

## **State Board of Agriculture Supports a “Big Tent” Policy**

At its quarterly meeting in June 2011, the State Board of Agriculture approved a policy resolution in support of diverse systems, scale, markets, and technology—an approach commonly called “the big tent” because of its inclusiveness to the diversity found in today’s Oregon agriculture:

Whereas a broad spectrum of production systems, certification programs, and technologies exist in agriculture (with many labels)—ranging from organic, natural, sustainable, Good Agriculture Practices (GAP), conventional, biotechnology, and many more;

Whereas Oregon farms vary in scale, business structure, and length of time in operation—some new, some over a century in the same family farm business—all contributing to the mosaic of agriculture in our state;

Whereas farmers have opportunities and responsibilities to many markets, including those nearby (local), regionally, and internationally, any of which may involve selling direct to consumers or wholesale, via contract or open market pricing;

Whereas those engaged in production of agricultural crops or livestock are entrepreneurs, venturing their own knowledge, capital, resources, and ideals to bring products to market with the intent to make a profit;

Whereas farmers should, of their choosing, be able to pursue and utilize all available legal technologies and agriculture production systems to grow crops and raise livestock while preserving the safety of our food supply;

Whereas all growers have the responsibility for good stewardship of natural resources, and every farmer/rancher must make management decisions that can support such stewardship regardless of production system;

Whereas good communication between neighboring farmers about practices and cropping choices is important to maintain crop integrity, resolve potential conflicts between neighboring operations, and help maintain successful farm operations;

Whereas those engaged in agricultural pursuits recognize that improvements in production processes require research, technological advances, and infrastructures to support adoption of new methods;

Whereas feeding and supplying a world population projected to increase from 7 billion to over 9 billion people in the next 30-40 years will require every available production methodology and technology, adapted to local conditions, that improves output while maintaining natural resources;

### **Therefore, the State Board of Agriculture supports:**

- a) Wise management of all production systems on farmlands and agriculture applications, striving for economic viability, natural resource stewardship, good neighbor and employee relations, and community connections;
- b) Growers retaining the legal and economic opportunity to choose production technologies and resources, size of operation, and business structures necessary to produce products that meet the markets they choose to serve.
- c) Growers using Best Management Practices (BMPs) where needed to minimize conflict between production systems as necessary, such as required isolation or control areas, good neighbor (farm-to-farm) communications about crops to be grown, pinning systems that notify other growers of crops and production systems, and other methods of adequate management to minimize cross pollination or crop commingling, noise or nuisance impacts, and other potential interactions;
- d) State and Federal programs that encourage a variety of agriculture production systems with appropriate research, infrastructure, tax policies and marketing support to engender new ideas; facilitate commerce; support efficiencies in inputs, production and yields; sustain natural resources; and provide financial and technical assistance when available and appropriate.