



# Capital Press

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Serving Farms and Ranches in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and California

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# Four Wash. farms earn Salmon-Safe certification

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Four farms in King County, Wash., have earned the right to use a label that lets consumers know that their agricultural practices are "fish friendly."

The farms, all located in the Snoqualmie Valley near the outskirts of Seattle, are the first in Washington to win Salmon-Safe farm certification.

Portland, Ore.-based Salmon-Safe and Stewardship Partners, a nonprofit organization in Seattle, worked together in launching the Salmon-Safe program in Washington state.

David Burger, executive director of Stewardship Partners, said the four farms are proving every day that successful agriculture and preservation of fish habitat can work hand in hand.

Program manager Larry Nussbaum praises the concept behind Salmon-Safe certification, saying it shows that farmers and environmentalists can work together on salmon conservation.

"Because our major salmon streams flow through our most productive farmland, farming practices that protect stream habitat and water quality are essential to regional salmon recovery efforts," he said.

The Snoqualmie River supports runs

### RECOGNIZED FARMS

- **Oxbow Organic Farm** – Oxbow is on a 100-acre nature preserve in the Snoqualmie Valley near Duvall, Wash. The heart of this preserve is an "oxbow" lake, which provides critical habitat for salmon and other wildlife. From May through November, the farm sells produce at the Ballard and Magnolia farmers markets. It also offers a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) membership program, which provides a weekly box of produce from May through October.
- **Full Circle Organics** – This 140-acre certified organic farm near Carnation, Wash., located along the banks of Griffin Creek and the Snoqualmie River, cultivates more than 75 varieties of fruits, vegetables and herbs. The farm sells its produce to Seattle markets, at several farmers' markets and through a CSA program.
- **Jubilee Farm** – Located near Carnation, Wash., this farm specializes in CSA and offers members not only the chance to be part of a summer CSA, but also the chance to be a part of fall, winter and spring CSAs.
- **Cherry Equestrian Center** – The center, which has a new classical dressage barn near Duvall, has 146 acres of facilities, pastures and trails. Its philosophy centers around doing what is good for its horses.

### REWARDS

The Salmon-Safe logo, one of the nation's most recognized regional eco-labels, can provide a competitive advantage to growers and food companies that qualify to use it on their products.

This fall, Stewardship Partners began partnering with PCC Natural Markets to label and promote local Salmon-Safe produce in Seattle-area retail stores.

Trudy Bialic, spokesperson for PCC,

said the label is important because it lets consumers know that the farming methods that qualify for Salmon-Safe certification make a crucial difference to the health of the streams and rivers, salmon and other aquatic wildlife, and even the quality of drinking water.

"People don't always understand that what farmers are doing on their land can make a huge difference," she said.

And while many consumers tend to focus on making sure their food hasn't been grown with chemicals that could harm their health, they don't always make the connection that sustainable and organic farming practices also benefit the health of the overall environment, she said.

In Oregon, Salmon-Safe certification has already proven its value.

Bill and Karla Chambers of Stahlbush Island Farms in Corvallis, Ore., said that the food companies that buy their vegetables want to know that the farm's crops are grown in a more ecologically sustainable way. "Salmon-Safe is our proof," said the Chamberses.

According to the organization's website, monthlong Salmon-Safe wine promotions in the Portland area typically result in a 15-20 percent increase in sales for participating growers.

More than 25 wineries in Oregon have been certified.

### CERTIFICATION

In Washington state, an independent third-party review looked specifically at farm practices in five areas: riparian and wetland management, water use, erosion and sediment control, animal management, and the responsible use of chemicals and pesticides.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the King Conservation District are supporting the pilot phase of the program.

Fund raising is under way to create a similar program next year for 25 farms in the Snoqualmie, Skagit and other watersheds. For information about the program, call Nussbaum at (206) 292-9575.

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