

ODA adopts Willamette Valley canola control area rule

February 7, 2013... The Oregon Department of Agriculture has adopted an administrative rule that allows for some canola production in the Willamette Valley while continuing to protect specialty seed crop production. Under the rule, a majority of specialty seed production remains in a rapeseed exclusion zone in which canola is not allowed to be grown.

“Following the extensive amount of public comments received, we have made modifications to what was proposed in order to give greater assurance that our specialty seed growers in the Willamette Valley are not harmed by canola production,” says ODA Director Katy Coba. “At the same time, we feel it’s important to give some producers an opportunity to grow canola under the restrictions and safeguards put in place by this rule.”

The administrative rule establishes the Willamette Valley protected district, which includes portions of Lane, Linn, Benton, Marion, Polk, Clackamas, Yamhill, Washington, Multnomah, and Columbia counties. The protected district will have two zones. The first is a fully protected zone of more than 1.9 million acres that prohibits the growing of canola and contains the highest concentration of specialty seed growers in the valley. The second zone of about 1.7 million acres, located outside the exclusion zone, allows the growing of canola but production is limited to a maximum annual total of 2,500 acres. Producers desiring to grow canola are required to apply for a contract with ODA that contains specific requirements for managing the crop. The rule also establishes a minimum field size of 25 acres for canola.

In general, ODA’s rule limits how much canola can be grown in the Willamette Valley, where it can be grown, and requires significant management practices for production by controlling inadvertent spread of canola seed. It is important to note that the cap of 2,500 acres is a small fraction— just 0.13 percent— of the approximately 1.9 million acres of farmable land in the valley.

The rule and its new boundaries go into effect immediately. ODA will award contracts for canola planting by September 1 of each year for requests received before July 15. Each contract will describe the responsibilities and obligations of the producer.

For more information, go to <http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/Pages/canola.aspx>

Media contact: Bruce Pokarney, (503) 986-4559.