

# AGRICULTURE

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More than 1,200 acres of pasture were devastated by raging flood waters. This is debris left on the Josi farm.

## Recovery

Trashed pastureland, lost animals, reduced milk production - Tillamook County farmers tally flood damage

BY DENISE PORTER  
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After November's devastating flood, which resulted in nearly \$2 million in agricultural damages and \$12.5 million in damages countywide, many dairymen in Tillamook County say they are biding their time. They are waiting for winter to pass so recovery efforts may begin on an estimated 1,255 acres of pastureland around the county that was devastated by floodwaters and debris.

Bryan Gibson, farm quality manager for Tillamook County Creamery Association, detailed the damages caused by the flood and its aftermath. Gibson said the amount of milk coming into TCCA the week during the flood was approximately

**FORAGE VALUE:** OSU Agriculture Extension expert, Troy Downing, details the true value of pasture.

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365,000 pounds lower than average. Furthermore, he said, in the past month, the creamery has recorded a decrease in milk deliveries of nearly 1 million pounds, representing a loss of \$170,000 in farmer revenue.

Milk that farmers had to dump when tanker trucks could not get through water, amounted to 27,500 pounds, or \$4,675. One farm — Wilsonview Dairy, owned by the Josi family — accounted for nearly half that



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See FLOOD, Page A16 Bill Josi stands in a hole cut by the Wilson River.

## FLOOD

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milk.

Another four truckloads, or 215,199 pounds of milk, had to be rerouted to the Farmers' Cooperative Creamery in McMinnville while roads were closed.

"I am grateful to the milk drivers who dropped everything and worked overtime to make certain our milk was picked up," Gibson noted.

The value of animals that perished in the flood totaled \$161,100, Gibson continued. This included 35 calves valued at \$500 each; 54 heifers valued at \$1,000 each, and 64 cows valued at \$1,400 each.

He said damage to farm structures and implements account for another \$400,000 in flood losses, although he said he suspects this total will continue to grow.

Value of feed lost, not including pastureland, was \$83,800, he continued. He estimated that four miles of fence was lost in North County and another 15 miles was lost in Central and South County. Estimates for repair are \$225,729, but Gibson said he expects that number will rise as more damage is discovered.

He said the value of the 1,255 acres of lost pasture is \$313,750, and the cost of replacement feed for the 4,200 animals that will be affected by the lack of pasture next spring will be \$600,000. He said this total only accounts for those acres most severely damaged. Weather will play a key role in determining how long it will take for farmers to begin working silt-covered pasture again.

Observers report that the farms most severely affected with property damage are located along the upper Wilson River.

Dairymen Don and Bill Josi of Wilsonview Dairy saw the hard hours they put in after the 1996 flood washed away. The Josis had built an additional 1,000 feet of dike and planted large trees along it after 1996. Today, the remains of the six-foot dike are spread across the fields, along with tons of debris

### Flood Damage Estimate

(Source: TCCA)

Item	Units	Value
Acres of pasture damaged	1,255	\$313,750
Replacement fee	4,200 cattle	\$600,000
Reduced milk production during flood	365,000 pounds	\$170,000
Milk dumped on farms	27,500 pounds	\$4,675
Animals lost		
Calves	35	\$17,500
Heifers	54	\$54,000
Cows	64	\$89,600
TOTAL	153	\$161,100
Damage to farm buildings & implements		\$400,000
Value of feed lost		\$83,800
Fencing lost	19 miles	\$225,729
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$2,119,354</b>

and logs.

Additionally, Bill Josi said, the angry river attempted to carve a new course through the fields. A 12-foot-deep gash in the earth that is from 300 to 400 feet long and 100 feet wide juts into what was once pasture land.

"The power of the river was amazing," he said. "I could see the water pouring over the old part of the dike and I don't know why it wasn't ruined, too. We have enough work here to keep us busy for months, once it dries out and we can get to it."

Don Josi said it will take months to recover.

"We're still dealing with issues, and we will 'til probably August," he said. "If this were the first time this had happened, I wouldn't even know how to begin. Thankfully, and ironically, we lived through 1996, and I'm resigned to the fact that we will survive and move on." Don said.

Two Josi neighbors, Mike and Sharon Shreve and Bernie Sander, reported significant damage, as well.

"The logs and the mud are still there," Sander said. "They haven't gone anywhere, and won't until it dries out and I can get down there. I won't have much room to haul manure either, which is a worry."

Sander said water entered his barns and he had no fresh drinking water for his cows during the height of the flood. As a result, he said his milking herd is experiencing mastitis (udder infection) problems.

"I'm also down in production 500 pounds of milk a day. That's a lot, when you only milk

120 cows," he said.

The Shreve farm is located on higher land. The cows were dry and safe during the flood but the pastures below the farm were hit hard. Sharon Shreve estimated that 105 of their 125 acres are now covered in from one to four feet of silt, logs and debris. She noted that most of the severe agricultural property damage in the county took place on just five or six farms along the Wilson River.

"This flood wasn't as devastating countywide for farmers as the 1996 flood," she said. "That's good. But I also worry that we (along the Wilson River) won't get as much funding as we need to cover the cost of damages."

Lester Monagon rents the Lucas farm on the Wilson River. He said 35 of his 70 acres are damaged. He said he was renting the farm in 1996, as well. That year, he spent an additional \$50,000 in feed for his 120 cattle. He said he expects to do the same in the coming year.

George Prince, who rents pastureland along the upper Wilson, said he lost pasture and spring feed in the form of grass for his heifers, but won't do any cleanup until spring.

"It's still a long winter, a lot could happen," he noted. "I'm just thankful no one was hurt."

Along the Trask River, farmers Dan Landolt and Butch Schriber, who both evacuated their cattle, also expressed relief that their cows survived. Even so, they said the stress of being moved to other farms and changing feed caused their cows' milk production to fall by

nearly 500 pounds per day, or nearly eight pounds per cow for Schriber's 65 cows, and nearly six pounds for each of Landolt's 85 milkers.

"We're still not where we were (in production) and its nearly four weeks after the flood," Landolt's wife, Karilea said. "Plus, a couple of the cows stepped off the trailer with bruised or cut teats."

Gibson said he fears recovery will take months.

"I fear it will be a long winter and spring."