



**OREGON  
DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE**

# Environmental Justice Task Force 2020 Annual Report

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August 18, 2021

Amira Streeter  
Environmental Justice Task Force  
Office of the Governor  
900 Court Street, Suite 254  
Salem, OR 97301-4047

Re: Oregon Department of Agriculture 2020 EJTF Annual Report

Dear Governor's Office and Task Force Members,

Early in 2020, a world-wide pandemic changed the way people and businesses interacted, including state agencies. ODA quickly worked to ensure communication, support and assistance to stakeholders, partner agencies, advocate groups and businesses continued to flow so that assistance could be provided where needed, and all voices could be equitably heard and considered. The Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF) and the Governor's Natural Resources Office continued its efforts to support a place to identify, address, and connect with others on environmental justice issues that intersect with the Department's activities. The Oregon Department of Agriculture appreciates the EJTF members expertise and guidance. In fulfillment of our annual reporting responsibilities under ORS 182.550, the Department respectfully submits our 2020 activities report. If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact Christina Higby at 503-986-5105 or [chigby@oda.state.or.us](mailto:chigby@oda.state.or.us).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alexis M. Taylor".

Alexis M. Taylor, Director  
Oregon Department of Agriculture

635 Capitol St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

[www.oregon.gov/oda](http://www.oregon.gov/oda)

Oregon Revised Statute 182.550 requires natural resource agencies submit an annual report to the Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF) and to the Office of the Governor on the results of the agencies' efforts to: (1) Address environmental justice issues; (2) Increase public participation of individuals and communities affected by agencies' decisions; (3) Determine the effect of the agencies' decisions on traditionally underrepresented communities; and (4) Improve plans to further the progress of environmental justice in Oregon.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA or Agency) is committed to addressing environmental justice issues and promoting public participation efforts related to the agency. ODA has policies and procedures in place to meet these efforts and supports progress on environmental justice. The following 2020 activities represent the agency's effort:

In 2020, many of the initiatives and emergencies enacted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic consumed a significant amount of time and energy for our agency leadership and we are proud of the contributions ODA staff have been able to make helping to halt the spread of COVID-19. Some of the highlighted areas of work around COVID-19 include working with food processing establishments on food safety protocols to prevent and respond to COVID-19 outbreaks in the workplace; coordinating and participating in Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) distribution to farmers and farmworkers; and co-administering a grant program with Oregon's Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) to help farmers absorb some of the costs of complying with Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Agency (OR-OSHA) rules intended to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Additionally, ODA worked on standing up a state meat inspection program to help facilitate more local meat processing; and supported county emergency shelters for livestock and companion animals following the wildfires (ODA is the state lead on animal sheltering as part of the state's emergency support functions system).

In early 2020, prior to the shutdown, ODA participated and sponsored conferences that focused on environmental justice communities including the second annual *Back to the Root* gathering hosted by the Black Food Sovereignty Coalition.

ODA's five-year Strategic Plan (2018-2023) continues to guide the agency towards fulfilling our role to serve the changing needs of Oregon's diverse agricultural and food sectors. The agency's core values described in the Strategic Plan include a commitment to diversity and inclusion. 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. Continued outreach efforts to increase representation of Oregon's diversity in agriculture has positively impacted participation in our Boards, Committees and Commissions. The strategic plan is available at <https://oda.direct/StrategicPlan>.

As a member of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), ODA worked to bring [policy](#) forward to support diversity, inclusion and racial equity (DEI) at the national level. In addition to federal policy work, ODA continues to make efforts to stand up state efforts to support DEI. Director Taylor presented to Oregon's Racial Justice Council's Environmental Equity Committee in October on the Agency's DEI work. In August, ODA also hosted a panel of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) partners to present on how the Agency could support and improve collaboration efforts with BIPOC communities.

ODA acknowledges the need to adapt to a changing climate to protect and enhance our nation's natural resources, while also building a resilient agricultural industry and food supply chain. In 2020, ODA adopted a climate change plan and participated in the Impacted Communities work group convened as a result of EO 20-04. ODA was also a part of the interagency team led by the Department of Land Conservation & Development (DLCD) who published a state Climate Change Adaptation Framework in 2020. Additionally, ODA participated in the Oregon Global Warming Commission's Natural and Working Lands Workgroup and the US Climate Alliance's Natural and Working Lands Policy Workgroup. ODA's Sustainability Team, created in 2020 meets monthly as we work toward an update of ODA's Sustainability Plan for 2022-23 that will dovetail with ODA's Strategic Plan.

A major accomplishment for ODA was the creation of ODA's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee in December 2019, with significant work occurring in 2020. The committee established a membership that represents employees from all program

areas within ODA. While the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed the ability of the committee to meet in person, they continue to meet virtually and in September 2020 created a charter and an objective and goals document that will serve as the committee's basis for moving ODA forward. The DEI Committee will help drive cultural change within ODA. It will help create strategic accountability for results, provide direction and oversight on DEI efforts, and communicate agency-wide on their progress. The committee commits to successfully integrating DEI goals and strategies within the agency's strategic plan. The committee will provide a platform for establishing a dedicated agency focus on diversity, equity and inclusion priorities by overseeing and assessing the agency's DEI effectiveness and making recommendations for agency culture reform.

ODA has a Citizen Advocate and Liaison position to serve as the agency representative to the EJTF. ODA actively participates in the EJTF meetings to report agency related environmental justice (EJ) activities and inform the agency of EJ issues. The Citizen Advocate regularly communicates with the EJTF members on agency activities to share with interested parties and seeks guidance from members on outreach work. ODA's website has a dedicated Environmental Justice webpage with resources and contact information for internal and external parties interested in ODA's EJ work.

ODA participates on the planning committee for Oregon's annual Diversity and Inclusion (DEI) Conference, which provides relative training and education to state employees. Because of COVID-19, the DEI Conference was held virtually, allowing an increase in participants to attend. In total, 141 ODA staff participated over the course of the two-day conference. ODA continues to review and translate documents into Spanish and other languages as needed and requested, many examples of which are provided in program area updates. A minimum of 45 documents between the various ODA programs were translated into Spanish in 2020, with a particular focus translating materials related to COVID-19 and the historic wildfires. ODA is also looking at ways to reach out and promote the rich diversity of Oregon's agricultural producers. A recent publication on Oregon [BIPOC producers](#) created in 2020 is an example of that work.

ODA's Citizen Advocate also serves as ODA's Tribal Liaison. The role of this position is to inform, and when appropriate, consult with Oregon's nine (9) federally recognized tribes on ODA's activities. The Citizen Advocate works with ODA staff to maintain good

working relationships with tribal nations in Oregon. ODA's website has a dedicated Oregon Tribes webpage that provides resources and contact information for interested parties. Multiple ODA staff from all program areas work with tribal nations on a wide-range of topics throughout the year. Some of these activities are captured in this report, however to see a full report of ODA's annual government-to-government activities, please visit ODA's Oregon Tribes webpage at <https://oda.direct/Tribes>. ODA is continuing to identify ways to support Oregon's tribal nations that intersect with the agency's work. In December 2020, ODA created a letter that was sent to each of the nine federally recognized Oregon Tribal Leaders. The letter included a summary of planned activities for the coming year (2021) in an effort to provide an opportunity for meaningful engagement and consultation with Oregon's Tribes. Planned activities included updating ODA's Tribal Government Relations Policy and the creation of a records destruction notification process to ensure Oregon's federally recognized tribes have access to documents of interest prior to their permanent destruction.

ODA directly supports and administers programs that benefit EJ communities. The [Farm to School Program](#), in conjunction with the National Farm to School Network, supports the ability to serve locally grown, raised, harvested or processed foods in school cafeterias; improve student nutrition; provide agriculture, health, and nutrition education opportunities while supporting Oregon's agriculture economy. ODA partners with the Department of Education's Farm to School Education Grants to deliver food along with information about nutrition and agricultural production to Oregon schoolchildren. The Farm to School Program was cut during the special session in 2020 and the total funding (\$15 million) was reduced to \$10 million. This impacted the ODA Farm to School Equipment and Infrastructure Grants by reducing the total amount available to producers from \$500K to \$250K. We were able to fund six (6) projects, of which five (5) were women-owned and three (3) were BIPOC or minority-owned businesses. You can read more about the grantees on the F2S webpage at [www.oda.direct/F2S](http://www.oda.direct/F2S).

Although the [FoodCorps](#), which is a national service program, is no longer hosted by ODA, the Agency continues to serve as a state advisor to FoodCorps Oregon. There are ten (10) FoodCorps service members serving nine (8) communities in Oregon. Service members work in low income and under-resourced schools teaching kids where their

food comes from, how to grow it, and how to make healthy choices every day through school garden, environmental and nutrition education.

ODA also has regulatory and consumer protection-related programs that may intersect with EJ communities:

The Natural Resource Program Areas aim to conserve, protect, and develop natural resources on public and private lands in order to ensure that agriculture will continue to be productive and economically viable in Oregon. Natural Resources Programs work to do the following: address water quality and natural resource conservation on agricultural lands; protect Oregon's environment and public health by ensuring the proper and legal sale, use, and distribution of pesticide products; and assist local soil and water conservation districts as they help landowners properly manage Oregon's natural resources.

The Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) Program is operated in conjunction with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) under a Memorandum of Understanding and overseen by EPA. In 2020 the agencies began developing a new MOU. The program issues permits to qualifying CAFOs and provides inspection oversight to protect Oregon's water quality by preventing animal wastes from entering surface and ground water. The proposed MOU incorporates several practices that we have adopted by policy, such as a two-step permitting process for large facilities, more interagency coordination on issues like water supply, and more intensive monitoring requirements for facilities that land apply manure in groundwater management areas. The CAFO program has incorporated EJ outreach activities to the CAFO Notice and Public Participation checklist for use in all of its noticing activities. Additionally, the CAFO National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit, Water Pollution Control Facilities (WPCF) Permit, and public notice documents also have been translated into Spanish and are available online. The CAFO program also has native Spanish speaking staff to assist permittees and the public. In 2020, the CAFO Program Manager and Citizen Advocate & Tribal Liaison provided regular updates to one of Oregon's federally recognized Tribes regarding a CAFO with significant compliance issues in their region of interest, and the Citizen Advocate also provided regular updates to the EJTF regarding this operation. All of the CAFO public hearings and

CAFO advisory meetings conducted after March 26, 2020 were held virtually due to state COVID-19 protocols.

Agricultural Water Quality Program is responsible for developing plans and ensuring rule compliance to prevent and control water pollution from agricultural activities and soil erosion on rural lands. ODA is also responsible for ensuring that farmers and ranchers help achieve water quality standards. In 2020, the Agricultural Water Quality Program initiated a new effort with the Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) to explore Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) election eligibility and advance relationships between districts and a broader community. ODA staff have provided support to a workgroup administered by the SWCC to explore laws relating to eligibility to run for elected offices of SWCDs. This exploration, in part, stems from a citizen's concern around minimum landownership or management requirements for certain Director positions. A survey of SWCD elected boards summarized responses to questions about current or potential new laws surrounding election eligibility. ODA has joined the SWCC Chair in continuing these conversations with a broader community, to promote the work of SWCDs generally, and expand relationships. In November 2020, ODA's Water Quality Manager and the SWCC Chair provided a presentation to the EJTF on this subject.

In other work, Water Quality staff continued monitoring adjacent to Klamath Lake to address water quality concerns from agricultural activities. The Klamath Tribe is part of a technical team to evaluate water quality data around the lake and develop projects with local landowners. Water Quality staff are also working with a group that has formed at the request of the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, Siuslaw Indians (CTCLUSI) to focus on improving water quality in Tenmile Lakes (Coos County).

The Pesticide Program regulates the sale, use and distribution of pesticide products in Oregon to protect people and the environment from adverse effects of pesticide use while maintaining the availability of pesticides for beneficial uses. ODA recognizes the importance of protecting pesticide applicators and workers from pesticide exposure. ODA continues to provide trainings and translate documents including advisories into Spanish and work with partner agencies to conduct outreach and education. Among those translated include: Disinfectants for COVID-19, Pesticide advisories, and pesticide rulemaking. In February 2020, ODA Pesticide Registration Specialist

participated in the first commercial beekeeper workshop held in Spanish put on by Oregon State University.

A workgroup was put together to explore the use of pesticide products containing the active ingredient chlorpyrifos. The purpose was to identify priorities, direction and focus to reduce risk to humans. Members of the workgroup convened for nine (9) months and included leaders and experts from a wide cross section of interests, including agriculture, environmental justice groups, toxicologist and farmworker health-and-safety organizations. The committee's work was transparent, collaborative, and consisted of inclusive communication that was in-line with ODA's mission and strategic plan objectives. ODA provided professional Spanish interpretation for two (2) of the public hearings on the proposed rules and extended the public comment period. As a result of these actions, the process provided critical public comment and stakeholder feedback that helped the agency adopt a rule designed to protect vulnerable populations of agricultural workers and other people, as well as the environment, from the harmful effects of the insecticide chlorpyrifos.

The Pesticide Analytical and Response Center (PARC) is mandated to collect pesticide-related incident information and coordinate in making appropriate referrals to PARC member agencies. PARC contracts with 211info to provide a 24-hour hotline to receive pesticide-related calls. The hotline provides assistance to customers through access to an interpreter service with more than 140 languages.

The Insect Pest Prevention & Management (IPPM) Program works to protect Oregon's agriculture, horticulture, natural resources, and quality of life from invasive insect pests. In 2020, IPPM continued its' fourth year of the multi-year eradication program to combat the destructive Japanese Beetle (JB) found in Washington County. From January to March, IPPM staff worked to inform residents and businesses in the treatment area about the importance of protecting Oregon from JB, as well as gather consent from residents to allow IPPM to treat the properties. To inform residents about the project, information was sent through multiple media sources including mailed letters, notices on doors, posters in heavily trafficked areas, posts on the social platform Nextdoor, blog posts on our project website, and articles in local newspapers. In addition, two open house events were held in collaboration with partner agencies and stakeholders in the area to provide residents an opportunity to learn about the



project, ask questions, and have conversations about their concerns. In total, about 12,200 residences, six schools, eight parks, three shopping centers, and one golf course were treated, totaling approximate 4,300 acres. IPPM biocontrol has shared information on the greenhouse thrips with the Confederate Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians. The IPPM program translated documents into other languages as part of its outreach efforts including Spanish and Russian. Additional information about 2020 activities can be found in ODA's Plant Program's annual report can be found at <https://oda.direct/PlantAnnualReport>.

ODA's Noxious Weed Program works to protect Oregon's natural resources and agricultural economy from invasive noxious weed. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic down-turn, our Noxious Weed Program had to limit its activities on noxious weed work to federal land. We hope that our Noxious Weed Program will resume noxious weed work in limited capacities during the 2021 summer.

The Nursery & Christmas Tree Program works to protect Oregon's nursery and Christmas tree industries from the introduction and spread of plant pests, disease, and noxious weeds. The program provides services to licensed Oregon nurseries and Christmas tree growers that assist in the production, marketing, and protection of Oregon nursery stock and Christmas trees. In 2020, the program received funding from USDA (PPA 7721) to develop outreach and education services for nursery growers on boxwood blight. In collaboration with Oregon State University, the goal was to develop in-person and online trainings/workshops that teach how to scout for the disease, recognizing early symptoms, and how to respond. A key focus group of these trainings/workshops are the agricultural workers in boxwood growing nurseries. A large portion of this demographic are from the Latinx community, where English may not be their first language. Moreover, these workers do not always receive direct training on pest identification and management. These workers are the first line of defense a grower has to detect the pathogen and protect their inventory from severe infestations, which can result in large monetary losses. Moreover, by directly teaching these skills in Spanish, it can empower workers to be more independent and proactive in their work. Dr. Luisa Santamaria, a plant pathologist with Oregon State University Extension, and member on the State Board of Agriculture has been developing and teaching such trainings in Spanish, targeting Latinx agricultural workers for multiple years with the Oregon nursery industry.

The Food Safety Program ensures food is safe for consumption and works with food establishments to prevent foodborne illness. The Food Safety Program remains committed to support its clients' diversity. As previously mentioned, with the onset of the global pandemic in early 2020, ODA's Food Safety Program worked with food establishments on food safety protocols to prevent and respond to COVID outbreaks in the workplace. ODA staff translated information into Spanish on safety of food from establishments with COVID positive staff. Staff continue to assist to help navigate the ever-changing safety guidelines being put out.

ODA's Shellfish Program is moving to provide QR codes on all shellfish area closure signs that will provide this critical public health information in multiple languages including Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean. The QR codes will be able to be scanned by any smart phone so that they have instant translation of an area closure.

Ongoing Food Safety Program activities that particularly benefit EJ communities include the following:

- ODA Food Safety Inspectors check expiration dates on certain products, including baby formula, during inspections to ensure they are not beyond the expiration date.
- The Food Safety program tracks the number of businesses whose preferred language is other than English. There are approximately 80 businesses where the operator prefers Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai, Burmese, Korean, or Russian. Many ODA food safety inspectors speak multiple languages, and inspectors provide educational assistance to all the firms they inspect to help them understand and meet food safety requirements.
- Some smaller convenience stores and markets, including those who serve EJ communities, may need extra assistance in proper food handling and storage, including keeping foods out of the temperature danger zone, handling and preparing food safely, and purchasing food from approved (licensed) sources. ODA provides this extra assistance when needed, with a focus on educating store managers and employees on strategies to comply with Oregon's food regulations.
- ODA commonly provides food recall information in several languages and tries to provide the information in a way that reaches affected businesses and consumers.

The Animal Health Program tracks livestock movement in and out of the state, establishes disease testing and vaccination requirements for interstate movement, conducts outreach and education about livestock disease prevention, and investigates reports of certain livestock diseases. Outreach and education materials are available in multiple languages. The program has especially focused on poultry producers, ranging from backyard poultry to large-scale poultry operations, providing information on how to prevent avian influenza and other serious avian diseases.

The Livestock Identification Program works to deny a market for stolen livestock through registration of brands and brand inspections. The program's brand application has been translated into Spanish, and the program communicates with customers who are more comfortable receiving written correspondences in Spanish.

The Market Access, Certification and Inspections Programs address the development and marketing needs of Oregon's agricultural industries to promote and create demand for Oregon agricultural products in local, domestic, and international markets through trade and business development activities; provide third party inspection and certification services that add value to products by making them more marketable; and conduct field surveys and provide laboratory testing of seed and plant material to detect pests and diseases. In 2020, ODA applied an equity lens to the selection of Specialty Crop Block Grants and Farm to School Infrastructure Grants, considering woman or Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)-owned business, and veterans, in addition to regional and industry sector diversity. Additionally, the Produce Safety Program offered free, remote training classes for all growers in 2020. Free classes increase the accessibility of meeting the Produce Safety Rule requirement that one person from every farm subject to the rule attend a recognized training class.

The Smoke Management Program administers the rules for field burning in the Willamette Valley to reduce smoke impacts to populated areas in the interest of public health and welfare. In 2020, field burning occurred on 11 days, with only 7,512 of the allocated 14,865 acres burned. Impacts to municipalities were recorded on two days. Nephelometers, which measure particulates in the air, are located in Carus, Detroit, Eugene, Lyons, Mill City, Portland, Salem, Silverton, Springfield, and Sweet Home. The nephelometers in Lyons, Mill City, and Detroit each recorded one hour of light impact on one day of burning. On the second day in which impacts were recorded, the Lyons (7

moderate, 11 light), Mill City (3 moderate, 13 light), and Detroit (8 light) nephelometers also recorded impacts. A total of 44 complaints were received during the 2020 field burning season. Due to the unprecedented wildfires that impacted the Willamette Valley, the 2020 field burning season was voluntarily ended to protect the health and safety of both the program participants as well as other Oregonians affected by the wildfires. The full report can be accessed at:  
<https://www.oregon.gov/ODA/shared/Documents/Publications/NaturalResources/FieldBurningSummary2020.pdf>

The Weights and Measures Program (WMP) provides consumer protection, fair competition among businesses, and facilitates interstate commerce and international trade by assuring the accuracy of all licensed commercial weighing and measuring devices in Oregon. The WMP inspects approximately 61,800 devices in approximately 13,600 businesses each year which are used to weigh or measure an estimated \$107 billion worth of goods and products in Oregon. This program also maintains custody of Oregon's mass and volumetric standards for measurement, which are used to provide precision calibration and traceability for Oregon's commercial weighing system. Calibration services are provided to over 141 private businesses annually in order to help strengthen Oregon industry's competitiveness.

The Motor Fuel Quality Program (MFQP) provides consumer protection by ensuring that the estimated 2.1 billion gallons of motor vehicle gasoline and diesel fuel sold in Oregon each year meet national standards for quality and comply with Oregon's Renewable Fuel Standard (10% ethanol in gasoline and 5% biodiesel in diesel fuel). Annually, inspectors screen approximately 3,600 samples of gasoline for octane levels, inspect 5,500 fuel storage tanks for excessive water and other contaminants, and pull approximately 120 official fuel samples that are tested at a private lab for state and national specification compliance.

#### The ODA Regulatory Laboratory Program

ODA's Regulatory Laboratory Program provides laboratory chemistry and microbiology analysis for ODA in the areas of food, dairy, shellfish, foliage, soil, fertilizer, pesticides, water, and various food products destined for domestic and international markets. Throughout the year, many of the samples received by the Lab for testing purposes are directly related to potential human health issues.

### The Country of Origin Labeling Program (COOL)

Designated retailers are federally mandated to notify their customers of the country(ies) of origin and methods(s) of production (wild or farm raised-as applicable) of covered commodities. Covered commodities include muscle cuts of lamb, chicken, and goat; ground lamb, ground chicken, and ground goat; wild and farm-raised fish and shellfish; perishable agricultural commodities; macadamia nuts; pecans; ginseng; and peanuts. The USDA contracts with ODA to perform COOL audits of several food retailers each year for compliance.

ODA will continue to make improvements to its processes by increasing knowledge and understanding about environmental justice issues that intersect with our agency. ODA welcomes any feedback that could help support these efforts.