OREGON SEED eUpdate

A Newsletter from the Oregon Seed Council ISSUE #88 • APRIL 2023

Spring Crop Seminar Looks at Replant Options

Poor crop development last fall that was exacerbated by cold and rainy conditions in early spring has many Willamette Valley growers looking to pull out crops and replant this spring. With that in mind, OSU Extension agent Christy Tanner put on a seminar April 4 to help answer grower questions regarding spring crop decisions.

First off, Tanner said, growers need to decide whether it makes economic sense to pull out a fall-planted crop or a perennial stand in favor of a spring-planted crop.

"If you haven't yet committed to taking out a grass crop, take some time to consider the options," Tanner said. "Even if the crop isn't looking great, compare that to your other options for wheat and other crops. Take time to look at some of the input costs that you can expect for a given crop and balance that with the potential for weed growth in fields with a weak crop."

> "With your spring crops, the limitation is always going to be, what herbicides were applied in the past and are they likely to cause injury to a different crop."
>
> *Christy Tanner*

Depending on the price a grower can get for a grass seed crop that is already in the ground, even a low-yielding seed crop may be a better option financially than taking out a stand and planting the ground to something like spring wheat, Tanner said.

"I would also urge you to consider how you can manage your crop to make next year's crop more profitable," she said. "It's not a great place to be if you have to replant a crop that you weren't expecting to, but think about how you can use this as an opportunity to address, for example, a weed problem in the field.

"Your main consideration is how you can make money and get through this year, but you also have an opportunity to perhaps use some herbicides that may not be available in your grass crop to try to control grass weeds that are a problem in that field," Tanner said.

Tanner also said it is important to know your plant-back limitations based on herbicide use in the fall or winter.

"With your spring crops, the limitation is always going to be, what herbicides were applied in the past and are they likely to cause injury to a different crop," she said.

Christy Tanner

Tanner also advised growers to avoid planting a specialty seed crop without a contract.

"I would urge you to avoid assuming there is a particular demand for a crop and planting it without a contract," Tanner said. "Your fallback option will probably be something like spring wheat, something that you can plant and know that you'll be able to market it somewhere, even if you don't have a contract ahead of time."

As for how late a grower can plant a spring wheat crop and still expect to get a crop, Ryan Graebner, OSU cereal scientist, said that depends a lot on weather conditions, but he noted growers can expect to lose yield when planting on any date after April 1.

"After that date, every week you wait to get it in the ground, you are going to be losing about five to eight bushels per acre," he said.

continued on page 2

IN THIS ISSUE:

Spring Crop Seminar Looks at Replant Options *continued*

continued from page 1

Still, Graebner noted that in trials last year at Forest Grove, researchers planted some spring wheat on about May 20 and still were able to get sixty bushels per acre.

"Now sixty bushels isn't great," he said, "but that is still a lot more value than empty ground."

He added that he wouldn't consider planting in June and that going in at any time after May 1, growers will run the risk of getting a very poor crop, particularly if the weather doesn't cooperate.

Graebner also said that certain spring wheat varieties perform better than others when planted late, including Ryan, Tekoa and Alturas.

"Tekoa and Alturas are likely the better fits for earlier planting, with Tekoa having an advantage over Alturas in terms of stripe rust and Hessian fly resistance," he said. "I would expect Ryan to perform best in dry years and when planted later, especially when planted after May 1."

Oregon Ag Fest at State Fairgrounds April 29 & 30

Oregon Ag Fest is back with its 36th annual celebration of agriculture at the Oregon State Fairgrounds, April 29 and 30.

The event uses hands-on activities in a fun-filled festive environment to help educate families about where their food, fiber and flora comes from.

"We strive to bridge the gap between urban and rural life and to share the wonder and abundance of Oregon's bountiful and diverse harvest," said Executive Director Michele Ruby. "We do this in a family-friendly way, where kids 12 and under receive free admission and virtually all activities at the event are free of charge. Thanks to our sponsors, kids ride ponies, plant seedlings, watch sheep get sheared, pet farm animals and much, much more."

The Oregon Seed Council, which has participated for most of the event's 35-year run, will be back again this year with its display that highlights the benefits tall fescue and perennial ryegrass provide to the environment.

The event, which drew upward of 20,000 people last year, runs from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday the 29th and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday the 30th.

A youngster checks out grass seed in the Oregon Seed Council booth at last year's Ag Fest.

THE E-NEWSLETTER The goal of this e-newsletter is to provide timely updates to Oregon seed producers and field reps. It includes a snapshot of what's happening currently with respect to weather, pest and disease outbreaks, harvest, label updates, and other management activities. Growers or field reps can provide input anytime at mitchlies@comcast.net.

CONNECT WITH US To sign-up for this e-newsletter or for archived issues, please visit: http://www.oregonseedcouncil.org/seed-update

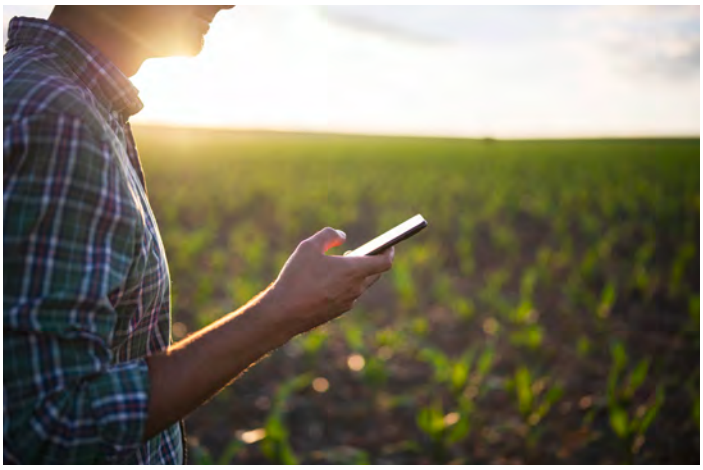
Calling All Ag Communicators

Organizations working to better understand how to communicate about agriculture to the general public are holding workshops in Oregon and California.

The first one-and-a-half-day workshop is scheduled July 11 and 12 in Newport, Oregon, at Best Western Agate Beach. A second workshop will be held the following Tuesday and Wednesday, July 18 and 19, at the Asilomar Conference Center in Pacific Grove, California.

The workshops will be conducted by the FrameWorks Institute and The Farming and Food Narrative Project, which is a seven-year project that is using cognitive science to reframe the public narrative about food and farming. According to a press release, the workshops will use practices grounded in social science to help participants create understanding among the general public about unfamiliar farming topics.

The workshops are supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture's Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) grant funds.



The workshop material was developed through research that involved surveys and focus groups wherein the FrameWorks Institute tested different ways of talking about agriculture. "They looked at, 'If we use this frame to talk about an ag topic, what is the public's reaction versus using another frame,'" said Clare Sullivan, a former Deschutes County Extension agent who is working with the organizations to organize the Oregon workshop.

The researchers eventually came away with six recommended strategies for speaking with the public about agriculture. "It's been a pretty robust research process," she said.

The project was started by Red Tomato food hub, which works with farmers, distributors and grocers in the Northeastern U.S. to support regional food systems and local farms.

"They found they were struggling to explain their agricultural practices in a way that the public understood," Sullivan said. "So, they started a partnership with the FrameWorks Institute and asked them to help with communicating about agriculture with the general public."

The FrameWorks Institute is an independent research organization based in Washington, D.C., that is comprised of Ph.D.-level social scientists whose primary work is to translate the views of scientists to the public.

The Oregon connection was established when Katie Murray, then with Oregon State University as the Statewide IPM Coordinator, was asked to join The Farming and Food Narrative Project.

"There was a desire to extend this project into the Pacific Northwest, so I took that on and applied for Western SARE funding, in collaboration with the rest of the project partners," Murray said.

"Changing the narrative around food and farming, particularly with public audiences, is an essential part of the equation to sustain natural resource industries into the future," Murray said.

> "Changing the narrative around food and farming, particularly with public audiences, is an essential part of the equation to sustain natural resource industries into the future."
>
> *Katie Murray*

Murray is currently executive director of Oregonians for Food and Shelter.

According to a press release announcing the workshop, participants will be able to "share your most pressing communication challenges, engage with communications strategies that reframe the conversation about good farming practices and practice on your own materials."

Further, the release states, "You will meet and connect with colleagues from your region facing similar challenges and can choose to join a follow-up community of learning."

Sullivan said she envisions the workshops as invaluable for professional ag communicators, as well as for farmers who regularly communicate about agriculture through print, television, radio or social media.

The workshops go from 1 p.m. on day one to 4 p.m. on day two. Registration cost for the workshops is $100 and includes one night's lodging and meals.

Deadline for registration is May 15. The Newport workshop is limited to 25 participants.

For more information, go to www.farmingandfoodnarrative.org/western-sare.

To apply, go to https://forms.gle/JsJAXjrtZN27Hvyy5.

Sullivan noted that workshop organizers will follow up with people regarding registration after they apply.

Research Looks at Defoliation Date, Irrigation Timing in Clover

Waiting until May 20 to cut red clover and delaying irrigation until flowering have been shown to produce the best yields two years into a three-year-research project on whether stand age and irrigation practices should influence defoliation timing.

Speaking at the Oregon Clover Growers Annual Meeting in February, OSU Extension Seed Production Specialist Nicole Anderson prefaced her findings with the caveat that year one of the study was one of the driest years on record and year two was one of the wettest.

"In hindsight, it would have been nice to have more normal years," Anderson said, "but I think we can still learn some things from these results."

In the project, Anderson is using three irrigation treatments, including no irrigation, early irrigation added right after cutting and a late irrigation added at flowering, or about July 1. Over the top of those three regimes, she is defoliating at three different timings two weeks apart, and in one plot she did no cutting.

In year one, in a dryland situation, the data showed that not cutting or cutting at the beginning of May were the best treatments.

"I'm not saying don't cut your red clover," she said. "That was a very extreme year in terms of drought. The standard practice should still be to cut, but in a year like that, where we are extremely dry and you have no irrigation, either not cutting or cutting on May 1 by far outyielded the later cuttings of May 20 and June 5."

Conversely, when adding irrigation at flowering, a May 20 cutting timing outperformed the other timings, Anderson said.

In year two, the wet year, yields improved when cutting stands, and again, the May 20 timing produced the highest yields compared to the other cutting dates, Anderson said.

Anderson noted that she initially sought to determine if there are interactions between cutting date and irrigation practices on both first- and second-year stands, and to see if the interactions were different between stand ages.

"The only time we have seen those interactions so far was in the first year," she said. "Otherwise, in 2022, a really wet year, it didn't matter.

"And in that trial, the May 1 defoliation produced the highest seed yield when irrigation was not used, but when you were irrigating, the later cutting timing (May 20) was best and the later irrigation (at flowering) was the highest yielding treatment," she said.

Anderson said she launched the research hoping to produce some data to help growers determine when to cut and when to irrigate, with the understanding that cutting decisions often are based on outside factors, such as weather and dairy availability for silage removal.

"Those are things that need to be considered," she said, "but are there other things that need to be taken into consideration when we choose our cutting date? And can we make more precise decisions?"

Anderson said she will provide a more thorough report of the project's yield components and an overall summary at the completion of the three-year project, in 2024.

Calendar

April 11	**Oregon Ryegrass Commission Meeting, 6 p.m., Cascade Grill, 110 Opal St N.E., Albany**
May 3	**Oregon Clover Commission Meeting, 7 a.m., Roth's 1130, Wallace Rd NW, Salem**
May 8	**Oregon Fine Fescue Commission Meeting, 7 a.m., Roth's 1130, Wallace Rd NW, Salem**
May 17	**Oregon Ryegrass Commission Meeting, 6 p.m., Cascade Grill 110 Opal, St N.E., Albany**
May 25	**Oregon Tall Fescue Commission Meeting, 6 p.m., Roth's 1130, Wallace Rd NW, Salem**