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Stewardship Newsletter Postharvest Season 2022

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## Fall on the Farm



Our farm foreman, Paul, once said that his favorite season is fall because all life begins in decay. The post harvest season may feel like the “end”, but from every ending sprouts the seeds of a new beginning. Here at Vilicus Farms, we are wasting no time in restarting the cycle! In the post harvest season we plant our rye crop, which will spend the winter insulated in the frozen ground before sprouting next spring. This season we also worked on making compost for next years crops.

Composting is a fitting activity for fall because it mimics the Earth's natural process of creating soil nutrients from plants that die off each year.

It has been a snowy November at the farm, which is great news for our soil. Slow melting snow is easier for dry soils to absorb than rain. When the weather is unfit for outdoor work, we spend time in the shop. Our hard working trucks and tractors can always use some maintenance, especially this time of year as we wind down from the busy summer work.

Keep reading to learn more about our composting system, the importance of rye on our farm, and learn about our artist collaboration coming next month! As always, when you finish reading, try our seasonal crossword puzzle!

Post Harvest Crossword Puzzle

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POSTHARVEST SEASON: **STEWARDSHIP SPOTLIGHT**



## Composting

Composting is the process of breaking down natural materials into a nutrient rich humus. Integrating compost into soil is extremely beneficial for the health of soil and the production of our crops. We typically use the compost we make on our cover crop strips. Cover crops are planted to promote soil health rather than to be harvested, and compost is a great aid to that goal. Compost is full of nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus, that enrich the health of the soil. Since we don't use any

chemical fertilizers, compost is a great way for us to help our crops get the nutrients they need!

Vilicus Farms partners with a local ranch to compost manure and straw from their winter holding pens. This year we started our composting operation in September. We started by collecting the material from the holding pens and forming it into long rows. We tried to make sure that each row has a equal mix of straw and manure. The process of turning this raw material into compost takes about 3-4 weeks. Our mechanic, Ben, oversees the operation. Over those 3-4 weeks we use a special compost turner to aerate and moisturize the rows. The compost turner we use is called an Aeromaster pt -130, if you're interested in learning more about how this machine works and what makes it so special, check out the video below!



When making compost we are trying to create ideal conditions for microorganisms to be able to break down carbon into a more stable form. These conditions are determined by three factors; carbon to nitrogen ratio, oxygen levels, and moisture. We can tell that the microorganisms are doing their job because their activity will make the compost feel hot. When our compost piles were active, we measured temperatures as high as 160° F! However if the compost gets too hot, the temperature can kill the microorganisms, it's all about creating just the right balance! After about 3 weeks the microorganisms in our compost piles had done their job and broken down the large clumps of manure and straw into a fine soil we can spread on our crops! This year we made about 750 yards of compost, that's about 3 times the amount we were able to produce last year! The compost we made this fall will remain in piles until we are ready to use it next year.





# Rye

## Rye on the Farm

Here at Vilicus Farms, rye is one of our favorite crops to grow. We love rye for both its unique agronomic properties and its economic value to our business!

Rye is the most reliable crop we grow. It is one of a very few fall-seeded crops adapted to our region. By seeding rye in the fall, we reduce our workload during the busy spring seeding season. It is also beneficial to have a growing crop in place whose roots will protect our soils from erosion-inducing spring wind and water runoff. Rye germinates readily, requiring less moisture than most crops to get started. Rye plants require an estimated 30% less water throughout their life than most varieties of wheat. Rye also produces more biomass than any other crop we grow. It grows taller than most crops, and its straw contributes to building organic matter in the soil. Rye is an excellent nutrient scavenger, its vast root system is able to extract nutrients from deeper in the soil than most crops. After harvest, the nutrients released from rye's decaying roots and straw are a nutrient source for use by subsequent crops. Rye is a "weed warrior!" Its tall and vigorous growth out-competes most weeds and exudates from rye roots have an allelopathic effect on weeds. This means that rye plants produce biochemicals that prevent weeds from growing even after the harvest

and into the next season. We use rye to “clean up” fields that have excess weed populations. Fields seeded to rye have fewer weeds both during the year it's grown and the following year.

Rye is the leading crop for our direct-market, value-added enterprise. Few farmers grow rye, so there is less competition in the marketplace. We think rye makes the best whiskey! In fact, whiskey made with rye is so special, it's called by its own name, rye! Rye whiskey is known for its wonderful spicy or fruity flavors, perfect on it's own, or for a fall cocktail, like the one below! The growing micro-distillery movement provides a burgeoning market for organic and identity-preserved rye. Read more about our identity preserved rye whiskey in the “Partner Spotlight” section! Rye is also a niche ingredient for bread flour. Small bakeries and specialty flour mills use rye in whole grain flours both pure rye-flour and in whole-grain blends. Rye bread is commonly considered a healthy option since is very rich in carbohydrates and provides a good source of fiber and antioxidants. It also contains high amounts of phosphorus and magnesium. We are excited to continue expanding our rye production and develop more direct-market partnerships in these industries!

## Rye in the Kitchen

If you're ready to get in the festive fall spirit, try out our seasonal maple rye cobbler cocktail! Use the recipe below for a single serving, or making it as a punch for your next holiday gathering!



### Maple Rye Cobbler

#### Ingredients:

- 1.5 oz Rye whiskey
- 1 oz Maple syrup (plus some for rim)
- 1 oz Organic cranberry juice
- 2 oz Organic apple cider
- Angostura bitters
- Ground cinnamon (for rim)
- Granulated sugar (for rim)
- Fresh rosemary (for garnish)
- Cinnamon stick (for garnish)



### To Assemble:

- Make the cocktail in a separate vessel and set aside
- Put a splash of maple syrup in the bottom of one shallow bowl
- In another shallow bowl combine granulated sugar and ground cinnamon
- Coat the rim of your glass by placing it upside down in first the maple syrup bowl and then the cinnamon sugar bowl. Swirl the rim of your glass in each bowl to ensure good coverage.



- Place a few cubes of ice in your rimmed glass
- Pour your drink over the ice
- Garnish with a sprig of fresh rosemary and a cinnamon stick
- Cheers!

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POSTHARVEST SEASON: SEASONAL SPOTLIGHT

Meet Our 2022 Artist in Residence:

**Landon George**



Each year the Vilicus Farms CSSA program partners with the Vilicus Institute to bring our shareholders exclusive access to art inspired by and created on the grounds of Vilicus Farms!

The Vilicus Institute is a 501c3 nonprofit with a mission of bringing life back to the Northern Great Plains by creating conditions for all beings to prosper in and around agriculture. Vilicus Institute sponsors artists to create works rooted in the inspiration they find in the wide open fields and prairies of Vilicus Farms.

For 2022 we are so excited to share with you the work of multi disciplinary artist Landon George! George has been an employee of Vilicus Farms since summer 2021. He came to the farm to drive tractors and grain trucks, but quickly found himself entranced by the landscape of the farm and inspired to create art that captured the unique color pallet, soundscape, and energy that surrounded him. In 2022 the Vilicus Institute was able to sponsor George's two ongoing sonic expositions, "Organ Studies" and "DE/COMPOSITION."

Our shareholder exclusive collaboration with George includes access to unreleased tracks from both of his sonic projects! **You will receive your exclusive download code as well as a statement and video bio by the artist on December 21st!** If you are considering giving CSSA shares as gifts this holiday season, **all new shareholders whose shares are purchased before the end of the year will receive access to this exclusive collaboration!**

# Glacier Distilling Company

Glacier Distilling Company is a craft distillery and tasting room located in Coram Montana, just outside Glacier National Park. They specialize in small-batch whiskeys, and use local grains and pure glacial water from the Northern Rockies.

Vilicus Farms has partnered with Glacier Distilling to produce an identity preserved, single source rye whiskey made exclusively with Vilicus Farms rye! Due to the aging process, we still have to wait a few more years before this whiskey hits the shelves.



Our partnership with Glacier Distilling supports our production of rye as a premium value-added crop. We love keeping our buyers local when possible, and value-added crop sales help us to break away from economic structures that put farmers last. Cheers to that!



Check out their website linked below to learn more about Glacier Distilling Company!

GLACIER DISTILLING CO.



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