

Submitter: Kathy Ging

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery

Measure: SB1532

2 of 2 To: Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery RE creating swales to create moisture in country properties, a stunning success story documented in book Secrets of the Soil how some Australia farms implementing permaculture+swale techniques became fertile oases in drought periods contrasted to parched farms lacking application of this simple knowledge.

Time is of the essence. Now more than any time in recent history local ORGANIC agriculture needed for pressing diverse reasons. We must be diligent, wise in learning, sharing reliable info about local organic farming availability as climate change has morphed 10 USA growing zones. New crops can be grown here, some old ones not so much.

I learned decades ago that the Willamette Valley is the top place in the world for horticultural nurseries!

I ask you to support SB 1532 expanding the Center for Small Farms and Community Food Systems by hiring 5 agricultural extension positions focused on organic practices to assist Oregon farmers and ranchers. It will fund an economic assessment of Oregon's organic sector.

The extension agents will focus on organic practices that will help all farmers, regardless of if they are certified organic or not. OSU will be able to expand the reach of organic practices that are already providing benefits to both organic and conventional farmers, and also increase much-needed applied research. Many of these common practices like cover crops, compost management, crop rotations and efforts to enhance soil health can, when used fittingly, benefit all producers.

Harry MacCormack organically farming near Corvallis since 1972 wrote in Transition paperback/digital book from SunbowFarm.org we need to educate ourselves and practice cultivating 'micro-herds' organically managed soil food web as traditional NPK inputs becoming scarce. More people need to learn how to compost safely and cultivate plants as pollinator food too.

Recently, farms of all sizes were significantly impacted not only by COVID-19 but also by recent floods, ice storms, fires, smoke and record-setting extreme heat. The heat dome heat wave created existential threats to farm viability in many agricultural sectors, like the berry industry.

Technical Assistance in organic practices is sorely needed to help farmers employ methods that allow them to diversify their operations or try new ways to build resilience. For example, organic methods have led to soil with increased water holding capacity—a benefit that is critical during drought.

The organic community has long known the importance of technical assistance as offered by extension agents. Oregon Global Warming Commission's recent Natural and Working Lands Proposal also noted that additional technical assistance for Oregon farmers and ranchers is needed.

Although certified organic farms as measured by NASS currently only represent 1.2% of agriculture in Oregon, organic captures 6% of our farmgate sales. Between 2016 and 2019, the total value of Oregon's organic agricultural products sold increased nearly 30% to \$454 million. However, OR is falling behind other states and is no longer in the top 10 for organic production, ranking 12th, which is why this legislation is critical to reestablishing Oregon's leadership within organic.

In general, Organic agriculture is a bright spot in U.S farm economy growing to over \$55 billion in sales a year 2020, more than double the growth rate of overall U.S. food market. Organic farming also creates jobs with greater stability—organic farms hire more people per acre, and those people work for more days of the year.

The number of US organic farms grew by 39% in recent years while the total number of US farm shrank by 3%. During that period, organic farm income nearly doubled while the income of all U.S. farms remained stagnant. Average value of products sold from organic farms is double the average value sold from all U.S. farms. Kathy Ging MA.