



EO Media Group/File

FFA and 4-H sheep handlers line up outside the livestock arena during the 2019 Wallowa County Fair. An initiative petition that seeks to limit exceptions to the state's animal abuse protections would make artificial insemination an offense. Opponents say the change would mean anyone assisting a 4-H member with such procedures could be charged with a felony.

INITIATIVE

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November 2022 ballot.

Michelson did not return calls for comment.

According to state law, a person commits animal abuse if they "intentionally, knowingly or recklessly cause physical injury to an animal," or "cruelly cause the death of an animal," except when practicing good animal husbandry. The petition seeks to remove that exemption.

"IP13 doesn't change our definition of abuse, it merely changes who is considered above the law," the "Yes on IP13" website states.

Cooper said the petition is the biggest threat to Oregon's livestock industry in decades.

"I think it would leave producers in incredibly uncertain territory," she said. "It is very dangerous territory for folks."

Perhaps the cruelest twist, Cooper said, is the effect the initiative would have on 4-H and FFA programs. Animal abuse in Oregon is considered a Class A misdemeanor but is a felony if committed in

the presence of a minor.

"You think of 4-H programs, and people who have artificial insemination programs, and all of a sudden anybody helping them with their projects could be considered a felon," Cooper said. "That's just wild."

Supporters say the initiative would not ban the sale of meat, leather and fur in Oregon.

"It would require that animals be allowed to truly live a good life free from abuse, neglect and sexual assault," the campaign website states. "After an animal lives a full life, and exits the world naturally and humanely, this initiative does not prohibit a farmer from processing and distributing their body for consumption."

But Tom Sharp, a Harney County rancher and president of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, said that is not an economically viable business model for producers.

"How would a producer ever plan on managing a herd of cattle, until some uncertain date when that herd has reached their full and natural lifespan?" Sharp said. "At that point, it's impractical to take

those animals to market for processing."

Oregon has 13,000 cattle ranchers statewide with 1.3 million head of cattle. In 2019, cattle and calves ranked as the second-most valuable agricultural commodity, at \$652 million. Sharp said the petition could put those businesses at risk.

"I don't see, from a business standpoint, how that would pencil out for any of these beef producers," he said.

The initiative doesn't only target agriculture. It would also erase animal cruelty exemptions for hunting, fishing, wildlife management, rodeos and scientific research, among others.

Amy Patrick, outreach coordinator for the Oregon Hunters Association, said the initiative is ringing alarm bells and could potentially make hunting illegal in the state.

"It's an attempt to get at fishing, trapping, hunting and additional wildlife management practices," Patrick said. "Removing the exemptions would allow them to be classified as animal abuse. It's not animal abuse by any stretch of the imagination."

WRIGHT

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at The Observer," he said. "The newspaper and the crew in La Grande mean a great deal to me not just because of the work or the experience I gained there, but really because of the people and what we were building together. Now I get to put all this to the test again."

When Wright was hired in November 2019, The Observer newsroom had been without an editor since March 2019. The Observer publisher Karrine Brogoitti said Wright helped bring some much-needed stability to the newsroom.

"Phil came to us when we really needed a leader," she said. "He hit

the ground running and hasn't had the opportunity to take a breather since that first day. It's one thing to take on a new leadership role, but it's a completely different game to take on that role and then navigate the landscape of covering a pandemic and what that means for the community you serve and your staff. It was a lot for everyone, but he certainly thrived under the pressure."

Andrew Cutler will fill in as editor in La Grande on an interim basis. Cutler, who is the publisher/editor of the East Oregonian and the regional editorial director of EO Media Group's eastside publications, served as editor in La Grande from 2012 until 2017. He also served as

the paper's publisher from 2015 until leaving.

"Having Andrew help out during this interim period is something that I'm certainly looking forward to," Brogoitti said. "I have a lot of respect for Andrew as an editor, and I'm glad he was willing to step in and help. He's been an 'honorary' member of The Observer family and the entire staff is excited to have him back."

Cutler said he's happy to be able to help out in La Grande during the transition.

"Some of my happiest times professionally have occurred at The Observer," he said. "To be able to come back and help out — even in some small minor way — is something I'm always more than happy to do."

BOARD

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clearing up misunderstandings that can lead to bad policy such as a ballot initiative that seeks to restrict animal agriculture.

"I'm trying to educate Oregonians about the importance of agriculture in Oregon," he said.

Talking with people about the challenges of farming creates positive connections and often elicits comments such as, "I didn't realize that," or, "That makes sense now," Allen said.

As far as specific policy advice for ODA, Allen said it's not possible to "know what's around the next bend" but he expects water and land use to remain perennially important topics for the agency.

Allen said he has a "personal passion" for protecting exclusive farm use zones and the "right to farm" in Oregon, and hopes to "bring common

sense to the table" regarding controversies over the dairy industry.

Conservation projects are often adjacent to dairy farms in the Tillamook area and the region has shown that agriculture doesn't need to be eliminated to improve water quality and environmental conditions, he said.

"I believe we can accomplish a lot of things if we work together on it," Allen said.

Svaty said that between growing up on a ranch, marrying a farmer and working at an agricultural bank, "ag is just who I am, it's all I know."

By serving on the Board of Agriculture, Svaty hopes to inform the state's farm regulators about how regulatory policies will affect growers on the ground.

"The ODA has a lot to do with how we farm and raise our animals," she said.

Irrigation availability and other water issues are

likely to remain a key issue for the agency, she said. "It's a topic that's always been there but it needs to be on our radar all the time."

In light of Oregon's higher tax and regulatory burden, the state's farmers must also seek ways to add value to their crops and livestock to remain competitive, Svaty said.

"You've got to add value to keep that family farm going," she said. R&R Seed Farms has found a unique niche producing vegetable and forage seeds, starting with an alfalfa seed contract inherited from a previous landowner over a decade ago.

The family's land and irrigation setup have proven conducive to such crops as carrot and turnip seeds, among others, Svaty said.

"We got a name for being able to raise those kinds of crops and we've stuck with it and it's served us well."

CLASSIFIEDS

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CROSSWORD PUZZLER

ACROSS

- Go at an easy gait
- Pediatrician's patient
- Short hairdos
- Bede or Sandler
- Nest-egg letters
- Give the eye
- Mademoiselle's father
- Ariz. neighbor
- Flashy sign
- Tattered cloth
- Vaccinate
- Upholstery choice
- Eastern philosophy
- Vein contents
- Bottle edge
- Throws the rider
- Garden dweller
- Write more
- Rajah's wife
- Put in a log
- Sine — non
- Chomped
- Wiedersehen
- Squander
- Blowtorch user
- Corn Belt st.
- Bullring yells
- Actress Hagen
- Swit co-star
- Swiss painter
- Paul —
- John, in Aberdeen
- Laundry need
- Author Paretsky
- Pair
- Scottish philosopher

DOWN

- Once around a track
- Type of poem
- Average
- Polishing agent
- Ruler
- Rage
- Boat crane
- Monsieur's greeting
- Curved molding
- Coalition
- Mailed out
- Winner's take
- Seize
- Cast a ballot
- Dietary need
- Spruce
- Des Moines loc.
- Pronto
- Yellow vehicles
- Clingy fabric
- Venue
- Jordan River's outlet (2 wds.)
- Fond — Lac
- Regret bitterly
- Impress deeply
- Orchard yield
- Make blush
- Stir-fry pans
- She, in Seville
- Sly look
- Billionth, in combos
- Shooting marble
- Gehrig or Rawls
- Beaver project
- Imitate

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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110 Announcements

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110 Announcements

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110 Announcements

*****LOST - MAY 8th*****
 Piper was spooked away from her home on Old Wingville Rd. (Between Haines/Baker City) She is black w/a white chin, very friendly and very small 5 lbs. **She is also chipped.** If you find her please call: **541-993-3220**

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110 Announcements

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