

# OREGON DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



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## STRATEGIC PLAN 2018–2023

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

I am very pleased to present the 2018 - 2023 Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) Strategic Plan. This is the first edition of what I intend to become an annually reviewed, dynamic five-year plan.

My predecessor, Katy Coba, for which I am grateful, initiated this strategic plan. Her approach, which I continued, was to focus on identifying what we at ODA need to do so we can most effectively accomplish our work. It is important that ODA's employees have the tools and resources to adapt to the ever-changing needs of Oregon's agriculture and food sector as well as the State of Oregon as a whole. This plan is to make sure we have what we need to best take us where we need to go.

This strategic plan is based on the power of diversity and inclusion. We believe that the best solutions come from the melding of many perceptions, concepts, backgrounds and approaches, reflecting those we serve. Our employees played a large role in the development of this strategic plan by providing valuable feedback to leadership. The State Board of Agriculture and

stakeholder organizations also informed the development of our strategic plan. Oregon, and Oregon agriculture in particular, is highly diverse, ranging from large to small, rural to urban, experienced to new producers, located in a wide range of geography and operated by people of many backgrounds, histories, cultures, and interests. The development of this plan strives to be equally diverse and is built on the principle of inclusion.

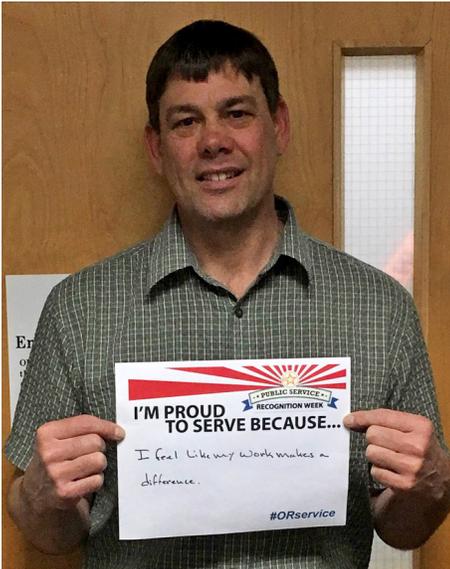
To make this a living plan we will tie it to annual objectives. Each year we will reflect on what we have accomplished the previous year, strengthen our intentions for the next four years, add a new fifth year, and select specific actions to hold ourselves accountable for the coming year. We will rely on our employees, the State Board of Agriculture, and stakeholders to assist us as we move forward to ensure that the plan supports our employees, those that we serve, and the state. We want ODA's strategic plan to be dynamic, effective, nimble, and a source of focus for our work.



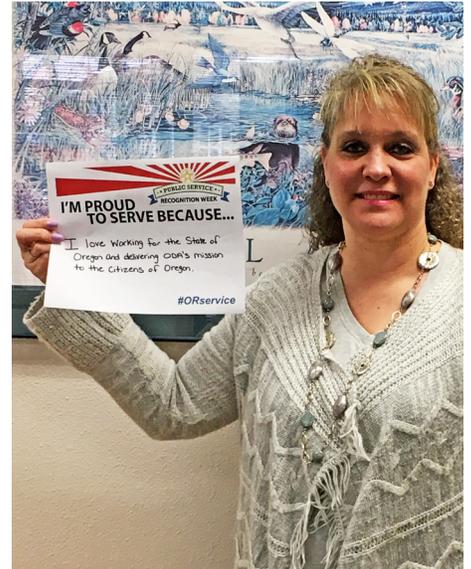
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alexis M. Taylor". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Alexis M. Taylor, Director  
Oregon Department  
of Agriculture

# I'M PROUD TO SERVE BECAUSE...



"I LOVE WORKING FOR THE STATE OF OREGON AND DELIVERING ODA'S MISSION TO THE CITIZENS OF OREGON."

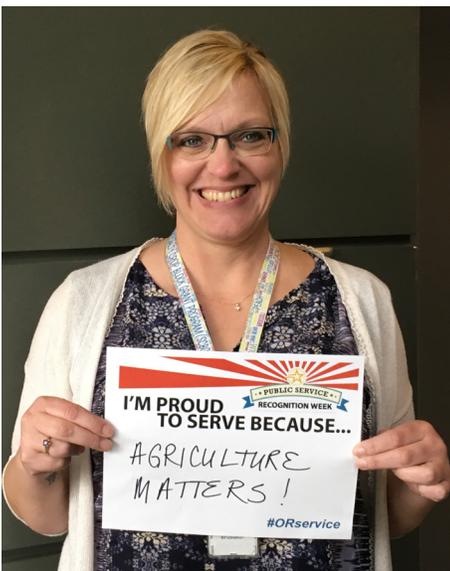


"IT'S AN OPPORTUNITY TO HELP OREGONIANS!"

"I FEEL LIKE MY WORK MAKES A DIFFERENCE."



"I GET TO MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON MY COMMUNITY WHERE I LIVE AND WORK."



"AGRICULTURE MATTERS!"



## BACKGROUND

### *Mission*

Ensure healthy natural resources, environment, and economy for Oregonians now and in the future through inspection and certification, regulation, and promotion of agriculture and food.

### *Vision*

The Oregon Department of Agriculture remains able to serve the changing needs of Oregon's diverse agricultural and food sectors to maintain and enhance a healthy natural resource base and strong economy in rural and urban communities across the state.

### *Core values*

We value...

- Honesty, integrity, and fairness
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Respect for people and property
- Practical collaborative approaches to problem solving
- Science-based approaches: technical and professional competence
- Transparency
- Quality customer service

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## BUDGET

The department's Legislatively Adopted Budgets change depending on the biennium but are funded at an 'all funds' levels of over \$100 million. The budget is comprised of a mix of General Fund, Lottery Funds, Other Funds (primarily business licenses and fees, charges for services, service contracts, income from fines, and interest income), and Federal Funds. The budget includes approximately 500 positions (350 full-time equivalent positions).



## PROFILE

*The 1931 Oregon Legislature consolidated thirteen separate boards, bureaus, and commissions to form the Oregon Department of Agriculture. Today, the department is comprised of the following program areas:*

### **Food Safety & Animal Health**

- Inspect all facets of Oregon's food distribution system (except restaurants) to ensure food is safe for consumption, protects and maintains animal health.
- Ensure animal feeds meet nutritional and labeling standards.
- Protect livestock health.
- Deny a market for stolen livestock through brand inspections.

### **Internal Service & Consumer Protection**

- Provide consumer protection and fair competition among businesses while facilitating interstate commerce and international trade by ensuring the accuracy and uniformity of Oregon's Commercial Weighing System and the quality of motor fuels sold in Oregon.
- Provide laboratory analysis and technical support to ODA's enforcement programs.
- Administer programs dealing with wolf depredation compensation and egg-laying hen cage space.

### **Market Access & Certification**

- Help Oregon's agricultural producers successfully add value, sell, and ship products to local, national, and international markets by promoting and creating demand for products through marketing activities, inspection, and certification.

### **Natural Resources**

- Address water quality, water quantity, and natural resource conservation on agricultural lands.
- Address the proper use of pesticides, labeling, and sale of fertilizer.
- Control field burning in the Willamette Valley through outreach efforts, compliance, monitoring, and coordination with other natural resource agencies.

### **Plan Protection & Conservation**

- Protect Oregon's agricultural industries and natural environment from harmful plant pests, diseases, and noxious weeds.
- Enhance the value and marketability of exported nursery stock, Christmas trees, seeds, and other agricultural products.
- Further the conservation of threatened and endangered plants.

### **Administration & Support**

- Provides department-wide services that support the department and program areas.
  - » Budgeting
  - » Business-related services
  - » Communications (external & internal)
  - » Government relations
  - » Human resources
  - » Information technology

## STATE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

A 10-member State Board of Agriculture provides advice on policy issues, develops recommendations on key agricultural issues, and advocates for the state's agriculture industry in general. Members of the board are appointed by the Governor and may serve up to eight years. Priority issues for the current board are details in their most recent biennial Oregon State of the Agriculture Industry Report<sup>1</sup>, and include:

1. Food safety
2. Water quality
3. Pesticides
4. Certification programs
5. Market access
6. Land use & farm land use protection
7. Water quantity/drought/insurance of irrigation water
8. Invasive species: weeds & pests
9. Cannabis & hemp
10. Transportation
11. Building a technical agriculture workforce/advocacy for vocational agricultural education
12. Keeping the next generation of agriculture involved



Barbara Boyer  
Chair



Pete Brentano



Stephanie Hallock



Bryan Harper



Tracey Liskey



Sharon Livingston



Laura Masterson



Marty Myers



Tyson Raymond  
Vice Chair



Luisa Santamaria  
Public member

<sup>1</sup> <https://go.usa.gov/xnWGj>

## KEY OBJECTIVE 1

# OPERATE AS A ROLE MODEL ORGANIZATION

### *What does this mean?*

*To operate as a role model organization, ODA must maintain a culture of excellence in all employees, work products, and customer service while achieving operational objectives and goals. Effective leadership, fiscal responsibility, an adaptive organizational structure, innovative use of technology, programmatic expertise, and a safe work environment are necessary elements for a role model organization.*

### *How will we know if we are doing this right?*

- Employees and managers are knowledgeable about and follow state laws, rule, and policies that affect the department, such as public records laws, ethics laws, vehicle use policies, and human resources policies. Managers additionally communicate to employees that we value spending time to learn this information.
- Employee surveys indicate a high level of confidence and respect for fellow employees and for ODA leadership.
- ODA operates with an organizational structure where resources are adaptively allocated to best solve emerging challenges.
- Programs undertake internal and external reviews to stimulate continuous improvement and adaptive management.
- The department continues to have a positive relationship with the Legislature, as indicated by open dialogue and support for the department's mission.
- Fund balances and resource allocation continue to remain within budget.
- The department budget is submitted by September 1.
- ODA continues to demonstrate increases in efficiency and effectiveness through adoption of technology.
- Every program has at least three months of operating costs in reserve.
- The state continues to recognize the department's fiscal responsibility through Gold Certification.
- ODA manages safety risks and responds to safety concerns raised by employees. Staff feel safe while doing their jobs and feel supported in leaving a situation where they feel unsafe. Staff feel equipped with the tools needed to lessen the chance of confrontations that can lead to safety concerns.
- ODA has organizational capacity to continue key operations even when faced with unexpected events such as computer failure or extreme weather.
- Stakeholder surveys indicate that their interactions with employees of ODA are open, transparent, and collaborative at least 90 percent of the time.
- Stakeholder surveys indicate ODA demonstrates a culture of continuous improvement.
- ODA gains benefit from a State Board of Agriculture that actively provides guidance on industry trends.

## KEY OBJECTIVE 1 *CONTINUED*

### OPERATE AS A ROLE MODEL ORGANIZATION

#### *Examples of what we hope to do over the next five years to realize this objective:*

- Advocate for department budgets that continue to support our evolving core programs and values.
- Implement systems to accept and communicate input from all sources.
- Create an effective feedback system from employees and departing employees to drive operational improvements.
- Innovate cost-effective, new ways to deliver service and control costs.
- Increase emphasis on cross-functional work, including holding related discussions and planning during program staff meetings.
- Implement the technology strategic plan.
- Develop and implement a strategic communication plan.
- Develop a feasibility evaluation for laboratory consolidation.
- Review and take actions to improve the security of ODA employees in the field and in the ODA building.
- Make better use of data to improve how we deliver our programs. For example, if a key performance measure is declining, adjust program delivery for improvement and track the impact.
- Help new State Board of Agriculture members contribute fully more quickly through a more effective onboarding and orientation program.
- Develop and maintain a crisis management plan to effectively respond to unexpected potentially negative events without delay.
- Finish and implement the Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP) plan.



## KEY OBJECTIVE 2

# OPERATE IN A CULTURE OF COMPLIANCE & SUPPORT

### *What does this mean?*

*To operate in a culture of compliance and support, ODA must deliver all services in an open, proactive, professional, helpful, and respectful manner focusing on education, outreach and technical assistance while relying on a regulatory backstop. When pursuing program compliance and support, a variety of regulatory tools must be considered, innovative problem-solving process used, and communication completed in a clear, understandable, and flexible manner.*

### *How will we know if we are doing this right?*

- Customers and clients report that the department provides effective educational support and consulting.
- Progressive compliance actions lead to conformity with Oregon laws.
- Inspections document high rates of compliance.
- Complaints about serious violations decrease.

### *Examples of what we hope to do over the next five years to realize this objective:*

- Complete staff conflict resolution training.
- Complete staff training to better utilize regulatory options.
- Dedicate key staff that know how to navigate compliance procedures to help others in the department.
- Implement compliance tools that are consistent across programs department-wide.
- Develop data systems to improve compliance tracking.
- Develop new and innovative communications that effectively convey the intended message and are clearly understood by stakeholders.



## KEY OBJECTIVE 3

# EMBRACE A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION

### *What does this mean?*

*To embrace a culture of collaboration, ODA engages and works with interested parties to evaluate and search for appropriate outcomes through trust, transparency, and respect for different points of view. We use program and project opportunities to grow existing partnerships and develop new partnerships.*

### *How will we know if we are doing this right?*

- ODA takes proactive steps to engage all audiences/stakeholders of agriculture.
- The department continues to forge deeper and more effective collaboration with key stakeholders on subjects such as legal, non-legal, rulemaking, and public comments.
- ODA has reached out to new partners and interested parties to engage them in ODA's work.
- There is continued collaborative support by stakeholders and legislators for department requests.
- Partner groups know and participate in setting department priorities; there are no surprises.

### *Examples of what we hope to do over the next five years to realize this objective:*

- Complete an inventory and review of partnerships to evaluate opportunities for improvement and expansion.
- Evaluate programs that do not have organized stakeholder engagement and consider creating this structure as needed.
- Identify strategies to interact with farmers, ranchers, or fishermen whom are not members of a state agricultural organization.
- Seek to improve relationships with organizations that show interest and need.
- Evaluate and improve how we typically conduct processes that include public involvement (e.g. rulemaking).



## KEY OBJECTIVE 4

# FOSTER EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE

### *What does this mean?*

*To foster employee excellence, ODA creates a work atmosphere that encourages employees to excel as they incorporate ODA's mission and values in their day-to-day work. We encourage and challenge existing employees to grow professionally, and we attract and keep new employees who complement and enhance ODA.*

### *How will we know if we are doing this right?*

- Employees at all levels hold themselves and each other accountable for results.
- Each program budgets and plans for training that is needed for their employees.
- Employee accomplishments are recognized regularly by peers, managers and department leadership.
- Most employees report that performance information they receive from their manager helps them improve.
- High participation in wellness activities continues.
- Feedback from the annual employee climate survey and exit interviews indicate employee work experience receives appropriate management attention.
- Results from the annual employee climate survey show an engagement level greater than 90 percent.

### *Examples of what we hope to do over the next five years to realize this objective:*

- Empower employees to make decisions and take personal responsibility for their work.
- Ensure that every employee knows what their professional development needs are and what is available to them.
- Develop a process for individual, specific ongoing performance feedback and recommended improvements for all employees, including managers.
- Develop and implement an annual employee climate survey.
- Foster an environment that promotes work life balance.
- Develop tools such as desk manuals and standard operating procedures (SOPs) to support succession planning.
- Cross-train employees to meet the department's succession needs.
- Develop and promote a hybrid live and online onboarding training program.
- Create a mentorship system to help promote employee capabilities.
- Explore opportunities for additional employee recognition.
- Continue to encourage and promote workforce diversity to reflect the population served. Hold an annual manager work session to review and re-focus department direction and the strategic plan.

## KEY OBJECTIVE 5

# PROVIDE EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE RECOGNIZING THE DIVERSITY OF OREGON AGRICULTURE

### *What does this mean?*

*To best provide excellent customer service that meets the unique needs of Oregon farmers, ranchers, fishermen. ODA embraces, supports, and promotes the diversity of all of Oregon agriculture regardless of crop type, production practice, size of operation, geography, land or water, market and the numerous other factors used to produce and process Oregon's 225 agricultural commodities.*

### *How will we know if we are doing this right?*

- We solicit, track, and learn from customer compliments and complaints regarding services provided and the approach taken to navigate difficult issues.
- Problem solving and cooperation increases across the spectrum of Oregon agriculture.
- Oregon continues to have a reputation for serving the diversity of agricultural.
- Collaborative efforts where ODA is involved results in increased benefits to Oregon agriculture.

### *Examples of what we hope to do over the next five years to realize this objective:*

- Review policies and procedures to ensure they are customer oriented.
- Improve work flows to promote reliable delivery of customer orders.
- Create opportunities to address customer wants and needs.
- Build organizational capacity to continue key services to customers even when faced with unexpected events such as computer failure or extreme weather.
- Strive to help organic, small farmers, and direct-to-consumer farmers to feel served by ODA.
- Help promote a shared understanding of all agriculture by all parties, leading to improved co-existence.
- Learn how to better facilitate collaboration between diverse parties to benefit Oregon agriculture.



## KEY OBJECTIVE 6

# CONNECT & PROMOTE OREGON FOOD & AGRICULTURE AS A VALUED EXPERIENCE FOR CONSUMERS & AN EXCITING CAREER CHOICE

### *What does this mean?*

ODA raises awareness of the opportunities, diversity, and innovation of Oregon's agriculture and food sector by seeking to connect Oregonians to their producers and to the importance of farming, ranching, and fishing. ODA serves as an ambassador helping to inform Oregonians about the economic significance of Oregon's agricultural and food sector to the state, the employment opportunities directly and indirectly available in agriculture, and agriculture's environmental investments to protect, preserve, and enhance Oregon's natural resources.

### *How will we know if we are doing this right?*

- The value and role agriculture is providing to urban centers in the state increases.
- Partnerships between the department and youth communities expands.

### *Examples of what we hope to do over the next five years to realize this objective:*

- Adopt communications strategies, platforms, and messages that resonate with customers and the public by identifying how various audiences receive and access information.
- Actively promote the value of farming, ranching and fishing to Oregonians.
- Develop strategic directions for the Celebrate Oregon Agriculture to continue the promotion of agriculture.
- Communicate with youth about agricultural career opportunities available to them.
- Increase partnerships such as those with OSU, including the Small Farms Program.
- Encourage staff to connect with the communities they live in about agriculture and its opportunities.
- Enhance the role of the State Board of Agriculture as ambassadors to help promote the diversity and value of agriculture in Oregon.



## KEY OBJECTIVE 7

# STRIVE FOR CLEAR, CONCISE, & INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION

### *What does this mean?*

*To strive for clear and concise communication with all Oregonians about agriculture and the department's programs, ODA uses the most effective tools available to give and receive information. ODA employees respond quickly, providing information directly or re-directing customers, consumers, and the public to the appropriate sources for that information.*

### *How will we know if we are doing this right?*

- Stakeholder support increases over time due to increased understanding of ODA's work.
- Public awareness of department work increases over time.
- Compliance increases due to ODA's regulated community's increased understanding of regulations.
- Employee knowledge of ODA programs increases (e.g. onboarding versus demonstrated knowledge over time of employment).
- Number of engagements with ODA communications increases (e.g. social media impressions, subscriptions to ODA communication products).

### *Examples of what we hope to do over the next five years to realize this objective:*

- Continue producing (or in some cases converting) our publications to plain language and an easy to digest format (e.g. use of infographics).
- Utilize new methods (e.g. social media) to effectively communicate to evolving audiences.
- Continue periodic director outreach to staff.
- Develop and implement department strategic communication plan that assesses and prioritizes communication work products and initiatives.
- Provide media training of key program staff.
- Ensure employees understand the services available from the Information Office and the importance and value of using those services.
- Increase the number of opportunities for staff to gain a better understanding of ODA and its work.



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## STRATEGIC PLANNING APPROACH

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*The development of the strategic plan was guided by Kathryn Walker, Special Assistant to the Director, and Ron Sarazin, President, Olympic Performance, Inc.*

*The plan is organized around key objectives. These are statements of purpose indicating a desired result consistent with the mission along with currently known challenges and opportunities. It is a statement of what is to be achieved. If all objectives are achieved, the maximum benefits of the mission will be realized. Key objectives are supported by key measures of success (“How will we know if we are doing this right?”). These measure the degree of accomplishment realized toward the key objectives. As much as possible, key measures are both outcome-specific and quantifiable.*

*To score well on the key measures of success for each key objective, a list of action plans have been developed (“What do we plan to do over the next three years to realize this objective?”). These action plans will be helpful as departments setting priorities and focus.*

*The approach to developing this strategic plan involved ten steps, described on the following pages:*

### **1. Board Priorities**

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At the September 24, 2015 meeting of the State Board of Agriculture meeting, the board identified agricultural issues that they consider challenges and issues they consider are going well. In their December 15, 2015 meeting, they reviewed the list and separated topics into agriculture industry priorities, Department of Agriculture priorities to address the industry priorities, and important considerations for the Department as it completes its work (not in priority order). In their following meetings, they reviewed and provided feedback on the continued development of the plan.  
Report: *Board Issues Prioritization*