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## Save the plants—A look at ODA’s Plant Conservation Program

A better way to keep rare plants from extinction while promoting habitat restoration

By Bruce Pokarney

Up to 10 percent of the approximately 3,500 native plant species known to occur in Oregon are in serious decline, including dozens that face potential extinction. Some people may wonder why it’s important for these species to survive. Well-known American biologist and naturalist E.O. Wilson offers an answer in his book, *The Future of Life*:

*“Each of these has a name, a million-year history, and a place in the world. Each species, when examined closely, offers an endless bounty of knowledge and aesthetic pleasure. It is a living library.”*

It’s a little-known program of the Oregon Department of Agriculture. Nevertheless, ODA’s Native Plant Conservation Program has had great success at keeping threatened and endangered plant species from disappearing in Oregon—as long as there have been resources to do the job. In these times of diminished budget resources, the program itself seems to be threatened and endangered. However, an advisory panel studying funding options has come up with a plan that will hopefully stabilize the program and encourage more public-private partnerships. That could lead to greater success in restoring habitat while saving rare native plants.

“Much of the problem is directly related to the accelerating loss of quality habitat across the state,” says Program Leader Bob Meinke, who for 23 years has been part of ODA’s efforts to save rare plants. “Since the program started, we’ve worked on more than 400 projects. While we’ve made significant progress over the years, native species and habitats continue to diminish and urgently need our help.”

It was the 1987 Oregon Legislature that established the program within ODA—a response to the federal Endangered Species Act passed in 1973 that offered protection for plants in peril. With the program’s help, these dwindling populations of native plants and important habitat have a fighting chance. But in the end, it takes financial resources, and some creative thinking to get the work done.

The Native Plant Conservation Program can point to several showcase projects of the past and present. A reliable source of funding is needed to ensure success in the future.

### Don’t let the fritillary fritter away

Portland has its Rose Festival. Woodburn hosts a tulip festival. For the Southern Oregon City of Jacksonville, its flower festival is dedicated to a showy red wildflower known as Gentner’s fritillary. There are plenty of roses and tulips for everyone to enjoy, but the fritillary is a different story. The species—a close relative of wild lilies—is on Oregon’s endangered plant list and also has been similarly listed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Several partners, including the Oregon Department of Agriculture and the Jacksonville community itself, are working hard to keep the rare plant from going extinct.

You know there aren’t many of them when each population is subject to GPS tracking.

“The first component of a recovery effort is to simply get more plants,” says ODA botanist and research coordinator Kelly Amsberry. “Surveys have shown the location of

additional plants. In the meantime, we are continuing a project that relies on the ability to cultivate and transplant Gentner’s fritillary ourselves.”

The species is found from far northern California to Oregon’s Josephine County. But most of the populations are centered near Jacksonville. It is the city’s signature flower and, because of its extremely rare status, attracts visitors from around the world as it blooms each spring. While the city celebrates its existence, several groups and agencies continue efforts to conserve the species and its habitat.

“We actually create new populations of Gentner’s fritillary,” says Amsberry. “We collect bulblets from existing plants, grow them in our nursery at Oregon State University, and replant them as large bulbs in protected sites on public lands. We are having good success.”

A major challenge is the plant’s lack of viable seed production. The recovery effort involves harvesting small, asexually produced bulblets from mature plants. Each bulb produces an average of 50 bulblets. In the fall, cultivated greenhouse bulbs are outplanted at selected sites in the Jacksonville area. The city and the Bureau of Land Management have provided those sites. To date, more than 13,000 bulbs have been transplanted.

“It’s still a new project, so a lot of the plants are quite young,” says Amsberry. “But we seem to be doing well with up to 70 percent of the transplants recurring after one year and up to 30 percent surviving after three years.”

With the recent bloom of the wildflower, surveyors have been out and about this spring, re-locating existing populations as well as finding new ones.

In the late 1940s, a local teenage girl spotted a beautiful flowering plant while riding her bike. Laura Gentner dug it up and gave it to her father to replant in the family’s flower garden. The father happened to be an entomologist at the Southern Oregon Experiment Station and when he noticed the unique characteristics of this fritillary compared to other known species, he sent a specimen to an OSU botanist. Three years of peer review determined it was a new species, which was then named after the Gentner family. During that time, other small populations of the rare flower were discovered locally. Today, despite her advancing age, Laura Gentner Dunwald excitedly hikes the pathways that take sightseers to known and protected populations of the plant.

Jacksonville residents have adopted the cause of recovering its signature flower. A yearly festival highlighted by organized hikes in hundreds of acres of protected habitat has boosted the local economy. Awareness of Gentner’s fritillary is one of the biggest achievements for the local community. So far this year, hundreds of people have participated in the hikes.



Above: Kelly Amsberry (left) records the data as Rebecca Currin looks at Gentner’s fritillary, a rare plant found nearly exclusively in Jacksonville.

Left: Gentner’s fritillary is a rare lily that has captured the attention of ODA and the Southern Oregon community of Jacksonville.

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# Board of Agriculture profile: Tracey Liskey

*Attending his first meeting, the newest member of the State Board of Agriculture got a hefty assignment right off the bat. Tracey*

*Liskey, a third-generation diversified farmer in the Klamath Basin, was asked to arrange a tour for the board and assemble a panel of local residents affected by this year's drought and water curtailment in the area. While not exactly a cheerful topic, Liskey and his neighbors provided a detailed and personal account of the challenge facing Klamath irrigators in an area where there is rarely enough water to go around. Liskey has been one of the key voices in the discussion and search for a long-term solution in the basin.*

"Everybody's got to work for a common goal of getting everyone through this instead of saying 'I've got mine and nobody else gets theirs,'" says Liskey. "Hopefully we can still come through this challenge together—agriculture, local business, fish and wildlife interests, and everyone else in the community. It's going to be tough, but we must do it."

Liskey hopes to contribute to the board from the perspective of Klamath Basin producers, demonstrating how local agriculture has tried to move forward in positive ways. The work ethic needed to survive in that part of the state is the same work ethic Liskey has shown all his life.

Liskey Farms is a diverse operation, producing grain, hay, cattle, greenhouse plants, and most recently, tropical fish. Despite being busy on the farm, Liskey has found time to be extremely active on a number of fronts to help farmers and ranchers across Oregon.

Farming is in the blood of Tracey Liskey who, at a young age, knew his life would be tied to the land and water that

sustains agriculture. After high school graduation, he stayed on the farm that started with his grandfather and, at the time, included his parents, brother, and sister. With boundless energy, Liskey got involved in county politics and in Farm Bureau activities. He has been on the Oregon Farm Bureau Board of Directors for more than a dozen years, traveling to Washington DC on several occasions on behalf of Oregon farmers. His willingness to take issues and concerns to the state's congressional delegation has benefited Oregon agriculture tremendously. Back home, he has offered tours of his operation to demonstrate agriculture's stewardship in the Klamath Basin—including one tour by a committee reviewing the Endangered Species Act.

Liskey has worked with the Oregon Department of Agriculture on practices and measures that make wise use of water and protect water quality. The Liskeys have used geothermal wells on their property to heat their productive greenhouses and fish tanks. Nurseries are not common in Klamath County, but the Liskeys have made it work.

Liskey's expertise in sustainable agriculture landed him a spot on the Governor's Sustainability Board. He even volunteered to grow sunflowers on a test plot for biofuel production. Liskey has also been a great ambassador of Oregon agriculture during several trade missions organized by ODA.

But it's back home in Klamath Falls where Liskey feels most comfortable. He and his wife Susan have raised a son and daughter, but remain active with other family members in running the farming operations.

He comes to the Board of Agriculture in particularly trying times.

"ODA's budget is sure to be a major issue for us," says Liskey. "There are land use issues and so many other things hitting agriculture right now, it's hard to even keep farming or having the will to farm. But we have to stay positive and keep going."

He says the board is great body of people with good intentions. He's looking forward to the hard work ahead, but also says it will be fun.

"I know we'll do the best we can," says Liskey. For him, that's been a successful formula for years. ☒



## Director's column

Earlier this month, at a Board of Agriculture meeting in Klamath Falls, we listened intently to a panel of local residents connected to farming and ranching. They talked about the impact of this year's drought in the Klamath Basin and water curtailment

that is giving them about a third of the water amount irrigators normally receive from the Upper Klamath Lake. Those who listened were extremely moved when a local farm equipment dealer talked about his loss of business as agriculture struggled in the basin. Employees are working part time and he has even told his own children that they should consider not coming back to Klamath Falls after they grow up.

Our collective goal should be to get the dealer, and others like him, to a place where they'll want to encourage their kids to come back to Klamath Falls. We can think of it as a performance measure for improving the incredibly complex water situation that has plagued the basin for years. The summer of 2010 is just the latest obstacle for a valuable agricultural production area. But the people of the Klamath Basin, in particular the producers, deserve our attention, our respect, and all the help we can give them under the current circumstances. I'm impressed with the way local farmers and ranchers are trying to move forward when there simply isn't enough water to go around this year. The word "challenging" doesn't adequately describe what they are going through. But I am grateful for their hard work and willingness to continue producing under trying circumstances.

We also toured the Klamath Basin as part of the Board of Agriculture meeting. The producers continue to work. We saw beautiful farmland, fully productive for those who have enough water. We also saw quite a bit of land idled this year because of the lack of water. We know Klamath farmers can successfully grow a crop. That's why I encourage all farmers and ranchers

in the basin to not give up. Their commitment to the viability of agriculture is vital. Despite all the challenges, they want to continue farming. They know it is still an important part of their community, their culture, and their lives.

I know that the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement tries to address all uses and issues surrounding water in the basin, and that it moves towards a settlement that essentially will give irrigators certainty and reliability of future water releases. But I also know that there is no consensus of opinion among farmers and ranchers over the agreement. Everyone in the industry needs to find a way to reunite. Hopefully, as the agreement evolves and is eventually implemented, people can come around and support it.

There is also a message I can bring back to the rest of the state. I believe the Board of Agriculture reflects much of Oregon's general population. Board members didn't realize just how complex the Klamath water issues are. Oregonians often jump to simple conclusions about what the problem is in the Klamath. People come from different viewpoints. Some say agriculture uses too much water and that the loss of species in the Klamath is an indication of overall habitat degradation. Others say the Endangered Species Act is broken and needs to be fixed, and water should be used more to support the economy. There is also the issue of multiple cultures, including the tribes, which have rights to the water. People want to jump to simple answers, and you can't do that in the Klamath Basin.

I'm hoping that all Oregonians will recognize how people in the Klamath have tried to overcome their differences and put together a map for the future. They are working hard to find a solution to the water shortages of an important region. All of us should do what we can to support that effort and encourage a unified response to solve a longstanding problem in the Klamath Basin.

## Save the plants: Continued from page 1

“We take kids out and talk about this rare flower,” says Larry Smith, executive director of the Jacksonville Woodlands Association. “They start spotting them and get real excited. A few days later, you will see the kids out with their families. The trails have been built around populations of the fritillary, but close enough to see them.”

Thanks to grants, the association has been able to purchase land in order to protect the endangered plant species as well as provide needed green space for the city. The association has secured funding to help treat weeds in the area that threaten Gentner’s fritillary. Combined with the effort of ODA and other partners, there is great hope that the plant someday can be de-listed.

“The species has a good chance of successfully surviving,” says biologist Rebecca Currin, who is also part of the ODA program. “First of all, more resources have been put into this one compared to others in Oregon. So we know more about it. We have a large number of partners working on it. And because it is so showy and local citizens have been so active, a lot of resources to protect it have been leveraged. Some of the other endangered species we work on aren’t quite as well known or beautiful. They don’t get quite as much attention, but we still work hard to keep them all from going extinct.”

When ODA’s Native Plant Conservation Program can collaborate with other agencies and the local community, success is more likely. They may not draw the attention of the spotted owl or various salmon runs, yet native plants and their habitats are important to protect.

“We don’t know the value of these species,” says ODA’s Meinke. “It’s possible some might have scientific, medical, or even economic benefits that have yet to surface.”

In the case of Gentner’s fritillary and the city of Jacksonville, the economic and aesthetic benefits are readily apparent.

### Squeezing the dollar

To stretch its budget, the Native Plant Conservation Program moved its base of operations from Salem to Oregon State University in the early 1990s to make use of a lab and office facilities and to team up with students and staff at OSU. For the first dozen years, the program received a modest amount of General Fund dollars and occasional outside grants. In recent years, the three-person staff and program have been supported almost entirely by outside competitive grants.

At the same time, the number of requests for staff expertise and services has increased.

“Because most of our budget now consists of federal grants, our project work has had to focus on habitats administered by the Bureau of Land Management or the US Forest Service,” says Meinke. “However, much of the interest in collaborating with ODA now comes from state and local agencies, and private landowners.”

An advisory panel was asked to consider whether the Native Plant Conservation Program could better serve its mission under a revised funding model. The options ranged from leaving the program alone to terminating it.

“The program has been remarkably successful in keeping the mission alive in spite of steadily declining resources, thanks to the never-give-up attitude of a few dedicated staff people,” says advisory panel member Pat Dudley, a wine grower and member of the State Board of Agriculture. “Sadly, the resources and staff positions are now very close to extinction. The new funding model we recommend has the potential to engage the conservation efforts of many organizations and individuals beyond ODA, both public and private. More conservation work would get done on the ground and, at the same time, would also increase public awareness of the importance of native plant conservation.”



The panel’s recommendation would convert the program from one where staff do mostly field work to a granting and consulting function. Staff would consult with land managers and administer grants—in conjunction with the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB)—to cities, counties, soil and water conservation districts, and others to help further the goals of native plant conservation and watershed restoration.

“These grant funds would be limited to on-the-ground projects that specifically can be tied to habitat and watershed restoration,” says Dan Hilburn, administrator of ODA’s Plant Division. “Helping restore populations of rare native plants as part of the grants program certainly seems to fit the definition.”

Patterned after ODA’s successful noxious weed grant program, the new model for the Native Plant Conservation Program would rely on the same small ODA staff to work with dozens of new partners. The result would be a several-fold increase in plant conservation projects.

The recommendation ultimately needs the legislature’s blessing, both in concept and funding. But it seems to be the best option yet.

### Restoring natural resources, one rare plant at a time

Malheur wire-lettuce, Cook’s desert parsley, rough popcornflower, northern wormwood—odd names for rare native species. They are among the many focus species involving a trio of ODA experts and OSU graduate students who rely on partners to make progress. But as habitat for these and other plants continues to decline, ODA botanists envision a new future.

“Traditionally, the Native Plant Conservation Program has emphasized the protection and management of individual species,” says Meinke. “Many of our rarest natives, from species isolated on a single mountaintop to those scattered throughout the populated valleys of western Oregon, have benefited from the attention. but with the increasing loss of natural sites statewide, it maybe time to integrate our original program goals with the important task of habitat management. Combining species conservation with habitat rehabilitation—especially in partnership with local landowners—promises even better long term results for all of Oregon’s native plants.”

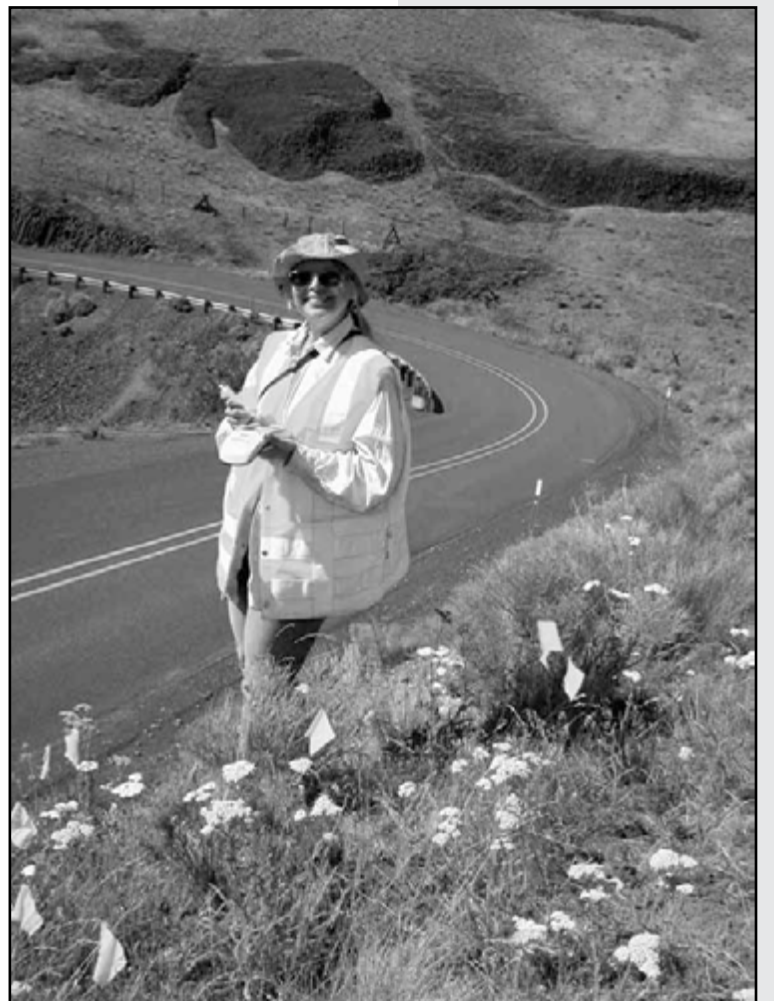
With a potential new approach for native plant conservation in Oregon, tough economic times don’t necessarily have to mean tough environmental times. 📍

*The Native Plant Conservation Program uses greenhouses to propagate new plants of rare native species.*



*Above: Rough popcornflower has a colorful name but is on the list of endangered native plants needing ODA’s help.*

*Below: ODA botanist Rebecca Currin evaluates right-of-way habitat in Umatilla Co. for ODOT, as part of a habitat conservation plan study. ODA collaborates with other agencies to protect rare native plants.*





The Coon family farm house, built in 1904, circa 1908.



Currently, the Coon family house is used as the farm office.

# Business is blooming— The Coon Family Farm

By Madeline MacGregor

*“The fairest thing in nature, a flower, still has its roots in earth and manure.” ~David Herbert Lawrence*

## Size doesn't spell f-a-m-i-l-y

Family farms have always been the backbone of Oregon agriculture. They come in all shapes and sizes, from three to 3,000 acres and beyond. Most have diversified crop and livestock production, and most count on extra income from other sources. Family members are incredibly creative when it comes to generating money from both on and off farm ventures. Many a wife, son, or daughter has assumed the role of the niche marketer or accountant. From selling eggs in a cooler at the edge of a driveway to engineering innovative farm equipment, family members contribute tirelessly to the future stability of their farms.

One of Oregon's 19 registered sesquicentennial farms and ranches, the Coon Family Farm reflects the cooperative spirit necessary for success. Located in Shedd Oregon, the farm's longevity depends on an extended network of friends, family, and the surrounding community.

## The farmer takes a wife

In 1850, Washington Landis Coon filed an Oregon Donation Land Claim (DLC) for 320 acres in Linn County. He knew that the fertile soils of the valley would support the production of vetch, grain, cattle, hogs, and horses, and was eager to set about the business of farming. When the 50-year old bachelor finally married Susan Spears at age 50, he encouraged his new stepsons to file a separate DLC for an additional 320 acres alongside his own.

Six generations later, the Coon Family Farm encompasses 4,000 acres of diversified production. Owned by Washington Coon's great-great grandsons Donald and Mike Coon, and their wives Dona and Tami, this Oregon family farm produces an amazing array of Oregon commodities, including wheat, peas, triticale, grass seed, and beef.

In classic “farmer's wife” ingenuity, Dona Coon keeps the family business moving in directions that add local color to daily food and commodity production. Dona combined her passion for flowers and farming and crafted a business that not only employs her daughters and sister-in-law Tami, but good friend Jo Hughey. It also generates a viable income that helps pay for repairs on the farm, family vacations, and new varieties of bulbs.

Dona christened her business Stems & Stuff in 1983. She invited friend Leslie Lewis to help market local artisan crafts, fresh flowers, and neighboring farm products. When Leslie moved on from the partnership, Jo Hughey stepped in and the enterprise continued. Tami Coon was recruited as bookkeeper and inventory specialist and two acres were placed into flower production.

Dona is an astute businesswoman who understands both the value of her field-cut flowers and her customers' aesthetic tastes. She grows not just one or two varieties, but over a dozen, including the tantalizing chocolate cosmos.

## From farm to market

From April to November, Coon and Hughey set up five gallon buckets of tulips and other seasonal fresh flowers at the Albany and Corvallis farmers' markets. Dona and 17-year old daughter Elle wrap their bouquets from the back of a minivan. Every part of their stall is awash with vivid hues, from grass green ribbons to mother-daughter strawberry pink aprons. Their buckets overflow with red, purple, and yellow blooms. Customers naturally flock to the booth, energized by the splash of color against the grey backdrop of early morning.



Dona Coon and daughter Elle bring their tulips to the Albany Farmers' Market.

Coon used to bring her flowers to the Wednesday evening Corvallis market, but says her merchandise does not hold up well in summer evening heat. “Customers don't want to see flowers melting on asphalt,” she wryly points out.

Back at the farm and behind the family's 1904 era house, stands a rustic garden cottage with a shingled roof. Dona and Jo open the doors to the public twice a year for a special sale featuring handcrafted jewelry, quilts, pottery, art glass, and garden décor. In December, wreaths made from fresh greens hang on the outside walls. At their latest open house, Coon and Hughey hosted 26 vendors. Since the cottage is too small to hold everything, big items such as metal garden art and live plants are displayed under a large awning.

Once inside the French doors of the 500 square foot structure, merchandise is arranged with an artisan's touch. The miniature store is wall-to-wall with shoppers who relish the panoramic drive down Peoria Road and are keen to support Dona and Jo's concept of buying local. The twice yearly event is open to the public—and once a customer has made a purchase, they receive a postcard reminder for the next date. Stems & Stuff mailed 1,400 invitations for their 2010 Mother's Day weekend sale.

## Come one, come all

Dona and Jo periodically invite the community to visit the farm and help divide flower bulbs. In 2009, garden enthusiasts were told to show up on a specific day with their own shovels, gloves, and containers. For a nominal price of \$2 per bag, home gardeners could dig as many bulbs as they wanted between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Although this unusual event has only happened three times in the history of the farm, it no doubt will continue as long as Stems & Stuff continues to cultivate new varieties of flowers. Not only does the community profit, but the health of the flowers is ensured by a much needed division of the bulbs.

## Bouquet of many colors


The Coon Family Farm is first and foremost a family operation. Coon takes a practical approach to the farm's future and says her children need to be exposed to other viewpoints and cultures. They are also required to graduate from college before coming back to work on the farm. “That's just part of the family rules,” she says straightforwardly. “They need to open up their eyes to how the rest of the world lives, because that's what it's going to take to get to the next generation and give this farm the tools it needs to survive. We need their ideas if we're going to adapt.”

This adaptation ensures the land is available for the Coon children as they move past their teen years and into young adulthood. The teens not only devote time to the family business operating machinery and participating in high school and collegiate FFA, they also travel the globe in their very own family internship program.

Within the program, students from Brazil, Norway, Denmark, France, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand work alongside the Coon family for two to three months each year. Long lasting bonds are made as the Coon children visit the interns' countries in return, learning different agricultural practices. As generations of interns grow up and have their own families, their children come back to work the same farm their parent's did. “It's almost like a reunion,” says Donna. “We get to make eye contact with the children we've heard about.”

The Coon Family Farm is more than a marketing concept—it is a spicily fragrant bouquet of diverse opinions and multicultural strengths. It is a visible testament to the true nature of a working sesquicentennial farm and demonstrates what is required to survive the next 150 years.

For more information about Stems & Stuff open house events and their farmers' market schedule, phone 541-936-0074.

If your farm or ranch is turning 100 years old or more, please consider applying for the Oregon Century Farm & Ranch award. Visit <http://oregon.gov/ODA/cfr.shtml> for more information. 

# Changes coming to Oregon energy tax credit

By Stephanie Page

*Oregon's Business Energy Tax Credit has helped support a variety of agricultural energy projects in Oregon. Costs of the program has exceeded initial projections, and the Oregon Legislature and Oregon Department of Energy have been working to contain the revenue impacts to the state in a time of tight budgets. While the tax credit program will continue to provide valuable support for many projects, it's important for project developers to be aware of some changes to the programs as they analyze the economic feasibility of a project.*


The Business Energy Tax Credit Program provides up to a 50 percent credit for renewable energy projects, and a 35 percent credit for conservation projects. The Business Energy Tax Credit has helped finance agricultural projects ranging from a few hundred dollars' worth of lighting efficiency upgrades in nursery propagation warehouses and dairy barns, to multimillion-dollar anaerobic digesters, wind farms, and oilseed processing facilities. A "pass-through" option on this credit allows project owners to pass the credit on to another taxpayer with a tax liability in exchange for a discounted cash payment.

To contain the costs of the Business Energy Tax Credit program, the Oregon Legislature implemented several changes in the 2010 special legislative session. The Oregon Department of Energy recently adopted rules to implement the legislative changes to the program.

One of the most important changes is a cap on renewable energy Business Energy Tax Credits of \$300 million for the 2009-2011 biennium and a cap of \$150 million for 2011-2012. To allocate the remaining tax credits available for the 2009-2011 biennium, the Oregon Department of Energy has established a tiered review system and application process.

Under the new tiered system, projects requesting \$250,000 and less in tax credits will continue to be processed more or less as they were before, until all available funding has been committed. Projects requesting higher amounts of credits are separated into two additional tiers by cost and are subject to additional levels of review. There are also application deadlines to request higher amounts of credits. For more information on the timelines and the information that must be submitted with an application, please refer to the appropriate opportunity announcement on the Oregon Department of Energy Web site, <http://www.oregon.gov/ENERGY/CONS/BUS/tax/BETC-Renewables.shtml>

How will these changes affect agricultural energy projects? Many energy efficiency and smaller renewable energy projects can continue to proceed through the review process as before, but it's important to consider the limited amount of credits available when estimating the cost and planning the timeline of your energy project.

To learn more about the changes to this credit and get involved in future developments, visit the Oregon Department of Energy Rulemaking portal at <http://www.oregon.gov/ENERGY/Rulemaking.shtml>. 



# New trailers to help animals during disasters

By Bruce Pokarney

*A \$52,000 Homeland Security grant has given the State of Oregon an opportunity to better take care of pets and livestock in the event of a natural disaster or other emergency. Four enclosed cargo trailers, owned by the Oregon Department of Agriculture, are now available to counties throughout the state as part of a plan to rescue animals facing disaster conditions. Inside those trailers are tools to help emergency responders.*

"When natural disasters affect pets and livestock, that puts an additional burden on emergency response teams to find a way to take care of those animals," says Dr. Don Hansen, ODA state veterinarian. "We've been working hard with emergency managers in the counties to develop plans that include what to do about companion animals and livestock, should disasters strike Oregon."

Key to those plans are the four trailers, which are designed to carry cages and watering and feeding apparatuses—all the equipment needed to care for dogs, cats, and other house pets. During a disaster, those trailers can be mobilized to the site and used to set up a temporary animal holding facility for small pets. Each of the four trailers has the capability to handle about 40 companion animals. Other trailers are available to provide portable corrals and other equipment to hold livestock.

"We have pretty much everything you would need to set up a short term animal shelter," says Hansen. "It could be set up very quickly, using a school or a tent or some other fixed facility to actually house companion animals."

The trailers' origins probably date back to 2005 when Hurricane Katrina slammed into the Gulf Coast. Thousands of pets were displaced or abandoned. While Oregon does not face the constant threat of hurricanes or tornadoes like other parts of the US, the state is not immune to events that might separate people from their animals. Oregon is susceptible to flood events and forest fires.

"Through our experiences, we know that people are often reluctant to leave their pets or their livestock and evacuate themselves, so that becomes a human safety issue," says Hansen. "Also, of course, animals left behind are in grave danger of injury, disease, or death."

The pet trailers are stored at four different locations throughout the state in counties that have an animal response team and a plan to shelter animals during a disaster. These are places where responders can quickly access areas that historically face disasters. Multnomah, Linn, Douglas, and Jackson counties are responsible for taking care of the trailers, even though ODA retains ownership. Each of the four counties have signed a memorandum of understanding that spells out the responsibilities, including an agreement to provide a vehicle and driver to transport the trailer to disaster sites outside of the county, when needed.

"Having the ability to handle animals during disasters has been a major challenge," says Hansen. "These trailers will save a tremendous amount of time getting shelter to a given location during an emergency situation. In the past, it might have taken days to adequately respond. Now counties can respond in a matter of hours. Not only will the trailers save time, they will save the lives of animals."

Multnomah County provides a base location for one of the trailers and serves the highly populated Portland Metropolitan area—highly populated in pets as well as people.


"We're excited about the new capabilities," says Mike Oswald, Multnomah County Animal Services director. "There has been growing interest on a national, state, and local level about incorporating emergency response for animals in a disaster. Ever since Hurricane Katrina, animals have become a critical issue in evacuating people. One of the key elements is our capacity to respond, which comes down to having the personnel and the right equipment to care for the animals. Up until now, we really haven't had that capacity."

Other trailers deployed to more rural areas of the state are likely to deal with more livestock animals. But in the five-county metro area, it's all about pets. Oswald estimates a half million dogs and cats reside in the area. That means a disaster could simultaneously require the evacuation of thousands of people and thousands of pets.

"Our plan would be to co-locate the animal facilities next to a Red Cross evacuation center," says Oswald. "As you evacuate people, many won't go without their pets and Red Cross won't take the animals. The goal is to take in the pets, identify them, and reunite them with their owners. In order to do that, we need to have the capacity to set up an animal shelter in the field. This trailer and its equipment is key to our ability to do that."

Securing the federal grant—a joint effort by ODA and Oregon Emergency Management—is one of the latest pieces of an overall comprehensive plan that considers the safety and well being of animals during disasters. Each county has developed its own specific emergency response plan as part of an overall statewide planning document. Now, each county will have access to an animal disaster response trailer, no matter where the trailer is located.

"During the flooding in Vernonia a couple of years ago, we were ready to send in cages and animal holding facilities when needed," says Hansen. "Now with the trailers, emergency managers will have immediate access to the equipment."

That will be a comforting thought to pet and livestock owners alike, if and when the next disaster strikes. 



Right: ODA Director Katy Coba and Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development Yvonne Choi sign an agreement to promote Pacific NW wines in Hong Kong.

# Asian trade mission

## Wine agreement highlights trade mission to Asia

By Bruce Pokarney

Late last year, the Oregon Department of Agriculture and its counterpart agency in neighboring Washington led an 18-member delegation to Asia, promoting Pacific Northwest agriculture, and whetting the appetite of food buyers and consumers alike. A separate but equally important trade mission in May reinforced the fact that Asia will continue to be the state's number one export market for the foreseeable future.

Along the way, Oregon and Washington wines have been given a special status as part of a landmark agreement with Hong Kong.

"This trip yielded some very positive results for Pacific Northwest agriculture," says Gary Roth, administrator of ODA's Agricultural Development and Marketing Division.

Although Governor Kulongoski had to cancel his plans for medical reasons, the objectives of the mission stayed the same as four trade-related agencies pushed through the agenda. Near the end of his second term, the governor wanted to take a final opportunity to thank Oregon's major export markets face-to-face for their business. That message was delivered by the delegation.

"This mission was basically a way to call on and thank our primary trading partners," says ODA Assistant Director Dalton Hobbs, who participated in the overseas visit. "Governors typically schedule these kinds of missions, but this was one of the most ambitious in years. A trade mission like this is usually limited to one or two countries. This one included four countries—Japan, Korea, China, and Hong Kong."

State agencies that organized and participated in the mission included ODA, Business Oregon, Travel Oregon, and the Port of

Portland. Agriculture was a key agenda item. But renewable energy and transportation were also high priorities. In fact, discussions with Korea and Japan regarding shipping service to and from Oregon have direct implications to agriculture. A meeting in Japan with the Westwood Group helped advance restored shipping between Oregon and its top trade partner. Westwood will provide a weekly direct service from Oregon to Japan and Korea. The Port of Portland considers this a major success.

"That's a big deal for Oregon agriculture," says ODA Director Katy Coba. "We basically did not have steamship service anymore from Oregon to Japan, so this is a good first step. It's not daily service, but we hope it will grow into something more."

The trade mission included private sector activity as well. While in Japan, representatives with the Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission featured product at retail stores in the greater Tokyo area.

A big thank you was on the agenda for Korea as the delegation stopped to recognize the Korean Flour Mills Industrial Association (KOFMIA) for more than 50 years of continuous wheat purchases from Oregon. Korean flour mills were completely destroyed during the Korean War. As the mills were rebuilt in the mid-1950s, the US government and the wheat industry were there to help. Soft white wheat from the Pacific Northwest accounts for



half of Korea's milling wheat imports from the US, at more than 500,000 metric tons each year. The majority of all US wheat bound for Korea is exported through the Port of Portland and other Columbia River District ports, making it a key commodity for the region. In recognition of the strong association between the industry and the Koreans, a commemorative plaque was presented to the chairman of KOFMIA.

The delegation came back with the realization that a free trade agreement between the US and South Korea would be a good thing for Oregon agriculture. The agreement was signed in 2007, but has yet to be ratified by the US Congress. Given the Korean appetite for such Oregon fruit products as blueberries, a free trade agreement could dramatically increase sales for Oregon growers.

Oregon's seafood industry contingent investigated cooperative opportunities and sharing of technical information with counterparts in China. That included a tour of a seafood processing facility in Fujian Province.

The agricultural highlight of the trade mission was Director Coba's signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Hong Kong Commerce and Economic Development Bureau to promote the sale of Oregon and Washington wines into and through the Hong Kong market. Following the lead of a similar US agreement with Hong Kong signed this spring, Oregon and Washington become the first to act on a state level.

"Hong Kong has just exploded in terms of an export market for all kinds of products, not just agriculture," says Coba. "It's not only a very high end market in itself, but Hong Kong is a gateway into China."


The MOU encourages a joint effort to promote Oregon and Washington wine-related trade, tourism, investment, and education. Activities are likely to include—but are not limited to—trade fairs and wine education seminars in Hong Kong featuring Northwest wines as well as inbound trade missions to Oregon and Washington wineries by Hong Kong buyers and media.

Hong Kong, as a major world importer, abolished all import duty and taxes on wine in 2008, making it an even more desirable export market for Pacific Northwest wine. Hong Kong continues to be an important gateway to the mainland, as it was prior to being returned to China in 1997. But now, Hong Kong is a rapidly growing end-market for Oregon high value agricultural products in its own right. Its sophisticated, high per-capita income consumer base is willing to spend, and like Tokyo, is a trend-center for all of Asia. At the same time, Hong Kong's cultural ties to Mainland China, and new investments stemming from China's rapid economic growth, provide unique market opportunities that are often overlooked by exporters.

"I think the MOU is important to more than just our wine industry," says Coba. "I think we'll be able to ride on the wine coattails to get better name recognition for all kinds of Oregon products."

Over the past few years, ODA, in partnership with the Oregon Wine Board and the industry, has led efforts to open wine sales channels in the Hong Kong market through series of targeted promotional events. These events have been expanded to include other Oregon foods. Hong Kong consumers are discerning and well versed in the wines and specialty products from major European producers such as France and Italy. While Oregon faces strong competition in the Hong Kong market, reaction to Oregon products in the marketplace has been very favorable.

"While there, we were able to shore up final details and commitments for a large July promotion of Pacific Northwest products in Park n' Shop stores—Hong Kong's largest retail food chain," says ODA's Roth. The promotion is expected to feature wine, Dungeness crab, fresh blueberries and cherries in addition to consumer-ready foods from Oregon and Washington.

The trade mission was a grueling two-week trip crammed with meetings and tours. Although it did not focus solely on agriculture, the mission reaffirmed that Oregon's food and wine products are central features of the state's successful export strategy. 



Above: Oregon's seafood industry contingent of the delegation tours a fish processing facility in Fujian Province, China. Part of the trade mission involved looking for cooperative opportunities and the sharing of technical information.

Below: Hong Kong is an important export market in its own right but is also a gateway for Oregon agricultural product into China.



# Farm to school spotlight: Lane County

By Michelle Markesteyn Ratcliffe

*Oregon is the first state in the country to have farm to school coordinators in both the state departments of agriculture and education. The federal government is following suit and recently created the “USDA Farm to School Team” comprised of both Agricultural Marketing Service and Food and Nutrition Service staff members. The team is visiting 15 diverse school districts in nine areas across the country to see first-hand how farm to school programs work and how the USDA can support those efforts. In May, the USDA Farm to School Team selected Oregon as one site and traveled to Eugene to learn from the Bethel School District and Eugene 4J School District.*

To hear more about farm to school activities in Lane County and the USDA Farm to School Team visit, we met up with Megan Kemple, Willamette Farm and Food Coalition’s Farm to School Program Coordinator. The Willamette Farm and Food Coalition is a community based non-profit committed to developing a more secure and sustainable food system within Lane County, Oregon.

**Q: Why did you want to become a farm to school coordinator?**

I have a strong interest in helping kids gain an understanding of where their food comes from. Most kids don’t know that food comes from farms—that it grows in the ground, someone has to grow it, and that it grows where we live. I am committed to creating a local food system where farmers are supported, and as a result they are able to keep farming and feed our community now and in the future.

**Q: What does farm to school look like in Lane County?**

There are eight districts serving kids in grades K-12 that are purchasing local foods. They represent a variety of sizes and operational styles from in-house to contract management. The districts include: Bethel School District, Creswell School District, Crow Applegate, Lorane District, Eugene 4J School District, Jasper Mountain Center, McKenzie School District, Springfield Public Schools. Three of these districts have developed Harvest of the Month programs, highlighting one Oregon-grown product each month which is served weekly in cafeterias district-wide and promoted with posters and on the lunch menu. We’ve also been working to incorporate more Lane County product. As compared to 2008, there was an increase of approximately 99 percent for Lane County produce, an increase of 15 percent for Lane County processed products, and no increase for local milk or meat/fish. Processed items include those that were processed in Lane County such as bagels, granola, tortillas and corn chips.

**Q: How are kids involved?**

Students receive an introductory lesson in which we trace each item in the school’s hot lunch for the day back to its source. We teach about which fruits and vegetables grow in Oregon and which are tropical, as well as about the environmental and community benefits of eating from farms close to home. In the fall and spring, students have the opportunity to visit a local farm, take a tour, taste food in the fields, do a “helping task,” and harvest produce to take back



to the classroom. Following their farm field trip, the students prepare a meal together with food they harvest themselves at the farm. Students receive garden sessions and have the opportunity to plant, nurture, harvest, and eat vegetables from their own garden plot. We work with the School Garden Project of Lane County to implement these sessions. Students also receive lessons focused on learning the nutritional value of fresh fruits and vegetables. We work with Oregon State University Extension Nutrition Education Program. Students are also offered a tasting table, featuring fruits and vegetables from the farm they visited, at lunchtime in the cafeteria.

**Q: What brought the USDA to Eugene?**

Although Bethel and Eugene 4J school districts were chosen out of almost 300 applicants, it wasn’t an acknowledgement, or an award. The USDA Farm to School Team wants to identify things that either support or deter farm to school activities, from both the school and farmer perspectives. They want to see geographically and operationally diverse programs so that they can better figure out how to best support support farm to school programs nationwide. While the USDA Farm to School Team was here they met with farmers, both school districts, local and state authorities, and community partners. The team was extremely knowledgeable and interested. I was impressed with the questions they asked. They seemed to know what they were talking about and what needed to be done here. I could not believe we had the opportunity to spend three days giving direct feedback to the federal government about what we needed. Simply knowing we have the support at the federal level will go a long way in supporting our schools and our efforts here. ☒

## Gypsy moth traps Gypsy moth traps placed statewide

*The Oregon Department of Agriculture continues placing thousands of insect traps throughout the state in an annual effort to detect gypsy moth and other exotic, invasive, plant-eating pests. All traps should be set by mid-July and will be checked by ODA technicians throughout the summer. Most traps will be removed by late September.*

Detecting invasive species of insects before they become widespread is fundamental to the success of ODA’s Insect Pest Prevention and Management Program. Early detection of invasive insect populations, such as the gypsy moth, makes for smaller, more defined gypsy moth eradication efforts should they be needed. No gypsy moth eradication project has been planned for 2010 based on last year’s trapping results of only six detections statewide.

Approximately 12,000 gypsy moth traps are being placed in Oregon, most being set west of the Cascades. The bright green or orange tent-like cardboard traps contain a non-toxic female sex pheromone that attracts adult male gypsy moths. Inside, a sticky substance keeps the winged pest from escaping.

ODA is asking for homeowner’s cooperation to allow traps to be placed on private property. Homeowners are advised to keep an eye on traps that may be placed on or near their property, making sure that the traps remain undisturbed. The traps are typically non-toxic, but people are encouraged to avoid handling them due to the sticky substance inside the traps. Anyone noticing a damaged trap or who has questions about ODA’s insect pest detection efforts should contact the Insect Pest Prevention and Management Program at (503) 986-4636 or 1-800-525-0137. ☒



# 2010 Oregon fair dates

Baker County Fair	August 4-7
Benton County Fair	August 4-7
Clackamas County Fair	August 17-22
Clatsop County Fair	August 3-7
Columbia County Fair	July 14-18
Coos County Fair	July 27-31
Crook County Fair	August 4-7
Curry County Fair	July 29-August 1
Deschutes County Fair	July 28-August 1
Douglas County Fair	August 3-7
Gilliam County Fair	September 2-5
Grant County Fair	August 25-28
Harney County Fair	September 7-12
Hood River County Fair	July 28-31
Jackson County Fair	July 20-25
Jefferson County Fair	July 21-24
Josephine County Fair	August 17-21
Klamath County Fair	August 5-8
Lake County Fair	September 2-6
Lane County Fair	August 18-22
Lincoln County Fair	July 16-18
Linn County Fair	July 15-18
Malheur County Fair	August 3-7
Marion County Fair	July 8-11
Morrow County Fair	August 4-8
Multnomah County Fair	May 29-31
Oregon State Fair	August 27-September 6
Polk County Fair	August 12-15
Sherman County Fair	August 24-29
Tillamook County Fair	August 11-14
Umatilla County Fair	August 10-14
Union County Fair	August 4-7
Wallowa County Fair	July 31-August 7
Wasco County Fair	August 19-22
Washington County Fair	July 29-August 1
Wheeler County Fair	August 3-8
Yamhill County Fair	August 4-7



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## Announcements

### July 8, 2010

1:30-3:30 p.m.

#### Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) Advisory Committee

Conference Room D, Ag Buiding, 635 Capitol st. NE, Salem, OR, 97301

[http://oregon.gov/ODA/NRD/cafo\\_front.shtml#Committee\\_meetings\\_notice](http://oregon.gov/ODA/NRD/cafo_front.shtml#Committee_meetings_notice)

### August 20, 2010

Statewide mandatory furlough

### August 27-September 6, 2010

#### Oregon State Fair

For ticket information: <http://www.oregonstatefair.org/about-the-fair/tickets>

### September 4, 2010

3:00 p.m.

#### Oregon Century Farm & Ranch awards ceremony

Americraft Center (formerly named the Jackman-Long Building)

Oregon State Fairgrounds

2330 17th St NE, Salem, OR 97303

Oregon Century Farm & Ranch Program: <http://oregon.gov/ODA/cfr.shtml>

### September 8-10, 2010

#### Oregon State Board of Agriculture Meeting

Holiday Inn Express

204 West Marine Drive

Astoria, OR 97103

For information: 503-986-4552

### September 17, 2010

Statewide mandatory furlough

### Save a tree

Get the AQ online. Register at <http://listsmart.osl.state.or.us/mailman/listinfo/aq>