

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
GOVERNMENT - TO - GOVERNMENT 2008 ANNUAL REPORT

1. Agency: Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA)

2. Executive Committee Member:

Katy Coba, Director
Oregon Department of Agriculture
635 Capitol St. NE
Salem, OR 97301-2532
Ph 503-986-4552
Fax 503-986-4750

Tribal Liaison:

John Byers - Operations and Program Manager
Natural Resources Division
Oregon Department of Agriculture
635 Capitol St. NE
Salem, OR 97301-2532
Ph 503-986-4718
Fax 503-986-4730

3. Major areas of work with Oregon Tribes FY 2007-2008

John Byers, Natural Resources Division Operations and Program Manager, represents the agency in the Natural Resources Cluster of the Government to Government organization, a committee that includes representatives of natural resources agencies and Oregon's tribes.

Oregon Department of Agriculture divisions serving the needs of and providing assistance to Oregon tribes during FY 2008 were:

Agricultural Development and Marketing Division: The Agricultural Development and Marketing Division offers assistance through the development and retention of production and processing capacity, and is available to help with the promotion and marketing of tribes' agricultural and food products industries. In 2008 and into 2009, the Agricultural Development and Marketing Division, through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is offering Specialty Crop Block Grants. With the help of ODA, Tribes are being encouraged to apply for these grants. Proposals that enhance the competitiveness of Oregon's specialty crops are eligible for funding. Eligible activities include product research, development and promotion, market research, plant health programs and others.

The Agricultural Development and Marketing Division will propose to the 2009 legislature a "legislative concept" that clarifies the Agricultural and Marketing Divisions responsibilities to expand market opportunities by getting the authority to enter into agreements for testing and certification of market products.

This legislation could have an impact on the commodities tribes produce and sell commercially. If passed, Oregon would have the capability of entering into agreements to test products and ensure they meet the standards of the importer. For example, wheat produced in Oregon would be tested and certified prior to export, speeding the shipping process for fresher and timelier delivery enhancing the value of Oregon products.

Animal Health and Livestock Identification Division: The Animal Health and Livestock Identification Division (AHID) has the responsibility to prevent the introduction and spread of diseases in animals.

In 2008, AHID worked with the Warm Springs and Umatilla Tribes to help them with brand inspection and estray livestock issues.

Food Safety Division: The Food Safety Division's mission is to prevent the spread of food borne illness. Diseases caused by food in the United States are responsible for an estimated 76 million cases of gastrointestinal illnesses, 325,000 illnesses resulting in hospitalizations, and 5,000 deaths each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In 2008, the Food Safety Division invited tribes to participate in a Food and Drug Administration grant proposal entitled, "Food Protection Rapid Response Team Program Infrastructure Improvement Prototype Project". This grant, if awarded, would fund specialized training in the event of intentional or unintentional food contamination in Oregon, state wide.

Measurement Standards Division: The Measurement Standards Division (MSD) assures consumers that the weight or measure of food and nonfood products, services or commodities purchased in Oregon is accurate. MSD checks the quantity labeling on packaged products, investigate complaints, and annually inspect 54,000 scales, gas pumps, and meters statewide.

Although tribes are not inspected by MSD, Oregon tribes have requested that MSD license and test their gas pumps at specific locations.

Natural Resource Division: The Natural Resources Division is responsible for regulating agricultural practices for the protection of water quality; it coordinates its planning process at the basin and sub-basin levels with tribes and with federal land management agencies. Participation from local tribes has been sought in the advisory groups to ensure that tribal concerns about water quality and endangered species protection are provided a forum among agricultural producers.

Water Quality Specialist, Tom Straughan, interacted with tribal members from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) on the following projects or programs:

Mr. Straughan continues to participate in the monthly meetings of the Tiicham Conservation District, chaired by Louie Dick, member of the CTUIR and an at-large director of the Umatilla County SWCD.

He interacts with CTUIR staff regarding many of the natural resource issues affecting the Umatilla Basin. These include the OWEB Small Grant Team, the Umatilla Technical Team that coordinates the basin-wide water quality-monitoring project, Watershed Field Days, Umatilla Agricultural Water Quality Management Local Advisory Committee, and the Critical Groundwater Task Force.

Through the Grant and Wheeler SWCDs, Tom interacts with staff from the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs (CTWS) on natural resource issues in the John Day Basin including restoration project development.

Water Quality Specialist Ellen Hammond and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (CTWS) work together collecting, sharing, and interpreting water quality data collected from the Middle and Upper Deschutes Basin. CTWS provided content to the Jefferson County Rural Living Handbook.

Plant Division: The Plant Division includes four sections: Insect Pest Prevention & Management, Native Plant Conservation, Noxious Weed Control, and Nursery & Christmas Tree. The Division's programs protect Oregon's agricultural industries and natural environment from harmful plant pests, diseases and noxious weeds; enhance the value and marketability of exported nursery stock, Christmas trees, seeds and other agricultural products; and further the conservation of threatened and endangered plants.

In 2009, the Plant Division is presenting a legislative concept to the Oregon Legislature that changes current plant quarantine laws. The current weed control laws are over 50 years old and were originally designed to combat Tansy Ragwort. Today many more noxious weeds exist, and ODA requires legislative authority to help eradicate them. Although any weed control legislation has no direct impact on tribes, tribal leadership has made noxious weed control a priority in many areas. Consequently, the control of noxious weeds near or adjacent to tribal lands is important to prevent noxious weed spread.