

Oregon Seed eUpdate

ISSUE #107 • FEBRUARY 2026



A Newsletter from the
**OREGON SEED
COUNCIL**

A 'Perfect Storm' Aligns to Decrease Forage Exports

A perfect storm of negative influences has combined to lower U.S. forage exports by more than 40 percent between 2022 and 2025, according to a report at the Oregon Ryegrass Growers Association's 63rd Annual Meeting, January 14 in Albany.

Just in the past year, forage exports declined 20 percent in the ten-month period between January through October, dropping from \$944.5 million in 2024 to \$780.1 million in 2025, said John Szczepanski, director of the U.S. Forage Export Council.

Looking further back, since 2011, U.S. forage exports have annually topped \$1 billion, until this year. "This will break a string of fifteen years in which we've had over one billion dollars in sales," Szczepanski said.

Szczepanski described the influences affecting U.S. forage exports as "a perfect storm" that includes inflationary pressures, freight issues, a relatively strong U.S. dollar in comparison to Asian currency, and low demand in Asia, by far the largest market for U.S. forage exports.

"If we compare the U.S. dollar to the Japanese yen, we can see that just four or five years ago, the U.S. dollar was trading at nearly 110 yen," Szczepanski said. "But on January 11, the yen was trading at 158 yen per dollar. Compared to 2021, that represents a weakening of the yen by about 45 percent. And concurrently, our exports have declined from 2022 by about 45 percent. So, there is a very strong link, a very strong correlation between our strong the dollar and the weakness that we've seen in markets."

Over the ten-month period between January and October, alfalfa export sales, generally associated with dairy, dropped from a peak of \$973 million in 2022 to \$497 million in 2025. Hay sales dropped from a peak of \$412 million in 2022 to \$282 in 2025.

Alfalfa generally makes up 62 percent of U.S. forage exports with hay making up the remainder. The hay exports, which include straw from Oregon ryegrass seed fields, are used in the beef-cattle, dairy and the horse industries. Straw is a principle ingredient in feed rations for the Wagyu beef market in Japan.

Japan is the largest market for U.S. forage exports, followed closely by China and Korea. Other prominent markets include Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, and the United Arab Emirates.



Japanese port officials inspect a load of hay. Japan, the largest market for U.S. forage exports, is monitoring residue levels of clopyralid in shipments of Oregon straw.

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MRL Issues

On another topic, Szczepanski advised ryegrass seed growers who plan to sell their straw to steer clear of insecticides that contain cyfluthrin and herbicides that contain clopyralid.

Residues from those chemistries are being closely monitored in straw exports to Korea and Japan, respectively.

Straw shipments to Korea with cyfluthrin residue levels above 0.01 ppm can be rejected at the port, he said. He added that Korean officials will reject multiple containers, everything in a bill-of-lading, if finding a maximum residue level (MRL) above the allowable limit in just one sample.

“Let’s say a bill of lading has five containers, Korea just needs to pull one container from that order and if that container contains ryegrass straw that is found to have an MRL higher than 0.01, the entire bill of lading, all five containers, will be rejected and sent home,” Szczepanski said.

Szczepanski noted that Bayer, which manufactures cyfluthrin, is working with Korean authorities to try and change the Korean

MRL. In the meantime, he advised growers to substitute lambda-cyhalothrin for cyfluthrin. South Korea has an MRL of 0.6 ppm for lambda-cyhalothrin. Szczepanski noted that in random sampling by the U.S. Forage Export Council, only once in the past ten years has Oregon ryegrass straw contained a pesticide residue level of lambda-cyhalothrin above 0.6 ppm.

Consequences of finding samples with clopyralid in straw in Japan aren’t as severe, Szczepanski said, given that while the Japanese have set an MRL for the product at 0.01, they aren’t enforcing it.

“The Japanese will still let the product in with MRLs of clopyralid above that default level,” he said. “The product can still be used. But the Japanese make a note of it and if they find they are having problems, they may set some residue limit for this chemical.”

Products containing clopyralid include Stinger and Curtail.

Cyfluthrin, a synthetic pyrethroid, is used in dozens of products.

LAST CALL - SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE MARCH 1

The Oregon Seed Council will be offering three college scholarships this year in the amounts of \$2,000, \$1,000 and \$500.

A scholarship committee will review applications, conduct interviews and choose the scholarship recipients.

The scholarship will be available for college bound students who come from a farm involved in seed production, have worked on a seed farm or have worked for a seed company. High school seniors, home school seniors, or current college students are eligible. Past winners are encouraged to apply.

Applications must include responses to a questionnaire, an essay of less than 500 words describing why the student deserves the scholarship, and three letters of reference.

The application closes on March 1.

Visit the [OSC website](http://oregonseedcouncil.org) for more details.

For questions, please contact Megan Chuinard at Megan@MAC-Consulting-LLC.com.



The graphic features the Oregon Seed Council logo at the top. Below it, the text "SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS ARE DUE MARCH 1ST" is displayed in large, bold, green and red letters. Underneath the text is a 3D rendering of a pink piggy bank. At the bottom, the text "THERE'S STILL TIME TO APPLY! VISIT OREGONSEEDCOUNCIL.ORG FOR APPLICATION INFORMATION." is written in green.

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," Singh 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

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.

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



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>

Commission Administrator Introduces New Administrative Team to Ryegrass Growers

Oregon grass seed commission administrator Michelle Palacios introduced herself and the new administrative team to seed growers at the Oregon Ryegrass Growers Association's Annual Meeting, January 14 in Albany.

"I'm probably a new face to many of you," Palacios said. "I'm the new administrator of the Oregon Ryegrass Commission, effective September 1."

During her presentation, Palacios provided information on services available from the commissions' new administrative team, and introduced new team members.

The Oregon Ryegrass Growers Seed, Oregon Tall Fescue, Oregon Fine Fescue and Oregon Clover commissions last year selected the association management firm Bryant Christie Inc. Management (BCIM) to lead the commissions following the retirement of Bryan and Lisa Ostlund on August 31. BCIM is based in Salem and is an entity of Bryant Christie Inc., a market development company that serves agriculture, food and beverage clients from offices in Seattle and Sacramento.

Palacios serves as director of association management for BCIM.

BCIM also serves as administrator of the Oregon Mint Commission, the Oregon Blueberry Commission, as well as other agricultural organizations, including the Mint Industry Research Council and Oregon Seed Growers League.

The new team includes two members from the old Ostlund's team, Jeff Booth and Shawn Anderson, and new members, Maureen LaGrande, Mandy Ficker and Allie Janicek. Eric Rosenberg is president of BCIM, James Christie is founder and Alicia Alder is vice president.

"BCIM offers a full suite of management services for agricultural commissions, trade associations and similar organizations," Palacios said.

In her Commission Report, Palacios highlighted several commission projects from 2025, including participation in a Soil Building Field Day in Kentucky, which addressed the fact that when used as a cover crop, annual ryegrass roots have been shown to break up fragipan, a cement-like layer of soil typically eighteen or so inches below the soil surface that inhibits yields on fifty million acres in the Southeast and Midwest U.S.

She noted the Ryegrass Growers Seed Commission continues to work toward the re-establishment of Gulf breeder seed. "This responded to industry concerns about maintaining Gulf annual ryegrass genetics, and the seed is now available," Palacios said.

She updated growers on developments toward publishing the Sixth Edition of "Southern Forages," a series of books that educate southern livestock producers on the use of cool-season grass seed produced in Oregon. The book is written by southern U.S. forage experts Don Ball,



Garry Lacefield and Dennis Hancock. "We've continued to work on content and now we're stepping into the layout phase before some final edits," she said. She noted that the commission expects revenue from the book to cover its production costs within two or three years.

And Palacios provided meeting participants an update on the Oregon Seed Research Institute's equipment purchases, noting that the commissions supported the institute's purchase of a customized GK Machine which was used by OSRI for the 2025 harvest season.

Palacios also updated participants on research proposals before the commissions this year. "We have a long list of proposals submitted for consideration," she said. Proposal presentations were scheduled to take place on February 12 in Corvallis. People interested in providing input to the commissions on proposals can request copies of the proposals and scoring sheets. "Anyone interested in grass seed research is invited and encouraged to be part of this process," she said.

Oregon seed commissions put \$487,937 toward research as part of efforts to address crop production issues over the past year.

Palacios ended her presentation by noting that she previously worked as administrator of the Oregon Hop Commission for two decades, a position she is continuing in. "So, I have a strong understanding of how commissions work," she said. "And I hope that our office can continue the legacy that Bryan and Lisa have set in place and that we can continue to help you address your issues and tell your stories."

Palacios encouraged growers to contact her for more information on commission activities. She can be reached at 503-364-2944, or at Michelle.Palacios@bci-mgmt.com

Oregon Seed Council Update

At the time this article was written, the Oregon Legislature was 24 days into the 2026 Legislative Session. The Session is constitutionally mandated to end within 35 days (March 8)

BUDGET REDUCTION HEARING

The Session started with a lengthy Ways and Means public hearing on February 3, where the public was able to provide testimony on budget reductions which were proposed during the interim - November Legislative Days.

The [Oregon Seed Council submitted](#) testimony advocating for four programs:

- 1. Funding for OSU Statewides.** Initial budget reduction proposals put OSU at a 7.1 percent reduction, compared to other universities at five percent.
- 2. Maintain funding for Future Farmers of America.** A \$1.1 million reduction was proposed. FFA chapters exist at 123 of Oregon’s high schools and the program fosters leadership development, agricultural education, and workforce readiness for students, which is so greatly needed.
- 3. Retain grant funding for the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP).** The OAHP is a bipartisan program created in 2017 by conservation and agricultural groups to prevent the fragmentation of Oregon’s working lands while protecting natural resources values.
- 4. Japanese Beetle Eradication.** The Japanese Beetle Eradication program was established in 2016. The work of the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) to do the identification of the invasive pest, the Japanese Beetle in Washington County. Program staff have identified the program work as incomplete and have noted a need of 4-5 years to complete the work. Unfortunately, this program was not funded in the 2025 Session, but the continuation of this program is essential for crop health and export markets.

UPDATED ECONOMIC AND REVENUE FORECAST

The morning of February 4, the House and Senate Committees on Revenue heard from the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis (OEA) on the overall revenue forecast.

Coming into the Session, the state had an anticipated deficit of \$63 million.

The economic and revenue forecast highlighted the following that at the national level GDP firmed to 2.1 percent and inflation slowed to 2.7 percent. The risk of an economy-wide recession fell to 20 percent. Conversely, Oregon’s economy trails much of the rest of the country, suffering from private sector job loss and stagnant population growth.

OEA increased its revenue projections for the 2025-27 biennium. The state’s ending fund balance is projected to be \$197.9 million, which is an increase of \$261.1 from the Q4 forecast.

Corporate tax collections were stronger than previously expected, resulting in the OEA’s Q1 revenue forecast showing General Fund revenues increasing \$105.6 million over the OEA’s 2025 Q4 forecast.

INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES

[Oregon Economic and Revenue Forecast - Feb. 4, 2026](#) - Oregon Office of Economic Analysis

[Legislative Revenue Office Forecast Summary](#) - Oregon Legislative Revenue Office

[2026 Legislative Revenue Office Public Finance](#): Basic Facts - Legislative Revenue Office

SEED INDUSTRY LEGISLATION

By now, you may have heard about HB 4065, this bill is focused on seed contracting. HB 4065 does the following:

- Clarifies the dates for when payments must be made.
- Clarifies in statute that dealers must submit notice of payment to Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA).
- Increases the seed grower fee to ODA.
- Increases interest rates for dealers on failure to pay under slow pay/no pay law.

The bill has cleared the House and is scheduled for a public hearing and possible work session on February 26 - the final day for a bill to make it out of a policy committee in its second chamber.

OSC provided testimony in support of the bill. We believe the increase in the interest rate presented in this bill will help bridge a gap where growers are disadvantaged if they are underpaid and/or payment is not made within the deadline of Oregon statute. In our testimony, OSC also provided clarification on what steps will come next with the ODA rulemaking process. [Click here](#) to view OSC’s testimony submitted to the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water. [Click here](#) to view OSC’s testimony for the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire.

OTHER ISSUES

While there are many topics to report on this Session with OSC tracking 50 bills this session, below are a few highlights:

Taxes/Increased Costs for Business

- [SB 1507A](#) - Partial disconnect from federal tax code - for agriculture, the big concern is disconnect from the 100 percent bonus depreciation provision. - OSC POSITION: Oppose

Oregon Seed Council Update *Continued*

- **OSC Engagement:** [Ag Coalition Testimony](#), [OSC Testimony](#), [OSC Testimony on SB 1507A](#) (House Revenue), [OSC Verbal Testimony](#) (Charles Ortiz in House Revenue).
- **Status:** The bill is scheduled for a third reading on the House Floor on February 25.
- [HB 4098](#) - Increases liability and insurance costs. - OSC POSITION: Oppose.
 - **OSC Engagement:** [Business Coalition Testimony](#), [Ag Coalition Testimony](#), [OSC Testimony](#)
 - **Status:** The bill died on the House Floor on a 28-30 vote.
- [SB 1511](#) - Estate tax changes - the bill moves the threshold for the estate tax from \$1 million to \$2.5 million and rate change to maintain revenue neutral impact. A summary of the changes is [available here](#).
 - **Status:** Passed the Senate February 24. Referred to the House Committee on Revenue.

Land Use/Climate

- [SB 1586](#) - the “Oregon JOBS Act” would add around 1,700 acres of prime farmland to the Hillsboro UBG. About 1,500 acres of the 1,700 acres proposed for annexation are Class 1 and 2 soils, some of the best in the world. - OSC POSITION: Oppose.
 - **OSC Engagement:** [OSC Testimony](#), [Verbal Testimony by Charles Ortiz on behalf of OSC](#), and [individual testimony by Charles Ortiz for OSC](#).
 - **Status:** Three public hearings held. No further action is scheduled at this time.

- [SB 1541](#) - the Climate Superfund - this bill would create open-ended financial risk, raising costs for households and businesses. Essentially, the bill allows for agencies to hold energy companies liable for adverse impacts of climate change. - OSC POSITION: Oppose.
 - **OSC Engagement:** [Coalition Testimony](#)
 - **Status:** Currently in the Joint Committee on Ways and Means. No further action is scheduled at this time.

Labor and Employment Issues

Several labor and employment issues have popped up this Session relating to vacation payouts, liability, and retaliation. Most of the bills OSC monitored have been amended with reasonable language. We will have a more detailed report on policies considered during the Session in our final Legislative Session Report.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation continues to be a major discussion in the Capitol, with [SB 1599](#) the bill that moves the referral of several taxes and fees in the transportation package to the May Primary rather than the November General Election, at the center of the discussion.

The bill cleared the Senate and awaits further action in the House.

ACTION ALERTS FROM THE OREGON SEED COUNCIL

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.

OREGON SEED PAC - PLEASE HELP!

Election season is just around the corner!

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.**



WE NEED YOUR HELP! Japanese Beetle Eradication Funding

WHAT: Contact your legislators to support \$1.8 Million for the Japanese Beetle Eradication Program

WHEN: ASAP

ACTION: Contact Your Legislators Today - Call and Email

[CLICK HERE TO FIND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR YOUR LEGISLATOR](#)

About the Request

Before the end of the 2026 Legislative Session, lawmakers will finalize the last spending bill of the session (the “Christmas tree bill”).

Included in that package is a **request to allocate \$1.8 million to restore and strengthen the Japanese Beetle Eradication program at the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA).**

This funding would go directly to ODA’s Insect Pest Prevention and Management (IPPM) Program, allowing the agency to hire, train, and deploy staff to conduct the critical statewide trapping program during flight season (June–September).

Without this funding:

- Oregon risks long-term market access challenges.
- Continued shipment through the 2027 shipping season becomes uncertain.
- Family farms and specialty crop producers across the state feel the impact.

This decision will be made before the short session ends.

Why Now?

Unfortunately, the Legislature did not authorize the funding required to preserve the Japanese Beetle Eradication Project during the 2025 Legislative Session.

While this issue is hitting nurseries most significantly right now, and will impact agriculture broadly, and for the seed industry, if established in the state, it will have significant 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.

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.

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

Unless funding is achieved, the burden of trapping and mitigation will fall on the industry.

This pest is a problem across agriculture, without this critical funding, this pest will spread across the state, devastating our natural environment and will impact production for sectors and loss of market share for a multitude of crops.

Talking Points

Be polite and indicate you are a constituent of the legislator you are calling. Be sure to introduce yourself and your operation, and highlight the following:

- **MAKE THE ASK:** Please support allocating \$1.8 million to ODA’s Insect Pest Prevention and Management Program in the final spending bill of this Legislative Session (the Christmas Tree Bill).
- This funding is necessary to strengthen Japanese Beetle eradication efforts during the 2026–2027 shipping seasons.
- The previous statewide program achieved 95 percent statistical eradication and was working. Unfortunately, it was not funded in last year’s budget.
- Without timely funding, Oregon agriculture risks significant economic loss and long-term market share.
- This investment protects jobs, interstate plant health, and the stability of Oregon’s agricultural economy.
- For Oregon agricultural sectors, lack of funding in this program puts our valuable crops at risk for significant damage, and financial implications.



Email/Letter Template

If you’d like to use an email/letter template to support your outreach, click on the button below.

[CLICK HERE FOR ADVOCACY TEMPLATE](#)

Resources

If you are looking for how to testify, get engaged in the legislative process, or details about the legislative session, please check out the Oregon Seed Council’s Guide to the Legislative Session [here](#).



If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Oregon Seed Council Executive Director, [Megan Chuinard Graser](#).

Goracke Honored by Ryegrass Growers

Dave Goracke, who grew up on his family farm in Monroe, Oregon, and started farming Cala Farms in Shedd in 1999, has received the 2026 Service Award from the Oregon Ryegrass Growers Association.

Goracke was honored for his many years of commitment to the industry, a stretch of commitment that dates to 2002 when he started serving on grass seed commissions and extends through to today as he fills his term as President of the Oregon Seed Council.

Goracke has served on the Oregon Tall Fescue Commission, the Oregon Clover Commission, the Oregon Seed Growers League Board, as well as serving on the boards of the Linn-Benton Farm Service Agency and the Central Linn School District.

“I am just doing my part to do what I can to help move the industry forward,” he said.

Asked how he felt to be recognized by his peers, Goracke said, “What an honor.”



Kyle Larkin, left, presents Dave Goracke the Oregon Ryegrass Growers Association's 2026 Service Award.

Calendar

- 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

Oregon AgriStress Helpline is Now Open ☐ 833-897-2474

This program is completely dedicated to serving Oregon's agriculture and forestry communities, which includes farmers, farm workers, ranchers, fishermen, foresters and their families.

The AgriStress HelplineSM is a crisis line for people engaged in agriculture, forestry and fishing. It includes crisis and emotional support, suicide intervention and prevention, and a database of both mental health and agriculture-related resources. The AgriStress Helpline provides persons in agriculture with free and confidential crisis support. The AgriStress Helpline can be reached 24/7/365 by calling or texting 833-897-2474. [Click here for more information.](#)

If you or someone you know is struggling, call or text 833-897-2474. If you have a medical emergency, call 911.