

Doerfler Farms sold to Victor Point Farms

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
Capital Press

SUBLIMITY, Ore. — As longtime friends, neighbors and fellow farmers, the Doerfler and Rue families have spent generations producing high-quality grass seed in the fertile Willamette Valley.

It only made sense then, as siblings Kent, Kevin and Amy Doerfler were looking forward to the next chapter of their lives, that they would turn to the Rues to carry on the legacy.

On Dec. 16, Doerfler Farms was sold to Victor Point Farms — operated by Joel Rue and his sons Jesse, Lucas and Ben. The sale includes all machinery, seed contracts and land leases. Financial terms were not released.

“It’s going to be a gradual transition,” Amy Doerfler told the Capital Press. “My brothers and I will continue on as consultants for several years to ensure Victor Point Farms’ success.”

Joel Rue said the deal allows them to grow and sustain Victor Point Farms, keeping it in the family for generations to come.

“We’ve recently put together our own succession plan,” he said. “We were maxing out our potential with the acres we were farming and the personnel we had. ... This provided an opportunity for all three boys to stay on the farm.”

Headquartered near Sublimity, Ore., Doerfler Farms is a large grass seed operation that stretches about 40 miles across Marion and Linn counties in a region nicknamed “the grass seed capital of the world.”

In 1973, when Bob Doerfler took over his family’s farm, he made the pivotal transition from raising livestock to growing grass seed.

Over the next 30 years, Bob Doerfler grew the farm tenfold. When he died in 2003, his children, Kent, Kevin and Amy, worked



From left are Kent Doerfler, Lucas Rue, Amy Doerfler, Joel Rue, Donna Rue, Ben Rue, Jesse Rue and Kevin Doerfler. Victor Point Farms, owned by the Rue family, has purchased Doerfler Farms.

toward diversifying markets and increasing efficiency.

According to its website, Doerfler Farms now grows several grass seed varieties, which are shipped around the globe, and wheat and cover crops.

Amy Doerfler said the family has spent a long time thinking about succession planning. Though the siblings

have children, most have moved away and are pursuing careers outside farming.

“It takes a united team to run this place,” she said. “So we looked outside of the family.”

The family explored several options, though none of them seemed quite right, Amy Doerfler said. They wanted to keep the business locally

owned and make sure new owners would take care of the landowners and employees.

“We didn’t want to see an outside buyer come in,” Doerfler said.

At the same time, Doerfler said they wanted to start the transition now, while they are still young enough to help set up their successors for success.

“We don’t want to wait until something happens to one of us and then we’re in a panic to find a buyer,” she said.

Conversations between the families began just before this year’s harvest, Joel Rue said. He credited Amy Doerfler for pushing the deal to fruition.

“We went into this as friends and neighbors, not as competitors,” Joel Rue said.

Victor Point Farms, headquartered in Silverton, Ore., also traces its roots back generations to 1910, when Knute Rue established the farm specializing in growing loganberries, hops and livestock.

Today, Joel and his sons Jesse, Lucas and Ben run the farm, predominately growing grass seed. The three brothers also have young children who have taken an interest in farming and are part of the succession plan.

As part of the sale, Doerfler Farms employees will be retained by Victor Point Farms. The Doerflers will maintain ownership of all other properties they own, and for the time being will maintain ownership of Doerfler Tractor Sales, a tillage equipment dealership based in nearby Aumsville, Ore.

The families behind Doerfler Farms and Victor Point Farms share the same values, goals and principles, Amy Doerfler said, which made the sale a natural fit.

“Both of our organizations are very involved in the community, and really care about the landowners and the employees,” she said. “It’s about taking care of people and the community.”

Easterday family lawyer: Maybe Tyson wronged us

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

Former Washington cattleman Cody Easterday, awaiting sentencing for defrauding Tyson Fresh Meats, may have been a victim of price-fixing by Tyson, a lawyer said in court Wednesday, a claim rebuffed by a Tyson representative.

Attorney Timothy Conway, representing Cody’s mother, Karen Easterday, pointed to a lawsuit in Minnesota that alleges Tyson and three other packers depressed cattle prices.

The Easterdays sold cattle from the family-owned feedlot near Pasco to Tyson, until the company discovered Cody Easterday was billing it for non-existent cattle.

Nevertheless, if the anti-trust allegations are proven, the Easterdays could share in a large settlement, Conway told U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Whitman Holt in Yakima.

Tyson attorney Al Smith called Conway’s claim an “irrelevant cheap shot.” He said the Easterday family was angling to dodge paying \$233 million in restitution to Tyson.

“They are trying to complicate things to avoid their own liability here,” Smith told the judge. “Your honor, they are just trying to throw sand into the works.”

Cody Easterday filed for bankruptcy last year shortly before pleading guilty to selling Tyson about 200,000 head of what federal prosecutors called “ghost cattle.” He is scheduled to be sentenced for wire fraud in January.

Meanwhile, the family’s extensive farm and ranch operations in the Columbia Basin are being sold. The proceeds have yet to be



Cody Easterday

George Plaven/Capital Press File

divided among Tyson, other creditors and the Easterday family.

Conway said the bankruptcy attorneys working on an allocation plan should look into allegations in the antitrust lawsuit in Minnesota.

The suit, led by R-CALF and the National Farmers Union, alleges Tyson, JBS, Cargill and National Beef conspired to lower cattle prices beginning in 2015.

U.S. District Judge John Tunheim ruled in September that the plaintiffs have presented enough evidence for the case to proceed.

The evidence includes testimony from two anonymous meat-packing insiders identified in court papers as “Jason F.” and “Matt T.”

Conway said Cody Easterday may have been doubly victimized because the conspiracy also allegedly lowered prices for cattle sold through the Chicago Mercantile Exchange.

Federal prosecutors said Easterday sold Tyson the non-existent cattle to cover his losses trading in cattle futures contracts listed on the exchange.

Separate from defrauding Tyson, Easterday has been charged with filing false reports to the exchange to further his speculation.

Richard Pachulski, the

lead attorney working on allocating the proceeds from selling the Easterday property, said Tyson’s claims against Easterday have been investigated.

“We’re kind of done going through rabbit holes in trying to figure out claims because the Easterdays don’t like that Tyson is actually getting paid after being defrauded,” he said.

Conway said the claims in the antitrust lawsuit were significant. “Terming it a ‘rabbit hole’ is rather astonishing,” he said.

The exchange came during a monthly conference on the status of the bankruptcy case. There was no motion for Holt to rule on.

In a written status report, bankruptcy attorneys said Karen Easterday was refusing to help appraise the family’s remaining real estate, including 1,000 acres of “lakeside property in Idaho.”

Conway denied Karen Easterday was refusing to cooperate. In a written response, he said the land in Idaho was “unimproved ranch land, not resort property.”

The Easterdays will sell their one-sixth interest in a hangar at the Tri-Cities Airport in Pasco for \$270,000 to Omaha LLC. Holt approved the sale Wednesday.

Oregon adopts ‘Climate Protection Program’ to limit fuel-related emissions

By **SIERRA DAWN MCCLAIN**
Capital Press

SALEM — Oregon’s Environmental Quality Commission, or EQC, a governor-appointed panel, voted 3-to-1 on Dec. 1 to approve the “Climate Protection Program,” a sweeping plan aimed at cutting greenhouse gas emissions by regulating fuel-related pollution.

The move is controversial and sparked more than 7,600 comments from Oregonians during the public comment period, according to Department of Environmental Quality staff.

Climate activists say the new rules are long overdue and may not be extensive enough. Critics say the program has the potential to

significantly increase fuel prices, impacting all Oregonians and disproportionately hurting sectors that rely on transportation, including agriculture.

The plan, which will be phased in starting Jan. 1, 2022, will require fuel suppliers in Oregon to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the products they sell 50% by 2035 and 90% by 2050.

DEQ will issue free compliance credits to fuel suppliers covering each metric ton of carbon dioxide emitted from burning the fuel they sell.

The allowable emission cap will become smaller each year, forcing suppliers to substitute “cleaner” options for fossil fuels, raise prices to lessen demand or

purchase alternative credits.

The plan was developed by DEQ after Republican walkouts in 2019 and 2020 killed efforts to pass economy-wide “cap and trade” legislation.

After the walkouts, Gov. Kate Brown outflanked Republicans with a far-reaching use of her executive powers to achieve the same general goals. March of 2020, she signed an executive order directing agencies to craft a plan to regulate emissions.

A year and nine months later, commissioners voted to approve the new rules.

“I’m proud that today, Oregon is taking the historic step to put tools in place to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions,” Brown said in a statement.

Big Iron AUCTIONS **HUGE END OF YEAR! AUCTIONS!**

OVER 6,600 ITEMS FOR SALE!

<p>CLOSING ON DEC 29TH</p> <p>Gary Galt Spanish Fork, UT</p>	<p>CLOSING ON DEC 29TH</p> <p>Carlos Ensz Bruneau, ID</p>
<p>CLOSING ON DEC 29TH</p> <p>Jo Ann Cooper Nampa, ID</p>	<p>CLOSING ON DEC 29TH</p> <p>Renter Center Twin Falls, ID</p>
<p>CLOSING ON DEC 29TH</p> <p>BS Compost LLC Carpenter, WY</p>	<p>CLOSING ON DEC 29TH</p> <p>Knudson Land & Livestock Buffalo, WY</p>
<p>CLOSING ON DEC 29TH</p> <p>John Hansen Buffalo, WY</p>	<p>CLOSING ON DEC 29TH</p> <p>John Hansen Buffalo, WY</p>
<p>CLOSING ON DEC 30TH</p> <p>Fieldgrove Ranch Buffalo, WY</p>	<p>CLOSING ON DEC 30TH</p> <p>Farnsworth Services Co Inc Newcastle, WY</p>
<p>CLOSING ON DEC 30TH</p> <p>Vermilyea Farms Douglas, WY</p>	<p>CLOSING ON DEC 30TH</p> <p>Anzalone Drilling And Pumps Newcastle, UT</p>

TWO DAYS! - DECEMBER 29TH & 30TH

Got Equipment to Sell?
(800) 937-3558 | www.bigiron.com

Capital Press
EMPOWERING PRODUCERS OF FOOD & FIBER

Trade Show Help Needed

We are seeking temporary employees for the Northwest Ag Show January 12-14, 2022 at the Oregon State Fairgrounds & Expo in Salem.

The job duties include and are not limited to: greeting people at the door as they enter and exit, handing out swag bags and general vendor assistance.

Dates and times are:

Tuesday, Jan. 11: orientation and training, times vary

Wednesday, Jan. 12: 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 13: 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 14: 8:30 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

\$100 completion bonus for those who work all shifts.

Go here to apply: <https://www.applicantpro.com/openings/eomediagroup/jobs/2139921-429357>

S274218-1

S274096-1