The Non-profit Quarterly

Sector Jumping: 30-Year-Old Working Farm Goes Nonprofit

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May 2, 2011; **Source:** The News Tribune | Cloud Mountain Farm, a 30-year-old working orchard nestled against the western flank of Sumas Mountain near Everson, Wash., has decided to become a nonprofit. Owners Tom and Cheryl Thornton plan to sell their popular business to a yet-to-be-determined entity that will convert their 20-acre farm into a nonprofit center to provide education and hands-on training to new and experienced farmers and gardeners, according to *The News Tribune*.

For the Thorntons, who are known for offering workshops and experimenting with agricultural techniques, the idea seemed natural. "It's a continuation and expansion of what we're already doing," Cheryl Thornton said. "The center brings it full circle."

The transaction is being handled by Whatcom Community Foundation, which manages numerous funds, including at least two geared to helping local agriculture - the Sustainable Whatcom Fund and the Whatcom Farm Incubator Fund.

"Everybody was saying, 'Look what Cloud Mountain does,'" said Sue Webber, who does staff work for the Sustainable Whatcom Fund and will be on the Cloud Mountain Farm Center board of directors.

Cloud Mountain will continue to grow and sell berry plants, fruit and nut trees, fruits and vegetables, ornamental plants and grape rootstock - to keep it a working farm and to raise money for the nonprofit center, according to the *Tribune*. And lucky for long-time fans of the farm, the Cloud Mountain annual fruit festival will also continue.—Aaron Lester