

People & Places

Researcher focuses on 'Ag of the Middle'

Amanda Osborne looks for ways to help medium-size farm operations

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

PORTLAND — Amanda Osborne raised some eyebrows — and a lot of interest — as lead author and editor of the “Oregon Food Infrastructure Gap Analysis.”

The report by Ecotrust, a Portland nonprofit, takes a deep look at the problems holding back Oregon’s “Ag of the Middle” — producers too big to survive by selling only at farmers’ markets or to CSAs, but too small to compete in commodities markets.

Osborne, who is vice president of food and farms for Ecotrust, demonstrated in the report that many mid-sized producers spend so much time picking, packing, labeling and distributing that they don’t have time to grow their businesses.

At the same time, many students, prisoners, hospital patients and assisted living or nursing home residents don’t



Eric Mortenson/Capital Press

Amanda Osborne, lead author of a report on Oregon’s “Ag of the Middle,” says market infrastructure improvements will benefit mid-sized producers.

have access to local, minimally processed, sustainably produced food because the economies of scale push it out of their price range.

Expanding on one of the report’s themes, Osborne said institutions have “massive purchasing power” that could bring more nutritious food to thousands of low-income and vulnerable people.

“That purchasing power, if harnessed even a little bit for the benefit of the local economy, would have huge impacts

on the regional food system,” Osborne said by email. “These are not Whole Foods Market shoppers. The most direct route to getting good, nutrient-dense food to them is via those food service operations.”

She said larger producers can adjust operations to divert some production to local markets, but it’s in our interest to help small farmers grow as well.

“I believe having a broad base of people who know how

to produce food is going to matter in the long run,” she said. “Feeding ourselves has guided the course of human history. Those societies who can do it well are resilient, those who can’t are at risk. For that reason alone, I think letting food production become an abstraction is a dangerous path.

“I don’t think all small producers should get big,” Osborne said, “but I hope those that want to can get the support they need.”



Western Innovator Amanda Osborne

Occupation: Vice president of food and farms for Ecotrust, a Portland nonprofit.

In the news because: Lead author and editor of “Oregon Food Infrastructure Gap Analysis.” <http://www.ecotrust.org/publication/regional-food-infrastructure/>

Personal: Age 41, mom to Olivia, 10, and Hudson, 8. Cheerfully describes her food preference as an “omnivore without a dilemma.”

Background: Holds an undergraduate degree from Washington University in St. Louis, and a master’s degree in Integrated Marketing Communications from Northwestern University. Grew up spending summers visiting Oregon relatives, moved here in 2006.

Professional: Joined Ecotrust in 2010, first working as sales and marketing director of Food-Hub, an online service that links producers and buyers.

Capital Press

Established 1928
Board of directors
Mike ForresterPresident
Steve Forrester
Kathryn Brown
Sid Freeman Outside director
Mike Omeg Outside director

Corporate officer
John Perry
Chief operating officer

Capital Press Managers
Mike O’BrienPublisher
Joe Beach Editor
Elizabeth Yutzie Sell Advertising Director
Carl Sampson Managing Editor
Barbara Nipp Production Manager
Samantha McLaren Circulation Manager

Entire contents copyright © 2015
EO Media Group
dba Capital Press

An independent newspaper
published every Friday.

Capital Press (ISSN 0740-3704) is published weekly by EO Media Group, 1400 Broadway St. NE, Salem OR 97301.

Periodicals postage paid at Portland, OR, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: send address changes to Capital Press, P.O. Box 2048 Salem, OR 97308-2048.

To Reach Us

Toll free 800-882-6789
Main line 503-364-4431
Fax 503-370-4383
Advertising Fax 503-364-2692

News Staff

N. California
Tim Hearden 530-605-3072

E Idaho
John O’Connell 208-421-4347

Idaho
Carol Ryan Dumas 208-860-3898

Boise
Sean Ellis 208-914-8264

Central Washington
Dan Wheat 509-699-9099

E Washington
Matthew Weaver 509-688-9923

Oregon
Eric Mortenson 503-412-8846
Mateusz Perkowski 800-882-6789

Graphic artist
Alan Kenaga 800-882-6789

To Place Classified Ads
Ad fax 503-364-2692
or 503-370-4383
Telephone (toll free) 866-435-2965
Online www.capitalpress.com/classifieds

Subscriptions
Mail rates paid in advance
Easy Pay U.S. \$3.75/month (direct withdrawal from bank or credit card account)
1 year U.S. \$49.49
2 years U.S. \$89.89
1 year Canada \$275
1 year other countries call for quote
1 year Internet only \$49
1 year 4-H, FFA students and teachers \$30
9 months 4-H, FFA students & teachers \$25
Visa and Mastercard accepted

To get information published

Mailing address:
Capital Press
P.O. Box 2048
Salem, OR 97308-2048

News: Contact the main office or news staff member closest to you, send the information to newsroom@capitalpress.com or mail it to “Newsroom,” c/o Capital Press. Include a contact telephone number.

Letters to the Editor: Send your comments on agriculture-related public issues to opinions@capitalpress.com, or mail your letter to “Opinion,” c/o Capital Press. Letters should be limited to 300 words. Deadline: Noon Monday.

Capital Press ag media

www.capitalpress.com
www.FarmSeller.com
www.AgDirectoryWest.com
www.OnlyAg.com
www.facebook.com/capitalpress
www.facebook.com/farmseller
www.facebook.com/onlyAGdotcom
twitter.com/capitalpress
www.youtube.com/capitalpressvideo
www.blogiculture.com

Index

California 11
Dairy 14
Drought 4
Idaho 10
Markets 16
Opinion 6
Oregon 8
Washington 9

Correction

In a story last week on Page 3 about brothers Ebin Barnett, Ben Prindle and Matthew Prindle, makers of Thinksect cricket flour and the Entobar, the source of the crickets was incorrect. The crickets are raised in Thailand. The Capital Press regrets the error.

Lamb and wool show features youths’ efforts

By JAN JACKSON
For the Capital Press

TURNER, Ore. — Parents, teachers and children of all ages focused on sheep during the 78th annual Marion County Lamb and Wool Show on June 6.

Originally started in 1937 so local farmers could show their sheep, the event morphed into a family friendly educational experience that focuses on youth.

The 2015 show included about 40 Peewees (pre-4-H), 4-H and FFA kids who showed 70 registered and commercial ewes and feeder and market lambs.

Sheep grower Kraig Ohling, of Shedd, Ore., considers the event a family tradition.

“I started as a judge in 1972,” Ohling said. “My chil-



Jan Jackson/For the Capital Press

Nine-year-old Jackie Leao of Silverton, Ore., communing with her lamb after winning second place in the showmanship event at the Marion County Lamb and Wool Show on June 6 in Turner, Ore.

dren and grandchildren have shown their lambs here and to-

day I’m watching my 5-year-old great-grandson show a sheep he

Online

www.marioncountylamband-woolshow.yolasite.com

owns. It is a great experience for these young people. It teaches them responsibility, helps them learn how to deal with the public as well as helps them get ready to show at their county fairs.”

Andrea Leao, an Oregon State University 4-H coordinator from Silverton, Ore., was there watching her four daughters — ages 3, 7, 9 and 12 — show their family market lambs.

“It is particularly good for my 9-year-old daughter, Jackie, who is an autistic special needs student,” Leao said. “Also a member of Silver Adventures Livestock 4-H Club, the program gives her a place where

she can compete with peers when academics and sports are not as easy for her. She entered this year for the first time and she was really excited to have her lamb take a second place in showmanship.”

Jula Galvin, the event coordinator who has been volunteering for the event since her children participated in 2003, was pleased with this year’s show and even more encouraged about its future.

“We are seeing more young peewees coming up and their parents are becoming more involved,” Galvin said. “This year’s judges were impressed with the quality of the lambs that were shown Saturday and said there was a large number that were of the quality that could have gone to market that very day.”

Norway students see U.S. forestry and Christmas tree industries operate

By MITCH LIES
For the Capital Press

BANKS, Ore. — Eighteen college forestry students from Norway visited a Banks, Ore., Christmas tree farm June 3 as part of a two-week stint here to study Northwest farm and forestry practices.

The students, mostly seniors, peppered farm owner Mark Schmidlin with questions: How many trees does he plant per acre, they wanted to know. What percentage of the trees make top grade? How much fertilizer does he add and when? How does he harvest the trees? How long does it take to produce a Christmas tree? How does he process and transport them?

From the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, the students were primarily interested in forestry operations, but

also wanted to see a Christmas tree farm. Tour organizer, Olav Hoibo, who is spending a year’s sabbatical at the College of Forestry at Oregon State University, called Schmidlin and arranged the stop.

Two of the students, including Lars Raaen, said their families are involved in Christmas tree production. And, according to Raaen, many Norwegian families decorate their homes each holiday season with a Christmas tree.

“Christmas trees are as big in Norway as they are here,” Raaen said.

Among forestry stops, the students visited forest products operations in British Columbia, Washington and Oregon.

Birger Eikenes, a forest technology professor at the Norwegian university and one of three professors to make the trip, said



Mitch Lies/For the Capital Press

Banks, Ore., farmer Mark Schmidlin tells college students from Norway, who are touring Northwest forestry and farm operations, how the Northwest Christmas tree industry processes and transports trees. The students are spending two weeks in the Northwest.

the students already knew a lot about U.S. forest products practices. “But it is another thing to go and see with your own eyes,” he said.

“They wanted to go out and

see how forestry is done in other places,” Eikenes said.

“We wanted to see how things are done on the other side of the water,” said Terje Olav Ryd, “and see if it is as big as we

expected. We always hear that everything is bigger in America. “It is,” he said.

The students were next headed to Northern California to view Sequoia trees and Coastal redwoods, Eikenes said.

“There is nothing that size in Norway,” Eikenes said, noting that trees in Norway are more similar in size to East Coast trees.

Of course, there are a lot of similarities between the two countries, the students said, including environmental regulations.

“We have a lot of environmental rules that will shut down areas for a while,” said Ingebord Anker-Rasch.

Also, she said, like here, the industry has mechanized its harvest in recent years, and is recovering from a lengthy economic downturn.

Calendar

Friday, June 12

Forestry Shortcourse, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. West Bonner Library, Priest River, Idaho, 208-446-1680. This 6-session program will help forest owners understand ecology, silviculture, wildlife and other topics.

Saturday, June 13

Rickreall Gun Show, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Polk County Fair Grounds, Rickreall, Ore., 503-623-3048.

Sunday, June 14

Rickreall Gun Show continues, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Polk County Fair Grounds, Rickreall, Ore., 503-623-3048.

Monday, June 15

Purchasing and Owning Rural and

Small Farm Property, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center, Central Point, Ore., 541-776-7371. June 15, 22 and 29. Get the facts about wells, septic systems, zoning requirements and limitations, special assessments, water and soil needs, farm product marketing restrictions and water rights. Single attendance \$45. Bring spouse or partner for additional 50 cents. Register online at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/sorec/farms>. Call 541-776-7371, ext. 208.

Friday, June 19

Forestry Shortcourse, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. West Bonner Library, Priest River, Idaho, 208-446-1680.

Saturday, June 20

Humane Chicken Processing Seminar, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Oakville Regional Event Center, Oakville, Wash., 360-858-1317. This seminar will describe humane methods for processing chickens using equipment that can be rented from the county extension office.

Wednesday, June 24

Importance of Beneficial Insects on the Farm, 1-5 p.m. Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center, Central Point, Ore., 541-776-7371. Instructor: Gwendolyn Ellen, Integrated Plant Protection Center, Oregon State University.

This class will cover the basics of agricultural biodiversity and how you can increase it. Also covered will be information on habitat and practices Northwest farmers use to keep beneficial insects (including native pollinators) on the farm. Class includes a tour of flowering plants and beneficial insects on the farm. Register online at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/sorec/farms>

Friday, June 26

Forestry Shortcourse, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. West Bonner Library, Priest River, Idaho, 208-446-1680.

Tuesday, June 30

Poplar for Biofuels field tour, 10:30 a.m.

-1 p.m. Hayden Demonstration Site, Hayden, Idaho, 253-241-5043. Learn about the latest biofuel and biochemical developments in the Pacific Northwest. Topics include growing hybrid poplar as a short rotation woody energy crop; sustainable production and environmental impacts on soil water and wildlife; best areas to develop biofuel and biochemical industries; and biomass production tour highlighting operational and research poplar plots.

Friday, July 3

Forestry Shortcourse, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. West Bonner Library, Priest River, Idaho, 208-446-1680.

DON'T MISS OUT!

Subscribe to the Capital Press E-mail Newsletters and stay informed on the topics that matter most to you.

Visit www.CapitalPress.com/Newsletters and sign up today!



Capital Press
The West's Ag Weekly