

People & Places

# Riches abound at organic farm

By JULIA HOLLISTER  
For the Capital Press

CORRALITOS, Calif. — Lonely Mountain Farm was named after J.R.R. Tolkien’s “Hobbit” story in which the riches-laden mountain is overseen by a fiery dragon.

These days, the dragon has shuffled on and the “riches” have morphed into organic crops.

Kenny Baker started the farm on 5 acres of leased land in 2009. He and his wife, Molly, plowed under a dirt bike course to make way for their dream farm.

Kenny had previously worked at several organic farms in Santa Cruz County.

“With my hands in the dirt, doing my work is where I feel purposeful and at peace,” Kenny said on the farm’s website.

When the couple first broke ground on the Santa Cruz County farm they decided it was important to grow crops that would be shelf-stable — potatoes instead of lettuce — because they had no clue where or to whom they would market them.

The first year they grew an acre of heirloom potatoes, many varieties and many colors. They also started to experiment with growing heirloom dried beans.

“After being known as the potato farmers, we began to augment our plant-



CUESA

Molly and Kenny Baker of Lonely Mountain Farm in Corralitos, Calif.

ings to include other niche and unrepresented items that were not at the marketplace,” Molly said. “Some of these crops included parsnips, rutabagas, specialty beans and peppers.”

Eventually, the couple built up name recognition and branding, and were able to get into bigger farmers markets. Currently, the farm grows 75-100 different crops including flowers, vegetables, fruits and herbs.

Brie Mazurek, communications director of CUESA, which operates the Ferry Plaza Farmers Market in San Francisco, said the Bakers

represent the next generation of innovative organic farmers, bringing a diversity of fruits, vegetables and flowers to the market, all grown with a deep care for stewarding the land and feeding the community.

The selection of crops continues to vary. The Bakers say it has seen many transformations since the beginning.

“We grow many unusual crops including mulberries, loquats, passion fruit, gherkin cucumbers, indigo tomatoes and more,” Molly said. “The most difficult crop to grow is cucumbers because of the insect pressure, cool nights

and trellising requirements.”

The farm is also host to many beneficial insects and animals including ladybugs, praying mantises, frogs, chickens, owls and red-tail hawks.

They are also consistently creating new habitat and maintaining farm edges to encourage beneficial insects.

Wild animals are considered part of the farm and not a problem. The Santa Cruz Mountains area is deer country and fencing was installed to keep them out.

The region-wide drought is a challenge for every farm, they said.



**Western  
Innovator**

**KENNY AND  
MOLLY BAKER**

**Owners:** Lonely Mountain Farm

**Hometown:** Corralitos, Calif.

**Occupation:** Farmers

**Family:** Three children

**Quote:** “We think the biggest challenge to California agriculture is a sustainable labor force, with livable wages and housing. In order to achieve this we need to pay more for food across the board and start subsidizing small-scale (200 acres or less) organic farms. This might also provide incentives for people to transition to organic.”

Farming consumes lots of water, so when there are droughts it is a double-edged sword — less water is available, and at the same time more water is needed, they said.

## E. Oregon youth earns title of Miss Teen Rodeo Oregon

By RONALD BOND AND BILL BRADSHAW  
EO Media Group

ENTERPRISE, Ore. — It’s almost as if Destiny Wecks was destined for this title.

Wecks, one of the three queens for Chief Joseph Days, which rides for the 75th time later this month, won the title of 2022 Miss Teen Rodeo Oregon at the Junior Miss and Miss Teen Rodeo Oregon Pageant on June 26 at the Tillamook County Rodeo.

“She represents rodeo at the teen level for the entire state of Oregon,” said Lois Forester, second vice president of the Miss Rodeo Oregon Inc. Foundation. “It’s quite an honor.”

As Miss Teen Rodeo Oregon, Wecks will travel the state in 2022 promoting the sport of rodeo in parades, personal appearances and rodeo events.

It’s the third state honor the 17-year-old has won during what already is building up to be quite the rodeo career.

She said she was named Miss Rodeo Sweetheart when she was much younger — at ages 6 and 7 — and in 2015 she was selected as Junior Miss Rodeo Oregon.

“It’s been my dream to go on this



EO Media Group File

**Destiny Wecks and her horse Opie. Wecks won the title of 2022 Miss Teen Rodeo Oregon at the Junior Miss and Miss Teen Rodeo Oregon Pageant on June 26 at the Tillamook County Rodeo.**

sequence,” she said. “Now I’m hoping to go on to (be) Miss Rodeo Oregon and Miss Rodeo America. When I got a chance to try out, I had to take it.”

Wecks, who will be a senior at Enterprise High School starting this fall, will serve in her role for the entirety of 2022. Until her cor-

onation, she is called the “lady in waiting.”

Barb Carr, who serves as the lady in waiting adviser, listed a rigorous set that was before Wecks.

“The girls go through a pageant, and different aspects and elements of that pageant,” she said. “They are judged on personality, they are judged on appearance, they are judged on public speaking abilities, their ability to answer impromptu questions, they go through an interview, (and) they take a written test.”

“Everything kind of aligns with mainstream pageantry.”

The exception to that is the horse skills contestants were to display, and knowledge of the lifestyle beyond just taking part in a rodeo. Carr said they had to ride a pattern given by the judges, ride a pattern they create on their own, and show their understanding of the agriculture and beef industries.

“You can’t represent something you don’t know, so they really have to be able to talk to the public knowledgeably,” Carr said. “You have to be well-rounded.”

Wecks said the ample experience she has in winning previous Miss Rodeo honors and being a CJD queen were helpful, but added

she still was preparing late the night before the pageant, preparing for her speech and written test.

“I was up until midnight or 1 a.m. studying,” she said.

Wecks is active in FFA, Natural Helpers, and the 4-H horse program. She trains horses rides her own horses for drill, 4-H, rodeo and pleasure. She represents Oregon in 2020-21 as High School Rodeo First Attendant and the Chief Joseph Days Honorary Queen.

Wecks has been on a horse just about her entire life, and has royalty in her blood with her mother, Vixen Radford-Wecks, being a former CJD queen. She credited her mother with helping her get started in many of the events.

“She helped me a lot,” Wecks said. “It’s not just to like horses, but you can have jobs and other opportunities in horses. When I started doing horse or FFA I realized I could do rodeo as well.”

While the date is not finalized, Wecks’ coronation will be sometime in early 2022.

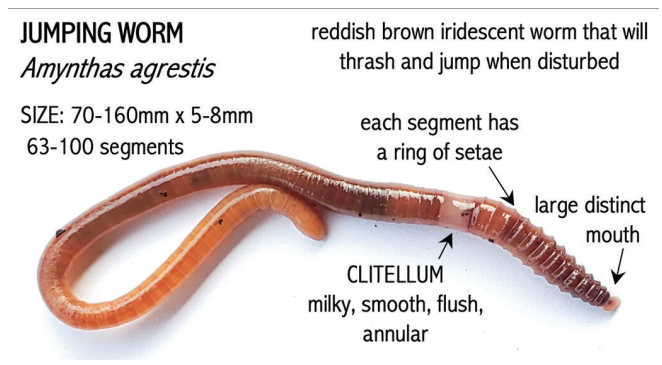
“I hope I can travel all over Oregon as well as surrounding states, like Idaho and Montana, to welcome more people to our state and tell them about rodeo,” she said.

## Invasive jumping worms wiggle way across Oregon

By MIA RYDER-MARKS  
Capital Press

After hitchhiking a ride from TMs near the soil surface, unlike other earthworms, which inhabit the lower organic layer. This allows the jumping worm to devour the organic matter and leaf litter that plants depend on to grow and survive.

They also burrow deep tunnels in the soil and release feces as they go. The casting resembles cooked hamburger, said Chan. In their path, they leave behind loose soil with a texture similar to coffee grounds. The soil can no longer retain moisture and lacks nutrients.



Sea Grant Extension/OSU

Also, worm activity eliminates insulation around plants and allows heat to penetrate quickly into the soil.

Another notable characteristic of the worm is their giant mouths, which open like a mechanical excavator.

“It’s a little bit like that from the horror movie,” said Chan. The worms have insatiable appetites and can outcompete other native organisms.

It is hard to tell just how many jumping worms are in

the state, said Chan. However, they occur at higher densities than other earthworms in Oregon. In one square yard of soil, thousands of jumping worms can be found.

Right now, there are no biological controls or certified pesticides that can be used to eradicate the jumping worm. Some early work looked into fertilizers containing saponin, which is plant-derived glucose that repels the worms.

“The best way to minimize their spread right now is just be able to recognize them,” said Chan. If detected in gardens or crops, he advised contacting the

Oregon Invasives Hotline and submitting a photo for identification.

If there is a contained population in a landscape, jumping worms can be placed in plastic bags and exposed to the sun. This will generate a temperature of up to 160 degrees, “which is more than enough to be lethal to the worms,” said Chan.

To stall the spread when gardening or cultivating crops, tools and work gear such as boots should be cleaned, as their cocoons can stick to them and spread. Despite the vast population in Oregon, there are still opportunities to slow it from growing further.

### CALENDAR

Submit upcoming ag-related events on [www.capitalpress.com](http://www.capitalpress.com) or by email to [newsroom@capitalpress.com](mailto:newsroom@capitalpress.com).

**WEDNESDAY-SUNDAY  
JULY 28-AUG. 1**  
Deschutes County Fair and

**Rodeo:** Deschutes County Fair and Expo Center, 3800 SW Airport Way, Redmond, Ore. This year marks the 101st edition of Central Oregon’s largest event, after COVID-19 forced the event’s cancellation in 2020. The theme for the 2021 Fair & Rodeo is “Back in the Saddle.” This year, Fair attendees can expect an excit-

ing event full of animals, agriculture, concerts, carnival rides, cotton candy and corn dogs, along with shopping, exhibits and food. Website: <https://expo.deschutes.org/>

**THURSDAY, AUG. 5**  
Internal Auditing for Food Processors (live online): 1 p.m.

Internal audits allow you to audit your facility for gaps and compliance. They are an important tool in the on-going food safety toolbox for any food manufacturer, packager, and warehouse and distribution company. This course is for those who are new to internal auditing and those that could use a refresher course. Cost: \$595 Contact

Bill Mullane, 208-426-2266, [williamullane@techhelp.org](mailto:williamullane@techhelp.org). Website: <https://bit.ly/3xt9APY>

**TUESDAY-THURSDAY  
AUG. 10-12**

**2021 Cattle Industry Convention & Trade Show:** Gaylord Opryland Resort, Nashville, Tenn. The convention will include educational seminars, exhibits and networking. Website: <http://convention.ncba.org>

**TUESDAY AUG. 17**  
Intro to Experimental Statistics. 8:30 a.m. This course will teach

statistical thinking concepts that

are essential to learning from data and communicating key insights to your organization, clients, or suppliers. Join Catherine Cantley, extension professor at the University of Idaho and TechHelp processing specialist, as we explore the fundamentals of “storytelling with data” in a practical industry-based approach. Website: <https://bit.ly/3AF17f3>

**WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY  
AUG. 18-20**

**Farwest Show:** Oregon Convention Center, 777 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Portland. The Farwest Show, the biggest green industry trade show in the West, is produced

by the Oregon Association of Nurseries, a trade organization that represents and serves the interests of the ornamental horticulture industry. For more information, go to [www.FarwestShow.com](http://www.FarwestShow.com)

**R-CALF USA 2021 Convention and Trade Show:** Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, S.D. The convention will feature industry speakers and networking opportunities. Website: [www.rcalfconvention.com](http://www.rcalfconvention.com)

**AUG. 20-29**  
**Western Idaho Fair:** Expo Idaho, 5610 Glenwood St., Boise. Check back later for more information. Website: [www.idahofair.com](http://www.idahofair.com)



**Capital Press**  
EMPOWERING PRODUCERS OF FOOD & FIBER  
Established 1928

**Capital Press Managers**

Joe Beach ..... Editor & Publisher  
Anne Long ..... Advertising Director  
Carl Sampson ..... Managing Editor  
Samantha McClaren ..... 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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://MarketPlace.capitalpress.com)  
[facebook.com/CapitalPress](https://facebook.com/CapitalPress)  
[facebook.com/FarmSeller](https://facebook.com/FarmSeller)  
[twitter.com/CapitalPress](https://twitter.com/CapitalPress)  
[youtube.com/CapitalPressvideo](https://youtube.com/CapitalPressvideo)

**Index**

Markets ..... 10  
Opinion ..... 6

**CORRECTION**

The July 16 story, “Washington AgForestry leader to depart after six years,” incorrectly stated Matt Kloes was the AgForestry executive director for six years. He was executive director for two years and program director for four years. The Capital Press regrets the error.

**Correction policy**

Accuracy is important to Capital Press  
staff and to our readers.  
If you see a misstatement, omission or  
factual error in a headline, story or photo  
caption, please call the Capital Press news  
department at 503-364-4431, or send  
email to [newsroom@capitalpress.com](mailto:newsroom@capitalpress.com).  
We want to publish corrections  
to set the record straight.