

People & Places

Farmer has big success with tiny greens

By JULIA HOLLISTER
For the Capital Press

FORESTVILLE, Calif. — Corie Brooks raises tiny crops on a tiny farm. For nearly three decades, she has grown sprouts and microgreens on 1 acre.

She says that sometimes the definitions of the two are blurred. “Sprouts are the first leaves the seeds produce,” she said. “Microgreens are the first true leaves produced next.”

Growing sprouts and microgreens is no easy task.

“Some sprouts and microgreens are harder than others to grow,” Brooks said. “Each one has different tricks.”

Brooks, a food scientist, opened Brooks and Daughters 28 years ago.

Today she lives on 5 acres and farms just under 1 acre with five greenhouses on it.

The farm sells 80% of the sprouts it grows to consumers at the CUESA Ferry Plaza Farmers’ Market in San Francisco and the farmers market in Berkeley.

One of the hardest things — in addition to getting them to grow — is getting them to reach marketability at the right time, she said. Tracking the weather is essential.

Brooks & Daughters farm never uses pesticides, herbicides or commercial fertilizer and uses only water and organic compost on the sprouts.

The health benefits are



Corie Brooks opened Brooks and Daughters 28 years ago. Today she farms just under 1 acre with five greenhouses.

many. The tiny plants have concentrated amounts of most of the vitamins and minerals humans need.

Studies also show that microgreens have 8-10 times the vitamins and minerals by weight compared to the adult plant. An ounce of wheatgrass juice is the equivalent of eating 1 1/2 pounds of vegetables.

Also, the flavor is concentrated, she said.

The farm starts all its sprouts in buckets of water outdoors. Next, they are transferred to specially designed racks under a large shaded structure.

As the seeds sprout, they are planted in soil or in 17-by-17-inch open-bottom

nursery flats and moved into greenhouses.

The sprouts and microgreens then grow for one to four weeks in the greenhouses before they are ready for market.

“Corie Brooks had a background in food science before taking over the farm,” said Lulu Meyer, CUESA’s director of operations. “She grows more than 30 varieties of sprouts and microgreens on the farm, rotating them throughout the year and feeds what she doesn’t sell to her small but very happy chicken flock.”

There have been some downturns in the sprout market due to COVID

pandemic. The business had a “horrendous” 2020 because 60% of its sales are to restaurants, which also generally had an awful year, Brooks said.

Retail sales were down, too.

2021 was better and things seem to be improving now despite omicron.

“She takes a lot of pride in growing specialty microgreens for chefs in the Bay Area, which is very evident if you ever visit her at the Saturday Ferry Plaza Farmers Market,” Meyer said. “Her stand is often the first stop for chefs as they line up for a shot of her wheatgrass to power them through their market shopping.”



Western Innovator

CORIE BROOKS

Home: Forestville, Calif.

Occupation: Farmer

Education: San Francisco State University, bachelor of food science

Family: Two daughters, Geneva and Lindsay

Quote: “The business is all women though not intentionally, but it works for us,” Brooks said. “We enjoy growing and selling clean, fresh healthy food at our wonderful Ferry Plaza Farmers Market. It is the best market with the best customers.”

Brooks adds that neither of her daughters — Geneva and Lindsay — is involved in the business.

“When my oldest went into the Peace Corps they asked her what she wanted to do. She said, ‘Anything but agriculture!’ Growing up they did help with the business and I believe the close-up look at the amount of hard work, involved in farming, was enlightening.”

Hay industry leader David King succumbs to cancer at age 62

By CRAIG REED
For the Capital Press



David King

the Klamath Basin hay association.

“David put a lot of hours into both organizations, trying to make them better, to make their work,” said Mylen Bohle, the recently retired Oregon State University Extension hay and forage specialist for Central Oregon. “He saw the value of the two organizations.”

King had planned to participate in an evening zoom meeting of the state association on the day he died.

“David’s whole love was farming,” said Robin King, his wife of 40 years. “He enjoyed the satisfaction of seeing things grow. He believed in the marketing part of the business and that’s why he was also a believer in the hay grower

David King, a long-time officer with both the Oregon Hay & Forage Association and the Klamath Basin Hay Growers Association, lost his battle with cancer and died Jan. 26.

King, 62, had been a hay grower in the Malin, Ore., area since returning to Klamath County after graduating from Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo in California with an ag business degree in 1982. The King farm grows alfalfa, grass, timothy and triticale hay and grain. The farm was a member of the High Mountain Hay Growers Cooperative that marketed and sold the hay products.

King was a founding member of the state hay association. He was both a long-time secretary of the state organization and president of

associations. He believed you could move forward as a group better than as an individual.”

King was first diagnosed with leukemia in 1998. In 1999, he had a bone marrow transplant with his daughter Whitney being the donor. Six years ago, he had surgery to remove cancerous cells and then last year another surgery.

Robin King and their son Cameron will continue to work the family operation. The couple’s two daughters are also involved in agriculture. Angelina King works for the Tululake Irrigation District and Whitney Cantrell is an accountant for Macy’s Flying Service and also does bookkeeping for the family’s farm operation.

David and Robin King each have long family histories in the Klamath Basin. Robin’s great-grandparents

came to the area in the early 1900s.

David’s father, Frank King, got a homestead in the Malin area as a veteran in 1949. That homestead property is still part of the family operation with the land being used to graze cattle.

David King was known as an innovator, trying new ways to benefit the soil and to conserve water. He was willing to share what worked best for his farming operation.

“He wanted to promote education as much as possible,” Robin King said of her husband. “He worked hard every day to do it right and to produce a high-quality product. That was important to him.”

“It was also important to him that people got the right facts and perspective so they would better understand agriculture,” she added.

Laurence Bagg, another Malin area hay grower, described King as efficient, creative and progressive. Bagg said King laser-levveled several fields to make them more efficient for flood irrigating.

Scott Pierson, a Silver Lake, Ore., hay grower, agreed that King was “extremely innovative.”

“But he was also interactive,” Pierson said. “You could ask him questions, but then he wanted to know more about your operation, your soil and water issues.”

“He was a serious representative for the ag industry,” Pierson added. “He could be a professional among suits or easily talk to a person who was just getting into the industry.”

Bohle said King is “a real loss to his family, the Klamath Basin and to the Oregon Hay and Forage group.”

Longtime Spokane Ag Show site manager receives excellence award

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press



Brad Hoyt

SPOKANE — Brad Hoyt, a longtime volunteer site manager for the Spokane Ag Show, received the Excellence in Agriculture award Feb. 1.

Hoyt’s humility was evident in accepting the award.

“I feel like there’s a lot of farmers and people that deserve it more than me,” he said. “I appreciate the honor of having it, but there’s a lot of really good farming, technology and things going on that I think deserve the award also.”

Tim Cobb, chairman of the award committee, highlighted Hoyt’s military service and professional career helping people invest and prepare for

the future. “He has continually shown his commitment to the agriculture committee and to Spokane Ag Show,” Cobb said. “Personally, I can say that (he) is one who can be relied on to complete any task, large or small. His dedication has made the ag show the success it is today.”

Hoyt grew up on a 400-acre cattle, alfalfa and timber farm near Post Falls, Idaho. Back then, a tractor took “about a week” to plow a 100-acre field, he remembered.

“The first day, if you got three rounds, you were feeling like you were really rolling,” he said.

He thought the tractor then had a “huge tire,” he remembered.

“Some of these tractors have the front tires as big as (our tire) in the back,” he said. “As the machinery got bigger and the laws got stricter, people didn’t want to drive down the road to get to 100 acres. It wasn’t big enough.”

Hoyt retired about four years ago after nearly 38 years as a financial adviser. He’s been working on home projects since then, including a shop house at his home in Priest Lake, Idaho, for the last year and a half.

Hoyt has volunteered at the ag show since 1983, wanting to help the community he was working with.

“I like helping the farming economy, they’ve been undervalued,” he said. “Everything that comes from

the store comes from an ag business.”

Preparation for the ag show begins mid-summer. In December and January, Hoyt goes over the schedule to coordinate with exhibitors about what machinery they’re bringing.

Move-in begins the Wednesday before the show, with the majority of the large equipment coming in Sunday.

Volunteering for the show is one way Hoyt feels he’s able to give back to farmers. He admires how they’re always willing to step up to help someone in need.

“The farming community has always been that way; it was when I was little,” he said. “You helped the neighbors if you could help the neighbors, even if you only just put in your muscle. That still is there.”

CALENDAR

FRIDAY FEB. 18

Submit upcoming ag-related events on www.capitalpress.com or by email to newsroom@capitalpress.com.

THROUGH SATURDAY FEB. 12

Organic Seed Growers Conference: Oregon State University Campus. The Organic Seed Growers Conference is the largest event focused solely on organic seed in North America, bringing together hundreds of farmers, plant breeders, researchers, certifiers, food companies, seed companies, and others from across the U.S. and around the world. Farm tours and short courses are held prior to the full two-day conference. Website: <https://seedalliance.org/>

FRIDAY-SATURDAY FEB. 18-19

Oregon State University Small Farms Conference (online): Everything you ever wanted to

know about succeeding as a small-scale farmer. Website: <https://bit.ly/3lA8jx9>

THURSDAY FEB. 24

Virtual classes for pesticide applicators (online): 8 a.m.-noon. There will be virtual classes for pesticide applicators’ recertification, offered by Oregon OSHA and the Oregon Farm Bureau Health & Safety Committee. The virtual training will provide continuing education credits for any pesticide applicator licensed in Oregon. Participants will receive pesticide recertification CORE credits to maintain an applicator’s license. The four CORE credit hours provided are approved by the Oregon Dept.

of Agriculture’s “Worker Protection Standard: What You Should Know.” Website: <http://www.oregonfb.org/pesticideclass>

THURSDAY-FRIDAY FEB. 24-25

USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum (virtual): The forum will include more than 30 breakout sessions on climate, innovation, trade, commodity outlooks and supply chains. Website: <https://www.usda.gov/oce/ag-outlook-forum>

TUESDAY-WEDNESDAY MARCH 8-9

Oregon Wine Symposium 2022: Oregon Convention Center, 777 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Portland. The Oregon Winegrowers Association will host an

in-person event and trade show March 8-9 at the Oregon Convention Center. The live event attracts industry owners, directors, academics, winemakers, viticulturists, and sales and marketing professionals. Website: <https://www.oregonwinesymposiumlive.com/>

THURSDAY-SUNDAY MARCH 17-20

Oregon FFA State Convention: Deschutes County Fair and Expo Center, 3800 SW Airport Way, Redmond, Ore. Oregon FFA members from around the state will gather to compete and to learn during their annual convention in Redmond. Website: <https://oregonffa.com/state-convention/>



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To Reach Us

Circulation.....800-781-3214
Email..... Circulation@capitalpress.com
Main line503-364-4431

News Staff

Idaho
Carol Ryan Dumas208-860-3898
Boise
Brad Carlson208-914-8264

Western Washington

Don Jenkins.....360-722-6975

Eastern Washington

Matthew Weaver509-688-9923

Oregon

George Plaven406-560-1655
Mateusz Perkowski800-882-6789
Sierra Dawn McClain503-506-8011

Designer

Randy Wriighthouse.....800-882-6789

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CORRECTION

Dam position corrected

Whatcom Family Farmers advocates water storage in the Nooksack River Basin, but that could also include aquifer recharge and not necessarily a dam. The group was incorrectly reported as trying to rally support for a dam in a Page 1 story on Feb. 4. The Capital Press regrets the error.

Correction policy

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