

Oregon Department of Agriculture Program Reports
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Natural Resource Programs

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The following updates are organized by operating process in our management system and cover all NRPA programs. In addition to the updates below, one more important activity involves filling a variety of vacant positions in the program area with limited duration and/or permanent staff. This will continue to be a major focus for all programs for the remainder of the biennium and we are excited to be able to bring on these staff.

- **Fostering collaboration**

- The Pesticides Program has been working closely with Oregon State University to create a bulletin for schools about the pest emergency provision of the school Integrated Pest Management law. The goal of the bulletin is to increase schools' understanding and compliance with this provision of the law.
- We have welcomed a variety of new staff who are involved in collaborative programs. These staff include Kathryn Rifenburg, our new Pesticide Stewardship Partnerships coordinator, Warren Hanson, our new Pesticide Analytical and Response Center coordinator, and Brittany Mills, our new Ag Channel Maintenance specialist. We are also finalizing the hiring process for our new Soil Health Specialist.
- We recently finalized a Memorandum of Understanding between ODA, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and the Department of State Lands (DSL) regarding the Ag Channel Maintenance program.

- **Permits, Registrations, and Notifications**

- Two new staff, Grant Aman and Tess Khofri, have joined our Fertilizer program. Our two new staff have spent their first few weeks learning about the fertilizer registration and inspection process.
- The CAFO program held a public hearing regarding a CAFO permit application for JS Ranch near Scio. The proposed permit has received significant public interest and inquiries.

- **Providing Compliance and Technical Assistance**

- The PSP program recently sponsored a very successful waste pesticide collection event at the Polk County Fairgrounds in Rickreall. These events provide an opportunity to remove legacy pesticides from rural properties and eliminate the safety and environmental risks these products can pose. Products are often several decades old in aging containers.
- The Agricultural Water Quality Program has been working with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and stakeholders to develop a system for tracking and reporting accomplishments that help implement the Willamette Basin Mercury Total Maximum Daily Load (a basin-wide water quality plan for mercury).

- **Conducting Inspections, Investigations & Enforcement**

- The Pesticides Program has investigated several complaints this year regarding possible violations of Oregon's school integrated pest management (IPM) law.
- Andrea Sonnen has been selected as our new Lead Pesticide Investigator. We have also hired a new investigator and case reviewer to fill two cannabis-funded positions in ODA's 21-23 budget.

- **Providing Customer Support and Resolving Inquiries**

- The Pesticides Program has launched a new component to our online licensing database. The new component allows continuing education course sponsors to enter course and participant information directly into the database. This new component will improve service to course sponsors and license holders, improve the accuracy of information entered, and save time for our office staff.

Plant Protection & Conservation Programs

Chris Benemann, Interim Program Director; chris.benemann@oda.oregon.gov; 503-986-4636

- Key issue is securing continuous and stable funding for our invasive species programs, in particular for the largest Japanese beetle eradication project in Oregon's history and important noxious weed projects considering the financial constraints due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The ODA is actively recruiting for a new Director of the PPCP Area/State Plant Regulatory Official (SPRO), a position previously held by Dr. Helmuth Rogg for 17 years. We hope to have this position filled by early 2022.
- **Insect Pest Prevention and Management Program (IPPM)**
 - This year's Japanese beetle eradication efforts in NW Portland ended successfully with foliar treatment of hot spot areas, following the turf treatments earlier this spring. All JB traps are up and we hope that last year's eradication efforts have further decreased the JB population in Portland. An additional JB hot spot was detected in Lake Oswego, however with immediate turf treatment we hope to avoid a significant outbreak in that new area. Funding for JB eradication was approved in full during the most recent legislative session.
 - Over 24,000 detection and delimitation traps have been set around the state targeting a multitude of invasive pest species as part of our efforts to protect Oregon from invasive pests.
 - A notice of intent was submitted to the Ways & Means Committee to provide additional assistance to private landowners and the cattle industry in the 2021 grasshopper survey efforts to assist private landowners and the cattle industry. Continuous and severe drought in eastern Oregon has exacerbated the native grasshopper situation and is threatening additional economic losses to ranchers and growers in the region. The grasshopper program assists private and public landowners in managing grasshopper populations before they reach outbreak levels.
- **Noxious Weed Control Program**
 - Until the end of the year only two Weed Control staff persons continue work put time in the Hemp Program. All other program staff have transitioned back into the Weed Program. Staff have implemented priority federal, and state noxious weed projects and seasonal staff have been termed for the season.
 - The legislature approved a onetime fund increase of \$450,000 for the Weed Program for the new 21-23 biennium. The Directors Office and program staff are working a plan for utilizing these funds.
 - Program staff are busy with outreach to stakeholders and working year end reporting.
- **Nursery and Christmas Tree Program**
 - All vacancies in the program have been filled, including the program lead and two nursery inspectors.
 - In partnership with ODA's Plant Health Program, we inspected commercial grapevine growing areas (including nurseries) across 10 counties. This survey targeted five exotic pathogens of regulatory significance (including *Xyella fastidiosa*, which causes Pierce's disease. All results from laboratory tests were negative, securing Oregon's pest free status and ensuring future marketability of Oregon-grown grapevine nursery stock.
 - To date, 3,110 samples were collected from nurseries and tested for the sudden oak death pathogen. Inspections include host material that comes into Oregon from other confirmed positive nurseries.
 - Staff continued to provide expertise on everchanging phytosanitary requirements which facilitate the movement of Oregon nursery products to both domestic and international locations.
- **Hemp Program**
 - In the summer of 2021, the Hemp Program was part of a multi-agency operation (Operation Table Rock) to inspect all registered hemp grow sites and deter illegal marijuana production.
 - Offered 69 Corrective Action Plans to growers who planted before receiving their registration. 22 have responded and are working through the process.
 - For the first time, online license renewals are available now for the 2022 growing season. Registration staff are starting to review them now. Historically processing license renewals has created a significant bottleneck for administrative staff.
 - First rules changes to be USDA compliant have been adopted and the second round are in public review with a hearing on December 2nd. Those rules will be adopted by the end of the year.
- **Native Plant Conservation Program**
 - The legislature approved \$464,000 of additional funding. These general funds will greatly assist in implementing the program's statutory mission to protect Oregon's threatened and endangered native plants.
 - The program is making plans to increase staff: already they hired a technician for the greenhouse at Oregon State and is looking to hire 2 additional staff in early 2022.
- **Oregon Invasive Species Council**
 - All meetings of the Council continued to be in virtual mode. ODA and OISC continue to work on a MOU which will clearly define ODA's role as the fiscal agency for OISC.
 - A request for proposal (RFP) was posted for a new OISC Coordinator. The RFP has closed and OISC is working on setting a date for interviews for the companies that have placed a bid.

Administration/Special Projects

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- **Bovine Manure Tax Credits**

A bovine manure tax credit (Sections 6 to 11 of HB 2066) requires ODA to administer tax credit certifications to qualified bovine manure producers or collectors that produce biofuels in Oregon. HB 2066 sunsets December 31, 2021. This is the last year ODA will be issuing bovine manure tax credits. Contact: Sunny Summers

- **Wolf Depredation Program**

For the 21-23 budget the program has \$196,471 Federal Funds + \$627,906 General Fund = \$824,377 total. Split evenly between the two granting cycles provides \$412,188.50 in granting capacity. The previous grant cycle the program had \$130,164 in total funds available and received in \$348,453 in requests. The next application period will be opened in early 2022. Contact: Jonathan Sandau

Food Safety and Animal Health & ID Programs

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Market Access & Certification Programs

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