



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Find Christmas tree farms with Oregon's Bounty

Use a smartphone to easily find Christmas tree farms and the best of winter harvest with Oregon's Bounty at oregonfb.org/oregonsbounty.

Now that the Halloween pumpkin and Thanksgiving turkey have had their turn in the seasonal spotlight, the public turns its attention to another Oregon agricultural product: the Christmas tree.

With an ideal climate for evergreens, Oregon has long been the #1 grower of fresh Christmas trees in the nation. Last year Oregon's Christmas tree production was valued at an impressive \$123.9 million, making it the 11th largest out of 220+ agriculture products raised in the state, according to the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture. The Pacific Northwest Christmas Tree Assn. reports that there are 700 Christmas tree farmers in Oregon, raising 5.2 million trees on 42,000 acres.

To help consumers find family farms selling Christmas trees, and other favorites of winter harvest, Oregon Farm Bureau offers the searchable Oregon's Bounty website.

With a smartphone, search for "Oregon's Bounty" or go directly to <http://oregonfb.org/oregonsbounty/> to quickly and easily find family farms selling Christmas trees — as well as other seasonal ag products, such as holly, wreaths, hazelnuts, chestnuts, cranberries, pears, apples, winter squash, broccoli, cauliflower, mushrooms, and garlic.

Oregon's Bounty allows visitors to search for farms by region and/or a specific ag product. Each of the more than 300 listings of farms and ranches includes hours of operation, contact information, and driving directions.

One of these is Green Ridge Christmas Tree Farm, an almost-100-year-old farm owned and operated by Fritz Ellett, president of Wasco County Farm Bureau. Green Ridge offers u-cut and pre-cut Christmas trees, selling directly to the public from the farm, instead of on the wholesale market.

"We're helping people create holiday traditions and good memories," said Ellett. "Family and friends come out to the farm and pick a Christmas tree together. They get to enjoy the fragrance of a real tree and the satisfaction of supporting a local farm. You can't get that from pulling a fake tree out of the attic."

A fresh-cut tree is also more environmentally responsible than a petroleum-based version.

“Live Christmas trees are a natural, recyclable, renewable resource that won’t end up in a landfill like artificial trees,” he said.

Ellett said sometimes people are surprised to learn that Christmas trees are raised as a crop like wheat or grass seed.

“We’re not going out into the woods and chopping trees down,” said Ellett. “We’re growing trees in a farm-like setting.”

Instead of an annual harvest, an average 7-foot tree takes about 8 years of growing before it’s ready for sale. Farmers have rotating plots with trees of varying ages to ensure there are enough mature trees by November and December. A small farm like Green Ridge hand-harvests its trees, or allows visitors to cut their own, while larger farms use helicopters to haul in trees from expansive acreage. After a crop is harvested, new trees are planted.

In Oregon, the most common Christmas tree varieties are Douglas fir (“The traditional tree, full and symmetrical with a fresh smell,” said Ellett.), Noble fir (“Very attractive, more layered, holds up well.”), and Grand fir (“Rich, dark-green color and the most aromatic.”).

Green Ridge has started to offer the lesser-known Concolor fir, which Ellett described as “having the coloring of a blue spruce, but with long, soft needles and sturdy branches.”

Of course, all varieties of live Christmas trees are biodegradable. Many communities publicize tree recycling programs soon after New Years.

Enjoy the bounty of winter harvest — and support Oregon family farmers — with Oregon’s Bounty at <http://oregonfb.org/oregonsbounty/>.

Photos

Oregonsbounty.jpg: Find local family farms offering the best of winter harvest with Oregon’s Bounty.

Greenridge.jpg caption: Farm Bureau member Green Ridge Christmas Tree Farms in The Dalles offers u-cut and pre-cut Christmas trees.

Helicopterharvest.jpg caption: Helicopter harvest at Farm Bureau member Noble Mountain Tree Farm, one of the world’s largest wholesale Christmas tree suppliers.

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* Note to Editors: “Farm Bureau” is a registered trademark; please capitalize in all cases.

The state’s largest general farm organization, Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) is a grassroots, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization representing the interests of the state’s farmers and ranchers in the public and policymaking arenas. First established in Oregon in 1919, Farm Bureau is organized in all 36 counties and has 7,000 member families that are professionally engaged in agriculture.

Oregon Farm Bureau President Barry Bushue is a third-generation farmer raising a variety of vegetables and berries at a nearly century-old farm near Boring, Oregon. He is OFB’s 15th president.