

Welcome to TWIN VISTA RANCH



Marrowstone Island, WA JC Viveros Summer Semester 2015

Introduction and History

Twin Vista Ranch sits on a 26-acre site on the Olympic Peninsula's Marrowstone Island. Lisa Painter donated the farm to Washington State University and the Jefferson County Land Trust after her partner, Jeanne Clendenon, passed away in 2011. Lisa wanted to protect the land from ever being developed and ensure that it would continue to be managed organically and sustainably.

When Lisa and Jeanne bought the property in 1972 they began to raise cattle, chickens, bees, and fruits and vegetables. The ranch continues the work they began, but the new Farm Manager, Martin Frederickson, has added sheep, pigs, pasture and hay. As part of the gift, the goal is to also have the farm serve as a center for educational outreach. Currently the farm is used for classes, workshop, seminars, FIELD (Farm Innovation, Education and Leadership Development) and crop studies and breeding by graduate students.

Responsibilities

During this internship my responsibilities were to be adaptable, because on a farm projects can change day to day. The days always started with feeding all the animals. Some animals had to be bottle-fed, like calves born twins that were rejected by their mother. As a routine all the animals were checked for injuries or disease and their surroundings for any safety concerns. The rest of the day was dedicated to projects around the farm. Twin Vista Ranch had a lot of maintenance, upkeep and repairs, just as you would expect on any working farm. Some of the major projects were the installation of irrigation to a large part of the 26-acre ranch, important for pasture cell rotation of sheep and cattle. Other projects consisted of demolition and cleaning out a portion of the hay barn to make room for more of the hay that was produced on the farm.

An important part of this internship was working with OSA (Organic Seed Alliance). OSA is a non-profit organization and is the leading organic seed institution in the U.S. They support the growing organic seed movement and on-farm diversity by educating local farmers and other agricultural community members. They emphasize diversity, ecology, and shared benefits. They conduct organic plant breeding and seed production research on the old Brown Dairy Farm in Chimicum, Wa. that is also part of the Jefferson County Land Trust. My responsibilities were to help them with trials conducted on Twin Vista Ranch, which was keeping trials free of weeds, staking any tall plants and setting-up pollination tents. Twice a week Martin and I would go to the Chimicum location and assist them with any needs.



Tools of the trade. There's a lot of old growth and blackberry bushes that had to be cleared for maintenance and to make room for a new fences or structures.



(Above) Once a week I would have a FIELD class, or sometimes a guest lecture from WSU. This particular lecture was on the food science aspect of quinoa. Anyone from the farming community is invited to attend.



(Above) This is Nash from Nash's Organic Farm (Sequim, Wa.) and Michael Colley, Executive Director of Organic Seed Alliance. This was a FIELD trip and another great learning experience. Nash started farming in 1994 with his wife on 10 acres. They currently lease and farm over 450 acres. Their approach is to lease and not own, dedicating most of their funds to running the business. We joked that when Nash speaks, even the dog listens. (Below) Kale diversity.



(Above) As part of my internship I would occasionally have tours of different cideries or wineries, this particular one is Algerian Cider. One of only a few true organic cideries in Washington State. Their fruit comes from their organic orchard. Here, 'Bear', a former wild land firefighter, was showing me how he controls weeds by wrapping the bottom of trees with old fire fighting shelters and applying a light flame that suppresses the weeds for a few weeks at a time. I have to add that their cider is amazing. I like the traditional European cider, and this hits the mark on every aspect, their passion for the craft is truly reflected on their end product.

Summary

What I will take away from this experience is how much dedication, hard work and continuing knowledge it takes to run an organic farm. It is definitely a lifestyle that requires around-the-clock attention, but this also makes it a rewarding experience. Harvesting a crop that you consciously tended to all season with your hands, without the aid of pesticides or raising your livestock on organic and sustainable feed you prepared from your own farm, altogether contribute to present and future stewardship of our agricultural land. A great deal of my experience cannot be learnt from a textbook. The best part of this experience was my active involvement, networking and learning from those people. The continuing education that I received in a class setting, from the Farm Manager and individuals from OSA where very valuable to my education and understanding of what it takes to properly and ethically run an organic farm. This experience can be applied to any aspect of agriculture that I decide to pursue in the future.



Bucking hay for the farm. Most of the hay comes from the farm, but some is outsourced from Eastern Washington. It is hard work, especially in the hot sun.



Matilda and B-Dub, 2 of our 3 bottle-fed calves. Not common, and also not a desired trait, but some cows would have twins and abandon one of their offspring. (Below) OSA trials on Twin Vista Ranch. These were pollination tents set up to have a control pollination of either wind or insect.



(Left) are some of the peas used by a graduate student for his wedding trial of quinoa. (Right) Spinach. Some of the work for OSA was pulling out the males at senescence, or when it had fully pollinated the female. As you can see the male is turning yellow and the female, with the lady bag, has seeds up and down its stem.



(Above) Another FIELD trip, this one was to Outspreader Farm Seed (Port Townsend, Wa.). They produce organic seed for local and nationwide demand. Here they used Hubbard leaves and covered them with mulch to suppress weeds. They are not sure how it works, but they do it every year because it works so well. That is Mae in the background, one of the many young farmers in the FIELD program. Excellent program for anyone that is looking to learn basic and hands-on experience from several farms in the area.