Since graduating from high school, Jamie Bone has had many different jobs. She was working as an assistant in accounting at Blackfoot River Brewing in Montana when she decided it was time to get a "grown-up job."

Since she likes working with numbers, her plan was to go to college to get her accounting degree.

A bicycle ride around Clackamas Community College derailed that plan.

"I remember seeing the greenhouses and the gardens and realizing I couldn't sit behind a desk all day," said Bone, 32. "My true passion was growing and preparing food."

This fall, she will earn her associate's degree in horticulture from Clackamas Community College.

Bone and her husband, Trevor Alton, lease 42 acres in the Mulino area, home of Whiskey Fork Farm. "Our goal is to get the farm to the point where both Trevor and I can work here."

Trevor works for an arborist.

They enjoy cooking for friends and family, and Bone sells produce through Community Supported Agriculture, CSA.

"The best thing ever is to eat everything you have grown or raised," she said.
"I have enjoyed my classes and the field trips to farms and listening and learning from the farmers we visited," she said.

Even so, starting her farm this year was "kind of scary."

"There are many risks in starting your own business," she said. "This year has been all about the learning curve and every day I am learning from my mistakes."

In her journal, she makes notes on what she has learned and what she plans to do differently next year – from increasing her production to changing her distribution plan.

"I know I just need to take the steps I need to take and keep moving in the direction of where I want to be," she said.

As a student at Clackamas Community College, she doesn't ever feel like she is alone in her quest. "If I have questions, farmers in the small farms group will help and share what has or hasn't worked for them," she said.

She grows vegetables and fruits and raises chickens, turkeys, ducks and pigs.

She sold nine shares in her CSA her first year, just off her goal of 10.

"I was grateful I didn't have more because I worried about having enough produce to fill the baskets the first few weeks," she said.

Bone said the CSA supported the garden part of the farm – "the gigantic seed orders, the drip irrigation and the tools."

From talking with her friends and family, she believes there is a demand for food grown without using chemicals.

"Being a farmer is the most rewarding job I have ever done," she said. "I know I am never going to be a millionaire. But I know where and how my food is grown, and I love sharing it with others."

-- Kristine Thomas

© 2013 OregonLive.com. All rights reserved.