

Oregon Seed eUpdate

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A Newsletter from the
OREGON SEED COUNCIL

Oregon Seed Council 2024 Legislative Session Summary

Megan Chuinard, Executive Director, Oregon Seed Council

Introduction

The 82nd Oregon Legislative Assembly convened for the 2024 Legislative Session on Monday, February 5, and adjourned Sine Die on Thursday, March 7, at 8:16 p.m.

Constitutionally authorized for up to 35 days, the short session (even numbered years) offers an expedited timeframe to navigate budgetary adjustments and policy issues.

February 19 was the first turn of the Session, where bills had to have been worked out of policy committees or reside in a non-exempt committee (revenue, rules or joint committees) to make it to their next chamber. This deadline provided some clarity as to what could be expected to cross the finish line.

February 29, just a week and a half later, was the next chamber deadline – meaning bills had to be moved out of policy committees in their second chamber - a significant sprint for major policy bills. The Session was then required to conclude by March 10.

The State's Top Issues

Top issues for the Governor and the Legislature were housing and Measure 110 and these issues took most of the spotlight during the Session.

Importantly to the Oregon Seed Council (OSC) members and industry partners, we monitored over 30 bills of the 290 bills introduced. Issues ranged from land use, to climate, to employment, to taxes, to transportation – and more.

OSC

Thankfully, the short Session was less intensive for the seed industry and agriculture than past years.

We were able to see some positive policy advance, and a key and long-awaited appointment confirmed during the Session.

OSC took positions on two bills during the session: HB 4111 – a fix to Oregon's Farm Equipment Tax; and HB 4061 – an Elk Damage Prevention and Compensation Pilot Program.

A victory to industry: HB 4111 passed and is expected to be signed by the Governor.

While HB 4061 did not pass, it did have some traction, but unfortunately, was stalled as housing and Measure 110 took central focus for funding priorities.

The long-awaited appointment – Lisa Charpilloz Hanson as Director of Oregon Department of Agriculture was approved by the Senate on February 8. Director Charpilloz Hanson has been highly engaged with industry, and has been regularly meeting with partners, including with OSC, through quarterly meeting since she started in the role, December 1, 2023. She's a great partner with a strong connection to agriculture. We're grateful to see her confirmed.

Legislative Relationships

While the Session was relatively light, OSC was able to meet with numerous legislators and staff to build relationships, elevate the partnership of the seed industry overall and begin the conversations of how OSC can be a resource for the Legislature.

Finally, I want to thank each of you for thoughtful conversations, your input and support as we navigated the 2024 Session.

A special thank you to the OSC Board of Directors, Government Affairs Committee and Executive Committee for quick action and in-depth discussion on policies and how OSC can best support industry in the legislative process and policy discussions.

[Click here to view the full OSC Legislative Report.](#)

IN THIS ISSUE:

Oregon Seed Council 2024 Legislative Session Summary	1
Extension Pollinator Specialist Reminds Clover Growers of Bee Protocols	2
State Grants Support Watershed Work on Farms and Ranches	3
2024: A Year for Plant Growth Regulators in Grass Seed	4
New Field Crops Extension Faculty Named for Mid-Valley	5
Registration Open for OSA Spring Workshop	6
Calendar	6

Extension Pollinator Specialist Reminds Clover Growers of Bee Protocols

During a presentation at the Oregon Clover Growers Annual Meeting, January 31 in Wilsonville, Oregon State University Extension Pollinator Health Specialist Andony Melathopoulos provided growers a reminder of their responsibilities and rights within the bee protection protocol that was established in 2020.

First off, Melathopoulos said the protocol calls for growers to call their beekeeper ten days before beekeepers move colonies into fields and to wrap up any pre-bloom insecticide treatments at least four days before bees arrive.

He noted that insecticides dissipate at different rates, but research has shown even the most toxic of insecticides dissipate within four days of treatment.

Also, Melathopoulos said, if growers need to apply an insecticide at full bloom, they need to contact their beekeeper to see if the beekeeper wants to move their bees out of a field. Going further into this topic, he said restricting insecticide sprays to early evening is helpful when treating during bloom, and he noted that if treating for aphid control, growers might consider using Sivanto Prime, which is less toxic than other available products.

As for beekeepers, the protocols require them to remove colonies in a timely manner and states that in most cases, growers do not

want uninvited colonies on their property. To that end, beekeepers should ensure they have full permission before placing colonies in clover seed fields, Melathopoulos said.

Melathopoulos also said that if growers are concerned about colony strength, they should ask beekeepers to open a colony for them to view.

“The beekeepers said they are always willing to open a colony for you to look inside,” Melathopoulos said. “And you should demand it, especially if you are paying for those colonies, but never open the colonies or move them on your own. The beekeepers are really clear about that. All sorts of things can go wrong when that happens.”

The Bee Protection Protocol for clover seed production was ironed out over a series of meetings between the Oregon Clover Commission and the Oregon State Beekeepers Association with help from Oregon State University Extension faculty.

Beekeepers, growers and Extension faculty met to revise the protocol this past February. Melathopoulos said the revised protocol should be ready in April.



The bee protection protocol in clover encourages growers and beekeepers to place colonies closer to the edge of a field rather than deep into a field, such as is pictured on the Pollinator Paradise license plate. The placement helps protect colonies from spray drift and minimizes damage to the crop during colony management.

State Grants Support Watershed Work on Farms and Ranches

Stephanie Page, Acting Director, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

Introduction

Oregon's farmers and ranchers are leaders in voluntary efforts to improve water quality and restore and protect fish and wildlife habitat. The state is proud to partner with farmers, ranchers and local communities to support watershed projects on Oregon's agricultural lands.

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) is a small state agency that offers grants to local organizations. These organizations work with farmers and ranchers to complete projects that provide a variety of watershed and landscape benefits. Projects may also provide economic and environmental benefits to the farm or ranch business.

This article highlights some of the projects that OWEB funds and describes the key partners who work with farmers and ranchers to complete OWEB-funded projects.

What types of projects does OWEB fund?

Below are some examples of voluntary projects funded by OWEB and accomplished by local organizations in partnership with farmers and ranchers. This list is tailored to highlight projects that connect with seed growers, including growers in the Willamette Valley, Central Oregon and Northeast Oregon.

- **Streamside planting projects.** In the Willamette Valley, OWEB grants combined with USDA programs have helped support voluntary streamside restoration on farmlands along the Willamette River in Lane and Yamhill counties and along the Tualatin, Yamhill and other rivers and streams.
- **Irrigation modernization projects such as canal piping or lining, or irrigation conversion to pivot or drip sprinklers.** North Unit Irrigation District and Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District have both received OWEB grants to support piping of canals and laterals and help irrigators upgrade irrigation systems to support water use efficiency.
- **Other projects that improve water quality.** In addition to streamside projects, OWEB grants can support projects that keep soil out of waterways. For example, Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District received a small grant that helped a diversified farm in the Madras area to install a pipeline to handle stormwater runoff, addressing a flooding and soil erosion problem.
- **Projects that support farm and ranchland protection and maintain or enhance both agriculture and natural resources such as fish and wildlife on agricultural lands.** The Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program, administered by OWEB, awarded grant funds in 2023 for seven easement and covenant projects



and two conservation management planning projects on farm and ranchlands.

- **Projects that control invasive weeds.** OWEB funds have supported invasive weed control, juniper control and re-seeding in many areas of the state. Grantees may use native or non-native seed for re-seeding depending on the needs of the project.

Who can I partner with on an OWEB project?

Farmers and ranchers interested in pursuing OWEB funds can contact organizations in their local community. The following organizations and governments successfully partner with OWEB and with farmers and ranchers to accomplish projects on the ground. These groups are experienced in partnering with farmers and ranchers to develop projects and applying to OWEB for grant funds.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs). SWCDs are local government organizations that provide voluntary technical assistance to address conservation priorities within their communities. To find your local SWCD, visit the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts web site at <https://www.oacd.org>.

Watershed Councils. Watershed councils are community-based organizations that assess and monitor natural resources and work within their communities on restoration projects. To find your local watershed council, visit the Network of Oregon Watershed Councils website at <https://www.oregonwatersheds.org>.

Land Trusts. A land trust is a nonprofit that works with individuals and communities to conserve land. Some land trusts focus on farm and ranchland conservation. To find land trusts that work within your community, visit the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts website at <https://oregonlandtrusts.org>.

Tribal governments. Tribal governments frequently participate in OWEB grant programs either as an applicant or as part of a partnership with others in the community.

continued on page 4

State Grants Support Watershed Work on Farms and Ranches *Continued*

continued from page 3

Other local governments. Irrigation districts and other similar districts frequently partner with other organizations in their communities to pursue OWEB grants for irrigation modernization projects.

Other non-profit organizations. Non-profit organizations such as Trout Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy and Ducks Unlimited pursue OWEB funding to support natural resource projects on public and private lands.

Schools and institutions of higher learning. Schools and universities may pursue OWEB grants in partnership with farmers

and ranchers. For example, Oregon State University has received several grants for assessment and monitoring activities.

Conclusion

Farmers and ranchers are critical partners in the state's efforts to protect clean water, maintain fish and wildlife populations and keep watersheds healthy. State funding programs help support these collaborative efforts. OWEB encourages farmers and ranchers interested in projects to explore the available funding options by reaching out to a partner within your community.

2024: A Year for Plant Growth Regulators in Grass Seed

In a complete reversal from last year, weather conditions this spring are creating a lot of biomass in Willamette Valley grass seed crops, a development that is creating ideal conditions for the use of plant growth regulators.

"We're in a very different spring," said Oregon State University Extension Seed Production Specialist Nicole Anderson. "Last year, we didn't have a lot of spring crop growth. This year we have a lot more biomass on pretty much all of our cool season grasses in the Willamette Valley.

"People really need to put last year in their rearview mirrors," Anderson said. "We're in a different year."

Anderson advised growers to go with the top-end of OSU's recommended rates when applying plant growth regulators this spring. For annual ryegrass and perennial ryegrass, that is 3 pints of the Palisade EC formulation per acre. For tall fescue, it is 1.5 pints per acre.

The other thing growers need to keep in mind this year is to make sure to get the growth regulator on in time, Anderson said.

"The thing to remember is on the ryegrasses, it's absolutely imperative that the growth regulator is applied at two nodes," Anderson said. "If you apply it after two nodes, you're leaving yield on the table."



The timing for tall fescue is similar, Anderson said, but a little more flexible. Growers can apply the growth regulator on tall fescue any time from the two-node stage up to first head emergence.

"If growers are waiting until that 10 percent head emergence to start on tall fescue, that's too late. That is actually when it

needs to be finished," Anderson said. "You don't want to be too late, especially in a year like this where we've got a lot of early-season biomass."

Bottom line, she said, is that growers can apply a PGR at the same timing across the three species. "But," she said, "if the weather isn't cooperative, the sprayer breaks down or whatever, prioritize the ryegrasses over the tall fescue, because the tall fescue has a little more flexibility in terms of timing."

Another issue to consider, Anderson said, is that the generic versions of Palisade and Apogee that are now hitting the market may not all be equal in terms of efficacy.

"There have been generic versions of Palisade/Moddus in other parts of the world for a number of years, and we have been cautioned by research scientists in those places that generics don't always perform the same as the non-generic plant growth regulators," Anderson said. Researchers in New Zealand, for example, have found that some of the generics perform similar to Palisade/Moddus, where some do not, she said.

Anderson noted that OSU has a trial in the ground now that will compare several generic versions to non-generic Palisade and Apogee, so OSU scientists hope to have some data to share on the generic versions in the near future. For now, however, growers should be aware of potential variabilities between the different plant growth regulator formulations and products.

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Nicole Anderson

New Field Crops Extension Faculty Named for Mid-Valley

Collins Buggingo has been named the new Oregon State University Extension field crops faculty for the mid-Willamette Valley, ending a lengthy, nationwide search to replace Betsy Verhoeven, who left to take an instructor position on campus in 2022. The mid-valley region includes Marion and Clackamas counties.

Buggingo comes to OSU from Cornell University, where he has spent the past two years based in Vancouver, Washington, working as the Northwest Regional Extension associate for the Produce Safety Alliance, a partnership formed between the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Food and Drug Administration and Cornell to help producers comply with the Food Safety Modernization Act.

Buggingo previously worked at Montana State University and South Dakota State University and has training in general agriculture, extension education and plant sciences. He has presented at scientific conferences, grower trainings and has authored factsheets and journal articles on integrated pest management and produce safety.

“Collins’ strong background in crop production and plant pathology, as well as his experience implementing and evaluating successful Extension programs will be an asset to OSU Extension,” said Christy Tanner, South Willamette Valley Extension agronomist. “I am really happy to be bringing another field crops Extension faculty on board and look forward to working with Collins.”

Buggingo grew up on a subsistence farm in Uganda, where he helped his mom battle plant pests and diseases, a background that he said contributed to his career choice in agriculture.

Buggingo said he is looking forward to getting started in his new position. “I’m excited to share my knowledge, but also learn from growers,” he said. He anticipates communicating with growers through factsheets and field day presentations, but also in one-on-one settings.

“I am looking forward to one-on-one discussions, because farming is unpredictable and you cannot have a solution that fits all,” Buggingo said. “So, some of these solutions will have to be tailored to different production systems and I am looking forward to (collaborating on) that.”



Collins Buggingo at a worker training module in Vancouver, Washington, last year. Buggingo is the new Extension field crops faculty for the Mid-Willamette Valley.

Buggingo said he has no experience with grass seed but believes the knowledge and experience he has gained in working with food crops and other field crops will be transferable to seed production.

“It will be a learning curve for me, but the beauty of this is that the knowledge I’ve gained in agronomy, economics, plant pathology and soil and nutrient management is highly transferable,” he said.

Buggingo holds a Ph.D. degree in plant sciences and plant pathology. He will start in his new position on June 1.

OSU Extension is also looking to fill a North Willamette Valley field crops agronomy position, a position that has been vacant since Nicole Anderson took over as Extension Seed Production Specialist in 2022.

If all goes well, Extension hopes to announce the hire for the North Valley field crops position in one to two months, Tanner said, and the new faculty member could start around the same time as Buggingo. “This will depend on the outcome of the interviews and the selected candidate’s availability to start work,” Tanner said.

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>

Registration Open for OSA Spring Workshop

Registration is now open for the Oregon Seed Association’s Spring Workshop and Professional Development Event. The event features four days of educational seminars, training and a forklift rodeo.

The event will take place April 23 through April 26 at the Chemeketa Community College’s Agriculture Complex in Salem. Attendees can sign up for one or multiple days. Speakers will be covering a variety of topics from the farm to the warehouse, including sessions on seed cleaning, sampling and dividing, seed purity, germ and reports of analysis and differences in test types.

The forklift rodeo will culminate the activities on the final day. “This fun activity allows operators to showcase their abilities on an obstacle course, emphasizing safety and efficiency,” according to a flyer announcing the event.

Cost is \$50 per day per person.

Visit oregonseed.org/events/springevent or contact the Oregon Seed Association.



Calendar

- April 4 Oregon Tall Fescue Commission Meeting, 6 p.m., Roth’s, 1130 Wallace Rd NW, Salem
- April 8 Oregon Ryegrass Commission Meeting, 6 p.m., Cascade Grill, 110 Opal St N.E., Albany
- April 23 Oregon Seed Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Meeting will be Held Virtually
- May 28 Oregon Seed Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Cascade Grill, 110 Opal St N.E., Albany
- June 25 Oregon Seed Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Cascade Grill, 110 Opal St N.E., Albany

Oregon AgriStress Helpline is Now Open ☐ 833-897-2474

This program is completely dedicated to serving Oregon’s agriculture and forestry communities, which includes farmers, farm workers, ranchers, fishermen, foresters and their families.

The AgriStress HelplineSM is a crisis line for people engaged in agriculture, forestry and fishing. It includes crisis and emotional support, suicide intervention and prevention, and a database of both mental health and agriculture-related resources. The AgriStress Helpline provides persons in agriculture with free and confidential crisis support. The AgriStress Helpline can be reached 24/7/365 by calling or texting 833-897-2474. [Click here for more information.](#)

If you or someone you know is struggling, call or text 833-897-2474. If you have a medical emergency, call 911.