

Protect Your
Potatoes.

Capital Press

AGRICULTURE WEEKLY

home : [NEWS](#)

Tuesday, March 07, 2006

search

Advanced Search

[Email this article](#) • [Print this article](#)
[Comment on this article](#)

Sustainable resource center nearer reality

Joint effort will help farmers with practices

Mitch Lies

Capital Press Staff Writer

BROOKS, Ore. – More than two dozen organizations and agencies signaled their commitment to establish a sustainable agriculture resource center when they signed a declaration of cooperation at the Norpac Foods processing plant here Feb. 16.

The event marked a significant step in creating a center to serve as a clearinghouse for Oregon growers to access information on sustainable farming.

The center, expected to be housed on the Oregon State University campus, would, among other functions, provide information on certification standards and inform growers of public funds available to help pay for adopting certain sustainable farming practices.

The planners have applied for a \$50,000 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant to help move the project to the next phase. Planners hope to have the center up and running next year and are writing a Natural Resources Conservation Service grant proposal for a larger sum. Long-range plans call for the state to fund the center with taxpayer money.

Planners used funds from the Oregon Solutions effort and from private donations to bring the project to this stage.

The project is the brainchild of Norpac growers, who found while developing a company-wide sustainability program that it was difficult to access information on sustainable farming practices.

"It took a lot of work to get us to this point, and there's a lot of work still to be done," said Norpac President and CEO Rick Jacobson.

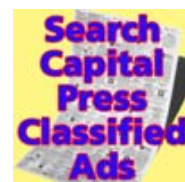
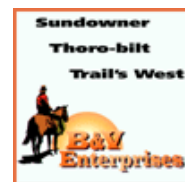
Norpac has made available to its growers an opportunity to certify their farming practices as sustainable under a third-party audit by Food Alliance. The program was adopted to ensure Norpac growers access to national and international markets that have begun requiring sustainable certification.

"It's not a choice," Jacobson said. "We must adapt or we're not going to be able to compete."

To date, 14 of Norpac's 240 growers have been certified in the program. More are on a waiting list, Jacobson said.



Oregon Association of Conservation Districts President John McDonald signs a declaration of cooperation to establish a sustainable resource center during a ceremony Feb. 16 at Norpac Foods' processing plant in Brooks, Ore. Thayne Dutson, dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences at Oregon State University, is at the lectern.



3 FREE Issues

- Breaking News
- News

This Week's Top Articles

- California News
- World Ag Expo
- East Ore/Wash News
- Idaho News
- West Ore/Wash. News
- More News
- Rural Life
- Ag Youth
- What's Cookin'
- Small Acreage
- Orchards, Nuts & Vines
- Ag Suppliers
- Adding Value
- Outdoors
- Fishing Special Report
- Fair Results

- Opinion
- Columns
- Print Editions
- Photo Gallery
- Special Sections
- Blogs
- Water Special Report

- Events Calendar
- Auction Calendar

- Classifieds
- Late For Press Ads
- Newspaper Ads

- Ag Marketplace

• **Farms For Sale**

• **Links & Information**

• **About Capital Press**

• **Archives**

[Home](#)

[Feedback](#)

• **SUBSCRIBE**

[XML](#)

Norpac called on Food Alliance and sustainable farming experts at OSU's College of Agricultural Sciences to help adopt its program. The Oregon Sustainable Agriculture Resource Center could serve some of that function, he said.

The next step in developing the center, said Peter Bloome, former associate director of Oregon State University Extension Service, is coordinating how to use the expertise available in the organizations and agencies that have signed on to the project. Bloome is serving as a consultant on the project.

"We want to get it up and running and available as soon as possible and delivering real value to producers," he said.

"This is the kind of partnership Oregon agriculture needs to have to not only survive but thrive," Oregon Department of Agriculture Director Katy Coba said.

Newsstand Code

- Friday, February 24, 2006

Subscriber

Login:

Zip Code:

Subscriber Number:

Login

[Log In Help](#)

Mitch Lies is based in Salem. His e-mail address is mlies@capitalpress.com.

Article Comment Submission Form

Please feel free to submit your comments about this article.

We can not guarantee a personal response to all comments left here. If your intent is to submit a letter for publication in Capital Press send it to opinion@capitalpress.com

Article comments are not posted immediately. Each submission must be approved by the Web site editor, who may edit content for appropriateness.

Note: All information is required. Your telephone number will not appear online.

Name:

Telephone:

E-mail:

Message:

Submit

Clear Form



Entire contents © Copyright, 2006 by Capital Press Agriculture Weekly, All Rights Reserved
PO Box 2048 Salem, OR 97308 * 1-800-882-6789
Software © 1998-2006 [1up! Software](#), All Rights Reserved

