

## Cattle:

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### Wife speaks up

But Karen Dean, wife of Bob Dean, the owner of the ranch in the Upper Imnaha area where cattle have been freezing for the past few weeks, was defensive of her ailing husband during a telephone interview from her Georgia home.

Dean said her 68-year-old husband underwent surgery in June when his oxygen was cut off and left him with brain damage. Dean placed the responsibility for the cattle's welfare squarely on the shoulders of the ranch managers, B.J. and Emily Warnock.

"He was supposed to bring the cows down in October," Dean said. "They let the cows go down on their own."

The Deans also own ranches in Colorado and New Mexico. Dean said one of their wranglers from New Mexico visited the Oregon ranch to see what was happening. She said the wrangler said ranchers normally round up their cattle, take them to a pen and put them aboard a truck to ship to market.

"He said they don't do that (in Wallowa County)," Dean said. "They let (the cattle) find their own way down."

Dean emphasized that was why they hire local wranglers to do the job.

"My husband doesn't physically do the cattle work," she said. "He pays B.J. to wrangle the cows. We're relying on people who live there that they would do the job."

Despite the Deans being the owners of the land and livestock, Dean holds the Warnocks responsible.



Calves rescued from the deep snows in the Upper Imnaha get some refreshment Jan. 2, 2022, at the Joseph-area ranch of Mark and Anna Butterfield. They are among many rescued since the end of December.

Anna Butterfield/Contributed Photo

"They're responsible," she said. "We called him every other day to get him to bring those cattle down."

Dean added that the Warnocks signed releases as property managers for the Deans.

"Those cows were his responsibility," she said.

But B.J. Warnock disagreed with Karen Dean on the nature of their business relationship.

"Mrs. Dean is not our employer and she is misinformed," Warnock said in an email. "Typically, in a situation like this, the owner blames the manager, who

blames the crew, and so on. We are not going to do that. Unfortunately, I was never officially named or authorized to act as manager, which left me without decision-making authority to act in critical situations. We did have a main crew of seven people gathering Dean Oregon Ranches cattle. We are very proud of all of their hard work and the fact that they have stuck with the job despite extenuating circumstances."

### Attorney involved

Chris Gramiccioni, a South Carolina-based attorney

for the Deans in their ongoing lawsuits over handling of nursing home evacuations last year at the time of Hurricane Ida, said the Deans and their attorneys were just learning of the situation with the cattle.

"My client is not happy with what happened to these cattle," he said. "My client had a team of people who were supposed to bring the cattle down from the mountains."

Gramiccioni, who said the Deans have paid the cost to fly in hay and help rescue the cattle, declined to comment specifically on whether the

Deans shared responsibility for the fate of the cows and their calves.

"I have to be cautious on answering that because it could be the subject of litigation," he said. "Our client is taking it very seriously. It's not something he's taking lightly."

In an emailed statement, Gramiccioni said the Dean Oregon Ranches have historically entrusted livestock management to a local onsite expert familiar with the land in Wallowa County.

"Thankfully, most livestock were recovered before the snows made routes

impassable. Dean crews have worked tirelessly to ensure the care and feeding of the remaining animals while ongoing efforts are undertaken to bring them back down to the ranch," he said. "The Dean family is truly grateful for the continued recovery efforts by local ranchers, state and county government officials, and volunteers. It is hoped and prayed that the continued search for the remaining cows will be successful, and we wish to ensure the community that rescue efforts will remain unwavering."

B.J. Warnock said on Jan. 2 that when they began gathering the cattle in September, there were 1,613 Dean Oregon Ranches mother cows on summer range. Of those, 10 were found unrecoverable and 1,548 Dean Oregon Ranches mother cows were successfully gathered before the snows of late December. Since then, another 34 mother cows were gathered in joint efforts between the ranch crew and the community. Warnock said 26 of those were Dean Oregon Ranches cattle and the others were owned by neighboring ranches.

As of Monday, Jan. 10, no updated figures on the number of cattle lost or saved were available.

As for the Deans' troubles over the nursing homes, the Advocate of Baton Rouge reported that the Louisiana Department of Health pulled the licenses of seven of Bob Dean's nursing homes in the wake of Hurricane Ida, which ravaged Louisiana from Aug. 26 to Sept. 4. It was alleged that seven people died of the 843 residents he ordered evacuated and warehoused in the lead-up to the hurricane.



Phil Wright/East Oregonian, File

Pilot Rock Mayor Virginia Carnes, right, gets ready to enjoy a piece of cake on June 6, 2019, in celebration of breaking ground on the town's new sewer lagoon project. Carnes, who was mayor of the small town since 2004, died Saturday, Jan. 8, 2022. She was 77.

## Mayor:

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nity brought to the table. If she thought a subject might impact her community, she was in the front row. In the days to come, we will see a long list of her accomplishments as we pause to honor her memory and pay tribute for her service."

Murdock said when the east side mayors and managers met to discuss issues of mutual concern, Carnes was the first to arrive and her friendly greeting and enthusiasm for the task always put a positive spin on the meetings.

Public service is too often a thankless task, according to Murdock, and it seems to be getting more and more difficult to find individuals who are willing to serve. But Carnes was "the epitome of

dedication and service, and I'm confident the citizens of Pilot Rock are both mourning her loss and very likely wondering who is going to be willing to fill her shoes," Murdock stated.

In addition to her work on the council, Carnes was on the Pilot Rock Fire District Board, involved in the local chamber of commerce and the nonprofit group The Pilot Rock Downtown Association.

Bacus said the Pilot Rock City Council holds its first meeting of the new year Tuesday, Jan. 18. The council then will elect a president and decide what to do to fill the position of mayor. Carnes was in the last year of her current term and planning on running again.

The council could appoint someone at the meeting to finish out the term. Bacus said, but is more likely to open it to applicants.

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