

People & Places

Startup business supports local ag

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

TWIN FALLS, Idaho — Local meat and potato producers and processors are the foundation of a new, first-of-its-kind business in south-central Idaho that delivers local, high-quality beef, pork, chicken and potatoes to customers’ doorsteps. The Meat and Potato Company began operations in November and is already seeing high demand for its restaurant-grade products. The business is the brainchild of Travis Dixon, who spent 25 years in foodservice sales. “Our purpose is to give our customers the experience and flavor of a steakhouse delivered right to their door,” he said. A little more than eight years ago, Dixon started thinking about a home-delivery service that could provide local, high-quality products directly to consumers. “I always thought there was going to be a need for something like this,” he said. He started looking into website domain names and purchased meatandpotato.com. “I was hoping to do something in the future, figuring people would be buying things online,” he said. He also started thinking about partnerships with local ranchers, producers and processors. But with a busy family life and his



Carol Ryan Dumas/Capital Press

Travis Dixon, owner of the Meat and Potato Company, with some of the products he offers for home delivery.

job as a district sales manager for a full-line foodservice distributor it was easy to lose focus. Growing requests from friends and acquaintances wanting restaurant-type products they couldn’t get at retail stores got him back on track. They were looking for things like aged products for steakhouses, higher-end products like giant potatoes and colossal shrimp — products that allow restaurants to

provide a good eating experience, he said. His business can deliver on those items, as well as high-quality, affordable items people can get in grocery stores. “We’re trying to hit a couple of niches,” he said. The business also delivers on consumers’ growing desire for local foods from a locally owned business that keeps money in the local economy, he said. The company’s aged beef

Western Innovator

TRAVIS DIXON

Owner: Meat and Potato Company
Age: 44
Location: Twin Falls, Idaho
Background: 25 years in foodservice sales
Affiliations: Approved by the Idaho Potato Commission, working toward a local supplier listing with the Idaho Beef Council
Education: Studied business at College of Southern Idaho
Family: Wife, Jamie; son, Teylor, 18; daughter Alyx, 20
Online: For more information, visit: meatandpotato.com



comes from cattle raised at Five Rivers feedlot in Malta, Idaho, southwest of Burley. All of the cattle are from the Northwest, and 63% are from Idaho. All of the feed for the cattle is grown in the Mini-Cassia area. The company’s jumbo russet potatoes and unique blend of rainbow fingerling potatoes, sought after by top chefs, are grown in the Magic Valley and Mini-Cassia areas. Dixon has also partnered with Independent Meat of Twin Falls to provide a wide variety of quality pork products, and he sources his hormone-free, antibiotic-free chicken from Draper Valley Farms in Oregon and Washington. He wants product that is “the closest I can get it and the best I can find,” he said. The business sources product from more than 300 family farms in Idaho and the

Pacific Northwest. In addition to local meat and potatoes, the company provides lobster tails and jumbo and colossal shrimp. The company offers free local delivery and is currently shipping to 38 states, sending out a couple of hundred boxes a month. “I have orders going out all over the place,” he said. Another plus for environmentally minded customers is that all the company’s packaging is recyclable or biodegradable. Dixon currently operates out of another company’s commercial facility but is planning to open his own retail store later this year and expand his offerings to other local vegetables, fruit and dairy products. He is also pursuing local bison and lamb to add to his offerings. “I’m just itching for a retail location to sell that kind of stuff,” he said.

Oregon maltster wins international contest

By JAYSON JACOBY
EO Media Group

BAKER CITY, Ore. — Behind the glass of beer, with its photogenic bubbles and foamy white head, are Tom Hutchison and his bags of Eastern Oregon barley. Hutchison’s place in the brewing business isn’t the most prominent. Yet aside from the typical odes to pure spring water and to hops, the dried flowers that infuse beer with its mouth-puckering bitter bite, the building blocks for a pint of ale or lager are stacked in Hutchison’s building near the railroad tracks just off Broadway Street in Baker City. And when it comes to



Jayson Jacoby/EO Media Group

Tom Hutchison, who owns Gold Rush Malt in Baker City, Ore., checks the steel drum where barley is dried.

malting barley, a key ingredient in beer as well as many distilled spirits such as whiskey and vodka, Hutchison occupies a lofty place among his peers. Hutchison, who started Gold Rush Malt in 2016, swept three awards at the

annual Craft Malt Conference put on by the Craft Maltsters Guild Feb. 10-12. Hutchison won gold medals for both his pilsner and pale malts during the online awards ceremony that took place Feb. 12. He’ll also be caretaker

of the traveling Malt Cup Trophy for the next year as recipient of the best of show award. Hutchison said he knew he had won at least one award. Officials from the Guild told him that in advance to ensure he would be watching the awards ceremony, which, like the rest of the annual conference, took place remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. But when he heard his name called not once but three times, he was, he admits, “just stunned.” “It was way more than I expected,” Hutchison said on Feb. 16. “It’s the first time I’ve entered.” He was the first maltster to win two gold medals in a sin-

gle competition, according to the Craft Maltsters Guild. Hutchison competed against 27 other maltsters from seven countries, 17 states and one Canadian province. Each of the 46 samples of malted barley was evaluated in multiple ways. Researchers at Montana State University’s Barley, Malt & Brewing Quality Lab tested each sample. Then, judges at 17 sites around the U.S. and Canada compared the entries’ aroma and flavor, including nibbling on the kernels. Finally, in the last round, additional judges reviewed the lab results and the other judges’ findings to pick the winners.

Cooperative supports farming for people of color

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

A Washington nonprofit is forming a cooperative for Black, Indigenous and other farmers of color. “You have to start from ground zero, building a farming community of people of color,” said Mercy Kariuki-McGee, founder of the Haki Farmers Collective in Olympia. Nearly 49,000 farmers in the U.S. identified as Black in the 2017 Census of Agriculture, a 5% increase from 46,582 in 2012. They represent 1.4% of all farmers. The collective is named “Haki,” which means “justice” in Swahili, a widely spoken language in Africa. The Haki collective wants to enhance farming traditions and develop a new generation of farmers of color. “That knowledge does exist, and farmers are going back to that,” she said, pointing to organic and regenerative agriculture methods. Kariuki-McGee and her daughter, Elisa McGee, started the organi-

zation in 2020 as part of the protests over George Floyd’s death in May 2020. Kariuki-McGee and her family have been involved in helping the city of Olympia develop public safety and community outreach procedures. Kariuki-McGee was struck by the presence of a garden and free kitchen in the middle of protests in Seattle, used as a “healing” space filled with messages of hope and unity. She wanted to develop a similar garden in the Olympia-Tacoma area. The Haki collective will use part of a community garden donated by the nonprofit organization Garden-Raised Bounty, or GRuB. The collective is also receiving a larger piece of farmland from the South Sound Community Farmland Trust to develop a BIPOC — for Black, Indigenous and People of Color — Farm.

WSU, Black farmer collective look to raise ‘culturally relevant’ crops

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

A new collective for Black farmers and Washington State University are working to grow crops originally raised by Black, Asian and South American immigrants in their home countries. A \$40,000 WSU BioAg grant will allow the study of “culturally relevant” staple crop economies within Black, Indigenous and People of Color farmer and consumer groups, said Aba Kiser, project manager for WSU Food Systems. That includes grains, greens and roots, said Mercy Kariuki-McGee, founder of the nonprofit Haki Farmers Collective in Olympia. Crops include sorghum, millet, cassava, yams and medicinal plants. “(They) are very, very healthy for you and the ones that people are craving for,” Kariuki-McGee said. Kariuki-McGee also points to use of

the entire crop, such as eating pumpkin or bean leaves. “Everything that comes out of the garden is actually used. It doesn’t go to waste,” she said. Kariuki-McGee will be project coordinator. Her organization is called the Haki Farmers Collective. “It’s an important piece of removing systematic racism when you can make food available to those who need it most, and it’s a way to close the gap of food sovereignty,” she said. “It’s very hard for the immigrants, who usually end up being the most marginalized, to have access to food that is healthy, affordable and easy to grow.” Indigenous communities used the crops for a long time, but the “shifting landscape of migration” changed the way people eat and take care of their bodies. “In America, you shift the way you eat when you get here, and you try to adapt as much as possible, but the diet is not always what is good for you,” she said. “Trying to introduce those traditional foods can be very beneficial dollar-wise and health-wise.”



https://hakifarmers.org/

CALENDAR

TUESDAY, MARCH 9
Intentional Adulteration-Food Defense (online): 8 a.m.-noon. This Food Defense Course will help you mitigate the risks and hazards of intentional contamination in food operations by protecting vulnerable elements in the agrifood chain and food production operations. We will explore Food Defense Plans to help you build barriers around vulnerable points to prohibit intentional adulteration. The course fee is \$495/each individual. Janna Ham-

lett, 208-731-9363, jannahamlett@techhelp.org

TUESDAY MARCH 30
Practical Sensory Programs for Factories and Quality Managers (online): 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. The Practical Sensory Program course is designed around a learn-and-apply model. Each participant will get a kit to have hands-on activities to reinforce the concepts learned. He or she will walk away with practical skills that can be applied immediately. The course fee

is \$285/each individual. Contact: Catherine Cantley, 208-426-2181, catherinecantley@techhelp.org

FRIDAY APRIL 16
AgForestry Leadership Class 41 Graduation: 5 p.m. Red Lion Hotel, Wenatchee, Wash. Celebrate the graduation of AgForestry Leadership Class 41. This celebration was rescheduled from its origination April 10 date. Table sponsorships are available. Cost: \$60/adults, \$20/child. Website: http://agforestry.org/graduation-class-41/

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

THURSDAY MARCH 4
Applied Corrective & Preventive Action (online): 1-5 p.m. This course will be interactive and hands-on. Using exercises, actual scenarios, and group discussions, you will learn and use several tools. You will be ready to put your knowledge to work in your facility. We will explore common

root cause analysis tools, including 5 whys, Failure Mode Effect Analysis, Fishbone diagram, cause & effect tools, and relationship diagrams. You will receive training and templates to use and modify as needed to create and maintain an effective corrective and preventative action program in your facility. Corrective actions are not just for food safety issues but all aspects of a food manufacturing facility. Janna Hamlett, 208-731-9363, jannahamlett@techhelp.org



Capital Press
EMPOWERING PRODUCERS OF FOOD & FIBER
Established 1928

Capital Press Managers

Joe Beach Editor & Publisher
Anne Long Advertising Manager
Carl Sampson Managing Editor
Jessica Boone Production Manager
Samantha McLaren Circulation Manager

Entire contents copyright © 2021
EO Media Group
dba Capital Press

An independent newspaper
published every Friday.

Capital Press (ISSN 0740-3704) is
published weekly by EO Media Group,
2870 Broadway NE, Salem OR 97303.

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 800-781-3214
Email Circulation@capitalpress.com
Main line 503-364-4431

News Staff

Idaho
Carol Ryan Dumas 208-860-3898

Boise
Brad Carlson 208-914-8264

Western Washington
Don Jenkins 360-722-6975

Eastern Washington
Matthew Weaver 509-688-9923

Oregon
George Plaven 406-560-1655
Mateusz Perkowski 800-882-6789
Sierra Dawn McClain 503-506-8011
Designer
Randy Wriighthouse 800-882-6789

To Place Classified Ads

Telephone (toll free) 800-882-6789
Online CapitalPress.com/classifieds

Subscriptions

Mail rates paid in advance
Easy Pay U.S. \$4/month
(direct withdrawal from bank
or credit card account)
1 year U.S. \$55
2 years U.S. \$100
1 year Canada \$275
1 year other countries call for quote
1 year Internet only \$49.99
1 year 4-H, FFA students/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.
Include a contact telephone number.

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

CapitalPress.com
FarmSeller.com
MarketPlace.capitalpress.com
facebook.com/CapitalPress
facebook.com/FarmSeller
twitter.com/CapitalPress
youtube.com/CapitalPressvideo

Index

Markets 10
Opinion 6



E.J. Harris/EO Media Group File
The former Lost Valley
Farm outside Board-
man, Ore., now Easter-
day Dairy.

CORRECTION

A cutline accompanying a
photograph published on
the front page of the Feb. 19
edition with a story about
the Easterday Dairy incorrec-
tly stated that the farm would
soon be auctioned.

The file photo has been used
many times, and the cutline
originally was published with
a story about the farm, then
known as Lost Valley Farm,
when it was to be sold in the
former owner’s bankruptcy.
The Capital Press regrets the
error.