WDFW: Only open-and-shut wolf attacks confirmed

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

Washington Fish and Wildlife officials concede that they likely undercount depredations by wolves, but say the high standard is necessary to maintain scientific integrity and legal certainty.

Even if tracks, scat, radio collars, signs of a struggle and chronic attacks point to wolf packs, department investigators look for hemorrhaging on a dead or an injured animal before confirming a depredation.

In some cases, the cause of injuries is unclear, wounds have started to heal or scavengers beat investigators to the carcass.

"There are livestock killed by wolves that there is not enough evidence for the department to confirm," statewide wolf coordinator Julia Smith told the department's Wolf Advisory Group on July 7.

"There's a full acknowledgement that wolves may kill livestock that the department can't account for," she said.

Southeast Washington rancher Samee Charriere, a member of the advisory group, brought up depredation investigations. Confirmed attacks don't accurately reflect cattle losses, she said.

"The percent loss here was next to none, and now that we have wolves, it is very high," she said. "Those things have to come in to play a little bit, like some commonsense has to come into play, and it doesn't — at all."

WDFW
A Hereford calf in Ferry County, Wash., killed by a wolf.

Wolves scavenge carcasses so even witnessing wolves feeding on an animal doesn't prove they killed it, Fish and Wildlife biologist Trent Roussin said.

"If there is no hemorrhaging, it's essentially impossible for us to say that wolves killed that animal, particularly given that we know how frequently wolves scavenge," he said.

If Fish and Wildlife tallies three attacks by a pack in 30 days or four attacks in 10 months, it will consider shooting a wolf or two to curb the depredations. The department usually doesn't initiate lethal removal until there are more than three or four confirmed attacks.

Before killing wolves, the department gives wolf advocates one day to seek a restraining order in court. Fish and Wildlife attorneys have had to defend the decision in courtrooms far removed from where ranchers are losing animals.

"When we go to confirmed, we do need to see that evidence, it needs to be beyond a reasonable doubt — that that cow or sheep was killed by a wolf," Roussin said.

Advisory group member Dave Duncan, a Kittitas County cattleman, said ranchers are frustrated.

"The present system definitely breeds a lot of hate and contempt and distrust of the department. Now whether there could be a better system or not, I'm not sure," Duncan said.

Good science requires Fish and Wildlife to reserve judgment unless the evidence is clear, Smith said.

"We fully acknowledge that wolves have effects that we can't necessarily document well or account for," she said.

Record-high steel prices hurt ag manufacturers and farmers

By SIERRA DAWN McCLAIN
Capital Press

For decades, the U.S. steel industry has faced job losses, mill closures and foreign competition.

But in 2021, the industry is experiencing a dramatic comeback with steel prices at record highs — good for steel makers, but challenging for agricultural equipment manufacturers and farmers.

"Steel is higher than ever price-wise in history," said Travis Cox, vice president of operations for Tarter Farm and Ranch Equipment, which produces corral panels, feeders and other equipment. "Companies like ours all over the United States are having to pay these super high prices, and there's no negotiation. It's a textbook example of supply and demand."

Evidence of the steel boom can be seen in the S&P 500, where Nucor, the country's largest steel producer, has been a top-performing stock for months.

There are many reasons for the price increase, according to experts.

Trump-era tariffs on foreign steel shifted the balance of power from buyers to sellers. The pandemic, combined with new steelmaking techniques, led to production disruptions right when a nationwide scramble for building materials catapulted demand. Freight and labor expenses have further contributed to high prices.

The biggest concern, agricultural manufacturers say, is that, much like the meatpacking industry, the steel industry is experiencing a major consolidation after many long-timers have gone bankrupt, leaving fewer players with more power. Goldman Sachs predicts that by 2023, about 80% of U.S. steel production will be under the control of five companies.

Ag manufacturers and retailers are already feeling the impacts.

Cox, of Tarter Farm and Ranch Equipment, estimates prices have increased 24-32% across his industry in 2021.

"You can hardly raise prices fast enough to cover what's going on," he said.

Lead times are also challenging. Cox said he's buying material 8 to 16 weeks in advance.

What's surprising, he said, is farmers are still buying, which he believes is because of stimulus checks and other government payouts.

Tim Robinson, a buyer for Coastal Farm & Ranch stores, said Coastal has had to raise prices on steel products four times already in 2021: about a 10% increase each time.

Robinson has also faced supply delays. The stores, he said, are now receiving some products ordered last November and December, and he's about to place orders for the first quarter of next year. Forecasting that far in advance, he said, is "very challenging."

Sam Bugarsky, CEO of Wilco Farm Stores, said his lead times are double or triple what they've been in the past, and the high cost of steel has cut into profit margins.

The steel shortage has also challenged Wilco's own projects. The company is opening a new store in Yakima, Wash., this year, but Bugarsky said it's been hard to secure building materials for the new facility.

Tractor manufacturers, too, are facing production challenges.

Jennifer Hartmann, spokeswoman for John Deere, declined to comment this week on steel prices. Some information, however, can be gleaned from the company's public records. Earlier this year, John Deere noted in its annual corporate outlook that surging steel prices and elevated freight rates could cost the company $500 million during fiscal year 2021.

Former manager of grass seed company sentenced to federal prison

By GEORGE PLAVEN
Capital Press

PORTLAND — The former general manager of a Washington-based grass seed company will serve three years in federal prison, followed by three years of supervised release stemming from a multi-million-dollar fraud case.

Christopher Claypool, 53, of Spokane, was sentenced July 7 in U.S. District Court in Portland. He pleaded guilty in March for conspiring to commit wire fraud and money laundering while managing Jacklin Seed Co. in Liberty Lake, Wash.

Under the terms of his plea agreement, Claypool has already paid nearly $8.3 million in restitution and agreed to forfeit $7.8 million in criminally derived proceeds from his schemes.

Jacklin Seed Co. is a producer and marketer of Pacific Northwest grass seed and turf grass. The company was owned by J.R. Simplot before being acquired by Barenbrug USA in 2020.

As general manager, Claypool oversaw Jacklin's product sales to domestic and foreign distributors, contracted with independent growers in Oregon for the production of proprietary grass seed varieties and fulfilled orders from a distribution facility in Albany, Ore.

According to court documents, between 2013 and 2015, Claypool and other Jacklin employees realized that growers' preference for higher-yield grasses was creating a "substantial shortage" of lower-yield varieties the company had promised to deliver.

Claypool directed employees at the distribution facility to fulfill customer orders using other readily available varieties that were falsely labeled — charging buyers $1.1 million for products they did not receive.

Claypool also directed an accomplice to create a limited liability corporation posing as an independent grass seed broker.

By diverting a portion of Jacklin's overseas sales to a competing grass seed company, ProSeeds Marketing in Jefferson, Ore., that company could then add its own markup to the sales and kick back outsized commissions to Claypool through his accomplice's LLC.

Claypool earned more than $369,000 in fraudulent commissions from December 2018 to August 2019.

In a third scheme, Claypool conspired with the owner of an independent travel agency in Spokane to inflate the costs of Claypool's international business travel, which was designed to defraud Jacklin's former owner, J.R. Simplot.

Rather than using Simplot's contract travel agency, Claypool booked flights through the independent travel agent. The agent booked economy and lower-cost fares for Claypool's trips, but created fake first-class bookings that were billed to Simplot, costing three to four times as much as the actual flights.

In total, the agent overbilled Simplot for more than $500,000 in international airfare, most of which Claypool received in kickbacks.

According to court records, more than $12 million in rebates and commissions from Simplot that were supposedly paid to foreign sales partners were actually directed to bank accounts in Hong Kong that Claypool controlled.

Claypool used the money, accumulated between 2010 and 2016, to purchase four properties in Hawaii that were later sold at a net profit of $9.5 million, which authorities say constituted money laundering.

The maximum sentence for the crimes was 70 years in prison, $15 million in fines and five years probation, though under the plea agreement prosecutors agreed to seek only four years of imprisonment and three years of probation.

The case was investigated by the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation and the USDA Office of Inspector General, and was prosecuted by Ryan W. Bounds, the assistant U.S. attorney for Oregon.

LEGAL

PURSUANT TO ORS CHAPTER 87
Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 07/26/2021. The sale will be held at 10:00am by
COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2013 TOYOTA RAV 4 UT
VIN = JTMBFREV8DD043693
Amount due on lien $1455.00
Reputed owner(s)
ANGELIQUE J & WILLIAM D HOPSON
CENTRAL WILLAMETTE C.U
S253259-1

LEGAL

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Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 07/26/2021. The sale will be held at 10:00am by
COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2019 NISSAN SENTRA 4DR
VIN = 3N1AB7AP7KY284046
Amount due on lien $1455.00
Reputed owner(s)
DANIEL HERNANDEZ ZAMORA
SANTANDER CONSUMER USA
S253260-1

LEGAL

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Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 07/26/2021. The sale will be held at 10:00am by
COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2011 CHEV SUBURBAN UT
VIN = 1GNSKJE36BR235228
Amount due on lien $1455.00
Reputed owner(s)
PAULA ANN & GARY L BUTTS
S253261-1

LEGAL

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Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 07/26/2021. The sale will be held at 10:00am by
COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
1999 PROWLER 22FT R.T
VIN = 1EC1W2221X2395330
Amount due on lien $1455.00
Reputed owner(s)
LORRAINE GAIL OSTROM
S253262-1

LEGAL

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Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 07/26/2021. The sale will be held at 10:00am by
COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2020 HYUNDAI KONA LL
VIN = KM8K3CA5XLU412186
Amount due on lien $1415.00
Reputed owner(s)
ANDREA DAWN HUNT
OREGON COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION
S253269-1

LEGAL

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Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 07/26/2021. The sale will be held at 10:00am by
COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
1999 PROWL RT
VIN = 1EC1W2221X2395330
Amount due on lien $1455.00
Reputed owner(s) LORRAINE GAIL OSTROM
S253270-1

LEGAL

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Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 07/26/2021. The sale will be held at 10:00am by
COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2014 TOYOTA VENZA UT
VIN = 4T3ZA3BB2EU084247
Amount due on lien $1535.00
Reputed owner(s)
STEPHEN H & MARY A AUSTIN
S253272-1

LEGAL

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2001 UTIL REEFER TRLR
VIN = 1UYVS25391U278101
Amount due on lien $1575.00
Reputed owner(s)
GOLD TRANS LLC
S253276-1

LEGAL

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Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 07/26/2021. The sale will be held at 10:00am by
COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2017 CHEV MAL 4DR
VIN = 1G1ZE5ST7HF284032
Amount due on lien $1575.00
Reputed owner(s) J CARMEN GUZMAN-ARROYO
ONPOINT COMMUNITY C.U
S253277-1

LEGAL

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Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 07/26/2021. The sale will be held at 10:00am by
COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2017 CHEV CRUZE 4DR
VIN = 1G1BC5SM8H7213951
Amount due on lien $1575.00
Reputed owner(s)
AUSTIN FRANK GOSSER
RIVERMARK COMMUNITY C.U
S253279-1

LEGAL

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2019 WWTI TRL
VIN = 59H241T22K1000524
Amount due on lien $1415.00
Reputed owner(s)
ADRIAN & MAURILIO PORTILLO
RIVERMARK COMMUNITY CU
S253264-1

LEGAL

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2014 INFINITI Q50 4D
VIN = JN1BV7AR7EM699601
Amount due on lien $1415.00
Reputed owner(s) CARMAX
S253266-1

LEGAL

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2006 FRHT M2-112 TRK
VIN = 1FUJC5CV66HV90739
Amount due on lien $1415.00
Reputed owner(s)
ADAMS TRANSPORT INC
DCFS USA LLC
S253267-1

LEGAL

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2020 FORD FUS 4D
VIN = 3FA6P0RU5LR172160
Amount due on lien $1575.00
Reputed owner(s)
LARRY WESLEY EATON
FORD MOTOR CREDIT COMPANY
S253273-1

LEGAL

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Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 07/26/2021. The sale will be held at 10:00am by
COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2018 KIA SOL UT
VIN = KNDJP3A59J7903574
Amount due on lien $1575.00
Reputed owner(s)
ELIA BACCHIOCCHI & JEREMIAH LASYONE
ELIA JEAN BACCHIOCCHI
S253274-1

LEGAL

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2019 NISS ROGUE UT
VIN = 5N1AT2MV6KC806872
Amount due on lien $1575.00
Reputed owner(s)
GLORI DIANE REDFERN
SANTANDER CONSUMER USA
S253275-1

LEGAL

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2019 KIA FOR 4DR
VIN = 3KPF24AD4KE097467
Amount due on lien $1575.00
Reputed owner(s)
SARAH J GAINEY & BILLI JO AMOS
OREGON COMMUNITY C.U
S253280-1

LEGAL

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2017 TOYT COA 4DR
VIN = 5YFBURHE1HP718935
Amount due on lien $1575.00
Reputed owner(s)
ANA & FERNANDO B DE HARO
PRESTIGE FINANCIAL SERVICES INC
S253281-1

LEGAL

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2019 NISS ROGUE UT
VIN = KNMAT2MV9KP504442
Amount due on lien $1575.00
Reputed owner(s)
TAYLOR MAE DARE
S253282-1