



Capital Press

EMPOWERING PRODUCERS OF FOOD & FIBER



Sierra Dawn McClain/Capital Press
Contractors dredge the Coos Bay channel. If the channel modification project is approved, the dredging activities will be much larger-scale.

GAME CHANGER

Coos Bay port strives to become international shipping giant

By SIERRA DAWN MCCLAIN
Capital Press

COOS BAY, Ore. — Wind howls across the channel — the kind of wind that turns umbrellas inside-out.

On the water, the ghost-like outline of a ship, scarcely visible through white fog and driving rain, seems to stand still.

It is here the Oregon International Port of Coos Bay has proposed the largest project in its history: expanding the channel to 45 feet deep and 450 feet wide and allowing the port to take its place among the international shipping giants along the West Coast.

People have been talking about the idea for decades. Advocates say it could open new avenues for international trade of agricultural

goods and transform the region's economy.

Previous project iterations have stalled, but now experts say the project has a good chance.

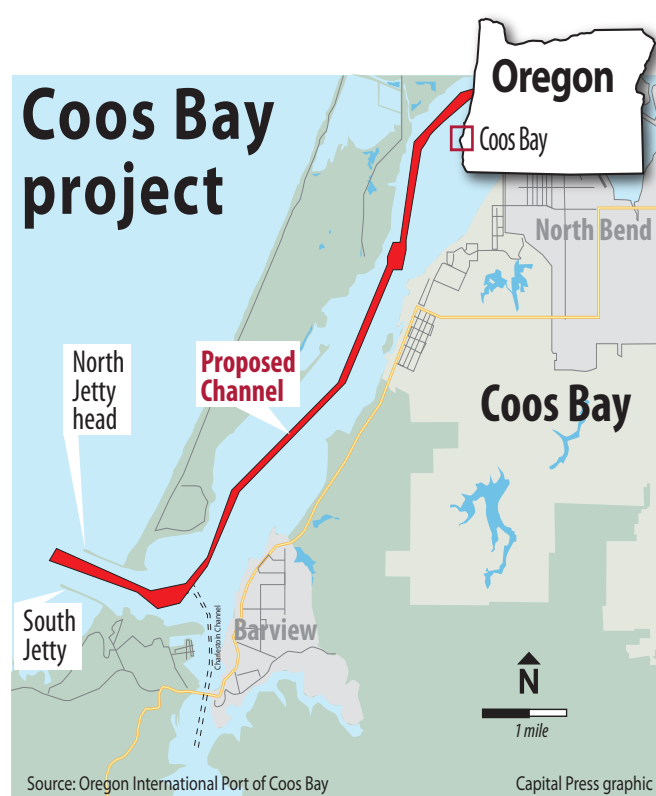
Its design is 90% complete and the public can likely expect construction to begin in a few years.

Critics, however, say financial, legal and regulatory hurdles remain. Environmental agencies are concerned the project may have negative impacts on the water, wildlife and commercial fishing. And experts say the channel modification is too intimately tied to another more con-

troversial project — the Jordan Cove natural gas pipeline.



Sierra Dawn McClain/Capital Press
"The Hub," the office building housing the Oregon International Port of Coos Bay



Source: Oregon International Port of Coos Bay
Capital Press graphic

See Port, Page 9

British beef is coming: First imports from UK in 24 years

By SIERRA DAWN MCCLAIN
Capital Press

The longstanding U.S. ban on British beef just ended.

This month, UK-produced beef arrived in the U.S. for the first time since 1996, when the outbreak of BSE, also known as mad cow disease, shut down red meat imports from the EU.

UK beef was actually cleared for export in March following a series of inspections by the U.S. Food Safety and Inspection Service, but experts say final negotiations took time.

British politicians and food industry leaders have hailed the change as a victory for British agriculture. U.S. food policy experts are not quite as optimistic. The change, they say, has had little impact on U.S. beef producers, but may later be useful as a tool for negotiating on behalf of the U.S. industry.



U.S. Meat Export Federation
The first UK-raised beef has arrived in the U.S. in more than two decades.

"As for the impact of these imports on U.S. producers and exporters, or on the balance of trade, it should be quite minimal.

(But) from a broader perspective, reopening the U.S. market to British beef could possibly prove helpful in trade agreement negotia-

tions with the UK," Joe Schuele, spokesman for the U.S. Meat Export Federation, told the Capital Press.

Schuele said export groups can expect to know more as U.S.-UK trade talks progress this fall.

A U.S. trade official who asked not to be named told the Capital Press the long-awaited decision to import UK beef really had little to do with BSE. It has long been safe to import UK beef without risk to producers or consumers, he said.

"It was just a strategic trade barrier for years, nothing clearer than that," he said. "Everyone knows it's not a health issue anymore. It's all about negotiating power."

The recent inspections focused on synchronizing U.S. and British E. coli prevention standards. E. coli outbreaks are less

See Beef, Page 9

Oregon water regulators asked to limit 'stockwatering exemption'

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

Critics of large dairies are asking Oregon water regulators to limit new groundwater pumping by such operations within 257 square miles of Umatilla and Morrow counties.

A coalition of environmental groups and others called Stand Up to Factory Farms has submitted a petition asking the Oregon Water Resources Department to restrict such withdrawals to 5,000 gallons per day for new or expanded livestock facilities without water right permits in two critical groundwater areas.

Irrigators must obtain water right permits to divert water in Oregon but some water users are exempt from this requirement, including those who need the water for livestock watering purposes.



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press File
A worker at a dairy milks cows on a rotating carousel system. A coalition of groups wants Oregon water regulators to limit the "stockwatering exemption" in two critical groundwater areas.

This "stockwatering exemption" has grown controversial because critics claims it's been exploited by major "concentrated animal feeding operations," or CAFOs, such as the

defunct Lost Valley Farm — a dairy near Boardman, Ore., that ceased operating after bankruptcy and numerous wastewater violations. "We're trying to protect the

groundwater aquifer from new CAFOs in general or expanded CAFO use," said Brian Posewitz, staff attorney for the WaterWatch of Oregon nonprofit, a member of the coalition.

However, if the petition were successful, that wouldn't necessarily prohibit any new CAFOs in the region, such as a planned redevelopment of the Lost Valley Farm operation by another operator, Posewitz said. For example, such a facility may have a different plan for obtaining water than relying on the stockwatering exemption.

Other withdrawals of groundwater exempt from water rights permits are already restricted to 5,000 gallons per day, he said. "That amount is the same as the limit for industrial and commercial use."

See Water, Page 9

