

Klamath Basin ag leaders show heart for future generations

By **TIM HEARDEN**
Capital Press

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. — While fights over water have come to define the region over the years, at least one idea unites growers and others throughout the Klamath Basin: a desire to pass on local agriculture to future generations.

That desire is front and center at Klamath Community College, whose agricultural sciences program offers classes that can go toward a bachelor's degree from Oregon State University. The 21-year-old campus also offers support for students who are finishing their degrees at OSU online.

"Studies have shown there's a probability of kids staying in the community if they graduate (from college) in that community," said Keith Duren, who leads KCC's ag program. "We're going to die if we don't have that next generation."

To entice high school graduates to stay in town, Duren has amassed high-tech equipment one might find in a university's master's degree program. His chemistry and biology labs have such equipment as a gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) device for identifying different substances within a test sample.

He has an atomic absorp-



Tim Hearden/Capital Press

Keith Duren (center), who leads the agriculture program at Klamath Community College in Klamath Falls, Ore., discusses the advanced equipment in the campus' chemistry lab during a tour. A program at KCC enables students to obtain four-year degrees without leaving the campus, which leaders think will entice more young people to stay in the Klamath Basin.

tion monitor and obtained a DNA synthesizer two years before Washington State University did, he said.

"This is how we make the next generation of agriculturalists," Duren said. "It's pretty amazing to have this stuff at a two-year school. I've got sophomores doing gene transformation in chemistry lab."

A tour of KCC's facilities kicked off an all-day field trip on Sept. 28 highlighting Klamath Basin agriculture. Hosted by the Klamath Water Users Association, the Fall Harvest Tour of area farms and processing facilities is aimed at teaching local businesspeople and political lead-

ers about the industry that contributes nearly \$300 million to the region's economy.

Stops on the tour included Holland's Dairy in Klamath Falls, a potato farm, the Gold Dust Potato Processors and Walker Farms potato shed in Malin, Ore., and a farming and wetlands restoration project on the Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge in far Northern California.

This year's theme centered around making ag attractive to the area's young people, and keeping the industry viable and sustainable for future farmers.

"There's been a concern for years about kids who go

off to college not coming home," said Scott White, the KWUA's executive director. "But there's been a change. Some of the kids are wanting to stay ... It's a pretty exciting thing."

Among the attendees this year were FFA students from Henley High School in Klamath Falls, who said they found the tour valuable.

"I think these stops are helping us see the opportunities in the basin and see new things that we haven't seen in the basin," said Wyatt Quinowski, a senior. "If I had the opportunity to just go in and farm ... I'd like to stay in the basin."

Bob Hamlin earned a degree from OSU and returned to the area to help his uncle at Holland's Dairy, where he manages about 700 cows.

"Hopefully we can continue this lifestyle in the basin," he said, noting the frequent water shortages that have been the source of controversy and settlement talks for decades.

Growing potatoes — a key crop in the basin — has its challenges, farmer Luke Robison warned. One has to put lots of capital into potato farming, which most young people can't afford to do, he said. And proper water management in the height of summer is critical, as water stress can alter a potato's sugar levels, he said.

Irrigators appeal well interference ruling

Plaintiffs challenge ruling that sided with water regulators

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**
Capital Press

Several irrigators in Oregon's Klamath Basin have appealed a ruling that upheld the shutdown of their wells for interfering with surface water rights.

According to the state judge, the Oregon Water Resources Department had "substantial evidence" that flows in the Sprague River were affected by pumping from the four wells.

Several people who own or lease the wells — Stanley and Dolores Stonier, Larry and Joan Sees and Garrett and Cameron Duncan — are now challenging that decision before the Oregon Court of Appeals.

Instead of relying on the full evidentiary record from trial, Marion County Circuit Court Judge Channing Bennett based his ruling on OWRD's information from the time when the wells were shut down, said Sarah Liljefelt, attorney for the irrigators.

"The judge has applied the incorrect standard of review in the decision," she said.

Layers of rock and clay divide the Sprague River

from the confined aquifer into which the wells were drilled, but OWRD wrongly concluded the aquifer was sufficiently permeable to transmit water to the river, according to the irrigators.

Apart from wrongly applying a scientific model, the agency also interpreted its authority too broadly by regulating an expansive "aquifer system" — rather than just the "adjacent aquifer" to the river, as permitted by law, the plaintiffs claimed.

The irrigators asked the judge for special findings explaining his decision, but he failed to buttress his legal conclusions with adequate evidence, said Liljefelt.

"Some legal conclusions have no legal findings to support them whatsoever," she said. "My opinion is there were a lot of errors in this decision."

Any ruling from the Oregon Court of Appeals would have a long-reaching effect, since OWRD is likely also misapplying its authority and scientific model in similar irrigation cases, Liljefelt said.

"They're regulating beyond their jurisdiction," she said.

The OWRD will be working with its attorneys at the Oregon Department of Justice in responding to the appeal, as it does with all litigation, said an agency spokesperson.

Knowledge is Power During October "Breast Cancer Awareness Month"

The chance of a woman developing invasive breast cancer some time in her life is about 1 in 8. There is good news, however, and that is the breast cancer death rate has declined by 39% since 1990. While significant progress has been made, breast cancer remains the most common cancer among American women (besides skin cancer) and the second leading cause of cancer death. According to the American Cancer Society, more than 3,450 Oregon women will be diagnosed with breast cancer and 520 will die from the disease this year.

Some of the most common risk factors for breast cancer are:

- gender - simply being a woman;
- age - risk increases as women get older;
- genetics - about five to 10 percent of cases are thought to be hereditary, resulting from gene mutations;
- family history - having a mother, sister or daughter with breast cancer nearly doubles the risk;
- race and ethnicity - Caucasian women are slightly more likely to develop breast cancer, though African-American women have a higher mortality rate from the disease; and
- dense breast tissue - dense breasts result in a higher risk than less dense breasts.

Having one or more risk factors does not mean that a woman will get the disease. Most women who have risk factors never develop breast cancer and many women with breast cancer have no apparent risk factors.

The American Cancer Society recommends the following to create good health and help prevent cancer: don't smoke or use tobacco products; limit consumption of alcohol; maintain a healthy weight through good nutrition and a diet including fruits and vegetables; and get regular exercise.

One of the most critical factors in surviving breast cancer is early detection. Getting regular mammograms is one of the most important things a woman can do to find breast cancer early — when it's small, hasn't spread, and is easier to treat. The American Cancer Society recommends the following for finding breast cancer early in women at average risk who do not have symptoms:

- Women ages 40 to 44** should have the choice to start annual breast cancer screening with mammograms if they wish to do so.
- Women ages 45 to 54** should get mammograms every year.
- Women 55 and older** should switch to mammograms every two years, or can continue yearly screening. Screening should continue as long as a woman is in good health and is expected to live 10 more years or longer.

All women should be familiar with the known benefits, limitations, and potential harms linked to breast cancer screening and should talk with a health care professional about the best screening plan for them.

To learn more about breast cancer and how you can join us to fight back against the disease, log onto MakingStridesWalk.org/PortlandOR, or join us as we walk together Saturday, October 14 at the University of Portland Chiles Center. Share your hope so no one walks alone.

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