

ODA director backs more trade opportunities for ranchers

By **CRAIG REED**
For the Capital Press

ROSEBURG, Ore. — Alexis Taylor, director of the Oregon Department of Agriculture, commented on topics ranging from trade to wolves while visiting with ranchers at an Oct. 16 meeting of the Douglas County Livestock Association.

The back-and-forth conversation between the director and the ranchers included discussion of foreign markets for beef, wolves and compensation for livestock loss, food origins, estate and inheritance taxes and solar farms on agricultural land.

Umpqua, Ore., rancher Kurt Spencer said it is important that Oregon maintains a strong interest in pursuing foreign beef markets. He said the state is not keeping up in that pursuit.

Taylor explained that representatives from the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, the Oregon Beef Council and Country Natural Beef were on a trade trip to China last May. She said Japan has been the state's top market for agricultural products, but the next key market for Oregon may be China. That country recently reopened its beef market to U.S. producers.

Taylor said 80 percent of Oregon's agricultural products are shipped outside the state and 40 percent of that total is exported to international markets. She agreed it is important to seek out and establish trade



Craig Reed/For the Capital Press

Alexis Taylor, director of the Oregon Department of Agriculture, talks with rancher Bill Hoyt of Cottage Grove, Ore., about foreign beef markets. Taylor answered questions from ranchers at a Douglas County Livestock Association meeting in Roseburg, Ore., on Oct. 16.

relationships in those foreign markets.

She said it is important that trade trips are set up in both directions so that representatives from China, South Korea and Japan can visit Oregon to meet beef producers and to see where and how beef is raised.

"Trading relationships are long-term investments, not something you build in two years," Taylor said. "Oregon agriculture can capitalize on our proximity to the Pacific Rim and the growing middle class in Asia."

Cottage Grove, Ore., rancher Bill Hoyt brought up the importance of having a wolf compensation fund for livestock damage in western Oregon because the wolfpack in southwestern Oregon is dis-

persing and future conflicts are inevitable.

"To get to the point, we need more funds for compensation for all over the state," he said, adding that ranchers are willing to work with the ODA and to testify on behalf of the department to the Oregon legislature on wolf issues.

Taylor said it was a point well-taken and that the ODA would continue to support an increase in the fund through the budget process. She added there are always opportunities for stakeholders to testify and provide support for the fund in the budget.

In response to a question from Tennile, Ore., rancher Marwood Hallett about future trends, Taylor said she anticipates the origin of foods to be

an important subject well into the future. She said only 10 percent of the U.S. population now lives in rural areas so the disconnect with food sources is expected. She added 56 percent of Oregon's population lives in the Portland metro area.

"Consumers want to know the source of food," she said. "We have generations of people who are now removed from agriculture and we're less educated as a consumer base as a result. It'll take time out of our business to try to educate consumers."

The ODA is involved in the Agriculture in the Classroom program in an effort to provide educational materials on the ag industry to city classrooms.

Regarding solar panels on agricultural land, Taylor said ODA is supportive of all forms of alternative energy, but it comes down to "what is the best use of that land?"

"We want to see the most productive ag land in any part of the state protected," she said. "We want to provide for both, but in a way that makes sense. We need to be thoughtful about solar in the state, we want it to be compatible with agriculture, but not competitive."

Glide, Ore., rancher Mark Talcott asked Taylor about estate and inheritance taxes and the difficulty in passing an agricultural operation onto the next generation. Talcott is the fifth generation to own and operate his family's ranch.

"We're land rich, cash poor," he said. "We need relief if family farms and ranches are going to continue. The last nail in the coffin is the Oregon estate tax. There is a loss of family farms because they're being bought up by corporations that can afford the tax situation."

Taylor said the estate tax issue is something she has heard talk about in the Oregon Capitol in Salem "so it is on their radar." She had no further information on whether tax changes were coming.

"I find what you have on your minds very valuable," Taylor said to the ranchers as the meeting concluded.



Dale Whaley/Washington State University

Adult grasshoppers damaged these winter canola plants along field margins in northern Douglas County, Wash. Washington State University Extension area educator Dale Whaley recommends canola farmers check their fields for the insects and damage.

Winter canola growers advised to check for grasshoppers

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
Capital Press

Winter canola farmers should check their fields for grasshoppers, a Douglas County, Wash., researcher says.

Dale Whaley, extension educator in agronomy for Washington State University in Waterville, recently found a damaged field of winter canola where plants were "severely" defoliated.

"Grasshoppers are voracious predators. They can eat half their body weight per day in forage," Whaley said.

Farmers should go out and look for damage and the insects themselves using a sweep net, he said.

Farmers may have grasshoppers that have reached an economic threshold, of roughly 7-12 per square meter, Whaley said.

"That's pretty high pressure," he said. "That would warrant an action threshold, some kind of a chemical treatment."

Farmers don't want to reach the point where the cost of controlling the insects would equal the amount of damage they caused, he said.

A killing frost would kill any mature grasshoppers, but eggs survive in the soil over winter and hatch the following spring, Whaley said. Grasshoppers typically migrate into the edges of fields, so Whaley recommends farmers start scouting there, where they should see the most damage. If they're seeing enough damage to warrant pesticide treatment, they may only have to treat borders and not the entire field, he said.

"You can save money by making sure you're only treating the damaged areas," he said.

USDA Animal and Plant

Health Inspection Service conducts grasshopper surveys throughout Eastern Washington to monitor for grasshopper nymphs in May and then adult insects later in the summer to determine potential for grasshopper outbreaks, said program coordinator George Bruno.

"I'd say in general the grasshopper populations are down overall," Bruno said. "We always have some isolated outbreaks that occur in any of the 20 counties we survey."

Most surveys are conducted on rangeland. APHIS doesn't typically survey crop land, Bruno said, but grasshoppers can easily move in and damage crops adjacent to affected lands.

"Generally, grasshoppers build up for four to five years and reach peak populations where they cause some damage and then, depending on weather, their populations will crash and return to more normal levels," Bruno said.

Grasshopper numbers reached fairly large outbreaks in recent years, but have returned to more normal levels, he said.

Grasshoppers are common every year, said Karen Sowers, WSU Extension outreach specialist for oilseeds, although this year, farmers saw more green stinkbugs, which don't appear to cause damage.

Sowers isn't aware of much damage caused by grasshoppers this year.

"It's a field-by-field and year-by-year diagnosis," she said. "That's the importance of scouting and knowing what the thresholds are for each particular insect. Grasshoppers are the type that tend to move in and move out. They can do a lot of damage in some situations. Always be vigilant, is the number one thing on any of these insects."

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1:00PM – 3:00PM ENGLISH PESTICIDE CLASS

3:30PM – 4:30PM DRONE DEMONSTRATIONS

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NOVEMBER 8, 2018

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8:30AM – 9:30AM ENGLISH PESTICIDE CLASS

9:30AM – 10:30AM DRONE DEMONSTRATION

10:30AM – 11:30AM JOHNNY GEORGES

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