

# Dine Around Oregon an Expo highlight

By GEOFF PARKS  
For the Capital Press

Dine Around Oregon, the hugely successful dining event that puts the spotlight on each year's Willamette Valley Ag Expo, heads into its sixth year in 2018, remaining "just a little bit different" from other similar events.

That's the evaluation of Jill Ingalls, the event's coordinator. She calls Dine Around Oregon "a progressive dinner-type hearty buffet, Oregon-style times four. That's because there's a full meal buffet with a different theme in each of the four buildings" at the Linn County Fair & Expo Center.

"You can eat your way through all of them!" she said.

Lamb is always the highlight of the meal, she said, be-



Willamette Valley Ag Expo

Diners line up at the 2017 Dine Around Oregon event.

cause it is raised on the Reed Anderson Ranch in nearby Brownsville and prepared by Pat Manning, a Brownsville rancher. Manning picks up the meat from Anderson just before the Expo and marinates and grills it on-site.

"I just like to support the

ag industry and see all the folks really enjoying it," Manning said.

The event originated to add something special to Wednesday during the three-day Expo. Wednesday offers the longest hours of the week, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Ingalls said.



Willamette Valley Ag Expo

FFA members help at the 2017 Dine Around Oregon event at the Willamette Valley Ag Expo.

"Adding something fun and staying with our agriculture theme was the challenge," she said. "The Dine Around Oregon just fits perfectly and is very popular."

She said the value of the meal would be far above \$30 anywhere else, but Expo sponsors and partners bring the cost down to just \$12. The Oregon Cattleman's As-

sociation contributes Oregon beef products, the Oregon Dairy Women bring pounds and pounds of Oregon cheese, Stahlbush Island Farms donates produce, and preserved Oregon products are sourced from local processors.

Other Oregon products include beer, wine, cider and distilled spirits, which all incorporate Oregon agriculture products.

This year a total of 850 tickets will be available, and event producers are predicting a sellout prior to the event, Ingalls said.

"Once the sponsors have all received their allotment, the tickets will then be sold online only," she said. "If they don't sell out they may be available at the door."

"But don't count on getting one at the door," she added. The event is that popular.

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