



Lee Juillerat/For the Capital Press

Tamara Mitchel says she can find water using brass brazing rods.

Tamara Mitchel: Looking for water

By LEE JUILLERAT
For the Capital Press

DORRIS, Calif. — Some years Tamara Mitchel's phone doesn't ring much. But this year, living in a region where an unprecedented drought has already resulted in water cutoffs to irrigators, the phone has been jingling.

"I've been getting more calls from people asking me to find water because of the drought," Mitchel said between chores at her family's Rising Sun Ranch, a fourth-generation family cattle and sheep ranch outside the Siskiyou County town of Dorris.

Callers are inquiring if she might be able to help them find a valuable commodity, water, something that's in short supply.

For the last 44 years, the

56-year-old Mitchel has been helping people find underground water. The most commonly used term for what she does is water witching, but Mitchel prefers water dowsing because, she insists, no witchcraft is involved.

"I can always find some," Mitchel says of locating water by using her tiny diameter brass brazing rods. When searching, she holds the rods in the palms of her hands, both aimed straight ahead. When she passes over flowing underground water the rods involuntarily, and sometimes abruptly, cross. Based on the intensity of the rod's tug she can determine whether it's enough water to supply the needs of a farm, ranch or home. "Is it going to be 50 feet wide or 2 feet wide?" she asks.



Craig Reed/For the Capital Press

Dixie Williams is both an AI specialist and a nurse.

Dixie Williams: AI specialist helps out ranches, dairies

By CRAIG REED
For the Capital Press

LOOKINGGLASS, Ore. — Dixie Williams is a registered nurse and an artificial insemination specialist.

She's been providing an AI service since 1985 and she's been a nurse since 1989.

She continues to work in both professions.

"I understand the anatomy of both (humans and cows)," said Williams, now 63. "They're pretty similar."

Williams, who was certified by the American Breeders Service, is the only AI specialist who "hangs out my shingle and hands out business cards." Others also AI cows, but they are mainly ranchers who deal with their own herds.

Williams provides the AI service for dairy cows

and beef breeds, but mainly works with red and black Angus and polled Herefords. Most of her work through the years has been in Douglas County, but she has made longer trips, providing her service for one cow or for many.

Williams said providing the service is not a full-time job because many large ranches have bulls. But for people raising their own beef, who have only a few cows, she provides the specialty service.

She said her success rate in breeding cows with AI is 73%.

"It's knowing when cows are in heat, and you have to depend on the livestock owners for that," Williams explained. "That can be difficult, especially when there's only one cow."



Maggie Howard, left, and Carol Pasheilich raise Romney sheep and Murray Grey cattle in Siskiyou County, Calif.

Carol Pasheilich and Maggie Howard: Start ranch from ground up

By JULIA HOLLISTER
For the Capital Press

Twenty years ago two women — who had been friends for many years — had what they thought was a "crazy" idea: Let's start a ranch.

Both were wives and mothers: Carol Pasheilich was an office manager for a consulting company and Maggie Howard was a high school science teacher.

The pair started the Tawanda Ranch in Siskiyou County, Calif., knowing little to nothing about agriculture and livestock. They readily admit that it was a scary step for both of them.

They named the ranch after dialogue from the movie, "Fried Green Tomatoes." The main character yells "Tawanda" every time she does

something scary.

"I think the most unusual fact about the operation is that we are two women in our 70s and 80s who have done this for over 20 years," Pasheilich said. "We are very successful and we are still doing it!"

The ranch has 120 dry and irrigated acres in the Little Shasta Valley. They rotate the grazing: cattle first, then sheep.

The sheep are Romney, a dual purpose breed known for its meat and wool production, and the cows are Murray Grey, a breed that finishes well on grass. A single bull runs with the cows year round.

They sell sheep breeding stock and wool as well as meat. They keep strict records on birth rates and weights, growth rate and fleece quality, color and yield.



Bridget Coon wants to help visitors understand ranching.

Bridget Coon: An advocate for the beef Industry

By HEATHER SMITH THOMAS
For the Capital Press

BENGE, Wash. — Bridget and Paul Coon are part of a family ranch in the Channeled Scablands in eastern Washington, near the small town of Benge. Paul's family has ranched there since the 1950s raising hay and cattle.

The ranch is along Cow Creek, which runs from Sprague Lake to the Snake River and Palouse Falls.

"We're on a dry, rocky patch between the basin and the Palouse,

and our hay ground is irrigated from deep wells," Bridget said.

She and Paul have been married almost 10 years. She grew up in western Washington where her family had a diversified farm and feedlot south of Seattle.

"I feel like I've gone from the most populated area of Washington to the most rural," Bridget said. Her two children attend a two-room school in Benge with 16 other students.

Before she met Paul she went to Washington State University

majoring in political science, planning to become an advocate for agriculture. She went to Washington, D.C., where she worked in public policy and politics.

After she moved back she began working for the Washington State Beef Commission.

The Beef Commission Board was becoming more proactive in confronting animal welfare and environmental issues — explaining the realities of raising beef and busting the myths around how cattle are raised.

"It's great to teach people how to cook a steak but I wanted to use my experience growing up in the consumer area, and bridge both worlds," she said.

On the ranch, she finds herself squarely in the world of cattle.

"I help with everything here at the ranch, as well. We've added a guest cabin for people passing through, and it's a way to help educate the public about ranching. People who come here really enjoy it and have a lot of questions," she said.

FROM THE FARM TO THE BOARDROOM

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