

# Oregon Family Farmer

A publication of the Oregon Family Farm Association

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## *The Big World of Roloff Farms*

Meet Oregon's Matt Roloff

*Plus*

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OREGON'S  
AGRICULTURE  
ENTREPRENEURS:  
REED ANDERSON**





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# Farmers Win Against Gypsy Moth, Next Up Japanese Beetle

## From the President



Matt Cyrus, President,  
Oregon Family Farm Association

After a massive eradication project last spring, the Oregon Department of Agriculture is happy to report no detections of the Asian gypsy moth in more than 19,000 traps statewide.

The good results indicate there will be no need for ODA to come back next year with additional treatment for the invasive, plant-eating pest. The manager of ODA's Insect Pest Prevention and Management Program says they'll do two more years of high density trapping before they can officially declare the gypsy moth eradicated, but it looks like their treatments were successful.

Reports that Asian gypsy moth populations in the Pacific Rim are down is welcome news to Oregon and Washington.

However, since new introductions of gypsy moths can occur any year, Oregon is probably never

going to be out of the woods when it comes to the threat of the invader which is why trapping is so important. Early detection allows for a rapid response in the form of insecticide spraying to eliminate the moth populations.

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*“ODA will continue to trap for Japanese beetles in hopes of pinpointing the location of the breeding population”*

---

The insect that is drawing the most attention now is the Japanese beetle which has been detected in record numbers in Washington County this last summer. To date, the Oregon Department of Agriculture has found 265 Japanese beetles in traps placed in the area as well as numerous live beetles causing feeding damage on roses and other plants.

No eradication plans have been made yet in response to the most recent outbreak. ODA will continue to trap for Japanese beetles in hopes of pinpointing the location of the breeding population and potential treatment next year.

The ODA encourages residents to cooperate with field technicians who are maintaining traps and to be aware that this infestation can be spread by the movement of plants, roots, and soil that originate from this area. ■





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REGULAR FEATURE

CELEBRATING *Oregon's* AGRICULTURE ENTREPRENEURS

# On the Lamb!

R E E D   A N D E R S O N

Brownsville's Reed Anderson and His Family Supply the Nation's Best Steakhouses with Premium Grass-fed Oregon Lamb





## BY DAVE REINHARD

It all started, naturally enough, at the dinner table.

“People would come to our home for dinner and say, ‘My Gosh, this isn’t like any lamb we’ve ever had,’” Reed Anderson recalls today.

That was back in the early 1980s. Reed and his wife Robin were recently married, raising sheep and growing grass seed at their place in Brownsville.

“I thought it was that my wife is a great cook,” he says, “but after a while I started thinking, ‘You know, we’ve got something here.’”.

What Reed and Robin and their two sons Jake and Travis have more than 30 years later is an integrated ranch and processing operation that supplies premium grass-fed Oregon lamb to top steakhouses and restaurants from Seattle (Lola, The Metropolitan, the Space Needle) to Tampa (Bern’s) and New York City (Trump Tower) with places in between (Pirogue Grille in Bismarck, as well as the B&B Grill and Luxor Restaurants in Las Vegas).

Robin and Reed were third- and fourth-generation sheep people respectively, but they were first-generation entrepreneurs. They were out on their own, first raising sheep then, after more than a few lamb dinners for friends, processing their lamb through a specialty slaughter house to sell to a few area markets.

“I just saw a real need. It made a lot of sense,” Reed says with that easy humility that prompts comments from people in Oregon agriculture that Anderson is “one



the nicest people you’ll ever meet.”

He started selling two sheep a week. Today he’s up to 250 sheep a week (more than 2 million pounds a year) processed for the last three years at Anderson’s own facility (Kalapooia Valley Grass Fed Processing LLC).

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*“Restaurants love consistency. Diners want consistency. That’s been a big driver in our growth.”*

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“We were already sheep people. We already had the production dialed in. We knew how to produce animals of the same size and weight. That’s hard, especially in any kind of volume,” Reed notes matter-of-

factly, before saying. “Once we started doing our own processing things started happening,”

The integration of production and processing — “conception to plate,” Reed calls it — is a key part of the Anderson lamb difference for both institutional and individual customers. It’s a difference you can taste. “We process the same breeds, the same size, eating the same thing 52 weeks a year,” Anderson says. “Restaurants love consistency. Diners want consistency. That’s been a big driver in our growth.”

He is quick to point out, however, that it’s only part of the growth. Anderson’s most certainly a man who counts his blessings. He attributes his success to a hard-working family. Robin handles all the paperwork and bookkeeping. One son, Travis,

*Continued on Page 8*



## On the Lamb!

*Continued from Page 7*

oversees the meat company, and the other son, Jake, takes care of the farming and sheep-ranching side of the operation, which is itself integrated. Their lambs and sheep graze on the grass-

seed crops that the Andersons sell as far away as China.

Indeed, Anderson knows that his success also depends on the fact that he can produce lambs year-round, thanks to the cool moist climate and fertile land of the

Willamette Valley. That cannot happen in other regions, which makes Linn County the “grass-seed capital of the world.”

“Year-long production is the advantage we have,” he says. All year long Anderson’s lambs have pasture aplenty in the croplands beneath the Coburg foothills of the Cascade. His sheep graze on his grass crops all winter and into May. They also graze the hill pastures that are not farmed. They eat and grow and roam the fields at their own stress-free rhythm and pace.

Because the Anderson processing facility is just minutes away and his lambs are accustomed to moving from one field to another by truck, they are not stressed out when it comes time for processing.

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*“All year long Anderson’s lambs have pasture aplenty in the croplands beneath the Coburg foothills of the Cascade. His sheep graze on his grass crops all winter and into May. They also graze the hill pastures that are not farmed. They eat and grow and roam the fields at their own stress-free rhythm and pace.”*

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Anderson's operation has not only earned the Certified Humane label, but it also contributes to the Anderson lamb taste difference.

Nobody will ever mistake the down-to-earth Reed Anderson for a cutting-edge fashionista. He'd likely recoil at the very thought. Yet, his approach to raising and processing lambs was cool before

For more information about Anderson Ranch grass-fed lambs at [oregonlamb.com](http://oregonlamb.com)

it became cool to be organic, humane, local and sustainable. With lamb consumption growing across the country, and growing most in the Pacific Northwest,

Reed Anderson and Anderson Ranches Oregon Lamb is positioned for continued growth.

It couldn't happen to a nicer guy. ■

For nine years now Reed Anderson has hosted the popular Bi-Mart Willamette Country Music Festival in Brownsville. Nearly 20,000 fans come to see stars like Blake Shelton, Trace Adkins, and Carrie Underwood. The festival nets \$100,000 for the local booster club and brings in business to the local community.



Willamette Country Music Festival Sponsors:

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# FFA Doubles Food Drive Haul

FFA Students collected more than 500,000 pounds of fresh food for the Oregon Food Bank — twice the amount brought in last year.



**BY JULIE NOLTA**

The Oregon Future Farmers of America stepped up to the challenge when Les Schwab Tire Centers approached them a few years ago to help collect food for the Oregon Food Bank. Their partnership to Drive Away Hunger has been a huge success. This past fall they collected more than 500,000 pounds of fresh food — double the amount brought

in the previous year.

In addition to the fall food drive, 500-700 FFA students hold a Day of Service at their annual convention in March and collect another 90,000 to 100,000 pounds of food which they package up for the food bank.

Between the two groups, it's a well-oiled machine. Les Schwab stores around the state are the drop off locations for donations from the public, and students from local FFA chapters pick up the donations and deliver them to regional food pantries. The food — all fresh vegetables and produce like potatoes, squash, onions, beets, and apples — stays in that community to meet the needs of families there.

Over the past couple of years, Drive Away Hunger has collected more than a million pounds of food, enough to feed 2,500 Oregon families for a month, well over 380,000 meals.

"The FFA thanks all the farmers, community





members, and everyone who dropped off food or gave to this effort,” said Kevin White, Executive Director of the Oregon FFA Foundation.

Future Farmers of America was founded back in 1928 by a group of young farmers from 18 different states. Their mission was to prepare future generations for the challenges of feeding a growing population and to offer opportunities for leadership development.

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*“The FFA thanks all the farmers, community members, and everyone who dropped off food or gave to this effort.”*

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Today all 50 states and two U.S. territories have chartered members of the National FFA Organization, with nearly 630,000 student members, 6,000 of which are from Oregon.

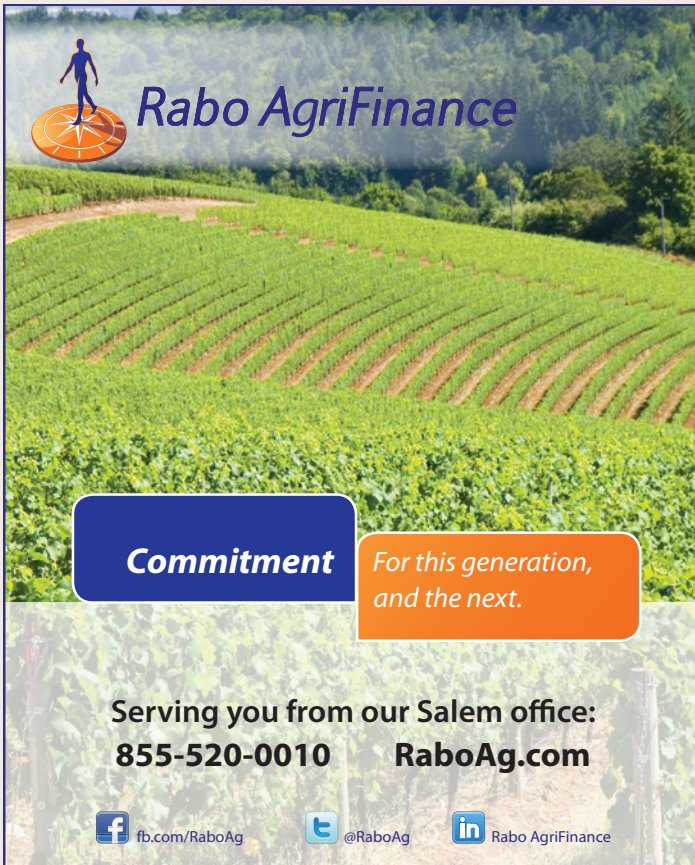
These days the FFA goes well beyond simply exhibiting livestock at the state fair. Membership is not just for students who want to be farmers, but also includes those who are aspiring teachers, doctors, scientists, business owners and

more. In addition to agricultural education, they participate in career development and leadership conferences; have opportunities to travel and to apply for \$2 million in scholarships; and give back to their communities through projects like Drive Away Hunger.

Since the Oregon FFA Association lost state funding in 2011, their programs and scholarships are funded by support from businesses and individuals and raised by the non-profit FFA Foundation. Their board is made up of members of the agricultural industry, educators, business leaders, donors, and always includes an active farmer.

While most of the board’s fund-raising focus is on sponsorships and donations, at this year’s state convention in Redmond, they’ll also be hosting an event: country music singer and songwriter Jerrod Niemann will be performing a benefit concert on March 25th which is open to the public.

To learn more about Drive Away Hunger and the FFA Organization or to get involved, visit the Oregon FFA Facebook page, [www.oregonffa.com](http://www.oregonffa.com) or [www.ffa.org](http://www.ffa.org). ■



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# Oregon Family Farm Association Legislative Agenda: January 2017

## TAX POLICY

Contained in Governor Brown's proposed budget is a 20-30% tax rate increase on small business owners. If approved, Governor Brown's tax increase would result in Oregon's small and family business owners paying a tax rate nearly 30% higher than Wall Street firms that produce the same product or raise the same crop in Oregon. This proposal is truly outrageous — why would Governor Brown favor large interests over small businesses?

In addition, the Governor is proposing a 300% increase in the tax rate on Oregon ICDISC exporter companies (Interest Charge Domestic International Sales Corporations) during a time when agricultural

exporters are already facing huge barriers to export trade.

The Oregon Family Farm Association has two key tax policy objectives for the 2017 Legislative Session:

- 1. Defeat the tax increase on active owners of pass-through/small business entities**
- 2. Defeat the tax increase on ICDISC export companies which sell much of Oregon's valuable agricultural products**

## PROPOSED OFFA BILLS

**SB 520: Irrigation Districts Recall Elections** — This bill requires that a recall election of an irrigation district officer follow the standard state election law procedures

for recalling of public officers. This is a "fix-it" bill to correct an oversight in Oregon election law.

**SB 873: Right to Farm (Marijuana Fix)** — Specifies that cities and counties may not adopt regulations limiting or prohibiting production of marijuana or propagation of marijuana plants occurring on land designated for exclusive farm use. This bill would undo the right-to-farm exemption for marijuana that was approved last session.

**HB 2371 and HB 2372: Industrial Hemp Housekeeping Bills** — Directs Oregon Department of Agriculture to create consumer safety testing protocols and clarifies that Industrial Hemp is an agricultural product regulated under the exclusive authority of the ODA. Provides process for mitigation for hemp that tests between 0.3% and 1% THC and provides protection from criminal prosecution for unintentionally exceeding the 0.3% THC threshold.

**SB523: Board members/Officers Owe Fiduciary Duty to Cooperative** — With a recent failure of another major Oregon agricultural cooperative, this bill is an important fix to help protect family farmers from future losses. The bill clarifies that directors and officers of cooperatives owe a fiduciary duty to the cooperative members. Oregon law on this issue appears to be inconsistent with federal court rulings. Obviously officers and board members of cooperatives should







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owe the co-op members a duty of loyalty in protecting their financial interest. The major improvement in the law would make it clear that the officers (CEOs, CFOs, etc.) would also owe a fiduciary duty to co-

op members, discouraging misleading financials presented to cooperative boards that lead to long-term problems.

**SB524: Misrepresentation in Cooperative Contracts** — The bill provides that a long-term binding

contract with a cooperative is void if a board member, officer, or agent of the cooperative misrepresents the financial condition of the cooperative, or misrepresents a term or condition of a contract, to induce the member of the cooperative to enter into the contract. This is vital in protecting farmers from being stuck in a long-term binding contract, when they were misled with false statements and false representations to get them to sign a contract with a cooperative.

**HB 2179: Fixing farm/biosolids decision** — Oregon law allows biosolid application on farm fields, provided the biosolids aren't applied to crops used for human consumption. In order to



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## Legislative Agenda: January 2017

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get a permit to apply biosolids, the farmer or applicator must obtain a permit from DEQ.

Current land use law (ORS 215.213 and ORS 215.283) refers to the “application” of biosolids. Most counties interpret the word “application” to allow both the spraying of the biosolid onto the fields and the preparation of the biosolids for spraying. Jackson County took the odd position that getting the biosolids ready for application is not the same

thing as applying them, and prohibited the applicator from treating the biosolids on site. This bill fixes that problem.

### **HB 2786: Farm Use/Wetlands**

**Bill** — A Willamette Valley famer operated a straw press outside of Junction City. This past summer, the farmer’s agricultural building caught fire and burned down. When he went back to Lane County for land use permits to rebuild his structure, he got a call from the Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL). DSL told him

that they believed his building was on wetlands, and that he needed a removal-fill permit before he could rebuild his farm building, even though the property did not appear on any wetlands map, including DSL’s map. This bill (and HB 2227) will fix that issue. The bill provides that if property is not labeled as wetland on DSL’s state wetlands inventory (SWI), then DSL can’t require a removal fill permit to allow development on the property. In other words, if DSL doesn’t map it as wetlands on their maps, they can’t claim it as





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The mission of the Oregon FFA Foundation is to coordinate sustainable, long-term funding for agriculture education and the Oregon FFA. The Foundation supports our young people today with over 6,000 students in 103 local FFA chapters as they become farmers, ranchers and agribusiness leaders prepared for tomorrow's agriculture industry.

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# A Look at Oregon's Record-Breaking Crop Years

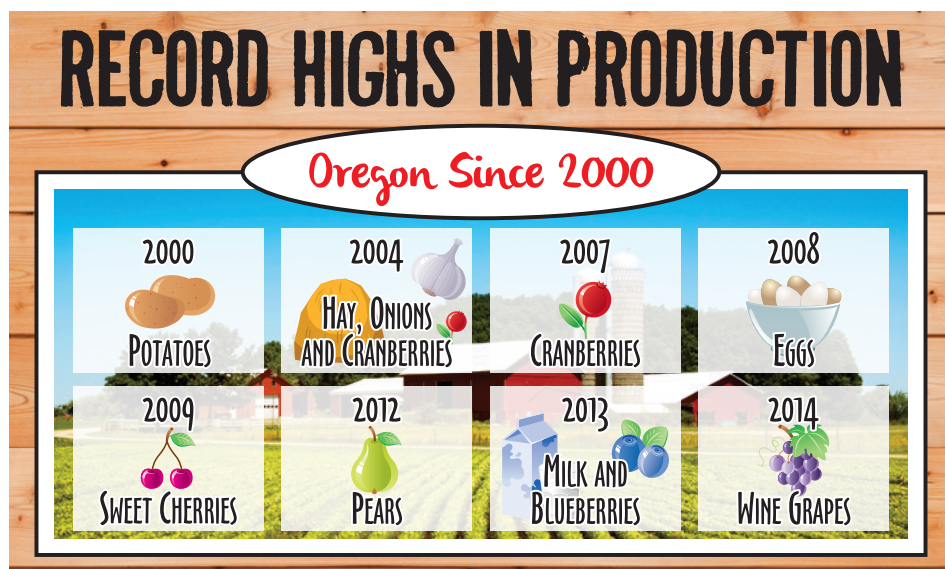
BY JULIE NOLTA

The Oregon Department of Agriculture recently released an analysis of Oregon's agricultural production from data gathered since the 1860s. The analysis charts Oregon's development into one of the country's most agriculturally rich and diverse states — one that, if history is any guide, will continue to evolve and grow as challenges and opportunities force change and adaptation.

## OREGON'S CROP PRODUCTION EVOLVES

During the administration of Abraham Lincoln, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) began keeping meticulous record of annual high and low yields of crops grown in Oregon. As a result, the value of Oregon's contribution to our nation's food production can be traced over many decades of growth and development. According to Jim Johnson, land use specialist with the Oregon Department of Agriculture, the data demonstrates "the efficiency and effectiveness of Oregon's agriculture."

From the beginning, Oregon farmers showed a commitment to certain staple crops like barley and oats and, by the late 1860s wheat and corn, as well. As the state grew and prospered, its rich soil and climate expanded farming output and new agricultural commodities were added. By the mid-1920s,



*Though many factors impact the level of various crops' production, over 150 years Oregon producers have proven industrious at adapting to agriculture demands.*

Oregon had also become a major producer of hay, onions, sugarbeets, hops, and various fruits.

Most recently, Oregon has grown a strong reputation as a berry state. The blueberry, in fact, is the most recent commodity to be added to the USDA's tracking, having been added to the list in 1978. That said, fruit production has been tracked since the early 1900s. Related production, however, has seen record highs in recent years. In the 2000s alone, Oregon saw record-setting production of grapes (2014),

blueberries (2013), pears (2012), cherries (2009), red raspberries (2007), and cranberries (2007).

## OREGON PRODUCERS ADAPT TO TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES, OTHER FACTORS

Most of the low yields of various crops occurred early on record keeping. According the Oregon Department of Agriculture, that's because modern farming technology and improvements in management practices have

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## A Look at Oregon's Record-Breaking Crop Years

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significantly enhanced agricultural efficiency in production. Moreover, the number of acres and yields has grown substantially from 150 years ago. As a result, certain crops have steadily increased over the decades. Consider these high/low yields and their respective years:

- **ONIONS — 811 tons in 1987 / 5 tons in 1918 (162 times larger)**
- **SWEET CORN — 452,000 tons in 1995 / 2,200 tons in 1934 (more than 20 times larger)**
- **POTATOES — 1.5 million tons in 2000 / 14,400 tons in 1869 (almost 110 times larger)**

Improved technology and management practices don't necessarily account for all high versus low yields, since certain crops experienced high/low yields in a relatively short time period.

In 1987, for example, apples hit a record high production that still stands — 105,000 tons. Just 26 years earlier in 1961, Oregon's apple production was more than 60% less at 40,800 tons. And green peas increased fivefold from 1977 to 1995.

Weather during the growing season, economic conditions, and demand for certain crops at different times, among other factors, also contribute to swings in crop yields. Additionally, consumer appetites regionally, nationally and even internationally, as well as other things impacting demand for certain crops, affect what farmers decide to plant. For instance, it's no coincidence that Oregon wine grapes hit record production in 2014, as its status as one of the nation's top wine producing states

continues to grow. Hazelnuts, cranberries, and blueberries are all riding a consumer popularity wave, and Oregon is obliging with strong, record-setting yields in recent years.

During economic downswings, like the Great Recession, many farmers tend to diversify what they grow to stabilize business. This causes variations in production of certain crops. Producers also anticipate crops of the future, or in some cases, crops of a soon distant past. That's because science and related studies, as well as government policy in a sense pick crop winners and losers. When corn-based ethanol was in ascendancy, corn production spiked nationally for the purposes of supporting the ethanol industries. In recent years, the health benefits of blueberries have been hailed by study after study, increasing their popularity and consumption.

Between 2000 and 2012, Oregon's non-sweet corn production nearly doubled due to several factors. The soaring cost of livestock feed in the early 2000s played a big part in the increased production. Livestock farmers tired of paying high costs for corn-based feed from the Midwest decided to grow their own.

Though many factors impact the level of various crops' production, over 150 years Oregon producers have proven industrious at adapting to agriculture demands. Oregon crop production is diverse, which is demonstrated by the sheer number of different crops grown across the state. It's also responsive, as evidenced by the growth in production of crops suited to the changing preferences of consumers and other economic factors. ■



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# Oregonians Named 2016 National Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year

“For over a century they have practiced sustainable forest and cattle management. Their storybook tale is about pioneering the West, with a foundation built on family and land.”

BY JULIE NOLTA

This last November, the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) named the Defrees Tree Farm of Oregon the 2016 National Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year.

The tree farm has been in the family for more than 100 years and is now run by father and son team, Lyle and Dean Defrees, along with their wives and children. “Our family has had a passion for our land and conservation for generations,” said Lyle. They call their grandparents the original environmentalists for their work in maintaining the land over the years.

Their farm, located in Baker county in northeastern Oregon, covers 2,000 acres where they primarily grow and harvest Ponderosa pines. The trees are harvested for pulp, chip wood, and firewood in the winter (when other work slows down and when the ground is frozen to lessen the impact on the site).

In addition to farming, they raise beef cattle on the property to the highest environmental and compassionate standards. They like to think that their cows live happier lives since they



(left to right) Dean Defrees, Sharon Defrees, Dallas Hall, and Lyle Defrees.

are free to roam the land.

One of their main concerns is protecting the forested land from wildfires, which can be intense and devastating in that region of the state. The methods they use for harvesting and managing the land and water are all practiced with that in mind.

The Defreeses are active in their community, mentoring and educating other landowners about natural resource management, advocating for small businesses and ranchers at the state

legislature, and hosting recreational groups on their property.

“For over a century they have practiced sustainable forest and cattle management,” stated the ATFS in their announcement. “Their storybook tale is about pioneering the West, with a foundation built on family and land. They truly are National Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year.”

The Defrees family was honored in December 2016, at a reception on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. ■





# *The* **Big World** *of Roloff Farms*

**THIS FAMOUS  
OREGON FAMILY  
AND FARM HAS  
ECLIPSED 250  
TELEVISION  
EPISODES ON TLC**

## **BY NAOMI INMAN**

As a former high-tech fugitive fleeing to the hills, Matt Roloff and his wife Amy first dug down roots on a small acreage in Helvetia in Washington County west of Portland. More than one quarter century ago — before kids, before

pumpkins had ever entered his marketing plan, and before TLC television network fame — Matt caught the farming bug.

Matt left all the status symbols behind — granite countertops, manicured lawn, clean shoes, and nicely appointed suburban home



— to move into an old house on 22 acres with a small peach orchard.

“That little guy? He ain’t gonna make it!”

Roloff remembers hearing that refrain from neighboring farmers in the community. “It’s alright really,” he remembers with a laugh. “I mean, farming is really tough work for an able-bodied man. With my disabilities, it’s even more of a challenge.”

As Matt and Amy’s family grew, they also had new additions to the property, first 17 acres, then 80 to comprise the 110 acres of pumpkins, clover, spring wheat and family fun that has come to define Roloff Farms and showcase how these self-described “Little People” could imagine and create a very big world.

In the pumpkin season of 2016, over the course of four weekends, approximately 30,000 customers visited Roloff farms to be a country-bumpkin for a day. It’s no wonder that so many families relish this annual tradition with little, and even not so little people in tow. There’s something big for the little kid in everyone. And everything about the farm is designed with Matt Roloff’s instinctive eye toward fun for the kids. Everything.

“I originally started building this as an elaborate playhouse for our kids... then people started coming and I kept building,” Roloff offers with delight. He tours me around in his rugged farm utility vehicle with a wisp of a dog named Lucy tucked behind his back. A picturesque century barn and windmill crowns the property.

“All this stuff we built was with two purposes: first was the notion that we were a family with four kids and wanted a fun place for them

---

*“All this stuff we built was with two purposes: first was the notion that we were a family with four kids and wanted a fun place for them and their friends, but also, to be agriculturally successful and a place for others to enjoy as a family.”*

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and their friends, but also, to be agriculturally successful and a place for others to enjoy as a family.”

The haywagon ride is only a portal to the acres of family fun that surround visitors. Tiny rubber boots can tromp from a pumpkin patch to the Louisiana swamp fort. They can tiptoe through the spooky forest, meander through a little western town, climb a castle fort, or board a soon-to-be-rebuilt pirate ship. Even the petting zoo has a man-made mountain with Noah’s ark and storybook houses of twigs, brick and straw to shelter his three little pigs (or more).

Those are only preliminaries to the sprawling Fun Zone with a giant tricycle race track, giant slide and sandboxes, giant slingshots, a giant rail roller (invented and built by son, Jeremy) and mini golf — to name a few. They invite food carts to do business on “Main Street” for appetites big and small alike. Almost all of the farm is handicapped accessible.

Matt’s son Zachary (married to high school sweetheart, Tori) works at the farm most every day, pursuing his passion for television productions, soccer and farming.

*Continued on Page 22*





## The Big World of Roloff Farms

*Continued from Page 21*

Sons Jeremy (married to Audrey) and Jacob (living in California), and daughter Molly (a recent Whitworth grad and accountant in Spokane), have all assured papa Roloff that they share his vision for this to become a multi-generational family farm. Matt and his wife Amy recently divorced, but they are united in keeping the farm — and family — together.

As any small family farmer

would attest, it takes business sense, a little faith, and a good business model to make farming economically viable. Matt Roloff's strokes of genius ignited by whimsy have enabled him to hit on a crop and business model that resonates with who he is and brings him the joy of serving others. It works so well that Roloff Farm earns its keep in 14 very busy public days each year.

At the end of the gravel driveway, Roloff shuts off the motor and pulls

his tiny dog, Lucy, close. He points over the hill to the tavern. "One of my favorite sayings is on the wall of Helvetia Tavern. An old farmer with a pitchfork says, 'I reckon if I inherited a million dollars, I'd keep right on farming until it was all gone.'" That's sort of the way farming is. It's a tricky balance to make a profit. But, as Matt Roloff says, the secret to success is to find the crop you're passionate about so that you can throw your heart and soul into it. Then you keep on farming — until it's all gone. ■



### WATCH SEASON 16 OF LITTLE PEOPLE BIG WORLD ON TLC!

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# AGRICULTURE HISTORY: French Prairie

BY TIM LYMAN

French Prairie is the cradle of Pacific Northwest private agriculture.

The first European settlement in French Prairie was the Pacific Fur Company trading post Wallace House, established in December 1812 by William Wallace Matthews, John C. Halsey, John Day, and twelve other men. The Pacific Fur Company (aka Astor Fur Company) sent the men from Fort Astoria to establish a post on the Willamette River. The post is thought to be located at present Wallace House Park, in Keizer, Oregon.

In early 1814, the American Pacific Fur Company sold to the competing North West Company, a British fur trading company. In December 1813, the North West Company established its own post (Willamette Trading Post) near the site of Champoeg State Park north of St. Paul. North West Company merged with Hudson's Bay Company in 1821.

The first farmers in the Oregon Territory were the French Canadian Métis who settled French Prairie starting in the 1820s. Most of these were retired trappers formerly employed by the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Vancouver.

The Hudson's Bay Company was bound by its license to return its employees to Canada or Europe at the ends of their engagements and was forbidden to leave them in the "Indian Country." This was a great hardship on the families of men who had taken native wives. Many having already settled in the Willamette Valley, freemen of the Hudson's Bay



Company approached Dr. John McLoughlin, (Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Vancouver) for formal permission to settle along the Willamette. While McLaughlin realized the cruelty of separating men from their families, it was economics and politics that changed the policy for the freemen. Sending the men back to Canada was very expensive, and McLoughlin and George Simpson (Governor-in-Chief of the Hudson's Bay Company) realized that the best way to secure the Pacific Northwest for the British was to establish British settlements.

Between 1829 and 1843, successful Métis agricultural communities developed in several locations throughout the Willamette Valley, including Butteville, Champoeg, Gervais, Saint Louis, and St. Paul.

Excellent soils, a mild climate, plenty of water, and, later, excellent transportation via steamboats on the Willamette River, made French Prairie the breadbasket of Oregon.

Today, in spite of encroaching development, French Prairie remains one of Oregon's most important and productive agricultural areas. ■

## 2017 CHALLENGE OF CHAMPIONS TOUR SCHEDULE

(Events subject to change)

### HERMISTON, OR

May 13, 2017

### ALBANY, OR

May 20, 2017

### SANDPOINT, ID

June 17, 2017

### MOLALLA, OR

June 24, 2017

### KENNEWICK, WA

July 13, 2017

### WAHKIAKUM, WA

July 14, 2017

### SANDPOINT, ID

August 11, 2017

### ROSEBURG, OR

August 12, 2017

### MORO, OR

*Sherman County*

August 26, 2017

### REDMOND, OR

November 11, 2017

### CENTRAL POINT, OR

*Tour Finale*

January 6, 2018



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# Cash Crop??

## *Oregon's Climate is Ideal for Controversial Growing Industry*

Oregon produces such high yields that an Oregon State University researcher estimates the state production is three to five times higher than state consumption.

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### **BY DR. ERIC FRUITS**

Nine states voted on marijuana-related measures — four related to medical marijuana and five to recreational. Eight of the measures passed. As a result, more than half of the states in the U.S. now have comprehensive medical marijuana laws. About one-fifth of the population lives in a place where adults 21 and older can legally consume recreational marijuana.

Much of Southern Oregon sits at the northern tip of the Emerald Triangle, one of the nation's best marijuana growing regions. The climate is ideal for growing cannabis. The growing season extends into fall and these long warm summers bring little or no rain. Of the 308 growers with Oregon producer licenses, more than 45 percent are located in Jackson and Josephine counties.

In contrast to Oregon's growing environment, much of Colorado's marijuana is grown indoors, due to weather constraints. While indoor cultivation can be controlled — down to the minute details of humidity and temperature — and produces more growing cycles per year, indoor cultivation also adds significant production costs. Oregon produces such high yields that an Oregon State University researcher estimates the state production is three to five times higher than state consumption. Oregon state senator Ted Ferrioli once noted that Oregon is the “Saudi Arabia of marijuana.”

Outdoor grow operations can be scaled over a wide range. The smallest licensed tier allows 2,500 square feet (about 140 plants) and the largest tier of licenses allows up to 40,000 square feet (just under 2,300 plants). Each plant

produces two to five pounds of buds, but yields vary for a variety of reasons such as what strain is grown and how it's grown. According to the Rand Policy Research Center, buds could lose 60 to 70 percent of their weight in the drying process, so a pound of buds will provide about 10 ounces of saleable product. At current prices, that amounts to about \$10,000 per plant in revenues. While that seems lucrative, keep in mind that Oregon produces way more weed than it consumes, so finding a legal in-state market may be a challenge. Many pioneers in the business have poured in a lot of money and have yet to see a return on that initial investment.

For Oregon farmers considering switching to the state's newest cash crop, be prepared for a steep learning curve. One experienced grower cautions,





“Prepare for failure. A lot of it. Every day something new is going to be a huge wall that you have to surmount or else your grow will fail.” He reports in his first few months that he battled mites, bud rot, caterpillars, and moths. There are no pesticides specifically labeled for the production of marijuana, but the Oregon Department of Agriculture identifies pesticide products that may be used for the production

of Oregon cannabis. On top of that, security is a key concern: It’s called a “cash crop” for several reasons. One reason is that banks won’t take marijuana money — meaning all business is on a cash-only basis. Because marijuana is still illegal at the federal level, federally regulated financial institutions will not bank marijuana-related businesses.

Buying a property with cannabis

plants could set off legal problems and jeopardize a bank loan.

Under federal law, the seller has committed a crime by growing the cannabis plants and, after the real estate transaction closes, so has the buyer if the buyer knowingly bought property with plants on it. Since federally insured financial institutions typically include a clause in mortgage documents that the owner cannot conduct an illegal activity, the buyer would risk defaulting under the loan if the plants were discovered after funds were issued.

That leads to the big question: Will the feds legalize marijuana? President Donald Trump has made statements that seem to support marijuana legalization in the past, but he has not yet staked out a clear position. Federal legalization will open up opportunities for farmers looking for a bigger market for Oregon’s bounty. In the meantime, Oregon is sliding down the learning curve to producing a potentially profitable crop. ■





# INDUSTRY PROFILE:

## Oregon Wine Nears 3 Million Cases Mark

BY DAVE REINHARD

Sales for Oregon's increasingly popular wines could top three million cases, with promise of continued growth in years ahead, thanks to yet another banner weather year for growing Oregon grapes. The Oregon Wine Board still has to report final wine sales numbers and grape tonnage figures, but last year's 2.9-million case and 8,618 grape tonnage records could soon be history.

The past year provided prime wine-growing weather for Oregon growers: "You'd like to have a winter that's not too cold, but yet has enough moisture to allow the soil to recharge," Southern Oregon University professor Greg

Jones, who researches the state's wine industry, told the Eugene Register-Guard in October. "You want to have a spring that starts off warm and clear with little frost risk. And then you want to have a summer that has the right heat accumulation to ripen varieties, but yet doesn't produce a lot of heat stress." Jones judged 2016 "a pretty good year" for grape growing in Southern Oregon.

That good weather translates to better quantity and quality for Oregon grapes. The 2016 harvest may not prove as productive as 2014 (7,038 tons) and 2015 (8,618 tons) for southern Willamette Valley wineries. But that's because those years were so

fruitful. By way of comparison, the 2013 harvest was 4,731 tons, according to figures from the Southern Oregon University Research Center in Ashland.

On the wine sales front, Oregon has become a popular brand among millennial wine consumers, in the company of Washington State and New York vintages. That's certainly the case in the premium Pinot Noir category, according to the Wine Market Council's 2016 annual survey. Oregon wines, most especially the state's signature varietals, are on the rise. That's particularly significant, given that Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris respectively account for 55% and 25% of Oregon volume (Impact Databank figures).

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*"On the wine sales front, Oregon has become a popular brand among millennial wine consumers..."*

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Bountiful harvests and consumer buzz can bring minuses as well as pluses. Is the infrastructure there to process the grapes? Will big out-of-state wineries move into Oregon? That would have its own pluses (raising the profile of Oregon wines) and minuses (Oregon wineries would have to compete against companies with greater resources).

But those are problems that come with success. Other states and regions would kill to have such problems.

As Juan Pablo "J.P." Valot, head winemaker of Silvan Ridge Wineries near Eugene told the Register-Guard's Dylan Darling, "I'm excited for another great vintage. And I think that's great for Oregon." ■







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