

GMO ...
Continued from A-1

Mary Middleton, leader of the group Oregonians for Safe Farms and Families that defended the ban in court, conceded defeat. “I don’t believe there’s another next step in Oregon,” she said. “There’s not another court to go higher with this. We’ve come to the end of the road, in terms of litigation.” Middleton vowed to keep seeking change at the legislative level, saying lawmakers are ignoring the will of the people. “We are not giving up, we are not giving in, we are going to continue to work on behalf of our farmers who have asked for protection in this beautiful seed-growing region,” she said.

Josephine County’s initiative easily passed 58 to 42 percent in May 2014, a surprising margin given its conservative leanings. GMO crops make up the vast majority of corn, cotton, soybeans, canola and sugar beets grown in the United States and smaller percentages of alfalfa, papaya and squash. There is no evidence that GMOs are unsafe to eat, but changing the genetic code of foods presents an ethical issue for some. Supporters of the initiative argued that GMO crops can contaminate non-GMO crops through cross-pollination.

Information from: *Daily Courier*, <http://www.thedailycourier.com>

POT ...
Continued from A-1

On Sept. 12, State Representative Carl Wilson sent a letter addressed to the entire board which encouraged them to take caution before wading too deep into new time, place or manner restrictions because of the whirlwind of changes already occurring, or about to occur in the entire sector. “I feel that a number of the proposed changes to the planning code are premature at best, given the state of the industry,” Wilson wrote, “At this point, we don’t even know who will remain in production at the end of this growing season, due to massive alterations made to the OMMP by the Oregon Legislature.” In response to this letter and public commentary urging the same, Commissioner Simon Hare said that his patience has waned with the legislature, who he said had ample opportunity to fix problems with their measure 91 task force. “My faith in them getting it right for rural Oregon wanes a little bit and they rarely do. It’s not their first consideration. It’s usually their last.” Although becoming grandfathered is a possibility for existing grow-sites under

the ordinance’s current iteration, such sites will have to be in perfect compliance with all codes administered by the Community Development Department and submit to yearly inspections. Should a RR grower fail an inspection for any reason, their grandfathered status will be revoked permanently. In addition, the grandfathered status does not apply to the property itself so, should the land change hands, growing commercial cannabis there would no longer be a legal option. Grandfathered operations would also no longer be able to use private roads, easements or right-of-ways unless the producer owns all of the land abutting it. The only recommendation made by the Rural Planning Commission, which approved all of the amendments as written last month, was to reduce property line setbacks (how far away from the lot line a grow can start) to 150 feet for new indoor Micro Tier 1 operations with a minimum lot size of 2.5 acres. (Tier 1 can be up to a 5,000 sq. ft. canopy. A canopy is the amount of space a plant covers and does not include space between rows and fencing.) It was rejected entirely. The ordinance maintains that new cannabis operations desiring to start up

in RR zones must have 300 feet setbacks on all sides of the property for RR5; 250 feet for RR2.5; and 150 feet for RR1. During Schmelzer’s presentation at the reading, she outlined her department’s “comprehensive plan” regarding the future of RR land use. This included a policy that will be used to change property zones. If the land is shown to be a “non-resource in capability” it will be changed to RR. According to Schmelzer, this is to encourage affordable housing. “In other words,” Schmelzer said, “if you’re not agricultural land or if you’re not forest land you would end up in Rural Residential.” Commissioner Lily Morgan was the most outspokenly skeptical of the ordinance as it is written and listed her concerns regarding setback levels, certain parts of grandfathering and how any of this will be enforced. “We have people that are trying to go through a legal process to be in compliance to show an industry is legitimate and have the ability to say, ‘I want to work within the laws.’ That is not who we should be going after. Why would you go after legal complying folks when it’s those that are ignoring the law that are creating the issue for the most part?”

Friday, Sept. 29th

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