

STEP BY STEP

Step by step, Capay Hills Orchard has been reaching more and more customers and has been expanding the business, this time with adding an Instagram page. Follow us at CapayHillsOrchard! Another way we are growing is in our customer base all over the world. We want to mention a few of our more unique customers, so you can see what we mean by “all over the world.” In the past seven years we can say with certainty we have sold to England (both to individual customers and to a small convenience shop in Kensington), to Japan, Canada, the Virgin Islands, Australia, and perhaps by now to all 50 states as well. We have also sold our almonds to several other unique customers—businesses and restaurants. To name a few, we have sold to a popular restaurant in the downtown district of the nearby town of Winters (they put the almonds in a locally-sourced salad), to a vegan restaurant in Roseville, to individuals who make sprouted almond butter and almond milk with them in large quantities, and to several candy companies. One of the candy companies is Winnepesaukee Chocolates, based in Wolfeboro, New Hampshire. This company buys large quantities of our Fritz variety almonds to use in their candy products. They prefer the Fritz variety because it has a deeper almond flavor than the Monterey or Nonpareil varieties, which makes it an excellent choice for candying. If you would like, we invite you to check out their website, at <https://www.winnepesaukeechocolates.com/ourStory.php>. If you live in their area, try out some of their products and you might eat some of our almonds, too!

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MEET THE FARMER: ALICIA PADDOCK

If we were to progress in order of farmers from oldest to youngest, Nicholas would be next. However, he works a farm-related job and is in high demand right now (working 12-18 hour days), and has not had the time to be interviewed. So the next article will be about him, and this one will be about me, the writer of the newsletters. Strangely enough I am writing this one while working a job in Estes Park, Colorado. The reason this newsletter is late is because during the beginning of August I was busy moving and downsizing my chicken business and then for the past two weeks I have had intensive training for my job as a Catholic camp missionary at Annunciation Heights in the Rocky Mountains. This is my first day off!

I work in Colorado because I decided to do some more mission work for a year and wound up working at a Catholic camp where I assist with family camps and summer camps, retreats, and an outdoor lab program where I teach children about the outdoors and their relationship to it. I love this job, though it is hard to be away from the land I love in California. Back in 2018 I graduated from Franciscan University in Ohio with a degree in Sociology and minors in Spanish and Human Life studies. In the past year, while working many different farm-related jobs, I started up a chicken and egg business on the farm, and I made 99% of the almond butter you have eaten this past year! I also do any other jobs on the farm that need to be done, including sending out your packages. My favorite thing about living on the farm is being outdoors in God’s great creation all the time and having plenty of animals. My least favorite job on the farm is gleaning after harvest, or making almond butter (after you’ve made several thousand jars it does get a little tiring!).

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Top to bottom: our driveway was about 2 feet high in weeds after we mowed the cover crop; late rain in May gave us a last rainbow; the nonpareil 2 weeks from harvest.

A CALIFORNIA FARM KID

What is it like to grow up on a farm? This question, or a variant of it, is asked of each member of our family quite often. To answer simply, I think it's safe to say we all love it! Yet at the same time, living on a farm entails a lot of hard work and extra responsibility, and it isn't as easy to leave home for a vacation at the beach as it is for most people. Yes, we have owned many more pets than most people have, and we have had much more space to run and play in than most children growing up. Those are the obvious things.

While we never really took living on a farm for granted, we also never really understood how different it is from how most people live until we started giving farm tours and would have city friends from out-of-state come and visit us. It seemed natural to us to have dogs barking and howling all night, roosters crowing and hens cackling at any time, to keep a bucket indoors to fill with food scraps for the chickens, and to do a "rain dance" of excitement when the season's first rain came as a sign of the end of fire season and hope for a good harvest. As kids, we played outside all the time, rain or shine, and Dad (Brian) was always hard at work, usually outdoors doing landscaping, fixing equipment, or working in the orchard. The times in between litters of kittens or puppies and sets of chicks or ducklings are very short (right now we have chicks), and there is always some kind of fruit or nut in season for us to eat. This is and has been our life, for over 18 years now, and we all love our country life. We understand that many people are fascinated by our farm lifestyle because it is not normal, and we welcome any questions you or your children may have for us about what it is like to grow up as a California farm kid. If you'd like to have a question answered, please email me (Alicia) at thelupine-ladyca@gmail.com. Maybe your questions will even be featured in the next newsletter!



WASTE NOT WANT NOT

Food waste is a big topic right now, and rightly so. Yet as big as it sometimes seems, there is also less than you might think. Let me show you how the California almond industry has engineered ways in which to virtually eliminate almond waste from the harvested product. Remember, when you harvest an almond there is the nut, the shell, and the hull—three parts in total and only one of them humans consume directly. So what happens to the hull and shell if it does not get wasted? And what happens to the nuts that are chipped or broken? Firstly, chipped and broken nuts are still 100% fine for consumption; however, most people are honestly rather picky and only want to eat a perfect-looking product. So the chipped nuts often are turned into almond milk, ground into almond butter, milled into flour, or added chopped to various other products. The hull (60% of the almond's weight) is too bitter and tough for humans to eat, but it is a great cattle feed for dairy cows or as foodstuff for farmed poultry and insects. The shell is often used as livestock bedding but can also be processed into a plastic-like substance or as a replacement for petroleum used in making tires. The sugar from the hull is also being investigated as a food for bees or as an alternative to high fructose corn syrup. Lastly, almonds are good not only for one's internal health but also for external health, such as being a natural ingredient in skin care products and cosmetics. No waste!