



Unique foundation aids OSU research

By ALIYA HALL
Capital Press

CORVALLIS, Ore. — Jean Hall has experienced firsthand the impact that receiving a competitive grant from the Agricultural Research Foundation has had on her work.

Hall, a professor in the College of Veterinary Medicine at Oregon State University, is researching the effects of feeding selenium-fortified hay to cattle as a method of improving their health. The outcome of her research is expected to influence how cattle health issues are addressed, according to the foundation’s annual report.

“Funding I have received through the ARF Competitive Grant has played a significant role in helping my colleagues and I advance this frontier to discover best practices in (selenium) supplementation,” Hall said in an email.

She has received six grants from the foundation over the last decade.

The importance of selenium has been known for decades, but the most effective method of delivery to cattle is still being investigated. Hall said in the report that she believes “increasing the bioavailable concentrations of selenium in forage through the use of selenium fertilizer is the most economical and practical method to provide supplementation to cattle.”

Located on the OSU campus, the foundation was established in 1934. It awards short-term funding to researchers, each year giving out a maximum of \$12,500 to about 23 applicants.

“We focus on younger faculty, associate professors who aren’t tenured yet and it helps launch careers,” said Russ Karow, executive director of the foundation. “If



Aliya Hall/For the Capital Press

Russ Karow, executive director of the Agricultural Research Foundation, has worked at the foundation since July 2015. He’s a retired professor and Crop and Soil Science Department head who has been with Oregon State University for 30 years.

you’re brand new, \$12,500 isn’t a small amount and it launches the effort to find background data. You need background data before applying for more grants.”

Karow has worked with the foundation since July 2015. He’s a retired professor and Crop and Soil Science Department head who has been with OSU for 30 years. As a professor he worked with the foundation and was familiar with its operations. Because of his involvement it was an easy fit for him.

Since its beginning, the foundation has received and managed over \$190.8 million in donor gifts and grants to support research across all categories of agriculture, according to the annual report. Last year, it provided \$8.1 million for research through grants.

The foundation generates its operational and special program support funds through investments, Yanli Zhang, manager of finance and research, said in the annual report.

State commodity commissions also provide grants to researchers, Karow said. Especially for the smaller commissions, it makes sense for them to work with the foundation.

The foundation is made up of 23 board members representing many commodities. Members serve three-year terms, but there isn’t a limitation on the number of times they can be re-appointed.

“We’ve had people involved for 15 to 20 years,” Karow said. “Wheat production, melons, livestock, university emeritus, lawyers, investment people. A spread of

people who would be helpful in the review process.”

Although the foundation helps commission grants, it also works with board members to clarify budgetary questions in proposals and work with younger faculty to form their proposal.

Karow said that he has worked with other universities outside Oregon who want to create a similar foundation. “We’re unique in the nation,” Karow said.

Hall is using her 2016-2018 grant on the focus of feeding selenium-enriched alfalfa hay to weaned beef calves for eight weeks to see if it improves their performance and health.

In the report, Hall said she “believes (selenium supplementation) can be readily adapted to Oregon cattle production systems.”



Jan Jackson/For the Capital Press

Jacob Valentine has built a business by shearing sheep live on Facebook while the prospective wool buyers watch, bid and buy online.

Online auction sells fleece as sheep are sheared

By JAN JACKSON
For the Capital Press

SALEM, Ore. — Sheep shearer Jacob Valentine auctions fleece online before it even leaves the barn.

Valentine, owner and operator of Darkside Shearing, has his staff video the event live while potential customers watch on Facebook. They see the animal in full fleece, the wool as it comes off and a close-up of the fleece as it is skirted. The bidding goes quickly.

Valentine is a fifth-generation shearer who lives in Crabtree, Ore.

The idea to auction fleeces during shearing came to him one afternoon.

“... I saw a couple of really nice fleeces get sacked in a commercial bale,” Valentine said. “That seemed like such a shame because I knew hand spinners would have loved to have them.”

He decided to do something about it, going live on a Facebook page he belonged to with approximately 3,000-member fleece-lovers. The sales started pouring in.

“When I shear, I give my customer a choice of keeping their wool or selling it to me,” he said. “When a grower decides to participate in the

auction, I cut them a check for more than market price for the wool and keep the auction receipts to cover costs, including the cost of my crew.”

At least half of the online auction customers live in the Midwest and the East Coast.

Valentine shears throughout the Pacific Northwest, works out of his three shearing trailers and sometimes brings along his wool press when he shears close to home.

“I may shear one weekend on Whidbey Island, Washington, and the next in Willows, California, and when that’s the case I use the customer’s facilities,” Valentine said. “I try to shear my customer’s sheep as if they were my own and I know that animals that have injuries aren’t productive.”

When asked about the name Darkside Shearing, Valentine laughed and admitted that he was known among his fellow shearers for being hard to please when things didn’t live up to his standards.

“I heard that one of my buddies commented when they were coming to the valley to help me shear that they were going to the dark side, and it stuck,” Valentine said. “I’m a Pink Floyd fan so I decided to run with the Darkside of the Moon theme and it worked.”

WSU developing orchard system for mechanical cider apple harvest

By MARGARETT WATERBURY
For the Capital Press

MOUNT VERNON, Wash. — Apples are a notoriously labor-intensive crop. Prone to bruising, they must be hand-harvested, a proposition that becomes more challenging — and expensive — by the year.

For cider apple growers, however, a solution may be on the way: mechanized harvest.

At Washington State University’s Mt. Vernon Northwestern Washington Research and Extension Center, Carol Ann Miles is developing a whole-orchard plan for thinning, pruning and harvesting cider apples mechanically.

Inspired by technology used by the Northwest raspberry industry, Miles’ system uses an over-the-row mechanical harvester that gently shakes apples loose using rotating and vibrating rubberized metal fingers. The apples are then transferred to the down-belt, a conveyor belt that goes straight into the back of a truck driving alongside the harvester.

To work within this system, orchards must be specially planted in a fruiting wall configuration, with all trees on the same rootstock and pruned



Courtesy of Carol Ann Miles

A mechanical harvester designed for the soft fruit industry helps provide proof-of-concept for mechanical cider apple harvesting at the Mt. Vernon Northwestern Washington Research and Extension Center cider apple orchard.

to a 10-foot height and uniform width. Rows must also be spaced to accommodate the machinery and truck. Miles says her NWREC test plot is planted on 12-foot spacing, but 15-foot may be more appropriate.

Mechanized harvest has so far remained out of reach of the dessert apple industry, but Miles thinks cider apples present more opportunities. “All mechanical harvesting will result in 100 percent bruising,” says Miles, noting that a bruised dessert apple loses virtually all of its value.

Cider apples, on the other

hand, are able to sustain bruising without negatively impacting the quality of the finished cider. The WSU team conducted several trials comparing cider from hand-harvested, unbruised apples as well as mechanically harvested, bruised apples and found no significant difference in flavor.

In Europe, all cider apples are mechanically harvested using shake-and-sweep systems. While those systems are effective, they are not compatible with the U.S. regulatory environment or industry structure.

EVERYTHING ABOUT THIS ROGATOR
IS DESIGNED TO DELIVER
MORE PRECISE APPLICATION.

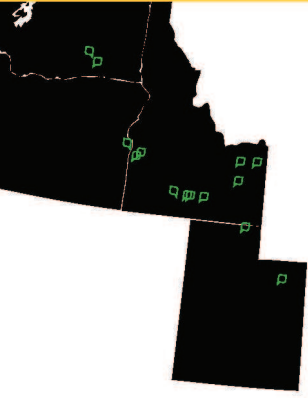


For nearly 50 years, we’ve worked with customers to improve our application equipment. You said your investment in every plant had to pay off. Every time. You asked for technology and solutions that work for you, not the other way around. A liquid system obsessed with protecting the crop by keeping product in motion and minimizing contamination. Section control that’s more precise than precise. A drive system that delivers consistent power, torque and traction, so you can provide timely crop care, even in the toughest conditions. And a machine that anyone can easily learn and operate. You asked. You got it. **Learn more at challenger-ag.us, or see Agri-Service for a demo.**



ROGATOR
C SERIES

INTELLIGENT FARMING



AGRI-SERVICE

Together, we drive agriculture FORWARD

Locations in Idaho, Oregon, Utah and Washington.
Call or visit our website to find your local store.

800-260-3599 | Agri-Service.com



©2018 AGCO Corporation. RoGator and Challenger are worldwide brands of AGCO Corporation. AGCO and RoGator are trademarks of AGCO Corporation. Challenger is a trademark of Caterpillar Inc. and is used under license by AGCO. All rights reserved.





techSP18-1/108

Joyce Capital

(208) 338-1560
joe@arrien.biz
kevin@arrien.biz

Term Agricultural Loans

~Competitive Rates~
~Purchases & Refinances~
~FSA Preferred Lender~



Let's Grow.

