

Ag industry helps supports research center

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Local growers and agricultural industry representatives implemented a plan for local support for the Central Oregon Agricultural Research Center, raising \$110,000 locally. An additional \$26,000 was provided by state commodity groups for wheat and potatoes to support current research activity at COARC.

The College of Agricultural Sciences challenged local agricultural communities around the state to provide 25 percent of the current base budget for the branch experimental stations. The assumption for maintaining the 13 branch experimental stations around the state has been that they provide local value in Oregon's diverse agriculture and natural resource industries. Continued strategic investment across the state by the CAS will be guided by industry response to this challenge.

Local growers and industry representatives, recognizing the economic value provided by COARC, developed a plan for voluntary contributions to meet this challenge. Growers across the three counties of Central Oregon are being asked to voluntarily contribute \$1/irrigated acre for non-contracted crops. Vegetable seed and grass seed growers were contacted by local seed contractors about the suggested grower contribution of \$10/acre for carrots, parsley and onions, and \$3/acre for grass seed. In addition seed contractors and agricultural dealers are committed to providing meaningful, annual contributions are their own behalf.

COARC's economic impact upon the local agricultural community is seen through applied research, product registrations, educational programs and services, and new crop evaluation. COARC is proactive about addressing agricultural issues in the region, and providing an incentive for growers to support our research and educational activities.

A recent example is the initiation of an alfalfa variety evaluation last year that includes both conventional and Roundup Ready cultivars. For the first time, this four-year project will provide independent feed value testing (ADF, NDF) for each of the four cuttings, in addition to the protein and yield data provided in the past.

We are committed to making the results available in near real time to assist growers in their management decisions. This research is being funded by entry fees from seed companies at no cost to local alfalfa growers.

A second example is ongoing research being conducted on the amount of ammonia volatilization that occurs with urea-based fertilizers under Central Oregon conditions. Losses in the 25 percent range, or 40 pounds N/acre, are possible when urea is applied to bluegrass seed fields following the last irrigation in mid-October.

What is being learned from this project is changing the way agricultural dealers and growers are doing business related to fertilizer handling and crop fertility.

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