



Sierra Dawn McClain/Capital Press  
**Julie Wuesthoff, who has worked at Central Market for 15 years, puts a sign beneath the Dharma Ridge spinach to signify that it was grown locally in the Pacific Northwest.**



**EDITOR'S NOTE**  
In this two-part series, the Capital Press follows food from farm to retail store. This week's story follows fresh fruits and vegetables. Next week's story will follow the separate supply chain for groceries and other value-added products.

# THE SECRET LIFE OF SPINACH

## Following a pallet of produce from field to retail store



**Zach Wailand, co-owner of Dharma Ridge Organic Farm in Quilcene, Wash.**

By **SIERRA DAWN McCLAIN**  
Capital Press

**P** OULSBO, Wash. — Around 7 a.m. in the Central Market grocery store on the Friday before Memorial Day, a shopper pulled a bunch of spinach from a shelf, stuffed it in a bag and dropped it into her cart.

The sequence took seconds. But the story behind this bunch of spinach and how it got there is far from simple.

The produce supply chain is an ensemble of parts and people working in concert to bring food to consumers' tables. The size of the 2021 U.S. fruit and vegetable market, measured by revenue, is \$5.3 billion, according to market research firm IBISWorld. To take a snapshot of this system, the Capital Press followed a precise bunch of spinach from the farm

where it was grown to the retail store.

Following a lowly spinach bunch, in Lot No. 8525, opened a window into this complex system.

### DAY ONE Wednesday, May 27

*Dharma Ridge Organic Farm  
Quilcene, Wash.  
8 a.m.*

The spinach trail began in Quilcene, Wash., on the Olympic Peninsula. Here lies Dharma Ridge Organic Farm, a strip of land hemmed in by evergreen trees.

Zach Wailand and his wife, Haley Olson-Wailand, started this farm in 2003. They began by selling to farmers markets.



Sierra Dawn McClain/Capital Press  
**The view from inside the truck as Zach Wailand loads a pallet.**

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## FERC approves license transfer of Klamath River dams slated for removal

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**  
Capital Press

**KLAMATH FALLS, Ore.** — The largest dam removal project in U.S. history is one step closer to becoming reality.

Federal energy regulators have approved the transfer of operating licenses for four hydroelectric dams along the Klamath River in Southern Oregon and Northern California, handing ownership

from PacifiCorp to the nonprofit Klamath River Renewal Corp.

The KRRC plans to demolish the dams to help endangered salmon, opening approximately 400 miles of upstream habitat.

"We view this as a big win for every stakeholder in the basin," said KRRC spokesman Dave Meurer. "That includes the farm and ranch community."

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission issued the order June

17 for J.C. Boyle, Copco 1, Copco 2 and Iron Gate dams, marking a key milestone in the effort to revive dwindling salmon runs in the Klamath Basin.

Removal of the fish-blocking dams is currently slated to begin in 2023, with a project budget of \$450 million — including \$200 million from PacifiCorp ratepayers, and \$250 million earmarked from California Proposition 1, a \$7.5 billion statewide water bond

that passed in 2014.

Jim Root, president of the KRRC Board of Directors, said the FERC decision is a "crucial and significant step forward" in restoring a free-flowing Klamath River.

"I am deeply appreciative to all of the parties who have supported this project over the years, and I wish to especially note the significant and sustained efforts of our tribal partners," Root said in a statement.

Getting to this point has taken decades of work, and overcoming setbacks that threatened to derail the plan, he said.

The four dams were originally built between 1911 and 1962, with a total generating capacity of 169 megawatts. They do not provide any irrigation storage or flood control.

Efforts to remove the dams

See Dams, Page 11

## Oregon ag overtime bill amended with \$100 million price tag

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**  
Capital Press

A bill requiring Oregon farmers to pay higher overtime wages has passed a key legislative committee, though it now includes a hefty price tag that may hinder further progress.

The House Rules Committee voted 4-3 to approve House Bill 2358 with an amendment that would phase out the agricultural overtime exemption over three years and allocate \$100 million to help farmers make the transition.

To put that amount in perspective, it's more than twice the general fund tax dollars appropri-

ated for the entire Oregon Department of Agriculture during the most recent biennium.

Before the House votes on HB 2358, it must first clear the budget-setting Joint Committee on Ways and Means. The bill would then need to pass the Senate before the end of this year's legislative session, which is constitutionally required to end by June 27.

Under the amended version of HB 2358, farm workers would be owed one-and-a-half the regular wage rate after 55 hours per week in 2022, after 48 hours per week in 2023 and after 40



Andrea Johnson  
**A bill that would end the Oregon agriculture industry's exemption from higher overtime wages has been amended to include \$100 million to help farmers transition.**

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