



## **2019 POSITION STATEMENTS**

### **Agriculture Chemical Regulation**

- OWA supports the use of consistent units of measurement in parts per million when reporting chemical levels (natural and artificial) to consumers.
- OWA supports an adequate time period for oral and written comments prior to the modification of use or suspension of any chemical.
- OWA supports EPA's 30 day or less time frame for declaring emergency use clearance of chemicals, especially under Section 18 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA).
- OWA supports utilizing EPA crop groups to facilitate uniform tolerances and application of label registration for similar crops. For example, a fungicide cleared for raspberries should also apply to blackberries or marionberries without additional testing.
- OWA supports the IR-4 Program (Inter-Regional Research Project No. 4). The IR-4 Program is a USDA-funded cooperative program among the 50 States whose mission is to assist in obtaining pesticide registrations and labels for minor drop uses. IR-4 works with farmers, agricultural scientists, and extension personnel to conduct research and petition the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for tolerances for specific pesticides. Minor crops include all specialty crops such as cucumbers, hops, mint, holly, grass seed, hazelnuts, caneberries, etc. Minor crops have high monetary value to each regions' economy. The small volume of chemicals sold for use on some minor crops often does not justify commercial development of label registration.
- In making a "reasonable certainty of no harm" determination to ensure that infants and children are adequately protected, OWA supports EPA in applying the 10X margin of safety factor for infants and children in establishing tolerances for chemicals in accordance to the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA).
- OWA supports continued use of chemicals unless verifiable and reproduceable scientific evidence determines that the risk of a particular chemical outweighs the benefits.

## **Agricultural Education**

One of OWA's primary goals is educating our membership and the public about the importance of agriculture to human survival and wellbeing, as well as to the economy and to the environment.

- OWA supports agricultural education programs such as:
  - Agriculture in the Classroom (AIRC)
  - Summer Agricultural Institute (teaching teachers about agriculture)
  - Ag Fest
  - Kids Day for Conservation
  - Agricultural organizations and events such as Sigma Alpha Agricultural Sorority, Chamber of Commerce agriculture committees, FFA & 4-H.

## **Agricultural Labor**

Agriculture is a high-labor intensive industry with 80% of our agricultural products being exported out of state. One in eight Oregon jobs is rooted in agriculture and forestry, making agriculture and forestry an integral part of Oregon's economy. 98% of Oregon farms are family-owned and operated, and the work is done with a combination of family and non-family members. Employees are a valued part of agricultural and forestry operations and are an integral part of the family business. In addition, OWA recognizes that employment laws are increasingly more onerous and time-intensive than ever before and supports common sense legislation that considers the needs of both employee and employer.

- OWA supports a guest worker program with a realistic admissions level that will be a legal channel for workers to enter the country.
- OWA supports appropriate due process in Department of Labor investigations of the farm, ranch and forest industries.
- OWA supports a minimum wage that is consistent with the federal minimum wage. Oregon agriculture needs to be competitive with the rest of the nation and the global market.
- OWA supports a strong worker's compensation plan that takes care of employees while protecting employers from significant financial burden.

## **Agricultural Research**

Research is necessary for the continued efficient, economic and environmental operation of agriculture. Per unit of production, research enables agriculture to increase gross productivity and decrease agricultural inputs and energy investments while reducing losses to pests. The agency for conducting such research is the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), which must retain its integrity as a separate service dedicated to research in agriculture.

ARS is charged with extending the nation's scientific knowledge and solving agricultural problems through its four national program areas: nutrition, food safety and quality; animal

production and protection; natural resources and sustainable agricultural systems; and crop production and protection. Therefore, OWA supports ARS in prioritizing that research be directed to:

- ensure high quality, safe food and other agricultural products,
- assess the nutritional needs of Americans,
- sustain a competitive agricultural economy,
- enhance the natural resource base and the environment, and
- provide economic opportunities to rural citizens, communities, and society as a whole.

OWA supports research through our land grant universities and other organizations that will benefit all aspects of agriculture.

### **Animal Welfare**

Animal welfare is the belief that animals deserve responsible treatment at all times.

It is in the best interest of farmers and ranchers to supply nutritious, high quality, economical and abundant food as well as non-food products to consumers. Farmers and ranchers do this by providing quality care for their animals.

- OWA supports industry participation in the development of any new policy to improve and/or regulate livestock treatment practices.
- OWA supports the right of farmers and ranchers to protect their animals from prey.
- OWA supports the responsible use of animals for research.
- OWA supports legislation that would protect farms, ranches, research facilities, educational institutions and animal exhibitors from unlawful or terrorist activities that attempt to restrict or eliminate animal uses.
- OWA supports the right of farmers to protect their records from public scrutiny.
- OWA supports the legalization of horse slaughter plants to guarantee the humane and environmentally-sensitive disposition of aged and infirm horses in the US.
- OWA supports the sale, possession and humane transportation of horses for processing across state and international borders.
- OWA supports the use of standardized best management practices in livestock carcass disposal.
- OWA recognizes all the ways that animals contribute to the quality of everyday life.

### **Biotechnology**

The biotechnology tools that are important for agricultural biotechnology include: - Conventional plant breeding - Tissue culture and micropropagation - Molecular breeding or marker assisted selection - Genetic engineering and GM crops - Molecular Diagnostic Tools.

Genetic engineering, also referred to as biotechnology, allows plant breeders to take a desirable trait found in nature and transfer it from one plant or organism to the plant they want to improve, as well as make a change to an existing trait in a plant they are developing. Some examples of desirable traits commonly transferred include resistance to insects and disease and tolerance to herbicides that allow farmers to better control weeds.

- OWA supports continued research using biotechnology and encourages expedient approval of the product that may result.
- OWA supports the position that it is unnecessary, confusing and costly to the consumer to label biotechnological products or processes.

### **Clean Air**

- OWA urges consideration of agriculture's positive contributions to air quality. Through the growth of green renewable crops, farmers, ranchers and foresters help purify the air.
- OWA supports a clean air standard providing an agricultural exemption for dust particulate matter generated as a result of agricultural activities. Any definition including dust as a contaminant must exempt production agriculture.
- OWA supports research efforts to identify agriculture's role in carbon sequestration. Carbon sequestration, the process by which carbon gases are captured and stored, presents potential technological solutions to the build-up of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.
- Agriculture should not be required to implement practices that have not been scientifically vetted and that are not economically feasible.

### **Disposal of Pesticides and Pesticide Containers**

- OWA supports current Oregon programs that promote the responsible disposal and recycling of unused or unwanted pesticides and their containers.
- OWA supports continued research to reduce the number of pesticide containers such as soluble bags that dissolve in the spray mix, etc.

### **Endangered Species**

OWA supports amendments to the Endangered Species Act that will at a minimum:

- Protect property owners from takings by local, state or federal agencies;
- Require sound, verifiable science be used throughout the process;
- Incorporate free market mechanisms and involve the private sector in solving our endangered species problems;
- Require concurrent social and economic impact analysis of endangered species listings and recovery plans;

- Eliminate subjective biological units (subspecies, populations, stocks); and
- Allow for administrative appeal of qualified major decisions and/or judicial review by qualified affected parties.

### **Invasive Species**

OWA does not view all non-native species as invasive, nuisance, noxious, or harmful. The phrase “invasive species” needs to be defined as a specific set of scientific criteria.

- OWA supports efforts to eradicate invasive species that are likely to cause economic harm to Oregon farmers and ranchers.
- OWA supports the early detection and rapid response (EDRR) efforts of the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) to address listed invasive weeds.
- OWA supports the efforts of the Insect Pest Prevention and Management Program (IPPM) of ODA and USDA in preventing, mitigating or eradicating invasive pests that would be detrimental to agriculture or forestry. These projects include Asian Gypsy Moth, Japanese Beetle, Light Brown Apple Moth, grasshoppers, etc.

### **Energy**

Farming and forestry represent the major renewable resource of stored solar energy. Less than 3% of the energy consumed in the United States is used to produce our food and fiber.

- OWA supports development of energy sources using agricultural products and by-products when economically feasible.
- OWA supports research that will continue to improve the efficiency of fossil fuels and development of additional sources of energy.
- OWA supports the continued use of Oregon tax credits and other incentives to encourage on-farm development of renewable energy.

### **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) & Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)**

- OWA recognizes the need for continued research on environmental management and decisions based on a reasonable margin of safety.
- OWA supports the collaboration of producers and qualified scientists working within their area of expertise to advise the EPA and Oregon DEQ in making environmental decisions.
- OWA does not support pesticide regulation or use reporting to Oregon DEQ.

### **Farm Safety**

OWA supports programs that encourage farm safety and ongoing trainings. These safety measures include:

- Responsible and safe handling of chemicals;
- Safe operation of farm equipment and tractors;
- Keeping crop protection chemicals and materials secured;
- Use of a specific gear and/or machine speed for correct application of chemicals;
- Knowledge of first aid and CPR procedures;
- Careful handling of irrigation pipe and equipment near power lines;
- Maintenance and upkeep of farm vehicles and machinery;
- Education about safety around farm equipment and buildings; and
- Keeping persons out of pesticide treated areas unless protected by required personal protective equipment or until after the Restricted Entry Interval (REI).

### **Field Burning**

- OWA supports field burning as an efficient, natural management tool to control fungi and diseases; eliminate weeds; remove excess straw; improve soils by recycling the potassium, phosphorus and other minerals from the ash; and to sanitize fields for quality seed and genetic purity.
- OWA supports continued research and development of programs designed to find efficient methods for straw management and/or straw removal.
- OWA expects government to comply with the same standards imposed on citizens and businesses regarding the management of natural resources and wildlife.

### **Food Safety**

As producers of our nation's food supply, farmers/ ranchers are committed to providing the safest, most wholesome, affordable and abundant food in the world.

- OWA encourages public education about food handling and preparation; which often poses the greatest threat to food safety due to unsafe rots, molds, bacteria and other micro-organisms.
- Responsible use of crop protection chemicals (pesticides) is one of the important tools that has made this abundance and quality possible. OWA supports continued use of crop protection chemicals. OWA supports verifiable, scientific evidence to determine the benefits versus the risks before the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (or any other regulatory agency) takes any precipitous action against their registration or use.

### **Foreign Trade**

The national economy and balance of trade is heavily dependent upon agriculture. It is essential that agriculture be released from barriers and restrictions that inhibit our capacity to produce and market agriculture commodities.

- OWA supports Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) on all imported food products at the final point of sale to consumers. Standards for these imported foods should be the

same as required for domestic food products.

- OWA supports the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).
- OWA supports the Oregon Department of Agriculture's Market Access and Certification Programs that address the development and marketing needs of Oregon's agricultural industries by:
  - Promoting and creating demand for Oregon agricultural products in local, domestic, and international markets through trade and business development activities;
  - Providing third party inspection and certification services that add value to products by making them more marketable; and
  - Conducting field surveys and providing laboratory testing of seed and plant material to detect pests and diseases.

### **Grazing Practices**

- OWA supports grazing on public land and fees that are determined by the current formula. Controlled responsible grazing is crucial to maintaining range and wildlife habitat and the viability of range communities.
- OWA supports continued improvement of the range through education and voluntary effort, rather than regulation.

### **Land Acquisition**

- The state and federal government own over 60% of the land in Oregon. OWA supports the sale of government land to private parties to off-set the deficit and balance budgets.
- OWA supports the monitoring of private, non-profit groups that purchase land with the intent to sell that land to the government for public use.

### **Land Use**

OWA recognizes that a family farm or ranch is a form of business enterprise in which the entrepreneurial decisions are made by individuals engaged in the production of food, feed, fiber, fuel, forest products and/or flora for profit, which provides a major source of income and capital for investment.

- OWA recognizes the critical need to maintain productive farm and forest land. OWA recommends that incentives, rather than regulatory actions, be implemented to encourage continued use of productive farm and forest land.
- OWA supports the Oregon Constitution, which requires governmental bodies to pay "compensation" to landowners or get their consent for "regulatory takings." These are regulatory actions that overly restrict the use of privately-owned property.
- OWA supports a policy of no net loss of taxable private property.

- Land and land uses differ from area to area, within counties, as well as within regions. OWA supports land use decisions made by the local citizens whose livelihoods are impacted by those plans. These decisions should be consistent with statewide guidelines.
- OWA supports multiple use of natural resources. Those who work with soil and water know first-hand that renewable resources are healthiest when used productively.
- OWA objects to use of public funds to support easements or buyouts to non-profit groups for conservation projects, such as wetlands restoration or wildlife habitat, which remove agricultural land from local tax rolls and other local economic activity.

### **Insurance**

- OWA supports legislation that allows associations to offer group health insurance programs to individual members and small businesses.
- OWA supports a health care system that continues to develop and to use paraprofessional programs in rural communities, as well as programs to encourage doctors and nurses to locate in rural areas.

### **Nutrition**

- OWA supports emphasis on improved nutrition, which is best accomplished through research and public education.
- OWA supports farm-to-school food programs.

### **Preemption Laws**

- OWA supports the pesticide pre-emption statute that says that all regulation of pesticides can only be done at the state or federal level.
- OWA supports the seed pre-emption statute that says that all regulation of agricultural seeds can only be done at the state or federal level.

### **Private Property Rights**

Private property ownership forms the basis of our free market economic system. This private ownership of land is vital in maintaining a dynamic and healthy environment and economy.

- OWA supports the multiple use of public land with emphasis on stewardship (management/conservation), rather than preservation.
- OWA supports the highest and best use of publicly owned forests, sustainably harvesting timber, with allocation of the revenue generated to the common school fund and the counties in which the timber is located.
- OWA supports legislation that would require government agencies to consider the impact of their rules and regulations on private property under the “takings” clause of the Oregon and United States constitutions. The legislation would require these agencies to assess the potential economic impact of their actions. This is needed as

agencies are exerting additional controls on the ownership and use of private property. These controls include:

- Wetland Regulations
  - Wildlife Habitat
  - Conservation Easements
  - Scenic Views
  - Natural Areas
  - Open Space
  - Historic Sites
  - Land Use Planning
  - Environmental and Endangered Species Restrictions
  - Denial of Water and/or Mineral Rights
  - Other Economic Uses of Property
  - Out Right Taking of Private Property Without Compensation
- OWA supports the monitoring of private, non-profit groups that purchase land with the intent to sell the land to the government for public use.

### **Railroad Abandonment**

When railroad abandonments occur, OWA supports the return of railroad rights-of-way to adjacent landowners; or where the railroad owns the land outright, any leaseholders should have the first option to purchase the land. Returning this property to the tax rolls is an added benefit in helping maintain economic vitality for local communities.

### **Farm & Forest Practices**

Farming and Forestry are essential to Oregon's economy, one cannot benefit without the other as our joint concern for the environment, economy and community are intertwined.

- OWA supports current RIGHT-TO-FARM laws. This legislation protects farmers and ranchers from complaints and legal action by neighbors who are irritated with noise, dust, smoke, odor, etc., which are integral parts of producing food and fiber.
- OWA recognizes that Farm and Forest practices require a diverse set of tools and methods to manage pests and disease.
- OWA opposes limiting or banning the use of farming or forestry methods to manage pests and disease without scientific consensus and support of the local farmers and foresters who manage the lands daily.

### **Sustainable Agriculture**

OWA defines sustainable agriculture as using farm practices and resources that produce safe, high quality food and other products for the US and the world, resulting in profitable operations that improve the land and environment for future generations.

- OWA supports flexibility and choices by individuals, rather than regulatory command and control, in making management decisions. Crop decisions are based on specific soil types, climate, in-puts, crop variety and the availability of markets for those crops. Each region in Oregon has specific climatic and soil differences that will affect these decisions.

## **Taxes**

### Capital Gains Tax

- OWA supports broadening of the \$250,000/\$500,000 exemption available on the sale of a personal residence to apply to the sale of farmland.

### Estate Tax

- OWA recognizes the myriad contributions of farm spouses and children to the accumulation of an estate.”
- OWA supports the elimination of federal and state estate taxes, making it possible for retiring farmers to ensure survival of the next generation of family farms.
- OWA supports legislation that lessens the burden of estate taxes on farmers and ranchers.

### Taxes – General

- OWA supports measures that will provide tax simplification for farmers, ranchers, and business and opposes any effort to make tax laws more burdensome.
- OWA supports limiting property taxes with the intent to help ease the tax burden for those passing land/assets to the next generation.

## **Water**

Water is the basis for all life. Ultimately, all of the water used in agriculture is used by consumers in the products they eat and wear; whether they choose to reside in the city or country.

- OWA recognizes agriculture as a priority user of water to continue producing the public benefits of food, fiber and shelter as opposed to prioritization of use of water for wildlife, recreational and scenic uses.
- OWA supports existing water rights and opposes additional water user fees.
- OWA supports programs that encourage municipalities and landowners through education, incentives, Soil Conservation Service, and local conservation districts to maintain and improve surface and ground water quality and quantity.
- OWA supports the development, construction and maintenance of feasible water storage facilities for the retention of winter rain and run-off. Water storage development, particularly in the Western states, will enable our country to meet increased water demands in the future.

- OWA supports dredging of the Columbia River to increase navigability.
- OWA supports retaining the word “navigable” in the Clean Water Act.
- OWA opposes federal purchase of privately held water rights in cases where the federal government would then hold the water right.

### **World Hunger and Food for Peace**

OWA supports institutional development assistance, emergency humanitarian assistance and technological aid to alleviate hunger throughout the world. Through shared research and technology, developing countries can be aided in progressing from subsistence agriculture to a self-sustaining system in their own country.

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