

## MIRANDA DAIRY

## Rising to the challenges

By **BRENNA WIEGAND**  
For the Capital Press

COQUILLE, Ore. — In 20 years, Organic Valley producers Mike and Lisa Miranda increased their milking herd from 22 to 200 and now dedicate 450 acres to growing their own feed.

The Miranda Dairy is also a vibrant part of their community in Coquille, Ore., near the Southern Oregon coast. They make a float for the Christmas parade and host the robust 4-H club their daughter started.

“She loves letting kids have that fair experience and we make sure to have calves for them to show,” Lisa said. “We organized milk for the milk-drinking contest at the fair that has become

quite a big deal with around 140 kids participating.”

On a larger scale, Mike is a 13-year board member and current president of the Oregon Dairy Farmers Association, representing Coos, Jackson, Josephine and Klamath counties.

“Every area has different issues,” Mike Miranda said. “Right now, our area is in a huge drought and a lot of us grow crops on land without any irrigation and the future is looking bleak for some of them.

“I planted this year’s corn early while we still had a little moisture in the ground.”

Keeping an eye on the USDA’s online Drought Monitor provides an overall picture.

“It is a really neat tool, but looking at the whole coun-



**The Miranda Dairy family. Back row, left to right are Matt Miranda (son), dairy owners Lisa and Mike Miranda and their son-in-law Levi Noel. Front row left to right are daughter-in-law Hailie Miranda, grandchildren Caden Hawkins, Kensey Noel, Zayne Miranda and daughter Maegen Noel. The Organic Valley producer milks 200 cows and grows most of its own feed.**

try, it’s scary,” Lisa said. “The Southwest is already in D-4 — ‘Exceptional Drought’ — telling you fire season will be bad.”

During his tenure with ODFA Mike has been astounded at the sheer volume of regulations continually placed on the dairy industry.

“There are a lot of bills that get proposed without any science to back them up; it makes no sense,” Mike said. “A lot of them would like to put us out of business.

“For instance, the diesel bill they were trying to put through,” he said. “How’s that going to work? We can’t operate without it — the trucks can’t come pick up our product; we can’t get our product shipped to us. You can’t support things like that.”

The board is a staunch supporter of Oregon State University’s dairy and food technology program, funding research

on forages, methane emissions, wood chip bioreactors to remove nitrates from tile drainage and the effects of feeding spent hemp biomass to dairy cows. They also fought for and won exemptions from the Corporate Activity Tax for producers.

“As dairy producers we do not have the luxury of passing our costs on to the next person like a trucking or feed company can,” Mike said.

Life on a dairy is demanding but the Mirandas feel fortunate to have so much family involved in the operation.

“It’s not an industry a lot of young people go into because of the hours and the workload,” Lisa said. “The average dairy farmer is over 50. You really have to like the job.”

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