

OUR VIEW

Mercury worries lead to regulatory worries

In Victorian England, mercury compounds were used to process felt for hat making. Mercury is a neurotoxin. Daily exposure to the vapors led hat makers to tremble and to appear insane. Thus was born the now somewhat archaic phrase, “mad as a hatter.”

Today, mercury could soon start driving Oregon farmers and foresters more than a little crazy. Natural resource industries are worried about the potential regulatory implications of a study identifying forests and farmlands as major sources of the mercury pollution in the Willamette Basin.

Mercury is a naturally occurring element. Readers of a certain age will recall being allowed to play with “quicksilver,” the form of mercury once found in thermometers, in junior high science class. The discovery of mercury in a science classroom today would present an environmental hazard that would require immediate and expensive remediation.

Mercury poisoning is serious business, so it is regulated as a pollutant by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

At issue is mercury that is absorbed by fish, then subsequently ingested by humans who eat fish.

Though mercury can be found naturally in some soils, the real culprit is mercury pollution caused by the burning of coal, particularly for the generation of electricity.

Mercury emissions are severely regulated in the United States, while the Chinese burn coal like crazy to generate electricity without regard to the environmental impact. The main source of mercury in soil and water in Oregon is Chinese power plants.

Atmospheric deposition is estimated to contribute 34 percent of the Willamette Basin’s mercury load, while sediment contributes about 43 percent. Much of the mercury in that sediment comes from historic atmospheric deposits.

The Clean Water Act requires that sources of mercury pollution be identified and regulated.

Regulators in the United States can’t prevent the Chinese from burning coal and can’t stop it from literally raining down on the Pacific Northwest. They can regulate domestic sources of pollution, no matter how minor — such as soil containing trace amounts of mercury eroding into waterways as a result of agriculture or timber harvesting.

DEQ’s modeling estimates forestland represents 45 percent of the mercury load source, followed by shrubland at 20 percent. Row crops represent 7 percent, while the “other” category — which includes pasture and hay ground — was estimated at 11 percent. Altogether, these sources represent 83 percent of the mercury load.

Farmers and foresters do not cause any mercury contamination in soil. Because it is impossible to eliminate all soil erosion, some mercury enters streams through farm and forest practices. Even if it were possible to stop all erosion, no one thinks that it could be enough to reduce contamination to desired levels.

The EPA and DEQ are under court order to adopt more strict methods of identifying and dealing with source pollution. Farmers and foresters rightly worry that they will be held to a standard that they cannot meet.

We can only hope common sense prevails. But that would be a refreshing surprise.

OUR VIEW

Gerawan case shows ALRB ineptitude

No matter where you stand on the unionization of farmworkers, you would have to agree that the California Agricultural Labor Relations Board did a disservice to Gerawan Farms and the United Farm Workers by bungling that dispute to the point that it would be laughable if it weren’t so serious.

But more than anything else, the ALRB did a disservice to the farmworkers it was allegedly trying to help.

Some background: In 1990 Gerawan workers voted in the UFW as their bargaining agent. Then, five years later, the union disappeared from the scene without bargaining for a contract.

That was weird enough, but in 2012 the UFW reappeared and demanded that the ALRB impose a contract on behalf of the farmworkers it had abandoned 17 years previous. The next year, 2013, the majority of farmworkers called for a decertification election to toss out the UFW.

An election was held, but the ALRB held off counting ballots be counted.

Mind you, this ineptitude spanned 26 years.

The UFW lost the election by a 5-to-1 margin, which could be expected, considering the bungling of the ALRB and the UFW.

There may be more bizarre cases in the annals of farm labor law, but we don’t know what it would be.

A union abandons its members for years and then reappears and imposes a contract and opposes an election sought by its members. At the same time the ALRB employs delay tactics to prevent a vote count.

Western Growers President and CEO Tom Nassif assessed the mess this way: “With a resounding vote against the union, we now know the reason behind the ALRB’s delay tactics, which lasted nearly five years.”

It’s time for the ALRB to review its performance in this case and explain to the California Legislature exactly what it does for either farmworkers or employers that warrants state funding.

Workers protest to have their votes from the UFW decertification election counted. The Sept. 18 count was 1,098 to 197 to decertify the United Farm Workers Union.

the ballots. The case went to an appeals court and then to the California Supreme Court.

The ALRB claimed that it was “impossible to know” what farmworkers were thinking when they called for the election. This was before the ballots were counted. Of course it was impossible to know without counting the ballots.

The appeals court then reminded the ALRB that it has lost sight of the importance of the union election. The ALRB appealed the case to the state Supreme Court, which agreed and — finally — ordered that the



Courtesy of Gerawan Farming

It’s not Pearl Harbor, but the boy crying ‘wolf’

The recent letter on climate change is wrong, contradicted by the evidence and literature, and harmful in its “remedies.” This is not the Pearl Harbor of climate change, and the American people have shown this by their actual behavior.

Recent weather events, hurricanes, storms, fires, droughts, floods and earthquakes, are not caused by climate change or global warming. No responsible scientist so believes, and none are cited: only one opinion poll which does not show this, but that some of the public supposedly wants energy companies regulated by a carbon tax and believe that carbon dioxide is a pollutant.

They are wrong. One poll does not a summer make, much less a connection between extreme events and “climate change.” Even the numbers are misstated. If only 86 of the 435 members of the U.S. House of Representatives, most sensitive to the public, sign on to those positions, that means that most of Congress rejects this position.

Marc Morano’s 2018 book on Climate Change (pp. 189-214) well summarizes the literature on real scientific opinion on whether recent extreme weather events are caused by “climate change” or

“global warming” — they are not. The actual science and history is that extreme climate events are, if anything, less in recent years — there are no worsening trends, and none caused by the rise in carbon dioxide levels. NOAA (The National Oceanic & Atmosphere Administration) stated in 2017 that there was no detectable connection, and many other responsible scientists have stated the same.

This is not Pearl Harbor. This is another example of the boy crying “wolf.” If such predictions were correct, the world would have long since been destroyed by Global Cooling, Global Warming, Global Change or the destruction of forests caused by all the trees cut to print their false statements.

Alan L. Gallagher
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Dairy farmers and cranberries

Capital Press, Sept. 21, issue reports that because the cranberry supply of recent years, including this year’s crop, has exceeded profitable demand and prices have fallen below the cost of production for many farmers, USDA has ordered a second cut in cranberry production this year, directing larger cranberry handlers to withhold 25 percent of the fruit they receive this year.

Dairy farmer member-owned co-ops handle 80 percent of the milk produced in the U.S., most of

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which exceeded profitable demand and was sold below the cost of production for most dairy farmers.

Why does dairy farmer co-op management fail to reduce pro-rata, across-the-board among all co-op members, the acceptance of milk for processing as a “volume-control measure to stabilize prices” for dairy farmers as the cranberry industry has asked USDA to implement for their cranberry farmers?

The answer is the existing management of dairy farmer member-owned co-ops operate the dairy farmer co-ops not for dairy farmer member benefit but only for management’s benefit.

Politicians and government bureaucrats follow the bidding of existing dairy farmer co-op management and their minions, NMPF, IDFA, USDEC, etc.; and promote actions that only benefit co-op management NOT the dairy farmer milk makers who are the co-op owners.

Dairy farmer: it is time for a change! It is time for new co-op management policies and/or new hired hands!

The implementation of NDPO’s 4 co-op management policies will help dairy farmers to share in properly managing the milk they make so that the milk supply is balanced with profitable demand thereby generating a profitable milk price for as many dairy farmers as possible, regardless of size or location.

To learn more about NDPO’s co-op management policies and milk supply program which will benefit dairy farmers in the form of a sustainable, profitable milk price, contact Mike Eby, NDPO Chairman, (717) 799-0057, mikee@ndpo.us, or like us on Facebook - National Dairy Producers Organization, or www.nationaldairyproducersorganization.com

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Solutions to animal rights extremism

My heart broke and my life changed forever. I was devastated when I was forced to close all operations of Schumacher Furs USA, after over 100 years in operation. My wife and I, our family, employees and customers were terrorized for two straight years by animal rights activists.

Instead of having assistance from law enforcement, industry organizations or even the courts, we had to hire private security 24/7 to keep us safe. I can’t begin to tell what these extremists, terrorists did to us, but we accumulated over 360 hours of audio/video footage, mostly of illegal protesting.

After years of recovery from the trauma, I researched deeply how the animal rights terrorists might be successfully countered. Having found the key, my wife, Linda, and I decided to dedicate our lives to

addressing this issue. We want to prevent other animal usage businesses from experiencing what we endured.

Stop Animal Rights Extremists (SARE) is a nonprofit organization in Washington, D.C. We are active, not passive! In taking the offensive by exposing animal rights extremism, we are building a coalition of animal usage industries as well as those in the general public who are fed up with animal right activists’ behavior. Along with the exposure, we are providing access to attorneys and security personnel. This combination will root out the lying, greedy, people-hating organizations and, hopefully, we can all go back to doing what we do best — our jobs.

No industry, acting alone, can stop the animal rights movement. We must act together. Stand up and fight back! There is no other option.

SARE Solutions educates the public about the difference between animal rights and animal welfare. We support animal welfare. We are a coalition of animal use enterprises and business owners who use ethical strategies to expose the radical animal rights groups’ agenda. We are a member-based organization formed to counter — through public exposure — animal rights extremism/terrorism in media, legislation and education, both nationally and globally.

Gregg Schumacher
Founder and President
SARE Solutions
Washington, D.C.