

2021 Legislative Priorities

OCA advocates on behalf of ranchers and their families to ensure continued success of their operations and contributions to Oregon's rural communities. Our members are committed to sustaining the economic and cultural tradition of caring for Oregon's working lands while producing one of Oregon's top agricultural commodities. OCA works to educate legislators on the challenges facing citizens in the rural and frontier areas of our state.

Wildlife Management

Oregon's ranchers are our state's original conservationists. We aim to ensure that Oregon's wildlife is appropriately managed and meets healthy wildlife objectives.

- Protect producers from bearing an unfair share of the cost of feeding and providing habitat to wildlife without fair protection or compensation.
- Support wildlife objectives such as addressing the decline of mule deer or other ungulate species.
- Engage in state and federal Endangered Species Act reviews.
- Ensure management decisions are made efficiently, with local, data-based decisions free from outside special interests or political input.
- Ensure policy reflects the unique geographical needs in various areas of the state.
- Consider regional approaches to management of wildlife.
- Find solutions for new approaches to fish passage, including tide gates or culvert and road repair.

Water Quantity and Quality

Water is our most precious resource and critical to sustaining both our animals and our families. Oregon's century-old appropriation process and modernized its approach to ag water quality is critical to our members operations.

- Support regional water quality management, storage, and conservation projects based on credible science and built with local input.
- Preserve local management of shared water resources.
- Defend our member's existing water rights and work to ensure that any new requirements added to existing water rights will be appropriately funded without imposing costs on our members.
- Support investment in better understanding of ground and surface water connectivity.
- Seek to maintain fair adjudication processes for water right's holders.
- Support water quality management and conservation projects based on credible science and built with local input.

Protection of Public and Private Lands for Agricultural Use

The land where our cattle graze is critical to both our operations and Oregon's environmental health. OCA member's private lands provide significant benefit to Oregon's fish and wildlife. We partner with our local, state and federal government keeps working lands working.

- Advocate for better governance of federal lands through management and consideration of grazing and logging management to reduce fuels that cause massive forest fires and destroy complete wildlife ecosystems.
- Protect Rural Fire Protection Association mechanism, which allows private protection against wildfire, to defend sage-grouse habitat.

- Defend private property rights, including closely monitoring land-use law changes that fail to recognize the unique needs of small and rural communities where ag lands and cities interface.
- Support a sustainable and cost-effective timber market to address the value of timber, and reduction of wildfires on natural resources.
- Evaluate Endangered Species Act changes or reclassifications that limit use of public and private lands or risk ranchers' livestock, pets or property.
- Oppose limitations on existing grazing allotments, access to range or use of public lands
- Advocate for resources supporting our Rural Fire Protection Associations and oppose changes to existing law that unfairly burden landowners with the cost of fighting wildfires.

Market Access and Operating Costs

The beef industry faces constant challenges in producing animals, processing and a competitive, global commodity market. OCA will work to support getting quality product to market, avoiding additional undue regulatory or compliance costs that disadvantage Oregon producers in comparison to those in other states and around the world.

- Work with legislators, Department of Ag and other policy leaders to consider creative solutions to reduce challenges created by the COVID pandemic, particularly around processing facilities.
- Continue to advocate for expanding local processing availability.
- Protect the use of the best available, approved products and technology for treating our herds and feedstock, and oppose requirements that limit use of animal health products.
- Advocate for fair, nationally consistent, labeling standards that don't unfairly disadvantage Oregon producers, processors or retailers by imposing unique state or local requirements.
- Support modernization of Oregon's transportation infrastructure to streamline access to in-state, national and global markets.
- Engage in RFID tag requirement discussions and avoid unnecessary, costly requirements impacting members.
- Coordinate with broader business community to combat costly regulations and new mandates on private business.

Budget and State Finance

As one of Oregon's top agricultural products, our members rely on partnerships with state agencies, but are vulnerable to continued tax increases. We advocate for funding that both directly and indirectly supports the broad range of needs for our rural communities.

- Oppose tax and fee increases that unfairly target our small, commodity-based businesses.
- Enhance state investment in making ranchers whole when they lose cattle to wolf depredation and provide funding to protect our herds from growing and expanding wolf populations.
- Support our universities and colleges to promote ag-based education, partnerships and research.
- Prioritize funding programs that enhance our rural culture and educate our kids, such as fairs, 4H programs, and FFA.