

Candidates give agriculture short shrift

Unless establishment Republicans can pull some convention shenanigans, Donald Trump will likely be the GOP nominee for president.

And despite Bernie Sanders' continuing efforts, short of a timely indictment Hillary Clinton will be the Democrats' standard bearer.

But what either thinks about the concerns of farmers and ranchers is, and will probably remain, a mystery in the short run.

Though once courted by politicians, farmers and ranchers have gotten short shrift from presidential candidates in the 21st century.

Quite a surprise, given that everyone in America eats, and eats quite well. Food is so abundant that it doesn't register as a concern, and food producers are so few that they no longer constitute a viable interest group.

Trump's website doesn't mention agriculture specifically. Sam Clovis, Trump's national campaign co-chairman and chief policy adviser, told Capital Press the campaign "looks at agriculture from a security issue as every bit as important as energy and border security."

Clinton's campaign didn't respond to our request for information. Her website offers the vague promise to "increase funding to support the next generation of farmers and ranchers, invest in expanding local food markets and regional food systems, and provide a focused safety net to assist family operations. ..."

Here's what we know based on what the candidates have said or published:

Neither Clinton nor Trump likes the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the big 12-party trade deal now pending before Congress.

Clinton was for the pact before

she was against it. As secretary of state she touted the negotiations and the prospects for a deal. She once referred to TPP as the "gold standard" for fair, transparent trade. But once the deal was finalized, Candidate Clinton dropped her support.

Her online campaign material doesn't say what she wants in future trade deals.

As always, Trump is blunt. "The TPP is a horrible deal," Trump said of the pact. How he thinks it could be improved, we don't know. His positions on trade are fairly general — it will "flourish," he says.

Clinton supports the use of genetically modified crops, and mandatory labeling on food products. Trump, who eats organic food at home, told the Iowa Farm Bureau that he supports the use of biotechnology in food products and opposes mandatory labeling.

On immigration the candidates occupy opposite poles.

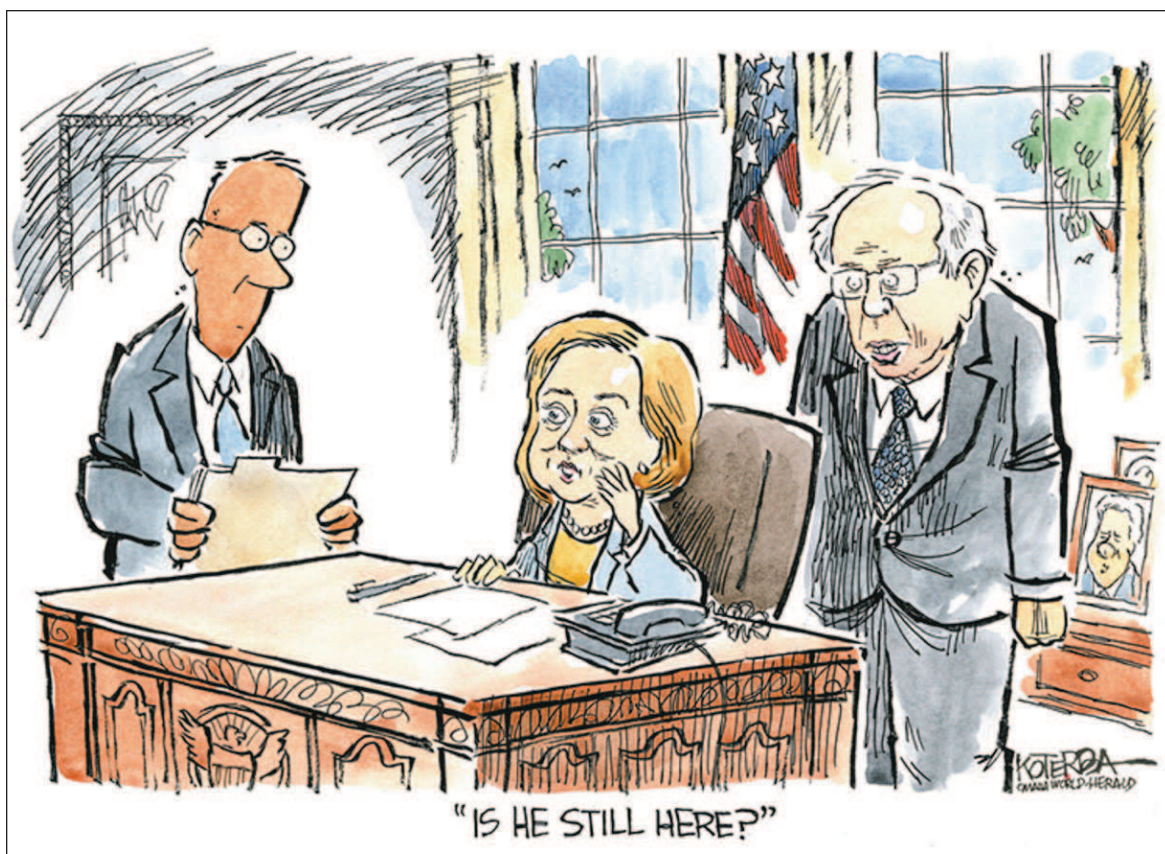
Clinton supports a path for citizenship for illegals now in the country, Trump does not. Clinton supports "humane, targeted immigration enforcement." Trump wants to hire 10,000 more ICE officers and repatriate all criminal aliens as well as everyone caught crossing the border.

Clinton supports the president's plan to give work permits to as many as 5 million illegal immigrants. Trump supports mandatory E-Verify screening to prevent non-eligible applicants from getting jobs.

Trump has promised to reduce federal regulation, Clinton has not.

We will do more reporting to better nail down the candidates' positions on these and other issues important to agriculture. But it's too early to say which would be better.

And maybe too early to know who the nominees will be.



GUEST COMMENT

Giving law enforcement tools they need to help victims in an emergency

By Rep. Greg Walden
To the Blue Mountain Eagle



Rep. Greg Walden

On Dec. 1, 2013, Kari Rene Hunt was brutally murdered by her estranged husband in the bathroom of a motel room in Marshall, Texas. Her three children listened through the door as she was stabbed repeatedly. Kari screamed to her 9-year-old daughter to "call 9-1-1." The girl did as instructed, frantically dialing 9-1-1 four times. But each time, she heard static on the other end of the line. What she didn't know is that, because of the way the motel's phone system was set up, she had to dial "9" first to reach an outside line. She told her grandfather later, "I tried, but it wouldn't work, Papa."

On June 2, 2007 — just days after her high school graduation—Kelsey Smith went to a Target store in Kansas to buy a present for her boyfriend. She was abducted from the parking lot in broad daylight, and law enforcement began a massive search for her. They were unsuccessful for four days until her cell-phone's location information was turned over to law enforcement. Kelsey's body was then found in about 45 minutes.

The House Communications and Technology panel, which I chair, heard these stories recently from the parents of both the slain young women. No family should have to face situations like these. And they were made worse by a

confusing patchwork of laws that govern telephone and communications systems in this country. If the laws were different at the time, is it possible that Kari Hunt and Kelsey Smith would be alive today? Perhaps. That's why I'm helping to lead an effort in the U.S. Congress to pass two bills to ensure that law enforcement can help victims faster in an emergency situation, when time is precious.

One proposal, known as "Kari's Law," would require that all multi-line telephone systems, typically found in hotels, offices, and schools, be configured to reach 9-1-1 without any additional prefix. After all, children are taught from a very young age to simply dial 9-1-1 in an emergency, not "9-9-1-1" or "7-9-1-1" or anything else. This fix would be both easy and inexpensive.

Many hotels around the country have made progress addressing this problem, but we need a uniform, national standard to make sure what happened to Kari Hunt and her family never happens again. It's been said that you may only dial 9-1-1 once in your life, but that time will be the most important call you ever make. We should make sure it's as easy as possible so you can get the help you need when seconds count.

Another proposal, known as the "Kelsey Smith Act," would give law enforcement the tools to locate victims in emergencies, using location data from their cellphone providers. By creating a narrow set of circumstances in which law enforcement can access this type of data, the bill seeks to protect the privacy of users while still allowing access for law enforcement when the situation demands it. The Kelsey Smith Act is already the law in 22 states, including right here in Oregon where it was approved by the legislature unanimously in 2014. The federal bill would take the Oregon standard and apply it nationwide. It's just common sense.

Both these proposals were recently approved unanimously by the Communications and Technology panel I chair, as well as the full Energy and Commerce Committee.

The next step is a vote in the full U.S. House of Representatives, which I hope will take action soon. These plans would save lives using existing technology and don't cost taxpayers a dime. It's time they become law so that what happened to the families of Kari Hunt and Kelsey Smith never happens to another American family again.

Greg Walden represents Oregon's Second Congressional District, which covers 20 counties in southern, central and Eastern Oregon.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sometimes the truth is hard to take

To The Editor:

I seem to recall a letter to the editor about a month ago demanding the Eagle "shape up or ship out" and by doing so tell both sides of whatever the story may be.

It seems to me that when a reporter such as Les Zaitz (*The Oregonian*) reports on anything that doesn't fit the narrative or agree with the opinion of some of the citizens here, he is perceived by them to be out of line and a liar.

Here we have Michael Emry who is a self proclaimed journalist, "The Voice of Grant County", (and many other counties along the way) who was outed at the very least as a thief, a snitch, and for my money had no place in our community with his stolen machine gun and his seditious background. It was interesting to me how many of his enthusiastic supporters crawfished when he was arrested, and even more interesting were the justifications I

heard for his behavior from others who refuse to accept the fact that this man is a bad player of the very worst kind.

So, back to my original point. Sometimes the truth is hard to take when it defies certain agendas. When the truth came out about Mr. Emry, which wasn't really too much of a surprise to many of us here in Grant County, the hate-filled rhetoric directed towards the FBI and certain journalists for doing their jobs was ridiculous.

I would suggest those of you who invited Mr. Emry here in the first place to not get your panties in a wad, as it were, and accept the truth about the man. Semper Fi.

Dan Maynard
John Day

You will get caught

To the Editor:

When I was gone, you opened the gate onto Highway 395 several times and my horse ended up on the highway. You will get caught.

When I was in the hospital having brain surgery, you came onto my property again and stole over \$3,000 worth of tools, several 5-gallon water jugs, etc. You will get caught.

While I was at a funeral, you stole my 4-month-old dog who was in a kennel. You will get caught.

You stole gas out of my fire truck several times. You will get caught.

Jack Johns
Vaughan Ranch, Fox

What's up with that?

Letter to the Editor:

So, it appears from the article in the May 11 issue that our county officials think that preserving the name of Squaw Meadow is more important than approving an investigation into the Canyon Creek Complex which took so much away from Grant County. What's up with that?!

Judith Beaudet Reed
Robert Reed
Canyon City

WHERE TO WRITE

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Letters policy: Letters to the Editor is a forum for Blue Mountain Eagle readers to express themselves on local, state, national or world issues. Brevity is good, but longer letters will be asked to be contained to 350 words. No personal attacks; challenge the opinion, not the person. No thank-you letters. Submissions to this page become property of the Eagle. The Eagle reserves the right to edit letters for length and for content. Letters must be original and signed by the writer. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Writers should include a telephone number so they can be reached for questions. We must limit all contributors to one letter per person per month. Deadline is 5 p.m. Friday. Send letters to editor@bmeagle.com, or Blue Mountain Eagle, 195 N. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR 97845; or fax to 541-575-1244.



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