

People & Places

OSU Extension leader seeks wider impact

Sam Angima looks for ways to get researchers out of their ‘silos’

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

Academics, even at a land grant university such as Oregon State, sometimes isolate themselves in research and specialty “silos.” It is now Sam Angima’s job to cajole them to open up more readily to each other and to the public.

Angima is OSU Extension’s new assistant dean in a position that melds the College of Agricultural Sciences and the university’s Division of Outreach and Engagement. He has 20 years experience in Extension programs, including 10 at OSU, and knows full well how people can get locked into their specialties, especially if they’re talking only to other experts.

“In Extension, what walks in the door is what defines your day,” Angima said.

“I’m trying to convince people there is more their specialty can do for normal Oregonians,” he said. “I’m thinking my role is to say, ‘Will you be willing to have people contact you about this area when something comes up? What is the best way you can share this?’ ”

Perspective is everything. Angima is from Kenya, where many small farmers still use hoes, and the crops they produce are processed somewhere else and sold back to Kenyans as finished goods. Security is an issue, as evidenced by the gruesome terrorist at-



Eric Mortenson/Capital Press

Oregon State University College of Ag Assistant Dean Sam Angima, left, and Associate Dean Dan Edge are touring extension and research centers. Angima hopes to get researchers to cooperate more with each other and the public.

tack at a Kenyan university. When he goes home and is hit up for advice, Angima shares information drawn from OSU’s small farms program.

Collaboration can’t be forced with “rules and guidelines,” Angima said. “The best thing is to involve people in defining this problem,” he said.

Being the “new kid in the building,” as he puts it, Angima is taking time to listen first. He and Dan Edge, the College of Ag’s new associate dean, recently toured some OSU research stations. “You don’t want to come into a new office and assume everything’s fine,” Angima said during a stop at the North Willamette

Western Innovator
Sam Angima

Position: Assistant Dean of Outreach and Engagement, Oregon State University Extension Service

Personal: Age 49, married with a 14-year-old daughter and 10-year-old son.

Professional: An agronomist by training, at OSU since 2006, worked as regional administrator of OSU Extension on the North Coast, based in Newport. Moved to the Corvallis campus March 1.

Background: Grew up in the Kisii region, a rich agricultural area in the highlands of Southwestern Kenya, where his family owns a tea and coffee farm. The farm remains in the family, with Angima, two brothers and three sisters as shareholders. Came to the U.S. for college and has a doctorate in soil science from Purdue University.

Perspective: His home country recently suffered a terrorist attack in which 148 Christian university students were murdered. “So insane,” he says.

Approach to his new job: “We can’t sit in an ivory tower and expect things to happen.”



station in Aurora, south of Portland.

Station staff made it clear they are spread thin.

All the more reason, Angima said, to engage others across counties, offices and departments.

“We don’t want everyone doing it by themselves, so we help one another,” he said.

Calif. rancher switches to raising sturgeon

By LEE JUILLERAT
For the Capital Press

LIKELY, Calif. — Really big fish, some of them weighing more than 200 pounds, are being raised for caviar at an unlikely location — warm water ponds outside the tiny far northern California town of Likely.

“They’re big fellas,” Pearce Flournoy said as he fed the prehistoric-looking sturgeons — their color ranges from pale olive to grayish brown while some are a ghostly white — on his Willow Creek Ranch.

The sturgeon are part of Flournoy’s “surf and turf feeding company.” Years ago, he ran a large cow-calf operation at his ranch, which was home-steaded by the Flournoy family in 1871. For the past several years, however, he’s leased out grazing lands to other ranchers. Water from the just-hot-enough springs that feed the sturgeon ponds is leased to The Fishery, an Elk Grove, Calif., company that raises white sturgeon for caviar.

The idea for raising sturgeon was born in 1989 when a Modoc County farm advisor was developing an aquaculture project with the University of California-Davis. At the time, cattle prices were plunging and ranchers were seeking alternative ways of using their land to generate income.

Tests showed water from springs at Flournoy’s ranch



Photos by Lee Juillerat/For the Capital Press

Dan Taylor tosses fish food into ponds filled with white sturgeon on the Willow Creek Ranch near Likely, Calif.



Sturgeon swim in a pond at the Willow Creek Ranch near Likely, Calif. They are raised for caviar and meat.

hold steady at 65 degrees Fahrenheit, the ideal reading for white sturgeon that grow best in 63- to 68-degree water.

Testing was done in 1989, a bitterly cold winter when tem-

peratures frequently dropped below zero. A year later, the first raceways were installed. Since then the raceways have been replaced by a series of tanks — six metal, three con-

crete and three dirt. Warm water from the natural hot springs flows into a pipe that, using the natural gravity flow, fills the series of carefully terraced tanks. The constant flow, combined with motion created by sturgeon constantly circulating their ponds, provides the necessary oxygen.

“We didn’t have the talent, intelligence or resources to do it,” Flournoy explains of why others developed and oversee the infrastructure. He and his hired hand, Dan Taylor, handle the day-to-day feeding chores and basic maintenance for the sturgeon and cattle — thus the surf and turf moniker.

The sturgeon, all females,

are 2 or 3 years old and typically weigh 25 to 30 pounds when they’re delivered to Flournoy’s tanks. They’re usually kept five years, when they typically weigh 120 to 150 pounds, before they’re captured and returned to the San Francisco Bay area. After the eggs, or caviar, are harvested the fish are slaughtered, with the meat sold to fish distributors and restaurants. Flournoy says caviar sells for about \$50 an ounce, or \$800 a pound, while the meat brings about \$20 a pound.

White sturgeon can live up to 100 years, grow 20 feet long and weigh nearly 1,800 pounds, but not those at the Willow Creek Ranch. The biggest, the 200-plus pounders, are exceptions, carryovers 10 or more years old.

For Flournoy, raising sturgeons is a business, and a pleasure.

“It’s extremely rewarding,” he says of raising sturgeon and allowing friends to view the ponds. Viewing is controlled because “we’re not geared to make a tourist attraction out of it.”

Whether it’s with friends or by himself, the sense of wonder when seeing the huge fish persists.

“I enjoy it as much as ever,” Flournoy laughs. “Every time I drive up it’s still, ‘Holy Mackereel, look at that!’ ”

Calendar

- APRIL OREGON**

April 18 — Oregon Women for Agriculture Auction and Dinner, Linn County Fair and Expo Center, Albany, 503-243-FARM (3276), <http://owaonline.org/>

April 21 — Oregon Raspberry and Blackberry Commission meeting and budget hearing, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Hayden’s Grill, 8187 SW Tualatin-Sherwood Road, Tualatin, 541-758-4043, www.oregon-berries.com

April 23 — Oregon Processed Vegetable Commission meeting, 7:30 p.m., Oregon Farm Bureau Building, 1320 Capitol St. NE, Salem, 503-924-1181

April 25-26 — AgFest, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday, Oregon State Fairgrounds,
- Salem, \$9 for adults, under 12 are free, <http://www.oragfest.com>

April 28 — Oregon Blueberry Commission budget hearing, noon, Chemeketa Events at Winema, Room 210, 4001 Winema Place, NE, Salem, 503-364-2944
- CALIFORNIA**

April 18-21 — California State FFA Conference, Selland Arena, Fresno, www.calaged.org/stateconvention
- IDAHO**

April 24 — Forester map and compass workshop, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., University of Idaho Extension office, 1808 N. Third St., Coeur d’Alene, \$10 fee, 208-446-1683, <http://www.uidaho.edu/extension/forestry/content/calendarofevents>

- WASHINGTON**

Through April 19 — Washington State Spring Fair, Puyallup, 10 a.m.-10 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Sunday, <http://www.thefair.com/spring-fair/>
- MAY NATIONAL**

May 13-14 — 19th Annual Distillers Grain Symposium, Sheraton Crown Center, Kansas City, Mo. sponsored by the Distillers Grain Technology Council, www.event.com/d/54qvfh/4W
- WASHINGTON**

May 14-16 — Washington FFA Convention, Washington State University, Pullman, www.washingtonffa.org/convention

- CALIFORNIA**

May 1-2 — Forest Landowners of California annual meeting, Holiday Inn, Auburn, www.forestlandowners.org/
- JUNE CALIFORNIA**

June 15-26 — Postharvest Technology Short Course, University of California-Davis, <http://postharvest.ucdavis.edu/Education/PTShortCourse/>
- IDAHO**

June 13 — Sheep in the Foothills, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Boise Foothills Learning Center, 3188 Sunset Peak Road, 208-493-2530, FoothillsLearningCenter-Parks@cityofboise.org
- WASHINGTON**

June 20-21 — Glenwood

- Ketchum Kalf Rodeo, 1 p.m. each day, 509-364-3371, <http://business.gorge.net/glenwoodrodeo/>

June 21-23 — Washington Potato and Onion Association Annual Convention, Northern Quest Resort and Casino, Spokane, wa.potato.onion@gmail.com
- JULY IDAHO**

July 11 — 94th annual Idaho Ram Sale, Twin Falls County Fairgrounds, Filer, 208-334-2271 or iwga@earthlink.net
- NOVEMBER CALIFORNIA**

Nov.17-18 — Drone World Expo, San Jose Convention Center, www.droneworldexpo.com

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