

## Women in Ag

### ‘A really good education’

By **BRENNA WIEGAND**  
For the Capital Press

SILVERTON, Ore. — Herman Goschie always thought no daughter of his would be a farmer.

Much to his surprise, daughter Gayle just couldn't stay away. Her determination has made her a pioneer as a woman in agriculture.

“When I came back to the farm, my dad could see that I was serious,” Goschie said. “I was first relegated to managing hand labor out in the field, which was crazy because our employees had much more experience than I did, but the crews had patience, and, as a very young person, I was given an understanding as to all the work that goes into bringing in a crop.”

Goschie tagged along with her dad to industry meetings and hop commis-



**Gayle Goschie**

Brenna Wiegand/For the Capital Press

**Gayle Goschie surveys a springtime hop field. Goschie is the fourth generation on the family farm that planted some of the Willamette Valley's first hops in 1904.**

sion meetings and listened to the talk of other growers.

“It was a really good education,” Goschie said. “There were very few people my age doing that at the time. I stayed involved in the hop commission, became a commissioner and ended up representing Oregon on the international

Hop Research Council.”

The Goschie family planted and harvested its first hops in 1904, when it was about the only cash crop around. Nestled against the hills of Silverton in Oregon's beautiful Willamette Valley, the family farm remains a fixture in the local growing community.

### Technical services manager

By **BRENNA WIEGAND**  
For the Capital Press

NEWBERG, Ore. — Anne Iskra's graduate thesis at Oregon State University includes valuable information she uses to this day.

A large part of her job as technical services manager at Marion Ag Service is helping growers of all crops manage the impact of pests and diseases.

Though her family raised sweet cherries in the Columbia Gorge area, Iskra never thought she would return to agriculture as a career. That is, until she got a job with Dave Gent, a plant pathologist with the USDA in Corvallis, who primarily works on hops.

“That turned into a graduate degree and everything kind of unfolded from there,” Iskra said.



**Anne Iskra**

Brenna Wiegand/For the Capital Press

**Anne Iskra visits a hop field as part of her work with Marion Ag Service. Iskra relied on such growers for support as she completed her master's degree at Oregon State University.**

Her graduate work looked at the rates and timing of nitrogen applications on hops and its impact on foliar disease, insect pest populations and brewing quality.

A portion of her work

involved studying the biological control of spider mites in hops. They were able to document the stability of the natural predator population and how quickly it returns after disruption.

### It's about small-scale woodlands

By **CRAIG REED**  
For the Capital Press

OAKLAND, Ore. — Tami Jo Braz is not only a small woodland owner, but also an ambassador for those who grow and manage trees on small parcels of land.

Braz and her husband, Barry Braz, have owned and managed 50 acres of woodlands since 1986. After taking Master Woodland classes and with help from a forester, the work the couple did on their property earned them the 2004 Tree Farmer of the Year award for the Douglas County Small Woodlands Association.

In 2016, Tami Jo Braz joined the association's board and soon became the secretary and membership coordinator for the organization, which has 225 member families. Braz writes a regular newsletter that includes a



**Tami Jo Braz**

Craig Reed/For the Capital Press

**Tami Jo Braz is the co-owner of 50 acres of small woodlands in Douglas County, Ore. She is also a board member, secretary and membership coordinator for the Douglas County Small Woodlands Association.**

profile on one of the members and the management of their land.

“It's a matter of giving back and working to further the education of those who want to be good stewards of their land,” Braz said of taking on a leadership role for the Small Woodlands Asso-

ciation. “I want to encourage others to be good stewards of what they've been entrusted with.

“Being a member of the association allows you to be in some great company,” she added. “People who love their land have so much in common.”

### A passion for animals

By **BRIAN WALKER**  
For the Capital Press

COLVILLE, Wash. — Angie Barton was always drawn to animals while growing up in Vancouver, Wash.

Her mother gave her a pony when she was 8 and a horse at 14.

“I grew up with stories of my mom's sheep ranch and homesteading,” Barton said.

Her interest in animals deepened when she learned about a nearby dairy.

“I spent my spare time exploring the old barn and eventually got a job feeding the heifers that were raised there,” said Barton, who owns Douglas Falls Creamery and Barton Hay near Colville, Wash., with her husband, Dennis.

By the time Barton moved out at 18 to be the garden-care-taker at the estate and dairy across the road, she



**Angie Barton**

**Angie Barton's love for animals is evident at Douglas Falls Creamery and Barton Hay near Colville, Wash.**

had a dog, two horses, two ponies, two goats, chickens and rabbits.

“I was allowed to keep my animals at the old barn and eventually I began working at

the main dairy as scraper and then relief feeder,” she said. “I was fascinated by the process of dairying, helped with a lot of different aspects and learned a lot.”

### A love of being in the vineyard

By **BRENNA WIEGAND**  
For the Capital Press

NEWBERG, Ore. — Danielle Zarro grew up in Florida, about as far from Oregon agriculture as you can get.

“I grew up as an absolute beach bum,” Zarro said. “It took some time to figure out what I really wanted to do, but I settled on horticulture and started looking for online schools with really good programs because I wasn't quite ready to leave Florida.”

She was quickly drawn to Oregon State University where intro classes included a survey of related careers.

“In one of those lectures Patty Skinkis explained how vineyard management is shifting to reflect changes in climate and I was absolutely smitten with the idea of managing vineyards,” Zarro said. “I switched my degree to



**Danielle Zarro**

**Danielle Zarro keeps a close eye on everything happening on Adelsheim Vineyard's 157 producing acres. The assistant vineyard manager says she appreciates the mentoring she has received from women in the field.**

viticulture and enology and headed West.”

Her schooling at OSU included a job in the sensory lab with Elizabeth Tomasino, who proved to be an inspiring female mentor.

Upon graduation, Zarro secured an internship with Gallo, which in turn led to her

current job as assistant vineyard manager for Adelsheim Vineyards under Kelli Gregory.

“These last five years have been just incredible,” she said. “I really love being in the vineyard working with the vines and being outside and working with the crew.”

### More than a ‘hobby gone wrong’

By **CRAIG REED**  
For the Capital Press

ROSEBURG, Ore. — With a wide smile and laughter, Ellie Norris-Assmus calls Norris Blueberry Farm “a hobby gone wrong.”

The hobby that Paul and Sandy Norris started by planting 5 acres of blueberries in the mid-1980s to keep their three daughters and friends busy is now 650 acres of blueberry bushes and a packing house with six sorting lines and six packing lines.

During their junior high, high school and college years, Norris daughters Amy, Carrie and Ellie worked in the slowly expanding blueberry field that their parents had started and sold the fruit at a roadside stand and at a local farmers market. Now at 40 years old, Norris-Assmus is a full-time employee of the business and 43-year-old Carrie Norris is a half-time employee.



**Carrie Norris**

**Ellie Norris-Assmus**

Craig Reed/For the Capital Press

**Sisters Carrie Norris, left, and Ellie Norris-Assmus have returned to the blueberry farm they grew up on and now share the responsibilities of running the Norris Blueberry Farm's packing house during the harvest season.**

While Paul and Sandy are still frequently on site, the two sisters have gradually taken over the operation of the farm with the help of 10 full-time employees and seasonal local workers and contract crews.

“They're running the farm,” Paul Norris said of his daughters. “It makes me

very proud to watch them develop the operation. It's fun to watch them move the farm forward.”

The daughters said their parents and the farm taught them to work hard and to realize there are usually no quick answers to problems that unexpectedly arise.

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