

Oregon

Oregon horses diagnosed with equine herpes virus

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

Four Willamette Valley horses have tested positive for contagious equine herpes virus, and veterinarians warn horse owners to watch for neurologic symptoms in their animals.

Two of the horses were treated at Oregon State University's veterinary hospital. Horses at Marion County and

Polk County stables and another farm have been quarantined.

The first horse to fall ill showed signs April 28 and a diagnosis of EHV-1 was confirmed the following day. Horses from the Marion County stable were at events at the Linn County Fairgrounds in Albany April 16-19 and at the Oregon Horse Center in Eugene April 25-26.

Owners who also had horses

at the events or have questions about the virus should contact their vet, said Dr. Ryan Scholz, the Oregon Department of Agriculture's western district veterinarian. He said there was no immediate sign of neurologic problems among the horses quarantined at the stable.

EHV-1 is one of the most common respiratory viruses among horses; by age 2 most horses have been exposed to it,

Scholz said. It's a lifelong infection, but lies dormant most of the horse's life. But every once in a while, triggered by stress or other factors, it pops up and attacks the nervous system, he said.

The virus in this case is a common form, Scholz said. It is not the mutated form of the virus that caused an outbreak among horses at a national cutting horse competition several

years ago, he said.

The virus can't be transmitted to people but spreads among horses through animal-to-animal contact or contaminated equipment, clothing or hands.

Symptoms include fever, decreased coordination, nasal discharge, dribbled urine, loss of tail tone, hind limb weakness and poor balance, according to an ODA news release. Sick

horses may be unable to rise.

The virus can cause pregnant mares to abort. Severe cases can kill horses. Vaccinations are available, but Scholz said they are short-lived and must be combined with good bio-security management practices. The department does not recommend for or against the vaccine, but encourages horse owners to discuss it with their veterinarian, he said.

OSU determining building design values of juniper



Eric Mortenson/Capital Press

Scott Leavengood of OSU's Oregon Wood Innovation Center sits atop juniper timbers that will be tested for design values. Certification may improve the market for juniper wood.

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

CORVALLIS — About five times a year, architects call Scott Leavengood at Oregon State University to ask about juniper. Usually they have a client who wants to use the beautifully gnarly wood as an architectural detail such as exposed beams.

Normally, architects and engineers can find wood design values — load-bearing properties and so on — by turning to a booklet published by the West Coast Lumber Inspection Bureau.

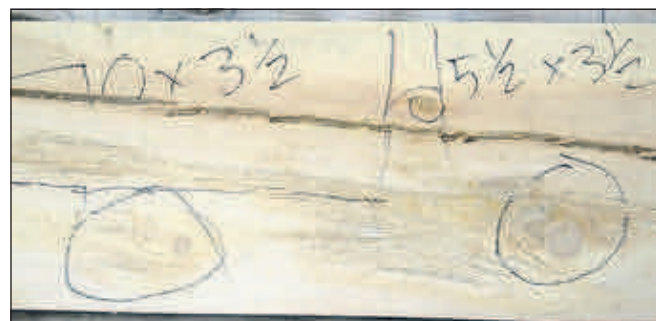
Trouble is, "Juniper is not in there," said Leavengood, director of OSU's Oregon Wood Innovation Center. "It's a market barrier right now."

Work at OSU this year could change that. Loads of juniper timbers from Idaho and North Central Oregon will be cut, bent, stressed and broken in the center's testing facilities.

The certified results could strengthen market demand for a tree that is rooted in greater sage grouse, ranching and rangeland health issues.

The thing about juniper is, it's native and invasive at the same time. It controls swaths of Eastern Oregon and beyond. It intercepts precious moisture from sage brush and grasses and provides hawks and other predators a place to perch and spy for prey.

Leavengood of OSU said juniper logs sometimes show false growth rings, periods where the tree basically turned itself off to wait out a drought.



Eric Mortenson/Capital Press

Students marked knots and other imperfections on juniper timbers, indicating how difficult it will be to find clear sections to cut and test for design values.

They hang tough, he said.

"If I was an ecologist, I think I would study juniper," he said. "Because it's such a tough species."

And now agencies and researchers say we should cut juniper like crazy. They say removing juniper allows for a quick comeback of sage and grasses. This improves habitat for greater sage grouse, which hangs on in 11 Western states and is a candidate for inclusion on the federal endangered species list. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will make that call in September.

A lot of ranchers connect the dots. Improve habitat, keep the bird off the list, ease the worry of increased grazing restrictions. Necessary management changes are "not onerous" as a Southeast Oregon rancher put it once.

A market for juniper could fuel the whole thing, the thinking goes. But that's the problem. "It's expensive to harvest, expensive to cut up, and the yields are low," Leavengood said.

He believes juniper is best

suited for minimally processed uses such as sign posts and guardrails, and for the high-end niche market such as cabinets and flooring. It's pretty, smells good and is naturally rot resistant.

And juniper has that rangeland "restoration" message that frankly plays well with urban buyers.

"Juniper's got a story behind it," Leavengood said.

"I don't think it's ever going to be Doug fir or Ponderosa pine," he said. "But that's not the point."

Some landowners now cut juniper and leave it on the landscape or burn it. Leavengood and others hope to convince them juniper should be hauled to small mills operating in Eastern Oregon.

Efforts to establish a juniper logging, hauling and milling infrastructure have come and gone for a couple decades. Leavengood believes establishing its design values, as OSU will do, could help the market. A USDA grant is helping pay for the research.

Researchers warn vineyards may face increased pest pressure

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

Researchers expect this to be a bad year for bugs in Oregon's vineyards.

Oregon State University's Wine Research Institute issued a warning saying wine grape growers can expect increased pressure from brown marmorated stinkbugs in particular and spotted wing drosophila to a lesser degree.

A warmer-than-average growing season last year and a mild winter set the stage for high populations of both, according to OSU.

The pair are two of agriculture's most damaging pests; both feed on tree fruit and berries, including cherries, raspberries, blackberries and blueberries.

For wine grape growers, the highest risk areas for stinkbug damage are the Chehalem Mountains, Dundee Hills, Eola-Amity Hills, and McMinnville American Viticultural Areas, or AVAs. Southern Oregon and Columbia Gorge AVAs are at somewhat reduced risk.

Brown marmorated stinkbugs eat plant tissue and the grape berries, potentially contaminating the grapes and hurting wine quality. They apparently move into vineyards late in the season after other crops have been picked.

An OSU news release said they engage in "hill topping" behavior, meaning they overwinter at higher elevations. Many vineyards are planted on rolling slopes, putting them in favored stinkbug habitat. Wineries have found them in buildings and dead bugs have been found in fermenting wine, according to OSU.

Vaughn Walton, a professor and horticultural entomologist at OSU, is researching the use



Courtesy of USDA

Brown marmorated stink bugs such as these may pose a threat to Oregon vineyards, researcher warn.

of tiny parasites to control the stinkbugs.

Spotted wing drosophila prefer other crops, particularly berries. It saws a hole in berries and lays an egg inside, which hatches and feeds on the host from the inside, causing it to collapse in a gooey mess.

The tiny flies may be drawn to grapes damaged by rain, birds or fungus, according to the Wine Research Institute.



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Water regulators seek to close funding loophole

Bill would also extend deadlines

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

Oregon water regulators are aiming to close a loophole in the rules governing the state's \$10 million water supply development fund.

The legislature created the fund in 2013 with the goal of funding water projects that meet certain environmental conditions.

For example, storage reservoirs must comply with a "seasonally varying flows" requirement to ensure that enough water is left in-stream outside the irrigation season to ensure the proper functioning of watersheds.

While developing regulations for the fund, the Oregon Water Resources Department noticed that project developers who get a water right permit before applying for money could

circumvent this requirement.

House Bill 2400 would clarify that water storage projects that receive state funding must comply with the "seasonally varying flow" conditions regardless of when the permit was obtained.

The bill has already passed the House 47-10 and is now being considered by the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.

During a May 4 hearing, some lawmakers said they were concerned about provisions in the bill that extend deadlines for the completion of key reports on the fund's operations.

Sen. Alan Olsen, R-Canby, said he was concerned why the work wasn't done in the time frame set by lawmakers.

Racquel Rancier, senior policy coordinator for OWRD, said the delay was caused by the untimely appointment of two task forces that were charged with writing the reports last year.

April Snell, executive director of the Oregon Water

Resources Congress, urged the committee to pass the bill because the reports are now finished and being used to write regulations for the water fund.

As for the permit loophole, Snell said the intention of lawmakers all along was to condition funding on environmental requirements being met, and HB 2400 simply corrects the statutory language.

"We want to see it up and running and we want to see it workable," she said of the water fund.

The committee also heard testimony on other bills that have already passed the House:

- House Bill 2445, which provides farm regulators with additional ways to notify people of agricultural quarantines beyond newspaper ads.
- House Bill 2474, which creates licenses for veterinary facilities that are owned by non-veterinarians.
- House Bill 2047, which corrects map boundary mistakes made in a previous bill dealing with urban and rural reserves.