

# Judge penalizes anti-GMO activist group \$320,000

By **DON JENKINS**  
Capital Press

An anti-GMO activist group was fined \$319,281 by a Washington state judge Monday for violating the same disclosure law that the processed food industry broke during the high-stakes 2013 initiative battle over labeling genetically modified food.

Food Democracy Now's failure to report the names of some 7,000 campaign donors can't be excused as an oversight, Thurston County Superior Court Judge Gary Tabor said. "The term that came to me was 'sloppy.'"

The Iowa-based organization set up a political committee, Food Democracy Action, to support I-522, which would have made Washing-

ton the first state to require labels on products with GMO ingredients.

The political committee spent \$295,661, but didn't disclose its contributors until after the election.

Tabor agreed with the state attorney general's office that the group should be fined the full amount it spent. The added \$23,620 was for failing to timely file 18 reports with the Public Disclosure Commission.

The judge noted that Food Democracy had previously been politically active in California, Maine and Connecticut.

"The fact is they were involved in other state issues of a similar nature and that would indicate they know there are rules to follow," Tabor said.

Tabor ruled in April that Food Democracy was guilty. A non-jury trial to determine the penalty was put off for two months when Food Democracy failed to show up for a hearing in September.

Food Democracy was again absent Monday. Tabor went ahead with taking testimony and then made a ruling. The session lasted fewer than 90 minutes.

"I think it's unfortunate there is no one representing the defendants," Tabor said.

Reached by phone after the hearing, David Murphy, Food Democracy's founder and executive director, said he will appeal.

He said that Food Democracy

thought it was within the law. By the time it learned it needed to file reports, the paperwork was too overwhelming to complete before the election, he said.

"We at all times wished to comply with Washington state law. This is just an example of where justice has not been done," he said.

Murphy blamed his absence on health problems, confusion on court dates and a change of lawyers since the April. "They just chose to railroad this," he said. "It is a miscarriage of justice."

No attorney has registered with the Thurston County court to represent Food Democracy.

The judgment is one of the larg-

er penalties ever in a case involving Washington's disclosure commission. But it is dwarfed by the \$18 million fine issued earlier this month against the Grocery Manufacturers Association by another Thurston County judge.

GMA did not report until shortly before the election the food and beverage companies that contributed \$11 million to defeat I-522.

GMA has indicated it will appeal. If upheld, the fine will be by far the largest ever in the U.S. for not reporting political activities.

I-522 was the most expensive political campaign in state history, attracting a total of \$42 million for the "yes" and "no" campaigns.

# Wet weather heralds busy season for slug researcher

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**  
Capital Press

It's the rainy season in Oregon, which means there's plenty of work for Oregon State University's new slug expert, Rory McDonnell.

With slugs emerging from their underground hibernation, McDonnell has found that Oregon's reputation as a haven for the slimy pests is well deserved.

"The populations are very large," he said.

The number and size of slugs is greater in Oregon compared to McDonnell's previous post as a research specialist at the University of California-Riverside.

"Sometimes, in California, I felt like I was trying to fit a square peg into a round hole,"



Courtesy of Rory McDonnell

Oregon State University assistant professor Rory McDonnell specializes in slugs. He's currently helping Oregon farmers find efficient ways to kill the slimy pests.

he said.

McDonnell assumed his new position as an assistant professor at OSU in mid-July, but autumn is when his research began in earnest.

During the dry season, he got his laboratory equipped and met with farmers afflicted by the prodigious mollusks.

The wet weather has now allowed him to study the slug's life cycle with the aim of developing efficient ways to eliminate the pests.

Slug activity peaks in fall

and spring, so McDonnell is out in the field, checking traps to see which species are most problematic in certain locations.

European brown garden snails are the worst offenders in nurseries, while gray field slugs are the primary culprits in field crops, he said.

The gray slug is likely the most prominent slug pest worldwide due to its ability to adapt to a variety of environments and food sources, McDonnell said.

"It can be successful under a wide range of conditions," he said.

In March 2015, OSU organized a "slug summit" in Salem, where growers complained that damage from slugs has increased in recent years.

That complaint prompted the university to seek additional funding from Oregon lawmakers to hire a slug researcher. The Legislature provided an addition \$14 million to OSU later that year, allowing the university to fill the slug position and several others.

McDonnell is exploring strategies to fight the pests.

For example, farmers could use extracts from food or slug pheromones to attract them to a certain area of a field that's treated with a hefty dose of molluscicide. This approach may kill the slugs more effectively than spreading a lesser concentration of molluscicide across an entire field. McDonnell and other researchers have identified slug attractants that work in the laboratory, and they plan to see if the substances also work outdoors.

"What happens in the lab isn't necessarily what happens in the field," he said.

Another technique would involve parasitic nematodes that kill slugs, which are used for biocontrol in Europe.

If the nematodes were found in Oregon, researchers would have to prove to the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service that the parasites don't impact native species.



John O'Connell/Capital Press

Derek Tilley, manager of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's Plant Materials Center in Aberdeen, Idaho, finds a dead milkweed plant along the banks of the Aberdeen-Springfield Canal. Tilley has started research on maximizing milkweed planting and to provide weed-management recommendations to canal managers for the benefit of monarch butterflies, which are a species in decline.

# Aberdeen center studying milkweed to benefit butterflies

By **JOHN O'CONNELL**  
Capital Press

ABERDEEN, Idaho — The USDA's Aberdeen Plant Materials Center has started trials to determine the best planting methods for establishing stands of milkweed — a plant that fills a critical life-cycle niche for declining monarch butterfly populations.

The center, run by the agency's Natural Resources Conservation Service, has additional trials planned for next spring, aimed at helping canal companies control vegetation along their irrigation ditches without harming milkweed.

Groups petitioned to put the monarch on the federal list of threatened species in 2014. The Aberdeen center's manager, Derek Tilley, noted a listing could lead to new restrictions on public and private lands, as well as on herbicide use.

"My thought is we get ahead of this and start working on monarch conservation before it becomes a major issue," Tilley said.

Monarchs lay their eggs exclusively on milkweed, which provides nectar for adult butterflies and imbues feeding caterpillars with a toxin that protects



Eric Mortenson/Capital Press

The star-shaped blossoms of showy milkweed provide food and egg-laying sites for migrating monarch butterflies.

them from birds. According to the petition, monarch populations have declined by 90 percent since 1995 east of the Rockies and by half since 1997 in the West. The petitioners argue declining milkweed populations due to increased farm use of glyphosate herbicide are a primary reason for the monarch's struggles. In Iowa, for example, the petition cites a 98.7 percent loss of milkweed between 1999 and 2012.

Tilley intends to make a pamphlet to educate canal managers on monarch-friendly weed control, based on his planned spring research comparing effects of weed control with mowing and light tillage on milkweed productivity.

Regarding the seeding trials, he hopes his findings will help reduce the cost of milkweed seed and improve success for farmers seeking to include milkweed in pollinator plantings. Tilley said growers have been including milkweed lately in pollinator field buffers to attract predatory insects that feed on crop pests. Some growers are also selectively planting milkweed in moist pockets within Conservation Reserve

Program land, he said. Even with seed prices of about \$400 per pound, Tilley said vendors have had a hard time keeping milkweed seed in stock.

Tilley's children helped him collect milkweed seed along canal banks for the trials. He's already direct-seeded a fall milkweed planting at his center's man-made marsh, which he'll compare against a spring seeding, rhizome planting and transplanting of greenhouse starts. The center also has a contract to supply Yosemite National Park with 30,000 milkweed plants for restoration work.

Angie Babbitt, a spokeswoman with Kansas-based Monarch Watch, said her organization prefers public and private partnerships to bolster milkweed populations to a threatened species listing. Her group's fear relates to the continuation of monarch migrations — including one in the East and a Western migration that heavily utilizes the Snake River Plain through Idaho.

## LEGAL

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON FOR THE COUNTY OF MARION**

**Probate Department IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF**

**Fran Bledsoe, Deceased No. 16PB07260**

**NOTICE TO INTERESTED PERSONS**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned has been appointed Personal Representative of the above estate. All persons having claims against the estate are required to present them to the undersigned Personal Representative in care of the undersigned attorney at: 319 Sixth Street SW, Albany, OR 97321 within four months after the date of the first publication of this notice, as stated below, or such claims may be barred.

All persons whose rights may be affected by the proceedings in this estate may obtain additional information from the records of the Court, the Personal Representative, or the attorney for the Personal Representative.

DATED and first published November 25, 2016.

**Personal Representative:**  
KYLE B. DILL  
2735 Gilbert St. S.  
Salem, OR 97302

**Attorney:**  
DAVID B. BECKHAM  
319 Sixth Avenue SW  
Albany, OR 97321

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## LEGAL

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