

Oregon

Oregon Ag Department developing new strategic plan



Agency faces new challenges as agriculture evolves

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

BOARDMAN, Ore. — The Oregon Department of Agriculture is drawing up a new strategic plan to guide the agency's activities in the future.

The goal is to develop a document that's actually useful to ODA officials rather than gathering dust on a shelf, said Ron Sarazin, a consultant who's assisting ODA with the

process.

"It's got to be something that's used on a day-to-day basis," Sarazin said at the recent Oregon Board of Agriculture meeting in Boardman.

The department decided to update its strategic plan because the most recent version was completed before ODA Director Katy Coba was appointed in 2003, said Bruce Pokarney, the agency's communications director.

"We really want to find out what we do well and what we need to improve upon," he said.

To that end, members of the Oregon Board of Agriculture weighed in on the

challenges facing the agency, including:

- **Coexistence:** The farming industry, and by extension the ODA, is struggling with coexistence among different types of agriculture, said Coba.

The battle over cross-pollination between biotech, conventional and organic crops is a prominent example, but the issue isn't limited to genetic engineering, she said.

- **Water:** ODA is rolling out a program to increase its oversight of water quality in "strategic implementation areas" throughout the state, which involves identifying problems and persuading landowners to correct them. The agency aims for voluntary compliance but can issue civil penalties if landowners refuse.

While the agency has made significant progress in its water quality program, the objectives yet to be accomplished are "daunting and the resources are limited," said board member Steve Van Mouwerik, vice president of operations for the Pacific Ag forage and residue harvesting company.

Even when the ODA does ensure that a landowner cor-

rects water quality problems, the same property can easily slip back into non-compliance when it changes hands, said board member Doug Krahmer, a blueberry farmer in the Willamette Valley.

- **Outreach:** Some non-traditional farmers, such as those in urban areas, don't know how to access services provided by the ODA or don't feel like the agency speaks for them, said Laura Masterson, the board's chair and a Portland-area farmer.

Such growers often aren't involved in commodity commissions and other traditional channels that ODA is used to working through, she said.

Threemile Canyon general manager appointed to Oregon Ag Board

Marty Myers' appointment met with criticism from Friends of Family Farmers

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

Marty Myers, the general manager of a diversified dairy and crop farm in Boardman, Ore., has been appointed to the Oregon Board of Agriculture.

The company he operates, Threemile Canyon Farms, has about 50,000 cows and raises potatoes and organic produce on more than 90,000 acres in the Columbia River Basin.

"I've got a diverse background in agriculture," said Myers, noting that he worked on farms through high school and college.

Myers said Oregon Gov. Kate Brown asked him to join

the advisory board, which makes policy recommendations for the Oregon Department of Agriculture, due to his past experience with task forces on dairy air quality and biotechnology, as well as his involvement in international trade programs.

"I try to find solutions rather than take hard line positions," he said.

The appointment is not without controversy, however.

Friends of Family Farmers, a group that advocates for environmentally responsible agriculture, criticized Brown's choice as misguidedly bending to corporate farming.

"For us, it shows the governor wants to take agriculture in the direction of industrialization," said Ivan Maluski, the group's policy director.

Maluski said Threemile Canyon Farms isn't representative of sustainable farming in Oregon because it's a "mega-operator" that causes air pollution and generates large



Marty Myers, general manager of Threemile Canyon Farms, talks with employee Tom Chavez about the operation of the farm's new methane digester in this 2009 file photo.

amounts of manure.

It's also concerning that Myers will be able to guide ODA policies that affect his company, which could create a conflict of interest, said Ma-

luski. "They don't need special access."

Myers said it was offensive to label his operation as a "factory farm," as it's run by two families.

"It's a group of families that have come together and we're farming," he said.

The dairy has a digester that captures methane from manure and turns it into renewable en-

ergy, Myers said. "When you look at air quality, we're very proud of what we do."

The company employs 300 full-time employees and is regularly subject to customer audits to ensure animal welfare and other best practices, he said. "Large does not mean it's bad. It gives the critical mass to do things the right way."

The controversy over Myers' appointment was brought up during his first board meeting in Boardman, which took place Sept. 22-24 and included a tour of Threemile Canyon Farms.

Craig Reeder, general manager of Hale Farms, said he was troubled by the personal attack on Myers, whom he emotionally described as a mentor in the agricultural industry.

Oregon Department of Agriculture Director Katy Coba said she took the criticism of Myers' appointment personally and objected to the implication that the agency only supports large agriculture.

OBC NORTHWEST, INC.
Nursery & Greenhouse Supplies

Over 60 Years Growing with our Customers!

Greenhouses
Semi-Gable, Semi-Quonset, and Gutter Connected models available.

Poly film, clear and blackout film, shade cloth, privacy screen, single and double wall polycarbonate, heaters, exhaust fans, circulation fans, soil mixes, and more supplies to grow with.

GREENHOUSE SPECIALS

	SALE PRICE
20' x 96' Semi-Quonset Greenhouse (1-5/8" x .085" Bows, 6' on center)	\$1499.00
30' x 96' Semi-Gable Greenhouse (1-7/8" x .095" Bows, 6' on center)	\$2624.00
30' x 96' Semi-Gable Greenhouse (2-3/8" x .095" Bows, 6' on center)	\$3279.00

Prices good until Oct. 31, 2015

Call 800-477-4744 or visit obcnw.com
1076 SW Berg Parkway, Canby, Oregon 97013

Licensed & Bonded
• License #127055 (OR)
• OBCNO1 - H022CR (WA)

National FFA membership increases by 3 percent

By MITCH LIES
For the Capital Press

The National FFA Foundation announced Sept. 28 that national FFA membership has reached record numbers and is up more than 20 percent from 2009-10.

The foundation announced membership in the national FFA organization now stands at 629,367, a 3 percent increase from last year.

The number of chapters also increased, from 7,665 in 2014 to 7,757 in 2015, according to the announcement.

"FFA, through agricultural education, is preparing our youth to ensure the security of our country's food, fiber and natural resources for years to come," said National FFA Organization CEO Dwight Armstrong in a prepared statement. "Through real-world experiences, the nation's agricultural educators are helping students



Reserve Grand Champion FFA Swine Showman Ashlee Bowen of the Meridian, Idaho, FFA chapter poses with the Western Idaho Fair's swine judge. Ashlee's breeding gilt won Reserve Grand Champion at the same fair. National FFA membership is up 3 percent this year.

develop the technical knowledge, skills and problem-solving capabilities to be the industry's leaders of tomorrow.

"FFA continues to grow leaders, build communities and strengthen agriculture," he said.

The top five states by membership are Texas, California, Georgia, Oklahoma and Missouri, according to the announcement.

Oregon membership numbers also are up, said Kevin White, executive director of the Oregon FFA Foundation, increasing from 5,323 in 2013-14 to 5,588 in 2014-15. Going back five years, the state membership has increased more than 17 percent, White said.

Asked why he believed membership has grown in recent years, White echoed much of what Armstrong said.

Bury it!

Unique Features Reduce Draft

Vari-Lander
Semi-mounted conventional plows from 4 to 7 bottoms

KUHN
Invest in Quality!

www.kuhnusa.com

Belknap Ag Belknap 20 Belknap 25 Belknap 30 Belknap 35 Belknap 40 Belknap 45 Belknap 50 Belknap 55	Merble Mountain Machinery Merble 20 Merble 25 Merble 30 Merble 35 Merble 40 Merble 45 Merble 50 Merble 55	Pape Machinery Pape 20 Pape 25 Pape 30 Pape 35 Pape 40 Pape 45 Pape 50 Pape 55	Robbins Farm Equipment Robbins 20 Robbins 25 Robbins 30 Robbins 35 Robbins 40 Robbins 45 Robbins 50 Robbins 55	Wabco Tractor & Supply Wabco 20 Wabco 25 Wabco 30 Wabco 35 Wabco 40 Wabco 45 Wabco 50 Wabco 55	CH Ag CH 20 CH 25 CH 30 CH 35 CH 40 CH 45 CH 50 CH 55
Valley Truck & Tractor Valley 20 Valley 25 Valley 30 Valley 35 Valley 40 Valley 45 Valley 50 Valley 55	Ferridge Tractor Ferridge 20 Ferridge 25 Ferridge 30 Ferridge 35 Ferridge 40 Ferridge 45 Ferridge 50 Ferridge 55	Boyd's Implement Boyd 20 Boyd 25 Boyd 30 Boyd 35 Boyd 40 Boyd 45 Boyd 50 Boyd 55	Central Machinery Sales Central 20 Central 25 Central 30 Central 35 Central 40 Central 45 Central 50 Central 55	Okanogan Truck & Tractor Okanogan 20 Okanogan 25 Okanogan 30 Okanogan 35 Okanogan 40 Okanogan 45 Okanogan 50 Okanogan 55	Campbell Tractor Campbell 20 Campbell 25 Campbell 30 Campbell 35 Campbell 40 Campbell 45 Campbell 50 Campbell 55
	Torrance's Farm Implements Torrance 20 Torrance 25 Torrance 30 Torrance 35 Torrance 40 Torrance 45 Torrance 50 Torrance 55	Farmers Equipment Farmers 20 Farmers 25 Farmers 30 Farmers 35 Farmers 40 Farmers 45 Farmers 50 Farmers 55	Wainwright Tractor Wainwright 20 Wainwright 25 Wainwright 30 Wainwright 35 Wainwright 40 Wainwright 45 Wainwright 50 Wainwright 55	Pioneer Equipment Pioneer 20 Pioneer 25 Pioneer 30 Pioneer 35 Pioneer 40 Pioneer 45 Pioneer 50 Pioneer 55	

SAGE Fact #118
Dams on the Columbia and Snake Rivers create large reservoirs that allow barges to navigate more than 465 miles from the Pacific Ocean to Lewiston, Idaho.

Visit the SAGE Center:
Sunday - Thursday 10am - 5pm
Friday & Saturday 10am - 6pm

Find us on:
Facebook Twitter YouTube

101 Olson Road - Boardman, OR 97818
(541) 481-7245
www.visitidaho.com