

People & Places

More to flour than meets the eye

By JULIA HOLLISTER
For the Capital Press

ESPARTO, Calif. — Farmer David Kaisel doesn’t just grow wheat, he mills it into flour, too.

And, just as a sommelier recommends the perfect wine to complement a meal, he can help a baker find the perfect flour for an artisanal bread.

But there’s more to wheat and flour than meets the eye, he said.

“Wheat fascinated me as perhaps our first domesticated crop, and for its significance to agriculture, nutrition and the environment,” he said. “It remains the most widely grown crop worldwide in terms of acreage, and is the primary source of calories in many populations.”

Cereal grains are grasses, and remarkably adaptable to different climates and soils. Wheat remains one of the most drought-tolerant crops and provides great benefits in terms of soil health and biomass for farmers who grow it in rotation with other field and row crops, he said.

“The miller’s role as matchmaker between farmer and baker is at the heart of what we do, and we love the creative energy that comes from those exchanges,” he said in his newsletter. “It’s all about building relationships between producers and consumers, fostering transparency, knowledge and an appreciation for the hard work and talent it takes to



David Kaisel of Capay Mills recommends flour to bakers based on what they are making.

put wholesome, nutritious, sustainable, and ultimately delicious food on the table.”

Kaisel’s company, Capay Mills, produces dozens of heritage and varietal wheat flours and mills corn for polenta, grits and cornmeal, along with non-wheat flours such as barley, millet, rye and buckwheat. All are certified organic.

Lulu Meyer, director of operations for CUESA, which operates the Ferry Plaza Farmers Market in San Francisco, said Kaisel has a passion for educating home and professional bakers about the complex history and flavors of grains.

“He has worked with many small grain growers to share what makes California grains and flours so unique, while also honoring traditional forms of milling,” Meyer said.

Capay Mills focuses exclusively on California-grown wheat sourced directly from farmers.

Wheat comes in many varieties, both modern and heritage, and there are significant differences in flavor, baking performance and adaptation to specific climates and growing conditions among all those wheats.

According to Kaisel’s

newsletter, which is posted on the Capay website, most of the flour found on store shelves is milled from hard red wheat. It has high protein, between 11.5% and 13%, and is used for bread and general baking.

Bread flour has more protein, 12.5% to 15%, and is used for yeast breads, pizza dough, croissants and strudels.

Pastry flour has lower protein — as low as 9% — and is milled from soft white wheat, which is grown mainly in the Northwest. It develops less gluten and is used for cookies, biscuits, pie crust, cakes and muffins.



Western
Innovator

DAVID KAISEL

Hometown: Rumsey, Calif.

Age: 62

Occupation: Owner, Capay Mills. Miller, farmer, local food advocate

Education: Master’s degree in business administration, University of Washington; master’s in public health, University of California-Berkeley; California Farm Academy, at the Center for Land-Based Learning.

However, Kaisel shies away from using those three main categories for flour.

“We prefer not to use these classifications for our flours. It would be like ordering wine according to whether it is sweet, medium, or dry,” he said in his newsletter. “Sure, those are basic descriptions, but there’s a lot more going on in wine. Same for wheat. Instead of the standard classifications, we recommend flours based on what customers want to bake and the performance and flavor profiles of each.”

Idaho Preferred website gets a makeover

By BRAD CARLSON
Capital Press

BOISE — The Idaho Preferred website has gotten a makeover, and the state’s farmers are helping out by telling their stories.

The state Department of Agriculture program so far has sent a professional photographer to 59 farms and ranches to shoot stills or videos. That need became apparent during the overhaul of the Idaho Preferred website, re-launched in early September.

“We knew something had to be done,” said Anne Struthers, an ISDA marketing specialist for Idaho Preferred. “We need to tell stories about the people behind food production. It resonates with the consumer.”

“And it’s an opportunity to showcase our members,” said Marketing Specialist Erica White, whose work areas include digital marketing.



Guy Hand/Idaho Preferred
Tim Sommer of Purple Sage Farms, Middleton, Idaho.

They said the content can be expanded — such as to show a crop’s stages at different times in the growing season or to provide opportunities for how-to or behind-the-scenes images. Program staff contribute photos and videos. Member farmers and businesses have full access to content.

White said a south-central Idaho mill got many more visits to one of its

social media platforms soon after Idaho Preferred posted on-site videos. The program aims to get more videos about its members.

Struthers said discussions at member locations among the food producer, photographer and staff often help show if the story is best told through photos or video. The idea is to tell about the person, and how or why he or she is doing something,

rather than just showing a process or object.

“Members can utilize Erica and Anne,” ISDA Deputy Director Chanel Tewalt said. Many often don’t have the time or resources to take on these projects themselves.

Most Idaho Preferred members have a social media presence. Some use their member page as their website, which is allowed and helps drive traffic to the program’s site, officials said.

ISDA Market Development Division Bureau Chief Laura Johnson said the redesigned website and additional member-focused imagery and content mean “producers are front and center. And for consumers, it’s easier to find local products.”

As of Sept. 30, Idaho Preferred had 344 members, up 10% from a year ago. Struthers said there is an opportunity for substantial growth partly because consumers are interested in

locally produced food.

Annual dues are \$50 for members who don’t change a product and \$100 for those who process, craft or materially change something. Restaurants and retailers can join for free.

Idaho Preferred says it aims to identify and promote food and ag products grown, raised and processed in the state. It was started in 2002 with a USDA grant.

White sees more opportunity for marketing cooperation among members, such as when they offer products that are complementary or that originate from different parts of the state.

Johnson and Struthers said Idaho Preferred events remain important, whether in person or virtual. Sessions with chefs or retailers, for example, can help a member get a product into a restaurant or store, or show the buyer opportunities to expand an existing relationship.

Farm Bureau hires Smith as new director of government affairs

By GEORGE PLAIVEN
Capital Press

SALEM — The Oregon Farm Bureau has hired attorney Lauren Smith to serve as director of government affairs, lobbying on behalf of the state’s farmers and ranchers.

Smith comes to the Farm Bureau from the Oregon Association of Counties, where she was the legisla-



Lauren Smith

sel for the Oregon Water Resources Congress, representing irrigation districts statewide.

tive affairs manager for natural resources and veterans. She also spent five years as public policy council

“After spending most of my career working in natural resources, I am so excited to join the Oregon Farm Bureau family,” Smith said in a statement. “I consider it an honor to do what I can to protect what makes Oregon such an amazing place to live, specifically our diverse farming, ranching and forestry operations.”

Smith’s hiring comes after former policy coun-

sel Samantha Bayer left the Farm Bureau earlier this year to return to her family’s vineyard in Eagle Point.

Farm Bureau spokesperson Anne Marie Moss said Smith will focus on several issues affecting Oregon agriculture, including wildfires, wildlife, transportation and tax policy. Her first day was Oct. 1.

“Lauren brings a breadth and depth on many issues

important to Farm Bureau members and has great experience and relationships in the Oregon public policy arena,” said Dave Dillon, OFB executive vice president. “We are excited to welcome her to the OFB team.”

Smith earned her bachelor’s degree from Willamette University in Salem and graduated from the university’s College of Law in 2007.

CALENDAR

MONDAY-THURSDAY
NOV. 1-4

Western Dairy Management Conference: Peppermill Resort Spa Casino, Reno, Nev. The conference will include a host of presentations on animal health, fertility, genetics and production systems. Website: www.wdmc.org

FRIDAY
NOV. 12

Food Regulations and Labeling (online): 10 a.m.-noon. Product claims are advantageous to your company because they signify a higher perception of quality for your consumers and increase purchase intent. However, such claims can have profound legal implications that your company should be aware of. Learn about the product, testing, and processing requirements necessary to add these essential marketing claims on your

sales material, website, and product label. Our presenter will also compare applicable certifying bodies to help you navigate certification for specific claims. Website: https://bit.ly/3hBM4uV Contact: 208-426-2181

TUESDAY-THURSDAY
NOV. 16-18

Willamette Valley Ag Expo: Linn County Fair & Expo Center, 3700 Knox Butte Rd E, Albany, Ore. Exhibitors, equipment, seminars, classes, food and fun. In addition to the exhibitors and classes, attendees can enjoy other attractions such as “Dine Around Oregon,” an antique farm equipment display and an educational area from Oregon Women for Agriculture. Website: www.wvaexpo.com

FRIDAY-SUNDAY
NOV. 19-21

Tilth Conference (live and virtual): 7 a.m. Lynnwood Convention Center, 3711 196th St. SW,

Lynnwood, Wash. This year’s conference is being held in-person with virtual options available. Over the course of three days, farmers, food system professionals, researchers and educators have the opportunity to learn from one another and share best practices, catch up with old friends, and make new connections. Website: www.tilthalliance.org/special_events/Conference

TUESDAY-FRIDAY
NOV. 30-DEC. 3

Tri-State Grain Growers Convention 2021: Davenport Grand Hotel, 333 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., Spokane, Wash. Featured speakers include Sara Wyant, Agri-Pulse Communications, Inc.; Eric Snodgrass, principle atmospheric scientist for Nutrien Ag Solutions; Idaho ag emcee Steve Miller; Futurity CEO Jack Bobo and U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack (invited). Website: https://www.wawg.org/convention/



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MONDAY-THURSDAY
OCT. 25-28

OSHA 30 — General Industry (online): This course is specifically intended for safety managers, supervisors, and anyone who oversees safety programs. The topics are more diverse and include information on how to successfully manage a safety program in your facility. At the completion of the course, you will receive a Department of Labor OSHA 30 General Industry card. This course meets the training requirements of the OSHA 30 designation and is taught by an authorized instructor. Website: https://tech-help.regfox.com/20210510osha30

WEDNESDAY-SATURDAY
OCT. 27-30

National FFA Convention

and Expo: Indianapolis, Ind. The National FFA Organization will host an in-person 94th National FFA Convention & Expo Oct. 27-30, with a virtual program. National FFA will continue to follow all health guidelines set by the county, state and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. More information will be shared as it becomes available. Housing for the in-person event will open July 14, with convention registration opening Sept. 8. Website: https://convention.ffa.org/

SATURDAY
OCT. 30

Ag in the Classroom Fall Harvest Dinner and Auction: 5 p.m. Linn County Expo Center, 3700 Knox Butte Road E, Albany, Ore. Join us to celebrate and support Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom. Website: https://bit.ly/3ovujYy