

Statement by Representative Darlene Hooley
The House Appropriations Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and
Related Agencies Subcommittee
Hearing
March 19, 1997

I would like to start by thanking the chairman and the ranking member for the opportunity to testify.

I am proud to say that I come from one of the most fertile agricultural districts in the country. The 5th district of Oregon is a leader in the growth of Christmas trees, nursery crops, hazelnuts, berries, and grapes. I am also fortunate that my district includes a large portion of Oregon's scenic Pacific coast where fishing is a major industry.

I am also proud to say that the farmers of my district are mostly small family farmers. We must do all that we can in Congress to support our family farmers. This includes supporting extension programs, agricultural education programs and institutions and doing away with overly burdensome inheritance taxes.

My district is also home to one of the most prestigious agricultural education and research institutions in the nation: Oregon State University, which is located in Corvallis. Oregon State with its network of agricultural experiment and extension stations, is an international leader in advancing the agricultural industry through the discovery and the application of new technology.

Although agriculture is one of the oldest industries in the world, it relies on innovation and recognizes the importance of progress. New technology is needed for constant modernization. Agricultural research in Oregon has led to major breakthroughs in the past including the development of a patented plastic cylinder fertilizing system, dozens of disease-resistant crop strains and crop rotation strategies that minimize the effects of harmful pests and diseases.

Mr. Chairman, much of Oregon State's ground breaking research could not have been conducted without the help of federal funding. I am here today to thank the subcommittee for its help in the past and I would like to ask for its continued support for Oregon State research projects in Fiscal Year 1998.

There are seven Oregon State programs which are especially vital to the farmers and fishers of my district. I respectfully request that you consider the following programs as you appropriate funds for agricultural research and extension services in FY 98.

Pacific Northwest Center for Small Fruits Research Program

I respectfully request \$350,000 from Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and \$250,000 from Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Services (CSREES) funds for Pacific Northwest Center for Small Fruits Research Program, which has received substantial federal funding since FY 90. This program functions as a cooperative venture between researchers and berry and grape producers, and plays a major role in setting the research priorities for industry and scientists. The Center has achieved acclaim for both its research findings and for its ability to coordinate research efforts involving state, federal and industry researchers. I strongly request that the subcommittee continue to support this program.

The importance of berry and grape production has long been recognized in the Pacific Northwest where these high value, specialty crops are a major component of the region's agricultural sales. The demand for fresh and processed berries and grapes (including wine) in both domestic and international markets continues to grow at a rapid rate. In response to the expanding demands, this project employs a highly integrated approach to research among land-grant university, USDA-ARS scientists, and their industry counterparts in three Pacific Northwest states.

The small fruit research focuses on production and processing in the areas of breeding, pest management, physiology, processing/packaging and marketing. The program sets research priorities to ensure an effective means to respond to current challenges within the small fruits industries.

Northwest Nursery Crops Research Center

Second, I respectfully request \$1,500,000 from ARS for the establishment of a USDA/ARS Nursery Crops Research Center, located at the USDA/ARS Horticultural Research Lab's present site in Corvallis, Oregon. Although the Center would be located in Oregon, it would serve as a research and meeting place for the nation's nursery industry. It would be located in the heart of the Pacific Northwest's nursery industry and would be closely connected to Oregon State, the University of Idaho and Washington State University.

USDA figures indicate that the nursery industry (ornamental, landscaping, greenhouse plants and turf) had wholesale sales of over \$7.8 billion in 1996. This makes these products a top commodity in the U.S. ranking ahead of such well-known crops as wheat and cotton. The nursery industry also employs an estimated 43,000 people year around, with peak employment at over 100,000.

Because nursery crops are so closely intertwined with public health, we must be able to conduct research and exchange ideas on water, pesticide and herbicide use especially since many of the growing operations are located near urban centers. Unfortunately, at the present time, there is no horticulture research center or even an effective centralized program. Thus, it is crucial that we establish the Nursery Crops Center at Oregon State.

Recovery of Bioactive Components from Seafood Wastes

In addition, I am respectfully requesting \$275,000 from CSREES for the Recovery of Bioactive Components from Seafood Wastes Program.

This program would provide a tremendous opportunity for seafood operations throughout the Pacific Northwest and Alaska because it is built upon a sound predecessor-- last year's Seafood Quality, Processing and Marketing Interactions of Pacific Whiting project-- and because this program could teach industry how to eliminate large amounts of waste. One of the most important things we can do in government is to find more efficient ways to spend our money and to support programs which help American industry learn how to spend money most effectively. Eliminating waste is key in these efforts, and the seafood waste utilization program is a perfect example of the type of research program we should support.

Waste utilization is an increasing concern for the seafood industry, especially on the West coast where the industry produces about 55 percent of the nation's seafood. Since only 30-40 percent of seafood raw material is used for primary products, it is extremely important to find effective means for using the remaining 60-70 percent of the material-- material which often goes to waste. This excess material can be used not only for low-valued products such as fishmeal and hydrolysates but also in other segments of the food industry. With proper research, we can expand the potential for seafood by-products.

The research of Recovery of Bioactive Components from Seafood Wastes Program would focus on several compounds studied at the OSU Seafood Laboratory including enzymes and antioxidants from surimi wash water. These extracted compounds would be tested for commercial applications and their yields estimated. In short, this program will demonstrate the economic potential for seafood processing plants and associated industries.

Rural Development Centers

I respectfully request \$500,000 from CSREES for Rural Development Centers, which have been funded by the subcommittee in the past. As the members know, there are five of these centers throughout the U.S. with centers located in Oregon, Iowa, Pennsylvania, Mississippi and North Dakota.

The purpose of the Rural Development Centers is to strengthen rural families, communities, and businesses. They facilitate collaborative socio-economic research and extension through higher education institutions in their regions. The research agenda is aimed at understanding the working relationships between the natural resource industries and rural communities. They focus on improving economic competitiveness and diversification in rural areas. Rural Development programs are an effective part of our nation's extension system, and I hope the subcommittee will continue to support them.

The National Center for Molluscan Broodstock (NLMB)

In addition, I respectfully request that the subcommittee continue funding NLMB with \$400,000 from CSREES.

Established at the Hatfield Marine Science Center at Oregon State, the laboratory has three principal objectives: 1) establishment of a repository for the conservation of genetic material of molluscan shellfish; 2) development of breeding programs for the commercial production of shellfish with desirable traits and 3) establishment of a resource center for industry and researchers.

Cooperative research efforts with NLMB participants located in a number of coastal states contribute to the recovery of Eastern oyster populations in the Chesapeake and Delaware Bays. Research improves commercial oyster production in the U.S. FY 98 funding would enable continuation of stocking the NLMB with valuable strains of molluscan shellfish and research in the long-term storage (cryopreservation) of valuable genetic material and oyster breeding.

Oregon Biotechnology

For the continuation of the Oregon Biotechnology Project, I respectfully request \$500,000 from CSREES.

The Oregon Biotechnology Project was initiated in 1995 as a means of helping research biotechnologists from three major research institutions in Oregon: Oregon State University, the University of Oregon, and the Oregon Graduate Institute. The project focuses on improving plant characteristics that can lead to commercialization of superior varieties. Each year, projects are selected specifically because they have a high probability for immediate technology transfer. Some projects currently underway include: the development of potato lines which are immune to Potato Virus Y, the production of pear lines which have altered iron metabolism, and the development of the ability to fingerprint the genetic identity of grapes and their rootstocks so that growers will be able to pedigree the material they are planting and limit the spread of infection. Oregon Biotechnology has been highly successful at finding new reasons and methods for genetically engineering particular traits for individual crops and I encourage the subcommittee to continue its support.

Regional Barley Genome Mapping Project

Finally, I would like to respectfully request \$348,000 in continued funding in FY 98 for the CSREES Regional Barley Gene Mapping Project Special Research Grant.

Barley production and the manufacture and sale of value-added barley products (malt, beer, and food) have a significant impact on the U.S. economy. If barley and barley product sales grow to

their potential in domestic and export markets, there will be substantial new employment, as well as government and industry revenue.

The North American Barley Genome Mapping Project (NABGMP) is a collaborative partnership between university and USDA-ARS scientists from throughout the United States. With support from a USDA-CSREES special grant, the group has mapped genes controlling disease resistance, grain quality, and productivity. The group is transferring these genes to adapted varieties that can be used in various domestic growing areas. NABGMP researchers are locating and manipulating new genes that will add value, maximize grain quality, and ensure a more productive and competitive barley industry.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for your consideration. I believe that these programs at Oregon State University are vital to our country's agricultural research. They will greatly enhance our agriculture industry and I urge the subcommittee to support them.