

Easterday family plans to re-open Boardman dairy

By GEORGE PLAVEN
CAPITAL PRESS

It's been five months since Lost Valley Farm closed and sold off its remaining herd of dairy cattle. The facilities have now been scrubbed clean, and the massive free-stall barns await their new tenants.

Lost Valley's owner had big ambitions when he opened the dairy in spring 2017 near Boardman. It was supposed to have 30,000 animals at full capacity, making it the second-largest in the state. Instead, it became a high-profile disaster as regulators cited more than 200 wastewater violations and its owner declared bankruptcy within a year.

Cody Easterday is aware of the controversy. At the same time, he believes the dairy will be successful with the right management and the right approach.

Easterday Farms purchased the property, including the buildings and infrastructure, for \$66.7 million in February. The cattle had been sold at auction separately. A new corporation, Easterday Farms Dairy LLC, was registered with the state on March 20.

On July 1, Easterday Farms Dairy submitted an application to the Oregon Department of Agriculture for a new Confined Animal Feeding Operation permit, otherwise known by the acronym CAFO. The permit would allow Easterday Farms to reopen the



George Plaven

Cody Easterday, president of Easterday Farms, said he hopes to open Easterday Farms Dairy by fall 2020.

dairy.

Based in Pasco, Wash., Easterday Farms is a fourth-generation, family-owned business with 70,000 head of beef cattle and 25,000 acres of potatoes, onions, grain and forage in the Columbia Basin.

As president of Easterday Farms, Cody Easterday said the company plans to invest \$15 mil-

lion in the dairy, including completion of a wastewater treatment system that was never finished under the previous owner and bringing the farm into full environmental compliance.

"It's a state-of-the-art dairy. It just needs to be finished, and it needs to have the correct management," Easterday said. "It will be a solid, environmentally sound

dairy."

First dairy

While Easterday Farms has decades of experience running ranches, farms and feedlots in Washington, this will be the family's first foray into the dairy industry.

According to its CAFO application, Easterday Farms Dairy will have up to 28,300 cattle, though

not all of those will be milking cows. The dairy lists 8,000 mature dairy cows and 2,650 dairy heifers housed under roof, along with 1,700 mature dairy cows and 5,950 heifers in open confinement.

Some 10,000 cattle will also be kept in open confinement for beef production.

"We've operated CAFOs in Washington," Easterday said. "We understand it. We're good, clean operators and we know what we need to do."

In Oregon, CAFOs are jointly regulated by the state Department of Agriculture and Department of Environmental Quality. Permits must include an Animal Waste Management Plan that describes how the farm will handle large amounts of manure without contaminating groundwater or surface water.

Easterday Farms Dairy expects to generate roughly 5.4 million cubic feet of liquid manure, 5.9 million cubic feet of solid manure and 11.7 million cubic feet of processed wastewater annually. That's enough manure to fill 128 Olympic-size swimming pools.

The dairy plans to recycle all that nitrogen-rich manure by using it as fertilizer on the surrounding farmland, growing irrigated crops such as potatoes, onions and wheat, as well as forage for cattle. Easterday said the manure will be applied at agronomic rates on 5,390 acres of cropland.

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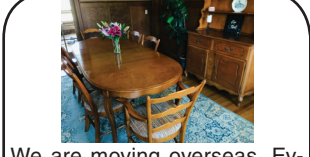
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