



Sierra Dawn McClain/Capital Press

Jeff Wong, owner of CS Fishery in Garibaldi, Ore., stops to rest on his small fishing boat.

COMEBACK TRAIL

How a farm-to-table restaurant network is recovering from COVID-19

By SIERRA DAWN MCCLAIN
Capital Press

GARIBALDI, Ore. — On a sleepy June morning in Garibaldi, a fishing village on Tillamook Bay, fisherman Jeff Wong was preparing to take his small boat on the water.

“Hey, Grasshopper! Hi, Jimmy!” he called, waving to crabbers.

He swapped local gossip and talk about sea conditions as he readied the boat. Seagulls screeched. Sunlight glittered on blue-green water. The air smelled of fish and brine.

Wong, owner of CS Fishery, appeared calm. But he, along with other producers — dairy farmers, growers and ranchers — had been hit hard by COVID-19’s impact on the restaurant industry.

Pre-pandemic, Wong said he supplied 25 restaurants with seafood. Now, he supplies three.

According to the National Restaurant Association, March through May, the sector lost 8 million jobs. The association predicts that nationwide, the industry will lose \$240 billion in sales by the end



Sierra Dawn McClain/Capital Press

Seafood stew, made primarily from locally sourced seafood and vegetables, at the Schooner Restaurant & Lounge in Netarts, Ore.

of 2020: \$7,609 per second. At least 3% of U.S. restaurants have closed permanently.

“It feels like every other day we hear a restaurant we knew and loved is closing,” said Laura Morgan, owner of The Big Foody, an Oregon-based food tourism company.

But as Oregon reopens, data show restaurant visits are increasing.

Experts say the industry may never again look the same. But along Oregon’s north coast, producers and restaurant owners say they hope a program that boosted their sales before the pandemic will help them get back on their feet: an initiative called the North Coast Food Trail.

Beating a trail

A “food trail” is a route intended to promote food-related recreational travel. The idea is to get restaurants to buy from local producers and then use that as a draw for tourists to enjoy the bounty.

The North Coast Food Trail was pioneered in 2018 by Nan Devlin, executive director of the tourism organization Visit Tillamook Coast.

The self-guided “trail” is promoted through maps, brochures and website campaigns.

“When urbanites look at the maps, they see all these dots. For every little dot on the map, there’s this whole story,” said Wong, the fisherman.

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Ag groups to Trump: Stay the course on phase one China deal

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

U.S. farm groups have sent President Donald J. Trump a letter supporting his administration’s continued work on the first phase of its trade deal with China.

The June 16 letter was signed by 192 groups representing “all parts of the food chain and rural economics,” including the American Farm Bureau Federation, National Association of Wheat

Growers, U.S. Wheat Associates and the Washington Potato Commission.

“The focus of what’s being asked is to stay the course,” said Matt Harris, director of government affairs for the potato commission.

Under Trump and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer’s leadership, the letter states, the Phase One Trade Agreement represents “historic outcomes” to address technical bar-

riers to trade and commits China to “significant” purchases of U.S. agricultural products.

The trade deal will be assessed at the end of the year to determine whether targets were met, said Dave Salmons, senior director of congressional relations at the Farm Bureau.

“We want to make sure they are staying in touch with their counterparts in

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President Donald J. Trump and Xi Jinping, president of the People’s Republic of China, June 29, 2019, at the G20 Japan Summit in Osaka, Japan. U.S. farm groups are urging Trump to follow through on phase one of the trade deal in which China promised to buy \$80 billion in U.S. agricultural products over two years.

White House

Klamath takings case won’t be heard by U.S. Supreme Court

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

A lawsuit filed by Klamath Basin farmers seeking compensation for a federal irrigation shutdown won’t be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court, ending nearly two decades of litigation.

To protect endangered sucker fish, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation stopped water deliveries to irrigators in the Klamath Project along the Oregon-California border in 2001, prompting the farmers to accuse the federal government of taking their water rights without just compensation.

Contractual and jurisdictional matters took decades to unwind in federal court, along with a detour to the Oregon Supreme Court to answer questions about state water law.



U.S. Supreme Court

The U.S. Supreme Court has decided against reviewing a lawsuit filed by irrigators who claimed the federal government took their water rights without just compensation during a 2001 shutdown.

Last year, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit ultimately dismissed the lawsuit because the water rights held by several tribes were senior to

those of the farmers, justifying the federal government’s irrigation curtailment.

On June 22, the nation’s highest court denied a petition by affected

irrigators to review the appellate court’s ruling, letting that dismissal decision stand.

The irrigators had urged the Supreme Court to take the case, arguing the earlier ruling would “upend a century of western water law” because the appeals court concluded the tribes had senior water rights even though that hadn’t been adjudicated in state court as required.

“The Federal Circuit’s decision upsets the security, flexibility, and finality provided by western state general stream adjudications, and threatens to wreak havoc in the future,” the irrigators’ petition said.

In its opinion, the Federal Circuit determined the Bureau of Reclamation could legitimately halt water deliveries to comply with

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