



SILLER RANCH
THE GENTLE GIANTS OF THE PASTURES

IN REMEMBRANCE OF DAVID LEWIS BARHYDT PEARDALE: HOME OF THE FAMOUS BARLETT PEAR



FROM STUDENT TO TEACHER: HOW FFA IMPACTS LOCAL YOUTH





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## \* CONTENTS \*

- IN REMEMBRANCE OF DAVID LEWIS BARHYDT
- PEARDALE: HOME OF THE FAMOUS BARLETT PEAR
- THE SILLER LAND & 10 LONGHORN RANCH
- FROM STUDENT TO TEACHER: HOW FFA IMPACTS LOCAL YOUTH
- DISASTER LIVESTOCK **ACCESS PROGRAM**
- FARM DAY 2023

#### ON THE COVER



Photo by Taylor Jean Photography

The longhorns of Siller Ranch.

Page 9



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At Hooper & Weaver Mortuary, we're honored to have long supported generations of our agricultural community, including the farmers and ranchers who have helped build such a solid foundation for our community. We are pleased to have supported you through 4-H, FFA, and the Nevada County Fair—and also during those difficult times when you needed us most. We thank you for your commitment to our community and for honoring us as your mortuary of choice for more than 80 years.

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# IN REMEMBRANCE OF DAVID LEWIS BARHYDT

JUNE 13, 1949-JUNE 30, 2023

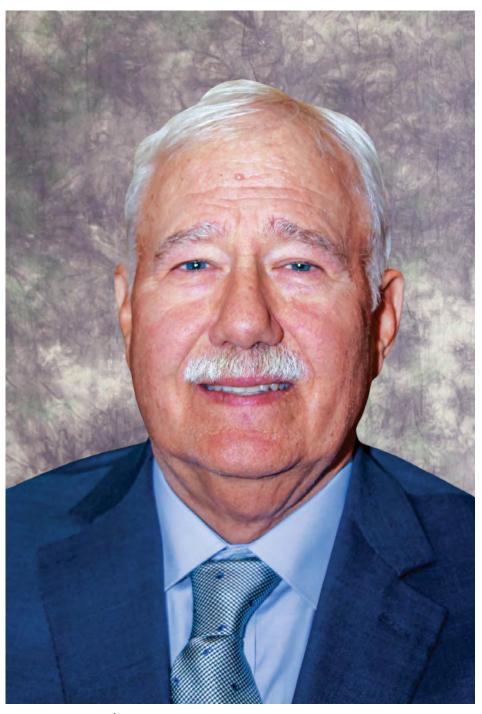
By family and friends

avid Lewis Barhydt was born in Hinsdale, Illinois to George L. Barhydt and Berdine L. (Huebner) Barhydt on June 13, 1949. The family later moved to California settling in Orangevale where Dave attended Faith Lutheran parochial school in Fair Oaks and graduated from Bella Vista High School in 1967. He attended American River College and received an AA Degree in accounting. While in college, Dave took courses in auto body repair and decided that was the career he wanted to pursue. He worked for Mel Rapton Pontiac as a painter for several years.

Dave met his wife of 53 years, Laura (Smotherman) Barhydt in their church's youth group while in high school. After their marriage in 1969, they purchased their first home in Orangevale. They enjoyed camping, hiking, fishing, horseback riding, and exploring back roads in the Sierras, especially Nevada County. The love they developed for Nevada County led them to purchase bare land in the Garden Bar area where they built their homestead and raised their family. Dave did all of the construction of the homestead himself from the groundwork to the finish with volunteer help from family and friends. This experience led to a career change when Dave discovered how much he enjoyed working with his backhoe. He received his contractor license and specialized in septic systems and ground preparation for new home construction in Nevada and Placer counties from 1987 until he retired.

Dave volunteered as a coach for Bear River Little League and as a 4-H leader with Meadowlarks. One of his fondest memories was getting the 4-H camp ready for campers each year. He also volunteered his time with Bear River FFA at the cook shack and drove students to competitions. He was a member of Higgins Diggins Lions Club and participated in the fundraising for and construction of the Higgins Lions Community Center. Dave served several years on the Nevada County Youth Ag Boosters and the Board for the Nevada County Resource Conservation District (NCRCD) and was the current Board President.

Preserving agriculture in Nevada County was a top priority for Dave. He loved his cattle and taking care of the land. He was working with NCRCD and Point Blue Conservation to improve the soil and wildlife habitat on the ranch and the family intends to continue his efforts. He enjoyed helping



**Submitted photo | David Lewis Barhydt** 

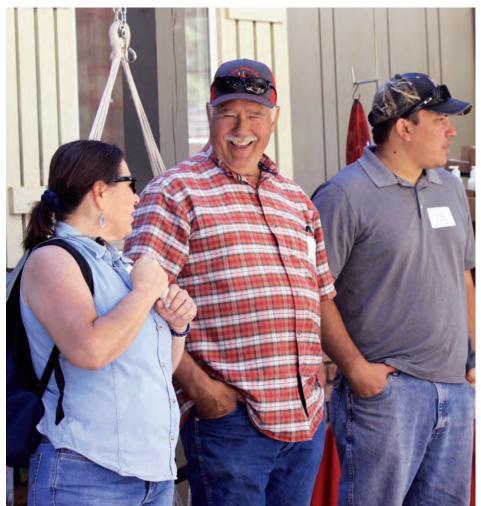
land owners with NCRCD Equip projects offering free professional advice and helping complete conservation projects. He was very honored to receive The Contractor of the Year award in 2006 for outstanding promotion and installation of conservation projects.

Dave served as a Board Member for the Nevada County Farm Bureau from 1995 to 2001; he took a brief break and then served again from 2004 to June 23. David served several years as an officer including President of Nevada County Farm Bureau and Vice President.

One of his favorite committees was serving on the Barn Clean up committee, where he arranged to get the barns cleaned up after the fair with the help of our community, FFA, and 4-H.

One of the things he enjoyed most was welcoming visitors to the ranch to enjoy McCourtney Roads Pumpkins and was sad when his illness made ources they needed to be successful in agriculture. He volunteered his own it necessary to close. David and Laura hosted the Farm Bureau Summer Picnic a few times on their Pumpkin Farm down near the creek; it is a beautiful spot and he was happy to host.

He was honored and proud to serve as the District 15 Director for the



Submitted photo | Dave with Pamela Hertzler (NCRCD) and Chris de Nijs (Nevada County Ag Commissioner).

California Farm Bureau from 2017-2021, where he represented Nevada, Yuba-Sutter, and Butte Counties. David was also an integral member of the agriculture community who represented as a stakeholder on the NID AG adversary committee, he was deeply involved in making sure NID remembered that they were originally started by the Farm Bureau, and he had great influence in keeping agriculture water rates available and affordable to Nevada County producers. On the state level, David attended the California Farm Bureau Capitol Ag Day every year and visited our state leaders at the capitol to bring our agricultural issues to the attention of our representatives.

Dave served as a Board Member for the NCRCD, first as a Director in 2016, but later served two terms as President.

Dave had a passion for helping underserved farmers find the help and resproperties for many studies in Monarch habitats, bird habitats, seed studies, weed abatement, and many various ag-related how-to seminars. He was passionate about agriculture water in Nevada County and helping to spread the word about preparing the way for future farmers. If there was a case for the farmer, Dave never hesitated to step up to the plate to give Nevada County farmers a voice. He even served as a Representative of Northern California traveling to Washington D.C. to attend the Federal Leadership Program.

Dave always had time to help a neighbor or a struggling farmer across town. His friendly demeanor, funny quips, rollicking laughter, and smiling face (irreplaceable) will be missed by many.



Submitted photo | Dave helping set up at the 2017 Nevada County Fair.

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# PEARDALE: HOME OF THE FAMOUS BARLETT PEAR

By Maria E. Brower

here do you live? I'm often asked by newcomers and people living outside of Nevada County. I reply that I live in Peardale—of course the next question is, "Where is that?" I explain it is between Cedar Ridge and Chicago Park to narrow it down, or if they are not familiar with the local area at all I say it's between Grass Valley and Colfax along Hwy. 174. *California Geographic Names* describes Peardale as a settlement 3.5 miles north northwest of Chicago Park.

While small, unincorporated settlements like Peardale were overshadowed by Nevada County's larger, more prominent historic and popular Gold Rush towns—Grass Valley, Nevada City, Rough and Ready, areas that were rich in gold, it was in the small communities across the county that grew the food, raised the livestock, and contained the ranches and farms that fed the county. After the Gold Rush was over and the mines were closed down, agriculture and horticulture would become the county's richest export.

Ironically, it was the Gold Rush itself that was responsible for the early development of the agriculture and horticulture industries in Northern California. With thousands of men, and some women, descending on the shores and coming overland, there was a great need for food. The ships that would bring in supplies to California were too far away from the Goldfields and it was costly to freight food in many different directions. The mining camps could be booming one day and deserted the next. Food would often spoil before reaching the miners and was a loss to both merchants and gold seekers. Settlements soon began to spring up and enterprising men found that providing food to the miners was a better and easier way to make a living than digging for gold. Those with the means, foresight, and experience bought



Submitted photo | Completion of the Central Pacific Railroad to Colfax was on September 1, 1868 with the first train running three days later. The Nevada County Narrow Gage (NCNG) was built to give the gold mines of Nevada County easy access to the Central Pacific. Prior to the NCNG the Nevada County orchardists packed their fruit on their ranches and loaded them into wagons and delivery to Colfax.

land and began planting but had to be patient until the crops came in. Many men were shortsighted thinking that the Gold Rush would be over soon and not worth the trouble and outlay to farm or ranch and went back home.

#### **FRUIT BECAME KING**

It is believed that Peardale was named for what became the famous pears that were successfully grown in the area. The Bartlett pear found to grow successfully in Nevada County. It was attributed to the perfect climate, the









Submitted photo | Nevada County never had their own fruit labels. These fruit labels were popular ones that Nevada county fruit would have been shipped under.

rich soil and what one reporter, Earnest E. Bowles, who wrote an informative article "Fruit Rivals Gold in Nevada," lauded the excellence in quality and taste of the pears grown in Nevada County for the *Morning Union* published on May 10, 1914.

"There is several reasons [sic] advanced for the excellence of foothill fruit, chief among which are dry, cloudless air, sun-sterilized, with no rain, no dew, days of unbroken sunshine, and nights tempered by cool breezes from the high Sierra." His article was quite extensive and he lauded the wide variety of fruits, nuts, and more exotic produce being grown including the loquat, pomegranate, fig, and olives, with oranges, lemons and grape-fruit, walnuts, almonds, and filberts being grown in the lower elevations of the county. Bowles wrote that anyone can raise anything toward which he is inclined in Nevada County. Bowles said at present pears had the lead commercially, with apples a close second. "If you ever eat the ripe Nevada county Bartlett pear, juicy, melting, delicious, with one cheek blushing in the September sun, you will not soon forget it."

In 1913, the exhibit from Nevada County at the State fair in Sacramento showed the high-quality pears. An article that appeared in *The Union* praising the locally grown pears:

"It was said that the climate and soil seemed to blend just right for the attainment of approximate perfection in the growing of this fruit. . . Let no one become imbued with the idea that there is danger of over production. There is no such danger. Even though every acre of ground in Nevada County is suitable for producing pears were planted to this fruit, that would not glut the markets, by any means. The areas of the United

States naturally well-adapted to raising first class pears are comparatively limited. The pear-producing regions in California are not large, relatively speaking. There will always be good demand for all the pears that can be produced in the quality grown in Nevada County."<sup>1</sup>

Peardale wasn't the first name the community went by and originally given by early Nevada County Pioneer Benjamin Franklin Taylor (see *Nevada County Rancher Spring 2023*). The name for the area that was used for decades had been Buena Vista. Buena Vista was very popular with vets returning from the Mexican War of which Taylor had been a solider. General Santa Ana had been defeated by U.S. forces directed by Zachary Taylor at Buena Vista, Mexico in 1847.

There is several reasons [sic] advanced for the excellence of foothill fruit, chief among which are dry, cloudless air, sun-sterilized, with no rain, no dew, days of unbroken sunshine, and nights tempered by cool breezes from the high Sierra.

-Earnest E. Bowles,
Reporter for the *Morning Union* 

The rapid growth of the fruit industry in county between 1912 through 1914 was due to both local and outside capital that invested in the Nevada County fruit growing district. The Bartlett pear, which attained superiority in Nevada County, was not excelled in any fruit-growing district of the west, leading in the variety of trees planted. Out of the 140,305 trees planted during the two seasons that year 84,769 were Bartletts.

In 1914, a farm club was formed and in 1915 they bought the old Odd Fellows Hall and tore it down and moved it to a site donated by William Bierwagen at what became the intersection of Peardale Road and Highway 174. When the club applied for a post office in 1916 it was learned that there was another town named Buena Vista in California in Amador County. Although Amador County's post office was established on April 24, 1855 it was discontinued in 1878. Nevada County was told another name had to selected for the post office. The name Peardale was put forth but it is not documented by whom or how it decided upon. The post office was discontinued in on January 14, 1927 due to the small population by that time.

The name of Peardale may have been a fluke due to a statement made by the Department of Agriculture whom credited Walter Parsons, living three miles east of Grass Valley, with the largest wield of potatoes grown on a measured acre in the U.S.—over 700 bushels that brought about the notoriety of Nevada County's rich producing lands. At that time, it was pointed out

6 NEVADA COUNTY 餐 RANCHER

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of the quality of products grown in the county,

". . . the most striking example was the pears, which was said have never failed, at every exposition, fair, or land show where exhibited, to take first prize, the most important of such events being the San Francisco World Fair of 1915, where Bartlett pears from this county were awarded the grand prize in keenest competition with the entire horticultural world."

Or it may have been because the pear was one of the biggest exports and the prized fruit grown in the county.

In addition to the rodeo grounds, the Brooklyn Lodge No. 46, I.O.O.F, built outside of Red Dog that later became the Peardale Farm Center, and served as the Peardale Baptist Church and headquarters for the Peardale



Submitted photo | After the NCNG was running the orchardist sent their fruit in wood crates to be packed at the packing house behind the train tracks at Colfax. Undated photo shows the Pacific Fruit Exchange sign above one of the packing houses.

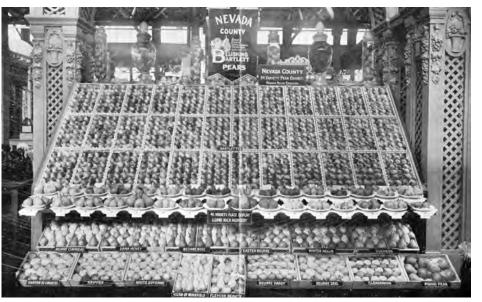
Pines 4-H Club and was a community meeting place. The original building built c. 1857 by the I.O.O.F. on the town's main street was said to be "an imposing two-story wood frame building of the latest design complete with wall-to-wall carpeting." The lodge hall occupied the second story while the ground floor was rented to the school district to be used as a school room. When the town of Red Dog burned in a fire in 1863 the lodge was untouched due to its location on the outskirts of town.

Mining had its ups and downs and by 1870 mining at the formerly rich diggings at Red Dog was at a standstill. The majority of the miners followed the mining and left the area, as the population at Red Dog dwindled and the lodge lost the majority of its members. Many had moved to nearby You Bet and Brooklyn Lodge No. 46 was moved there. The lodge was partly dismantled with the second floor removed. After relocating to You Bet the lodge moved into the ground floor as there was already a schoolhouse at You Bet and no need to rent space out and the second floor never reconstructed.

By 1873, there were many articles in local newspapers reporting the fine

hay and grain and superior fruits that were being raised on farms in the "mines" as the area was frequently called.

It was the infamous decision in 1884 by Lorenzo Sawyer, Federal Court Circuit Judge that put an end to almost all hydraulic mining in California. Many more lodge members moved either to neighboring towns or out of Nevada County. The lodge building was left unoccupied until it was moved again to a new location in 1915 at Peardale on the line of NCNGRR where it became the Peardale Farm Center. It was relocated behind the present day



Submitted photo | This Nevada County exhibit won the grand prize at the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco. The County's Blushing Bartlett Pear and 54 other varieties of pears were featured in the exhibit. More than 18 million people visited the fair in 1915; it covered 600 acres along two and half miles of waterfront property that highlighted San Francisco's grandeur.

Peardale-Chicago Park firehouse. There it served the area for fifty more years.

There was never any fruit crate labels produced with the names of Nevada County or Peardale or any of the fruit growing communities in Nevada County appearing on them. The horticulturists would pick and pack their fruit in wooden crates and the boxes would be loaded on the Nevada County Narrow Gage Railroad cars that ran through Nevada City and Grass Valley and on to the railroad station at Colfax. From there, they would be trans-

ferred to standard gage railroad cars at the California Fruit Exchange that

Today, Nevada County is again experiencing a surge in agriculture attracting a lifestyle, satisfying labor, and an income to support younger newcomers and longtime farmers and horticulturists alike. Farmers Markets are popular county-wide as well as selling produce to local grocery stores.

1. The Union, October 15, 1913 p. 4.

was in business from 1901-1991.





## The Nevada Joint Union High School District Board of Trustees and Superintendent

Congratulate the Nevada Union High Schools'
Future Farmers of America and Agricultural Programs
– ON THEIR –



## 2023 NEVADA COUNTY FAIR RESULTS AND AWARDS

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## Nevada Union High School FFA HOME OF THE MINERS

#### **Swine**:

Reserve Supreme Hog- Harlie Deschaine Reserve FFA Hog- Harlie Deschaine Registered Gilt Champion- Jayden Yokom Best County Group of Hogs- Nevada Union

#### Goats:

FFA Champion- Kayla Whitman Supreme Champion- Kayla Whitman FFA Reserve Champion- Austin Whitman Supreme Champion- Austin Whitman, Best FFA Group- Nevada Union Best County Group- Nevada Union

#### Lambs:

Overall Champion Market Lamb- Meghan Garren, Champion FFA Market Lamb - Meghan Garren Champion Fall Ram- Adam Jones Reserve Champion Wether Dam- Meghan Garren Overall Champion County Group- Nevada Union

#### Showmanship:

Swine Showmanship- Jayden Yokom Goats Novice Showmanship- Taylor Reiss, Goats Senior Showmanship- Kayla Whitman Lambs Novice Showmanship- Meghan Garren

#### 406 Members in the 2022-2023 School Year

27 hog exhibitors, 17 market goats, one dairy goat, three dog exhibitors, 43 Ag Mechanics Projects, 13 steers and 22 lamb exhibitors.







On behalf of all of our student recipients, we would like to thank the community for their ongoing support, participation, and incredible generosity shown during the Agriculture Mechanic's Project and Livestock Auctions.





#### The Nevada Joint Union High School District Board of Trustees and Superintendent





# 2023 NEVADA COUNTY FAIR RESULTS AND AWARDS



## Bear River High School FFA HOME OF THE BRUINS

#### Sheep

FFA Reserve Champion Market Lamb- Chris Newell Supreme Champion Ewe- Chris Newell Showmanship:

Dairy Goat Showmanship- Bailey Ham Beef Novice Showmanship- James Strong Beef Market Steer- Arden Franks Dairy Cattle- Wyatt Fowler

#### **Beef:**

FFA Reserve Champion Market Steer- James Strong FFA Champion Market Steer- Arden Franks

#### **Dairy Cattle:**

Best Overall- Wyatt Fowler

#### **Ag Mechanics:**

Proud Division Award- Chloe Huiskens Best of Division- Mya Marsh

1st Place Projects- Addison Guild, Belle Burnett, Gabby Kitchen, Wyatt Neeb, Adam Sigl, Cooper Marchi, Taven Duffey, Morgan Fowler, Hailey Brenes, Austin Mertens, Wyatt Thompson, Ocean Nasalroad, Dakota Graham, Thomas Billingsley, Makayla Magnuse, Taryn Cleek, Bridgette Kohlbeck, Maliya Mendoza, Nikolas Palacio, Braden Smith, Macy Martin

This year's Ag Mechanics live auction broke a record and brought in \$105,000 to BR and NU students who made projects







On behalf of all of our student recipients, we would like to thank the community for their ongoing support, participation, and incredible generosity shown during the Agriculture Mechanic's Project and Livestock Auctions.



## THE SILLER LAND & LONGHORN RANCH

THE GENTLE GIANTS OF THE PASTURES

By Dora Scott

riving through Penn Valley as a child, I remember my dad stopping to take pictures of me with a few grazing longhorn cattle. Though the expanse of their horns intimidated me, I was enamored by their majesty. Driving past now, there are more and more longhorns in the area's pastures, thanks to The Siller Land & Longhorn Ranch. Andrea and Mac Siller purchased their ranch in Penn Valley in 2016 and began their journey into the longhorn industry in 2017.

Mac and Andrea both grew up in Yuba City and became high school sweethearts. After moving around a few times for work, they decided to settle in Penn Valley due to its proximity to Yuba City, where their parents still lived. Andrea describes her husband's mindset as "go big or go home," adding that he wanted their new ranch to have 100 acres or more.

"When we found the first ranch in Penn Valley I think it was like 160 acres, and then we ended up buying the ranch behind it, and that's having up to 500 acres in Penn Valley," Andrea stated.

"My husband and I bought the ranch, and he actually was the one that went out and bought the longhorns. I was away at a barrel race with my daughter, came home, and there were three longhorns in the pasture," Andrea explained. While purchasing longhorns was Mac's impulsive decision, that hopefully the industry would want to pur-Andrea fell in love with the animal and quickly became what their ranch hand, Coal Barker, describes as "Cow Boss."

The first three longhorns the Sillers bought were unregistered, which they eventually sold off to get into breeding registered Texas longhorns. Andrea stated, "I would say the last two years we are trying to breed really well-rounded longhorns



Photo by Taylor Jean Photography | The Siller family

...we just liked the beauty of the longhorns; we liked that they are a hardy cattle. They are really disease resistant, easy calvers—they don't have any issues having their calves -and that's what we were looking for...

-Andrea Siller

For those who do not have a cattle ranching background, like Andrea, longhorns are a relatively easier breed to take care of. Andrea explained, "We needed something to eat down our pastures, and we just liked the beauty of the longhorns; we liked that they are a hardy cattle. They are really disease resistant, easy calvers—they don't have

any issues having their calves—and that's what we were looking for, something that was easy to handle especially since I was new at this."

Within the last few years, the Sillers got more involved in the longhorn industry by traveling across the country to different futurities and showings, judging every aspect of their animals up against other ranches. Their efforts are starting to pay off, as they won Grand Champion Bull and Grand Champion Heifer at this year's Oregon Trail Sale and Futurity of the West.

While some might assume that longhorns would be judged primarily on their horn length, Andrea and Coal explained that body conformation is also really important: "The way that heifer walks out, all the other parts that help her function as a cow, that's what they're judged off of," Coal stated.

The Sillers have four main bulls that they bring to their different properties, matching them up with cows that they think would produce the best

NEVADA COUNTY **RANCHER** 10





Photo by Cori Ann Photography | Andrea and Mac Siller

genetic outcome.

While there are trends of what type of genetics are more popular, like black and white longhorns currently, Andrea does not want to follow phases. "We, as breeders, I think we just want to focus on breeding like a big-bodied, conformationally correct cow because the trends go in and out. We

We've met a lot of friends through the business, and that's all across the U.S. I didn't realize that longhorns are that popular—maybe not necessarily in California—but in a lot of other states.

-Andrea Siller

are just trying to focus on breeding what we like, and hopefully other people will like it as well," she elaborated.

For Andrea, one of the reasons she enjoys being in the longhorn industry is due to meeting people with similar passions. "We've met a lot of friends through the business, and that's all across the U.S. I didn't realize that longhorns are that popular—maybe not necessarily in California—but in a lot of other states," Andrea stated.

There are a number of misconceptions about longhorns, possibly attributing to their lack of pop-

I would love to get longhorns more popular here in California, but a lot of people think that they are mean and tear up fences and they do not at all.

-Andrea Siller

ularity in California. "I would love to get longhorns more popular here in California, but a lot of people think that they are mean and tear up fences and they do not at all," Andrea explained how the breed is actually very docile.

Andrea gave an example of how, though longhorns have large horns, they have a great spacial awareness: "We have this one shelter and it's a normal-sized door and we have a longhorn, our longest one—she's almost 100 inches tip to tip—she will turn her head sideways and not even touch the door."

Another misconception that follows these gentle giants around is that only males can have horns. Andrea said, "There are a lot of people that, if I post something, and because they have horns, they will automatically think that it's a bull." However, both genders can have the iconic horns.

As the Sillers got more into breeding longhorns,

Mac's motto of all or nothing struck true as they bought 9,000 acres in Elk Creek, CA, and another ranch in Texas. Living half the time in Penn Valley, and half the time in Texas, the Sillers depend on their ranch hands and family members for daily operations across the three properties. Andrea emphasized, "We wouldn't be able to do what we do without Coal because of the care he gives to our longhorns. He is a huge part of our team and we consider him family."

Andrea had to learn everything about cattle ranching through self-research, trial and error, and the advice of others like Coal, their ranch hand in California. "I got into cows probably when I was about 12 years old. I started working for a couple of different ranches, got into the registered Black cows with my mentor, then decided to go and play cowboy up in Oregon, came back from that, and found my home here," Coal explained.

Coal is also extensively involved in the events to show and consign the longhorns. Andrea explained, "Coal grew up in the show world, so he had the background of giving them haircuts, shaving them." Day-before preparation for showing the animals lasts usually into the night, Andrea stated, "We are usually there until the dark, washing them, giving them baths."

While the longhorns take an extensive amount of time and energy, Andrea doesn't view the animals as a "job". "These longhorns are more, in my opinion, a hobby. I hope to one day be making money by raising them and selling them, but we are still new in it," she stated.

As they have gotten a better grasp on the breeding side of the longhorn industry, they are also looking more into selling their meat. "There are a lot of health benefits to the longhorn beef that people just don't realize. Way lower calories, lower fat, lower cholesterol, and higher protein than other beef," Andrea stated, adding that you just have to be a bit more careful when you cook it. Due to its lower fat content, if you cook it for too long or too high of heat it can become too tough.

Considering that finding USDA-inspected

processing facilities has been a great challenge for a lot of ranches in California, Andrea stuck gold. "We have just found someone in California, that handles longhorns, where we can start doing USDA beef, and we are really excited about that," she stated. They will likely start retail, selling at farmers markets, but have aspirations to get into wholesale as well.

Andrea emphasized they want to use all the parts of the animal that they can, which includes selling cured skulls and horns. "The hides are the only thing that we haven't figured out yet," she stated, elaborating on how their attempt to tan the hides themselves left them only with a sore back. sonalities," Coal explained. However, they do offer the hides for those that

are adventurous, or skilled enough, to tan them.

Though they have hopes to expand into the meat market, for the Sillers, breeding will be the biggest draw.

When calving season rolls around in the spring and fall, things liven up on the ranch and Coal starts dishing out some creative names for the calves relaxing," she stated. (based off the genetics of their sire and dam), ear tagging, and vaccinating.

"My favorite time is calving because it's like Easter egg hunting, especially with these longhorns. You don't know what color you are going to get. . . each cow is unique; they all have their own per-

Aside from the longhorns, their ranch also has

goats for weed control, a zebra, zonkeys, and a pack of 14 dogs. Though they are constantly on the road, Andrea explained how there always has to be longhorns at all of their ranch lands, as they are a source of comfort at the end of the day. "We go out in the pastures in the evening and it's

Longhorns, in California, are still somewhat of an oddity. Andrea urged, "Hopefully, we can get some other people that would be interested in longhorns, they are a lot of fun."

The Siller Land & Longhorn Ranch also sells privately for those that are interested.

For more information, visit sillerlonghorns.com.





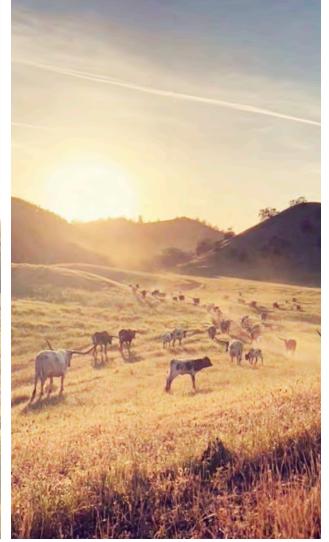


Photo by Coal Barker

NEVADA COUNTY RANCHER



# FROM STUDENT TO TEACHER: HOW FFA IMPACTS LOCAL YOUTH

By Dora Scott

hen asked what we want to be when we grow up, many children say something like an astronaut, a princess, or something similarly imaginative yet unattainable. Lauren Glomson, a teacher in her first year at Bear River High School, made her childhood dream a reality.

"I think I knew I wanted to be a teacher honestly since I was probably in Kindergarten. My mom would tell me, and I remember too, every summer I would play school with my little sister, and I would literally make her sit down and do assignments," Glomson said.

Coming full circle, Glomson is now teaching in the same classroom where she took agriculture-related classes at Bear River when she was a high schooler. Though she always had the desire to become a teacher, it wasn't until she took classes from Steve Paasch and Tim Reid that she connected her love for the agriculture community with her love for teaching.

I think I knew I wanted to be a teacher honestly since I was probably in Kindergarten. My mom would tell me, and I remember too, every summer I would play school with my little sister, and I would literally make her sit down and do assignments. . . .

-Lauren Glomson

"I grew up in the Nevada County agricultural community. I did 4-H since I was six or seven years old. Then, I moved on to FFA once all my friends and I reached high school. I had two great Ag teachers here—Steve Paasch and Tim Reid—who definitely were two of my role models, and definitely helped me get to where I am today, and inspired me to want to be an Ag teacher," Glomson explained.

Glomson received her teaching credential and degree from Chico State University in Agricultural Science & Education. After student teaching at Linden High School and Colusa High School, she returned back home to Nevada County to teach Beginning & Advance Floral, Animal Science, and Agriculture Science at her alma mater.



**Submitted photo | Lauren Glomson** 

The Ag classes at Bear River used to be taught solely by Mr. Paasch and Mr. Reid, but now have expanded to four teachers: Lauren Glomson, Bre Shannon, Andy Barhydt, and Dylan Weddle—a testament to the rising popularity of agriculture studies not only locally but in California and beyond.

FFA, which used to stand for "Future Farmers of America", is an intracurricular student organization with chapters all across the country. Glomson explained, "(FFA) has expanded to encompass so many more opportunities for individuals who aren't involved in farming. It could be from the business side of agriculture, the sales side, the plant and soil side, the leadership side, communications, animals, or anything like that."

To those who are unfamiliar with FFA, it's easy to think that it is just for the "Ag kids", but Glomson touched on the vast opportunities that the organization can give youth: from competing as a team with your school chapter in mechanics, public speaking, livestock raising and showing, veterinary science to the thousands of Supervised Agriculture Experience (SAE) projects that kids can undertake outside of school.

Glomson added, "Throughout all that there are just so many opportunities for networking, for traveling, for scholarships, and personal growth esp-

ecially—really pushing students outside their comfort zone and just helping them grow as an individual is really what this organization is about."

Those who take an Ag class are automatically enrolled in FFA, but there are different levels of involvement. "Agriculture education consists of what we call a three-ring model: the first ring is classrooms, so everything we do in here, the hands-on labs, all of the group work, all of that sort of thing. Then we have FFA, which is that leadership portion and all those contests and events, then we have SAE which is that supervised agriculture experience and all three of those are tied into every single Ag. class that we have here," Glomson explained.

Lauren has experienced almost all aspects of FFA—even earning the prestigious American FFA Degree when she was in high school. According to FFA's website, the American FFA Degree is "the highest degree achievable in the National FFA Organization," and, "shows an FFA member's dedication to his or her chapter and state FFA association."

Even graduation from high school did not stop Glomson's involvement in FFA. FFA also offers "Field Day" opportunities where universities with agriculture departments welcome students to compete in a number of agriculturally- based competitions. Glomson competed as a student at Bear River in these field days at different California universities and eventually got to help run and plan them once she attended Chico State.



**Submitted photo** 

When asked what she was looking forward to for this school year, Glomson responded how she wanted to incorporate more hands on labs and activities into her classes. Adding, "I'm looking forward to making it fun, making everyone involved, making everyone want to come to class."

Drawing from her experiences student teaching at other schools, where



Photo by Faith Escoto | Belle Burnett from Bear River FFA showing her steer at the 2023 Nevada County Fair.

they had a barn and other agricultural amenities on campus for more handson learning, Glomson explained how she also hopes to get Bear River's greenhouse area next to the parking lot cleaned up and usable for classes.

Glomson added how her colleague Bre Shannon, who has a background in raising and showing small animals, hopes to incorporate that more into Bear River FFA, giving students who live in Lake of the Pines or do not have access to land for larger animals more opportunities. "Once we get this area fixed up," Glomson referred to the greenhouse area, "easily we could have some goats or other poultry down there."

Be on the lookout for the feats that are sure to come from the students that are involved in local FFA chapters like Bear River. The Bear River Ag. Mechanics team is on their way to the National FFA Convention this November, way to go Bruins! This organization is a great way for students to be involved in our community and develop a range of skills and knowledge that will help them throughout their lives—Lauren Glomson's story is a prime example of this!

From student to now teacher, she now has the opportunity to impart the same experiences and support she once received.

NEVADA COUNTY **RANCHER** 14



# 'IN THE MIDST OF A DISASTER, WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITH 200 CATTLE?'

COUNTY HONORED FOR DISASTER LIVESTOCK ACCESS PROGRAM

Submitted to *The Union* 

evada County was honored for its role in creating the Disaster Livestock Access Program which helps ranchers safely evacuate their livestock in the event of a wildfire.

Graham Knaus, chief executive officer of the California State Association of Counties, praised the county for its "culture of innovation" at a Board of Supervisors meeting.

"For your community, I think it's really important to understand the outsize impact that Nevada County has on the state of California and local governments all across the state," he said.

For your community, I think it's really important to understand the outsize impact that Nevada County has on the state of California and local governments all across the state...

Graham Knaus, CEO,
 California State Association of Counties

Courtesy photo | Through Nevada County's Disaster Livestock Access Program, ranchers will be able to safely evacuate their livestock in the event of a wildfire.

Knaus made the remarks when he presented the board with a Challenge Award. Nevada County's project was one of 14 honored out of more than 300 applicants. The judges were particularly impressed with the collaborative approach to creating the program, Knaus said.

The Disaster Livestock Access Program was created by the agricultural departments of Nevada, Placer and Yuba counties along with the UC Cooperative Extension in cooperation with CalFire, the Sheriff's Office and the Office of Emergency Services. It provides ranchers with training in emergency procedures and how to not impede first responders during a disaster while caring for animals.

Supervisor Sue Hoek, a rancher, said the program has been very helpful to her in making her own wildfire readiness plans. "I raise cattle," she said. "In the midst of a disaster, what am I going to do with 200 cattle?"

Knaus pointed out that the county has won several other Challenge Awards in the past. He congratulated the Board of Supervisors for their "history of leadership and pursuing innovation."

For more information on the Disaster Livestock Access Program, visit www.NevadaCountyCa.gov/DisasterLivestock.



Photo by Elias Funez | A property owner with trailer in tow escapes the flames and billowing smoke of the River Fire on the afternoon of August 4, 2021.



## **FARM DAY 2023**

#### TEACHING YOUTH WHAT 'AGRICULTURE' REALLY MEANS

By Dora Scott

he Nevada County Resource Conservation District (NCRCD), in partnership with the Nevada County Farm Bureau, Nevada County Cattle Women, and Sierra Harvest, taught local second and third graders the broad scope of what agriculture entails and why it's important at the annual Farm Day on Sept. 20, 2023.

Hosted at the Nevada County Fairgrounds, the Farm Day welcomed over 800 children, parents, and teachers for various hands-on activities with local businesses, community members, and organizations related to agriculture.

Anne Solik, the Executive Assistant of NCRCD, explained, "They are all here because they are interested in what we are doing. They are interested in what kids can do outside with animals, what agriculture really means—that it isn't just planting a plant."



Photo by Dora Scott | Briana Bacon (Executive Director of NCRCD) and Anne Solik (Executive Assistant of NCRCD) greet students as they come to the 2023 Farm Day.



Photo by Dora Scott | Second and third-grade students watch a demonstration of milking a dairy goat at the 2023 Farm Day.

With nearly 30 different exhibitors at the Farm Day, there is little that the event didn't touch on. The kids could interact and learn about a number of different animals and species related to agriculture like herding dogs, agriculture-detecting service dogs, dairy goats, and draft horses, to name a few.

As our ecosystem is interdependent, there were exhibits that taught about how bats, bees, birds, fire, and soil all play an important role in our local agriculture industry.

There were also exhibits that taught students various skills such as fiber weaving and leather crafting—showing that there are a number of arts that depend on agriculture.

Briana Bacon, the Executive Director of NCRCD stated how "Farm Day is a great opportunity for agriculture to be an experience for kids from younger grades to then know what the importance of agriculture is for the community, and then move on into the grades and hopefully participate in agriculture as an adult."

To make sure that Farm Day goes smoothly, FFA students from Nevada Union and Bear River



Photo by Dora Scott | Students learn about pack mules at the 2023 Farm Day.

High School were in attendance. Andy Barhydt, a teacher in the agriculture department at Bear River, stated, "We are here representing agriculture at the high school level," adding, "We've brought around 70 students here to help lead these second and third graders and teach them about agriculture."

While Farm Day is intended for the second and third graders, the participating FFA students equally benefited from the experience. Barhydt explained, "It's a great opportunity for high school students to become leaders and feel like mentors to younger students, to have their place in our community and really feel like they feel part of what's going on here."

Some may have noticed that Farm Day is always back-to-back with the annual Draft Horse Show at the fairgrounds. "Every year, it's the Wednesday before the Draft Horse Show so the kids have the chance to see the draft horses and appreciate that," Solik explained.

Petting a horse or holding a chicken is fun and engaging for the kids, but it is also these little experiences that leave the biggest impression.

To learn more about the NCRCD, visit ncrcd.org.