

Smaller is better for farmers' market operation

By **CRAIG REED**
For the Capital Press

ROSEBURG, Ore. — Jim Leet gardened as a kid, as a soldier and for the last 10 years as a retiree.

Leet and his wife, Joni, established Linnea Marie Farms

— the middle names of their two daughters — in 2005 on their property in the Melrose area west of Roseburg. Jim Leet said he's working about as much on his 1 acre as he did during his professional career when he worked for large nonprofit organizations

in Minnesota and Alaska.

"Obviously, I like growing things," the 67-year-old said. "It's definitely a labor of love."

In the ground and in two large hoop houses, Leet grows vegetables year round. He and Joni Leet have a booth at the

weekly Umpqua Valley Farmers' Market, where they sell their peppers, tomatoes, salad greens, asparagus, garlic, carrots, onions, potatoes, corn, peas, beets, kohlrabi, boysenberries, strawberries, raspberries, squash and tomatillos. They also sell their produce at Umpqua Local Goods, a small store in Roseburg that is a retail outlet for small home businesses.

In addition to the produce, the Leets have had chickens for three years and sell the eggs at the farmers' market.

"I've tried to diversify enough so if something tanks, I have enough balance to equal things out," said Jim Leet, who was an Umpqua Valley market

board member for six years and was the president for the middle four years.

The Leets don't have a certified organic farm because that process is too expensive for their small size of operation, but they grow their produce by organic methods.

"People want local food," Jim Leet said. "They're buying more and more local. They want the quality and freshness. The idea of getting to know your farmer is increasingly popular."

Leet specializes in growing peppers, and has earned the nickname of "The Pepper Man." On market days, he usually wears shirts and hats with peppers printed on them.



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Jim Leet picks a handful of salad greens for the evening meal after a day of working on Linnea Marie Farms near Roseburg, Ore.

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Betaseed's planned expansion includes hiring research, breeding team members

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"The primary objectives for the new expansion were driven by a desire to respond to market and customer demands even quicker than we had been," said Bryan Meier, director of operations at the Tangent location. "Our new technology and automated systems support these objectives by allowing us to reach the growing regions earlier,

making sure seed is in place when growers are ready to start planting."

Growers' needs drive Beta-seed's research efforts. Beta-seed markets and sells its seed through sales agents scattered across North America in 11 sugarbeet growing regions.

"These agents collaborate with customers to identify field conditions, soil type and disease pressure, and recommend the varieties best suited

to perform under the grower's specific conditions. Beta-seed's extensive seed portfolio allows Beta-seed to support growers with the best genetics for each acre, maximizing every dollar that growers invest in their operations," said Lisa Butzer, corporate marketing manager.

Current research efforts focus on increasing disease tolerance and yield.

"Our most recent successes include nematode tolerance and MultiSource rhizomania tolerance," said Butzer.

Future breeding efforts may include developing heat, salt and drought tolerant sugarbeets, as well as additional disease and pest tolerances, Butzer said.

Betaseed's planned expansion includes hiring new research and breeding team members over the next few years.

"For the future, Beta-seed will continue to focus on bringing value to sugarbeet growers through innovative solutions through traits, seed treatments and increased yield," Butzer said.

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