

Oregon

Small Farm News

Oregon State University Small Farms Program

In This Issue:

2009 OSU Small Farms Conference	2
Farm Profile: Rainshadow Organics	3
The Need For New Farmers	5
Growing Farms: Successful Whole Farm Management Series	7
Agricultural Labor Management Series offered in Southern Oregon	8
Sustainable Livestock Production - Part 2	10
Making Sense of Food Labeling	14
USDA Funds New Organic Cropping Research at OSU	16
Willamette Valley Pesticide Collection Event	18
USDA Seeks Public Comment	19
Calendar	20



OSU Extension Service Small Farms Staff

Garry Stephenson
Small Farms Program
Coordinator
Corvallis, OR 97330

Sam Angima
Lincoln County
29 SE 2nd Street
Newport, OR 97365
541-574-6534

Nick Andrews
Clackamas & Washington
Counties
15210 NE Miley Road
Aurora, OR 97002
503-678-1264

Melissa Fery
Benton, Linn, & Lane Counties
1849 NW 9th Street
Corvallis, OR 97330
541-766-6750

Dana Martin
Deschutes, Crook, & Jefferson
Counties
3893 SW Airport Way
Redmond, OR 97756

Melissa Matthewson
Jackson, Josephine, & Douglas
Counties
569 Hanley Road
Central Point, OR 97502

Maud Powell
Jackson, Josephine, & Douglas
Counties
569 Hanley Road
Central Point, OR 97502

Chrissy Lucas
Small Farms Program Assistant
1849 NW 9th Street
Corvallis, OR 97330
1-800-365-0201

Cover Photo:

Snow covered ranch near Klamath
Falls, Oregon

Photo by Lynn Ketchum, Oregon State University
Extension & Experiment Station Communications

Layout by:
Chrissy Lucas, Oregon State University
Extension Service Small Farms Program

Oregon State University Extension Service offers educational programs, activities, and materials without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, disability, and disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran status. Oregon State University Extension Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

2009 OSU Extension Service Small Farms Conference

The 9th annual Extension Small Farms Conference will be held on Saturday, February 21, 2009, from 9:30 AM to 5:00 PM. The one-day conference will be held on the Corvallis campus of Oregon State University at the Alumni Center.

The keynote speaker, Michael Rozyne, founder of Red Tomato, will speak on *Values Based on Supply Chains and Community Food Systems*. The Red Tomato is a nonprofit organization marketing fresh fruit and vegetables from family farms in the northeast and southeast US to supermarkets and other customers throughout New England. Oregon Department of Agriculture Director Katy Coba is the invited capnote speaker.

Find registration materials on-line after January 5th at: <http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/> or call the Benton County Extension Office at 541-766-3556 or toll free at 1-800-365-0201. Online registration will be offered this year!

The conference includes 12 concurrent sessions, covering a range of topics of interest to growers who market their production directly to the public, for farmers' markets managers, and for community food advocates.

- ***Farmscaping for Beneficials: Insect Biodiversity and On-Farm Habitat***
- ***Building a Sustainable Business: A Minnesota Case Study***
- ***Simple Ways to Promote your Farm***
- ***Simple Ways to Promote your Farmers' Market***
- ***Alternative Poultry Feeds***
- ***Alternative Energy and Renewable Energy***
- ***Management Structures for Farmers' Markets***
- ***Conversation with Michael Rozyne***
- ***Conversation with Community Food Security Coalition's Andy Fisher***

Pre-registration is \$30 or \$50 for two registering together, and includes lunch. Registration deadline is February and then the cost is \$35 per person. \$40 per person for onsite at the door, lunch subject to availability.

This event is sponsored by Oregon State University Extension Service; Oregon Department of Agriculture; Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education. 

Farm Profile: Rainshadow Organics

By: Dana Martin

Sarahlee Lawrence has lived an eventful life following graduation from Redmond High School in 2000. She's traveled the world touring New Zealand, South and Central America and Africa. She has worked as a river guide, exploring the Nile River and leading adventures through the Grand Canyon. While floating the Colorado River, she was involved in an invasive species project.



Sarahlee Lawrence is excited to return to her family farm in Central Oregon. She is currently transforming her family's hay operation into an organic vegetable and grain farm. *Photo by Dana Martin*

During this time, Sarahlee also earned a degree in Sociology and Environmental Studies from Whitman College and a Master of Science degree in Environmental Science and Writing from the University of Montana

Through all her adventures, Sarahlee never lost site of her dream to return to her Central Oregon family farm, located about 10 miles down Lower Bridge Road in the Terrebonne area.

"I wanted to return to our family farm but I wanted to do it differently," says Sarahlee, referring to her parent's hay operation, which David and Chris Lawrence have farmed for the past 30 years.

While Sarahlee's husband, a West Point graduate, is deployed to Iraq, Sarahlee and her family are busy diversifying their 130-acre farm. Sarahlee

is composting horse manure and involved in a vermiculture project. She has planted one field in winter peas and is experimenting with growing Quinoa as well as Safflower. Her pickup has been converted to run on recycled vegetable oil and Sarahlee is in the process of constructing a four-seasons greenhouse.

Her goal for the family farm, Rainshadow Organics, is to eventually develop an organic vegetable and grain CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) operation.

"I want to grow healthy, local food for my community in a sustainable way," says Sarahlee. "We have a three-year timeline to get Rainshadow Organics converted to organic. Our goal is to be in operation by the summer of 2011.

Sarahlee has done her research. While she is willing to explore new, innovative techniques for farming, her business plan is very practical and straight forward. She plans to improve their soil, create an efficient infrastructure and explore different crop options.

"The first thing we need to do is fortify our soil," she says, noting that this year, Rainshadow Organics will turn 150 tons of horse manure into compost. "We are exploring various methods in order



Above: An old potato cellar is being used to house worm bins. Left: Sarahlee is conducting vermiculture experiments on her small farm. She plans to turn worm casings into a worm tea which will be spread on her land. *Photos by Dana Martin*

to conserve water, a critical consideration in our arid region.”

Sarahlee has also partnered with a neighbor to conduct intensive vermiculture experiments on the farm, utilizing an old potato storage cellar to house the worm bins.

“We will turn worm castings into a worm tea and then spread it on our fields,” she says. “We are experimenting with ways to harvest worms and their castings as well as looking for efficient ways to turn the castings into a nutrient-rich tea, which will be used to improve the health of our soil.”

Sarahlee is working with a local irrigation company to better manage water on her farm. The district is currently piping 10 miles of canals in order to save water for local endangered fish, while also creating a pressurized water source for farmers. Most of this work is being done through volunteer labor.

Next year, she will be field-testing Quinoa, an Andean grain that is gaining popularity in the United States. It will be planted on a two-acre field and closely monitored to see if it is feasible as a crop in Central Oregon.

After attending a recent ‘Cultivating Our Local Food Economy’, coordinated by the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council in cooperation with OSU Extension Service, Sarahlee is excited about the connections she made with other farmers in Central Oregon.

“A recurring theme at the conference was the need to form a cooperative where local producers can pool their resources to meet local demands and share knowledge,” she says. “Through a local cooperative, those of us with small farms could possibly work together to purchase equipment and supplies and figure



Rainshadow Organics farm will soon have a four-seasons greenhouse to help expand the growing opportunities in Central Oregon.
Photo by Dana Martin

out ways to market our products. In order to make this happen, we need to have a viable system to exchange information.”

Sarahlee is actively seeking funding opportunities that will allow her to develop a website for people involved in the local food movement.

Through this community resource, producers and consumers could connect, share ideas and increase communication.

“This website would be a resource for all farmers interested in working towards a sustainable farming and ranching community,” says Sarahlee, noting that she has always had a love for environmental stewardship. “I’m dedicated to my community and the land. I don’t care about making a million bucks, I just want to live a quality life and in the process, make a significant contribution. There is no better place to live than right here so we are committed to making this work.”

Lambing School 2009

January 27th, 2009 from 8 am to 5 pm

McMinnville, Oregon

Topics covered include lambing problems, vaccinations, castration, grafting, foot trimming, docking, emergency situations and more.

Cost is \$55 per person. Limited to 12 participants. Deadline for registration is Tuesday, January 13th. For more information, contact the Polk County Extension office at 503-623-8395 or email Gene Pirelli at Gene.Pirelli@oregonstate.edu

The Need for New Farmers

By: Zoë Bradbury

Every 5 years the United States Department of Agriculture sends all of us farmers a survey that rivals War and Peace in length: the Agricultural Census. And every five years once all the results are tallied – the irrigated acres summed, the number of women farmers counted, the gross revenues from hog production totaled - and much, much more – without fail, an alarm bell goes off. With no offense intended to my baby boomer parents, U.S. farmers are getting old. The national average has climbed to 55.3 years as of the last agricultural census in 2002 (the 2007 census results have not been released yet), and the trend is ever upward.



Photo by Lynn Ketchum, Oregon State University Extension & Experiment Station Communications

Well big whoop, the parents are muttering: Fifty is the new thirty anyways...

Be that it may, the sirens are clanging not only because farmers are getting older – more than a quarter of U.S. farmers are over 65 and in Oregon it's anticipated that up to half of the state's farmers and ranchers will retire in the next decade - but because young farmers are also in short supply. A mere 5.8% of us are now under the age of 35, compared to 16% in 1982.¹

The simple take-home from this mess of statistics is that farmers are getting to be a rare, old breed in America, comprising a scant 1% of the U.S. population compared to 40% in 1900. In fact, the headcount has dipped so low that people who grow food for a living are now outnumbered by federal prison inmates. Thomas Jefferson must be rolling over in his grave.

Which begs the question: how did we go from the Jeffersonian ideal of independent family farmers forming the backbone of society to an era in which the mainstream connection to agriculture is boiled down to tidy, iconic, disembodied exposure - corn on the cob at county fairs,

glossy images at the grocery store, and cowboy boots on the retail rack at Ross Dress for Less?

There's a long history of U.S. modernization and agricultural policy to point to, but a few headlines stand out:

- *The combustion engine headline from the early 1900s: "Tractors & cheap energy displace draft animals, people"*
- *The post-WWII headline: "Nerve gas & bombs reincarnated as pesticides, fertilizer – the work of farmhands now done by chemicals"*
- *The still-relevant 1970's Farm Bill headline: "Government pays farmers to overproduce commodity crops: Prices plummet, farms forced to get big or get out"*
- *The 1980's farm crisis headline: "Interest rates skyrocket, farmers default on debt, suicide rates surge"*
- *The ongoing corporate agribusiness concentration headline: "Four companies control 80% of U.S. meatpacking: Monopoly control takes its toll on family farmers"*
- *The ubiquitous credit headline: "Farming seen as high risk, lenders balk at making farm loans"*
- *And the real estate headline: "Land prices through the roof due to development pressure"*

There's a joke that asks, "What do you call a dairy farm willed to the kids?" And the reply: "Child abuse." Which, in addition to all of the economic, political, and technological forces highlighted above, points to a cultural element in this saga of farmer aging and attrition. It's the mainstream stereotype that has dogged agriculture over the past half century: that farming is a life sentence to work your way out of, not into. This notion alone has been one of the most powerful constructs spurring successive generations off the farm in search of higher paid, better respected desk jobs.

The result is a U.S. food system that resembles an inverted pyramid teetering precariously on its nose, a system in which just 3 million people – most of them grandparents - feed three hundred million and the world beyond. It's also a food system in which a startling majority of people don't have a clue about where their food comes from and in which the average fifth grader can identify more corporate logos than local plants.

Proponents of modern industrial agriculture will argue that there's nothing wrong with a scenario like this in which the fewest possible number of people feed the largest possible number of people. In fact it's an equation that economists celebrate, touting America's agriculture as the most successful (read "efficient") in the world. This paradigm asserts we don't need more farmers to feed a growing population; we simply need bigger tractors, bigger farms and biotechnology.

Except for one big problem: oil. America's industrial food system relies almost entirely on oil, which it transforms into everything from carrots to Coke by way of diesel-powered tractors, natural gas-derived fertilizers, oil-based pesticides, and gas-guzzling trucks. When all is said and done, the average American "eats" 350 gallons of fossil fuel a year, and close to one fifth of all the energy used in the U.S. is burned up producing, processing and transporting food. It means that as oil supplies peter out and fuel costs keep ballooning, America runs the risk of bankrupting it's own breadbasket if we bet our lunch on industrial agriculture.

Our chance of weathering this challenge better than other civilizations that have collapsed for lack of food throughout history hinges in part on cultivating a whole new generation of farmers in America. About 50 million in the next thirty years, estimates Richard Heinberg of the Post Carbon Institute, and they can't be addicted to oil.

Pulling it off at this scale is going to take a lot of things: programs and policies that give new farmers access to affordable farmland; land use planning that prioritizes agriculture in both urban and rural settings; low-interest loans to help beginning farmers get their start; training and technical assistance to teach smart farming practices; succession planning amongst retiring farmers to help perpetuate successful farm businesses; and an American government that puts an end to subsidizing industrial agribusiness and starts investing purposefully in a crop of sustainable family farmers - starting with the fastest growing segment of farm operators today: women, Hispanic, Asian and Native American farmers.

Fortunately, some small strides were made in this direction in the 2008 Farm Bill, including appropriations for a Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, improvements to USDA's low-interest down payment loan program, and the creation of a new USDA office for small



Photo by Lynn Ketchum,
Oregon State University Extension & Experiment Station Communications

and beginning farmers.² These sorts of federal provisions are the ones we need to nurture and expand, in addition to state and local programs that promote sustainable agriculture and a next generation of food producers. OSU's Small Farms Program is part of this solution in Oregon.

In addition to policy change, renewing the American farmscape is also going to take a cultural shift that revitalizes farm culture, breathes life into rural towns, and throws a party when a college grad decides to be a farmer. We face the task of restoring honor to one of the oldest professions on earth. Heartening is the fact that we're making the most headway in the realm of sustainable agriculture: at last count, eighteen percent of organic farmers were under the age of 35 - three times the rate of conventional agriculture.

Turning the tanker may be slow work, but here at home we can be buoyed by a unique, little counter-current statistic: Oregon - bucking the national trend - grew 58 new farms between 1997 and 2002, from 39,975 to 40,033.



Only 4,999,942 more to go.

Zoë Bradbury is a young farmer on the southern Oregon coast and a Food & Society Policy Fellow.

¹Data junkies can visit the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service to explore their nearly bottomless database of US Agricultural Census information: <http://www.nass.usda.gov/QuickStats/>

² Visit <http://sustainableagriculturecoalition.org/publications/grassrootsguide/> for more information about positive gains for beginning farmers in the 2008 Farm Bill.



**Oregon State University
Extension Service
Small Farms Program
Presents:**



Growing Farms

Successful Whole Farm Management Workshop Series



Are you in your first to fifth year of farming? Are you ready to expand or start your farm business, but feel you need a better understanding of specialty crop production and farm management? If so this course is for you!

OSU Small Farms Program has designed this workshop series to provide beginning farmers with the tools and knowledge to manage the crop production and financial risks of farming. A mix of faculty, experienced farmers, and other professionals will present curriculum and resources vital to a sustainable small specialty crop farm. In addition, participants will become acquainted with their regional farm community over dinner.

For more information:
smallfarms.oregonstate.edu
 Contact: Kristin Pool
 (503) 678-1264 ext. 118
poolk@onid.orst.edu

Save the Date!

Join us! The Small Farms Program will host the series in four regions: North Willamette Valley , South Willamette Valley, Central Oregon, and Southern Oregon.

✦

North Willamette Valley and Southern Oregon
 January 21st to March 11th
 Wednesdays 4 to 8:30 pm, including dinner

South Willamette Valley and Central Oregon
 6 Wednesday Evenings and 1 Saturday starting April 8th



Supported by The Risk Management Agency



Agricultural Labor Management Series offered in Southern Oregon

By: Shelley Elkovich and Maud Powell

This winter, the OSU Extension Small Farms Program is offering a series of courses on agricultural labor management. Local producers have indicated that labor represents one of their greatest challenges in running successful businesses. Farms in southern Oregon tend to be fairly small, and in addition to family members, farmers rely on either paid agricultural workers or interns as their workforce. The OSU Small Farms Program will be offering two four-week courses, one focused on agricultural labor; the other on farm interns. The courses are designed to help producers in many aspects of labor management, including recruitment, hiring, retention and complying with state and federal regulations.

Agricultural workers in southern Oregon are typically Latino, either part-time seasonal workers, or on some farms, full-time and year-round. Among the challenges in hiring these workers is the lack of a central hiring source. For instance some cities have specially designated hiring halls which can offer basic services such as Spanish language interpreters, lavatories and an agreed-upon state wage.

Farmers in southern Oregon often struggle to find skilled workers and rely on word-of-mouth and networking with neighboring farms. Skilled laborers vastly prefer year-round employment, which often exceed the financial resources of the farm operation. Cooperation between farms in work-share arrangements often boosts retention of good workers by offering them the equivalent of full-time work spread between the two farms.

Another challenge in hiring is communication. Farmers who take the time to learn a few phrases in Spanish have a much easier time communicating with their employees. An excellent resource for agriculture-specific Spanish phrases is the out-of-print *Spanish in the field: Practical Spanish for ranchers, farmers, or vintners*. Check your public library for a copy.

Until recently, it was difficult to compete with the

building boom when hiring workers. Some experienced farmworkers shifted their employment focus to construction work because it generally pays better. The economic downturn and decrease in housing construction has made it easier for farmers to compete with that sector.

Farmers who employ unionized workers have reported increased marketing opportunities for their products and higher satisfaction among their workers. Wages are not necessarily higher for union employees, but these workers do enjoy collective bargaining protections. While there is an active labor union in the Woodburn area, there is currently no organized labor among southern Oregon farmworkers.

Internships

Many small specialty farms rely on intern or apprentice labor. These interns are typically young North Americans, although apprentices come from all over the world. The apprentices usually do not have the same work experience or skill level as farmworkers; in fact, some have never spent significant time on a farm. Others may have worked on other farms and seek to broaden their experience. Interns are typically housed at the farm, and in exchange for room, board and a small stipend, gain valuable farm skills and the chance to experience the farming lifestyle.

This exchange has been a valuable source of affordable labor for small producers, and an important “training ground” for next generations of farmers. Despite the success of these programs, they are rarely in compliance with state wage law. Recently, in the Willamette Valley, a former intern filed a wage claim against a farmer and won payment of back wages. Wage law states that if an intern works independently and contributes to the profitability of the farm, that intern is an employee entitled to minimum wage compensation.

One solution is to pay interns minimum wage for work performed and then charge the intern market rates

for rent, contributions toward groceries, and fees for educational programs. In order to comply with the law, all appropriate tax and employment forms must be filed, as well as a written work agreement between intern and farmer.

Successfully and legally managing employees, be it interns or farmworkers, represents a difficult and complicated aspect of running a business. Through the two courses on labor management, the OSU Extension Small Farms Program will provide producers with knowledge and information to more successfully manage their workers. *Z*

**Resources: Bureau of Labor and Industries, www.oregon.gov/BOLI/
The On-Farm Mentor's Guide
World Wide Opportunities, www.woofusa.org**

New Illustrated Guide to Sheep and Goat Production from ATTRA

Sheep and goats are versatile animals and can be valuable and enjoyable additions to many farms, providing meat, milk and fiber products, as well as brush control and pasture improvement services. This new, basic and graphic introduction to sheep and goat production discusses animal selection, feeding, breeding and young stock, equipment and handling, and marketing. The 20 page guide can be downloaded at: http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/PDF/sheep_illus.pdf

Web Site Explains Details of COOL

A University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Web site explains the details of the Country of Origin Labeling law that went into effect September 30, 2008. The law requires labels identifying country of origin on certain foods, including meat, produce and nuts, when sold at particular retail establishments.

The Web site, *COOL* (at: http://agecon.unl.edu/mark/country_of_origin.html), will help “anyone in the food system from farm to fork,” said Darrell Mark, UNL extension livestock marketing specialist. “There’s still a lot of learning needed,” he said. “I hope this site accomplishes educating people on what they need to do for their own operation.”

The law will require livestock producers to document where their livestock was born, raised and processed. While the U.S. Department of Agriculture will not fully enforce terms of the law until April, “educational compliance” is being promoted now. The site includes a series of fact sheets, videos and other educational materials for livestock producers, meat processors, retailers, extension educators and consumers. Included are videos from Lloyd Day, administrator of the USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service, as well as livestock professionals from Iowa State and Oklahoma State universities.

The site focuses primarily on meat but also contains some information about other commodities included under the law. Food included under the law include muscle and ground cuts of beef, pork and lamb, goat meat, chicken, ginseng, fish and shellfish, peanuts, fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables, pecans and macadamia nuts.

The labels placed on the products must state which country the product came from so consumers know whether they are buying products from the United States or other countries. Meat can be labeled “U.S. origin” only if it came from animals born, raised and processed in the United States. The labels are required only at larger retail outlets, defined as those that invoice more than \$230,000 of fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables.

COOL originally was contained in the 2002 farm bill but its implementation was delayed because of challenges in how to make it work, Mark said. Parts of the law were changed and modifications to the original COOL law were passed in the 2008 farm bill.

Sustainable Livestock Production, Part 2

By: Dr. Susan Kerr, WSU-Klickitat County Extension Director

In Part 1 of this series on sustainable livestock production, we discussed the need for effective pre-planning before engaging in a livestock enterprise. This pre-planning includes inventorying resources, conducting market research, selecting products, determining break-even prices, etc. In Part 2, we will focus on enterprise-specific issues. Bear in mind the brief comments here grossly oversimplify the issues related to each livestock species. However, this information should be enough to help readers decide if this venture is of interest and possible on a given farm and therefore worthy of additional research.



Photo by Melissa Fery

Common Issues for All

All prospective livestock producers should critically investigate markets and realistic revenue and expense prices first and see if these are compatible with the farm's financial goals. Also see if there are opportunities to sell value-added products and/or if special management tasks can increase product value. For example, using protective blankets on fiber animals will keep fleeces cleaner and increase their value.

The importance of understanding and applying best pasture management practices on small acreages cannot be overemphasized. The University of Idaho's Bulletin 849 (see link below) is a useful resource. Pasture rotation and multi-species grazing are two very effective management tools.

Food animal producers need to implement product quality assurance practices, maintain accurate records on all animals, stay within the law regarding the use of medications in food animals and develop effective biosecurity plans. Wise animal husbandry practices regarding air quality, sanitation, feeding, nutrition, stress reduction and so on are essential aspects of herd

health.

Horses

It is a challenge to have a profitable horse enterprise. Also, if not properly managed, horses can do quite a bit of damage to their environment. Consequently, horse enterprises require a great deal of pre-planning. Enterprise options include breeding, boarding, training, recreation, sheltering/rescue, therapy, agrotourism and showing, to name a few. Your selection of a breed will probably depend on your goals and the horse's purpose. For example, a Percheron probably would not make the best competitive hunter/jumper and you probably would not use an Arabian in competitive weight pulling.

Start-up and input costs can be significant. Land, shelter, fences, machinery, hay/feed, breeding fees, routine health care (deworming, vaccinations, hoof care, dental care) and veterinary services are some costs to be considered. Horse operations can be physically demanding and labor-intensive, too.

Each horse farm needs to have a mud and manure management plan. This plan may include a "sacrifice area" where horses are kept and fed on a dry lot so grazing can be managed and environmental impacts minimized. Horses on dry lots need exercise or they can develop behavioral and health problems. A grazing plan including pasture rotation is essential for optimal pasture health, production and longevity.

Horses are susceptible to many health and disease concerns including tetanus, West Nile virus, colic, parasitism and many more. Many of them can be minimized or prevented by vaccinations and proper management.

Goats

Due to their size and versatility, goats can be



Photo by Melissa Fery

a viable option for many small acreage enterprises. One goat can produce an amount of milk compatible with a family's daily needs and surplus can be made into other dairy products. However, year-round milk production can be a challenge with goats. There is growing customer demand for goat products such as milk, soaps, cheese and meat.

Goats can be used for dairy, meat, fiber, draft, packing, companionship and forage control purposes. Purebred breeding operations are a common enterprise selection. There are many breeds to choose from and this choice will depend on the producer's goals, markets and interests. Common management practices include vaccinating, hoof trimming, deworming, castrating, and ear tagging or tattooing.

The meat goat industry has grown exponentially since the mid-1990s when the Boer breed was introduced to the U.S. The majority of goat meat consumers in the U.S. are ethnic minorities with a cultural tradition of goat meat consumption, especially during religious celebrations. Knowledge of customers' preferences and cultural requirements is essential for customer satisfaction and repeat business.

Profitable goat enterprises providing the sole income for a family are rare. Major challenges to profitability include location of markets, availability of USDA-approved slaughter plants, costs of meeting requirements for dairy licensing and land and feed costs. Health and management challenges include shelter, fencing, predator control, parasite control and several contagious diseases.

Selection of disease-free foundation animals will help reduce future health issues when assembling a herd. A quality assurance program and excellent record keeping help ensure producers sell only safe and wholesome food products.

Cattle

As with goats, cattle breeds include meat and dairy varieties. Breed selection will depend on markets, goals and



Photo by Melissa Fery

resources. For all cattle, good fences and handling facilities are essential, as are mud and manure management plans. Because cattle cycle year-round, breeding can be timed to coincide with other factors such as labor availability, weather, markets, forage cycles, etc.

The barriers to establishing a new, conventional, large-scale commercial dairy are staggering and this option is probably not feasible for small acreage owners. Small-scale specialty dairies (such as organic, specialty breed or specialty product production) are a possibility, however. Federal, state and local laws govern dairy licensing and the sale of dairy products so pre-planning should include investigation of these issues. Year-round milk production is possible with just a few animals; a two-month dry period at the end of lactation is needed so the udder can recover and prepare for the next lactation. A cow needs to give birth to produce milk so the farm plan needs to include a plan for calves.

Small beef herds are common on small acreages. Again, a marketing plan is essential for maximum profitability – who is the target customer and what does he/she want? Equipment, land, feed and labor costs and issues should be addressed before the first animal is purchased. Many small-scale beef producers sell live animals or portions thereof directly to consumers and the animals are processed at local custom plants. Others have access to USDA-approved processing plants and can then sell retail cuts to customers, restaurants and even online. The more marketing options available, the more likely the enterprise is to be profitable.

Purchase initial animals from reputable, disease-free sources. Concerns include Johne's Disease, respiratory viruses and bacteria, Bovine Leukosis Virus, Bovine Viral Diarrhea, mastitis, hairy heel warts, foot rot



and many more. Quality assurance programs are essential to guarantee product safety, wholesomeness and customer satisfaction.

Photo by Lynn Ketchum,
Oregon State University Extension & Experiment Station Communications

Swine

Some people find it very enjoyable and rewarding to raise pigs; others find it to be a lot of work and not profitable. There are “meat” (e.g. Hampshire) and “mother” (e.g. Yorkshire) breeds of market hogs as well as many lesser-known breeds, including those with critically-low worldwide populations. Go to the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy web site (URL below) for a list of endangered livestock breeds of all species – perhaps you would like to dedicate your small farm to the preservation of one of these breeds.

Being omnivores, swine can be fed a least-cost ration based on a variety of locally-available products and by-products. However, most small-scale producers feed commercially-prepared products. Public health regulations mandate that any household food wastes feed to hogs must be thoroughly cooked first.

Pigs adapt well to a variety of management settings, from confinement to free range. However, they can be difficult to keep inside fences and can be very destructive to property through rooting activity. Piglets need sanitary environments, protection from crushing, creep feed, supplemental heat and iron injections at birth.

Potential customers include 4-H/FFA youth, pig roast events, locker meat customers and those interested in breeding stock. Some consumers seek out home-raised hogs because they desire moister and more flavorful pork than that typically available in grocery stores.

Parasites and many diseases threaten swine but a great many can be prevented through vaccination, selection, deworming and management practices. Most serious swine producers have a strict biosecurity program that restricts farm visitors and prevents mixing of pigs from multiple sources. The National Pork Producers’ Council has been at the forefront of quality assurance programs and their web site has an excellent array of educational materials for producers (see link below).

Sheep

Sheep are another versatile species with many products to offer: wool, meat, milk and cheese. They are well-suited to small acreage and various intensities

of management. Keeping accurate records and adhering to food animal regulations are again essential tasks for sheep producers. Common management practices include vaccinating, hoof trimming, deworming, shearing, castrating, tail docking and ear tagging.

In the meat breeds, shearing has become an unprofitable and time-consuming venture, so some small acreage owners are transitioning to non-wooled “easy care” breeds such as Dorpers and Katahdins. Lamb and mutton are prized by some people groups, especially for certain celebrations. Other sheep meat enterprise customers include 4-H/FFA market lamb youth and locker lamb/direct market consumers.

Wool has several value-added opportunities, as well: washed fleeces, rovings, spun yarn, bats, finished products, pelts, etc. Sheep milk, cheese, fleeces and hand-spun yarn tend to be “high-end” products commanding high retail



Photo by Melissa Fery

prices. Again, regulations govern the production and sale of sheep dairy products.

Excellent fences are necessary to keep sheep in and predators out. Livestock guardians such as guardian dogs, llamas or donkeys can be very effective but have their own management issues.

Predators and parasites are threats to sheep health and profitability. Sheep can be afflicted with several serious and contagious diseases, so assemble a flock from disease-free sources. Pay particular attention to foot rot, Johne’s Disease, Caseous Lymphadenitis and Ovine Progressive Pleuropneumonia. Use vaccinations and excellent management to control other common sheep diseases.

Poultry

What is a small farm without poultry? More and more farms are taking poultry seriously and are producing meat and eggs for the growing segment of the population demanding “free range” products.

Poultry (chickens, turkeys, ducks and geese) can work into pasture rotations nicely, helping distribute

livestock manure and reducing livestock parasite loads on pastures through a multi-species grazing program.

The poultry production cycle includes incubation, chick brooding, growth and breeding or slaughter. Chicks need supplemental heat for up to several weeks and a well-balanced diet for optimal growth. Laying hens should be fed a laying hen ration that meets their high calcium needs. Roosters are not required unless you plan to let eggs get fertilized and either incubate eggs or let hens hatch them out.

Creative producers can find markets for many poultry products including eggs, breeding stock, 4-H/FFA birds, fryers/broilers, show birds, chicks, manure, grass/pasture management, feathers and even egg art. Laws govern the sale of meat and eggs but usually not to the extent of livestock species; check with state and county agencies to see what regulations govern the sale of poultry products in your area. Keep excellent records and record all treatments and processes.

Poultry predators come in all shapes and sizes and any time of day. Owls, hawks, eagles, foxes, coyotes, dogs, cougars, cats, raccoons, weasels, opossums and others can kill poultry, so effective protection is essential. Birds need protection from both the sun and the harsh elements of winter. Health threats are often tied to sanitation and environmental problems, so keep housing and equipment clean and make sure birds have good ventilation. Remove and isolate sick birds from the flock. Purchase eggs or chicks vaccinated against Marek's Disease at the hatchery. Monitor birds closely for lice, especially through the winter.



Photo by Justin McGovern

Resources

Contact your county's Extension office to see what educational workshops are offered in your area. Educational programs specifically developed for small acreage owners include “Living on the Land,” “Cultivating Success” and “Tilling the Soil of Opportunity.” The following web sites have helpful information as well. 🌿

General

<http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/livestock>

<http://smallfarms.wsu.edu/animals.php>

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/html/ec/ec1529/>

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/html/pnw/pnw225/>

<http://info.ag.uidaho.edu/pdf/BUL/BUL849.pdf>

www.public.iastate.edu/~mwps_dis/mwps_web/frame_p.html

www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds

www.albc-usa.org

www.animalag.wsu.edu

www.hobbyfarms.com/livestock-and-pets/choosing-livestock-14981.aspx

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/html/em/em8649/>

Horses

www.ayhc.com (Horse Industry Handbook)

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pdf/EC/EC1558.pdf>

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pdf/EC/EC1610.pdf>

Goats

www.sheepandgoat.com

Cattle

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/html/ec/ec1514/>

(beef)

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ds147> (dairy)

Swine

www.pork.org

<http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/PDF/hog.pdf>

Sheep

www.sheepandgoat.com

www.sheepusa.org

Poultry

<http://poultryone.com>

Making Sense of Food Labeling

By: Sam Angima

Food labeling is becoming more complex and confusing these days. You may see labels such as 'Free Range', or 'Hormone Free', 'Fair Trade', 'Locally Grown' etc, but what do they really mean?

The food industry is experiencing tremendous growth in the organic and natural food sectors, and thus, the reason why you are seeing more of these labels and claims.

Here are some explanations from USDA on labels (<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/>):

Organic labels include:

USDA Certified Organic: crops grown without using most conventional pesticides, petroleum-based fertilizers, or sewage sludge-based fertilizers. Animals raised on an organic operation must be fed organic feed and given access to the outdoors. They are given no antibiotics or growth hormones. To sell 'Certified Organic' product, producers must meet the standards of the National Organic Program and be inspected by a licensed organic certifying agent – include a fee. USDA has begun discussions regarding the 'Natural' label but no certification has been granted so it is currently considered a label claim. Another label gaining in popularity is 'Locally Grown'. Consumers are demanding their products with more intensity and have been educated on how nutritious locally grown produce can be. The concept of 'Buy Local' has also expanded and consumers know that their food purchasing power impacts their local environment, economy and agricultural communities.

100% Organic: must contain only organically produced ingredients.

Organic: must contain at least 95% organically produced ingredients.

Made with Organic Ingredients: must contain at least 70% organic ingredients.

Natural: product does not contain artificial flavor,



Labeled versus unlabelled: Labeling aids consumers make decisions on how to spend their food dollar

coloring ingredients, chemical preservatives or any other artificial or synthetic ingredients and the product and its ingredients are not more than minimally processed.

Minimal processing: traditional processes used to make food edible, preserve it or make safe *or* physical processes that do not fundamentally alter the raw products or that only separate a whole food into component parts (such as ground beef). There are exceptions to the use of the 'Natural' claim.

Hormone-Free: no additional hormones where administered to the animal beyond those that occur in the animals natural biological processes. There is no standard definition of this method of production.

Fair-Trade: a term used to describe a social-responsibility movement demanding that farmers receive fair prices for their products; also describes products that are produced by these farmers. There is no standard definition of this method of production.

Free Range: implies that a meat or poultry product comes from an animal that was raised in the open air or was free to roam. There is no standard definition of this method of production.

A study in Lincoln County, for example, shows that of one dollar spent locally, 68 cents stays and 'recycles' in the community keeping jobs and revitalizing the local economy. However, a Chile grown apple for example has its dollar divided up according to contractual obligations among the local retailer,

the grocery's distributor, third-party transportation company, and finally the grower in Chile.

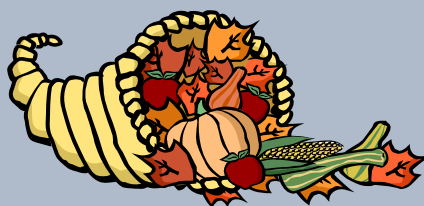


USDA sets the guidelines for the organic label which comes in two flavors; 100% Organic and Organic.

I think that time has come for local producers to stretch their imagination on how they can use labeling, either individually or as a cooperative, to increase their local share in sales to local consumers. There is a big and growing demand especially in our urban areas for locally grown food. This is evidenced by the huge number of people coming and buying at local farmers' markets. As you plan for next year's season, think of ways to brand your product even for local consumers to increase your footprint in promoting local consumption and increase your sales. ☺

54th ANNUAL NORTH WILLAMETTE HORTICULTURE SOCIETY MEETING

***Announcing the 2nd annual
Organic Crops Day***



*January 13th ~ Organic Section
January 14th ~ Vegetable Section
January 15th ~ Berry Section*

*Clackamas County Fairgrounds
694 NE 4th Ave
Canby, Oregon*

***Registration fees include
breakfast & lunch***

***One day = \$35
Two days = \$60
Three days = \$85
Exhibitors = \$175***

***Program & registration forms
available at the
OSU North Willamette Research &
Extension Center Website:
<http://oregonstate.edu/dept/NWREC/>***

USDA Funds New Organic Cropping Research at OSU

By: Nick Andrews

This year OSU received a USDA award to develop an Oregon Organic Cropping Research Project lead by Anita Azarenko (OSU Department of Horticulture). Several industry collaborators reviewed research proposals from the College of Agriculture and six projects are now underway.

Extending application of “Organic Fertilizer Calculator” to cover crops

This project is collecting field and laboratory data to estimate N mineralization from cover crops. The data will be used to develop a mineralization model that estimates the release of plant-available nitrogen (PAN) from cover crops. The model will be incorporated into a cover crop calculator that will be similar to OSU’s existing Organic Fertilizer Calculator (<http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/organic-fertilizer-calculator>), and will be made available on the Small Farms website. This project will enable growers to estimate how much they can reduce N fertilizer rates after incorporating legume cover crops.

Participatory Approach to Beetle Banks and Biological Pest Management

This project is collaborating with Oregon’s organic farmers to create beetle banks: on-farm habitat for naturally occurring beneficial predators such as beetles and spiders. The project is investigating optimum size and spacing of banks on farms and studying whether the banks actually improve pest suppression. Specifically, they are investigating how beetle banks influence the spatial and temporal patterns of predator activity and predation on farms.

Facilitating NOP compliance through Vegetable Variety Trials

Nearly all contemporary vegetable varieties were selected in conventional systems and may not be adapted to organic conditions, and popular heirloom varieties may lack productivity. This project grew out of an earlier OSU organic potato research project



Nick Andrews and Kristin Pool discuss cover crop research with growers at David Brown’s Mustard Seed Farms this April.
Photo provided by Nick Andrews

(OSPUD.org). Participating growers requested work on *Alliums* and *Brassicac*s. These trials are evaluating fall and spring planted onions, and spring planted broccoli at OSU and on organic farms. Researchers and growers will identify available organic seed of onion and broccoli varieties, establish selection criteria for organic fresh market broccoli and onions (including yield, quality and pest resistance), and compare varietal performance. Results will be made available to farmers, breeders, seed companies and certifying agencies.

Evaluation of potato germplasm for suitability in organic production systems in Oregon

Few breeding efforts have developed potato varieties adapted for organic production, and released potato varieties have not been evaluated under organic management. This project aims to identify potato varieties best suited to organic production systems. Potato quality will be assessed by chefs, distributors, retailers and processors. They will evaluate appearance, color, flavor, texture and overall liking. This information, along with yield data, will help organic producers select potatoes best suited to their production systems.

Weed control strategies in irrigated organic forage production

Organic hay production relies on weed tolerance or non-standard weed control methods. This project is studying weed control strategies best suited to irrigated organic hay production in Oregon. Perennial crops are orchard grass and alfalfa. Weed management practices will include flaming prior to resumption of growth in the spring; harrowing; and sowing at twice the standard rate. Annual systems of oats and berseem clover will also be grown. Weed management practices include cultivating in the spring but not the fall (reduced tillage); cultivating in the fall and the early spring, rolling to stimulate weed growth, then cultivating again before sowing; cultivating in the fall and then harrowing in the spring prior to sowing; and cultivating in the fall and spring and then sowing at double the standard rate. Yield and weed contamination will be determined from each cutting. The experiments are being conducted at the Central Oregon Agricultural Research Center near Madras on certified organic land.

Developing Viable Organic Cereal Production Systems for Eastern Oregon

Organic wheat acreage has increased rapidly in recent years, USDA ERS reported 143,260 acres in 11 Western States (USDA Economic Research Service, 2006). The same report estimated wheat acreage in Oregon to be only 1,778 acres. Expansion has been limited by lack of weed control methods and economical sources of nitrogen. Development of effective weed control methods using minimum tillage and economically viable N sources from perennial legumes and cover crops inter-seeded with cereals can pave the way for increased organic cereals production in the PNW.

For more information about these projects contact nick.andrews@oregonstate.edu (503) 678-1264 x149 and keep reading Oregon Small Farms News for feature articles.

Sheep and Goat Parasite Workshop Scheduled for January 12, 2009

On Monday, Jan. 12, 2009, Oregon State University and the Oregon Sheep Growers Association will host another Sheep/Goat Internal Parasite Workshop for producers. However, the 2009 Workshop offers a bonus. Dr. Ray M. Kaplan from the University of Georgia, College of Veterinary Medicine, who is one of the leading research experts on drug-resistant parasites, has agreed to speak to the workshop participants. Dr. Michael Kent, OSU College of Veterinary Medicine and Ms. Janell-Bishop Stewart, Parasitology Technician for OSU's Veterinary Diagnostic Lab will also serve as instructors for the 2009 workshop.

The Workshop will be held on the OSU campus in Corvallis, OR. Cost is only \$30 per person, which includes lunch, workshop handouts, and lab materials.

The workshop is limited to 25 participants, in order to accommodate the limited lab time and space. Registrations will be accepted on a first paid basis. No refunds are available after January 5th. Registration forms are also available on OSGA web site: www.sheeporegon.com.

Willamette Valley Pesticide Collection Event

Information provided by Densie Kalakay, Lane Council of Governments



An opportunity is here for Southern Willamette Valley farmers to dispose of unwanted pesticides, fertilizers, and other chemicals at no cost or

risk to themselves! This event is based on the earlier success of chemical collection events held for farmers in Lane County.

In 2006 and 2007 farmers in Lane County got rid of materials that were old, unusable, or could pose a threat to drinking water sources. About 44 tons of pesticides, fertilizers, waste oil, solvents and other chemicals were disposed of during a first-of-its-kind chemical removal project. Many of the substances collected had been stored on farms for several decades.

The up-coming collection event in February 2009 will allow farmers in Linn and Benton Counties to participate in this program to help properly dispose of unwanted agricultural chemicals. These unused chemicals can pose a threat to surface water and groundwater, used for drinking by people throughout the Southern Willamette Valley.

Two collection days are scheduled on **February 11th and 12th** at the collection facility on Walnut Street in Corvallis. **Farmers who want to participate need to complete a farm chemical survey and submit it to OSU Lane County Extension by January 14, 2009.** The chemical surveys will allow us to properly plan for adequate transport and disposal of the chemicals delivered by growers. The information contained in the survey is confidential and will not be used outside of this project. Under no circumstances will growers be regulated, investigated, or subjected

to any enforcement by participating in this survey and chemical collection event.



If you are interested in learning more about the program, or want to find out more about the assistance available for prepackaging the chemicals, please contact:

- ◆ Ross Penhallegon, OSU Extension Service at (541) 682-4243, ross.penhallegon@oregonstate.edu
- ◆ Denise Kalakay, Lane Council of Governments at (541) 682-7415 dkalakay@lcog.org
- ◆ Audrey Eldridge if you live in the Groundwater Management Area at (541) -776-6010, ext. 223, ELDRIDGE.Audrey@deq.state.or.us
- ◆ OSU Extension Service website at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/lane/farms>

This project was made possible by a grant awarded to Lane Council of Governments by Governor Ted Kulongoski. The funds are from the Oregon Governor's Fund for the Environment. Partners include OSU Extension Service, County Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Health Division, and several cities.



USDA Seek Public Comment on Deregulation of Genetically Engineered Corn

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is seeking public comment on a petition to deregulate corn genetically engineered (GE) to produce a microbial enzyme that facilitates ethanol production. APHIS has regulated the corn through its notification and permitting process since 2002.

The petition for deregulation, submitted by Syngenta Seeds, Inc., is in accordance with APHIS' regulations concerning the introduction of GE organisms and products and is available for the public's review and comment. As part of the decision making process, APHIS also has prepared a draft environmental assessment (EA) for review and comment.

Following the comment period, APHIS makes a determination of nonregulated status if it can conclude that the organism does not pose a plant pest risk. If APHIS grants the Syngenta Seeds, Inc., petition for deregulation, the GE corn and its progeny would no longer be regulated articles. The product could then be freely moved and planted without the requirement of permits or other regulatory oversight by APHIS.

APHIS is responsible for protecting U.S. agriculture and the environment from animal and plant pests. APHIS regulates GE products in cooperation with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In compliance with agency policy, Syngenta Seeds, Inc. submitted a food and feed safety and nutritional assessment summary to FDA for this GE corn. EPA is not involved in evaluating this GE corn because it has not been engineered to produce a pesticide or to be tolerant to an herbicide.

Consideration will be given to comments received on or before Jan. 20, 2009. Send two copies of postal mail or commercial delivery comments to Docket No. APHIS-2007-0016, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road, Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Comments can be submitted on the the Federal eRulemaking portal at <http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=APHIS-2007-0016>. Click on "Add Comments" to view public comments and related materials available electronically.

[From USDA pressroom]

Living on a Few Acres Conference in Central Oregon

The annual Living on a Few Acres (LOAFA) Conference will be held Saturday, March 14, 2009, 9am to 4:30pm at the Deschutes County Fairgrounds and Expo Center in Redmond, Oregon.

This day long event will include educational workshops covering a variety of topics such as first aid for livestock, growing fruit and vegetables, creating wildlife habitats, irrigation and pasture management, raising poultry, pond management, weed control and more.

A trade show will be featured with various equipment dealers, trade association representatives and people from agricultural agencies present who can help you with your needs ranging from financial to operational and management. There will also be networking opportunities to talk to other land owners.

A catered lunch and feature program will be provided, thanks to the Deschutes County Farm Bureau. For more information about LOAFA, contact Dana Martin, Central Oregon Small Farm Faculty; dana.martin@oregonstate.edu; 541-548-6088 x7957.

Calendar

January

12-Sheep/Goat Internal Parasite Workshop

Dr. Ray M. Kaplan from the University of Georgia, College of Veterinary Medicine, who is one of the leading research experts on drug-resistant parasites, has agreed to speak to the workshop participants. Dr. Michael Kent, OSU College of Veterinary Medicine and Ms. Janell-Bishop Stewart, Parasitology Technician for OSU's Veterinary Diagnostic. Corvallis, OR. http://extension.oregonstate.edu/yamhill/sites/default/files/parasite_reg09.pdf \$30

21-Growing Farms: Successful Whole Farm Management

Workshop series to provide beginning farmers with the tools and knowledge to manage the crop production and financial risks of farming. North Willamette Research and Extension Center, 15210 NE Miley Rd, Aurora, OR. Kristin Pool (503) 678-1264 ext. 118. \$200

21-Growing Farms: Successful Whole Farm Management

8-week course to provide beginning farmers with the tools and knowledge to manage both the biological and financial risks of farming. Josephine County Extension Service, 215 Ringuette, Grants Pass, OR. Tracy Harding 541-776-7371 ext 208 \$175/person or \$300/farm duo

27-Lambing School 2009

"EMPHASIS TO BE HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE" Ewes: Lambing problems, obstetrics, grafting, foot trimming and health. Lambs: Castration, docking, vaccinations, and emergency situations as they arise. The school will also include discussions on sheep nutrition and facilities. McMinnville, OR http://extension.oregonstate.edu/yamhill/sites/default/files/lamb_school_reg09.pdf \$55 per person.

February

21-OSU Extension Small Farms Conference

The keynote speaker, Michael Rozyne, founder of Red Tomato, will speak. The Red Tomato is a nonprofit organization marketing fresh fruit and vegetables from family farms in the northeast and southeast US to supermarkets and other customers throughout New England. ODA Director Katy Coba is the invited capnote speaker. The conference includes 12 concurrent sessions, covering a range of topics of interest to growers who market their production directly to the public, for farmers' markets managers, and for community food advocates.. Corvallis, OR. 9:30 AM to 5:00 PM. Registration materials: smallfarms.oregonstate.edu after January 9 or call the Benton County Extension Office at 541-766-3556, 1-800-365-0201. \$30 or \$50

Want to add your event to our calendar then please submit your information at <http://calendar.oregonstate.edu/advanced/list/extension-smallfarms/> "Click the Submit an event button." Events have to be approved and will not immediately post. If you have questions please email Chrissy.Lucas@oregonstate.edu or call 541-766-3556