

# Farm app creators cope with virus closures

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**  
Capital Press

The creators of the local food-oriented smart phone app Share.Farm say they’ve taken a “good hit” in the midst of coronavirus-related business closures but hope to attract more individual customers who want to purchase food from farmers.

The app currently helps customers order food online and have it delivered to their business. The food comes from local farms and ranches and wholesale distributors of organic and natural foods. It is delivered the next morning.

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee recently issued a “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” order closing all businesses except those considered essential.

“It’s pretty substantial,” app co-founder Vincent Peak said of the closure’s impact. “Our main focus was in-house corporate dining, and bringing farmers on to deliver direct to cafeterias. That’s entirely closed down, and that was the main revenue driver of our business.”

The company is now reduced to home food delivery, but that, too, has become limited, Peak said.



**The Share.Farm website. The company has seen corporate traffic drop after coronavirus-related closures but is hoping to attract individual customers.**

The app typically attracts 50 to 75 users each day.

Peak said he is working with developers to update the app. Customers are able to use the mobile app to arrange to purchase food directly from local farmers.

Peak expects more traffic on the app as customers seek to purchase more local products.

**ONLINE**  
<https://share.farm/>

“Utilizing something like the app, or just going out to the local farms, contacting them, getting your food from the local community — that’s a recession-proof model,” he said. “The food exists, you can always access your local economy.”

Farmers will also sign up to have their contact information included in the app, Peak said. About 500 farms across the nation are using the app, with 20 to 30 in the

Spokane area.

He said he’s seen an increase in users searching for local beef and organic products. That helps Peak provide feedback to farmers about what customers want, he said.

It also helps identify new farms to bring on board, he said.

The company has low overhead, Peak said. Much of the work consists of being online, he noted.

“Regardless of what happens, the business will survive,” he said. “It will just be an uphill battle getting things back to where they were.”

# Wineries offer virtual tastings amid coronavirus shutdown

By **ERIC RISBERG**  
Associated Press

SONOMA, Calif. (AP) — In stark contrast to the normal hustle and bustle of tourists and enophiles, the grounds sit empty at California’s oldest commercial winery — the historic Buena Vista.

Tasting rooms statewide shut down last month after the governor ordered businesses to close to slow the spread of the new coronavirus. So Buena Vista and other wineries that want to stay viable and connected to their customers

during the pandemic are harnessing technology and platforms such as Facebook Live to offer virtual wine experiences.

Actor George Webber, dressed in period clothing as “The Count” Agoston Haraszthy — the founder of Buena Vista in 1857 — takes online viewers back in time, broadcasting several days a week inside the oldest wine cave dug in the state and offering a “virtual tasting.”

“While it’s certainly an interesting phenomenon — a different world now without throngs of people visiting our tasting room — this



Capital Press File

**Wineries are offering virtual tours online while traditional wine-tasting events have been put on hold by virus shutdowns.**

is a remarkable opportunity to present the wines, the history behind the wines, the flavors and aromas

of each wine in a format that provides plenty of time to talk about the wines and share my perceptions with people around the world who can comment live,” Webber said. “It is a fun and unique way to keep commerce going in these difficult times.”

Among the many other wineries doing online experiences are Clos du Val, Far Niente, Groth, St. Supery, Kendall-Jackson, Quintessa, Plumpjack, Wente and Bouchaine Vineyards.

At Bouchaine, a premier producer of estate Chardonnay and

Pinot noir in Napa’s Carneros region, a virtual online experience that had been in the planning for months was launched in mid-March at a crucial time. Those who want to take part in the tasting program order a winemaker tasting kit, which is delivered to their home. Bouchaine’s host leads the virtual tasting with a view of scenic rolling vineyards in the background.

Taking part in one of the first hour-long wine tastings last month were Don and Mardel Overly, who were self-quarantined in their home near Reno, Nevada.

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