NASDA Winter Conference

The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), hosted its annual Winter Policy Conference near Washington D.C. in late February. I was fortunate to attend the meeting and visit with members of our congressional delegation to discuss NASDA’s International Trade Policy Modernization. Director Derek Sandison, Washington; Secretary Mike Naig, Iowa; and Director Ben Thomas, Montana joined me in these talks. As a member of NASDA’s Marketing and International Trade Steering Committee we were charged with updating NASDA’s dated policy on international marketing and trade of food, beverage, and agricultural products.

During the conference, I participated in the many sessions with state staff, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) staff and other agriculture industry professionals. The issues dominating most discussions were international trade and industrial hemp. Overall, despite our diversity in commodities and geography, our needs are similar. State departments of agriculture need more access to overseas markets, and clarification from the USDA on hemp rules and regulations.

As a result of the conference NASDA adopted a hemp policy and approved three action items. The policy acknowledges the economic potential in the U.S. and encourages uniformity in hemp regulation nationwide. In addition, NASDA urges USDA to work with state departments of agriculture to develop a model regulatory framework for oversight of hemp processing and manufacturing of cannabidiol (CBD), which will protect public health, comply with federal law, and foster growth in the industry.

A policy amendment and three action items were also adopted in relation to international trade. In addressing our need for market access in China, NASDA’s action item urges the administration to pursue a resolution that includes restoration of market access for U.S. agricultural and food products. NASDA also urges Chinese structural reforms to address non-tariff barriers to create a more predictable, reliable, and transparent biotechnology approval process. Tariff and non-tariff barriers cost our northwest cherry industry approximately $86 million in 2018.

The trade policies that I helped draft urges Congress and the President to aggressively negotiate new trade agreements that allow for gains that will benefit U.S. agriculture. The new policy clearly lays out that agriculture must be a key component to any trade agreement the U.S. pursues negotiating; prioritizes the elimination of tariffs on U.S. food, beverage, and agricultural products entering foreign markets; the elimination of unjustified non-tariff barriers; and additional support to help food and agricultural businesses access global markets.

ODA will continue to work locally and globally on maintaining our long-standing trade relationships — our economy depends on it. Agriculture has a $50 billion-dollar impact providing more than 326,000 jobs up and down the food supply chain. Eighty percent of Oregon’s food and agriculture production leaves the state and 40 percent leaves the country. The health of Oregon’s overall economy depends on our ability to export. Through our work with trade associations like the Western United States Agricultural Trade Association (WUSATA) and networks like NASDA, ODA will continue to help farmers, fishers, ranchers, and other producers diversify and reach new international markets with a goal of increasing international trade and strengthening Oregon agriculture.
JAPANESE BEETLE PROJECT 2019

The Oregon Department of Agriculture’s (ODA) Insect Pest Prevention and Management Program (IPPM) is continuing its multi-year project to eradicate Japanese beetle (JB) in Washington County. Japanese beetle (*Popillia japonica*) is a scarab beetle that feeds on over 300 different plants and poses a significant risk to Oregon’s specialty crop growers, including the booming nursery and ornamental plant industry and potentially, cannabis. Japanese beetle is also a significant landscape and turf pest for homeowners, parks, and schools. The USDA estimates that management costs to control Japanese beetle in the eastern United States total $460 million per year.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture has been working for over six decades to prevent JB from establishing in the state. The Insect Pest Prevention and Management Program sets thousands of traps statewide to detect JB. In 2016, 369 beetles were detected in the Cedar Mill neighborhood in Washington County. This population increased in 2017 to over 23,000 beetles.

IPPM treated approximately 2,100 households in 2017 and just over 5,800 households in 2018. Each year’s treatment application affects the offspring that emerge as adults the next year. The treatment in 2017 resulted in a Japanese beetle population reduction of 34% when measuring beetles caught per trap the following year. The results of the 2018 treatment will be known this summer.

Treatment will continue in April of 2019; the area has expanded to be about 50% larger than in 2018, and includes roughly 8,500 residences. Schools, parks, shopping centers, and a golf course in the area will also be treated. Treatment consists of a single application of a granular larvicide, Acelepryn G, to lawns and ornamental planting beds. Acelepryn G is a “reduced risk” pesticide and is not considered to be a health threat for humans, pets, and other insects that do not go through a larvae stage (including pollinators) when applied correctly. It’s been used successfully for Japanese beetle eradication projects in Utah and Idaho.

Written or expressed consent is needed from homeowners to allow ODA to treat the property as proposed. With the support of the community and numerous partner agencies, response from residents has been incredibly positive. By the first week of March, 99% of the responses received this year were to give consent to allow the treatment.

A yard debris quarantine is also in effect in the area to help prevent the spread of beetles. For more information, visit: japansesebeetlepdx.info

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NASDA WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

*Winners of the first NASDA Foundation Women Farm to Food Competition put Oregon and Washington agribusinesses in the spotlight*

On February 26, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) Foundation announced Sage Dilts of Washington-based Barn Owl Bakery as its 2019 Women’s Farm to Food Competition grand prize winner. Dilts took home a $20,000 prize to help grow her artisanal bakery located on Lopez Island. The People’s Choice Award winner was La Vang of La Vang Foods Inc. in Hillsboro, Oregon. She won $10,000 to help her build her Hmong food business and farm. The prizes were awarded during the 2019 Winter Policy Conference of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) near Washington, D.C.

The NASDA Foundation, the Oregon Department of Agriculture, and the Washington State Department of Agriculture established the Women’s Farm to Food Competition to support women leading agricultural and food businesses. “We created the competition as a new way to celebrate women farmers, producers and entrepreneurs who are diversifying their operations and creating unique approaches to developing value-added products,” said NASDA Foundation Executive Director Lisa Benson.

Four finalists were chosen from 238 applicants and were invited to Washington D.C. to pitch their business ideas before a panel of judges and an audience of state department of agriculture leaders during the NASDA Winter Policy Conference. While Dilts and Vang received top honors, runners up included Spring Alaska Olson, owner of Sakari Botanicals in Bend, Oregon and Lori Babcock, co-owner of Tieton Farm and Creamery located in Tieton, Washington. Both Olson and Babcock took home a $5,000 prize to help build their businesses.

“We are so proud to be a part of this outstanding recognition of women farmers and entrepreneurs in Washington and Oregon,” said Director Alexis Taylor, Oregon Department of Agriculture. “I want to thank all the applicants. We were overwhelmed with amazing, diverse applicants. So many other states want to replicate this competition, our finalists really stole the show.”

The Women’s Farm to Food Competition is in its first year and focused on food and beverage businesses in Oregon and Washington. Farmers, fishers, and ranchers as well as entrepreneurs who source from local farmers were eligible for the competition. The women’s competition is part of the NASDA Foundation’s Women in Agriculture Project.
**CENTURY FARM and RANCH PROGRAM**

by ANDY ZIMMERMAN

ODA representative, vice chair, Oregon Century Farm and Ranch Committee

If you traverse rural areas of Oregon, you’re likely to see them: the green and white signs announcing a century farm. A family’s name with a year listed. Simply, these markers honor farms and ranches that have been family owned for generations.

Oregon officially has 1,212 century farms and ranches, and it has 41 farms that have earned the sesquicentennial award, having existed for at least 150 years.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) has been associated with the program in some fashion since it began in the state in 1958. In fact, ODA Director Alexis Taylor has ties to a century farm in Iowa.

What does it take to be recognized as a century farm?

Each year, the program, which is administered through the Oregon Farm Bureau Foundation, opens the application process. There is a list of qualifications prospective applicants must meet to earn Century Farm status, including the farm or ranch must have been operated continuously in the same family for 100 years or more, with documents showing verification of continuous ownership as well as a narrative of family history.

The program receives lots of questions regarding original ownership and how that relates to succession throughout the years, as well as how much original documentation is needed, says Andréa Kuenzi, Century Farm program coordinator.

Kuenzi, who is part of a farm that earned Century Farm honors last year, can help prospective families prepare their applications.

“We provide assistance in getting the county records wherever they are housed and how to go about finding original documentation,” she says.

Kuenzi says she also fields lots of calls throughout the process, helping families with each step.

**LOST VALLEY FARM UPDATE**

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) with the Trustee for Lost Valley Farms signed an Order and Mutual Agreement (OMA) in mid-January that ensures the wind-down and cleanup of the facility.

Lost Valley Farm’s former owner and operator was issued a Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) permit in March 2017. After repeated violations of the CAFO permit, ODA moved through the legal process, issuing penalties and eventually a notice of revocation of the CAFO permit in June 2018. The owner filed for bankruptcy in April 2018. ODA continues to work with the court appointed trustee through the recent sale of the livestock and clean-up and/or decommissioning of the facility as outlined in the OMA.

The more than 8,000 cows on the property were sold at auction in mid-February. During the same time, a federal bankruptcy judge in California approved the dairy farm’s sale to Canyon Farm LLC for $66.7 million. According to the OMA the buyer must abide by the agreement and cannot receive a new CAFO permit until clean-up is completed to ODA’s satisfaction. The buyer must apply for a new permit which would include a public comment period.

**SUMMARY OF OMA**

- Assures that the Trustee of the Lost Valley Farm remains responsible for the clean-up and or decommissioning of the Lost Valley Farm even after the facility itself is sold and removed from the bankruptcy estate.

- Secures the Trustee’s obligations under the agreement with a financial package which includes: 1) a Liquidated Damages Clause that is assigned to the ODA and DEQ; 2) $500,000.00 in moneys that are held back from the sale of any bankruptcy assets; and 3) the right to file an uncapped administrative claim in the bankruptcy proceeding.

- After removal of the animals, requires amendment of the Animal Waste Management Plan (AWMP) so that no (zero) animals may be confined on the facility. The amended AWMP and the CAFO permit (the “clean-up” permit) will then govern the clean-up and the operation of the facility until either 1) the facility is cleaned up and a new CAFO permit is issued or 2) the facility is cleaned up and decommissioned. The terms of the “clean-up” permit allow only the clean-up of solid and liquid waste, application of waste to farmable lands at an agronomic rate, monitoring and reporting of waste applications, and monitoring of groundwater via 11 monitoring wells.

- Requires the trustee to transfer the “clean-up” CAFO permit to subsequent purchasers of the facility such that any activities on the farm are governed by the “clean-up” permit. If the subsequent purchasers refuse to accept transfer of the “clean-up” permit then the trustee must decommission the facility.

- Keeps the “clean-up” permit in place until either: 1) a new CAFO permit is issued; or 2) until the facility is decommissioned to the satisfaction of ODA.

- Releases the trustee only after clean-up to the satisfaction of ODA and transfer of the permit or after decommissioning to the satisfaction of ODA.

After the Century Farm and Ranch committee votes to approve an application, the family is honored at a ceremony held at the Oregon State Fairgrounds in Salem.

Each family is given a certificate signed by Oregon Gov. Kate Brown and ODA Director Taylor as well as the green and white metal Century Farm sign.

“Being awarded the Century status in some ways has brought our family together for a common good of recognizing we are just the stewards of this land right now, and they’ll be more in the future as there were ones we followed,” Kuenzi says. “Honoring the hard work of our ancestors and providing for the future of this farm is a life’s work that is important for the future generations.”

Applications are due May 1, and this year’s ceremony will be held at 11 a.m. Aug. 24 at the state fairgrounds. For information, go to https://centuryfarm.oregonfb.org, email andrea@oregonfb.org or call (503) 400-7884.
HEMP and the FARM BILL

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provided a Hemp Program status update on the Trump administration’s efforts to regulate the newly legal crop in late February 2019. While the 2018 Farm Bill federally legalized hemp, USDA still has to develop rules and approve individual state plans before farmers can cultivate and transport the crop under the legislation’s provisions.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) established a statewide hemp program in 2015. Considered a state at the forefront of hemp production under the hemp pilot program, ODA is eagerly awaiting direction from USDA regarding requirements for state implementation plans, as required by the 2018 Farm Bill. USDA’s rules will provide details on: sampling procedures, testing requirements, licensing, and compliance. In the meantime, ODA Director Alexis Taylor submitted a letter of intent to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue asking for expediency. The Secretary said during a congressional hearing Feb. 27, 2019, that the department is working to create that regulatory framework in time for the 2020 growing seasons.

“The passage of the 2018 Farm Bill was clear: interstate transportation of hemp is allowed, once a state’s implementation plan has been submitted and approved,” said Director Taylor. “With the delay in the rules until the 2020 crop year, Oregon’s hemp industry is being subjected to unnecessary transportation and commerce restrictions.”

For the 2019 planting season, the 2018 Farm Bill provides that states, tribes, and institutions of higher education can continue operating under authorities of the 2014 Farm Bill. And as for submitting those state plans, USDA says state or Indian tribal nations do not need to submit plans for approval until regulations are in place; however, should a state submit a plan, USDA will hold that submission until regulations have been set.

It is USDA’s intention to issue regulations in the Fall of 2019 to accommodate the 2020 planting season.

FEDERAL HEMP UPDATES
For more information, visit https://oda.fyi/USDAhemp
Please email questions or requests for information to: farmbill.hemp@usda.gov

OREGON HEMP UPDATES
For more information, or to subscribe to the hemp email list, visit: https://oda.direct/hemp