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FLOCK CONNECTS PAST, FUTURE

A DECEMBER PURCHASE OF 70 PUREBRED SUFFOLK SHEEP FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO'S SHEEP CENTER IN MOSCOW RENEWS A HISTORIC CONNECTION – UI IMPORTED THE WEST'S FIRST SUFFOLKS IN 1919 – AND WILL HELP UPDATE RESEARCH AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES. THE IDAHO AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION BOUGHT THE FLOCK TO ENHANCE RESEARCH ON GENOMICS AND POTENTIAL TIE-INS WITH THE U.S. SHEEP EXPERIMENT STATION AT DUBOIS.

Waste Not, Want Not: Forget Wastewater Treatment, Think Nutrient Recovery

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AN IGEM PROJECT TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY by treating dairy and municipal wastewater is changing the focus from nutrient removal to recovery, and yielding a potential new fertilizer source.

School of Food Science environmental chemist Greg Möller in Moscow is exploring new technology to capture valuable nitrogen and phosphorus. His work interests the J.R. Simplot Co. and dairy operators.

Möller's N-E-W Tech™ process captures the nutrients on biochar, tiny bits of activated charcoal created by burning farm or forest residues.

"We're proceeding at the speed of business," said Möller, a UI College of Agricultural and Life Sciences professor. The research already has yielded two patent applications and a licensing inquiry.

In 2014, he began work on the biochar idea. Last March, the Idaho Global Entrepreneurial Mission Council gave him a $427,000 grant to build a pilot-scale plant. In December, his team ran its first dairy wastewater experiment and began collecting biochar for laboratory testing.

Möller's N-E-W Tech builds on a record of success. A decade ago original research by Möller and UI colleagues yielded six patents. It also created Hayden, Idaho-based startup Blue Water Technologies. Wastewater plants in the U.S., Korea and England are using the process to reduce phosphorous levels.

A related project led by UI soil scientist Daniel Strawn received $62,000 from the Idaho State Board of Education for the related N-E-W Terra™ to analyze biochar's properties. With added UI support and other contributions, investment in the project tops $600,000.

USDA Award Honors Clearwater Collaborative

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THE CLEARWATER BASIN COLLABORATIVE, an innovative approach helping people from all perspectives join together to advance north central Idaho environmental restoration projects, won the U.S. Department of Agriculture's highest honor late last year.

The collaborative effort's 8-year track record of success helped lay the groundwork for a pioneering effort initiated by University of Idaho Extension's Bill Warren and others to help private forest owners recover from disastrous wildfires last summer along the Clearwater and Salmon rivers.

The Clearwater Basin Collaborative, which was convened by U.S. Sen. Mike Crapo in 2008, was recognized Nov. 5 by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack with the Abraham Lincoln External Partnership Honor Award.

Warren, UI Extension educator in Clearwater County, was among the collaborative's members recognized with the award. He serves as co-chair of the landscape health committee and member of the rural economies and forest policy committees.

After the wildfires burned tens of thousands of acres of family forests and destroyed scores of homes, Warren helped lead efforts to draw together federal, state and private experts to help assist erosion control, replanting and other restoration efforts.

A series of meetings at Kamiah and elsewhere connected wildlfire victims with information, experts and resources to speed recovery.

Workshop Helps Meat Managers Get Back to Basics

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ELLIE WILLOUGHBY, BOISE-BASED WINCO'S VICE PRESIDENT of meat operations, began her grocery career as a 19-year-old college student who took a summer job cutting meat.

She now leads meat departments that employ more than 1,000 in the fast-growing, Boise-based grocery chain's 105 stores across the West. She has seen consumers and grocery stores' meat counters change.

Willoughby helped create and joined a recent three-day pilot meat-science workshop offered by the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences in Moscow with 13 other Winco managers and supervisors.

Led by Department of Animal and Veterinary Science meat science faculty members Matt Doumit and Ron Richard, the three-day workshop provided a back-to-basics review.

"I think that over time we have just started to recognize that we have kind of lost some of the art of meat cutting. A lot of us started when we processed carcass cattle. You understand the relationship between the meat and what ends up on the table. Now we have folks who have never seen that piece of it, never seen that relationship."

The workshop covered the basics of meat science so participants could pass that knowledge back to their stores and customers. The goal: increase buyers' knowledge of meat cuts, success preparing them and demand at the meat counter.

UI faculty members covered the science from livestock care to meat processing and marketing. They also worked with beef and pork from breaking down carcasses to preparing cuts for sale.

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