

People & Places

# Farming with Mother Nature

Dede Boies raises heritage breeds organically

By JULIA HOLLISTER  
For the Capital Press

PESCADERO, Calif. — Dede Boies says the road from growing up on the East Coast to operating an organic farm on the California coast was long and winding.

“After college I wanted to learn more about growing food so I signed up for a world-wide work exchange program,” she said. “Host farms offered room and board in exchange for working on the farm. I learned about vegetable farming on the big island of Hawaii, and in New Zealand I learned about raising animals.”

Boies began searching the Bay Area for a farm, preferably one owned by a nonprofit educational organization.

Her quest came to fruition in 2013 with Root Down Farm.

“The 62-acre farm is owned by the Peninsula Open Space Trust,” she said. POST protects and cares for open space in and around the Silicon Valley south of the Bay Area. Since it was founded in 1977, the nonprofit has protected more than 75,000 acres in three counties.

POST sent out a request for proposals for new tenants, and Boies’ proposal was accepted.

“I raise chickens, ducks, turkeys and pigs,” she said.

The ranch is certified through Animal Welfare Approved, a program with rigorous animal welfare and



Courtesy of Frederica Armstrong

Dede Boies, of Root Down Farm near Pescadero, Calif., with her livestock guardian dog, Bunny. The dog guards the farm’s heritage turkeys, chickens, pigs and ducks from predators.

environmental sustainability standards designed to ensure animals live in “a state of physical and psychological well-being” from the pasture to the slaughterhouse.

“All the animals have their unique challenges, but I would say the Standard Bronze turkeys are the hardest to raise,” she said. “They grow slower and are incredibly curious animals that really push the boundaries.” They reach maturity in seven months.

Customers order their birds online and pick them up at the farm the weekend before Thanksgiving, she said.

She also raises New Hampshire, Delaware, Barred Plymouth Rock and Red Rang-

er chickens — all heritage breeds. They eat bugs, grubs, and grass on the pastures, and Boies supplements their diet with organic grain.

“My mission is to humanely raise the healthiest animals possible while working within the ecosystem to responsibly steward the land,” Boies said. “The farm focuses on the strong genetics of heritage breed livestock to ensure the animals grow at a normal rate while thriving outside on pasture.”

Marcy Coburn is executive director of the Center for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture, a nonprofit that is dedicated to cultivating a sustainable food

system through the operation of farmers’ markets and educational programs. She recognized Boies’ contributions to the organization’s farmers markets, which are three days a week at the Ferry Plaza on the Embarcadero in San Francisco and once a week at Jack London Square in Oakland.

“Dede Boies and the ranching she is doing are incredibly important to the future of agriculture in California,” she said. “Boies is a part of the next generation of young farmers who carry the legacy of our pioneering organic farmers to care for the land, conserve natural resources and bring healthy food to our tables week after week.”



## Western Innovator

### Dede Boies

Hometown: Pescadero Calif.

Age: 39

Occupation: Owner-farmer, Root Down Farm

Education: Ursinus University, Collegeville, Pa.

Boies sells at the CUESA farmers’ market, Coburn said, and educates customers “about her hands-on, and humane, animal livestock operation.”

She also hosts tours and educational events at her farm.

Boies said business is bustling but there are challenges to working in California agriculture.

“Weather — the intense dryness last year and a huge amount of rain earlier this year” were difficult to deal with, she said. Also, “farmland is becoming cost-prohibitive. Farms have been lost to developers and parties that can afford the high prices.”

“Predators are a problem because we live in their backyard,” she said. “We have to find a balance with Mother Nature and the most humane way to work in the ecosystem.”

# Unique ‘brewery-raising’ at abbey

By BRENNIA WIEGAND  
For the Capital Press

MT. ANGEL, Ore. — Saturday morning, 100 workers — the majority of them monks and seminarians — assembled near Mount Angel Abbey for a barn-raising.

Or, more accurately, a brewery-raising.

They raised the frame of the abbey’s new Benedictine Brewery. The job was finished by 5 p.m.

The 3,000-square-foot brewery and tap room will be built almost solely of logs harvested on abbey property.

The abbey was established in 1882 by Swiss monks, who settled on 300 pastoral acres atop a butte east of Mt. Angel in the Willamette Valley.

They built a community and purchased 600 acres in the Cascade foothills, where they planted Douglas fir trees 100 years ago.

“They were 200 feet tall,” volunteer John Gooley said. “The first 160 feet there were no limbs, so we got a lot of



Brennia Wiegand/For the Capital Press

Volunteers raise the frame of the Benedictine Brewery on the Mount Angel Abbey grounds. No nails were used in the construction of the frame. The brewery is expected to help the monks achieve self-sufficiency.

clear wood.”

Eight truckloads, to be exact. With others, Gooley began calling contacts made over a 42-year career with Withers Lumber. Hull-Oakes Lumber Co. in Monroe, Ore., milled the entire order in exchange for one truckload. Freres Lumber in Lyons transported a full

semi-load of wood.

Universal Forest Products, New Energy Works Timber Frame Homes and others also became involved.

The timber was harvested, cut, dried, milled using mortise and tenon joinery, which is secured with wooden pegs — an age-old traditional craft

and prepared for a seamless, no-hammer, no-saw construction. This saved the abbey as much as \$100,000.

“It was really awesome,” Gooley said. “We ended up with about 26,000 board-feet of lumber; there were even logs left over. We cut all of their siding, too.”

Construction should be complete in March or April, at which time Benedictine Brewery will begin hosting guests and expanding their beer repertoire. Until now it has consisted of Black Habit, a dark beer, and Saint Benedict, which is pale, brewed at Seven Brides Brewing in nearby Silverton.

Abbey procurator and brew master Father Martin Grassel has worked closely with Abbey Enterprises Manager Chris Jones on the brewery. It will be run by Grassel and Father Jacob Stronach, an intern at Seven Brides and Benedictine breweries. Their new custom-made 5-barrel system has been waiting in the wings.

Benedictine monks in Europe have been brewing beer

for more than 1,000 years. In the Middle Ages they supplied beer to the locals because the water was often undrinkable, and breweries became part of the character of monasteries.

“There’s a vision forming for what we want here,” Grassel said. “We hope people come to our taproom to seek and enjoy good beer, but we also want them to experience something of who we are. ... It’s all for the kingdom of God and our brewery must be oriented to that.”

“Everybody’s got a brand; everybody’s got a unique character, and ours has to be consistent with who we are as monks,” he said.

Part of that is self-sufficiency through work, and if they didn’t think the brewery was going to be profitable they wouldn’t be doing it, he said.

“We don’t want another operation you have to raise money for,” Grassel said. “Libraries and schools don’t make money and we expect the brewery to help support us — or at least break even.”

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**Saturday, Nov. 18**  
Women in Agriculture Conference. The 2017 conference is a one-day event held simultaneously in 39 locations. Washington: Bremerton, Chehalis, Colville, Coupeville, Des Moines, Elma, Everett, Goldendale, Mount Vernon, Nespelem, Olympia, Pasco, Port Angeles, Pullman, Raymond, Republic, Ritzville, Spokane, Vancouver, Walla Walla, Wenatchee and Yakima. Idaho: Bonners Ferry, Caldwell, McCall, Salmon, Sandpoint and Twin Falls. Oregon: La Grande, Redmond, Roseburg, Salem and The Dalles. Montana: Broadus, Great Falls and Missoula. Alaska: Delta Junction, Fairbanks and Palmer. Website: [www.WomenInAg.wsu.edu](http://www.WomenInAg.wsu.edu)

**Saturday-Sunday Nov. 18-19**  
Thanksgiving “Before & After” Weekend Festivals. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Redhawk Vineyard & Winery, 2995 Michigan City Lane NW, Salem, Ore. Join us for wine and barrel tasting, delicious food and our incredible

view. We will be serving our popular tri-tip sandwiches, Betty’s famous butternut squash soup, homemade sausage, smoked salmon pate and cheeses. Meet the winemaker, sample our current selection of wines and barrel taste a future release. All included with \$10 tasting fee. Website: [redhawkwine.com](http://redhawkwine.com)

**Friday-Sunday Nov. 24-26**  
Thanksgiving “Before & After” Weekend Festivals. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Redhawk Vineyard & Winery, 2995 Michigan City Lane NW, Salem, Ore. Join us for wine and barrel tasting, delicious food and our incredible view. We will be serving our popular tri-tip sandwiches, Betty’s famous butternut squash soup, homemade sausage, smoked salmon pate and cheeses. Meet the winemaker, sample our current selection of wines and barrel taste a future release. All included with \$10 tasting fee. Website: [redhawkwine.com](http://redhawkwine.com)

**Tuesday Nov. 28**  
Developing or Expanding Your Farm Stand or Agritourism Operation. 5-8 p.m. OSU Extension, Auditorium, SOREC, 569 Hanley Road, Central Point, Ore. Are you interested in developing or expanding a farm stand or agritourism operation? A 4-class series on the subject begins Nov. 28. Sign up for one class or all four: Nov. 28 is Understanding Regulations and Licenses for Farm

Stands and Agritourism Operations. Dec. 13 is Social Media Training for Small Farms, Jan. 10 is Accepting Food Stamps/SNAP/EBT at a Farm Stand or CSA and Feb. 6 is Starting a Farm Stand/Agritourism Operation. Website: <http://bit.ly/JacksonSmallFarms>

**Tuesday-Thursday Nov. 28-30**  
Montana Grain Growers Association Convention and Trade Show. Best Western Heritage Inn, 1700 Fox Farm Road, Great Falls, Mont. With nearly 900 in attendance, a dynamic and educational agenda, and a full trade show with over 70 exhibitors, the MGGA Convention is one of Montana’s largest agricultural gatherings. Website: [mgga@mgga.org](http://mgga@mgga.org)

**Tuesday-Friday Nov. 28-Dec. 1**  
Oregon Water Resources Congress Annual Conference. Best Western Hood River Inn, 1108 E Marina Drive, Hood River, Ore. Website: <https://owrc.org/>

**Wednesday-Friday Nov. 29-Dec. 1**  
Farm Fair Ag and Tradeshow. Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, 1705 E. Airport Road, Hermiston, Ore. The event is a partnership with the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce and the Oregon State University Hermiston Agriculture Re-

search and Extension Center. Local and regional agriculture-related businesses will display their services and products both inside and outside the center. Topics and sessions include the Oregon Bee Project, Pollinator Workshop, Pesticides, Water, Potato Production, Organic Session, Cereal Session and more. Website: [hermistonchamber.com](http://hermistonchamber.com)

**Thursday, Nov. 30**  
Four-Part Farm and Ranch Succession Workshop 6-8:30 p.m. Online or Clackamas Community College Harmony Campus, 7738 SE Harmon Road, Milwaukie, Ore. Learn from an attorney, an accountant, an appraiser, a banker, the director of Oregon State University’s Austin Family Business Program and farmers who’ve been through the process. Receive free one-on-one succession counseling sessions between each event. Part three of four parts. Cost: Free. Website: <http://bit.ly/2e1YcPx>

**Saturday, Dec. 2**  
NE Washington Haygrowers Association 2017 annual meeting. 8-30 a.m.-3 p.m. Deer Park Diesel, 4608 Wallbridge Road, Clayton, Wash. Two pesticide applicator recertification credits available. Cost: \$20-\$30

**Sunday-Wednesday Dec. 3-6**  
California Farm Bureau Annual Meeting. Hyatt Regency Orange

County, 11999 Harbor Blvd., Garden Grove. Website: <http://www.cfbf.com/am2017>

**Monday-Thursday Dec. 4-7**  
How to Raise Free-Range or Pasture Poultry. 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. University of California-Davis. Prospective, beginner or intermediate farmers interested in raising poultry flocks on pasture or free-range are invited to attend poultry workshops. The lessons will apply to both egg-laying hens and broilers. UC Agriculture and Natural Resources, the National Center for Appropriate Technology and the Farmer Veteran Coalition have partnered to provide training for military veterans who are embarking on careers in farming, but all farmers are welcome to the workshops. Each day will include 90 minutes of networking opportunities with other beginning farmers. The registration fee is \$80 and includes lunch. Website: <http://ucanr.edu/newpoultryfarmer>

**Tuesday, Dec. 5**  
Wheat U. Spokane Convention Center, 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., Spokane, Wash. Wheat U is a farmer-focused event that provides resources to make informed production decisions. Sponsored by BASF, Capital Press, High Country Journal. Website: [wheatu.com](http://wheatu.com)

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