

## People &amp; Places

## Farm offers the usual — and something different

By ALIYA HALL  
For the Capital Press

NEWBERG, Ore. — Annie Brown of Dolce Farm and Orchards likes to offer three categories of fruit preserves to her customers: what they know, what they should know and what they don't know.

"I enjoy it, that's the most important thing, and it's nice to have people taste something they've never had before," Brown said. "Most people haven't had chutney or tasted a black currant."

Dolce produces micro-batch chutneys and fruit preserves, as well as raw honey and hazelnuts that are grown organically.

Brown's fruit choices are influenced by her travels abroad, and she sells the products at local farmers markets.

Brown and her husband, Kevin, bought their 50-acre property in 2003. Originally, Kevin wanted to grow Pinot noir grapes, but when their crops kept failing they planted hazelnuts instead. They now have 45 acres of Oregon's most popular nuts.

The other 5 acres are Annie's domain. She grows a wide variety of fruits and nuts, including: walnuts, persimmons, several plum varieties, quinces, black and red currants, Marionberries, loganberries, haskaps, seedless table grapes, tayberries, blackberries, raspberries, elderberries, several cherry varieties, peaches and medlars.

"I like different, unusual berries more than the standard berries; it's more interesting," she said. "We have



Aliya Hall/For the Capital Press

**Annie and Kevin Brown own Dolce Farm and Orchards in Newberg, Ore. They bought their 50-acre property in 2003.**

enough of a mono-crop here. Having that diversity, it's richer and more fulfilling."

The inspiration for Brown's fruit choices comes from her time living abroad with her husband. They have lived in or visited Austria, Germany, England, Italy, France, China and South Africa.

"I remember the first time I saw red currants. I was in Austria and they were in this little basket," she said. "It was fresh and sour, and I was like, 'Wow! What are these?'"

Brown learned to can from her mother and grandmother. Her grandmother grew up on a farm in Pennsylvania and raised 10 kinds of apples, some of which they dried, others they made into applesauce and some they kept fresh.

"When you have so much fruit and a plethora of

pears, what are you going to do with all that fruit? You make pear butter and pear jelly," she said.

All of the processing is done in her kitchen, and her yield each year depends on what grows. Sometimes she'll make a batch that is only two to three jars and sometimes it's up to 10 to 14.

"So if something is fruitful, something else might not be; we didn't have much haskap this year," she said. "It ebbs and flows with the warming climate and things changing."

Although Dolce Farm is a micro-operation, Brown wants to keep it that way. She said she makes enough for markets but she doesn't have any interest going to the grocery store or processing the preserves elsewhere.

The biggest challenge that Brown faces is being deemed too "exotic" by

customers. Interest in certain fruits or berries varies depending on which farmers markets she attends, adding that it can be difficult to plan for different palates.

"If I enjoy it, I'll make it no matter what," she said. "It's chutney, but I love it. Like black currant. Maybe it doesn't move as fast, but it's truly magnificent."

The biggest reward for Brown is when a customer falls in love with something new. Unexpectedly, she said, many of those customers are children. She has even had one child spend his allowance on her preserves.

"It's really exciting when kids will try black currant jam and be like, 'Mommy I want that,'" she said. "You wouldn't think kids would want these really unusual, unique flavors. Sometimes I make tomato jams with spices they have in South



## Western Innovator

### DOLCE FARM AND ORCHARDS

**Kevin Brown**

**Age:** 64.

**Occupation:** Farmer, business software developer, freelance musician.

**Education:** Indiana University.

**Ann Brown**

**Age:** 64.

**Occupation:** Farmer, instructor of bassoon at Oregon State University.

**Education:** Oberlin College, bachelor's of music; master's studies, Cincinnati Conservatory of Music.

**Family:** Two sons, Branko, 23, and Aleksandar, 22.

**Dolce Farm and Orchard**

**Location:** Newberg, Ore.

**Crops:** Hazelnuts, walnuts, fruits, berries, chickens, eggs and honey, plus jams and preserves.

**Information:** www.facebook.com/dolce-farmer/

Africa, and a kid grabs his mom saying, 'You have to try this!'"

## Company sells WSU cheese in airport vending machine

By MATTHEW WEAVER  
Capital Press

PULLMAN, Wash. — A new company has come up with a unique way to sell Washington State University's Cougar Gold cheese — a vending machine.

Sky High Cheese LLC has installed the vending machine selling several WSU specialty cheeses at the Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport.

"This might sound a little cheesy, but I was looking for a hobby that would allow me to use my creativity and I thought a small business would be something fun to do," Jeff Reed, owner of Sky High Cheese, told the Capital Press.

Reed grew up in Pullman, where WSU's main campus is, and loves all the cheeses produced by WSU's creamery. He graduated from WSU in 2007 with a business degree, specializing in marketing.

"I thought that a vending machine would be a unique way to sell the cheese and ... convince many people unable to get to the WSU Creamery," Reed said.

The vending machine has been



Sky High Cheese LLC

**Sky High Cheese LLC recently began selling cheese from Washington State University's creamery in a vending machine at the Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport.**

in operation for a week, and so far demand has been "Gouda," Reed said.

The machine sells four types of cheese: Cougar Gold, an aged white cheddar; Viking, a white cheese similar to Monterey Jack; Crimson Fire, with hot peppers added; and Natural Cheddar.

Each tin costs \$40.

The tins are Transportation Security Administration-approved for carry-on or checked bags, Reed said.

The vending machine currently only takes cash, but will begin taking credit card payments by the end of August.

"It is interesting and creative," said John Haugen, the WSU Creamery manager. "Cougar Gold has been available to buy at the airport at times, but not as visible as this."

Because the price is similar to other local resellers, Haugen expects the business to do fairly well.

"We have allotments for local resellers," he said. "We don't want to run out of cheese too early in the year."

The creamery produces eight batches a week. A batch uses 15,500 pounds of milk, or about 1,800 gallons, to make about 850 cans.

"Because we are still running out of cheese every year before holiday season is over, we haven't wanted to add more resellers which could cause us to run out earlier," Haugen said.

Ferdinand's, the creamery's main shop, has limited hours, so the creamery tries to make sure local resellers in

Pullman have enough cheese.

"However, if we run out, everybody runs out," Haugen said. "We keep working on making more cheese. The pandemic and remote classes have slowed us down a bit, but we are still making more than previous years."

The vending machine currently only sells WSU cheese.

"We have looked at the possibility of adding other WSU products, but that would be in the future," Reed said, adding that he wants to see how the cheese sells.

He might be willing to investigate the future use of University of Idaho products, he added.

Reed sees possibilities in the vending machine as a place for customers to purchase gifts for family, friends or just to take home for themselves.

"I believe that there was enough of a demand to pursue this opportunity and I thought it was something fun for Pullman — how often do you see a cheese vending machine?" he said. "My favorite comments so far have been 'This is the most Pullman thing ever,' and 'All you need is a wine vending machine next to it and you're set.'"

## Eastern Oregon town is gone, but its namesake store remains

By LISA BRITTON  
EO Media Group

PONDOSA, Ore. — Bob Bennett is just three years older than the Pondosa Store, where he's been selling cold drinks and ice cream since 1983.

Bob, now 98, was born in 1923.

The store was built in 1926 to serve Pondosa, a mill town about 25 miles north of Baker City in eastern Oregon.

Pondosa as a town no longer exists. But Bob is happy to share the story with anyone who happens by his remote store.

Although Pondosa was home to 500 people at one time, it was wholly dependent on a lumber mill. The mill closed in 1959 — just one year after the area was named the geographic center of the United States with the addition of Alaska and Hawaii.

"They were going to name it Centerville, U.S.A., but the town closed up," said Lori Brock,

Bob's daughter, who moved to Pondosa several years ago.

Lester Gaddy, brother to Bob's wife, Jean, saw an advertisement in the Eugene Register-Guard newspaper.

"The whole town. For sale," Lori said.

Lester, she said, "traded three city blocks for the whole town."

Lester died in 1982, and left his property to Jean, his only sister.

Jean and Bob Bennett faced a decision: sell the Pondosa property, or sell their Eugene home and move to Eastern Oregon.

"I had a debate on it," Bob remembers.

He'd lived in Eugene all of his life, and had recently retired from Georgia-Pacific, a timber company.

But he was tired of the rain west of the Cascades. So the couple sold their place and moved to Pondosa in 1983.

"All this nice sunshine and fresh air," Bob said.

"It was a good idea. I kept busy over here."

Although the houses had been sold and moved to other towns nearby, Bob discovered a huge pile of sawdust left at the mill site.

He can point it out, too, on the aerial photo of Pondosa that hangs on the wall of the store. He set to grinding up that sawdust and started selling it as garden mulch.

"I'd deliver it in 5-yard loads all over," he said.

That kept him busy for a while, until the pile finally disappeared.

"It took 20 years," he said with a smile.

While he worked at that, Jean ran the store.

"People yet talk about her. She'd visit with everybody," Bob said.

Jean passed away in 2015. During her illness, she and Bob lived in Nampa, Idaho, with Lori and her husband, Dennis.

After Jean died, Lori thought her father might stay in Idaho with her. But he returned to Pondosa in the winter of 2015.

## CALENDAR

SEPT. 3-11

**Eastern Idaho State Fair:** Eastern Idaho Fairgrounds, 97 Park St., Blackfoot, Idaho. The daily schedule and entertainment line-up will be published in June. Website: <https://funatthefair.com/>

SEPT. 3-26

**Washington State Fair:** Washington State Fair Events Center, 110 9th Ave. SW, Puyallup, Wash. Open Labor Day weekend. Closed Tuesdays and Sept. 8. Website: <https://www.thefair.com/>

[www.thefair.com/](https://www.thefair.com/)

**TUESDAY SEPT. 7**  
NRCS Idaho State Technical Advisory Committee Meeting (virtual): 9 a.m.-noon. Meeting meets three times per year to advise NRCS and other USDA agencies on carrying out Farm Bill conservation provisions. Includes representatives of various natural resource and agricultural interests such as agencies, ag producers and tribes. Website: <https://bit.ly/3fUNorS> Contact:

[mindi.rambo@usda.gov](mailto:mindi.rambo@usda.gov)

**WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY SEPT. 8-10**

**Public Lands Council 53rd Annual Meeting (live and online):** Best Western Ocean View Resort, 414 N Prom, Seaside, Ore. The meeting provides a forum for producers to discuss current and emerging issues with federal agencies, industry partners and lawmakers. Website: [www.publi-landscouncil.org](http://www.publi-landscouncil.org)

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

**THROUGH AUG. 29**

**Western Idaho Fair:** Expo Idaho, 5610 Glenwood St., Boise. Website: [www.idahofair.com](http://www.idahofair.com)

**AUG. 27-SEPT. 6**

**Oregon State Fair:** Oregon State Fair & Exposition Center, 2330 17th St. NE, Salem, Ore. We're look-

ing forward to welcoming you back to the fair. Website: <https://oregon-statefair.org/>

**SEPT. 1-3**

**Idaho Grower Shippers Association Annual Convention:** Sun Valley Resort, 1 Sun Valley Road, Sun Valley, Idaho. The event focuses on Idaho potato industry. Includes meetings of industry groups, updates on research, marketing and policy, recreational and networking events. Website: <https://bit.ly/3madKtP>



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### CORRECTION

The original version of  
a story and an editorial  
about the #TimberUnity ef-  
fort to provide hay to Klam-  
ath Basin farmers included  
an inaccurate quantity. The  
July 24 convoy delivered  
nearly 200 tons of feed.

The story and editorial  
have also been corrected  
on [www.capitalpress.com](http://www.capitalpress.com).

The Capital Press regrets  
the error.

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