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OUR VIEW

'Wolf-friendly beef' concept patronizing to ranchers

Everyone knows the feeling of saying something that sounded better in their head than it did when they said it out loud.

That's what we thought when we heard that conservation groups in Washington participating on the state's wolf advisory panel suggested helping ranchers by creating a premium label for "wolf-friendly beef" for producers who employ Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife wolf protection measures.

Dan Paul, state director of The Humane Society of the United States, said as with cage-free eggs, some consumers would be willing to pay more for beef raised with wolf protection measures.

A new marketing ploy is not a substitute for a viable management plan that includes a full range of control options, including lethal measures for problem wolves.

Really?

First, we'd point out that all beef raised on grazing land in wolf country is "wolf-friendly." It all can fall prey. Ranchers in Washington and Oregon can't legally shoot a wolf, as they are protected either by state or federal law. In fact, we would argue beef protected by extensive measures championed by the panel is less friendly to wolves. If the measures work — and producers say the results are mixed at best — wolves have to work harder for their meal.

Second, we think the number of people who would pay more for beef in order to somehow help wolves would be small.

Though we don't necessarily think it's true, people who buy cage-free eggs believe they're getting a better quality product because of the way hens are treated. The reasoning goes that cage-free hens are exposed to less disease and stress, therefore their eggs are better.

But there is no corresponding perceived quality enhancement for

"wolf-friendly" beef. The benefits from such measures go exclusively to the wolves and their champions.

Ranchers are quick to point out that to recoup the cost of the suggested counter-measures, "wolf-friendly" products would have to be priced 50 percent more than comparable conventional (wolf hostile?) products.

We'll give the wolf advocates the benefit of the doubt that they are sincere in their desire to help ranchers cope with wolves on the range. But a new marketing ploy is not a substitute for a viable management plan that includes a full range of control options, including lethal measures for problem wolves.

And this is why ranchers are frustrated with efforts they find, at best, patronizing.

The Cattle Producers of Washington has withdrawn from the Wolf Advisory Group, calling it "inept and pointless" and saying it has prevented any action by the state Department of Fish and Wildlife in dealing with wolves that kill livestock.

Though there are some with more strident views, most ranchers at least grudgingly accept that the reintroduction of wolves into the West is *a fait accompli*. They know they'll have to find a way to survive in a new paradigm that includes another predator.

Conversely, wolf advocates and government wildlife agencies must also accept that ranchers can't be expected to provide wolves an unlimited buffet. The tab must be paid, or the losses be stopped.

State-sponsored elimination of ranchers is no more palatable than the wholesale extermination of wolves.

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board of Publisher Kathryn Brown, Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, and Opinion Page Editor Tim Trainor. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

OTHER VIEWS

Cheatgrass, the annoying killer

The (Bend) Bulletin, Oct. 11

Cheatgrass has been called the invader that won the West, and that's not far off the mark. The annual grass covers nearly 12 million acres in Oregon alone, and can be found across the western United States and Canada, and as far north as Alaska.

That causes problems.

Cheat, an invasive plant that most likely arrived here from Asia via Europe, chokes out native plants. It blooms and dies early, leaving in its wake a tangled mat that makes range fires in these parts far worse than they otherwise would be. In a time of drought, that's especially troublesome. Moreover, after it's fueled a fire it chokes out native plants trying to re-establish themselves.

Its effects don't stop there. Any desert hiker can tell you what it's like to come home with socks full of cheatgrass, just as many dog owners have tales of trips to the veterinarian to have cheat removed from ears and noses. Cattle and horses, too, have problems with cheatgrass.

Now comes word that a scientist with

the Agricultural Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture may have found a way to finally begin to bring cheatgrass under control.

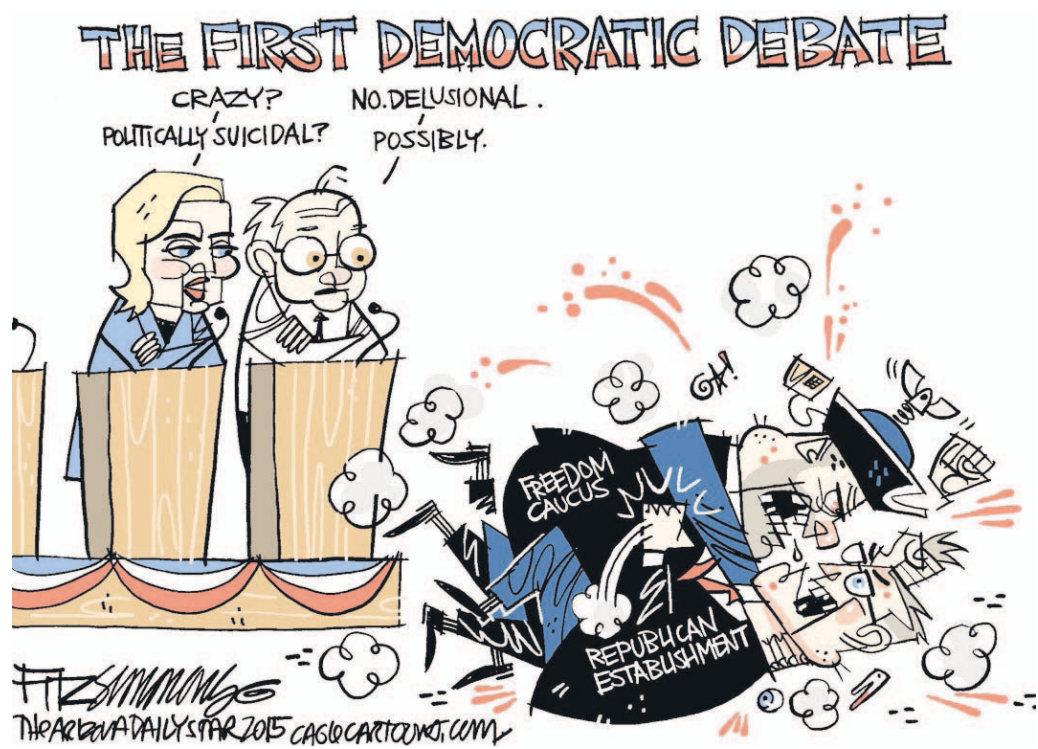
Ann Kennedy, a soil scientist, has teamed up with students from Washington State University and tested some 25,000 bacteria taken from nearby fields. Her goal was to find those that hinder the growth of cheat but do not hurt the growth of wheat.

She's done just that. In fact, her bacteria not only reduce the amount of cheatgrass by half with a single application, they're also useful against two other invasive plants, medusahead and jointed goatgrass. At least one of her bacteria strains is likely to be ready for commercial sale in fall 2016.

Kennedy's bacteria won't be the sole answer to the West's cheatgrass infestation, of course — with something like 100 million acres of cheat infestation in the West, nothing is — but it's a big step in the right direction. That's good for the High Desert, good for sage grouse, good for all sorts of things.

LETTERS POLICY

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters that address concerns about individual services and products or letters that infringe on the rights of private citizens. Submitted letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published. Send letters to Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.



YOUR VIEWS

Calling all reasonable gun owners

"We think it is reasonable to provide mandatory instant criminal background checks for every sale at every gun show. No loopholes anywhere for anyone." Another intolerable utterance by president Obama? No, it's an ad placed in *USA Today* in 1999 by the NRA.

Why the change? By the end of the 1990s gun sales had plummeted and the NRA had obviously forgotten who calls the shots at their organization, the gun manufacturers. Universal background checks would put a further onus on sales and profits. What to do? Pull out the ever-reliable fear card. Works every time, as witnessed by the reaction to any utterance of gun control. They whisper gun control and the NRA whispers gun confiscation, and like Pavlov's dogs, the frothing at the mouth begins.

Ask yourself this: If it wasn't for the never-ending use of guns as the preferred choice of people for a violent act, what argument would the gun control people use to limit and/or end the rights of gun owners? Don't be complicit in the seemingly never-ending slaughter of the innocents in our country. If you are a law-abiding gun owner who supports reasonable and universal background checks, write the NRA, your congressman, the gun manufacturers and let them know how you feel. After all, the very rights you cherish are in serious peril if you choose to stand pat on this issue.

David Gracia
Hermiston

Slow down, PC police

I could probably make a career out of trying to add some balance to the immigration views of the *East Oregonian*, but it's probably not advisable since they purchase ink by the barrel. However, I have to say something about the Guest Column from Antonio Sierra on Saturday, October 10, 2015.

Antonio summarizes and supports the recent decision by the Associated Press to stop using the term "Illegal immigrant." Mr. Sierra then extends that logic to the term "alien" or, more specifically, "illegal alien." The proposed "acceptable" substitute term is "undocumented immigrant." The AP style book change and every piece that has been written to support it are all attempts to blur the distinction between legal immigrants and illegal immigrants, as if their presence here in relation to the U.S. immigration law shouldn't matter at all.

Webster's Dictionary defines "illegal" as "not according to authorized law" or "not sanctioned by official rules." Black's Law Dictionary defines "illegal alien" as "an alien who enters a country at the wrong time or place, eludes an examination by officials, obtains entry by fraud, or enters into a sham marriage to evade immigration laws." Doesn't leave a lot to the imagination, does it?

By all means, if the term "alien" conjures up images of little green men or spaceships (or even Ray Walston for that matter) then let's drop it from the definitions used to describe this population. Even though the current immigration statutes of the United States expressly define an "alien" as meaning "any person not a citizen or national of the United States" and there are hundreds of references to "alien" in the statutes, we might as well call them something entirely different simply because the "political correctness police" say that language may be inflammatory.

The point is that these are not terms that have "become increasingly antiquated" as Mr. Sierra contends. As a matter of fact, if we were going to follow the AP's logic that "human beings can't be deemed illegal, only the acts they commit" we would have to call that population "undocumented immigrants who are here illegally" in order to be fair to the rest of the population that is here legally. Rolls right off the tongue, doesn't it? I'm sure the AP simply forgot to add that extension to the acceptable alternative description that they proposed for their style book.

Gordon Graham
Hermiston

Language won't stop illegal invasion of America

Staff writer Antonio Sierra exposed himself as an illegal immigration advocate who used intellectually dishonest rhetoric to manipulate Americans into accepting foreign lawlessness in our country. His rant against legal language, citizens and immigration law was meant to shame Americans into a paralysis of self-censorship, but he will fail if we understand the tactics he used.

To elevate illegal invasion to the status of normal immigration, Sierra first tried to commandeer our terminology by convoluting logic. By relabeling illegal aliens as regular "immigrants," and using the fact that regular immigrants become citizens, he argued that illegal aliens are also de facto future citizens. Sierra also tried to blur the distinction between legal and illegal entry by calling any reformist legislation "anti-immigrant." Confused yet? He hopes so.

As with other illegal alien supporters, Sierra dismissed criticism of illegal immigration by stating "No human is illegal" — a slogan that appears at every illegal alien rally. No border enforcer ever claimed that humans were illegal, but that they were sneaking illegally into the U.S. File Sierra's criticism under "Diversionary Tactics," and if Sierra ever confronts a burglar in his house, I hope he remembers his own adage that because this human is legally alive, he couldn't have broken any law.

Lawbreakers typically feel bad or embarrassed when they hear an accurate description of their behavior, but this shouldn't stop citizens from calling it as it is. If we applied Sierra's sanitized and manipulative language to other forms of subversion, then drug dealers would be "undocumented pharmacists" and human smugglers would be "irregular tour guides." It's bad enough that propagandists are called "journalists."

Lyneil Vandermolten
Tualatin

Hold Pendleton accountable for what it already has

I see that the Gas Tax PAC made their first pitch for the 5 cent gas tax to AAUW (*East Oregonian*, October 3rd).

Somethings need clarification. Councilman Plute said in a September 19th article in the *East Oregonian* that the total collected from property taxes, ambulance fee, and court income was \$7 million. As I said in my last letter to the editor September 30th, the franchise fee is really a tax on Pendleton residents worth \$2.5 million in revenue for the city. If you add the revenue from the street fund of \$2.3 million and the franchise tax the total is \$11.8 million. That should be used first for basic services. The city's priority should be fire, police and streets. All other nonessential services should be funded only after high-priority departments are well funded.

If you are wondering about water and sewer, these funds are self-funding, not part of the General Fund. We know the city has done a poor job of keeping up with maintenance of these services. There is a large raise coming for upgrades to these services. Usually rate increases are done in July, but this year no increase until after the vote on the 5 cent gas tax. (This is politics as usual.)

We are already stuck with a \$5 per month raise on our utility bill. With all the other increases we are going to pay next year, we do not need a new tax.

Vote NO November 3rd. This is the only rate increase we get to vote on.

Rex J. Morehouse
Pendleton

Environmentalists win the day!

News flash! September 29, 2015, Pendleton, Oregon. Clean water advocates prevail!

In an emergency executive session, the Pendleton City Council bans all wildlife, fish, dogs, cats, goats and humans from any activities within 100 feet of Umatilla River, and institutes a "no-fly" zone up to 10,000 feet for all birds.

Mayor appoints committee to study long term effects, and city planners contract reputable California consulting firm to design implementation program. Bicycle riders and electric car owners have volunteered to fund the program. Details will be available at the end of 30-year study. Bird watchers vow fight to finish.

Other unrelated city news: In an uncharacteristic move, city staff recommended measures to remove the speed bumps on Main Street, and replace them with decorative paverstone crosswalks, and to construct a sidewalk continuation up the Southwest 15th Street hill, demolishing the unsafe and rotting concrete stairs on Southwest 13th Street. That should satisfy those darn ADA critics. However, the city council disapproved both measures unanimously, citing insufficient data and the common sense approach used by staff. A committee was formed and a consulting agency hired to further study the impact on the community. Funding for study will be sourced from utility tax. I meant to say "fee."

Rick Rohde
Pendleton