

Rancher in wolf country wonders what else he must do

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

Wolves are attacking northeast Washington rancher Jake Nelson's cattle and he said May 26 that he doubts the Department of Fish and Wildlife will ever be satisfied with his non-lethal efforts to ward them off.

The Togo pack recently killed one calf and injured another in a pasture. The predations were the fourth and fifth in the past 10 months and crossed the numerical threshold for the department to consider removing a wolf or two.

In the week leading up to the attacks, Nelson said he or an employee was in the pasture at least six hours a day. A state-funded range-rider was there four hours on every other day.

Fish and Wildlife concluded Nelson didn't disclose enough details — such as the exact times he was in the pasture, and detailed descriptions of what he was

doing and what he saw — to count his presence as a non-lethal deterrent.

As a result, Fish and Wildlife declined to resort to lethal control.

"I think they'll always come up with something more we have to do," Nelson said. "It leaves us in a tight spot."

Nelson said he tried to accommodate the department by reporting that he was in the pastures doing "livestock husbandry practices." He also reported seeing wolf signs and "restless cattle."

Nelson said he drew the line at providing all the details — including essentially a timetable — that Fish and Wildlife requires of state-funded range-riders.

"I told them I wouldn't do it. I don't work for them," he said. "They wouldn't take my word on it. I didn't like that none too much."

He said he also was concerned that if he supplied the details Fish and Wildlife



Sarah Bassing/University of Washington

A northeast Washington rancher whose cattle are being attacked by the Togo wolf pack says state officials aren't satisfied with the non-lethal efforts he's taking to ward off the attacks.

wanted about his daily activities, it would set a precedent for other ranchers. "It would be the new standard," he said.

Fish and Wildlife policy calls for "near daily" cattle monitoring to prevent predations from escalating to the point that the department shoots wolves as a last resort.

The definition is flexible, but generally means checking cattle four to five times a week. The department is conscious that its lethal-control decisions may be scrutinized in court and requires state-funded range-riders to submit logs.

Fish and Wildlife wolf policy coordinator Julia Smith said the department

has not imposed the requirement on ranchers. She said that removing wolves in the Togo pack remains an option.

"If depredations continue, WDFW will consider any appropriate reactive measures to mitigate further conflict, including lethal control," she said in an email.

Wolf advocates are pushing for a rule that puts more requirements on ranchers. It's already happening, said Scott Nielsen, manager of the state-funded Cattle Producers of Washington wolf-livestock monitoring program.

The Cattle Producers supplied the range-rider for Jake Nelson's pasture. Nielsen agreed that the Cattle Producers employee by himself was not enough to satisfy the department's near-daily requirement.

The employee, however, supplemented the rancher's presence, Nielsen said. Between them, the near-

daily standard was being met, he said.

"In this area, we are being treated differently," Nielsen said. "It's not WDFW's place to manage ranchers, and that's where we're going."

Nielsen said that if ranchers can't satisfy Fish and Wildlife that they're watching cattle on spring pastures, they won't have much chance of pleasing the department when cattle move to larger summer grazing allotments.

Nelson said he knows Fish and Wildlife didn't like his response to their requests. "Quite frankly, I made a lot of people in the department mad by not doing those two things," he said.

The rancher said that even if he did everything the department wanted, it wouldn't have changed the department's decision. "I'm sure they would have asked for something else," he said.

Field day highlights WSU's turf grass research

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

The state Turfgrass Seed Commission and Washington State University will host a field day to highlight the latest advances at WSU's Turfgrass Breeding and Ecology farm.

The event will be at 9 a.m. June 9 in Pullman.

"We built this farm during COVID, so we really haven't had the opportunity to show what we've accomplished, and what our dream is, to the community," said Michael Neff, WSU professor and grass breeding project leader. "I am beyond where I wanted to be. I could not have imagined how well my team works together and how much we've accomplished, given the restrictions we've had to deal with. We've really been operating full steam ahead, even at the peak of COVID."

A large percentage of the grass seed used worldwide is



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press File

Washington State University professor Michael Neff looks over the turf grass breeding and ecology farm on March 10, 2021, in Pullman. The state Turf Grass Seed Commission and Neff will highlight WSU's breeding program on June 9.

grown in Washington, Neff said.

A third of the farm is devoted to Kentucky bluegrass.

Neff is working to address climate change, flowering and seed yield.

"When we have mild winters, the yields the following year can be lower," he said. "The cold winter triggers the plants to make flowers."

He's working to identify Kentucky bluegrass varieties with a low vernalization requirement. Vernalization refers to the plant's ability to flower.

"As we think about warmer winters, this is something that can have a huge impact on seed

production in this area," he said.

A no-burn variety, Matchless, will be available to farmers in the fall.

The variety has been 20 years in the making, beginning with the work of researchers William Johnston and R.C. Johnson, who developed a Kentucky bluegrass that doesn't require field burning after harvest.

Other WSU varieties are in the works, Neff said.

"It's an amazing plant, it has fascinating biology," he said.

During the pandemic, demand for turf grass seed increased, said Travis Meacham, chairman of the turfgrass seed commission board and a

Moses Lake farmer.

"A lot of people were staying home and looking for projects, and home improvement projects were really strong," he said. "That ate up a lot of that supply that was out there. A low supply now has made a nice demand for our product."

Turf grass seed farmers are struggling with increased input costs and availability of products, Meacham said.

"All the challenges we have have also come into our industry as opportunities," he said. "Pricing to growers in this last year or so has actually been pretty favorable."

WSU's research farm will further strengthen the industry, Meacham said.

Roughly 90 farms grow Kentucky bluegrass seed in Washington, according to the commission.

WSU is also working on native grasses, prairie junegrass and tufted hairgrass. The farm is also hosting a fine fescue variety trial for the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program, Neff said.

The field day is open to farmers and end-users. Pre-registration is recommended to get a head count for a noon lunch. For more information, contact the commission at 509-585-5460 by close of business May 30 or Neff at mmneff@wsu.edu.

Global conglomerate settles lawsuit against NW grain cooperative

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

A global agribusiness conglomerate has settled its lawsuit against a Northwest wheat farmers cooperative over the alleged breach of a flour milling contract.

A federal judge has dismissed a complaint filed by the Archer Daniels Midland crop processing and trading corporation against Columbia Plateau Producers of Reedman, Wash., after the parties struck an undisclosed settlement deal.

In 2020, ADM filed a complaint against the cooperative for switching to another milling company, Grain Craft, for processing its sustainably grown Shepherd's Grain flour products.

The company sought a preliminary injunction to stop the cooperative from changing processors but that request was denied, with U.S. District Judge Thomas O. Rice ruling that it wasn't likely to prevail in the lawsuit or suf-

fer irreparable harm without an injunction.

In an answer to ADM's complaint, the cooperative admitted to terminating the contract but only after the processor had violated the agreement's terms. The cooperative also filed counterclaims against ADM, alleging that it failed to fulfill processing orders and thus limited the sales growth of Shepherd's Grain products.

Rather than improve its deficient performance, ADM started a competing "Grower Connect" program that tracked wheat from the farmer to the user, the document said. The processor solicited the cooperative's farmers and attempted "to take sustainable flour business away from Shepherd's Grain."

The problems were compounded by ADM closing a Los Angeles mill that the cooperative relied on to serve bakery customers in Southern California, prompting it to begin doing business with Grain Craft's nearby flour mill, the document said.

The cooperative sought damages in an amount to be specified at trial from ADM's alleged breach of contract, as well as compensation for litigation costs.

However, the parties have now agreed to drop the claims and counterclaims without an award of attorney fees or other expenses to either litigant. The settlement deal's terms were not disclosed in court documents.

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2021 PORSCHE CAYANNE LL
VIN = WP1AA2AY9MDA06250
Amount due on lien \$1415.00
Reputed owner(s)
HEIDI CORDAY BROCKMAN
PORSCHE LEASING LTD

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2013 TOYT PRIUS 4D
VIN = JTKD8T38D1056791
Amount due on lien \$1515.00
Reputed owner(s)
DANIEL & NATHAN DONATI
RIVERMARK COMMUNITY CU

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2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2015 MAZD MZ3 4D
VIN = JM1BM1V76F1268174
Amount due on lien \$1515.00
Reputed owner(s)
HELEN MILLER

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2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2016 TOYOTA PRI 4D
VIN = JTDKARFUXG3506660
Amount due on lien \$1535.00
Reputed owner(s)
TYLER & JEREMY NOFZIGER
TOYOTA MOTOR CREDIT CORP

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2011 CHEV TRV 4D
VIN = 1GNKRGD8B199404
Amount due on lien \$1535.00
Reputed owner(s)
BREANNA MIRANDA & WILLIAM RUFF
OREGON STATE CREDIT UNION

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2014 JEEP GCH UT
VIN = 1C4RJFBM0EC425683
Amount due on lien \$1675.00
Reputed owner(s)
MIGUEL ANGEL ROSAS ROSAS
WESTLAKE FINANCIAL SERVICES

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2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2015 KIA SOUL 4DR
VIN = KNDJ3A58F7149705
Amount due on lien \$1595.00
Reputed owner(s)
MICHELLE BERGMAN
& STEVEN THOMAS

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2008 INFI G37 CP
VIN = JNCKV64E38M122684
Amount due on lien \$1435.00
Reputed owner(s)
> ABHINAV & ASTHA MITRA

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2015 RAM 150 PK
VIN = 1C6RR6GT3F5714404
Amount due on lien \$1535.00
Reputed owner(s)
BENTLEY BEAR WORKMAN-MORELLI
ONPOINT COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2003 TOYT TAC PK
VIN = STENL42N732268173
Amount due on lien \$1675.00
Reputed owner(s)
FRANK & ILA AICHER/AICHER
LVNG TRST

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2017 TOYT YARIS 4D
VIN = 3MYDLYV3HY178637
Amount due on lien \$1435.00
Reputed owner(s)
JUSTA CAUICH & YESENIA CHABLE
TOYOTA MOTOR CREDIT CORP

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2018 SUBA LEG 4D
VIN = 4S3BNA066J033147
Amount due on lien \$1515.00
Reputed owner(s)
> OLD REPUBLIC SURETY CO
ENTERPRISE FM TRUST

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2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2018 HONDA CIVIC 4D
VIN = SHHF7H5XJU415082
Amount due on lien \$1535.00
Reputed owner(s)
BEATRIZ D DIAZ & LIZBETH E DIAZ
CITIZENS BANK

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2016 TRAC 17' BOAT
VIN = ISRME154A616
Amount due on lien \$4035.00
Reputed owner(s)
COLUMBIA MOTORS INC

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2015 GMC SRA PK
VIN = 1GT120E8ZF640567
Amount due on lien \$1455.00
Reputed owner(s)
AIDA BARAJAS ESCOBEDO
PACIFIC NW FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

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2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2018 TOYT RAV 4D
VIN = JTMRFRE8VJ214311
Amount due on lien \$1515.00
Reputed owner(s)
BETTY JUNE JOHNSON

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2009 LEXUS RX35 UT
VIN = 2T2HK31U8X9107182
Amount due on lien \$1535.00
Reputed owner(s)
DANIEL SHERMAN BATES
WELLS FARGO AUTO

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2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2013 SUBA XVC 4D
VIN = JF2GPAWC7D2894673
Amount due on lien \$1455.00
Reputed owner(s)
TIMOTHY & ALYSA MOUNCE
OREGON STATE CREDIT UNION

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2016 ACURA TLX 4D
VIN = 19UUB3F57GA001670
Amount due on lien \$1515.00
Reputed owner(s)
KYLE WAYNE KAPPLER

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2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2015 NISSAN MUR LL
VIN = 5N1AZ2MH3FN290909
Amount due on lien \$1535.00
Reputed owner(s)
JOSHUA BLAINE DEMARAY
CONSUMER PORTFOLIO SERVICES INC

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VIN = 5N1AZ2MH3FN290909
Amount due on lien \$1535.00
Reputed owner(s)
JOSHUA BLAINE DEMARAY
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