

# Denied pesticide, oyster growers face disaster

## Farmers to challenge ban on insecticide use

By **DON JENKINS**  
Capital Press

Southwest Washington oyster growers face an economic emergency after being barred from spraying a pesticide into Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor, a Washington State University research scientist said Friday.

Kim Patten, stationed at WSU's research station in Long Beach and an ally of the growers, said the neonicotinoid insecticide imidacloprid was the only practical way growers had to control ghost



Don Jenkins/Capital Press  
Burrowing shrimp, such as this one taken from Willapa Bay, undermine the mud underneath oysters, causing them to sink and suffocate. The Washington Department of Ecology has rejected a plan to spray the shrimp.

shrimp. The shrimp burrow in tide flats and cause oysters to sink in the mud and suffocate.

"I don't see anything else on the horizon that will work

at the level growers consider useful," Patten said. "One of the real threats is the loss of family farms."

The Washington Department of Ecology announced Thursday it won't issue a permit to the Willapa Grays Harbor Oyster Growers Association to spray 500 acres. The department said there was mounting evidence that imidacloprid would harm such species as Dungeness crabs and disrupt the food chain for fish and birds.

The shellfish industry is the largest private-sector employer in Pacific County. A University of Washington study found that growers produced \$12.2 million worth of oysters in 2013.

The growers association,

representing a dozen farmers, said Friday it will appeal Ecology's denial to the Pollution Control Hearings Board.

The association accused Ecology of bowing to opposition to pesticides and "hiding behind" moves in Europe and Canada to ban imidacloprid over concerns that neonicotinoids applied to land crops harm bees.

"This decision and the glacially slow process that produced it were clearly driven by the political winds of the moment," the association's president, Ken Wiegardt, said in a written statement.

In 2015, Ecology issued the growers a permit to spray 2,000 acres. The growers abandoned the plan because of activist, consumer and media backlash.

The growers scaled back the proposal, but found Ecology less receptive this time.

The department noted that the European Union banned imidacloprid in April and Health Canada this month proposed phasing it out for agricultural use. The Environmental Protection Agency expects to finish reviewing imidacloprid next year.

Although imidacloprid is widely used on land, Patten said that as far as he knows imidacloprid has not been used in aquatic applications. It was meant to replace carbaryl, which growers gave up in 2013 after using for 50 years.

Registering imidacloprid to spray in water took a decade, Patten said. "When we started this process, this chemical did

not have a bad rap," he said.

Ghost shrimp and mud shrimp are native species collectively called burrowing shrimp. A parasite has sharply reduced the West Coast population of mud shrimp. Ghost shrimp are not affected by the parasite.

Patten said the number of ghost shrimp is growing dramatically in Willapa Bay. The shrimp are particularly troublesome in the bay because of the number of oysters grown there.

"Everybody has lost ground in Willapa Bay," he said.

Patten has experimented with crushing and blasting out the shrimp, which burrow a three feet below the surface. Nothing practical enough to use for an entire farm has emerged, he said.

# New hop farm touts innovations

By **DAN WHEAT**  
Capital Press

YAKIMA, Wash. — Harvest is wrapping up in the nation's largest hop region, the Yakima Valley, as it is for the area's newest player a dozen miles to the north.

Wenas Hop Company is finishing its third harvest in the Wenas Valley, north of Selah, where hops hadn't been grown for 50 years.

It had been hay fields and was where large, contiguous parcels of land could be found, says Mike McGree, co-owner and manager of the 530-acre farm.



Dan Wheat/Capital Press  
The new Dauenhauer picking machine at Wenas Hop Co., Yakima, Wash., where hop cones are separated from vines.

It's the northern-most hop farm in the state, he believes.

Anheuser-Busch has long operated a much larger farm farther north near Bonners Ferry, Idaho, and there are several small farms in British Columbia.

But the most notable things about Wenas Hop Company are hop yards and facilities that are all new.

themselves from the heat."

Hops are cooled on concrete floors in U.S. systems, some of which have ambient air tubes underneath the floors to aid in cooling.

The German system allows a mix of ambient air, air returning from cooling boxes and air from the heating units, all of which can be humidified.

The company has 15 year-round workers and with seasonal workers rises to 100 employees for spring planting, training and stringing of trellis. It's at 55 employees during fall harvest.

About two-thirds of the workforce are H-2A-visa foreign guestworkers.

## Boise National Forest slates fall prescribed burns

By **BRAD CARLSON**  
Capital Press

The Boise National Forest in October plans prescribed burns in 13 areas totaling about 2,600 acres to reduce fire-fueling vegetation and improve wildlife habitat.

The burns will be on Boise National Forest land, BNF spokeswoman Stephanie Kerley said. Burns are slated through November. Access to areas within or adjacent to burn operations may be restricted temporarily for public safety.

Prescribed fires can burn out understory vegetation and brush.

BNF planned fall prescribed burns include these ranger districts:

**Idaho City**

Alder Ridge (100 acres):

One mile north of Placerville, Idaho.

Amber (300 acres): Two miles east of Idaho City, Idaho.

Buckskin (200 acres): About three miles east of Idaho City.

Little Ophir (100 acres): Four miles west of Pioneer-ville, Idaho.

Mores South-Granite Creek (250 acres): Three miles east of Idaho City.

**Cascade**

Horsethief (360 acres): About one mile east-northeast of Horsethief Reservoir.

Westside Restoration Unit 39 (25 acres): On National Forest System Road 435 along West Mountain about 10 miles west of Cascade, Idaho.

Crawford (100 acres): About 4 miles east of Cas-

cade, off NFS Road 22 adjacent to Crawford Guard Station and northeast of Davis reservoir.

Lower Johnson Thinning (95 acres): About seven miles south of Yellow Pine, Idaho.

Yellow Pine Blowdown (40 acres): About 62 miles from Cascade and adjacent to Yellow Pine.

Rainbow Point (19 acres): About 25 miles northwest of Cascade.

**Mountain Home**

Cottonwood II Rx (1,000 acres): About 17 miles northeast of Boise along NFS roads 203 and 377 in Cottonwood Creek drainage north of Arrowrock Reservoir.

**Emmett**

Administrative piles: 1 to 2 acres at Garden Valley work center.

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