

Yakima Basin irrigation district expects high water prices

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

OLYMPIA — The Roza Irrigation District in the drought-stricken Yakima Basin anticipates water will be far more expensive than during the last drought a decade ago.

“We’re saying the cost of water will be at least double what it was,” Roza’s policy director, Ron Van Gundy, said Monday.

Van Gundy and the district’s manager, Scott Revell, outlined for the Legislature’s drought committee their preparations for a dry summer.

The 95-mile-long district particularly concerns state officials. The district produces roughly \$1 billion annually in agricultural products, including tree fruit, grapes and hops. The district is made up of junior right holders, who are forecast to receive 60 percent of their normal water supplies.

The district has some 90 percent of the state’s roughly 100 drought emergency wells. The Washington Department of Ecology says the wells can’t be tapped unless water is leased from somewhere else to offset



Don Jenkins/Capital Press

Roza Irrigation District Policy Director Ron Van Gundy, right, gestures while talking with district Manager Scott Revell after meeting April 13 with the Legislature’s drought committee in Olympia.

the impact on streams.

Faced with a drought in 2005, Roza and the state split the expense and spent \$3.8 million on leasing water, primarily from senior right holders in the Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District.

This time, Roza has saved up \$3.5 million for drought relief. Plus, DOE has requested lawmakers spend up to \$4 million, with the goal of providing Yakima Basin growers at least 70 percent of their normal supply.

But the money won’t go as far as it did in 2005, Van Gundy and Revell said. The value of cropland has gone up and with

it the demand and price of water, they said.

Roza spent about \$300 per acre to lease water 10 years ago. For this drought, Van Gundy said he hasn’t heard any estimate below \$500 an acre.

Roza will wait until at least early May and the next U.S. Bureau of Reclamation forecast to pursue water from Sunnyside. The bureau expects senior right holders will have full water supplies.

Revell and Van Gundy said the district doesn’t want to commit to buying water now, cautious that 2016 could be even worse if the drought continues.

“We are just as worried about next year as this year,” Revell said.

Van Gundy said the next 60 days will determine the severity of the drought.

Normal rainfall in the watersheds that feed the Yakima Basin may minimize the need to lease water, he said. But if only 80 percent of average precipitation falls, summer water supplies could fall to 50 percent or below of normal, he said.

“We’re just on the ragged edge — which way it’s going to go,” Van Gundy said. “About every two weeks, we need a shot of moisture.”

The U.S. Climate Prediction Center forecast in mid-March that the region would receive below average rainfall over the next three months.

A manager in DOE’s water resources program, Dave Christensen, said the department has received five inquiries from growers about drawing from emergency wells. The DOE is not issuing permits at this time to use the wells.

Revell said he assumes all growers with emergency wells are interested in using them.

Nurseries given tips on preventing spread of citrus psyllid

By **TIM HEARDEN**
Capital Press



Photo courtesy of USDAARS

SACRAMENTO — A state agency is urging residential and commercial nurseries to take steps to prevent the spread of a disease-carrying pest whose presence could decimate California’s citrus industry.

The state’s Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Program is working with trade organizations in distributing tips to nurseries touting best practices such as arranging citrus trees to encourage the sale of older plants first.

The effort, which is funded by an 8-cents-per-carton assessment on growers, also focuses on what nursery employees should tell homeowners about the Asian citrus psyllid and how to treat for it. The psyllid can spread huanglongbing, or citrus greening disease, which has already infected 75 percent of the Florida citrus industry.

Nurseries serve as “the front line” in educating homeowners about the threat the psyllid poses to California’s citrus industry, said Victoria Hornbaker, citrus program manager for the state Department of Food and Agriculture.

Hornbaker said she thinks the education efforts will curb the spread of the pest, which has been discovered in many parts of California despite CDFG quarantines of plants and fruit.

“The reason I’m optimistic is that the people we’re working with in the industry are really engaged and dedicated,” Hornbaker said. “This is their livelihood. If they can’t figure out a way to stop the Asian citrus psyllid and spread of the disease... they’re the ones who are going to lose their livelihood. Then the citizens of California will lose the opportunity to have fresh citrus on their table.”

The best-practices materials for nurseries were developed by the University of California Cooperative Extension and the Department of Entomology at UC-Riverside, which are also offering an online course for nursery employees in dealing with the psyllid.

Huanglongbing causes discoloration of fruit and leaves and eventually kills the tree. The University of Florida has estimated that the disease has caused more than 6,500 lost jobs, \$1.3 billion in lost revenue to growers and \$3.6 billion in lost economic activity in a swath of the South from Geor-

An adult Asian citrus psyllid is shown on a young citrus leaf. The California Department of Food and Agriculture has expanded the citrus psyllid quarantine area in Tulare County.

gia to Texas, where the disease is present.

Only one known case of huanglongbing has been discovered in California, occurring in 2012 in a back yard in the Los Angeles area. Recently the CDFG added a 79-square-mile section of Madera County to its growing quarantine area, which includes all or parts of 15 counties in central and southern California.

Under the quarantine, all citrus fruit must be cleaned of leaves and stems before being sent out of the area and citrus and curry tree nursery stock are prohibited from leaving the area. An exception can be made for nursery stock and budwood grown in USDA-approved structures that are designed to keep the psyllid out.

For plants sold to local residential customers, nurseries can take such steps as avoiding removing new flush, which results in regrowth that can attract the psyllid, and properly disposing of citrus green waste, Hornbaker said. The state’s effort comes as the USDA has announced that an additional \$23 million is available for research and extension projects for growers fighting huanglongbing. The grants are part of the federal Citrus Disease Research and Extension Program, which is funded through the 2014 Farm Bill.

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture will take grant applications this summer and will give priority to projects that are multi-state, multi-institutional and can show clear results to producers, according to a news release.

In February, the USDA handed out \$23 million for university research as well as projects that support such near-term tools as thermotherapy, best-management-practices training, early detection and pest control efforts.

Foreign markets loom large in GMO litigation

Lawsuits over biotech trait have industrywide implications, experts say

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**
Capital Press

The barrage of farmer lawsuits against a biotech developer could give foreign buyers more influence over genetically modified crops grown in the U.S., experts say.

Syngenta faces numerous cases in federal court filed by growers who claim they lost

money due to China’s rejection of Viptera corn, which USDA deregulated in 2010.

The legal dispute is troubling to biotech proponents, who fear that litigation-averse companies will become reluctant to introduce new traits even when they’re approved by federal regulators.

“It’s ultimately giving China a veto on our regulatory

process,” said Mary Boote, CEO of Truth About Trade and Technology, a nonprofit that supports genetic engineering.

Critics of federal biotech oversight, on the other hand, say the lawsuits simply reflect market realities — overseas buyers are often sensitive to transgenic crops regardless of their status with USDA.

The court system provides a means of “backdoor regulation,” said George Kimbrell, attorney for the Center for Food Safety, which is involved in several lawsuits over biotechnology.

“We think federal oversight of genetically engineered crops is woefully inadequate,” Kimbrell said. “Litigation is unfortunately even more necessary in such circumstances.”

Syngenta’s insect-resistant trait was sold to U.S. farmers before China cleared it for importation, resulting in numerous corn shipments getting turned away in 2013 and 2014.

Farmers who are suing the company claim that reduced exports also depressed corn prices. They’re demanding compensation from Syngenta on several legal grounds, arguing the biotech firm released the trait despite knowing of the potential for market disruption.

The cases were consolidated before a federal judge in Kan-



AP Photo/Nati Hamik

Corn is unloaded from a truck in this file photo. A class-action lawsuit resulting from China’s rejection of a genetically modified variety of corn is likely to demonstrate the sway foreign buyers have over domestic policy.

sas who is now sorting out procedural matters in the litigation.

While the plaintiffs face an “uphill battle” in proving their claims, the “chilling effect” for biotech developers will increase as the case progresses, said Kristine Tidgren, staff attorney for the Center for Agricultural Law and Taxation at Iowa State University.

“I don’t see that agriculture wins in this lawsuit, no matter how it turns out,” she said.

Even if Syngenta ultimately prevails, the case will encourage copycat lawsuits if the plaintiffs’ legal arguments are able to survive one or more “motions to dismiss,” she said.

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NOTICE OF FINE FESCUE COMMISSION PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING TO: ALL OREGON FINE FESCUE GROWERS

Notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held pursuant to ORS 576.416 (5), on Monday, May 11, 2015, at 7:00 a.m., at Elmer’s Restaurant, 3950 Market Street NE, Salem, Oregon, upon a proposed budget for operation of the Fine Fescue Commission during the fiscal year July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016. At this hearing any producer of Fine Fescue has a right to be heard with respect to the proposed budget, a copy of which is available for public inspection, under reasonable circumstances, in the office of each County Extension Agent in Oregon. For further information, contact the Fine Fescue Commission business office, P.O. Box 3366, Salem, Oregon 97302, telephone (503) 364-2944. The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. Please make any requests for an interpreter for the hearing impaired or for other accommodation for persons with disabilities at least 48 hours before the meeting by contacting the Commission office at 503-364-2944.

16-1/#4

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Key committee approves canola extension

Work group proposes legislative package on pesticides

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**
Capital Press

A proposal to extend canola production in Oregon’s Willamette Valley has passed

a key legislative committee despite the opposition of seed producers.

House Bill 3382, which would allow farmers to grow 500 acres of canola in the re-

gion for an additional three years, was unanimously referred to the House floor with “do pass” recommendation by the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources on April 14.

A six-year moratorium on canola production in the Willamette Valley was approved by lawmakers in 2013, but 500 acres of the crop were allowed to be cultivated as part of a three-year study by Oregon State University.

Under HB 3382, the crop would continue to be grown on 500 acres annually for the rest of the moratorium.

Specialty seed producers who fear that canola “volunteers” will disrupt their operations, possibly by causing unwanted cross-pollination with other brassica crops, argued the bill would increase the canola “seed bank” by 1,500 acres.

They urged the committee to reject any extension until

OSU completed its study.

Carol Mallory-Smith, a weed scientist at the University, testified that so far canola has not posed a greater pest or disease risk than other brassica crops and its volunteers could be controlled with the same methods as for radishes and turnips.

Committee Chair Brad Witt, D-Clatskanie, also recently announced that a work group on pesticides has agreed to propose a package of bills.

The legislation would require the Oregon Department of Forestry to conduct an analytical review of no-spray pesticide buffers and implement standard operating procedures for the Oregon Department of Agriculture to receive and investigate pesticide complaints, he said.

The proposal would also double penalties for pesticide violations, require ODA to post an electronic list of restricted use pesticides and provide funding for these programs, Witt said.

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NOTICE OF TALL FESCUE COMMISSION PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING TO: ALL OREGON TALL FESCUE SEED GROWERS

Notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held pursuant to ORS 576.416 (5), on Thursday, May 14, 2015, at 6:00 p.m., at the Cascade Grill Restaurant, 110 Opal St. NE, Albany, Oregon, upon a proposed budget for operation of the Oregon Tall Fescue Commission during the fiscal year July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016. At this hearing any producer of Tall Fescue has a right to be heard with respect to the proposed budget, a copy of which is available for public inspection, under reasonable circumstances, in the office of each County Extension Agent in Oregon. For further information, contact the Tall Fescue Commission business office, 4093 12th Street Cutoff SE, P.O. Box 3366, Salem, OR 97302, telephone 503-364-2944. The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. Please make any requests for an interpreter for the hearing impaired or for other accommodation for persons with disabilities at least 48 hours before the meeting by contacting the Commission office at 503-364-2944.

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NOTICE OF OREGON RYEGRASS COMMISSION PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING TO: ALL OREGON RYEGRASS SEED GROWERS

Notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held pursuant to ORS 576.416 (5), on Tuesday, May 19, 2015, at 6:00 p.m. at the Cascade Grill Restaurant, 110 Opal St. NE, Albany, Oregon, upon a proposed budget for operation of the Ryegrass Growers Seed Commission during the fiscal year July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016. At this hearing any producer of Oregon-grown Ryegrass seed has a right to be heard with respect to the proposed budget, a copy of which is available for public inspection, under reasonable circumstances, in the office of each County Extension Agent in Oregon. For further information, contact the Oregon Ryegrass Growers Seed Commission business office, 4093 12th Street Cutoff SE, P.O. Box 3366, Salem, Oregon 97302, telephone (503) 364-2944. The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. A request for an interpreter for the hearing impaired or for other accommodations for persons with disabilities should be made at least (48) hours in advance.

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PURSUANT TO ORS CHAPTER 87 Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 4/28/2015. The sale will be held at 10:00 am by CERTIFIED AUTO REPAIR 2880 22ND ST SE, SALEM, OR 2007 Chevrolet 3500 Van VIN=1GAHG39U071203764 Amount due on lien \$1,090.00 Reputed owner(s) Gregory Garrett Westlake Financial Svcs James Schneider

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PURSUANT TO ORS CHAPTER 819 Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 4/28/2015. The sale will be held at 10:00 am by PRECISION TOWING & RECOVERY IN 7575 3RD STREET SE, TURNER, OR 2008 GMC Sierra VIN = 1GTEK29039Z161370 Amount due on lien \$4,105.00 Reputed owner(s) Merle McClure Merle McClure Citizens Auto Finance

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