



Mitch Lies/For the Capital Press
The Oregon Farm Bureau's new government affairs specialist, Jonathan Sandau, grew up on a fifth-generation family farm and spent most of the past three years as a district aide for U.S. Rep. Kurt Schrader, D-Ore.

Farm Bureau lobbyist finds job a good fit

By MITCH LIES
For the Capital Press

For most of the past three years, Jonathan Sandau was content working as a district aide for U.S. Rep. Kurt Schrader, D-Ore.

But when the Oregon Farm Bureau announced earlier this year that former Government Affairs Specialist Jenny Dressler was leaving, Sandau saw an opportunity on the horizon.

In February, Sandau made the leap from national to state politics, joining the Farm Bureau as its newest government affairs specialist.

"This was a huge opportunity for me," Sandau said. "I have always wanted to balance politics and agriculture, and you can't blend agriculture and politics more than in Farm Bureau." Sandau added that few opportunities would have pulled him away from Schrader's office. "But this is one of them," he said, "if not the only one."

Dressler, who joined the Farm Bureau in December of 2014, left in March to take a position with the Salem lobbying group Public Affairs Counsel.

Sandau, 28, comes by his enthusiasm for politics and agriculture naturally. He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Portland in political science, and he was raised on a fifth-generation family farm just east of Salem.

His work in politics includes a six-month internship with Schrader's office in Washington, D.C., and work on former Gov. John Kitzhaber's re-election campaign in 2014, in addition to the three years he spent as a district aide.

Still, his immersion in state politics was a bit daunting, as he started with the Farm Bureau midway through this year's session.

"It was trial by fire," he said. "The short session was a good introduction into what state politics looks like and how it is done."

Sandau, whose family has belonged to the Farm Bureau for as long as he can remember, said he has enjoyed getting to know legislators and the dynamics in play around the Capitol. And he has enjoyed his visits with Farm Bureau members.

"Getting out on folks' farms and seeing first-hand how the issues impact them is something I think is critically important for us and for policy makers to do. The more we can build those bridges between the farming community and legislators, the better," Sandau said.

"Agriculture in Oregon has an excellent story to tell, and that story is not on the forefront of people's minds," he said.

"So, we have to work at telling the story that what we are doing is good, that what we are growing is socially, economically and environmentally responsible, particularly when the perception is sometimes otherwise. And at the Farm Bureau, we have a very credible, authentic and well-branded voice to help folks tell their story."

Sandau, who is married and lives in South Salem, said he hopes one day to get back to farming, and said if the opportunity arises, he could see a future in politics, as well.

"Right now, though, this is where my focus is," he said, "and I can't imagine a better position to be in."

Demonstration shows modern forestry advances

By ALIYA HALL
Capital Press

PHILOMATH, Ore. — Simon Babcock, forestry teacher at Philomath High School, compared the thinning of Downing Forest to Christmas morning.

"I'm ecstatic," he said. "It's been needing to happen."

On June 1, the Forestry and Natural Resources Club organized a demonstration with Miller Timber Services to thin half of the 10-acre certified forest behind Philomath Middle School. Using a Ponsse harvester, Miller Timber Services had thinned 5 acres by the end of the day. The demo was open for elementary and high school students, as well as community members.

"Forest thinning is the process of taking trees out to make the forest healthier," Katelyn Walker, forestry instructor and FFA adviser, said. "They're cutting down dead and diseased trees that aren't quality timber."

This method is more environmentally sustainable than clear cutting, which is more commonly criticized, Walker said.



Aliya Hall/For the Capital Press

Kacie Hillery operates one of the Ponsse machines, moving harvested logs onto a pile. The logs will be repurposed as either studs or wood chips by Oregon companies Western Cascade Industries and Thompson Timber Co.

"It's a really great opportunity," she said. "The biggest thing is for (the community) to see that we care about what we do, and we want to give back to the community and eco-system."

Another aspect of the demonstration was to show how technologically advanced the industry has become. In about 30 seconds, the Finnish Ponsse harvester can cut a tree and section it to the length mills require.

The smaller branches with needles are left for soil protection.

Kacie Hillery, an operator at Miller Timber Services, has been running the machines since September. She said it was a challenge at first, but has become muscle memory.

"It's like a video game," she said.

Hillery didn't think a career in the forestry industry would be a possibility for

her, but as the technology advanced, it has enabled all genders to be in the field.

"The nature of the industry is changing," Matthew Mattioda, manager and forester at Miller Timber Services, said. "Jobs that were never considered because they needed brute strength now need finesse — the technology changed that."

One of the Forestry and Natural Resources Club members, Kelsey Looper, has been considering entering the forestry industry. She said her favorite thing about the club is how much she's learned.

Mattioda said over 60 percent of the company's workforce are millennials, and often don't have a forestry background.

He said the company training teaches the "why" they're doing something, not just what to do.

"What you leave behind is more important than what you take out," he said.

The logs will be used either for studs or wood chips.

Even though the forest could be thinned one more time before its next rotation, Mattioda said that even thin-

ning one side of the forest shows the difference.

"Contrast is important," he said. "It's a good way to learn and show the actual practice of forestry. You can already see more light through the trees, the crowns have lifted. It's already changed for the better."

Walker said her passion has been "reconnecting the community with the industry."

Her goal was to have community members interact and gain exposure to an industry that is integral to the state.

For Mattioda, who is also on the board of the REAL Oregon program, which helps the natural resource industries tell their story, foresters are just farmers on a longer time frame.

"We've dealt with the urban-rural divide and it was amazing how many people don't understand what we do," he said. "We'd like the community to see our operations, ask questions and learn the benefit economically and environmentally. We need to re-engage in a positive manner. If we don't tell our story, who is? I'm proud of what we're doing."



Port of Portland

Wheat bound for overseas pours into the hold of a ship at the Port of Portland. U.S. Wheat Associates leaders say they are increasingly concerned about President Donald Trump's tariffs on foreign-made goods and what it might mean for U.S. wheat exports.

U.S. Wheat on tariff turmoil: Patience starting to run out

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

U.S. Wheat Associates leaders say they are concerned about the impacts of U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum, which would hit "some of our closest allies and trading partners."

The U.S. Department of Commerce is also investigating imports of automobiles and parts, the value of which far exceeds steel and aluminum imports, and primarily affect major wheat export markets such as Mexico, Japan, the European Union and Canada, according to U.S. Wheat.

"The patience is starting to run out in the ag world," Mike Miller, U.S. Wheat chairman and a Ritzville, Wash., farmer, told the Capital Press.

U.S. Wheat is the overseas marketing arm of the industry.

"We're so vulnerable in regards to retaliation," Miller said. "We don't have a single gun in the fight. You can't say, 'No, you can't retaliate against wheat or pork or whatever.'"

Other U.S. Wheat leaders agree.

"It is dismaying to see that common sense has not yet prevailed in preventing these protectionist measures," said Vince Peterson, president of U.S. Wheat, in a press release.

U.S. Wheat spent decades in critical markets such as Mexico, Japan and Europe because the organization is committed to lasting trading relationships between overseas milling and processing sectors and U.S. farmers, Peterson said.

"If this administration isn't careful, decades of efforts by our farmers could be wasted," Peterson said.

Trump's "ambitious"

bilateral trade agreement agenda — "which was promised and which we all look forward to" — may never get off the ground because no nation would be willing to take the political risks necessary to negotiate an agreement with the U.S., the organization said.

Miller cites slowing North American Free Trade Agreement negotiations, Chinese trade concerns, Trump's upcoming summit with North Korea, EU tariffs, Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations between the U.S. and the EU and the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Japanese customers want the U.S. back in the TPP trade deal, from which Trump withdrew in January 2017.

"The Japanese, however, have a plan to proceed without U.S. involvement, Miller said.

"That's pretty unnerving," he said.



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23-3/100

George Fox University lands USDA grant for improving energy efficiency

Research to assist small farmers, winemakers

By GEORGE PLAVEN
Capital Press

George Fox University, a private Christian school based in Newberg, Ore., is reaching out to small farmers and vintners in the Willamette Valley after receiving a \$100,000 Renewable Energy Development Assistance Grant from the USDA.

Students and faculty in the university's College of Engineering will use the grant to help agricultural producers become more energy efficient, conduct energy audits and consider renewable energy options on the farm or vineyard.

The university is collaborating with Spark Northwest, a Seattle-based nonprofit organization dedicated to renewable energy development. Funding will be provided by the USDA over two years, beginning this fall.

Bob Harder, dean of the College of Engineering at George Fox, said students will also benefit by becoming more widely recognized in the state as viable contributors to the growing needs of agriculture.

"George Fox is located right in the heart of a verdant countryside surrounded by agricultural endeavors of all kinds — berries, grapes, nuts, dairy and hops — which provides us with a significant opportunity to get to know and serve our neighbors, an advantage we have over some of the other engineering programs locat-



George Fox University

Bob Harder, dean of the College of Engineering at George Fox University.

ed in more urban parts of the state," Harder said in a statement.

Founded in 1885 as a school for Quakers, George Fox offers bachelor's degrees in more than 40 majors, 13 master's and doctoral degrees and six seminary degrees. More than 4,000 students attend classes at the main campus in Newberg, south of Portland.

The university's foray into agricultural outreach began two years ago, when school President Robin Baker gave a presentation about enhancing the value of George Fox among local communities.

As part of that initiative, one goal was to "develop solutions to real-life challenges in the Northwest through effective cross-disciplinary collaboration between students, professors and the marketplace."

Harder said the university saw a "clear alignment" between the needs of the USDA Rural Development agency and the strengths of their engineering program. The College of Engineering — led by associate professor Chad Stillinger, and with encouragement from Jill Rees, USDA Rural Development

economic coordinator for Oregon — decided to apply for the grant, which it received earlier this spring.

"In looking at our surroundings, it became obvious that one of our regional stakeholders was the agricultural industry," Harder said. "Through this grant our students will get the unique opportunity to interact with owners of small farms and vineyards, understand their energy needs and use their technical engineering capabilities to assist them in diagnosing energy waste as well as propose efficiency measures and renewable energy options."

Harder said the grant also positions the university for future USDA funding at the "energy-food-water-climate nexus," including precision agriculture, field drones and sensors and digitizing data.

Erin McDuff, a spokeswoman for USDA Rural Development in Oregon, said the program is available not only to farmers and ranchers, but rural communities where farmers and ranchers live and work to help them thrive.

The renewable energy development program specifically is designed to help businesses save money on their utilities, which will make them stronger and more resilient, McDuff said.

"We're also hoping to bring that innovation and new technology into those communities and make them more successful," she said.

George Fox was the only university in Oregon to receive the grant this year.

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