

## People &amp; Places

## From farming to politics to farming

John Chandler trades in Capitol jobs to return to his family's operation

By JULIA HOLLISTER  
For the Capital Press

SELMA, Calif. — Farmer John Chandler had his career planned until a tempting call from Washington, D.C., changed the course.

"I grew up on the family farm, in the same house where my father and grandfather grew up," he said. "As a kid the entire farm is your backyard."

By the time he was 7, he was working summers on the farm. "Though I was not thrilled about working all summer, I have come to appreciate the ethic of work and value of doing a job well," he said.

In college he studied fruit science with the hope of a career working in the orchards. Chandler learned the latest science on farming so he could stay on the cutting edge of agriculture.

However, the farm economy was at a low point and jobs were not easy to come by. Life had other plans, and he ended up going to Washington, D.C., and starting a decade-long career in government. Chandler went to work for then-Rep. Doug Ose of California as a staff assistant. The stint was a good start in the political world. He met political leaders from all over the nation but missed the open spaces of the West and its better weather.

He returned to California when the opportunity presented itself and worked as a consultant to the California Senate Committee on Agriculture.



John Chandler is a farmer and agricultural advocate. He returned to farming after having spent a decade in Washington, D.C., and Sacramento.

"From Washington I eventually landed in Sacramento," he said. "I always knew I wanted to return to the land and be a farmer. Knowing how much politics and government were influencing agriculture in California, I figured to make the most of my time and learn how the government-political system worked and be a better advocate and voice for farmers with today's decision-makers."

His "return to the farm" came in a phone call in 2012.

"One day I got a phone call from my parents down on the family farm," he said. "My dad was getting older and

wanted to slow down. He said now was the time if my brother and I wanted to return to the farm and help run the business or we could look at selling the business.

"I knew that this was my last golden opportunity to try my life ambition of farming," he said.

"John's experiences on the family farm as well as his policy background have molded him into a strong agricultural advocate," Ryan Jacobsen, CEO and executive director Fresno County Farm Bureau, said. "He is always willing to step up to promote the industry via media inter-

views and educate those decision-makers with a 'boots on the ground' visit to his operation."

Like many in the industry, Chandler sees many challenges facing farming.

"Water and labor are the two biggest challenges facing California agriculture," he said. "During the recent drought the lack of water was a serious concern for every farmer in California."

On his farm, he was forced to replace several wells that had gone dry.

"The legacy of this drought is a cloud over the future of California agricul-



## Western Innovator

**John Chandler**  
Hometown: Selma, Calif.

**Education:** California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo

**Age:** 40

**Occupation:** Farmer

**Quote:** "The food you eat is a direct connection to the land on which it was grown and the people who grew it."

ture," he said. "How state and local agencies allocate water, and now ground water, will determine the productivity of California agriculture for the future."

He described labor as another challenge.

"Simply put, there is not enough quality labor to harvest our crops in California," he said. "All the recent talk about immigration reform has created a roller coaster of hope and despair as we try and find a workable solution to find workers."

In addition to the lack of available workers, the cost for farm labor has increased, he said.

"Crops that were once affordable to grow are less profitable," he said. "As a result of the uncertainty of labor availability and the increased costs we have been moving away from our labor-intensive stone fruit and shifting to crops that take less labor, such as almonds, vines and citrus."

# Linn County sheep producer remembered

Walter "Lynn" Barnes of Halsey passed away on July 13, 2017, just a couple weeks shy of 99 years old. He was born Aug. 7, 1918, in Carrier, Okla., to Walter and Opal Barnes.

His mother passed away when he was 10 years old and his father a week later. All four children were raised by their grandparents, Chancy and Minnie Sickels of Halsey, Ore. At the age of 13 he was given two bummer lambs, bought one old Romney ewe and began his journey of becoming a world-class shepherd and farmer. He graduated



Walter "Lynn" Barnes

in 2013.

Lynn served his community well by taking part in the American Romney Breeders Association, Oregon Pure Bred Sheep Breeders Association, Charity Grange in Harrisburg, Linn/Lane Soil & Water Conservation Dis-

trict and Muddy Creek Water Control District. He was a member of the OSU Withycombe Club in recognition of significant contribution to animal agriculture. The country of New Zealand gave him one of three awards in the world called the New Zealand Romney Ambassador Award for his outstanding work in the breeding of Romney sheep in America.

Survivors include his sons, Jerry Barnes of Cheshire, Ore., and Dennis Barnes of Halsey, Ore. Grandchildren include Bryon Barnes and wife Janet; Bradley Barnes

and wife Elaine; and Belinda Lewallen; step-grandchildren, Lori Burrows; Raneé Werdner and husband Tim. He had seven great-grandchildren, two step-great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife, his sister Louise, brothers Chancy and Louis "Dee", and his parents.

The funeral services for him were held at Harrisburg Christian Church on Saturday, July 22, at 10 a.m. Interment was at Alford Cemetery on Highway 99 N in Harrisburg.

In honor and memory of Lynn, the Lynn Barnes Me-

morial Fund has been established. The memorial fund will sponsor a future award for both FFA and 4-H youth who are the premier sheep exhibitor at the Oregon State Fair. Lynn was a proud supporter of the FFA and 4-H programs and this memorial will be a lasting tribute to this great man. In lieu of flowers, you are welcome to contribute toward this fund.

Arrangements by Murphy-Musgrove Funeral Home in Junction City. Please access the obituary, and you are invited to sign the guestbook at [www.musgroves.com](http://www.musgroves.com).

## Calendar

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### Monday, July 31

Agricultural Technology Day, 1-6 p.m. Washington State University Ag Technology Building, 24106 N. Bunn Road, Prosser, Wash. Highlights of this year include plenary talks on "Drone Data Decisions in Agriculture" and "Precision Irrigation Technologies" followed by a live demonstration of low energy precision irrigation and UAS-based multispectral sensing technologies. The event will also feature displays and short demonstrations of key technologies such as robotic weeding, precision pollination, mechanical pruning, direct root-zone deficit irrigation, novel chemical application technologies, robotic apple harvesting, intelligent in-orchard bin-managing systems and high throughput crop phenotyping technologies. A networking social will be from 5 to 6 p.m. Cost: Free, but registration is required. Website: <http://cpaas.wsu.edu/>

### Tuesday-Friday, Aug. 1-4

7th World Congress on Conservation Agriculture. Rosario, Argentina. A world meeting presented by the American Confederation of Farmers Organizations for a Sustainable Agriculture, which began with associations of farmers that promoted the no till system and are currently working to promote sustainable production systems. Website: <http://congresoaapresid.org.ar/>

### Friday, Aug. 4

9th Annual Friends of Agriculture Golf Tournament. Chehalis Glenn Golf Course, 4501 E. Fernwood Road, Newberg, Ore. The

tournament benefits Oregon Aglink, which is dedicated to growing agriculture in Oregon through education and promotion and bridging the gap between urban and rural Oregonians. Contact Mallory Phelan at 503-595-9121 or [mallory@aglink.org](mailto:mallory@aglink.org). Website: [www.aglink.org](http://www.aglink.org)

Left Coast's Run for the Oaks, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Left Coast Cellars, 4225 N Pacific Highway W, Rickreall, Ore. The course will predominantly be on gravel roads or off-road with trail and paved road segments. The run will meander throughout the Left Coast Cellars estate and runners will pass oak forests, vineyards and gardens with spectacular views of the Willamette Valley. All proceeds from the race, food and wine sales for the day will be devoted to the Oak Savanna Restoration Project. 10K Trail Run: \$60 Start time 9 a.m. 5K Trail Run/Walk: \$50 Start time 9:15 a.m. Registration includes complimentary wine tasting; free Patagonia Capilene T-shirts; finishers receive a GoVino wine glass; music, awards and snacks. Left Coast Cellars has over 100 acres of ecological compensation areas and 70 acres of old growth oak forest. Through time the forest has become populated with invasive species and our goal is to restore the forest to a native oak savanna. We have partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Website: <http://leftcoastcellars.com/>

### Saturday-Sunday Aug. 5-6

Mother Earth News Fair. 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Linn County Expo, 3700 Knox Butte Road E., Alba-

ny, Ore. The Mother Earth News Fairs are fun-filled, family-oriented sustainable lifestyle events that feature dozens of practical, hands-on demonstrations and workshops from the leading authorities on renewable energy, small-scale agriculture, gardening, green building, green transportation and natural health. Cost: \$15-50. Website: <http://www.motherearthnewsfair.com/oregon/>

47th Annual Great Oregon Steam-Up. 7 a.m.-6 p.m. Powerland Heritage Park, 3995 Brooklake Road NE, Brooks, Ore. Packed with vintage power, this annual event celebrates the steam power, machines and people who drove Oregon agriculture, logging, transportation and more from the 1800s through early 1900s. Get up close to the team-power farm machinery, vintage trucks, antique cars, logging gear and a working steam sawmill. Kids of all ages will enjoy train and trolley rides, daily parade, huge flea market, traditional tractor pulling, machinery demos, threshing and quilt show. This year the featured makes are Aultman-Taylor and Rumely. General admission \$12, children under 12 are free. Website: <http://www.antiquepowerland.com/html/steam-up.html>

### Wednesday-Saturday Aug. 9-12

Skagit County Fair. 10 a.m.-10 p.m. Skagit County Fairgrounds, 479 W. Taylor St., Mount Vernon, Wash. Website: <https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/Fair/main.htm>

### Tuesday-Thursday Aug. 15-17

Future Farm Expo. Pendleton Convention Center, 1601 Westgate, Pendleton, Ore. The Expo has a new name and a program more ambitious than ever. The Future Farm Expo 2017 will now span three full days and feature outside technology demos in addition to its tradition of world-class presenters and exhibitors. Growers, processors, crop consultants, service providers, and technologists are all invited to connect and share knowledge. The 2017 Expo will cover topics such as ground sensors, crop imagery, data use, precision irrigation, robotics, automation, soil science and more. Website: <http://www.futurefarmexpo.tech/>

### Friday, Aug. 18-Sunday, Aug. 27

Western Idaho Fair, noon-11 p.m. Western Idaho Fairgrounds, 5610 Glenwood St., Garden City, Idaho. Website: <http://www.idahofair.com/>

### Thursday, Aug. 17

Stream Restoration Workshop. 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Federal Building Meeting Room, corner of Seventh Street and College Avenue, St. Maries, Idaho. Those wishing to participate should pre-register at the University of Idaho Extension office in Benewah County by Aug. 11. Registration is limited. A \$20 registration fee covers resource materials and refreshments. For registration questions, contact the UI Extension office at (208) 245-2422. Website: [www.uidaho.edu/extension/forestry](http://www.uidaho.edu/extension/forestry)

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## Correction

A story in the July 21 edition about USDA grants incorrectly reported that Cloud Mountain Farm Center in Everson, Wash., formerly used laundry washers and dryers to wash and spin lettuce. While other places have used the appliances, according to the center, it has not. The nonprofit farm received a grant from the USDA to buy equipment to wash and spin lettuce.

The Capital Press regrets the error.