

People & Places

Horse vet inspires generations of large-animal veterinarians

By SIERRA DAWN McCLAIN
Capital Press

NEWBERG, Ore. — In his cramped office inside a horse barn, Dr. Jack Root, owner of Oakhurst Equine Veterinary Services in Newberg, was scratching out a drawing.

His client, Jean Marie Marsh, leaned in, watching the veterinarian sketch a horse's spine. As he drew, Root described to Marsh how he would perform incisions on her horse for a procedure called "kissing spine surgery," intended to correct "kissing," or overlapping, spinal vertebrae.

Root, 68, has performed more than 100 of these surgeries using a technique and surgical tools he invented. Compared to traditional kissing spine surgery, Root's method is gentler and less expensive.

"He is one of the few vets in the nation that has this down," said Marsh.

Root is widely considered to be an innovator in his field, and his work has created ripple effects in farming communities across the Northwest. Root is a farmer, expert horseman and accomplished equine veterinarian whose legacy includes inventing new surgical methods, treating lameness, developing famed genetic lines and training the next generation of large-animal veterinarians.

On the morning the Capital Press visited, Root's schedule was packed: collect-



Sierra Dawn McClain/Capital Press

Dr. Jack Root feeds a tube into a horse's nose. Riley Erickson, right, veterinary assistant, helps.



Dr. Jack Root

ing semen from a stallion to ship to Texas; treating a horse with a blocked intestine; checking the health of a day-old foal; and between veterinary tasks, feeding farm animals.

"Ehhh — Monday mornings," he said.

He shook his head and chuckled.

Outside veterinary work, Root and his wife, Cookie, run a working farm with cattle and pigs on 147 acres in Newberg that they bought in 1996.

"This is both a veterinary practice and a working farm. I love that about it," said Cookie Root.

Horses, however, are Jack Root's favorite animal — he has 35 of them. Root even kept two Kentucky Derby winners as studs at Oakhurst: Giacomo, the 2005 winner, and Grindstone, the 1996 winner, who died in March.

Root's love for horses started when he got his first horse at age 6. By age 9, he knew he wanted to be a vet.

He was captivated by race horses since early childhood and got his first Thoroughbred broodmare while an undergraduate at Oregon State University.

Root studied veterinary medicine at Iowa State University, interned with equine veterinarians around the U.S., then returned to Oregon, where he set up a practice in 1979.

Today, Root's passion

includes training young large-animal veterinarians.

"There are fewer and fewer people doing large-animal practice," he said.

Root has seven veterinarians on staff at Oakhurst. They help one another and draw from Root's wealth of knowledge.

One of the biggest challenges rural veterinarians face, Root said, is lack of work-life balance. To combat burnout, Root has his veterinarians take turns with emergency shifts.

Root said he knows that's not possible for everyone, but he encourages even solo vets in rural regions to connect with other nearby vets and form partnerships, covering each other's emergency shifts.

Root told the Capital Press that he has a neurolog-



DR. JACK ROOT

Hometown: Born in Durango, Colo. Childhood in Farmington, N.M. Moved to Oregon in high school.

Age: 68

Education: Joint B.S. degrees in biology and general science from Oregon State University, 1974. Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine from Iowa State University, 1978. Currently pursuing certification in International Society of Equine Locomotor Pathology (ISELP).

Occupation: Equine veterinarian and owner of Oakhurst Equine Veterinary Services in Newberg, Ore.

Family: Cookie Root, his wife, and four sons

ical autoimmune disease that almost took his life at one point, but he survived and was able to continue teaching young veterinarians.

"I think God sent me back from the edge of death to make these young people into vets, so that's what I'm trying to do," he said.

Community college students cruise timber to determine its volume

By CRAIG REED
For the Capital Press

ROSEBURG, Ore. — Four Umpqua Community College Forestry Club students took a recent break from classroom work to take a cruise — through the timber.

They were able to experience an actual boots-on-the-ground timber cruise and do the work themselves on 57 acres of private property several miles northwest of Roseburg. Their goal was to estimate the volume and value of merchantable timber on a steep north facing slope that was a mix of Douglas fir and incense cedar trees.

Timber cruising normally involves only coming up with a volume of board-feet figure, but Isaac Cherry, the project leader and a UCC freshman, planned to add an extra step and determine a value estimate for the timber.



Craig Reed/For the Capital Press

Javier Goirigolzarri, left, discusses timber data with Umpqua Community College students Isaac Cherry and Joe Godawa during a recent timber cruise. Goirigolzarri, a professional forester, was helping the students learn the basics of timber cruising.

"Knowing the price (from a sawmill) per thousand board-feet per species and including logging and trucking costs, you can figure the value of the stand for that species," he said.

"Being out here is

extremely valuable," Cherry said of taking data from random plots within the acreage. "It's an experience where you're able to connect technical knowledge from the classroom with real world job experience."

Each plot was 1/20th of an acre and all merchantable trees within the plots were recorded. After locating each plot using GPS, the students measured a radius out to 26.3 feet to identify the plot boundary. Then the species, diameter and height measurements of each tree that measured 10 inches or greater in diameter at chest height within that area were recorded. A hypsometer was used to measure the height of the trees.

The project came about when Cherry, who is majoring in forest management, was asked by a family friend if he'd be interested in cruising the timbered property. Cherry accepted the challenge. He contacted Javier Goirigolzarri, a forestry consultant who owns Resource Management Services in Roseburg, for advisory help.

Goirigolzarri volunteered his time, meeting with

Cherry to discuss mapping of the property and marking desired plot locations with GPS. On the day of the timber cruise, Forestry Club members Jake Gerrard, Joe Godawa and Thomas Williams joined Cherry and Goirigolzarri for the hike in the woods.

"They've done the classroom work and had occasional field trips, but this was actually getting out on the ground and doing it," Goirigolzarri said. "It adds to their depth of understanding, the practical experience any student needs to develop into a professional."

"I was truly impressed with these guys and their eagerness to learn more about forestry ... whatever aspect they decide to pursue," he added. "Their objective was to learn about timber cruising, but they were eager to talk about so many other aspects of forestry."

Greater Idaho map shrinks after primary election

By JOE SIESS
EO Media Group

The Greater Idaho movement reconfigured its map after two coastal and southern Oregon counties rejected ballot measures last week that would have required county commissioners to study becoming part of a different state.

While the setback does not spell the end for the Greater Idaho movement, which seeks to move the border of Idaho to include all of Eastern Oregon, it is a sign most of the people who hope to see the movement succeed are in rural counties east of the Cascades.

The likelihood the border would be changed is remote, as it would require the approval of the Oregon and Idaho legislatures and Congress, but for the movement's leaders, part of the point is to send a message to

Salem and to get more rural Oregonians to the ballot box.

The movement's new map now excludes Douglas, Coos, Curry, Josephine and Jackson counties, but includes nearly everything east of the Deschutes River. The Bend area would remain in Oregon, but other parts of Deschutes, Jefferson, and Wasco counties would be annexed to Idaho. Most of Klamath County, which in Tuesday's election became the ninth county to support the movement, would be annexed as well.

Jefferson County narrowly approved the Greater Idaho ballot measure in 2020. It asked county residents if they wanted the Jefferson County Commission to meet twice a year to discuss the initiative.

Kelly Simmelink, a Jefferson County commissioner, said while he is willing to do what he can to

honor the people's vote, he does not have high hopes for the movement's success.

"I applaud the efforts of people that want to be represented," Simmelink said. "I get it. Eastern Oregon, anything east of the Cascades, has a long record of being underrepresented."

"We need to make Oregon work for all of us. ... I want my Oregon to be the best it can be. The state is run in a fashion that it is a one size fits all, and what works in Multnomah County doesn't work in Jefferson...."

Mike McCarter, president of the Greater Idaho effort, said the movement intends to push forward, and the main goal at this point is to start the conversation in the state Legislature.

"We are working hard trying to find the champions in the state Legislature that want to start the discus-

sion," McCarter said. "I think that what we are doing does send a message to the Oregon Legislature that they need to work across the state."

McCarter said the movement's intention from the beginning was never to force an issue on anybody, but getting it on the ballot was an important step in figuring out where the focus should be moving forward.

"Our move right now, we have ready to turn in the signatures for Morrow County, to get them on the ballot in November," McCarter said. "And we have signatures lined up to put Wallowa County on next May's election. And we are trying to work with Wheeler and Gilliam counties to get them a petition going so we can get them on the ballot."

"So, we are going to continue on. This is not a step back. It's maybe a change of direction a little more," he added.

CALENDAR

Submit upcoming ag-related events on www.capitalpress.com or by email to newsroom@capitalpress.com.

MONDAY-TUESDAY JUNE 6-7
Idaho Cattle Association Summer Roundup: Red Lion Hotel, Pocatello, Idaho. The conference will focus on industry issues. Website: <https://www.idahocattle.org>
Idaho Water Users Associa-

tion summer seminar: Sun Valley, Idaho, Resort. The seminar covers water law and water resource issues. Website: <https://www.iwua.org>

TUESDAY JUNE 7
NRCS Idaho State Technical Advisory Committee Meeting (online): 9 a.m.-noon. The committee meets quarterly to advise the Natural Resources Conservation Service and other USDA agencies

on carrying out natural resource conservation provisions of the federal Farm Bill. Includes representatives of federal and state resource agencies, tribes, agricultural and environmental organizations. Website: <https://bit.ly/3sHRJvT> Contact: Mindi Rambo, Mindi.Rambo@usda.gov

WEDNESDAY- FRIDAY JUNE 8-10
World Pork Expo: Iowa State

Fairgrounds, Des Moines. The world's largest pork industry trade show will feature education, innovation and networking. Website: <https://www.worldpork.org>

FRIDAY-SATURDAY JUNE 10-11
Lind Combine Demolition Derby: Starts at 6 p.m. Friday and 10:45 a.m. Saturday at the Lind, Wash., Arena. Join the fun for this year's Combine Demolition Derby

and truck races. Website: www.lind-combinederby.com

SATURDAY JUNE 11
Forest and Range Owners Field Day: 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Casa Becca del Norte Tree Farm, 2716 Moser Road, Chewelah, Wash. Washington State University Extension field day offers information specific to landowners' needs. Cost: \$30-50. Contact: Sean Alexander, 509-680-0358, sean.alexander@wsu.edu

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