

Oregon

Japanese beetle eradication in a Portland suburb begins April 17

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

Japanese beetle



Courtesy of en.wikipedia.org

Binomial name:
Popillia japonica

Appearance: Iridescent copper-colored elytra, green thorax and head

Diet: Roots of grasses during larval stage; foliage and fruits of many common trees, vines and crops during adult stage

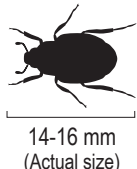
Life cycle: Typically one year; extended in cooler climates

Origin: Japan

First observed in U.S.: 1916 near Riverton, New Jersey

Control methods: Chemical and biological; mechanical traps

Source: USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service



Capital Press graphic

A state ag department campaign to kill destructive Japanese beetles begins April 17 when contractors will apply a granular insecticide to lawns on 2,500 private properties in the Cedar Mill area of Washington County, just west of Portland.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture says the action, which could extend to annual treatments for up to five years, is crucial to knock out an infestation of the beetles that was confirmed last summer.

The project could become an uncomfortable legal problem for the ag department, however. The effort's success hinges on the cooperation of all property owners, and a handful — 16 of the 2,500 as of April 6 — have said they won't allow insecticide applied on their lawns. Several hundred others have not responded despite five direct mailings, 46 community presentations, social media postings and 500 hours of door-to-door canvassing.

If necessary, the department is prepared to ask a judge for an order allowing it to go on private property and complete the treatment, said Bruce Pokarney, the ODA spokesman. The department believes it has legal authority to take the action, he said.

"If we don't have to do that, it would be great," Pokarney said.

If it goes that far, the issue could involve balancing private property rights against the potential economic harm to businesses and property owners outside the area.

Ag officials say Japanese beetles are capable of causing heavy damage to commercial nurseries, vineyards, orchards, and crops ranging from cannabis to cane berries. A department analysis estimated that an infestation could cost Oregon agriculture an estimated \$43 million a year in damaged plants, lost

crop value, export restrictions and increased spraying and other production costs.

Clint Burfitt, the ag department's insect pest program manager, said the property owners who have said they won't allow insecticide applications are scattered across the 1,000-acre treatment area.

"We're trying to communicate with them about what their concerns are," he said. "Some are concerned about pesticides in general. It doesn't matter what pesticide it is, it's a word that sparks fear. Others don't want the government on their property."

He said nurseries would be hardest hit initially, followed by small farms, berry crops, orchard fruit and nut crops and "definitely grape production." In the Great Lakes region, some vineyards have to spray three times a summer to control adult Japanese beetles, he said.

Imperial Stock Ranch gains animal welfare, land management certification

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press



Capital Press File

Imperial Stock Ranch, a small Oregon wool producer that has carved out a niche in high-profile markets, is the first U.S. farm to gain the Textile Exchange's Responsible Wool Standard certification.

The certification is overseen by the Michigan-based NSF International, which describes itself as a global public health organization. Certification means the ranch "practices the highest levels of animal welfare and land management, and that the wool is fully traceable throughout its supply chain."

According to NSF International, the Responsible

Jeanne Carver of the Imperial Stock Ranch in Shaniko, Ore. The ranch is the first in the U.S. to gain the Textile Exchange's Responsible Wool Standard certification.

Wool Standard means sheep are treated under a "Five Freedoms" concept. That in-

cludes freedom from hunger and thirst; freedom from discomfort; freedom from pain, injury or disease; freedom to express normal behavior; and freedom from fear and distress.

The standard also requires farms or ranches to follow land management practices that protect soil health, biodiversity and native species. The certification process required audits throughout the supply chain, from the ranch to the manufacturers.

On her ranch blog, Imperial co-owner Jeanne Carver said meeting certification standards is not new to the business, but the latest may be the most comprehensive. Auditors were at the ranch over

the course of three months, checking the operation, she said.

"It requires a little more record keeping, and the willingness to open our books, records and operation to inspections, but it is one of the best tools I know to share a true and positive story of agriculture," Carver wrote.

The Oregon wool producer has sought out new markets among high-fashion companies, and in 2014 provided material for the U.S. team's Winter Olympics uniform sweaters. Yarn made from Imperial Stock Ranch wool has also been picked up by companies such as Ralph Lauren and Patagonia.

Deadline kills Oregon pesticide lawsuit bill, other legislation

Proposal would have eased filing of lawsuits over pesticide damages

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press



AP File

A bill aimed at making litigation against farmers who use pesticides easier has died in the Oregon Legislature.

SALEM — A proposal to make lawsuits over alleged pesticide damages easier to file in Oregon has died along with several other bills that could have impacted agriculture.

Senate Bill 500 wasn't scheduled for a work session as of April 7, killing the legislation.

Under current law, anybody who claims to be harmed by pesticides must submit a report within 60 days to the Oregon Department of Agriculture before taking legal action against the landowner or applicator.

Senate Bill 500 would have removed the requirement, which was characterized by proponents as an unfair impediment to justice and by critics as a reasonable barrier to friv-

olous litigation.

Critics of the bill argued the reporting requirement allows ODA to gather facts substantiating or repudiating the claims of pesticide loss, thus avoiding litigation based on weak or nonexistent evidence.

The 60-day window also ensures that accused farmers have an opportunity to collect evidence, which may not be possible if a lawsuit is filed long after an alleged incident, opponents said.

Supporters of SB 500, on the other hand, said the "report

of loss" requires submitting specifics that are difficult for people to obtain, such as the type of pesticide applied and who sprayed the chemical.

Rural residents who are exposed to pesticides often won't realize they must submit a report to ODA, according to proponents.

If they find out about the 60-day deadline too late, residents are then permanently blocked from seeking legal recourse, supporters said.

The April 7 deadline, which lawmakers set early in the legislative session, also marked the death of other farm-related proposals:

- Senate Bill 499 would have changed Oregon's "right to farm" law to exclude pesticide usage. The statute currently protects common agricultural practices from lawsuits over nuisance and trespass, but SB 499 would have specifically allowed litigation over pesticide use.

- Senate Bill 198 would have established an Independent Science Review Board to analyze controversial decisions by state agencies, such as wolf management or restrictions on genetically engineered crops. Representatives of natural resources industries objected to SB 198, arguing that such a panel would create another layer of bureaucracy without ensuring objectivity.

- Senate Bill 866 would have held cities liable for discharging pollutants in stormwater into irrigation canals without permission. Supporters claimed SB 866 was necessary for irrigators to comply

with environmental laws, but municipal governments said the bill would unrealistically require them to collect and divert all the rainwater falling within their boundaries.

- House Bill 2180 would allow workers with unpaid wage complaints to file liens against the property of their employers. Supporters of HB 2180 said the proposal would prevent employers from transferring assets to another entity to avoid paying unpaid wages. Critics countered that such liens could disrupt business transactions even without proving any wrongdoing by an employer.

- House Bill 2181 would have created a "rebuttable presumption" that employers unlawfully retaliated against workers who were fired within 90 days of filing an unpaid wage claim. Employers argued that under HB 2181 they'd be considered guilty until proven innocent.

- House Bill 2365 would have created a task force to study transferring federal land to state ownership. Such transfers are opposed by environmental groups that say state government wouldn't be able to afford the upkeep of such lands, forcing their sale to private parties.

- House Bill 3016 would prohibit discrimination by county and city governments against any specific type of livestock in zones where livestock are generally allowed. Critics of HB 3016 worried the bill would prompt local governments to make more zones livestock-free.

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