

## Letters/Opinions

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### Reader says hunters left out of Owyhee Initiative process

I read with interest the article "Idaho ranchers strive to access public lands" in the December *Western Farmer-Stockman* [by writer Rusty Tews]. I do dispute one assertion in the article that the Owyhee Initiative was a collaborative effort involving sportsmen.

If you read the Owyhee Initiative and how it was organized and who was invited to the table, nowhere do you see that any hunting groups were involved. Those involved were ranchers, conservationists, county officials, Shoshone Paiute tribes and recreational users (primarily rafters). In fact, if you review the 12 people who signed on as the Owyhee Initiative board of directors, no hunting organizations are represented.

The fact of the matter is, hunting groups were not involved to the table for a reason. The reason is that the people involved in the process knew that there wouldn't be any hunting group that would support a vastly biased piece of legislation that permanently locks them out of over 500,000 acres of hunting. Under the legislation, you can hire a guide to take you in the locked up areas, however, by horseback. Of course, this takes time and money, and basically would be reserved for people who can afford such luxury.

Frankly, all hunting groups should be opposed to Sen. [Mike] Crapo's misguided legislation. The legislation will lock all people out of vast areas of the Jarbridge Bruneau, Jacks Creek and Owyhee River multiple desert areas and river drainages. Why would sportsmen agree to such a lockout that they could currently access and enjoy?

We all agree that these areas should be protected from development other than building what cattlemen need for watering sources and grazing. We all agree that the rafters should be able to make their annual run down these river complexes. We all agree that the Paiute tribes use the designated area as is currently done.

So the question becomes, why do we need any legislation at all? We don't. And, I don't like the fact that I will be locked out of hundreds of thousands of acres I can currently access while obeying the current designated road signs, etc. This is simply bad legislation, and did not involve any hunter groups in the Initiative process.

**Armand M. Eckert,**  
Buhl, Idaho

**Rusty Tews' response:** *The hunter issue is a little iffy. Bird Hunters of Idaho and the Idaho Wildlife Federation were involved in the process of developing the Initiative. Also, the Outfitters and Guides Association claims to have been looking out for hunters.*

*It looks to me like the hunters/sportsmen were left out because they can't get their act together.*

*Thanks for the update.*

### Keep dogs safe

To the Editor:

Your recent article on farm safety (December 2006) was appropriate and timeless. I would add farm dogs to the list of family and hired workers who should be kept safe on the farm.

During my years with Washington State University Extension, many farmers have told me how much they love their dogs, so I know they are important family members. I think especially of the farmer who was so tough that he endured a ruptured appendix for three weeks before he finally went to a

## Your Say

doctor about a moderate, nagging stomach-ache. But his agony was intense the day he told me he had accidentally run over and killed his dog. Also, the farmer whose dog was diabetic and blind, but he opted for expensive cataract surgery so his buddy could see again to chase a ball.

I grew up on a big timber plantation in Zimbabwe, and like most farm kids of my generation, I loved to stand in the back of my father's truck, holding onto the narrow rim at the back of the cab and wishing he would take the corners faster.

But most of us don't let our children do that anymore and I contend that neither should our dogs ride loose in open pickup beds.

I used to draw cartoons for our Extension newsletters that featured my dog and cat. After I did one on how I now use a seat belt for my dog, farmers who saw it told me lots of horror stories about dogs and car/truck accidents, which often occurred at slow speeds and with dogs they had thought were reliable riders. It was heart-breaking to hear their remorse.

In Washington and several other states, it's a ticketable offense not to contain safely dogs that ride in an open truck. A simple tether is often inadequate. Friends of mine witnessed the gruesome end of two dogs that tried to leap from a pickup and were strangled and dragged to death at 60 mph.

At a minimum, dogs should be cross-tethered by a short leash from either side so they cannot jump out. But this doesn't protect their eyes and nasal passages from impact by insects or their feet from standing on burning hot or freezing metal.

A better option is to contain the dog in an airline kennel that is firmly attached to the pickup.

Our dogs love us unconditionally. They deserve our best consideration.

**Diana Roberts,**  
WSU Extension agronomist,  
Spokane, Wash.

### CAFO permit worth the effort

On Dec. 1, 2006, something of great importance to the confined animal feeding industry in Colorado happened with little fanfare. This event was not marked by balloons or a ticker-tape parade, but happened rather quietly — the issuance of a CAFO, or Confined Animal Feeding Operation, General Permit by the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment.

While the average citizen couldn't care less about this significant event, there are many in the livestock industry who have worked diligently with CDPHE for several years to arrive at this important juncture.

In 1998, meetings were being held between the Colorado Cattle Feeders Association (the predecessor organization to the Colorado Livestock Association) and CDPHE to develop a CAFO general discharge permit that would protect producers who might experience a discharge as a result of a storm event. The passage of Amendment 14 in November 1998, which resulted in strict water and odor regulations on Colorado's Housed

Commercial Swine Feeding Operations, lent considerable weight and urgency to these discussions.

It has taken a lot of hard work and dedication by CLA members and staff working closely with CDPHE staff to arrive at the event of Dec. 1. The road was neither easy nor simple. Stakeholders met from early in 2003 until April of 2004 to craft Colorado CAFO regulations based upon the federal regulations that were issued by EPA in February of 2003. Just when you thought you were within spittin' distance of a state CAFO permit, throw in the 2005 2nd Circuit Court decision to revise major portions of the 2003 EPA rule. It makes for a lot of "stuff" to wade through and sent everyone back to the square one.

What does this mean today? The question each CAFO must answer for itself is "should my operation apply for a General Permit?" It is important to know that while the "duty to apply" provision was eliminated, a CAFO that discharges pollutants to waters of the U.S. without holding a Colorado Discharge Permit System permit is in violation of the Colorado Water Quality Control Act and is subject to a fine of up to \$10,000 per day of discharge.

Thus, a CAFO operator should carefully consider the likelihood that the CAFO will discharge and decide whether to apply for a permit before a discharge occurs. A permit allows a CAFO to discharge to water of the U.S. as long as the CAFO is operating in accordance with permit requirements.

As of Dec. 1, CDPHE has a general discharge permit available under which a CAFO can request coverage and be certified. Coverage under this permit runs until Aug. 13, 2010. Sometime in mid to late 2007, the state CAFO regulations will need to be revised to reflect the new federal CAFO regulations expected to be issued in June 2007.

CLA members and staff are proud to be part of a process with the goal of protecting Colorado's waters and at the same time providing workable livestock regulations.

Hats off to the dedication of the CDPHE's Environmental Agriculture Program team under the leadership of Phyllis Woodford and especially the efforts of Erin Kress.

While Dec. 1 came and went pretty quietly for most, livestock producers in Colorado do have something to cheer about.

**Kent Bamford,**  
Colorado Livestock Association  
president and  
owner of Bamford Feedyard,  
Haxtun, Colo.

### Mix-up on BASF rep

I got my November *Western Farmer-Stockman* in the mail at the beginning of the week. Great piece on the World Potato Congress farm show, and we very much appreciate you visiting the BASF tent during your whirlwind tour of the show.

However, I note in the article (Page 24) that I'm referenced as the contact for the BASF program. That's not quite accurate. While I was the contact for the media tour, the preference would be to contact BASF directly by going online to [www.agproducts.basf.com](http://www.agproducts.basf.com) or calling (800) 669-1770.

**Dan Myers**  
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**Dan Myers,**  
Quarry Integrated Communications

## It's time to play offense, not defense

By PAM GOLDEN

GUEST  
EDITORIAL



**PICTURE** this: The temperature is in the mid-70s with a slight breeze. A yellow crop duster soars across a deep-blue sky over what surely will be a 3-bale cotton field. It's a perfect day for my kind of work.

I was on my way to a farmer's house in south Georgia when I saw the plane. So I stopped, grabbed my camera and moved around to a good spot in the field.

The plane made one more pass, saw me and then flew away.

That was a few years ago. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was reviewing pesticide labels. A new farm bill was under way. Life was a bit tense.

Realizing the pilot didn't know I was farm-friendly, I told the farmer what had happened. He knew the crop duster and volunteered to ease his worries about the photographer in his field.

I've been thinking about that day

lately. Maybe the agricultural community turns inward too often. Maybe we worry about how someone will view our management practices to the point that our secrecy hurts our cause. We know the best defense is a good offense. So let's mount one.

### Nothing to hide

What if we opened our practices to scrutiny and invited folks to compare what we do here with other countries? The only other places with worker-safety standards and pesticide regulations comparable to ours are Canada and the European Union.

The countries hassling us in the World Trade Organization don't want their practices scrutinized. The countries shipping food into this country carrying residues of chemicals banned here for 20 years will resist scrutiny.

Let's band with the U.S. environmental organizations and turn their attention to those countries. Let's help those who are concerned about migrant workers by encouraging them to visit

other countries to see how laborers are treated there. Let's let 'em test a load of peanuts from Mexico for residues.

The formula for what chemicals win labels under the Food Quality Protection Act includes an element to estimate the residues coming in from other countries. How much of those chemicals coming in on our food in part determines whether new, safer chemicals are labeled for use in this country? That's outrageous. Environmental groups will be outraged that chemicals they worked to ban still are coming in our back door.

Now I know it's a scary thought to join forces with environmental groups. As it appears, there are more environmentalists than agriculturalists, and because agriculturalists practice environmental stewardship every day, they could be great allies.

What you must remember is you guys do good work and you do nearly everything for the right reasons. Not only can you stand up to the scrutiny, but you also are the kind of people who restore our faith in America.

This country needs you; let's remind Americans of that.

*Golden is a Farm Progress editor.*

