For #GivingTuesday, please partner with Our Family Farms!

Please donate $5, $10 or more today to Our Family Farms and be part of the movement to protect the traditional seed supply for generations to come. With your help we are creating a future in farming, one seed at a time.

Donate Now

Our Family Farms is a 501c3 non profit. All donations are tax deductible.

SAVE THE DATES!

Our Family Farms Presents:

The Future of Soil: Ensuring Resilient Food and Agricultural Systems

Food security and autonomy is in serious jeopardy due to the expansion of corporate control of our seed supply. Excessive use of pesticides has led to soil degradation contributing to climate disruption, contaminated water supplies, air pollution and diminished quality of life. Our Family Farms is committed to educating our community and the agricultural industry on best practices for the important decisions we make each and every day; from the seed we buy to the food we put on our table.
This monthly series will educate the community and consumers as to how their food is produced using both cutting edge 21st century technology and time tested farming techniques. Farmers and businesses will learn how to improve the economic viability of their operations and enhance the quality of life for themselves and their employees. All will learn how these best farming practices can regenerate soil, improve yield, mitigate climate and environmental chaos, and serve as alternatives to pesticides and mineral fertilizers.

Attendees may join us for the entire series or sign up for one or more informative and interactive sessions. Registration is opening soon!

To volunteer or get involved in this series, please contact Elise.

Class one: February 4th, 2018 in Talent, Oregon
Agricultural Industry and Community meet together 6-8 pm
Theme: History of seed, farming practices and food in Southern Oregon, Our State and Nation. We’ll explore the foundation of our agricultural heritage and explore where we are heading in the future.

Class two: February 20 at the Medford Library, Oregon
Agricultural Industry Presentation 1-4:30 pm; Community Presentation 6-8pm
Theme: Soil is alive to nurture the next crop without added toxic chemicals.
Presenter: Dr. Elaine Ingham; soil scientist

Class three: March 20 at the Medford Library, Oregon
Agricultural Industry Presentation 1-5 pm; Community Presentation 6-8pm
Theme: Pest Management beyond Neonicotinoids: Predatory Insects and Regenerative Agriculture.
Presenter: Jonathan Lundgren

Class four: April 17 at the Medford Library, Oregon
Agricultural Industry Presentation 3-5 pm; Community Presentation 6-8pm
Theme: GMO Pesticide Impacts on Farm Workers, Consumers, and the Environment.
Presenters: Lisa Arkin (Beyond Toxics), Dr. Ray Seidler (retired EPA scientist), Dr. Fenske (University of Washington School of Public Health) and others TBA

Class five: May 15 at the Medford Library, Oregon
Agricultural Industry Presentation 1-5 pm; Community Presentation 6-8 pm
Theme: Oregon businesses and regenerative organic agriculture 
Presenters: TBA 

Class six: June TBA 
Industry and Community meet together 
Theme: Seed to Table Farm Picnic 
At this final event, we will review the highlights of the past workshops and give the opportunity for breakout sessions with farmers and consumers to discuss ways we can move forward with the information we learned over the last months. Certificates of completion will be given out. 

Southern Oregon, let's join Unete and Beyond Toxics to show we care about Farm workers! 
Attend and give testimony at the Oregon OSHA hearings on farm workers and pesticide exclusion zones. The public Hearing is Tuesday, December 5th at 6:00 pm in the Carpenter Room at the Medford Library. 

See this message from Beyond Toxics... 

We need you! 
We are very concerned that OSHA's proposed rule does not require pesticide-free buffer zones to protect the living areas where farm workers and their families sleep, cook, eat and play with their children. 

Background 
In Oregon, many farm workers live on the work site in what is called labor housing located in the agricultural fields and orchards. Frequently, labor housing consists of small structures resembling shacks – there is no running water, bathroom or kitchen. Workers have to leave the structure to go to cooking, shower and bathroom areas. Windows are often boarded up with cardboard or plywood. Quite often, these are not air-tight structures. 

The farm worker labor housing may be as close as 15 ft. to the crops and trees sprayed with pesticides, but their houses are not included in the no-spray Application Exclusion Zone. 

The issue is the Application Exclusion Zone, an area of 100 ft. from the active spray operation where no worker or other person is allowed to be present due to the likelihood of exposure to pesticide spray or drift. Federal law requires the 100 ft. Application Exclusion Zone
Zone. Instead Oregon OSHA is proposing a “Compliance Alternative” to the federal rule. The “Compliance Alternative” as it currently stands, states:

• Farm workers and their families inside the shacks don’t get protection from the Application Exclusion Zone. They have to hide inside their shacks! In other words, Oregon OSHA is excluding farm worker housing from being protected by the Application Exclusion Zone. This is true even if the application is by air blast sprayer, aerial crop duster or helicopter.

• Farm workers and their families have to "evacuate" by walking 150 ft. away from the housing and standing outside when the label requires the handler to use a respirator because the pesticide is so toxic and harmful to breathe.

Summary
In both scenarios, farm workers and their families will continue to be exposed because they will come into contact with pesticides that contaminate farm worker housing, the kitchen areas, and bathroom and laundry areas. Also, evacuating 150 ft. to stand outside does nothing to protect people from breathing fumes and vapors drifting from the spray.

The main point is that OSHA require a minimum of a 100 ft. no-spray buffer around farm worker housing; 300 ft. would be the most efficacious.

LEARN MORE

Thank you Salant Family Ranch for Renewing your Our Family Farms Business Membership! Show your support and become a business member today!

Salant Family Ranch
In 1996, the old Circle G Ranch near Ruch became home to our foundation herd of Black Angus cows. Our ranch-raised, natural beef is grown here on native grass pasture, irrigated by the fresh snowmelt water of the Little Applegate River, and alfalfa hay fed in wintertime. No hormones or antibiotics are ever fed to these Angus-crossbred black cattle and dairy steers. Our cows, calves and bulls are managed using best husbandry practices. We can be found at local Rogue Valley Farmer’s Markets throughout the spring, summer & fall. Delivery of reasonable quantities available within a 50-mile radius of Jacksonville. Visitors are always welcome. — Peter & Carly Salant
NEWS

Dicamba Herbicide: The Next Broken Promise for GMO Farmers

By Dr. Ramon Seidler, Ph.D.

Why have states taken the rare step to impose bans on its use? Farmers in 10 states sue Monsanto for faulty product.

Dicamba is a weed killer and perhaps the most widely used chemical (along with 2,4-D) that represents the so-called pesticide treadmill. The pesticide treadmill comes in to play because the most commonly used weed killer on GMO crops, glyphosate, has been used too much for too long and there have emerged glyphosate resistant weeds on well over 65 million prime farmland acres in the U.S. alone, an area the size of the entire state of Oregon. For many years the need for another weed killer specifically for use with GMO crops was obvious but farmers did not have dicamba tolerant crops until 2013-15 (corn, then soy then cotton). Dicamba works like 2,4-D by killing plants through growth stimulation beyond available nutrients. The growing edge of the plant dies from lack of nutrients.

Why has dicamba become so controversial? The manufacturers know well that this weed killer is highly volatile, even capable of evaporating off the sprayed crops and becoming easily spread to other crops. But industry promised a new chemical formula of dicamba to be used with the new GMO crops, a chemical formula that would not be so volatile and thus would stay put on the sprayed fields when released under “calm” wind conditions.

But the results of volatility and spray drift issues are severe as documented by this farmer who grows soybeans on 6,000 acres. "We’ve had damage across just about every acre of soybeans we farm in southeast Missouri," said Hunter Raffety, a farmer in Wyatt, Mo. "In our small town, even the ornamentals and vegetables in backyards, have been lost. It’s a big problem."

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There are at least two complex issues. First, the GMO seeds expressing tolerance to dicamba became available before the new generation of the chemically modified dicamba. EPA only approved the new supposedly less volatile dicamba in November 2016, two years after the availability of the new GMO tolerant soy seeds became available to farmers. The old dicamba is especially known to be volatile and can spread even after the droplets become deposited on target plants. The second issue is that the lower cost for old formulations of dicamba are still readily available for grower purchase.

Reasons given for drift and volatility issues with dicamba are many and seem to vary among the states of the mid-south vs. the north. For Example, Arkansas, Missouri, and Tennessee have had more off-target cross farm contamination issues than further north in the corn belt. But many complaints have also been filed by farmers in Illinois, Alabama, Minnesota, Texas, and North Carolina. Three states (Arkansas, Missouri, and Tennessee) have filed partial bans and other restrictions on dicamba use for the remainder of the current crop year.

The majority of dicamba applications onto GMO dicamba-tolerant soybeans are currently made as the crop approaches reproductive stages. In the past, prior to GMO tolerant crops, dicamba was used largely as a pre-emergent product and applied very early in the growing season. Now susceptible crop varieties including orchards and non-GMO soybeans, etc are at greater risk because dicamba applications are made later in the crop year. Due to later application dates, temperatures are likely to be higher. The higher the temperature, the greater the likelihood of vapor drift.

One may wonder why there is a cross contamination problem now with the increasing use of dicamba and but not so much with the more commonly used glyphosate-based herbicides. Historically most farmers remember that corn is highly sensitive to low exposures to glyphosate. But by comparison soybeans are 200-fold more sensitive to dicamba than corn is to glyphosate (see image).
This extreme sensitivity of non-GMO soybeans (and other crops including orchards) to dicamba has received part of the blame for the damages of “over spray and volatility.” The pesticide chemical Industry is pushing back in many ways and has held classes for farmers to instruct them about using larger spray nozzle sizes and instructing on weather requirements prior to the use of dicamba. The controversy over dicamba drift is far from over since major lawsuits have been filed against Monsanto by farmers in at least 10 states. The basis of the lawsuits are financially significant to both farmers and Monsanto. Farmers claim that even the newer formulations of dicamba are incapable of being routinely and safely applied to cotton and soybeans, without damaging other sensitive nearby crops.

In the meantime, many traditional farmers that are not growing GMO-based soybeans are losing significant percentages of their crops and yields. One now hears talk of these farmers adopting GMO-based seeds next crop year that have the genetic basis for tolerance to dicamba. More GMO soy coming to the U.S. market. Was the sale of a faulty dicamba product that results in neighbor crop damage part of a strategy to market more GMO seeds in the coming years?

For further reading, see Dicamba Lawsuits Mounting and Not All Drift is Created Equal.

Dr Ramon Seidler, PhD, is a retired senior research scientist and Team Leader of the Genetically Engineered Organism biosafety program within the US EPA and former Professor of Microbiology at Oregon State University.

Buy SEED: The Untold Story on DVD
Celebrate seeds with 10% off the award-winning SEED: The Untold Story!

Use code OFFSEED at seedthemovie.com and 30% of proceeds will be donated to Our Family Farms!

In the last century, 94% of our seed varieties have disappeared. As biotech chemical companies control the majority of our seeds, farmers, scientists, lawyers, and indigenous seed keepers fight a David and Goliath battle to defend the future of our food. In a harrowing and heartening story, these reluctant heroes rekindle a lost connection to our most treasured resource and revive a culture connected to seeds.
SEED comes from the filmmakers behind Queen of the Sun: What Are the Bees Telling Us? It features Dr. Jane Goodall, Vandana Shiva, Winona LaDuke, and Andrew Kimbrell.

Stay up to date on all the latest news on our Website and Facebook page!

UPCOMING EVENTS

OSU Small Farms Farm Stand Education Series
Series of workshops beginning November 30
With a generous grant through the Western Center for Risk Management Education, OSU has an exciting opportunity to improve access of locally raised farm products to consumers through increasing the number of farm stand and agritourism operations in Southern Oregon. This project aims to educate producers on how to work with county and state planners to comply with the regulations of running farm stands and agritourism operations; to write a business and marketing plan for a farm stand or agritourism operation; to understand the process of accepting EBT payments (food stamps); and to use social media to attract and retain a reliable customer base. More information and registration is available here.

OSHA Hearing for Farmworker Safety
Tuesday, December 5th at 6pm at the Medford Library
Oregon’s OSHA is proposing farm worker safety rules that will affect farm workers across the state. Get involved to demand OSHA to do the right thing! It’s a rare opportunity the have this hearing held outside of Salem. Let’s bring the masses and show OSHA that Southern Oregon cares about their farm workers.

The Future of Soil
Beginning February 4th, 2018
An Our Family Farms educational series for community and consumers as to how their food is produced using both cutting edge 21st century technology and time tested farming techniques. Farmers and businesses will learn how to improve the economic viability of their operations and enhance the quality of life for themselves and their employees. All will learn how these best farming practices can regenerate soil, improve yield, mitigate climate and environmental chaos, and serve as alternatives to pesticides and mineral fertilizers. Attendees may join us for the entire series or sign up for one or more informative and interactive sessions. Registration is opening soon!

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