

SUMMER 2023

CO-OP CONNECTION

LOCAL RANCH SELLS BEEF
AND HOSPITALITY *Page 10*

REFRESHING FOOD AND FRIENDS

– Tom Boland, President & CEO



Thursday, May 18, 2023, was a beautiful evening, and I was fortunate to spend part of that evening on the roof deck of the Spokane Convention Center. The view looking west over the Spokane River was hard to beat as the sun set. We were enjoying live music, scallops and mushroom appetizers, and local sliders, while seeing familiar faces and making new friends.

In addition to visiting with many colleagues from Skagit Farmers Supply, I also spent time with representatives

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The show floor was busy, the booths were full, and the circus theme was colorful and fun.

of new brands we're selling through AFCO. I met Snorri Halldorsson from Iceland, representing Tickled Pet, and Bradley Kerrick from New York City with Pawse. Both of them were passionate about people and pets and were thrilled with the attendance at our event.

It caused me to reflect yet again on how crucial food, music and laughter is in making a lasting memory. There would be much business to conduct the next day, but this reception was a highlight to be sure. I would guess that most on that roof deck would agree.

The reception was a prelude to our annual AFCO Buying Show that brought vendors and retailers together on May 18-19, 2023. The purpose was to facilitate a

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relationship between vendors and dealers, which allows much needed time for vendors to discuss their products and for our customers to see the opportunities available for them. It generally gives our dealer network access to some of the best pricing of the year and a look at the newest products arriving in the market.

The buying show included well-known brands represented from across the U.S. It also included startups that hope to become the next well-known brand. As a native Minnesotan, it was great to meet Toby Green with KLN Brands. KLN is a highly regarded Perham, MN-based company that markets everything from pet food to popcorn and licorice. These products are distributed by AFCO and also sold in our Country Stores. The show floor was busy, the booths were full, and the circus theme was colorful and fun.

Our feed offerings are deep, and they were well-represented at the show, but the pet industry was on full display. It featured everything from pet food and toys to CBD offerings and doggie life vests for pets. We were focused on what animal owners might purchase, but the show was also a reminder of how much business is still done between people.

It was old home week for many vendors and customers walking the aisles. Of course, there were sales to be made, but our customers knew that when they came to the show. Most of these products are already being sold in their stores. They came to see vendors and our AFCO sales staff



Guests enjoy each other's company on the Spokane Convention Center roof deck during the Customer & Vendor Mixer at AFCO's 2023 Buying Show.

and to reconnect with other like-minded retailers from other communities. All of the hard work of preparing for the event was completed, and our AFCO team represented themselves and our cooperative well.

Skagit Farmers Supply touches many customers across our diversified business portfolio. We just completed our biggest spring ever in agronomy and retail. AFCO and LMF also have a record year in progress, with double-digit increases heading to the fourth quarter. Our energy department put together another strong year, as well.

I drove back from Spokane reflecting on how much energy

there was at our buying show. Thoughts of my computer and desk at Burlington began to pull me back to the daily grind, which most days isn't much of a grind. Yet, I wanted to stop and appreciate that sunset over the Spokane River a bit more.

Life is lived, memories are made, and even business is transacted while enjoying a bacon-wrapped scallop in the company of friends and new acquaintances in one of the Lilac City's most enjoyable settings.

LMF HOSTS EQUINE NUTRITION SEMINAR

– Cheyanna Wing, LMF Administrative Assistant



Animal owners are always looking for ways to improve the health of the animals they love. This is certainly true with horse owners, and it can be hard to keep up with the advances in equine care.

With this in mind, LMF Feeds hosted an Equine Nutrition and Health Seminar on Saturday, April 29 in Spokane Valley, WA. It was a successful event, and we were thrilled that so many area horse lovers gave up a beautiful 80-degree spring day to learn more about performance, farrier and dentistry, equine chiropractic and nutrition.

LMF was grateful to have local equine doctors, Dr. Kathy Grimes, Dr. Bob Peters, Dr. Bailey Nachtigal, and Dr. Stephen Duren donate their time and knowledge to this event to help provide more education and insight to the local equestrian community. Spokane is a home to LMF Feeds, but LMF is fed across 10 states and on two continents, so we're planning to take this seminar on the road later this year.

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Horse owners gave up a beautiful 80° day to learn more about performance, farrier and dentistry, equine chiropractic and nutrition.



Dr. Steven Duren speaks to horse lovers at the LMF Equine Nutrition and Health Seminar.

AFCO'S 2023 BUYING SHOW:

BIGGEST EVER!

– David Underwood, Sales Manager AFCO Distribution & Milling



The buzz is still in the air after wrapping up our 2023 AFCO Buying Show.

We hosted our biggest crowd-to-date, over 300 people at the Spokane Convention Center! In attendance there were 161 customers, 126 vendor representatives, seven special guests, and 21 staff members. We had retailers join us from as far north as Alaska and southeast to Wyoming, giving us all a chance to meet and talk with people from all over as we learned what their businesses had to offer and how we can build partnerships with these businesses.

Vendors, dealers, and guests mingled on Thursday evening on top of the roof deck patio overlooking beautiful Downtown Spokane and the Spokane River. Guests enjoyed cocktails and hors d'oeuvres before getting a sneak peek at the show floor and access to special "Hot Buy" deals for the evening. Everyone took the opportunity to mingle and meet new people, making networking connections and some fun memories, too!

On Friday morning, the red curtains parted at 8:00 a.m. for the rush of dealers ready to take advantage of the Greatest Show on Earth! Our circus theme brought out the kid in all of us, and our team were circus performers for the event! Lloyd Campbell took a swing at the High Striker, Cheyanna Wing climbed in the money machine to "test it out", and Jarrett Hunt acted as the professional carnival clown to greet everyone. Michelle Muir ran the snack shack which offered popcorn, licorice, cookies, and Italian sodas, and if you didn't blink, you would catch Melissa Weems running around as the ring master!

Even vendors took part in our theme with the Best in Show booth award



A record 126 vendor representatives set up booths at the 2023 AFCO Buying Show.



Bolton and Lindsey Testerman of Metro Paws—2023 AFCO "Best of Show" vendor booth.



Logan Moose, regional sales manager of vendor Nulo Pet Foods, takes a hard swing at the high striker.

going to Metro Paws! Attendees had a blast getting a chance to partake in some of the games that were offered as well as keeping our ears open to hear if they were a lucky winner to one of the awesome giveaway items such as a kayak, an outdoor fire pit, Grizzly coolers, or time in the money machine!!

Fast-talking Tucker Cool, professional auctioneer and PRCA Rodeo announcer, was hired to be the emcee for his first pet/feed industry buying show. Both vendors and customers enjoyed the energy and personality he added to our event. Tucker found a likeminded individual in the Astro Loyalty booth who turned out to also be an emcee. He let them take over the microphone to give us the rundown on their business!

As an auctioneer at heart, Tucker tried to teach a few vendors the ropes of how to say a few common auction phrases. A few gave a valiant effort, but nobody could quite keep up. They don't call him the fast-talking cowboy for nothing!

A lot of planning and prep goes into these shows, and we want to say THANK YOU to all of the vendors, customers, and team members that made our AFCO Buying Show 2023 incredibly successful.

See you all in 2024!

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Retailers from Alaska to Southeast Wyoming attended.



David Graham, product manager of Wilco Farm Stores, registers and shares pleasantries with AFCO staff Carla Becker and Esther Paul.



Amy Snell and Kelley Parsons, representing vendor Northwest Naturals, sell their freeze-dried and frozen pet food line to a buying show attendee.

AMENDMENTS APPROVED OVERWHELMINGLY

– Nels Lagerlund, Board Chairman



Thank you, members, for your approval by mail ballot of our proposed amendments to the Skagit Farmers Supply Articles of Incorporation. The required quorum of 25% of voting members participating was exceeded and 98% of the valid ballots received were for approval of the amendments.

Your board's practice is to look at the Articles and Bylaws every five years to keep up with changes to laws, regulations and impacts from

other cooperatives. The changes are vetted by a cooperative attorney to ensure they are lawful.

The changes we recommended were presented at the annual meeting in March, and after the annual meeting these changes were further disseminated to the membership.

As a locally owned and governed cooperative, participation of the voting members is vital to our continued success. Again, "thank you" to all who voted. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions.

WATCH YOUR MAIL

A reminder: You should have received an invite to the summer member appreciation picnic in the mail. Please take note that we are moving the BBQ to our Burlington Agronomy Plant on Avon Allen Road just north of Highway 20.

Parking will be directed by staff across the street, with a golf cart shuttle to the event.

Enjoy grilled salmon, oysters, steak, dogs and all the sides and fixings you want. We'll have agronomy staff on hand to conduct tours of the facility for those that would like to see it up close and personal.

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Your board reviews the co-op's Articles and Bylaws every five years.



Mike Hunskor, left, and Lance Carsten, right enjoy a reprieve from the smoke as they grill salmon over an alder wood fire at the 2022 member appreciation picnic.



Members at the annual meeting studied the board's recommended changes to the Articles of Incorporation.

OUR NEWEST AGRONOMY INTERN

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Amanda Lenssen
studies agriculture at
Iowa State University.

Skagit Farmers Supply (SFS) is pleased to welcome Amanda Lenssen as its agronomy intern for the summer of 2023.

Lenssen completed her freshman year at Iowa State University this spring, where she is an Agricultural Studies major. She's excited for her field of study, because it will cover a wide variety of topics, including agronomy, animal science and agricultural business.

Our agronomy intern is based out of the Lynden Agronomy location. There, she will sample soils, make deliveries and learn about Western Washington's crops.

Lenssen grew up in Lynden, WA, on her family's dairy farm, Lenssen Dairy, which milks about 800 cows. The farm was started by Lenssen's grandfather and is now operated by her father and uncle. Lenssen said she learned about internship at SFS through her father, who is an SFS member and uses the cooperative's service on the farm.

SFS supports the next generation in agriculture with our internship program, our careers in agriculture scholarships, and by working out our mission statement.



Amanda is based out of the Lynden Agronomy location where she will sample soils, make deliveries, and learn about Western Washington's crops.



“We’ll be the first Country Store to offer pet grooming.”

STANWOOD REMODEL UNDERWAY

If you’re a regular shopper at our Stanwood Country Store, no doubt you’ve seen the changes we’re making at that location. We’re excited to get this project underway, after letting the supply chain disruptions settle down.

The biggest change you’ll notice will be the new fascia and store front on the south side of the building facing the main customer parking lot. The theme will be similar to that of our newest Country Store concept in Sedro Woolley and Freeland. The large, natural wood, along with numerous awnings, will spill out into the parking lot of the Stanwood store.

You will also notice a new entrance, landscaping and signage along 271st Street, which will fit more naturally with the long-term improvements that the City of Stanwood is making in the area.

We are excited to offer two big improvements at Stanwood: the addition of pet grooming and a greatly expanded garden center.

The garden center will be prominent off the southwest corner of the building. The expansion will allow us to more fully stock flowers, vegetables, plants, shrubs and trees during our busy spring months.

This is our first Country Store location with pet grooming. We’ll be offering both self-wash and professional grooming services.

This project started in early June, and we’re expecting it to be mostly completed by early September. The Stanwood location is our busiest store, and we will remain open during the remodel.



The greatly expanded garden center should be fully stocked for spring of 2024.

LIQUID TANKS INSTALLED AT CONWAY

– Ryan Hill, Agronomy Manager



Last fall Skagit Farmers Supply (SFS) installed five new liquid fertilizer tanks at our Conway Agronomy Plant. Those five tanks replaced smaller, older tanks with lower capacity. Our new storage tanks hold a total of 42,000 gallons of liquid fertilizer. The previous seven tanks were beginning to show wear and had a total capacity of 22,000 gallons.

We also added a state-of-the-art flow meter to the tank farm. That meter allows us to monitor inventory levels with greater accuracy and gives us more precise mixing capabilities.

Increasing our storage at Conway allows for more liquid to be moved through Conway to Fir Island, Stanwood, and areas south of the plant. Previously, those customers were serviced from our Burlington location. Having increased capacities at Conway cuts down on fuel costs, labor, and turnaround times. We're able to deliver the product faster to our customers so they have less downtime in the field. The main liquids stored in Conway are used for corn, but there are other seed crops and spud mixes that we can blend using those products. Our Conway location is 30 years old, but much of the manufacturing equipment has been replaced in the past five years.

A majority of the liquid fertilizers SFS provides its growers with comes from NACHURS®. Many turned to NACHURS' Bio-K® technology to increase quality and yield. They also appreciate its ability to preserve our soil, water, and finite global fertilizer resources. Increasing soil carbon by providing plants with proper nutrition will help achieve our nation's decarbonization goals.

NEW SEED STORAGE SYSTEM

In addition to the liquid tanks, we've added two new bulk seed storage bins at the Conway Agronomy Plant. With a capacity of 2,200 bushels each, these bins have reduced or eliminated many of our past storage issues. Storing seed in this manner allows us to free up space in our storage sheds and keep valuable, sensitive equipment out of the elements.

This new storage means we don't have 132 tote bags on the floor. No more double-stacked seed that is unstable and has a potential to settle and tip over. This seed storage system also eliminates bag cutting during blending, and the tanks keep their contents free from moisture and rodents.

The cost of shipping bulk seed is lower than hauling flatbed loads of seed in bags or totes. Unload times have been decreased and handling by forklift has been abolished altogether.

Having these bins has also decreased our cost to purchase seed by cutting out expensive tote bags and pallets. The average cost of a one-ton tote bag is approximately \$20 and the average pallet price right now is around \$19. That is roughly a savings of \$1,200 per truckload of seed.

We appreciate the confidence our members have in our agronomy team. This May was a record month for us in manufactured tons and liquid fertilizer sales. This spring was also our biggest corn planting season ever. We planted almost 20% more acres than we've ever done before. Our board of directors continues to approve strategic updates that help you, our members, get things done when you need them done.



Five tanks holding 42,000 gallons of liquid replaced seven older, smaller tanks holding 22,000 gallons at the Conway Agronomy Plant.

DOUBLE O RANCH

MERGING MEAT AND AGROTOURISM

– Brianna Hackler, Graphic & Multimedia Specialist



There's something for everyone at Double O Ranch.

Whether you're looking to purchase high-quality beef to feed your family or searching for a weekend camp to enjoy the beauty of nature, this historic ranch has much to offer.

"We've tried to hit a lot of small markets instead of putting all our eggs in one basket," says Cindy Kleinhuizen, one of the ranch's owners.

Double O Ranch is located near Concrete, WA, on 480 acres of land. The ranch, which sits on the Skagit

River with 360-degree sweeping views of Mount Baker and the North Cascades, offers custom grain-fed beef and grass-fed USDA packaged beef. In addition, Double O has guest cabins and camp sites for visitors. The ranch also sells show steers, as well as breeding females and bulls, to youth for their 4-H or FFA project animals.

Cindy and her husband purchased the cattle herd from her mother in 2011. She also partners with her four sisters – Karin Carter, Helen Ovenell, Kathy Roy and Kris Hansen – to run the guest lodging at the ranch and the on-site homemade item market.

The ranch has Maine-Anjou and Angus cattle, both full-blood and cross-bred. The cattle herd includes 100 cow-calf pairs, 20 replacement heifers, 10-12 feedlot steers, and 4-5 bulls.

The family sells custom quarter, half and whole butchered grain-fed beef, and butchers about 10-12 head of cattle for customers each year. Additionally, they sell USDA certified grass-fed beef by the package.

"Customers really like the grass-fed stuff," Cindy said. "We've been able to keep the good quality grass-fed stuff because we've been concentrating on carcass quality for a long time."

She added that Maine-Anjou cattle are known for their marbling and cutability.

At one time, Double O Ranch did sell some of their packaged USDA certified meat in stores, but now all sales are direct to customers. Cindy said she has a lot of local customers, and people who stay in the guest lodging can – and often do – purchase meat when they book their stay.

It's not uncommon for the ranch to run out of meat between butcherings. Cindy said she hopes that, in the future, another USDA beef butcher will open its doors, allowing them to increase their meat supply to satisfy demand.

"People come from all over to buy beef from us," Cindy said. "Once they try it, they'll come back."

Additionally, the ranch sells at least two head of cattle to the Concrete School District each year.



The ranch has an on-site shop with items made locally, many of which come from the garden at the ranch, as well as items from local makers including honey, soap, pottery and even a children's book.



Having guests benefits the ranch owners, too. They get an outsider's point-of-view on what they do.

Double O Ranch is a customer of Skagit Farmers Supply, which does soil sampling and provides fertilizers for all the ranch's fields.

SFS also supplies propane to the home and guest houses on the property.

A PIONEER FAMILY'S HISTORY

The cattle ranch assumed its current form in 1947, when James T. Ovenell and Harold Pierson combined two local parcels of land to create P&O Ranch. In subsequent years, the Ovenells cleared more than 700 acres of river bottom, timber, and stumps to build the ranch, following a conservation plan which determined which land would be cleared and which crops would be planted.

The ranch's cattle were kept in Burlington during the winter and moved to Concrete in the summer. The herd totaled 371 head by 1949. Crops on the ranch included peas, flax, corn and hay.

By the late 1950s, Jim and Mary Ovenell were the sole owners of the ranch. When they retired, they passed management of the Burlington location to their son Lyle and the Concrete location to their son Norman, Cindy's father.

In 1965, Norman married Eleanor Jungbluth. The couple later had five daughters who today own and operate the ranch, guest houses and land.

"It's cool to be a part of the history of the area and preserving it," Cindy said. That's a big part of agro-tourism as well. "It's a way to keep the land and be able to share it with people," she added.

In 1997, the ranch opened four rooms in the main home as a bed-and-breakfast. In 2000, it added four log cabins and three guest houses, which are still operational today. Most recently, Double O Ranch added six Harvest Host sites, which are pads for self-contained campers. These can be booked through an app.

The ranch is also available for events and weddings.

Cindy said the on-site guest lodging has been a great way to connect with people who may not normally see the farm.

"There's a loss of connection to ranching and how we work with wildlife," she said. "Our guests can see the interaction and that you can do both at the same time. One doesn't take away from the other."

She added that it is important for people in today's world to see how meat is produced and how humane it can be to raise animals.

To access the cabins and Harvest Host sites, a camper drives down a gravel road through the fields where cattle are grazing, with a full view of Mount Baker and Sauk Mountain. The road ends at the Skagit River where guests can take a dip.

Cindy said having guests has been beneficial for the ranch owners as well, as they get an outsider's point of view on what they do.

"We're always seeing everything we're behind on – that field didn't get harrowed, that fence didn't get fixed, and that lawn didn't get mowed," Cindy said. "But [guests] don't care. They see the beauty of everything. They're just in awe."

For more information about Double O Ranch, visit www.doubleoranchllc.com. For more information about Ovenell's Heritage In Log Cabins, Guesthouses and Historic Ranch, visit www.ovenells-inn.com.



Double O Ranch is located on the Skagit River outside Concrete, WA, with sweeping 360-degree views of Mount Baker and the North Cascades. The ranch raises Maine-Anjou and Angus beef on 480 acres.



The ranch has four log cabins and three guest houses, as well as six Harvest Host sites.



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MISSION STATEMENT

To preserve and enhance viability of the local agriculture economy through cooperative profitability.



VISION STATEMENT

To be the premier cooperative in the Pacific Northwest by being:

- The producers' first choice
- The consumers' first choice
- The employees' first choice



CORE VALUES

Customer Commitment
People
Integrity
Performance
Quality
Safety
Community

DIRECTORY

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Oak Harbor360.675.2277
Oroville.....509.560.7088
Sedro Woolley.....360.856.6567
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