

Farm tours at Sanctuary One

BY HOLLY HIGHT

I remember hearing about Sanctuary One several years ago; I'd known it was a farm in the Applegate and a haven for rescue animals. My mom had a book about how the original farm sanctuary got started, and the topic intrigued me. For a year or two, I made it a New

Year's resolution to volunteer—so long as I could fit it into my hectic schedule. The Applegate was an hour's drive from Ashland, far enough away that just getting there would be a significant commitment. Life was busy, and it was easy to let New Year's resolutions fall by the wayside for another year.

Sanctuary One tour participants enjoy a friendly pig.



Rune Hight is delighted by the goose and duck eggs he found at Sanctuary One.



In fall 2014, I signed up for a farm tour with my son. I was looking at opportunities for my son's education that didn't include traditional classroom learning. A farm tour seemed like just the thing. On farm tours, a staff member or volunteer guides you around the farm, explains how a care farm works, and answers your questions. The tour also includes meeting the Sanctuary's herd of rescued farm animals and house pets.

We arrived on a balmy day, catching sight of all of Sanctuary One's larger animals, which included llamas, alpacas, cows, horses, sheep, and pigs sharing pastureland at the base of the Sanctuary's property. My son, who was seven at the time, pointed at all of the animals. "Look at them!" he exclaimed.

As we made our rounds from the pasture to the bunny cottage, then to the cat cottage and dog yards, I knew this was something I wanted to turn into a New Year's resolution at last realized. I'd been looking for a place to volunteer, and, despite the long drive, I knew that this was something my son and I could do together. In the dog yard, he met a frisky poodle named Gabe and the two became fast friends. It was the kind of

classroom that matched my son's energy and interest.

Thereafter, our volunteering day was Wednesday, and we looked forward to our adventures. I met volunteers who'd been there for years, whose service began with a tour. It's hard not to let the surrounding beauty combined with the level of commitment and enthusiasm on behalf of Sanctuary One's staff and all of the colorful personalities of the rescue animals themselves turn a day into a month, a year, or a decade commitment. It's worth the drive, and, more than that, it's worth the time carved out each week to reconnect and to give back. In our hectic lives, Sanctuary One is an invitation to slow down, take a breath, and focus on the task at hand.

Farm Tours are offered Saturdays and Wednesdays, now through October. All tours begin at 10:30 am sharp. Book your tour online today! Farm Tours must be reserved in advance. For more information, visit www.sanctuaryone.org or call 541-899-8627.

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Who's your farmer and how green is your food?

BY ELISE HIGLEY

The way a farmer chooses to grow food is important not only to the health of your family but also to the health of our environment. As a consumer of food, you get to make environmental decisions by what you eat. How was your food grown? Are you eating what is in season locally or was it shipped here? Look at your food's carbon footprint. As a community of eaters and food producers, we can make decisions that make a difference for our planet.

Although farming is an extractive industry, many decisions made on the farm can make it more environmentally conscientious. Above and beyond growing organically, a farmer decides what kind of seeds to buy, whether to plant a cover crop, whether to till and how often, how to deal with waste, and what kind of inputs are needed on the farm, such as composting techniques, for example. Of course, choosing *not* to use pesticides can make a big difference to our environment.

ByGeorge Farm, a dairy and cheese-making farm in the Little Applegate, has done a lot for the environment by using solar panels and being Salmon-Safe certified. In addition, it has some creative environmental systems in place, one of them dealing with waste products. Example: In the cheese-making process, pounds of whey are generated each day. By feeding that whey to their chickens, the farm is not only dealing with waste, but the chickens are also reaping the added calcium, fat, and protein from the whey. Now there is less feed to buy off-site, so ByGeorge has reduced the carbon footprint of its egg production, not to mention having healthier and happier chickens.

If you haven't had the pleasure of sampling some of ByGeorge's farm-fresh culinary delights, you're in for a treat.



ByGeorge Farm produces many different cheeses, including Swisskiyou, Dutchman's Peak, and Buncom Brie (pictured).



Owners Jonny Steiger and Tyson Fehrman, pictured with Vera Charles the cow, have run the ByGeorge dairy and cheese-making farm since 2012.

The owners and operators, Jonny Steiger and Tyson Fehrman, bring an array of vegetables, eggs, pickled products, and cheeses to restaurants and five farmers' markets throughout the Rogue Valley. They also deliver to grocery stores, including Whistling Duck Farm Store in Grants Pass and The Cheesemonger's Wife in Jacksonville.

The work of a dairy farm goes on 365 days a year. Milking occurs daily at 6 am and again at 6 pm. Currently the farm is getting over 50 gallons a day of fresh milk, which is going straight into cheese production at their

new on-site state-of-the-art creamery. A new favorite not-to-miss is the Buncom Brie, which was named after the nearby last-standing ghost town in Oregon. According to the ByGeorge website, the brie is so good it "will haunt you!"

ByGeorge Farm is located at 176 Yale Creek Road in Jacksonville. For more information, call 541-899-5650 or visit their website at <http://bygeorgefarm.wix.com/growit> or their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/bygeorge.farm.

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