

Kim Brackett: Wears many hats on and off ranch

By HEATHER SMITH THOMAS
For the Capital Press

MARSING, Idaho — Kim Brackett grew up on a ranch in Wyoming, then married Ira Brackett and moved to his family's Idaho ranch in Owyhee County near the Idaho-Oregon-Nevada border.

"We've been here 25 years. Our kids are the sixth generation of Bracketts on this ranch," she said.

This is high desert, with 10 to 12 inches of annual precipitation. "We always seem to be in a drought, trying to manage around it," she said.

Kim is involved with daily ranch work alongside her husband.

"I love to ride and work on the ranch. As the kids got older and insisted on going to school, we got a house that is closer to town (Marsing)."

Her life consists of getting them to practices and games, FFA, 4-H, piano recitals, rodeos and other events.

"I also do all the bookkeeping for the ranch and don't have time to be outside doing all the day-to-day work I once did, and I hate not being able to do that," she said. "I keep asking my youngest son if we could just homeschool him so we'd have more time on the ranch but he isn't sold on that idea!"

Kim also works for the beef industry at the state and national levels. She was chair of the Idaho Beef Council



Courtesy of Kim Brackett

Kim Brackett is part of a sixth-generation ranching operation near Marsing, Idaho.

and went on to chair the National Cattlemen's Beef Board. She's currently vice president of the Idaho Cattle Association.

"I chair the National Beef Quality Assurance Advisory Board and Beef Industry Long-Range Plan Task Force. We created a strategic plan for the industry for the next five years and rolled out that plan last summer," she said.

Kim is also on the management board of the Intermountain West Joint Venture, a collaborative conservation group.

"Their goal is to maintain or increase wildlife habitat and they realize this can't happen unless we have working ranches and rangelands," she said, adding that ranchers are the best conservationists. Without viable ranches these lands would be subdivided and wildlife habitat lost.

"I was hesitant about becoming involved with that group, but have enjoyed sitting at the table with folks with the same goal, of keeping working ranches," he explained. "Idaho became involved with this because of sage grouse."

Kathy Dopps: From school teacher to 'Blueberry Lady'

By ERICK PETERSON
For the Capital Press

HERMISTON, Ore. — As she walked through her blueberry patch, Kathy Dopps reflected on the joy the farm and its visitors give her.

"I love the idea that I have created a place where people want to return year after year," said Dopps, who owns K&K Blueberries with her husband, Ken. "It's enjoyable, and it's a family activity."

Four of her 20 acres of Duke blueberries are U-pick. She started the farm in 2006 and the U-pick in 2008. Some people have visited the farm on a first date and then have returned as married couples. Other people have made an annual tradition of visiting the farm and picking berries every year with their children. Still others visit every morning during the picking season to start their days.

"When people tell me that they are enjoying the blueberries as much as I do, it makes my day," she said, though she also said that it is "a lot of work" and that she must frequently walk through her farm, keeping an eye out for anything that "isn't quite right."

Birds, she said, are a common nuisance. She must also keep up with bookkeeping and certifications.

Dopps, who was born and raised in Hermiston, grew up on a family farm as one of six children. Her parents worked at the nearby Umatilla Chemical Depot.

Her family's farm was small, she said. It consisted of a couple of cows and some chickens and pigs, but it did make her feel connected to her food. Milking cows will do that, she said.

Also, the farm connected her to the community. Her brothers and cousins were all part of 4-H, and she would attend local fairs.



Kathy Dopps



Dave Leder/For the Capital Press

Jacqui Gordon of the Washington State Tree Fruit Association directs a worker safety training video at an east Yakima apple orchard in mid-May.

Jacqui Gordon: Mentors help tree fruit safety advocate

By DAVE LEDER
For the Capital Press

YAKIMA, Wash. — Jacqui Gordon doesn't know where she would be if it weren't for all of the support she has received from other people in Washington state agriculture over the past 10 years.

The Ecuadorian-born horticulturalist came to the U.S. in 2011 as an intern for the Washington Tree Fruit Research Commission and used that experience to earn a master's degree from Washington State University in 2016.

Immediately after graduation, Gordon was hired as the director of training,

education and member services for the Washington State Tree Fruit Association, where she has made an immediate impact by developing a series of bilingual training and outreach programs for growers and packers around the state.

But she admits she never would have reached such heights without the help of mentors such as Ines Hanrahan and Jon DeVaney. Connecting with Hanrahan, the WTFRC executive director, and DeVaney, the WSTFA director, proved to be the catalyst for Gordon to become one of the most influential young women in Washington agriculture.



Brittany Dalton

From left, Buckle, Kyle, Brittany, Rusty and Dallie Dalton.

Brittany Dalton: Hard work pays off for ranch family

By HEATHER SMITH THOMAS
For the Capital Press

CAREY, Idaho — Brittany Dalton grew up on a farm at Carey, Idaho, with 4 sisters and 2 brothers. Her mother was a stay-at-home mom and her dad was an outfitter. When she was little, her dad fed cows with draft teams.

When she was a high school senior her mom was in a car accident, then passed away after being paralyzed for 10 months. Brittany kept the farm running and took care of 2 younger sisters while her dad kept the outfitting business going.

"I stayed close to home, attending College of Southern Idaho, so I could come home and help," Brittany said.

"Every cowgirl's dream is to be a cowboy and that came true for me 10 years ago. Kyle and I fell in love when we met, and were married 7 months later," she said.

Like many young married couples, they had no money, but she had 4 cows.

"We stayed in Carey where we purchased 25 more cows. Kyle worked for an electrician that summer while I helped Dad with the farm and outfitting business," Brittany said.

"A year later we were expecting twins. We moved to the Deseret Ranch in Utah where Kyle cowboied. Then Kyle's dad passed away and we realized we needed to come back closer to family."

They moved back to Carey where Kyle worked for a rancher while Brittany tended the twins, a boy and a girl.

"We built our cow herd over the next few years with the twins in tow. While Kyle day-worked for other ranchers, the twins and I fixed fence, hauled water, moved cows, and tried to keep things going," she said.

She was also part-time bookkeeper for a local welding shop.

Jordyn Coon: Getting agriculture's message out

By BRENNIA WIEGAND
For the Capital Press

SHEDD, Ore. — Jordyn Coon has been involved in agriculture as far back as she can remember.

She is part of the sixth generation at Oak Park Farms in Shedd, Ore. She worked summers on the farm, was an active FFA member, earned an ag science degree from Oregon State University and spent five years working for an international ag company.

"You could say agriculture is kind of a big deal for me," she said. "I enjoyed the work and learning about the process."

She went to OSU with plans to become a high school ag teacher and FFA adviser but that trajectory changed after serving as a National Collegiate Ag Ambassador her junior year, one of just 20 college students selected from around the country. Ambassadors are trained to speak to the public about agriculture and coached on some of the hot topics.

"Then we had to go and present at least 30 hours of ag presentations to basically anyone we could get to sit down with us," Coon said. "I talked to Rotary groups, Lions groups, elementary schoolers and college students; it was a wonderful experience."

"High school ag teachers are my heroes and I respect them so much, but I realized I wanted to speak to the general public about agriculture and help them understand their food supply and other products that come from farms," she said.

She was hired by Syngenta, a global crop protection and seed company, straight out of college and spent more than 5 years on the sales and marketing side, which involved living in three states.

"I was working with PR and advertising agencies learning about messaging and marketing strategy, how to get your brand or message across and realized I could apply that to what I wanted to teach people," she said.

She saw the power of social media platforms as an effective way to educate people on various topics and to create the type of career she hoped to develop. She began writing mostly food-based blogs — on topics such as expiration dates, organics, how to pick the perfect watermelon — through her website, <https://theolivebranch.net/>.

"There are so many pieces to the ag puzzle," Coon said. "I want to help people understand them and let them decide for themselves."



Jordyn Coon

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