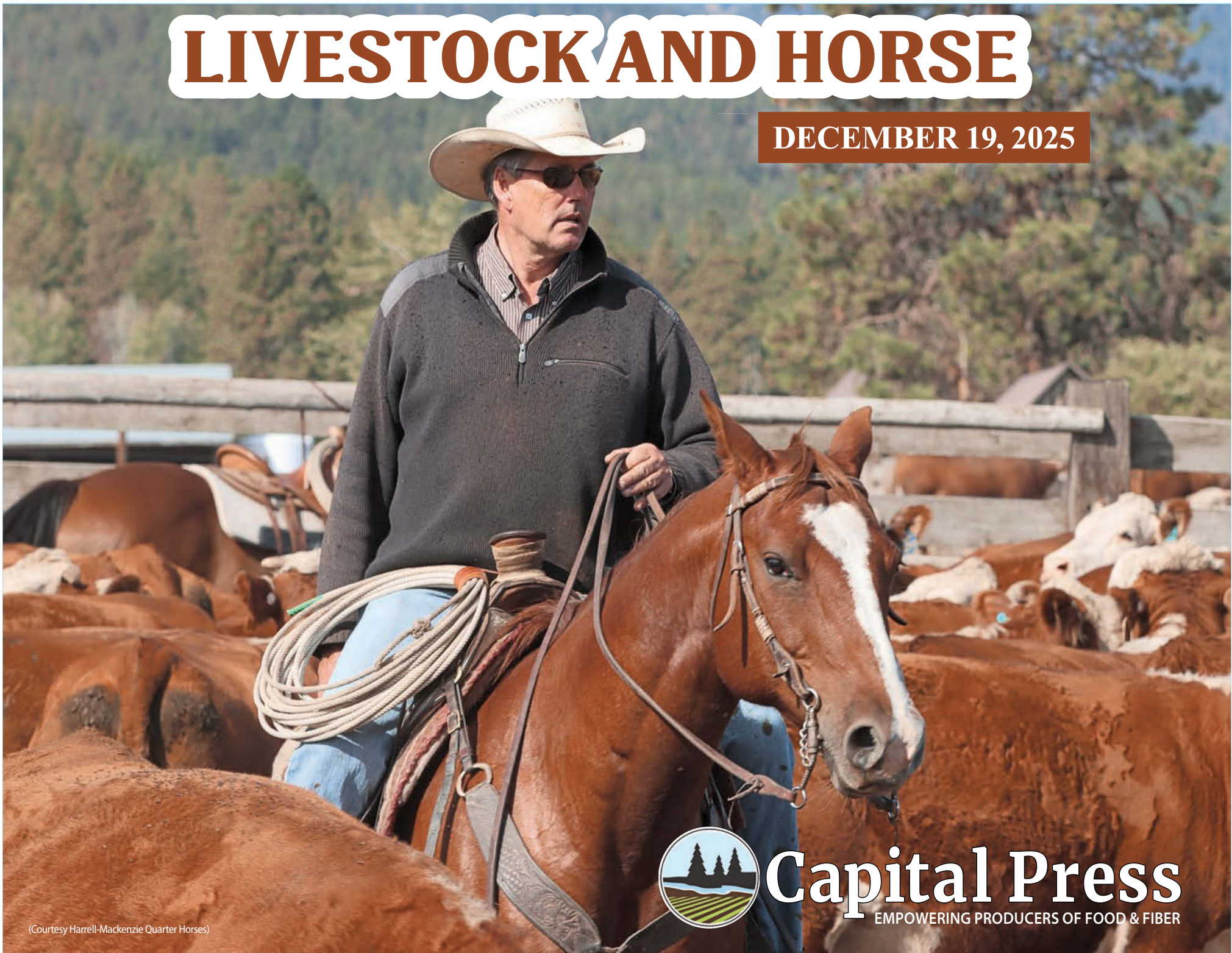


LIVESTOCK AND HORSE

DECEMBER 19, 2025



(Courtesy Harrell-Mackenzie Quarter Horses)



Capital Press

EMPOWERING PRODUCERS OF FOOD & FIBER



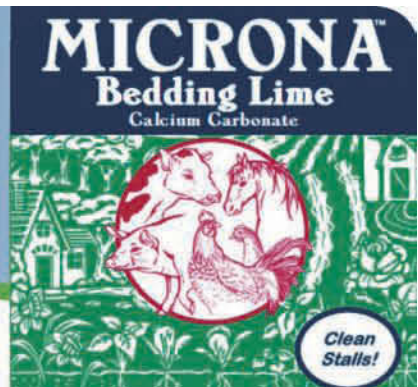
MICRONA™ Bedding Lime

- WSDA Organic
- Increase Sanitation, Decrease Odors
- Replace hydrated lime
- Micronized, Proven Results

MICRONAag.com



(360) 225-6505



Equine experience: Harrell-Mackenzie at home in horse breeding niche

By **BRAD CARLSON**
Capital Press

BAKER CITY, Ore. — Ranchers Bob Harrell, Jr., and Wannie Mackenzie are big believers in breeding their own horses, which they've done for decades.

The Harrell-Mackenzie Quarter Horses partners — who plan their 28th annual sale March 2 — remain committed to the business.

“We started raising horses for our own use because we couldn't find the horses that we liked,” Harrell said. “We started raising horses for ourselves and had extras, and started selling them in the sale. It has grown from there.”

Custom beginnings
“We didn't do it halfway,” Mackenzie said.

In the beginning, he and Harrell traveled the U.S. looking at different horse

programs.

“Bob and I decided to run quality, not numbers,” Mackenzie said. Between the two, they market 20 horses a year, “and we really work on quality. We make sure that horse fits the person who buys it. We daily strive to do that.”

Genetics emphasis

Quality boils down to genetics and training, he said.

“We have a bunch of old mare lines that fit our criteria,” Mackenzie said.

“The horses aren't given special treatment,” he said. “We raise them like we run our cattle.”

“We run stallions in bunches” banded together in groups on open range, Mackenzie said. “It's all old-school.”

Over the years, the business has become known for a horse who is versatile on the



Harrell-Mackenzie Quarter Horses limited annual production from the outset to focus on genetics-based quality. (Courtesy Harrell-Mackenzie Quarter Horses)

ranch and also excels in arenas, Harrell said.

Working horses

The Harrell and Mackenzie families have rodeo in their backgrounds.

“We used horses during

the week on the ranch and would go rodeo and rope on the weekends,” Harrell said. “That's how we got started. These are performance horses that have a lot of athletic ability and have ‘a lot of cow.’”

Most ranchers buy horses from a reputable breeder rather than breeding and raising their own, said Rex Hoagland, a past Owyhee Cattleman's Association president who raises cattle in the Wilson-Reynolds Creek area of southwest Idaho. Breeders select for specialized traits and “they look through all of the genetics. So they are hand

picking everything they want out of that colt.”

There was a time when ranchers tried to do more with vehicles, partly because ranchers were getting older on average, Hoagland said.

“In the country we run in, you can't just do it all with motorcycles, side-by-sides and four-wheelers,” he said. “You need to have a horse who can get through the willows and junipers.”

“You're seeing the value of horses because of how they are being used and what they are having to do with them to run their cattle, which is a good thing,”

Hoagland said. “I'm glad to see people back using them.”

In the West, a good ranch horse is “the best tool we have,” said Idaho Cattle Association executive vice president and Idaho Quarter Horse Association board president Cameron Mulroney. “They're able to get out in all the areas we run cattle and do the jobs we need. It's uncanny.”

Based on his own experience, cattle are “much more acclimated to other livestock” such that horses don't create a flight response in a

See *Breeding*, Page C3

YEAR-END EQUIPMENT SALE



2009 MF 5455, 4200 hours, MFWD, radial tires, 3 remotes, quick loader with bale spear..... **\$45,000**



2014 Trail King 48' Hydraulic Trailer, Hydraulic Trailer, beaver tail, front ramp winch, air ride, Apitong deck, nice trailer **\$55,000**



1986 JD 4450, MFWD, front weights, 650/65R38 radials, recent rebuilt engine with warranty..... **\$55,000**



New house 1530 15ft Shredder, new blades, heavy duty rear door..... **\$11,500**

*** AG EQUIPMENT ***
*** SALVAGED TRACTORS ***
*** CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT ***
*** PARTS ***

(Save up to 50% buying used parts.)



2019 CAT 420F Series 2, MFWD, extendahoe, hydraulic claw, only 80 hours..... **\$110,000**

Nyssa Tractor & Implement

Celebrating 35 years in the agricultural machinery business.

Our yard has 5 miles of road, with machinery on both sides.

FREE TOURS GIVEN DAILY. LOCATED NYSSA, OR

Call Toll Free: (833)372-4020

www.nyssatractor.com • sales@nyssatractor.com

THE VALLEY'S LEADING SOURCE FOR CHAINS, BEARINGS, AND SPROCKETS

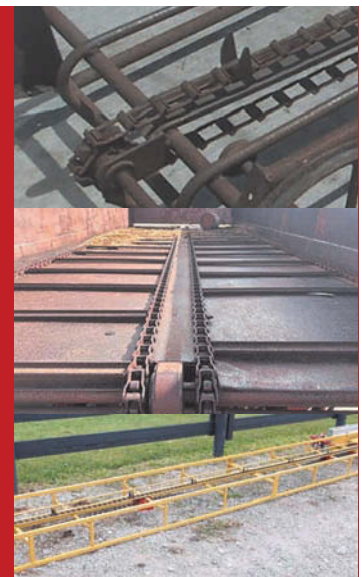


📍 1079 Wilco Rd, Stayton, OR

☎ 503-796-1500

✉ sales@agchainsplus.com

🌐 www.agchainsplus.com



Breeding

Continued from Page C2

cow to the extent that a vehicle can, he said. “A good horse is what we see as the best way to gather cattle and keep a low stress level when done properly.”

Mulrony’s family has a small-scale cattle operation in the Wilder, Idaho, area and also raises colts. The colts are bred mostly for the rodeo arena and racetrack — and be fast, smart and work-ready in general.

“In my view the American Quarter horse or the ranch horse is a tool for the cattle rancher and is the basis for everything we do with quarter horses” including on the performance side, he said.

Anecdotally, Mulrony sees a pattern of fewer horses being used on ranches due to industry shifts including lower cattle numbers and more operations running on smaller acreages.

Mackenzie said he and Harrell run their ranch horses similarly.

“We both run in sagebrush,” Mackenzie said.

Solid demand

Early on, many of Harrell-Mackenzie’s buyers used the horses on their ranches and in weekend events, Harrell said.

“Our client base has expanded on that, what the use of the horse is for” to include competitions, he said.

Prices have been steadily increasing over the past five to 10 years, Harrell said.

“Horse numbers have been dwindling for a number of years, so to go and find good ‘using’ horses was hard to do,” he said. “So that really increased demand for good horses.”

More people are getting into the business of raising



(Courtesy Harrell-Mackenzie Quarter Horses)

horses “because now there is enough money to justify starting a breeding program whereas before it was awfully expensive to raise horses,” Harrell said.

Veterinary service and medicine costs are fairly high, and “the cost of genetics is extremely high,” he said. “The cost of good stud horses, those have gone up

dramatically.”

“We kind of have our own clientele that keeps coming back, buying the same bloodlines they like,” Mackenzie said. “Plus, we get a lot of new customers just by word of mouth.”

A nice horse

“Bob and I, we have focused on the structure of

the horses, the bone and their feet — making sure their feet are straight — and a great disposition,” he said.

Disposition is important to clients partly because

in general, people don’t ride as much as they used to and “really don’t want to get bucked off,” Harrell said. “We’re trying to get horses that are not as ‘cold-backed’

and are user friendly, but still have the athletic ability we are looking for.”

They run the business with their wives, Becky Harrell and Beth Mackenzie.

LEE’S DIESEL & MOBILE REPAIR, LLC

Rickreall, OR • 541-936-9146 • www.leesdiesel.com

Pivot & Linear Irrigation Systems

Parts & Service - All Electric Machines, Diesel Engines & Generators



GPS Guidance Systems
Submersible & Line-Shaft
Turbine Pumps, VFD's

Deutz Linear Engine
Timing Belts
Replace every 5 Years
or 4500 hrs

Lima Generator Bearing
and Cap
New Engines: Isuzu, FPT,
Perkins & Others



Eugene Livestock



Auction

EUGENE LIVESTOCK AUCTION, INC.

92380 Hwy 99 So. • Junction City, OR 97448

Livestock Auction every Saturday at 10:30am.

541-998-3353

www.eugenelivestockauction.com

Cover cropping, targeted grazing help Blattner Suffolks enlarge flock

By **BRAD CARLSON**
Capital Press

KUNA, Idaho — Sheep close in on Ross Blattner as he stands at a pasture's edge, a welcome and increasingly frequent sight as flock headcount rises per an earlier goal.

"We are able to have more sheep because we're not having to feed them hay" except during lambing season, he said.

Cover cropping, targeted grazing, crop mix shuffling and a recent small expansion have helped Blattner Suffolks gain efficiency — and sheep.

"With the extra feed we are making on the farm, we are keeping more ewe lambs to create more brood ewes, which eventually increases the number of ram lambs that we have to market," said Blattner, 26.

"We've been doing this the last four years," he said. "It doesn't stay stagnant."

The flock has grown even as sheep leave the farm through the course of normal business operations.

"In the past four years, we've probably increased from about 90 to 100 brood ewes to 175, with plans to continue growing," Blattner said. "We've not hit our potential on what we can

hold."

He expects to have 220 to 225 next year after culling around 20 from the current group.

But even at 220-plus brood ewes next year, "that will not be at capacity," Blattner said. "This year, we have more feed than sheep that can eat it."

Grazing sheep currently total about 350 — 175 brood ewes older than a year, 75 ewe lambs younger than a year and 100 ram lambs the operation keeps for a year and a half.

While the 2026 operation likely will have room for more sheep, flock expansion over the long term would depend on the availability of land on which to maintain and grow the rotational grazing system, Blattner said.

The system involves pasture, cover crops and alfalfa that keep the sheep foraging into the cold months, after they come off pasture.

The operation comprises around 300 acres after leasing an additional 20 this year. The added acreage previously produced corn that was combine-harvested for feed; Blattner and his father, Jack, no-till-planted barley. The farmers aim to lease some more ground next year.



Ross Blattner Nov. 24 shows where barley has been no-till-planted into grain corn stalks on part of the Blattner Suffolks operation outside Kuna, Idaho. (Brad Carlson/Capital Press)

"He needs some more ground, a challenge," said Jack Blatter, who retired from teaching high school agriculture in mid-2023 to work full-time with Ross, a University of Idaho agriculture graduate. Development pressure in the area effectively reduces the amount of farm ground available to lease.

Jack and Lori Blattner and their three children live on the farm, which has been in the family since 1917 and has raised purebred Suffolk

range rams since 1989.

As for the transition four years ago that included cover cropping, "we didn't have a ton of equipment when we started," Jack Blattner said.

The equipment, some standard and some specialized, is needed largely due to workflow and task timing requirements, he said. "We managed to add some. He's got a good precision sprayer, and we added harvest equipment."

A sprinkler pivot project

is underway on part of the farm.

Cash crops are wheat, barley, silage and grain corn, hybrid sweet corn for seed, alfalfa hay and mint. Cover crops — planted after the cash crops are harvested — are radishes, turnips, Austrian winter peas, two types of millet, and forage kale. The Blattners acquired a specialized drill about two years ago.

Sheep ate pasture grass Nov. 24, roughly a day ahead of a planned move to

dormant alfalfa. Last year, which was colder earlier, the move was around Nov. 1.

"That helps the alfalfa because the voles stay out — there's nowhere to hide — and in the spring, the alfalfa doesn't have the 'dead growth' to grow through," Ross Blattner said. And the reduction in foliage improves early season spraying efficiency.

Dormant alfalfa grazing began at Blattner Suffolks seven to eight years ago. Four to five years ago, volume was sufficient enough that feeding hay was not needed until lambing.

"And now with more crops, we can have more sheep," Ross Blattner said.

This year, with no-till and reduced-till practices and more cover crops, "we are starting to see the benefits of both" including higher yields and healthier soil, he said.

Long-term solvency is the driving factor in the moves made in recent years, Jack Blattner said.

"If you're just depending on planting a crop in spring and harvesting in fall, there is not enough margin in the farming part at 300 acres to make a living," he said. "Lori and I allow Ross a rope to make these decisions."

NW
Mixer Feeders
Feeding Cows Without The BULL!



1121 Garber St, Caldwell, ID 83605 | (208) 459-2750 | www.nwmixerfeeders.com



Washington Cattlemen's Association executive rounds up support for ranchers

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

If you don't love cows, you just don't know cows, says Chelsea Hajny, executive vice president of the Washington Cattlemen's Association.

There are people who don't love cows. Cattle critics blame cows for changing the climate, polluting water and stripping grasslands bare. On the other hand, cows fertilize the earth, chew down flammable vegetation and convert plants into protein for humans.

"Cows give back tenfold what they take," Hajny said.

Hajny, 42, has been the association's top executive since 2022 and was a member before that. With her husband, Mike, she raises cattle and exports hay in Kittitas County. She grew up on a ranch in Hayden Lake, Idaho.

In an interview, she talked about advocating for an industry that's admired, but also sometimes reviled. "There is the perception that people are always coming for us. Always coming to attack our way of life, or take something from us. There are days I feel like that, too," she said.

"I think that's the job in a nutshell — to educate and

bridge that gap, so we're not always on defense."

Washington ranchers have persistent problems — a shortage of grazing land, but no shortage of wolves, and a constant push by regulators to keep cows away from water, even stockwater ponds.

Hajny says there are a couple of things working in the favor of ranchers — cowboy hats and the popular television show "Yellowstone."

When cattlemen visit legislators in Olympia, they wear cowboy hats and "stick out like a sore thumb," Hajny said, but make a point.

"A cowboy hat commands respect. The thing is our members aren't just putting their cowboy hats on that day. They wear that hat everyday," she said. "The cowboy effect is very real."

So is the "Yellowstone effect," Hajny said. In the show, the Dutton family fights to keep their Montana ranch. "Now we know ranching is not glamorous," Hajny said. "It's not as glamorous as Yellowstone makes it look. It's not a glass of scotch by the fire at 5 p.m. everyday."

But the show makes ranching relevant to main-



Washington Cattlemen's Association executive vice president Chelsea Hajny seeks to educate the public and policymakers about ranching.

stream audiences, she said. "And that has had such a positive effect for agriculture, in rodeo, the Western way of life as a whole."

Hajny herself competes in breakaway roping at rodeos. "I picked up a rope during COVID," she said. "I found myself with down-

time, and it was something I decided I was going to do."

Four years ago, she entered her first rodeo. "I was terrified," she said. "I certainly wasn't ready, but I entered anyway."

She competed professionally for the first time last summer and plans to

CHELSEA HAJNY

Age: 42

Position: Washington Cattlemen's Association executive vice president

Other jobs: Founder of CM Strategies; helps organizations with business development, public image and marketing; Hajny Trading, a livestock and hay exporting business in Kittitas County.

Education: Washington State University, bachelor's degree in public relations and business administration.

Family: Husband, Mike

compete next year. She credits any success to her mare, Prada. "It is definitely my happy place. It's how I recharge," she said.

Normally, ranchers appear happy with President Trump. But when Trump suggested importing more beef from Argentina to lower retail meat prices, ranchers criticized the president.

"Rural America voted for Trump, loves Trump, supports Trump and is grateful for what he is trying to do in America, but at that moment, I believe ranchers felt betrayed by him," Hajny said.

To put matters into perspective, Argentina is a major beef-producing country, but it exports relatively little to America. The U.S. gets more fresh beef from Nicaragua than Argentina.

Besides addressing high retail beef prices, Trump was trying to help an ally's economy.

Ranchers reacted emotionally to an attempt to control beef prices and thus cattle prices, Hajny said.

"The American rancher has suffered for a very long time, and we finally get this stint where the beef prices are good," she said. "Our stance was, 'Please, let the markets do what they're going to do.'"

"My phone rang off the hook and the words from my members were, 'We're just trying to heal from a decade of low beef prices prior to this upswing.'"

The upswing particularly benefits ranchers who also farm and are losing money on that side of the operation, she said. "Right now, the cows are saving the farm."

**Western Oregon,
Washington &
No. California
distributor of the
Arrowquip Livestock
Handling System**



New 88 Series In-Stock!

**GR Livestock
Trailers**

20' and 24' Available W/4' Tack Room



Stock # C001599

26' W/ 8000lb axles,



Stock #C013073

Diamond Sales

Your All Service Dealer Halsey, OR
541-953-7548 • 541-740-5135

View our inventory: diamondksales.com



MAXX-D



Rancher rides into the sunset after leading the Oregon Cattlemen's Association

By **KYLE ODEGARD**
Capital Press

Matt McElligott, immediate past president of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, has had a successful two years leading the organization, but he's also looking forward to letting someone else take the reins.

"Being president takes a lot of work and a lot of time, but I did it because I was hoping to make a difference and help the industry," said McElligott, who has ranches near North Powder, Ore., and Long Creek, Ore.

When the beef cattle industry remembers 2025, they'll think primarily of high prices, strong demand and short supply, McElligott said.

"Prices have come off, but they are still historically high and they are higher than this

time last year," he said.

"We may have seen the top. It's uncertain," McElligott added.

This year has had other notable developments, including legislative wins, lowered tariffs by President Donald Trump's administration and the threat of the new world screwworm.

Lowered tariffs not a major concern

Ranchers had strong initial reactions to lowered tariffs on beef from Brazil and Argentina.

McElligott said feelings now are more tempered.

"The first inclination is, 'Son of a gun, why did he do that?'" The reality is we don't have enough beef right now in our domestic supply to fulfill domestic demand," McElligott said.

Argentina is a relatively

small supplier, mainly of hamburger, and can't match the quality of U.S. beef.

"It's a supply and demand game. We'll always have imports. We'll always have exports," McElligott said.

Screwworm strategy will lead to border reopening

Ranchers believe the U.S. government is doing a good job battling new world screwworm with protocols on both sides of the border and banning live cattle imports from Mexico.

But that strategy also has costs. Southern feedlots are struggling financially and Tyson shuttered a plant due to low supply.

McElligott expects the southern border to reopen to Mexican cattle in early 2026.

He also anticipated that a planned sterile fly facility



Matt McElligott, immediate past president of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, said he expected the state's beef sector to surpass the nursery industry as Oregon's top agricultural product in 2025. "Every county in the state of Oregon has cattle, and that's pretty unique," McElligott said. (Courtesy Matt McElligott)

would open in Texas, providing an additional layer of security.

Brand inspectors, wolf compensation and other legislative wins

As president of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, McElligott spent ample time in Salem talking with politicians.

One legislative win this year was raising fees on producers to increase funding for Oregon Department of Agriculture brand

inspectors.

"It was either that or cut back on the program and we did not want to cut back on the program," McElligott said.

A recent cattle rustling case in Klamath Falls, Ore., detected with the help of a brand inspector, highlighted the program's importance, McElligott said.

With beef prices so high, he expects more cattle rustling cases.

New Oregon legislation also approved wolf depreda-

tion "multiplier" payments, with the reasoning that the indirect costs of wolves far exceed the market value for livestock kills.

The new law allows for state compensation of up to five times the value of calves, yearlings, goats and sheep, and up to three times the market value of other cattle.

McElligott said increased funding for wolf compensation will be a focus next legislative session, as well.

Other legislative wins included restructured Oregon Department of Forestry funding that lessens costs on landowners for fire readiness and mitigation, water bills that were amended or killed and making the T-bone the official steak of Oregon.

The latter emphasizes the importance of the state's beef sector, which he predicted would surpass the nursery industry as Oregon's top agricultural product in 2025.

"Every county in the state of Oregon has cattle, and that's pretty unique," McElligott said.

"Tennis shoes and computer chips get all the press, but ag is a bigger driver than those combined," he added.

To Find a Local SWS BEEF SALES REPS

Let us show you all the ways we can help you raise healthy animals!

NEED PROTEIN BLOCKS:
GENUINE 20 ULTRA ALL NATURAL
GENUINE 30 ULTRA ALL NATURAL

AVAILABLE WITH AVAILA 4

BENEFITS
HANDLING CONVENIENCE
WEANING CONDITIONS
COST EFFECTIVE

Simplot
WESTERN STOCKMEN'S

GENUINE
FEED & SUPPLEMENTS

AVAILA 4
ZINPRO

ROCKY MOUNTAIN STEEL

WE HAVE 2 3/8" & 2 7/8" WELL STEM PIPE

Other Sizes Available Call For Pricing Today!

- USED CABLE
- ALL FENCING HARDWARE AVAILABLE
- CABLE CLAMPS

Direct Ship & Cutting Available

400 3rd Ave. North, Nampa, ID 83687
800-851-8612 • 208-466-0036
rockymtnsteel2020@gmail.com

Carter assumes ICA president role

By **BRAD CARLSON**
Capital Press

Val Carter began his one-year term as Idaho Cattle Association president during the group's annual convention Nov. 10-12 in Sun Valley.

He succeeded Spencer Black, who remains on the ICA executive committee as past president.

"I feel honored to be able to be a representative of the cattlemen in the state," Carter said. "I'm not the smartest person in the room ever, but I do see we have qualified people on the board and we do have a really great staff."

"He has 100% of my confidence," Black said of Carter.

"Val is well rounded," said Black, whose family has a cow-calf operation in the

Almo area and a finish yard in Burley. "He basically has built his own business. He was given an opportunity at an age when he had a young family and turned it into Carter Cattle Company. He deals with grazing rights, succession planning ... He knows all the challenges young people are facing. It's never easy to get into the business."

Spencer Black, Idaho Cattle Association past president. (Courtesy ICA)

Carter Cattle, in the Pin-gree area, is a cow-calf operation that runs on a mix of private and public land, with U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Bureau of Land Management grazing permits. The business has a registered Angus herd, raises purebred bulls to sell to commercial cattlemen, and has a feedlot for the bulls in winter. Carter has served



Val Carter

as purebred chair on the ICA executive committee.

The cattle association board and staff work on state and federal policy issues. The board will meet in mid-December, partly to set priorities for 2026.

"What's going on in the (Idaho) legislature usually dictates what we work on — different bills that may come up and that would affect the cattle industry," Carter said. The annual session starts Jan. 12 and is expected to last about three months.

On the federal side, "cow-calf grazing on public lands is a big issue, sage grouse are still an issue, etc.," he said.

Working with the environmental community "is a little bit different than it was five or six years ago," Carter said. Cattle have gained more acceptance as part of the ecosystem and "can be a good thing in preventing fire."

An expected ICA priority for 2026 will involve how the association can help maintain what has been a good market — such as by continuing to focus on handling ani-

IDAHO CATTLE ASSOCIATION DETAIL

<https://www.idahocattle.org/>

mals well and carrying out other best practices to ensure product quality and safety, he said.

The U.S. cattle industry in the last two years has seen record-high beef prices, ongoing high demand, and cow numbers lower than they have been since the mid-1950s, Carter said. "But we've been more efficient. We are more efficient at producing more pounds of beef with less cattle."

"There is more availability for processing, but that has been a double-edged sword because now we have

low cattle and we have places not running at full capacity — which is going to affect their bottom lines," Black said.


Carter said that as a cattle business owner-operator, current market conditions "make me want to be more cautious in the decisions we make."

Producers this year have been starting to retain heifers, he said.


As for a future change in the market, "we will gear up for it, just as we have in the past," Carter said.

ICA is "doing great," Black said. He began serving on the board in the fall of 2017, "and since then, all I've seen ICA do is grow. We handle our own issues and are not just the voice of Idaho cattle, but are becoming a voice of the West."

Specializing in Truck and Livestock Scales






Established in 1959, Scales NW offers a wide range of equipment, from precision lab balances to high capacity rail scales, as well as certified scale service and installation.



Scales NW is proud to serve:

- California
- Idaho
- Montana
- Nevada
- Oregon
- Utah
- Washington

SCALES


NORTHWEST

Contact Steve Orr for more information today!
Email: steveorr@scalesnw.com
Phone: (503) 510-3540

www.scalesnw.com • (800) 451-0187


5221096-1

PROVEN PERFORMANCE




CERTIFIED | TRUSTED | PERSISTENT


DISTRIBUTED BY



ROB DUERST & BRANDON BISHOP | 503.873.6498
INFO@IOKAMARKETING.COM | IOKAFARMS.COM



We know ag financing like you know how to direct traffic.



For over a century we've served customers who can do just about anything. You deserve a financial partner who works as hard as you do.

AgWestFC.com



 Equal Housing Lender
This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.