

LOCALLY GROWN

Vodka (which comes from the original name of Pine Bluffs), was Nov. 8, 2017 at the Wyoming Malting Plant. Laughter rang throughout the plant and showroom as the bottles were being filled and labeled. Some of the visitors were giving free labor in bottling the vodka, but you did not have to work to enjoy the free food or drink.

Out of the 600 bottles filled, 30 cases were signed up for at the Bottling Party that was attended by approximately 100 guests.

"The best way to enjoy \$3/bushel barley is to drink it!" exclaimed Purdy, also a part own-

er in Wyoming Malt and Pine Bluffs Distilling.

Distilling is a week-long process. The wheat and barley is put into a 500 gallon mash tin and cooked with a mixture of water and grain at 180 degrees for 90 minutes. Yeast is added after cooling down. A few days of fermenting is the next step, then all is transferred to a 500 gallon still were all of the alcohol is drained then transferred to the 300 gallon still to have the process repeated. What comes out of the final still is 190 proof alcohol that is cut by water, using a formula, for the finished product of 80 proof vodka.

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Although the craft distiller industry is about 20 years behind the craft beer industry, it is "booming." About 10 years ago, the tax requirements were changed to only being taxed on what you produce, which has opened up the industry to smaller operations. A Federal Alcohol Production License, as well as being inspected by the county Health Inspector, is required to produce the vodka.

Pine Bluffs Distilling is all a part of Wyoming Malting, which provides malt for local home and industrial brewers. It is the first licensed distillery in the history of Laramie County Wyoming.

RABOU FARMS, INC.

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Ron Rabou can attest to the fact that organic farming is a big and time-consuming business. The Rabou family came to the Cheyenne area in 1876 and spread out by homesteading, settling around 1905 in the Albin area.

Rabou comes from a long line of entrepreneurs. He is a fifth generation farmer and strives to grow a product that is safe to eat. However, the organic process is quite extensive with a long and tedious paper trail. Elevator and scales are required. Storage, due to the certification, has to be separate from the more traditional type of harvested products. Accounting includes from where the seed originated to the fin-

ished product, and the farm has to go through two certifications each year. Additionally, all equipment has to be certified clean. The family also does all of its own equipment maintenance.

On a typical day Rabou travels around 100 miles inspecting his fields. Farming has met the technology stage as well, and Rabou can now log into a program on his phone or computer to see how much rain each field has had, heat units, what is planted, how much was harvested, organic testing results and the paper trail for each field. Maps on the computer pull up an overview of the fields, provided by entering information on a tablet each time.

Rabou believes the organic farming is driven by societal changes, and "Certified Organic" is not a

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