

OSU poised to expand research, extension

\$14 million in additional funding appears likely

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

SALEM — Oregon State University is poised to hire new agricultural research and extension employees with a \$14 million funding increase recently passed by the Oregon legislature.

The hike is part of broader higher education legislation, House Bill 5024, that's won approval in the House and Senate by strong margins but still awaits Gov. Kate Brown's signature.

If HB 5024 is enacted, it will result in the first meaningful expansion of OSU's extension service in many

years, said Scott Reed, vice president of university outreach and engagement.

"It's very encouraging," he said. With inflation and increasing costs, the extension service has lost two positions a year on average since 2000, he said.

Of the \$14 million in additional funding, about 31 percent is slated for the extension service, 44 percent for the university's agricultural experiment stations and 25 percent for its forest research laboratory.

Total funding for the three programs is set at \$118.5 million under the bill.

The extension service has numerous unfilled positions that are being considered for funding, such as agents specializing in livestock, dairy, polli-

nators, forestry, nutrient management, watershed research and sage grouse recovery, Reed said.

"We have not yet pulled the trigger on which positions to fill," he said, adding that administrators would wait until the bill is approved by the full Legislature.

Dan Arp, dean of OSU's College of Agricultural Sciences, said it's premature to discuss the experiment station positions that would be filled due to the funding increase.

However, the university does plan to hire field and laboratory technicians dedicated to pollinator research if HB 5024 becomes law, he said.

At the beginning of the legislative session, OSU asked for \$16 million in additional funding for the three

programs, Arp said.

The university won't be able to fill all 40 positions that would have been possible with that level of funding, but it's nonetheless grateful for the support of lawmakers, he said.

"That's a glass that's 88 percent full," Arp said. "It's really great news."

While the details about specific positions remain murky, the university has identified five priority areas for hiring:

- Sustainable management of working landscapes: This category is of most significance for farmers and ranchers, as these positions would focus on helping landowners with on-the-ground problems facing agriculture.
- Promoting public health, food safety and security: Apart from food safety issues, these positions may also

support the "community food systems" of local farms and market channels, as well as breeding efforts.

- Ensuring water quality and quantity: These positions would assist with farm and forest practices that improve water quality and managing basins to improve water availability.

- Technologies for business development and value-added manufacturing: Food processing and forest products would benefit from these positions, which are meant to help develop new technologies that create jobs in rural communities.

- Educating the workforce of tomorrow: "Youth development" of pre-college students through real world learning experiences is the focus of this area.



Carol Ryan Dumas/Capital Press

Officials participate in groundbreaking ceremonies at the site of PerforMix cattle feed-supplement facility in Rupert, Idaho, on June 23. From left are Jan Rogers, executive director, Southern Idaho Economic Development Organization; Jeff Sayer, director, Idaho Department of Commerce; Jim Keppen, PerforMix president; and Celia Gould, director, Idaho Agriculture Department.

PerforMix expands production to Magic Valley

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

RUPERT, Idaho — In the latest in a string of ag-related businesses to launch or expand in southern Idaho's Magic Valley, PerforMix feed-supplement and livestock-nutrition company broke ground for a new processing plant on June 23.

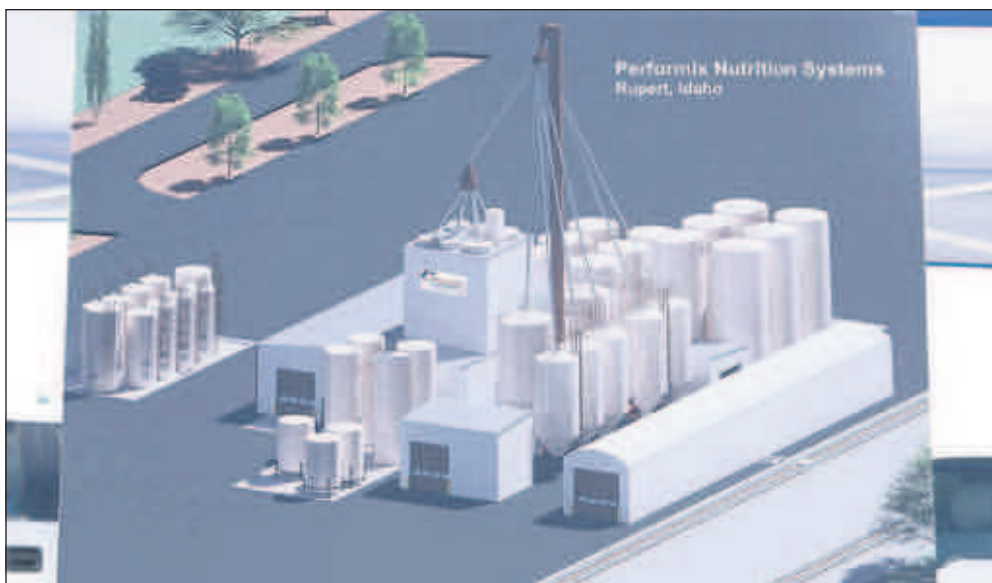
The facility will produce liquid feed supplement for the dairy and beef cattle industries, encompassing four separate buildings with tanks and a truck yard on 6.8 acres of the company's 10-acre site, said Jim Keppen, PerforMix president.

The new facility represents significant investment, several millions of dollars. Operations are expected to begin in December or January, he said.

The plant will have a capacity for 100,000 tons of production annually and will employ 15 at maximum production, including five drivers through partner trucking company Ag Express, he said.

The Rupert site offers 800 feet of rail spur for receiving incoming ingredients. Outgoing product will be trucked, he said.

Founded in 1985 by AgriBeef Co. of Boise to supply nutritional supplements to AgriBeef's feedyards, PerforMix Nutrition Systems has expanded beyond AgriBeef's



Carol Ryan Dumas/Capital Press

A rendering of the PerforMix cattle feed-supplement facility, expected to open this winter, was on display during ground-breaking ceremonies at the company's planned location on 10 acres in Rupert, Idaho, on June 23.

needs with production facilities in Nampa and Fruitland, Idaho, and Moses Lake, Wash.

The Rupert facility will serve PerforMix's customer base across Idaho and allow the company to expand its beef and dairy business across the Pacific Northwest, Keppen said.

The company already has a strong customer base in the Magic Valley and with production peaking at the company's Nampa plant, the new Rupert plant will assume some of that production, focusing on eastern Idaho, and open up opportunity in the Treasure Valley, he said.

Rupert offers a great loca-

tion. The community has been so welcoming and official so supportive, the experience has been refreshing, he said.

Keppen said a great group of people, starting with Jan Rogers at Southern Idaho Economic Development Organization and Rupert officials, have made the process "painless and seamless."

Local officials were committed to bringing PerforMix to the area, and Rupert is the right place for the company's new facility, he said.

Idaho's ag industry, in the Magic Valley specifically, "is nothing short of outstanding," said Celia Gould, director of Idaho Department of Agriculture.

With 2.2 million head of cattle in the state, it makes

sense to build a plant in the epicenter of Idaho's cattle country, she said.

Rupert Councilman Craig Swensen said the area is a burgeoning agricultural hub and industry sector, giving credit to a community that's paying attention to growth and what's coming.

PerforMix had many options in its site selection, and it was hard work and collaboration that brought the valuable partnership to fruition, with a great deal of credit to Rogers at SIEDO and Jeff Sayers, director of Idaho Department of Commerce, he said.

PerforMix is a quality company and couldn't be a better fit for the area and the local ag industry, said Kelly Anthon, Rupert city administrator.

Forestry officials, woodland owners prep for fire season

By JAN JACKSON
For the Capital Press

LYONS, Ore. — Most of the 165 small-woodland owners who recently gathered at a McCully Mountain tree farm had wildfire season on their minds.

The wildfire forecast for Northwest forests is not good, said Joe Arbow, stewardship forester with the Santiam Unit of the Oregon Department of Forestry in Mehama. He brought an ODF tanker unit to the forest site in Lyons on June 19.

"The dry winter and spring and lack of snowpack in the mountains has set us up for a busy fire season," Arbow said. "We can't control the start of naturally occurring fires but we do prepare and train for all fires."

The department monitors all ground-based operations, looking for clearly identified unlocked tool boxes complete with firefighting tools, pumps with at least 250 feet of hose and nozzles ready to operate at all times and fire extinguishers for each internal combustion engine and chainsaw in operation.

"On inspections, we look at cable operations first because rubbing lines create sparks, and we look to see that spark arrester systems in good working order

Online

For detailed information on the 2015 fire season, find the National Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook at www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov.

To contact Joe Arbow at the Oregon Department of Forestry, call 503-859-4323 or email jmarbow@odf.state.or.us.

are in place," he said.

Arbow is one of about 20 year-round and seasonal people in the Mehama ODF office responsible for fire protection on state, private and Bureau of Land Management lands in northern Linn and eastern Marion counties.

In addition to fire protection, he conducts forest practices inspections.

K.C. VanNatta, a tree farmer and logging operator from Columbia County, talked about his ongoing fire protection regimen.

"You can't go out without shaking down all of your fire trucks to make sure you have everything you need," VanNatta said. "You never know when something might have been stolen or used and not put back. Your fire extinguishers, gallons of water and working spark arresters and exhaust system — you can't go out without making sure they are operational."



John O'Connell/Capital Press

Kevin, Matt and Rebecca Loveland stand in a field of potatoes. Kevin and his wife, Ann, are preparing to leave soon on a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and will leave the family farm in the hands of Rebecca and Matt.

Children return to farm while father takes LDS mission

By JOHN O'CONNELL
Capital Press

FORT HALL, Idaho — The past few months have been a crash course in agriculture for 26-year-old Rebecca Loveland. Her father, Kevin, considered it a privilege he couldn't refuse when he received an unexpected calling in October to serve The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as a mission president.

Rebecca was fresh out of graduate school, having earned a master's in public administration from Brigham Young University, and had just started a job running business internships with Utah Valley University in Provo.

But she's left that job to manage the family's 5,000-acre

grain and fresh potato farm, while her father spends the next three years training 200 LDS missionaries in Bentonville, Ark. Her mother, Ann, will be charged with overseeing the health of the missionaries. Her 15-year-old brother, Neal, will also make the trip to Bentonville.

Family, neighboring farmers and product suppliers have pledged to help her with the transition. Her 21-year-old brother, Matt, returned days ago from his own two-year LDS mission to St. Louis — the same city in which Rebecca completed a mission four years ago. Matt will put off college to assist her full time, though he may take some winter classes. They expect to average 60 hours of weekly farm work.

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