

Who's your farmer?

New creamery and charcuterie at Wooldridge Creek Winery

BY ELISE HIGLEY

If you haven't been to Wooldridge Creek Winery recently, you're in for a pleasant surprise. Many of us have come to know Wooldridge Creek for its great wines and hospitality. What you might not know is it has a creamery and charcuterie now open on-site!

In an effort to provide quality food for its customers, Kara Olmo, one of the owners of Wooldridge Creek, came up with the idea of opening a creamery. Her inspiration began at a cheese-making course led by Gianclis Caldwell of Pholia Farm Creamery and Dairy in Rogue River, Oregon. Crushpad Creamery was born!

Crushpad Creamery provides cheese from both cow milk and goat milk from local organic dairies. (You can even visit some of the retired milking goats now living at the winery.) Crushpad's cheeses range from soft and creamy to hard cheeses aged for over 12 months.

"All the cheeses created will aim at pairing well with wine. We've already started one cheese that is dunked in red wine and another washed with our dessert wine," Kara says. Because the creamery is working on an ultra-small production scale, cheeses are available only at the winery at this time.

In addition to the creamery, there is also a new charcuterie (a French word for a store selling cold, cooked meats). The winery is taking things to the next level by providing homemade sausages, salamis, and other cured meats on-site. Their "Chef's Board," with cured, local meats, fermented vegetables, fruits, and crackers, will not disappoint.

Come by and visit Wooldridge Creek Winery and its new creamery and charcuterie. Support its efforts in working together with other local farmers to offer a seasonal menu reflective of the offerings in the Applegate Valley.

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Wooldridge Creek Winery is located at 818 Slagle Creek Road, Grants Pass, Oregon. 541-846-6364; wwinery.com.

Maud is passionate about helping low-income people enjoy nutrient-rich foods.

■ SISKIYOU

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that would help provide for the needs of the farmers, such as a credit union, a commercial kitchen, a seed-cleaning facility, and affordable health insurance. They initially developed three marketing venues: a CSA program, a farm stand on Highway 238 in Applegate, and a cooperatively run booth at the Rogue Valley Growers' Market. After a year, they found the CSA to be the most financially successful of their ventures, so it became the exclusive focus.

Since its inception fourteen years ago, Siskiyou Sustainable Cooperative has grown to include 10 farms and ranches and 275 consumer-shareholders. The cooperative's mission is to provide organically grown fruits, vegetables, and specialty items to folks all over the Rogue Valley, while elevating the

economic viability of their sustainable agricultural production.

Siskiyou Sustainable Co-op farms include Barking Moon Farm, Dancing Bear Farm, L and R Family Farm, Mama Terra Micro Creamery, Rise Up! Artisan Bread, Seven Seeds Farm, Sun Spirit Farm, Wandering Fields, White Oak Farm, and Wolf Gulch Farm.

Although Siskiyou Sustainable Cooperative started in a very grassroots manner, they are anything but low tech. Thanks to the imagination of CSA coordinator Maud Powell, the Siskiyou Sustainable Cooperative has a new app to keep farmers and consumers connected.

Through funds received from SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education), the CSA app was developed by a team of techies, who used feedback from CSA members to determine what features would be used in the app. The app puts members' information right at their fingertips, providing a more "customer centric" experience. Maud was inspired to keep CSAs relevant and accessible to younger generations with a more high-tech approach. The user-friendly app can be easily accessed through the website at siskiyoucoop.com.

And what an impressive app it is, with features that allow members to see what's currently being harvested and what's in their weekly box, as well as links to Farmigo (an online farmers' market) to place vacation holds



Siskiyou Sustainable Cooperative farmers include, from left to right (front row), Steve Florin, intern, Ryan Dolan, Taylor Starr, and Don Tipping; (back row) four interns, Tom Powell, Maud Powell, Tom Redding, Ben Yohai, and Josh Cohen. Photo by Gayle Murphy.

on their produce boxes. There are also recipes and cooking videos demonstrating how to prepare items in a box. Did you know you can make a healthy chocolate cake with beets? I do now, after visiting the Siskiyou Sustainable Cooperative app. Talk about getting kids to eat their veggies! For people on the go, it even shows you how to incorporate vegetables into a breakfast smoothie to ensure you are getting all the vegetables you need.

Maud is passionate about the importance of helping low-income people enjoy the bounty of the nutrient-rich foods that Siskiyou Sustainable Cooperative supplies. She feels that vulnerable populations—the elderly, young children, and pregnant or nursing mothers—are perhaps most in need of these nutritious foods.

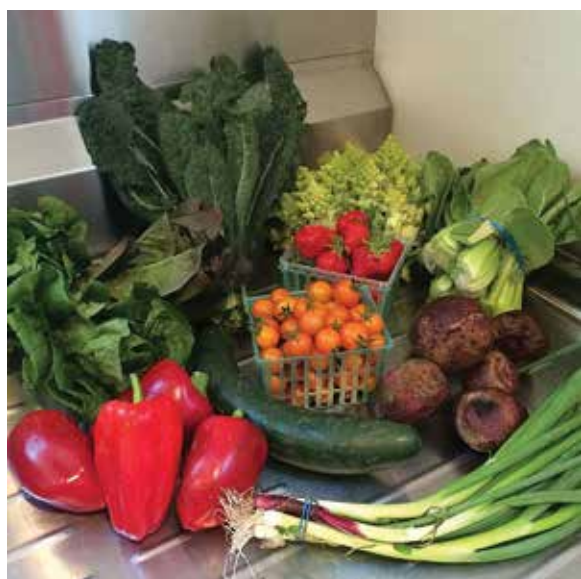
In 2009, Siskiyou Sustainable Cooperative was the first CSA to accept

food stamps (Oregon Trail Cards). The cooperative also has a program that includes 30 Medicaid patients as members. In partnership with Jackson Care Connect, these members are subsidized due to such health issues as diabetes, obesity, and high blood pressure. Members are also provided with cooking classes. What an inspiring opportunity for people to get healthier through education and nutrition!

From a mini share, meant especially for one person, to the large share for larger families, Siskiyou Sustainable Cooperative has something for everyone. The organization looks forward to growing its patronage right here in the Applegate. For more information, visit its website at siskiyoucoop.com.

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A sampling of the organic vegetables provided to members every week by Siskiyou Sustainable Co-op.



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