Oregon Governor Kate Brown released her budget and policy agenda for the 2019-2021 biennium in early December. This is the first step in the state’s budget process, and it offers the Governor an opportunity to lay out her vision for Oregon. Priorities include: strengthening democracy, efficient spending and smart government, affordable housing, addressing climate change and education. With a healthy economy, the Governor included many key investments including several priorities for the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA).

FOR ODA, THE GOVERNOR’S PROPOSED BUDGET INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

• Maintains all core programs
• Fee increases: Food Safety, Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO), Weights and Measures and Certifications to maintain current serve and program levels.

ADDED POSITIONS
• Fertilizer registration staffing
• Federal Grant opportunities coordinator
• Pesticide education, training and Worker Protection Standards
• Trade Development Specialist
• 2 positions: Agriculture Water Quality, Strategic Implementation Areas
• Internal auditor

ADDITIONAL INVESTMENTS IN AGRICULTURE WATER QUALITY PROGRAM
• Additional funding for coordination within the Lower Umatilla Groundwater area
• Additional funding to address water quality issues for agricultural lands around Klamath Lake

FUNDING FOR AGENCY LABORATORY CONSOLIDATION FEASIBILITY STUDY
• Adds spending limitation in several areas to align expenditures authority with actual expenditures

PLACEHOLDER FOR JAPANESE BEETLE PROJECT
• Adds a placeholder package to fund the Japanese Beetle project and continue on-going discussions with the legislature for continued funding and eradication

REDUCTIONS
While the Governor’s budget generously includes 7 new ODA positions and prioritizes investments in several key programs in our agency, there are some reductions proposed:

• Eliminates funding for Predator Control ($481,840)
• Reduces Personal Services by holding vacancies as they occur ($546,540)
• Service and Supply reductions ($169,772)

The recommendation to eliminate funding for Predator Control at ODA and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) does not impact the wolf compensation program. These are separate programs. The wolf compensation program is funded in the Governor’s budget. Also, in this budget, the greenhouse gas reporting functions of the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Carbon Policy Office and the Department of Energy are consolidated into one state agency known as the Oregon Climate Authority.

The Governor will be working with the legislature through the next session to create a final budget. Session begins on Tuesday, January 22, 2019. As we move through the process, we will provide staff, stakeholders, partners and our clients with ODA specific updates. If you have any questions, please contact me at [oda-director@oda.state.or.us].
ASIAN GYPSY MOTH 
Forest Park Eradication

Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) routinely conducts survey programs for North American gypsy moth and its more destructive and potentially faster spreading Asian gypsy moth. While North American gypsy moths are an established pest in the eastern U.S., Asian gypsy moths never have been established in North America, primarily because of “early detection-rapid response” programs by federal and state pest-management agencies.

Survey traps are placed in high risk areas across Oregon, such as the Port of Portland, and in cities such as Eugene and Bend. Gypsy moth caterpillars can defoliate trees, causing severe impacts on natural and urban forests, which hurts water quality.

In 2016, traps detected two Asian gypsy moths in Forest Park and the St. John’s area of Portland. Across the Columbia River in Vancouver, the Washington State Department of Agriculture trapped 10 moths. Gypsy moth is a regulated species by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). When detected, quick action is taken by several federal and state agencies including: ODA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Plant Protection and Quarantine, and Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF).

“Detectons of Asian gypsy moth in Oregon are rare, and because of the potential severity, we immediately implemented an eradication program to keep the pest from establishing,” said Chris Hedstrom, ODA entomologist.

“For the 2016 eradication, ODF and USDA provided staff, resources, and expertise during all stages of the project from operations planning to public outreach.”

The eradication site totaled about 8,700 acres, including St. John’s and Forest Park in the Portland area, where Asian gypsy moths were caught. The biological pesticide Bacillus thuringiensis var. kurstaki (BtK) was applied three times by air in spring 2016. This was the third-largest Asian gypsy moth eradication program in Oregon’s history. In the months before spraying, officials addressed public health concerns, and provided information about the pest and the need for management.

In the three years of trapping since the BtK application in Oregon, no Asian gypsy moths have been detected, indicating that the eradication was a success. ODA continues to place traps statewide to detect Asian gypsy moths.

TRADE MISSION REAPS REWARDS

Christian Krogstad flew to Japan as part of a trade mission to expand sales of his Westward American Single Malt Whiskey. The trip was a learning experience.

Krogstad, a master distiller from Portland, traveled in June with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Western United States Agricultural Trade Association (WUSATA), and the Oregon Department of Agriculture. He was one of seven Oregon agribusinesses looking to expand to new markets.

“This was my first trade mission to Japan, and I learned a lot of things during this trip,” Krogstad said. “I met so many good contacts, it was almost overwhelming. The Japanese alcohol distribution is very different from the American framework. I’m still learning how it all works and taking my time in choosing the right partner.”

Krogstad is the founder and master distiller of House Spirits Distillery. After 14 years in the business selling Aviation American Gin, he is focusing on his newer innovation: Westward American Single Malt Whiskey. His single malt is an award-winning whiskey, inspired by Oregon’s rich brewing culture that is distilled from Northwest malted barley and in new American oak barrels.

He is exploring several markets in Asia, saying their love of single malt whiskey is growing. Expanding into Japan could benefit Krogstad’s Portland-based operation.

“Opening the market in Japan for us would represent about 5 percent of our total sales, or about $400,000,” Krogstad said. “That would mean we could hire more people, buy more northwest grown ingredients and more locally fabricated equipment. I’m planning on participating in another trade mission to Japan early next year. The help we get through trade missions in breaking barriers and the contacts with qualified buyers is very important.”

Krogstad will attend the Premier Whiskey show in late February in Tokyo and will join WUSATA at the Tokyo food show in March. He said he has several contacts who are asking for pricing and availability. WUSATA and ODA will provide support when he finds the right match for his business.

NASDA TRI-NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL ACCORD

Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) Deputy Director Lisa Hanson and Interim Market Access and Certification Manager Casey Prentiss represented Oregon interests at the 27th annual Tri-National Agricultural Accord in October in Monterrey, Mexico.

The accord, attended by senior state and provincial agriculture leaders from the U.S., Canada and Mexico, focused on the importance of cooperative relationships in the agriculture and food-processing sectors of the nations, especially after the conclusion of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). The new pact protects the longstanding trade relationship among the three countries, an agreement that has benefited Oregon exporters for more than 20 years.

“With the new agreement, Oregon exporters should see increased market access for hazelnuts, organic and value-added products,” Hanson said. “Additionally,
Tri-National Accord - Continued

Canada has historically provided preferential treatment for its domestic wine production; the new agreement will assure Oregon wines are treated equitably in the Canadian retail market.”

Included in the discussion were advancing agricultural technology, food safety collaboration and preparing the next generation for the agricultural workforce.

“Several things became very clear during our talks: all three countries really do face similar challenges in agriculture, and it benefits all of us to work together and learn from each other so we can explore solutions,” Prentiss said.

Canada and Mexico are top export markets for Oregon agriculture. In 2017, Oregon exported more than $361 million in agricultural products to Canada, and $71 million, mostly fresh products, to Mexico.

AG IS COOL

Gilbert Uribe’s college degree in biology didn’t prepare him for the challenge of trying to be cool for a bunch of middle schoolers. Yet, that is what he does, as part of the Oregon Department of Agriculture’s (ODA) team. ODA recently finalized a five-year strategic plan that includes a key objective called, “Ag is Cool.” The goal is to engage youth about the many exciting careers in agriculture. That is what Uribe tried to do by sharing what ODA does and his personal story.

Uribe experienced agriculture as the child of farm workers. He grew to love biology and pursued a degree at Oregon State University. When it came time to choose a career he wanted to work in agriculture and help people like his parents. As a pesticide registration and certification specialist Uribe educates the agricultural community about pesticide regulation and ways to keep our environment healthy for humans, insects and animals. Fluent in Spanish, he is able to extend his reach to many more Oregonians.

The agricultural community needs more graduates like Uribe. According to a 2015 report by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Purdue University, from 2015 to 2020 there will be on average 57,900 annual job openings in food, agriculture and renewable resources in the US, yet only 35,400 annual graduates in relevant fields. The lack of skilled people in these fields will very likely prevent the agriculture and food sector from producing at its full potential. Oregon’s economy depends on agriculture with a total impact of approximately $50 billion a year and growing.

ODA recognizes this challenge and is prioritizing engagement with youth of all ages with the idea that ag can be cool. With the proper guidance and support, Oregon’s youth will increasingly look to agriculture as an opportunity for a career, fulfilling the growing needs of our state and our economy. With this goal in mind, ODA will continue to have Uribe and others share their personal stories, showing others what is possible and then maybe agriculture will become cool.

STRATEGIC PLAN LAUNCH

In July 2018 Mason Atkin, a Hatfield Resident Fellow at Portland State University joined the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) to lead the agency in implementing its 2018-2023 Strategic Plan and developing metrics to track progress. Atkin’s skills in data analytics, project management and conflict resolution made her a great fit in taking on this eight-month project. The plan and the seven strategic objectives were developed by employees with feedback from the State Board of Agriculture and stakeholder groups.

Atkin began her work by surveying ODA employees to determine which of the seven objectives the agency should prioritize for the 2018-19 fiscal year. Two hundred and eight survey responses were collected, and employees chose Foster Employee Excellence and Excellence in Customer Service as their two priorities of focus in the next year.

Small teams from each program area identified ways to measure progress on the prioritized objectives agency wide. After much discussion, deliberation and feedback, the teams settled on desired goals and key results to measure. Each objective has 2-3 associated metrics, which will be used to track success.

Atkin organized a Strategic Plan launch event on October 31 to share the work. During the event, program representatives presented their team’s work and common themes of focus did emerge. Themes included cross-program area experiences such as job shadows, creating quantitative baselines for employee engagement, and considering new ways to utilize performance reviews. Actions were identified to increase employee excellence and customer service. The presentation was streamed live and about 115 ODA employees joined, dozens more watched a recorded version at a more convenient time.

Moving forward, program areas will track their progress towards meeting their goals until February 2019. At that point, teams will reflect on what was achieved and learned and new goals with key results will be created for the remainder of the year. This is a living plan and it is expected to continue to change as employees meet and establish new goals. The overall intention is to provide staff with the tools they need to meet and adapt to the ever-changing needs of Oregonians.

For more information about the ODA Strategic Plan please contact Mason Atkin at matkin@oda.state.or.us.
The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) led a team of 22 Oregon volunteers to Butte County, California to take over the operations of the Small Animal Full Care Shelter. The shelter is one of 3 shelters established to house companion animals and livestock that could not return home due to the devastation of the Camp Fire. The fire killed 86 people and destroyed almost 14,000 homes.

The state of California made the request for help through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), a national state-to-state mutual aid system. The EMAC request was sent to Oregon’s Office of Emergency Management who then coordinated with ODA. ODA then recruited 5 veterinarians, 6 veterinary technicians and 11 shelter management experts from all over the state to respond. Many of the volunteers are also members of the Oregon Veterinary Emergency Response Team (OVERT), who train to respond to animal health emergencies.

ODA Veterinarian, Ryan Scholz, organized the deployment and says his time at the Camp Fire was a learning experience with each team member bringing back valuable experience that Oregon can use to respond in the event of our own disaster. “Our team was loaded with talent and compassion and we far exceeded everyone’s expectations and I could not be prouder of every one of them.”

Read more: https://odanews.wpengine.com