

TRADE: TPP nations account for up to 42 percent of all U.S. agricultural exports

Continued from 1A

“This partnership levels the playing field for our farmers, ranchers, and manufacturers by eliminating more than 18,000 taxes that various countries put on our products,” Obama said in a statement. “It includes the strongest commitments on labor and the environment of any trade agreement in history, and those commitments are enforceable, unlike in past agreements.”

Brett Blankenship, president of the National Association of Wheat Growers, told the *Capital Press* he supports the pact but that the organization’s analysts will evaluate the final text.

“We have always viewed the Trans-Pacific Partnership as a great opportunity for potential marketing gains, as well as preventing future market access losses,” Blankenship said. “Without the multilateral approach of a broad-based trade agreement, our competitors have been working on country-to-country bilateral agreements, which would leave American products outside of the trade zone.”

Randy Suess, a former U.S. Wheat Associates chairman, said Japan may be allowed to protect several commodities, including wheat and barley, under the pact. Japan doesn’t grow much wheat and heavily subsidizes its wheat and barley farmers, he said.

“It’s not that big of a deal, but it seems like if we’re really going to have a true free-trade type policy, everything would have to be on the table, and I guess that isn’t going to be the case,” he said.

Suess said the agreement is designed to level the playing field for U.S. farmers. Some of the countries in the agreement are already good trading partners, and others, such as Vietnam, are emerging markets for the United States, he said.

“As far as wheat and barley goes, I think we’re

going to be happy with this,” Suess said.

Suess hopes other countries, including China and Indonesia, will eventually join TPP.

But not all agricultural groups support the deal. Bill Bullard, CEO of R-CALF USA in Billings, Mont., said his organization will encourage Congress to reject the deal.

“We are very disappointed that what we have is but yet another trade deficit-generating free trade agreement that will only cause more harm to our U.S. cattle and sheep industries,” Bullard said.

Bullard said trade agreements give developing countries a forum to force the United States to relax its health and safety standards. He wants to see the United States work to increase health and safety standards in other countries before allowing them access to the U.S. market.

“(TPP) will result in the further relaxation of our health and safety standards and the further erosion of our ability to maintain the highest health and safety standard in the world,” Bullard said. “Currency valuations have far more impacts on trade than tariff compromises or reductions.”

Blankenship pointed to the success of securing trade promotion authority — called fast-track authority — for the Obama administration in June, which allowed the TPP negotiations to continue. Congress won’t be able to modify the agreement, only vote for or against it.

The TPP nations account for up to 42 percent of all U.S. agricultural exports, totaling \$633 billion, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement.

“Failing to grasp this opportunity would be a mistake, worse than just losing out on potential gains, our producers would fall behind other countries that are negotiating their own

preferential arrangements in TPP countries,” Vilsack said. “We are committed to working with Congress within the framework of the recently passed trade promotion authority to obtain a strong bipartisan understanding of and support for this historic trade deal that benefits farmers, ranchers and all those who live, work and raise families in rural communities.”

The president has to wait 90 days before signing the pact, and only then will Congress begin the process of voting on it.

As a result, a vote on the TPP likely will not happen until well into 2016, where it is likely to get ensnarled in the politics of a presidential election year. Congress can only give the deal an up-or-down vote. It can’t amend the agreement.

Many of the tariff reductions and other changes will be phased in over several years, so benefits to the U.S. economy could take time to materialize.

Peter Petri, a professor of international finance at Brandeis University, says he doesn’t expect the deal to lead to any U.S. job gains. But he forecasts it will boost U.S. incomes by \$77 billion a year, or 0.4 percent, by 2025, mostly by creating export-oriented jobs that will pay more, even as other jobs are lost.

Another target for opponents was drug companies’ efforts to protect some of their products from cheaper foreign competition.

U.S. drug makers wanted 12 years of protection from competitors for biologics — ultra-expensive medicines produced in living cells. That is longer than in any country but the United States. Critics say blocking competition from near-copies drives up drug prices and makes them too expensive for people in poor countries.

Drug companies didn’t get the dozen years they wanted; they got about eight years of protection.

GAS: Natural gas burns cleaner than coal

Continued from 1A

to bring the facility to life. From start to finish, it’s the longest job he’s ever seen planned and one of the more complex.

“It’s all being driven, in my mind, by the environment,” Mody said. “This is a very low carbon footprint plant.”

The easy comparison is right next door, where the Boardman Coal Plant is slated to close or convert to an alternative, renewable source of fuel by 2020.

Carty, on the other hand, represents 45 years of progress in energy technology, Mody said. Natural gas not only burns cleaner than coal, but the plant is able to capture a bulk of its own heat to create steam, which is then used to drive a second turbine at the plant.

The result, Mody said, is an increase in efficiency by as much as 15 percent.

“It’s a very important resource for our customers, and for PGE,” he said.

Carty uses what is known as a combined cycle system, splitting power generation between two Mitsubishi-manufactured turbines with a combined capacity of 440 megawatts. The first generator runs off the combustion of natural gas, burning at a temperature of about 1,100 degrees.

A heat-recovery steam generator, however, captures the majority of heat that would otherwise be wasted and filters in high-purity water to create steam, used to drive the second turbine.

Transformers at the plant take the electricity that’s generated and step it up to 500 kilovolts, which is essentially like pressurizing the power to move it over long distances. The power is carried first to the Grassland Substation a mile away, and from there fed onto the Bonneville Power Administration transmission system in Gilliam County.

At capacity, Mody said the station will be a dependable source of electricity for customers and enable PGE to invest in more renewable energy, like wind and solar.

Cranking out the juice

Oregon gets its electricity many different sources, including:	
• Hydro power	44.7 percent
• Coal	33.4 percent
• Natural gas.....	11.8 percent
• Wind.....	5.2 percent
• Nuclear	2.8 percent
• Biomass	0.54 percent
• Waste.....	0.23 percent
• Petroleum.....	0.12 percent
• Geothermal	0.12 percent
• Landfill gas	0.09 percent
• Solar	0.02 percent

Source: Oregon Department of Energy

“We’re very excited to have this serve our customers next year,” Mody said.

Despite their close proximity, Carty was never envisioned as a replacement for the Boardman Coal Plant. The \$513 million station was identified in PGE’s 2009 long-range energy plan to a customer demand that continues to grow at a rate of 1-1.5 percent every year.

Steve Corson, a spokesman for PGE, also said the plant will help minimize the utility’s exposure to fluctuating prices on the wholesale power market. PGE decided to turn to wholesale power purchases after decommissioning the Trojan Nuclear Plant near Clatskanie in 1993.

Carty will help PGE maintain demand after several Mid-Columbia hydro power contracts expire in the coming years. Boardman will also benefit with the creation of 20 full-time jobs.

Mody said the project is lucky not only to have the right infrastructure, but great neighbors in the community.

“It’s very hard to get good sites,” he said. “We don’t have any people protesting, or anything like that. It’s creating clean jobs for the community.”

CBARC: Oregon wheat assessment was \$2M in 2014

Continued from 1A

just a lot of adjustment to a lot of new stuff,” Rowe said in an interview with the *East Oregonian*. “You have to expect these growing pains.”

Some of the new researchers at CBARC are not only from out of town, but out of the country: Valtcho Jeliaskov, who replaced Petrie as director, grew up in Bulgaria, while Judit Barroso, who filled Ball’s position, earned her doctorate at the Institute of Agrarian Science in Madrid, Spain.

Darren Padget, a Sherman County wheat farmer and chairman of the Oregon Wheat Commission, said it’s crucial for CBARC staff to continue meeting with growers in the field to better understand the region’s unique climate and cropping systems.

“That’s probably the biggest concern I have,” Padget said. “There’s a lot to learn, and they really have to lean on the growers to understand it.”

About half of Oregon’s wheat assessment — every grower is assessed a nickel per bushel — goes toward research with OSU labs and extension. The assessment was just a little more than \$2 million in 2014, though

drought and lower yields are anticipated for 2015.

As money gets tight, Padget said every dollar becomes closely scrutinized. And like anything else, change can lend itself to uncertainty.

“We just want to make sure those dollars are targeted where you get the greatest rate of return,” Padget said. “We’re constantly providing input on what we want.”

In addition to Pendleton, CBARC operates a field station in Moro not far from Padget’s farm. Erling Jacobsen, the Moro farm manager, also recently retired. Padget is part of the committee charged with finding his replacement.

To OSU’s credit, Padget said he feels the university has been receptive to the growers’ needs.

“I believe there’s a lot of hard decisions to be made in front of us,” he said. “We don’t have an endless supply of money.”

CBARC did get a welcome boost from the Wheat Growers League in August after the organization purchased 57 acres adjacent to the Pendleton station, and leased them back to the center for research. It’s the first CBARC has added land since 1930.

Steve Clark, vice presi-

dent of university relations at OSU, said the college recognizes the turnover at CBARC and the need to foster new strategic partnerships.

The CBARC Liaison Committee will meet at 8 a.m. Nov. 19, hosting an open house for growers to come tour the station and meet the new staff in Pendleton.

“That will be a great opportunity for the university to listen and learn,” Clark said.

Since coming on board almost a year ago, Jeliaskov said he’s met with 20 individual farmers along with the Wheat Growers League and Wheat Commission. In every meeting, he said he has two main questions: What are problems facing farms, and how can CBARC help?

Though every farm is different, Jeliaskov said growers seem most interested in breeding new wheat varieties, followed closely by weed control, applying fertilizers and herbicides in drought and testing the benefit of cover crops.

Jeliaskov said the former scientists had great credibility with the growers, and they look forward to establishing that for themselves.

“It will take time,” he said. “New people bring new expertise, and new ideas.”

GUARD: First deployment was to Afghanistan in 2010-11

Continued from 1A

sent thousands of refugees fleeing.”

The 168th Aviation Regiment, Atkins said, will use CH-47 Chinook helicopters to move supplies and passengers.

Before the ceremony, Sgt. August Radke said this will be his second deployment with the regiment, the first to Afghanistan in 2010-11.

“That was just a whole culture shock going to a different world,” he said of Afghanistan. “I did find a lot of similarities, as far as flying around Wallowa Lake and the Snake River Valley is kind of similar. It just kind of brought it into perspective, made me miss home a little bit.”

He said it will be interesting to see another part of the world but difficult to part with loved ones for a year.

“Leaving family at home with my two children and my wife, it’s always tough that way,” he said. “It’s not something I’m looking forward to.”

For this deployment, however, Radke won’t be away from his entire family. His older brother, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jacob Radke, is a pilot deploying with the regiment.

Jacob Radke said he was deployed to Iraq in 2004-05 as a ground medic unit with the Washington National Guard before joining the Oregon Guard with the intention of becoming a pilot.

“I’m looking forward

to it,” he said of the new deployment. “It’s going to be an interesting experience. I haven’t been to Iraq (which borders Kuwait) for 10 years, and this time it will be in the air as opposed to on the ground. It will be interesting to see what’s changed in 10 years and a different perspective from the air.”

Spc. Brandon Bonney said he has enjoyed being in the Guard since 2011 but has never been deployed.

“I’m just ready to get it started,” he said. “It’s the first deployment, so it’s going to be a new experience.”



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