

Dine Around Oregon a delicious adventure



Appetizers greet diners at the first stop of Dine Around Oregon event at the 2014 Willamette Valley Ag Expo.



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By **GEOFF PARKS**
For the Capital Press

The wildly successful Dine Around Oregon dinner event at the Willamette Valley Ag Expo returns for a fourth year to offer something different and tasty for everyone.

“It’s kind of like a progressive dinner,” explained Jill Ingalls, WVAE manager. “Attendees can start anywhere and move freely through the offerings — menu items created from pork in the Cascade Building, lamb in the Santiam Building, beef in the Willamette Building and cheese, soups and appetizers in the Calapooia.”

All of the products are Oregon-sourced, she said. Lamb comes from Reed Anderson Ranches and is prepared by Pat Manning of Manning Farms, the Oregon Dairy Women provide the cheese, and the rest is purchased or donated from local growers and ranchers. The Oregon Cattlemen’s Association will help sponsor the beef.

Beverages are another highlight, featuring sampling from 4 Spirits Distillery — and various Oregon wines and beers. Desserts are also a top draw.

Catering by Valley Catering of Adair Village pulls it all together, Ingalls said. “(Valley Catering owner) Mary Bentley is like a magician. She takes all these ingredients and seemingly with a wave of her hand turns them into a masterpiece, then brings out a staff that is simply stellar.”

Students from the Scio FFA Chapter assist that staff in taking tickets and hosting attendees through the four different dining stations.

Gary and Teresa Pullen, owners of Spring Acres Cranberries in Bandon, are providing the fresh cranberries for the event. They and their son-in-law are the only employees of the 40-acre



Courtesy of WVAE

Dine Around Oregon offers the best of the state’s food and beverages.

operation, and an Oct. 1 harvest time had them hopping to flood, float and gather the tart, juicy berries. It’s a labor-intensive operation, Gary Pullen said.

“We typically wet harvest and sell our tonnage to an independent handler, who brokers them out,” Pullen said. “But we will dry pick with a 100-year-old hand scoop to bring berries to the WVAE.”

He said the hand implementation has been in the family and used by four generations of Pullens to harvest small quantities of cranberries, which are destined for dinner

and desserts at the Expo.

“We used to just attend the WVAE as guests and for the ag show,” Pullen said. “But we decided to volunteer to give them some unprocessed fresh fruit, picked just a day before the (Dine Around Oregon) event.”

Dine Around Oregon runs from 5 to 9 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 18. A total of 500 tickets are available while quantities last at www.wvaexpo.com.

“Thanks to sponsors and all the amazing food providers we can keep the cost of tickets to under \$12,” Ingalls said.