



RURAL OREGON JUNIPER MILL OPERATES ON HOPES AND DREAMS



Photos by Eric Mortenson/Capital Press

Kendall Derby says the demand for juniper products is strong, but the market lacks infrastructure and business is tentative. "I come close to the edge pretty regularly."

'I don't expect it to be easy, but I expect it to be possible'

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

Kendall Derby rolls into Portland in a tan GM Sierra pickup truck, pulling a flatbed trailer full of hope and bother. It's a load of landscape timbers Derby cut from gnarly western juniper trees, and he drove 170 miles from Fossil, the emptiest spot in rural Oregon's bare economy, to sell them in the city of hipsters.

Derby, 53, is burly, bearded, holds a rangeland ecology degree from Oregon State University and runs a two-man sawmill called In the Sticks. He said a guy should be able to make a living milling the juniper that cattle ranchers and government agencies want removed from the landscape.

He wants to believe that. But the saw should be whining, the kiln should be humming and the phone should be ringing with orders and offers. Instead, the only sound is the



Kendall Derby sizes up a juniper log for cutting at his In the Sticks sawmill in Fossil, Ore. Most of the lumber he produces is sold in the Portland area as landscape timbers and vineyard posts.

wind gently flapping the plastic covering stacks of timbers.

Winter's arrived and he doesn't have a juniper log deck to cut.

"One of the things that haunts me is, everybody that has tried juniper

has gone under," Derby said.

"Part of it is just hanging in there," he said. "I come close to the edge pretty regularly."

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Governor to propose Oregon GMO bill

Questions loom over coexistence measures

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

SALEM — Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber will propose a legislative fix in mid-January aimed at fostering coexistence among biotech, conventional and organic crops.

Details of the proposal haven't yet been disclosed and the legislative language will likely be amended before an actual bill is introduced, said Richard Whitman, the governor's natural resources policy director.

"The anticipation is there will be more conversation among stakeholders before we finalize the bill," Whitman said.

A task force on genetically modified organisms appears to have helped Kitzhaber decide on a course of action.

In 2013, the Oregon legislature pre-empted most local governments from restricting genetically modified crops at Kitzhaber's urging.

The governor then appointed a task force to frame the controversy over genetically modified organisms and inform lawmakers' decisions on possible statewide legislation.

The task force's recently completed report does not make any policy recommendations but lays out the points of contention between critics and proponents of genetically engineered crops.

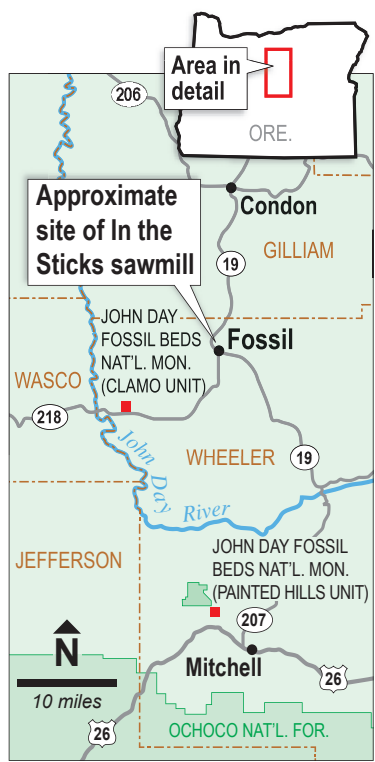
However, its members did agree that more clarity is needed about the state's role in regulating GMOs and how it diverges from federal authority.

The main question now is what measures Kitzhaber or state lawmakers will put forward to prevent unwanted cross-pollination among these crops or if farmers can agree on a voluntary system to avoid such gene flow.



Kitzhaber

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Alan Kenaga/Capital Press

Prospects for immigration reform uncertain

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

Farm labor leaders have mixed opinions on the prospects Congress and the president will reach a deal on immigration reform, and whether illegal immigrants will sign up in large numbers

for temporary legal status under President Obama's executive action.

They foresee agricultural labor shortages getting worse as fewer people want physical work.

Manuel Cunha, president of the Nisei Farmers League in Fresno, Calif., said major-

ity Republicans in Congress will do something on immigration to diffuse it as an issue for 2016 elections.

They likely will adopt a new agricultural guest worker program, like the one in the Senate bill last session, and

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Manuel Cunha, president of the Nisei Farmers League, poses Dec. 22 in front of a vineyard in Fresno, Calif.

Scott Smith
Associated Press

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