



A CELEBRATION OF LOCAL FOOD, WINE & BEER

October 2, 3 & 4 ★ 2015

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For Immediate Release

Harvest Fair Names Stephanie Larson

2015 Friend of Sonoma County Agriculture

Award recognizes leadership in “agritourism” and training of “agropreneurs”

SANTA ROSA, Calif. – August 25, 2015 – From working to increase “agritourism” in Sonoma County to training young “agropreneurs” in ways to increase food production, Dr. Stephanie Larson stands out as a steadfast champion and promoter of Sonoma County’s \$3 Billion dollar agriculture industry. As the director of the University of California’s Cooperative Extension in Sonoma County and a farm advisor for over 20 years, Larson has provided high level livestock and range management expertise to local farmers and ranchers and developed economic opportunities to encourage young farmers towards success. The Sonoma County Harvest Fair is pleased to honor Dr. Stephanie Larson with the 2015 Friend of Sonoma County Agriculture award.

“The support that Dr. Stephanie Larson has provided for over two decades to agriculture is immense,” said Katie Fonsen Young, Interim Director for the Sonoma County Events Center at the Fairgrounds. “She’s provided valuable research to integrate dairy and livestock production with rangeland management in the county, helped local producers to improve production and marketing, and developed economic models to document the benefits of local agriculture to our region. She’s also a big supporter of our Sonoma County 4-H Foundation and a promoter of the Range to Table program



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that provides quality meat to the Redwood Empire Food Bank, as well as tax incentives to those who donate livestock.”

The leader in the effort to increase “agritourism” in Sonoma County, Larson is working closely with Sonoma County Tourism. Her efforts are bringing more economic opportunities to local agriculture producers, making their operations more sustainable and economically viable. Her program integrates ecosystem services provided by rangelands and highlights the benefits of using grazing animals as tools to manage local landscapes. As a certified rangeland manager, she works with land managers to help them to make sound ecologic decisions about managing working landscapes for the benefit of all users.

Larson also focuses on local food systems and is working on ways to increase access to land and markets for agricultural producers. She is currently the principle investigator for the USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher program, which is training “agropreneurs” to increase food production throughout a five county region. Larson is working to develop an incubator farm that will provide opportunities for these beginners to learn their skills and increase local food access.

“Programs like this are important to combat the shrinking acreage available for growing crops and the climbing prices of farmland, particularly in Sonoma County,” says Larson.

The Sonoma County Harvest Fair is proud to recognize Dr. Stephanie Larson for her years of guidance and support as this year’s Friend of Sonoma County Agriculture. The Harvest Fair and members of the local food and beverage community will celebrate Larson, along with her fellow Harvest Fair award recipients, during a ceremony and



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dinner to be held September 27 at Wells Fargo Center for the Arts. The annual event is an important part of the Harvest Fair Professional Food and Wine Competitions. The celebration is open to the public with a limited number of tickets available at HarvestFair.org or at the Harvest Fair Box Office located at 1350 Bennett Valley Road in Santa Rosa.

The 2015 Sonoma County Harvest Fair will be October 2-4 at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds. For more information, visit HarvestFair.org or call (707) 545-4200. You can also find "Sonoma County Harvest Fair" on Facebook.

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