

Washington

Five Wash. FFA chapters are national award finalists

Adviser: Honors speak to creativity, innovation of students

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

Five Washington State FFA programs are finalists for national FFA awards, and a state adviser says it's a sign of creativity and innovation from student members.

The Elma and Goldendale FFA chapters are national finalists for the National FFA

Organization's 2016 Model of Innovation awards for student development for logging, rodeo and non-traditional agriculture career programs, respectively.

The Omak chapter is a finalist for the national Model of Innovation award for chapter development for its officer mascot's social media campaign.

The Ephrata chapter is a finalist for the national Model of Innovation community development award for highway crop signs with the Quincy Rotary.

The Yelm chapter is a final-

ist for the Model of Excellence award.

"I think it's really significant when you look at the size and scope of our national organization," said Rebecca Wallace, Washington FFA adviser and agricultural education program supervisor in the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. "Having one of the top 10 chapters in the nation as an overall program means they're one of the best. That's huge."

Every chapter in good standing in the nation is eligi-

ble for such recognition, Wallace said, noting there are more than 7,000 chapters.

The national organization is looking for programs that are "new, different, exciting — you really have to be quite innovative," Wallace said.

Wallace believes it's the first time Washington has had this much recognition in one year.

"It speaks to the good works being done in the communities across the state, the strong leadership and dedication from our agricultural educators and the creativity and innovation

that our students have when they're putting together their program activities," she said.

Students plan the activities, Wallace said.

"Statistically, to have five finalists out of one state across the nation being recognized, I think that speaks volumes," Wallace said.

The programs also benefit from the participation of local communities, Wallace said.

"Most certainly, the programs that have the most success means they're really drilled in to their local industry partners," she said.

Beef Counts to provide 1 millionth meal

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

Washington beef producers will provide their 1 millionth serving to a family in need this fall.

Ranchers and volunteers distributed food Sept. 8 to people in need in Spokane. The event capped the summer-long "Buy Beef and Fight Hunger" program. Consumers were encouraged to buy beef at Rosauers and Haggen Food grocery stores. Ten cents of every purchase went to Beef Counts, raising to \$50,000.

The \$50,000 goes to help provide the 1 millionth beef serving, said Bridget Coon, director of digital strategies for the Washington Beef Commission.

Beef Counts is the state beef industry's program to provide beef to local food banks.

Second Harvest and Food Lifeline are the food banks working with the program in Eastern Washington and Western Washington, respectively.

Rancher enthusiasm for the program is growing, Coon said.

"That's really exciting because when we started out, we had to do a lot of education on the public and the producer side, to get everyone on the same page," she said. "(Ranchers are) excited because they believe it's the right thing to do, to help."

The food banks say many clients are families with young children and senior citizens.

"We know these are people that sometimes need a little help for a short time or they're in a really vulnerable position," Coon said. "They all need beef protein and the nutrients found in beef to be healthy and have a chance to thrive."

The commission's consumer marketing indicates that younger millennial audiences respond well to products and brands doing good work in a community, Coon said.

"We continually find ways to get consumers involved in the giving, and we're seeing nothing but positive return on that," she said.

As of July, more than \$620,000 was raised for the Beef Counts program.

The commission continues fundraising in the industry. A roll-over auction at Toppenish Livestock Commission Oct. 11 will allow the beef feeder community to raise funds for the program.

The commission started Beef Counts in 2010. This is the fourth year for the "Buy Beef and Fight Hunger" program.

DNR to auction farmland owned by trust

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

PASCO, Wash. — Irrigated row crops have grown on it for many years, but 230 acres owned by the state since it joined the Union will be auctioned in November by the Washington Department of Natural Resources.

The acreage, valued at \$5.5 million, is surrounded by the growing city of Pasco, making it less suitable for agriculture. For years, it has been leased for farming with revenue supporting statewide school construction.

"The sale of this valuable property will generate money we can profitably use to buy other revenue-producing land," said Peter Goldmark, state commissioner of public lands who heads DNR.

The state Board of Natural Resources authorized sale of the land at its Sept. 6 meeting.

The property is at Interstate 182 and Road 68 in Pasco and includes five parcels ranging from 21 to 103 acres.

Gypsy moths pop up throughout Washington

Defoliating pest trapped in nine counties

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

The Washington State Department of Agriculture has not trapped any gypsy moths in areas it sprayed last spring, but it has caught 24 moths at 20 sites in nine counties, an unusually wide distribution that concerns the department, a WSDA spokeswoman said Sept. 9.

The troublesome pest has been detected this summer from the Kitsap Peninsula to Airway Heights near Spokane, the spokeswoman, Karla Salp, said.

In most years, gypsy moths are found in a handful of counties. The number of places gypsy moths are appearing in Washington may be linked to recent severe infestations in other states, such as Connecticut and Massachusetts, Salp said.

Gypsy moth egg masses are typically brought to



Don Jenkins/Capital Press

Washington State Department of Agriculture gypsy moth trapper Jennifer Berg nails a trap to a tree June 20 in a park along the Columbia River in Vancouver. WSDA has trapped European gypsy moths in nine counties so far this summer, an unusually broad distribution of the troublesome pest.

Washington attached to the belongings of new residents who moved from states with established gypsy moth populations.

"We're expecting to see more introductions because of the massive outbreaks back East both last year and this year," Salp said.

WSDA will continue trapping for gypsy moths until the end of September. So far, moths have been caught in Clark, Cowlitz, King, Kit-

sap, Kittitas, Mason, Pierce, Spokane and Thurston counties. All were European gypsy moths, considered less of a threat to the landscape than Asian gypsy moths.

In response to trapping Asian gypsy moths in 2015, Washington and Oregon agriculture departments last spring conducted unusually large and high-profile aerial spraying operations.

Washington also found a large number of European

gypsy moths in a densely populated Seattle neighborhood, Capitol Hill.

Washington sprayed 130 acres on Capitol Hill and about 10,500 acres at six other sites with Asian gypsy moths.

Salp said officials won't know for two more years whether the spraying was effective.

"We're on the way to hopefully, down the line, being able to say, 'Yes, they were successful treatments,'" Salp said.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture sprayed 8,800 acres over North Portland, where two Asian gypsy moths were found.

ODA spokesman Bruce Pokarney said that the department this summer has trapped four European gypsy moths in Grants Pass and two about 20 miles east of Springfield along the McKenzie River, but no Asian gypsy moths and none in Portland.

"We haven't trapped any in the area that we treated, and that's good news," he said.

In Washington, six gyp-

sy moths have been trapped in Kitsap County, including three adjacent to the naval base on the peninsula. One gypsy moth was trapped on Capitol Hill in Seattle, but it was outside the area that WSDA sprayed last spring.

Salp said WSDA will search for egg masses in areas where gypsy moths were trapped. WSDA typically decides in the winter whether to spray. The department looks for signs that European gypsy moths are taking hold.

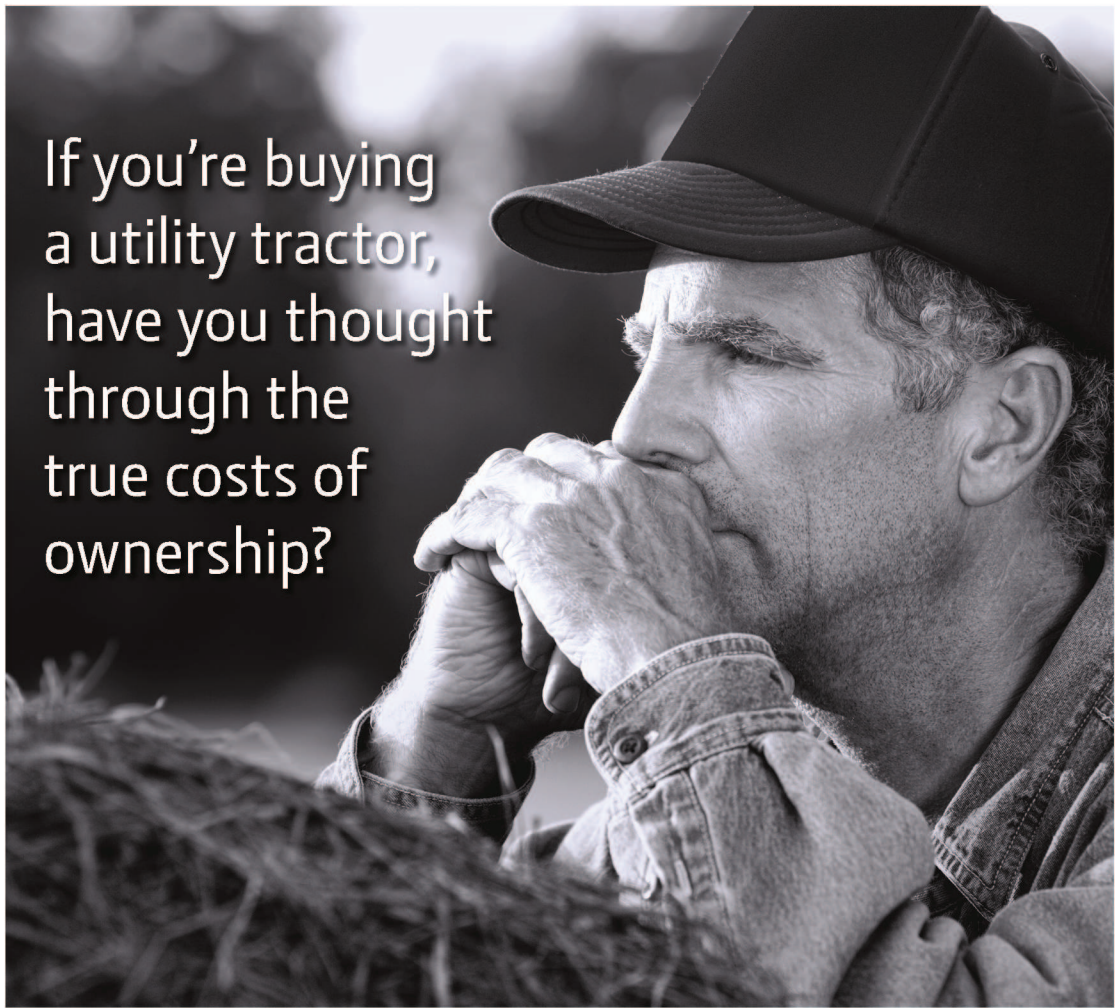
Officials take a harder line on Asian gypsy moths because of their wider diet and greater mobility.

Gypsy moths annually defoliate thousands of acres as caterpillars in the East and Midwest.

Gypsy moths affected 172,573 acres in Connecticut alone in 2015, according to Connecticut agricultural officials.

Outbreaks this year in the Northeastern U.S. have been aided by drought, according to agricultural officials.

A fungus that thrives on moisture infects gypsy moths.



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