

Farming draws couple back to their roots

By **ERICK PETERSON**
For the Capital Press

The son of a farmer who moved to Washington's Yakima Valley in the 1940s, Lino Guerra developed a love of agriculture that he shared with his wife and four sons.

And while personal tragedy

and market trends have taken their toll, he believes new trends are creating new opportunities.

This pepper farmer is making a comeback.

Talking about it while he brews coffee at the shop he owns at a Sunnyside mall, his eyes light up. Working alongside his father and building a

farm that grew to 30 acres was joyful. His wife, Hilda Guerra, loved it to.

"I'd love to be out there again, out with a hoe, out in the outdoors, that's for sure," she said.

She raised her sons in the fields, where she taught them the importance and pleasure

of hard work. Driving tractors, tending crops and laboring alongside generations of family were greatly satisfying, she said.

It was never greatly profitable, Lino said, and he supplemented their income with outside work. He was a scientific technician at the nearby Hanford nuclear facility and a construction worker. So when he came home, he was often tired. Still, his farm gave him energy, and he was very pleased that his family was enjoying a life in farming.

Unfortunately, the idyllic life did not last. His father grew ill in old age and passed away. About the same time that he became sick, Hilda was injured in a car accident. No longer able to operate the farm without them, the



Eric Peterson/For the Capital Press

Hilda and Lino Guerra produce Guerra's Gourmet Natural Seasonings while operating a coffee shop. They plan to go back to farming full-time producing peppers they use to make seasonings.

Guerras sold it.

Lino never gave up on the dream, though. He held onto 70 acres just north of Sunnyside. He maintained a garden on that property, and he continued to grow peppers.

His homegrown peppers are

ingredients in a product that he markets — Guerra's Gourmet Natural Seasonings. He sells around 100 canisters online every month. He also applies his seasonings to meats that he cooks at local events that he caters.

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— [Name], Farmer

FARMER APPROVED

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