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Opinion

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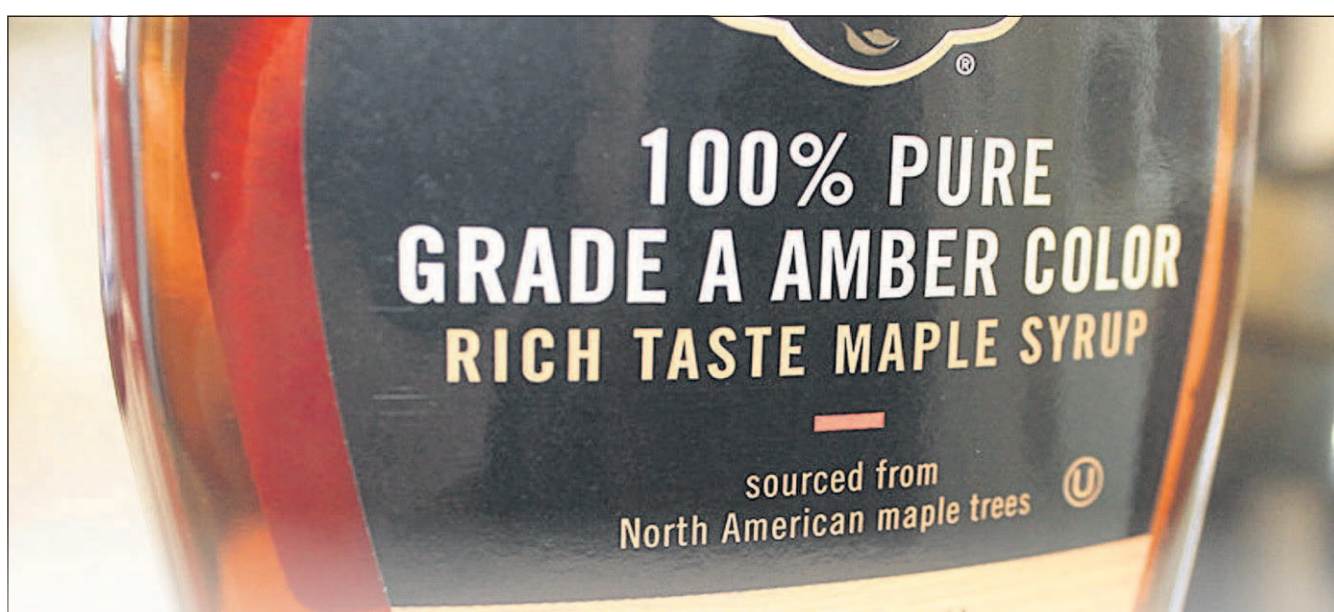
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OUR VIEW



FDA promises to rewrite 'added sugars' labels

The Food and Drug Administration is taking another look at proposed nutritional labeling rules after a hue and cry from honey, maple syrup and cranberry producers.

It's a good thing, too.

At issue is a proposal that would require certain foods to include the wording "added sugars" on their labels.

Beginning in 2020, pure honey and maple syrup nutrition labels must have the word "added" in front of "sugar." Producers and trade groups complained that customers will naturally think another sweetener is added to the natural sugars in honey and maple syrup.

That had us scratching our heads, too.

Pure honey and maple syrup are sugar — fructose and glucose, and sucrose respectively — and have none added to enhance their sweetness.

In the typically tortured English

employed by bureaucrats, "added sugars" in this case was meant to imply that adding these products to other foodstuffs or consuming them on their own will add sugar to your diet. According to the FDA, unlike a piece of fruit or other naturally sweet food, honey and maple syrup are not "nutrient rich" foods.

The FDA at first tried to "clarify" the rule by suggesting footnotes on labels stating that the "added sugars" are natural.

Washington state beekeeper Tim Hiatt, a honey producer, called the labeling requirement, even qualified by a footnote, "crazy."

"It shouldn't say 'added sugars' at all," he said. "The only ingredient in honey is honey."

"The whole industry is up in arms about this," Hiatt said. "We're struggling in the industry to protect the image of honey."

Cranberry producers have a different beef.

Cranberries are not sweet. Without added sugar, cranberry

juice — whether straight or in combination with adult beverages — would be pretty tart.

For cranberry juice the FDA suggested this footnote: "Sugar added to improve the palatability of naturally tart cranberries. The 2015-20120 Dietary Guidelines for Americans state that there is room for limited amounts of Added Sugars in the diet, especially from nutrient dense food like naturally tart cranberries."

Although they're willing to go along with that, cranberry producers say the footnote suggests cranberries with sugar added have more sugar than naturally sweet fruits and berries.

So, the FDA is going to take another look at how a label might provide valuable nutritional information without leading consumers to false impressions about honey, maple syrup and cranberry juice.

Good writing is rewriting, even in footnotes.

Elected officials must understand importance of ag trade

By CURTIS ROBINHOLD AND ALEXIS TAYLOR
For the Capital Press

Guest comment
Curtis Robinhold



Guest comment
Alexis Taylor



Oregon agricultural products are more popular than ever, especially in Asia.

Berries, craft beer, pinot noir and noodles made with Northwest wheat are all in high demand. The fast-growing middle class in China is craving the safe, high-quality food products that Oregon can provide. But today's foreign trade policy disputes threaten our farmers' opportunities for trade and economic growth in the future.

In 2017, Oregon exported more than \$5 billion in agricultural products, making it the top economic driver in the state. Oregon's top five agricultural export markets include Japan, South Korea, Canada, China and the Philippines. Talk of a trade war or tariff increases represent an additional obstacle for agricultural producers and the long-term effects are unknown.

Trade is about developing relationships and long-term trust. In the last month, more than a dozen Oregon companies and the Oregon Department of Agriculture have met with buyers and distributors in China and Japan. During these trade missions, producers showcased many of the state's agricultural items such as kombucha, potatoes and beef. This past October, Governor Brown led a trade mission to Japan and Hong Kong that helped strengthen our relationships in Asian markets and increase exports for Oregon apples, berries, and cider.

However, when foreign countries raise the price of a commodity with a tariff on imports, we know the demand for the product de-

creases. That would mean fewer Oregon exports. Oregon's agricultural economy depends on our ability to invest and trade in the global market. More than 95 percent of the world's population lives and eats outside the U.S., and Oregon's agricultural producers will increasingly depend on expansive U.S. trade policies to connect with rising incomes. At the Port of Portland alone, we see large export volumes of wheat, corn, cherries, crab, and other Oregon products at risk if a trade war breaks out.

We will continue to grow our connections in Asia, while the threat of trade tariffs and other issues persist. Our hope is that these conversations will keep lines of communication open. This fall, ODA will lead trade missions to Taiwan and South Korea.

The bottom line is that the future of Oregon's agricultural economy depends on our ability to invest and trade in the global market. As Oregonians, we must make it clear to our elected officials that trade is important. Shop local and trade global, preferring to buy Oregon products knowing you're supporting farmers and ranchers in our region.

Curtis Robinhold is executive director of the Port of Portland. Alexis Taylor is director of the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

Readers' views

Organization wants to change dairy industry

In the Capital Press Ag Weekly June 8 issue, Carol Dumas reports that RaboResearch recommends that the "dairy industry" get into "the alternative dairy markets", i.e.; the milk-free alternative dairy markets.

Rabo not only promotes the "dairy industry" over dairy farmers and the milk they make, Rabo fails to understand the basic purpose of dairy farmer member owned cooperatives, when they allege, "...it is the responsibility of the co-op to find a home for their (member) milk."

Not true!

The purpose of every dairy farmer member-owned co-op is to both pay to its members a milk price greater than the member dairy farmer's average cost to make the milk and profitably sell any products made with member milk and share these profits with the co-op members.

It is universally recognized that the milk price is given by the marketplace and that the volume of milk delivered to the marketplace is the fundamental driver of the milk price.

The marketplace will give a profitable milk price when the milk supply is balanced with profitable demand.

The existing management of most, if not all, dairy farmer member-owned co-ops have encouraged and accommodated maximum, excess milk production rather than disciplined, profitable milk production that is balanced with profitable demand.

Obviously, existing co-op management is following RaboResearch's recommendations and pursuing their own best interests as the "dairy industry" over the best interests of the dairy farmer co-op member-owners.

Dairy farmer: Want a co-op that supports your member-owner best interests?

Join and implement NDPO's co-op management policies, which will allow you to share in balancing the milk supply with profitable demand, to receive a profitable price for your milk and preserve as many existing dairy farm families as possible regardless of size or location.

To learn more about NDPO's co-op management policies, contact Mike Eby, Chairman, (717) 799-0057, mikee@ndpo.us, or like us on Facebook-National Dairy Producers Organization, or www.nationaldairyproducersorganization.com

*Bob Krucker
Jerome, Idaho*

FDA milk label rule 'bizarre'

On April 29, 2018, Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Scott Gottlieb told a U.S. Senate panel that the agency has "exercised enforcement discretion" when it comes to holding plant-based drink manufacturers accountable for mislabeling their products as "milk." Federal standards, by the way, define milk as a product sourced from mammals.

I first became aware of this term in a General Accounting Office (GAO) report on ultra-filtered milk released on March 6, 2001, in which the original language accused FDA of "withholding enforcement" relative to "standards of identity" and labeling for dairy products. FDA objected to this terminology, and it was replaced by "exercise enforcement discretion." Over the past 20-plus years, many efforts have been made to change "standard of identity" rules and/or allow ultra-filtered milk or milk protein concentrate (MPC) to be used in cheese without identifying it on the label.

On Aug. 11, 2017, the FDA

publicly renewed its policy to "exercise enforcement discretion" relative to violations of standardized cheese recipes and inaccurate ingredient listings on product labeling.

So what rules do FDA enforce related to milk? In a June 2018 American Agriculturist story "Skim milk an imitation dairy product? Say it ain't so," FDA requires pasteurized milk that contains less fat than whole milk have vitamins A & D added. If these synthetic vitamins are not added, it must be labeled as "imitation milk" or "imitation milk product" if it is sold across state lines. Obviously, there is nothing "imitation" about pure milk with nothing added.

This is truly one of the most bizarre rules that I have heard of but one that FDA seems willing to enforce, especially when it's only a small business such as South Mountain Creamery of Middletown, Md., which on April 5, 2018, filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in U.S. district court, Harrisburg, Pa.

*Gerald Carlin
Meshoppen, Pa.*

Time to comment on Blue Mountains Forest Plan

I understand that the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision will be released on or before Friday June 29. While my public comment was shouted down by staff of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest supervisor's office, and neither I nor any other citizens of Eastern Oregon's comments were responded to over the last four years, it will be interesting to see what the path forward looks like in Northeastern Oregon for public lands, and how the U.S. Forest Service plans to allow us to use the mountains we love.

Once the plan is released, commenters on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) from 2014 will have 60 days to file an objection with the USFS on the Final EIS. Also, if new information is found in the plan, or a substantial change is found in the Final EIS, you will also have an opportunity to file an objection. Along with the formal objection process, you also can file as an "interested person" and there will be a 10-day period to make this request after objections have been filed.

An "interested person" is someone who may or may not have objected or commented during the forest plan and amendments process, but who has an interest in supporting or opposing a submitted objection.

After watching the meetings and the treatment of residents at these meetings I can understand why folks chose to remain silent. Forest Service staff yelling and belittling residents, and former USFS staff doing the same. Environmental groups name-calling and yelling during "facilitated" meetings, while subsistence users of the forest tried to politely articulate their concerns, only to be demeaned and belittled.

You will have a chance to have another voice, I would simply ask that you do so.

*John D. George
Bates, Ore.*

Water impact goes beyond Klamath Project

On June 1 and June 8 you ran articles that concerned the Klamath Project irrigators and tribes trying to balance a limited water supply and the federal government trying to protect the Klamath farmers and ranchers, respectively.

However from your articles one would gather that the only farmers and ranchers affected in

the Klamath Basin resided and worked on the Klamath Project. This is not so.

This year OWRD marked 140 wells that were subject to be regulated off in the Sprague River Basin which is not part of the Klamath Project. Between 86 and 89 wells were eventually shut off for the season. That is at least 6 months without the use of your wells for irrigation and stock water. These wells are owned by over 100 ranchers, farmers and the cities of Bly and Chiloquin. This again is to keep sucker fish happy, because we are being told by OWRD that our wells, which are being pumped from confined aquifers, are depleting the rivers.

The \$557 million agriculture industry in the Klamath Basin, that you spoke about, includes the ranchers and farmers that are not part of the Klamath Project. But we are never mentioned in any way. Between 30,000 and 50,000 cattle are trucked into the Sprague River Basin each summer but this year cattle had to be turned away due to not being able to use well water. Not to mention the hundreds of tons of hay usually made in this area each year.

Rep. Greg Walden and Sens. Wyden and Merkley are proud of helping to pass \$10.3 million in emergency drought funding that will pay for farmers and ranchers to pump emergency groundwater wells or to leave land idle in 2018. But it is never mentioned that that money only goes to the farmers and ranchers on the Klamath Project, no one else. Those who are not part of the Klamath Project are abandoned, no help for them. Families are close to losing farms and ranches on which they have made a living for decades.

Please give the farmers and ranchers that are not part of the Klamath Project but still citizens of Oregon the same respect in your paper as you give the Klamath Project.

*Joan Sees
Beatty, Ore.*