

Fifth-generation farm thrives on seed operation

By **GEOFF PARKS**
For the Capital Press

SILVERTON, Ore. — Change has been a constant companion to the work of five generations of the Loe family's diversified farm in the Evans Valley area northeast of Silverton.

Fifth-generation Angela (Loe) Rose started the Silver Falls Seed Co., in 1999 to market the Triangle Farm's seed production directly to retailers and consumers.

"I started Silver Falls Seed Company in 1999 with just me doing this and mom and dad (Kevin and Lori Loe) helping out a little bit," she said. She explained that her seed company is separate from Triangle Farms, which is operated by her parents and brother, Travis.

The Loe family traces back to Norwegian immigrant Ole Loe, who originally settled in Minnesota before moving to Oregon in 1902. He purchased acreage for raising hops until the 1920s when he switched to grain, hay, berries and other crops.

Ole Loe's son, Oscar, took over the farm in the 1920s and began producing an eclectic mix of nursery stock, turkeys, chickens and custom harvesting before deciding to get into



Silver Falls Seed Co.

ABOVE: Some of the colorful fields that grow Silver Falls Seed Co.'s seeds. **LEFT:** Angela Rose of the Silver Falls Seed Co. checks a small sampling of the hundreds of varieties of seeds grown on her family's Triangle Farms. Photo by Geoff Parks



the grass seed industry.

The next generation of Loes moved the farm into cattle and horses as well as the seed business until Kevin took over in the 1980s. In 1999, Triangle Farms began native seed collections and propaga-

tion of their own domestic seeds.

Today, Triangle Farms does contract production, seed cleaning and grows and markets Christmas trees and Douglas fir timber. The business also produces meat goats and beef cattle.

The company Rose originally started — Oregon Wholesale Seed Co. — was established in 1999. The concurrently created Silver Falls Seed Co., sells pre-packaged

seed directly to consumers and retailers.

"Different sizes of seed packets up to one pound of our seed is sold at the Oregon Gardens and Silver Falls State Park," Rose said, "but is now sold mainly online through our website."

The company markets Northwest native seed, individual flower, cereal grain and grass seed species; forage and pasture mixes; flower and grass seed mixes and blends; ground cover species and custom seed packets contain-

ing one or more of the 200 or so species produced over the years.

"We're set up to clean flower and vegetable seed, grasses and specialty seeds here," she said, noting that Triangle's own wildflowers, native grasses, turf and forage grasses form the bulk of the Silver Falls company's output. She markets the Silver Falls-labeled seed as well as custom-labeled seed in smaller quantities than most companies offer.

"Most everything that I

sell is grown right here on this farm, though I do buy outside a little bit for our forage mixes," she said.

"It's a lot of work; it's not something you can just pick up and do," she said of her company.

All seed packets are hand-filled on site at the sprawling warehouse and dryer complex that makes up the Triangle-Silver Falls businesses. Rose and one employee handle the flow of online and telephone orders, while a contract crew does the packaging.

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