

Cottage Grove meets, dances with its farmers

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Cottage Grove area food producers journeyed into town this weekend for a meet-and-greet with their customers on a picturesque spring Sunday.

The day brought the third annual Meet My Farmer event to the First Presbyterian Church, where nice crowds, especially early on, were introduced to or reacquainted with some of the area's offerings.

Warm, inviting scents greeted the crowd from the start, as Nora Ponce pounded out fresh corn tortillas and browned them on one of Cottage Grove-based nonprofit InStove's 60-gallon institutional stoves. Inside the church, familiar operations such as Log House Plants and the Coast Fork Farm Stand showcased their wares, while visitors could also meet newcomers like Erika Petum, who's been marketing a different purchasing model from Dorena's Star

Ranch for about two years. Petum said the idea of a "flockshare" of pasture-raised chickens — which involves a down payment for free-range chickens to be raised on the farm and then purchased at a per-pound rate — is a new idea that drew a lot of interest Sunday. She said the same was also true for the farm's raw dairy "herdshare," which provides a gallon of grass-fed milk and cream from Jersey cows for a one-time fee. More information on Star Ranch is available at starranchoregon@gmail.com.

At the booth next door, Chuck Stromme connected with potential customers with a new line of products, Wood Butter, Inc., which includes a variety of hand balms, boot butter and lip balm, sticks of which Stromme proudly traded for name-brand varieties to Meet My Farmer visitors. He said Wood Butter had previously been marketed only to friends and family but is catching on fast with a wider



photo by Jon Stinnett

Cottage Grove's 'Liners' brought line dancing back during Sunday's Dance with the Farmers event at Cottage Grove Public Market, and they invited guests to join them to learn a few moves.

audience, adding that a plan to introduce a brand of hemp butter to the public is also in the works. More information can be obtained by calling 541-767-2659 or by emailing chuck@woodbutterinc.com.

An effort to extend the interactions with local farmers

throughout the day led to the first Dance with the Farmers event on Sunday evening, according to Beth Pool of the FEAST (Food, Education, Agriculture Solutions Together) group. About a dozen farmers visited the Cottage Grove Public Market at 10th and Washington

Streets, a building that buzzed with activity all weekend.

Line dancing was the first order of the evening, and a group of about 10 dancers, the "Cottage Grove Liners," showed off their steps to the crowd and invited many to join the line. Pool said the event was another

promotional event to acquaint the community with its food producers, an event that FEAST plans to repeat the first Saturday in November to open and close the 2015 growing season.

Aprovecho adjusting offerings for 2015, planning garden party

Shorter intensive courses, community education on tap this year

BY JON STINNETT
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These days, there's a decidedly laid-back feel at Aprovecho's sustainable education campus outside Cottage Grove.

Aprovecho, which translates to "I make best use of" in Spanish, has taught a sustainable approach to living on a 40-acre land trust west of town for over 30 years, in the process welcoming groups of students from across America and abroad to its campus. But noticeably absent this year is the large group of students that has traditionally come to Aprovecho for extended internships, according to Emily Sessoms,

who spoke with the Sentinel on a sunlit walk around the campus last week.

Sessoms explained that a group of about 20 students came to Aprovecho for an eight-month internship last year, during which many lent their efforts to long-term projects on campus.

"Great things happened here last year," Sessoms said. "But there were a lot of people here all at once."

The crowds on campus drew resources away from certain aspects of running Aprovecho, and Sessoms said Aprovecho chose to take a new direction this year and offer six-week intensive courses in natural building, permaculture and the new sustainable kitchen series as opposed to drawn-out internships.

"It's given us the opportunity to re-focus on things that we can't really get done when the campus is full of students," she said.

The extra time has also allowed Aprovecho to begin branching out

more into the community it inhabits, and Sessoms said the campus will host classes in community-supported education on most Sundays. Subjects to be covered include pole timber framing and beekeeping, and certain aspects of the sustainable kitchen series — which will cover topics like nutrition, fermentation and knife sharpening — will also be offered to the broader community.

Aprovecho's Justin Watt said the nonprofit is also excited to begin processing and acting as a pass-through for individual development accounts (IDAs) that provide matching grant funds up to \$9000 for efforts the organization supports.

Sessoms said that, with new students coming to campus all the time, change is a constant at Aprovecho.

"We just roll with whatever the population is," she said. "It's always had that ebb and flow."

Aprovecho is also busy tidying up



photo by Jon Stinnett

Emily Sessoms surveys the Aprovecho garden. The sustainable education campus has refocused its efforts in 2015.

for a garden party for its supporters this Saturday, April 25, an event that offers a campus tour in addition to food and live music. Tickets for the event can be

obtained online at aprovecho.net or at the door for the event, which begins at 4 p.m.



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Truck crash on London Road injures one

A rollover crash involving a pickup truck and trailer on London Road sent one of the truck's occupants to the hospital Thursday. Josh Brooks of the Oregon State Police said a Dodge pickup was traveling south on London Road when for an unknown reason the truck left the roadway. The truck came to rest partially in the roadway and a nearby ditch with its trailer still intact. Crews with South Lane Fire and Rescue responded to the crash and discovered the truck's occupants, Eugene and Sharon Cooper of Cottage Grove, unable to free themselves from the



courtesy photo

Oregon State Police are still investigating the cause of Thursday's accident.

vehicle. Division Chief Joe Raade said Sharon Cooper was transported to River Bend Hospital with minor injuries. He added that alcohol was not a factor in the accident.

Trillium ovatum - Western Trillium Art by David Hall

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