

# Business & Ag

## Baker's FFA Ag Issues team places in top six at state competition



Chuck Buchanan / The Baker County Press

Baker FFA Ag Issues team, left to right: Taylor Hawes, Kylie Skidgel, Ashlee Brinton, Hannah Oliver, Christian Oliver, and Robie Davis.

By Chuck Buchanan  
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Silverton High School in Silverton, Oregon was the site of the 87th Annual Oregon FFA State Convention held March 20-23rd, 2015.

FFA, also known as Future Farmers of America, is an organization that today rewards students for their efforts in diversified field ranging from Ag Sales and Ag Communications to Parliamentary Procedures and Prepared Public Speaking to Livestock Production Entrepreneurship.

Each year on the weekend before spring break, Oregon FFA gathers at a different venue to celebrate the achievements of its members during that school year.

Thirty-five members of the Baker FFA chapter, accompanied by parent chaperones and Ag instructor Seth Bingham, traveled

to Silverton to participate in this year's convention.

Five members, Kylie Skidgel, Robie Davis, Morgan Scilacci, Carley Johnson and Melissa Foltz received their State FFA Degrees, the second highest degree awarded in FFA.

State Degree recipients must keep accurate records of income and expenses relating to whatever projects they may be involved in as well as accomplishing a long list of other requirements. These five students are to be congratulated for their hard work and dedication to FFA.

Six of those traveling to Convention made up the Baker FFA Ag Issues team. The team was accompanied by their coach, Chuck Buchanan.

Ag Issues is what is known as a CDE, or Career Development Event. The team is required to research an issue that is important to agriculture

then produce a fifteen minute skit or presentation showing the pros and cons of that issue as it relates to modern agriculture.

Baker's topic was titled "To Graze or Not to Graze: Mob Grazing As a Tool to Combat Desertification" and was presented using a Star Wars theme.

During this presentation, the actors discussed the various aspects of the ongoing process of the degradation, or desertification, of agricultural lands around the world due to a number of mitigating factors.

Mob grazing, or holistic grazing as it is also known, is a system of concentrated grazing of small pastures in a rotation and has been touted by scientists in a number of countries as a potential cure for desertification. The team's presentation discussed the pros and cons of mob grazing.

The State Ag Issues

competition was held in two sessions. In the first session, which took place on Friday March 20th, teams from across the state were divided up into flights of three or four teams.

Eleven teams in three flights competed at this year's Convention. Two teams from each flight were chosen to go to the final competition based on their presentation and on a written portfolio turned in before the competition.

Baker FFA's Ag Issues team competed in the final on Sunday, March 22nd as one of the top six but failed to place in the top four, which are awarded banners.

The top team, made up of members of the Sandy FFA Chapter, won the competition and will represent Oregon at the National FFA Convention in October.

## Program offers sage grouse habitat protection on private property

By Brian Addison  
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A decision from US Fish and Wildlife on whether to list Greater sage-grouse as a federally recognized endangered species is expected in September of this year and land owners and agricultural producers in Baker County have been offered a Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) to protect against impacts should the bird be listed.

"Baker County has recently signed a Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances with US Fish and Wildlife Service. The main goal of the CCAA program is to assist landowners in preparing their land for the possible land use regulations that would come with listing the sage grouse," according to a press release from Baker County Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

"Some land owners and different agency people have compared the potential impact to the ag industry if the sage-grouse is listed to impacts felt by the timber industry when the spotted owl was listed," said Whitney Collins, district manager of Baker County Soil and Water Conservation District.

The CCAA works as an "insurance policy for land



Photo Courtesy of USFWS

The Greater sage-grouse's listing as an endangered species will happen—or not—this September.

owners if the sage-grouse is listed," said Collins.

Landowners who choose to sign a CCAA with the Soil and Water Conservation District enter into a 30-year agreement requiring them to implement conservation strategies on their land to protect sage-grouse habitat, according to Collins. The CCAA documents the habitat conservation plan and, as long as the landowner remains within the plan, protects the landowner from complaints.

Landowners entering into the private CCAA work with the Soil and Water Conservation Districts to draw a reasonable plan to address sage-grouse habitat protection on their land and within their operations, according to Collins.

"A lot of landowners are already doing this stuff and they just need to get it down on paper," Collins said.

"Once a CCAA has been signed, if a complaint arises against a landowner, the US Fish and Wildlife Service would call the Soil and Water Conservation District, and then we'd call the landowner," Collins explained.

Once a complaint has been made, it would then be determined whether the complaint was valid based on the plan in place through the CCAA. If it is determined that the land owner is operating within the CCAA plan and providing the habitat protections outlined in the CCAA plan, that landowner is protected against being in

violation of sage-grouse habitat protection regulations and the imposition of large fines

Baker County Soil and Water Conservation Districts, serving Baker Valley, Burnt River, Keating and Eagle valleys, have scheduled an informational meeting for landowners interested in the CCAA program. Speakers include representatives from the United States Forest Service, Baker County Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and the Baker County Board of Commissioners.

The informational meeting will be held on Thursday, April 9 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative meeting room, located at 4005 23rd Street.

### — WEEKLY HAY REPORT —

Friday, March 27, 2015 — Eastern Oregon

Prices trended generally steady compared to the same quality last week. Trade activity and demand increased this week. The continued good weather in several areas of Oregon has slowed down demand, as pasture grasses are growing causing end users to be able to turn animals out on pasture rather than purchase and feed additional hay. Few containers available at the shipping ports has slowed down the ability to export hay overseas. Several producers have sold all that they plan to sell for this season.

Alfalfa- Large Square/Good, 1,000 tons, \$150 avg.  
Triticale - Large Square/Good, 56 tons, \$125 avg.

USDA Market News Service—AMS.USDA.gov

### — CATTLE MARKET REPORT —

Wednesday, March 25, 2015  
Vale, Oregon

Cattle sold through the auction: 638

#### Steer Calves

300-400# Bulk N/A Top N/A  
400-500# Bulk 285.00-330.00 Top 333.00  
500-600# Bulk 260.00-292.00 Top 297.00

#### Heifer Calves

300-400# Bulk N/A Top N/A  
400-500# Bulk 250.00-275.00 Top 288.00  
500-600# Bulk 230.00-255.00 Top 260.50

#### Yearling Steers

600-700# Bulk 230.00-248.00 Top 251.00  
700-800# Bulk 205.00-223.00 Top 228.00  
800-900# Bulk 185.00-197.00 Top 204.75  
900-1,000# Bulk 170.00-185.00 Top 195.50

#### Yearling Heifers

600-700# Bulk 205.00-225.00 Top 230.00  
700-800# Bulk 200.00-206.00 Top 210.00  
800-900# Bulk N/A Top N/A  
900-1,000# Bulk N/A Top N/A

Thin Shelly Cows 75.00-90.00  
Butcher Cows 91.00-104.00  
Butcher Bulls 105.00-120.00  
Stock Cows 1200.00-2200.00  
Younger Hfrts. 125.00 top  
Stock Cows Yng. - N/A

ProducersLivestock.com  
541-473-3136

### — LOG PRICE REPORT —

Price per 1,000 board feet: Northeast Oregon

#### Delivered to Elgin

Doug Fir / Larch 6"+ \$370/m  
White Fir/Sp 6"+ \$380/m  
LPP 6"+ \$350/m

#### Delivered to La Grande

P. Pine 6-11" \$290/m  
12-17" \$340/m  
18-23" \$390/m  
24'+ \$420/m

#### Delivered to Pilot Rock

12-17" \$390/m  
18-23" \$440/m  
24'+ \$480/m

#### Delivered pulp

\$28/ton to Elgin  
\$28/ton to La Grande  
Courtesy of Arvid Andersen,  
Andersen Forestry Consulting

### — PRECIOUS METALS REPORT —

#### Price per ounce, USD

Gold: \$1184.20  
Silver: \$16.58  
Platinum: \$1,142.25  
Palladium: \$734.85

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### — AG COMMODITIES —

Corn: \$377.50/bu/USD  
Wheat: \$512.50/bu/USD  
Soybeans: \$968.00/bu/USD  
Oats: \$267.00 bu/USD  
Rough Rice: \$11.02/cwt/USD  
Canola: \$454.50 CAD/mwt  
Live Cattle: \$152.55/lb./USD  
Feeder Cattle: \$217.05/lb./USD  
Lean Hogs: \$76.55/lb./USD

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