

People & Places

Urban markets aid next generation

Sandi McGinnis-Garcia and niece step into new roles as farm operators

By JULIA HOLLISTER
For the Capital Press

WATSONVILLE, Calif. — When Howard McGinnis retired from 47 years in farming recently, his daughter jumped at the opportunity to run the operation.

“I grew up on the farm and started driving a tractor when I was 9 years old,” Sandi McGinnis-Garcia said. “There were five kids and but only my niece, Sara Evett, and I were interested in taking over from Dad. We, as co-owners, turned everything over to a (limited liability corporation).”

The 17½-acre McGinnis Ranch is 99 miles south of San Francisco. All of the produce is sold to consumers through San Francisco farmers’ markets: Ferry Plaza, Alemany and in Menlo Park. Any leftover produce is donated to a food pantry in a local shelter and leftover flowers are taken to various locations including a senior center and a church.

Brie Mazurek, marketing and communications manager of the Center for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture at Ferry Plaza Farmers’ Market, had praise for McGinnis-Garcia and her contributions to the success of the market.



Julia Hollister/ For the Capital Press
Sandi McGinnis-Garcia, left, and niece Sara Evett sell their produce at the Ferry Plaza Farmers’ Markets in San Francisco and other locations. They are continuing the operation of their family farm.

“McGinnis Ranch has been part of CUESA’s Ferry Plaza Farmers’ Market community for more than 15 years, bringing their beautiful bouquets, berries and vegetables,” she said. “As an organization that supports farmers in making their operations more sustainable, we’re excited to see the next generation stepping in to carry on that family farming legacy and transition to organic.”

McGinnis-Garcia also noticed some changes in the consumers over the years.

“The biggest changes I have witnessed in 30 years of going to farmers’ markets are that people are demanding organic produce,” she said.

“They are more aware of how food is grown and where it comes from and they want to buy local.”

The crops — grown in sandy soil with a combination of commercial fertilizer and mushroom compost — includes carrots, fava beans, flowers, green beans, loganberries, raspberries, winter squash, strawberries, English peas, broccoli, zucchini, beets, pumpkins and olallie berries.

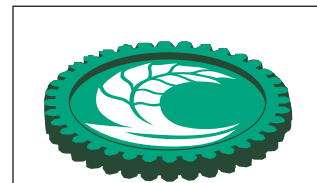
Education is part of their service to customers.

For example, “I always advise customers to break the bushy green tops off the baby carrots first,” McGinnis-Garcia said. “That way the carrots

will stay fresher longer because they are not providing nutrients that keep the tops alive. On the farm, we use the greens for compost and mulch. The cucumber beetle doesn’t like to eat the carrot tops so we put them around the flower beds.”

The farm currently uses an Integrated Pest Management approach that includes beneficial insects and crop rotation but McGinnis-Garcia said they are transitioning to organic, a three-year process.

The farmland — which sits on a 12 percent grade — is steep and drains well. The grade allows maximum sun exposure and extends the farm’s growing season sig-



Western Innovator

Sandi McGinnis-Garcia

Hometown: Watsonville, Calif.

Occupation: Farmer

Family: Two children

Quote: “I believe in retaining as much ag land as possible. My grandmother was a farmer, too, so I am happy to be a part of four generations of time-honored values. And, I also enjoy a good challenge.”

nificantly. She predicts they will continue to pick beans and berries until the first frost.

Water is not a problem now. The farm uses mostly drip irrigation, and some sprinkler irrigation from two deep wells on the property.

“In my opinion, the biggest challenge facing agriculture today is land access,” she said. “There is not as much land to be had and if I were a beginning farmer I couldn’t do what I am doing now. Everything I have was already in place when I took over, so I didn’t have to consider the cost of land, cost of getting started and setting up market outlets.”

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Courtesy of Yamhill-Carlton FFA
Left to right are members of the Yamhill-Carlton FFA's Oregon state Agricultural Sales competition winners: Elsie Duyn, a junior; Abbey Berhorst, a junior; Liberty Greenlund, a senior; and Hayley DeHaan, a senior.

Yamhill-Carlton FFA wins state Ag Sales competition

The Yamhill-Carlton High School FFA chapter traveled to Ontario, Ore., High School Friday, Dec. 4, to compete in the Oregon state Agricultural Sales CDE (Career Development Event) competition. This CDE is a four-part competition.

The first part consists of a 50-question multiple choice knowledge test on the complexities of the sales process. The second is a 15-minute sales presentation where the student sells a product of their choosing to a judge or judges. The third is a practicum

component that proves their comprehension of prospecting for new customers, handling customer relations/complaints, print advertising creation and telephone order-taking skills. The fourth component is a team activity where the team is given a new product to develop a comprehensive marketing strategy and present to a panel of judges in just under one hour.

The team consisted of Elsie Duyn, Hayley DeHaan, Liberty Greenlund and Abbey Berhorst.

The team also recent-

ly took second place at the Lower Willamette District Ag Sales event, held at Dayton High School on Nov. 19, which qualified them to compete at the state level. Their months of practice and dedication were validated when they achieved first place out of 19 teams from across the state Dec. 5 at Ontario High School.

The team will go on to compete as Oregon’s representative at the National FFA Agriculture Sales Competition held in Indianapolis, Ind., in the fall of 2016.

Campbell says it supports standard for GMO labeling

By CANDICE CHOI
AP Food Industry Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Campbell Soup says it supports a mandatory national labeling standard for products containing genetically modified ingredients.

The maker of Pepperidge Farm cookies, Prego sauces and Spaghetti-Os says it will withdraw its support from various efforts opposing such labeling, which has become a contested issue in recent years. The move marks a break from industry groups that have sought to make labeling voluntary.

About three-quarters of Campbell’s products contain GMOs. The company has opposed a patchwork of state-by-state legislation that it believes would confuse customers.

States have tried to address the issue on their own and Vermont passed legislation requiring food makers to disclose when certain products contain genetically modified ingredients by July. But industry groups want to pre-empt such efforts with federal legislation that would make disclosures voluntary, said Michele Simon, a public health lawyer.

“They’re going for as little as they can,” Simon said.

If a federal labeling standard isn’t established in a “reasonable amount of time,” Campbell says it will work independently to disclose the presence of GMOs in its products. The company did not specify a timeline for doing so.

Genetically modified seeds are engineered in laboratories to have certain traits, such as resistance to herbicides. The majority of the country’s

corn and soybean crop is now genetically modified, with much of that going to animal feed. Corn and soybeans are also made into popular processed food ingredients like high-fructose corn syrup, corn starch and soybean oil.

The food industry says about 75 percent to 80 percent of foods contain genetically modified ingredients. The Food and Drug Administration has said that GMOs are safe.

Still, the number of products stamped with a voluntary “non-GMO” label from a third-party group has proliferated as the issue has gained attention. The label, which is displayed on the front of packages, has become a marketing tool in some cases, Simon noted.

Campbell’s labeling for GMO ingredients likely wouldn’t be as prominent. An image provided by the company to illustrate compliance with the Vermont law showed the back of a Spaghetti-Os can with the words “Partially produced with genetic engineering” in small print at the bottom.

The company also called on the federal government to propose a national standard for non-GMO claims made on food packaging.

Campbell Soup CEO Denise Morrison has been outspoken about the need for big food makers to adapt to changing tastes. The company, based in Camden, N.J., has been diversifying its packaged food lineup with offerings that are seen as fresher.

Its acquisitions in recent years include premium juice and carrot seller Bolthouse Farms and Plum Organics, which makes baby food.

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.

Tuesday, Jan. 19
2016 Annual Rice Grower Meetings, 8:30 a.m. Evangelical Church, Richvale, Calif., and 1:30 p.m., Glenn Pheasant Hall, Glenn, Calif.

Wednesday, Jan. 20
2016 Annual Rice Grower Meetings, 8:30 a.m., CIP Conference Room, Colusa, Calif., and 1:30 p.m., Veterans Hall, Yuba City, Calif.

2016 EcoFarm Conference, Asilomar Conference Grounds, Pacific Grove, Calif.

Methods of Measuring Fruit & Vegetable Flavor, Color and Texture Workshop, 8 a.m. University of California-Davis Postharvest Technology Center, Davis.

Northwest Hay Expo, Three Rivers Convention Center, Kennewick, Wash.

Thursday, Jan. 21
2016 EcoFarm Conference, Asilomar Conference Grounds, Pacific Grove, Calif.

Northwest Hay Expo, Three Rivers Convention Center, Kennewick, Wash.

Friday, Jan. 22
2016 EcoFarm Conference, Asilomar Conference Grounds, Pacific Grove, Calif.

Saturday, Jan. 23
2016 EcoFarm Conference, Asilomar Conference Grounds, Pacific Grove, Calif.

Monday, Jan. 25
Oregon Blueberry Conference, Red Lion Hotel, Portland, Ore.

Tuesday, Jan. 26
Northwest Agricultural Show, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Portland Expo Center, 2060 N. Marine Drive, Portland, Ore., www.nwagshow.com

Washington-Oregon Potato Conference, Three Rivers Convention Center, Kennewick, Wash.

Wednesday, Jan. 27
Northwest Agricultural Show, 9 a.m.-8 p.m., Portland Expo Center, 2060 N. Marine Drive, Portland, Ore., www.nwagshow.com

Washington Oregon Potato Conference, Three Rivers Convention Center, Kennewick, Wash.

Cattle Industry Convention and NCBA Trade Show, Convention Center, San Diego, Calif.

Thursday, Jan. 28
Northwest Agricultural Show, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Portland Expo

Center, 2060 N. Marine Drive, Portland, Ore., www.nwagshow.com

Washington Oregon Potato Conference, Three Rivers Convention Center, Kennewick, Wash.

Cattle Industry Convention and NCBA Trade Show, Convention Center, San Diego, Calif.

Organic Farming Conference, The College of Idaho, Caldwell, 208-850-6504. The conference will feature reduced tillage systems in organic production, organic certification and record keeping tips, crop insurance options for organic producers and virtual farm tours.