

## People &amp; Places

## Reforming the food supply chain

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**  
Capital Press

EUGENE, Ore. — Todd Edman has a vision for how he hopes to reshape the global food supply chain.

“All of the local products that I love, I want to be able to order from one place and have them delivered to my house,” said Edman, an Oregon-based entrepreneur and software developer. “We’re not as far from that as you might think.”

Four years ago, Edman co-founded a business named BitCork, distributing wine from small producers to restaurants in Portland and Eugene. It quickly proved successful, slashing delivery costs by more than 90% from an industry average of \$125 to \$8.50.

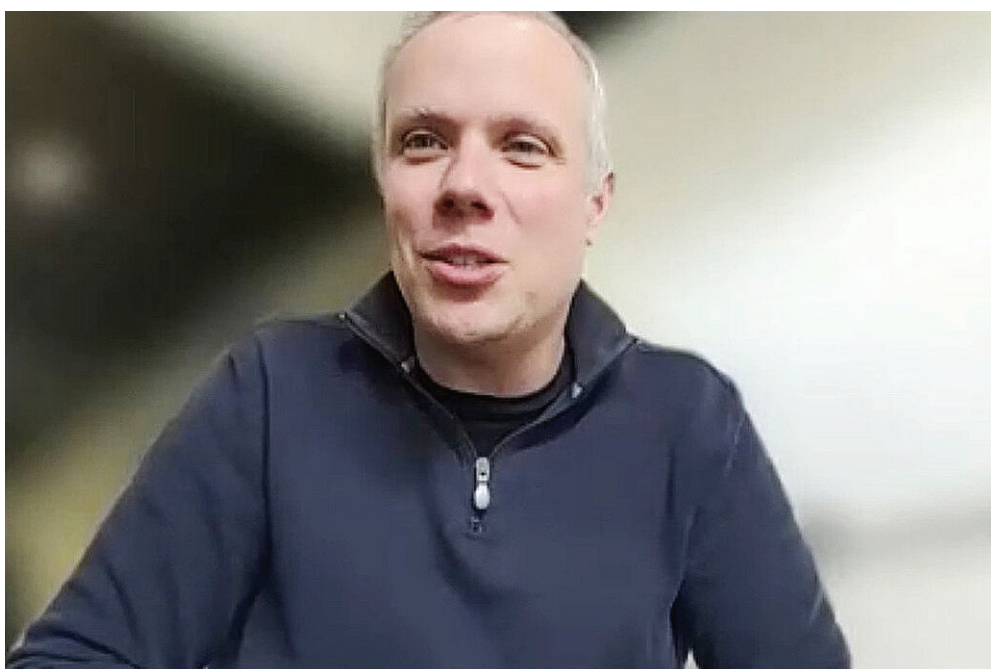
The key, Edman said, was a computer program written to run BitCork’s warehouses, which uses algorithms to predict what restaurants are likely to buy and manage orders from listed wineries, all in one system.

That same program — rechristened in 2020 as Pollinate — is now being deployed in small- and medium-size food establishments, allowing them to buy ingredients from several farms and other providers through the same network.

“It’s a very precise engine for allocating and tracking inventory,” Edman said. “We’ve put it into a system they can actually run on their phones.”

#### Targeting distribution

Before coming up with the idea for Pollinate, Edman got his start in software working for



Facebook

#### Todd Edman

Chase Bank in New York City during the late 1990s and early 2000s dot-com boom.

Feeling dissatisfied in his job, Edman returned to his hometown of Eugene, wanting to apply his skills to a business with the potential to change the world. There he met Justin Bloom, and the two became founding members of the Eugene chapter of the Technology Association of Oregon.

Through the association, Edman and Bloom became interested in addressing problems in the food supply chain.

“There’s not many things more fundamental to who we are than food,” Edman said. “Ultimately, the food system that the world needs is one that is synergistic and sustainable.”

Citing a study by the environmental nonprofit Ecotrust, Edman said the No. 1 barrier to sustainabil-

ity in the food supply chain is localized distribution. While 84% of food supplies come from firms doing less than \$100 million in annual sales, the country has invested trillions of dollars in infrastructure geared toward the largest producers and distributors.

For example, Edman said 98% of all iceberg lettuce grown in the U.S. comes from a single watershed fed by Lake Mead in California and Arizona.

The reason is that’s where the processing and distribution infrastructure is to sell to major grocers such as Wal-Mart and Kroger, Edman said.

“Clearly, what consumers are choosing is they want better quality goods,” he said. “It’s just not accessible with the way this food supply chain is built.”

#### Tilting the economics


Edman, Bloom and a third partner, Jesse Ralston,

would go on to create BitCork, which they envisioned as a sort of Redbox movie rental system for restaurants to buy small-batch, boutique wines that consumers otherwise wouldn’t find in grocery stores.

With the software platform now known as Pollinate, Edman said they were successful in creating an efficient distribution network that has since gone on to sell products from 23 wineries to more than 250 restaurants licensed by the Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission.

“Our goal is to tilt the economics in favor of the smaller food businesses,” Edman said. “It’s those companies that can give us that future of food.”

By leveling the playing field for smaller growers, Edman said they can also reduce how far food has to travel to reach consumers, thereby lowering the indus-



**Western Innovator**

**TODD EDMAN**

**Occupation:** Co-founder and CEO, Pollinate Food

**Age:** 47

**Hometown:** Eugene, Ore.

**Education:** Studied engineering at University of Portland, 1993-95; studied economics at University of Oregon, 2006-08

**Family:** Wife, Celeste, and three children (ages 3, 7 and 10)

try’s carbon footprint.

Pollinate is now being rolled out in 10 food establishments in Los Angeles. One of the first clients is a small chain of coffee shops called Go Get Em Tiger that emphasizes selling food made from local ingredients.

Edman said Pollinate will be able to help Go Get Em Tiger connect with farms that grow the food they need, and vice versa, providing another outlet for small growers to sell their crops.

“Every single person can log in and see how many of what items are available for them to order,” Edman said. “That gives them the ability to know when it should arrive in a store.”

“It’s a really complex business,” he added, “and this allows it to operate in a way that’s reliable and consistent, so they can meet their customers’ demands.”

## Couple recognized as county tree farmers of the year

By **CRAIG REED**  
For the Capital Press

ROSEBURG, Ore. — After 15 years of working to turn a fixer-upper property into a multi-use area, Evan and Lorreen Barnes were recently honored as the 2021 Douglas County Small Woodlands Tree Farmers of the Year.

A tour of their property by Douglas County Small Woodlands Association members and a presentation of the 2021 award was delayed from a year ago until last month because of COVID restrictions.

The Barneses purchased 65 acres of timber and 15 acres of agricultural ground in 2006. The property included two mobile homes and 30 broken down vehicles.

Their forest management and fire prevention efforts earned them recognition.

“It’s nice to be acknowledged,” said Lorreen Barnes. “It’s nice to share what we know and what we’ve learned over the years.”

“It’s an honor to be distinguished, to be acknowledged for the work we’ve done around here,” agreed Evan Barnes.

The Barneses designed and built a circular access road system with landings for logging and self-loading trucks but also for better access in case of wildfire. Trees



Craig Reed/For the Capital Press

**Evan and Lorreen Barnes were recently honored as the 2021 Douglas County, Ore., Small Woodlands Association’s Tree Farmers of the Year. The couple have managed 65 acres of timber since purchasing the property in 2006.**

were removed from close to where the couple built their home and outbuildings.

For additional fire protection, sprinklers were installed on all the buildings, there’s a 500-gallon water tank on a mobile trailer and there’s 10,000 gallons of water in four holding tanks placed around the property.

“Every year we try to clean up

the forest floor to reduce the hazard,” Evan Barnes said of the surrounding forest that includes Douglas fir, oak, madrone and pine trees.

In 2014, the Barneses helped start the Upper San Souci Firewise Community. Evan Barnes is the community’s coordinator for the program.

Through Firewise, workers from Douglas Forest Protective Association have visited the property and helped clear 200 feet of “defensible ground” around each structure.

The Barneses had no forest management experience early in their lives. Evan was a construction contractor and builder in Northern California. Lorreen was a high school teacher and social worker. They read books from the library, read news publications, took extension classes and consulted with foresters to learn about forest management and fire prevention.

A small woodlands association panel visited the Barneses’ property and selected the couple for the tree farmer award. They were praised for having a forest plan and for their management, protection and enhancement of their small woodlands.

“From what they described that it was like when they bought it to now, they’ve made tremendous progress,” said Richard Rawson, president of the Douglas County Small Woodlands Association.

“The property looks very nice. It’s a well-earned honor for them.”

In addition to managing the timber, the Barneses have turned their property into multiple use, adding a large garden, fruit trees, chickens and fenced pasture for a couple steers and two horses.

Tami Jo Braz, the woodlands association’s membership and communications coordinator, described them as an “inspiring example of forestry and woodland management.”

“They exemplify the four core tenets of stewardship, which are wood production, water quality protection, wildlife habitat enhancement and recreation opportunities,” Braz said.

The small woodlands association has a membership of 190 families. The objective of the association is to study the problems of managing, protecting and improving small tracts of forest, to distribute information on the establishment, growth, harvesting and marketing of forest crops, to inform and educate owners on problems and solutions for forest management, and to represent the owners of small woodlands before legislative bodies and agencies.

More information on the Oregon Small Woodlands Association can be found online.

### CALENDAR

Submit upcoming ag-related events on [www.capitalpress.com](http://www.capitalpress.com) or by email to [newsroom@capitalpress.com](mailto:newsroom@capitalpress.com). All times reflect the local time zone unless otherwise noted.

#### THROUGH JULY 31

**California State Fair & Food Festival:** Cal Expo, 1600 Exposition Blvd., Sacramento, Calif. The California State Fair is dedicated as a place to celebrate the best the state has to offer in agriculture, technology, and the diversity of its people, traditions, and trends that shape the Golden State’s future. Website: <https://calxpostatefair.com/>

#### SATURDAY-SUNDAY

##### JULY 30-31

**Great Oregon Steam-Up:** 7 a.m.-6 p.m., Powerland Heritage Park, 3995 Brooklake Road NE, Brooks, Ore. Enjoy a steam-powered day with train and trolley rides, a parade, steam sawmilling, traditional tractor pulling, machinery demos, threshing, flour milling, fire apparatus demos, museum tours, kids pedal tractor pulling and

a youth passport program. Website: [www.antiquepowerland.com/](http://www.antiquepowerland.com/) steam-up Phone: 503-393-2424

#### SATURDAY-SUNDAY

##### AUG. 6-7

**Great Oregon Steam-Up:** 7 a.m.-6 p.m., Powerland Heritage Park, 3995 Brooklake Road NE, Brooks, Ore. Enjoy a steam-powered day with train and trolley rides, a parade, steam sawmilling, traditional tractor pulling, machinery demos, threshing, flour milling, fire apparatus demos, museum tours, kids pedal tractor pulling and a youth passport program. Website: [www.antiquepowerland.com/](http://www.antiquepowerland.com/) steam-up Phone: 503-393-2424

#### MONDAY

##### AUG. 8

**Transitioning Your Ag Business to the Next Chapter:** 12:30-4 p.m. Paisley Community Center, 705 Chewaucan St., Paisley, Ore. Farm and Ranch succession counselor and accountant Diana Tourney will prepare you for the human and financial elements

of succession planning. Easement specialist Marc Hudson will answer your questions about working lands conservation easements — what they are, what they aren’t, and how they may be helpful in executing your agricultural business plans. These in-person events are part of a free 6-workshop series in Lake, Harney and Malheur counties. All are welcome, and the events are free. RSVP for these or any of OAT’s other events and refer any questions about the event to [diane@oregonagtrust.org](mailto:diane@oregonagtrust.org) 503-858-2683

#### TUESDAY

##### AUG. 9

**Transitioning Your Ag Business to the Next Chapter:** 12:30-4 p.m. Lake County Library, 26 South G St., Lakeview, Ore. Farm and Ranch succession counselor and accountant Diana Tourney will prepare you for the human and financial elements of succession planning. Easement specialist Marc Hudson will answer your questions about working lands conservation easements — what they are, what

they aren’t, and how they may be helpful in executing your agricultural business plans. These in-person events are part of a free 6-workshop series in Lake, Harney and Malheur counties. All are welcome, and the events are free. RSVP for these or any of OAT’s other events and refer any questions about the event to [diane@oregonagtrust.org](mailto:diane@oregonagtrust.org) 503-858-2683

#### MONDAY-TUESDAY

##### AUG. 8-9

**American Lamb Summit:** Michigan State University and East Lansing Marriott East Lansing, Mich. The summit will focus on competitiveness, production and quality of American lamb. Website: <https://www.lambresourcecenter.com>

#### THURSDAY-FRIDAY

##### AUG. 11-12

**Idaho Milk Processors Association Annual Conference:** Sun Valley Resort, Sun Valley, Idaho. The conference will focus on industry issues. Website: <https://www.impa.us>

#### SATURDAY

##### AUG. 13

#### Family Forest Field Day

##### — Southwest Washington:

9 a.m.-4 p.m. L & H Family Tree Farm, 1309 King Road, Winlock, Wash. Whether you own a “home in the woods” or many acres of land, this “out in the woods” educational event is packed with practical “how-to” information that you need to know. Learn more at <https://forestry.wsu.edu/sw/fd2022/>.

#### SATURDAY-SUNDAY

##### AUG. 13-14

#### Dufur Threshing Bee 2022:

6 a.m.-3 p.m. Main Street, Dufur, Ore. Relive the good old days at the Dufur Threshing Bee. Included will be blacksmiths, a one-room school house, the Dufur Historical Society, petting zoo, food booths and artists’ booths, tractor pull, vintage car show, home-town dinner and a steam engine display. Contact: Nancy Gibson, 541-993-3429.



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