

DeGoede Bulb Farm and Garden in third generation

By **SHERYL HARRIS**
For the Capital Press

MOSSYROCK, Wash. — Travelers along Washington's scenic Highway 12 are bound to notice the colorful fields of tulips, iris and perennials that is DeGoede Bulb Farm and Garden.

Henry and Hildegard DeGoede started the operation in 1951 in the Skagit Valley of Washington state. Needing more property, they purchased land outside Mossyrock, and around 1976, they moved the family and business to its present location nearby.

Today, sons Jack and Bob and grandson Alex are at the helm. Jack and Alex manage field production, Bob handles the garden center and container plants, and Alex manages cut tulips and the Dutch irises.

While bulbs have been a mainstay, Jack DeGoede says they are adding more perennials. This is because the bulb market has been decreasing and labor costs and competition from Europe have been increasing.

"We have about 100 year-round employees in all divisions," Alex says. "It might vary by 10 or 12 seasonally, but that's all."

Jack explains, "Our work is steady so it allows us to



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Jack, left, and Alex DeGoede are two-thirds of the team heading up DeGoede's Bulb Farm and Garden. Jack's brother, Bob, is the third team member.

keep good people. Replacing our workers is difficult since we can't use temp or seasonal workers, so we're always looking for ways to streamline our work."

He describes a recent equipment advance that fills containers.

"It took two people to do it; now it takes one," he says. Since it is much faster, actual savings may be four or five employees over the year. Jack says another way to save is growing plants in beds, not

rows as they get more plants per acre and it helps grow them to size without dividing them.

About 250 of their 300 acres are in production. About 95 percent of DeGoede's product goes to U.S. buyers. Container production goes to an area between Bellingham, Wash., and Eugene, Ore., west to the Olympic Peninsula, and east to the Yakima Valley.

About 80 percent of the field production goes east of the Rocky Mountains.



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One of the greenhouses at DeGoede's Bulb Farm and Garden near Mossyrock, Wash. Together, the greenhouses total 12 acres.

and Prayer Trail. Henry and Hildegard DeGoede built them to give thanks and glory to God for the blessings

they had received in their lives, marriage, and a business to pass to future generations.

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