

Success blossoms on organic farm

By JULIA HOLLISTER
For the Capital Press

AROMAS, Calif. — In the late 1980s, when Jill Kayne and her mother, Nancy Gammons, first brought their bouquets to sell at farmers markets, people laughed at the idea of organic flowers.

Today, more and more people understand organic farming and seek out flowers and other crops grown with organic practices.

“My parents were pioneers in the organic food movement back in the late seventies,” Jill said. “They also felt that a healthy environment was crucial to the health of people.”

Jill Kayne and her three sisters — Lucy, Dusty and Prema — grew up on the 5 acres near Aromas, Calif., that their parents, Robin and Nancy Gammons, bought in 1977. The farm was certified organic by California Certified Organic Farmers in 1988. “As my sisters and I grew we worked on our farm. I started picking kiwi, our first crop, at the age of six. This was my introduction to the seasonal aspect of farming,” Jill said. “Because our farm is so small, growing diversity is key for marketing.”

In addition to the 100 varieties of flowering plants, they produce volunteer greens to sell at farmers markets. The greens — stinging nettles, miner’s lettuce and purslane



Jill Kayne of Four Sisters Farm in Aromas, Calif., with an organic wreath and flowers.

— are high in nutrients. They are eaten all over the world and a staple in the diets of many cultures.

The farm also grows apples, avocados, beets, herbs and kiwi and sells them at farmers markets in Santa Cruz, Berkeley and San Francisco at the Ferry Terminal Market.

Kayne sells both flowers and wreaths made with fragrant bay and lavender and other plants.

“The farm has really evolved over the years to

embody their commitment to their land, soil, and the natural beauty of their location in Aromas,” said Lulu Meyer, CUESA director of operations. “Their small acreage gives the farm the feel of a beautiful meandering garden and their commitment to selling only locally means you can really only experience their product offerings at farmers markets or local restaurants.”

CUESA — Center for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture — oper-

ates the Ferry Terminal Market.

Kayne says her farm has been impacted indirectly by the decline of restaurants during the COVID-19 outbreak. At least 50% of the business at CUESA’s Ferry Plaza Farmers Market was restaurants. That dropped to less than 20%.

However, many customers want natural beauty in their homes during this time of year so their flower business has picked up.

Jill said she is more con-



Western Innovator

JILL KAYNE

Education: Bachelor of arts in psychology, Naropa University in Boulder, Colo.

Occupation: Organic farmer, Four Sisters Farm

Hometown: Aromas, Calif.

Family: Husband Josh, three daughters, parents Robin and Nancy Gammons, and three sisters, Lucy, Dusty and Prema (they are no longer active in operating the farm)

cerned about climate change, which she considers to be the biggest challenge.

“When we began farming in the late seventies it was unusual to have a day over 100 degrees,” she said. “This we year have had more than 15 days over 100 degrees. We are moving toward crops that can adapt to this but it is a challenge. We will continue to do our little part for our planet as we believe small family farms are going to be what sustains our future in food.”

California researchers work on high-fiber wheat

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

Researchers at the University of California-Davis are developing varieties of wheat with more dietary fiber in an effort to reduce health concerns such as colon cancer and heart disease.

Americans consume only 30% of the recommended daily amount of fiber, according to the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research. “By developing wholesome food with more fiber, and the same great taste, we can lower the incidence of preventable, diet-related diseases,” FFAR executive director Sally Rocky said.

The foundation awarded nearly \$480,000 to the UC-Davis project, led by wheat breeder Jorge Dubcovsky. The California Wheat Commission, Limagrain Cereal Seeds and Bay State Milling provided matching funds.

The industry primarily produces enriched wheat flour, while whole wheat flour gets a lot of “positive press” for its higher level of fiber, said said Tim O’Connor, president of the Wheat Foods Council.

The USDA says 4.9 million hundredweight of whole wheat was produced from July to September, roughly 5% of the total wheat production.

“The assumption that is often made that it is far superior in terms of health and nutrition isn’t quite accurate — it has more fiber,” O’Connor said. “It’s also not fortified the same way that enriched wheat products are.”

Enriching wheat has been one of the most successful public health initiatives in the world, he said. Adding folic acid has reduced the number of birth defects around the world, he said.

“If you can do that and up the fiber, that’s even more of a win-win,” O’Connor said.

Whole wheat has several challenges, including price, taste and texture preferences, particularly for children, O’Connor said.



Researchers at the University of California-Davis are developing varieties of wheat with more dietary fiber.

“Children aren’t easy to convert to whole wheat,” he said, adding that it performs differently in baking.

O’Connor said the UC-Davis program could make enriched wheat flour with more fiber without changing milling or baking characteristics.

Having higher-fiber enriched wheat would be the “sweet spot” for many consumers, he said.

Dubcovsky’s team is using modified starch synthesis enzymes to increase dietary fiber in wheat. Using genetic tools and molecular markers, they are identifying genes responsible for wheat yield, quality and fiber content.

They then test combinations of wheat genetics, environmental conditions and growing practices to cre-

ate high-yield and high-fiber crops.

“The enzymes synthesizing the two types of starch — amylose and amylopectin — were known for a long time,” Dubcovsky told the Capital Press. “Now we have the tools to modify them.”

The researchers get more fiber in wheat by increasing the amount of “resistant starch,” which acts like dietary fiber and is not digested in the small intestine, he said.

Most refined flour is starch, so the trick is to “hide” the fiber in the starch, Dubcovsky said in an FFAR press release. “We are now combining modern and traditional breeding methods to improve the grain yield of the high-resistant-starch varieties to make this healthy product more affordable to consumers.”

Varieties with more fiber content are already available, Dubcovsky said. They include hard red spring bread wheat UC-Lassik-RS, hard white spring bread wheat UC-Patwin-RS and UC Desert King-RS. The “RS” stands for high resistant starch, Dubcovsky said.

“These varieties have 900% to 1,000% more resistant starch than the same varieties without the modified starch synthesis enzymes,” he said.

The varieties are non-GMO. The three varieties are adapted to California and can be grown in other Mediterranean climates.

Limagrain has other resistant starch varieties, but Dubcovsky’s program is focused on California, he said.

CALENDAR

Submit upcoming ag-related events on www.capitalpress.com or by email to newsroom@capitalpress.com.

**TUESDAY-FRIDAY
DEC. 15-18**
Idaho Ag Outlook Seminar (virtual): 9-10:30 a.m. each day. University of Idaho Extension will host online seminars each day. Presentations will cover outlooks for economies, input costs, weather, water and various agricultural commodities. Phone: 208-847-0344. Email: beborn@uidaho.edu

**SUNDAY-WEDNESDAY
JAN. 10-13**
American Farm Bureau Annual Convention (virtual): The

convention will focus on top issues including the impact of COVID-19, sustainability and the future of the supply chain. Website: <https://www.fb.org>

**TUESDAY-WEDNESDAY
JAN. 19-20**
Dairy Strong Annual Conference (virtual): The annual conference is organized by the Dairy Business Association. More details to come. Website: <https://www.dairystrong.org>

**WEDNESDAY-SATURDAY
JAN. 20-23**
41st EcoFarm Conference (virtual): Save the date for the 41st EcoFarm Conference Jan. 20-23.

Building upon its farmer-to-farmer education model, EcoFarm is an essential networking and educational hub for ecologically minded farmers, ranchers and all who work to support their success in growing a healthy food system and world. Mark your calendars for Jan. 20-23 and get ready for an EcoFarm Conference unlike any before as we will convene online for our 41st event. Phone: 831-763-2111 Email: info@eco-farm.org Website: <https://eco-farm.org/conference>

**MONDAY-THURSDAY
JAN. 25-28**
Dairy Forum 2021 (virtual): Presentations will focus on leadership, technology, global trade, sustainability, product innovations and navigating the political landscape.

Website: <https://www.idfa.org>
**MONDAY-FRIDAY
FEB. 1-5**
Spokane Ag Show (virtual): Currently, we are finalizing the latest technology in virtual conferences and trade shows and expect recording breaking attendance at our virtual show in 2021. Website: <https://www.agshow.org/>

**TUESDAY-THURSDAY
FEB. 9-11**
World Ag Expo (virtual): The World Ag Expo in Tulare, Calif., is moving online this year. It will kick off February 9-11, the original show dates. Live events and seminars will be scheduled 9 a.m.-4 p.m. PST each day, but content will be available on-demand at no charge to

attendees around the clock. For more information, go to <https://www.worldagexpo.com/>

**TUESDAY-THURSDAY
FEB. 16-18**
Northwest Agricultural Show (virtual): The 51st edition of the Northwest Ag Show will be a free digital event featuring a daily lineup of presentations, virtual exhibitor booths and more. The event features equipment demos, networking opportunities and a schedule of educational programming. Attendees have the opportunity to live-chat and direct message with representatives from participating companies and take advantage of show specials. For more information, go to <https://northwestagshow.com/>



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CLARIFICATION

National Association of Wheat Growers CEO Chandler Goule clarified his comments regarding the Trans-Pacific Partnership in the Dec. 4 story, “NAWG leader: Biden, Congress have full plate of ag issues,” on page 4. Withdrawal from the TPP did not mean markets were lost, as Goule originally said, but did hinder the potential to access new markets.

“After re-examining the trade numbers in Asia, all the TPP and non-TPP countries have increased their purchases of U.S. wheat over the last 4 years,” Goule said. “We haven’t lost markets.”

Correction policy

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

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We want to publish corrections to set the record straight.