



Oregon
Environmental
Council
It's Your Oregon



Healthy Food & Farms Program

Why We Care

Oregon is renowned for the incredible bounty of food we produce. Many of our top chefs have built their reputation by showcasing the delicious foods grown and harvested locally. Oregonians are fortunate to have local farmers, ranchers, and fishermen who bring such a variety of fresh foods to our plates.

A sustainable food and farm system can improve our health through the availability of more local, fresh produce, reducing our exposure to harmful chemicals, reducing the risk of food-borne disease, and supporting the economic vitality and strength of Oregon's communities.

Our food and agricultural system has a tremendous impact on the quality of our environment. The management of Oregon's agricultural lands can significantly impact, both positively and negatively, the quality of our rivers, air and wildlife. Food processing and distribution also affect our air and water quality through food transportation, packaging, and manufacturing processes.

What We Do

Sustainable Food and Farm Policy

OEC has had a strong presence in Salem for many years, and has successfully advocated for state legislation that benefits agriculture and the environment. Recent successes include increasing funding for local community groups engaged in watershed restoration and environmental stewardship on agricultural lands, and supporting growth of a community-based biofuels industry in Oregon.

OEC's current focus is ensuring that Oregon food and farm businesses have the resources they need to reduce rising energy and input costs, participate in greenhouse gas reduction incentive programs and markets, and meet the growing market demand for regional products that demonstrate environmental stewardship and social responsibility. Part of this strategy is creation of a Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems within the Oregon University System to provide research, outreach and education to assist today's farmers and food businesses — and the next generation — in being successful, socially and environmentally responsible leaders in a continually evolving food and farm system.

Our Vision for Oregon

- Oregon will be a leader in food production and farming that protects our health and our environment.
- Oregon's farmers and food businesses will flourish economically and be rewarded for their stewardship of our rivers and water, air, and wildlife.
- Oregonians will have the opportunity to support local agriculture and eat local, healthy, sustainably produced food as part of our everyday lives.

Market Connections

OEC's *Farm Fresh* program uses the workplace to educate consumers about the effect their food choices have on their health, the environment, and local rural economies through lunchtime *Vote with Your Fork!* presentations, while enabling farmers to market their products directly as Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares to food consumers at work. CSA drop-offs at worksites reduce transaction costs for the farmer and make it easier for the consumer to access fresh, local food. Additional outreach tools include our monthly *Vote with Your Fork!* newsletter for interested eaters and our *Vote with Your Fork!* pledge, which asks eaters to commit to one action to build a better food system.

The Oregon Environmental Council is working with the South Coast Watershed Council and the Cape Blanco Challenge to create a place-based, local, sustainable foods brand and marketing campaign to tell the story behind how food is produced on the South Coast to protect water quality, native salmon runs, habitat, and a local agricultural economy in the face of growing development pressure. *Clearwater Cranberries* is our first South Coast sustainable foods brand.

Slowing Global Warming

OEC provides information about the potential effects of global warming on Oregon agriculture, adaptation strategies, and ways agriculture can benefit from solutions to global warming.

In 2007 OEC, Governor Kulongoski and the Oregon Wine Board joined together to develop the *Carbon Neutral Challenge Initiative for Oregon Wineries*, which assists wineries in assessing and reducing their carbon footprint by connecting them with expert consultation and incentives. Twenty-seven Oregon wineries and vineyards have committed to become carbon neutral by 2010 through a combination of energy conservation, clean energy, generating renewable energy on site, reducing carbon emissions, and buying carbon offsets.

In 2009 OEC began a partnership with the Oregon Association of Nurseries and Oregon State University to launch *Climate Friendly Nurseries*, a project to help nurseries use energy and other resources more efficiently, reduce costs, and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Building Common Ground

In 2002 OEC published the results of interviews with agriculturalists throughout Oregon about their relationship with environmentalists and opportunities to find common ground. These interviews formed the basis for the creation of OEC's Healthy Food and Farms Program and still inform our collaborative approach. In 2008 OEC published "Working on Common Ground," a summary of interviews with prominent Oregon environmentalists focused on opportunities for working on common ground with the agricultural community.

Support Our Work!

Help us ensure a healthy environment, strong economy, and thriving communities for the next generation. We invite your input and suggestions and hope you'll consider supporting OEC's Healthy Food and Farms Program as a partner, volunteer, member, and financial contributor.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Allison Hensey
Program Director, Healthy Food and Farms
503-222-1963 x 116
allisonh@oeconline.org
www.oeconline.org/our-work/food-and-farms

Oregon Environmental Council

222 NW Davis Street, Suite 309 | Portland, OR 97209-3900
p: 503-222-1963 f: 503-222-1405 info@oeconline.org www.oeconline.org