

Oregon lawmakers consider banning livestock discrimination

Bill would prohibit species-specific restrictions by county governments

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

SALEM — An incident of prejudice against pigs near the state capital has Oregon lawmakers contemplating a broader prohibition against livestock discrimination.

A landowner in West Salem is facing a prohibition against raising pigs on properties smaller than 10 acres due to a species-specific regulation by Polk County's government.

The dispute has caught the attention of Rep. Paul Evans, D-Monmouth, and Rep. Brian Clem, D-Salem, who have proposed a bill that would ban county ordinances that generally allow livestock but forbid certain animals.

"It's weird to exclude one particular species," Evans said during a March 23 hear-



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press File

Oregon lawmakers are contemplating a bill barring discrimination against pigs such as these or any particular species of livestock.

ing on House Bill 3016.

Evans drew a parallel to George Orwell's classic book, "Animal Farm," in which all animals are equal but then some become more equal than others.

Species-specific livestock restrictions seem to run counter to the philosophy of Oregon's "right to farm" law, which disallows local restrictions against common farming practices, he said.

Such prohibitions are also at odds with the growing movement toward local foods, which requires that

farms be close to urban areas, Evans said.

"It was curious to me that swine were called out," he said.

In the case that spurred the proposal, though, the situation is complicated because the property is located within the "urban growth boundary" for Salem, but isn't actually within the city limits, Evans said.

The "right to farm" law only applies to land zoned for farming and forestry uses, said Mary Anne Nash, public policy counsel for the Oregon Farm Bureau.

The West Salem property in question is within a suburban residential zone, though the county may rezone the property to resolve the conflict, said Mark Nystrom, policy manager of the Association of Oregon Counties.

The Association of Oregon Counties opposes HB 3016 due to its "all or nothing" approach to local livestock regulations, he said.

It's possible that some county governments will simply decide to ban all livestock in certain zones if they're not allowed to have species-specific ordinances, he said.

Nystrom also pointed out that in "Animal Farm," it was the pigs that ended up taking over the property and becoming the oppressors.

The exchange elicited a comment from Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, who was waiting to testify on other legislation related to shellfish, but said she was grateful the committee was considering the swine-related bill.

"I've spent countless nights worried about porcine presence in populated areas," she said.



Sean Ellis/Capital Press

A section of the Malheur Siphon, a 4.3-mile-long steel pipeline that carries irrigation water to thousands of acres of farmland in Eastern Oregon, is starting to fail. An engineering firm is designing a fix.

Malheur Siphon fix will cost more than \$1 million

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

ONTARIO, Ore. — It will cost between \$1 million and \$2 million to fix the Malheur Siphon, which carries irrigation water to thousands of acres of farmland in the northern part of the Owyhee Irrigation District system.

The 4.3-mile-long steel pipeline, a landmark in the valley, delivers up to 325 cubic feet of water per second from the Owyhee Reservoir.

The 78-inch diameter pipeline was built in 1935 and an about three-quarter-mile-long section of it east of the Malheur Butte is starting to fail.

OID Manager Jay Chamberlin said that if the pipeline failed in the middle of growing season, it would result in about \$18 million in crop losses.

"If we lose this pipe in July, that's the worst-case scenario," he told OID patrons March 21 during the district's annual meeting. "That's why we feel the urgency to do what we're doing."

The district last year hired MWH Americas, a Boise engineering firm, to perform a structural analysis of the pipeline and design a fix.

MWH civil engineer Gary Clark told OID patrons that most of the pipeline is in fantastic shape and should last until about 2060.

"The pipeline is worth fixing," he said.

The problem section is in an area with bentonite clay, which, along with spikes and

dips in temperature, can cause the pipe to move as much as 9 inches up and down and several inches sideways throughout the day.

"It goes through an expansion and contraction process during the day," Chamberlin said. "It's quite a living structure."

Clark said the structural supports on the pipeline are starting to fail in that section because of the constant movement. Expansion joints, where the pipe slides inside itself, can also move several inches a day and are also close to failing.

These weak points have received band-aid fixes over the years, he said.

"In my opinion, it's very close to failing at this point," Clark said.

OID patrons this year will pay a special assessment of \$1.50 per irrigable acre, which will raise about \$101,000 to help fund the engineering work.

"This is going to help us get this process started," said OID Assistant Manager Harvey Manser.

He said the district's board of directors will seek grants and loan opportunities to help fund the project and OID employees will do as much of the work as possible to keep the cost down.

MWH's proposed fix will involve new legs that will be designed to move relative to the pipeline and allow movement from side to side and vertically.

Hemp bills would move crop into mainstream

Proposals would create commodity commission, seed certification process

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

SALEM — Hemp would be brought further into the mainstream of Oregon agriculture under two bills that create a commodity commission and seed certification process for the crop.

"Industrial hemp has a huge potential in Oregon, we just need a few tweaks to help move it forward," said Matt Cyrus, who grows hemp in Deschutes County, during a March 28 legislative hearing.

Under House Bill 2372, Oregon's hemp industry would join 23 other crop, livestock and seafood sectors to have a state commission aimed at promoting and researching a commodity through fees raised from producers.

Breeders of new hemp varieties could also get the purity of their seeds certified under House Bill 2371, similarly to other crop species, through a system overseen by Oregon



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press File

A bill in the Oregon Legislature would create a hemp commission.

State University.

"It's truly about a certified seed, one we know Oregon can count on," said Jerry Norton, a hemp grower.

To comply with federal provisions in the 2014 Farm Bill that allow hemp research, HB 2371 would also create a hemp pilot program at OSU, among other changes to Oregon hemp statutes.

Commercial hemp production is illegal under federal drug laws that lump hemp, a form of cannabis, in the same category as its psychoactive cousin, marijuana.

Aligning Oregon's hemp laws with the 2014 Farm Bill provisions will likely ease financial transactions for hemp growers, since many banks are otherwise leery of dealing

with the crop, Cyrus said.

"The banks are looking for specific language in statute," he said.

If there's ever a change in federal law regarding cannabis, Oregon's seed certification process would let hemp breeders patent their varieties, said Jay Noller, head of OSU's crop and soil science department.

Because cannabis is illegal under federal law hemp varieties can't be protected, he said.

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration has authorized Noller to import high-quality hemp seeds from Canada and elsewhere.

At this point, though, foreign companies are reluctant to export hemp seed to Ore-

gon due to a provision in state law allowing growers to save and plant it, he said.

Under HB 2371, that provision would be struck from Oregon law, hopefully opening the way for new hemp genetics to enter the state, Noller said.

Oregon's hemp statutes are already setting an example for other states and the proposed changes will let growers "get off the airstrip and into the air," said Norton.

"We feel that hemp in Oregon is going to be the new crop of the decade, if not the century," he said.

Cyanide traps that killed Northwest wolf and a dog come under scrutiny

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

An internal review by USDA Wildlife Services has not been completed, but the agency has removed M-44 cyanide poison traps from areas of the Pacific Northwest where a wolf and a dog have been killed recently.

The devices were set to kill coyotes, but killed a protected gray wolf in Northeast Oregon in February and a dog near Pocatello, Idaho, in March. In the second incident, a 14-year-old boy accompanying the dog was knocked down when the device went off but escaped serious injury, according to news reports.

"Wildlife Services has removed M-44s in that immediate area, and will work to review our operating procedures to determine whether improvements can be made to reduce the likelihood of similar occurrences happening in the future," Wildlife Services spokesman Richard Bell said in a prepared statement.

Wildlife Services also said it removed M-44s from the Wallowa County area where a wolf designated OR-48 was killed.

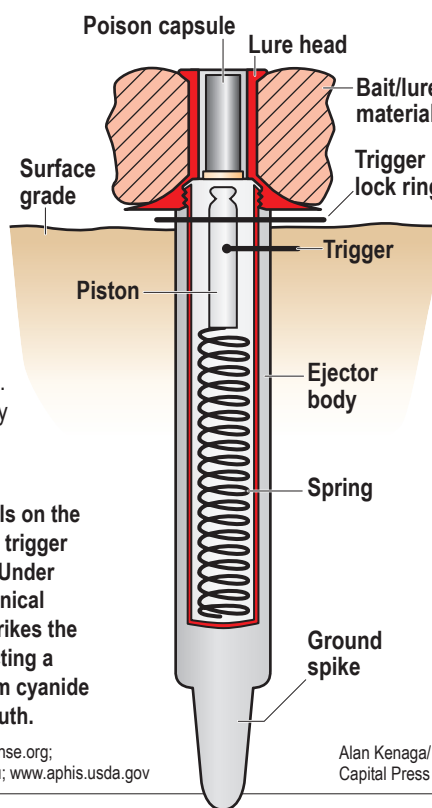
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, which manages wolves in the state, said it was

M-44 Cyanide Traps

M-44-style traps, also known as Canid pest ejectors, or CPEs, were first developed in the U.S. in the 1930s as a way to autonomously control pest species.

When the animal pulls on the baited lure head, the trigger releases the piston. Under pressure of a mechanical spring, the piston strikes the poison capsule, ejecting a lethal dose of sodium cyanide into the animal's mouth.

Sources: www.predatordefense.org; www.smithandgeorg.com.au; www.aphis.usda.gov



Alan Kenaga/
Capital Press

told by Wildlife Services that all M-44s were removed from areas of known wolf activity identified by ODFW.

Meanwhile, two dogs were killed in Natrona County, Wyo., after reportedly encountering an M-44 on private property. Wildlife Services said it does not use M-44s in that area; it's unclear how a property owner or someone

else outside the agency would have obtained one.

M-44s are spring-loaded devices that eject cyanide powder when an animal bites or tugs on a baited or scented lure. The powder interacts with saliva in the animal's mouth, creating a lethal gas that kills within one to five minutes, according to Wildlife Services.



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