

GUEST COMMENT

Ag lessons

In honor of National Ag Week, March 21-27, I'd like to share a few things I've learned while working for Oregon Farm Bureau since 2004.

1. There's room for and a need for all types of farming.

Organic, conventional, biotech, no-tech, small-scale, mid-size, commercial-scale, direct-to-consumer, contract for food processors, international exports — all can be found in Oregon and all have an important, vital place in agriculture.

The myth that one type of farming is "good" and another is "bad," and therefore should be pitted against each other is just plain untrue.

I know farms in Oregon that grow organic crops on one field, conventional crops on another and biotech crops, like GMO alfalfa or sugar beets for seed, on a third. Other farms stick to just one farming method.

Farmers decide what to do based on many factors, including their customer base, market potential, the farm's location, the crop's labor requirements and equipment available.

2. Big doesn't mean bad.

The size of a farm or ranch does not dictate its commitment to a healthy



Anne Marie Moss

environment, care for animals, treatment of employees or respect for neighbors.

A farmer with 2,000 acres cares as much about these things as does a farmer with 20 acres. Their day-to-day work may be different, but their values and integrity are shared.

Nearly 97% of Oregon's farms and ranches — including commercial-scale farms — are family-owned and operated. Some are "corporate farms" that incorporated for tax purposes or succession-plan reasons. These are run by families, people raising kids, often living on the farm, who are involved in their communities and are proud of what they do. They're not in the business of harming their customers, their neighbors, or themselves.

3. Part of sustainability is profitability.

Because eating food is such a personal act, there's a tendency for consumers to forget that the people growing their food are also running a business. Even the smallest farms must ultimately make a profit to survive.

Few people get into

agriculture to get rich quick. It often involves slim profit margins at the mercy of many uncontrollable factors like weather, pests, fluctuating commodity prices and rising supply costs.

This is compounded by the fact that almost every realm of public policy, from transportation to taxes, directly impacts agriculture. When regulations bring new fees or compliance costs, it's very difficult for most farmers to pass along those expenditures to their customers.

4. There's no such thing as a "simple farmer."

Farmers do more than raise crops or take care of animals. Farmers are also business owners, accountants, scientists, meteorologists, mechanics and marketers. Many are also eager innovators, always searching for new technology to help them produce more with less: less water, less fertilizer, less fuel, fewer pesticides.

5. There's more that unites agriculture than divides it.

No matter the amount of acreage worked, farming method used or number of animals raised, Oregon farmers and ranchers share core values: a deep love for the land, incredible work ethic and immense pride in their work.



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National Agriculture Day 2021

On National Agriculture Day, we recognize the unique and irreplaceable value that farmers, ranchers, foresters, farmworkers, and other agricultural stewards have contributed to our Nation's past and present. America's agriculture sector safeguards our Nation's lands through sustainable management; ensures the health and safety of animals, plants, and people; provides a safe and abundant food supply; and facilitates opportunities for prosperity and economic development in rural America.

Over the last year, workers and other leaders across the agriculture sector have stepped up to ensure a stable food supply in the face of incredible challenges prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Farmworkers, who have always been vital to our food system, con-

tinued to grow, harvest, and package food, often at great personal risk. Local farmers helped to meet their communities' needs by selling food directly to consumers. Small meat processors increased their capacity as demand for their services skyrocketed. Restaurants found creative ways to bring food to members of their communities. Grocers and grocery workers also navigated new models, such as curbside pickup and online sales.

These collective efforts helped get food to the millions of adults and children in America experiencing nutrition insecurity. Programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children; school meals; and others focused on eliminating nutrition insecurity play an integral role in making sure that every family has enough food on the table.

As we overcome the pandemic and build back better, we will advance an agriculture sector that works for everyone. When I took office, I made a commitment alongside Vice President Kamala Harris to put racial equity at the forefront of our Administration's priorities. For generations, Black, Indigenous, and other farmers of color have contributed to sustaining this Nation. They fed their communities, gave the country new food products, and nourished communities with rich food traditions. Yet for gen-

erations they have faced the harmful effects of systemic racism. On this National Agriculture Day, I remain determined to address racial inequity and create an equitable space for all to participate in the great American enterprise of agriculture.

I also made a commitment to tackle the climate crisis. Farmers, ranchers, and foresters play a critical role in combating climate change. From sequestering carbon in the soil to producing renewable energy on farms, we will continue to innovate and create new revenue streams for farmers and ranchers while building a resilient agriculture sector.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR., President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 23, 2021, as National Agriculture Day. I call upon all Americans to join me in recognizing and reaffirming our commitment to and appreciation for our country's farmers, ranchers, foresters, farmworkers, and those who work in the agriculture sector across the Nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-second day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-fifth.



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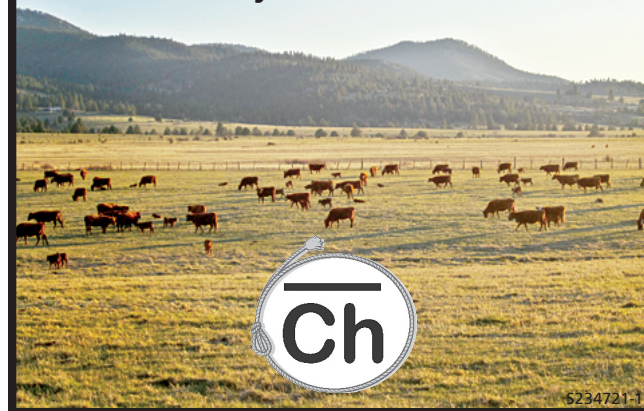
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