



MFC Vendor Profile:

By George Farm



Jonny Steiger with one of By George Farm's 21 Jersey cows.

Jonathan (Jonny) Steiger and Tyson Fehrman are the owners and operators of [By George Farm](#). Their farmstead creamery is located on the banks of Yale Creek and Little Applegate River in Southern Oregon and includes 21 grass-fed Jersey cows. We reached out to By George Farm to learn more about their farm and business. Check out our interview with Jonny of By George Farm below for a glimpse into dairy farming and cheesemaking.

MFC: How did By George Farm get started?

BY GEORGE: In 2009 Tyson and I interned at the Siskiyou Crest Goat Dairy through the [Rogue Farm Corps](#). After completing the internship we returned to land outside of Madison, Wisconsin and started By George Farm – primarily growing produce for fine dining restaurants. After two years in Wisconsin we had the opportunity to return to Southern Oregon to farm. Back then, we were hand milking 3 cows and running a raw milk herd share while working on cheese recipes.

MFC: What inspires you to be farmers (and cheesemakers)?

BY GEORGE: Our inspiration for farming came from wanting to provide quality food to our community. Our inspiration for cheesemaking sprouted from our understanding that value-added products were the way to go. I (Jonny) grew up on a

From the GM:

Exploring Expansion

by Anne Carter - General Manager

It seems like every area of Medford is experiencing construction: new residential neighborhoods, new retail spaces, and road construction. From 2010-2016, the population of Medford grew 8.9%. The city is planning for continued growth over the next 10 years. The Co-op has also grown a lot in recent years and is planning for continued growth.



The official ribbon cutting in 2011.

When the Medford Food Co-op opened in August 2011, we had 1,200 owners. During our first 12 months, we had an average of 262 customer sales transactions per day and weekly sales of \$53,000. Currently, we have over 3,500 owners, an average of 481 customer sales transactions per day and weekly sales of \$94,500. We have added staff, another checkout lane, opened a Cafe, and leased an empty lot behind the store to provide additional parking and access to and from



Jonny with a calf.

may not be as high as many other breeds but we strive for quality not quantity, and we hope you can taste the pastures in our cheese.

MFC: What is the most difficult part of the cheesemaking process?

BY GEORGE: Patience is the most difficult part of cheesemaking. Our Buncom in Bloom takes 10-12 hours to make and is then flipped and patted daily for 7-12 days. Our raw aged cheeses take regular maintenance and can sit in the aging room for over a year while we wait for the flavor to develop.

MFC: What are your most popular products?

BY GEORGE: Our most popular cheese would be our [Smoked Garlic Cheese Curds](#) or our [Buncom in Bloom](#).

MFC: Tell us something most people don't know about By George Farm.

BY GEORGE: Something most people don't know is that the farm was named after Tyson's grandfather George. The year we started farming George passed away, and Tyson used the money his grandfather left him to buy seeds. We thought it was fitting to name the operation after him.

On By George Farm, the calves and cows are raised with every care for the animal's well-being, and the cheese is handmade with care for the art of cheesemaking. Support your local farmers: pick up By George Farm's delicious local cheeses here at the co-op or find them at the weekly [Growers Markets](#).



Smoked Garlic Cheese Curds.

the Co-op. It is exciting to see the growth in our small co-op in such a short time!



As we look ahead at the ability of the Co-op to serve the future needs of our community, it is apparent that our current store will be too small. A year ago, we contracted with a research group to assess our performance in our current location and evaluate our potential for growth. The study concluded that our existing store size will ultimately hamper our sales potential. In order to better serve our growing owner and customer base, the board and management will begin gathering information and studying our expansion options.

You – a Co-op owner, customer and supporter – are the reason the Co-op exists and is thriving! Join us on Sunday, May 20th in the Café for our [Annual Owner Meeting](#) from 1:30-2:00pm. Meet the people you help elect to serve on the [Board of Directors](#) and the staff who keep your Co-op running smoothly. Your voice matters and your feedback is important to us as we make plans for the future. After the owner meeting, stay for the second annual [Good Food Festival](#) in the front lot featuring food samples from local vendors, cooking demonstrations, and family-friendly activities.



Staff Spotlight

Get to know the staff!

Jesse Smith-Richards



How long have you been cooperating?

I have been working at the Medford Food Co-op for over one year now. However, working at a co-op is in my blood. When I was young my father worked for the Ashland Food Co-op for many years. I know at that age I was probably very entertaining for the staff there and I helped move them from their old location into the building they've been in for over 20 years now.

What do you do at the co-op?

Just last month I was promoted to Grocery Manager. I'm very excited for my new role and the opportunities I will have to make the Medford Co-op an even better place to work and shop at. My days

can vary greatly and this job has many different tasks to perform; which is part of what makes it so challenging and fun! I work with a large portion of the staff to make sure we are operating smoothly. Placing orders, stocking the store, and helping customers are all hugely important tasks to me. I also help keep our computers running and have a soft spot for produce.

What brought you to the co-op?

After I left my previous job I knew a bit more about myself and the environment I wanted to work in. I knew I needed somewhere that would value my input, allow for change, and be a positive space. I had worked previously with several employees already working at the co-op, so thought I would come and drop off my resume. The response I received made me a bit emotional, and I left with a smile on my face. I knew I couldn't work anywhere else!

What do you like best about your job?

I've always loved learning about something and taking the time to really understand and master it. I have a lot left to learn, and that's very exciting for me. I can't wait to see how my expectations change as I grow into the position. Having a variety of things to do doesn't hurt either.

Tell us your co-op favorites:

Right now, I'm very excited for the Atlas Blackberry Cider 6-pack that Jimmy just brought in! My real favorite has been all the local products we get, especially Annie Macs; I'm a sucker for their banana bread.

How has working at the co-op affected your life?

Working at the co-op has allowed me to take more pride in what I do. Knowing that where I work is focused on our local economy. Not sending our profits off to a CEO and executives in another state allows me to give my all willingly as it helps not only my store, but my co-workers and our customers.

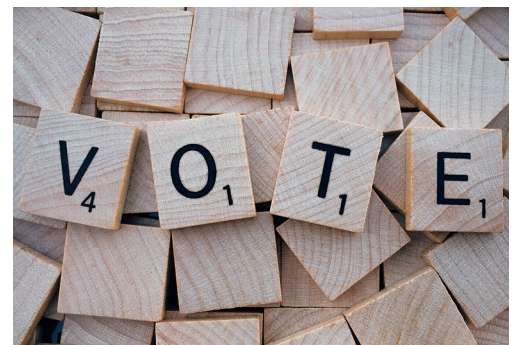
From the Board:

Proposed Bylaw Changes

by Fran Batzer - Board Member

Bylaws are exciting because as a community, we get to write the rules for our business. Bylaws are the foundation of our cooperative. As we grow it is important to reflect on our bylaws and make updates as needed. Recently, the Board assigned a committee the task of reviewing the bylaws and recommending changes. Specifically, we wanted to provide clarification around the change to the number of board members, balloting by electronic means, voting shares per owner, share redemption, and unclaimed dividends.

The committee proposed changes to [Section 2.1](#), [Section 3.6](#), [Section 3.7](#), [Section 4.2](#), [Section 5.5](#), [Section 7.4](#), and [Section 8.1](#). The proposed changes were discussed amongst the Board, and there was unanimous agreement to bring these proposed changes to the MFC owners for a vote. The full text of the proposed



bylaw changes can be found on the Co-op's website. On the website, you can [view the proposed new bylaws](#) showing the changes in legislative format (changes shown by strike-through of deletions and highlighting of additions). Here is a summary of the bylaw changes:

Section 2.1 – Admission. Medford Food Co-op owners have the right to one vote per share.

Section 3.6 – Quorum and voting. Should a multiple-member household desire voting privileges for more than one individual, additional ownership shares must be purchased.

Tell us something we don't know!

In the year before Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans my step father visited the city. After the levees broke he spoke with his friends there and knew they needed help and he had to do something. We didn't have a large sum of money we could donate to help them rebuild but he was running a small business, Computer Drop-off. As donations of old and broken computers were dropped off by the community, we rebuilt them. Eventually we had over 60 computers which we drove down from Ashland to deliver to groups in New Orleans. Seeing the reaction, especially of the children who used the computers to play games, to this relatively small donation was shocking and showed me how every small thing can make our world a happier place.

What do you like to do outside of work?

I'm a very big geek. I keep up on all sorts of news related to movies, TV, comic books, and video games. My fiancée and I enjoy cooking together, watching Saturday Night Live, as well as other shows on Netflix, Hulu, etc. Right now a lot of my time is being invested in planning my wedding!

Where did you grow up/where have you lived in your life?

I was born and raised in Ashland. A lot of people I know left once they finished school but I have always been very happy with the Rogue Valley and all it offers, so I've never left! I can't see that changing any time soon.

Section 3.7 – Balloting by mail. Electronic option to vote was added. When voting electronically, a copy of the issue and the ballot will be sent electronically with notice of the date to be returned with the owner's signature.

Section 4.2 – Number and qualifications. The board shall consist of not less than five nor more than nine individuals.

Section 5.5 – Decision-making. Duplicate wording removed.

Section 7.4 – Redemption. Share redemption for fully paid shares.

Section 8.1 – Distribution of net savings. A housekeeping unit that has purchased one share will be eligible for one unit of redemption; dependent upon the method of redemption offered, a housekeeping unit that has purchased one share may be asked to designate one primary, legal-age owner, to serve as the redemption recipient. Dividends remaining unclaimed after four years may be forfeited by the Board and reverted to Medford Food Co-op.

Owners will receive an e-mail invitation to vote on the bylaw changes and new board members in a couple of weeks. Directors will provide several open meetings for owners to ask questions about the bylaw changes. Stop by on Thursday, April 19th from 4:00-6:30pm, Saturday, April 21st from 2:00-4:30pm, or on Sunday, April 22nd from 2:00-4:30pm if you have questions or just want to learn more about the Co-op.

And be sure to cast your vote on the bylaws and electing directors to the Board. Our Co-op depends on your participation and input! We hope you'll celebrate with us at the Annual Owner Meeting and Good Food Festival on Sunday, May 20th.

Important Dates

Bear Creek Stewardship Day

Volunteer to help us clean-up litter along the Bear Creek Greenway for Earth Day! Join us on Saturday, April 21st from 9:00am-12:00pm. More information at bearcreekstewards.org.

Annual Owner Meeting & Good Food Festival

Join us for the [Annual Owner Meeting](#) in The Café at 1:30pm on Sunday, May 20th, and stay for free samples, cooking demonstrations, and family-friendly activities at the [Good Food Festival](#) to be held in the front parking lot from 2:00-5:00pm.

Brews, Bluegrass & BBQ

Brews, Bluegrass & BBQ is a benefit for the [Rogue Valley Food System Network](#) and [Rogue Farm Corps](#). Join us at RoxyAnn Winery on June 2nd from 12:00-8:00pm for 8 hours of foot-tappin' bluegrass music, regional craft beers, and delicious BBQ. More information available at roguebbb.org.

Rogue Valley Farm Tour

Your local food co-ops, Ashland Food Co-op and Medford Food Co-op, are organizing the first annual Rogue Valley Farm Tour! On Sunday, July 22nd from 10:00am-4:00pm, visit 25+ local farms around the Rogue Valley, participate in a variety of activities from tastings to field tours, and learn about the abundance of our local food system. More information on Facebook [@RogueValleyFarmTour](#).

Bylaw Q&A Sessions:

Thursday, April 19th
4:00-6:30pm

Saturday, April 21st
2:00-4:30pm

Sunday, April 22nd
2:00-4:30pm