

Oregon cattle group votes to sue Fish and Wildlife Service

By KATY NESBITT
For the Capital Press

PENDLETON, Ore. — The Oregon Cattlemen's Association announced this week its intent to sue the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for its failure to complete an environmental study that would remove gray wolves from the endangered species list in the lower 48 states.

Citing the agency's lack of decision-making following the publication of its 2013 proposed rule in the Federal Register to remove the gray wolves from the Federal List of Threatened and Endangered Species, Jerome Rosa, executive director of Oregon Cattlemen, said the membership voted to file a 60-day letter of intent to sue U.S. Fish and Wildlife during its Pendleton spring quarterly meeting June 2.

Rosa said the association will be represented by the Pacific Legal Foundation of Sacramento, Calif.

"One comment we've gotten through the years is that the cattle industry often tends to be playing defense," Rosa said. "Many of our members feel by moving forward with this we are being on the offensive side of things instead of trying to defend what we do."

Todd Nash, the Cattlemen's wolf committee chairman, said the absence of a completed analysis three years after U.S. Fish and Wildlife closed its public comment period regarding its



Two adult wolves from the Walla Walla Pack were caught on remote trail camera Jan. 16, 2016, in northern Umatilla County, Ore. The Oregon Cattlemen's Association has announced its intent to sue the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for its failure to complete an environmental study that would remove gray wolves from the endangered species list in the lower 48 states.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

lengthy discussions regarding the intent to sue, Nash said they are not yet on board.

"Washington is going to take it back to their board and discuss it, and California will likely throw in with us," Nash said.

environmental policy analysis to delist gray wolves from the endangered species list was one reason for the suit.

"They are legally bound to do that within one year and that's the preface of pressing forward with the lawsuit," Nash said.

The lack of manpower Fish and Wildlife dedicates to managing wolves was another frustration that led to litigation, Nash said.

In Oregon, like Washington and Utah, managing wolves is complicated.

Through an appropriations bill Congress removed gray wolves from the Endangered Species List in Montana,

Idaho and parts of Oregon, Washington and Utah in April 2011. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife then took over sole management of wolves east of U.S. Highway 395, Oregon Highway 78 and U.S. Highway 95.

In November 2015 wolves were removed from the state endangered species list, but west of that line wolves remain protected by the federal Endangered Species Act.

In the vastly larger landscape of the western portion of the state under federal jurisdiction, Nash said the agency is woefully understaffed.

"This is no discredit to John (Stephenson, wolf biologist)," Nash said, "but he is one guy."

Nash said the cattlemen believe the U.S. Fish and Wildlife needs to increase its staffing to better capture, collar and monitor wolves and complete its effort to delist gray wolves through the National Environmental Policy Act.

A vote was taken to sue the federal government at the cattlemen's November annual meeting in Bend as well, Nash said, but the members were waiting to see if the Washington Cattlemen were interested in taking legal action along with them. While a contingency of Washington

Cattlemen members were in attendance at the Oregon Cattlemen's Pendleton meeting last week and participated in

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Pacific Coast buys Oregon Cherry Growers

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

SALEM — Pacific Coast Producers, a grower cooperative in Lodi, Calif., is buying the processing portion of Oregon Cherry Growers in Salem.

Pacific Coast Producers processes and packages fruits and tomatoes for private label retail and food service sales. It plans to operate OCG as a stand-alone subsidiary that will continue to use the OCG name and operate OCG facilities in Salem and The Dalles. The deal is expected to close by June 17.

OCG's fresh cherry business will continue independent of the transaction as Cascade Fruit Growers.

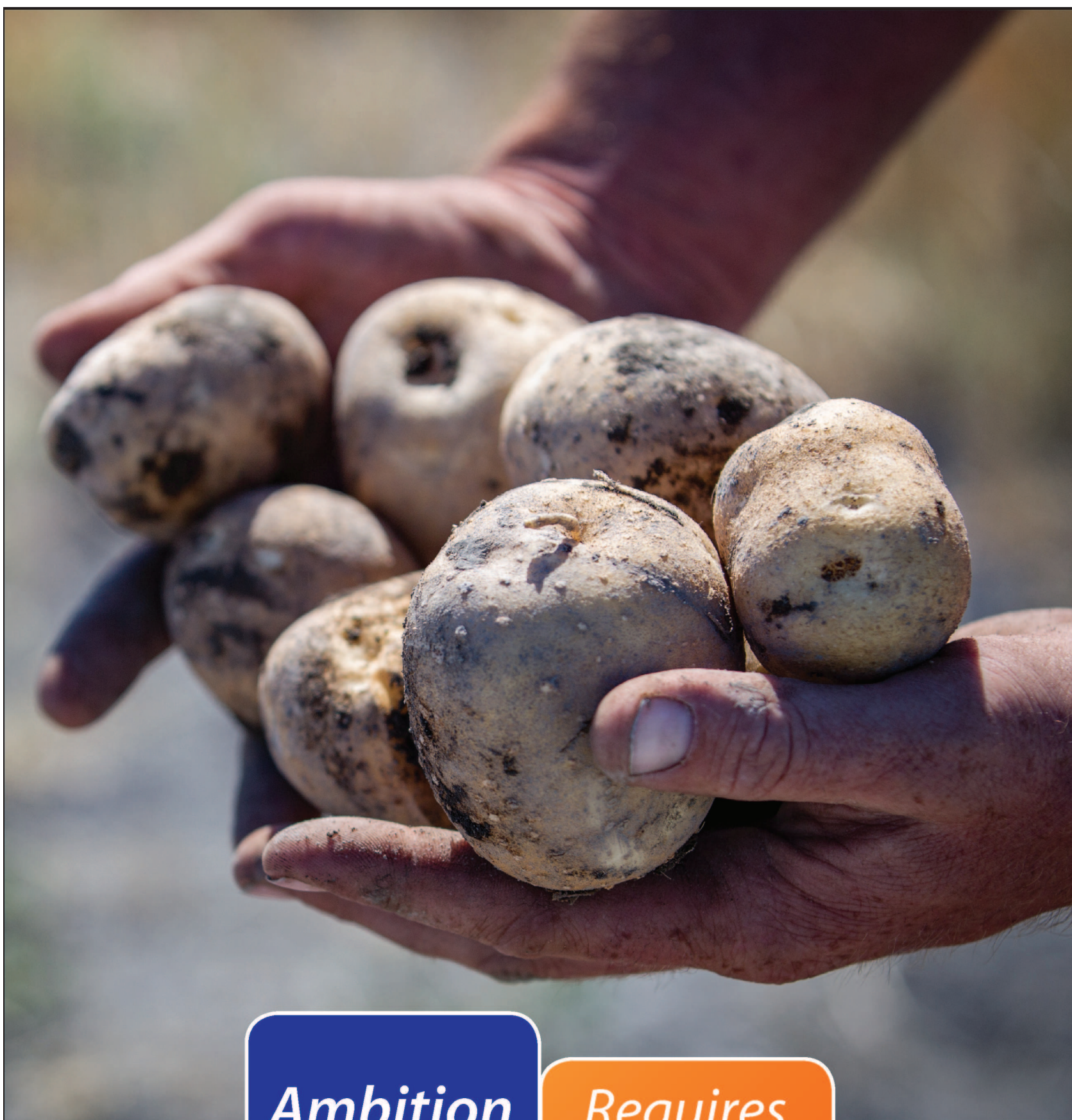
"We believe this acquisition will be positive for the future of Oregon Cherry Growers, for our employees and our growers," Tim Ramsey, president and CEO of Oregon Cherry Growers, said in a news release.

Founded in 1932, OCG is made up of almost 60 family farms in the Willamette Valley and Columbia River Gorge. The cooperative is the largest grower-processor of sweet cherries in the world, including fresh, maraschino, glace, frozen, IQF, dried and canned cherries, as well as a wide variety of dried fruit, servicing the food service, retail and industrial ingredient channels.

"We appreciate Oregon Cherry Growers' 85 years of quality, service and innovation and their experience in supplying cherry ingredients to customers around the world," said Dan Vincent, president and CEO of Pacific Coast Producers.

Values and strengths of the two cooperatives align well and the deal will allow Pacific Coast Producers to grow and further serve customer needs, he said.

Pacific Coast Producers represents growers of peaches, pears, grapes, apricots, apples and plums. It is the premier private brand supplier of canned fruits and tomatoes.



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