

People & Places

From Saudi Arabia to California

John Carlon uses Middle East experience to grow organic blueberries

By JULIA HOLLISTER
For the Capital Press

FOREST RANCH, Calif. — John Carlon grew up in Northern California and always had an interest in agriculture.

But to realize the dream of having his own farm he would first have to go to Saudi Arabia.

“I managed the college farm when I attended Chicago State, graduated from Chico State with a degree in agronomy and horticulture,” he said. He also has a master’s degree in international agriculture development.

“But I always wanted a farm of my own,” he said.

He heard of a well-paying opportunity in Saudi Arabia and decided to go for it.

He farmed 8,000 acres of wheat in the Middle East for five years.

“By this time, I had saved enough to come back to the states,” he said.

In 1989 most of the blueberries on the West Coast were grown in Oregon.

“We settled in the foothills and today we have nine acres in blueberries,” Carlon said of their location in Butte County.

Carlon and his wife, Armen, believe their operation



CUESA

John Carlon owns and manages Sierra Cascade Blueberries in Northern California. Blueberries are seasonal — from the first of June to the first week in July. The farm sells 80 percent of its blueberries to retail chains and 20 percent to farmers’ markets.

is one of only a few organic blueberry farms in the state. It was certified organic in 1993.

“Blueberries are hard to plant but easy to grow,” he said. “The soil has to be exactly right because of the acidity. We just gambled and picked some good plants.” They grow eight varieties from Michigan and New Jersey.

The farm is nearly self-sufficient.

“With the exceptions of electricity to pump water, fuel to power our tractor and trucks and containers to package the fruit, our farm has become self-sustaining,” he said on the farm’s website.

“We have replaced off-farm inputs with ecosystem services.”

For example, birds are a pest on the farm, but Cooper’s Hawks make short work of them. The hawks eat the other birds as their main food source and have saved the farm hundreds of dollars.

Blueberries are harvested from June 1 through the first week in July. The farm sells 80 percent of its blueberries to retail chains and 20 percent at farmers’ markets.

“We are grateful to have Sierra Cascade Blueberry Farm in the Ferry Plaza Farmers’ Market community

and eagerly await their return every spring,” said Brie Mazurek, communications director of CUESA — the Center for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture — which runs the farmers’ market. “The Carlons truly embody ecologically holistic farming, caring for wildlife, waterways and the land, while providing delicious organic berries for us to eat.”

Carlon also serves on CUESA’s board of directors.

He said the demand for blueberries has increased since information came out about their health benefits.

Western Innovator

John and Armen Carlon
Address: Forest Ranch, Calif.
Occupation: Owners, Sierra Cascade Blueberry Farm
Website: www.sierracascadeblueberries.com

Studies have found that they help maintain healthy bones, promote skin health, reduce blood pressure, help manage diabetes and promote heart health, among other benefits.

Carlon is also the co-founder of River Partners, an environmental nonprofit that has planted over a million native trees and restored thousands of acres of natural habitat.

He is justifiably proud of the family farm.

“With a combination of good soil, water, organic and sustainable growing practices, and careful selection of varieties that would grow in the local climate, the blueberries harvested from Sierra Cascade Farm have been consistently outstanding in quality and flavor,” he said.

Don Kruse, well-known Oregon farmer, dies at age 87

By CRAIG REED
For the Capital Press

ROSEBURG, Ore. — Don Kruse, a long-time area farmer who was instrumental in the expansion of his family’s farm to 500 acres of row crops and orchards, died May 13.

Kruse was 87.

Due to his health, he had been forced off his tractor and into retirement about 5 years ago. After a recent hospital stay, the ambulance that was giving him a ride back to his assisted living facility apartment detoured to Kruse Farms Market, Bakery & Gift Shop that is a mile west of Roseburg. He was able to look out over the crops one more time and family members said the visit “perked him up.” He died six days later of heart-related issues.

As a youth, Kruse helped his father, Bert Kruse, on the farm that was originally a 20-acre parcel purchased in 1923. After graduating from Roseburg High School and spending one term at Oregon State University in Corvallis, Kruse returned home to farm full-time. He became a partner in the business with his father and then when Bert Kruse semi-retired early in the 1970s Don Kruse became partners with his



Craig Reed/For the Capital Press

Don Kruse, a long-time farmer in the Roseburg, Ore., area, is seen at his produce stand in this file photo. His business, Kruse Farms, still grows about 60 different crops on 500 acres west of Roseburg.

own two sons, Denny and Jeff. His daughter Karen and his grandson Evan also work in the family business.

“I think you’re born with some of that ability,” Denny Kruse said of his father being a successful farmer. “He had the intuition to do things right. He wasn’t one of those people who used science to figure everything out. He used his gut reaction to respond to whatever the situation was.”

“Farming was his life and I think in his later years when

he wasn’t working anymore, he could look back and see what he had accomplished,” Denny Kruse added.

Kruse Farms originally specialized in growing about a half dozen crops for the wholesale market. Truckloads of produce were hauled to distribution warehouses throughout Oregon.

Larry Geraci, a produce salesman and manager in Portland and later in Medford, Ore., did business with Don Kruse and his farm for almost 60 years.

“Don was one of the better growers out of a lot of good growers in that area,” Geraci said. “When you would give him an order, you could depend on him to make it good. He grew quality products. When you would tell people it was Kruse corn, Kruse peaches, Kruse cantaloupes, they would know it was a quality product.”

In the mid-1980s, Kruse Farms purchased a produce stand and expanded its business to the retail market that soon added a bakery and gift shop. The farm went from growing a few crops on a large scale to about 60 crops, each on a smaller scale.

In an interview with this reporter in 2009, Don Kruse said he wouldn’t make any changes, even if he could, in his life.

“We had some bad years on the farm,” he said in that interview. “But in those tough years, we kept saying the year of the farmer was coming. It did get here. If I was going to do life over again, I wouldn’t change my life at all.”

Although busy on the farm, Don Kruse also found time for community service. He was a member and a strong advocate of the Farm Bureau. He was a member of the Roseburg School Board

for 17 years and of the state Board of Education for 10 years. He was also a member of the Douglas County Fairgrounds board, representing agriculture, for 12 years, was a board member of South Umpqua Bank, now Umpqua Bank, was a board member of the Douglas County Farmers Co-op and was a member of the Vocational Agriculture Advisory Committee for Roseburg High School. His farm made many food donations to the local food bank.

The Roseburg Area Chamber of Commerce named Kruse its 1982 First Citizen of the Year.

“When somebody would ask him to contribute, to serve on a board, he would always rise to the occasion,” Denny Kruse said of his father. “He would take time out of work to do those things. Community service was in his personality. He always wanted to help people. If there was a need, he would help.”

Family members said a celebration of life for Don Kruse has been scheduled for 1 p.m. June 21 at Redeemers Church in Roseburg.

“Don was a good one,” Geraci said. “His name and the Kruse Farms name is known throughout agriculture in the state of Oregon.”

Calendar

To submit an event go to the Community Events calendar on the home page of our website at www.capitalpress.com and click on “Submit an Event.” Calendar items can also be mailed to Capital Press, 1400 Broadway St. NE, Salem, OR 97301 or emailed to newsroom@capitalpress.com. Write “Calendar” in the subject line.

Saturday, June 2

81st Annual Marion County Lamb & Wool Show. 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Turner Elementary School, 7800 School St., Turner, Ore. The show is a day of fun with 4-H & FFA events, wool animals and market lambs. The show also includes craft vendors, an ice cream vendor, a local spinning club and plants for sale. Again this year we will start the day with the children’s classes: Most Beautiful Lamb, Young Herdsman and Young Market Lamb classes for children under the age of 10. Website: <http://marioncountylambandwoolshow.yolasite.com/>

Farm to Table Dinner and Soil Health Field Walk. 2:30-8 p.m. Springs Ranch, 51801 County Road 1, Fort Bidwell, Calif. There will be live music from Huckleber-

ry Road, a meal featuring Surprise Valley and Modoc grown products as well as regionally sourced adult beverages and a tour of Springs Ranch. All proceeds from the event will go to Modoc Harvest to improve local food access and education in Modoc County. Cost: \$75/person, kids under 12 free. Website: <https://bit.ly/2lmyUCd>

Tuesday, June 5

Pre-Harvest Cherry Tour. 7:45 a.m. Tour Dahle Farms on Cherry Heights Road and Omeg Family Farms, 3157 Knob Hill Road, near The Dalles, Ore., for presentations on rootstock selections, New Pearl series cherries, little cherry disease, cover crops for orchards and to meet WSU’s new cherry breeder, Per McCord. Website: extension.oregonstate.edu/wasco

Tuesday-Thursday June 5-7

Oregon Board of Agriculture Meeting. Best Western Hood River Inn, 1108 East Marina Way, Hood River, Ore. The board meets at 5 p.m. June 5 for board resolutions and subcommittee meetings. At 8:30 a.m. June 6, the agenda includes an update on the Oregon Department of Agriculture’s leg-

islative issues, reports on ODA’s Natural Resource and Internal Service and Consumer Protection Programs, project updates from groups receiving Specialty Crop Block Grant funding. A panel presentation on Northwest fruit moving from the grower to the marketplace will follow. The afternoon agenda includes tours of H-2A worker housing and a fruit packing operation. At 8:45 a.m. June 7, board members will receive an update on the recent trade mission to China and hear a presentation from the Cultivating Change Foundation. Website: <https://bit.ly/2cKsbhX>

Wednesday, June 6

Our Valley, Our Future Breakfast. 7:15-8:45 a.m. Emmanuel Baptist Church, 1515 College Way, Mount Vernon, Wash. Join us for our fourth annual celebration of past, present and future Skagit Valley agricultural leaders over a hearty breakfast. This year our keynote speaker will be Ciscoc Morris of King 5 TV. Awards will also be presented to honor the Skagitians that shape our industry. This event is a great way to connect with regional businesses and farmers, celebrate successes, and start the day feeling informed and inspired. Cost: Free; donations requested

Website: <http://www.skagitonians.org/events/valley-future-breakfast/>

Monday-Tuesday June 11-12

Water Law & Resource Issues Seminar. Sun Valley Resort, 1 Sun Valley Road, Sun Valley, Idaho. Brenda Burman, the Bureau of Reclamation commissioner, will provide updates on the agency including the ongoing discussions about infrastructure and title transfer. A variety of other presentations is also planned by the sponsoring Idaho Water Users Association. Website: www.iwua.org

Tuesday-Friday June 12-15

Agriculture Transportation Coalition Annual Meeting. Greater Tacoma Convention Center, 1500 Commerce St., Tacoma, Wash. The meeting will be the largest annual gathering of ag shippers sourcing and delivering to foreign markets. The agenda includes an off-the-record best practices session for members, a port tour and sessions on other topics. Website: www.ag-trans.org/events

Wednesday, June 13

Sherman County Field Day.

8:40 a.m.-noon. Sherman County Station, 66365 Lone Rock Road, Moro, Ore. Topics include wheat breeding and variety testing, weed control, disease control and agronomy. Website: <http://cbarc.aes.oregonstate.edu>

Forestry Shortcourse. 9 a.m.-noon. Sandpoint Orchard, 10881 N. Boyer Road, Sandpoint, Idaho. This is the first session of a six-session course on forest ecology, silviculture, wildlife habitat, and other forestry topics. Cost: \$38 Email: cschnepf@uidaho.edu

Saturday-Sunday June 16-17

84th Annual Glenwood “Ketchum Kalf” Rodeo. 12:30-10 p.m. The Glenwood, Wash., Rodeo Association is a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization that sponsors this rodeo. Cost: \$10 for adults, \$3 for ages 4 to 12.

Wednesday, June 20

Forestry Shortcourse. 9 a.m.-noon. Sandpoint Orchard, 10881 N. Boyer Road, Sandpoint, Idaho. This is the second session of a six-session course on forest ecology, silviculture, wildlife habitat, and other forestry topics. Cost: \$38 Email: cschnepf@uidaho.edu

Capital Press

Established 1928

Board of Directors

Mike Forrester

Steve Forrester

Kathryn Brown

Susan Rana

Harrison Forrester

Mike Omeg

Cory Bollinger

Jeff Rogers

Corporate Officers

Heidi Wright

Chief Operating Officer

Rick Hansen

Chief Financial Officer

Capital Press Managers

Joe BeachEditor & Publisher

Elizabeth Yutze Sell.... Advertising Director

Carl Sampson.....Managing Editor

Jessica Boone Production Manager

Samantha McLaren.... Circulation Manager

Entire contents copyright © 2018

EO Media Group

dba Capital Press

An independent newspaper

published every Friday.

Capital Press (ISSN 0740-3704) is published weekly by EO Media Group, 1400 Broadway St. NE, Salem, OR 97301.

Periodicals postage paid at Portland, OR, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: send address changes to Capital Press, P.O. Box 2048 Salem, OR 97308-2048.

To Reach Us

Circulation.....800-882-6789

Email.....Circulation@capitalpress.com

Main line503-364-4431

Fax503-370-4383

Advertising Fax503-364-2692

News Staff

Idaho

Carol Ryan Dumas208-860-3898

Boise

Brad Carlson208-914-8264

Cent. Washington

Dan Wheat.....509-699-9099

W. Washington

Don Jenkins.....360-722-6975

E Washington

Matthew Weaver509-688-9923

Oregon

George Plaven406-560-1655

Mateusz Perkowski800-882-6789

Graphic artist

Alan Kenaga.....800-882-6789

To Place Classified Ads

Ad fax503-364-2692

or503-370-4383

Telephone (toll free).....800-882-6789

Onlinewww.capitalpress.com/classifieds

Subscriptions

Mail rates paid in advance

Easy Pay U.S. \$3.75/month (direct withdrawal from bank or credit card account)

1 year U.S.\$49.99

2 years U.S.\$89.99

1 year Canada\$275

1 year other countries..... call for quote

1 year Internet only.....\$49.99

1 year 4-H, FFA students and teachers ...\$30

9 months 4-H, FFA students & teachers ...\$25

Visa and Mastercard accepted

To get information published

Mailing address:

Capital Press

P.O. Box 2048

Salem, OR 97308-2048

News: Contact the main office or news staff member closest to you, send the information to newsroom@capitalpress.com or mail it to “Newsroom,” c/o Capital Press. Letters should be limited to 300 words. Deadline: Noon Monday.

Letters to the Editor: Send your comments on agriculture-related public issues to opinions@capitalpress.com, or mail your letter to “Opinion,” c/o Capital Press. Letters should be limited to 300 words. Deadline: Noon Monday.

Capital Press ag media

www.capitalpress.com

www.FarmSeller.com

marketplace.capitalpress.com

www.facebook.com/capitalpress

www.facebook.com/farmseller

twitter.com/capitalpress

www.youtube.com/capitalpressvideo

Index

Fieldwork report 3

Opinion 16

Markets 13

Clarification

A page 4 story in last week’s Capital Press needs to be clarified. Norcal Nursery LLC of Anderson, Calif., is entirely unrelated to Norcal Nursery Inc. of Red Bluff, Calif., which is the defendant in a lawsuit filed by an Oregon company over supplying strawberry plants.

Correction policy

Accuracy is important to Capital Press staff and to our readers.

If you see a misstatement, omission or factual error in a headline, story or photo caption, please call the Capital Press news department at 503-364-4431, or send email to newsroom@capitalpress.com.