# Oregon Department of Agriculture Program Reports Prepared for: State Board of Agriculture Meeting date: June 13-15, 2023

# Food Safety and Animal Health & ID Programs

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# • Food Safety General Update

- Food Safety program staff continue to reduce the inspection backlog from the COVID pandemic. Overdue is defined as those inspections that are more than 90 days beyond their due date. The backlog numbers have trended down from a peak of 4,943 in July of 2021, to the current 2,902. We currently have 3 open positions that we are recruiting to fill. The vacancies are related to internal promotions and retirements.
- The current legislative session has several measures that will require rule making activities over the next couple months. Specifically, rules need to be created or modified related to exemptions for rabbit slaughter and processing (HB 2689), home baking/confections (SB 643), and farm direct sales (SB507).

### • Retail and Manufactured Foods

Negotiations for next year's FDA contract are nearly complete. The new contract will add seafood HACCP inspections, a continued reduction in the number of GMP inspections, and continued Food Safety Modernization Act Preventative Controls inspections. Food safety have conducted 108 inspections using FSMA Preventative Controls dating back to the 2018/2019 contract.

# • Dairy Program

With the support of our dairy community, ODA is participating in the FDA Drug Residue Monitoring Pilot Program. The National Conference of Interstate Milk Shipments (NCIMS) Appendix N Committee has selected 19 drugs representing 8 drug families based on the FDA Risk Ranking Study. The 3-year project provides anonymity for participants with double blind, non-regulatory testing and no sample traceback / trace forward. No States or firms where samples are collected will be identified. Samples are shipped to 3rd party labs and the cost of shipping samples will be reimbursed to the State by the FDA. Oregon is tasked with taking 7 samples per year. The first sample will be collected in March at a yet to be determined dairy plant or farm. Results from the drug monitoring study will get reported annually. Prior to the start of this pilot program, we will inform our licensed dairy farms and plans of the pilot program.

# • Shellfish and Crab Program

- The FDA's triennial audit of the ODA shellfish program has been completed with a successful outcome. Oregon's shellfish industry participation in interstate commerce may continue without interruption.
- The presence of domoic acid, a naturally occurring biotoxin produced by certain types of marine algae, continues to be problematic along the Oregon Coast. Razor clam recreational harvest remains closed in some areas of coast, a naturally occurring toxin.
- The commercial crab season is open along the entire Oregon coast. Testing of the crab is continuing in areas where razor clams, an indicator species, are high in domoic acid. This ongoing testing has resulted tensions in the crab fishing, processing, and buying communities. Future high domoic acid results will result in the issuance of an evisceration order to protect public health. Eviscerated crab has significantly less value than whole crab.

#### • State Meat Inspection

- The State Meat Inspection program (SMI) currently has two firms under inspection. One is a full-service slaughter facility in the Forest Grove area. Overall, we have 13 firms at various stages of the application process and are watching the number and types of firms to ensure that our staffing is sufficient to support business needs.
- We are looking to post a SMI position soon. This new hire will help our SMI Specialist and critical for us to stay on course and assure we are continuing to maintain our equal to status with USDA.

# Animal Health

- The program has been very busy monitoring, tracking, and preventing the spread of animal disease. The calls from the public related to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) have decreased from the first quarter. Oregon has not seen any impact on our commercial industry, which we have attributed to successful biosecurity protocol implementations.
- The program has some rulemaking in the works. The Animal Rescue program is cleaning up language and enforcement pathways to make the program activities more streamlined. SB 57 impacted requirements related to brucellosis vaccination and has cleared current legislative session.

# Livestock Brand Inspection

- The brand program is collecting data associated with program costs and how to best maintain existing levels of service.
- Lab Services
  - The regulatory lab continues to keep up with the testing workload provided by the various ODA programs despite going through some staff turnover. The lab working to fill 3 vacant, or soon to be vacant, positions in the coming month (Chemist, Microbiologist, 1 Lab technicians). Much of our employee movement is being triggered by the anticipated move to the North Valley Complex. As that transition point nears, we anticipate seeing more staff changes.
  - The lab is actively working to prepare for the move reviewing supplies, chemicals, unused equipment and determining appropriate disposal method.
  - The lab continues to work with the State Meat inspection program and the Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission (OLCC) to develop testing protocols to support the industries they regulate. As well as the potential to do some testing for Psilocybin requested by OHA.

# **Market Access & Certification Programs**

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# • Agricultural Development & Marketing (ADMP)

- ODA received a healthy number of applications for the Commodity Commissions Oversight Program Manager opening that closed June 11.
- ODA hosted delegations from Malaysia and South Korea to learn about Oregon agriculture and US regulatory practices.
- ADMP led an outbound mission to Japan with the Potato and Raspberry/Blackberry Commissions.
- ODA staffed an Oregon booth at the second annual SIAL America Trade Show in Las Vegas.
- o ODA hosted the second annual Good Food Foundation Good Food Mercantile in April.
- ODA joined two agricultural recipients of the Oregon Consular Corps 2023 Celebrate Trade Gala. Wong Potatoes of Klamath Falls received the Trailblazing Trade Award and Secret Aardvark of Portland received the Emerging Exporter Award.
- ODA contributed to holding an Oregon-Vietnam Business Forum as part of the memorandum of understanding Governor Brown signed in 2022.
- The Ag Development & Marketing Program hosted an Oregon Pavilion at the Global Seafood Marketplace in Barcelona, followed by an inbound visit of prominent buyers from the United Kingdom.
- ODA continues to support the Oregon shrimp industry to expand tariff-rate quotas in the United Kingdom and the European Union, where the tariff is 20 percent.
- ODA appointed and reappointed 45 commissioners to Oregon's 23 Commissions and Advisory Committee.
- The Legislature passed and the Governor signed a dissolving the Oregon Alfalfa Seed Commission in May.

# Certification Programs

- The Certification Program (GAP and Organic) are continuing audits across the state. Auditors are maintained in all Shipping Point Districts across the state.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture has increased their auditing fees which mandates the program increase their fees for Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) and Harmonized GAP audits to \$132/hour from \$115/hour. A remote public hearing regarding this change to OAR 603-053-0250 will be held on June 20, 2023, at 1 pm.
- The Organic program has completed recruitment for the full time Program Manager the new hire will start June 5, 2023. Fees for the Organic Program remain unchanged.

# • Produce Safety

- The ODA's Produce Safety Program is hosting the 2023 Western States Regional Meeting that will be held remotely in October.
- The program has three Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training classes remaining for the Spring/Summer season.
- The technical assistance side of the program has seen a rise in interest with the growing season, these visits are conducted on farms across the state offering free technical assistance visits to growers.
- The program has hired a new Outreach Coordinator which is a new position for the program.

### Plant Health Program

- The Plant Health program has completed recruitment for a Virus Certification Program Coordinator the new hire will start August 1, 2023.
- In collaboration with the Washington State Department of Agriculture, Plant Health is working on a federally funded project to identify potential pathways for virus infection in certified nurseries. This is a two-year project funded by PPA 7721.

# Seed Regulatory Program

- Rulemaking was completed for the state supervised grass seed price negotiations. Updates were developed with a rules advisory committee in 2022 and the new rules are effective May 1, 2023.
- Preparations are ongoing for the 2023 negotiations, with a Spring Data Meeting scheduled for May 25, 2023. The Oregon Grass Seed Bargaining Association and participating seed dealers will provide updates prior to negotiations.
- Staff participated in the Mega Cool Season Grass Seed Workshop hosted by the Pacific Northwest Seed Technologists and the Oregon Seed Association.

### • Shipping Point Inspection

- Labor continues to be a challenge for both the industry and the shipping point program. The limited labor pool as well as constraints put on hiring practices make it difficult for the program to hire in a competitive market.
- Most areas will have enough water to get a full or close to a full irrigation season.
- Product movement is slow throughout the state in all commodities due to 2022 drought conditions.

# Smoke Management Program

- The seed and smoke regulatory outreach specialist position was filled with an internal hire March 1.
- The program is preparing for the 2023 season 13,361 acres are registered for the season which will begin July 5, 2023.

#### • Weights and Measures

- Weights and Measures is still managing staff turnover and expects to do so for some time. We are currently training 2 inspectors in eastern Oregon (The Dalles, and Ontario) and are actively recruiting a third in Pendleton. We expect to lose another couple of experienced inspectors in 2024. Fortunately, we still have a core of experienced staff who can pass institutional knowledge and experience to our new staff members.
- W&M is working on a plan to finish our caseload of livestock scales starting July and working through to November. We focus on these starting in July since our weight carts get stuck in the mud easily and summer through late fall offers us a window when conditions are reliably dry.
- W&M needs to replace a mass comparator in our metrology lab. We have 2 that are nearing end of life which is to say they are showing signs of malfunction and we are well past manufacturer support for repair/replacement parts. We have a number of mass comparators in service in the lab which are over 20 years old. The metrology lab is core to weights and measures, if forms the basis for all of our field work.
- W&M heavy-capacity scale inspection program is in need of a new test truck. We are plagued with the reliability issues that accompany aging trucks and well used equipment.
- W&M is looking to replace our fuel lab's octane analyzer which has reached the end of its service life. Our laboratory octane analyzer no longer works and is well outside of any manufacturer support. Such an instrument is essential to our field octane screening program.

# **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, we continue to have turnover across the programs and are in various stages of recruitment. 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 new staff.

### • Fostering collaboration

- The Pesticides Program continues to work closely with Oregon State University (OSU) and Oregon Department of Education (ODE) on increasing awareness on the school Integrated Pest Management (IPM) law. In March ODA investigative staff presented on the law at the first of the 2023 OSU School IPM Coordinator Trainings in Redmond. During the summer Investigators are planning on attending and presenting at the remaining OSU school IPM trainings that are conducted throughout the state. In addition, one special project that the Pesticides Program continues to work on as time allows is to create "school IPM law modules" (basically short ~5-10 minutes, narrated PowerPoints focused on the law requirements) to post on YouTube for school IPM coordinators and other school staff. The goal is to provide short, recorded trainings so they will to be able to access them all year round (e.g., refresher or say new staff start/onboarding). The Team is hoping to have the first two ready before the summer training time.
- Now that the new ODA-DEQ Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is in place we have begun quarterly coordination meetings with ODA and DEQ staff. These meetings are to ensure that work aligns with the spirit of the MOA.
- The Ag Water Quality Program (AGWQP) is currently reviewing the submissions for the 2023 Water Quality Support grant. We received 22 applications totaling a little of \$2M in requested funds. We are anticipating that we will have \$650,000 to award, but we will not know the actual amount until the agencies budget has been finalized. These funds are for Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Watershed Councils for the 23-25 biennium. Look for updated information to be posted online: https://www.oregon.gov/oda/programs/NaturalResources/AgWQ/Pages/AgWQGrants.aspx.
- The Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) Program continues to engage with Region 10 EPA drinking water and enforcement sections in quarterly meeting on ODA and partner agencies program implementation in the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area. CAFO program staff have fulfilled extensive data requests to EPA and has had two information and programmatic review meetings with EPA staff.
- CAFO program is continuing its outreach to small milk producers in Oregon who have not sought a CAFO permit. Dairies, regardless of size are CAFOs in Oregon because of their operational characteristics and wastewater control systems. The program is conducting outreach, providing education and technical assistance to non-permitted milk producers to bring any operation needing a permit into compliance.

# • Permits, Registrations, and Notifications

- Starting January 1, 2023, counties eligible to submit notices to the Agricultural Drainage Channel Maintenance (ADCM) Program expanded beyond northwest Oregon to include Coos, Douglas, Curry, Josephine, and Jackson. AGWQP staff are meeting with local farming and ranching organizations, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and OSU Extension in southern Oregon to spread the news about the program. Two recent northwest Oregon notice applications are under review between ODA and ODFW.
- The CAFO program continues to work with DEQ and EPA to renew the CAFO NPDES General Permit. 2023 will be the start of the renewal process for the CAFO WPCF General Permit.

# • Providing Compliance and Technical Assistance

- The AGWQP is working with partner agencies to find opportunities to adapt and improve the monitoring portion of the Strategic Implementation Area (SIA) initiative. The program has lined up four SIAs for the 2023 cycle and is looking at identifying five for the 2024 cycle. One if the new SIAs for 2024 will be located in the Lower Umatilla Groundwater Management Area and will focus on ground water improvements. This is the first time that the SIA process will be adapted to look at ground water rather than surface waters. The full scope is still in development but is expected to focus on education, outreach and demonstration projects focused on irrigation practices and nutrient use efficiency.
- All Pesticide Program staff continue to answer technical questions from the public on licensing requirements, label interpretations, school IPM law, and other pesticide related questions. Pesticide Program staff recently published and distributed its Spring 2023 newsletter. The newsletter has been a valuable outreach method to keep people up to date on either changing regulations or areas that need increased awareness.

In addition, ODA's Insect Pest Prevention & Management (IPPM) Program and the Pesticides Program connected this spring for the Pesticides Program to assist with some of the IPPM's projects (e.g., spring eradication efforts relating to Emerald Ash Borer and Japanese Beetle). For example, Pesticide Investigators can provide use observations for pesticide applications and Pesticide staff can also provide technical assistance regarding label interpretation or provide clarification on the licensing requirement. This Spring staff attended meetings relating the Emerald Ash Borer project to help provide technical advice and conducted a use observation on the first day of the Japanese Beetle project.

### • Conducting Inspections, Investigations & Enforcement

- The Pesticides Program has continued to follow-up on complaints through the year to investigate possible violations of the state's Pesticide Control Act. In addition, the program continues to conduct routine compliance monitoring to include marketplace inspections, record inspections of pesticide applicators and pesticide dealers. Although during the spring the focus generally shifts to complaint-based investigations as the numbers of complaints increase. On May 1, the Program welcomed its newest Investigator filling a Eugene based position that became vacant in 2022. The Pesticides Enforcement Program continues to keep a focus on its Enforcement case load to help prevent any backlogs into the future after making significant progress in reducing its enforcement case backlog (i.e., cases not in the investigation phase, but are in the review/enforcement phase). Currently cases being submitted by investigators (after an investigation was completed) are continuing to receive reviews within a short time frame (e.g., typical turnaround time for the case review step of the process is less than 60 days). The additional Enforcement Case Reviewer added to the Program from OLCC cannabis funds in this current biennium continues to help tremendously!
- The AGWQP recently filled our easter region water quality specialist position. Shiloh Simerell joined the team in April and will be based out of LaGrande. She is well on her way through her onboarding and training.
- The 2022 compliance report is completed and can be found <u>here</u>. The AGWQP has had 5 Ag Drainage Chanell Maintenance related compliance cases. All resulted in Water Quality Advisory letters because maintenance work was completed without a valid notice on file.
- The CAFO Program has filled a CAFO inspector and administrative position. Katie Kearney started with the program in April. That brings the program back to full staffing levels.

#### • Providing Customer Support and Resolving Inquiries

- The Pesticides Enforcement Program Area continued to receive and fulfill a number of public records requests in a timely manner. ODA's Citizen Advocate also continued to work closely with citizens concerned about pesticide usage helping answer questions and find other resources to their questions. Lastly, the Pesticides Program has also been looking to increase the number of outreach materials available in Spanish. For example, recently the Pesticide Enforcement Program brochure was translated into Spanish and is in the final review stage to be published in the near future.
- The Pesticide Program also published its 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Report in January 2023. This was the second year after its creation that the report was generated to provide agency partners and other interested parties' information about the program.
- Both the AGWQ and CAFO programs have continued to receive and respond to inquiries from the Environmental Protection Agency and the media regarding work completed in support of the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area (LUB GWMA). The AGWQP is working in collaboration with local the Umatilla and Morrow Soil and Water Conservation Districts to ensure consistent tracking and reporting of actions completed in support of the 2020 LUB GWMA Action Plan.

# **Plant Protection & Conservation Programs**

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#### • Insect Pest Prevention and Management Program (IPPM)

- ODA issued a temporary Control Area against Emerald ash borer (EAB). Like the temporary quarantine that was previously in place, the Control Area is defined as Washington County and any other county where EAB is confirmed. Changes include the removal of olive as a restricted plant and that ash and white fringe are now allowed to be moved from the Control Area provided that plant material is done so under a compliance agreement. ODA held a Rules Advisory Committee on the proposed language on May 10<sup>th</sup>.
- A Pest Alert has been created and shared for Mediterranean oak borer (MOB), in collaboration with Oregon Department of Forestry. MOB has been detected at seven sites in Oregon, spanning Clackamas, Marion,

Multnomah, and Washington counties. It is a significant pest of oak species. MOB is not a federally regulated pest and ODA has no pest response program to formally trap and detect the movement of MOB in Oregon. ODA will bundle MOB trapping along with other pest survey work. The pest alert is available online: <u>ODA Pest Alert</u>.

- The Japanese beetle (JB) Eradication Program will not be providing green waste collection and disposal services in 2023 due to budget constraints. Effected communities and collaborators have been informed and residences have been asked to continue efforts to reduce the spread of JB by keeping green waste within the quarantined area in Washington County.
- Grapevine mealybug continues to be a concern and ODA has expended efforts to bring this attention to industry and connect the dots between various groups and university extension. Industry has approached the legislature for funding to support long term survey and control efforts. ODA has been awarded funds from the Oregon Wine Board to continue trapping/monitoring for the next season.

# Noxious Weed Control Program

- The Oregon State Weed Board held their Spring meeting the first week of March. The Board awarded over \$1.4M in grant funds for 47 noxious weed projects across the state.
- The program filled the vacancy left when Troy Abercrombie took over the manager position. Grant Jackson, longtime ODA Pesticides Program staff, will be the new Integrated Weed Management Specialist for West-Central Oregon beginning June 5<sup>th</sup>.
- Noxious Weed Program staff have started the 2023 field season and are busy working on projects across the state including numerous A-rated species. Aquatic weeds and invasive annual grasses continue to be a challenge due to lack of capacity at the state level.
- The program is hiring two seasonal staff for 2023. One will be located in Central Oregon and focus on assisting regional staff with new and ongoing priority work while the other will be based out of northeast Oregon and focus on biocontrol work and assisting the IPPM program with insect trapping and monitoring.
- The program submitted a proposal for \$1.5M in federal funding over 5 years to support a statewide aquatic noxious weeds specialist.
- The program is working with federal partners at the NRCS to develop and fund two positions that will focus on rangeland health and restoration with an emphasis on managing invasive annual grasses.
- At the Spring Planning Meeting, staff identified 11 species that will be proposed for delisting at the Spring 2024 Oregon State Weed Board meeting.
- Staff is currently working on updating all our species-specific strategic management plans for T-listed species with regionally specific objectives and priorities.
- With the new combined management structure, the Noxious Weed Program has been collaborating with the Native Plant Conservation Program on outreach and education, most recently during Oregon Invasive Weed Awareness Week and National Endangered Species Week.
- The program is working with federal partners to eliminate barriers for producers to participate in ODA's Weed Free Gravel and Forage programs.

# Nursery and Christmas Tree Program

- 2023 shipping season was another busy season with minimal incidences. Due to wet and cold weather, plants were to leaf out which led to a later start to shipping season for some.
- At the end of June, two long-time nursery inspectors will retire. One of whom has been with the ODA for 37 years. The two inspectors cover the busy territories of Washington and Marion Counties. With their departure goes a wealth of knowledge. Recruitments for two new nurseries are underway.
- With the EAB temporary control in place, movement of ash and white fringe tree nursery stock from Washington County
- In collaboration with Oregon State University Extension, ODA will co-host a town hall informational meeting in Lincoln City in late June. The event will provide education on *Phytophthora* on ornamentals and re-cap of survey activities and findings in Lincoln City and proposed next steps.

# Hemp Program

• **Hemp Grower Inspections:** We plan to inspect 100% of our actively growing licensed Growers. Inspections for Growers with a history of compliance have begun. We are inspecting these locations while plants are immature and will not be performing presumptive testing at these locations. The primary purpose of these

inspections is to identify the location of hemp being produced so that we can verify all required pre-harvest compliance testing is completed.

Inspections and presumptive testing for new Growers and Growers with compliance concerns, will begin later in the summer once plants are mature. Testing of mature plants will yield a quantitative result for THC levels. Based upon the test results, if the site is determined to be "presumptively" marijuana the Department can issue a Detainment Order that restricts the crop from being removed from the site until it passes preharvest testing.

- **Hemp Handler Record Inspections**: This is the first year that inspections will be conducted for licensed hemp Handlers. Records request letters will be sent to approximately 1/3 of handler by the end of June.
- Online Hemp Retailers: The Department conducted an inspection of licensee's websites and identified approximately 20 websites that are selling artificially derived cannabinoid products. Letters of Advisement will be sent out in June to advise Licensee to remove such products. Follow up inspections will be conducted to verify corrections are made.

### Native Plant Conservation Program

- Morgan Maier was hired to assist with field work for the 2023 field season and has proven to be a great asset to the team.
- Grayson Lindsey, Greenhouse Technician, will be graduating from OSU and moving on. They did a great job for the program and will be missed. That position will be filled in the coming weeks.
- ODA added eight endangered and five threatened species to the State's list of threatened and endangered plants, effective May 22, 2023. Following multiple years of fieldwork, data collection and consultation with stakeholders, subject matter experts, the Technical Advisory Committee, Tribal consultation and a public comment period, the eight species have been added to <u>OAR 603-073-0070</u>: It is now unlawful to take, import, export, purchase, sell, collect material from, store, preserve, possess, cultivate, propagate, knowingly transport, or attempt any of these actions for any of the above-listed plants on non-federal public land in Oregon without a written permit (see <u>OAR 603-073-0100</u> for more details)
- Staff continue to work with the Oregon Department of Energy and Baker County on permitting and consulting regarding proposed development in rare plant habitat.
- The program submitted two proposals for federal funding to: 1) work with the federally listed species Howell's spectacular thelypody (*Thelypodium howellii ssp. spectabilis*), rough popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys hirtus*), Applegate's milkvetch (*Astragalus applegatei*), and Bradshaw's lomatium (*Lomatium bradshawii*) and 2) to develop a Statewide Seed Strategy that will facilitate the collection, production, storage, and conservation of native seedstock.
- Field season began in April. The team is working with rare and endangered plant species all over the state, including but not limited to golden paintbrush (*Castilleja levisecta*) and Hitchcock's blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium hitchcockii*) in the Willamette Valley, Cook's lomatium (*Lomatium cookii*) in Josephine County, Gentner's fritillary (*Fritillaria gentneri*) throughout southwest Oregon, Laurent's milkvetch (*Astragalus collinus var. laurentii*) in north-central and northeast Oregon, and Peck's astragalus (*Astragalus peckii*) in central Oregon.
- Several research projects continue in the greenhouse facility at Oregon State University, including research on soft blazing star and Owyhee clover – two extremely rare plants endemic to the remote Owyhee Uplands of eastern Malheur and Owyhee Counties.

# Oregon Invasive Species Council

- Samara Group has been selected as the new Coordinator. The Coordinator serves the OISC to fulfill many of its goals including outreach and Council organization. The Council Chair has agreed to allow the Coordinator to continuing assisting with the EAB Task Force meeting coordination. Samara Group served in the coordinator role previously.
- Glenn Dolphin (OR Marine Board) now serves as the new Chair of the Council. Glenn has been prioritizing reinvigorating the council by re-establishing roles and strengthening communications amongst the executive team.
- OISC is planning to hold an in-person meeting in Prineville, OR in August 2023.

# **Administration/Special Projects**

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### • Wolf Depredation Grant

- ODA completed the 2023 grant cycle to counties for Wolf Depredation Compensation and Financial Assistance Grant Program in early May. Contact: Sunny Summers
- Canola
  - ODA issued a number of research permits for canola production in the Central Oregon Protected District for the 2023 crop year. This spring, ODA received a petition to remove the Central Oregon Protected District from the canola rules. Growers in the area want to pursue canola as a potential low water usage rotation crop due to drought and an endangered frog species. Additionally, they have looked at pollination services and do not believe canola will overlap with carrot bloom (one of the primary crops). Finally, there is a buyer in the area that is currently buying canola seed for crushing from Canada that could replace that Canadian seed with local seed. ODA is meeting with the community and considering the petition. Contact: Sunny Summers