

People & Places

Recycling drip tape made easy

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Benjamin Bauman with bales of old irrigation drip tape collected from farmers' fields for recycling. Bales typically weigh 700-1,000 pounds, he said. Bauman estimates there are 460,000 pounds of material behind him.

the grower. He's not having to send a crew out there to pick all this stuff up, throw it in a truck, send it to the dump and then come back."

Tape-winding season is typically late August through October.

"When you're in the middle of harvest, the last thing you want to deal with is what you're going to do with this drip tape," said Taryn Hartley, who farms outside Prosser, Wash.

Hartley has used Bauman's service for five years. He estimates he uses drip tape on about 300 acres each year.

What would Hartley do with his drip tape without the service?

"I honestly don't know,"

he said with a chuckle. "I guess going to the landfill with it. I've never had to worry about that."

Farmers can buy or rent equipment to remove drip tape from their fields. The company collects the old tape at no charge.

"If they bring us loose material and we have to bale it, then we do have a charge for that," Bauman said.

He hopes the price of plastic rallies to the point that farmers can be paid for their used drip tape.

Treasure Valley area farmers pay to ship tape to the AquaTech facility.

Working with a plastic broker, the company takes the drip tape back to its

facility, then loads it onto a container bound for the Port of Seattle.

The tape is shipped overseas, where it is ground up and extruded into small pellets to be used to make other plastic items.

Aquatech and the broker are working to develop a domestic market for the recycled plastic, Bauman said.

The business keeps track of the pounds of drip tape it recycles for a farmer, sending a wall plaque noting how many pounds of drip tape were recycled from the farm for the season.

To handle the drip tape, the company built a large roll that can be quickly

Logo: Western Innovator
BENJAMIN BAUMAN
Age: 38
Title: Co-owner, AquaTech Irrigation Supply LLC
Current location: Pasco, Wash.
Education: Home-schooled
Family: Married, seven children
Contact: 509-547-3800

grabbed and loaded with a tractor. Farmers typically use small rolls that weigh 65 pounds.

Bauman hopes his service grows to a point that it can handle smaller rolls as well.

"The machinery's expensive, and it's a challenge for some farms to switch over," he said.

He'd also like to establish a collection site.

"I feel like I can bring good value to these farmers by taking this stuff and putting it back into a good use," Bauman said.

"You get it out of the field, you get it wound up and Benjamin comes and gets it," Hartley said. "It's easy. You don't have to do anything."



Capital Press
EMPOWERING PRODUCERS OF FOOD & FIBER
Established 1928

Capital Press Managers

- Joe Beach Editor & Publisher
- Anne Long Advertising Director
- Carl Sampson Managing Editor
- Samantha Stinnett Circulation Manager

Entire contents copyright © 2022
EO Media Group
dba Capital Press

An independent newspaper
published every Friday.

Capital Press (ISSN 0740-3704) is
published weekly by EO Media Group,
2870 Broadway NE, Salem OR 97303.

Periodicals postage paid at Portland, OR,
and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: send address changes to
Capital Press, P.O. Box 2048 Salem, OR
97308-2048.

To Reach Us

- Circulation 800-781-3214
- Email Circulation@capitalpress.com
- Main line 503-364-4431

News Staff

Idaho

- Carol Ryan Dumas 208-860-3898

Boise

- Brad Carlson 208-914-8264

Western Washington

- Don Jenkins 360-722-6975

Eastern Washington

- Matthew Weaver 509-688-9923

Oregon

- George Plaven 406-560-1655
- Mateusz Perkowski 800-882-6789
- Sierra Dawn McClain 503-506-8011

Designer

- Randy Wriughthouse 800-882-6789

To Place Classified Ads

- Telephone (toll free) 800-882-6789
- Online CapitalPress.com

Subscriptions

- Mail rates paid in advance
- Easy Pay U.S. \$4 /month
(direct withdrawal from bank or credit card account)

- 1 year U.S. \$ 65
 - 2 years U.S. \$115
 - 1 year Canada \$230
 - 1 year other countries call for quote
 - 1 year Internet only \$ 52
- Visa and Mastercard accepted

To get information published

Mailing address:

- Capital Press
- P.O. Box 2048
- Salem, OR 97308-2048

News: Contact the main office

- or news staff member closest to you,
- send the information to
newsroom@capitalpress.com
- or mail it to "Newsroom," c/o Capital Press.
- Include a contact telephone number.

Letters to the Editor: Send your

- comments on agriculture-related public issues to opinions@capitalpress.com, or mail your letter to "Opinion," c/o Capital Press. Letters should be limited to 300 words. Deadline: Noon Monday.

Capital Press ag media

- CapitalPress.com
- FarmSeller.com
- MarketPlace.capitalpress.com
- facebook.com/CapitalPress
- facebook.com/FarmSeller
- twitter.com/CapitalPress
- youtube.com/CapitalPressvideo

Index

- Markets 10
- Opinion 6

Correction policy

Accuracy is important to Capital Press staff and to our readers.

If you see a misstatement, omission or factual error in a headline, story or photo caption, please call the Capital Press news department at 503-364-4431, or send email to newsroom@capitalpress.com.

We want to publish corrections to set the record straight.

'A huge loss': Industry remembers regional NASS director Mertz

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press



Chris Mertz

our beloved regional directors, Christopher Mertz," NASS Administrator Hubert Hamer said

in a notice to agency staff members. "Chris was a great friend and admired co-worker to many, a man of great character. He was a consummate professional, skilled leader, an excellent motivator, and a champion for NASS. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him and had the privilege of working with him. May we all find comfort in the wonderful memories we have of him during his 35-year career with NASS."

"Chris was an exceptional person," said Derek

Sandison, director of the Washington Department of Agriculture. "He was a pleasure to work with and was always ready to collaborate with our department on a host of matters relating to Washington state's large and very complex agricultural industry."

"He was one of the good guys," said Tim McGreevy, chief executive officer for the USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council.

Mertz's career and work was exemplary of "the public servant he was, really serving all of agriculture," McGreevy said.

Mertz took his job and responsibility seriously, providing accurate and useful data to the industry, he said.

"Farmers sometimes resist giving information, but it was hard to say no to

Chris," McGreevy said. "It's such a tremendous service for all of us to really have a feeling for what's happening in the countryside, both if you're a marketer or a farmer."

"That is a huge loss for our industry," said Glen Squires, CEO of the Washington Grain Commission. "He was a personable, detail-oriented, quick-response kind of person. Never too busy to answer questions, dig into data or provide information, no matter how small or complicated the request."

"Chris was always so responsive to the needs of growers," said Chris Voigt, executive director of the Washington Potato Commission. "He was smart, he listened to those around him and he made a difference."

Voigt praised Mertz as a

"family man who set a good example for all of us."

"He found that balance between being great at his job and being a great husband and father," Voigt said. "His sudden passing leaves a professional and personal hole for all of us."

Mertz was featured in a June 2022 profile in Wheat Life, the Washington wheat industry magazine.

"I feel very hopeful and feel good because people are communicating, more people might be understanding what the importance is in making sure that they respond (to surveys)," Mertz told Wheat Life. "When I see commodity groups use data, that's what gets me excited. That's what keeps me and my folks excited every day, somebody using the data for the good of agriculture."

CALENDAR

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

THROUGH SATURDAY
JULY 9

National Onion Association Summer Convention: Grove Hotel, 245 S. Capitol Blvd., Boise. Discussion topics to include updates to food-safety guidelines for dry bulb onions, immigration reform, USDA National Potato and Onion Report methodology. Industry facility tours planned. Registration price to increase after June 15. Website: https://bit.ly/3M85Gt7

THURSDAY JULY 14

Poop Smart Clark Open House: 6-7 p.m. learn about ways Clark Conservation District is helping Clark County, Wash., residents clean it up with the Poop Smart Clark program. This open house will be a showcase of resources that the Conservation District can provide like best practices for how to take care of your land and livestock, site visits with environmental experts and ways that landowners can even get reimbursed for septic repairs and inspections. Cost: Free To sign up or for more information go to http://www.poopsmartclark.org

JULY 15-31

California State Fair & Food Festival: Cal Expo, 1600 Exposition Blvd., Sacramento, Calif. The California State Fair is dedicated as a place to celebrate the best the state has to offer in agriculture, technology, and the diversity of its people, traditions, and trends that shape the Golden State's future. Website: https://calxpostatefair.com/

TUESDAY JULY 19

Transitioning Your Ag Business to the Next Chapter: 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m. City of Vale Library, Vale, Ore. Attorney Maria Schmidkofer will present on the topics of succession and estate plan-

ning, and how to prepare your operation to be resilient for future generations. She will review the steps of estate and succession planning, how to address taxes and corporate farm structuring, and more. Easement specialist Marc Hudson will answer your questions about working lands conservation easements — what they are, what they aren't, and how they may be helpful in executing your agricultural business plans. These in-person events are part of a free 6-workshop series in Lake, Harney and Malheur counties. All are welcome, and the events are free. RSVP for these or any of OAT's other events and refer any questions about the event to diane@oregonagtrust.org 503-858-2683

Intro to Good Manufacturing Practices (online): 8 a.m.-noon. Dr. Janna Hamlett & Catherine Cantley of TechHelp and the U of I will help participants learn and understand the revised current Good Manufacturing Practices or cGMPs according to the final rule for FSMA's Preventive Controls for Human Food. Contact: 208-736-3610 Website: https://bit.ly/3y3SNq9

WEDNESDAY JULY 20

Blueberry Field Day: 1 p.m. North Willamette Research & Extension Center, 15210 NE Milley Road, Aurora, Ore. This annual field day will inform participants about the latest research in blueberry propagation and breeding. Contact: Amanda Davis, (971)-801-0394 or amanda.davis@oregonstate.edu Website: http://extension.oregonstate.edu/NWREC/

SATURDAY-SUNDAY
JULY 30-31

Great Oregon Steam-Up: 7 a.m.-6 p.m., Powerland Heritage Park, 3995 Brooklake Road NE, Brooks, Ore. Enjoy a steam-powered day with train and trolley rides, a parade, steam sawmilling, traditional tractor pull-

ing, machinery demos, threshing, flour milling, fire apparatus demos, museum tours, kids pedal tractor pulling and a youth passport program. Website: www.antiquepowerland.com/steam-up Phone: 503-393-2424

SATURDAY-SUNDAY
AUG. 6-7

Great Oregon Steam-Up: 7 a.m.-6 p.m., Powerland Heritage Park, 3995 Brooklake Road NE, Brooks, Ore. Enjoy a steam-powered day with train and trolley rides, a parade, steam sawmilling, traditional tractor pulling, machinery demos, threshing, flour milling, fire apparatus demos, museum tours, kids pedal tractor pulling and a youth passport program. Website: www.antiquepowerland.com/steam-up Phone: 503-393-2424

MONDAY AUG. 8

Transitioning Your Ag Business to the Next Chapter: 12:30-4 p.m. Paisley Community Center, 705 Chewaucan St., Paisley, Ore. Farm and Ranch succession counselor and accountant Diana Tourney will prepare you for the human and financial elements of succession planning. Easement specialist Marc Hudson will answer your questions about working lands conservation easements — what they are, what they aren't, and how they may be helpful in executing your agricultural business plans. These in-person events are part of a free 6-workshop series in Lake, Harney and Malheur counties. All are welcome, and the events are free. RSVP for these or any of OAT's other events and refer any questions about the event to diane@oregonagtrust.org 503-858-2683

TUESDAY AUG. 9

Transitioning Your Ag Business to the Next Chapter: 12:30-4 p.m. Lake County Library, 26 South G St., Lakeview, Ore. Farm and Ranch suc-

cession counselor and accountant Diana Tourney will prepare you for the human and financial elements of succession planning. Easement specialist Marc Hudson will answer your questions about working lands conservation easements — what they are, what they aren't, and how they may be helpful in executing your agricultural business plans. These in-person events are part of a free 6-workshop series in Lake, Harney and Malheur counties. All are welcome, and the events are free. RSVP for these or any of OAT's other events and refer any questions about the event to diane@oregonagtrust.org 503-858-2683

MONDAY-TUESDAY
AUG. 8-9

American Lamb Summit: Michigan State University and East Lansing Marriott East Lansing, Mich. The summit will focus on competitiveness, production and quality of American lamb. Website: https://www.lambresource-center.com

THURSDAY-FRIDAY
AUG. 11-12

Idaho Milk Processors Association Annual Conference: Sun Valley Resort, Sun Valley, Idaho. The conference will focus on industry issues. Website: https://www.impa.us

SATURDAY-SUNDAY
AUG. 13-14

Dufur Threshing Bee 2022: 6 a.m.-3 p.m. Main Street, Dufur, Ore. Relive the good old days at the Dufur Threshing Bee. Included will be blacksmiths, a one-room school house, the Dufur Historical society, petting zoo, food booths and artists' booths, tractor pull, vintage car show, hometown dinner and a steam engine display. Contact: Nancy Gibson, 541-993-3429.

AUG. 19-28
Western Idaho Fair: 11 a.m.-West-

ern Idaho Fairgrounds, 5610 Glenwood St., Boise. Western Idaho gets together annually for this celebration of country living. Website: https://idahofair.com

AUG. 26-SEPT. 5

Oregon State Fair: 10 a.m. Oregon State Fair & Exposition Center, 2330 17th St. NE, Salem. The Oregon State Fair continues through Sept. 5. Website: https://oregonstatefair.org/

SEPT. 2-10

Eastern Idaho State Fair: Eastern Idaho Fairgrounds, 97 Park St., Blackfoot, Idaho. It's fair time in Idaho. Website: https://funatthefair.com/general-info/

SEPT. 2-25

Washington State Fair: 10:30 a.m. Puyallup Fairgrounds, 110 9th Ave. SW, Puyallup, Wash. The Washington State Fair is the largest single attraction held annually in the state of Washington. Closed Tuesdays and Sept. 7. Website: https://www.thefair.com/

THURSDAY SEPT. 8

Farm & Ranch Succession Planning and Working Lands Easements: 12:30-4 p.m. OSU Malheur County Extension, 710 Southwest 5th Ave., Ontario, Ore. Attorney June Flores will present on the topics of succession and estate planning, and how to prepare your operation to be resilient for future generations. Easement specialist Marc Hudson will answer your questions about working lands conservation easements — what they are, what they aren't, and how they may be helpful in executing your agricultural business plans. These in-person events are part of a free 6-workshop series in Lake, Harney and Malheur counties. All are welcome, and the events are free. RSVP for these or any of OAT's other events and refer any questions about the event to diane@oregonagtrust.org 503-858-2683