

Ecology agricultural advisory panel light on farm groups

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

Farm groups were unrepresented until recently on a panel formed to advise the Washington Department of Ecology on how farmers and timberland owners can profit from the state's low-carbon fuel standard.

The panel has met twice with conservation groups, government agencies, the timber industry, out-of-state companies, the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community and the Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility represented.

Pacific Northwest Canola Association Executive Director Karen Sowers was added this week as the panel's 17th member and the first from a farm group.

"I would feel bad if I were the only one," Sowers said Aug. 9. "I think it would behoove the panel to have more representation from ag landowners."

Lawmakers directed Ecology to convene a panel of "stakeholders" to advise the state on rewarding farmers and timberland owners who sequester carbon.



EO Media Group File

The Pacific Northwest Canola Association will have a representative on a panel that will advise the Washington Department of Ecology about how farmers can profit from the low-carbon fuel standard.

By capturing carbon, landowners could earn credits to sell to fuel suppliers that must offset carbon emissions from gasoline and diesel.

Lawmakers didn't tell Ecology who would be on the panel, only that it must include representatives of forestland and agricultural landowners. Weyerhaeuser and Inland Empire Paper Co. executives and a small forestland owner are on the panel.

Ecology spokeswoman Susan Woodward said the department is

confident agricultural landowners are well represented.

Besides Sowers, Woodward cited panel members from Columbia Land Trust, the Lands Council, Pacific Ag Biofuel and Indigo Agriculture as representatives of agricultural landowners.

Based in Vancouver, Wash., Columbia Land Trust is a nonprofit that acquires land. The trust's holdings include cattle grazing and farming, spokesman Dan Roix said.

The Lands Council, a Spo-

kane-based nonprofit, works to preserve forests, water and wildlife, according to its website. The Lands Council and two other groups are currently suing the U.S. Forest Service, alleging the agency allows too much cattle grazing in the Colville National Forest. Efforts to reach the council's panel representative were unsuccessful.

Based in Hermiston, Ore., Pacific Ag describes itself as North America's largest crop residue harvest and supply company.

Indigo Agriculture, based in Boston, develops biological and digital technologies that improve farmers' profitability, according to its website.

Efforts to contact representatives from those companies were unsuccessful.

Woodward said Ecology is open to adding more agricultural landowner representatives to the panel. No agricultural landowner representative has declined an invitation to join, she said.

"One of the things we're looking at is making sure the people and organizations we invite are connected to the transportation fuel sup-

ply chain. For example, that they work with a crop that is used as a feedstock for biofuel," she said in an email.

Washington State Conservation Commission policy director Ron Shultz said he was not aware of Ecology's Agriculture and Forestry Carbon Capture and Sequestration Advisory Panel.

"I think it would be very beneficial to have both the commission and conservation districts involved," he said. "We would be very interested in engaging."

Washington State Dairy Federation policy director Jay Gordon said he too was unaware of the panel. Dairies are capable of producing renewable transportation fuels.

Gordon said he didn't agree with the panel's makeup, but that Washington is in the early stages of figuring out how to reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

"I don't begrudge Ecology for what they're doing at all," he said. "They're a little short on ag representation — ag representatives should be in the mix — but they're learning."

In-person wheat trade team visits resume

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

After a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person wheat industry trade teams have resumed in the Pacific Northwest.

Nearly a dozen teams are slated to tour the region this summer, said Amanda Hoey, CEO of Oregon Wheat, including teams from Vietnam and Japan, which visited last week.

"Group sizes are definitely larger than the norm, given pent-up demand from a few years inability to travel for these visits," she said.

The Washington Grain Commission is hosting 10 trade teams from June through September, said Mary Palmer Sullivan, commission vice president. Customers learn about wheat variety development and breeding at Washington State



Lori Maricle/Washington Grain Commission

USDA Agricultural Research Service club wheat breeder Kim Campbell tours wheat variety trials at Washington State University's Spillman Farm with the Japan club wheat exchange team July 12 in Pullman, Wash. From left are Campbell; Bungo Hirano, assistant manager of the quality control and assurance group in the production division at Nisshin Flour Milling Inc.; Hajime Akashi, director and head of laboratory, Flour Millers Association; Hiroyuki Kawakami, manager of the wheat research team at the innovation center central laboratory at NIPPON Corp.; and Kazunori "Rick" Nakano, Japan Country Director for U.S. Wheat Associates.

University, grain elevators and by talking with farmers.

"A lot of these folks have never been to a wheat field or talked to a farmer," Sullivan said. "They learned a lot

and asked a ton of questions. That makes it really fun, when they're really interactive and feel relaxed to ask the questions they want."

Idaho has hosted two trade teams so far this summer. They included customers the Middle East, North Africa, Ecuador and Peru, said Casey Chumrau, executive director of the Idaho Wheat Commission.

The wheat organizations provide updates on crop quality and harvest progress, as well as the production process, from variety development to the farm and through the supply chain to their countries, Chumrau said.

"The personal interaction with our customers overseas is so vital, and really broadens the perspectives of these customers," she said. "The connections they make with the farmers and other agribusiness partners are really important to the growth and development of these professionals, and help with the commitment to purchasing U.S. wheat."

"It's been a long time," said Darren Padgett, a Grass Valley, Ore., farmer, past chairman of U.S. Wheat Associates and board member of the Oregon Wheat Commission. "Everybody, both on the U.S. side and the foreign side, are pleased to

see this start to happen. Nothing beats face-to-face."

U.S. Wheat, the overseas marketing arm for the industry, has 12 trade teams on the schedule, making stops in several states.

"There are fewer teams this year, compared to the typical number of teams before the pandemic, but everyone is very happy to be traveling again and experience the 2022 crop," said Steve Wirsching, director of U.S. Wheat's West Coast office in Portland.

Wirsching said U.S. Wheat's focus is on bringing the next generation of flour millers and buyers to experience the U.S. wheat industry first-hand.

"The same generational turnover that is happening on our farms is also happening with overseas flour milling companies," he said.

In-person trade teams and virtual meetings prove that the U.S. wheat market "remains open and transparent," Wirsching said.

"Trade teams demonstrate that our wheat and the people who supply it are dependable, that there is nothing hidden about our wheat quality nor our market system, and that our farmers are economically resilient and concerned about producing wheat sustainably," he said.

The grain commission has to be flexible in its schedul-

ing, Sullivan said. Some countries require different forms of proof of testing negative for COVID in order for travelers to return and in one instance, half of a trade team arrived later than its other members due to flight delays.

When the industry pivoted to Zoom online meetings, it opened up the ability to communicate to larger groups of people, Sullivan said.

"As a result, some of the meetings or opportunities that otherwise would have been maybe focused on four or five people are now opening up to sometimes 50 to 100 people that want to know about the crop," she said. "A lot of people are willing to jump on a call or webinar and hear first hand about the crop."

That will continue, to a certain extent, she said. "We're not limiting ourselves."

"We know for sure that, seen in person, the iconic 'amber waves of grain' are very impressive to our customers," Wirsching said. "There is no better way to demonstrate the value that comes from the cooperation between farmers, the grain handlers, our state wheat commission members, and the transportation system to produce safe and wholesome wheat. We hope that the customers who visit also feel like they have a stake in that cooperative effort."

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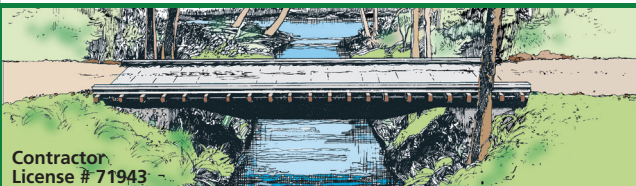
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Gates-funded study claims candy is healthier than beef

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association is condemning as flawed the Food Compass study funded in part by alternative meat promoter Bill Gates.

The Food Compass nutrient profiling system scores foods from best to worst on a scale of 0 to 100, ranking products like peanut M&Ms, Coco Puffs and potato chips

as more healthful than beef.

"The idea that M&Ms, potato chips and cereal are somehow healthier than natural beef ignores scientific evidence and frankly doesn't measure up to logic," said Colin Woodall, NCBA CEO.

"These snack foods are high in sugar, carbohydrates and fats, while beef is a nutrient-rich food that provides essential protein, iron, zinc and numerous B vitamins," he said.

No one sits down to a plate of candy and chips expecting a healthy meal, but a lean cut of beef accompanied by vegetables or fruits and whole grains is a healthy choice every time, he said.

"To suggest otherwise is irresponsible, and it confuses consumers at a time when we should be working to meet their nutritional needs, rather than confounding them with

agenda-driven faux science," he said.

The nutrient profiling system was developed by Dariush Mozaffarian, a cardiologist and dean of Tufts University Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy.

His resume on Tufts' website lists at least \$6.2 million in research funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation between 2012 and 2021.

Earlier this year, NCBA called out Bill Gates for suggesting consumers in wealthy nations should switch from real beef — whose production only accounts for 2% of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions — to synthetic beef as a solution to climate change.

Instead of focusing on reducing emissions from the energy or transportation sectors, Gates chooses to focus

on beef because he is heavily invested in the same fake meat companies he is promoting, Woodall said at the time.

NCBA continuously highlights beef's role in a healthy diet as an authentic source of high-quality protein and essential nutrients.

Animal proteins such as beef are among the most nutrient-dense, complete protein sources available, and cattle farmers and ranchers are committed to producing high-quality protein in the most sustainable way possible, NCBA said.

NCBA is a tireless advocate for America's beef farmers and ranchers and will continue highlighting the nutritional, environmental and economic benefits of real beef, it said.

The Food Compass study was published in October 2021.

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