Oregon State University Extension Service

MID-COLUMBIA FARMER'S NEWSLETTER

May 2024

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We're on the web!
http://extension.oregonstate.edu/wasco
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Grain and Rain

The average price for soft white wheat in Portland for March and April was $5.63 and $5.83 per bushel for 10.5% protein. A year ago the price was at $7.78 and $7.50 during March and April. So far the price in May has been around $6.41, a year ago the price was at $7.24 this far into the month. Barley prices have been averaging around $180 per ton over the last two months.

The Columbia Basin Agricultural Research Center is in the process of putting in a new weather station at the Sherman Station in Moro and in the interim, they do not have staff collecting rainfall data. Average precipitation across Sherman County in March was 0.79 inches ranging from 0.45 east of Wasco to 0.96 west of Wasco. Average precipitation across Sherman County in April was 0.45 inches ranging from 0.29 in Rufus to 0.71 south west of Grass Valley. Rainfall cooperators in Moro have reported 10.23 inches so far for the crop year, 101% of the long-term average for Moro.

Precipitation at The Dalles Airport for March and April was 1.14 and 0.29 inches at 97% and 33% of the 30 year average. So far in May rainfall is at 0.72 inches, 124% of average. Crop year total for The Dalles Airport is at 101% of average with 12.74 inches since September 1st. Rainfall recorded by the AgriMet weather station in Dufur recorded 1.04 inches for March, 0.47 for April, and 0.91 for May through the 24th of the month. Average precipitation across Wasco County in March was 1.09 inches ranging from 1.97 in Mosier to 0.60 the Columbia District. Average precipitation in April was 0.47 ranging from 0.24 outside of The Dalles to 0.74 on Juniper Flat. No rainfall to report from rainfall cooperators yet for May, but rainfall totals for the month are looking promising.

Climate Outlook

Rainfall over the last 3 months in the Mid Columbia is at 70-90% of average with temperatures about average. Fortunately, both Sherman and Wasco Counties are no longer in any form of drought according to the drought monitor thanks to recent precipitation. Across the state of Oregon abnormally dry conditions are only present in the northeast corner and the central region starting below Jefferson County.

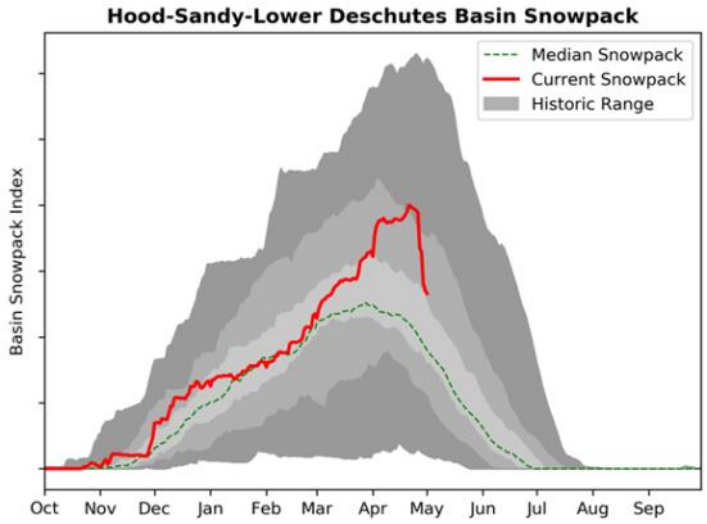
La Niña conditions are expected to return in September and overall conditions appear neutral over the next few months. Weather will likely turn warmer and drier in early June with an expected shift in the Pacific Ridge. Ridge events often favor hot and dry conditions across Oregon and often impact wheat development during June. The recent rainfall will help buffer the crop condition, but fingers crossed for a continued cool and wet start to June.

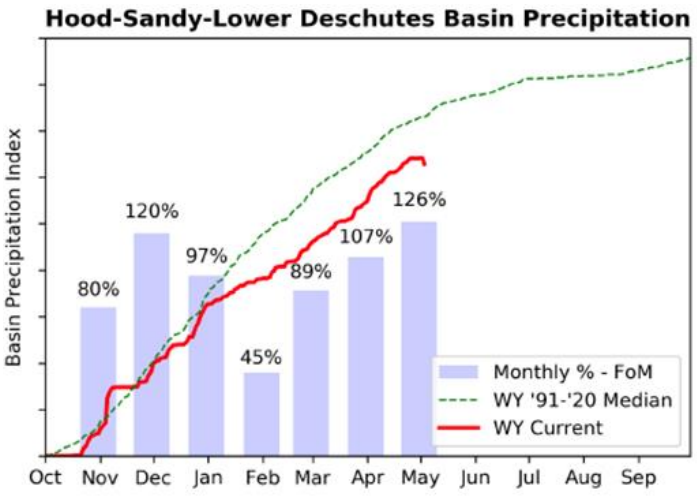
Climate Outlook Continued...
According to NOAA over the next three months there is a 33 to 50% chance for below average precipitation and a 33-50% chance for above average temperatures across northern Oregon.

The Oregon state climate office is forecasting the following conditions for the North Central Region of Oregon (Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Morrow, and Umatilla Counties):

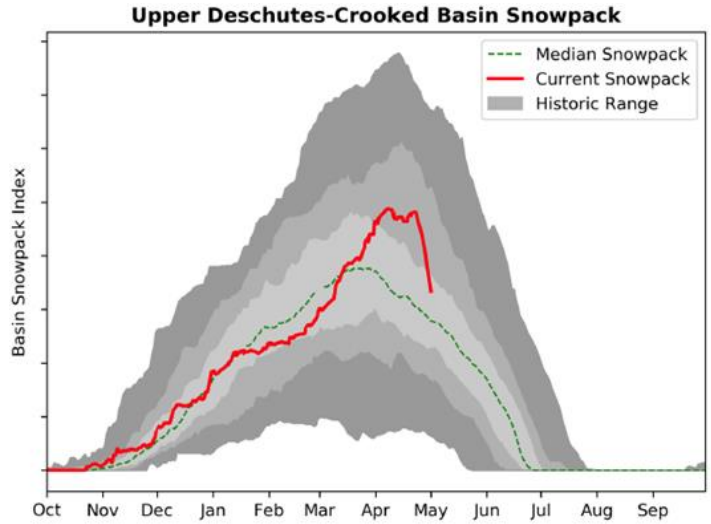
- June through August is expected to be 1.1°F above average with precipitation 79% of average.
- June is predicted to be 1.1°F above average with rainfall at 69% of average.
- July is expected to be 0.8°F above average with rainfall at 169% of average.
- August is predicted to be 1.6°F above average with rainfall at 29% of average.

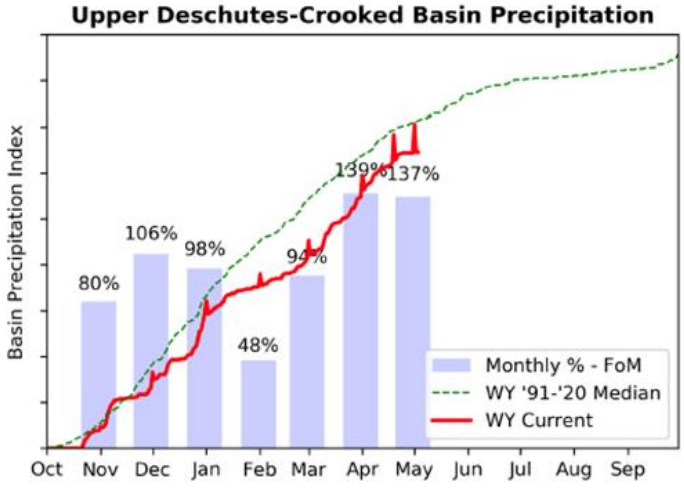
Snowpack
For the Hood, Sandy, and Lower Deschutes Basin snowpack was at 177% of median on May 1, modestly higher than April when the basin snow-pack was 126% of median. April precipitation is above normal at 126% of median. Precipitation since the beginning of the water year (WY) at the start of October is 88% of median.





For the Upper Deschutes Basin snowpack is 158% of median as of May 1st, higher than last month when the basin snowpack was 131% of median. April precipitation is above normal at 137% of median. Precipitation since the beginning of the water year since October 1st is 94% of median.





Wheat Market Outlook

The price for wheat has thankfully started increasing primarily due to crop conditions beginning to deteriorate in the northern hemisphere. The main wheat growing regions of Russia have also been abnormally dry and cold. In the United States wheat is need of more rainfall in western Kansas, Nebraska, and parts of Colorado. Wheat stocks remaining in India are at their lowest levels in the last 16 years and the government imports of wheat 25% lower than last year. Continued wet weather and flooding in France and Germany is lowering crop quality and expected yields.

The Russian wheat belt has been drier than average with precipitation from mid March through mid April at 60% to 80% of normal with temperatures 35 to 40 F higher than average. Russian wheat production estimates have been lowered to 85.7 MMT (million metric tons), resulting in an increase in the price for Russian wheat. Severe frost also impacted the south-central Russian wheat producing region with temperatures in early May dropping to 24 F. Several regions of Russia declared a state of emergency due to the cold weather.

The May World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates gave estimates for the 2024/25 marketing year. Overall world wheat production is expected to be up 10.5 MMT from the prior year at 798 MMT. As stated above Russian wheat yields will likely be 3.5 MMT lower than expected, but wheat production is expected to be higher in Canada, Australia, and the United States. Expected world wheat consumption has increased to 802.4 MMT, the highest on record. Ending stocks for the next marketing year are expected to be around 253.6 MMT. The U.S. is anticipated to produce 50.6 MMT of wheat with 21.1 MMT being exported.

An interesting development in Argentina where Bioceres Crop Solutions is selling genetically modified wheat seeds to farmers that they modified with the HB4 GM wheat trait to resist drought. This is the first time that GM technology has been made commercially available to farmers.

Wheat Crop Conditions

In Oregon 93% of spring wheat is emerged, 7% higher than a year ago. In Washington 95% of spring wheat is emerged, 11% higher than a year ago. 31% of winter wheat is headed in Oregon as of May 19th, this is double what it was this time last year and up 6% from the five year average for this time of year. Similarly, 35% of winter wheat is headed in Washington, also double from a year ago and the five year average.

Winter wheat conditions are looking good for the Pacific Northwest, though conditions have deteriorated slightly due to some observed freeze damage. In Oregon only 11% of the crop is in very poor to poor condition, 30% fair, 49% good, and 10% excellent. Winter wheat in Washington isn't looking as great due to missing out on rainstorms that did reach Oregon. Washington wheat is ranked at 18% very poor to poor condition, 39% fair, 40% good, and 3% excellent. Idaho winter wheat is so far looking the best out of the tri-state region with 4% very poor to poor condition, 29% fair, 63% good, and 4% excellent. However, wheat in northern Idaho is facing drier conditions.

Across the 18 wheat producing states that are reported winter wheat is ranked as 5% very poor, 13% poor, 33% fair, 42% good, and 7% excellent. A week ago the crop was ranked similarly, except was 1% higher in the good to excellent category. Overall conditions are better than a year ago when winter wheat was ranked at 18% very poor, 22% poor, 29% fair, 26% good, and 5% excellent. The Wheat Quality Council's Hard Red Winter Wheat Tour noted variable wheat conditions across the Great Plains with some areas impacted by stripe rust, Wheat Streak Mosaic Virus, and freeze damage. Yields are expected to be better than previous years due to improved soil moisture conditions with an average expected of just below 50 bushels per acre.

Stripe Rust Update

With the recent rainfall and cooler weather stripe rust is starting to show up in North Central Oregon. Take time to scout fields and be on the lookout for stripe rust. Stripe rust development will start slowing once temperatures swing back above 75 F.

Stripe rust is being found in both Magic and some VooDoo and Mani in Morrow and Sherman Counties and likely other regions as well. Rust is taking longer to show up on VooDoo than Magic, but still needs to be

Stripe Rust Update Continued...
watched. Keep an eye on susceptible to moderately susceptible varieties. The cool weather looks to continue for another several days and will help rust infection possibly spread into moderately susceptible varieties.

The decision to apply a fungicide should be based on the amount of disease in the field, the yield potential, and the susceptibility of the variety planted. The price for wheat has improved slightly, but consider the return on your investment before ordering the spray plane or filling up your sprayer. There is also limited time to put on fungicides with wheat at lower elevations, early planted, or early maturing varieties that have already flowered. Read your fungicide label – many products do not allow you to apply during later crop stages close to flowering due to concerns with residue. In addition, the likelihood of economic benefit from a fungicide for stripe rust drops off sharply after flowering unless the stripe rust levels exceed 65 per cent severity (more than 65 per cent of the flag leaf area covered with rust pustules).

Soil pH – Liming Research
Dr. Amber Moore, Soil Scientist at OSU, is working with a graduate student examining liming application in a greenhouse study with wheat. They used sulfur to lower the pH in Walla Walla silt loam soils down to a pH of 3.8. The majority of wheat production in eastern Oregon is with Walla Wall silt loam soils. They are seeing a good response with 3 tons to the acre of lime applied that is incorporated 6" deep by hand to simulate what farmers might use with an implement. They also surface applied ag lime at the same rate and so far the results are not looking as promising. Recent published research out of Montana also supports that incorporation of lime is needed in lower rainfall regions across the Northwest to see a response. With the adoption of no-till we would all like to avoid tillage, but it looks like it might be necessary for lime applications to work. Liquid lime or liquid calcium products may be a better solution to avoid tillage, but often these products can be more expensive. Soil pH continues to decline in wheat fields across Oregon due to the continued use of synthetic nitrogen fertilizers, but the cost of lime continues to be prohibitive to apply lime at large scales. Hopefully in coming years there will be cost incentives and programs from USDA to help make liming more affordable at the scale that will be needed in another decade or so. For now the good news is that we have been unintentionally selecting for more acidic tolerant wheat varieties that are being tested and breed in similarly low soil pH on industry and university plots. Come to the Wasco or Sherman County Crop tours to learn more – agendas later in this newsletter.

Fertilizer Trends
Fertilizer prices have been increasing over the last few month and often peak in the spring.

- Anhydrous is up slightly from a month ago at $794/ton or $0.48/lb. of N.
- Urea is up at $585/ton or $0.64/lb. of N, this is down 2% from a year ago.
- UAN28 is up at $364/ton or $0.65/lb of N, this is down 14% from a year ago.
- UAN32 is up at $418/ton or $0.65/lb of N, this is down 18% from a year ago.
- Potash is down slightly from a month ago with an average price of $513/ton.

The Port of Baltimore where the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapsed handles 15% of UAN imports into the United States. Initially there were concerns that this would impact the UAN market, but so far that response has been fairly muted with prices increasing primarily due to seasonal shifts. In the past markets have peaked in May and this continues to be the case with little impact from the port closure thanks to strong imports from other ports.

Hay and Pasture Outlook
Pasture and rangeland outlook is looking improved from a year ago across the West and the United States. The U.S. currently has less drought than any time in the last four years. Range and pasture conditions across the U.S. rated as poor and very poor are about 25%, an improvement over 37% last year. 47% of pastures and ranges are currently rated in good to excellent condition, compared to 34% last year. Conditions are looking rough in Arizona and New Mexico, and Florida though. The Western U.S. range and pasture conditions rated poor and very poor started below 18% compared to 21% last year. Range and pasture in Oregon is ranked with 15% very poor to poor condition, 31% fair, 35% good, and 19% excellent.

Hay and Pasture Outlook Continued...
The total U.S. hay stocks on May 1 were at 21.0 million tons, up 46.6% from a year ago with drought improvement across the nation. The current May 1 total stocks are 8.9% higher than the 10-year average from 2013-2022. Last year the May 1st stocks were 25.7 percent below the ten-year average. Nationally the price for hay is lower by about $60/ton compared to a year ago.

Pricing off the Oregon Direct Hay report (accessed here: https://beav.es/iTs) is starting to come in for first cutting hay in the Central Oregon region (Crook/Deschutes/Jefferson/Wasco Counties):

- Alfalfa hay for May has been selling for $225/ton for premium quality.
- Orchard grass in May with premium quality was averaging $327/ton, lower than earlier this spring.
- Triticale with good quality has been selling at around $220/ton over the last several months.
- Mixed grass hay has been at $160/ton for good quality.

Cattle Markets
Cattle prices experienced a drop during the development of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) outbreak in dairy cattle, but have rebounded back to levels slightly lower than before the outbreak. Prices are still stronger than they were a year ago though have faced some temporary downward pressures. Nationally fed cattle prices have been staying around $185/cwt over the past few weeks and for the major cattle producing states in the Great Plains has increased up to $190/cwt as of the end of May. Steer calf prices (500-600 lbs.) are trending higher across most regions of the U.S. with prices at or above $300 per cwt in May. Returns to cow calf producers are still expected to be at record levels with lower input costs. At some point herd rebuilding will need to take place, but so far cattle inventories are still lowering.

For the week ending May 10th national live steer prices are down slightly from a month ago at $185.25/cwt – down $0.50 from a week ago, but up $9.00 from a year ago. Dressed steer prices are at $295/cwt, up $0.50 from a week ago, but down $10 from a year ago. Choice beef cutout prices are at $296.78, up $2 from a week ago, but down $10 from a year ago. Cattle slaughter numbers nationally were at 622,000 head, down 22,000 from a year ago. Cattle slaughter numbers are expected to decline further later this year once the current inventory of cattle on feed are processed. Cattle live weights are up 47 lbs from a year ago as cattle are being kept on feed longer with reduced feed costs and improved weather. Cattle weights have changed little over the past month with most weeks showing 20-30 lb increases from a year prior, the week ending May 10th showed a surprisingly substantial increase.

Beef production is up 1.5 million lbs from a year ago and has been increasing since February. Beef exports for the first quarter of the year were down 6% from a year ago while beef imports were up 25%. For the month of March along beef exports were down 10.4% from a year ago. Beef exports actually increased to Mexico by 10%, but dropped by roughly 10% in each of the other top five beef export destinations (Cannada, Japan, South Korea, and China). The increased beef imports are coming from Canada, Brazil, Australia, and New Zealand.

The United States has more beef supply than usual due to the increased cattle imports, reduced exports, and increased production. There is about an extra 0.86 lbs of beef per capita across the United States. This is pulling down cattle prices to producers slightly but is primarily being reflected in reduced prices for consumers purchasing beef. This abundance of beef is expected to be short lived which is good news for cattle producers and perhaps not as good for the consumer buying beef at the supermarket.

Oregon State University Across-Breed EPD Calculator Updated
The OSU Across-Breed EPD Calculator is a tool to help commercial cattlemen evaluate and compare sires of different breeds using adjustment factors generated from the MARC data. The 2024 breed adjustment factors prepared by the Meat Animal Research Center (MARC) were updated in the OSU calculator. The calculator

EPD Calculator Continued...
is an Excel sheet that is available for free download, along with instructions for use, by clicking here: https://blogs.oregonstate.edu/beefcattle/epd-calculator/

OWGL Wheat Talk – Inflation and Interest Rates - June 5th at noon
Oregon Wheat League is hosting another Wheat Talk Webinar on June 4th from noon to 1 pm. Darcy Sexson with Agwest Farm Credit will be covering implications for farm operations on inflation and interest rates. Go to https://www.owgl.org/events/2024/wheat-talk222 for the zoom link. The live talk will be available virtually and the recorded session will be posted to the OWGL website.

2023 OSU Extension Crop Tours
Sherman County Crop Tour, Tuesday, June 4, 8:30 am to noon
Starting and ending from the Sherman County Extension Office (66365 Lonerock Rd, Moro, OR 97039)

Agenda:

8:30 am - Coffee and doughnuts social

8:45 - Agency Updates

9:00 - Wheat variety trials, Sherman Experiment Station, Ryan Graebner with OSU

9:20 - Limagrain wheat variety updates, Bailey Jenks with Limagrain

9:30 - Winter wheat biofertilizer trials and soil pH, Sherman Experiment Station, Jacob Powell (OSU) and Brian Griffith (Fresh Tracks Ag)

9:45 - Seed treatment trials, Sherman Experiment Station, Christina Hagerty and Grayson Namdar with OSU

10:00 - Using precision spraying systems and drones in wheat, Pete Berry with OSU

10:30 - Mapping wheat for crop health with drones, Jacob Powell with OSU

10:45 – See & Spray John Deere sprayer demonstration, Bryan Cranston (producer) and Josh Ball (RDO Equipment)

11:15 – McGregor / MCP seed treatment trials and wheat varieties, next to Sherman County Fairgrounds, Jamie Slocum and Mike Anderson with McGregor

Noonish – Return to Sherman County Extension Office for lunch

3 ODA pesticide credits available. Questions or need accommodations? Contact Jacob Powell at jacob.powell@oregonstate.edu or call 541-298-3581

Thanks to our great sponsors this year: Mid Columbia Producers, McGregor, AgWest Farm Credit, and Sherman County SWCD!

Wasco County Crop Tour, **Thursday, June 13th, 8:30 am till noon**
Trial starts at OSU Wheat Variety Trials near Dufur, OR off of Hwy 197 (45.4842, -121.1029, trial this year is next to the orchard and not the cemetery). 3 ODA pesticide credits available.

Agenda:

8:30 am – Coffee and doughnut social

8:45 – Agency updates

9:00 - Electric Tractor Updates and Demonstration - Robert Wallace, Wy'East RC&D Council

9:15 – OSU Wheat Variety Trials - Ryan Graebner, OSU

9:45 - OSU Wheat Breeding Program Updates, Margaret Krause, new OSU Wheat Breeder

10:00 - Winter wheat biofertilizer trials and soil pH discussion, Jacob Powell (OSU) and Lee Walker (Fresh Tracks Ag)

10:15 am – Drone spraying demonstration, Good Ground Ag Services, Rob Stoddard

10:45 - Source microbial trials at Emerson Dell Farm, Jessica Schultz, Sound Ag

11:15 - MycoGold seed inoculant trial at Emerson Dell Farm, Jacob Powell, OSU Extension

11:30 am – Pea production at Emerson Dell Farm, David Brewer (producer)

12:00 - Lunch provided by JTI (Paco's Tacos Food Truck), at JTI on 3000 E 2nd St, The Dalles

Questions or need accommodations? Contact Jacob at jacob.powell@oregonstate.edu or call 541-298-3581

Thanks to our great sponsors this year including Wasco County SWCD, Wheatland Insurance, and JTI!

Gilliam County Crop Tour
Friday, June 28th, beginning in the USDA Service Center parking lot in Condon at 8 am.

Experiment Station Field Days
Field days are free to attend, but you need to register here: https://beav.es/c2F

- Tuesday, June 11th, Pendleton Station Field Day, starts around 8 am
- Wednesday, June 12th, Sherman Station Field Day, starts around 8 am

2024 Wildfires, Smoke, and Livestock: Getting Ready for the Fire Season OSU Webinar Series
June 3rd, 4th, and 5th at 6:00 pm. Register here: https://beav.es/cF7

06/03/2024 - Dairy Research Update
Dr. Amy Skibiel and Dr. Pedram Rezamand will provide a dairy research update on wildfire smoke exposure and its effects on health and performance.

06/04/2024 - Getting Ready for Fire Season
Dr. Katie Wollstein will provide information on wildfire preparedness for livestock producers, focusing on fuels and property management prior to and during wildfire events.

06/05/2024 - Beef Research Update & Livestock Care
Dr. Juliana Ranches and Dr. Jenifer Cruickshank will share an update on smoke exposure research in beef cattle and information on preparedness for livestock producers focusing on animal health.

Reach out to Juliana at juliana.ranches@oregonstate.edu for questions or concerns.

PDNSA 2024 Soil Health Event, June 17th and 18th in Colton, WA
Join Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association for an amazing opportunity to hear from world-renowned Soil Health Experts! June 17-18th, 2024 at Red Barns Farms in Colton WA. Featuring Ray Archuleta, Christine Jones, and Alejandro Carillo. Go to www.directseed.org to learn more.

Grasshopper Season
With the grasshopper season upon us, ODA wants to inform you that state assistance may be available for survey and mitigation efforts. Please reach out to your county commissioners for more information on how to access these resources. Attached, you will find an informational pamphlet on grasshoppers. This pamphlet provides valuable guidance on dealing with grasshopper infestations. Additionally, we ask that you report any grasshopper infestations through the public reporting portal, as detailed in the pamphlet or at this link: https://oda.fyi/GHMC. To streamline the process, we simplified the reporting form, making it quicker and easier to complete. Your participation in reporting infestations is crucial, as it helps us gather the data necessary to support future grasshopper mitigation projects.

Questions? Contact Grasshopper and Mormon cricket program coordinator - Todd Adams: Cell: 503-931-0829; email: todd.adams@oda.oregon.gov; Hermiston Office: 541-567-2251

In the summer of 2023 Oregon suffered a grasshopper outbreak affecting 2.25 million acres, with 15 counties reaching damaging levels of infestation. Grasshoppers reached an average density of 63 animals per square yard (with densities of 8 or more per yard considered economically significant). This followed the already historic outbreak of 2021, when 60% percent of all ODA survey sites recorded commercially significant grasshopper numbers. Such outbreaks often follow or coincide with drought years when high temperatures and low rainfall create ideal conditions for egg hatches.

How to Report Outbreaks

For Oregon residents, businesses and other parties concerned by grasshopper outbreaks the ODA has set up a system for tracking rangeland grasshoppers- by reporting sightings and submitting observations of potential outbreaks and outbreak species. Once submitted, reports are available to ODA entomologists for data analysis and outbreak tracking.

Reports can be made at:

https://oda.fyi/GHMC

Survey Contact Information

If you have questions regarding grasshoppers or Mormon crickets in Oregon, their control, and their impact on Oregon agriculture or would like more information about the ODA Grasshopper Survey and Suppression programs, including details about eligibility, requirements and scheduling please visit us at:

https://oda.direct/IP-PMGrasshoppersCrickets

or call our Hermiston field office at **541-567-2251**