



Thurston County

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

The AG Sounder Newsletter



January 2022

Do you have a story you would like featured in
The Ag Sounder Newsletter? Let us know!

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GRANTS available for Thurston County farmers who have experienced an increase in expenses, a decrease in revenue, or had to change the way they do business since COVID began.

Thurston Strong Agricultural Grant assistance for farms, value-added processors, co-ops, and Farmers Markets impacted by the COVID pandemic is available now. If you have

experienced an increase in operating costs, have lost revenue, or had to make changes to meet demand or new safety measures in the last two years, you can qualify for a grant of up to \$10,000. There is dedicated funding for BIPOC businesses. Contact Annie Salafsky of Thurston County Extension with questions about qualifying, at anna.salafsky@wsu.edu.

Thurston Strong Grant guidelines and application.



If you are a farmer, rancher, or rural landowner who has been impacted by the recent flooding, please take a moment (less than 5 minutes) to fill out **this questionnaire**.

Thurston Conservation District and partners are working to collect damage impact information so that they can coordinate potential technical assistance and recovery funding for individuals. This is not related to or duplicative of Thurston County's (or other regional counties) coordination of FEMA funds, but instead is focused on landscape and agricultural damage.

You will find links to Emergency Management resources for Thurston County at the end of the questionnaire, as well as many post-flood resources on **Thurston Conservation District's website**.



Washington's new overtime rules for farms and ranches began January 1st.

As of January 1st, overtime rules for the farming community in Washington State has changed. Overtime now begins once an employee has worked more than 55 hours in a week. It's the first step in legislation that will require overtime pay for work over 40 hours starting in 2024.

[More information about WA State's new overtime laws for farms.](#)



WA State Farm Walk Podcasts, brought to you by WSU Extension and Tilth Alliance!

The most recent episode features Chelsey and Ben Mesman, a fifth generation wife/husband farming team running Mesman Farm, a certified organic dairy operation and Organic Valley Co-op Member in Mount Vernon, WA. Find out how they run their operation, what it takes to be a dairy farmer these days, and learn about their robotic milker!

The Mesman Farm episode.



An OSU study aims to introduce commercial maple syrup production to the PNW.

Eric T. Jones, an assistant professor at OSU College of Forestry, is leading a federally funded project that is providing equipment and training to several Oregon landowners, who are learning how to tap bigleaf maples commercially. If successful, Jones predicts the industry could become as big as Oregon Christmas trees, valued at \$106.9 million in 2020 according to the state Department of Agriculture.

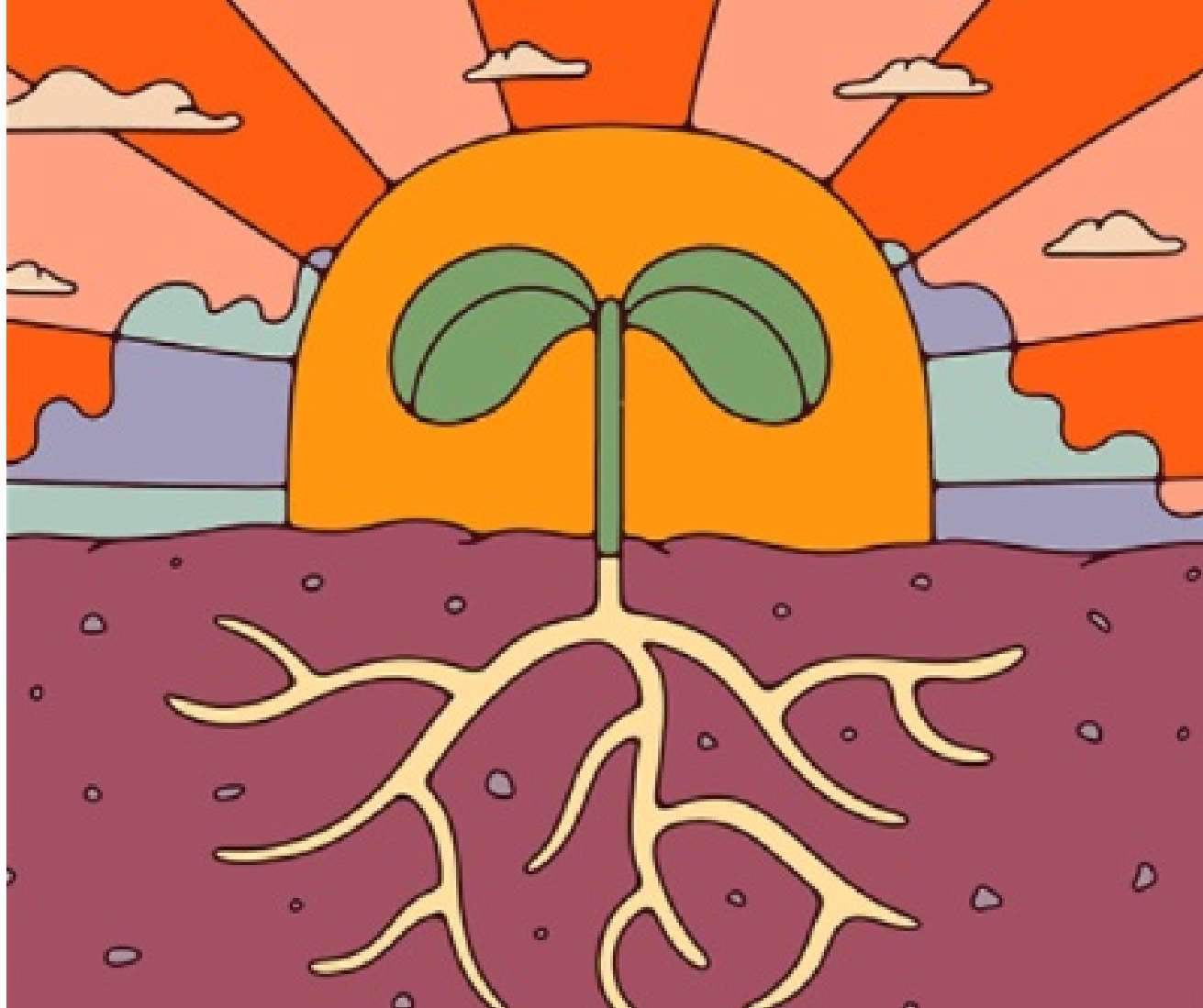
[Article about the maple syrup study in The Capital Press.](#)



South Sound Prairie Grazing Project Update.

Most local range lands occur on sites that historically supported native prairie. Over 90% of the prairies in this region have been converted to agriculture or lost to development, making conservation of this rare system a top priority. Prairie conservation can only be achieved by partnering with private landowners to develop strategies that maintain productive farms. Thurston County Extension, along with The Eco Studies Institute, and the NRCS have facilitated on-farm experimental demonstrations, which help to quantify improvements in habitat for rare species, which are generated by conservation tools (altered grazing regimes, spring rest period, and seeding native species). Additionally, they are evaluating the costs and benefits associated with conservation actions, to provide guidance on strategies and expenses for agricultural producers.

Summary of Project.



Join the virtual Organic Seed Growers Conference, February 4th-11th!

Enjoy a week of roundtables, panels, demonstrations, farm tours, lightning talks, art and music, regional meet ups, keynote presentations, and celebration. Over 70 sessions and 150+ speakers from across the world will share their seed knowledge and passion.

[Click here for more information.](#)



Join WSU's virtual Country Living Expo and Cattlemen's Winterschool. Choose from 83 classes, January 28th-30th.

Class instructors are fellow WA State farmers, industry experts, veterinarians, researchers, and professors from all sectors of agriculture and farming. Take up to 12 classes with standard registration on topics such as: Sheep Dairying 101, Baking Sourdough Bread, Water Rights for Rural Landowners, Raising Poultry, or Canning 101 to name a few. From cooking, crafting, animal care, or machinery repair your class lineup can reflect your learning interests.

Check out this year's exciting class list and register today.

Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training
held virtually with Zoom*
Registration is limited!
Visit our website for more info: bit.ly/WSU_PSA
Fee is \$25 per attendee, includes manual and certificate

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 WSDA

Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

Produce
Safety
Program

Produce Safety
ALLIANCE

January 26 and 27
9 am - 1 pm

Remote training via Zoom, hosted by WSU

February 9 and 10

1 pm - 5 pm

Remote training via Zoom, hosted by WSU

Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training.

AGRICULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND BUSINESS PLANNING EMPRENDIMIENTO Y LA PLANIFICACIÓN DEL NEGOCIO AGRÍCOLA



This course will walk you through the steps to create a farm business plan through weekly online classes with guest speaker farmers and resource providers and connections in regional groups.

Este curso le guiará a través de los pasos para crear un plan de negocios agrícolas por medio de las clases semanales en línea con expertos y agricultores invitados, y conexiones en grupos regionales.

2022 Course Online via Zoom/Curso en línea con Zoom
Tuesdays/los martes 2/8-3/29 6:00pm-8:30pm



 **Food Systems**
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

WASHINGTON STATE
DEPARTMENT OF
**VETERANS
AFFAIRS** 

 **VA**  U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Scholarships available for Veterans and anyone for whom the course fee is a barrier.

Hay becas disponibles para veteranos militares y cualquier persona para quien la tarifa del curso sea una barrera.

¡Curso traducido al Español! This course will be offered with Spanish language interpretation and facilitation. *Este curso se ofrecerá con interpretación y facilitación en español.*

Learn More/Aprende más:

<https://www.cultivatingsuccesswa.org/agricultural-entrepreneurship>
[cultivating.success@wsu.edu/360-399-6052](mailto:cultivating.success@wsu.edu) (español)

Link to Cultivating Success Classes.



Senate Bill 5727 and House Bill 1838 could profoundly affect farming on the floodplain.

Senate Bill 5727 and House Bill 1838 focus on riparian areas, effectively barring the right to farm on floodplains to the floodplain line and beyond by 235 feet, effectively creating mandated buffers in many cases in excess of 400 feet. This legislation advanced by Gov. Jay Inslee and Washington tribes calls for mandatory riparian buffers, with up to \$10,000-a-day fines for landowners who don't plant trees along creeks and rivers crossing their property. Farm groups said the buffers could take a lot of farmland out of production. "It's pretty strident," Washington Farm Bureau director of government relations Tom Davis said. "This can and will likely put some farmers out of business." Fish and Wildlife would give landowners who don't plant buffers a list of "corrective actions." Farmers who lost productive land would be eligible for compensation at least equal to USDA's conservation easement program for up to 10 years. The land would have to be taken out of farm production forever.

Capital Press article about the bills.



Pat Munts retired January 3rd, after more than 15 years as small farms and urban agriculture coordinator for WSU's Spokane County Extension.

She's particularly proud of supporting the formation of the LINC Foods co-op; the Farm & Food Symposium now operated by the Spokane Conservation District; the Spokane community garden system; and Vets on the Farm.

"Her knowledge of botany, soil and the Pacific Northwest is immeasurable and impressive to say the least," said Vicki Carter, the Spokane Conservation District director. "She couples this with her ability to engage and excite groups of people into action. She could be described as a spark to the fire. She is truly gifted."

Munts will continue writing her gardening column for the local newspaper. She plans to start a garden coaching business and write several books, including a guide to starting a community garden and a guide to buying rural property in the Pacific Northwest.

Events, News, Farms, Funding, Jobs

- **Washington Snow Pack is Below Average**
- **Woman Food Entrepreneurs in Oregon get State Help to Develop Business**
- **Swinomish Tribe wants to resurrect U.S. clam gardening**
- **Fruit and Vegetable Supply Chains: Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Opportunities**
- **Job at Pacific Education Institute (PEI), to create programing for educators in WA State, that prepares students interested in entering green economy jobs**



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