

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Ron Pearmine is a new Salem Harvest Board Member

How he got involved in Salem Harvest

We farm 1,200 acres of crops north of Salem on River Rd, 600 acres of vegetables grown for NORPAC Foods. I have been farming since 1972 when I graduated college. My connection with Salem Harvest began 3 years ago when my daughter Molly McCargar, who is now managing the farm with her brother Ernie, connected with Alicia, then President of Salem Harvest, to harvest beans that were available. Last summer I was asked to serve on the Salem Harvest board.

We have grown vegetables for NORPAC Foods since 1972 and are proud supporters of our local cooperative. A growing number of NORPAC growers cooperate with Salem Harvest, thanks to Molly's work. It is her work that we can expand on.

His Favorite Part about Salem Harvest

My favorite part of Salem Harvest is the efficiency, energy and enthusiasm of all the people involved. The passion to organize and execute each harvest is clear. The systems in place that bring people together are state of the art, and old-fashioned, and they work. My most favorite part is to see people harvesting crops.

As my Aunt said as we were picking cherries when I was 10 in a salvage situation after a rain had caused damage, as much as I disliked picking cherries, I dearly loved my Aunt, she said, "SAVE THE CROP" repeatedly from her ladder. One of those childhood memories that carry through our lives.



Salem Harvest Volunteers getting dirty while harvesting squash in 2012 (PHOTO FROM THE 2012 HARVEST OF DAN WELL'S SPAGHETTI SQUASH FIELD)

Studies Show Gardening Boosts Your Immunity

Spring is finally here in Oregon. The cherry tree blossoms on the Capitol Mall have come and gone. There's nothing more tempting than to get out and enjoy every second of that sun while it's around.

Gardening is not only a great opportunity to get outdoors and soak up some Vitamin D, but, according to recent studies, it is also a chance to improve your health.

In a world where everything is triple washed to clean away the pathogens that might make us ill and there is hand sanitizer on almost every desk, gardening provides a much needed opportunity to get our hands dirty.

The "hygiene hypothesis" says that the increased occurrence of chronic diseases in first world countries is due to our lack of exposure to healthy microbes. These chronic diseases can include hay fever, asthma, diabetes and other autoimmune conditions. In other words, sanitizing away all the bacteria might only be solving one problem, while creating another.

Microbes are all around us. They're in the air that we breathe, the water we swim in and all over our bodies. While there are disease causing bacteria, there are also beneficial bacteria that help by fighting off the dangerous microbes. The cells in the average human body are

outnumbered by bacteria 10 to 1 and there are 500 different strains of bacteria just on your skin. Foods like yogurt contain beneficial bacteria. But, did you know that the soil contains good microbes too? According to a study done at Texas A&M University, there can be as many as 13,000 species of microbes in one gram of garden soil.

In other words, there is a real reason to dig your hands into the soil and get a little dirty whenever possible. Just think of gardening or getting out and volunteering with Salem Harvest as another way for you and your family to get a daily dose of beneficial bacteria. Your immune system will thank you for it!

If you're not already a Salem Harvest volunteer, [please register](#) today.

FURTHER READING

[Interesting article](#) from the Atlantic focused more on Agribusiness

Check out the [Human Food Project](#). If you're interested, you can find out what microorganisms are living in your gut!

More in depth explanation of the [Hygiene Hypothesis](#)

Salem Harvest

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CONSIDER MAKING A GIFT

You can [make a gift](#) to Salem Harvest, or make a donation in a friend's name. Your donation helps pay for harvest equipment, signage, software fees, liability insurance and more. We have no paid staff or office fees, so all donations go directly toward our core mission - To feed the hungry by harvesting food that would go to waste.

ABOUT SALEM HARVEST

Since 2010, Salem Harvest has donated over 233,000 pounds of fresh, locally grown produce from 307 harvests to Marion-Polk Food Share and their 100 affiliated food pantries.

Salem Harvest connects farmers and backyard grower with volunteers who harvest produce that would otherwise go to waste. More than half of each harvest is donated to the Marion-Polk Food Share or is affiliated food agencies.

Since 2010, Salem Harvest has harvested over 322,000 pounds of fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables at more than 230 harvests.

OTHER CONTACTS

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Harvest Director

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