

# Life *in the* Valley

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PHOTOS BY MOLLY J. SMITH/STATESMAN JOURNAL

The Oregon Association of Nurseries booth was full of many plants to take home at the Oregon Ag Fest on Saturday at the State Fairgrounds. The annual two-day event is full of demonstrations, activities and educational opportunities all centered around agriculture.

## Festival spotlights diverse Oregon agriculture

CONNER WILLIAMS  
APPEAL TRIBUNE

The annual Oregon Ag Fest drew thousands of people to the fairgrounds as dozens of exhibits, booths, and demonstrations paved the way for a week-end full of agricultural education and fun. From face painting, to tractor rides, to a petting zoo, and countless learning opportunities, the fest explores all areas of the agricultural process and showcases how the products people use every day get from the fields to the grocery store shelf.

The fest was created to “help better educate the public about the importance of agriculture. We demonstrate how important ag’s economic impact, logistics and practices are: showing folks, especially kids, such things as where the food they eat comes from, how sheep are raised for the wool to make clothing, to the importance of our forests for ecology and human survival,” according to the fest’s website.

“I grew up around (agriculture), and so I always try to get out to stuff like this just to get a little more information,” said Brooke Rogers, who attended the event with her husband, Nehemiah, and their daughters, a 3-year-old and a 9-month-old. “You walk through the grocery store and you don’t always know where your stuff comes from, so that’s what I like about this.”

“We like all the animals, and I think our favorite thing is taking the seedlings home and growing them,” Brooke Rogers said.

The Rogers said that they grow some of their own vegetables at home on the balcony of their Salem apartment.

“We want to show (our daughter) what can start if you take care of the plants. That’s my biggest thing for her and we want to make this a long-term teaching of what this means and what



Chantelle Ramcharan (left) and Shannon Ziesemer (right) talk to customers at the Willamette Valley Pie Company booth at the Oregon Ag Fest. The pie company has a production facility in Silverton and a retail store in Salem, and all of their fruit is locally grown.

each plant does,” said Nehemiah Rogers.

“It’s a good time, we’re definitely coming back next year,” said Brooke Rogers.

Visitors have a chance to learn about all areas of agriculture, including plant life and how to tend to a garden, the



Silverton-based King Fresh Produce had their locally grown hazelnuts for sale at the Oregon Ag Fest. The company is also signing up people for CSA shares.



Visitors at the Oregon Ag Fest explore the many tractors on display at the State Fairgrounds.

importance of water, farm animals and cattle, how to use different tools, and many more activities. Trinity Serafin, 11, of Albany, learned about planting from the Oregon State Grange.

“I really like the agriculture part. I get to learn about the plants and about different fruits and vegetables,” Trinity said as she took part in a demonstration showing how to tend to plants.

Oregon Ag Fest officials note that in 2015 more than 20,000 people attended

the event at the Oregon State Fairgrounds in Salem, to touch, taste and experience the incredible world of Oregon agriculture, in a fun-filled, festive environment. Organizers hail Ag Fest as a two-day event, “aimed to help families better understand where their food, fiber and flora come from, is a unique learning experience, where hands-on exhibits make learning about Oregon’s vast agricultural industry educational and entertaining.”