

# Northwest Farm Credit Services sponsors Women for Ag reception

By **BRENNA WIEGAND**  
For the Capital Press

Before Google, YouTube, cell phones and such, the Northwest Ag Show was the only place farmers could go to see all the latest farm equipment under one roof.

Mickey Hatley, Salem branch manager of Northwest Farm Credit Services, was there in the early days. His branch became an Ag Show exhibitor in 1988 as he served on the Oregon Horticulture Society board.

“Jim and Shirley Heater started and managed the Ag Show for many years before their daughter Amy Patrick took over,” Hatley said. “They are responsible for the Ag’s Show’s long run and success.”

While the nursery industry was already going strong in the 1980s and 1990s, the Ag Show provided a place

where other well-established industries — strawberries, blueberries, nuts — began having their industry wide meetings.

“The Nut Growers Society would have their annual meetings up there with 25-50 people that would gather,” Hatley said. “Now that same meeting is held every January in Corvallis with 1,000-plus people attending.”

“The hort society, nursery growers and hazelnut growers were the three organizations that essentially put on the Northwest Ag Show throughout the 1980s, 1990s and into the 2000s,” Hatley said. “Through that, Northwest Farm Credit Services became big supporters of many ag organizations.”

When given the opportunity to sponsor the after-hours Oregon Women for Ag reception, Northwest Farm Credit Services jumped at



**Randi Bural, relationship manager for Northwest Farm Credit Services, pays a visit to John Frank Schmidt III and Jan Barkely of J. Frank Schmidt & Son Nursery. Northwest FCS is sponsoring Oregon Women for Ag’s after-hours reception at this year’s Northwest Ag Show.**

the chance.

With 44 branches across the country, Northwest Farm Credit Services is a financial cooperative providing financing and related services to all phases of agriculture.

An important part of that is providing pertinent information to their customers.

“We have a real passion for education, helping our customers to be better at what they do,” Hatley said.

Northwest FCS created a

business management center on its website that provides pertinent information, seminars and other learning opportunities.

The financial cooperative’s other big focus is stewardship. Last year’s grants totaled \$14 million in the Pacific Northwest, including a \$250,000 grant to Oregon State University’s College of Veterinary Medicine. Local branches often support 4-H, FFA, Habitat for Humanity or specific projects including the Imagination Library in rural Yamhill County and the skate park in Silverton, Ore.

“We have a heart for improving rural communities and one way we can do that is to invest a lot of our profits back into these communities,” Hatley said. “Anybody in a rural community can apply for a grant; they range from \$500

to \$5,000 and are designed to go to a nonprofit organization with a program or project they need some help with.

“Of course, our core business is helping farmers, ranchers, fishers and the timber industry with the financing they need to run their operations with enough working capital to help them through the down times because we all know that agriculture has its ups and downs.

“The customers we work with own the company, and we have local advisory committees throughout the Northwest and a 14-member board of directors, mostly farmers, who provide the governance and oversee the business itself,” he said. “That kind of governance is good practice and a way to stay close to our customer base.”

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