



Washington FFA

The Washington FFA state officer team. From left are Secretary Gunnar Aune, Treasurer Alissa Whitaker, President Cole Baerlocher, Vice President Lauren Stubbs, Reporter Haley Gilman and Sentinel Tysen White.

Washington FFA revving up for virtual convention in May

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
Capital Press

Washington FFA officers are gearing up for the state-wide organization's annual convention after a year that included a change in leadership and a global pandemic. "It's definitely been a challenging year," said executive director Jason Bullock. The convention will be held virtually May 13-15. Attendees and exhibitors can begin accessing the platform May 10.

The FFA board decided in October to hold another virtual convention due to the differences in how schools are handling attendance, with some meeting virtually, some in-person and some a hybrid, Bullock said. Bullock took over as executive director in December.

The state officer team selected a theme of "All Systems Go." The convention will maintain its traditional agenda, with one session streamed on Thursday and Friday evenings and two on Saturday. The new state officers will be announced Saturday evening.

Bullock hopes to draw 3,000 attendees during the virtual conference. The National East-



Jason Bullock

ern Region vice president, Miriam Hoffman, is one of the keynote speakers slated. Career development events, or CDEs, and leadership development events, or LDEs, resumed virtually in March. Beginning April 19, three to five events will be held each week until the end of May, Bullock said.

"(It) has been quite challenging to determine how to convert an in-person event into a virtual format and still evaluate a member's knowledge and skill level, especially when there are hands-on components to it," Bullock said.

Some events in late May may be in person, such as agricultural mechanics, poultry evaluation, agronomy, dairy cattle management and meat evaluation as state restrictions ease and the number of vaccinations increases.

The state officers have conducted chapter visits in person and virtually each week since December. They also recently visited the Chehalis area for spring visits and industry tours.



Alex McGregor

Ag company adds its voice to Simpson plan opposition

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
Capital Press

The McGregor Co. is sending a letter to Idaho Rep. Mike Simpson opposing his \$33.5 billion plan to remove four dams on the Lower Snake River in the name of salmon recovery.

The company sells fertilizer, agri-chemicals and ag equipment. It has retail offices in more than 35 communities throughout the region.

Simpson has not proposed legislation. His plan has drawn opposition from agricultural stakeholders, power companies and legislators.

"I think we need to take it seriously," Alex McGregor, chairman of the company, told the Capital Press, referring to Simpson's plan. "Rather than a so-called solution that threatens farm families, rural communities and larger communities, we can find ways to continue to make improvements in stewardship."

The letter has been co-signed by 158 other

people, representing 30 towns in Washington, 11 towns in Idaho and two in Oregon.

The letter corrects Simpson's previous statements that downriver barge shipments have declined or that barging can be replaced with cheaper alternatives.

"Your proposal heads us in the wrong direction on efficiency and air emissions, so much a factor in the dire predictions about climate and warming oceans," the letter states.

The river system is "crucial" for moving grain downriver and shipments upriver, including crop nutrients, McGregor said. Removing the dams could cause delivery delays that risk yield, he said.

"It's vital that we find ways to work together to make progress in caring for our iconic salmon, while also being sure to protect a very efficient set of dams that offer us some substantial advantages (in) agriculture," McGregor said.

LUBA rules against Oregon landfill expansion

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**
Capital Press

An Oregon land use board has affirmed Yamhill County's decision not to allow a controversial landfill expansion that's long been opposed by several neighboring farms.

Yamhill County adequately explained why farming disruptions from the Riverbend Landfill's 29-acre expansion couldn't be "mitigated to an insignificant level," according to the state's Land Use Board of Appeals.

Waste Management, the landfill's owner, argued the county's findings didn't sufficiently explain its con-

clusion that small amounts of plastic litter from the landfill would force impermissible changes to adjacent hay production.

The company argued that Yamhill County hadn't established that its landfill was the litter's source or why the landfill's litter control plan wouldn't adequately reduce the alleged problem.

Last year, the county determined that even minimal amounts of trash drifting onto nearby farmland would substantially affect farm practices and increase operational costs. The county's board of commissioners rejected Waste Management's applica-

tion after approving similar proposals in previous years.

LUBA has now ruled that Yamhill County's reasoning was "explained in great detail" and is "more than adequate" to account for why the landfill expansion proposal was denied.

Because the litter problems were a valid reason to deny the expansion plan, LUBA didn't reach a decision on the county's finding that cumulative impacts also impermissibly disrupted farm practices.

Since the county rejected the expansion's site plan, it did not have to separately analyze a flood-

plain development permit for the landfill, LUBA said.

Waste Management is reviewing LUBA's decisions and assessing its options, according to a spokesperson.

If the company still wants to move forward with the project, LUBA's decision can be challenged before the Oregon Court of Appeals or a new proposal can be submitted to the county.

The expansion plan goes "above and beyond in terms of environmental protections and considerations for neighbors and the community," Waste Management's spokesperson said.

Why California farmers are going nuts for pistachios

By **SIERRA DAWN McCLAIN**
Capital Press

PIXLEY, Calif. — The pistachio, with a record-breaking crop last year, is now nearly tied with the walnut as California's second-biggest tree nut crop.

Farmers are expanding acreage, many calling the pistachio the key to their future success. Consumer demand, domestically and abroad, is growing. And the pistachio industry, according to a recent study from the American Pistachio Growers, now has a \$5.2 billion impact on the state's economy.



Richard Matoian



Dominic Pitigliano

harvested about 3 billion pounds of almonds, 1.5 billion pounds of walnuts and just over 1 billion pounds of pistachios.

Between 2016 to 2020, according to industry data, growers added 173,540 new pistachio acres, a 56% increase.

"The real wow factor in this whole thing is the huge jump in acreage in the last four years," Dennis Tootelian, who conducted the recent study for the American Pistachio Growers, said in a statement. "Growers' investment in new acreage equated to more than \$5.1 million per day and \$10,777 per acre."

Demand has been the primary driver.

Richard Matoian, president of American Pistachio Growers, attributes most growth to export markets. About 70% of the state's production is exported annually, Matoian said.

Matoian said consumers appear to be buying more pistachios for several reasons.

First, he said, people are becoming more health-conscious.

Because pistachios are high in protein, they're also popular among vegetarians and people trying to build plant-based protein into their diets.

HP 160 PROPUSH | Hydraulic Push Box Spreader
600 cu. ft. capacity • trailer model

FAST EFFICIENT UNLOADING NOW WITH GREATER CAPACITY!

Increased capacity of simple push-off design with no chains

VertiSpread® vertical beaters provide wide, consistent spread pattern

Poly floor and sides promote self-cleaning and prevent buildup

More clearance between spreader and tractor for greater maneuverability

California	Oregon	Washington
Papé Machinery Fall River Mills Fortuna	Papé Machinery Cornelius, Madras, Merrill, Tangent	Boyd's Implement Tillamook
Farmer's Equipment Burlington Lynden	Papé Machinery Chehalis, Lynden, Mount Vernon, Quincy, Sumner, Yakima	Central Machinery Sales Pasco Sunnyside

INVEST IN QUALITY®
www.kuhn.com

Visit your local KUHN livestock dealer today!

S228086-1

FLAT CARS- THE BETTER BRIDGE

- Lower Cost • Custom Lengths up to 90'
- Certified Engineering Services Available
- Steel Construction

Contractor License # 71943

P.O. Box 365 • 101 Industrial Way, Lebanon, OR 97355

Rick Franklin Corporation
Office: 541-451-1275
Email: info@rfc-nw.com
www.rfc-nw.com

S235743-1

Best Prices on Irrigation Supplies

IrrigationKing.com

Sprinklers • Rain Guns
Drip Tape • Dripline • Filters • Poly Hose
Lay Flat Hose • Micro • Valves • Air Vents
Fertilizer Injectors ...and much more!

Fast & Free Shipping from Oregon

1-844-259-0640
www.irrigationking.com

10% OFF
PROMO CODE:
CAP10

S232383-1