Announcing New Berry Program Extension Focus
By Mike Bondi, NWREC Director

Thanks to the hard work of Willamette Valley strawberry and caneberry growers in last year’s Oregon Legislative Session, $120,000 was appropriated to support Oregon State University’s Extension education and applied research addressing the production needs of these industries between now and June 30, 2019. Matt Unger, Oregon Strawberry Commission Chair; Commission member Mike Christensen; and Commission Executive Philip Gutt, all deserve recognition for working with the Legislature on this request. Oregon Representative, Rick Lewis, Silverton, is the person in Salem that made all of this happen. Please feel free to contact Representative Lewis and tell him, “Thank You!”

Matt Unger is here today. Is Mike Christensen here today, too? Please stand, guys. Everyone, be sure to thank Matt and Mike, too!

According to the Legislature, the new strawberry and caneberry program is to be based at the North Willamette Research and Extension Center in Aurora while working closely with growers throughout the valley.

Today, we are pleased to announce that Javier Fernandez Salvador, OSU’s Small Farms Extension Agent serving Marion and Polk Counties, has agreed to provide leadership for this special Extension Berry education and research effort. Javier expects to devote about 1/3 of his Small Farms program over the next 18 months to work on strawberry and caneberry production and management. In addition, Javier will be working closely with a part-time research assistant and a program technician to support his work on this project—with the funding provided in the Legislature’s appropriation.

Javier is here today, too, and part of our Organic Panel coming up next and can share about his plan for the coming months.