

# Commission hears report on new dairy operation

8,700 milking cows, 10,000 beef, and a farming operation planned

By David Sykes

Details of a new mega dairy planning to open near Boardman at the site of the now defunct Lost Valley Dairy, was presented to the Morrow County Commissioners August 5. Wym Matthews of the Oregon Department of Agriculture gave a presentation laying out the plans new owners Easterday Farms of Washington have for the 7,000-acre farm, ranch and dairy. Easterday purchased the property, including buildings and infrastructure for \$66.7 million in February of 2019 after Lost Valley went bankrupt leaving behind a multitude of environmental and other violations. Clean up at the former dairy has been completed and Easterday is in the process of applying for a new Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) permit with the state.

Matthews said the new operation would have 8,700 mature milking cows and 8,600 dairy heifers and calves and 10,000 beef feeders. There is extensive existing infrastructure already in place from the previous dairy and it can be used for the new operation. The dairy footprint alone covers 400 acres of just infrastructure, Williams said. The company plans on investing millions more into the facility for to bring it into environmental compliance including completion of a wastewater treatment system not finished by the previous owner. In addition to the dairy, the new owners plan to have 5,700 acres of irrigated crops and the beef cattle.

Of major concern to state agencies licensing the facility is the protection of ground water in the area. If granted a permit the dairy will be regulated so manure and processed wastewater does not enter ground or surface water. It would require a nutrient management plan that describes how the manure will be collected, treated, stored, transferred and utilized.

Matthews told commissioners other facets of the operation covered under the permit would be limits on the amount of wastewater that can be applied to fields as fertilizer. It would also prohibit runoff to surface waters or discharge to ground waters. Currently there are 11 existing

groundwater monitoring wells being sampled quarterly at the site and those tests have come up clean and show zero animal pollutants left over from the previous operator, Williams said.

Williams said state agencies are prepared to monitor the new dairy extensively to avoid the non-compliance issues they faced from the previous owner, who violated many of the environmental rules. He said there would be a lagoon leak detection system that notifies the dairy of any potential leaks in the lagoons. There would also be soil testing were the dairy is required to collect annual soil samples on all fields that receive manure or processed wastewater. The testing wells will also monitor nitrate levels in the water, an important factor in this area of the Columbia River Basin.

Gaining the permit is going to be an uphill climb it seems as a multitude of environmental, animal rights and small farm advocacy groups, who also opposed permitting the previous dairy, have already lined up in opposition to the new owners. Williams said the dairy will have to gain permit approval from multiple state agencies including the Agriculture Department, Department of Environmental Quality, Water Resources and Oregon Health Authority as well as the local planning commission. He said at some point there would be a 35-day public hearing and comment period on issuing the new permit.

Morrow County Commissioners were generally in favor of the new dairy operation, as long as, unlike the previous operation it followed the rules. "The previous board (of Commissioners) was happy to approve this (permit for the previous dairy) but we need to proceed with abundance of caution and make sure state agencies are holding up their end of the deal," Commissioner Jim Doherty said. He added that monitoring nitrate levels was very important to make sure people's drinking water stayed uncontaminated from the dairy. "We are tasked with not only looking after the ag folks but looking after everybody," Doherty said. He also said the new owners

had a good reputation for running clean agricultural operations. "Their reputation precedes them and I'll bet my left arm they are going to do things correct. They are fantastic folks and I think they are going to look after things," he added.

Doherty wanted to know if the county commissioners could be kept updated on the data the state has on operations at the dairy so they could keep an eye on things. Williams said the data collected by agencies was all public so anyone can look at it.

"I'm excited for this to come back online," Doherty

said of the rejuvenated dairy. I'm excited for the jobs it will bring and the milk it will produce. I'm excited for the ability of Morrow County to grow more jobs and feed more people around the world," he said. Morrow County Assessor Mike Gorman wanted to know what the time frame was. "Will it be months, years, decades?" he asked Williams. "The agencies are meeting weekly (on the permit)," Williams said. "There are lots of moving parts but I am hoping its months and not years," he told the commission in conclusion.

## Schedule announced for 4-H and FFA exhibits

The schedule for the 2020 Morrow County Fair 4-H and FFA demonstrations begins August 13. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, exhibits will be judged but are not open to the public. The schedule and information follows:

Thursday, August 13: Practice Zooms for Presentations and Fashion Revue.

Friday, August 14 by 4 p.m.: All livestock market and breeding videos uploaded to ShoWorks at <https://mcf4h.fairwire.com/>; All static exhibit photographs uploaded to ShoWorks. Include explanation cards; Photography; Art; Crafts; Wood Science; Fleece/Fiber; Eggs; Crocheting/Knitting; Clothing; Cake Decorating; Gift Packages; Robotics; Educational Displays/Design Boards; Container Gardening; Creative Writing/Short Stories- to be emailed as a PDF file to Erin by August 14 for review; Videography- the entire piece to be submitted to fairvault system.

Sunday, August 16, 9

a.m.-4 p.m.: Fashion Revue Zoom Interviews.

Monday, August 17 by 9 a.m.: Clothing exhibits will be dropped off at the Extension Office or Boardman Chamber Office.

Tuesday, August 18 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m.: Presentations ZOOM Interviews with judge. Includes presentations, pledge, FCS, measuring contest.

Friday, August 21: All Market Animals delivered to fairgrounds. Official weights will be taken and uploaded into ShoWorks for the livestock auction. All market animals must meet the same weight requirements as listed in the premium book to sell.

7:30-8:30 a.m.: Hogs; 9 a.m.: Sheep/Goats and Steers; 1 p.m.: Auction pre-bidding opens. Buyers can place early bids on livestock animals before the competitive bidding begins on Saturday at 1 p.m.

Saturday, August 22: 1-4 p.m.: Virtual Competitive Auction via ShoWorks, <https://auction.showworks.cloud/fair/mcf4h>.

## Marriage Licenses

The Morrow County Clerk's office has released the following report of marriage licenses:

July 1, 2020: - Zane Avery Shultz, 25, Heppner, and Hailey Marie Bowman, 22, Heppner

July 2, 2020: - Donald Wayne Carpenter, 71, Irrigon, and Karen Marie Mitchell, 64, Irrigon.

July 9, 2020: - Jordan Robert Braun, 25, Boardman, and Rylee Christine Hodges, 23, Boardman.

July 16, 2020: - Ruben Moreno, Sr., 43, Irrigon, and Chantell Leone Lynn

Michaels, 38, Irrigon.

July 17, 2020: - Austin Ray Carter, 21, Ione, and Shanane Rose Kelly, 22, La Grande.

July 23, 2020: Johnny Jake Wadkins, 66, Irrigon, and Roseann Gail Black, 67, Irrigon.

July 24, 2020: - Jim Kiley Richardson, 44, Robert Lee, TX, and Becky Ann Wagenblast, 42, Lexington.

July 30, 2020: - Adan Rodriguez, 32, Boardman, and Cristal Rodriguez, 25, Boardman.

## Spiritually Speaking

# Cling onto Jesus with the faith of the Canaanite woman

By Fr. Thankachan Joseph SDB, St. Patrick Church

Isn't it amazing that we are all made in God's image and yet each one of us is different? We are each unique. We need to give one another the space to grow, to be ourselves, to exercise our individuality. We need one another so that we may both give and receive the best in one another. Often, when we make choices of things, events, places and even persons, we tend to exclude some, based on our prejudices. The scripture readings of the day challenge us to break down our prejudices and exclude none. The Canaanite woman in the Gospel teaches us that our Christian vocation is to reconcile all humankind to God. The message of this single woman to every one of us today is "Be not afraid." Be not afraid to challenge prejudice.

In the first reading, Isaiah is writing to the Israelites after their return from exile in Babylon. They find their homeland occupied by foreigners whom the people of Israel deeply ostracized. Isaiah proclaims that the foreigners who joined themselves to the Lord had to be accepted. We are told that no one can be saved by one's own power. Only God can save us. Salvation is open to all. Anyone who is really determined to be saved will be saved. And no one can claim the right to be saved. We are saved only through God's mercy and love.

In the Second Letter of St Peter, Chapter 3, verse 9, we read: "God wants nobody to be lost. He wants everybody to be converted and be saved." Again, in the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 10, verse 35 tells us: "God does not have favorites; anybody from any nationality who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to him." Isaiah insisted that no one is excluded from God, and as believers we cannot exclude others. God is not our exclusive property, and faith is a gift to be shared, not a possession to be kept for ourselves alone. If we do not share the fire of our faith it can die within us.

The responsorial Psalm, of the day is very apt: "O God, let all the peoples praise you!" echoes Isaiah's message that God's house is open to all. When Paul wrote to the Romans, the community at Rome was a mixture of Jews and Gentiles, with the Gentiles a majority. Paul reminded both sides that all people are saved only by the free grace of God and not because they belonged to the 'right group.' In the second part of his message, Paul tells the Gentiles that God's gift and call to the Jews will not be taken back. At that moment, the Jews were rejecting God's gifts and His call, and the Gentiles were now accepting them. Paul warns both Jews and Gentiles to be faithful and believe in God's mercy, which alone saves them.

Today's Gospel takes up the religious exclusion prevalent among the Jews even in the time of Jesus. The Canaanite woman in today's Gospel was a Gentile. The woman symbolizes all those regarded as unclean by Jesus's own people. This woman comes to Jesus with a request on behalf of her sick daughter. "Sir, Son of David, take pity on me. My daughter is tormented by a devil." The mission of Jesus had been limited to a short period of time and confined to the Jews. He answered her not a word, and then states that he was sent to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. The silence of Jesus suggests a refusal to minister to this woman's needs. This is how his disciples interpret it and plead with Jesus to get rid of her. Jesus explains his exclusive mission to the woman: she is outside the territory of his pastoral concern.

The Canaanite woman teaches us the courage. Given her position as a stranger and as a woman, it took phenomenal courage to take on the all-Jewish and all-male company of Jesus and his disciples. She was so small that, even though she addresses Jesus by his proper Messianic titles - "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David" (v.22) - Jesus still ignored her: "He did not answer her at all" (v.23a). Most people at this point would give up and accept defeat. But not this Canaanite woman. Rather, she intensifies her efforts and embarks on a one-woman demonstration to the point that the disciples had to ask Jesus to do something about it: "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us" (v.23b).

But the woman has no intention of getting into a theological argument; all she knows is that her daughter is ill and needs Jesus. She goes after what she wants with perseverance. She stops Jesus in his tracks by kneeling at his feet. "Lord," she says, "help me!" Jesus responds with apparent harsh words: "It is not right to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." Jesus's apparent harshness was meant to test her faith. The woman was not diverted by this offensive rebuff; rather than taking offense, she hangs on to the reason she is there. She tells Jesus that even the dogs can eat scraps that fall from the master's table. This woman kneeling at Jesus's feet lets it be known that she will be satisfied with dog food. In her response, she has outwitted Him, and Jesus has the grace to give in. Her courage and her refusal to take "no" for an answer finally paid off. It was Jesus who gave in at the end: "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish" (v.28), and the woman gets what she came for; her daughter is healed.

The message of this single woman-outsider to every one of us today is "Be not afraid." Be not afraid to challenge prejudice and falsity even in high places, even in religious high places. The least among us can be a vehicle that God can use to bring justice and healing to all of God's disadvantaged daughters and sons all over the world. Especially at this time of turmoil and anxiety around us, like the Canaanite woman, until we get what we ask for, let's cling onto the person called Jesus. Surely, he will have pity on us and grant our hearts' desires.

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