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FAMILY INTRODUCES
CENTURY RANCH TO
MODERN MARKETS

YOUNG FARMERS
AND RANCHERS
SPEAK THEIR MINDS

NEW!
2007 OREGON
FARM STAND
GUIDE



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Photo by Anne Marie Moss

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The Michaels family of Douglas Co. Farm Bureau represents the fourth generation of a Century Ranch. Top row, from left: Katie, Holly, and Troy. Bottom, from left: Sarah and Moriah.

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LEGAL SCENE

LEGISLATION STRIPS WORKERS OF SECRET BALLOT PROCESS

By TIM BERNASEK

The union movement has come a long way since the early days of the 20th century. Child labor laws, minimum wage, and workplace health and safety regulations are just a few of the changes ushered in by a healthy and thriving labor movement in

political clout. This is especially true in Oregon. Union clout has grown even more since last year's elections when the Democratic Party, due in large part to union support, took control of Congress and the Oregon Legislature as well.

As the old saying goes, "to the victor go the spoils." Nationwide, many Democrats campaigned on the importance of union issues. It is not surprising that now they are in power, they would push for legislation that would benefit those who worked so hard to get them elected.

While it is understandable that Congress would consider union-friendly legislation, what is surprising is how anti-worker some of it is.

How can union-friendly legislation be anti-worker?

The best example is the so-called "Employee Free Choice Act." If the truth in advertising laws applied to legislation, this act would fail the test.

The Employee Free Choice Act, if enacted, would amend the laws governing the unionization process in this country. One of its key provisions is the sidestepping of the secret ballot election process. Under labor law today, a secret ballot election is an important tool in order to find out if workers want to be represented by a union.

Clearly unions and employers have a lot at stake in the unionization process. Each side routinely expresses their views about the subject to workers. However, the decision of whether or not workers want union representation in the workforce should be done in an environment free from coercion. A se-

cret ballot is the best way to make sure that workers can make their choices free from any such intimidation.

The Employee Free Choice Act would require employers to recognize a union once a majority of the workers in a proposed bargaining unit signed cards indicating they support the union.

While signed cards from workers is one way to determine that a union has support in the workplace, it does not ensure that support has been earned free from coercion. There is nothing to prevent union organizers from engaging in threats of violence or other intimidation tactics in order to get employees to sign the cards. Peer pressure can also come in to play. **The best way to gauge whether or not workers want union representation is through a secret ballot process with federal oversight.**

It is unrealistic to expect that all workers would benefit from every piece of legislation proposed by the unions. Admittedly, there are times when legislation advanced by the Farm Bureau draws the ire from some in the agricultural community.

However, it is reasonable to expect that workers would be better off if legislation advanced by those who represent them was passed. But it is difficult to see how individual workers would benefit from having their right to a secret ballot eliminated.

While the union would win by getting more members, individual employees would not.

For that reason alone, Congress should say "NO" to the Employee Free Choice Act. ☐



The Employee Free Choice Act: I know it's pro-union, but is it pro-worker?

this country.

Union membership grew dramatically after World War II only to taper off in recent years. From a high of 35 percent union memberships in the workforce (public and private) in the mid-1950s, today this number has fallen to around 12 percent (7.4 percent in the private sector).

Even though its membership has fallen, unions have tremendous



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IN THE LOOP

By KATIE FAST

DON'T BE FOOLED BY SB 694



Livestock bill SB 694 makes no sense for Oregon

Long before anyone recorded formalized knowledge about breeding, nutrition, the health and well-being of plants and animals, and sustainability, farmers could tell you when to plant, when to harvest, how to avoid disease, the warning signs in cropland and pasture, and how to take care of the resources their families depended on for survival.

In the 20th century, technological advances enabled farm families to produce more and higher-quality food using less land, less water, and less labor than ever before. Since 1950, the amount of land used for food production has remained the same. Over that same timeframe, the world population has more than doubled, and food production has more than tripled.

At the same time, Americans enjoy the most affordable food in the world, meaning our poorest citizens can access quality, nutritious foods in a way not possible in many countries.

Improvements in animal agriculture have included moving livestock indoors to protect them from extreme heat and cold.

Specialized housing has enabled animals to get food, water, and give birth in a cleaner, more protected environment. These and other shelter practices were developed hand-in-hand with veterinary and animal health experts to increase both animal welfare and production efficiency.

Unfortunately, these gains are at risk in Oregon and elsewhere. Groups whose sole currency is emotion have brought a bill to the Oregon Legislature that would outlaw good animal management practices. Senate Bill 694 would make criminals out of farmers using sound veterinarian-endorsed animal husbandry practices. It would also put Oregon on the path of ignoring sound science while making public policy based on sound-bites and buzzwords.

Ironically, this bill would also harm small, sustainable family farms and ranches. Oregon is not a large producer of hogs. Our operations are small family-owned farms that are producing meat for specialized markets.

Just as bad, the very practices targeted by the bill are only used to improve the health of hogs. Housing and birthing facilities are designed to protect hogs from waste and disease and to protect piglets from being inadvertently crushed by their mothers.


While the suggestions from the supporters of the bill appear otherwise, there is no “green” benefit to

this backward concept.

The bill talks about veal production. Oregon does not produce veal. Sadly, the language in the veal portion of the bill would harm our vital dairy farmers by outlawing basic tethering practices that are used for the well-being of dairy cows. The practices SB 694 would ban are humane according to the American Veterinary Medical Association. In fact, if any of these practices were not humane, they would be illegal under Oregon law right now with no new rules or legislation.

The sad truth is that a national fringe organization with no roots or connection to Oregon has chosen our state as a political pawn. **By targeting a smaller state like Oregon where family agriculture is the rule and where there are no big corporate enterprises to fight back, the group hopes to hoodwink our legislators into thinking they are promoting animal welfare.** The group hopes to win in several “pushover” states, and then take its case to the larger states or Congress.

Oregon has a strong tradition of valuing the family farm and supporting responsible, humane, and best-practices agriculture. We have no tradition of letting ourselves be bamboozled by traveling snake oil salesmen like the proponents of this preposterous bill.

Please join us in telling our legislators to protect Oregon values by opposing SB 694. 



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ASK THE EXPERT

Q & A WITH DOUGLAS BISH, TRAFFIC SERVICES ENGINEER WITH ODOT



Keep rural road safety in mind as you head out into the country this summer

During summer harvest, large farming equipment is more likely to be out on rural roads, moving from farm to field. Key tips: slow down, be patient, do not assume the farmer knows you are there, and pass with caution. Twice as many fatalities happen on rural roads than on urban streets.

We hope the enclosed Farm Stand Guide inspires your family to journey beyond your usual grocery store for at least one visit to a farm stand, u-pick field, nursery, or vineyard this harvest season.

It's so easy to get caught up in the beauty of Oregon's countryside, with its rows of fruit-laden trees or serene expanses of crimson clover; road safety can be the last thing on your mind. But as you cruise down a windy two-lane roadway, remember that along with the bucolic scenery comes the responsibility of occasionally sharing the roads with farming equipment.

Particularly during the summer months, hefty machinery like combines and tractors must drive from the farm to the field, or between fields, on public roads. Most of this equipment is designed to operate at speeds of no more than 25 mph and is required to display a Slow-Moving Vehicle sign — a triangular sign with a red reflectorized border and a fluorescent orange-red center. If you happen to come upon a vehicle with a SMV sign, you must slow down immediately.

Consider this: A car traveling 55 mph requires about 224 feet to stop on dry pavement, assuming average reaction time and braking. A

car traveling 55 mph can close a 300-foot gap (the length of a football field) and overtake a tractor moving at 15 mph in about 5 seconds. If you do not begin to slow as soon as you see a farm vehicle, you might not have time to avoid a collision.

To learn more about sharing the roads safely with farm equipment and rural road safety in general, *Oregon Agriculture* spoke with **Douglas Bish, Traffic Services Engineer with the Oregon Department of Transportation.**

Oregon Agriculture: How is driving on country roads different than driving on urban roads?

Douglas Bish: Rural roads are more likely to have two lanes and poor geometry, including narrow lanes, limited shoulders, sharp curves, pavement drop-offs, steep slopes, and limited clear zones along roadsides. There may be trees or other exposed hazards, which can be very dangerous if you run off the road.

Although there are fewer crashes in rural areas, they tend to be more severe than urban crashes. Probably due to higher speeds, twice as many fatalities happen on rural roads than on urban streets. There were 10,338 crashes on rural road

areas in 2005, with 303 fatal accidents. Comparatively, on urban roads, there were 34,540 total crashes in 2005 with only 141 fatal automobile accidents.

OA: What are the most common causes of accidents on rural roads?

DB: The most common type of crash is a lane departure crash, typically running off the road. Edge drop-offs, where the edge of the pavement drops off several inches to a gravel or dirt shoulder, can cause problems. If you drive off the road, that little ledge can grab your tire. When this happens, sometimes the motorist will over-correct with the steering wheel, causing more serious consequences, such as head-ons with other vehicles, roll-overs, or completely leaving the roadway.

Curves on rural roads can be misleading. They represent about 50 percent of the single-vehicle crashes in rural areas. A driver is not always able to judge the correct speed to negotiate the curve. When driving on an unfamiliar roadway or when it has been raining, slow down.

The most common contributing factors to crashes in rural areas are "too fast for conditions," "failure to yield right of way," and "following too close." These can be compounded by lack of concentration,



FEATURE STORY

By ANNE MARIE MOSS

Because the livestock is pasture-raised, Troy pays close attention to the quality of the grass. He explains how the field is full of clover, which is high in protein.



Back in 1989, Troy Michaels (right) attended the Douglas County Fair with his father Tom (middle) and grandfather Lawrence (left).



TAKING A 102-YEAR-OLD RANCH INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

Troy and Holly Michaels switch to pasture-raised livestock to tap into a modern market

Nestled in the Umpqua Valley, the Michaels Ranch in Days Creek is one of only 1,070 agriculture operations in the state to attain Century Farm or Ranch status, meaning it has been in the same family for more than 100 years.

It was established by Lawrence Michaels in 1898 and began by raising turkeys, beef, sheep, hogs, chickens, corn, grain, peaches — and nine children.

One of those kids was also

named Lawrence, the son who went on to become the second generation to run the ranch. By the 1950s, he had transitioned to only cattle, sheep, and prunes.

“The mix of products has changed over time as markets have fluctuated and certain commodities have become more profitable than others,” explains Troy Michaels of Douglas Co. Farm Bureau, who took over the reins from his grandfather, the second Lawrence, in 2000. Troy realized he now had the opportunity to put his own stamp on the ranch — as well as had the responsibility to keep it thriving.

Indeed, the only way an ag business can survive for four generations is if each successive owner is willing to change with the



times in order to stay competitive.

After Troy graduated from Oregon State University with a degree in agriculture economics, he returned to Days Creek to help out on the family farm.

"I worked with my grandfather for about 10 years before he passed away," says Troy. "It was a wonderful experience to work with and learn from him. I think if I had started out on my own straight out of college, I probably would have fallen flat on my face."

However his wife Holly, whom Troy met at OSU and became engaged to not long after, thinks that college prepared him well. "Because he went to school, Troy was able to learn new ideas and concepts and was able to bring some of those back," she says.

When it was Troy's turn to run the ranch, the ag economics background did indeed come in handy. Keeping an eye on evolving consumer tastes and staying open to new production practices, he was committed to taking the 102-year-old operation into the 21st century.

TAPPING A NEW MARKET

By the 1950s, Troy's grandfather had stopped purchasing new calves each year, instead allowing the herd

to replenish itself, which it does to this day. However, the animals lost their identity once they were shipped to large feedlots and sold on the open commodity market.

"A month or two after the calves were weaned off the cows, we loaded them up and they were sold," says Troy. "I never saw them again and never heard anything about where they ended up."

By the time he took over the operation, Troy had noticed a growing public interest in where food comes from. He knew the background of every animal on the ranch and realized that sending the livestock away to a wholesale warehouse cost his business a prime marketing opportunity. The idea to sell directly to retailers began to form.

The Michaels soon decided to take the plan a step further; they converted the ranch into a pasture-based operation. The market was ripe for this type of production. From claims that grass-fed beef tastes as good as conventionally raised beef, to the belief that it has high levels of omega 3s, a growing segment of consumers was willing to seek out and pay more for pasture-raised meat.

So instead of corn or grain, the

Michaels' cattle and sheep feed only on grass for the majority of the year. For a few months in the winter they receive a nutritional supplement on the grass. Troy also stopped giving the animals growth hormones and antibiotics.

In their research on how to enter this niche market, Troy and Holly found another ranch from the region also interested in selling a "natural product" directly to retailers. The two operations joined forces and created Emerald Hills Beef. The Michaels sell their sheep through Umpqua Valley Lamb, a partnership of producers similar to Emerald Hills Beef.

Their first client was the Ashland Food Co-op in Ashland. By 2005, New Seasons Market in Portland came calling. Unable to fill the larger orders on their own, the ranches joined the Country Natural Beef program, a direct-sell cooperative of cattle ranchers.

While the product costs a bit more than meat that's purchased on the open market, Troy says it's not far off from what conventional beef gets when commodity prices are good. The main benefit for the ranch is that its income doesn't fluctuate.

"For a small operation like us,

Top left: From left, Katie, Moriah, and Sarah Michaels help care for the horses on the ranch.

Top right: Holly and Troy make a point of speaking softly and not making sudden movements around the cattle to lessen their fear of humans.

Rain hitting the barn roof is captured in a gutter and is piped underground directly to the river. This helps minimize runoff contamination.





In 2005, Holly organized a Farm Bureau volunteer day at a food bank in Roseburg in conjunction with the national Harvest For All hunger-relief effort.

AN OREGON FARM BUREAU FAMILY

"The week we got back from our honeymoon, Troy says to me, 'Well, we're going to a Farm Bureau meeting,'" remembers Holly Michaels, a rancher from Days Creek. "And I said, 'A what?'"

When she married into the Michaels family, Holly became an instant Douglas County Farm Bureau member.

In the 1950s, Troy's grandfather Lawrence served as the Farm Bureau president for Douglas County. He was also closely involved in the creation and passage of the farm use assessment, where farmers pay their property tax based on the value of the land for farm production. This law, which is critical to the sustainability of family farm operations, still exists today.

Troy got started in Farm Bureau through the Young Farmers & Ranchers Program, where he served as the state chair and helped organize numerous tractor driving contests for FFA students. He has also served as the Douglas Co. Farm Bureau president.

For Holly, Farm Bureau offered not only an opportunity to learn more about the industry as a whole, but also a chance to put her political science background to use. Representing and advocating for agriculture interests in the local, state, and national legislature is one of the primary purposes of the organization. She has written to and met with elected officials, participated on OFB issue committees, and traveled to Washington D.C. to meet with lawmakers.

Holly also helped her county Farm Bureau create a scholarship program 13 years ago, and now serves on the board for the Oregon Agricultural Education Foundation. She has championed Harvest for All, a national hunger-relief effort, and like her husband and grandfather-in-law, has served as president of the Douglas Co. Farm Bureau.

In 2004, the Michaels won the state Farm Bureau Achievement Award, which recognizes exceptional work in agriculture, and earned a trip to the American Farm Bureau annual convention, which that year took place in Honolulu.

Says Troy, "Farm Bureau offers a chance for us to give back, to our community and to agriculture."

we couldn't get big enough to have the economies of scale where dips in the general market wouldn't impact us," says Troy. "Having a niche has stabilized our revenue."

It also makes accounting and financial planning much easier for Holly, who does the books for Michaels Ranch and Emerald Hills Beef.

NATURAL, NOT ORGANIC

Though grass fed, the livestock at Michaels Ranch is not raised organically. The animals get vaccinated and de-wormed, and the pastures they graze on receive some fertilizer and a limited amount of herbicides.

Holly says she occasionally has to defend this practice. "Sometimes people ask us why our product isn't organic, why do we vaccinate? And I ask them, 'Do you vaccinate your children against disease? Do you want to eat meat from an unhealthy animal or a healthy animal?' In western Oregon, you need to worm your livestock."

"Our system is produced sustainably and allows us to produce a high-quality product year-round," adds Troy. "We're using chemical fertilizers, but at a moderate level. We're trying to take care of the land as best we can so it produces for us and the animals."

And Troy does not take fertilizer use lightly. To hear him discuss his techniques is akin to listening to a scientist teach a 101 class. He takes soil samples, sends them to a lab for analysis, and based on the results, determines the appropriate nutrient cocktail for the field, adding or subtracting phosphorous or potassium, for example. The goal is to get the land closer to a target nutrient level for

optimum grass growth. Chemical sprays are occasionally hand-applied to combat blackberry bushes, a constant headache for Troy.

In terms of conservation, Troy and Holly have been very proactive, particularly in terms of water quality. The ranch has a CAFO permit (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation) and hired an engineering firm to suggest ways to reduce the potential of contamination, which could be caused by water running from the livestock barns into the river and streams.

Gutters were built around a barn roof to capture rainwater and pipe it underground so it enters the river without any contamination. Grassy field buffers are situated down-slope from the barn, which allows water runoff a chance to filter before it hits a drainage ditch. Troy harnessed the property's natural water sources by developing a small spring; water is piped from the spring into troughs. The troughs allow livestock to drink without having to wander into the streams, which helps minimize erosion.

The improvements the Michaels made have been so effective, that the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture is now figuring out how to take the ranch off the CAFO program. In fact, their care for their land has earned the ranch certification by the Food Alliance, a nonprofit organization that recognizes farmers who produce food in environmentally friendly and socially responsible ways.

RELATIONSHIPS: A BUSINESS INVESTMENT

The attention the Michaels give to their land and livestock extends to their nurturing of relationships. Troy predicts that at some point in



Addressing Misconceptions About Agriculture is a presentation and instructor's guide geared toward audiences of high school level and up. It tackles 35 issues and explains which are factual and which are not.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Though family farmers and ranchers are always near the top of the list in surveys when it comes to public perceptions of believability and credibility, the agriculture industry as a whole frequently comes under fire by groups who don't understand its practices. Unfortunately, when cases are made based on emotional arguments rather than scientific evidence, a message, whether correct or not, can grab a foothold in the public psyche, be repeated without

questioning, and eventually be accepted as fact.

"Most agriculturists know that many of the derogatory claims made against modern agricultural practices are not sound, but they don't know how to respond and don't have the time to conduct their own research," notes Betty Wolanyk, director of education and research for the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture.

After watching ag producers defend themselves against misleading

or untrue claims for years, the AFB Foundation developed an educational tool to challenge some of the more widespread assertions, based on extensive and referenced scientific research, and "to assist in setting the record straight," says Wolanyk.

Addressing Misconceptions About Agriculture is a presentation and instructor's guide that tackles 35 hot-button topics, from DDT to global food needs, ethanol to environmental impacts, and nutrition to

A new educational tool, Addressing Misconceptions About Agriculture, challenges some common claims with scientific evidence

AN AG TEACHER'S TAKE

This winter, Dale Crawford, an FFA advisor at Culver High School in Culver and state FFA Board chairman, had a chance to test out the Addressing Misconceptions About Agriculture presentation on his freshman and sophomore students.

Overall, what did you think about the presentation?

I'm very enthused about the product, and I'm going to share it with other educators at the state FFA convention in Corvallis.

Did the students find anything particularly striking?

They were surprised to learn that brown eggs were no different than white eggs. We had a little lab and did a blind test because they were convinced that they could tell the difference by taste only. But we proved that not only do they taste the same, when they are cracked, they look the same.

Why is agriculture education necessary in schools?

In the future, these students will be the ones making the decisions for society. I think the information that's in there has far-reaching implications. It got them thinking and talking about our food supply, environment, air quality, and energy use.

Is talking about misconceptions in class worthwhile?

There were lots of comments like "But Mom said or Uncle Jim Bob said," things they had heard and had automatically accepted as fact. We talked about where we get our information and to not always take things at face value.

Was the kit easy to use?

I think it's user friendly, but my advice for others would be to look through it and prepare a bit before giving the presentation.

Did you use the provided lesson plan and PowerPoint presentations?

I used one of the PowerPoints, but not the activity cards, though I will try that in the future. To start the discussion, I wrote down some of the issues on the board and asked the students to come in one at a time and indicate whether they thought the statement was true or false. I'd like to continue to customize it for my classroom setting.

American Farm Bureau surveys young farmers and ranchers for their take on the state of the agriculture industry

Key findings from the 2007 American Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers Survey

Outlook

- 79% are more optimistic about farming than they were five years ago
- 84% feel better off financially than they did five years ago
 - 92% envision their professions as lifelong
- 93% would like to see their children follow in their footsteps

Getting started

- 44% started their profession by being raised in a farming family
- 30% started farming on their own

Biggest challenge

- 29% availability of land and facilities
 - 23% overall profitability
 - 13% urbanization and loss of farmland

Conservation

- 57% employ conservation tillage on their farms
- 47% regularly test soil or crop tissue prior to the application of nutrients
- 46% utilize crop rotation practices with three or more commodities

The availability of land and overall profitability continue to be the top concerns of America's young farmers and ranchers. However, the majority of young farmers say they are better off financially than they were five years ago.

Those are just a few of the key findings of an informal survey of young farmers and ranchers, ages 18-35, from across the United States, conducted by the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Overall, the 15th annual survey of participants in AFBF's Young Farmers & Ranchers Program, completed in February during the 2007 YF&R Conference, shows that the future of American agriculture is in competent and caring hands. Despite challenges, today's young farmers and ranchers are continuing to invest in new technology and business practices to sharpen their competitive edge, while providing for their families and communities, and protecting the environment.

For the second straight year, the vast majority of young farmers and ranchers (79 percent) said they were more optimistic about farming than they were five years ago. In 2002 less than 60 percent were optimistic. In addition, when asked if they felt better off financially than they were five years ago, 85 percent said "yes," down from last year's record 91 percent and up sharply from the survey's low of 70 percent in 2000.

For the second straight year, young farmers said availability of land and facilities was their top concern (29 percent). Just two years ago, only 5 percent deemed it their top challenge. In addition, 56 percent listed it as among their top three concerns. These findings reflect the growing demand for U.S. farmland. Like last year, the young farmers indicated overall profitability was their second biggest challenge, selected by 23 percent. That's up from 18 percent in 2006 and down sharply from 36 percent in 2000, which marked the highest ever.

Also like last year, urbanization and loss of farmland was the third biggest challenge. Thirteen percent of respondents listed it as their number one challenge, while 36 percent ranked it as among their top three. Over the survey's 15-year history, this challenge was never ranked among the top three until 2003, indicating that concerns are intensifying.

"It is clear that our young farmers and ranchers have growing concerns regarding open space and the availability of farmland," says AFBF President Bob Stallman. "The issue of property rights is a critical challenge facing American agriculture. Anyone who enjoys open land needs to join in protecting agricultural landowners."

The objective of the Young Farmers and Ranchers Program is to provide leadership in building a more effective Farm Bureau to preserve individual freedoms and expand opportunities in agriculture. In Oregon, YF&R is open to Farm Bureau members ages 16 to 35. **For more information, contact YF&R Coordinator Amber McKinney at (503) 399-1701, ext. 314, or amber@oregonfb.org.**

What's on the minds of Oregon's young agriculture producers? We went to a few current and past members of the OFB Young Farmers & Ranchers Program to find out.



Name & county: Troy Hadley, Marion Co. Farm Bureau

Age: 30

Raises: fine fescue grass

What do you feel optimistic about?

I like the chances of, as long as we're diligent, being able to make a living doing what I love to do. I've never seriously thought about doing anything else. I'm working off the

farm at Wilco Agronomy right now because the operation isn't large enough to support two families. When my dad retires, I'll be the fifth generation to work the farm.

What are your biggest challenges?

The prices of land have skyrocketed because people keep moving out to the country to build a house. You cannot afford to buy land and farm it anymore, even with the exclusive farm-use (EFU) zones.

Why are you involved in Farm Bureau?

It is a stepping stone into the industry. I had friends that got me active in Young Farmers & Ranchers right out of high school, and I've been active ever since. I'm on my second year of being president of the state YF&R Committee.

I've gained so much from the people I've met and the experiences I've had in YF&R. It's a good place to start learning and talking about legislative issues that are going to affect us for the rest of our lives. YF&R offers workshops on how to give testimony at a legislative hearing and communicate with elected officials. You can't just complain and sit in your chair and do nothing. The people who speak up are the ones who get results.

How do you think the public perceives ag producers?

A guy out driving a tractor, stirring up the dust. Some people don't understand that there's a purpose to this practice and the timing of it. Others think that farmers don't care about the environment. That's another reason why Farm Bureau is so important. We need to connect with the public about what we are doing, why we are doing it, and

who we are.

A lot of the general public underestimates the complexity of agriculture. I don't know of any other business where you're responsible for so many different things, from serving as the general manager and bookkeeper, to being the guy running the tractor, acting as the mechanic, and making production decisions. There's no such thing as a "simple farmer."



Name & county: Kathy Freeborn, Polk Co. Farm Bureau

Age: 25

Raises: grass seed, wheat, cattle, and hay

Do you farm full time?

I started farming full time when I finished my masters of agriculture from OSU in 2004. My major areas were ag business and economics, with a minor in crop and soil science and political science. I'm the third generation on this property.

What do you feel optimistic about?

I'm optimistic that we're going to have strong agricultural markets. Because of biofuels, there's a lot more demand for corn and big commodity crops, which essentially pull everything up with them. Farmers in the Midwest are growing corn

for biofuels because the price has risen, so we in Oregon don't have the competition in the grass seed market.

I think there's an awareness and growing appreciation of what American farmers do and their desire to produce safe food. I've traveled to South America, and the United States has a lot more regulations for pesticide use, processing, and labeling than do some of those countries. The trend to buy local is good for both ag producers and consumers.

What concerns you?

The biggest thing is land use and development. We've got several huge Measure 37 claims around us. If one of them is developed the way it has been proposed, it will have the potential to dry up the streams that run through our property. There are a lot of concerns — pesticide use, fuel prices, taxation — but flat out, if the land is not there to farm, the other issues don't matter. I don't want the Willamette Valley to turn into another Southern California: all black top.

What kinds of things have you done in Farm Bureau?

I helped plan the YF&R spring ag tour to northeastern Oregon earlier this month. We visited a winery, cattle ranch, and wheat farm, among other operations. The goal was for Farm Bureau members to learn more about other parts of the industry and how, regardless of the commodity, ag producers share a lot of the same challenges and ways of running their businesses.

Why is joining YF&R a good idea?

It's a natural next step after FFA. In FFA, there are opportuni-

ties to prepare you for the future, like speaking contests and career development events. But in YF&R, what we do is applicable to real life. The public speaking contests in FFA are great practice, but in YF&R, you might actually be testifying at a legislative hearing. In Farm Bureau we are implementing the skills we've learned, while also getting a chance to improve them. What we do can have a significant impact on our operations or in legislative policy. There are also great networking and travel opportunities.



Name & county: Melissa Ramirez, Blue Mt. Community College YF&R Chapter, Umatilla Co.

Age: 19

Studying: ag business and animal science

Why are you interested in agriculture?

Ever since I was a little girl I wanted to be a farmer. However, I had never heard of a person from an urban background who grew up to run their own cattle ranch. But after I joined FFA in high school, I realized it wasn't so impossible. I would just have to work hard and overcome substantial challenges, which I am always up for. To me, keeping

agriculture alive is worth all of that.

What's your biggest challenge?

Reaching a point where I will be able to attain land, equipment, and livestock will be major, ongoing issues for me. Also, having adults already in the industry take me seriously. But if I get my degree, pursue work experience opportunities, stay in tune with ag news, and build relationships with current agriculturalists, maybe I can change their minds.

Why did you decide to get involved in YF&R?

I attended my first YF&R Leadership Conference during high school with one of my previous ag instructors, Mr. Rob Holveck. I enjoyed it and loved the people I met. Last year, I returned with representatives from the new Blue Mt. Community College YF&R chapter. In YF&R, I've learned that young

people can be successful in today's industry.



Name & county: Mike Hathaway, Benton Co. Farm Bureau

Age: 23

Raises: grass seed, sweet corn, and hazelnuts

How has the industry changed?

The agriculture population is aging, and there aren't as many young farmers to take their place. This will probably mean that fewer producers will be farming more acres, and farm owners will have to act more as managers rather than workers out in the field.

What kind of new technologies have you used lately?

We're using a harvest monitor on our combine that's helping us map our fields and identify which areas are less productive. The fertilizer spreader we use automatically adjusts the rates of chemicals based on which areas need more or less. My dad is always trying new methods to stay competitive, which is especially important because at 500 acres, we are a small operation.

What concerns you?

Urban sprawl — houses going up around farms and impacting the

operations. Unfortunately, a lot of people don't understand agriculture. They enjoy our fields of green in the spring, but then some of them complain when we're making dust during the summer.

What does "sustainability" mean to you?

It means taking care of my land so the family farm will still be here in the future. Sustainability also has to mean profitability. There has to be a whole-systems approach to it.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

I'd like to be farming more of our acres, let my dad have a break. I'll be the fourth generation of our family operation. I hope to be more productive, getting more bang for the buck, and increasing yield.



Name & county: Rob Holveck, Clackamas Co. Farm Bureau

Age: 37

Raises: sheep, hay, cattle, and vegetables

Do you farm full time?

I work full time as an FFA advisor for North Clackamas Schools, and my wife, Amber, works for the Oregon City Chamber of Commerce. Her parents have a Century

Farm outside of Winston, which we have committed to take over at some point. Right now the farm will not support two families, but we are working a few acres.

What's your biggest challenge?

How do I take over the ranching operation from Amber's family? We have heard that the transition from one generation to the next can be tough financially and even relationship-wise if you don't plan ahead. I also need some new farming equipment, but until I'm to the point where I'm at the farm full time, it's hard for me to justify a loan. When we make the move to Winston, I'll probably have an off-farm job for a while.

What do you feel optimistic about?

I'm looking into some innovative farming strategies like subscription gardening and the farm-to-cafeteria program as ways to help us get started. I've got the support network, other people who are willing to experiment and talk about what worked and what didn't. For me, as a younger producer, it's a lot easier to take those risks.

Why is YF&R worthwhile?

Farm Bureau has an incredible amount of opportunities to offer young people. There is so much to learn and get challenged by, and ways to make a difference for agriculture. Amber and I have tried to connect students at the university and college level with YF&R. The most important value of Farm Bureau has been the network of people we've met, people who have been in the same situation as us who can share advice, material, and resources. Information is power.

What could the government do to better support them

- 22% more financial help in getting started
 - 16% more protections for property owners
 - 11% federal tax reform

Technology

- 90% own a computer
- 87% utilize the Internet
- 70% use the Internet to stay current on markets and general news affecting agriculture
- 51% use computers for record keeping

Public perception

- 41% say the public thinks positively about agriculture producers
- 23% say the public thinks negatively about agriculture producers
- 35% say the public generally doesn't think about them at all



from crop to table

Dr. Seuss preferred them the color of grass, with a side of ham. The Easter Bunny likes them green, too — but also pink, yellow, and blue. And Monty Burns of “The Simpsons” would doubtlessly say that this particular food, however presented, is simply “egg-celent.”

Yes, it’s the incredible, edible egg.

Eggs are pretty big business for Oregon farmers. In 2005, the product ranked number 12 in a list of top commodities, bringing in \$50.9 million.

Here are 10 facts you may not know about our favorite oval-shaped breakfast item, courtesy of the American Egg Board:

1. A hen requires 24 to 26 hours to produce an egg. Thirty minutes later, she starts all over again.
2. The egg shell may have as many as 17,000 tiny pores over its surface. Through them, the egg can absorb flavors and odors. Storing eggs in their cartons helps keep them fresh.
3. Eggs age more in one day at room temperature than in one week in the refrigerator.
4. About 240 million laying hens produce approximately 5.5 billion dozen eggs per year in the United States.
5. White shelled eggs are produced by hens with white feathers and ear lobes. Brown shelled eggs are pro-

duced by hens with red feathers and ear lobes.

6. To tell if an egg is raw or hard-cooked, spin it! If the egg spins easily, it’s hard-cooked but if it wobbles, it’s raw.
7. If an egg is accidentally dropped on the floor, sprinkle it heavily with salt for easy clean up.
8. During the spring (vernal) equinox (about March 21), it is said that an egg will stand on its small end. Although some people have reported success, it is not known whether such results were due to the equinox or to the peculiarities of that particular egg.
9. Yolk color depends on the diet of the hen. Natural yellow-orange substances such as marigold petals may be added to light-colored feeds to enhance colors. Artificial color additives are not permitted.
10. An average hen lays 300 to

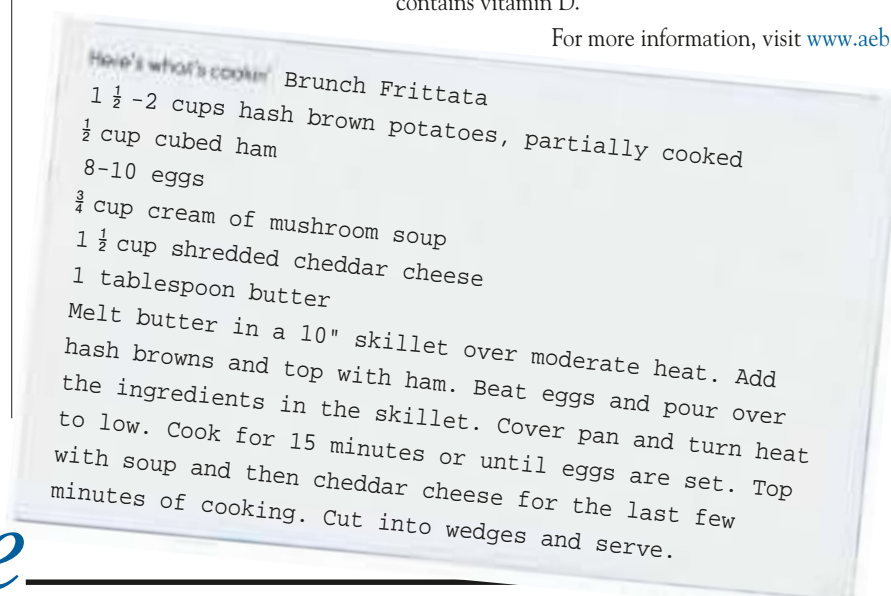
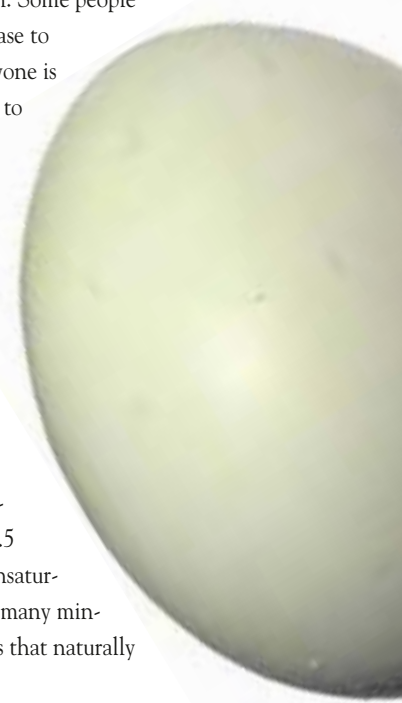
325 eggs a year. A hen starts laying eggs at 19 weeks of age.

For a long time, eggs were mistakenly placed in the list of “bad” foods because of their cholesterol content. But research has shown that for most people, saturated fat is more worrisome than dietary cholesterol in its affects on overall health. Some people can eat eggs every day without any increase to their blood cholesterol. (Of course, everyone is different and should consult their doctor to determine their best dietary plan.) The point is that most people do not need to completely ban eggs for a heart-healthy diet.

As far as calories go, eggs can’t be beat. (Or I guess they can...but this would not affect the calorie count.) A large egg is only around 75 calories.

The protein from eggs is of very high quality and contains all of the essential amino acids the body needs. Other nutritional notes: a large egg yolk has about 1.5 grams of saturated fat and 2.5 grams of unsaturated fat; an egg features 13 vitamins and many minerals; and egg yolk is one of the few foods that naturally contains vitamin D.

For more information, visit www.aeb.org.



recipe

T I D B I T S

- May is National Egg Month.
- Chickens came to the New World with Columbus on his second trip in 1493.

MYSTERY SPOT A GOLDEN PAST



Photo from Oregon Historical Society, #OHIH1799

The county in which our Mystery Spot lies was reportedly named after the daughter of a prospector. The teenager wrote about her adventures searching for gold with her father and finally striking it rich after making a discovery in a creek bed. It was the first time gold had been found in this part of Oregon.

Railroad tracks reached this community in 1880, bringing in

hoards more gold-seeking hopefuls. Within three years, the first building was constructed, establishing the settlement's official "downtown." Hotels and saloons started to spring up to meet the demands of an increasing population.

The site was originally planned to be named after a stage coach station located a few miles north of its borders. However, a few of the

more vocal locals thought this particular moniker did not sound enticing enough to lure new settlers. Instead, they suggested the name of a famous Civil War general. But, alas, another Oregon community had already taken that name.

Legend has it that the naming conundrum was solved by a man who was working on building a new road into town, which required con-

structing the route over a hill and into a valley. He came up with a variation on the war hero's name, based on the terrain in which he worked. Everyone agreed it was perfect.

By 1885, the site beat out two other towns in an election to become the county seat. That was also the year that the local newspaper, which still exists today, was launched. However, our Mystery Spot was not formally incorporated until two years later, in 1887.

As the town grew in prominence, the community evolved and schools, banks, a library, and even an opera house were built. A number of these old-time downtown structures still stand and have earned the neighborhood the distinction of a National Historic District. If you're lucky, you might find a piece of vintage furniture from the era in one of the many quaint antique shops that thrive in the heart of town today.

As what occurred in many Oregon communities at the turn of the 20th century, once the gold-rush fever subsided, timber became the natural industry of choice. Lumberyards and saw mills sprung up, and the region grew to become a prolific producer of all sorts of wood products. Some of these saw mills are still operational today.

In terms of agriculture, dairies were a common sight in the town's early years, and farmers dabbled in a large variety of crops, from hops to gladiola bulbs. These days, a famous outdoor market gives regional agriculture producers a chance to sell their fresh goods directly to consumers.

One of the town's idiosyncrasies



was the decision to hoist cloth signs in public areas that promoted its more positive distinctions to residents and visitors alike. One of the messages, touting the region's exceptional weather, is still proudly displayed, but now in the form of a more durable electric sign.

Another quirky feature of the community is a beloved fiberglass statue of what could possibly be the area's first-ever inhabitant. The figure doubtlessly enjoyed sipping "moon milk" while exploring the

"marble halls" located within the nearby national park. He also happens to be the local high school's mascot.

Because of its surrounding natural beauty and varied landscape, tourism is an important economic driver for this town today. The most popular of its recreational offerings takes advantage of its scenic waterways.

The sister city of our Mystery Spot is Rubtsovsk, Russia. What town and county is it?

The Last Mystery Spot . . .

Photo from Oregon Historical Society, #OHI23659



Yesterday



Today

The last Mystery Spot was
Malin in Klamath County.

DANA TUCKNESS of
MALHEUR COUNTY was our
winner. Congratulations!



How to enter the Oregon Mystery Spot drawing

THE RULES: Identify the place described in the Mystery Spot story by county. One entry per person. Send the answer on a postcard that includes name, address, and phone number to: **Oregon Mystery Spot, 3415 Commercial Street SE, Salem, OR 97302.**
Spring Prize: A new OFB three-season jacket. The winner will be picked at random from correct entries received with a postmark of **July 31, 2007**, or earlier. To be eligible, entrants must be Oregon Farm Bureau members in good standing. OFB and county FB employees and their immediate families are not eligible.

MORE OFB BENEFITS

To receive your discount cards, contact Cathy Murray, (503) 399-1701, ext. 326, cathy@oregonfb.org.



All Oregon Farm Bureau members are eligible to join Costco for discounted prices on everything from electronic products to home supplies to pharmaceutical items. Contact the OFB office for a special application form for instant Costco membership qualification, (503) 399-1701, ext 326.

www.costco.com

USE YOUR FARM BUREAU V.I.P. CARD AT YOUR LOCAL JIFFY LUBE AND RECEIVE A 15% DISCOUNT ON ALL JIFFY LUBE SERVICES*

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* May not be used with other discounts. Offer may be withdrawn without notice.