

The Oregon Department of Agriculture has served and provided my farm and fellow Christmas tree growers with important services that are critical to the profitability and longevity of our industry. The Christmas tree shipping season is a critical time for our industry; generally tree growers have 7-10 years' worth of time, inputs, and money in producing harvestable trees. 92 % of all Christmas trees produced in Oregon are exported outside the state. It is important for growers to provide high quality products for end users as well as environmentally safe to the geographical areas Christmas trees are shipped.

The nature of our time sensitive industry has been well served by the Oregon Department of Agriculture. The Oregon Christmas tree industry has benefited from the department's proactive assistance in identifying and developing effective countermeasures of pest of concern domestically and countries abroad to meet regulatory standards. Oregon's Department of Agriculture has facilitated many important discussions to gain understanding of environmental concerns. They have provided collaborative educational assistance domestically and importing countries on correct insect identification, environmentally safe and effective counter measures to maintain the free flow of product needed for our industry to be profitable. The state's inspectors provide time sensitive phytosanitary certificates and perform required inspections to meet the regulatory needs and assurances to our many geographical market places. Needless to say they work hard in our behalf.

The Department of Agriculture is by no means providing only harvest season assistance. During the 7-10 year crop cycle, the Oregon Department of Agriculture aids our industry by developing best management practices to maintain the health of our crops in an environmental responsible manner needed to keep our industry sustainable. They provide ongoing education and communication for growers to stay current on issues impacting our market. Their needed assistance helps develop the effective practices and measures needed to mitigate pests and diseases in a responsible and effective manner. They are a much needed resource and an asset to our industry.

The state of Oregon and the ODA have built a strong reputation that have paid dividends for Oregon producers ensuring our trees will be of high quality, meet regulatory standards and needs of states and importing counties for which our products are sold. The Oregon Department of Agriculture needs the resources and budget to maintain this high standards Oregon farms and producers depend on. I strongly urge you to allocate the needed funding for the Oregon Department of Agriculture. Thank you for your consideration.

Northwest Evergreen Inc

Jim Puffer