The future of Oregon’s agricultural economy depends on our ability to invest and trade in the global market. More than 95 percent of the world’s population lives and eats outside the United States. Oregon’s agricultural producers will increasingly depend on expanding U.S. trade policies to connect with this enormous purchasing power.

In 2017, Oregon exported more than $5 billion in agricultural products, making it the top economic driver in the state. The Oregon Department of Agriculture remains committed to pursuing growth opportunities for its producers, despite recent federal trade uncertainties, especially in China.

In May, we traveled to Shanghai, China, with more than 10 Oregon food and drink producers to build relationships and encourage trade. Last year, more than $290 million in Oregon food and agricultural products were shipped to China, the state’s fourth-largest market behind Japan, South Korea, and Canada. The group’s diversity was representative of Oregon agriculture, everything from berries to beef.

Members of Oregon’s beef industry traveled to China to begin learning about the newly opened market. For the first time in more than a decade, the U.S. can now ship beef to China. With the country’s middle-class on track to grow by more than 160 million households in the next decade, the work to establish connections and distribution channels could be a lucrative opportunity for Oregon beef producers. We look forward to updating you on progress of this outreach.

In June, we traveled to Japan, our top export market. ODA, along with seven Oregon producers, visited with trade partners in Tokyo and Osaka. Oregon has a long history of relationships in Japan with some producers exporting for generations. Last year, Oregon exported more than $646 million in agricultural products.

OREGON’S TOP 5 EXPORT MARKETS 2017

- Japan: $646,772,785
- South Korea: $378,861,844
- Canada: $361,256,179
- China: $290,274,955
- Philippines: $184,932,487

We want to thank all the producers who have participated in our trade missions representing Oregon’s high-quality products. We are in the planning stages for two more trade missions this fall to Korea and Taiwan. If you are interested in connecting to export markets please contact our Agricultural Development and Marketing team. They can help you understand agricultural trends and opportunities available. Our daily mission is to promote Oregon agriculture and ensure healthy natural resources, environment, and economy for Oregon now and in the future.

Questions? Contact ODA’s Agricultural Development & Marketing Program: 503-872-6600
L O S T V A L L E Y D A I R Y

by ANDREA CANTU-SCHOMUS

Stories of manure spill violations and pictures of cows standing in deep manure at Lost Valley Farm in Boardman have colored many people’s opinions about Oregon’s Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO). While the Oregon Department of Agriculture shares in the public’s concerns, the inability or unwillingness of one operator to follow the rules of his CAFO permit or pay enough attention to animal welfare should not represent all of Oregon’s CAFO operators.

The vast majority of Oregon’s CAFO operators follow their permits, that work to protect the environment and groundwater. ODA’s CAFO program permits on average, 509 facilities and conducted 880 inspections last year. Less than 1 percent of the total inspections resulted in violations that led to civil penalties. Lost Valley Farm is a different story.

Since the farm was granted a permit in March 2017, ODA has visited the farm every week due to concerns. The frequent visits by multiple CAFO inspectors continue to uncover a lack of compliance. Countless violations, fines and court action by ODA have not motivated the operator to meet the requirements of his permit. ODA continues to work with the Oregon Department of Justice pursuing every legal option to stop violations that may threaten the environment. Recent testing shows wastewater and manure overflows have not impacted groundwater. ODA is dedicated to ensuring that continues to be the case.

The operator filed for bankruptcy in mid-April. Due to the filing, a cattle sale organized by Rabobank, the farm’s main creditor was canceled due to bankruptcy protection. A bankruptcy judge in Fresno, California, recently denied Rabobank’s request to have the protection lifted so the sale could go on. While bankruptcy proceedings are ongoing, ODA will continue to monitor operations and demand the operator protects the environment and groundwater, as outlined in the CAFO permit.

ODA cannot predict what is next. What the agency can say is that it will continue to watch Lost Valley Farm, not forget the other 508 CAFOs who are properly running their businesses, while helping to protect Oregon’s natural resources.

O R E G O N ’ S  S W C D s  N E E D  Y O U R  H E L P

by ANDY ZIMMERMAN

Although summer has just started, it’s not too early to be looking toward fall, especially if you care about your local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). The election season begins July 19, when SWCD director candidates can file their completed forms with the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA).

Conservation districts were established in the U.S to assist farmers after the Dust Bowl destruction of the 1930s. The Oregon Legislature passed a law in 1939 that allowed for the formation of soil conservation districts, with the first district, in Tillamook County, becoming official in February 1940. Today, there are 45 districts, and each one still needs directors to carry on their missions. There are 160 positions up for election in 2018.

Each SWCD is governed by a board of five or seven unpaid elected directors; two of which are at large, while the others represent geography-based zones, must be an involved owner or actively managing a minimum of 10 acres of farmland in the district, and be a registered voter. Continued on page 3.
DEMystifying Exotic Animal Permits

by Liz Beeles

From pocket pets to elephants, the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) receives a wide range of questions about exotic animal ownership. In fact, the agency webpage on the topic averages over 19,000 visits a year.

Most people who contact ODA want to know whether it is legal to own an exotic animal. However, the answers often come from the USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service Veterinary Services (USDA) or the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).

There are three agencies that regulate the ownership of exotic animals in Oregon. USDA regulates dealers, exhibitors, transporters, and researchers. ODFW protects native wildlife by regulating indigenous wildlife as pets and non-native species not regulated by ODA.

Exotic animals within the purview of ODA include: felines not indigenous to Oregon (excluding the domestic cat); any non-wolf canines not indigenous to Oregon (excluding the domestic dog); any bears (excluding the black bear); and any member of the crocodile family. However, as of January 1, 2010, ODA stopped issuing new exotic animal permits. The agency is acting at the direction of the 2009 Legislature, which ordered the change to protect the public against health and safety risks posed to the community by exotic animals. Oregonians who want to obtain a permit to own an exotic pet from one of these categories are out of luck.

ODA still manages 16 active permits in the state, which include non-human primates, serval cats, a lynx, and several alligators. Biennially, ODA inspects the facilities and the health and welfare of these remaining animals.

For exotic animals permitted by other agencies, ODA tracks when they enter the state. Permit and inspection rules apply depending on the type of animal and where the animal originated. Transportation from outside of the U.S. is likely to involve additional federal agencies, such as U.S. Customs and Border Protection and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and regulations.

Owning an exotic animal requires a serious commitment, coordination, and care. You should always check with your local city and county to ensure they allow exotic animals in your area. The rules aim to protect the health and safety of Oregonians, the state’s native wildlife, and the exotic or non-native animals.

For more information, visit the online links listed below:
- oda.fyi/USDALicenses
- oda.fyi/ODFWWildlifeIntegrity
- oda.direct/ExoticAnimals

Oregon Bee Project

Oregon Field Guide, a television program on Oregon Public Broadcasting, will feature the work of the Oregon Bee Project. A film crew recently captured volunteers working near a vineyard in Dayton. The project, led by the Oregon Department of Agriculture, Oregon State University, and the Oregon Department of Forestry, is made up of several initiatives, including the creation of an Oregon Bee Atlas.

“There has never been a complete survey of the bees of Oregon. It has been estimated that about 500 species live in the state,” says Sarah Kincaid, an entomologist with ODA. “The Oregon Bee Atlas is about utilizing volunteers to try and answer the questions about what bee species live here and identify ways to help.”

Thankfully, Oregon hasn’t seen the same level of documented bee population declines found elsewhere. This may be attributable to the more than 200 crops grown statewide that provide a rich and varied diet for bees during the growing season.

OPB’s segment on the Oregon Bee Atlas will feature Michael O’Loughlin and his brother Dan as they gather bees and identify the plants on which they are foraging. Both own flagship farms, a name given to those working to promote pollinator diversity.

“No one has actually catalogued all the species of bees living in Oregon and until we do that and have baseline data we just don’t know how to help,” Michael O’Loughlin says.

This is the first year of the four-year atlas project. The information gathered will be added to the newly digitized historic records from the Oregon State Anthropod Collection to build the first comprehensive record of native bees in Oregon. The information also will be used to create science-based strategies for protecting and promoting Oregon’s bees.

The Oregon Field Guide story on the Oregon Bee Project will air this fall. For more information and how you can get involved visit: www.oregonbeeproject.org

SWCDs - Continued from page 2.

“Citizens who want to be on the ballot for a board position or conduct a write-in campaign can find complete details and the necessary forms online at oda.direct/ elections” says Sandi Hiatt, ODA’s SWCD Grants Administrator.

Another way for individuals to be involved and potentially gain full-board membership is through SWCDs Associate Director programs. Requirements to gain full board membership include serving at least one year as an Associate Director, being living in the zone they may represent, have an approved associate director application, be registered as an Oregon county SWCD, and have at least one member of the board who is a director.

Hiatt offers this advice to potential candidates: “Prior to running for the board, I recommend visiting the SWCD and attending a board meeting to learn more about the district and board responsibilities. Another resource that can be found online at the ODA website is our SWCD Guidebook. It is a great resource for understanding SWCD operations, roles and responsibilities.”

As part of the ODA-SWCD connection, ODA conducts director training to assist new (and current) directors better understand their responsibilities to those they serve. Responsibilities such as staff supervision, obligating and managing SWCD funds, managing projects, and ensuring overall sound operations.

“You don’t have to be a board member to be involved in a Soil and Water Conservation District; they always need volunteers,” says John Byers, ODA’s SWCD program manager.

For general information about districts or the election process, call Hiatt at 503-986-4704.
HEMP CONTINUES to GARNER INTEREST

The Oregon Department of Agriculture started with 12 registered hemp growers for the first growing season in 2015. A registration with ODA is required for growing or handling industrial hemp, except for a household that grows four or fewer plants for personal use. Interest in growing industrial hemp in Oregon continues to increase by leaps and bounds. Currently for the 2018 season, there are nearly 8,000 acres of registered hemp production with 577 registered growers and handlers. Growers who register with ODA to grow industrial hemp are part of the Oregon Industrial Hemp Agricultural Pilot Program.

What’s the difference between hemp and marijuana? Hemp is cannabis with 0.3% or less THC (the psychoactive part of cannabis). All registered hemp growers must have their crop tested no more than 28 days before harvest to verify THC levels. Starting last fall, new rules passed giving the same labs that do marijuana testing the permission to do preharvest testing for hemp.

As with any new program, there are often opportunities for improvement and refinement. The Oregon Legislature has passed statutes affecting the hemp program each legislative session. The 2018 legislative session was no exception. House Bill (HB) 4089 made changes and ODA will go through the rule-making process this summer to put those changes into rule. The bill requires all retail hemp products sold outside of the Oregon Liquor Control Commission regulated marijuana program to be 0.3% THC or less. It also grants ODA broader authority to regulate industrial hemp and hemp seed certification. For updates on the rule-making process as well as other hemp related notices, sign up for the Industrial Hemp email list at oda.fyi/subscribe.