

Oregon's Christmas crops spread cheer worldwide

Eighty percent of Oregon's agricultural products are distributed across the country and internationally

BY ANTHONY LUCERO
NEWS REPORTER

The state of Oregon plays a big role in creating Christmas cheer around the nation and the world. From hazelnuts to Christmas trees, Oregon agricultural businesses account for the majority of crops consumed by other states and international markets during the holiday season.

In fact, other states buy 40 percent of Oregon's \$3.68 billion agricultural products and other countries buy another 40 percent, leaving the last 20 percent of homegrown trees and nuts for Oregonians to enjoy, said Bruce Pokarney, director of communications for the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

"We don't have the population to use what we produce," Pokarney said. "We rely more heavily on export than most states do."

Oregon contains many Christmas traditions within its state borders — producing holiday classics such as reindeer and Christmas trees on farms — and California and other southwestern states rely on Oregon for Christmas trees, Pokarney said.

Oregon also exports other crops to other states and countries, ranging from hazelnuts — Oregon grows 95 percent of the \$39 million national market — to the \$32 million

peppermint oil market that is popularly used in candy canes. These two markets are overshadowed by the \$158 million Overshadown tree market and the even larger \$700 million greenhouse/nursery market, but hazelnuts and peppermint oil maintain a dominant market unrivaled by any other state or country.

The Christmas days of old are meeting the Internet generation, with many Oregon-based businesses expanding online to meet the overwhelming demand from other states and foreign markets.

One company meeting this outside demand is Freddy Guys Filberts, which sells hazelnuts grown from its 60-acre orchard in Monmouth, Ore.

Jocie Foulke, who helps to run the family-owned orchard, said many of the crops produced go to a larger co-op, but the remaining crops are sold through the Farmers' Market and on the orchard's Web site, www.freddyguys.com.

"We're shipping worldwide and get orders from out-of-state," Foulke said. "We get out-of-state business from visitors who come to Oregon's farmer markets and get our hazelnuts and want to continue buying them when they get back home."

The larger Made in Oregon company, spanning 10 stores across the

state, receives an outside market from its online component, www.madeinoregon.com. The Web site received 15,000-18,000 customers over the holiday season, representing an eighth of the company's sales, Dawn Malchow, assistant to buyers, said.

During the Christmas season, Made in Oregon stores sold gift packs with sausages and cheese from Tillamook and Bandon, Malchow said.

"Since we're only from Oregon it's a benefit to the state," Malchow said. "Business was great this year."

Malchow said online purchases were also made by tourists who keep coming back for more of what the state has to offer.

Most of Made in Oregon's online sales are gift packs, which Malchow said consist of a "little bit of everything," including cheese, jams, sausage and hazelnuts. Another popular item sold during the Christmas season is lavender. Pokarney said while Christmas provides a boost for agriculture sales with specialty crops like Christmas trees, much of the crops Oregon produces have strong sales throughout the year.

"Christmas is a great spotlight time — a time to feature (Christmas crops) — but if you take away Christmas you'd still have a strong agriculture market," Pokarney said. "Most of our products are year-round."

anthonylucero@dailyemerald.com

Commentator: Journal fights for funding

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Commentator had jeopardized the safety of the student," Quiroz said.

Quiroz said he felt it was his duty as a PFC member to determine whether the magazine should be student fee-funded. Citing the ASUO's Green Tape Notebook, Quiroz said it is the PFC's responsibility to decide how a student group is culturally and physically advantageous to students. According to the rule book, "each program ... must submit a goal statement which allows each Finance Committee to determine for itself whether the program or activity meets the statutory standard of ORS 351.070(3)(d), which authorizes the (Oregon State Board of Higher Education) to collect fees to fund programs for the cultural and physical development of students."

Nonetheless, Quiroz said he decided that the PFC should recall the decision because there is lack of clarity among the PFC members about exactly why the mission statement was not approved. In addition, the Commentator was also not present at the hearing when the decision was made. Quiroz said he still believes the issue of the Commentator's content should be pursued and he plans to have it discussed at the magazine's budget hearing. He said it is important for students to have an avenue for their concerns to be addressed.

"I've been really disappointed with the lack of action not taken by the other bodies in student government," he said.

However, Pohowalla said the PFC could not make decisions about a publication's content. The work of the PFC is only to determine whether student groups are following the rules, fulfilling their goals and missions and being fiscally responsible, she said.

"Every group is supposed to fulfill its mission and goals, and the

Commentator does that," she said, adding that the Commentator "is a service to campus."

She said PFC should not discuss content, adding that "that's not part of what we're supposed to do."

"As PFC we realized we'd made a mistake," she said. "We misinterpreted what the rules were."

She said she believes PFC members were "not educated enough" about what the rules are when the initial decision was made.

"We have to stay very viewpoint-neutral," she said, adding that if the PFC started to question the Commentator's content, it would also have to discuss content from other campus publications.

But Quiroz said he is not judging the magazine's content, but rather how that content might affect students.

"I don't think students should pay for hateful messages," Quiroz said. "That's poor use of student money."

Graf said the PFC did not have the authority to question the magazine's editorial content.

"The PFC tried to do a very underhanded thing thinking we wouldn't respond," Graf said. "They couldn't reason their way out of it. I don't think legally they had a leg to stand on."

Although the PFC did not specify which student made complaints, one student came out publicly to protest the Commentator's content.

ASUO Senator Toby Hill-Meyer wrote in a statement given to the Emerald that the Commentator "has repeatedly and maliciously targeted me with hate speech, ridiculing my gender identity, even with violent innuendo."

Hill-Meyer, who is transgender, said the Commentator attributed false quotes to Hill-Meyer in the last summer issue. The student senator said the comments provoked safety concerns.

Hill-Meyer wrote the statement in response to comments published

in the Commentator regarding Hill-Meyer's preference to be referred to by a non-gender-specific pronoun.

"While I do not know the specifics of the PFC's decision or how they plan to proceed, I myself have read through the Commentator and wondered how they can use student money to print their magazine," Hill-Meyer said.

Hill-Meyer said there was no desire to have the magazine defunded, but wished to see "some kind of University response to this kind of hate speech."

"I am glad that the PFC has decided to go down a path that will create a forum to discuss these issues," Hill-Meyer said.

Graf said the paper does not publish hate speech, adding that it is evident that what was written about Hill-Meyer was satirical.

"We're not going to allow Toby Hill-Meyer to dictate the editorial content of the paper," Graf said. "The quote that we had on him was clearly in jest."

Graf said the Commentator has no intentions to cause anyone any harm.

"We're very conscious of whether we're going to put someone in a bad position," Graf said.

ASUO President Adam Petkun said it is important to separate the issue of the Commentator's funding from that of whether it publishes hateful content. He said the Commentator operates under First Amendment rules that he wouldn't want to be violated.

"We need to make sure that (the PFC is) allocating student funds in a viewpoint-neutral manner," Petkun said.

Petkun added that ASUO is developing other ways to address the allegations of hate speech made against the Commentator.

ayishayahya@dailyemerald.com

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