmers, ranchers, state and federal agencies, agriculture, energy, and conservation organizations regarding Farm Bill conservation priorities in Marion County.
Request accommodations for persons with disabilities should be made at least 48 hours before the meeting to Les Bachelor at 971-273-4816.
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