



Left: Clif and Lois Willson, Connie's parents, celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary in 1957. Right: Lon and Connie Young will "miss so much about the Applegate Valley, but my father's farm most of all," where four generations of family have lived.

After marrying Lon in 1959, the couple lived in White City while Lon worked at Firply Plywood Mill. They continued to help her dad milk cows and put up crops, eventually moving back to the farm in 1969. When her mother died in 1975, her father sold the dairy cows and started raising beef, cattle and alfalfa hay. Connie and Lon already had purchased 20 acres of the farm in 1969 and added 18 acres in 1977. They, too, invested in beef cattle, and started raising alfalfa hay to sell. In 2000 Lon retired from Boise Cascade after working there for 15 years. They still raise grass-fed whiteface beef and grass hay. "We have six baby calves born this fall. One pair is twins. We already have three sold to be harvested in October," says Connie.

"Agriculture has been the love of my life," Connie enthused. "I love to grow things and watch the results of my labor. I pressure can or freeze vegetables from our garden, and enjoy my flowers and the crops we raise. We have our own beef for the freezer, raise chickens for eggs, and try to be as self-sufficient as possible."

This year Connie and Lon are growing an experimental crop of grass hay called "DUO." It is a mixture of developed fescues (a perennial grass that has narrow spiky leaves) and ladino clover (a giant form of white clover). Ampac Seed Company of Tangent, Oregon, furnished the seed and will send people to check its progress and production this season. Pictures are being taken and records kept of the crop's progress for Josephine Soil and Water Conservation District and for Ampac.

Two acres of land are leased to Syngenta, "a leading provider of innovative solutions and brands to growers and the food and feed chain" (according to its website), on which the company grows sugar beet seed, hybridizes it, cleans and processes it in Eugene, then sells it to the sugar beet growers in Jefferson County. Explained Connie: "The unique semi-Mediterranean climate here in the Applegate Valley gives the beet seed grower a two-year crop in just one year."

Never one to idle, Connie has been active in several agriculture organizations. She served as Oregon Farm Bureau Women's advisory council representative serving Jackson, Josephine and Douglas Counties for 13 years, resigning in 1989. She is special programs chairman for the Josephine County Farm Bureau,

vice chairman of the Josephine Soil and Water Conservation District, and a member of the Inland Rogue Water Resource Committee, which is working on the Clean Water Act (SB1010). Since Bear Creek Watershed Council merged with Inland Rogue, they are fine-tuning the regulations in relation to the Oregon Administrative Rules.

Connie has been an active member of the *Applegater* newspaper editorial board since the paper's inception in 1994. She also has served on the Board of Directors of the Applegate Partnership for the last 12 years, and gives the Partnership credit for "contributing to cooling the polarization that was so prevalent in this valley about 15 years ago [between farmers and environmentalists]." Not only has she learned a lot from working with the environmental community, she feels that they, too, have learned from her as a representative of the values of most farmers in this community. "Agriculture is my passion and I strive to preserve my way of life by farming in a manner that protects my environment. I love this valley and wish it could stay a farm community," said Connie.

Baptized in the Applegate River at 13, Connie is active in the Provolt Community Church, where she is chairman of the church women's group and sings tenor in the church choir and gospel quartet. The quartet performs at the Community Church Christmas celebration (usually at Ruch Community Church) and the Community Ice Cream Social held at Williams Community Church in July. They also sing at community functions like Pacifica's Christmas celebration. "My Christian faith is very important to me, and I try to live it every day," states Connie.

Lona Riley, Connie's only daughter, and husband Terry Riley both work at the Oregon State Police Academy near Salem, and live in Aumsville, Oregon, where Connie and Lon will relocate. The Rileys have two children—Savannah, who recently graduated from Oregon Institute of Technology in Portland and is married to Scott Lundquist; and Ethan, who is a freshman at Cascade High School near Stayton, Oregon.

"I love the Applegate Valley. My family has made their living farming, logging and mining here. I believe we have taken good care of our natural resources, protecting our environment and putting more into the land than we

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