

Women in Agriculture

Bean commission exec didn't plan ag career

By Paris Achen
For the Capital Press

Andi Woolf-Weibye didn't grow up on a farm and never planned a career in agriculture.

But today, she leads the Idaho Bean Commission and says what's kept her in the industry are the relationships she's cultivated.

"I absolutely fell in love with the people, the community and the lifestyle," she said.

An early moment in tenure as the commission's executive director epitomized everything she values about agriculture.

Looking for a particular variety of black beans for a grower, she asked the



IDAHO BEAN COMMISSION/CONTRIBUTED
Andi Woolf-Weibye is executive director of the Idaho Bean Commission.

commissioners if anyone knew where she could find some.

"I don't have any, but you should ask John," one commissioner replied. "He has some amazing black beans."

The exchange surprised

Woolf-Weibye. The growers around the table were competitors, yet they were eager to help each other and "better the industry as a whole," she recalled.

"That is super hard to find, especially in this day and age, and I don't think you would find it in any other industry," she said.

Raised in Boise, Idaho's biggest city, Woolf-Weibye pursued a Bachelor of Science degree in horticulture because she enjoyed having plants. After college, she accepted an administrative position with the Idaho Barley Commission and started building her knowledge about commodity commissions. Seven years later,

encouraged by her husband, she applied to lead the Idaho Bean Commission and has served as executive director since 2014.

While better known for potatoes, the state's farmers planted about 48,000 acres of edible dry beans in 2026, according to the National Agriculture Statistics Service. Idaho also leads the nation in certified disease-free bean seed production.

As the commission's sole employee, Woolf-Weibye juggles a variety of responsibilities, from bookkeeping and budget-writing to legislative presentations and communications. She believes women bring adaptability

to agriculture, allowing them to pivot quickly between tasks and focus on growers' needs.

During her time at the Bean Commission, she has helped secure nearly \$1.5 million in research funding for the bean industry, expanded the commission's Bean School from a biennial to an annual event that has outgrown its original venue, and strengthened partnerships with researchers, growers and industry leaders.

Outside the office, she lives on a hobby farm near Eagle, where she raises orchard grass along with chickens, ducks, horses, mini donkeys, goats and alpacas.

"Most of the orchard grass we grow, we utilize ourselves or sell to some of our friends and neighbors," she said.

Whether on her farm or at the commission, Woolf-Weibye said the relationships she's built within the industry remain her most valuable accomplishment.

"Being such a small organization, a lesson I learned pretty early on was that we can't complete these missions on our own," she said. "It takes a whole community, and fortunately for us, being in agriculture, community is at the heart of everything we do."

Boshart Davis takes farm experience to Legislature

By Paris Achen
For the Capital Press

Since she was 12 years old, Rep. Shelly Boshart Davis has missed only one harvest. Even after being elected to the Oregon Legislature in November 2018, harvest remains a part of her life.

The Republican from Albany helps oversee her family's farm, growing grass seed, wheat, radish seed, meadowfoam and hazelnuts. She and her business partner also custom bale straw from more than 400 grass seed fields across the mid-Willamette Valley each year. Through Boshart

Trucking, they transport agricultural products and export much of the grass straw to customers in Japan and South Korea. Those operations give her firsthand experience in crop production, transportation, exports, and the business side of agriculture.

Boshart Davis said that firsthand experience helps inform the questions she asks and policies she proposes at the Capitol. She believes lawmakers with agricultural knowledge can more easily understand how proposed policies affect farms, farm families, and agricultural businesses. To that end, she has invited

lawmakers without agriculture experience to visit her farm to see the realities that they face.

House Bill 4130 earlier this year was an example of legislation she sponsored that was informed by her farming experience. The bill clarified state land-use law to eliminate confusion over how to define facilities that process farm products, which qualify for a lower property tax rate. The bill allowed both preparation and processing facilities to qualify for a special tax assessment intended to preserve farmland. The proposal stemmed from the increase in vertical inte-



Rep. Shelly Boshart Davis uses her farm experience in the Oregon Legislature.

gration in farm operations, and it received unanimous support in both the House and Senate.

Another example is her

work on agricultural overtime.

"As a working farmer and business owner, I understand how these policies affect farm families, employees, and the long-term viability of agricultural operations," she said.

"I continue to work with colleagues and stakeholders to identify solutions, address unintended consequences, and ensure that the realities of the seasonal and agricultural work are part of the conversation."

Boshart Davis said women in agriculture often juggle responsibilities on the farm with running busi-

nesses, raising families, and serving their communities. Those experiences contribute to a collaborative approach to problem-solving in the field and at the Capitol. She currently serves in the Legislature with three other female farmers — Reps. Jami Cate, Bobby Levy, and Anna Scharf.

Despite that progress, Boshart Davis hopes women in agriculture eventually won't be viewed as noteworthy.

"I look forward to the day where 'women in agriculture' is no longer a headline," she said.



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Women in Agriculture

Bee Easy Farm is dream come true

By Aliya Hall
For the Capital Press

Nina Sackett Kronberg loves a challenge. As a first-generation poultry farmer who wanted more land for her family after the COVID-19 pandemic, she said she's now living her dream on Bee Easy Farm.

"I get bored when things are easy and routine, so what I love about farming, owning my own business, and keeping up with all these birdies is that it's just a consistent challenge every day," she said.

Bee Easy Farm in Corbett, Ore., started in 2021 as a pastured poultry producer that sells chicken, duck and Goose eggs, as well as offers backyard coop rentals. Now in their fourth commercial season, Bee Easy Farm has transitioned away from meat production to wholesale eggs.

From 2008 to 2010, Sackett Kronberg served in the U.S. Peace Corps doing agricultural extension work in rural Paraguay. She said the experience "got her feet wet" with beekeeping and cover crops, and helped foster her dream of farming.

Sackett Kronberg and her husband have 58 acres, and Bee Easy Farm operates on eight acres. Like most first-time farmers, she said it was a challenge to secure the land, but the farm came available through an estate sale with nine owners in three different states.

"We were thankfully able to navigate that situation and the oddity of it is what actually allowed us to be able to access a farm of this size for our first effort," she said.

The farm is maintained through regenerative farming practices. Sackett Kronberg said they are rebuilding their soil after years of extractive con-



NINA KRONBERG/CONTRIBUTED
Nina Sackett Kronberg and her husband, Martin Kronberg, with their daughter. The family started Bee Easy Farm in 2021 and are first-generation farmers.

ventional farming by minimizing soil disturbance, transitioning organic, and using poultry waste to input nutrients back into the soil.

The geese have also helped with brush control of tansy ragwort, and the farm practices a wholistic ecosystem by increasing pollinator forage, restoring wild bird habitat, and maintaining low conflict with predators as an edge territory.

Sackett Kronberg is a member of the Good Meat Project, which supports responsible approaches to raising, processing, and eating meat. One facet of the program is marketing, which Sackett Kronberg said has been "super helpful."

"They have classes where I can go and sit down and listen to somebody with expertise walk me through how to do it," she said, adding that she's been working with them to create

a pastured poultry marketing tool kit.

These tools have been particularly helpful as Bee Easy Farm is working to scale up to 1,000 ducks in the next few years. She is currently testing her distribution model on 100 birds.

"That's what I see in the future," she said, "hundreds of happy ducks quacking with modular sets of honey bee boxes and replanting all the pasture into a clover mix."

Despite the support from different organizations, Sackett Kronberg said the biggest challenge she's faced has been being treated like she isn't "serious enough" as a female farmer.

"It's like that movie Legally Blonde," she said. "There's a strong sense of you're not quite serious enough to do this, so — to use a duck metaphor — you really gotta oil up your feathers and just let all that roll right off your back."

Kaye dreamed of having horses

By Paris Achen
For the Capital Press

Aileen Kaye grew up in the city, but she dreamed of owning horses. After college, she bought her first horse, and years later, she and her husband found 5 acres outside Turner where they built what she calls "horse heaven," featuring a four-stall barn, an attached riding arena, paddocks, and spacious pastures.

During their search for the property, Kaye saw how scarce Oregon's rural land was becoming, and that became the catalyst for her advocacy efforts to protect the farmland that supports the state's animal and crop production.

Over four decades, she has testified before county commissions and state lawmakers on issues such as urban growth boundaries, aggregate mining, solar development, and other land-use proposals. Among the victories she is proudest of are helping stop a proposed 1,000-acre aggregate overlay zone on prime farmland in Marion County, a housing development outside the urban growth boundary near Jefferson, a natural gas facility near Turner, and several solar energy projects she believed threat-



Aileen Kaye has been advocating for protecting Oregon farmland for more than 40 years.

ened productive farmland.

She credits organizations, including 1000 Friends of Oregon, Friends of Marion County, Ag for Oregon, and the Marion County and Oregon farm bureaus, with helping her become a more effective advocate. Through those groups, she learned how to navigate Oregon's land-use laws, write persuasive testimony, and build relationships with elected officials.

"I continue to advocate for farmland protection because I care deeply for the beauty and bounty of Oregon," Kaye said. "People call us all the time with issues regarding threats to their area. They have no idea what to do. They have no idea what our land-use planning system is. They are so grateful; it inspires me to continue even though it sure is time-consuming."

To help educate the public about the state's

land-use planning system, Kaye hosts a monthly talk show, "Keeping Oregon Oregon" on KМУZ radio.

"It not only helps educate our listeners, but it helps educate me," Kaye said. "Because of the radio show, I have to keep up with current issues."

She also volunteers at a land-use education booth at the Oregon State Fair, where she introduces visitors to "An Oregon Story," a documentary about the history of the state's land-use planning system.

While much of Kaye's work has focused on protecting Oregon's farmland, she has also witnessed changes in who is taking the reins of agriculture's future.

She points to the increasing number of women in leadership positions, from farm bureau presidents to state legislators with agricultural backgrounds, as one of the encouraging developments she has seen.

"We have come a long way, baby," she said.

Kaye's last horse passed away at age 33, and she and her husband, Roger, are considering opening up their private horse facility as a temporary home for abused horses confiscated by the sheriff.

Ag was always part of McGregor's life

By Aliya Hall
For the Capital Press

Agricultural education has always been a part of Cat McGregor's background. Growing up in an agriculture family, McGregor said along with ranching and farming, her dad was an educator.

"I remember wearing the blue jacket back when I was four years old," she said.

McGregor has been the director of Research & Technology for The McGregor Company since 2015. Her work addresses region-specific agricultural challenges and applying practical research to directly benefit farmers in improving their crop yields and management of plant nutrients.

The McGregor company is a leading agronomic retailer in the Pacific Northwest, offering seed production and treatments, crop protection and fertilizer inputs



Cat McGregor is the Director of Research and Technology for The McGregor Company.

as well as research and guidance to help realize a farm's full potential.

McGregor's research program focuses on product development and screening, as well as explores any problems that account managers or customers may have, such as herbicide or fungicide use patterns or agronomic practices.

"We're in a unique position," she said. "We try to understand all the tools that we have access to and all the problems that we see and understand how to connect those two dots."

While McGregor said it isn't uncommon for her to be the only woman in the room, she doesn't perceive it as an advantage or disadvantage.

"I was trying to think of an example where I felt like that was a hindrance, and it's kind of interesting to consider it's just not something I perceived throughout a vast majority of my career, which I'm grateful for," she said.

For young women entering agriculture, McGregor said to get dirty, show up, and be as involved in many aspects as possible. She said she has worked a variety of farm jobs from driving semis and combines to leaf punching DNA samples.

"It's an experience that I think helps me connect with the group of employees that I'm trying to be support for," she said. "It helps me relate to the problems they're facing in the field."

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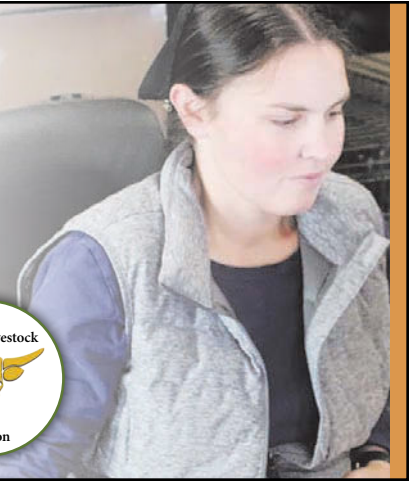
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Women in Agriculture

Farm Bureau leader has roots in family farm

By Aliya Hall
For the Capital Press

Rosella Mosby, president of the Washington Farm Bureau, is focused on the long game, with her goal to leave the organization better than how she found.

“It’s never been about one person or one generation,” she said. “I look at our farm and we’re still the first generation, but at the end of the day we’re borrowing it for a while. If we’re looking at what the next generation brings on board, our job is to leave it stronger.”

Mosby and her husband own the vegetable farm Mosby Farms, which has grown produce for the Puget Sound region since 1977. She has been involved with the Washington Farm Bureau for 11 years, and president for five years.

The Washington Farm Bureau is a grassroots organization built to empower farmers and ranchers, and strengthen the future of agriculture. Mosby said it brings together every commodity and perspective around

one purpose.

“I always say (the Washington farm bureau) is the best tool in the shed,” Mosby said, “and every good tool needs to be sharpened, which is what I’m attempting to do here.”

Originally, Mosby became involved with the Washington Farm Bureau to help advocate for changes around agriculture labor, an issue, she said, that hasn’t gone away.

Although Mosby grew up on a “gentleman farm,” where her parents had day jobs, she said she was initially happy to leave the farm and “not have to pay in the barn again.” Until she married her husband, a first-generation vegetable farmer.

“I missed the years of driving a tractor until midnight,” she said.

While her initial farm responsibilities have entailed managing the retail side, she said that, “like every farm, there’s strong women—they’re just usually behind the scenes.”

Mosby said she doesn’t want to be known as a woman leader in agri-



Rosella Mosby has been president of the Washington Farm Bureau for five years. She is also the owner of Mosby Farms, a vegetable farm she runs with her husband outside of Auburn, Wash.

culture, but rather a leader who happens to be a woman. She added that when it comes to leadership, there’s opportunities for all voices to be heard.

“Our challenges are the same as every body else’s challenges, trying to balance everything,” she said. “We worry about labor regulations, weather, markets. At the end of the day, you’re trying to have a livelihood and a viable future, especially when trying to get the next generation on board.”

Her advice for young women entering the agriculture sector is to find mentors, say yes before they’re feeling ready, listen more than speaking, work hard and to not underestimate the value of their perspectives.

“Women do a lot of jobs on the farm and they bring something to the table that isn’t always known is needed,” she said.

Seed at heart of Organic Seed Alliance leader's goals

By Matthew Weaver
Capital Press

Cathleen McCluskey was originally interested in journalism, media studies and systems thinking. While at Evergreen State College, she honed her interest in farming, media and policy.

But McCluskey, the executive director of the nonprofit Organic Seed Alliance, became interested in seed while working on farms throughout Washington.

“Seed was at the nexus of that,” she said. “Once I started asking questions about seed, I quickly became pretty obsessed with it. Seed, genetic resources and genetic diversity as a whole have been my career and my passion ever since.”

She’s been with the organization for 15 years, holding various positions, most recently policy and advocacy director.

“For organic seed in particular, I see a lot of opportunities,” McCluskey said.

The alliance works with U.S. seed communities, and has made advances over the past 23 years, she said.

“The biggest need is really being able to talk outside of the organic seed sector and build those strategic alliances and partnerships to amplify the work,” she said. “Food integrity begins with seed, as well.”

Evenness and consistency of organic seed use is the largest industry priority, McCluskey said. She sits on the national organic stan-

dards board.

“We want growers to have the seed they need to be successful, and we want that to be organic seed,” she said.

That requires increasing the quantity and quality of organic seed for U.S. and international organic farmers, she said.

“Organic Seed Alliance is looking to ensure that the power of seed is in the hands of growers across the board,” she said.

In the next 50 years, she hopes to make organic seed available to conventional farmers, too.

“We’ve seen an enormous interest in transition to organic,” she said.

That includes farmers transitioning to organic production, as well as seed

growers moving into organic seed production, she said.

“Our constituency is growers who work with seed,

which is every farmer,” McCluskey said. “We want to work with the farming communities across the U.S.

and internationally, to develop resilient, robust organic seed systems and production.”



Cathleen McCluskey is the executive director of the Organic Seed Alliance.



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