

People & Places

Growing blueberries in California

By JULIA HOLLISTER
For the Capital Press

CARUTHERS, Calif. — Mark and Kim Sorensen both were raised in agriculture, grew up in the same small California town but wanted to plant something new.

They chose blueberries. “My husband Mark is a fifth-generation raisin farmer and my grandfather and father owned an agricultural pump company,” Kim said. “We planted our first blueberries in 1997 after deciding we wanted to diversify. We also wanted to have something more ‘hands-on’ for our three daughters to grow up with.”

Blueberries were new to the area so they had to learn as they went.

Lesson No. 1: Blueberries are hard to grow. In fact, they require perfect soil and many nutrients to get good taste and high quality, Kim said.

Also, blueberries do not offer immediate results; plants take 3-5 years to reach full production.

Though California ranks fourth in the nation in blueberry production, the combination of climate and tight water supply create challenges that other top blueberry-growing regions such as Oregon and Washington state don't have.

Today, Triple Delight Blueberries boasts 100 acres planted to blueberries — 70 acres are organic and 30 acres are conventional.

The farm was named after



Foodwise

Kim Sorensen, left, and her daughter Johannah and their family raise 100 acres of blueberries in Fresno County, Calif., and sell them at the Ferry Plaza Farmers Market in San Francisco. California ranks fourth in the nation in blueberry production.

the Sorensens' three daughters, Johannah, Elizabeth and Olivia.

It is a family farming operation. In addition to the daughters' involvement, two sons-in-law, Jace White and Jeff Jantzen, work full-time on the farm.

The Sorensens sell most of their blueberry harvest directly to consumers at farmers markets.

Every spring the family looks forward to returning to the markets to connect with their customers.

“Kim and Mark Sorensen have been growing blueberries since the mid-1990s, when they first diversified

their farming operation,” said Lulu Meyer, director of operations for Foodwise, operator of the Ferry Plaza Farmers Market in San Francisco. “It's a true family affair at Triple Delight Blueberries, with everyone in the Sorensen family involved in managing the farm's day-to-day operations, harvesting and direct marketing.”

They have kept their operation small, and in the last few years have increased the amount of organic acreage in production.

Meyer said she has had the pleasure of watching their daughters grow up at

the markets, and it is “so great to see them, and their spouses, taking on even more of the direct-to-consumer part of the farm.”

“We grow seven different varieties,” Kim said.

She said the most popular varieties are:

- Star, which has an intense and more acidic flavor with a firm texture.
- Snow Chaser, which is smaller but sweet.
- Legacy, which produces large and firm berries “that always pops in your mouth with a perfect combination of sweet and tangy,” she said.

Each variety ripens



Western Innovator

KIMBERLY SORENSEN

Hometown: Caruthers, Calif.

Occupation: Owner, Triple Delight Blueberries.

Years farming: 25

Acres farmed: 100

Family: Husband Mark, Johannah and Jace White, Elizabeth and Jeff Jantzen and Olivia and Michael Foglio.

Personal quote: “Although perfection can never be attained, we can shoot for it and achieve excellence in all that we do.”

at different times, which allows the season to be spread over 10-12 weeks from April to July.

The family takes pride in the quality of their blueberries, which takes a tremendous amount of time and money to grow right.

After all these years of growing blueberries and trying different recipes, Kim said her favorite way to enjoy blueberries is “straight off the bush!”

Happy is an Asian elephant. But is she also a person?

She has four limbs, expressive eyes and likes to stroll through greenery in NYC

By MICHAEL HILL
Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. — She has four limbs, expressive eyes and likes to stroll through greenery in New York City. Happy, by species, is an Asian elephant. But is she also a person?

That's the question before New York's highest court Wednesday in a closely watched case over whether a basic human right can be extended to an animal.

Her advocates at the Nonhuman Rights Project say yes: Happy is an autonomous, cognitively complex elephant worthy of the right reserved in law for “a person.” The Bronx Zoo, where Happy resides, says no: Through an attorney, the zoo argues Happy is neither imprisoned nor a person, but a well-cared-for elephant “respected as the magnificent creature she is.”

Happy has lived at the Bronx Zoo for 45 years. The state Court of Appeals is hearing arguments over whether she should be released through a habeas corpus proceeding, which is a way for people to challenge illegal confinement.

The Nonhuman Rights Project wants her moved from a “one-acre prison” at the zoo to a more spacious sanctuary.

“She has an interest in exercising her choices and deciding who she wants to



Oregon Zoo

Elephants dine on giant pumpkins at the Oregon Zoo in Portland. An activist group in New York has sued on behalf of an elephant, arguing it is a person.

be with, and where to go, and what to do, and what to eat,” project attorney Monica Miller told The Associated Press. “And the zoo is prohibiting her from making any of those choices herself.”

The group said that in 2005, Happy became the first elephant to pass a self-awareness indicator test, repeatedly touching a white “X” on her forehead as she looked into a large mirror.

The zoo and its supporters warn that a win for the advocates could open the door to more legal actions on behalf of animals, including pets and other species in zoos.

“If courts follow NRP's demand to grant animals personhood for habeas corpus purposes, elephants as well as other animals at every modern zoo in this country would have to be turned loose or transferred to the facility of NRP's

choosing,” Kenneth Manning, an attorney for zoo operator Wildlife Conservation Society, wrote in a court filing.

Happy was born in the wild in Asia in the early 1970s, captured and brought as a 1-year-old to the United States, where she was eventually named for one of the characters from “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.” Happy arrived at the Bronx Zoo in 1977 with fellow elephant Grumpy, who was fatally injured in a 2002 confrontation with two other elephants.

Happy now lives in an enclosure adjacent to the zoo's other elephant, Patty. The zoo's attorney argued in court filings that Happy can swim, forage and engage in other behavior natural for elephants.

“The blatant exploitation of Happy the elephant by NRP to advance their coordinated agenda shows

no concern for the individual animal and reveals the fact they are willing to sacrifice Happy's health and psychological well-being to set precedent,” the zoo said in a prepared statement.

NRP's attorneys say no matter how Happy is being treated at the zoo, her right to “bodily liberty” is being violated. They argue that if the court recognizes Happy's right to that liberty under habeas corpus, she will be a “person” for that purpose. And then she must be released.

Lower courts have ruled against the NRP. And the group has failed to prevail in similar cases, including those involving a chimpanzee in upstate New York named Tommy.

But last October, at the urging of a different animal rights group, a federal judge ruled that Colombian drug kingpin Pablo Escobar's infamous “cocaine hippos” could be recognized as people or “interested persons” with legal rights in the U.S. The decision had no real ramifications for the hippos themselves, given that they reside in Colombia.

Opponents hope the NRP's string of court losses continues with the high-profile New York court.

In a friend-of-the-court brief, the New York Farm Bureau and other agricultural groups said the NRP's “new-fangled theory of personhood” would sweep up pigs, cows and chickens. The National Association for Biomedical Research said authorizing such peti-

tions on behalf of animals could drive up the costs of conducting critical research. State and national associations representing veterinarians filed a brief saying NRP's lawsuit promotes animals' personhood rights above animals' welfare.

Supporters of NRP's action include public figures such as Harvard Law School professor Laurence Tribe. Many of them see this case as a chance for society to take a step forward in the ethical treatment of animals. “We believe this legal moment for Happy represents a key cultural crossroads for thinking more openly and honestly—and less selfishly—about what it would mean to treat the particularity of non-human animals with the moral seriousness it deserves,” a brief submitted by Catholic academic theologians read.

The court's decision is expected in the coming months.

At least one animal rights advocate suggests a lone court decision won't change society's view of animal use. Rutgers Law School professor Gary Francione, who is not involved in the case, said that would require a broader cultural shift.

“I've been a vegan for 40 years. Don't get me wrong, I disagree with animal use altogether,” Francione said. “Just to have the court start saying that non-human animals are persons under the law is going to raise all sorts of questions, the answers to which are not going to be amenable to many people.”

CALENDAR

MONDAY-TUESDAY
JUNE 6-7

Idaho Cattle Association Summer Roundup: Red Lion Hotel, Pocatello, Idaho. The conference will focus on industry issues. Website: <https://www.idahocattle.org>

TUESDAY
JUNE 7

NRCS Idaho State Technical Advisory Committee Meeting (online): 9 a.m.-noon. The committee meets quarterly to advise the Natural Resources Conservation Service and other USDA agencies on carrying out natural resource conservation provisions of the federal Farm Bill. Includes representatives of federal and state resource agencies, tribes, agricultural and environmental organizations. Web-

site: <https://bit.ly/3sHRJvt> Contact: Mindi Rambo, Mindi.Rambo@usda.gov

WEDNESDAY-
FRIDAY JUNE 8-10

World Pork Expo: Iowa State Fairgrounds, Des Moines. The world's largest pork industry trade show will feature education, innovation and networking. Website: <https://www.worldpork.org>

FRIDAY-SATURDAY
JUNE 10-11

Lind Combine Demolition Derby: Starts at 6 p.m. Friday and 10:45 a.m. Saturday at the Lind, Wash., Arena. Join the fun for this year's Combine Demolition Derby and truck races. Website: www.lind-combinederby.com

SATURDAY, JUNE 11

Forest and Range Owners Field Day: 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Casa Becca del Norte Tree Farm, 2716 Moser Road, Chewelah, Wash. Washington State University Extension field day offers information specific to landowners' needs. Cost: \$30-50. Contact: Sean Alexander, 509-680-0358, sean.alexander@wsu.edu

SUNDAY
JUNE 12

Savor Idaho: 11:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Idaho Botanical Garden, 2355 N. Old Penitentiary Road, Boise. Idaho Wine Commission event features wineries, other exhibitors. Features wine tasting, activities, food trucks. Attendance periods from 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. and 3-5:30 p.m. Website: <https://idahowines.org/event/savor-idaho/>

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

WEDNESDAY
JUNE 1

2022 Wheat College: 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Ritzville Fairgrounds, 811 E. Main St., Ritzville, Wash. AMMO — the Agricultural Marketing and Management Organization — continues to support the ag industry by offering this year's Wheat College in person, providing information on the opportunities available to maximize yield in the Pacific Northwest. An event of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, sponsored by the Washington Grain Commission and AMMO partners. Pesticide cred-

THURSDAY
JUNE 2

Sustainable Produce Summit: 1-7:30 p.m. Marriott Desert Springs Resort, Palm Desert, Calif. The summit will focus on sustainability. Website: <https://www.events.farmjournal.com>

FRIDAY-SATURDAY
JUNE 3-4

West Coast Produce Expo: Marriott Desert Springs Resort, Palm Desert, Calif. The expo will focus on marketing and managing risks. Website: <https://www.events.farmjournal.com>



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