

Oregon

Oregon State University offers a pot policy class

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

Talk about higher education. Oregon State University — once known as “Oregon Straight” compared to the supposedly hipper school 40 miles south — is offering a marijuana

policy class this winter. About 50 students are enrolled in “Marijuana Policy in the 21st Century,” a sociology course developed by Seth Crawford, an instructor in the School of Public Policy within the College of Liberal Arts. Students will produce a

collectively-authored paper of their recommendations on how marijuana should be produced, sold and distributed when recreational pot use, possession and cultivation becomes legal in Oregon July 1. Oregon voters approved a measure in November that le-

galized possession and sale of pot and pot products, and allows people to grow limited amounts of marijuana as well. The class recommendations will go to the Oregon Health Authority and to the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, which will set the state’s pot rules.

Crawford, the instructor, is considered an expert on policies and the marijuana market structure in Oregon. He’s a member of the state’s Advisory Committee on Medical Marijuana. In a news release, Crawford said students “will be

working with policymakers and stakeholders to help answer some of the biggest questions facing the state following the passage of Measure 91.” No word yet on whether OSU’s Crop Science experts will be involved.

Stripe rust found early in Willamette Valley wheat

By MITCH LIES
For the Capital Press

At an wheat and seed production meeting Jan. 6, Oregon State University plant pathologist Chris Mundt warned growers that stripe rust could strike wheat early this year.

Those concerns now have materialized. Mundt and three extension researchers issued an alert Jan. 19 informing growers that they have found stripe rust in early-planted experimental plots and commercial fields, beginning with sightings Jan. 7-12, three weeks earlier than ever previously recorded. The alert described “early-planted fields” as those planted in September through the first 10 days of October.

The researchers found rust on individual leaves of the wheat varieties Goetze, WB 1529, Foote and Kaseberg. Also, Mundt, Extension Cereals Specialist Mike Flowers, and Willamette Valley Extension agents Nicole Anderson and Clare Sullivan reported that rust had not developed in easy-to-spot hot spots, so it may be difficult for growers to identify infected fields.

Doing so, however, may be vital for growers to maximize yields.

With mild winter temperatures creating an ideal environment for early rust development, Willamette Valley wheat could be highly susceptible to significant yield losses this year, Mundt said.

“The largest field losses occur when stripe rust starts early,” he said. “You don’t want the rust to get ahead of you.”

The researchers are recommending that fields planted prior to Oct. 15 to susceptible or moderately susceptible varieties, such as Goetze, Tubbs 06, Mary, Kaseberg, SY Ovation and LCS Art Deco should be scouted and may require an early fungicide treatment.

“Early sprays will likely not be required on resistant varieties such as Bobtail and Rosalyn,” according to the alert, “but these varieties should still be scouted to guard against the potential for new rust races to appear.”

The alert noted that December temperatures were 5 degrees above normal, and



Courtesy of Chris Mundt, OSU Oregon State University plant pathologist Chris Mundt warned Western Oregon wheat producers to watch for stripe rust, shown here. Mundt said mild winter weather is creating an ideal environment for the disease.

that December temperatures are “a crucial driver of stripe rust.” Mild December temperatures facilitate pathogen survival and shorten its generation time, according to the alert.

“The early start to the rust season may allow for an extra generation of disease increase, a critical factor for rapidly spreading rusts,” the alert states.

The researchers noted that rust has not been seen in later-planted, direct-tilled fields nor in the northern Willamette Valley, but that it is expected to occur in both.

“Weather in the remainder of the year can still influence rust, but the early start of the rust season suggests that vigilance be called for in 2015,” the alert states.

Karow named next OSU Ag Research Foundation director

By MITCH LIES
For the Capital Press

Russ Karow, former head of Oregon State University’s Crop and Soil Science Department, has accepted a position as the next executive director of the OSU Agricultural Research Foundation.

Karow is in line to replace Kelvin Koong, who is stepping down June 30 from the position he has held since September of 2011.

Phil Walker, president of the foundation, said the organization’s personnel committee identified Karow as its top candidate early in the hiring process.

“We had a couple of interviews with Russ and the more we talked to him, the better it looked,” Walker said.

“Russ is a veteran administrator with proven people skills and strong ties to the Oregon State University community,” Walker said. “We just thought he was the best choice for the job.”

Karow retired as head of the Crop and Soil Science Department last fall.

His hiring is pending formal approval by the foundation’s board of directors, which will meet in March. Walker said the board has been consulted throughout the hiring process and to date has been supportive of the personnel committee’s selection.



Mitch Lies/For the Capital Press Russ Karow, former head of the Crop and Soil Science Department at Oregon State University, will become the new executive director of the OSU Agricultural Research Foundation.

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Because of that, he expects the board to endorse the committee’s selection.

“We’ve had no objections from anyone at this point,” Walker said.

The part-time executive director post is one of three staff positions at the foundation. The other two, office manager and manager of finance and research, are full-time positions.

The foundation, which

was established in 1934, provides custodial services for research funds by accepting targeted grants from nonprofit organizations, including commodity commissions, and distributing the funds to researchers. In addition, the foundation accepts gifts toward research. It also distributes about \$400,000 annually to researchers in competitive grants — funds it accrues through investments.

Researcher-farmer named Nut Grower of the Year

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

A retired USDA researcher turned farmer has been named the 2015 Nut Grower of the Year.

Harry Lagerstedt, who worked for the agency’s Agricultural Research Service, is known for his popularization of the Ennis hazelnut variety.

The cultivar produces high yields of large nuts and continues to receive a premium price from buyers due to its size, said Dave Smith, an Oregon State University researcher.

After retiring from USDA in 1987, Lagerstedt decided to “put his money where his mouth is” and planted orchards of Ennis hazelnuts and

peaches in the Corvallis area, Smith said.

Lagerstedt was unable to accept the prestigious award at the recent annual conference of the Nut Growers Society in Corvallis on Jan. 13 due to a recent death in his family.

The society hopes to present him with the honor at its summer tour later in the year.

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