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SMALL FARM, BIG DREAM



Dan Wheat/Capital Press

Nate Perkins with his goats for the petting zoo he offers each fall at Annie's Fun Farm. His small farm is near several housing developments, making it accessible to customers.

Close proximity to city bolsters Nate Perkins' farming aspirations as he enters his fourth season

By **DAN WHEAT**
Capital Press

EAST WENATCHEE, Wash. — It's just dirt right now, but soon Nate Perkins will be discing the ground for the start of his fourth season as a small-scale urban farmer.

It's not Seattle or Portland, but his 14 acres surrounded by new housing is about as urban a farm as you can get in this city of 13,000 people on the banks of the Columbia River.

Perkins is among thousands of aspiring farmers in the Pacific Northwest and across the nation who are thriving on small acreages by selling their crops directly to local consumers, often with a side serving of entertainment courtesy of a petting zoo, corn maze, hay ride or other family entertainment.

The USDA defines small farms as gen-

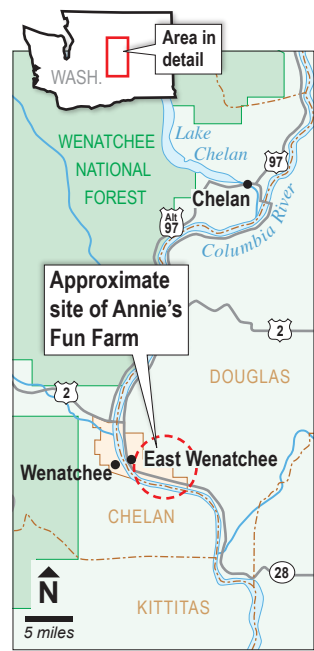
erating less than \$350,000 in annual gross receipts and on which the owner works. In Washington state, 35,269 farms — or 90 percent of the total — are defined as small.

Kellie Henwood, a regional coordinator of Washington State University's Small Farms Program, said agritourism — including the other activities besides a farm stand selling crops — is a way for small farm operators to diversify their income sources.

"More and more people are looking for opportunities to connect with their food source, either locally or in their travels," Henwood said. "Agritourism has shown that farmers are constantly innovating and adapting and without a doubt contributing to the economic development in their communities."

But what makes Perkins' small farm

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Alan Kenagal/Capital Press

"More and more people are looking for opportunities to connect with their food source, either locally or in their travels,"

Kelli Henwood | Regional coordinator of Washington State University's Small Farms Program.



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press

Wine grapes ripen at a vineyard in Oregon's Willamette Valley. The latest economic impact study of Oregon's wine industry shows impressive gains in tourism, jobs and total value.

Oregon wine industry grows in overall value, study says

Report based on 2016 figures, shows impressive gains in tourism, jobs

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
Capital Press

Oregon's wine industry has experienced explosive growth in recent years with a continued focus on higher-priced, higher-quality wines, according to the latest economic impact study from Full Glass Research.

The Oregon Wine Board and Oregon Winegrowers Association first commissioned a series of reports in 2005 to reflect

\$5.61 billion
Overall value of wine-related activity in Oregon, a 67 percent increase.

74 percent
Increase in wine jobs, from 17,099 to 29,738, with wages topping \$1 billion.

3.3 million
People visiting Oregon wineries, more than double over the course of three years, from 1.8 million people.

\$787 million
In tourism related to Oregon wine, versus \$295 million in 2013, a whopping 167 percent increase.

jobs, wages and revenue tied to wine production and distribution. The latest three-year update for 2016 was released March 19, showing gains across the board compared to 2013.

Three figures in particular tell the story. The overall value of wine-related activity in Oregon was \$5.61 billion, a 67 percent increase. That includes winery and grower revenues, wholesale and retail wine sales, and related industries such as trucking and professional services.

Wine jobs also increased 74 percent, from 17,099 to 29,738, with wages topping \$1 billion. To top it all off, the number of tourists visiting Oregon wineries more than doubled over the course of three years, from 1.8 million people to 3.3 million people.

Tourism related to Oregon wine accounted for \$787 million in spending versus \$295 million in 2013, covering hotel stays, food, entertainment and retail — a whopping 167 percent increase.

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Washington farm cleared by pesticide records, worker accounts

Records detail one probe at Sarbanand Farms

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

As Sarbanand Farms came under attack by social-justice activists last year, a Washington investigator reported that there wasn't evidence to support claims that field hands had been exposed to pesticides, according

to Department of Labor and Industries records.

The probe, launched as L&I was also investigating a worker's death, was finished in February and found no pesticide violations. L&I industrial hygienist Christopher Rossi foreshadowed that conclusion in a Sept. 26 email to a department manager.

"I'm not finding anything so far that's indicative of a violation," Rossi wrote to Christian Bannick, regional compliance manager for L&I's Division of Occupational Safety and Health.

The records, released in response to a records request by the Capital Press, provide more details on one of three simultaneous L&I investigations conducted at Sarbanand. The Whatcom County, Wash., blueberry farm near the Canadian farm is owned by California brothers Baldev and Kable Munger.

L&I launched the three probes as activists were blaming farm managers for the death of Honesto Silva Ibarra, a Mexican national who was taken away from the farm by ambulance Aug. 2 and died four days later at a hospital.

L&I absolved farm managers of Ibarra's death in one investigation. Another investigation found hundreds of workers missed one meal break and were served one meal late. The state and Whatcom County fined the farm \$149,800.

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