

Oregon farmers, ranchers weigh in on wolf suits

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

Northern Rocky Mountain wolves shouldn't receive federal protection just by crossing into Central Washington or Central Oregon, the Oregon Farm Bureau, Oregon Cattlemen's Association and Klamath County said in a court filing Monday.

Gray wolves are not in danger of extinction and returning them to the endangered species list would increase tensions with producers, according to an amicus brief filed in the U.S. District Court for Northern California.

Klamath County has

roughly 50,000 head of cattle and more wolf activity than any other county in western Oregon, according to the brief.

The filing adds more viewpoints to an onslaught of briefs in three lawsuits filed in Northern California by environmental groups. The lawsuits have been merged into one case.

The suits claim the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service prematurely delisted wolves throughout the Lower 48, giving short shrift to wolves in California and the western two-thirds of Oregon and Washington.

The USFWS, sticking with the decision it made



ODFW/La Grande Observer

The Oregon Farm Bureau, Oregon Cattlemen's Association and Klamath County warn that reinstating federal protection to wolves will increase tension with livestock owners.

under the Trump administration, has filed a motion asking Judge Jeffrey White

in Oakland to dismiss the lawsuits.

The environmental groups

have filed motions asking White to invalidate the delisting. A hearing on the competing motions is scheduled for Nov. 12.

White has granted intervenor status to states, sportsmen groups and tribes with conflicting views. He denied intervenor status to the American Farm Bureau, National Cattlemen's Beef Association and other national agriculture groups. The farm groups last week appealed the denial to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The USFWS concluded that wolves have stable and growing populations in the northern Rocky Mountains and Great Lakes and that

wolves outside those core areas are a westward expansion of a recovered species.

U.S. wolves and Canada's 30,000 wolves are connected in a vast North American network, according to the agency.

DNA tests show wolves in Oregon are descended from Rocky Mountain wolves, while wolves in California are descended from Oregon wolves, according to the USFWS.

The ancestry of wolves in Washington is more complex, according to USFWS. Wolves from the Rocky Mountains and British Columbia have commingled.

Coronavirus assistance program expanded to include Kentucky bluegrass seed

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
Capital Press

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Add Kentucky bluegrass seed to the list of eligible commodities under the USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, or CFAP.

The agency announced on Aug. 24 it is updating the second round of CFAP payments to include Kentucky bluegrass seed, which was previously left out.

Ninety percent of all Kentucky bluegrass seed in the U.S. comes from the Pacific Northwest. It is used primarily for turf grass and sod, and can be found growing in lawns, golf courses, sports fields and pastures across the country and worldwide.

On Jan. 15, the USDA Farm Service Agency announced that CFAP would cover turf and sod producers.

Kentucky bluegrass seed growers, however, were initially told they could not apply since the seed can be used for both sod and forage. The FSA had already decided that crops intended for grazing would not be considered.

Members of the Northwest congressional delegation intervened, sending a letter June 30 to Zach Ducheneaux, FSA administrator, urging him to reconsider Kentucky bluegrass seed.

The letter — signed by Rep. Cliff Bentz and Sens.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative, visit www.farmers.gov/pandemic-assistance.

Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley of Oregon, as well as Reps. Mike Simpson, Russ Fulcher and Sens. James Risch and Mike Crapo of Idaho — argued that locally grown varieties of Kentucky bluegrass seed are bred, contracted and produced for the turf and sod industries, not for forage.

Seed breeders carefully select traits ideal for lawns that are mowed at a 1-2 inch height, and that require minimal water and pesticides to remain healthy, the lawmakers added.

"The grass grown from the Kentucky bluegrass seed our farmers produce was never contracted for or intended to be grazed or used for forage," the letter underscores. "Therefore, we believe that FSA has made an honest error in finding bluegrass seed for turf and sod ineligible."

The FSA ultimately agreed, adding Kentucky bluegrass seed to the list of eligible specialty crops that also includes fruits, honey, tree crops and vegetables.

"Over this past year, agricultural producers have been hit hard by drought as

well as the coronavirus pandemic," Bentz said in a statement. "This program provides vital assistance to farmers who experienced market disruptions in 2020 due to COVID-19."

The USDA also announced changes in CFAP payments to contract producers of certain livestock and poultry, including broilers, pullets, layers, chicken eggs, turkeys, hogs and pigs, ducks, geese, pheasants and quail.

Payments for contract producers were to be based on a comparison of eligible revenue for the periods of Jan. 1, 2019 through Dec. 27, 2019, and those dates in 2020. Producers may instead elect to use revenue from the same period in 2018, as opposed to 2019, if they believe it is more representative.

Ducheneaux, the FSA administrator, said both adjustments were made after listening to feedback and concern from producers about gaps in pandemic assistance.

"The pandemic has had a tremendous impact on agricultural producers," Ducheneaux said, "and we have made significant progress since announcing our plans in March. While additional pandemic assistance remains to be announced in the coming weeks, USDA is also ramping up its efforts to make investments in the food supply chain to Build Back Better."

Washington eyes quarantine to control Japanese beetles

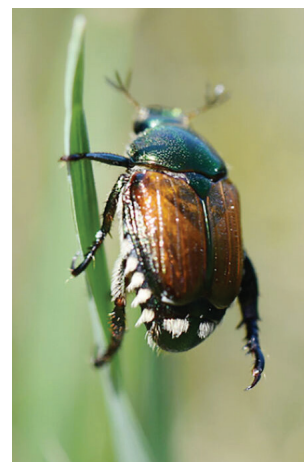
By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

More than 20,000 Japanese beetles have been trapped in and near a Central Washington town, an infestation the Washington Department of Agriculture hopes to contain with a quarantine.

The department has filed a notice that it intends to establish a quarantine in portions of Yakima and Benton counties. Grandview, the outbreak's epicenter, is in Yakima County and just west of Benton County.

The department has not determined the boundaries or what would be regulated under a quarantine, spokeswoman Karla Salp said Monday. Before establishing a quarantine, the department would analyze how it would affect businesses, she said.

Japanese beetles eat fruit, flowers and buds, and damage roots. The invasive pests are widespread east of the Mississippi. If established in Washington, the beetles would be a threat to agri-



WSDA

A Japanese beetle clings to a plant in Yakima County, Wash. The Washington State Department of Agriculture plans a quarantine to contain the pests.

culture, according to the department.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture has been battling Japanese beetles in the Portland area since 2016. In Washington, beetles are being trapped by the thousands close to farms and nurseries.

The beetles have the

potential to affect export markets for farm goods grown in the area, according to the department.

To eradicate beetles, Oregon spreads a granular larvicide in the spring on lawns and planting beds. The state agriculture department last spring treated 12,000 properties over 4,000 acres with Acelepryn G.

Landowners who didn't consent to the treatments were served warrants allowing the department onto their property.

The beetles spend about 10 months underground. The trapping season is coming to a close, Salp said. The department likely will use chemicals against the beetles in the spring.

The department has not yet presented a formal quarantine proposal or opened a comment period.

Anyone who would like to participate in formulating the rule can contact Assistant Director Brad White of the Plant Protection Division at (360) 902-1907 or bwhite@agr.wa.gov.

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