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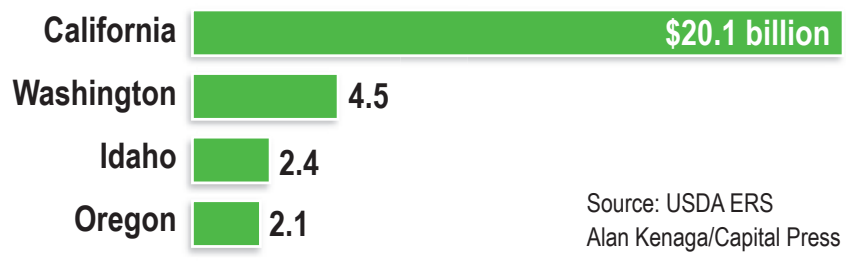
OUR VIEW

Top 5 agricultural exports from the Northwest and California, 2013

Rank	California	Washington	Idaho	Oregon
1	Fruits/nuts	Fruits/nuts	Wheat	Wheat
2	Vegetables	Vegetables	Dairy	Fruits/nuts
3	Dairy	Wheat	Vegetables	Vegetables
4	Cotton	Dairy	Beef/veal	Dairy
5	Rice	Beef/veal	Feed/fodder	Beef/veal

Value of ag exports (Billions of dollars, 2013)



Source: USDA ERS
Alan Kenaga/Capital Press

TPP deserves stamp of approval

The Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement will not throw open the doors of all Pacific Rim nations to U.S. farmers and ranchers.

But it'll do the next best thing. It will provide a huge opportunity for U.S. agriculture to do more business with a half a billion consumers that represent most of our biggest and best trading partners — and develop fast-growing markets that offer huge potential in the future.

U.S. agriculture is trade-dependent, especially in the West. Oregon, Washington, Idaho and California export about $30 billion a year in agricultural goods overseas, mainly to Pacific Rim nations. Included in the TPP are nearly all of those nations: Canada, Mexico, Japan, Australia, Malaysia, Peru, Vietnam, Chile, Brunei, Singapore and New Zealand.

The TPP represents a balancing act that will reduce and eventually remove confiscatory tariffs ranging up to 40 percent on poultry and fruit that some of those partners have imposed. It also ensures that sanitary and phytosanitary measures used by all of the TPP partners mirror U.S. food and agriculture safety policy and can be no more restrictive than allowed by the World Trade Organization.

This will take the politics and protectionism out of the standards, do away with duplicative and unnecessary tests and make for more efficient port of entry procedures.

For example, under the TPP, Japan, Malaysia and Vietnam will eliminate all tariffs on fresh and processed fruits, potatoes and potato products and tree nuts. Malaysia and Vietnam will eliminate tariffs on dairy products and wheat and wheat products, and Japan and Canada will develop tariff-rate quotas that will allow more U.S. dairy products to be sold there.

Free trade is critical to U.S. agriculture.

Whenever U.S. ag exports catch a cold, farmers get pneumonia. Consider the prices of beef, dairy and other commodities sold overseas. The price of each is sensitive to overseas demand and the value of currencies. As demand goes up, so do prices.

Cattle and milk prices have taken particularly deep plunges as of late, in no small measure because of flagging demand overseas.

Though TPP will not sweep aside all of the roadblocks to trade with the 11 other nations, it will go a long way to leveling the playing field.

> Free trade is critical to U.S. agriculture.

Our two largest trade partners — Canada and Mexico — are included in the TPP. It would be foolish for the U.S. not to participate in an updated trade agreement with those two nations. The TPP provided a forum to revisit the North American Free Trade Agreement and correct some of its insufficiencies.

Overall, the 11 other TPP nations bought $63 billion in U.S. agricultural products in 2014 — 42 percent of all ag exports.

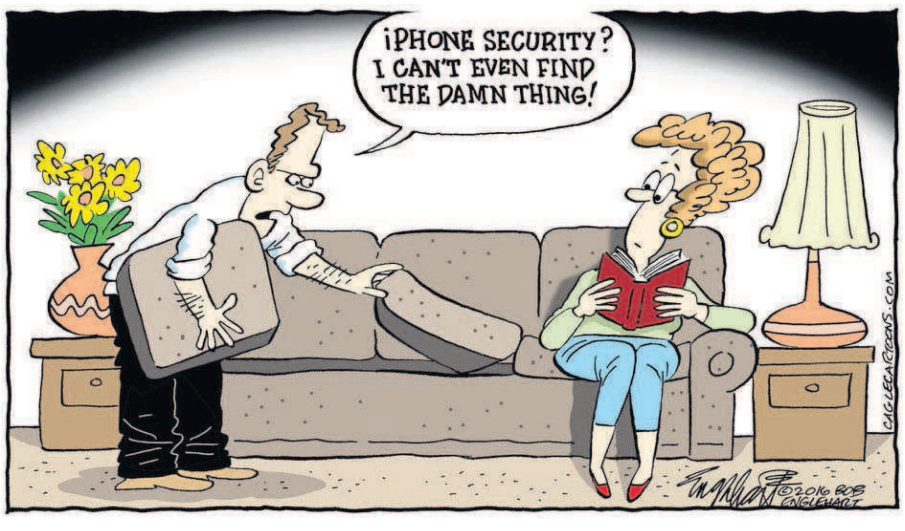
Critics say the TPP doesn't include China, but that was China's decision. Plus, the option remains for China, or virtually any other nation, to join the TPP.

The TPP is not perfect. Some of the tariffs will take years to completely disappear. But for farmers and ranchers who depend on trade with Pacific Rim nations, it is a good deal.

If you don't believe that, consider what life would be if the U.S. were to bail out of the TPP. In coming years the other 11 nations will be enjoying tariff-free trade on most of their goods, but the U.S. would left out in the cold.

Depending on the political winds, Congress may soon take up approval of the TPP. Our hope, and the hope of many in agriculture, is that Congress will provide its stamp of approval and set in motion the many good developments that await all 12 members of the TPP.

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

It's not too late for GOP

DAVID BROOKS
Comment

It's 2 a.m. The bar is closing. Republicans have had a series of strong and nasty Trump cocktails. Suddenly Ted Cruz is beginning to look kind of attractive. At least he's sort of predictable, and he doesn't talk about his sexual organs in presidential debates!

Well, Republicans, have your standards really fallen so low so fast? Are you really that desperate? Can you remember your 8 p.m. selves, and all the hope you had about entering a campaign with such a deep bench of talented candidates?

Back in the early evening, before the current panic set in, Republicans understood that Ted Cruz would be a terrible general election candidate, at least as unelectable as Donald Trump and maybe more so. He is the single most conservative Republican in Congress, far adrift from the American mainstream. He's been doing well in primaries because of the support of "extremely conservative" voters in very conservative states, and he really hasn't broken out of that lane. His political profile is a slightly enlarged Rick Santorum but without the heart.

> On policy grounds, Cruz would be unacceptable to a large majority in this country.

On policy grounds, he would be unacceptable to a large majority in this country. But his policy disadvantages are overshadowed by his public image ones. His rhetorical style will come across to young and independent voters as smarmy and oleaginous. In Congress, he had two accomplishments: the disastrous government shutdown and persuading all his colleagues to dislike him.

There is another path, one that doesn't leave you self-loathing in the morning. It's a long shot, but given the alternatives, it's worth trying. First, hit the pause button on the rush to Cruz. Second, continue the Romneyesque assault on Trump. The results on Saturday, when late voters swung sharply against the Donald, suggest it may be working.

Third, work for a Marco Rubio miracle in Florida on March 15. Fourth, clear the field for John Kasich in Ohio. If Rubio and Kasich win their home states, Trump will need to take nearly 70 percent of the remaining delegates to secure a majority. That would be unlikely; he's only winning 44 percent of the delegates now.

The party would go to the convention without a clear nominee. It would be bedlam for a few days, but a broadly acceptable new option might emerge. It would be better than going into the fall with Trump, which would be a moral error, or Cruz, who in November would manage to win several important counties in Mississippi.

This isn't about winning the presidency in 2016 anymore. This is about something much bigger. Every 50 or 60 years, parties undergo a transformation. The G.O.P. is undergoing one right now. What happens this year will set the party's trajectory for decades.

Since Goldwater/Reagan, the G.O.P. has been governed by a free-market, anti-government philosophy. But over the ensuing decades new problems have emerged. First, the economy has gotten crueler. Technology is displacing workers and globalization is dampening wages. Second, the social structure has atomized and frayed, especially among the less educated. Third, demography is shifting.

Orthodox Republicans, seeing no positive role for government, have had no affirmative agenda to help people deal with these new problems. Occasionally some conservative policy mavens have proposed such an agenda — anti-poverty programs, human capital policies, wage subsidies and the like — but the proposals were killed, usually in the House, by the anti-government crowd.

The 1980s anti-government orthodoxy still has many followers; Ted Cruz is the extreme embodiment of this tendency. But it has grown increasingly rigid, unresponsive and obsolete.

Along comes Donald Trump offering to replace it and change the nature of the G.O.P. He tramples all over the anti-government ideology of modern Republicanism. He would replace the free-market orthodoxy with authoritarian nationalism.

He offers to use government on behalf of the American working class, but in negative and defensive ways: to build walls, to close trade, to ban outside groups, to smash enemies. According to him, America's problems aren't caused by deep structural shifts. They're caused by morons and parasites. The Great Leader will take them down.

If the G.O.P. is going to survive as a decent and viable national party, it can't cling to the fading orthodoxy Cruz represents. But it can't shift to ugly Trumpian nationalism, either. It has to find a third alternative: limited but energetic use of government to expand mobility and widen openness and opportunity. That is what Kasich, Rubio, Paul Ryan and others are stumbling toward.

Amid all the vulgarity and pettiness, that is what is being fought over this month: going back to the past, veering into an ugly future, or finding a third way. This is something worth fighting for, worth burning the boats behind you for.

The hour is late and the odds may be long. But there is still hope. It's a moment for audacity, not settling for Ted Cruz simply because he's the Titanic you know.

■

David Brooks is a columnist for The New York Times.

YOUR VIEWS

Three ballot measures would create one new fire district

To help clarify some possible confusion on the upcoming ballot measures: Oregon state law requires several actions by voters to create Umatilla County Fire District #1. In addition to voting for the new fire district, voters will be asked to vote for a new board of directors and to also dissolve the current fire districts.

By voting to abolish the current fire districts, citizens will not risk losing fire service or ambulance coverage. As worded in the ballot, measures #30-109 and #30-110 would only go into effect if the new fire district is formed. If the new fire district is not approved the current fire districts remain intact.

By voting for ballot measures #30-109 and # 30-110 citizens are still assured of ambulance and fire services. Passage of these two ballot measures will not cause loss of protection.

Ric Sherman
President, Hermiston Fire District

Oregon should get rid of emergency clause

Did you know Oregon's legislature routinely thwarts your right, enshrined in the state constitution, to seek to approve or reject newly passed bills before they become law? You and I can take action to end this undemocratic practice — right from our home computers.

The details: Via a device called the "emergency clause" — which declares, without explanation, a bill's enactment to be an emergency — legislators can stop Oregonians from seeking to refer a bill to a statewide ballot for an up-or-down vote by their fellow citizens. In 2015, legislators imposed this clause on more than half of newly passed bills. Among them:

•Senate Bill 932, which credentials illegal-immigrant college students to compete with U.S. citizens for taxpayer-funded Oregon Opportunity Grants;

•Senate Bill 941, which imposes increased bureaucratic regulations on law-abiding gun owners; and

•House Bill 2177, which automatically registers as voters all citizens holding Oregon driver licenses.

Would you like to have had a chance to approve or reject these bills? By saddling them with the emergency clause, Oregon lawmakers took that chance — indeed, that right — away from you.

What can you do? The No More Fake Emergencies campaign is seeking to qualify a measure for Oregon's November 2016 ballot that would require a two-thirds vote (rather than the current bare majority) of the House and Senate to approve most bills containing an emergency clause. Such threshold would help keep legislators, other than in true emergencies, from denying Oregonians their right to refer and vote on newly passed bills.

Richard F. LaMountain
Portland

LETTERS POLICY

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