



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

BMCC student Melanie Sederburg carries alfalfa over a fence to give to cattle that were confiscated by the Umatilla County Sheriff's department outside of Hermiston.



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BMCC students Trevor Meyer, left, and Jackson Wall sort out one of the smaller black angus cattle from a group of cattle waiting for a veterinarian to check the animals on Wednesday east of Hermiston. The animals are part of a herd of more than 200 animals that were confiscated for animal neglect.

# Community rallies to help neglected cattle

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**  
Staff Writer

Dressed in wool overalls and carrying a pitchfork, Umatilla County Sheriff Terry Rowan looked more like a rancher than a lawman Wednesday morning while pacing the snow-covered pastures at Cedar Creek Cattle Company in Hermiston.

Two weeks earlier, Rowan and deputies arrived at this property on Columbia Lane and South Edwards Road to discover more than a dozen dead cattle and another 15 so malnourished they couldn't be safely moved. Charges of animal neglect will likely be filed against the herd's owner, 55-year-old Michael Hockensmith, but in the meantime daily care of the animals has fallen to the sheriff's office.

On Wednesday, officers recruited about 15 students from Blue Mountain Community College to help round up the cows for tagging and immunizations. A local veterinarian was also on hand to assess each animal's body condition.

By day's end, Rowan said they processed 185 cattle with another eight

still to go. The death toll, which had been 14 animals, is now 17, including a two-year-old heifer found dead early Wednesday morning. A necropsy determined the heifer, which was seven and a half months pregnant, had suffered from a bacterial disease and congestive heart failure.

"She had a rough life," said Brent Barton, veterinarian with the Oregon Trail Veterinary Clinic in Hermiston.

Upon investigation, Rowan said it appears the cattle were neglected over an extended period of time. There was no hay when officers first showed up weeks earlier, and water troughs had frozen over with 6-8 inches of ice.

"We have some really malnourished animals we've been contending with," Rowan said.

Rowan said they expect to file multiple charges of first- and second-degree animal neglect against Hockensmith in the coming days. Jake Kamins, Oregon's deputy district attorney dedicated solely to animal cases, has been brought on as a special prosecutor. The sheriff's office has

already spent several thousand dollars caring for the cattle, Rowan said. It also takes time and manpower to make sure the animals are properly fed, and to break through ice in the water troughs.

"It always stretches your resources," Rowan said. "At the same time, it's worthwhile. You hate to see the animals neglected."

Their goal Wednesday was to tag each of the cattle and give them much-needed vaccines, such as de-wormer and multi-mineral injection to boost their immune system. To do that, students from Matt Liscom's beef production class at BMCC joined the team to round up reluctant cattle and run them through the loading chutes.

From there, the animals were ushered one by one into a metal squeeze chute designed to hold them still, where Barton could perform his assessment. Some cattle thrashed, struggled and even fell down inside the contraption, getting themselves stuck in the process.

"They're not used to people handling them," Barton said. "Essentially,

they're pretty tender creatures right now. They've already been through quite a cold spell."

Liscom, who works as an agriculture science instructor at BMCC, said they were contacted by the sheriff's office last week to

lend a hand, and he decided it would be a valuable educational opportunity for his beef production students.

"We had a lab day anyway, so it worked out well that we could help out the county as well as learn," Liscom said.

Liscom said the class was not there to pass any judgment, or to determine who is right and who is wrong in the case.

"We're just here to help care for these animals as best we can," he said.

## Simplot opens new, larger location

Hermiston Herald

Simplot Grower Solutions has expanded its Oregon offerings with a new facility in Hermiston.

The new location, at 79319 Simplot Road, is a "state-of-the-art" 19,000 ton dry fertilizer blending facility and the largest in eastern Oregon, according to a news release from Simplot.

It is already operational and open for business.

At the new facility customers can choose from a "wide variety" of products on site to create custom blends of crop nutrient products that will be mixed and loaded on demand "within minutes of arrival," according to the news release.

"The new location enables us the flexibility to provide the same top-of-the-line products our customers desire, accurately blended, much more quickly," said George DesBrisay, Simplot area manager for the Lower Columbia Basin and Willamette Valley, in a statement. "We do everything we can to ensure

farmers maximize the success in all their fields and this is one more tool to help in that effort."

The entrance and load-out for trucks is designed so that drivers can remain in their trucks while orders are being loaded, increasing safety.

Simplot previously operated in Umatilla on Umatilla River Road. The company will keep that facility for organic fertilizer, while much of its other business has been transferred to the new Hermiston facility (located on Simplot Road off Highway 207 near the Space Age fuel station).

Dave Dufault, vice president and general manager of Simplot's retail business, said in a statement that Oregon is "extremely important" to the Boise-based company.

"We know our customers expect great products with great service, and this new facility will enable us to handle more of those products and deliver when our customers need them," he said. "We are very proud

of that capability.

For more information call 541-922-5672 or visit [www.simplotgrowersolutions.com](http://www.simplotgrowersolutions.com).

## School Exclusion Day

Wednesday, Feb. 15 is School Exclusion Day for the Hermiston School District. If students are not up-to-date on all state-required immunizations by that date, they will not be allowed to attend school or child care until they are immunized as required by the state.

The Umatilla County Public Health Department in Hermiston, at 435 E. Newport Ave., will provide immunizations from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 11.

No appointment is required.

The Public Health Department Hermiston branch is also open Thursdays and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and the Pendleton branch Mondays through Wednesdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Children over the age of seven can also be immunized at Bi-Mart, Safeway or Rite Aid.

For a list of immunizations required by the state, visit the Oregon Health Authority website, <https://public.health.oregon.gov>.

Umatilla Electric is offering the following scholarships for the 2017-18 school year:

### ACADEMIC

Twelve \$2,500 scholarships are available for members of UEC and/or their dependent children who are enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time graduate or undergraduate program at a two- or four-year college. Apply online at: [www.oregonstudentaid.gov](http://www.oregonstudentaid.gov).

### LINEMAN TRADE

A \$2,000 scholarship is available to members and/or applicants whose parent or guardian is an active member, and are interested in the Line Construction trade and will be attending an accredited Line College. Go to: [UmatillaElectric.com](http://UmatillaElectric.com) to download the application.

### ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

A \$5,000 scholarship is administered to a college student who has completed their freshman year and is interested in pursuing a degree in Electrical Engineering-Power Systems. Apply at [www.oregonstudentaid.gov](http://www.oregonstudentaid.gov).

For more information visit our offices in Hermiston or Boardman or our website: [UmatillaElectric.com](http://UmatillaElectric.com).

You can also call us at 541-567-6414 or OSAC at 1-800-452-8807.



**Deadline is March 1, 2017**