

Campus buzz

Saturday

Adam Kehl, percussion (senior recital), 1 p.m., Beall Hall, free.
Rachel Seay, horn (senior recital), 4 p.m., Beall Hall, free.
Dan Flanagan, violin (master's recital), 6 p.m., Beall Hall, free.
On the Rocks, with Divisi (a cappella

concert), 8:30 p.m., Beall Hall, \$8 general public, \$5 students and senior citizens, 346-5678.

Sunday

Leonard Bernstein's "Chichester Psalms" (University Ensemble Concert, featuring the University Singers), 3 p.m., Beall Hall, \$5 general public, \$3 students and senior

citizens, 346-5678.

Christine Keene, soprano (junior recital), 4:30 p.m., Newman Center, free.
Rika Uchida, piano (doctoral recital), 8 p.m., Beall Hall, free.

Monday

Chi Alpha (meeting), 6:30-9 p.m., EMU Metolius Room.

Government may keep food labeling optional

If the bill goes to the senate and passes, state and local governments won't be able to enforce food labeling

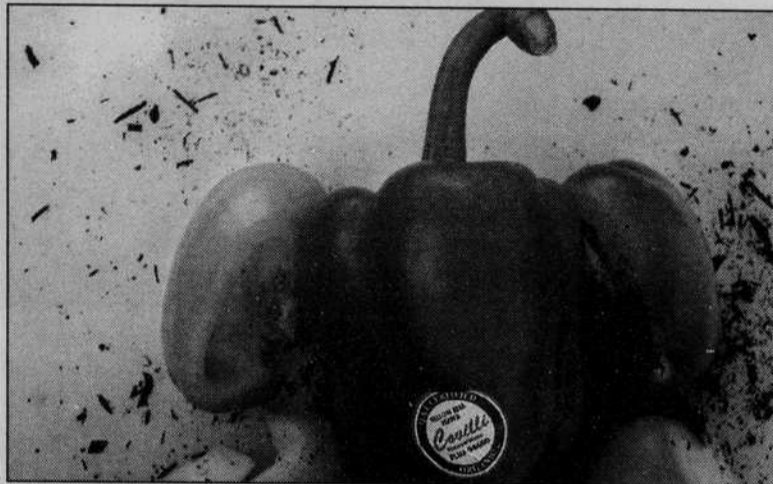
Aimee Rudin
City/State Politics Reporter

Most grocery stores are filled with produce and edible products from around the nation and around the world. Foods, especially fruits and vegetables, often carry a label describing the conditions under which they were grown. Stickers reading USDA certified organic, or hot-house grown, are a common sight. But one label some consumers would like to see on their food is noticeably absent.

Genetically modified organisms — food that has had its genetic material altered through controlled breeding — are not required to carry a label declaring their origins. Some Oregon producers do label their products as genetically engineered, although it is a voluntary action not required by federal law.

A few Oregon lawmakers are looking to keep labeling optional. The Oregon House of Representatives recently passed legislation ensuring that individual communities do not require more stringent labeling regulations on GMOs than those required by the federal government. However, the federal government currently does not require any labeling of genetically modified food.

House Bill 2957 was passed in April and is now in front of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, headed by Sen. Frank Shields, D-Portland. According to a spokesman in Shield's office, the committee is currently closed, and a senate vote has not yet been scheduled. If the bill goes to the senate and passes, neither the state government nor local governments will be



Jeremy Forrest Emerald

Many organic food growers label their food, such as peppers from Sundance Natural Food, even though labeling is optional.

allowed to enforce any form of labeling regulation on GMOs.

Many of the bill's opponents are calling it unnecessary and a knee-jerk response to Measure 27 — a bill proposed in 2002 that would have required the labeling of all genetically modified organisms.

Currently there is no record of any local government taking an individual stance on food labeling requirements. Before the passage of the bill in the House, opponents of the bill, including Rep. Floyd Prozanski, D-Eugene, said the bill was unnecessary.

"We're fixing something that isn't a problem," Prozanski said. "I don't believe we should be limiting the ability of the state to supply Oregon residents with information about the foods they are eating."

As of now, USDA regulations control the labeling of organic foods, but not GMOs. According to Joe Gabriel, Eugene office manager for CF Fresh, fed-

eral regulations for organic foods stemmed from the individual state requirements set by Oregon and California more than 10 years ago.

"Last year organic certification was moved under the federal USDA umbrella," Gabriel said. "Now everyone in the country uses the same standards, and individual states cannot enforce tougher standards than the federal guidelines. It has left many people feeling like the regulations were compromised."

Sen. Shields can be contacted at (503) 986-1724. Three other state senators represent the University and surrounding area: Sen. Tony Corcoran, D-Cottage Grove, can be contacted at (503) 986-1704, Sen. Bill Morrisette, D-Springfield, can be contacted at (503) 986-1706 and Sen. Vicki Walker, D-Cottage Grove, can be contacted at (503) 986-1707.

Contact the senior reporter at aimee.rudin@dailyemerald.com.

Railroad

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coordinator for the Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides, said NCAP's biggest concern was Union Pacific's lack of notification to people living along the tracks.

"We have concerns about the toxicity effects, as well as health and environmental effects," Kemple said. Union Pacific "is not posting notices near the tracks and not notifying the neighbors ... we think there should be postings."

Glyphosate, the active chemical used to kill the weeds, is rated by the Environmental Protection Agency as having a toxicity level of three, with level one being the most toxic and level four being the least. However, independent studies have shown conflicting results about what harm glyphosate may cause humans.

A fact sheet issued by the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the Bonneville Power Administration states, "Based on the results of animal studies, glyphosate does not cause genetic damage or birth defects, and has little or no effect on fertility, reproduction or development of offspring." The report also said that not enough information existed to determine whether or not glyphosate was a cause of cancer, and that there have been no reported cases of long term health effects in hu-

mans due to glyphosate exposure.

However, according to the Journal of Pesticide Reform, products that contain glyphosate can cause everything from eye irritation and nausea to breathing difficulties and heart palpitations. The Journal, published by NCAP, also makes mention of a recent Swedish study of hairy cell leukemia — a form of the cancer — which found that people who were occupationally exposed to glyphosate herbicides had a higher risk of contracting the cancer. Another study conducted in 1997 by Princeton found that Roundup caused death to half of the animals in an experiment.

John Bromley, the director of public affairs for Union Pacific, said the railroad company has no problem with using glyphosate because it feels there is no real danger in using the chemical.

"We don't think it causes any risk at all to the public," he said, adding he was aware of the public concerns about glyphosate but didn't feel there was a reason for the concern.

Bromley also said there shouldn't be any concern about winds blowing the chemical outside of the spray radius.

"The spray area is so small that I don't think (glyphosate) is going to go beyond the area it's intended to," he said. The spray area will be along all of the railroad tracks in Eugene and is expected to take one day to apply.

But Majeska Seese-Green, president of the Whiteaker Community Council and a member of the Railroad Pollution Coalition, said she disagrees with Bromley.

"Apparently, (Bromley) doesn't read the fine print," she said in response to his views on glyphosate, adding that people are concerned with the way the city of Eugene informs residents of the spraying.

"The fact is, neither Union Pacific or the city takes responsibility to make sure there are signs posted," she said.

Ward 3 City Counselor David Kelly said the reason the city doesn't post signs is because it takes money, and the city can't afford it right now. However, Kelly added there is currently a bill going through the Oregon Senate that would allow local jurisdictions to adopt local laws about requiring notification of pesticide use.

David Monk, executive director of the Oregon Toxics Alliance, said people should steer clear of areas being sprayed. He said if people do walk over the railroad tracks, they should leave their shoes outside when they return home.

Glyphosate will "affect anybody who happens to be around," he said, "especially young children. If you see (Union Pacific) spraying, I would vacate the area."

Contact the reporter at alishaughnessy@dailyemerald.com.

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RECEPTION TO FOLLOW IN ALLEN HALL ATRIUM AT 5:15 P.M.

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