



**A firefighter unrolls hose while working the Bootleg Fire in Southern Oregon.**

## Simplot cattle operation evaluates Bootleg Fire impact

By **BRAD CARLSON**  
Capital Press

Simplot Land & Livestock Group continues to assess cattle and grazing-ground losses from the ongoing Bootleg Fire in southern Oregon.

The company is the country's largest holder of federal grazing permits, President Tom Basabe told a Leadership Idaho Agriculture Congressional Aides Tour audience Aug. 10 at its Grand View, Idaho, headquarters and feedlot.

The Bootleg Fire has had a major impact on federal grazing ground on which Simplot and other permittees operate, he said.

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group said in an Aug. 10 InciWeb report that the 413,765-acre fire was 98% contained. Lightning started it July 6 in the Fremont-Winema National Forest about 15 miles northwest of Beatty, Ore. It later merged with three other fires and impacted state and private land.

The Bootleg Fire started roughly in the middle of Simplot's ZX Ranch, Basabe said in an interview.

The 1.2 million-acre ranch includes U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, state and private land. Simplot runs about 10,000 cattle there, including many summer-grazing cow-calf

pairs. "Neighbors are up there, too," Basabe said. "Everybody went into, 'get the cows out of the way' mode. We all went to work trying to get the cows away from that fire."

Simplot and neighboring ranchers "were all up there side-by-side," he said. "Everybody was trying to help each other."

They worked together to gather and count cows, calves and bulls as best they could given danger, poor visibility from smoke and other challenges.

Basabe said Simplot and other producers are still working to determine how many cattle have been lost. For Simplot, "hopefully the total is not more than a couple hundred, but I don't know that yet."

The Bootleg Fire displaced cattle.

"We're trying to figure out what to do next spring and next summer," Basabe said. "I'm going to have to make some decisions as to where and how many cows that this fire has displaced, and where I am going to put them."

Simplot manages 16 ranches in Idaho, Nevada, Utah, Oregon and Washington. It is the only U.S. company in the top 10 in both cow-calf production and cattle feeding capacity, second and seventh, respectively.



**Tom Basabe**

## Ecology resets schedule for new CAFO permits

By **DON JENKINS**  
Capital Press

The Washington Department of Ecology will revisit how it regulates dairy cow manure, guided by an appeals court decision in June that found fault with the current water-protection rules.

Ecology plans to host public meetings in the fall to begin complying with the ruling by the Court of Appeals Division II. The court said Ecology should require more monitoring to ensure manure isn't contaminating surface water or groundwater.

The ruling went against some positions held by dairies, but Washington State Dairy Federation policy director Jay Gordon said Friday he was happy Ecology won't appeal to the state Supreme Court.

The appeals court ruling was vague, and Washington's high court was unlikely to clarify anything in a way favorable to dairies, he said.



Don Jenkins/Capital Press

**The Washington Department of Ecology will rewrite conditions for a Confined Animal Feeding Operation permit to conform with a court ruling that directed the department to require more water-quality monitoring.**

"It would have likely gotten worse."

Every five years, Ecology rewrites the terms of its Confined Animal Feeding Operation permits. The state Department of Agriculture is the primary regulator of dairy manure. Ecology's CAFO permits are another layer of oversight that's required of dairies that have discharged pol-

lutants into water.

Dairies and other livestock operations also may obtain CAFO permits to guard against lawsuits. Ecology has issued 26 CAFO permits. Washington had 340 licensed dairy herds in 2020, according to the USDA.

The dairy industry wants to keep CAFO permits from bankrupting the dairies that

must have them. Environmental groups contended the permits are too lax and were by cheered the court's opinion.

The ruling, however, will delay new rules. The current permits were due to expire in March 2022. Ecology was about to propose new permit conditions when the appeals court ruled.

"We pressed pause," Ecology spokeswoman Colleen Keltz said.

The agency anticipates having a proposal out next spring and adopting new permits by the end of 2022. In the meantime, the old permits will stay in effect.

Jean Mendoza, executive director of Friends of Toppenish Creek, one of the environmental groups that brought the case to the appeals court, said she supported Ecology's revised schedule.

"This is going to be a difficult process, and it's going to take a lot of back and forth to get a reasonable proposal," she said.

## Beef, pork exports fire on all cylinders

By **CAROL RYAN DUMAS**  
Capital Press

U.S. red meat exports closed the first half of the year on a strong note. Although volume and value eased from the hefty totals posted in April and May, total export value was still the highest on record for June.

In addition, beef and pork export volumes in the first half of the year established a record pace, according to the U.S. Meat Export Federation.

"USMEF had expected a continued strong performance in June for both beef and pork exports, despite significant headwinds," Dan Halstrom, USMEF president and CEO, said in a press release accompanying the latest data.

This year has presented formidable challenges for the U.S. industry, including a tight labor situation, logistical obstacles and foodser-

vice restrictions in many key markets, he said.

"So the fact that first-half exports reached record levels speaks to the loyalty of our international customer base, strong consumer demand for high-quality, nutritious U.S. red meat and the U.S. industry's ability to adapt to a challenging and rapidly changing business climate," he said.

U.S. exporters have also seen a welcome rebound in beef and pork variety meat volumes, which were down last year due to the pandemic, he said.

June beef exports at 112,249 metric tons were up 42% from a year ago when exports were still hampered by a COVID-related slowdown in production. Those export values, at \$804.4 million, were up 68% from a year ago and

the third-highest on record after April and May of this year.

First-half beef exports reached 700,087 metric tons — up 18% from a year ago — valued at \$4.64 billion, up 28%. Compared to 2018, the record year for U.S. beef exports, first-half results were up 6% in volume and 15% in value.

Beef exports were led by an exceptional performance in South Korea, rapid growth in China, strong demand in Japan and Taiwan and a rebound in shipments to Mexico and Central and South America.

Beef exports in the first half of the year accounted for \$359.49 per U.S. head slaughtered and 13.6% of total U.S. beef production.

Pork exports reached 238,935 metric tons in June, up 15% from a year

ago, while export value climbed 35% to \$696.8 million. First-half pork exports topped last year's record pace by 1% at 1.58 million metric tons and were valued at \$4.33 billion, up 7%.

While China/Hong Kong remains the largest destination for U.S. pork in 2021, first-half export growth was led by Mexico and Central America, along with a sharp increase in shipments to the Philippines and Colombia. Pork exports also increased to Japan and South Korea.

Pork exports in the first half of the year accounted for \$67.04 per U.S. head slaughtered and 31.4% of total U.S. pork production.

June exports of U.S. lamb were 37% below last year at 1,083 metric tons, but still managed a slight increase in value to \$1.6 million.



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