

People & Places

Ex-hatchery provides cash crop

Jan Denlinger 'harvests' fish waste as ingredient for unique fertilizer

By JOHN O'CONNELL
Capital Press

PINGREE, Idaho — Some of the concrete raceways at Jan Denlinger's old fish hatchery have become marshes, where spring water bubbles through dark silt, supporting dense stands of cattails.

A few hundred trout still occupy one of the Pingree businessman's earthen ponds, but aquaculture has long since been abandoned at the 174-acre property.

On this trout farm, fish don't pay the bills. Rather, Denlinger is after what they left behind — nutrient-rich excrement accumulated over decades, which he uses as the key ingredient in a unique liquid fertilizer called Shot.

Denlinger, 55, is the owner of Idaho Organic Fertilizer and Compost. He also raises nightcrawlers for their castings, blending them with liquid charcoal — known as biochar — spring water and silt sucked with a trash pump from his 30 raceways and ponds. He markets his dark-brown cocktail as a natural concentrate, which he suggests mixing at 4 ounces per gallon of water to stimulate plant root growth.

Shot is sold in 175-gallon



John O'Connell/Capital Press

Jan Denlinger stands by a hatchery raceway that's filled in with cattails and silt, where trout were formerly raised near Pingree, Idaho. Denlinger harvests the rich silt as a major ingredient for fertilizer concentrate.

drums to commercial buyers — including a California medical marijuana farm, Amish growers in Kentucky, Hagerman watermelon growers and a few golf courses — and in 2-gallon jugs for home gardeners, who buy the product from retailers in Pocatello, Blackfoot and Idaho Falls.

Though the product hasn't been evaluated for the list of approved certified organic products, it's a good fit at Swore Farms in Tyhee, where the growers seek to use as few synthetic products as possible. Owner Wendy Swore said Shot has performed comparably

with conventional fertilizer on her sweet corn.

"It's nice knowing you have something on your crops that has organic properties to it that don't leave residues," Swore said.

Denlinger's great-great-grandfather bought the property along the Snake River in southeast Idaho, home to one of the state's largest springs, in 1907. The land was initially used for raising cattle, but in about 1950, the family leased it for fish production. It grew into a major supplier of fish filets, run by the predecessor of Clear Springs Foods.

Western Innovator

Jan Denlinger
Family: Wife, Loretta
Hometown: Pingree, Idaho
Age: 55
Innovation: Developing a liquid fertilizer known as Shot, made with fish waste, worm castings and biochar.

organisms and volcanic minerals, and he's sold Shot for about 18 years.

John Toberna, a crop researcher with Western Laboratories in Parma, tested Shot for pathogens to comply with an audit requested by a client of Denlinger's. Toberna said the product was clean, and he was impressed by the broad diversity of beneficial microorganisms he found.

Toberna, who has used Shot in his home garden, believes the product is a good fit for small producers of high-value crops.

Denlinger hopes to eventually return the hatchery to production, but he also sees a bright future for Shot, which he anticipates will see broader sales once he perfects a dry formulation.

11 family farms honored for longevity

By JANA SARGENT
Capital Press

HILLSBORO, Ore. — Three generations of the Grossen family sat around a picnic table on a recent Thursday and talked about their family and their 112-year-old dairy farm.

The Peter Fred Grossen Farm is in Hillsboro, Ore. Peter Fred Grossen founded it in 1904, after he immigrated from Switzerland with his family. More than a century later, his great-great grandson David Grossen and his family will receive a Century Farm Award from the Oregon Century Farm and Ranch Program honoring the farm for its history in Oregon.

The Grossens are one of 11 families being honored for longstanding farms at the Oregon Century Farm and Ranch Program Awards.

Six farms from six counties are being awarded Century status, meaning they have been in continuous operation at least 100 years.

Five farms from four counties are being awarded Sesquicentennial status, meaning they have been in continuous operation at least 150 years.

Andrea Kuenzi, program coordinator, said families must follow a formal application process in which they document the history of the operation of their farm with photos, original deeds, personal stories and other historic records.

David Grossen said re-



Janae Sargent/Capital Press

Three generations of the Grossen Family sit around a picnic table on their 170-acre farm. From left to right are David Grossen, Jackie Grossen, Maria Grossen, Hank Grossen, Alice Grossen and Ben Grossen. The Peter Fred Grossen Farm is one of 11 farms and ranches that are being awarded Century status or Sesquicentennial status Aug. 27 at the Oregon State Fair.

searching the history of his family farm was a fun family project.

Grossen's wife, Jackie, their two children and sister were heavily involved in researching the history of the farm — from when Peter Fred Grossen immigrated to the United States in the 1880s to when their grandfather ran a dairy business to get his family through the Depression to now, with David and his son Hank starting an artisan cheese operation.

The Peter Fred Grossen Farm started as a dairy farm and creamery with Brown Swiss cows. The Grossens also

sold wheat, oats, barley, hay and Swiss cheese. The farm's main crops currently are hay, wheat, Brown Swiss cattle and Swiss cheese.

"The Grossens are very connected to their history and to each other," Jackie Grossen said.

Other farms being awarded with Century status are: Omeg Family Orchards, Alley Ranch, Carman Ranch, M. Christensen Family Farm and Alder Glade Farm.

Farms being awarded with Sesquicentennial status are: Mosby Century Farm, Jesse & Ruby Looney Farm, Maple Hill Farm, Gordon Zimmer-

Oregon Century Farm & Ranch Program

The Oregon Century Farm & Ranch Program honors farmers and ranchers who have worked the same land for at least 100 years. The program is administered through the Oregon Farm Bureau Foundation for Education and is partially funded through a partnership of the Oregon Farm Bureau, Wilco, Oregon State Historic Preservation Office and OSU Libraries' University Archives. Since its start in 1958, 1,175 farms and ranches across the state have been registered.

the public," Kuenzi said.

2016 will be the first year all of the information about the historic farms will be available in electronic form for the public to see. Kuenzi said the records were kept since 1958 as hard copies at Oregon State University. The Oregon Century Farm and Ranch Awards Program received a grant to digitize all of its records.

For the Grossens, researching their history was a way of growing even closer as a family.

"It was so cool to look through all of the old photos," said Maria Grossen, David Grossen's daughter. "I really love learning about our history."

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Friday, Aug. 19
8th Annual Friends of Oregon Agriculture Golf Tournament. This annual fund-raiser for Oregon AgLink's Adopt-a-Farmer program includes the popular golf ball drop. Chehalam Glenn Golf Course, Newberg, Ore. www.aglink.org

Western Idaho Fair, 5610 Glenwood, Boise, 208-287-5650, http://sharemyfair.com/

Saturday, Aug. 20
Oregon AgLink Barn Dance, 6:30-10:30 p.m. Celebrating Oregon AgLink's 50th anniversary. Victor Point Farms, Silverton, Ore. Cost: \$50 www.aglink.org

Western Idaho Fair, 5610 Glenwood, Boise, 208-287-5650, http://sharemyfair.com/

Sunday, Aug. 21
Western Idaho Fair, 5610 Glenwood, Boise, 208-287-5650, http://sharemyfair.com/

Monday, Aug. 22
Organic Hispanic Farmer Evening, 6-7 p.m. Oregon State University Organic Growers Club Berry Project Parcel, 34306 NE Electric Road, Corvallis, Ore. Attendees will see demonstrations of production techniques and taste berry products and fruit from the certified organic teaching parcel. 503-373-3766 javier.f.s@oregonstate.edu

Western Idaho Fair, 5610 Glenwood, Boise, 208-287-5650, http://sharemyfair.com/

Monday-Wednesday Aug. 22-24
Biochar 2016, The Synergy of Science and Industry: Biochar's Con-

nection to Ecology, Soil, Food, and Energy. 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Oregon State University CH2M Hill Alumni Center, 725 SW 26th St., Corvallis, Ore. http://usbi2016.org/

Tuesday, Aug. 23
Western Idaho Fair, 5610 Glenwood, Boise, 208-287-5650, http://sharemyfair.com/

Wednesday, Aug. 24
Eastern Oregon Farm Bureau Trap Shoot, 9 a.m.-noon. Hermiston Gun Club 75772 Gun Club Road, Hermiston, Ore. The entry fee includes a morning of trap shooting, refreshments, an awards presentation and lunch. Top shooters will win prizes. oregonfb.org/

Western Idaho Fair, 5610 Glenwood, Boise, 208-287-5650, http://sharemyfair.com/

Thursday, Aug. 25
Western Idaho Fair, 5610 Glenwood, Boise, 208-287-5650, http://sharemyfair.com/

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Friday, Aug. 26
Oregon State Fair, 10 a.m.-11 p.m., Oregon State Fairgrounds, 2330 17th St. NE, Salem, 971-701-6573, http://oregonstatefair.org/

Western Idaho Fair, 5610 Glenwood, Boise, 208-287-5650, http://sharemyfair.com/

Saturday, Aug. 27
Oregon State Fair, 10 a.m.-11 p.m., Oregon State Fairgrounds, 2330 17th St. NE, Salem, 971-701-6573, http://oregonstatefair.org/

Century Farm and Ranch Induction Ceremony, 11 a.m. Oregon State Fairgrounds, 2330 17th St. NE Salem, Ore. Oregonfb.org

Western Idaho Fair, 5610 Glenwood, Boise, 208-287-5650, http://sharemyfair.com/

Sunday, Aug. 28
Oregon State Fair, 10 a.m.-10

p.m., Oregon State Fairgrounds, 2330 17th St. NE, Salem, 971-701-6573, http://oregonstatefair.org/

Young Farmers and Ranchers FFA Tractor Driving Contest, Oregon State Fairgrounds, 2330 17th St. NE, Salem, Ore. oregonfb.org

Western Idaho Fair, 5610 Glenwood, Boise, 208-287-5650, http://sharemyfair.com/

Monday, Aug. 29
Oregon State Fair, 10 a.m.-10 p.m., Oregon State Fairgrounds, 2330 17th St. NE, Salem, 971-701-6573, http://oregonstatefair.org/

Tuesday, Aug. 30
Oregon State Fair, 10 a.m.-10 p.m., Oregon State Fairgrounds, 2330 17th St. NE, Salem, 971-701-6573, http://oregonstatefair.org/

Wednesday, Aug. 31
Rice Field Day, 7:30 a.m.-noon. Rice Experiment Station, Biggs, Calif.

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