

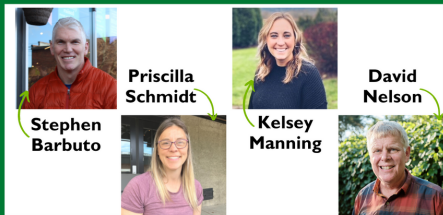


MOSCOW FOOD CO+OP  
COMMUNITY NEWS

# COMMUNITY NEWS GOES RETRO



*We're gearing up to celebrate our 50th anniversary in 2023! This zine-style Community News harkens back to the start of the publication in 1985.*



*"May your troubles be less, and your blessings be more, and nothing but happiness come through your door."  
An Old Irish Blessing*

## Register for the Hybrid Candidate Forum



Monday, March 6 from 6 - 8 p.m. via ZOOM  
or in-person at the 1912 Center

It's Board of Directors election time! Meet the candidates at the Candidate Forum on Monday, March 6, from 6-8 pm at the 1912 Center



## MARCH 2023

READ THE EDITION ONLINE AT [MOSCOWFOOD.COOP/COMMUNITY-NEWS](https://moscowfood.coop/community-news)  
ISSUE EDITOR AND LAYOUT: PEG KINGERY

# What's the Buzz?

## "What do you love about the Co-op?"

By Ashley Fiedler, Co-op Volunteer Writer

"All the Grab and Go items." Kristin Henrich,  
Moscow, University of Idaho Library



"I love that the cashiers remember my name." Richard Parks, Moscow, Software  
Developer



"The Hot Bar. I come every day." Kade  
Bice, Moscow, Allegra Printing



"The Breakfast Hot Bar." Nick Anderton,  
Moscow, Allegra Printing



"I love the variety of healthy foods – the  
meat and bread, especially." Donna  
Meehan, Moscow, Gardener



"A lot of things, but I love that it is next to  
my job and the people here are amazing."  
Hannah Guyer, Moscow, Storm Cellar



# Board Report: Inside the February Board Meeting

**By Mark Thorne, Board President**

Congratulations, we have made it through the first half of winter and are moving closer to spring! The seed catalogs are emerging and the garden planning is underway! I have flats of arugula seedlings growing under lights and am getting ready to plant tomato and eggplant seeds. Anyway, to the business at hand. The Co-op Board held its second meeting of the year on Tuesday, February 7 at the Latah County Fairgrounds. As is the current norm, thank you COVID-19, the meeting was a hybrid of in-person and Zoom participation and included Board members, Co-op staff, and participating owners. The Board reviewed policies and addressed a couple of minor issues with committee charters. We were joined by Autumn Avery, Executive Director of Family Promise of the Palouse.

Read the rest of the Board Report from Mark at <https://moscowfood.coop/board-minutes>

## Mark your calendars for the Board of Directors

# Election!

The 2023 Election will run from March 6 - 19, 2023 through online ballots sent to the email address of each current owner. The voter's guide is available online and in-store!

We are happy to provide opportunities for any owner to vote in the store on a laptop, but we are unable to provide paper voting slips. All owners receive credentials to vote, just give us a call if you don't have an email address. Email your questions to us at [BoardAdmin@moscowfood.coop](mailto:BoardAdmin@moscowfood.coop) or give us a call at (208) 882-8537 ext. 222.



# Art @ the Co-op

Join us for another exciting month displaying fun pieces of our cooperative history in the Good Food Gallery! We're so excited to share the incredible handmade sign by Shishona of Pauseibilities in Palouse, Washington – carefully scroll-sawed to look much like our original wood sign from our days as the Good Food Store.

Stop by the Co-op from March 1 – 18 to see our next installment focused on one incredibly special aspect of our store – our team! We'll be sharing staff shirts, aprons, photos, bios, and nametags from cooperators through the decades.



# **Wines of the World – Willamette Valley, Oregon**

**By Peg Kingery, Co-op Marketing Assistant**

The Willamette Valley American Viticultural Area (AVA), established in 1984, is located in northeast Oregon along the drainage basin of the Willamette River. It stretches 100 miles from the Columbia River to the north to just south of Eugene, Oregon, and is framed by the Coast Range to the west and the Cascade Mountains to the east. It encompasses over 5,350 square miles, making it the largest AVA in the state. Within the Willamette Valley AVA are 11 distinct sub-regions.

The climate here is mild year-round. Winters are generally cool and wet, summers are dry and warm; the most rainfall occurs in winter, spring, and fall. The Coast Range protects the region from cold, wet weather coming off the Pacific Ocean; the Cascade Mountains protect against the dry, desert-like climate of eastern Oregon. Most of the top vineyards are located west of the Willamette River on the eastern-facing slopes of the Coast Range. Here, numerous soil types, deposited millions of years ago by volcanic activity and the Missouri Floods, provide ideal substrate for the vines: basalt, ancient uplifted marine seabed, sand, and silt.

The first vineyards in the Willamette Valley were planted in 1965 by David Lett, Charles Coury, and Dick Erath, UC Davis graduates, who in spite of skepticism from other viticulturists, planted finicky pinot noir grapes at Eyrie Vineyards. Growing grapes in this region can be challenging; sunlight and heat can be in short supply, both of which are needed to ripen grapes. Rain and frost in spring and fall

can damage vulnerable vines. Up until the early 21st century, winemakers were patterning their practices after those used in France and California, often resulting in inferior wines. They began working with (rather than against) the unique weather patterns, developing new practices, which produced wines of much greater quality.

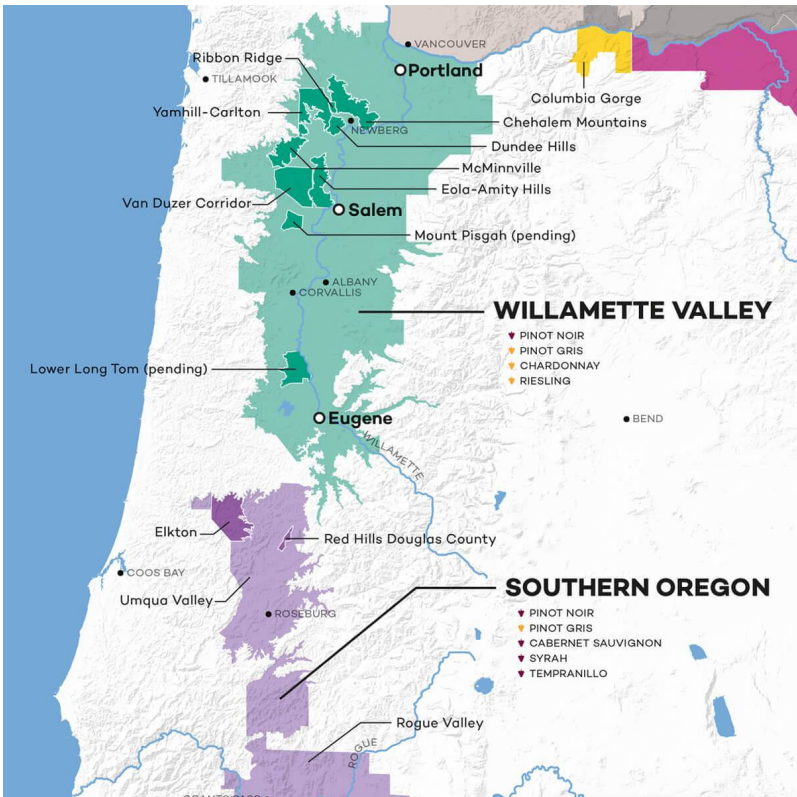
Today, the Willamette Valley is recognized as one of the premier pinot noir-producing regions in the world. Indeed, pinot noir makes up almost 75% of the grapes grown here. Pinot gris, chardonnay, pinot blanc, and several other varietals are also grown. Six of the 11 sub-regions, in the northern Willamette Valley, were established in 2005-2006; the remaining five, in the south, were recognized in 2019-2022. From north to south, these are: Dundee Hills, McMinnville, Yamhill Carlton, Ribbon Ridge, Chehalem Mountains, Eola-Amity Hills, Van Duzer Corridor, Tualatin Hills, Laurelwood District, Lower Long Tom, and Mount Pisgah Polk County.

Pinot noir produced in each of these sub-regions displays different characteristics, depending on the predominant soil type. Overall, the wines are rarely dense and alcoholic. The highest quality wines offer a unique richness of ripe red and black fruit, with earthy, mushroomy, brambly characteristics. They are brightly acidic, firm and delicate in structure, and fruity (but not jammy as they can be when grown in warmer environments).

Although often forgotten about when describing Willamette Valley wines, many memorable white wines are produced from chardonnay and pinot gris. Winemakers in the early 2000's began planting chardonnay rootstock imported from France. These "Dijon" clones produce outstanding wines noted for their complex flavors and ability to ripen in cool climates. The chardonnays are elegant and rich, characterized by notes of citrus, quince, nut, and

mineral flavors. Wines made from pinot gris are fresh with bright acid. They are characterized by flavors of honey, pear, apple, tropical fruit, and citrus, with notes of honeysuckle and baking spices.

Your Co-op has a wide selection of Willamette Valley wines, including some from several of the sub-regions in the AVA. There are numerous pinot noirs, as well as some pinot gris, chardonnay, pinot blanc, and riesling. These wines are wonderful accompaniments to a wide variety of foods, and perfect for sipping on their own. One of my favorite pairings is pinot noir with baked or grilled salmon. Salud!



# Change for Good

## January through March 2023

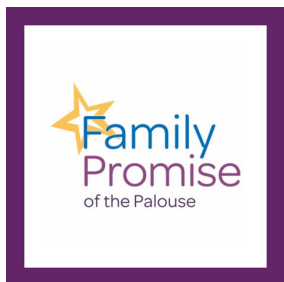
**By Chloe Rambo, Co-op Marketing Manager**

Yes, you can bring in your own bags, jars, and bulk containers! Change for Good is the customer-powered community donation program of the Moscow Food Co-op focused on supporting and rewarding making sustainable choices in the store. You may choose from two community organizations as well as the Co-op's FLOWER program to donate your wooden token(s) to for each reusable shopping bag, bulk container, coffee mug or produce bag used during your shopping trip. Each token is worth five cents and you can earn up to 10 total items per transaction. This Co-op program benefits non-profit, non-sectarian, non-discriminatory organizations whose goals complement or support the Mission Statement of the Co-op.

The following organizations will be featured this month:

Kenworthy Performing Arts Centre  
Family Promise of the Palouse  
Co-op FLOWER Program

Any organization can submit an application online to be featured from April - June at <https://www.moscowfood.coop/change-for-good>. The deadline is 8 p.m. March 10, 2023.





# Co-op Kids

**By Chloe Rambo, Marketing Manager**

Co-op Kids is in full swing! Come join in the fun from 9-10 am every Wednesday in the Co-op Deli seating area.

Would you like up-to-date information about the program? Email us at [marketing@moscowfood.coop](mailto:marketing@moscowfood.coop) to join the mailing list

For more information, send an email to [marketing@moscowfood.coop](mailto:marketing@moscowfood.coop) or call (208) 882-8537 ext. 222.



**CO-OP**  
k i d s

## March Schedule

- Wednesday, March 1: 9 - 10 a.m.**  
Join us at the Co-op in the Deli for a craft!  
To Go Activity: Paper Counting Jellyfish
- Wednesday, March 8: 9 - 10 a.m.**  
Join us at the Co-op in the Deli for a craft!  
To Go Activity: Tissue Paper Names
- Wednesday, March 15: 9 - 10 a.m.**  
Join us at the Co-op in the Deli for a craft!  
To Go Activity: Cork Shamrocks
- Wednesday, March 22: 9 - 10 a.m.**  
Join us at the Co-op in the Deli for a craft!  
To Go Activity: Paper Bag Buddy
- Wednesday, March 29: 9 - 10 a.m.**  
Join us at the Co-op in the Deli for a craft!  
To Go Activity: Celebrating Green Food + Coloring

*Co-op Kids To Go activity kits will be available at each cashier every Wednesday if your child is unable to attend Co-op Kids in-person.*

# **Company Profile: Tucson Tamale**

**By Amy Newsome, Co-op Volunteer Writer**

Todd Martin was dating Sherry, a woman raised in a big Mexican-American family in Tucson. Todd was invited over to Sherry's family home to take part in a "tamalada", a big party where everyone works together to make a stockpile of tamales. He fell in love with making tamales and the experience provided him with the business idea he had been looking for throughout his years of toiling away at a financial software company. He decided to open a small restaurant that specializes in tamales. Sherry was willing to join him in his business venture and they began pouring over her mother's tamale recipes for inspiration. They combined tried and true approaches while also infusing new ideas like tamales for vegans and vegetarians. Before long, they started getting requests at their restaurant, Tucson Tamale, for frozen tamales in bulk so they started producing tamales for the wholesale market. Now they have two manufacturing facilities and can make 20 million tamales a year. Each tamale is still rolled by hand and wrapped in a traditional corn husk.

The tamales come frozen and can be kept in the freezer for up to a year or in the refrigerator for a week. They are already completely cooked and can be warmed by either steaming on a stove top for 30 minutes from frozen, or as fast as 75 seconds in a microwave from the refrigerator.

The Moscow Food Co-op carries Tucson Tamale's Black Bean & Corn, Green Chile & Cheese, Green Chile Pork & Cheese, and Chorizo & Cheese varieties in individual 5 oz packages.

Tucson Tamale is recognized as a NCG (National Cooperative Grocers) Inclusive Trade Vendor Partner. This program was

established in 2022 and strives to identify and highlight producers who represent diversity including BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), LGBTQIA+ Individuals, Women, Veterans, and Persons with Disabilities.

Tucson Tamale's mission is to "To bring great tasting celebration foods to the masses using only clean, natural and healthy ingredients."

Tucson Tamale Snapshot

Founded in 2008

Located in Tucson, Arizona

Organic and Non-GMO Corn

Hormone- and Antibiotic-Free Chicken and Pork

Gluten-Free

This information and more can be found at [tucsontamale.com](http://tucsontamale.com)

*Amy Newsome absolutely loves Mexican food, including tamales!*



# Local Producers Profile:

## Bluebird Grain Farms

By Terri Schmidt, Co-op Volunteer Writer

Sam and Brooke Lucy grew up in the country, Brooke on a cherry orchard in Washington and Sam on a classic New England farm in New Hampshire. After teaching school a couple of years in Arizona, Brooke moved to the Methow Valley. After fishing in Alaska, Sam also moved there to work as an apprentice to an organic grain farmer. The couple met, fell in love, married, and began their journey toward owning Bluebird Grain Farms, which now services the whole Pacific Northwest, California, Canada, and other states.



*Sam and Brooke Lucy*

*Photo by Brooke Lucy*

Sam worked restoring fallow land to productive use, or returning it to its native state. During this time Renee Featherstone was looking for someone to experiment with ancient grains. Growing Emmer seed for Renee was the Lucys introduction to ancient grains. The couple realized there was a market for locally-sourced ancient grains, since no one in the area was growing them. They

jumped in with both feet in 2004 and incorporated Bluebird Grain Farms in 2005. They employ eight people, farm 100 acres themselves and contract with partner farms in the area totaling 800-1,000 planted acres.

Bluebird Grain Farms constantly improves the quality of the soil. Their partner farms use intensive organic regenerative systems, which includes a seven year rotation followed by six years of growing other crops like legumes, corn, and cover crops. Bluebird's goal is to have everything needed to replenish the soil grown on their own farm. The Lucys also follow the moon energy cycle, planting when the moon is waxing to take advantage of the extra energy flowing to Earth at that time.

The farm grows three certified organic ancient grains, all climate resilient. Einkorn, the mother grain, is the genetic foundation for all soft white wheat; it has been grown for over 10,000 years. Emmer, the foundation for Durum wheat, and Spelt, arrived about 3-4000 years later. The Lucys obtained their seed from a Montana State University professor who spent his career gathering ancient seed stock. Before retiring, he distributed the seed to farmers – including Bluebird Grain Farm.

All ancient grains have a very tight husk. Brooke said this husk “holds an incredible amount of nutrients which it transports to the seed in germination.” The spiky husk is a defense mechanism to protect from insects and helps in seed dispersal. Most ancient wheats on the market today are imported, and have their husks shaved off, called pearling, which eliminates part of the germ and bran. It was very important to the Lucys to maintain the quality of the whole grain; they spent years developing a cleaning system that saves the bran and germ. There is more nutrition in one cup of Bluebird's ancient grains than in 3 cups of conventionally-farmed wheat.

Brooke said, “Stores like the Moscow Food Co-op are shepherds of change, bringing high quality food to people. Customers who purchase at those stores are changing the food system. I don’t think people realize how powerful the purchase is. We really appreciate the support of small farms, which leads to positive changes in the farming industry.”

Sam and Brooke have two daughters in college, Larkin and Mariah. When things slow down in winter the Lucys enjoy back country and Nordic skiing. Sam loves duck hunting and working with his bird dogs. Brooke volunteers at the local elementary school, saying, “Children are a great source of joy for me.”

To learn more about Bluebird Grain Farms check their webpage: <https://bluebirdgrainfarms.com> and their Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/BluebirdGrainFarms](http://www.facebook.com/BluebirdGrainFarms)



# Staff Picks

**By Ivy Dickinson, Co-op Volunteer Writer**

The first staff-person I spoke with this month was Alex Bramwell who is currently the Center Store Manager at the Co-op after working in a number of different positions over ten years. For his recommendation, Alex chose the mango flavored RIOT energy drink. He told me he doesn't usually buy into the energy drink

hype as they tend to be too sugary and artificial-tasting for him, but he was pleasantly surprised when he tried some of the product samples that RIOT sent to the Co-op. He found he liked that the drinks have a clean ingredient list and the flavors are all really good. They are sweetened with erythritol (a natural low-glycemic sugar alternative) and provide an energy boost without jitters by incorporating a portion of your daily B-vitamins. The



Alex Bramwell

Co-op Coffee Bar has also featured this product in their Italian sodas.

RIOT Energy was founded in Venice Beach, CA, in 2016 by the husband and wife team of Laura and Steve Jakobsen. Fans of energy drinks, but not appreciative of the existing sugar-chemical

combination drinks that typified the market then, they created their own, more natural energy drink. Designed to deliver the same energy level as traditional energy drinks, RIOT Energy drinks contain 160 mg of caffeine and 100 mg of L-theanine, an amino acid found primarily in green and black tea. Their drinks are “100 percent plant-based, contain zero questionable chemicals, and no added sugar” (<https://riot.energy/pages/about-us>). RIOT Energy drinks come in various flavors, including watermelon, berry, mango, citrus lime, and strawberry lemonade.

In a unique move, RIOT Energy has partnered with realistic metaverse game-company AlterVerse to offer a new storefront to purchase virtual energy drinks in Sky City. Players can stop by the



Daniel Shuman

virtual store, grab a drink for their avatar, power up their vitals, and meet other fans of the product line (<https://www.bevnet.com/news/2023/riot-energy-joins-the-metaverse-with-virtual-storefront-vending-machines-in-sky-city/>). If you prefer your beverages to be in the real world, RIOT Energy drinks are available at many stores, including your Moscow Food Co-op.

The second staffperson I spoke with this month was Daniel Shuman who has been working as the Produce Buyer at the Co-op for two years. For his recommendation, Daniel chose the Christopher Ranch peeled garlic that can be found in the Produce Department directly below the packaged herbs. He told me that



the packaged peeled garlic is a new product that he recommends because it is extraordinarily convenient. While garlic is a staple in many households, we can all agree that the struggle to rid garlic cloves of their thin filmy peels with sticky garlic-covered fingers can be tedious at times. Daniel told me that he has been extremely happy with the quality and freshness of this product that he feels is far superior to most pre-peeled or jarred garlic products. He also added that the garlic has been divided within the bag into shrink-wrapped portions that help ensure freshness.

Christopher Ranch was founded in 1956 by Don Christopher and has been the nation's leading garlic producer ever since. Over 100 million pounds of heirloom garlic, grown on 6,000 acres across California, is produced by the company annually. The company operates as a multi-generational family business. The Christopher Family is proud of their proprietary seed line, which traces its origin back to the Piedmont region of Italy, as they believe it results in a high-quality, consistent product that leads to an exceptional and necessary ingredient for culinary excellence (<https://christopherranch.com/ca-heirloom-garlic/>).

All 100 million pounds of their annual crop is processed at the home ranch in Gilroy, CA. Their state-of-the-art cold storage ensures that Christopher Ranch can provide fresh garlic year-round. The company employs over 1,000 employees and is proud of the effect they have had on the local economy through industry-leading wages, investment in education, and support for conservation efforts (<https://christopherranch.com/corporate-social-responsibility/>). The company offers fresh garlic, peeled garlic, organic garlic, and processed garlic, including tasty options like Garlic Pesto and Pickled Garlic.

# **Products Review:**

## **Natural Makeup Removers**

### **By Dre Arman, Member of the Co-op's Volunteer Sustainability Committee**

#### *Sukin Micellar Cleansing Water*

I have really enjoyed other micellar waters so I was excited to give this brand a go. It does a great job removing makeup, but unfortunately feels very harsh on my eyes. Ultimately, this makeup removal option left the outside corners of my eyes feeling very dry and created a need for an extra moisturizing step in my skincare routine. 3/5

#### *Mad Hippie Cleansing Oil with Ginger, Rosehip, & Pumpkin Seed Oil*

The instructions on this one are a little daunting for me - "Massage oil into skin for one minute, then drape a warm, damp washcloth over face until cooled. Gently wipe from face"

I'm a light makeup wearer, so I used a cotton makeup removing pad to massage the oil into my skin for about 20 seconds, which removed my makeup with ease. After rinsing my face with warm water, my skin felt fresh, clean, and moisturized! I am very excited to continue using this product. Oh, and it smells amazing too! 5/5

#### *Coconut Oil*

I was sure that this option was going to result in a breakout, but I am happy to say that was not my experience and coconut oil is my new go-to makeup removing solution. A small amount of oil goes a long way and is as simple as massaging the oil into your skin until the makeup is lifted from your face, then rinse with warm water and pat dry. This process left my skin feeling softer than ever and moisturized without feeling oily. 5+/5

# Palouse Area Environmental Update

By David Hall, Co-op Volunteer Writer

## Biodiesel Production Plant Proposed for Pullman Property

The Port of Whitman County is assisting AgTech OS, based in Pullman and founded in 2022, to acquire about 184 acres within and just outside the Pullman city limits between the Whispering Hills Subdivision and the Hinrichs Trading Company Ardent Mills garbanzo plant on U.S. Highway 195 at Old Wawawai Road. The acreage is adjacent to the new home construction along the Old Wawawai Road corridor. It would be rezoned from its current residential to heavy industrial commercial.

Most of the acreage is within Pullman city limits. Its location was selected due to accessibility of water from Pullman, as water rights are difficult to obtain from Washington State. It will use 10,000 gallons per day, presumably the municipal water from Pullman (from our sole-source aquifer)—the equivalent of use for about 50 households.

AgTech says that they will reuse 95% of the water and they will get a lot of their energy from solar panels. Another report says, “The biodiesel facility plans to generate all its own energy on site using solar and biomass power.”

According to the Daily Evergreen, Brian Kraft, chief technology officer for AgTech, said that the project is important to the community and is not damaging to the environment, but he acknowledged that some Pullman residents might be cynical toward a new business opening outside the city. “We’re trying to set up right on the edge of Pullman. There are reasons why that’s tough,” Kraft said. “I think people look at that and say ‘Oh, an industrial operation,’ and yes, we’re going to be an industrial operation, but we’re going to be incredibly green.”

Once at scale, the company will purchase about 100,000 tons of canola grain per year from local farmers. The facility is projected to produce 10.8 million gallons of B100 pure biodiesel, 60,000 tons of seed meal, and 900,000 gallons of propanediol per year. Propanediol is used in the production of plastics.

Richard Parnas, AgTech's chief engineer, said, "We want to work with the farming community to get [canola] and then the biodiesel itself will be sold back into the farming community, giving them the carbon credits."

The planning, engineering and permitting could take place as soon as this summer.

References:

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<https://krfp.org/2023/02/20230214>

-Daily Evergreen, January 31, 2023. Josiah Pike. Land purchased for development of biodiesel plant.

<https://dailyevergreen.com/150455/news/land-purchased-for-development-of-biodiesel-plant>

-Port of Whitman County Commission Meeting. February 13, 2023.

<https://www.portwhitman.com/agendas-and-minutes>

-Whitman County Gazette. February 2, 2023.

<https://www.wcgazette.com/story/2023/02/02/news/port-of-whitman-county-purchases-land-for-biodiesel-plant/38630.html>

-Bio-based Diesel. January 23, 2023. Ron Kotrba. New 11 mgy biodiesel project under development in Southeast Washington state.

<https://www.biobased-diesel.com/post/new-11-mgy-biodiesel-project-under-development-in-southeast-washington-state>



Each year the Palouse-Clearwater Food Coalition hosts a Food Summit to celebrate our local and regional food systems and continue creating a vision for the future! The 13th annual PCFC Food Summit is focused on Planning,

Policy, and Partnership and putting our relationship-building and food systems work into practice. The summit features a keynote panel on culinary and agri-tourism, Ignite! presentations, hands-on workshops, and local food tastings. Come to learn and network, and leave with practical skills for planning, implanting policy, and developing partnerships to support our local and regional food system.

Find more information on the Palouse-Clearwater Food Coalition's Facebook page or their website:

<https://www.facebook.com/pcfoodcoalition/> OR

<https://www.pcfoodcoalition.org/food-summit>

# **Cooking Around the World: Benin with Modeste Houenou**

**By Judy Sobeloff, Co-op Volunteer Writer**

Modeste Houenou began college in his home country, the Republic of Benin, with an interest in physics and original goal of becoming a teacher and researcher. His older brother had come to Pullman in 2013 and his older sister had come to Pullman in 2017. For his second year of college, Modeste decided to join them in Pullman, and he began taking classes at Spokane Falls Community College, on the Pullman campus of Washington State University (WSU), in the fall of 2021.

Modeste says he really likes Pullman and that he finds “the whole community awesome” here. He appreciates how Pullman feels safer than a bigger city and how “you can really get to know your professors” at SFCC. He particularly likes the library, attending church both on campus and in the Pullman community, and “getting to know a lot of people.”

When he finishes at SFCC, he hopes to enroll at WSU and major in computer science, and then potentially move elsewhere to see what other communities in the U.S. might have to offer, since “there may be something else in other places that I might not know about.”

He says, “As Africans, we value culture a lot. However, it’s important to mention that culture varies a lot from one African country to another even though some of our countries share some dishes in common.” He adds that for Benin “it’s important to like food because that’s an important part of our culture.” He explains, “We have so many different types of food. For people who are not

necessarily sure of what they'd like, we have so many different things for them to taste.”

Modeste says popular dishes in Benin include different types of corn dough, beans, eggs, jollof rice, porridge, and that people typically eat a lot of fish. He shared a few vegetarian recipes with me: atassi, a beans and rice dish which is served with dja, a fried tomato sauce, and which is often (though optionally) served with fish; and ata, which are fried balls of bean paste. He said that people usually cook atassi on the weekend, and he explained that ata is often a special treat for kids that can be made at home or bought from street vendors.

He said, “For us when we were kids, before you can get one ata, you should work hard. You have to do something special in school, and then your parents will give you the money to go and buy it. When you're older, you would have your own money and you can buy it. Ladies are out there selling it in the evenings, when people get out of work and when people get out of school. If it's super delicious and a lot of people want it, they're going to be waiting in a queue.”

He explained that women do the preparations at home and then cook the ata out in the street in front of small shops. “The ata is usually cooked using fire concentrated within a metal stove-like station.” Children go to school in the morning, come back home for a few hours midday, and then return to school for a couple of hours in the late afternoon, so they are also getting out of school in the early evening.

When my family made Modeste's atassi (rice and beans) recipe, we particularly liked it in combination with the dja (fried tomato sauce) and fried fish.

Making the ata required peeling the beans, which was a fairly

labor-intensive task, but our family really enjoyed them. I thought they were like nutritious and beautiful biscuits, and I particularly liked them in combination with the side dish that contained bell peppers, salt, and oil. Fred said “they go far beyond the usual expectations of deep-fried food.”

In addition to French, the official language of Benin, and English, Modeste also speaks two indigenous languages commonly spoken in Benin: Fon and Goun. Roughly 13 million people live in Benin, and Fon is the most commonly spoken indigenous language.

Modeste added that Benin has the largest city on a lake in Africa, Ganvie, which is also Africa’s largest city on stilts, and that there are “a lot of historical places in Benin. There are a lot of beautiful things, but also there are some that are not.”

In particular, he says it is important to remember Ouidah, a town in southern Benin. “The slaves used to pass through there and through The Gate of No Return before getting on the ships.” He explained that a concrete and metal arch called “La Porte du Non-Retour” (which means The Door of No Return, or The Gate of No Return) now serves as a memorial to commemorate the more than one million Africans who were shipped into slavery from Ouidah. He recommended the recent movie, *The Woman King*, which he said tells a true story based upon his ancestors.

Ata (serves 10)

Cooking time: 2-3 hours

1 pound of beans (red or white)

8 ounces of any vegetable oil such as canola or sesame

3 cloves of garlic

Black pepper to taste (recommended but not required)

1 small onion

Salt to taste

3-8 green, red, and/or orange chili peppers (peppers are recommended but not required; chili peppers are preferred but can substitute bell peppers)

1. Sort the beans to make sure that they are all clean.
2. Pour the good beans into a bowl and add enough hot water to the point where the beans sit below the water, at about 5 inches from the water level.
3. Wait one hour or so if you are using white beans and about two hours if you are using red beans. Then, check to see if you can easily remove the skin of one of the beans with your bare fingers. If you can, then you are ready to move to the next step. If you can't, then you will have to wait a bit longer until you are able to do so.
4. Strongly massage or rub the beans so that all or almost all of their skins get peeled off. (Alternatively, if you have a bean peeler, after doing step 1, you just need to make the beans go through the peeler before pouring them into the bowl of water.)
5. Using a mixer or food processor, grind the peeled beans until you obtain a paste.
6. Grind two cloves of the garlic and leave one clove of it aside (to be used later).
7. Grind the black pepper.
8. Grind the chili or bell peppers, if you want to use them.
9. Chop the onion and add a small amount to the ground pepper mixture.
10. Pour the ground chili or bell peppers into a pan, add salt to it, and let it cook for 5 minutes.
11. Add the mixture of the black pepper, a little bit of salt, and garlic to the bean paste.
12. Stir the paste until it absorbs the ingredients.
13. Pour the oil into a pan and let it boil very well.
14. Add the remaining clove of garlic and remaining chopped onion to the boiling oil.



15. Using a ladle without pores, get some of the paste and pour it into the boiling oil. Depending on the diameter of your pan, you can pour from 5 to 10 balls of paste into the pan at once.

16. Wait until the balls of paste fry very well and you get a brown or reddish color (about 10 minutes) before taking them out of the oil. Note: you will have to flip the balls before the 10 min or so has passed so that the other side of these balls also get into contact with the oil and become brown.

17. Repeat until you use up the quantity of paste you have. Every time your ata is ready, take them out of the oil immediately so that they don't absorb too much of it.

18. Let both the pepper mixture and the ata cool down. Serve the ata on a plate with the preferred quantity of pepper on the side. Enjoy!

Atassi (serves 10)

Cooking time: 2-4 hours

1 pound of beans (red or white)

8 ounces of vegetable oil or palm oil

2 pounds of rice (one that is not a fragrant rice)

Salt to taste

Spices (such as "Complete" or something similar or onion and garlic powder)

Crushed or dried shrimp (optional)

3-7 pounds of any fish you like (optional)

Green, red, and/or orange chili peppers (chili peppers preferred but can substitute bell peppers)

1-1/2 cups tomato sauce

16 ounces vegetable oil for frying

1/2 - 1 small onion

1 clove of garlic

1 small ginger root, peeled

1. Sort the beans to make sure that they are all clean.
2. Pour the beans in a big cooking pot, add enough water so that the beans sit below the water and let it cook for about 25 minutes if you are using white beans or about 50 minutes if you are using red beans. You can check from time to time to ensure that the beans are cooking but make sure they still have some firmness in them. Note: the beans shouldn't be too fragile or too hard after you cook them.
3. Rinse the rice three or more times and pour it into the pot containing the cooked beans.
4. Add salt to taste.
5. Add water but not too much. Note: you can add a small amount, then let it cook and see if more water is needed, add another small amount and see, etc. The quantity of water to be added depends on whether the rice you are using absorbs a lot of water or not. However, generally, the water should sit at about 3 inches above the mixture of beans and rice.
6. Stir and let the mixture cook for about 7 to 10 minutes on high heat first and then about 25 minutes on low heat. You know it's ready when the rice and beans are fragile (and can be easily crumbled just using your fingers) and have absorbed all the water.
7. Pour the tomato sauce into a pan and let it cook for 3 minutes.
8. Chop the onion into small pieces.
9. Using a food processor or blender, grind the onion, garlic, and ginger together, but grind the pepper separately.
10. Pour the ground onion, garlic, and ginger mixture into the pan containing the boiled tomato sauce.
11. Add the "Complete" spice or the one you have to the mixture.
12. Add the optional ground peppers to the mixture, if you like.
13. Mix it up and let it cook for 1 to 3 minutes.
14. Add the 8 ounces of vegetable oil or palm oil to the mixture you just prepared.
15. Mix it up, add salt, and let it cook for 10-15 minutes.

16. Get your fish ready by peeling their skins if needed, cutting it to take out the wastes and seasoning it with “Complete” as well as salt. Let these seasoned fish rest for about 10 minutes.

17. Pour the 16 ounces of frying oil into a pan and let it boil.

18. Using the boiling oil, fry your fish until they have the texture you desire (usually, we let them fry until they turn out a brownish color).

19. Remove the fried fish from the oil and let them cool down.

20. Serve the atassi with the fried tomato sauce mixture (called “dja”) and a fried fish. Enjoy!



# Moscow Opens Nominations For Earth Day Awards

The city of Moscow has opened nominations for the 2023 Mayor's Earth Day awards until 5 pm March 20. Nominations can be submitted by letter to the city of Moscow, Administration Department, Attention: Sustainable Environment Commission, P.O. Box 9203 Moscow, Idaho 83843 or by email to [sec@ci.moscow.id.us](mailto:sec@ci.moscow.id.us).

Nominations should include the name of the nominator and nominee, contact information for both, and a brief description of why the nominee is qualified. The awards recognize Moscow residences for sustainable practices which foster environmental sustainability through conservation, recycling, reuse, construction, or design and public education. The awards are open to individuals, businesses, students and schools, nonprofits, service organizations, government, building or developments, green visionaries, and green neighbors. The nominations will be forwarded to Mayor Art Bettge, who will determine award winners.

## Palouse Prairie Charter School Tours By Trish Gardner, PPCS Administrative Assistant

Palouse Prairie Charter School is hosting tours for parents/guardians of prospective students on the following dates: Fridays, February 24 and March 10 and Wednesday, March 29. All tours take place from 9:30 to 10:30 am. Attendees of Friday tours may arrive at 8:40 am to observe a K-5 Community Circle before the tour. School tours will include an exploration of our school and playground, discussion of our educational model, and a Q&A session with the school director and students. Please RSVP for a tour with your name and phone number.

For more information and lottery applications, please visit [www.palouseprairieschool.org](http://www.palouseprairieschool.org).

Enrollment lottery applications must be received by 10:00 am on Thursday, March 25. Email [office@palouseprairieschool.org](mailto:office@palouseprairieschool.org) with questions or to RSVP for a tour. Palouse Prairie Charter School is located at 406 Powers Avenue in Moscow.