



Contributed photo

A dead cow found Saturday, May 8, on Roy Vardenaga's Fox Valley ranch.

Wolf kill

Continued from Page A1

cases lacked evidence of a wolf attack. However, due to a lack of a carcass to test, they could not rule out the likelihood of a wolf attack.

Rancher Roy Vardenaga said in a phone interview Thursday that his grandchildren found five dead cows Saturday on a 400-acre pasture on the east side of Highway 395.

"I've never had anything like this happen before," he said.

ODFW identified the Northside wildlife unit and Long Creek as an area of known wolf activity on April

21. According to the agency, a breeding male and female of the Northside wolves bred for the first time last year.

A breeding pair is an adult male and an adult female with at least two pups who survived to Dec. 31 the year of their birth, and a pack is four or more wolves traveling together in winter.

Three wolves were counted in Northside this year, along with six in the Desolation unit and one in Murderers Creek, according to Torland. He said there is likely a second wolf in Murderers Creek that showed up after winter, but it would not be included until next year's count.

Vardenaga said, roughly

two years ago, ODFW told him a collared wolf had been in the area. He said, over the years, he has had cattle go missing.

Vardenaga said he estimates that the loss of his livestock would cost him \$12,000 to \$20,000. He told the Eagle the determination that only one of the kills was attributed to wolves was frustrating.

Vardenaga, a retired firefighter and a third-generation rancher, went back to ranching after being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1997. He said the income he brings in from ranching keeps his medical costs down.

According to ODFW, wolves east of highways 395-

78-95, are delisted both federally and at the state level. Within this zone, livestock producers or their agents may shoot a wolf caught in the act of biting, wounding, killing or chasing livestock or working dogs on land they own or lawfully occupy.

In 2020, confirmed wolf depredations in the East Wolf Management Zone included seven dead cows, five injured cows, one dead llama, one injured llama, one dead working dog and one injured working dog across Baker, Union, Wallowa, Umatilla, Morrow and Harney counties, according to the Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management 2020 annual report.

Anti-ag

Continued from Page A1

The Oregon campaign recently cleared its first regulatory hurdle, submitting 1,000 sponsorship signatures for verification on April 28. If approved, supporters will need to collect 112,020 signatures to place the initiative on the November 2022 ballot.

Michelson did not return calls for comment.

According to state law, a person commits animal abuse if they "intentionally, knowingly or recklessly cause physical injury to an animal," or "cruelly cause the death of an animal," except when practicing good animal husbandry. The petition seeks to remove that exemption.

"IP13 doesn't change our definition of abuse, it merely changes who is considered above the law," the "Yes on IP13" website states.

Cooper said the petition is the biggest threat to Oregon's livestock industry in decades.

"I think it would leave producers in incredibly uncertain territory," she said. "It is very dangerous territory for folks."

Perhaps the cruelest twist, Cooper said, is the effect the initiative would have on 4-H and FFA programs. Animal abuse in Oregon is considered a Class A misdemeanor but is a felony if committed in the presence of a minor child.

"You think of 4-H programs, and people who have artificial insemination programs, and all of a sudden anybody helping them with their projects could be considered a felon," Cooper said. "That's just wild."

Supporters say the initiative would not ban the sale of meat, leather and fur in Oregon.

"It would require that animals be allowed to truly live a good life free from abuse, neglect and sexual assault," the campaign website states. "After an animal lives a full life, and exits the world naturally and humanely, this initiative does not prohibit a

farmer from processing and distributing their body for consumption."

But Tom Sharp, a Harney County rancher and president of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, said that is not an economically viable business model for producers.

"How would a producer ever plan on managing a herd of cattle, until some uncertain date when that herd has reached their full and natural lifespan?" Sharp said. "At that point, it's impractical to take those animals to market for processing."

Oregon has 13,000 cattle ranchers statewide with 1.3 million head of cattle. In 2019, cattle and calves ranked as the second-most valuable agricultural commodity, at \$652 million. Sharp said the petition could put those businesses at risk.

"I don't see, from a business standpoint, how that would pencil out for any of these beef producers," he said.

The initiative doesn't only target agriculture. It would also erase animal cruelty exemptions for hunting, fishing, wildlife management, rodeos and scientific research, among others.

Amy Patrick, outreach coordinator for the Oregon Hunters Association, said the initiative is ringing alarm bells and could potentially make hunting illegal in the state.

"It's an attempt to get at fishing, trapping, hunting and additional wildlife management practices," Patrick said. "Removing the exemptions would allow them to be classified as animal abuse. It's not animal abuse by any stretch of the imagination."

Dave Dillon, executive vice president of the Oregon Farm Bureau, said the organization is assembling a broad coalition of groups and businesses to oppose the initiative.

"There is a lot of concern among members," Dillon said. "It's going to take a lot of hands. That's the job ahead of us, and we'll be ready to do it."



The Eagle/Steven Mitchell

Organizers count ballots May 12 at the arena at the Grant County Fairgrounds. About 200 attendees nearly unanimously voted to declare an emergency caused by Gov. Kate Brown's COVID-19 restrictions.

Protest

Continued from Page A1

Lundbom's speech

Ron Lundbom, John Day's mayor, told the crowd that he did not know that joining Baker City and Sandy to sue the governor would be the right thing for John Day. He said the city has worked with 10 state agencies and received over \$6.5 million in grants and loans to fund a \$12 million wastewater treatment project. Someone in the crowd asked him if the money was worth laying down to die.

Lundbom said he disagreed with that sentiment.

He told the crowd that he thought the state agencies were doing their job in protecting the public.

Lundbom told Newman that "with all due respect," while he did not agree with mask mandates, Newman did not have the neck. "Lundbom, owner of Napa Autoparts in John Day, said that he was turned in five times and received a fine.

"Whether you call that beholden to the state or what," he said, "that's what some of us have to deal with."

He said he disagreed with OSHA, but he supported state legislators' efforts to limit OSHA's overreach.

"I have 10 employees that, if they don't work, they don't eat,"



The Eagle/Steven Mitchell

Brenda Coley, left, addresses the crowd of about 200 people who showed up to voice concerns about COVID-19 mandates May 12 as organizer Bill Newman listens.

he said. "A lot of businesses are in that same position."

A Grant County citizen Athena Moline screamed at Lundbom to "get off the stage" and study his Constitution. She said that OSHA had not collected fines because they know they would lose in court. Lundbom thanked Moline and said he was waiting for someone to tell him his legal recourse.

Moline told Lundbom she would make an appointment with him to share the information she had been studying for over a year.

Palmer's speech

County Commissioner Sam

Palmer said that Grant County had "flattened the curve." Since the start of the pandemic, he said the hospital reported four COVID-19-related admissions and no COVID-19 admissions since March.

After the event, Blue Mountain Hospital CEO Derek Daly confirmed those numbers were accurate. He said a COVID-19 "admission" is when a patient is admitted as an inpatient. Most COVID-19 patients are evaluated in the emergency room or receive outpatient testing and go home to recover and quarantine, he said.

"If someone requires hospi-



The Eagle/Steven Mitchell

John Day Mayor Ron Lundbom addresses the crowd of about 200 who showed up to voice concerns over COVID-19 mandates.

tal care due to severe COVID-19 symptoms, our physicians and nurses evaluate the condition of the patient and determine if they should be admitted to BMH or transferred to a COVID-19 unit at a larger facility," Daly said. "If the patient is deteriorating quickly or expected to require longer-term hospitalization requiring intubation, they would coordinate a transfer to an available ICU in Bend or Boise."

Daly said he estimated that about 12 COVID-19 patients have been transferred during the course of the pandemic.

While one death is too many, Palmer said, the county had only seen five deaths due to the virus before the sixth death Thursday.

"I think this county did a relatively well job at keeping that down and keeping that curve flat," he said.

Mtn. View Mini-Mart 211 Front St., Prairie City 541-820-4477
Weekly Specials
 Sunday - Family Style Joy's Choice | Thursday - Asian | Saturday - Sushi

Play, Learn and Grow... Together!

Join our School Today

Love to Learn!

Class sizes are limited

Register before July 31st

Office Hours: Tues-Thurs 8 am-12 pm

ENROLL TODAY

SONSHINE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

1. Registrations are being accepted for 2021-22 school year

We offer a high-quality school-readiness program for little learners. *Eligibility requirements apply.

Pre-Kindergarten (4-5 yrs): 3 days a week, (T, W, TH). Now registering for morning & afternoon classes. *Must be 4 years old by Sept. 1, 2021.

Pre-School (3-4 yrs): 2 days a week, (T, TH) 8:15 am-10:45 am. *Must be 3 years of age by Sept 1st, 2021 and be independent when using the bathroom.

SONSHINE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
 521 E Main St. John Day
 541-575-1895 or 541-968-9865
 office@johndaynazarene.com

5238822-1

BLUE MOUNTAIN EAGLE EARLY DEADLINE

For June 2nd Edition Ad, Classified & Legal Deadline Thursday, May 27th by 4PM

Our office will be closed May 31st in observance of Memorial Day

Blue Mountain EAGLE Grant County's newspaper since 1868

195 N Canyon Blvd., John Day, Oregon

MyEagleNews.com

541-575-0710

5244850-1