

Oregon Seed eUpdate

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A Newsletter from the
OREGON SEED COUNCIL

Pathologist Advises to Watch for Strip Rust

Scouting and treating for stripe rust at the first sign of its presence in wheat is critical for avoiding yield loss to the obligate parasite.

"The thing to remember with rust is timing is everything," said retired OSU plant pathologist Chris Mundt at the Oregon State University Extension Seed and Cereal Crop Production Meeting, January 6 in Salem. "You want to make sure that you get out there if you have rust and stop it early."

At issue with stripe rust is the disease has a latent period between infection and expression, with symptoms often not showing up for a week or so after a wheat plant is infected.

"So, if you go out there and you look at your crop and say, 'Well, I've got five percent rust out there. That's not too bad.' And you come back a week later and suddenly you've got thirty percent, that is because of that latent period," Mundt said.

"And so you want to keep an eye on your fields, especially if you have a variety that's known to be susceptible (to stripe rust)," Mundt said.

He added that while modern fungicides provide some reach-back activity, it typically is very limited. To be effective, fungicides need to be applied preventatively.

Adding to concerns this year is that a warm fall has pushed the wheat crop and disease development ahead of schedule. Mundt said a grower may even find rust as early as late January. "Hopefully, it will be a lot later than that," he said.

Also, Mundt advised growers to avoid getting complacent with the disease given the capacity of the rust pathogen to switch races and attack formerly resistant varieties.

"We've had a lot of new varieties come out since the horrific epidemics back in 2011, and that has really cut back the amount of inoculum that is out there," he said. "However, severe rust can come back at any time. We know there are changes of races with rust, just like there are changes in strains of flu or COVID. And so, things could change any time in the future."

Another issue with rust is it can build up rapidly in fields. Serious epidemics can begin from very low levels of inoculum, Mundt said.



Photo credit: A. Yaqub/CIMMYT

"That is a real killer for us, because the pathogen gets into several generations," he said. "It can build up very, very large amounts of disease in the field."

Rust also can blow in from a neighbor's field, or even from another part of the state, he said. The good news about rust coming in from an outside source, he said, is in those cases, it usually comes in much later than in cases where it originates in a field.

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Pathologist Advises to Watch for Strip Rust *Continued*

Varieties least susceptible to rust include SY Assure, LCS Drive, Bobtail, LCS Biancor, LCS Blackjack, LCS Shark, Norwest Tandem and Nixon.

Varieties highly susceptible include Foote, Mary and Goetze. Rosalyn, Kaseberg, LCS Ghost, Gale and LCS Artdeco also are susceptible to the disease. Shine is only moderately susceptible.

"With Shine, in a severe year, you might see approximately five percent rust or so," Mundt said. "In a year where there isn't heavy rust pressure, you might not see anything at all."

When it was first released, Bobtail was very resistant to rust, but that resistance seems to have faded some, Mundt said. "It is still holding up, but three or four years ago, we had a couple of years in a row where we had some individual plots that were coming up with three to five percent (rust infection). That seems to have gone away, but we had a little more rust than expected last year on Bobtail in Eastern Oregon. So, I think we do want to keep an eye on Bobtail."



Chris Mundt at the OSU Extension Seed and Cereal Crop Production meeting, January 6 in Salem, discusses a need to begin monitoring for stripe rust in wheat earlier than usual this year.

Calendar

January 27	Oregon Seed Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Cascade Grill, 110 Opal St NE, Albany
February 17	Oregon Fine Fescue Commission Meeting, 7 a.m., The Homeplace Restaurant, 1080 N 1st Street Silverton, OR
February 23	Oregon Ryegrass Commission Meeting, 6 p.m., Cascade Grill, 110 Opal St NE, Albany
February 24	Oregon Seed Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Cascade Grill, 110 Opal St NE, Albany
February 26	Oregon Tall Fescue Commission Meeting, 6 p.m., Cascade Grill, 110 Opal St NE, Albany
March 18	Oregon Clover Commission Meeting, 7 a.m., Roth's 1130 Wallace Rd NW, Salem
March 24	Oregon Seed Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Cascade Grill, 110 Opal St NE, Albany
April 7	Oregon Fine Fescue Commission Meeting, 7 a.m., The Homeplace Restaurant, 1080 N 1st Street Silverton, OR
April 9	Oregon Tall Fescue Commission Meeting, 6 p.m., Cascade Grill, 110 Opal St NE, Albany
April 13	Oregon Ryegrass Commission Meeting, 6 p.m., Cascade Grill, 110 Opal St NE, Albany

Accelerated Wheat Growth Poses Challenges

A warm fall has accelerated winter wheat growth in the Willamette Valley and increased the crop's susceptibility to disease and cold snaps.

Speaking at the Oregon State University Extension Seed and Cereal Crop Production Meeting in Salem January 6, OSU Extension Cereal Scientist Ryan Graebner said the accelerated growth poses several issues for growers, including a need to scout for diseases ahead of normal and concerns of crop death due to cold snaps.

What can happen in warm fall and winters, Graebner said, is wheat begins to move toward its reproductive phase and begins stem elongation ahead of normal. "And with that, it drops its winter dormancy," he said, making it more susceptible to a spring cold snap.

Graebner noted that the warmer than average temperatures between October 1 and December 23 this past fall pushed degree days well ahead of normal. "The difference between 2025 and the average of the previous thirteen years was about 115 growing degree days," he said. "Put in different terms, that's about how many growing degrees accumulate during nine typical days in October."

"So, a basic way to think about this is if you planted your wheat or another crop on October 10 this year, you'd expect similar results as if you planted it on October 1 in a typical year," he said.

The consequences of that, in addition to susceptibility to cold snaps, is increased potential for disease severity, he said, adding that growers should scout for disease symptoms earlier than they would in a normal year and be prepared to spray if necessary.

Another consequence of early maturing wheat, particularly in the Willamette Valley, is a need to potentially get nitrogen on the crop sooner than normal.

"You want to hit the wheat before stems start to elongate," Graebner said. Particularly in the Willamette Valley, where moisture is generally adequate to produce a big crop, growers should focus on getting as much tiller production as possible, he said. And a good way to trigger a plant to produce tillers is to provide it nitrogen relatively early in the season.

"If you get your nitrogen on too late, what has happened is the plant has moved away from thinking about how many tillers it can form and is just thinking about growth," Graebner said. "So, instead of having a lot of tillers, you have tall plants that fall over. So, we like to try to avoid that."

Graebner noted that wheat stem elongation will probably start earlier this year than in a normal year.

One application strategy to consider, he said, is to apply about a quarter of a crop's nitrogen needs early in the spring and come in with the remainder of its needs later in the growing season. "This gives you a bit of flexibility, where you get that early boost of nitrogen when the wheat plant is trying to decide how many tillers to make,



Ryan Graebner at the Extension Seed and Cereal Crop Production meeting in Salem on January 6 says a warm fall has accelerated wheat growth, posing challenges for growers.

and then you put the rest on a little bit later when it's really using the bulk of its nitrogen for production."

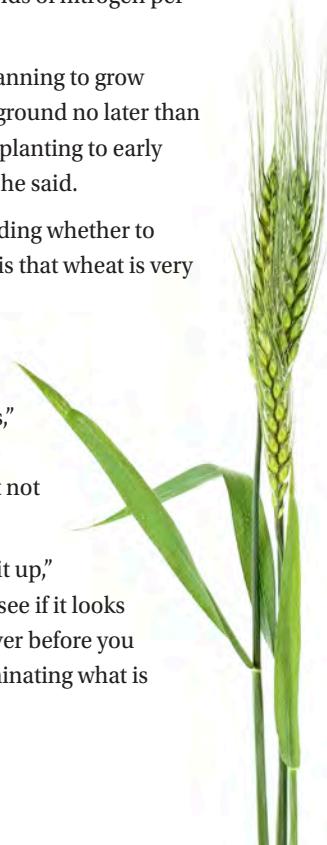
As a general guideline, Graebner said growers should consider applying between 140 to 180 pounds of nitrogen per acre. If following a legume or other high nitrogen production crop, such as corn, the recommendation drops to 60 to 140 pounds per acre. "If you are following a really vigorous crimson clover crop that might be where you go down to that 60 pounds of nitrogen per acre," he said.

Graebner noted that if growers are planning to grow spring wheat, it is best to get it in the ground no later than early April. "Keeping the spring wheat planting to early April is going to give the best results," he said.

One thing to keep in mind when deciding whether to terminate wheat due to cold damage is that wheat is very resilient, Graebner said.

"In my experience when we have a lot of fall growth, we're slightly more susceptible to spring cold snaps," Graebner said. "But if this happens to your wheat, the first thing to do is just not to panic."

"Don't go rush out and spray it or till it up," he said. "Wait just a couple of weeks, see if it looks like the wheat crop is starting to recover before you do anything where you might be terminating what is otherwise a good crop."



New Extension Soil Water Quality Specialist Looks to Connect with Growers

Arshdeep Singh, Oregon State University Extension's new soil water quality specialist, is asking growers to share their soil water quality concerns in a needs assessment survey he plans to conduct this spring.

Speaking at the OSU Extension Seed and Cereal Crop Production Meeting in Salem on January 6, Singh, who had started in his position just one week earlier, said, "Let's talk about what the issues are and how we can collectively work together to address those issues."

"My position is seventy percent Extension, so I will be working firsthand with growers and other stakeholders with the mission to increase profits, increase or at least optimize crop yields, and improve soil water quality," Sing said. "And this can only be done with your help."

Singh was born and raised on a generational family farm in the Indian state of Punjab. He obtained a bachelor's degree from Punjab Agricultural University before coming to the U.S. and earning a master's degree from Auburn University and a Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska. He did a postdoc at California State University, Chico and East Bay.

"Again, the overall mission is to improve profits, optimize yields, improve soil water quality, and work with all of you to identify issues. So, let's communicate."

Arshdeep Singh

While at the University of Nebraska, Singh said he worked extensively on different nitrogen and irrigation management strategies to reduce nitrate leaching and improve groundwater quality in groundwater management areas.

Singh said he has been working with farmers for more than ten years now and particularly enjoys working in diverse cropping systems towards the adoption of regenerative agricultural practices, something he did a lot of during his time at

California State University, Chico and East Bay. "It's different from the Midwest, where there are miles of corn or soybeans," he said.

"Being here in Oregon, I feel very lucky that again it is a diverse cropping system that I will be working in," he said.

Singh said he plans to communicate with growers through Extension publications, as well as at grower meetings and in one-to-one settings. He also expects to meet with regulators and other policy makers on a regular basis. "The policies can severely impact grower profits by imposing regulations for mitigating negative environmental impacts," he said.



Arshdeep Singh, the new OSU Extension soil water quality specialist, is asking growers to share their soil water quality concerns in a needs assessment survey.

Singh said one of his main goals is to work on developing best management practices that have the potential to improve water quality while optimizing yields.

"I am open to collaborations," he said. "So, what are the important water-quality issues for you?"

One tool for assessing the impacts of different management practices on water quality that Oregon lacks, Singh said, is long-term monitoring.

"There is no long-term monitoring site at the field scale that can tell us what our situation is," he said, "where the available data from different site-years shows variability in trends."

Singh said he will be launching a needs-assessment survey within the next couple of months. "So, please be open to responding to that," he said.

"Again," he said, "the overall mission is to improve profits, optimize yields, improve soil water quality, and work with all of you to identify issues. So, let's communicate."

Singh can be reached at Arshdeep.Singh@oregonstate.edu.

THE E-NEWSLETTER The goal of this e-newsletter is to provide timely updates to Oregon seed producers, field reps, and others involved in the seed industry. It includes a snapshot of what's happening currently with respect to weather, pest and disease outbreaks, harvest, label updates, and other management activities. Growers or field reps can provide input anytime by reaching out to Mitch Lies, the Oregon Seed Council writer at mitchlies@comcast.net.

CONNECT WITH US To sign-up for this e-newsletter or for archived issues, please visit: <https://oregonseedcouncil.org/news/#e-updates>

Oregon Seed Council Update

The 2026 Legislative Session is just around the corner. While the 35-day short Session begins February 2, 2026, bills have been filed, and the Legislature provided a window into what's to come during their January Legislative Days.

While the full bill stack likely won't be available until the Thursday or Friday before Session starts, we heard loud and clear the budget is the top issue to be tackled this Session.

At the close of the 2025 Session, there was a need for a \$373 million budget reduction identified. After the last revenue forecast, that number moved from \$373 million down to \$63 million. Agencies had been asked to identify around a 10 percent budget reduction.

On February 4, shortly after Session begins, the Legislature will hold a revenue forecast which should provide a clearer picture of the State's revenues and what cuts may be required to balance the budget.

So, what does that mean for the seed industry?

Budgets have an impact on our members, programs that we interface with, and for essential programs, sometimes when General Fund resources dry up, fees or fee increases are sought as solutions.

Budgets

What we're engaging in as far as budgets are:

- Preserving Oregon State University (OSU) and Extension funding and positions that support our industry. The Higher Education Coordinating Commission has recommended a seven percent cut to OSU/Extension compared to a five percent across other universities.
- Protecting programs like Future Farmers of America. Program cuts have been threatened.
- Preserving Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) program funds that impact the seed industry.
- And - other program areas we've advocated for in the 2025 Legislative Session.

Japanese Beetle Eradication

Unfortunately, we did not get the funding required to preserve the Japanese Beetle Eradication Project through ODA - this is an essential program across agriculture. We're working with nurseries, hazelnuts, and other ag partners to secure a \$750,000 investment this Session.

Why does this matter, you may ask? While this issue is hitting nurseries most significantly right now, and will impact agriculture broadly, for the seed industry in particular, if established in the state, it will have impacts on our crops and the export market. This pest has a broad host range and damage potential. The quarantine status and eradication programs for this pest are critical for keeping this beetle from establishing in Oregon.



Lifecycle information and feeding nature of this pest: There is only one generation per year. Grubs can feed on the roots for extended periods during fall and mild winter months. Grubs live in the soil and feed on grass roots. Pastures, natural grassy areas, golf courses, and lawns are particularly vulnerable. Grub feeding can result in severe root pruning that limits the plant's ability to acquire water and survive in drought-stress situations, often resulting in large dead patches of grass. Adults appear in summer and are strong flyers. According to the extension publication by entomologists at OSU [EM9158](#), *"If they become widespread and established in Oregon, gardeners or others should notice the appearance of adult JB's during the summer months."*

A proactive watch for this pest will help ODA's broader efforts to keep it out of our production systems.

Seed Industry Legislation

There will be a seed-related bill this Session. While we do not know the bill number yet, Legislative Concept (LC) 89 has been introduced by Representative Anna Scharf and does the following as drafted:

- Changes date requirements for payment within 30 days of the date that ODA's written notice for payment was issued to the seed dealer.
- Requires the dealer to provide written notice and supporting documentation verifying that the seed dealer has made payment to the grower.

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Oregon Seed Council Update Continued

- Changes interest rates for failure to pay to one percent or market interest on similar loans similar to the amount as determined by the department - whichever is greater
- Doubles fees ODA is able to charge growers.

OSC will be engaged in this legislation and the rulemaking on Slow Pay No Pay rules that are expected to begin in March.

Other Issues

We anticipate tracking a range of other topics to be assessed this Session, including:

- Water
- Labor and employment issues
- Taxes

There will be many more issues that OSC will track. We'll keep you updated as we get access to the full bill stack.

Transportation

You've likely seen a lot of news on the transportation package passed in the 2025 Special Session held August 29 - September 29, 2025.

The transportation package contained a number of tax and fee increases. Highlights are below:

- A gas tax increase from \$0.40 to \$0.46, effective Jan. 1, 2026
- An increase in annual registration fees from \$43 to \$85 for passenger vehicles; \$63 to \$105 for utility vehicles, light trailers, low-speed vehicles, and medium speed electric vehicles; and \$44 to \$86 for mopeds and motorcycles
- An increase in title fees for passenger vehicles from \$77 to \$216
- A temporary doubling of the payroll tax used from 0.1% to 0.2% from Jan. 1, 2026 - Jan. 1, 2028
- An increase in registration surcharges for electric and fuel efficient vehicles from \$35 to \$65 annually for cars with 40+ mpg rating, and from \$115 to \$145 annually for electric vehicles
- Phasing in the mandatory road usage charge for electric vehicles by 2031.

An initiative to repeal the gas tax increase of six cents per gallon, car registration fee increase, title fee increase, and payroll tax increase made it to the ballot for November.

Following a number of twists and turns, legislative leaders are seeking to move the vote to the May Primary ballot rather than the November General Election.

We anticipate this will continue to be a large topic among legislators.

Below are press releases and news articles related to the transportation package if you'd like to see a more full series of events.

Legislative/Governors Office Press Releases

[Governor Kotek Outlines Next Steps for Oregon's Transportation System](#) | Office of the Governor

[Governor Kotek Admits Failure, Begs Legislature to Repeal Her Signature Transportation Tax Package](#) | Oregon Senate and House Republicans

[Senator Drazan Responds to Governor Kotek's Call to Repeal Transportation Tax Package](#) | Office of Senator Christine Drazan

[Legislature Cannot Repeal Referred Transportation Tax According to Attorney General Legal Opinion](#) | Oregon House Republicans

[Legislative Leadership to Ask Voters to Weigh In on Transportation Funding in May](#) | Offices of the President of the Oregon Senate and Speaker of the Oregon House

[Governor Kotek Responds to Legal Analysis on Transportation Repeal](#) | Office of the Governor

[Democrats' Push to Move Transportation Tax Vote to Low-Turnout Primary Would Disenfranchise Voters](#) | Offices of the House and Senate Republican Leaders

In the News

[Gov. Tina Kotek calls for repeal of controversial transportation package she championed](#) | The Oregonian

[Oregon Gov. Tina Kotek now wants to scrap her newly passed transportation bill](#) | Oregon Public Broadcasting

[After a year of failed attempts, Oregon lawmakers are back at square one on transportation plan](#) | The Oregonian

[Top Oregon Democrats hope to move gas tax vote to May](#) | Oregon Public Broadcasting

Guide to the Legislative Session

If you'd like to learn more about how to get engaged, testify, or learn about the process, be sure to check out OSC's Guide to the 2026 Legislative Session



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Oregon Seed Council Update Continued

Please be sure you're signed up for Action Alerts from OSC - if you aren't sure if you're on the list, visit our website OregonSeedCouncil.org, scroll down, and complete the form to sign up for our newsletters.

Your voice matters! We appreciate your continued support to advocate the Oregon seed industry.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out.

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OREGON SEED PAC - PLEASE HELP!

The next Legislative Session is just around the corner and so begins campaign season.

The Oregon SEED PAC is the election arm for our industry. The PAC endorses industry friendly candidates, engages in initiative petitions and ballot measures, and makes contributions to candidates and issues that impact industry.

Please take a moment to consider making a contribution of \$1 per acre to the Oregon Seed PAC.

Contributions can be made through the QR Code below, or by mailing a check to

SEED PAC
PO Box 512
Independence, OR 97351



Every dollar matters. And as we look toward future legislative sessions, we know there's a lot coming at us. While the 2025 Ag Workforce Standard Board bill died as it turned into a study during the 2025 Legislative Session, we know it's coming back in the 2027 Session.



And like this policy, there are many threats to Oregon agriculture. So, my ask to you is to please help us support candidates that will work for positive results for our industry and genuinely want to help the Oregon seed industry succeed by making a contribution today.

