

In West, women farmers carry economic clout

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

The percentage of Pacific Northwest and California farmers who are women easily tops the national average, according to statistics released by the USDA.

Nationally, 31 percent of farmers are women, and they farm more than 301 million acres and have a \$12.9 billion annual economic impact, according to USDA.

In Oregon, 39 percent of farmers are women; 37 percent in Washington and 33 percent in Idaho and California.

MORE ONLINE

USDA's state-by-state analysis of women farmers: <http://1.usa.gov/1Z8oUfk>

2013 Capital Press article on daughters taking over the family farm: <http://bit.ly/1OjWziN>

The West in general has a higher percentage of women farmers than the rest of the country. Arizona tops the list with 45 percent women; Nevada counts 39 percent, Colorado 37 percent, Wyoming 35 percent and New Mexico and Montana have 34 percent.

Katy Coba, director of the Oregon Department of Agri-

culture, said the culture of the West is more receptive than other regions to women being involved in agriculture.

That can't help but influence or change agriculture, although the women themselves may not think there's anything special about their presence, Coba said.

"When there's a diversity

of perspectives, that's a good thing," she said. "Women are one element of that diversity."

Young farmers and people who grew up in urban areas and are turning to agriculture also bring diverse viewpoints and experience to farming, she said.

"The more we can bring those people together and help shape ag policy, I think you just get better policy," she said.

In the Midwest, women make up 23 percent of the farmers in Illinois, 25 percent in Iowa and 28 percent in Ohio.

The numbers are drawn

from the 2012 Census of Agriculture, which actually showed a 2 percent decline nationally in women farmers compared to the 2007 ag census. The 2012 census also showed the number of women who are principal operators declined by 6 percent.

Nonetheless, women's impact in ag is evident. In Oregon, for example, they farm 7.3 million acres and have a \$263 million economic impact.

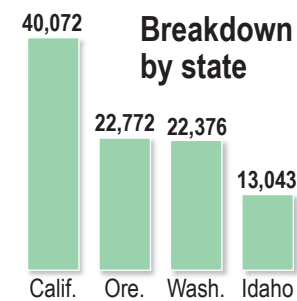
The USDA also announced it has established a mentoring network for women in agriculture. The agency invited people to take part by email-

Women farmers in the U.S., 2012

Of the nearly 1 million women farmers nationwide, more than 10 percent come from the Northwest and California.

Northwest and California: 98,263 or 10.1%

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture



Alan Kenaga/Capital Press

ing AgWomenLead@usda.gov or follow #womeninag on Twitter.

Chinook port still plotting a course toward solvency

By KATIE WILSON
EO Media Group

CHINOOK, Wash. — People in Chinook have donated what their port can't currently buy — stuff like coffee, basic office supplies and toilet paper.

Even though Port of Chinook Manager John Demase has managed to pay most of the bills since mid-September when he took over after former manager Ashley Davis resigned to spend more time with family, the port is still broke. Demase had hoped the port could hold on until January, the month when fuel sales increase thanks to the opening of the commercial Dungeness fishery and when annual moorage comes due.

But now, with no reserves and little revenue likely to come in for the rest of the year, he says he's modified his expectations.

A regular commissioners meeting will be held p.m. Thursday at the port office. Demase hopes to present a



EO Media Group/File Photo

The Port of Chinook was busy in August with recreational fisheries, but not as busy as hoped.

draft budget for next year to commissioners Ken Greenfield, Les Clark and Corky Wilson, and seek direction from them on how to generate revenue for the port in the short term.

"We need to figure out if this port is going to run

through the year," Demase said, adding the port can't wait for, or count on, what may or may not happen in January.

The port still owes \$133,000 to fuel supplier Wilcox and Flegel and has just \$74,000 left in the bank.

This month, and for the rest of the year, the port's income is down to roughly \$100 a day in fuel sales and transient moorage fees, and the port tenants that pay monthly leases (some pay yearly).

"That just doesn't get us through this year," he said.

The port's other main money-making month — August, with busy recreational fisheries in the ocean and on the Columbia River — is over and did not bring in nearly as much revenue as Davis had projected in the budget she drew up for this year.

Though the port plans to raise moorage and launch rates and charge for parking next year, Demase says he is looking at everything he can do now to bring in revenue. This could include selling some assets, though, he added, that "kills us in the long term."

As he and the Pacific County Treasurer's office sort through the port's confusing finances, it is clear that the port has been operating at a loss for many years.

"It's costing the port to operate its business," Demase explained.

Commissioners Greenfield and Wilson authorized Demase to seek a state accountability audit as it is unclear when things began

to go wrong at the port. Until Demase was asked to take over as manager and he asked for a closer look at the books, the commissioners said they believed everything was fine. They said Davis told them the port had plenty of money in the bank.

The Washington State Auditor's Office has been asked to investigate finances at the port, and is in the middle of a preliminary investigation to see if the situation warrants a full investigation. It is not clear who, if anyone, is to blame for the current circumstances.

Demase was previously in charge of the port's maintenance projects and dredging in the marina. He and Andy Beckford are now the port's sole employees. By the end of October, Demase plans to have Beckford out in the marina, running the dredge. The marina silts in and must be regularly dredged to remain viable, but this anticipated and much-discussed project was not included in Davis' budget.

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Join your local chapter of WomenHeart, an organization for women living with or at risk of heart disease. This chapter is sponsored by Columbia Memorial Hospital.

Contact Michele Abrahams for more information at WH-NorthOregonCoast@womenheart.org.

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When the media becomes the story



Nigel Duara
October 15

Based in Tucson, Duara covers the border for the Los Angeles Times. A Miami native, Duara was previously a reporter for the Associated Press in Portland. He covered the Ferguson, Missouri, demonstrations. He wrote about that experience in Oregon Humanities magazine.

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For Non-Members:
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The speaker will begin after the dinner service is complete and non-dinner members and guests of the audience take their seats.

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