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Opinion

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Our View

Be careful out there

Agriculture regulators in Idaho are getting ready to write new rules for hemp, a crop the state legislature just legalized.

We suggest they include some advice in those regulations: “Be careful.”

Since states such as Oregon first legalized it, hemp has represented the Wild West of agriculture.

Huge price swings coupled with speculation and a few less-than-scrupulous actors, the need for expensive seed and specialized equipment and even untimely rains have turned what had been promoted as an opportunity for farmers to diversify their crops into a latter-day version of riverboat gambling.

Now that Idaho has joined the other 49 states in the “hempstakes” we would suggest farmers there talk to their colleagues elsewhere.

They will hear comments such as these:

“We lost money two years a row.”
“You see a whole lot of land for sale now because people lost their shirts.”

“The price of hemp ... crashed overnight.”

“People are taking the contracts and wiping their butts with them and throwing them in the toilet.”

Pardon that last quote, but you get the idea.

At the same time, hemp acreage in Oregon has plummeted from 64,000 acres in 2019 to 3,800 acres registered so far this year.

When hemp first appeared on the horizon, much was said about its many uses — fiber, feed and even in “hempcrete” building materials. Little

was mentioned of CBD, the substance that can be extracted from hemp and used for its health benefits. There are even CBD supplements for dogs.

Now, however, the market for CBD is overloaded and the federal government still hasn’t approved it. Also known as cannabidiol, it is said to relieve pain, anxiety, reduce acne and provide several other benefits.

Add the federal government’s tight restrictions on the amount of THC — the psychoactive substance in marijuana — that is allowed in hemp, and farmers have had to overcome problems after problem.

If the federal government ever

legalizes marijuana, that will further complicate the hemp market.

Farmers’ views on those and other hemp-related issues vary. Some see them only as the speed bumps that are likely when dealing with a new commodity. Those who are vertically integrated seem to have done the best.

Others see hemp-related issues as roadblocks with “Caution” signs plastered on them.

After talking to those who have been involved in hemp for a few years, farmers in Idaho and elsewhere should consider the upside and downside of hemp as a crop and make sure they have a contract to sell it. Then they should put a pencil to it to project what the bottom line will be. Only then should they proceed.

And even then, the experience of others shows that they need to be exceedingly careful.



Capital Press File

Hemp has become the Wild West of agriculture.

Our View

A ridiculous initiative you have to take seriously

An Oregon initiative petition drive now gathering signatures seeks to end “unnecessary exemptions to laws governing animal abuse, animal neglect, and animal sexual assault.”

In actuality, the initiative would make artificial insemination a sex crime; virtually end commercial livestock, dairy production and animal slaughter; and criminalize hunting, fishing and pest control.

It is an assault on food production, and on Oregon’s farmers, ranchers and fishermen.

Oregon law provides stiff penalties for people who abuse animals. Those same laws provide fairly conventional and sensible definitions of what constitutes abuse — reckless or intentional neglect or cruelty that causes injury or death.

The statutes also set out exemptions that allow for animal husbandry following accepted practices, regulated slaughter, fishing and hunting, pest control and rodeo events.

We believe that most Oregonians are against animal neglect and abuse, but at the same time don’t object to reasonable meat and dairy production or the harvesting of seafood. That said, we’ve seen a lot of crazy ideas take root as initiative petitions.

Enter Portland animal rights activist David Michelson. Last November he filed Initiative Petition 13 with the



Eric Gay/Associated Press File

An initiative petition circulating in Oregon would make animal agriculture, hunting and fishing illegal.

Oregon Secretary of State’s Office.

“If enacted, IP13 would remove some of the exemptions to our pre-existing animal cruelty laws that currently allow certain individuals to abuse, neglect, and sexually assault animals without penalty,” according to yesonip13.org.

Mary Anne Cooper, vice president of public policy for the Oregon Farm Bureau, said the result would effectively criminalize everything from slaughtering livestock to basic animal husbandry, including branding and dehorning cattle, castrating bulls and

docking horses, sheep and pigs.

The initiative also would re-classify livestock breeding and artificial insemination as sexual assault of an animal — a Class C felony.

Cooper said the petition is the biggest threat to Oregon’s livestock industry in decades.

We agree.

Supporters of the bill are disingenuous in their depictions of the measure’s potential impacts and the current state of animal abuse enforcement.

“As they stand right now, not

everyone is held to the same standard when it comes to animal cruelty, and some people are exempt from these laws.”

Farmers and ranchers are not exempt from animal abuse laws. Those who operate outside the accepted norms, or those who neglect their animals, are subject to prosecution.

Yesonip13.org assures voters that nothing in the initiative bans the sale of meat, fur or leather, offering up the most ridiculous business model imaginable.

“After an animal lives a full life, and exits the world naturally and humanely, this initiative does not prohibit a farmer from processing and distributing their body for consumption.”

The public is hardly clamoring for meat from old and sick animals. It is illegal to sell meat from animals that have died a “natural” death.

IP13, though it sounds so reasonable in its description, is ridiculous. No meat, no backyard chickens, no goat milk soap.

But we are forced to take it seriously because, as we said, a lot of ridiculous ideas have become law via the initiative petition process. It must be stopped.

READERS’ VIEW

Malheur County ready to make the move to Idaho

The Malheur County Onion Growers Association and Malheur County Potato Growers Association are in favor of the Greater Idaho movement, though we believe that it is more reasonable to integrate Malheur County now.

The Malheur County economic region is more like Idaho than Western Oregon. Our population demographics mirror those who live within a few miles of our border than those hundreds of miles away.

Historically, we tend to vote based on family values, personal responsibility and integrity-based lifestyles. Virtues that Idaho can appreciate.

We have watched Western Oregon riot and destroy with dismay and embarrassment. We have learned from Idaho’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic that we agree with their way of protecting people’s liberties and personal choice.

We have all experienced

the same kinds of tragedy even across state lines, yet Oregon’s governor continues to increase her control of our schools, our businesses and everyday life without restraint. If that weren’t enough, Oregon’s massive estate tax kills generational small businesses.

We feel, on this side of the state, our voices aren’t heard. Our state continues showing us that we are inferior as they initiate a Carbon Tax and a goal to ban the use of all diesel fuel by 2027. This tax would devastate our far reaching agricultural based economy. Our production costs rise while unsafe imported food, without America’s standards, fill our stores. We can barely keep up with transportation costs.

Minimum wage in Oregon is currently higher than Idaho’s, but employees can rest assured knowing that wages won’t decrease because our businesses know their value.

We appreciate the awareness that the Greater Idaho movement initiated, but Malheur County is ready now. We feel that Idaho’s legislature preserves the legacies

that we have worked to build and will allow them to flourish in the future.

Paul Skeen
Malheur County Onion
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Nyssa, Ore.

Cancel the Cancel Culture

Who is the Cancel Culture? Whoever those elites are, they are forcing their agendas, values, ideas and beliefs on the basic fabric of American culture. They are attacking history, language, statues, founding fathers, the anthem, the flag, books, mascots, Title IX, law and order, right and wrong, male and female gender roles, cartoon characters, toys and on and on with no end in their sights.

One of the latest cancels is breast milk. OK, cow’s milk, goat milk, camel milk, whale milk — it all comes from mammary glands on mammals. So what should human milk be called now? Man’s milk? — Ouch!

Don’t think so. We as agricul-

turists already have experienced these powerful cancellation attacks over accepted sustainable environmental and agricultural practices from people who have no clue and have never “done it.”

These cancelers must have flunked Biology 101 let alone have real world experiences or common sense. All these cancellations have commonalities — everything old as well as history is bad, intolerance of diverse values, lack of respect for others, lack of common sense and “distractions” from real American social issues of problems.

No matter the history — good, bad or ugly — it can’t be changed. Don’t try to spin it, rewrite it or cancel it. History is history, deal with it then learn and grow from it. Canceling just means man falls back into the same old pitfalls and mistakes of humans. Oops, that’s history.

Cancel Culture seems to be the current “in thing.” The current cool, fashionable fad, the vogue. If given their way, they will rewrite everything. All must think like them! “Group think” like sheep — no thinking for yourself. Sink holes, quick sand,

undertows, whirlpools take us down — not good paths to be in or follow. That’s where America is headed. The so-called “know-it-all” elites of the Cancel Culture will soon cancel even themselves out.

Common sense and life-wise people must speak up and speak out, otherwise the Cancel Culture will continue to cancel American culture — the values, truths, traditions, freedoms and beliefs that built America. Soon, if not already, they will even cancel God, like the Nazis and the Soviet Union. Where are they today? Oh, that’s history again. Most Cancel Cultureists have never opened the Bible Book of Proverbs — the Wisdom Book. I dare the “elites” to study Proverbs.

America’s agriculturists, wake up! Now is not the time to be silent. Rise up, speak up, speak out to “cancel” the Cancel Culture. If not, they will destroy America’s history, wealth, standard of living and destiny. After all, we’re all Amer-ICANS because “free” Americans CAN!

Bob Beckner
Gervais, Ore.