

ODA striving to stop spread of nasty weeds

Early detection and rapid response.

That's the desired formula for the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture's (ODA) Weed Control Program. The growing season is under way throughout the state, and it's not just crops springing up from the ground.

Noxious weeds -- undesirable invaders that often out-compete native plant species -- are ready to pop up at many unannounced locations. ODA's team of experts is beginning to look for new infestations and welcomes help from the public.

"Obviously, a lot of weeds are starting to grow and will be flowering soon," said Tim Butler, manager of ODA's Weed Control Program. "So this is a good time of the year for individuals to be aware of Oregon's invasive weed problem, and be looking for these problems around the state."

On the whole, Oregon appears to be in much better shape in the battle against noxious weeds than many other states. ODA's program is internationally known for its success in biological control and active efforts to keep weed problems manageable.

ODA not only helps to coordinate local weed control efforts, but conducts many of the on-the-ground activities itself for targeted weeds.

Still, the state seems besieged by a number of new plant invaders in recent years. Most of them have exotic or colorful names. But each poses both an environmental and economic threat to Oregon. One of the best ways to win the battle against weeds is by finding them early.

The most publicized suc-

cess story deals with tansy ragwort, which remains the poster child for ODA's successful bio-control of noxious weeds. At one time, tansy cost the state \$4 million annually from livestock that had consumed the poisonous weed and died.

The plant still exists in Oregon, but at populations small enough to avoid the damage caused in the past. Three decades of control efforts have greatly improved the situation.

West of the Cascades, it is estimated that reduction of tansy ragwort has saved more than \$5 million each year in cattle losses since 1986. ODA estimates a 15-1 benefit-cost ratio for the tansy bio-control program, meaning that for every dollar spent on the program, there has been a return of \$15 in economic benefit.

There has also been success in controlling distaff thistle in Douglas and Josephine counties -- 98 percent control over 15 years of intensive control efforts -- plus good bio-control results in the fight against purple loosestrife in Western and Eastern Oregon.

A more recent case of successful weed control is the discovery of kudzu in 2000. Three small and separate sites of the ivy-like weed were detected in the Portland metropolitan area. Each was treated soon after discovery, and it appears that the spread of kudzu has been held in check.

Kudzu, an aggressive weed that has caused major problems in the southeastern United States, had never been found west of Texas until three years ago.

ODA agronomist Glenn Miller was driving back from

conducting a survey for another noxious weed when he happened to notice the unusual viny plant along a hillside south of Canby on Hwy. 99E.

Even though no one suspected kudzu would be found in Oregon, Miller alertly identified the weed. Eradication efforts were soon under way along with a focused search for other kudzu infestations.

Two small residential sites in southwest Portland were also discovered and treated. No new detections have been made since. But now that officials know kudzu can survive in Oregon, they are on constant lookout for new sites.

"A lot of these new weeds show up on road shoulders just from vehicle traffic," said Butler. "Motor vehicles are major vectors for moving weeds around."

From that standpoint, the public may be able to notice new infestations on noxious weeds, if they know what they are looking at.

Many times, it can be a case of mistaken identity.

ODA has been alerted by the public of giant hogweed infestations, but there have been look alike plants as well. If the mystery plant can't be easily identified but still seems to be a weed of concern, ODA can help online at <http://oda.state.or.us/Plant/weed_control/index.html> or through a hotline at (866) INVADER.

What officials want to avoid is allowing some of the newer species in Oregon to gain a toehold. The active detection efforts and weed surveys can help identify the new invaders in time for control programs to be effective.



TWO TANGLED TRUCKS- A couple of trucks, one carrying a tractor, collided and blocked traffic on the southbound side of the 23000 block of Redwood Hwy. near Sauers Flat at 12:46 p.m. Wednesday, May 14. An ambulance transported Joseph Jessome of Selma from the scene to Three Rivers Community Hospital in Grants Pass. (Photo by Steve Fairchild)

Oregon agriculture production on the rise

The value of Oregon agricultural and fisheries production increased three percent in 2002 and has reached 3.6 billion, according to preliminary numbers released by the Oregon Agricultural Statistics Service.

While there are some notable exceptions, a majority of the state's agricultural commodities showed modest increases in value last year.

"It is always encouraging to see the numbers go up even though we recognize that many producers in Oregon are still facing difficult times financially," said Katy Coba, director of the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture (ODA).

If preliminary statistics for 2002 hold up as the numbers are finalized, it would match Oregon's previous record high value of production set in 1997.

The top 10 list of Oregon agricultural commodities for 2002 include: Greenhouse and nursery products, \$714 million; cattle and calves, \$473 million; hay, \$357 million; grass seed, \$277 million; Christmas trees, \$160 million; wheat, \$135 million; potatoes, \$134 million; onions, \$80 million; pears, \$68 million.

The greenhouse and nursery industry had another strong year in 2002, becoming the first Oregon agriculture commodity to eclipse the \$700 million mark, based on preliminary statistics.

The four percent (\$34 million) continues a long trend of steady growth. Only twice in

the past 17 years has the value of agriculture production dropped from the year before.

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State economists miss budget mark again

By MEDFORD MAIL TRIBUNE

A new revenue forecast showing another \$665.9 million drop in state tax collections from the March forecast sent shock waves through the state Capitol on Thursday, May 15.

State economists unveiled the new numbers during a joint meeting of the House and Senate revenue committees. It was the ninth consecutive time state economists have missed the mark in estimating tax revenues, a source of frustration to many lawmakers.

"My diagnosis? It's just nuts," said Rep. Alan Bates (D-Ashland) and the Legislature's only physician.

"It's a shame we can't get more accurate information from our economists," added Rep. Dennis Richardson (R-Central Point).

The new numbers -- with total general fund resources for the coming 2003-05 biennium of \$10.3 billion -- offer

some new scenarios to cope with the shortfall:

*A beer and wine tax, elimination of some tax credits and tapping into one-time revenue sources such as government agency reserves, a reduction in fees paid to lottery vendors and further cuts in state budgets.

*Approve a one-year spending plan, then come back in January 2004 to complete the biennial budget. Sen. Lenn Hannon (R-Ashland), said that idea "is starting to appeal to a lot more people."

New taxes are not likely, according to Gov. Ted Kulongoski, who flatly said he will not support a general tax increase. "It will be up to the people in this building to fix the problem, not taxpayers," he said.

The governor, just back from a trade mission to Japan, also said that he and legislative leaders are working out what it will take to ensure a full school year for schools and reduce class sizes.

Hannon, who was in the Legislature in 1981 when the economy collapsed, said that people at the Capitol don't seem to understand the gravity of the situation.

"In 1981-83, revenues had dropped 7 percent. In 2001-03 they're down 14 percent," he said.

"It's like riding a bobsled downhill without any brakes," he added.

The next revenue forecast will come out in September.

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THURSDAY, MAY 22
*Cheeseburger, chicken sandwich, hamburger, turkey & cheese sub, ham & cheese sub, Chef salad, Mandarin chicken salad, vegetarian pizza, pepperoni pizza, nachos, spaghetti & breadsticks
FRIDAY, MAY 23
*Chicken sandwich, cheeseburger, hamburger, turkey & cheese sub, roast beef sub, Chef salad, Mandarin chicken salad, Hawaiian pizza, pepperoni pizza, beef tacos, hot dog & fries
MONDAY, MAY 26
*No classes
TUESDAY, MAY 27
*Chicken sandwich, cheeseburger, hamburger, turkey & cheese sub, roast beef sub, Chef salad, Mandarin chicken salad, sausage pizza, supreme pizza, beef & bean burrito, rib-b-que, potato wedge
WEDNESDAY, MAY 28
*Cheeseburger, chicken sandwich, hamburger, turkey & cheese sub, veggie sub, Chef salad, Mandarin chicken salad, cheese pizza, pepperoni pizza, taco salad, chicken nuggets

Illinois Valley Family Coalition would like to thank all the families and individuals who attended and enjoyed the Culpepper & Merriweather Circus on Thursday, May 15. We also would like to thank businesses and individuals who purchased and donated children's tickets to make it possible for so many children to attend. Finally, we want to thank the following individuals, businesses and organizations for their kind generosity and assistance in making this a great community event, which truly represents the goals that the Coalition strives to accomplish. Thank You, Thank You.

Home Valley Bank Three Rivers School District 'Illinois Valley News' Illinois Valley High School Lorna Byrne Middle School Illinois Valley Lions Club Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	Judith Zulliger City of Cave Junction Illinois Valley Head Start Illinois Valley Pool Evergreen Elementary School Illinois Valley Senior Center Alyce Kendall, True Ringleader
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To: Friends of Jim Brown,
Thank you for your thoughtful support,
prayers, and acts of kindness for Jim
and his family.

Love,
Pat Brown,
Beau Brown,
Karyn and Roy Elias
Wendy and Steve Zabriskie
Louise Brown
Ruth Samuel
Grandchildren:
Christopher Zabriskie
Alexa Zabriskie
Jasmine Elias
Jordan Getty