# Random Ramble— Won’t you be my neighbor?

Admittedly, I grew up with *Mr. Rogers* on PBS along with 3-2-1 *Contact* and the *Electric Company.* A group of my peers and I went down memory lane together just the other day on the aforementioned shows. Mr. Rogers was great at being a good neighbor and could wear a button-up sweater like no other! Not sure why I started with this other than to cause folks to google the 3-2-1 *Contact* theme song and go down that road with me!

The consecutive years of drought in our little corner of the world has been pretty stressful for most, if not all, involved. I think this may help contribute to folks being a little bit more abrupt with each other than normal. Neighbors are more likely to be a little less forgiving of each other when everybody feels under pressure. Unfortunately, in the past couple of years I was privy to a few neighbor gripes that most of the time would not flare up like they eventually did. While I do understand the frustration of drifted chemicals in one case or drifted cattle in another, I find myself appealing to the affected parties to really try to put things in a larger context.

In one instance, a landowner was wanting to report their neighbor for not controlling their scotch thistles. They were asking me what to do and I first asked them if there was anything their neighbor could report about them. I think we really need to be thinking about consequences and the adverse effect these decisions could have for future interactions. If a guy or gal picks every battle available to them, it can be exhausting and the “picked on” neighbor might be ready for revenge at the next opportunity.

We all know the adage “good fences make good neighbors” and I wholeheartedly believe that, but sometimes, things happen. As we learned in Jurassic Park, the critters can get out from time to time despite our best efforts. Unlike, Jurassic Park, most of the time nobody gets eaten or needs to be stomped. This is where I hope everybody can put the damage in perspective and try to remain neighborly with each other. Most of the time, solutions can be ascertained just by talking things out and sometimes an apology (no matter how hard it may be) goes a long ways. Maybe understanding neighbors make good neighbors!

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**March 15, 2016 is National Agriculture Day!** This designation was first made in 1973 and is a traveling date meaning it is not on March 15 every year. It is an opportunity to stop and recognize the contribution that agriculture makes to our way of life. There is a dedicated website www.agday.org. Check it out and see if there is anything you want to do to recognize agriculture that day!
Newsletter Mailing List: I have done a bunch of updating on my mailing list and if you are receiving Growing Awareness and want no part of this, please let me know and I will drop you from the distribution list. Also, if you know of anybody new to the area or otherwise might not be receiving this and might benefit, please contact us using the info on the back page. The more, the merrier! While we are trending towards electronic delivery, we are still happy to distribute Growing Awareness through a hard copy format.

Reminder!!
Check this site out on potential field issues: Pacific Northwest Pest Alert You can even sign up for email alerts! This is a great way to stay current. Subscribe today!

Pacific Northwest Pest Alert Network
Thanks to our 2015 Sponsors: Snake River Sugar Research and Seed Alliance

Current Alerts
Crop Alerts
Landscape & Garden
Join Alert Mail List

Glyphosate Tolerant Creeping Bentgrass: Meeting with USDA - March 1

What Lies Beneath
One of the most exciting things that happens during every spring is the installation of irrigation systems improvements and other excavation work. Landscaping projects and fencing are also items that can cause unnecessary excitement when digging. Due to the fact that it is spring and the irrigation season is quickly arriving, many of us might be in a huge hurry to get things done. That is when we can make mistakes such as not knowing what lies beneath when the excavator first digs down into the soil. There are services that are happy to come out and make sure the previously buried items are located. By clicking on the link: http://digsafelyoregon.com/ homeowners and professionals alike can submit requests to have pipelines or wires marked before they are found the hard (and exciting) way. Another site that is a means to the same end is http://call811.com/ as this link indicates, you can also call 811 and use phone technology to accomplish the same goals. Remember when we used to use phones? Most of the time, these services request at least two days worth of lead time to make sure they have time to get out there. There is a thing called the Pipeline Ag Safety Alliance that has some materials available with posters and statistics to help stress the need to be safe when digging.

Updating information
We have posted an updated version of the Custom Operators Rates and Directory to our website. Feel free to stop by the office and pick up a copy or venture on to the fad we call the interweb and download a copy right here: http://extension.oregonstate.edu/malheur/sites/default/files/custom_rates_bulletin_feb2016.pdf
Speed limit changes in Oregon

As many of you have seen, our speed limits in rural Oregon went up on many roads on March 1st. While I think that is great when I am cruising through Moores Hollow on I-84 in the Aveo, I don’t know that I care for it in the agricultural center of our valley. When I commuted to Parma for many years while working at the U of I R & E Center, it seemed like there was a constant stream of accidents between Parma and Anderson Corner. That stretch of road is 65MPH. It honestly felt too fast with the amount of agricultural traffic that frequented that stretch. It is even had big wide shoulders for large equipment to hunker over on and it is still pretty scary. We don’t have those big highway shoulders between Cairo Jct and Vale but we have the same speed limit as that stretch of HWY 95 now. We will also continue to have large combines, tillage equipment, swathers, and a relentless wave of farm trucks lumbering on and off this highway and others. We cannot do anything about the speed limit, so maybe we should spend time talking to our operators and loved ones about the need to maintain awareness of sharing the roads with items that do not even approach the old speed limit much less the new one. We could all use a refresher on highway safety anyway.

Tom Karsky of the University of Idaho is an Extension Farm Safety Specialist and has put together a document dealing with preventing road accidents with agricultural equipment. Here is the link: [http://nasdonline.org/static_content/documents/1674/d001574.pdf](http://nasdonline.org/static_content/documents/1674/d001574.pdf)

A couple of the highlights from Karsky’s work include training your operators to be extra careful in regard to what is happening around them. A vehicle traveling 65+MPH can close a distance very quickly when you are trying to enter or exit the roadway and that needs to be recognized. Using a slow moving vehicle sign (SMV) is important as well for equipment that travels less than 25MPH. That always seemed strange to me that a little orange triangle is supposed to recognized even though the swather, tractor, combine or groundhog is a big enough indicator as it is! However, it is the rules and perhaps every little bit helps when it comes to safety! Karsky does not get as specific as tying the tail on an Eversman Landplane straight before getting out on the road but please be aware of any “tricks of the trade” such as that to help keep equipment under control. Big slow equipment and fast objects do not seem like a good combination. As spring breaks, there will be more and more agricultural activity on our roads and we need to keep an eye out.
The Wayback this month comes courtesy of Linda Rowe at the Malheur County SWCD. It is always nice to recognize the folks who have made a difference over the years and to realize the amount of growth we have all undertaken! Stay tuned and we will continue to add these history lesson tidbits from time to time. Thanks Linda!

In February 1970, Darrell Standage was sworn in as an elected official for the Malheur County Soil and Water Conservation District. There are 5 zones set geographically across the county and two at-large positions. To date, Darrell still holds an elected position in Zone 3 representing the Vale area. A Director’s term is four years.

Darrell was chair when the district hired their first part-time secretary in 1985 (30+ years ago!) and the first district Manager in 1990. In 1993, Darrell was appointed to the Malheur County Groundwater Citizens Advisory Committee by then-Governor Barbara Roberts. It was this committee’s duty to develop a Groundwater Management Action Plan that would address the high nitrate levels being discovered in the area’s groundwater. The SWCD was named the lead agency in coordinating the plan, Darrell organized the board and went to the County Court to ask for financial assistance. The Groundwater Plan was successfully completed and approved by the Governors Strategic Water Management Group and is still recognized today as one of the most successful programs.

To date, the district now has a part-time secretary, district manager, water quality specialist and a rangeland specialist. It is folks like Darrell Standage that has vision and dedication that keeps Malheur County special.

Stripe Rust Could be a Major Issue this Year! (This is an excerpt from the OWGL Newsletter)

Xianming Chen, Research Plant pathologist, USDA-ARS

Based on our forecast models using the weather conditions from November 2015 to February 2016, stripe rust will potentially cause yield loss of 53% on highly susceptible varieties, indicating an epidemic in the severe (40-60% yield loss on susceptible varieties) range. This prediction is much higher than the 35% forecasted in January based only on the November-December weather conditions. If highly susceptible varieties have 53% yield losses, the currently grown winter wheat cultivars will have yield losses from 0 to 26%. On March 3, we were checking wheat fields in Whitman, Walla Walla, Benton, Franklin, and Adams counties in Washington, winter wheat plants ranged from tillering (Feekes 2) to early jointing (Feekes 5). Big differences were observed in crop uniformity resulted from the soil moisture conditions in the fall. The development of stripe rust is much earlier than normal. Stripe rust on wheat plants has been found on susceptible varieties near Walla Walla and in the Horse Heaven Hills recently. (That is a long way from Malheur County, but I think we should be aware of the potential for stripe rust in the Treasure Valley.)

Recommendations for the Pacific Northwest

As stripe rust has been found in Oregon and Washington and is predicted to be severe, control of stripe rust is necessary this year. Some general recommendations for the eastern Pacific Northwest are the following:

1) For winter wheat, check your field just before herbicide application. If a susceptible or moderately susceptible winter wheat variety (ratings 5 to 9 on the Buyers' Guide) is planted, or you find stripe rust in the field, consider using fungicide at the time of herbicide application.

2) For spring wheat, consider planting resistant varieties and avoid susceptible ones. Use the Seed Buyers Guide to choose varieties rated 1 to 4 for stripe rust and avoid those rated 5-9 if possible.

3) Based on some of the weather forecasts for the Pacific Northwest, we may have good moistures through May. This is good for high yield potential, but also good for stripe rust development. As this rust season has already started and is likely a much longer one than normal, second application may be needed around the flag leaf stage, depending upon the first time of fungicide application, rust re-development in the field, whether the variety has a high-level of high-temperature adult plant resistance, and weather conditions. General recommendation for using a second application or not will be made late as the season and rust progress.
Coming Attractions
May 14, 2016 Malheur Exp, Sta. Wildflower Day
June 9, 2016 Malheur Experiment Station Weed Tour
July 13, 2016 Farm Fest at the Malheur Experiment Station
There will most likely be several additions and more information constantly being updated.
Check out our calendar of events at our website.
www.extension.oregonstate.edu/malheur/

Go Beavers!

We are on the Web:
http://extension.oregonstate.edu/malheur

Safety Net Enrollment with the Farm Service Agency
Remember back a year or so ago when we were talking about all that PLC or ARC gobbledygook? Even though the election you made for your farm cannot be changed until at least 2018, you still need to enroll annually. To that end you have until August 1, 2016 to enroll for the 2016 crop year. You will need to swing by your local FSA office to do so. The quicker you stop in, the less time you have to get busy and forget! It should not take too long and you probably need to stop in and do your crop reports anyway!

A Reminder about Burn Permits in Malheur County
A lot of smoke plumes are visible in the early spring as folks work to get their property cleaned up. Burn permits in Malheur County are now administered by local rural fire protection districts. None of them are valid within city limits and all of them can be procured for free. They can be found and picked up in your towns’ respective city hall. In Vale and Nyssa a permit can be picked up that will include burn barrels and field burning that is valid for one calendar year. If you get a permit for the Ontario area, it is good all year for burn barrels but valid for only 7 days for field burning. All of the folks I talked to strongly encourage that somebody getting ready to drop a match warn their local fire department first. If you are going to have a fairly sizable fire, it is good to let somebody know in advance. That way, if a neighbor or passerby reports your fire, the fire department will already know it is not an emergency. I have a great story about that sometime if you ask me about a previous experience along those lines. Also, if you are burning and you have neighbors nearby, please think about where your smoke is going and what kind of potential acrimony you might generate before you light your fire. That is a Golden Rule situation that is not to be forgotten!
Small Farms and What to do About Them!
In preparing for a field visit to a small acreage landowner who is new to this area, I found a neat publication from OSU titled *What Can I Do With My Small Farm?*
[www.catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/ec1529](http://www.catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/ec1529)
Check it out at the link above. You can read it online or order a nice hardcopy for $2.50. It is full of things to consider when trying to decide what you want to do with your dream plot of land after you acquire it. If it gets your thought process rolling and you have further questions, feel free to stop by our office and we can visit about it!

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