Join us at our Annual Seed to Table Dinner Saturday, August 19th at 6 pm at Salant Family Ranch in Jacksonville. Smithfield’s Restaurant of Ashland will gather foods and flavors from the Rogue Valley to prepare a four-course dinner paired with local libations.

Tickets can be purchased online at our website.

Our Family Farms Members receive $10 off!

Farmer discount also available. Please contact us for more information.

Thanks to our Sponsors!

Safeworld International, Soil Salvation, Peggy Ann Smith, LMT, Whistling Duck Farm, Medford Food Co-op, Rogue Creamery, and Glory Bee
Welcome to our Newest Business Members!

Thank you Salant Family Ranch for becoming an Our Family Farms Business Supporter! Show your support and become a member today!

Salant Family Ranch

In 1996, the old Circle G Ranch near Ruch became home to our foundation herd of Black Angus cows. Our ranch-raised, natural beef is grown here on native grass pasture, irrigated by the fresh snowmelt water of the Little Applegate River, and alfalfa hay fed in wintertime. No hormones or antibiotics are ever fed to these Angus-crossbred black cattle and dairy steers. Our cows, calves and bulls are managed using best husbandry practices. We can be found at local Rogue Valley Farmer’s Markets throughout the spring, summer & fall. Delivery of reasonable quantities available within a 50-mile radius of Jacksonville. Visitors are always welcome. — Peter & Carly Salant

See all of our businesses supporters in our Business Member Directory!

A New Way to Support Us!

Now you can support us with purchases you make on Amazon. Register online and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible Amazon Smile purchases to Our Family Farms.
Legislative Update
So we have it, the 2017 Legislative Session has officially ended as of last week. The GE Liability Bill, Local Control and the Josephine County fix were never allowed to the floor for a vote despite getting testimony at the hearings and hundred of emails and calls. This is truly frustrating, but it's undeniable we are making progress!

With every session our attempts to educate those in the Capitol are making a difference and our legislators are understanding that we need to protect family farmers and their seed supply from the threats of GE contamination.

If you have the time, please do send your thanks to Rep. Paul Holvey, Rep. Pam Marsh, Rep. Phil Barnhart and Senator Lew Frederick who were true champions this legislative session. And a special thanks to each of you who took the time to write in, email, call and especially those who were able to make it to Salem in person!

Onward for the seeds!

Stay up to date on all the latest news on our Website and Facebook page!

NEWS

Farmers Deliver Appropriations Requests to Capitol Hill
Certified organic Oregon grower asks Congress to support critical conservation and research programs

Last month, the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) hosted its second “farmer fly-in” of the fiscal year (FY) 2018 season. Growers and advocates from Oregon, Mississippi, North Dakota, Wisconsin, Kansas, Iowa, Florida, Alabama, and Georgia took time out of their busy schedules to bring important food and farm issues to legislators’ attention as the FY 2018 appropriations cycle heats up.
On June 21st, Andrew Schwarz, certified organic grower and seed producer and Our Family Farms treasurer, made the over 2,500 mile journey from Ridgeline Meadows farm in Jacksonville, Oregon to speak to congressional appropriators about the importance of conservation and research programs to his operation’s continued success.

Andrew went to Capitol Hill to share his story the office of Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR), and to discuss the importance of supporting US Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Sustainable Agriculture Research (SARE) program and the Value-Added Producer Grant Program (VAPG). Andrew also met with officials from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the USDA to discuss how he employs these programs on his farm.

This year marks Andrew’s third season working the land at Ridgeland Meadows Farm. Prior to securing three acres of his own to farm, Andrew worked, interned, and “WWOOFed” on others’ farms for six years. It was during this time that he learned the dry-farming method, an agricultural technique for non-irrigated cultivation of crops, which he uses on his own farm today.

“I originally started farming because I love to eat food, and the wormhole it has opened up has been beyond my wildest dreams, I just keep opening new doors,” said Andrew.

Andrew has used multiple EQIP grants to improve the resiliency and efficiency on his farm in Jacksonville. Andrew used first EQIP to help him fight forest fires near his farm by removing dead, dry brush from the area. Most recently, he received EQIP grants that have allowed him to increase his on-farm conservation by installing a pollinator buffer strip and a high tunnel for his crops.
While the President’s budget proposal suggests cuts of $325 million to EQIP, NSAC urges Congress to maintain the current level of mandatory funding for this critical program.

Even with just three acres, Andrew keeps himself busy on the farm. He cultivates organic seed, and also grows twelve varieties of dry-farmed melons and a wide variety of perennials, including apples, pears, persimmons, pomegranates and peaches on his farm. Andrew is also on the board of the Southern Oregon Seed Growers Association (SOSGA) and Our Family Farms (OFF) in Oregon; OFF recently received a VAPG grant to do an economic evaluation of creating a Rogue Valley, Oregon GMO-free seed brand. NSAC is requesting that Congress appropriate an additional $4.25 million in discretionary funding to support the VAPG program, and also that no changes to the program’s mandatory funding are made.

SOSGA has also worked with USDA programs; two years ago they received a SARE grant to help them build their mentorship program and bring together experienced seed breeders with aspiring producers and growers.

“The SARE grant has brought together the community on field walks to help educate, spread the knowledge of saving seed, and has helped highlight the professional seed producers in our region who have been working diligently to produce bio-regionally adapted seed,” said Andrew “Open pollinated seeds are important because they allow for people to save their own seed, and they allow them to see the magic of saving seed, growing their own food, and continuing to build the diversity of our seed stocks.”

SARE is the only USDA competitive grants research program with a clear and consistent focus on farmer-driven research. Due to high demand and insufficient funds, USDA has only been able to fund around 6 percent of eligible SARE proposals in recent years. Despite clear demand for the program, the President’s budget proposal would cut the program by 30 percent and cut 21 percent ($4.7 billion) from USDA in total. The budget also called for changes in farm bill policy, which would tack on another $228 billion in cuts to USDA. NSAC urges Congress to fund SARE at $30 million in FY 2018, which would bring
funding to half of the authorized level after 28 years of successful research innovations.

“It was kind of surreal to go into these offices and put faces to these organizations and departments, to see pictures of kids on their walls and see that they’re real people,” said Andrew of his day in DC. “I feel like I was able to communicate my little story thoughtfully, from my little part of the country, and hopefully it has educated those who are in charge of funding these programs.”

Learn more at National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition website.

Pollinator News: Bee Certified!
By Kristina Lefever, Pollinator Project Rogue Valley

Farmers, gardeners, and anyone who eats know we need pollinators - especially honey, solitary, bumble, and carpenter bees, as well as certain flies and beetles - to pollinate crop plants to insure there is seed for next year's plantings. Now, farmers can realize an economic advantage by certifying their land as pollinator habitat!

Protecting and supporting pollinators with the habitat they need all year long not only provides farmers with a new marketing opportunity, but can also positively impact crop yields and produce quality. Our Family Farms and Pollinator Project Rogue Valley invite you to become part of the new Bee Better movement!

The Bee Better Certified™ program just introduced by The Xerces Society and Oregon Tilth asks farms to dedicate at least 5% of their total farm area to pollinator habitat. This requirement can be met with different types of plantings, based on what best serves your farm's needs - from permanent wildflower meadows to cover crops.

Habitat is the key ingredient for a thriving pollinator population. Having a place to call 'home' for all the pollinators - including butterflies and hummingbirds - means plenty of flowering plants that will provide the sustenance they need for
all stages of their life cycle, as well places to nest, and more importantly, to overwinter.

Want to learn more? If you are a farmer, check out this link about the Bee Better Campaign, and then watch this hour-long video with the details of how to Bee Better at what you already do! If you are a consumer, check out this link to learn how your shopping decisions will support this program - and the pollinators!

**SynBio products: a New Wave of Attack on Farmers Everywhere**

By Dr. Ramon Seidler, Ph.d.

In the October 2016 issue of this Newsletter I asked the question, “What is Synthetic biology and why should we care about it?”

Now I ask, what is the “veggie burger that bleeds” and should we care about it? The Washington Post asks “is this the beginning of the end of meat?”

Many environmentalists might "crave" the time that we can reduce the number of animals that get raised in inhumane CAFOs (confined animal feeding operations) at the expense of severe energy requirements, environmental pollution, and antibiotic and hormone usage in animal feeds. Some believe the new "bleeding veggie burger" can address these concerns. But without news releases ever referring to the technology, it’s another example of the growing multibillion dollar SynBio industry. This burger is all vegetarian, except perhaps and arguably so, the GE yeast that helped to make it.

This so-called “Impossible Burger” is the brain child of Dr. Pat Brown, a former biochemistry professor at Stanford University and owner of "Impossible Foods." He has referred to the “Impossible Burger “as a GMO without the “O” meaning genetically engineered without the organism. In reality, this is a false statement because the “organism” is in the production system, in this case, its a
genetically engineered yeast. The yeast is genetically engineered with a soybean gene that encodes for heme, the blood red iron complex that helps to carry oxygen to animal and a few plant tissues like the soybean plant.

The Veggie burger that bleeds contains flecks of coconut oil which is seen as solid pieces of “white fat” at room temperature which melts during the cooking process. The “Impossible Burger” uses protein from wheat and potato that is mixed with the genetically engineered heme derived from soybeans. By taking the soybean gene that encodes the heme protein and transferring it to yeast, the company has been able to produce vast quantities of the blood like compound in yeast fermentation tanks. Each “vat of frothy red liquid” in the lab holds enough heme to make about 20,000 quarter-pound “Impossible Burgers”.

It is not financially efficient to isolate the heme protein directly from the soybean. But the patented GE yeast produces sufficient quantities that the company says it will soon make it possible to produce “Impossible Burgers” at a meat competitive price.

Dr. Brown has backing for his company from Bill Gates, Google, and other billionaires. Currently the product is being sold in “trendy” restaurants in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York. The company has recently leased massive facilities in the Bay area to increase its production capabilities.

A second company, Beyond Meat, is targeting grocery store shoppers with its veggie Beyond Burger. The Beyond Beast Burger is made red with beet juice and it is not a SynBio process product. It is apparently only available in the Boulder CO. area at this time.

Is it time to enjoy an Impossible Burger with a glass of cow free Muufri milk? Owners of the 65,000 dairy farms in the United States alone might disagree.

I believe the impact of "factory food" (my term for Syn Bio food) upon farmers in general and American agriculture in particular will be severe over the next 20-30 years. I predict the impact will be especially severe on organic commodities as Syn Bio corporations continue their fight to join this rapidly growing consumer food segment. The Syn Bio industry knows that 100% grass-fed beef and organic dairy products are now the fastest growing components in grocery store sales. We are even having to import these commodities from
abroad because the USDA continues to subsidize GMO grains and industrial
based CAFO produced animal products rather than supporting the American
consumer's demand for grass-fed pasture based meat products and organic
crops that use regenerative agricultural technologies.

Dr Ramon Seidler, PhD, is a retired senior research scientist and Team Leader of
the Genetically Engineered Organism biosafety program within the US EPA and
former Professor of Microbiology at Oregon State University.

For further reading, see “Silicon Valley’s Bloody Plant Burger Smells, Tastes And
Sizzles Like Meat”

Buy SEED: The Untold Story on DVD
Celebrate seeds with 10% off the award-winning SEED: The Untold Story!

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and 30% of proceeds will be donated to
Our Family Farms!

In the last century, 94% of our seed
varieties have disappeared. As biotech
chemical companies control the majority of
our seeds, farmers, scientists, lawyers, and
indigenous seed keepers fight a David and
Goliath battle to defend the future of our
food. In a harrowing and heartening story, these reluctant heroes rekindle a lost
connection to our most treasured resource and revive a culture connected to
seeds.

SEED comes from the filmmakers behind Queen of the Sun: What Are the Bees
Telling Us? It features Dr. Jane Goodall, Vandana Shiva, Winona LaDuke, and
Andrew Kimbrell.
UPCOMING EVENTS

Cannabis and the Food System: A Changing Landscape
Wednesday, July 19 from 6pm to 8pm at the Medford Public Library
The growth of the cannabis industry in Southern Oregon has brought opportunities and complex challenges. The Rogue Valley Food System Network invites you to learn more about the changing role of cannabis on food production through an expert panel presentation. Whether you are a cannabis grower, food producer, or an interested citizen, you will walk away with a better understanding of these issues. A free event open to the public.

Applegator's Annual Fundraiser
Sunday, July 23 from 2 to 6 pm at the Applegate River Lodge
A family friendly BBQ with live music by “Still Looking” band, a silent auction, games and face painting. Tickets are available at the Ruch Country Store and online.

Dry Farm Field Day
Tuesday, August 15 from 1 to 6 pm in Applegate, Oregon
The Field Day will begin at the OSU Extension Teaching Farm at 1 pm and continue to Ridgeline Meadows Farm in the Applegate. See crops grown without any supplemental irrigation and taste the results! A free event sponsored by SOSGA.

Our Family Farms Seed to Table Dinner
Saturday, August 19 at 6 pm at the Salant Family Ranch
Reserve your seat at our Annual Seed to Table Dinner! Join us at the Salant Family Ranch in the Applegate Valley (Jacksonville) for a four-course dinner prepared with local foods and flavors gathered from the Rogue Valley by Smithfield’s Restaurant of Ashland. Tickets can be purchased online on our website.

Please support Our Family Farms as we work to create thriving communities by promoting and protecting family farms and traditional seeds from the threats of genetically engineered (GE) crops.