



Oregon Small Farm News

Oregon State University Small Farms Program

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Cover Photo:

Flats for the field. Gathering Together Farm, Corvallis.

Credit: Garry Stephenson, OSU Small Farms Program

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Introducing Crop Talks 2019

By: Tegan Moran & Victoria Binning, Small Farms Program, Oregon State University

The Small Farms Program is excited to introduce Crop Talks 2019 – A farmer-led, farm tour for other farmers hosted during the growing season. Each tour will center on a topic or theme specific to the host farm and relevant to the phase of the growing season it is being held in. These discussion based farm tours are an opportunity for



Photo by Rachel Suits

farmers to learn from one another, to get together to exchange ideas, opportunities, challenges, test assumptions, and to network. According to researchers, Borrelli, K, et al, “With regard to production management information, the first most trusted sources (that more than 80% of respondents found to be trustworthy) were other local farmers.” As such, Crop Talks are an opportunity intended to facilitate more instances of farmer-to-farmer sharing and learning. Extension staff will be on site to listen, support farmer to farmer exchanges, and to provide research-based resources related to the tour topic.

During the Crop Talk, the host farmer will share an overview of their farm operation and history, and then tour the farm while discussing the chosen topic or theme. The tours offer the chance to learn unique tricks of the trade and to access ‘hard won’ knowledge and local wisdom. When these tours happen in the midst of the season, the topics of conversation and the presentation are raw and in the moment. Mid-season tours highlight that farmers are not alone in the challenges they are facing and provide opportunity

to creatively explore those challenges, problem solve together, and find moral and technical support.


Data suggest that when farmers convene, new opportunities arise for increased economic viability, improved quality of life, and greater community interaction (Matthewson et al (2013) 2). At the end of the tour there will be dedicated time for socializing and networking. Especially during the growing season, farming can be isolating and extremely stressful. We envision these tours offering a practical and fun way for farmers to find inspiration and encouragement from peers.



Photo by Rachel Suits

For the 2019 season, Crop Talks are planned for the Columbia River Gorge and the Willamette Valley. To help guide future tour topics we are asking farmers to fill out a quick online survey to identify areas of interest. Thank you for taking the time to fill it out the survey. To learn more about individual tours visit

our Crop Talks 2019 webpage. Additional tours will be added as they are scheduled.

We want to thank our host farms for opening their farms and minds to other farmers and helping to build community. These are the meaningful exchanges that transfer knowledge from established farmers to the next generations of producers. 

SAVE

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DATE

SMALL FARM SCHOOL

JULY
18

Clackamas Community College, Oregon City



Hands-on and classroom learning for beginning small-scale farmers

Visit website for updates: <http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/smallfarmschool/>

a collaboration between OSU EXTENSION, CLACKAMAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE, CLACKAMAS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, ROGUE FARM CORPS and FRIENDS OF FAMILY FARMERS

Stone Wall Strawberries

By: Dr. Toshihiko Nishio, a Japanese rice farming system researcher

Translated and edited by: Shinji Kawai and Alice Formiga, Department of Horticulture, Oregon State University

Improvements in agricultural technology and breeding helped struggling Japanese farming communities in the early 20th century. Since the 1990s, Dr. Toshihiko Nishio, a Japanese rice farming system researcher, published over 150 stories about these innovations. By showing how these discoveries derived from careful observation, patience, and in some cases, serendipity, we hope that farmers will realize how ordinary people can contribute to the advancement of their local agricultural communities and beyond.

In the winter, Mt. Fuji is covered in white snow. It looks beautiful from a distance, especially from the Kuno mountain region in the Sizuoka Prefecture. Among the many other attractions of this area are the so-called stone wall strawberries.



Mt. Fuji, Mt. Kuno and Sugura Bay.
Illustration by Eiko Goto.

The story of the stone wall strawberries began around the turn of the twentieth century. According to one version, a rickshaw driver at the Kuno Mountain

Toshogu shrine, whose name was Kawashima, received a strawberry plant from the local Shinto priest. The priest had obtained it from a friend who was working at the American embassy. When Kawashima placed the pot at the base of a sunny stone wall, the strawberry plant was warmed by the radiating heat and bore beautiful fruit earlier than anywhere else. In 1901, Kawashima decided to start producing early bearing strawberries using stone walls.

The Kuno region is backed by Nihondaira Hill and faces Suruga Bay. The slope is too steep for rice production. According to a second version of the story, a farmer named Hansuke Ishigaki thought “Well, if this is our fate, how about growing strawberries?” He began growing them



Original section of pebble stone wall with Mr. Kawashima (great-grandson of the rickshaw driver) with 'Fukuba' strawberries.
Photo credit: Shinji Kawai.



V-shaped crevices with strawberry plants.
Illustration by Eiko Goto



Strawberry plants on concrete wall with the v shaped crevices.
Photo credit: Shinji Kawai

in 1904 by piling up terraces made of stone pebbles collected from the bay shore. Coincidentally, his name, Ishigaki, means “stone wall”. By 1907, Ishigaki was shipping strawberries to the Tokyo market. A third version of the story credits a farmer named Seisaku Ogiwara with inventing the stone wall system in 1908, after he accidentally discovered that his strawberries, which were growing among stone pebbles, produced earlier than others. (Kakiuchi, 1960).

Local farmers experimented with planting strawberries at different angles and directions near stone walls to maximize the plants’ exposure to the sun. Steep angles were ideal for catching sunrays, but if the terraces were too steep, they eroded during heavy rains and had to be rebuilt. Retaining soil moisture and fertilizer was also difficult. The farmers eventually settled on a slope angle of between 40 and 60 degrees. Irrigation was another challenge. Until the water pump was introduced in the early 20th century, the farmers had to haul water with wooden buckets three or four times a day. To control the temperature, straw mats or oiled paper were sometimes draped over frames around the plantings, and they needed to be opened and closed.

By 1923, the pebble stone terraces were replaced with concrete plates with v-shaped crevices on the upper edges, into which the farmers planted strawberries. Devised by farmers Seisaku Hagiwara and Keitaro Araya, this system reduced the labor

needs for stone wall construction. Strawberry acreage increased rapidly, and rose to between 80 to 100 hectares by the early 1930s. During that time, Kuno Stone Wall Strawberries became known throughout Japan.

The next leap forward in stone wall strawberry production took place in the 1930s, when the cultivar, ‘Fukuba’ was introduced to the region. It was bred in 1899 by Hayato Fukuba, who was a senior researcher at the Shinjuku Imperial Garden after his return from a study tour in France. Fukuba had initially tried to import strawberry plants; however, they dried up in shipping, so he was forced to import seeds instead. ‘Fukuba’ was bred from a chance seedling of the French variety ‘General Chanzu’. The new cultivar had large berries and ripened early.

Strawberry production ceased during World War II, but it gained ground again by the early 1950s. At that time, a researcher named Keiji Ninomiya began experimenting with vernalizing strawberry stolons by exposing them to lower temperatures, after attending a lecture by Yasuo Eguchi of the National Horticulture Experiment Station in 1949. Ninomiya took strawberry stolons to the foot of Mt. Fuji for a month, and by 1953, he had figured out the right altitude and stolon size for optimal vernalization. Farmers adopted his method in 1955. As a result, they began harvesting strawberries one month earlier, in mid-October.

In the mid-1950s greenhouse production was introduced, and after 1966, u-pick production became more widespread. By this time, ordinary citizens could afford fresh fruit and vegetables, and the consumption of strawberries rose, especially in Christmas cake, a strawberry shortcake that became a symbol of post-war prosperity. At the peak of strawberry production in the mid-1970s, about 10 million plants were grown.

After World War II, farmers began breeding new cultivars. Masazo Hotta from the nearby city of Fujieda, introduced 'Hotta Wonder'. It produced even earlier in October than 'Fukuba'. 'Hotta Wonder' became the number one cultivar by the mid-1960s for Christmas cake. The first introduction by a Kuno farmer came in 1983. Akihiro Hagiwara bred 'Kuno Wase' (early Kuno), followed by 'Akihime' in



Strawberry greenhouses.
Photo credit: Shinji Kawai.



Farmer harvesting stone wall strawberries.
Photo credit: Shinji Kawai

1989. Hagiwara disliked the other available cultivars, because he thought they were too sour for u-pick farming. When he sought advice at the local experiment station, he was told to create his own variety. 'Akihime' had good color and large size, with a sweet and not-too-tart flavor. It produced over an extended time and yielded well. By 2003 'Akihime' was grown by 94% of the regional farmers.

Although most of the strawberry production in the Kuno region is now located in the lower plains, the author has deep respect for the determined farmers who transformed the steep, stony slopes. Nowadays, local specialty crops are promoted everywhere, but Kuno stone wall strawberries were at the forefront of this movement. In a plum orchard at the Kuno Mountain Toshogu Shrine, a monument commemorates the "Birthplace of the Stone Wall Strawberries". Currently, the strawberry acreage of the region is 50 hectares, farmed by about 240 families. Today, visitors to u-pick farms pay a fee for half an hour of picking and receive a container of sweetened condensed milk to enjoy with as many strawberries as they can eat! 🍓

Additional Resource

Kakuchi G.H. 1960. Stone Wall Strawberry Industry on Kuno Mountain. Economic Geography 36:2. April 1960. p. 171-184.



NWREC Winter Cover Crop Variety Field Day

April 10th, 2019
1:00 - 4:00 pm

North Willamette Research and Extension Center
Oregon State University
15210 NE Miley Rd, Aurora

Join us for an afternoon of field tours and discussions with extension agents and seed companies.

Field Day is free, no need to RSVP. Questions: heidi.noordijk@oregonstate.edu

Clovers – Vetches – Fava Beans – Peas



Oregon State
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Oregon's Organic Sector Promotes Organic Agriculture at Legislature

During Oregon's biennial legislative session, a wide range of constituents reserve days and space at the capitol to promote issues and gain awareness. The organic farming and food sector had its day in February with Organic Grows a Better Oregon intended to make legislators aware of the important contribution organic agriculture makes to farm families, communities, and Oregon's economy.


Led by Organic Valley which recently invested \$21 million in a creamery near McMinnville, organizers highlighted some organic sector impacts:

- \$350 million in organic farm gate sales
- Ranked 9th in the nation with 864 organic businesses
- Top organic crops: milk, alfalfa, potatoes, cattle and berries
- 91% of households in the state purchase organic
- More than \$13 million in federally funded organic research
- Approximately 176,000 certified organic acres

The day included lunch consisting of a variety of organic products served to about 200 people, presentations by farmers, and a visit and comments by Oregon Governor, Kate Brown.

In tandem with the promotional lunch, some organizers independently met with lawmakers for informational sessions and to promote two policy options to support organic agriculture in Oregon: 1. Formalize a state Oregon Organic Advisory Council.

2. Expand investments that leverage greater organic agriculture research, outreach, and education in Oregon.

Event sponsors included: Organic Valley, Oregon Tilth, Friends of Family Farmers, OSU College of Agricultural Science, OSU Extension Service, Organically Grown Company, Oregon Organic Coalition, Hummingbird Wholesale, Mountain Rose Herbs, Organic Trade Association, and OMRI. 



Governor Kate Brown (background) visits **Organic Grows A Better Oregon**
Photo credit: Garry Stephenson

EMPOWERU! ADVOCATING INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Learn how to work with decision makers, influence management decisions and stop the spread of invasive species!

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COURSE IS \$25/PERSON
ONLINE PROGRAM STARTS ON
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MAY 11 IN LANE CO.
OR MAY 14 IN LINCOLN CO.

Registration information:
<http://tinyurl.com/osuempoweru>



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Good Meat Project at the Small Farms Conference

By: Adam Danforth, Good Meat Project, Board Member & Educator

The Good Meat Project, a partner of OSU's Niche Meat Processor Assistance Network (NMPAN), led a 2-session "meat track" at the Small Farms Conference in February.

Raising livestock in accordance with nature, outside of conventional models, is an undeniably worthy endeavor. The decision to take greater responsibility for animal genetics, humane husbandry, and environmental stewardship is an important one, and a full time job at that. By paying close attention to these aspects, each farmer or rancher (known as "seeders" at the Good Meat Project) can develop unique flavors and textures in their product, which are their primary selling points to consumers (known as "feeders" at the Good Meat Project). Together, hopefully, they can feel good about the impact of their practices on our planet and the animals who feed us.

But raising animals outside of the industrial model comes with many challenges for the farmers, from customer resistance to paying the true cost of this kind of meat production to navigating unfamiliar cut sheets with local processors (which can sometimes feel like a daunting choose-your-own-adventure), and dealing with the enormous challenge of selling those unfamiliar cuts to wary consumers who may or may not know what to do with them in the kitchen.

These farmers not only have to figure out how to raise their animals responsibly, with unique flavors and textures as the end goal—no small feat—but they have to become interpreters of their product for consumers. Yet, once those animals leave the domain of the farm, there is rarely a proper feedback loop to help inform farmers about the meat products that come from their animals. How did the steaks look? Was the final carcass in good condition? Were



Cutting demonstration at Clark Meat Center
Image provided by Rebecca Thistlethwaite

the processor-produced sausages delicious to the consumer? Were the final portions to spec and well butchered?

Do their customers even notice the difference between this kind of meat and the kind of meat sold in most grocery stores? How can producers most effectively communicate the true value of their meat if they don't have an in-depth understanding of how their animals get processed and what makes some meat delicious and other meat not?

At the Good Meat Project (<http://www.goodmeatproject.org/>), a 501(c)3 nonprofit based in Portland, Oregon, our mission is to inspire responsible meat consumption and production through experiential education. We help to facilitate communication between the various silos of the meat industry—seeders (farmers and ranchers), feeders (processors, butchers, and food professionals) and eaters (consumers). Our goal is to empower all participants in our food system to better understand how each of our roles contributes to the quality of life initiated on the farm and, hopefully, carried through each stage until consumption.



Cutting demonstration at Clark Meat Center
Image provided by Rebecca Thistlethwaite

the importance of fiber, fat, and fascia in relation to flavor and texture. We concluded by discussing pre-slaughter, slaughter, and post-slaughter conditions and their direction connection to an eater's experience.


Following the discussion, we transitioned a smaller group to the Clark Meat Science Center to demonstrate a pork carcass breakdown. Here we were able to get more specific. We discussed the anatomy of pork and other species, reviewing some of the most popular retail cuts as well as lesser known cuts. We concluded the demonstration with a blind tasting of unique individual muscle cuts, underscoring the day's earlier discussions on flavor, texture, and the language of "good meat."

Farmers rarely get to take part in the slaughter and processing of their animals. This gap in knowledge can be a great detriment to their business. The Good Meat Project attempted to fill a tiny part of that gap with this workshop. As such, the discussion was lively and informative.

Working with farmers during two sessions at the OSU Small Farms Conference offered a great opportunity for the Good Meat Project to open a dialogue about the definition of "good meat" and what that label might convey to consumers. In the morning, Bob Dickson (a seasoned retail meat specialist), Camas Davis (executive director of the Good Meat Project) and I (a butcher, instructor, and author of several how-to butchery and slaughter books) spoke about the development of flavor in live animals, detailing how ideal animal husbandry (proper and humane diet, exercise, and environment) results in better flavor, flavor which can create powerful food memories (as well as increased nutrition and more) for eaters.

In any of the Good Meat Project's farmer-focused workshops, our goal is to work with farmers to develop a language and vocabulary with which to help potential customers understand how the living conditions of livestock directly relates to the good or bad experience of the eater. In this vein, we first asked the audience to brainstorm the complex and myriad definitions of "good meat." We then discussed

As we butchered the side of pig, we were able to immediately respond to farmer inquiries about cuts, anatomy, flavor, and texture. Farmers could ask how to cook one cut so it wasn't tough. We discussed different words and phrases farmers could use to talk about flavor and texture outside of the usual fallbacks (i.e. "gamey" and "tough").

As an organization, the Good Meat Project was able to learn more about how farmers communicate their business priorities and the challenges they face. Experiential workshops like these, with healthy discourse, stimulate connections between invested factions of meat production. They help us all better understand how to aid one another as we rise to the challenge of making good meat accessible and appealing to all. 

The Good Meat Project inspires responsible meat production and consumption through experiential education. The organization conceives and conducts hands-on, experiential education events and workshops, envisioned for consumers, farmers, butchers, and chefs. <https://goodmeatproject.org/>

A New Tool Makes it Easy for Organic Farmers to Follow the NOP Guidance on Natural Resources and Biodiversity Conservation

By: Jessica Shade, Director of Science Programs, The Organic Center

The concept of healthy farms brings to mind fertile soils, clean water, and abundant wildlife. These amenities or ecosystem services were at one time taken for granted, but are now increasingly in the news and scientific literature, as we recognize that many are being degraded.

Organic farmers rely on biologically diverse agricultural ecosystems to maintain resilient farms in the absence of synthetic chemicals. Services provided by healthy agricultural systems include the production of food, fiber, and fuel, biological control, pollination, biodiversity conservation, aesthetic landscapes, carbon sequestration, climate control, purification of air and water, production of high quality soil, flood control, and breakdown of waste into nutrients. Though ecosystem services are provided free of charge, their estimated global value exceeds \$33 trillion dollars per year. Beneficial species such as insects and birds, for example, provide an estimated \$4.5 billion in biological pest control and \$3.1 billion in pollination services annually. These ecosystem services also reduce the need for external inputs and increase yields — improving profits and sustainability. Furthermore, such practices aid local conservation efforts.

In 2016 the National Organic Program (NOP) published its Guidance on Natural Resources and Biodiversity Conservation, a direct response to the need for supporting on-farm ecosystem services through organic agriculture. Unfortunately, the guidances provided are vague, placing the burden of designing and implementing technical plans on the farmer. This task is complicated by the fact that variation in farm size, type, and geographic location all influence the feasibility and effectiveness of biodiversity-friendly farming techniques making a “one-size fits all” conservation recommendation impossible.


Research continues to identify techniques and specific on-farm best practices that will result in a biodiversity increase on farm systems, but translation of this information for farmers remains limited, as does on-farm implementation. These shortcomings continue despite the benefits that can be gained by organic farmers.

To address this, The Organic Center and Dr. John Quinn of Furman University have collaborated to develop a NOP Natural Resources and Biodiversity Conservation Guidance Compliance Tool, which provides a farmer-friendly means of examining biodiversity with an interactive front-end interface that includes the mandates released by the National Organic Program in order to aid farmers in technical decisions to increase on-farm biodiversity and comply with the new guidance.

The tool can be accessed [here](#), and details ways that farmers can find and measure biodiversity on their fields. For example, diversity can be measured as the number of livestock breeds on a farm, the number of crop species planted in a field, the presence of unique wildlife in a pasture, or habitat patches across the farm. As a complete biodiversity inventory is not practical for a farm, suitable indicators are needed. The tool suggests indicators for general, crop, and livestock Organic System Plans for each of the following four management goals: 1) planning, 2) management, 3) restoration, and 4) preservation. In addition, to guide standardized reporting as part of annual USDA NOP certification, the tool can be used to generate a formal report.

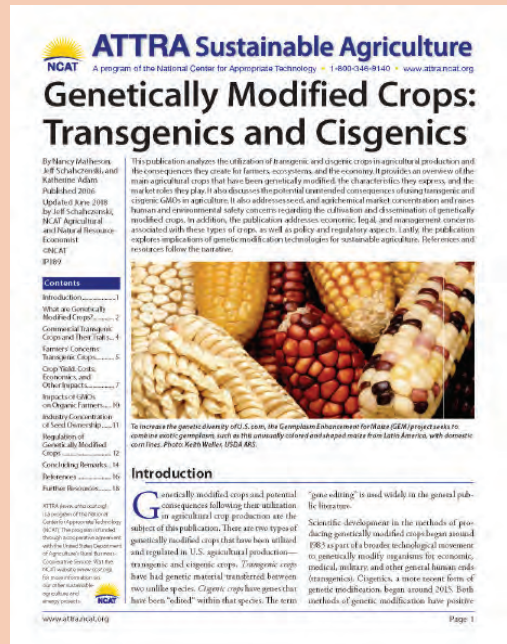
Lastly, the tool is designed to encourage farmers to set annual biodiversity conservation targets and follow a more formal land use planning process. Thus for each category, farmers are asked to choose the

best indicator for their farm, the current values that they observe on the farm, and where they would like to see their farm change to address each biodiversity indicator in the next 2-3 years

Recognizing the importance of ecosystem services to human well-being is an essential first step to sustaining healthy ecosystems now and for the future, and it is essential to ensure that the broad array of services is part of the decision-making process. The NOP Natural Resources and Biodiversity Conservation Guidance Compliance Tool seeks to improve how decisions are made by providing a cohesive way for farmers and certifiers to track on-farm biodiversity in a way that makes it easy to follow the Guidance on Natural Resources and Biodiversity Conservation. 

Updated ATTRA publication on transgenic and cisgenic crops

This publication analyzes the utilization of transgenic and cisgenic crops in agricultural production and the consequences they create for farmers, ecosystems, and the economy. It provides an overview of the main agricultural crops that have been genetically modified, the characteristics they express, and the market roles they play. It also discusses the potential unintended consequences of using transgenic and cisgenic GMOs in agriculture.



The publication also addresses seed, and agrichemical market concentration and raises human and environmental safety concerns regarding the cultivation and dissemination of genetically modified crops. In addition, it addresses economic, legal, and management concerns associated with these types of crops, as well as policy and regulatory aspects. Lastly, the publication explores implications of genetic modification technologies for sustainable agriculture.

An earlier version of this publication was written in 2006 by Nancy Matheson, Jeff Schahczenski, and Katherine Adam.

Download the article from this link on the ATTRA/NCAT website: <https://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/download.php?id=71>

Information provided by Jeff Schahczenski, Agricultural and Natural Resource Economist, National Center for Appropriate Technology

You're Invited to the Changing Hands Story Series

Rogue Farm Corps, in a Capital Press series, shares real stories of transitioning land from one generation to the next.

By: Ashley Rood, Rogue Farm Corps

Our farms and ranches throughout the West will see a huge generational shift in the coming decade. U.S. farmland is overwhelmingly concentrated in the hands of older farmers: nearly two-thirds of farmland is currently managed by someone over 55.

Transitioning farmland, and a business, is no easy task. The stories we all too often hear are about the loss of farms. But there are farmers and ranchers who have found creative ways to pass their legacies to the next generation. And there are programs designed to help farmers with succession and business planning. There's a lot of lessons to be learned and a wealth of inspiration from those who have carved this path.

Throughout 2019, the Changing Hands story series (<https://www.roguefarmcorps.org/changinghands>) is sharing the inspirational stories of farmland transition in the Capital Press - the west's most prominent agricultural publication - both online (https://www.capitalpress.com/specialsections/farm_succession) and in print.

You'll learn how farmers and ranchers in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and California passed their legacies to family members and non-family members

and meet skilled aspiring farmers and ranchers who are ready and able to take over a business. We also feature a variety of tools that help with transitions like working lands easements, conservation incentives, creative business structures and experiences with succession planners.

Stories so far include:

A Full Root Cellar, Hard Earned: Wild Hare Organic Farm: In 2017, Mark and Katie Green purchased a



Clockwise from left: "Wild Hare Organic Farm," photo by Molly Goren, PCC Farmland Trust "Bryan Harper of Harper Farms," photo by Karen Cammack "Dungeness Creamery," photo by Timothy Paul Photography

21-acre farm just outside of Tacoma, Washington from local sustainable farming leaders, Dick and Terry Carkner—and the deal they struck ensured it will stay a farm forever.

Farming Better Through Partnership: McClelland Dairy: Jana McClelland is partnering with her parents, George and Dora, setting her up to take over the family dairy farm in the future. Learn how this Organic Valley farm is continually refining their practices to care for the land and receiving conservation funding to do it.

Taking the Long View: B4 Sunrise Farm Transfer: “In 2014, my son Andy called me and said, ‘I want to come home and farm,’” says Dave Baldus. For Dave, it was essential that Andy kept his day job until they had a plan. Since that pivotal phone call, the Balduses have embraced one-on-one transition planning sessions, learned to communicate better as a family, and created a working partnership to set up B4 Sunrise for the future.


A New Track For Harper Farms: “It’s the ultimate compliment to have your child take over the family farm,” says Warren Harper, of Harper Farms in Junction City, Oregon, the heart of the Willamette Valley. Bryan Harper has done just that—he’s stepped up to be the fifth generation at the helm of the family’s 1200-acre Harper Farms. Learn how the Harper’s worked with a succession planner to pass along the farm.

A Dairy Thrives through the Next Generation: “When it comes to transferring a farm to the next generation, success is temporary, but failure is permanent,” says Ryan McCarthy of Dungeness Creamery. Their ongoing success is the result of a creative shift in their business model, a cash infusion from selling the property’s development rights, training, and a little bit of fate.

Creating A Legacy In Land: Crown Hill Enterprises: A non-family farm transfer benefits from succession planning and a conservation easement.

Stay tuned for more stories throughout the year! You’ll find them all on our Changing Hands Web page: <https://www.roguefarmcorps.org/changinghands>

If you are seeking farmland, transferring farmland, or conserving farmland in California, Idaho, Oregon, or Washington, see Rogue Farm Corps’ Changing Hands Resources page: <https://www.roguefarmcorps.org/resources>.

And if you have a story you’d like to share, or questions about the resources, please get in touch: ashley@roguefarmcorps.org. 



Food Hubs in Oregon: What have we learned?

By: Lauren Gwin, Center for Small Farms & Community Food Systems, Oregon State University; Matt Buck, food systems consultant; Teagan Moran, Small Farms Program, Oregon State University

Can you grow your local food economy by building a food hub?

Many communities around Oregon have been exploring food hubs as a way to get more locally grown food into local markets, including wholesale outlets like grocery stores, schools, and hospitals – by providing aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and marketing services. The challenge is moving enough food through the hub to pay for all the infrastructure, systems, and people needed for it to work. So how can you make it work?

To answer these questions, we started by learning about 10 different food hub projects around the state – some that are currently operating, some still in the planning stages, and some that were never built or are no longer operating. We also offered a session at this year's OSU Small Farms Conference, featuring current, former, and future food hub operators around Oregon. They shared their experiences and lessons learned, along with guidance for others thinking about starting a hub.

In our initial research on the 10 hubs, we observed that food hub proposals tend to come out of community food assessments and other food system assessments. Hub studies and projects have been started by a wide variety of people and organizations, including government agencies and nonprofit groups and also farmers and food entrepreneurs. Grant funding has played a big role for research and development, but it hasn't helped with hub operation.

Other challenges include a lack of agreement among those planning the hub about what it should actually do; overly rushed studies that result in crucial data not being collected; and a loss of momentum and slow progress after a study is completed; and not knowing who will actually run the hub.

In our Small Farms Conference session, Matt Buck provided a national overview of food hubs, including their range of goals, services, and products, success factors, and challenges (see box). We then heard about four hub projects from project leaders themselves.

Food Hub National Trends

A food hub is centrally located facility with a business management structure facilitating the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of locally and regionally produced food products. As of 2017, there were more than 360 active food hubs in the U.S.

Food hub goals include farm profitability, local economic development, and increasing access to fresh, healthy food. 89% of hubs buying from farms and ranches are supporting mostly or exclusively small or mid-sized producers.

Success factors: start with a business plan, strong financial footing, and expert staff; focus on your strengths and find partners for the rest; know your customers and markets; understand the food production process.

Challenges include balancing supply and demand, e.g., not enough product, seasonality constraints, not enough consistent customers who understand seasonality and using multiple suppliers; managing growth; negotiating prices; and access to capital.

Sources: 2017 National Food Hub Survey: MSU CRFS/Wallace Center at Winrock, USDA Rural Development. https://www.canr.msu.edu/national_food_hub_survey/

Central Oregon Food Hub

Janel Ruehl, Community and Economic Development Program Coordinator with Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council, and Liz Weigand, owner of Agricultural Connections, a local distribution company, described their multi-year planning process and how their hub concept has evolved over time.

From a 2010 community food needs assessment, COIC and partners saw that their growing regional population was increasing demand for local food, but local food suppliers needed support to scale up and serve those markets. In particular, they identified a lack of infrastructure for small- to mid-size producers to get their products to wholesale buyers. This led to a Central Oregon Food Hub Feasibility Study in 2012, a Central Oregon Food Hub Operating Plan in 2014, and a local food economic impact study, with OSU, in 2017.

COIC led the planning process but could not itself run a hub so decided to partner with an existing private local food distribution business, Agricultural Connections. Liz Weigand, owner of Agricultural Connections, serves wholesale buyers and sellers of local farm/food products with an aggregation site, a farm pickup service, post-harvest handling with limited processing, storage, access to distribution, education for producers on post-harvest handling and packaging, and marketing services. Through partnership with COIC, they will raise new funding to add a sales manager and another driver, additional equipment, transition to re-useable packing bins to reduce waste, and ramp up collaborative marketing in the region.

More about Central Oregon Food Hub: <https://agriculturalconnections.com/> and <https://coic2.org/community-development/food-hub/>

Fry Family Farm Food Hub, Medford

Amber Fry, Manager of Fry Family Farm Food Hub, moved back to her family's farm from San Francisco to launch and manage the food hub. Her parents started Fry Family Farm 27 years ago, and the farm has grown to 100 acres of certified organic row crop vegetables,



Agricultural Connections COIC Photo. Image from OSU Small Farms Conference 2019 Session - Food Hubs in Oregon: What Have We Learned?

including 10 acres of organic cut flowers, and some berry production for local markets and their CSA. She and her father envisioned a hub not only as a way to keep their farm growing and sustainable but as a way to address infrastructure and distribution challenges for other farms in their community.

They raised \$1.2 million for the project, half of it from private and public grant sources, and completed it in 2017. The facility includes a produce-washing and sorting line, a commercial kitchen; cold, frozen and dry storage; a loading dock to support aggregation and distribution, and a retail farm store.

From the outset, the Frys planned the hub so that even if no other farmers decided to use it, they could cover the operating expenses themselves. This decision was critical to the sustainability of the hub, now in its 3rd season. The on-farm retail store and commercial kitchen are creating value for them and other local farms. But the original “hub” idea has been a struggle. “Processing, aggregation, and distribution of organic, local foods has been the hardest part to move forward,” Amber said. She pointed to declining wholesale prices and the increasingly tight labor market as the two main reasons. Farms have such tight margins that they cannot afford to outsource anything. “We’ve had to learn to be flexible and innovative and figure out different ways to make it work and be profitable.”

Learn more at <http://www.fryfamilyfarm.org/wholesale/>.

The Redd, Portland

We then heard from Maia Hardy, Agriculture of the Middle Program Manager at Ecotrust, about The Redd, in Portland, which operates at a very different scale. The Redd, she said, “is a manifestation of our commitment to helping producers reach wholesale markets,” in Portland. Ecotrust’s research on regional food infrastructure laid the groundwork for the project.



Hey You're a Part of it! - Photo of the Ecotrust Redd Building. Image from OSU Small Farms Conference 2019 Session - Food Hubs in Oregon: What Have We Learned?

The \$25 million investment, funded by many layers of capital, is a 2-block campus designed to help businesses transition from small to mid-sized, and to scale the local food economy. It includes a commercial kitchen and work/office spaces with access to warehousing, cold storage, distribution, and business development support. The primary tenant is B-Line, a last-mile logistics, distribution, and warehousing/cold storage company known for its innovative delivery trikes. Soup Cycle and New Foods Kitchen are there as well.

One side of the campus, Redd East, will also include an event center, managed by Ecotrust, to generate revenue that will subsidize the space and services the rest of The Redd provides. So far, Maia said, 109 value-added companies, eight produce farms, nine grain companies, ten ranches, and one forest products company are all sending products through The Redd, into the Portland Metro market. More on The Redd: <http://reddonsalmon.com>

Adelante Mujeres: Sustainable Agriculture Distributor and CSA

Our final speaker was Silvia Cuesta, Farm Business and Distributor Manager at Adelante Mujeres, based in Forest Grove. “Our farmers are almost all very tiny in scale. They are farming in community gardens and their own backyards.” Despite their small scale, their team of farmers supplied a 200 member CSA and nine wholesale buyers at their peak in 2017.

Adelante Mujeres is “building a more just society by empowering Latinas to lead.” Their sustainable agriculture program provides beginning and experienced Latino farmers with the training and skills to farm using sustainable methods and successfully market their products.

“We didn’t start out saying, ‘we want to create a food hub,’” Silvia said. “It just started. We saw a need, and we did it.” The distribution hub and CSA began in 2012, as a way to sell excess produce. They started with 10 wholesale buyers, and, in 2013, a 30-member CSA. By 2017, the CSA had grown to 200 members but this success was unsustainable. They cut back again in 2018, but it was still too much.

“Our farmers did not have the capacity to supply all 200 boxes,” Silvia said, especially without their own dedicated farmland. Also, many farmers had full-time jobs and did not think they could earn enough from farming to grow and sell more. Adelante Mujeres, as a grant-funded nonprofit, also needed more capacity: more staff, more packing and delivery skills, and better space and infrastructure. After an extensive evaluation of the 2018 season, they halved their CSA membership for 2019 and will provide wholesale market access to farmers who want to continue. Two

of these, Mata's Family Farm and Reyes Family Farm, are the "success stories," Silvia says, and one may eventually take over the distribution operation and the CSA.

The speakers in our food hub session – combined with the additional projects we are learning about around the state – demonstrate a wide variety of reasons that agencies, organizations, farmers, and food businesses are motivated to start a food hub. They also demonstrate some of the significant challenges associated with different models.

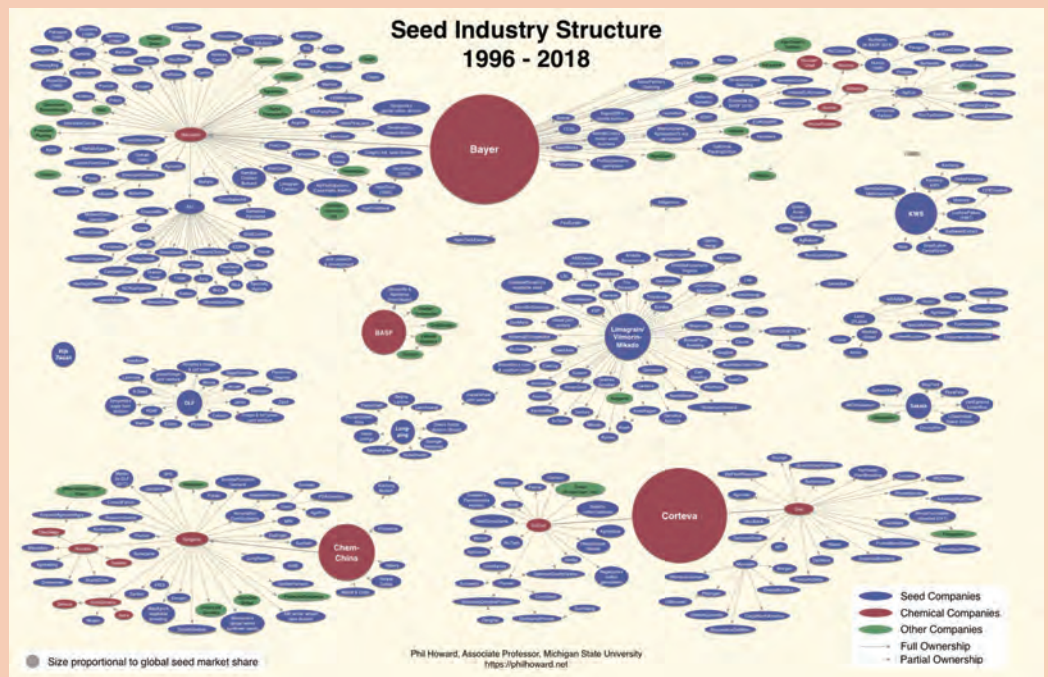
The Center for Small Farms & Community Food Systems, in partnership with the Oregon Community Food Systems Network is launching a peer learning community designed to support sustainable local and regional food system development in Oregon. For more information, contact Lauren Gwin: lauren.gwin@oregonstate.edu.

Four Firms Control 60 Percent of Seed Sales

Dr. Philip Howard with Michigan State University tracks consolidation in the seed industry and periodically issues updates on where the seed industry stands in terms of ownership. His most recent release, *Global Seed Industry Changes Since 2013*, points out that what were the "Big 6" seed firms are now combined into the "Big 4."

Dow and DuPont merged in a deal valued at \$130 billion (2015), and divided into three companies, including an agriculture-focused firm called Corteva. Chemchina acquired Syngenta for \$43 billion (2016). Bayer acquired Monsanto for \$63 billion (2016). Bayer's seed divisions were sold to BASF for \$7 billion to satisfy antitrust regulators (2018).

These four firms—Bayer, BASF, Chemchina, and Corteva—are now estimated to control over 60 percent of global proprietary seed sales. For additional information, visit Dr. Howard's website: <https://philhoward.net/2018/12/31/global-seed-industry-changes-since-2013/>



"The graphic shows ownership changes occurring from 1996 to 2018. Note that the size of the largest circles are proportional to global seed sales, which are dominated by Bayer and Corteva."

Calendar

April

9 - Crop Talk: Beneficial Insect Habitat in a Vineyard at Klickitat Canyon Winery

Crop Talks are farmer-to-farmer educational opportunities that consist of a tour of a farm by the farmer and a discussion about their area of expertise or interest during the growing season. These are opportunities to get out into someone's field, see their practices in action, ask questions, and connect with other local farmers while doing it! For farmers by farmers. This farm tour is hosted by Klickitat Canyon Winery and will focus on integrating beneficial insect habitat and native plantings into a field. 6:00PM-9:00PM. Lyle, WA. Additional farm tour details will be emailed to registered participants. Contact Rachel Suits to register for the event at 541-386-3343 ext 38257 or Rachel.Suits@oregonstate.edu

10 - NWREC Winter Cover Crop Variety Field Day

Join us for an afternoon all about overwintering cover crops. We'll start off inside with discussions on establishing and managing winter cover crops, followed by a field tour with cover crop seed researchers and distributors. This field day is targeted towards vegetable growers. Presenters include Nicole Anderson and Nick Andrews, OSU Extension. 1:00PM-4:00PM. 15210 NE Miley Rd

Aurora, OR. The workshop is free and no need to RSVP. We will be outside, please dress accordingly

19 - Olive Industry Meet & Greet

Do you grow olives? Do you want to? OSU Extension Olea Project is excited to announce an industry meet and greet for Oregon olive growers. Join olive growers, industry partners, and OSU Extension for an informal conversation on the status of olive production in the state. New and potential growers are encouraged to attend! The Olea Project will provide an update on olive research in Oregon, including propagation and up-potting practices; Paul Durant from Durant Olive Mill will discuss olive oil milling options within the state; and we will finish with a Q&A session with current Oregon olive growers. Bring your questions and network with others in this innovative industry! 2:00PM - 3:00PM. 1320 Capitol St NE, Suite 110, Salem, OR. Questions?? Victoria.Binning@oregonstate.edu or 503-373-3774

Check our online calendar at for the most up to date events <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/smallfarms>

Want to add your event to our calendar then please submit your information to SmallFarmsprogram@oregonstate.edu If you have questions please contact Chrissy Lucas at Chrissy.Lucas@oregonstate.edu or 541-766-3556