

Agriculture census will help farmers plan

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IVN Contributing Writer

The Census of Agriculture has begun in Josephine County and the entire state of Oregon. Farmers and ranchers across Oregon and throughout the country have received forms in the mail. The census is conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) every five years.

A number of government agencies and private organizations use information from the survey to budget resources, develop programs and meet the needs of agriculture. According to a USDA website, "The Census of Agriculture provides the only source of uniform, comprehensive and impartial agricultural data for every county in the nation ... (and will) influence the decisions that will shape the future of American agriculture for years to come." By responding to the Census of Agriculture, producers are helping themselves, their communities and all of U.S. agriculture.

Illinois Valley Soil and Water Conservation District (IVSWCD) conservation technician Tracey Brandt says that the census helps tell our "agriculture story." The IVSWCD

works with landowners who own small parcels and have small operations, as opposed to Douglas County where, according to Brandt, the average farm size is 198 acres and is continuing to increase.

The last agriculture census was conducted in 2012. The data is used by all those who serve farmers and rural communities – federal, state and local governments, agribusinesses, trade associations and many others. Further ways the data can be used include:

- Farmers and ranchers can use Census of Agriculture data to help make informed decisions about the future of their own operations.
- Companies and cooperatives use the facts and figures to determine the locations of facilities that will serve agricultural producers.
- Community planners and local governments use the information to target needed programs and services to rural residents.
- Legislators use the numbers from the census when shaping farm policies and programs.

Questionnaires were first mailed out in December to all farmers and the surveys were due by Feb. 5, 2018. Oregon's state statistician for NASS Dave Losh said that they have sent out 42,000 questionnaires. NASS updated

the census forms to track changes and trends in American agriculture. Federal law requires all agricultural producers to participate in the census and requires NASS to keep all individual information confidential.

In a statement released late last year, Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue said every response matters.

"The Census of Agriculture is USDA's largest data collection endeavor, providing some of the most widely used statistics in the industry," Perdue said. "Collected in service to American agriculture since 1840, the census gives every producer the opportunity to be represented so that informed decisions can support their efforts to provide the world with food, fuel, feed and fiber."

Farmers have the option of taking the survey online, which has made it easier to respond and eliminates the need for NASS to re-enter data. The online survey is private and secure. The data is eventually released only in aggregate which protects the individual producer or farmer's operation.

NASS plans to release Census of Agriculture data, in both electronic and print formats, beginning in February 2019. Detailed reports will be published for all counties, states and the nation.

CITY ...

Continued from A-1

The council then held the first reading of an ordinance to remove language from the code regulating marijuana-related businesses that gave the council unnecessary and arbitrary authority to revoke business licenses. The council discussed the pros and cons of relinquishing their authority, and how changes to this code would impact the community as a whole. As it was the first reading of the ordinance, no vote was held.

The council also heard the first reading of an ordinance to reduce the public's exposure to tobacco products. The regulation would ban the use of tobacco products in public parks, outdoor seating areas and within 20 feet of the entryways to businesses, aligning the city code with state law. The council voiced support for the ordinance, citing the well-known public health concerns related to cigarettes and secondhand smoke.

Then the council heard another first reading of an ordinance that would supplement the standards of land uses for hydrocarbon and petroleum extraction facilities. The regulation would set appropriate distances for these facilities in relation to residential and commercial areas.

SPECIAL ...

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A modified diploma has the same 24 credits as a regular diploma, but the work itself can be modified.

Allen-Hart explained: "If a 10th-grader is taking geometry, they may be able to take those classes, but instead of doing 20 assignments they may be asked to do 10 assignments. Instead of needing to get 70 percent for a passing grade, their level might be at 50 percent."

Students with a modified diploma can enter Rogue Community College, assuming they

satisfy other entrance requirements. They have access to financial aid and they can enter the military. All of the foregoing did not use to be the case. Until three years ago, a modified diploma did not count toward graduation; now it does.

The state of Oregon was one of the last states to make that change.

The certificate of completion is for students who are very impacted by their disability.

"They're coming to school every day, they're meeting their goals, their IEPs. They get a certificate of completion."

MAX ...

Continued from A-1

There are massive amounts of prescription opioids flooding rural areas, and a lot of people are on multiple combinations of painkillers, Pinsky said.

"Anyone that knows somebody that uses prescription opioids, street drugs or a mixture of both should have naloxone," she said. "People somehow think it's not going to be them, but you just have to think of it as having it in your emergency kit or carrying it with you. It's not a big deal, but it is a big deal."

Pinsky said there are various forms of naloxone, injectable or nasal, however time is of the essence.

"If somebody has overdosed, but you don't know what they've overdosed from, it will restore their breathing, but they could slip back into overdose," she said. "This is why it is absolutely

imperative to call 911, even before administering the drug."

Pinsky said the other thing Max's Mission is trying to do is get rid of the stigma of drug use.

"We are not here to make moral judgments on people," she said. "Opioids are a very hard drug to stop taking once you start taking them,"

Max's Mission is both trying to save lives and to get communities talking, Pinsky said.

"If you think you have somebody in your neighborhood or you have teenagers who may experiment at parties, you should have naloxone," she said. "Most schools now have it in their emergency kit."

Pinsky said there has been a huge surplus in the amount of opioids prescribed by the medical community, and it has not helped the opioid epidemic at all.

"The incredible prescribing of opioids since 2000, it's just been

mind-boggling," she said. "It's beyond understanding how many opioids are out there in the community. People don't talk about it. People don't tell each other that they're using opioids. In a room of 10 people, generally it affects probably five in that room. If you think about it like that, it really has had a huge, huge impact."

Max's Mission wants to help educate people to know what help is available for them in their area and how they can access that help or be there to provide naloxone.

The meeting will include guest speakers, who will speak on drug use and naloxone – what it does and how it works. Bend Recovery, as well as the HIV Alliance, will also be there to provide further information on treatment options and facilities available in the area.

For more information or to volunteer or donate to Max's Mission, visit maxsmmission.org.



Ron Smith

The Commissioner for all the County! From Williams to Wolf Creek, from O'Brien to Murphy, Illinois Valley, North Valley and Grants Pass Too!

Public Safety

Public safety is the first duty of government and primary reason we established governments, not for taxing and regulating us. I support all long-term solutions for full funding of Josephine County law enforcement, without raising taxes. I will work with federal agencies to reduce catastrophic wildfires smoke filled summers and to create forest restoration jobs.

Economy

I will strive to maintain a business-friendly environment for job growth, to remove the unnecessary bottle necks and over regulations and to improve economic development activity. I will support our largest job making businesses, such as medical, agriculture, timber and mineral industries.

Community

I will focus on reducing the meth and heroin epidemic in Josephine County. I will work towards alleviating the serious shortage of affordable housing. I will address the homeless problem with compassion and understanding seeking positive solutions.

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