

People & Places

# Growing hemp with a purpose

Lazarus Naturals earns B Corp. status

By **GEORGE PAVLEN**  
Capital Press

POWELL BUTTE, Ore. — Planting season is underway at Lazarus Naturals' 80-acre hemp farm in the high desert community of Powell Butte, Ore.

During the next five weeks, workers at the farm will transplant thousands of tiny hemp plants from the greenhouse to the field where they will grow from a few inches to 4-6 feet tall.

Cannabidiol, or CBD, will be extracted from the hemp on site and will be used to make wellness products including tinctures, balms and lotions.

Lazarus Naturals bought the property, a former cattle ranch, in 2018 before the passage of the Farm Bill that legalized hemp as an agricultural commodity. By 2022, the farm will complete its three-year transition to be certified organic.

Organic farming is one element of the company's recent certification as a B Corporation, dedicated to social welfare and public transparency as part of its business model.

"Even though we are in the unregulated CBD industry, we continue to set a new standard for conscientious and ethical business practices and use business as a force for good," said Sequoia Price-Lazarus, founder and CEO of Lazarus Naturals.

Founded in 2014, Lazarus Naturals' corporate headquarters are in Seattle, and the company manufactures its products in Portland. In an effort to become verti-



George Plaven/Capital Press

**Zack Troyer, farm manager and agronomist for Lazarus Naturals, inspects tiny hemp plants ready for planting at the company's 80-acre farm in Powell Butte, Ore.**

cally integrated, the company started its own farming operation in an isolated area of Central Oregon, growing the hemp it needs to produce CBD oil.

Rhonda Ahern, manager of farm administration, said the early days were marked by trial and error. The first crop was entirely hand-harvested and hang-dried from the rafters of an old horse arena several miles away.

"It was definitely a startup environment to begin with," Ahern said. "We did basically everything by hand."

Today, the company grows a total of 350 acres of hemp — including leased farmland — and cultivation is done by machine. Once harvested, the hemp is sent to the farm's on-site CBD extraction facility. The oil is then delivered to Portland, where it goes into Lazarus Naturals' lines of topical formulations, edibles and pet food.

"I think every person here

is so passionate about what they do," Ahern said.

Heading into their fourth year, Zack Troyer, farm manager and agronomist, said they are constantly experimenting with ways to increase yield, quality and efficiency.

Growing up on a conventional potato farm in Pennsylvania, Troyer said he became sick of dealing with potentially harmful pesticides. Organic farming is something he feels strongly about, from both a health and sustainability perspective.

"One of the worst parts is having employees, your land, the water resources and all of that exposed," Troyer said.

Organic farming is not new to hemp. Oregon Tilth, a nonprofit based in Corvallis that certifies organic farms in 49 states, has certified 143 hemp farms, including 77 in Oregon.

Instead of using tradi-

tional herbicides, Troyer said the farm uses plastic mulch to control weeds. Instead of chemical fertilizers, the farm uses a combination of chicken and steer manure, along with growing cover crops such as hairy vetch, oats and triticale.

Eventually, the farm plans to recycle spent hemp biomass after CBD extraction to apply back in the field.

"The hope is that soon here, we'll be able to reuse that biomass to recycle most of our nutrients," Troyer said. "It's going to be a little bit of a closed loop."

By using sub-surface drip irrigation and soil moisture sensors, Troyer said they can avoid wasting water, especially in a year like this when the Upper Deschutes Basin is experiencing severe to extreme drought.

Despite the worsening drought, Troyer said he

**Western Innovator**  
**LAZARUS FARMS**  
Established: 2018.  
Operator: Zack Troyer, farm manager and agronomist.  
Location: Powell Butte, Ore.  
Size: 80 acres.  
Crops: Organic hemp grown for CBD extraction.  
Products: CBD-infused tinctures, topical formulations, edibles and pet treats.

expects a decent growing season and harvest come fall. "I think we should be OK," he said. "All of our (plant) starts look really good and healthy ... We were fortunate to get enough water allocated this year, too, for all of our properties."

Lazarus Naturals announced its B Corp. status on April 12. The rigorous assessment to obtain certification not only takes into account the company's record on environmental stewardship, but also governance, employee welfare and community service.

Troyer said the farm did not have to change any of its practices to qualify as a B Corp. Becoming certified organic will only help build transparency and consumer confidence, he said.

"It's financially better for us if we do that, and it's also the right thing to do for the environment, for our people and for the bottom line," he said.

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We want to publish corrections to set the record straight.

# Invasive tree frogs identified in plants shipped to Oregon

By **GEORGE PAVLEN**  
Capital Press

SALEM — Oregon wildlife officials have identified two non-native and potentially invasive Cuban tree frogs that apparently hitchhiked into the state on nursery plants.

Both reports came on the same day, May 18, under strangely different circumstances, said Rick Boatner, invasive species supervisor at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

One of the frogs was spotted on a tropical plant shipped from Florida to a Home Depot store in the Eugene area, and the other was found on a garden croton plant that had been purchased online through the e-commerce site Etsy by a customer near Corvallis.

"It's rare, but not unusual, for creatures to come in on plants or in shipping containers," Boatner said. "It's critical to prevent non-native species from entering Oregon rather than try to deal with them once they've become established."



wikipedia

**A Cuban tree frog.**

Cuban tree frogs are native to Cuba, the Bahamas and the Cayman Islands, but have established a few highly invasive populations in places like Florida, Hawaii and the Caribbean Islands, where they out-compete native frogs and amphibians for space and food.

Boatner said the frogs are small, just 2-3 inches in length, which makes them hard to detect in plants. They are similar in appearance to Oregon's

native tree frogs, or peepers.

While it is not certain whether Cuban tree frogs can survive and become established in Oregon's climate, Boatner said the department doesn't want to take chances.

"We're being cautious," he said. "If you do find one, call us and let us know. We don't want them out in the wild."

Boatner urged nursery retailers and consumers to thoroughly inspect plants for invasive hitchhikers, and call

ODFW if they find anything suspicious.

**Tracking zebra mussels**

Earlier this year, ODFW also discovered invasive zebra mussels in imported "Beta Buddy Marimo Ball" moss plants sold at pet stores in the Salem and Ashland areas.

Though Oregon and the Pacific Northwest are currently free of zebra mussels in the wild, the species poses a massive threat to agriculture because they attach themselves on hard services in waterways, which can cause blockages of irrigation pumps and headgates.

Zebra mussels cause an estimated \$1 billion per year in damage and control costs where they have become established in the U.S.

Since reports of zebra mussels in the moss balls surfaced in April, the Oregon Department of Agriculture issued a 180-day quarantine on the product.

Moss balls may only be imported into Oregon if accompanied by a compliance certificate stating the prod-

uct was inspected and free of zebra mussels within seven days of shipping. Moss balls without the required proof of inspection will be destroyed, and violations may result in a fine up to \$10,000.

Boatner said ODFW will be conducting environmental DNA testing later this summer to track whether any zebra mussels have made it into the wild.

The agency is compiling a list of between 70 and 100 aquarium dump sites around the state — such as small city ponds — and will begin testing in July when the mussels' spawning season begins.

"We've been identifying those places so we can start testing with the environmental DNA," Boatner said. "It's kind of like an early warning system."

Boatner said officials must ultimately decide how they will handle the moss balls beyond the temporary quarantine, or whether they will ban the product.

The quarantine was announced April 19, meaning it will expire Oct. 16.

# Plague of ravenous, destructive mice tormenting Australians

By **ROD MCGUIRK**  
Associated Press

BOGAN GATE, Australia — At night, the floors of sheds vanish beneath carpets of scampering mice. Ceilings come alive with the sounds of scratching. One family blamed mice chewing electrical wires for their house burning down.

Vast tracts of land in Australia's New South Wales state are being threatened by

a mouse plague that the state government describes as "absolutely unprecedented." Just how many millions of rodents have infested the agricultural plains across the state is guesswork.

"We're at a critical point now where if we don't significantly reduce the number of mice that are in plague proportions by spring, we are facing an absolute economic and social crisis in rural and regional New

South Wales," Agriculture Minister Adam Marshall said this month.

Bruce Barnes said he is taking a gamble by planting crops on his family farm near the central New South Wales town of Bogan Gate.

"We just sow and hope," he said.

The risk is that the mice will maintain their numbers through the Southern Hemisphere winter and devour the wheat, barley

and canola before it can be harvested.

NSW Farmers, the state's top agricultural association, predicts the plague will wipe more than 1 billion Australian dollars (\$775 million) from the value of the winter crop.

The state government has ordered 5,000 liters (1,320 gallons) of the banned poison Bromadiolone from India. The federal government regulator has yet to

approve emergency applications to use the poison on the perimeters of crops. Critics fear the poison will kill not only mice but also animals that feed on them, including wedge-tail eagles and family pets.

"We're having to go down this path because we need something that is super strength, the equivalent of napalm to just blast these mice into oblivion," Marshall said.

## CALENDAR

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**WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY  
JUNE 9-11**

**World Pork Expo:** Iowa State Fairgrounds, Des Moines. The world's largest pork industry-specific trade show brings together pork producers and industry professionals from around the world for

three days of education, innovation and networking. Website: <https://worldpork.org/>

**THURSDAY-SATURDAY  
JUNE 24-26**

**United Fresh Convention and Expo (in person and online):** Los Angeles Convention Center. Whether online or in person, United Fresh is your partner connecting the global fresh produce industry. Sponsored by the United Fresh Pro-

**MONDAY-TUESDAY  
JUNE 28-29**

**Idaho Cattle Association Summer Round-Up:** Stagecoach Inn, Salmon, Idaho. The conference will include updates from the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, Idaho Beef Council, Idaho Department of

Agriculture and Idaho Departments of Lands, as well as market updates. An optional rafting trip is planned for June 27. Website: [www.idahocattle.org](http://www.idahocattle.org)

**WEDNESDAY-THURSDAY  
JUNE 30-JULY 1**

**Western Governors' Association 2021 Annual Meeting (virtual):** The event will feature governors in roundtable discussions on topics such as energy response, pub-

lic lands challenges, shared stewardship, infrastructure and workforce. Website: [www.westgov.org](http://www.westgov.org)

**TUESDAY-THURSDAY  
AUG. 10-12**

**2021 Cattle Industry Convention & Trade Show:** Gaylord Opryland Resort, Nashville, Tenn. The convention will include educational seminars, exhibits and networking. Website: <http://convention.ncba.org>