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President's Message

*John Zielinski, President
Marion County Farm Bureau*

We are well into the growing season here in Marion County, the heart of the Willamette Valley. This is a very busy time of year for farmers. This being an election year, this is also a busy season for those who are running for public office. The primaries are over, the Democratic and Republican parties have chosen their candidates. Now the race is on for the November elections, for those who will take office and govern Oregon.

Your Marion County Farm Bureau Board of Directors, will be taking time from running their farms, to interview Candidates for the State House of Representatives and the Senate. We will spend the majority of our June and July Board meetings listening to and asking questions of the Candidates. At our last Board meeting we formulated a questionnaire for the Candidates to complete in advance of their interview with our Board. We are taking the time necessary to discern which Candidates will best serve Agriculture since we know that you are busy on your farm too.

After our July Board meeting we will choose to endorse some Candidates. In some races the two Candidates for any one given office may hold similar ideas, in that case, we may choose not to endorse but to remain neutral. We, as your Board go through this process for several reasons. One, because we understand you are busy and may not have the time to research the Candidates yourself. Secondly, we want to establish a dialog with all of the Candidates about the needs of the agricultural community; to quote Lyndon Johnson, "All politics are local". With that in mind, we will no doubt be interacting with those who prevail in their bid for election. Our hope is that, because we, your Marion County Farm Bureau Board, took the time to meet with them during the campaign season they will be more mindful of the regulations, needs, and challenges faced by local farmers.

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GMO Ban Passes in Jackson County; Statewide GMO Labeling Measure Expected on November Ballot

A group of local petitioners called GMO-Free Jackson County scored a victory on election night when over 66% of the voters approved a ballot measure that bans genetic modification and engineering of plants in Jackson County, Oregon. The ballot measure also called on the county to provide inspections and allow enforcement through citizen lawsuits.

The statewide regulation of genetically modified food labeling will likely be determined by voters in November thanks to significant funds contributed by three entities to collect the necessary signatures: Mercola, Dr. Bronner's Magic Soaps, and Minnesota-based Organic Consumers Fund contributed \$350,000, \$250,000 and \$100,000 respectively. A total of \$810,000 million has been raised to date and the campaign has \$657,000 on hand. The ballot title issued for this measure reads as follows: "Requires Food Manufacturers, Retailers, To Label (Genetically Engineered) Foods As Such; State, Citizens May Enforce".

During the September 2013 special session the Oregon Legislature adopted Senate Bill 863 which required any Oregon policy regarding genetically modified crops to be implemented statewide, not on a county by county basis. The measure exempted Jackson County (the county already had a ballot measure qualified for the May 2014 ballot); if Jackson County's local measure had failed it would have also been subject to the local preemption and statewide standard.

Salem Harvest Wants You!

*Submitted by Katherine Daniels
Salem Harvest Board Member*

Salem Harvest connects farmers and backyard growers with volunteers who harvest fruits and vegetables that would otherwise go to waste. We provide a compassionate alternative to tilling under leftover crops or leaving them to rot. Farmers often have crops that cannot be efficiently harvested, are in excess of contracted amounts or are unsuited for commercial packing.

Last season, our volunteers harvested more than 75,000 pounds of fresh, locally-grown fruits and vegetables at more than 25 farm harvests in Marion and Polk Counties. More than half of each harvest is donated to the Marion-Polk Food Share or its affiliated food agencies, to help alleviate hunger in our community, and volunteers take home the remainder.

Salem Harvest is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization established in 2010 that has grown to be the largest harvesting organization in Oregon. In a state that has the nation's highest rate of childhood hunger, our local volunteers and growers have the opportunity to provide direct support to thousands of families and individuals in our community. Families and neighbors have the added opportunity to work together in the outdoors, meet local farmers and gain a better understanding and appreciation of where our food comes from.

Salem Harvest is fully insured and requires pickers to sign a property and liability release for each harvest. We carefully plan each harvest and supervise and instruct all of our volunteers. We invite you to contact Salem Harvest if you find that you cannot utilize all of your crop or crops this year or in any future year. You can contact us at: 503-400-6618 or crops@salemharvest.org or visit our website at www.salemharvest.org. Remember, your crop donations are tax deductible. Oregon Farm Bureau worked hard this past legislative session to get a crop donation tax credit back on the books.



Salem  Harvest

Mary Petzel Scholarship Deadline Extended to July 15

The application deadline for the Mary Petzel Scholarship has been extended to July 15, 2014. The Mary Petzel Memorial Scholarship is made available to any immediate member of a Marion County Farm Bureau family preparing to study at any university, four-year college, or junior college.

In 2013, the Marion County Farm Bureau awarded three \$1,000 scholarships; recipients were students enrolled at Oregon State University, Eastern Oregon University, and Linfield College, respectively.

Applications are available online at www.marioncofarm.com, by contacting the MCFB Office at 503-378-0595, emailing MCFB staff at jessica@marioncofarm.com, or visiting the MCFB website at www.marioncofarm.com.

China Offers Challenges, Potential for Produce

Lee Dean, Author

Vegetable Growers News (www.vegetablegrowersnews.com)

Excerpted with permission

It is impossible to survey China without considering an impressive list of superlatives. It is the world's largest producer and consumer of fruits and vegetables and is in the midst of the largest migration in human history, from the Chinese countryside to the nation's cities. This makes China a glittering prize for fresh produce companies, and an increasing number of them are making investments into the market.

With the world's second-largest economy and annual economic growth of 8 to 10 percent over the last two decades, China has become a middle-income country, said Eric Trachtenberg, director of the agriculture and sector at McLarty Associates, an international strategic advisory firm.

Other factors are contributing to a favorable environment for produce exports to China. The country has a shortage of arable land, with planted acres and total production in decline. Consumers are expressing an increased demand for higher-value products. A new middle-class society is hungry for global brands, largely due to concerns about the safety of domestically produced food.

"This urban middle class is spending more on food and spending more on eating out," Trachtenberg said. This new middle class will also demand more imported high-quality foods and new foods, which creates a market for more luxury, exotic and value-added products. Chinese consumers are uneasy about the quality of domestic food, rating food safety as their number one concern "by far," said Patrick Vizzone, regional head of food and agribusiness with National Australia Bank.

Food safety concerns are one reason why Chinese consumers crave global brands such as Zespri and Sunkist, and will pay a premium for them. Vizzone said this demand is also fueling the emergence of online sales of fresh produce and half-hour television infomercials devoted to produce.

"For sure, domestically people are starting to use their own brands. But it will take some time for consumers to trust those brands," said John Wang, CEO of Lantao Shanghai Great Harvest, which imports produce into China. Understand that there can be a lack of transparency from the Chinese about import rules. For companies considering an investment in the Chinese market, Wang advises getting first-hand knowledge. Above all, understand that wise practices know no boundaries. "Don't leave good business sense at the airport," Vizzone said. "This means that you must make the same sound business decisions in China that you would make at home."





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and Board
Activities
and Events



We're just a 'click' away!



Important Dates

July 10-13, 2014—Marion County Fair

July 15, 2014 —Mary Petzel Scholarship Deadline

July 16, 2014—MCFB Board Meeting &
Candidate Forum

Guests:

Paul Evans, Candidate for House District 20

Jodi Hack, Candidate for House District 19

Senator Alan Olsen, Candidate for Senate District 20

Bill Post, Candidate for House District 25

August 20, 2014— MCFB Board Meeting

Don't Miss Your Newsletter!

In an effort to be careful stewards of our resources, MCFB plans to switch to e-newsletters to save money on printing and postage. Members are encouraged to forward your email address to jessica@marioncofarm.com.