

# Oregonian national Make It With Wool winner

By JAN JACKSON  
For the Capital Press

Rebecca Sintek, a long-time 4-H and FFA leader from Sandy, Ore., is the 2017 National Make It With Wool adult winner.

The contest was held during the American Sheep Industry Association annual convention in Denver.

A two-time national winner and three-time state winner, Sintek submitted her black-and-white two-piece houndstooth jacket and slacks along with a three-minute video and photo for the pre-event judging.

Two other Oregon contestants competing at the national level were Oregon Senior first-place winner Kyra Forrester of Corvallis and Oregon Junior first-place winner Hannah Palmer of Heppner.

All three contestants received all-expense-paid trips to Denver for the competition.

Zoey Townsend of Medford won first place in the Pre-Teen state category, which does not advance to the national competition.

Sintek, a native of Wyo-

ming, moved to Oregon 21 years ago. She is the main leader of the Sandy 4-H and FFA.

"My family raised mostly beef, though we did keep a few sheep," Sintek said. "I am a huge believer in 4-H and FFA. I work every day with FFA students helping ready them for contests, ag sales, ag issues and speeches. I have 70-plus Sandy Livestock Club members and 30 in my Kids-R-Us 4-H clubs this year. It is going to keep me busy."

The objectives of the national and Oregon Make It With Wool contests are to promote the beauty and versatility of wool and other specialty fiber fabrics and yarns, encourage personal creativity in sewing, knitting and crocheting and recognizing creative skills.

Fabrics or yarns must contain a minimum of 60 percent wool. Specialty fibers include mohair, cashmere, alpaca, camel, llama and vicuna.

Chandra Worman, Oregon director of the competition, got her start in 1998 in one of Sintek's 4-H groups.

"I competed in MIWW

every year but two until 2013, when Maureen Krebs retired and I became director," Worman said. "Wool is easy to sew with but because no two pieces of wool are the same it is challenging at the same time."

She'll be accepting entries from contestants and recruiting sponsors to help with prizes for the fall contest, which will be on Saturday, Oct. 28, in The Dalles, Ore.

"I'm excited because we are holding it on the Columbia Gorge Community College campus in conjunction with the 2017 Columbia Gorge Fiber Festival," Worman said.

The contest is open to any age and every level of sewing or knitting ability.

"We had 34 contestants last year and hopefully we'll have 50 contestants in October," she said.

For more information about Oregon MIWW, email Worman at cwloves2sew@yahoo.com or visit www.oregonmiww.com.

For more information about the Columbia Gorge Fiber Festival, visit www.columbiagorgefiberfestival.com.



Courtesy of National Make It with Wool

Becky Sintek from Sandy Ore., second from right, is the 2017 adult Make It With Wool winner. She stands with, from left, fashion/apparel design award winner Daiane Bierhalz Elbert from Houston Community College; junior wool ambassador Alison Faber of Ohio; and senior wool ambassador Sarah Thelen of Minnesota. A total of 45 finalists represented 26 states and the New England region to model their creations at the national competition.

# Report quantifies value of Washington's H-2A workers

By DAN WHEAT  
Capital Press

OLYMPIA — Foreign guestworkers harvested about one-third of the total value of Washington's apple, pear and cherry crops in 2014, according to a new report.

H-2A visa agricultural foreign guestworkers were responsible for \$922 million worth of production value in Washington in 2014 and \$1.7 billion in total economic impact, according to an analysis done for the farm labor organization, WAFLA.

The \$1.7 billion includes indirect supply chain and induced payroll effects from local production of apples, pears and cherries, says a report by ECONorthwest, a Portland



Dan Wheat/Capital Press

Francisco Trinidad, an H-2A visa foreign guestworker for Zirkle Fruit Co., Selah, Wash., thins Gala apples last July at Zirkle's GRO Orchard south of Rock Island. H-2A workers picked about a third of the state's tree fruit value in 2014.

business consulting firm.

USDA statistics show the \$922 million was a little over one-third of the total apple,

cherry and pear production value of \$2.6 billion in 2014.

The report is related to the political questions of immi-

gration and immigration reform since it focuses on the economics of the H-2A program, the report states.

"There is uncertainty about immigration and we cannot speculate about future policies and how they will influence use of guestworker programs. However, we can safely project that, absent another major recession, there will be a shortage of workers who are motivated to seek seasonal agricultural jobs. Therefore, it is highly likely there will be a growing need for seasonal farm labor," the report states.

ECONorthwest built an economic impact model using federal and state data and used literature and worked with

industry representatives to determine assumptions about H-2A worker concentration in the tree fruit industry, wages and remittance.

H-2A worker economic contributions were measured for value of production associated with harvesting tree fruit and for payroll expenditures.

There were 8,468 H-2A workers in state tree fruit in 2014 with their economic activity supporting 5,814 jobs in the related supply chain.

The report assumed an average annual wage of \$24,690 based on data for crop production in 2014.

It assumed an 80 percent remittance of wages to the home country based on

previous survey research on spending patterns of migrant laborers and discussions with workers.

The number of domestic tree fruit workers in the state has been declining in recent years resulting in the number of H-2A workers increasing, the report states.

The number of domestic workers has declined 10 percent since 2010 with one cause being aging workers, the report says.

Growers are becoming increasingly concerned about the future supply of ag labor and Washington State University projects farm labor will drop between .7 to 1.4 percent a year through 2038, the report says.

# Decline expected in Oregon grass seed harvest acreage

By ERIC MORTENSON  
Capital Press

Oregon's grass seed farmers will harvest slightly fewer acres this year due to a combination of freezing weather, heavy rain and damage from the usual suspects: slugs, voles, cut worms, geese and mice, according to a survey by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service.

In some cases, fields were so wet last fall that farmers weren't able to plant, said Roger Beyer, executive director of the Oregon Seed Council. He said grass seed prices have been fairly strong and sales brisk, however.

Regarding pests, Beyer said growers are hopeful Oregon State University's new slug expert, Rory McDonnell, will "make some dents" in the problem.


The annual NASS survey said some Washington County growers reported slow re-growth of established fields and that some newly planted fields froze this winter. On a brighter note, the heavy winter snowpack means there will be adequate moisture.

The NASS survey indicated annual ryegrass acreage available for harvest this summer will increase by 1 percent to 119,000 acres. Perennial ryegrass acreage, however, dropped from 87,000 acres harvested last year to 75,000 acres available this summer.

Plantings of turf type tall fescue also dropped, from 101,000 acres harvested last summer to 93,000 available for harvest in 2017. Plantings of forage type tall fescue and K-31 tall fescue increased by about 1,000 acres each, according to the survey.

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