



CERTIFIED LOCAL FOOD  
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## Behind Our Table

Our Table is an antidote to the prevailing industrial food system. Industrial agriculture has given us large quantities of cheap food of poor nutritional value with a vast social, economic, and environmental cost. Our rural communities have been decimated and the average US farmer is over 57 years of age.

The need is urgent: rates of obesity and food-related chronic diseases are reaching epidemic proportions. There is a rising awareness of the true costs of industrial agriculture and the industry's inability to confront the twin problems of climate change and peak oil puts our food supply at risk. This reality coincides with recent trends emphasizing quality food and growing awareness of the economic benefits of re-localization while reminding us that food, community, and culture have ancient connections.

Our Table is a new paradigm that brings multiple stakeholders together under a single vertically integrated cooperative. Our Table members and workers care for their environment, their family of workers, and their customer community with the hope of building a lasting model for human collaboration around food.

### The Farm

- Home for Our Table Cooperative is a 58-acre diversified farm in Sherwood, Oregon, about 15 miles south of Portland. Due to the wonders of Oregon Land Use law, farms like Our Table can exist in close proximity to the communities they feed.
- From January 2011 through March 2012, a team of design professionals collaborated on a master plan for the farm based on Permaculture systems and Biodynamic farming principles. Working with nature, farmers emphasize on-farm nutrient cycling, stacked ecosystems, and watershed sustainability.
- Being committed to polyculture, farmers grow a variety of crops that include a mix of annual and perennial plants--specifically mixed vegetables, blueberries, flowers, and pastured chickens.
- The farm earned its Organic certification from Stellar Certification Services in June of 2014.
- The farm relies on 30KW of solar electric panels to supply power for all irrigation, refrigeration, and residential needs. A portion of Our Table CSA shares are delivered by electric assist bicycle to various Portland locations and electric vehicles are used as transportation around the farm.

### The Co-op

- At Our Table, farmers, producers, and customers work together to create a handcrafted, integrated food system. Those participating govern the effort through a multi-stakeholder cooperative composed of three membership classes: workers on the farm, independent, regional food producers, and customers.

- The cooperative was incorporated in February of 2013. As of March 2015, the co-op has 5 worker members and over 50 customer members.
- A seven-member Board of Directors consisting of representatives from each stakeholder group oversees the cooperative. The entire cooperative uses a decision-making framework called Dynamic Governance.

### The Business

- With 13 full-time employees, everything coming from the farm is grown, cooked, aggregated, and sold in-house by co-op members. This allows an honest and fair accounting for both wages and environmental impact.
- The completion of a packing & washing facility during the Fall of 2013 enables Our Table to properly prepare and package produce for either cold-storage or transportation. Being a “first-mile” aggregator, the farm serves as a hub for pooling and delivering food from regional farms and food producers that maintain cooperative membership.
- A grocery and commercial kitchen opened on the farm in November of 2014. Being both 80% Oregon-sourced and Certified Organic, the grocery offers a curated selection of foods and products, including dairy, produce, meat, health and wellness, dry goods, and prepared meals. A bulk section and a beer, wine, and growler station round out the offerings.
- In 2013, Our Table celebrated the release of its first cooked food offering, a Winter Squash Soup, which was inspired by its farm-grown Marina di Chioggia Squash.

### The Community

- Integral to Our Table’s mission is a connection to place via the land, the community, and the regional cuisine. The farm represents a gathering place to cultivate connections with the local community and culture through classes, food shopping, meals and events, fundraisers, U-picks, tours, and more.
- The co-op has welcomed many guests to the farm across the seasons during its Our Table in the Field dinner series. Through collaborations with local chefs and wineries, dinners are hosted in various settings on the farm using ingredients that reflect both the season and land where the food is crafted.
- The non-profit arm of Our Table, the Manav Foundation, works to build a locally adapted culture by hosting on-farm educational activities. Events have included Farm to School visits and multi-session Permaculture and farming courses.