

HOUSE AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Thursday, November 21, 2013

HR D, State Capitol, Salem

Members Present: Representative Witt, Representative Frederick, Representative Clem, Representative Thompson, Representative Krieger, Representative Reardon, Representative Unger, Representative Whitsett

Member Excused: Representative Esquivel

INFORMATIONAL MEETING

BEE HEALTH AND PESTICIDE USE

Katy Coba, Director, Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), described the ODA response to the bee die off incidents this past summer in Wilsonville and later in Hillsboro: the department instigated a pesticide investigation and also adopted a temporary rule prohibiting the use of certain pesticide products. The temporary rule is effective June 22 – December 24, 2013. The investigation is expected to be complete in mid-December.

Director Coba also noted that the department relies on the scientific expertise of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). EPA has been interested in effects of pesticides on pollinators and has made some label changes and restrictions on products, including those used in Wilsonville.

The ODA is proposing additional label restrictions on two products to go into effect in 2014; this would prohibit the application of these pesticides to certain species. Oregon State University is now conducting bee health surveys in Oregon.

Paul Jepson, Director of the Integrated Plant Protection Center, Oregon State University, distributed [testimony](#) to the committee. He explained the working relationship between OSU and ODA and the role of the state Integrated Pest Management Program (IPM).

Dr. Jepson also discussed the history of neonicotinoids. These pesticides are made up of a very diverse set of chemicals and were introduced in 1990s in response to resistance to other pesticides. They are the most widely used insecticides in the world, and widely used in Oregon commercially, but also for homeowner and cosmetic purposes.

He highlighted Oregon's unique record for cooperative deployment of research, extension and regulatory processes to solve serious pesticide risk problems while maintaining commercial agricultural operations; the many effective options for risk management in Oregon; how OSU works effectively through the applicator licensing process and the county-based extension program to provide an education program which will now include bee health; and that bee health is not a single factor challenge.

Scott Black, Executive Director, Xerces Society, noted that he was gratified by quick response of ODA to the summer incidents and provided a [presentation](#) to the Committee. He discussed the decline in bee populations, stating that this decline is not due to pesticides alone. Additional factors include habitat loss and disease.

He described the use, characteristics and impacts of neonicotinoid insecticides. The Xerces Society supports federal legislation introduced by Congressman Blumenauer titled “Saving America’s Pollinators Act.” He noted that three neonicotinoids are banned or severely restricted in Europe for next two years.

Mr. Black suggested that Oregon could consider a timeout for these products. Oregon could also require better label language (especially for the non-farm consumer) and support state funded outreach and education. He suggested that the new state IPM law might be used to help state agencies reduce neonicotinoid use.

Carson Lord, Tree Frog Nursery and Past President, Oregon Association of Nurseries distributed a [column](#) he wrote on the summer bee die-offs. He described the different levels of pesticide applicator licenses. He would like to see rational decisions based on science and doesn’t support ban on neonicotinoids. He noted that the alternatives to neonicotinoids all pose different risks – for example, some are more toxic to humans.

Scott Dahlman, Executive Director, Oregonians for Food and Shelter (OFS), noted that this is a difficult issue for his members who need both bees and pesticides. The incidents this summer have focused attention on the issue again. A misapplication of a pesticide will be toxic. OFS supports following label directions, and holding accountable those who don’t. Natural toxins in trees were also present in the summer incidents. Neonicotinoids are important – they have been widely adopted and are lower in toxicity to humans. EPA has been petitioned twice to ban neonicotinoids and has responded by requiring a “bee box” on labels. In response to a question regarding making these pesticides a restricted use pesticide, Mr. Dahlman replied that they are a very effective product and not all growers have licenses; designating them a restricted use product would add a level of restriction to those growers.

Harry Vanderpool, Oregon State Beekeepers Association, Vanderpool Farms in South Salem provided a [presentation](#) on “Bee Friendly Insecticide Management.” Mr. Vanderpool said that he works with neighbors to communicate spraying plans before they happen and noted the importance of the beekeeper and applicator working together. He said more education is needed. Anyone proposing a ban should be required to have an alternative that is acceptable. He also suggested requiring mandatory refresher courses (including one about pollinator protection), providing a copy of the new OSU [publication](#) to every applicator and giving everyone a way to help save the bees. A good first step is the mutual understanding that we are all working very hard to make a living at the same time.

Alan Turanski, Vice President, GloryBee distributed a [chart](#) showing the crops, acreage and value of crops pollinated by bees in Oregon. He noted that GloryBee employs 177 Oregonians and discussed the importance of bees to business in Oregon. He shared from a business

perspective why bees are important to the Oregon economy. About 1/3 of products sold by GloryBee are dependent on the honey bee.

AGGIE BOND PROGRAM (HOUSE BILL 2700)

John Saris, Business Finance Manager, Business Oregon (BO) told the committee that BO planned to outsource development of program to a consulting firm; a firm is now under contract. They expect some deliverables in December, including a program framework, rules, a draft application, and a list of best practices from other states with a program. They expected it would take about 9 months to get program up and running. A final product is due back from the consultant in early February. They have had an opportunity to talk with some potential users of the program. In summary, they are on track to launch the program the first of April 2014.

Ivan Maluski, Friends of Family Farmers, is still expecting a lot of interest in the program. He reminded the committee that the program is important for a number of reasons, including that the average age of Oregon farmers is approaching 58 years of age and we expect a 50 percent turnover in the ownership of agricultural lands over next decade. There will be an average interest rate saving of 1 – 3 percent for people using this program.

Stephanie Page, Special Assistant to the Director, Oregon Department of Agriculture told the committee that the department is looking forward to getting word out about the program to potential users.

The committee asked the panel some questions about the cost per loan and the availability of loans for unimproved lands. They also offered to help notify people about the program.

COASTAL MULTI-SPECIES CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

Ed Bowles, Fish Division Administrator, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife made a [presentation](#) and provided the committee with a [handout](#) summarizing the planning process, draft elements and timeline. He discussed a June committee hearing at which a lot of concern was expressed about the draft plan, both substantive and confusion. The agency took a pause and refocused on listening to concerns and held some work group meetings. He listed outcomes of these meetings. As a result of this process the agency is proposing a plan with fewer changes from status quo; providing conservation benefits, new fishing opportunities, and stronger integration with the Oregon Hatchery Research Center; and has achieved consensus on key elements of plan.

ODFW is planning a series of town hall meetings early next year and to take the plan to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission for approval in March or April 2014.

BOAT CHECK LAW – SUMMER 2013 UPDATE

Glenn Dolphin, Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Program Coordinator, Oregon State Marine Board submitted a program [briefing](#) on the Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Program. He noted that the program was established in 2009 with the passage of House Bills 2220 and 2583.

In 2013, the program completed 7,427 mandatory watercraft inspections including 279 decontaminations. Of these inspections, 52 percent were Oregon residents and 48 percent were visitors from 42 different states, three Canadian provinces and Mexico. Thirty of the 42 states or provinces represented have populations of either or both Quagga and Zebra mussels. They completed 17 hot water decontaminations for Quagga/Zebra mussels and 262 hand removal decontaminations for Eurasian Watermilfoil or other types of aquatic species this summer.

He listed both program challenges and goals.

Rick Boatner, Terrestrial Invasive Species and Wildlife Integrity Coordinator, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife provided a [presentation](#) on the program. He was asked his level of confidence that Oregon can prevent the introduction of these mussels. He replied that the longer we can hold them off the better – this saves money on infrastructure and gives science more time to come up with a way to get rid of them. Without this program, we would almost certainly already have these invasive mussels in Oregon.

PINNIPEDS

This agenda item was deferred until a January or February 2014 committee meeting.

DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL COMMITTEE BILLS

Representative Witt listed three potential committee bills: (1) water well inspectors continuing education, (2) cormorant research funding and (3) the 2013 raccoon bill. He asked the committee to submit additional suggestions.

He also told the committee he is planning a listening tour in Eastern Oregon in December and asked that they let him know if they would like to participate.