

People & Places

Poultry producer focuses on quality products

By JULIA HOLLISTER
For the Capital Press

HANFORD, Calif. — Chickens, turkeys and ducks weren't on Mary Pitman's radar when she studied child development at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo.

Then she met her future husband, Rick, who was involved in his family's poultry operation, which began in 1954.

Now, she says, Mary's Free Range Chickens represent the gold standard for high-end customers concerned about taste, lack of hormones and animal welfare.

Her concern for food follows her own quest for good health.

"For 30 years I was not well and found it difficult to raise my three boys as I was trying figure out why I was sick," she said, adding that every time she ate she became ill.

With the help of her dentist, she traced the problem to the mercury fillings in her teeth.

"The day I had my mercury fillings removed, I got my life back," she said.

Pitman said her struggle helped her understand why many consumers seek purity in their food and want to know the source of their food.

"Consumers want to eat healthy and that is the reason I want my name on our products," she said.

Pitman's farm follows the five-Step Animal Welfare Rating System of the Virgin-



Courtesy of Pitman Family Farms

Mary Pitman of Pitman Family Farms in Hanford, Calif., believes in no crates or cages and poultry without additives or preservatives are key to the success of Mary's Turkeys, Mary's Chickens and Mary's Ducks.

ia-based Global Animal Partnership. The regulations:

- No cages, crates or crowding.
- An enriched environment.
- Enhanced outdoor access.
- Pasture centered.
- Animal centered, physical alterations prohibited, and animals live their entire life on an integrated farm.

Mary's California Bronze Chicken was the first product in the nation to achieve a "Step 5" rating, she said.

Pitman Farms raises free-range chickens, heritage turkeys and ducks.

"The white broad breast turkeys only take 3½ months to grow out, and the heritage birds grow out in 7½ months and cost much more to raise," Pitman said. "These turkeys fly and we have to pull them out of the trees."

Her poultry is recognized among foodies. "America's Test Kitchens" and "Cooks Illustrated" named Mary's organic chicken the most recommended chicken in the nation.

The Pitmans have added a hatchery, a pet food line and a facility that manufactures non-genetically modified feed.

Bill Mattos, president of the California Poultry Federa-

tion, acknowledged the Pitman family and their contribution to California agriculture.

"Pitman Family Farms is one of California's fastest-growing poultry companies," he said. "It is one of the only family operations that processes chicken, turkey and duck. The brand — Mary's — is well known in many white table cloth restaurants and in supermarkets featuring free range and organic products."

"Their innovative operation features many processing plant procedures found in very few United States operations," he said.



Western Innovator

Mary Kathryn Pitman

Hometown: Hanford, Calif.

Family: Husband, Rick, three grown sons and their families

Occupation: Customer service, Pitman Family Farms, Mary's Chickens, Turkeys and Ducks

Education: California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, Calif.

Quote: "We are grateful that our third generation, family-owned business is still going."

David Pitman is the incoming chairman of the California Poultry Federation, the Pitmans also supply chicken and other poultry to live bird markets and ethnic processing operations both in San Francisco and Los Angeles areas. They care about their customers, and constantly ask them what they want from the Pitman Family Farms operation.

"My husband is a humble man and always said that his job is to create jobs for other people," Pitman said. "This is what America is all about."

Washington FFA teams find success at nationals

Students and advisers say hard work pays off

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

Several Washington FFA teams ranked highly at the recent National FFA Convention and Expo in Louisville, Ky.

Britte Harder, Abigail McGregor and Jason Wigen from LaCrosse, Wash., placed first in the nation for their marketing plan competition team, against 31 teams. Wigen is state reporter for the Washington FFA.

Cassidy Boyd, Kandace Brunner, Jordan O'Donnell and Olivia Abbott of Cashmere, Wash., placed second out of 43 meats evaluations teams at the convention. Boyd placed ninth individually out of 165, winning a \$400 scholarship.

Hannah Lynch, Delaney Strutzel, Ellie York and Sami Sykes placed fourth out of 36 food science teams. Lynch placed fourth out of 144 contestants, winning an \$800 scholarship.

Harder, a junior at LaCrosse High School, said it was "overwhelming" to come in first.

"We were pretty consistent with our presentation, we had a solid run and the questions they asked us, we answered



Courtesy LaCrosse FFA

LaCrosse FFA adviser Lisa Baser and marketing plan competition team Jason Wigen, Britte Harder and Abigail McGregor meet with sponsor representative Jason Corman of Bunge North America. The LaCrosse FFA team placed first at the FFA national convention in Louisville, Ky.



Courtesy of Cashmere FFA

Cashmere FFA members Delaney Strutzel, Ellie York, Sami Sykes and Hannah Lynch placed fourth in the food science competition.

very well," she said.

The team put together a marketing plan for Dixon Land and Livestock's annual club calf sale in Pomeroy, Wash., increasing revenue with advertising and other business propositions. The group began practicing last December, often after school, Harder

said. Harder has been in FFA since the eighth grade.

"I really like being competitive," she said. "I know if I study hard and put in the time and effort, then I'll succeed." She expects to apply the skills she learned in FFA to whatever career she pursues, still to



Courtesy Cashmere FFA

Cashmere FFA members Cassidy Boyd, Jordan O'Donnell, Kandace Brunner and Olivia Abbott placed second in the meats evaluation competition at the FFA national convention.

be determined.

Lynch, a senior at Cashmere High School, said her teammates practiced together one or two times a week and studied as much as possible. Adviser Rusty Finch recruited the team, she said.

"It was just something that we decided we were going to put our heads down, do the work and do our best so that we could get to nationals and be able to compete," she said.

Lynch started in FFA in her sophomore year. She enjoys being able to compete and still participate in sports. She is considering a biotechnology or a pharmacy degree.

LaCrosse FFA adviser Lisa Baser previously took another team to the national FFA marketing plan competition. In 2008, she coached the team from Pomeroy High School, where her husband J.D. was the FFA adviser at the time. She credited her LaCrosse

team with being "intelligent and hard-working."

"Just giving them something that will challenge them and push them, I think is the big key there," Baser said. "They knew they were going to be successful, but they were going to have to work really hard, and that's what they did."

Finch said his teams have placed in the top five in the last three years. Like Lynch, his students often balance FFA with sports, school, church and other activities, he said.

"They've been competing athletically and other ways, but one of the neat things about FFA is they get to apply what they've learned, usually with real world-type applications," he said. "It allows them to be employable and apply skills and knowledge they're going to utilize in the future."

Couple preserves Nebraska farm from future development

PAPILLION, Neb. (AP) — A Sarpy County farm is shielded from future development after a deal that started seven years ago has helped turn it into the second-largest patch of protected property in Nebraska's smallest county.

The Omaha World-Herald reports that Ron and Carol Patterson's 693-acre farm is permanently protected by selling conservation easements designed to shield it from incom-

patible land uses and excessive development.

The farm consists of four parcels owned by the couple and other families.

"Imagine what you could do with this 700 acres," Ron Patterson said. "You're talking lots of money and a huge development. But we couldn't stand it."

County officials designated 11,000 acres as the county's most important and vulnerable environmental district that

should be persevered after the Pattersons and other landowners in the bluff have advocated for preservation, but they wanted more protection.

According to the couple, they have been fighting to save the Schramm Bluffs above the Platte River on their property learned about the easements from Dave Sands, executive director of the Nebraska Land Trust. Easements are voluntary

legal agreements that permanently prevent commercial and residential development of a site.

Landowners who grant conservation easements reduce the value of their land through relinquishment of development rights. According to Sands, the Pattersons donated a significant portion of their easements by selling them for less than their appraised value.

Other partners in the deal

included the Papio-Missouri River and Lower Platte South Natural Resources Districts, eight foundations and several individuals.

The couple says they wanted to preserve not only the farmland, but also the woodlands, creeks and historic American Indian sites on the property.

According to Carol Patterson, "It'll be here after we die, nice and green and welcoming to Omaha and Lincoln."

Calendar

To submit an event go to the Community Events calendar on the home page of our website at www.capitalpress.com and click on "Submit an Event." Calendar items can also be mailed to Capital Press, 1400 Broadway St. NE, Salem, OR 97301.

Friday, Nov. 20
Agri-Business Council of Oregon Denim & Diamonds Auction, Dinner & Awards, 5 p.m. Oregon

Convention Center, Portland, 503-595-9121.

Friday-Saturday Nov. 27-28
Open Alpaca Barn, Alpacas of Oregon, Sherwood, 503-628-2023.

Tuesday-Thursday Dec. 1-3
Idaho Farm Bureau 2015 Annual Meeting, Shoshone Bannock

Hotel, Fort Hall, Idaho.

Saturday-Wednesday Dec. 5-9
California Farm Bureau Federation 97th Annual Meeting, Peppermill Resort and Spa Casino, Reno, Nev.

Monday-Tuesday Dec. 7-8
Oregon Seed Growers League

Annual Meeting, Salem Conference Center, Salem, 503-364-1673.

Tuesday-Thursday Dec. 8-10
Oregon Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, Sun River, Ore., <http://www.oregonfb.org/events/>

Sunday-Wednesday Jan. 10-13
American Farm Bureau Annual

Convention, Orlando, Fla.

Tuesday-Thursday Jan. 12-14
Potato Expo 2016, Mirage Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas.

Thursday-Friday Jan. 14-15
Oregon Mint Growers 67th Annual Meeting, Salishan Lodge & Golf Resort, Gleneden Beach.

Capital Press

Established 1928
Board of directors
Mike ForresterPresident
Steve Forrester
Kathryn Brown
Sid Freeman Outside director
Mike Omeg Outside director

Corporate officer
John Perry
Chief operating officer

Capital Press Managers
Mike O'BrienPublisher
Joe Beach Editor
Elizabeth Yutze Sell Advertising Director
Carl Sampson Managing Editor
Barbara Nipp Production Manager
Samantha McLaren Circulation Manager

Entire contents copyright © 2015
EO Media Group
dba Capital Press

An independent newspaper
published every Friday.

Capital Press (ISSN 0740-3704) is published weekly by EO Media Group, 1400 Broadway St. NE, Salem OR 97301.

Periodicals postage paid at Portland, OR, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: send address changes to Capital Press, P.O. Box 2048 Salem, OR 97308-2048.

To Reach Us
Toll free 800-882-6789
Main line 503-364-4431
Fax 503-370-4383
Advertising Fax 503-364-2692

News Staff
N. California
Tim Hearden 530-605-3072

E Idaho
John O'Connell 208-421-4347

Idaho
Carol Ryan Dumas 208-860-3898

Boise
Sean Ellis 208-914-8264

Central Washington
Dan Wheat 509-699-9099

E Washington
Matthew Weaver 509-688-9923

Oregon
Eric Mortenson 503-412-8846
Mateusz Perkowski 800-882-6789

Graphic artist
Alan Kenaga 800-882-6789

To Place Classified Ads
Ad fax 503-364-2692
or 503-370-4383
Telephone (toll free) 866-435-2965
Online www.capitalpress.com/classifieds

Subscriptions
Mail rates paid in advance
Easy Pay U.S. \$3.75/month (direct withdrawal from bank or credit card account)
1 year U.S. \$49.99
2 years U.S. \$89.99
1 year Canada \$275
1 year other countries call for quote
1 year Internet only \$49.99
1 year 4-H, FFA students & teachers \$30
9 months 4-H, FFA students & teachers \$25
Visa and Mastercard accepted

To get information published
Mailing address:
Capital Press
P.O. Box 2048
Salem, OR 97308-2048

News: Contact the main office or news staff member closest to you, send the information to newsroom@capitalpress.com or mail it to "Newsroom," c/o Capital Press. Letters should be limited to 300 words. Deadline: Noon Monday.

Letters to the Editor: Send your comments on agriculture-related public issues to opinions@capitalpress.com, or mail your letter to "Opinion," c/o Capital Press. Letters should be limited to 300 words. Deadline: Noon Monday.

Capital Press ag media
www.capitalpress.com
www.FarmSeller.com
www.AgDirectoryWest.com
www.OnlyAg.com
www.facebook.com/capitalpress
www.facebook.com/farmseller
www.facebook.com/onlyAGdotcom
twitter.com/capitalpress
www.youtube.com/capitalpressvideo
www.blogiculture.com

Index
Dairy 11
Livestock 11
Markets 13
Opinion 6
Wolf 4

Correction policy
Accuracy is important to Capital Press staff and to our readers.
If you see a misstatement, omission or factual error in a headline, story or photo caption, please call the Capital Press news department at 503-364-4431, or send email to newsroom@capitalpress.com.
We want to publish corrections to set the record straight.