



Medusahead rye is the noxious weed targeted by the Wallowa County Weed Board in September.

## September's noxious weed is medusahead rye

By **JOE SIMS**  
For the Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — As part of the Wallowa County Vegetation Department and Weed Board's ongoing education efforts, in conjunction with Wallowa Resources, the Chieftain features a noxious weed each month that is on the county's list of noxious and invasive weeds.

This month's noxious weed is medusahead rye.

**What:** Medusahead rye is an annual grass and grows 6-24 inches tall with two to three spikelets on each node of the flower head. The awns are straight when green, but twist into a snake-like fashion as they dry out. Flowering occurs in May and June.

**Where:** Medusahead rye

grows predominantly on semi-arid rangeland. In Wallowa County, it's typically found in the Imnaha and Grande Ronde canyonlands, as well as on the Zumwalt Prairie.

**Dangers:** Medusahead rye is a rapidly spreading annual, requiring multiple management stages for control. The stiff awns on the plant may cause injury to grazing animals by working into ears, eyes, nose and tongue. Once it dominates an area, the land base becomes unable to support wildlife or livestock.

**How you can help:** If you find medusahead rye either on your property or while out and about, take note of the location. You can contact our Wallowa Canyonlands Partnership Program Manager Joe Sims at 541-426-8053 ext.61.

## OREGON COURT OF APPEALS

# Animals lack the right to file lawsuits

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**  
Capital Press

SALEM — The Oregon Court of Appeals has ruled that animals can't file lawsuits, relieving farm advocates who had worried about potentially expensive new litigation over livestock production.

The appellate court has determined a horse lacks the legal right to sue its former owner, who'd pleaded guilty to neglecting the animal.

The Oregon Farm Bureau, Oregon Cattlemen's Association and Oregon Dairy Farmers Association feared the case could set a precedent, exposing meat and dairy producers to lawsuits from activists.

"If you look at the mission of most of these groups, that is the ultimate goal: to stop the ownership of animals," said Mary Anne Cooper, the Farm Bureau's vice president of government affairs.

The Animal Legal Defense Fund, which sought to represent the horse, is planning to petition the Oregon Supreme Court to review the dis-



Animal Legal Defense Fund/Contributed Photo  
**Justice, the horse that animal activists wanted to sue its former owner for support, walks in a pasture in Washington County.**

missal, said Christopher Berry, the group's managing attorney.

"It's an unjust result to say an animal cruelty victim can't have their day in court," Berry said.

A three-judge appellate panel has unanimously rejected the argument that Kim Mosiman, the executive director of an animal rescue nonprofit, could seek damages on the horse's behalf from Gwendolyn Vercher, who surrendered the animal in 2017.

Vercher was sentenced to three years probation and ordered to pay \$4,000 in fees, including restitution for the veterinary treatment

of the horse's malnourishment, lice and infections, but the animal still needs specialized medications and care, according to court documents.

In 2018, a judge in Washington County dismissed a tort complaint against Vercher ostensibly filed by Justice, the horse, because a "non-human animal" doesn't have the "legal qualifications necessary for the assertion of legal rights and duties in a court of law."

Mosiman, who now cares for the horse, admitted that Justice cannot independently file a lawsuit but argued that she could repre-

sent the animal's interests in court as a guardian.

However, the appeals court said the situation isn't sufficiently similar to those in which a guardian is appointed for a child or a person with cognitive disabilities.

An animal "inherently lacks self-determination and the ability to express its wishes in a manner that the legal system would recognize," the ruling said.

Allowing attorneys to represent animals this way would be "susceptible to abuse," with the animal potentially serving as a "pawn to be manipulated on a chessboard larger than his own case," the appellate court said, citing legal precedents.

Only human beings and their legal entities can pursue lawsuits while animals "are neither natural nor artificial persons," the ruling said.

Despite animal welfare laws that recognize them as "sentient beings capable of experiencing pain, stress and fear," animals nonetheless remain a form of property without "substantive or procedural rights," the ruling said.

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- CLUES ACROSS**
- Minor in astronomy?
  - Chest muscle, for short
  - "Around the Horn" channel
  - Some gardening tools
  - Tapioca balls
  - Snooped
  - Only state with a three-word capital
  - You \_\_\_ what you sow
  - App with stories and reels, briefly
  - "\*... and then something funny happens"
  - Get closer
  - Merit
  - \*Kosher restaurants observe one
  - Matzo ball \_\_\_\_, aka Jewish penicillin
  - Currently broadcasting
  - Un-even?
  - Funny Bombeck
  - Burnable music holders
  - Hollywood fame
  - McKellen who played Magneto
  - "Next To Normal" composer Tom
  - "\_\_\_ to the Women on Long Island" (Olivia Gatwood poem)
  - Words on a Wonderland cake
  - Person with future prospects?
  - \*Evidence of laundering
  - Katsudon grain
  - View as
  - Superpower that can alter material existence ... and a feature of the starred clues' answers
  - Ruth who played Lady Macbeth
  - Lion's bellow
  - "Sign me up!"
  - Barely defeated
  - Screws up
  - "Toodle-oo!"
  - Throw
  - Crossed (out)
  - Annual Austin festival, for short

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58								59			60		
61								62			63		
64								65			66		

- CLUES DOWN**
- "Not a chance, dude"
  - Bread served with curry
  - Close tightly
  - "Foolish" singer
  - Art form that might be in free verse
  - Auction site
  - Accessory for Thor or Storm
  - Hospital trauma pro
  - "Yes, miss!" in Spanish
  - Animals in family photos
  - Confidentiality doc
  - Prickly plant
  - City where tourists often pretend to hold up a tower
  - Fresh
  - Rein hairstyle
  - Places to tie up boats
  - Not from a big studio
  - Hidden bonuses in many Marvel films
  - Oscar winner Sophia
  - Sum up
  - Savory taste
  - Individual frame in a comic book
  - Marisa who plays Aunt May
  - "Without further \_\_\_"
  - Device that's "fed"
  - Prioritizes by severity
  - Places to apply deodorant
  - Bella's vampire husband
  - "The Last Five \_\_\_" (off-Broadway musical)
  - Dressed
  - Try again
  - Dino with a big head and little arms
  - Days of \_\_\_
  - Big name in the theater biz?
  - Little quibbles
  - Chew (on)
  - Badminton court divider

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