



Potatoes ride a conveyor belt into a cold storage facility outside of Hermiston.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

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Andony Melathopoulos, a bee expert and extension specialist with Oregon State University, will be on hand during the small farms seminar to discuss the importance of pollinators, including beekeeping basics and how to start your own hive.

Before arriving at OSU in September, Melathopoulos spent 13 years in Alberta, Canada, working on honeybee pests and diseases. While there, he learned about how farmers in southern Alberta were

using pollinators to their advantage in creating hybrid canola seed.

One of Melathopoulos’ presentations will seek to translate those lessons to Oregon, where he said there is a lot of hybrid vegetable seed production already happening.

“There are tricks to it. It’s not as simple as pollinating an apple tree,” he said.

Melathopoulos will also review ways to apply pesticides on the farm without harming bees. Chris Schachtschneider, livestock extension agent for OSU in Umatilla County, will conclude the seminar by explaining how to integrate chickens onto a small farm.

The small farms seminar will

run Wednesday from 1-4 p.m. in Meeting Room 3.

Schachtschneider will also serve as the moderator during Thursday’s livestock session, which includes findings on how grazing can impact both sage-steppe and riparian habitats.

It has been several years since the Farm Fair has included a session on livestock management. Cattle and calves ranked as the most valuable agricultural commodity in Oregon last year, grossing \$914,324,000. Morrow County ranks second in the state in cattle production, with Umatilla County coming in seventh.

Schachtschneider said he hopes ranchers come away from the session with a better idea of how to

responsibly raise their cattle in order to achieve healthier landscapes.

“The cattle themselves aren’t necessarily a bad thing. It’s the management that makes them good or bad,” he said.

The livestock session will run for half a day, from 1-5 p.m.

The Farm Fair will also include two cereal sessions Thursday, which Hamm said is another first for the event. The morning session will run 8 a.m. to noon, and the afternoon session from 1-5 p.m. in Meeting Room 2.

“Cereal production is a big land user for Umatilla and Morrow counties, both dryland and irrigated,” Hamm said.

Finally, the Farm Fair has also added a Lost Crop Assessment program to help producers understand why they may have suffered losses, and what to do about it.

“The idea is to get an assessment for what your real losses are,” Hamm said. “That triggers important decisions, like whether you spray or don’t spray.”

That program also runs from 1-5 p.m. Thursday. The Farm Fair wraps up Friday with a seminar on pest management and program on safe pesticide use.

Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.



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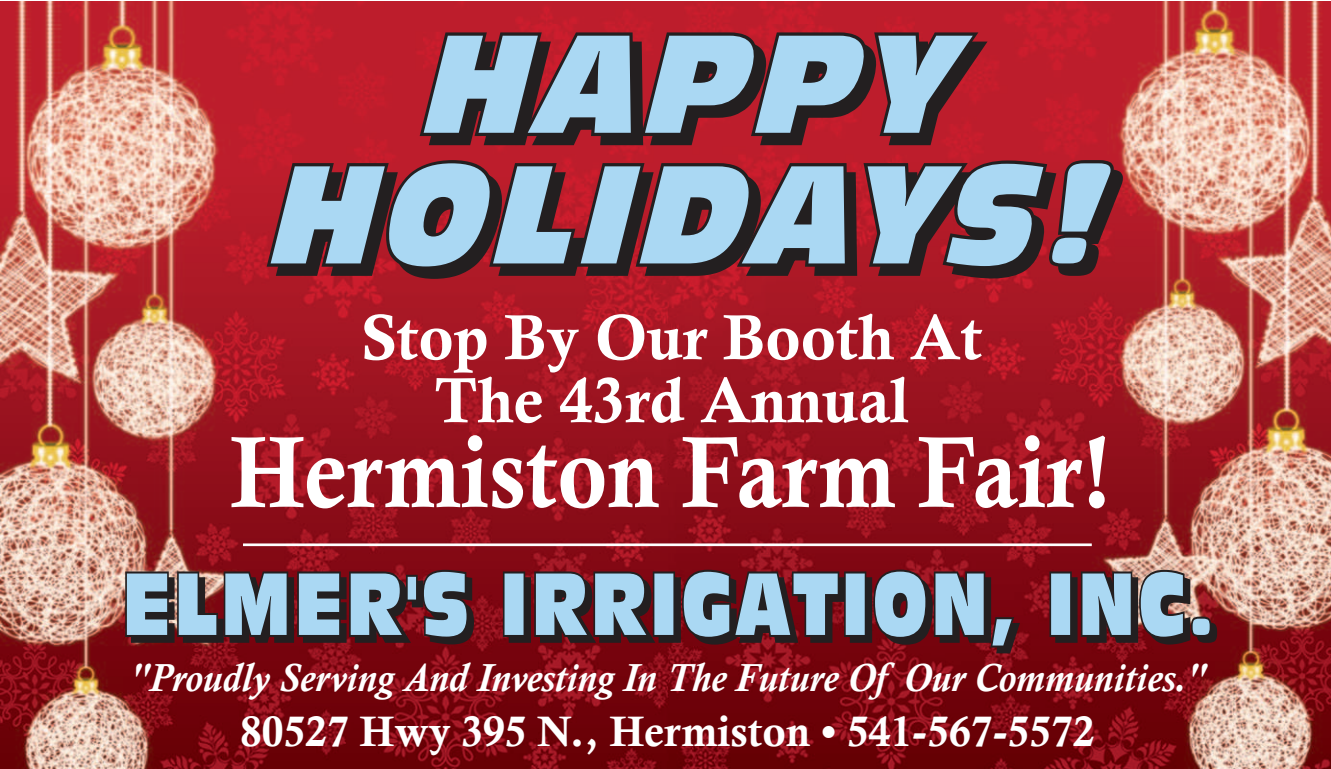
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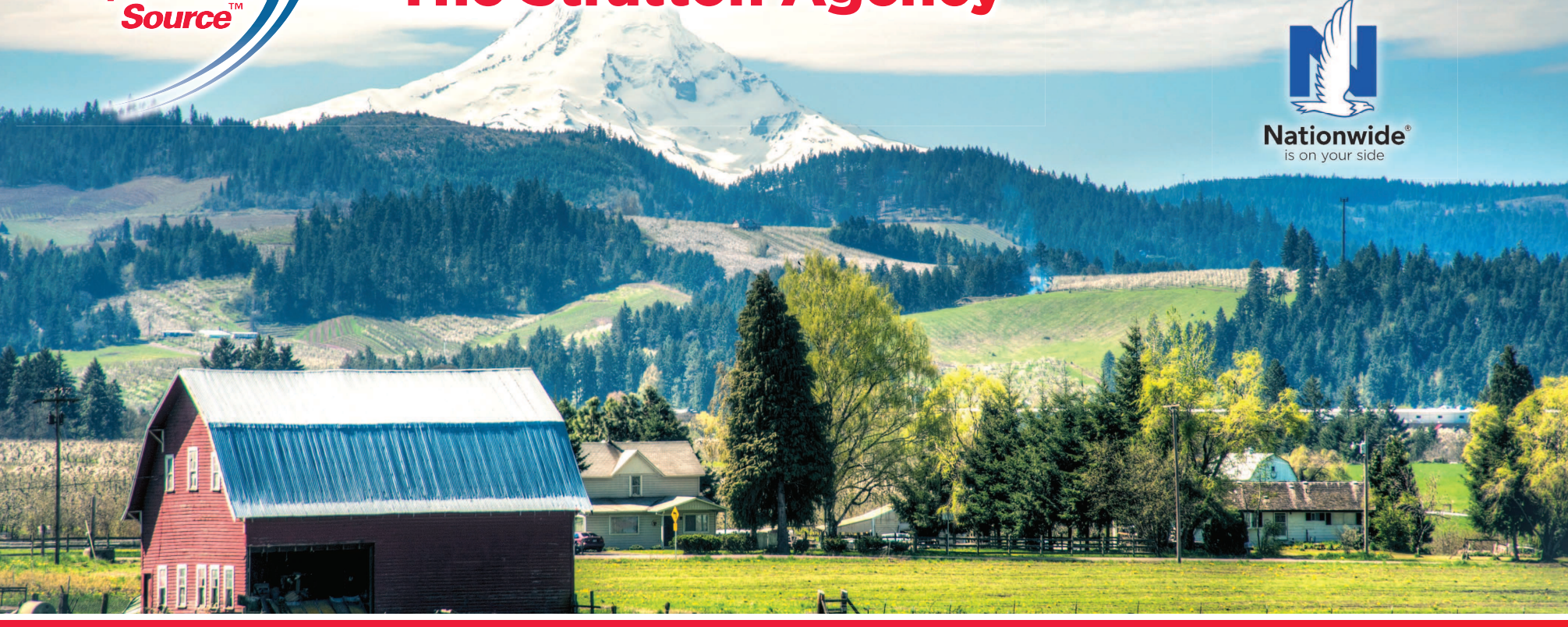
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