

# TMK Creamery: ‘We decided to go vertical’

By **BRENNA WIEGAND**  
For the Capital Press

CANBY, Ore. — TMK Creamery of Canby, Ore., began as a 4-H project of Todd Koch at the tender age of 12.

As it grew, family members joined in and the dairy shipped milk for 23 years until the creamery they supplied dissolved, threatening to leave them high and dry.

“It got to where it was liquidate or do our own thing,” Todd’s wife, Tessa Koch, said. “We decided to go vertical.”

TMK started making their own cheese and ice cream in 2017. Early the next year they built a retail space that, besides creating an outlet for their products, enables them to host large

groups of kids and the public to show them the inner workings of a dairy.

On weekends, visitors enjoy live music, food and drink with plenty of space to stick around and enjoy the country atmosphere. Special events include Friday night “Milking with Marc” events, which sell out every time. During the events, 15 participants get a chance to milk a “cowlebrity.”

Then there’s the vodka.

Getting the idea from research at Oregon State University, the Kochs embarked on making vodka from the whey left over from the cheesemaking process.

They spent two years designing and engineering their own vodka, which met with great success and led them to build a still.

In the process they had to develop a unique heat exchange method to keep the protein-rich liquid from scorching during the brief time involved in producing each batch.

“When we’re done making the cheese the whey goes into fermenters for about a week before going through the still,” Koch said. “It’s immediate; you’re getting alcohol as soon as you start putting it in.”

It’s a “sipping vodka,” she said. Most of its appeal is not in alcohol content but in knowing a waste product was upcycled in its making. Having their own still makes TMK the only 100% farmstead creamery distillery in the world. Their plans include going nationwide with the product.



## Relationships Beyond Lending



HARVEST CAPITAL COMPANY, LLC

dba Harvest Capital Company of America, LLC in AZ, CA, ID, MT, NE, UT, and WA

DEDICATED TO THE BUSINESS OF AGRICULTURE

## Long Term Real Estate Lending for Agriculture

Give us a call at: (503) 263-6616

690 NW 1st AVE | SUITE 101 | CANBY, OR 97013 [HARVCAP.COM](http://HARVCAP.COM) | [f](#) [in](#) [@](#)

Terms and conditions apply. Financing offered in connection with Farmer Mac and our underwriting partners, and is available only where Harvest Capital Company, LLC is licensed. To qualify, a borrower must meet the underwriting requirements and all credit is subject to approval. Interest rates and fees will vary depending on your individual situation. Not all applicants will qualify. Testimonial is not indicative of future performance or success. NMLS No. - 2237848



**FENDT**  
fendt.com | Fendt is a worldwide brand of AGCO.

## The grass is greener over here.

They’ve been tested. Retested. And trusted to efficiently take on the toughest dairy chores. Fendt is the tractor of choice for dairy operators who expect more from their machine.

**Visit Agri-Service to see our new Fendt® machines today!**

**AGRI-SERVICE**   
Together, we drive agriculture FORWARD

**800-260-3599 // [www.agri-service.com](http://www.agri-service.com)**

©2019 AGCO Corporation. Fendt is a worldwide brand of AGCO Corporation. AGCO and Fendt are trademarks of AGCO. All rights reserved.