

# THE FARM STORE



Welcome to our Farm Store and Kitchen! Built in 2016, this building has become our confluence of food and flavor, chefs and farmers, our community, and you. Each day, farmers and neighbors gather here to celebrate the nourishment of our minds and bodies with a full diet grown on the land before you. It is here we relish in the joys of what it means to walk the walk, to have a space to share critical conversations surrounding land management and food access. It is here that we open up the door for people to learn what real, flavor-packed organic food can do for the soul.



The Lawrence family bought this farm from Friday Holmes in the early 80's. Sarahlee Lawrence transitioned the farm to organic in 2010 and thus, Rainshadow Organics was born. Over the years, the farm has grown into an intricate ecosystem that sustainably supports itself and the community that depends on it.

Rainshadow strives to produce a balanced diet that celebrates both the abundance and the confines of a Central Oregon farm. In our farm store you will find a diverse array of organic veggies, pastured and organic meats and eggs, heirloom grains, both whole and freshly-milled, and many yummy preserved foods.

Through the components of holistic, seasonal approaches to ingredients, menus, and the dining experience, we cultivate convivial gatherings which support a regenerative food system that will sequester carbon, improve the health of our soils and waterways, localize economies, and build greater food security. We are on a mission to promote widespread regenerative eating by delivering our particularly diverse farm to our community table. We hope you can taste the collaboration.

Be sure to sign our visitor log in the Farm Store before beginning your self-guided tour!



# THE TWO-ACRE GARDEN



The Two-Acre Garden is where it all began, with Sarahlee growing her first ever vegetables for a 30 member CSA back in 2010. Today, the Two-Acre remains at the heart of Rainshadow Organics, and has evolved into a space for culinary exploration and scientific experimentation. The land you see before you is our center for no-till practices, water conservation, on-farm fertility, production, and seed saving. As you walk around, see if you can spot some of the exciting things we have in the making.



## Water and Conservation

After cascading down from its glacial headwaters in the Three Sisters Wilderness, and carving its way through volcanic canyons and ponderosa pines, water flows to our farm from Whychus Creek via Three Sisters Irrigation District. In the early 2000s the farmers of Lower Bridge began to pipe the irrigation ditches that had been dug over 100 years prior. Our district is completely piped and is a model of water conservation that benefits aquatic species and food security.

Drip lines you see laid out on our beds can reduce water use by 30-70% due to their ability to resist wind, evaporation and run-off.

It has been a journey to build organic matter in the soil and the process has increased the water holding capacity of our soil tremendously. This allows us to fully meet the water needs of our crops with a fraction of our irrigation allotment.

The Two-Acre Garden is also an incredible venue to enjoy dinner with friends. Visit [rainshadoworganics.com](http://rainshadoworganics.com) to find out more about our full event calendar, including farm-to-table dinners, brunches, weddings, and more!

Did you know that seeds hold within them a genetic makeup of the environment they're grown in? Central Oregon is a volatile environment with a short growing season. We select for hardiness, early ripening, and exceptional flavor. As you walk around, see if you notice any crops that have begun to set seeds.

## A Life Source as Old as Time

Every year, many of our crop varieties come from saved seed including spinach, onions, carrots, eggplants, peppers, melons, tomatoes, corn, fennel, beans, cilantro, dill, potatoes, and tomatillos. We plant and save open-pollinated seeds because we believe in freedom from GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms) and patent control of seeds. That freedom begins in the tiny little powerhouse that is a seed.

Each organic seed has a core microbiome, which is both intelligence and guardian for the plant. When the seed germinates, the core microbiome surrounds the roots and calls in everything the plant needs to thrive from the air and living soil. The core microbiome supports the plant throughout its life until it makes its way through the plant and into the new seed for next year.

Because the Two-Acre is at the heart of the farm, it is the perfect location to trial new and exciting varieties and then select the best of the best for seed saving.



# THE FLOWER PATCH



Welcome to the flower patch! All around you, you'll notice areas of the farm that really start to dive deeper into the idea of what a "full diet farm" looks like. To the north, you can observe our poultry pasture, where we raise broiler chickens and heritage turkeys. To the south, you'll see our 15 hoop houses, where we grow nutrient-dense food all year round. To the east, our Big Field rolls out and our dairy cows can often be seen grazing on our cover crop. And of course the flower patch, where beauty and bees meet in a tango of true symbiotic pleasure.

## Poultry Pasture

Throughout the warmer months, the pasture is home to a rotation of nearly one thousand broiler chickens and turkeys. The birds arrive in their first days of life and wait cozily in their chick houses until they're mature enough to roam, scratch, and peck through the pasture of carefully selected perennial species. The access to pasture allows for a nutrient rich, high protein diet that encourages healthy growth for our birds.



## Pollinators: Bees, Birds, and Flowers

Buzzing behind you is our hive of golden pollinators, our honey makers, one of time's oldest alchemists: our bees! Would you believe it if we told you this little hive of workers, drones, and their queen pollinate this entire farm? Each day they wake up to paint their pollen across the landscape along with birds, bats, and other pollinators who frequent our flower patch. We honor them by choosing open-pollinated and untreated seeds. They are left with plenty of honey reserves to sustain them through Central Oregon's cold winters.

In a quickening world, a breath here is cause for a pause - who greets you here now? Is it Spring's first tulips and daffodils in the wind? The peak-of-season snapdragons, or the crowns of sunflowers standing regal in summer? It's often said that farmers live at the forefront of climate change, and standing here now allows you a chance to anchor yourself to the metronome of time, of blooms and buzzing, and of chicken clucks. Enjoy the breath.

## Hoop Houses

Flowers fall away and bees huddle in their hives, but farmers on a full diet farm stay occupied. In winter, our set of 15 hoop houses provide just enough extra warmth and wind protection to grow enduring crops like Siberian kale, bunching onions, and Napa cabbage. These items provide a welcomed taste of winter freshness, partnered alongside our storage root crops, meats, milk, and eggs. There are many times during the short winter days that we watch our thermometers and proclaim our gratitude for the shelter our plants have within these greenhouses.

As our storage crops dwindle and the kale gets tired after providing for us all winter long, we turn our eyes to the year ahead. One by one, the hoop houses are filled with heat loving crops like snap peas and pole beans, summer squash and cucumbers, sweet and spicy peppers, eggplants, and tomatillos. There is no escaping the cyclical yet unpredictable swings of Central Oregon, but our hoop houses make it much more possible to enjoy the richness of a diverse diet.



# THE BIG FIELD



After months of planning and preparation in our propagation houses, huddling around the crop plan, tending to our hoop houses, and alchemizing the land's gifts into nutrients for our soil, we approach the Big Field like a blank canvas ready to be painted. Each summer season culminates here. We grow grain and vegetables for fresh eating as well as winter storage. Freshly-pulled weeds are served off the flatbed's silver platter to our pig herd. Though the season picks up in pace to match the whirl of the tractor and the tick of the transplanter, we continue to carry with us the regenerative and biodynamic practices that you've seen leading up to this point.

## On-Farm Fertility

We practice the principles of "closed loop cycle" farming, which means we are working towards developing systems that rely on nutrients we can grow rather than depending on external inputs. In order to achieve this, we are constantly working on developing recipes for teas and fermented plant juices that we can utilize directly in our irrigation system. This allows us to weave a stronger, healthier ecosystem through our unique soil fertility plan.

## Crop Rotation

The dance between cover crops with our dairy cows and laying hens, our row crops, and our grains is one that is methodically planned, rolled out, and then stewarded. Crop rotation and diversity helps prevent soil deficiencies and imbalances that can lead to pests and disease. You won't find anything growing in the same plot for at least five years.

Come August, green gives way to gold when we cut the water and prepare to harvest our grain. We grow soft white and hard red varieties, as well as corn and buckwheat for milling on the farm. Following harvest, the wheat stubble is crimped and a diverse array of more than twenty plant species such as clover, triticale, and oats are seeded into the understory. Our dairy cows are turned out onto the newly established cover crop to graze and feed soil microbes and thank us with creamy milk and rich eggs.

The cover crop is left to rest over winter before being tilled in and prepped with composted manure ahead of next season's vegetables. If a large expanse of row crops doesn't strike you as diverse, take another look. In a single row, we often have many different varieties growing. Can you see the difference?

This dance of diversity - from grain to dairy cow, broccoli to clover - is what it means to create a healthy, living ecosystem to nurture the land and its community, from microorganisms to humans.

