

An organic farm with a surprise twist

By Dan Mancuso
IVN Staff

Vincent Deschamps didn't always dream about being a pot farmer. "Vin," a retired CEO bought an organic farm for his wife Kate as a birthday present in 2014. With Kate's background in finance and Vin's marketing and economics experience, running the farm to be self sufficient was in their blood. They quickly found out that selling organic cider at \$40 per half gallon was not an option. The

Deschampses started to crunch numbers and came to the conclusion that pot would be a healthier business alternative. With the income from cannabis, it would allow them to grow organic fruit, vegetables, chickens, bees and Vin Deschamps vehemently added, "and rabbits."

Referring to the typical farm ventures, "You do that stuff for love, and the cannabis is the cash crop," Deschamps said.

It used to be that retired CEOs grew grapes and made wine. "Now it's cannabis;

it's trendy and defies age groups," Deschamps said. "We had a choice to grow grapes, hops or cannabis. It was a no brainer and gave me the opportunity to move here and become an Oregonian and focus on making the farm profitable."

All of this has not come easy and the Deschampses have had a few issues. Their grow-site was burglarized by three men who stole an estimated 30-40 pounds of wet cannabis. Deschamps' best estimate is that it would be about 10 pounds dry.

Like all Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) grows, they have cameras everywhere. "I never expected these lunatics coming in during daylight," Deschamps said.

The loss now must be logged with the OLCC. Every plant is tagged and is tracked every 14 days through the OLCC "Metrc" inventory system. "They want painstaking details, wet weight and dry weight," he explained.

Deschamps feels the dealing with the OLCC is not all that bad and said, "Their main concern is that people that are growing are selling their product legally."

The Deschampses take their organic farming seriously, "To eat good food is to know how it is grown. If you grow it, you know it." Like the food, they apply the same enthusiasm to their cannabis. While touring the production area Deschamps went into detail about aromatic organic hydrocarbons known as terpene, and the importance of proper curing to optimize the smell and flavor. He compared terpene to tannins in grapes. "The heritage of the plant has acceptable terpene levels that are required for optimal taste."

As for the business side, Deschamps said that Kate is the "numbers person" and he handles the marketing. The Deschampses customers were happy with last year's product and have increased their orders for this season.

When Deschamps was asked if cannabis infused organic apple cider was in the future, his answer was no. "Focus is knowing what you are not doing, we are focused on growing good flower. We will find sharp people and businesses to invest in and let them focus on that and other opportunities in the cannabis industry."

"Our goal is not to become millionaire farmers," Deschamps joked, "You have heard the old saying, 'Billionaire farmers end up as millionaire farmers.'"

So for now, it's organic fruit, veggies, chickens, bees and cannabis. Oh, and rabbits, don't forget the rabbits.



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

Vincent and his wife Kate in their drying room Saturday, Oct. 15. Their dream of an organic farm has taken a twist.

CANNABIS

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Christine Gardiner, present in the audience, advocated for everyone to attend the Josephine County Planning Commission Public Hearing that will take place Oct. 31 at 6 p.m. in the Anne Basker Auditorium of the County Courthouse at 600 NW 6th Street in Grants Pass. This hearing is important because it addresses growing marijuana in the residential zones. She also wanted to remind the community that cannabis is an "ancestral medication" and we need to have more discussions about how to grow cannabis and "protect our soil, water and pollinators; protecting what we know and love about our valley."

The audience was pleased when Michelle Binker, chief of staff for State Representative, Carl Wilson, announced that she had recorded the concerns addressed during the discussions and will pass them on to Wilson.

If you would like to learn more about Oregon Humanities and their project called the Conversation Project which brings Oregonians together to talk about differences, beliefs, backgrounds, important issues and ideas you can call 503-241-0543 or 800-735-0543 or visit their website at <http://oregonhumanities.org>. You can also contact them about a one-day gathering called "This Place" which is a statewide series of community conversations that will culminate Oct. 28, 2016 at the Chehalem Cultural Center in Newberg.

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