

OUR GOAL FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Help make Oregon a national model for successful, progressive agricultural production by harnessing the power of state economic development policies.



Progressive Agriculture as an Engine of Economic Development in Oregon

The nation's "urban-rural divide" is obvious in Oregon, where natural resource management discussions rapidly degenerate into ideological clashes. At the same time, Oregon's agricultural community faces unprecedented economic challenges. Commodity prices stagnate while production costs increase. Family-held and family-managed farms are, literally an endangered species.

Oregonians are coming to the realization that a healthy, economically and environmentally sustainable agricultural sector is an essential part of the Oregon dream. Urban and rural citizens are beginning to understand the need to develop new ways of working together.

OEC is leading an effort to bring Oregonians together around a new vision that unites us all: vibrant rural communities, a strong economy and a healthy environment.

Since 2001, OEC has been working to lay the foundation for profound long-term, on-the-ground support for sustainable, progressive agricultural practices.

OEC believes that meaningful and lasting policy change must be built by developing broad and diverse coalitions of interests, strengthened by mutual understanding and respect, working together toward shared objectives.

Project Objectives and Activities

Our first objective is to develop innovative economic development policies that support progressive agriculture. We released a commissioned report, *Assessing the Market Dynamics and Economic Potential of 'Values-Added' Agriculture and Food Businesses in Oregon*, in early December 2006. "Values-added" refers to

the social or environmental values consumers take into consideration beyond product quality and price when making food purchases.

Using this report along with interviews with agricultural, business, academic and environmental stakeholders, and the expertise of our Growing Stronger Advisory Committee, we'll develop policy recommendations that capitalize on market opportunities. We will pursue these policy recommendations with a broad coalition of partners.

Our second objective is to build support for these policies by strengthening collaborative voices' role in the public policy process. To do this, we are expanding the reach of our annual *Agriculture and the Environment Workshop Series*, seeking input from our Agricultural Advisory Panel, and working with key members of the community to develop a shared statement of goals so that farmers and environmentalists "start with the end in mind" in developing policies and other proposals.

Outcomes and Impacts

The concrete outcome of this project will be policy changes that will increase the economic rewards for sustainable agricultural practices, and increase the number of producers who are able to choose practices that provide higher returns due to their "values-added" nature.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Allison Hensey, Program Director, Agriculture

503-222-1963 x 116

allisonh@oeconline.org

www.oeconline.org/farmers