

Vilsack: Enormous opportunity hinges on trade deal, TPA

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

The U.S. could realize an additional \$123 billion in overall trade activity and \$11 billion in agricultural sales through the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement, but that won't happen unless Congress grants President Obama trade promotion authority, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a conference call with small business owners last week.

He said TPP is an enormous opportunity to expand U.S. exports of high-value agricultural products by reining in foreign tariffs that run as high as 200 percent in some of the other 11 negotiating countries, he said.

Asia alone is home to 525 million

middle-class consumers interested in those U.S. products. That population is forecast to grow to as much as 3.2 billion in the next 15 years — 10 times the populations of the entire U.S., he said.

Without so-called "fast track" authority, the president will have a difficult time concluding negotiations this year, he said.

Deals made without such authority are subject to amendment by Congress. Trade promotion authority limits Congress to an up or down vote on any proposed pact.

Democrats and trade unions have rallied strong opposition to the trade pact and to granting trade promotion authority to the president, contending a wide array of policy issues in free trade agreements — such as labor, health and

environmental standards — demand more input from Congress.

They also argue granting trade promotion authority will lead to a repeat of previous trade deals that they say lowered U.S. wages and sent jobs overseas.

Ag organizations, however, have largely supported both fast track and the negotiations.

Vilsack said foreign agricultural trade is critically important to both the rural and national economies, with 30 percent of all U.S. agricultural sales connected to exports.

The U.S. exported \$152.5 billion in agricultural products in fiscal year 2014, and record agricultural export sales in four of the last six years represents 1.1 million in U.S. jobs, Vilsack said.

In addition to the opportunity to in-

crease ag exports, TPP also offers the opportunity to point out to the rest of the world the need to continue to focus on higher standards of labor, environment and intellectual property protection, he said.

"I think we have in front of us with TPP negotiations a fundamental question: whether we're going to allow the United States to lead that effort or whether we're going to cede that opportunity to China," he said.

China is in the process of negotiating an all-Asia trade agreement that won't be as concerned with reducing trade tariffs or opening up opportunities for U.S. products and clearly won't address those higher standards, he said.

"So it's important for us to get engaged in this, and it's important for

Congress now to provide this president the same authority in terms of trade promotion that every president's had since Franklin Delano Roosevelt," he said.

There is serious, organized, vocal opposition to TPA and trade agreements, he said.

"We need a correspondingly well organized and powerful counter message, and that can come from small business," he said.

Nearly 300,000 small businesses across the country are engaged in export activity, hiring people, maintaining jobs and spreading the value of American system through trade, he said.

"These are powerful stories that need to be told. It's important that business owners make their voice heard," he said.

Second major container carrier stops visiting Portland

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — The Port of Portland might be almost completely out of the container business.

Hanjin Shipping left in February, taking nearly 80 percent of the Port of Portland's container business with it. Now there's concern that Hapag-Lloyd, the other major carrier, has ended Portland service.

"Although Hapag-Lloyd has not made an official announcement or given notification that it will no longer be calling on Terminal 6, its current vessel schedule does not show any such calls for the near future," Elvis Ganda, CEO of port operator ICTSI Oregon, told The Oregonian.

Not long ago, more than 1,000 businesses, primarily in Idaho, Oregon and Washington, relied on the container terminal to get their goods to or from international markets. Having to send cargo by truck or rail to or from an out-of-state port adds costs.

The Hanjin pullout happened amid continuing labor turmoil at the Port of Portland.

ICTSI, a major global ports operator, signed a 25-year lease in 2010 to operate the Port of Portland's struggling container terminal. It represented the company's first venture in the United



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press

A view of the Port of Portland is seen in this file photo. The port is losing a second container carrier.

States, and management quickly clashed with American labor.

The union described the operator's labor-management model as "authoritarian and intimidation-based," and said worker morale was low.

Ganda said the workers staged slowdowns to sabo-

tage the company and drive it out of business.

Agriculture industry officials have expressed concern that shipping goods from Puget Sound will become more expensive without Portland competing for the same business.

Hapag-Lloyd represent-

ed about 20 percent of Portland's container business, but more than 90 percent of the Port of Lewiston's, upriver in Idaho. Pea and lentil farmers in Idaho ship their product up the Columbia Snake River channel to the Port of Portland throughout the year, except for the yearly lock

maintenance.

"Hapag-Lloyd has been a wonderful supporter of peas and lentils in our region for decades, so it would be a huge blow to our area if Hapag-Lloyd were to discontinue Portland," said David Doringfeld, Port of Lewiston general manager.

Blueberry farmers plan to fight diabetes in children

By MITCH LIES
For the Capital Press



Kari Rosenfeld

A nonprofit organization founded by blueberry farmers is launching a campaign April 11 to raise awareness of Type 2 diabetes and its effects on child health.

The Blueberry Family Health Foundation is timing the launch of its first campaign with the April 11 opening of the Florida Blueberry Festival in Brooksville, Fla. Located near Tampa, the area is one of two communities serving as pilot-project sites for the campaign. The other is Portland, where the Blueberry Family Health Foundation campaign will be featured at the LifeWise Oregon Berry Festival, July 17 and 18 at the Ecotrust Event Space, 721 NW Ninth Ave.

Blueberry farmers from across the nation were behind the formation of the foundation in September 2013, including Fall Creek Farm and Nursery in Lowell, Ore.; Homegrown Organic Farms in Porterville, Calif.; Thomas Creek Farms, also in Porterville; HBF International in McMinnville, Ore.; Agricare in Jefferson, Ore.; Naturipe, Family Tree Farms and Driscoll's, all from California; several farms from Florida; a Michigan farm; a British Columbia farm; Atlantic Blueberry Co. from Hammonton, N.J.; and farms in Georgia, North Carolina and elsewhere.

The organization's board of directors includes Amelie Aust, owner and board member for Fall Creek Farm and Nursery; Karen M. Avinelis, president of Thomas Creek Farms and representatives of the financial and diabetes medical professions.

Kari Rosenfeld, sister of Fall Creek Farm and Nursery President Dave Brazelton, serves as execu-

tive director of the foundation.

Rosenfeld has been active in the diabetes community since 1993, when her 7-year-old daughter was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. Rosenfeld has extensive management experience in for-profit and nonprofit organizations and has created and led national and international health-awareness programs and campaigns, including the American Diabetes Association Youth Advocacy Program.

The foundation's Activate the Awareness Campaign includes messaging through Florida Blueberry Festival advertisements, which are being broadcast across four regional television stations and will air approximately 800 times. It will include message-sharing with upwards of 60,000 festival attendees over the course of the two-day festival, and it will include distribution of coloring activity sheets to help kids learn about eating a "healthy rainbow of fruits and vegetables."

Rosenfeld said the organization developed its campaign materials with help from leading pediatric endocrinologists and nutritionists.

"The plan is to leverage our relationships in the local health-care and community

Online
www.bbfamilyhealth.org

organizations to post and distribute these materials in the venues where those most at risk have access to help, while at the same time engaging local media to raise awareness among care providers and the general public," Rosenfeld said.

Rosenfeld characterized the foundation's work as "a multi-year philanthropic strategic plan to raise awareness of children's risk of Type 2 diabetes."

"Because a key barrier to prevention of Type 2 di-

"We have created a campaign to raise awareness that 1 in 3 children are now facing Type 2 diabetes, and that it is preventable."

Kari Rosenfeld, executive director of the Blueberry Family Health Foundation

abetes in children is lack of awareness, we have created a campaign to raise awareness that 1 in 3 children are now facing Type 2 diabetes, and that it is preventable," Rosenfeld said.

The foundation is inviting people to join and get involved in its effort, especially healthy food and produce organizations.

"This organization is open and eager to work with all individuals and companies," Rosenfeld said. "If you want to help shine a spotlight on a newly brewing health epidemic where your products are part of the solution, we are eager to talk about how to scale the program and impact your community," she said.

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Blackleg confirmed in N. Idaho canola fields

Researchers work to protect Washington brassica seed industry

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

Researchers have confirmed the fungal disease blackleg in 10 of 11 canola fields in northern Idaho.

The effect ranges from 1 percent to 30-40 percent of the fields, said Karen Sowers, outreach specialist for oilseeds for Washington State University Extension.

"I don't think it's necessarily cause for a panic attack but since last spring, we've been upping the education campaign on awareness," she said.

Blackleg affects brassica crops, including canola and rapeseed.

Tim Paulitz, USDA Agricultural Research Service plant pathologist, believes blackleg has likely established in the area from Moscow to Grangeville, after isolated incidents in Bonners Ferry in 2009 and near Lewiston last fall.

"It's at the point where those growers are going to have to manage it," Paulitz said.

Sowers and Lindsey du Toit, a WSU vegetable seed pathologist, say this outbreak isn't as bad as a blackleg outbreak in Oregon's Willamette Valley last year.

Du Toit said farmers should only buy certified, treated seed that's been tested for blackleg.

In the vegetable seed industry, blackleg is a zero-tolerance pathogen, du Toit said.

Sowers recommends growers check their fields, examining leaves and stems for lesions. Fungicide can be applied.

"It won't kill the disease if it's already there, but it will prevent non-infected plants from getting infected," Sowers said.