

There’s a certification for that

Time was, consumers trusted the producers who grew and processed the food they ate. Consumers, most of whom had ties to agriculture, knew how crops and livestock were grown and processed for the market.

EDITORIAL
Voice of the Chieftain

Not any more. The link between most consumers and agriculture has been severed. Consumers today are typically one or more generations away from the farm. Direct knowledge of agriculture has been replaced by hearsay and online information, some of which is accurate and some of which is pure propaganda.

Now a growing number of consumers, who are confused by the conflicting information, say they want to know exactly how their food is produced.

That’s where certifications come in. The best-known certification is for organically grown food. Since the federal government introduced the green label for organic food in 2002, consumers see it as an assurance that they know how that food was produced.

The problem is the proliferation of other certifications and labels, each one usually involving an audit and a fee.

Now food can be certified salmon safe, GMO free, gluten free, fair trade, vegan, natural, sustainable, humanely raised, rainforest safe, bird friendly, wholesome and, in the case of seafoods, slave free, to name a few of the certifications that are currently popular.

Because consumers — and retailers — now demand certifications, producers who want their business must undergo more and more audits. Those who sell to several retailers often need several different certifications. That means several audits, and several fees to pay.

All of which can be overwhelming, and unneeded.

In the U.S., everything from pesticides to grain quality to the amount of dust produced is regulated by the federal government.

“Most people don’t understand the regulatory system in the U.S.,” said Randy MacMillan, vice president of Clear Springs Food, a trout farm in Idaho that goes through six annual audits of its environmental impact, food safety practices and social responsibility on top of meeting 1,300 regulations enforced by 30 state and federal agencies.

More certifications are on the way. Concern over the use of gestation stalls for sows, whether chickens are raised in cages or if livestock is given antibiotics amounts to a growing trend that one expert described as a “tsunami” of certification.

“The customer is always right,” goes the retail adage. That food customers want to be sure they know how their food is produced is OK, too.

But if farmers, ranchers, fish farms and processors have to devote massive resources to filling out a growing number of forms to gain certification for food that is already wholesome, the net effect will only be higher prices — and bigger packages so all of the added labels will fit.



P.O. Box 338 • Enterprise, OR 97828
Office: 209 NW First St., Enterprise, Ore.
Phone: 541-426-4567 • Fax: 541-426-3921

Wallowa County’s Newspaper Since 1884
Enterprise, Oregon

MEMBER OREGON NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

PUBLISHER **Marissa Williams, marissa@bmeagle.com**
EDITOR **Scot Heisel, editor@wallowa.com**
REPORTER **Stephen Tool, stool@wallowa.com**
REPORTER **Kathleen Ellyn, kellyn@wallowa.com**
NEWSROOM ASSISTANT **editor@wallowa.com**
AD SALES CONSULTANT **Jennifer Powell, jpowell@wallowa.com**
GRAPHIC DESIGNER **Robby Day, rday@wallowa.com**
OFFICE MANAGER **Cheryl Jenkins, cjenkins@wallowa.com**

PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY BY:
EO Media Group

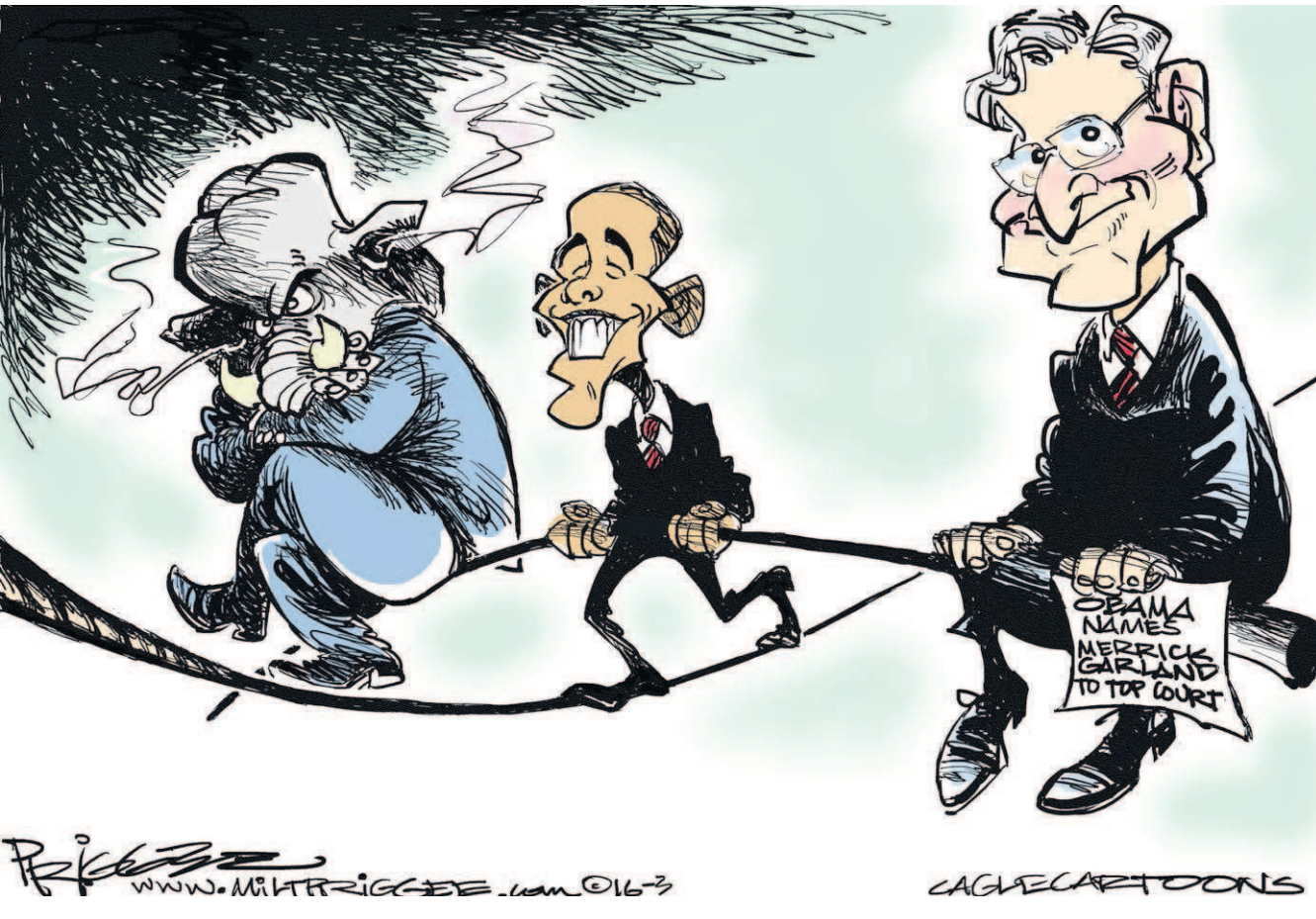
Periodical Postage Paid at Enterprise and additional mailing offices	
Subscription rates (includes online access)	1 Year
Wallowa County	\$40.00
Out-of-County	\$57.00

Subscriptions must be paid prior to delivery

See the Wallowa County Chieftain on the Internet
www.wallowa.com
facebook.com/Wallowa | twitter.com/wcchieftain

POSTMASTER — Send address changes to
Wallowa County Chieftain
P.O. Box 338
Enterprise, OR 97828

Contents copyright © 2015. All rights reserved. Reproduction without permission is prohibited.
Volume 134



Affordable Care Act 6 years old

In terms of significance, the passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2010 often is compared to the establishment of Medicare and Medicaid in 1965. The ACA grew out of advances in coverage provided by Medicare and Medicaid — in fact, President Teddy Roosevelt first proposed a national health insurance program in 1912. We celebrate over 100 years of health care progress in 2016.

The ACA turns 6 on March 23 and its elder sibling, Medicare, turns 51 a few months later. Both programs continue to evolve, enhancing the lives and health of Americans.

More states continue to expand Medicaid. Thirty-one states have expanded Medicaid, and it is under discussion in others.

Since the ACA took effect, 20 million uninsured adults ages 18 to 64 have gained health coverage. This figure does not include children or adults age 65 or older. The uninsured rate has decreased substantially across all races and ethnicities throughout the country.

Here in Oregon, enrollment in Oregon’s Healthy Kids and Oregon Health Plan has grown by 397,162 since 2013 — much of this growth is attributable to the implementation of Medicaid expansion. Additionally, 147,109 signed up for health insurance through HealthCare.gov during the recent open enrollment period.



GUEST COLUMNIST
Susan Johnson

However, the ACA hasn’t impacted only those who have recently gained coverage. Virtually every American has benefited in some way from the ACA, whether they realize it or not. Here are a few of the benefits we all enjoy:

- Young adults can stay on their parents’ plans until age 26.
- You can appeal your plan’s denial of payment decision.
- Lifetime limits are banned.
- Insurance companies must justify unreasonable rate hikes.
- Many preventive care services are covered at no cost with Qualified Health Plans and with Medicare.
- The Medicare “donut hole” is closing and will be closed by 2020, saving seniors on prescription drug costs.
- Health plans must spend at least 80 percent of your premiums on health care instead of administrative costs.
- Insurance companies can’t deny coverage based upon pre-existing conditions.
- Medicare payments to hospitals and physicians are now linked to quality in-

Cemetery project on track, thanks to you

Amazing results happen when citizens come together in a common cause close to their heart, not waiting as bureaucrats dictate what could be just “the way things are done.” Such was the case with the quickly deteriorating condition of the Enterprise Cemetery due to water being disconnected from 2011-2015 with no plan to reconnect. The squirrel population was destroying the once beautiful but scorched grounds that are final resting for citizens who built this community, lived lives here or always found it “home” in their hearts. Families and citizens were in despair over rapid degeneration of the cemetery.

Fast forward to 2016 with a new Cemetery Board and explosion of grassroots organization, Friends of Enterprise Cemetery (FEC) founded in the fall of 2014. Support for halting what was happening to this cemetery and an image of lack of community pride is the result of so many dedicated to solving the situation by simply putting their shoulder to the wheel and turning events around. With huge citizen turnout for Cemetery Board meetings starting in February 2015 and the city of Enterprise committing to donations of labor and equipment, by April of 2015 the following was in place:

- Water restored to Enterprise Cemetery

GUEST COLUMNIST
Ella Mae Hays

with plan for underground system financed by contributions.

- Finance campaign for monetary contributions resulting in hundreds of donations ranging from \$5 to \$10,000 throughout the U.S.
- Volunteerism in all management areas of the cemetery.

Today, one year later, the Board of Enterprise Cemetery and FEC wish to update the public on the current status:

- We are close enough to funding goals to soon put out request for bids for this system. The city has donated funding toward review of design plan and compiling of bid packages.
- Contributions to date to the FEC total over \$52,000,(a local church, Grace Lutheran, added hundreds to this amount by selling water at summer events); tax-deductible contributions to the cemetery directly total over \$16,000; dollars saved from annual tax budget will be directed to the irrigation account, thanks to a working board.

stead of quantity of services provided.

- States have incentives to come up with innovative plans to improve the health of their citizens.

These are just a few improvements that the ACA has brought to the entire health care landscape. Changes continue to be phased in.

We are working now to improve care by encouraging better coordination and prioritizing wellness and prevention. We’re seeing success in programs like the Diabetes Prevention Program, which helps at-risk individuals delay or prevent diabetes. By preventing illnesses before they happen, we can save lives and save money.

We also are giving providers and patients access to their health care data in new ways. Businesses are creating apps to help access electronic health records in innovative ways. Patients become more involved in their own care, leading to better outcomes. This is a win for providers, patients and the businesses that develop the applications.

Visionary Americans fought for the right for all Americans to have affordable, quality health care. The ACA will continue to bring those visions to fruition this year and for years to come.

Happy anniversary to us all.
Susan Johnson is regional director of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Region 10.

- Three grants have been awarded for irrigation: \$5,000 from Pacific Power, \$2,000 from Farm Credit Services and \$10,000 from Wildhorse Foundation. Total funds available are near the original goal, which has seen an increase to ensure top quality in design and system.

- Untold volunteer hours have been directed to maintenance and planning. The 2016 season irrigation will again be above ground lines that necessitate constant moving until we have efficient use of water.

- Fundraising continues with hopes of going “over the top” in the months to come. What was projected to take two years can become a reality sooner with continued support.

- Citizens keep coming on board to volunteer at the cemetery; one couple new to the community already has trimmed shrubs and trees this spring. This activity is vital to restoration. However, only involvement from the next generation can ensure history will not be repeated.

The Cemetery Board and volunteers appreciate all donations and work hard to ensure that your money is efficiently and effectively spent.

Friends of Enterprise Cemetery member Ella Mae Hays resides in Newberg, Ore.

A tribute to the people of Joseph

From the moment I arrived in Joseph — after learning that my son, Kip Rand, had died in a mountaineering accident — I met with an indescribable outpouring of love, comfort, encouragement, tears and laughter by the community of Joseph.

I can only say I’ve never experienced anything like it. Kip’s many dear local friends came around to sit with Robin, her mother and the Rand family, to share stories, hugs, laughter and tears. This community took care of every minute detail so that in our fog of grief we could just soak up love, support and appreciation for Kip. They arranged for grief counseling, pastoral support, meals and every other thing.

The celebration of Kip’s life was perfectly organized by the community. Even with less than two days’ notice, friends gathered from far and wide. Who would have thought that I would describe this celebration and my entire eight days in Joseph as one of the most beautiful and transcendent experiences of my life, while in the presence of indescribable tragedy and grief?

LETTERS to the EDITOR

Thank you, dear people of Joseph. You taught me how to grieve with others, and I intend to “pay it forward.” I will come back to see you, hike in the Wallowas, and remember that Kip loved this place more than any other in the world. May God bless you all!

Barbara Lawlis Rand, mother of Kip Rand, who died March 8
The Dalles, Ore.

In defense of trapping

I am writing this letter to show my full support for two of our local kids who have excelled in their chosen field with the support of our local FFA chapters. To them I say congratulations and that I’m sorry that someone would take the opportunity to use their success to push a anti-trapping agenda. As a Wallowa County trapper myself I

would like to shed some light on the subject. Trapping is a important tool in all Western states, although highly regulated in some, I assure you. Even the California Department of Fish and Wildlife uses traps of some sort within there own department. The fact is, lots of animals, especially predators, are nocturnal in habit and are not easily studied or managed. Traps are necessary to capture animals for protection, propagation and relocation. Trapping is conservation and wildlife must be monitored and managed for the good of all. There simply are no better, safer or more effective alternatives to traps. Like most activists, anti-trapping groups only portray the worst possible scenarios, not the benefits to wildlife and the public. All I ask is that you speak to your local Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife biologist or a responsible trapper before casting judgment on this long-lived tradition of trapping for conservation and fur harvesting.

Rod Smallen
Joseph