

# Northwest hops industry continues to add acres

Craft brewing seeks bounce-back year

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**  
Capital Press

YAKIMA, Wash. — To say 2020 was a precarious year for Northwest hop growers would be a massive understatement.

Pandemic closures hammered bars and restaurants, causing an overall decline in the U.S. beer market. Then came severe weather during the hop harvest, with high winds desiccating ripe cones and blowing down trellises.

Thick smoke from large wildfires also filled the skies, sending plants into early dormancy and reducing late-season yields.

Despite the challenges, total hop acreage is up 4% in 2021 across Washington, Idaho and Oregon, and industry representatives are cautiously optimistic about a speedy recovery.

“We’re starting to see things picking back up,” said Jaki Brophy, com-



Coleman Agriculture

**Rows of hops grow in Oregon's Willamette Valley.**

munications director for Hop Growers of America, a trade association based in Yakima, Wash. “We’re certainly not back to where we were before quite yet, but it does look like things are starting to recover well.”

According to a USDA report issued June 10, Washington has 60,735 acres of hops strung for harvest, an increase of 2,094 acres over

last year. Idaho has 9,784 acres of hops this year, up 516, and Oregon has 7,571 acres, up 467.

The total of 60,735 acres is a record high, though Brophy said some of those additions are the result of pre-pandemic planning, and not new business.

“A lot of this is based on past demand,” she said. “The sentiment

and estimate at this point is the increases aren’t necessarily from recent contracts, but fulfilling ones that were previously established.”

Michelle Palacios, administrator of the Oregon Hops Commission, said acreage is up in 2021 based on baby hops that were strung last year but did not produce a crop.

Unlike Washington and Idaho, it takes Oregon growers two years to harvest new hop plants based on the climate. Those acres are not included in the USDA’s annual report.

Palacios said more growers in Oregon are transitioning their acreage from alpha hop varieties such as Nugget to more aroma varieties like Citra and Centennial, driven by increased demand among craft brewers.

“Our (increased) acres was absolutely anticipated because of this variety transition that we’re going through,” Palacios said. “These acres were in the ground in 2020, but we just didn’t get to harvest them.”

Craft brewing has been the primary catalyst for the growth in hop acres, Brophy said. Brewers use more hops per glass in beers such as

pale ales that are rising in popularity worldwide.

But 2020 was undeniably difficult for the industry as on-site beer consumption fell due to COVID-19. That disproportionately affected craft brewing. While the overall beer market was down 3% last year, craft beer volume was down 9%.

Bart Watson, chief economist for the Brewers Association, which represents craft breweries, said their members rely more heavily on draft and on-site consumption than larger beer companies such as Anheuser-Busch or Molson Coors.

As more people drank beer at home during the pandemic, Watson said craft brewers faced a tougher adjustment.

“Generally, that tradeoff is bad for craft breweries,” he said.

The beer industry’s struggles rippled back up the supply chain to hop farms. About 98% of the U.S. crop comes from the Pacific Northwest. While hop acreage was up in 2020 over 2019, production fell to 104.8 million pounds, according to Hop Growers of America.

# Oregon fee hikes for food safety, livestock and water gain traction

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**  
Capital Press

A key legislative budget committee has voted to authorize maximum fee increases affecting food safety, livestock and water, though some of the hikes aren’t as steep as originally proposed.

Several bills raising the maximum cap on such fees will soon be voted on by the full Joint Committee on Ways and Means after receiving approval from its Natural

Resources Subcommittee.

Approval by the Ways and Means Committee is typically the final step before budget-related proposals are voted on by the full Legislature.

Under Senate Bill 32, which would raise maximum livestock fees, was recommended for approval 5-3 by the subcommittee on June 14.

The bill initially intended to increase the maximum fee for seven transactions, but has since been amended to

only change four fees.

The maximum brand inspection fee will be increased to \$1.35 per head of cattle, up from the current \$1 but down from the originally proposed \$1.50.

An emergency clause in the amended version would allow the Oregon Department of Agriculture more time to collect higher fees, so they may not have to reach the maximum level as quickly.

Maximum fee increases for livestock feed manufacturers were also recommended

for approval by the subcommittee, which voted 6-2 to approve Senate Bill 36. The bill would double license fees from \$500 to \$1,000 per manufacturer, and triple the fees per commercial feed product from \$20 to \$60.

Dairies, egg handlers, bakers, food processors and grocery stores would face increased food safety fees under Senate Bill 33, which the subcommittee recommended for approval 5-3.

However, the subcommittee amended the bill so

that maximum food safety fees would increase 7% in mid-2022 and another 7% in mid-2023, rather than rise 15% each year, as originally proposed.

Rep. Vikki Breese-Iverson, R-Prineville, said she could not support the proposed fee hikes after the hardship that agricultural communities have suffered during the coronavirus pandemic.

“All we’re doing is increase their fees and make it more difficult and harder for them to stay in business and

support our state,” she said.

An increase in maximum fees for water transactions charged by the state’s Department of Water Resources was also recommended by the subcommittee 5-3 on June 15.

The maximum fees would rise 17.39% under House Bill 2142, which was also opposed by Breese-Iverson.

“I feel it is very difficult and disingenuous when we’re going into a drought year to raise the fees for something these guys aren’t going to get, which is water,” she said.

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### Scott Stump Named New FFA Chief Executive Officer

The National FFA Organization and the National FFA Foundation named Scott Stump the new chief executive officer of both organizations, effective Monday, June 21.

Stump, who lives on a small ranch in Stoneham, Colorado, with his wife, Denise and three children, Brady, Ross and Emma, has a background rich in agricultural education, career and technical education and FFA. He received his bachelor's in agricultural education from Purdue University and his MBA from Western Governor's University.

“It is with great anticipation that I return to National FFA in this leadership role,” said Stump. “I know from personal experience as a student and as a parent the positive difference FFA makes in the lives of students across this nation. I look forward to working with FFA’s talented national staff, committed board members, state and local leaders and supporters to advance and expand our collective impact.”

National FFA Advisor and Board Chair Dr. James Woodard shared the news with state FFA and agricultural education leaders and National FFA staff earlier this month.

“The opportunity to select Scott Stump as the new CEO is exciting for the National FFA Board of Directors. Scott is a leader with credibility, vision and passion for the agricultural education profession,” Woodard said. “The process for selecting Scott was both inclusive and transparent. The respondents of the survey provided great insight into the needs of the organization. I want to professionally thank all who provided input to the selection process.”

After an extensive search process, the Joint Governance Committee of the National FFA Board of Directors and National FFA Board of Trustees selected and approved Stump as CEO.

“On behalf of the National FFA Foundation Board of Trustees, we are both humbled and excited to welcome Mr. Scott Stump to our team. Scott brings decades of experience to the table, having been a part of FFA and agricultural education at nearly every level — including student member, classroom teacher, state staff and national staff,” said Ronnie Simmons, chair of the National FFA Foundation Board of the Trustees. “With a Smith-Hughes style philosophy of agricultural education, Scott’s ideals and beliefs are built on a strong foundation giving him the capacity to lead and influence others. It is evident that these beliefs are the driving force behind his vision that agricultural education will continue to be the difference-maker in the lives of students across the nation.”

Stump began his career as an agriculture teacher in Manchester, Indiana, where he taught for two years. He then worked for the National FFA Organization, where he managed the national officer team and the National FFA Convention and Expo. From 2007 through 2014, he served as the assistant provost and state director for career and technical education with the Colorado Community College System. During his CCCS tenure, Stump also served as state FFA advisor, agriculture program director and interim president of Northeastern Junior College during the institution’s presidential search process.

In 2015, Stump was named COO of learning solutions provider Vivayic, Inc. In July 2018, he was confirmed by the U.S. Senate to serve as the assistant secretary of career, technical and adult education for the U.S. Department of Education, where he served until January.

He currently serves as senior advisor with Advance CTE, where he leads and contributes to major initiatives and projects, including Advances CTE’s Postsecondary CTE Leaders Fellowship Program and Advancing the Framework. He also supports their federal advocacy, state policy and technical assistance efforts.

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