

## People & Places

# WSU scientist a 'grower's advocate'

**Kim Patten**  
researches  
cranberries,  
shellfish issues

By DON JENKINS  
Capital Press

LONG BEACH, Wash. — Washington State University research scientist Kim Patten has gained some fame, or notoriety, for trying everything to rid Willapa Bay of burrowing shrimp.

The shrimp's tunneling causes commercially grown clams and oysters to sink in the mud and suffocate. Left unchecked, the shrimp will sink shellfish farmers, too.

Patten has tried crushing, blasting and paving over shrimp. He's tried organic controls, such as garlic oil, mustard seed and habanero pepper. He's tried sound waves, hoping annoyed shrimp would move away. He has tried things knowing full well that they were, in his words, "stupid."

Stupid but necessary. All possibilities must be exhausted, he says, to build a case for the one thing that has proven effective — a chemical. "You can't justify trying the harsh stuff until you try the safe stuff," he said.

Twenty-five years ago, Patten gave up a newly earned tenured position at Texas A&M University and returned to his alma mater as director of WSU's Pacific Coast Cranberry Research Station, an isolated and rundown outpost that the university wanted to close.

The station survived, thanks to protesting cranberry growers and an influential state senator, and so has Patten, though he's been nicked.

He's been thrust into the spotlight over the years, partly by his own choosing, as an advocate for pesticides, fungicides and herbicides to take on the pests, diseases and weeds that infest the region's cranberry bogs and shellfish beds.

"He's a grower's advocate. He tries to do everything he can for individual growers,"



Don Jenkins/Capital Press

Washington State University research scientist Kim Patten holds a cranberry, and maybe the cranberry industry's future, at the Pacific Coast Cranberry Research Station in Long Beach. Over 25 years, Patten has been a high-profile advocate, and sometimes a target, for the Long Beach Peninsula's food producers.

### Western Innovator Kim Patten

Age: 62

Position: Washington State University Extension professor at Long Beach; Pacific County Extension director.



Education: Bachelor's degree in plant science from University of California-Davis in 1977; master's degree in horticulture from Iowa State University in 1980; Ph.D. in horticulture from Washington State University in 1984.

Family: Wife, Andrea, and three grown children — Eli, Alisa and Anja.

said cranberry farmer Malcolm McPhail.

In cranberry bogs, weeds intertwine with vines. Patten was a pioneer in testing Callisto, an herbicide the cranberry industry has come to rely on to control weeds without damaging vines.

"Weed research has been his forte," McPhail said. "He's been incredible in that respect, as far as getting new compounds."

Patten, now 62, oversees 11 acres of cranberry test plots.

Recently, he showed a visitor a variety so new it doesn't have a name. The berries were large and matched Patten's crimson WSU hat and sweater. This, he said, would be a good berry for Ocean Spray Craisins, a happy prospect for the state's growers, most of whom belong to the co-op that produces the dried cranberries along with other products.

Although Patten was hired to spearhead cranberry research, he's better known for battling spartina and japonica

eelgrass, two invasive grasses that, like burrowing shrimp, defied mechanical controls. Chemical warfare on spartina was relatively popular, but spraying eelgrass has been controversial, with Patten supporting shellfish farmers who apply imazamox.

Someone once called him "chemical Kim," and the alliterative put down has been too good ever since for reporters to resist mentioning.

"It's a pretty vicious, mean world out there in terms of social media," Patten said. "It's not fun to be attacked professionally, and I've been attacked a lot professionally."

The spotlight was particularly intense this year when shellfish growers gave up a permit from the Washington Department of Ecology to spray burrowing shrimp with imidacloprid, a chemical commonly used on land crops and approved for use in the bay by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Washington State De-

partment of Agriculture.

Imidacloprid was to replace the discontinued carbaryl, which had been used in the bay for 50 years. DOE said the switch would substantially reduce toxics in Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor. The growers thought they were making environmental strides, but critics did not. The growers ultimately canceled the spraying after waves of bad publicity and threats of consumer boycotts.

"It left me feeling nauseous and disgusted with modern society and the way we deal with food," Patten said.

He said he's wary of chemicals, but he deplores what he describes as the public's unreasoning fears and ignorance of the regulatory framework that vets their use.

Patten said he's not optimistic he will find an effective alternative to imidacloprid, but he doesn't want to retire until the problem is solved, so he'll keep trying. "There's always something you can try," he said. "Maybe electricity."

## Bounty of Oregon showcased at Capitol

By JAN JACKSON  
For the Capital Press

SALEM — The rain made the hay bales uncomfortable to sit on but it didn't otherwise dampen the Bounty of Oregon Harvest Festival at the Oregon Capitol.

Among the agriculture partners for the free family-friendly event were commodity associations, Oregon Farm Bureau, Oregon Ag in the Classroom and the state Parks and Recreation Department.

Inside, kids clustered around hands-on activity tables and outside they got to climb on tractors, pet lambs and pick out free pumpkins to take home. The agriculture-themed event was the third in new series of programs sponsored by the Oregon State Capitol Foundation and funded with money from the sale of Pacific Wonderland license plates.

Oregon State Capitol Visitor

Services Event representative Stacy Nalley praised the ag event partners who supported their efforts.

"Every event is unique and this one allowed agriculture to be at the forefront," Nalley said. "We had about 500 to 600 adults and children learning and having fun in a safe environment while at the same time giving associations an opportunity to showcase their programs and answer questions."

Other special events have included those celebrating Oregon's history, learning about the Japanese culture, showcasing the importance of reusing and recycling and celebrating the Hispanic Heritage.

"During the events, we hear people say that 'This is the first time I have been in the Capitol' or 'I haven't been here since I was on a school tour in the fourth grade,'" she said. "Our goal is for our visitors to know this is their building, they are

welcome, and if they choose they can get involved in democracy. Our event partners are helping us accomplish that."

Nellie Oehler, a 50-year veteran Benton County 4-H Club leader from Corvallis, worked with the Ram Ewe Downs club to bring lambs to exhibit on the Capitol Mall.

"It was a lot of work for these kids to get the lambs fed and get them to Salem that early in the morning, but education and community service is part of what they do as a 4-H club," Oehler said. "The club members put together little bags of wool for each child to take home and handed out postcards that showed in pictures what happens to the wool once it leaves the sheep."

She said the most-asked question was how old the lambs were. One was three weeks and the other four weeks.



Jan Jackson/For the Capital Press  
Nellie Oehler, a Ram Ewe Downs 4-H Club leader, gives out bags of wool to young visitors at the Bounty of Oregon Harvest Festival at the Oregon Capitol.

## DuPont opens cellulosic ethanol plant in Iowa

NEVADA, Iowa (AP) — DuPont is announcing the opening of an ethanol plant that will make the fuel additive from corn stalks, leaves and cobs instead of the grain itself.

The \$225 million refinery in central Iowa is touted as the world's largest cellulosic eth-

anol plant, which is designed to make 30 million gallons annually once it's in full production next year.

The Oct. 30 opening of the plant comes at a challenging time for the ethanol industry, which has been battling the petroleum industry over how much ethanol the government

will require to be used in the nation's automotive gas supply.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is scheduled to come up with its final recommendations this month after proposing to cut the renewable fuel standard from levels Congress set earlier.

## Cougar snatches Yorkie from owner's porch

SALEM (AP) — An 8-year-old Yorkshire Terrier was carried away from its owner's porch in Oregon by an animal believed to be a young cougar.

The Statesman Journal reports that Mark Jensen says he watched a large cat carry away his dog, Bub, at his house near

Sublimity early the morning of Oct. 28.

He told Marion County Sheriff's deputies that the animal cornered the Yorkie on the porch before carrying it away.

Jensen described the cat as weighing between 35 and 50 pounds with brown and white markings.

## Calendar

To submit an event go to the Community Events calendar on the home page of our website at [www.capitalpress.com](http://www.capitalpress.com) and click on "Submit an Event." Calendar items can also be mailed to Capital Press, 1400 Broadway St. NE, Salem, OR 97301.

### Monday, Nov. 9

Meridian FFA Scholarship Auction, 5:30 p.m., Meridian High School Professional Technical Center, Meridian, Idaho, 208-350-4160. Free tri-tip dinner followed by several silent auction rooms and a live auction.

### Tuesday, Nov. 10

Nevada Governor's Conference on Agriculture, Culinary Academy of Las Vegas,

North Las Vegas, Nev. Conference highlights include local food successes in southern Nevada, breaking down barriers within the local food movement and making important connections in the local food chain.

### Wednesday-Saturday

#### Nov. 11-14

Tri-State Grain Growers Convention, Davenport Grand Hotel, Spokane, Wash.

### Thursday-Friday

#### Nov. 12-13

Oregon Water Law Conference, Hilton Executive Tower, Portland.

### Friday-Sunday

#### Nov. 13-15

Tilth Producers of Washington 2015 Annual Conference, Spokane Convention Center, Spokane, Wash. 206-632-7506.

### Monday-Thursday

#### Nov. 16-19

Washington Farm Bureau 2015 Annual Meeting & Trade Show, Yakima Convention Center, Yakima.

### Thursday-Friday

#### Nov. 19-20

Idaho Water Users Association annual water

law and resource issues seminar, 8:30 a.m. Riverside Hotel, Boise, (208) 344-6690. Several hot-topic water issues are on the agenda for the Idaho Water Users Association's annual fall water law and resource issues seminar.

### Friday, Nov. 20

Agri-Business Council of Oregon Denim & Diamonds Auction, Dinner & Awards, 5 p.m. Oregon Convention Center, Portland, 503-595-9121.

### Friday-Saturday

#### Nov. 27-28

Open Alpaca Barn, Alpacas of Oregon, Sherwood, 503-628-2023.

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