

# Obama immigration action may be dead, labor leader says

By DAN WHEAT  
Capital Press

YAKIMA, Wash. — A federal appeals court upholding an injunction against the President Barack Obama's controversial executive action on immigration probably means it is dead for the remainder of his term in office, a farm labor leader says.

"It is my understanding the administration probably will appeal and that could take a couple of years," said Mike Gempler, executive director of Washington Growers League, a non-partisan association representing agricultural

employers on labor issues.

The executive action would defer deportation and provide temporary legal work status for about 5 million of an estimated 12 million people in the U.S. illegally, was scheduled to take effect in May. Many of the illegal immigrants are farmworkers.

On Feb. 16, U.S. District Judge Andrew Hanen, in Texas, ruled in favor of 26 states that sued to overturn the executive action and issued an injunction stopping the programs on grounds that they were implemented without following the Administrative

Procedures act which requires a public comment period.

The injunction was appealed to the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans. A three-judge panel of that court upheld the injunction on May 26.

"In my opinion, it was productive to push the envelope a little on this," Gempler said. "It was provocative and made people think and hopefully would trigger action in Congress."

Comprehensive immigration reform by Congress seems unlikely anytime soon but it is needed because an executive action "is a very temporary

measure," Gempler said.

Tom Roach, a Pasco, Wash., immigration attorney, could not be reached for comment. Previously, he has estimated 90,000 to 100,000 people in Central Washington and north-eastern Oregon are eligible under the executive action for Deferred Action for Parents of Americans — known as DAPA — or an expanded 2014 version of the 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals — called DACA.

Thousands of illegal immigrants are eligible in Idaho and California, he said.

Gempler said he believes

there's always been public support for DACA because it makes sense to not deport people who have grown up in the U.S.

"For DAPA, I don't get a sense that there's a lot of support in the general public or in the farm community necessarily, but I think there is in the immigrant community," he said.

United Farm Workers, Keene, Calif., issued a news release denouncing the court ruling. UFW was among more than 100 organizations filing friend of the court briefs and issuing statements in support of the president's action. UFW ex-

pressed optimism that Obama's executive order eventually will prevail and said it will continue to help prepare illegals for administrative relief under DAPA and DACA.

OneAmerica, a Seattle immigration group, issued a statement calling the decision "disappointing" and saying it believes eventually millions will be given the chance to apply for DAPA and DACA.

Presente.org, a Latino power group, issued a statement saying the court ruling "is part of a continuing and well-orchestrated Republican attack on Latinos and immigrants."

## Iris yellow spot virus detected in volunteer onions

By SEAN ELLIS  
Capital Press

ONTARIO, Ore. — Oregon State University researchers have alerted onion growers in the region to be on the lookout for the iris yellow spot virus in this year's crop.

The virus has been detected in several volunteer onions, said OSU Cropping Systems Extension Agent Stuart Reitz.

"I haven't seen it in the crop yet but if we're seeing it in the volunteers, it's only a matter of time before it shows up in the crop," he said. "I expect to see it showing ... up in the crop any time basically."

About 25 percent of the nation's fresh bulb onions are grown in Eastern Oregon and Southwestern Idaho and the virus is one of the industry's top production challenges.

It weakens the onion plant and can significantly reduce growth, which is important in the onion industry because larger-sized bulb onions fetch higher prices.

The virus is transmitted to

onions by thrips and the insect's populations are starting to build up rapidly, Reitz said.

"We're consistently seeing 1 to 2 adult thrips per plant, which is a healthy population for this time of year," he said.

The virus was detected in last year's crop in early June.

Reitz said growers should be focusing on controlling volunteer onions, since they act as early season reservoirs for thrips and the virus to move into the crop.

"People need to get all of the volunteer stuff away," said Nyssa farmer Paul Skeen, president of the Malheur County Onion Growers Association.

Nyssa grower Reid Saito said the virus is one of the industry's top two problems, along with the nutsedge weed.

"We don't have a real good handle on it," he said. "You just never know when it's going to show up. Year to year and area to area, the virus pressure varies."

Saito said he has seen onion fields that look great "and then when the virus shows up, I've



Sean Ellis/Capital Press

An onion field is irrigated May 26 near Nyssa, Ore. The iris yellow spot virus has been detected in volunteer onions and Oregon State University researchers say it will soon show up in this year's crop.

seen the whole complexion of the crop change from good to terrible in a matter of days."

Reitz and Skeen credit an aggressive thrips control program with helping keep virus pressure low last year compared with the previous several years.

2013 was a bad year for the

virus but last year was mild by comparison, Skeen said, and that was due in part to farmers spraying earlier and more often for thrips.

Farmers should be out scouting their fields now and acting quickly if any virus pressure is detected, Reitz said. "People should be check-

ing their crop very carefully to see if any virus shows up," he said. "The people who had less severe pressure last year were the ones who stayed on top of it."

For more information about thrips and the virus, contact Reitz at (541) 881-1417.

## Biotech crop mediation bill faces resistance

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

After an uncontroversial start, legislation that would require mediation for disputes over biotech crops in Oregon is now facing opposition from critics of genetic engineering.

House Bill 2509, which would direct the Oregon Department of Agriculture to mediate conflicts over genetically modified organisms, didn't initially meet with objections and passed the House by an overwhelming margin.

The bill arose from a work group convened by Rep. Brian Clem, D-Salem, that evaluated a range of GMO proposals.

During a May 20 legislative hearing, Clem said he's surprised by the recent surge of antagonism toward HB 2509, which emerged from the concerns of GMO critics who worried that biotech farmers wouldn't agree to mediation.

"This came from the anti-GMO community," he said. "This was designed to be helpful for people worried about being interfered with by GMOs."

Friends of Family Farmers, a group that favors stronger GMO regulation, participated in the work group negotiations and credited the bill with providing an incentive for mediation during a work session last month.

Now that HB 2509 is before the Senate, however, the non-profit group and other GMO critics are asking lawmakers to reject the proposal because they say farmers who are harmed by biotech cross-pollination should not be forced into mediation.

"It strikes us that mediation should be a choice farmers make, not a mandated situation," said Ivan Maluski, policy director of Friends of Family Farmers, during the recent hearing before the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.

If a dispute over genetically engineered crops occurs between farmers, the bill calls for ODA to provide mediation to seek a coexistence solution. If a grower refuses mediation and later loses a lawsuit in the dispute, he'd be required to pay the opposing party's legal costs.

While Friends of Family Farmers believes mediation may be useful in some circumstances, the group has decided to oppose the bill because mandatory mediation could impose a financial burden on small growers.

The mediation requirement may delay a timely court decision when a farmer faces market rejection of his crop due to cross-pollination, the group claims.

Our Family Farms Coalition, which successfully campaigned for a GMO ban in Jackson County, argues that HB 2509 would hinder the ability of organic and conventional growers to enforce that prohibition.

The group argues that small farmers would effectively be blocked from seeking a "quick legal action to prevent contamination of their crop" due to fears of paying astronomical attorney fees.

"This bill would prevent that as a practical matter," said Kellie Barnes, a representative for the group.

The Center for Food Safety, a nonprofit involved in prominent legal battles over GMOs, alleges that ODA can't be trusted to oversee the mediation program because the agency has served as the "mouthpiece of the agricultural biotechnology industry."

## Wolf advisory group gets rancher input

By MATTHEW WEAVER  
Capital Press

AIRWAY HEIGHTS, Wash. — The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's wolf advisory group needs to build trust to work on wolf issues together, its director said May 21 during a meeting closed to the public.

Department director Jim Unsworth told the advisory group it will take time to see how wolves affect different aspects of the Washington landscape compared to previous wolf introductions in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming.

"I predict, with lots of confidence, wolves will not have the dire impacts some people predict, nor will they have the benign influence others predict," he said during the group's meeting in Airway Heights, Wash.

Unsworth said it's appropriate to start thinking about a plan now for when wolves are taken off the endangered species list, as he expects the wolf population to begin to rapidly increase.

The advisory group met in the morning, allowing only members of the media to attend. It met in private during the afternoon and planned to

take a private field trip to talk with ranchers on May 22. According to the advisory group's guidelines, all meetings are open to the public unless a majority of the 18-member group votes to change the guideline.

Unsworth declined to comment on closing the meeting, saying it was consultant Francine Madden, co-founder and executive director of the Human-Wildlife Conflict Collaboration, who asked that the meeting be closed to the public.

Madden will work with the group for the first few meetings, he said. He hopes to see a funding mechanism from the state Legislature to keep her on board, Unsworth told reporters outside the meeting.

Madden said the feeling of advisory group members during her assessment was that the group was not productive and had no relationship building or trust.

"You're not going to get one side to respect the needs of the other side if they don't respect each other as individuals and you're not going to build trust if you don't have respect," she said.

Many in the group are new to the process, she said. The advisory group recently grew from nine members to 18.

### Online

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/about/advisory/wag/>

"We want to use every opportunity to learn what is going to work in this system and how do we engage in a way where people can start to build trust in a broader community and build engagement," she said.

Madden said her goal is to expand involvement and not restrict it. The closed meeting was a "one-off," she said.

"The goal of the closed meeting was to build some trust so we can get everybody to trust each other enough so we can start to expand that involvement," she said. "To compensate for the closed meeting, we said we would audiotape the whole thing so people would know there's no hidden agenda, there are no secrets here."

An audio recording of the entire meeting will be available on the department website, Madden and department public affairs and outreach manager Bruce Botka said.

"As a department, we try to do our business openly and transparently as possible,"



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Hunters, Wash., rancher Dave Dashiell greets consultant Francine Madden prior to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife wolf advisory group meeting May 20 in Airway Heights, Wash. Madden is working to help the group overcome deep-rooted conflicts between opposing viewpoints to move forward on managing wolves.

Botka said. "Making the information available is one way we can people engaged at a level of detail some of them want to pursue."

Brendon Wold, deputy communications director of the Washington House of Representatives House Republican Caucus, was told he would not be allowed to attend the meeting as a member of the public. Wold said he represents Eastern Washington legislators and their constituents.

"This would be the first time I've ever been asked to leave a state agency meeting, advisory meeting, some sort of council, where the media

is able to be," Wold said. "It is a little bit concerning. I have representatives who are very involved in this issue and the outcome, so they would like somebody here to take notes and listen."

Stevens County commissioner Don Dashiell is an advisory group member, but remained outside the meeting, only entering during breaks to interact with new and returning members. As an elected official, he said, state law doesn't allow him to attend a meeting that excludes the public.

The advisory group doesn't set policy, but will be "incredibly powerful and influential" if they can speak with one voice, Unsworth told members.

### LEGAL

#### NOTICE OF OREGON WHEAT COMMISSION PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING

NOTICE HEREBY IS GIVEN that a public meeting will be held pursuant to ORS 578, the Oregon Wheat Commission Act, at the Oregon Wheat Commission office, 1200 NW Naito Parkway, Ste. 370, Portland, OR 97209 on Monday, June 15, 2015 at 1:30 pm to review the proposed budget for the operation of the Oregon Wheat Commission during the Fiscal Year July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016.

At this meeting, any producer of wheat in Oregon has the right to be heard with respect to the proposed budget, a copy of which is available for inspection, under reasonable circumstances, in the office of each County Extension Agent in Oregon.

For further information, contact the Oregon Wheat Commission office, 1200 NW Naito Parkway, Suite 370, Portland, OR 97209-2800 or by phone at (503) 467-2161.

Dated this 18th day of May, 2015  
ATTESTED: Robert Newton, Chairman  
Blake Rowe, Administrator




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