



Division of Agriculture Activities

Volume 1, Number 9

Note From the Director

September 3, 2009

Find us on the web go to:
<http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag>

Director of Agriculture—
Franci Havemeister
907-761-3867
Franci.Havemeister@alaska.gov

In This Issue

- Director's Note
- Eat Local Challenge
- New FSA Funds for "outdoor permanent structures"
- Red Meat Livestock Conference
- Subdividing Ag Parcels
- ARLF Land Sale
- Ethnobotany Garden
- Surveying Pest Pathways

To remove your name from our e-newsletter list [click here](#).

Questions or Comments? E-Mail me at Patricia.O'Neil@alaska.gov or call 907-761-3858.



Hard to believe it is "that" time of year again. The days are shorter, the nights cooler and I have a keen eye on the mountains dreading that first termination dust. As we all know – ready or not – here it comes.

It has been a busy month –

The Division of Agriculture is working in cooperation with Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) and has initiated a crop damage assessment program. A survey has been posted on the Division website under "What's New?" and if you experience crop damage from the bison please fill out and submit the survey. Charlie Knight, of the Northern Region Office (NRO), has been on the ground inspecting damage reported and ADF&G continues to monitor from the air. Please contact the main office 745-7200, or the NRO at 328-1950 to report bison damage.

A work session was held by the House Finance Subcommittee August 26, 2009 at the Plant Materials Center (PMC) to discuss the Potato Export Program. Representative Mike Kelly chaired the meeting and attending were Senator Charlie Huggins, Senator Gene Therriault, and Representative Bill Stoltze. It was a productive meeting – with presentations by Division of Ag, UAF, USDA, PMC, and two individual farmers. The meeting was worthwhile, questions were answered and misconceptions cleared. The fate of the funding is still unknown – but this was a much needed meeting and I appreciate Representative Mike Kelly's efforts in putting it together.

A legislative tour took place the morning of August 27th. Representative Bill Stoltze has been instrumental in scheduling this event for many years and this year it was quite well attended. The group began the morning at the Division of Ag main office and then traveled to VanderWeele Farms, Glacier Valley Farms, and on to the PMC. Open dialogue was encouraged amongst the group and with the producers and topics such as the 7% Purchase Preference for Alaska Grown and industry needs and concerns were discussed on the farm and with the growers. The group then traveled to the PMC and toured the Ethnobotany Garden and the Alaska Certified Seed Lab, the Seed Cleaning Facility, and the Potato Grow Room and Lab. It was a worthwhile event and legislators had the opportunity to ask questions and see some incredible local produce.

On August 27, 2009 the Alaska State Fair in Palmer honored the 2009 Farm Family of the Year. This award was presented by Governor Sean Parnell to the Oberg-Kenley family at the Alaska State Fair Opening Night Reception. This family has been involved in Alaska agriculture since 1954, when they began selling milk to Matanuska Maid. Their 160 acre farm is located on Palmer Fishhook Road. They and their extended families continue to be actively involved and if there is an Ag event in the valley you can guarantee this family's participation.

Be sure to check the new link regarding the change in USDA Farm Storage Facility Loan Program. It has been expanded to include vegetables and hay!

Good luck with your harvest! Franci

Franci

Calendar Events—

- Alaska State Fair (ASF)—Palmer, August 27-Sept 7
- Kodiak State Fair, September 5-6
- September 5th—Evening, Red Meat Livestock Conference #3 Kodiak, AK
- September 22-23, Palmer, AK— Grown in Alaska, Conference Greenhouse/Nursery Industry, contact Patricia O'Neil for more information.
- Pyrah's Fall Harvest Festival, September 19

Marketing Section

Eat Local Challenge

Have you heard of the Eat Local Challenge? Are you participating?

The Division of Agriculture is sponsoring the 2nd annual Alaska Grown Eat Local Challenge (ELC) August 23 – 29th. The ELC was launched in 2008 to encourage the general public, and particularly restaurants, to source more Alaska Grown products during the challenge week. Alaska Grown producers receive strong support from grocery stores, and farmers market sales are on the rise – even with the number of markets nearly doubling in the past four years. However, one area that producers have always felt lacked cooperation was the purchase of Alaska Grown products by restaurants. With the launch of the 2008 ELC we learned that many restaurants simply were not aware of how to access Alaska Grown. Many were under the impression that their only option was to select produce from the grocery store or the farmers market – both which were cost prohibitive options. The launch of the ELC introduced many chefs and restaurant decision makers to the notion that they simply had to request Alaska Grown from their normal wholesaler/distributor, and in most instances their request would be fulfilled.

Since that time the Division also introduced a new "Fresher by Far" newsletter in which we provide a weekly update to chefs, wholesalers, and other interested individuals about the availability of Alaska Grown products. The Division has also made efforts to educate chefs and wholesalers through farm tours where participants are able to see, taste and touch the products. We hope that these increased efforts will result in additional sales for our producers.

See all of the information regarding the 2009 Eat Local Challenge at www.alaskagrown.org. Take the challenge, participate in the survey, remember to eat Alaska Grown this week (and all year!) and spread the word!

Announcement from Farm Service Agency!

With the changes in the 2008 Farm Bill, USDA-FSA has revised a popular program (FSFL, Farm Stored Farm Loan program) to include Alaska commodities that may be eligible for participation. This could be a great opportunity for many rural farmers market, CSA's, greenhouse, and other producers of vegetables to find affordable loans to upgrade or construct permanent storage (cold storage) units to assist the producers in marketing fresh produce year round. This may assist them in expanding their marketing timeframe or allow them to pick a day or two earlier to meet market day quotas.

Also the FSFL program has been expanded to include hay as an eligible commodity for farm stored farm loan funds. We have many hay producers who have expressed the need for adequate storage. This may be an opportunity for them to get a low interest loan and build that needed storage.



Marketing Staff

http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_ms.htm

Doug Warner

907-761-3861

Douglas.Warner@alaska.gov

Amy Pettit

907-761-3864

Amy.Pettit@alaska.gov

Patricia O'Neil

907-761-3858



(Continued from page 2)

With the national focus on bioenergy USDA has also included FSFL loan funds for the construction of renewable biomass storage facilities.

For more information about FSFL or other FSA price support program, please visit your FSA county offices. In Palmer, Doug Carter, 761-7772 doug.carter@ak.usda.gov. In Delta, Lloyd Wilhelm, 895-4242 ext. 100 lloyd.wilhelm@ak.usda.gov, or www.fsa.usda.gov.

Red Meat Livestock Conference #3

We are hosting the third and "final" conference on the market research that has been conducted through our Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program grant. It will be hosted in Kodiak on September 5th, from 5:30-9:30 PM. If you are interested in going, but find it difficult due to travel costs please contact Patricia, as there are some options available. For more information go to: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/Index/RMLC3Announc.pdf>. We hope to see you there!

Land Sales & Grazing Leases

Subdividing Agricultural Parcels

The Division of Mining, Land and Water, with input from the Division of Agriculture recently clarified some aspects of how agricultural land can be subdivided. At issue was how the State handled parcels that are composed of more than one surveyed lot. The State has on occasion combined several surveyed lots to form one larger agricultural parcel. The State intended these multi-lot parcels to be managed as one un-subdivided parcel, subject to all the rights and restriction listed in AS 38.05.321, commonly known as Ag covenants. Recently questions have been raised on how this practice may affect the management of housing and subdivision rights and obligations when an owner wants to sell a portion of his agricultural parcel.

To address these questions the Division of Mining, Land and Water and the Division of Agriculture have agreed to a set of procedures to clarify the State's practice regarding multi-lot agricultural parcels. Agricultural parcels patented after August 5, 1997 (considered New title), are subject to a different law relating to housing and subdivision than those patented prior to that date (considered Old title). New title land is limited to a one-time subdivision with no more than four parcels, each of which has to be 40-acres or larger. The owners will have to purchase housing rights for each of the new parcels excluding the parcel that has the original housing right that was acquired when the state sold the parcel. There is no limit to the number of 40-acre or larger parcels an Old title parcel can be subdivided into. There is no limit to the frequency of subdivision as long as all resulting parcels are 40-acres or larger. The Old title parcels created by subdividing do not come with housing rights. Housing rights can only be acquired by converting the parcels to New title, which means submitting a form to DNR and paying the appropriate fees.

Subdivision of agricultural parcels that the State sold that were composed of multiple lots involves two options for each type of patent:

New title – Option One

You may accept the current surveyed lots as the subdivision of the parcel and sell them as they are currently surveyed, independent of the 40-acre restric-

Land Sales & Grazing Leases

Dan Proulx

907-374-3716

Dan.Proulx@alaska.gov

Erik Johnson

907-761-3863

Erik.Johnson@alaska.gov



(Continued from page 3)

tion. If you bought a parcel that is composed of more than four surveyed lots, when you sell one or more of those lots you will have to indicate to the State which lots will receive a housing right up to a limit of four. You will still have to pay for the three additional housing rights or establish a lien if they are to stay within the family, the same as you do now. If you do sell one of the pre-surveyed lots, that is considered your one-time subdivision and none of the lots can ever be further subdivided.

New Title – Option Two

If you do not wish to sell the lots as they are currently surveyed you may apply to the appropriate platting authority to have all the interior lot lines vacated. Doing this would make your parcel one larger parcel instead of several smaller ones. Once the lines are vacated you can subdivide your parcel into up to four lots as long as each meets the 40-acre requirement. Again, once this subdivision has taken place, the parcels can no longer be subdivided and housing rights will need to be purchased or a lien established if the land is to stay within the family.

Old Title – Option One

You may elect to sell the lots as they are currently surveyed, independent of the 40-acre requirement. At the time of sale you will be required to indicate, if it is not on your farm conservation plan, which lot gets the original housing right. The remaining lots do not have housing rights and are not eligible for housing rights under Old title. Old title lots can be converted to New title at which time a housing right can be purchased for the parcel. You may subdivide a pre-surveyed lot as long as the resulting parcels meet the 40-acre minimum requirement.

Old Title – Option Two

You may elect to resurvey the parcel, removing all interior lot lines and creating new lot lines into a configuration that meets the law of unlimited number of parcels at a minimum of 40-acres each. You may also vacate just some of the internal lot lines as long as it results in not less than 40-acres for each new parcel.

In the future, the State will not offer agricultural parcels composed of multiple lots. All interior lots lines will be vacated prior to sale.

If you have any questions please call the Division of Agriculture's Palmer office at 761-3863 or the Fairbanks office at 374-3716

ARLF Land Asset Management
Staff

Ray Nix

907-761-3870

Ray.Nix@alaska.gov

ARLF Land & Asset Manager

ARLF Land Sale #09-01

The Division of Agriculture is currently offering the former Matanuska Maid Blow Mold Manufacturing Facility, located at 513 South Valley Way in Palmer, Alaska through a competitive sealed bid sale. Brochures are available at Division of Agriculture offices in Palmer and Fairbanks and available

online at www.dnr.alaska.gov/ag/. For additional information regarding the sale, contact Asset Manager Ray Nix in the Palmer office, or by email ray.nix@alaska.gov or by telephone at 907-761-3870.

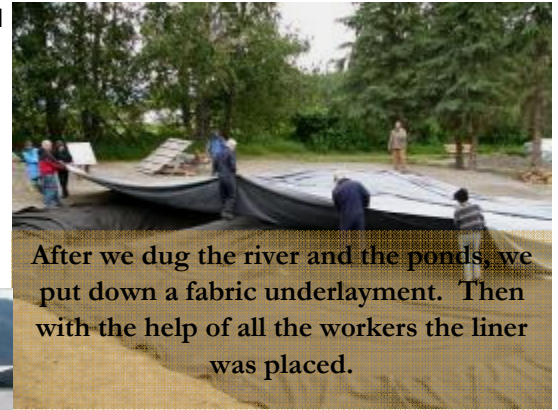




Plant Materials Center (PMC) - Ethnobotany Garden

It's hard to realize that summer is almost over! Most of our crops are harvested and the seeds are drying, waiting to be cleaned. The sandhill cranes are grouping up, ready to fly south for the winter. There still seems to be lots of work that we want to finish before the snow comes.

The Ethnobotany (Traditional Use) Garden's Yukon River and ponds



After we dug the river and the ponds, we put down a fabric underlayment. Then with the help of all the workers the liner was placed.

are still in the construction phase. The waterworks are an immense job!

The river is still being rocked. But it is starting to look really nice.

Plant Material Center

http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_pmc.htm

Main Phone: 907-745-4469

Stoney Wright

Manager, Plant Materials Center
Stoney.Wright@alaska.gov
907-745-8105

Peggy Hunt—Agronomist

Peggy.hunt@alaska.gov

745-8721

Many species of plants are in the garden, others are still being planted.

Signs for most of the plants are in place, as well as interpretive signs for the main ecological and cultural regions found in the state.

The Garden still isn't finished enough for groups to visit, but individuals are welcome to come when we are open – which is Monday – Friday; 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, except for holidays.



The Garden will be a great place to learn about Alaska native plants and what they can be used for. It is a place to learn about the various cultures in Alaska. Learning how to landscape with native plants and seeing those plants that are good for revegetation is another good reason to visit the Garden. We welcome everyone to come visit next summer, and to bring your visitors!

Pest Detection Surveys in Alaska

Fairbanks Office

907-328-1950

Charlie Knight

Charles.Knight@alaska.gov

907-374-3715

Curtis Knight

Curtis.Knight@alaska.gov

907-374-3732



Pest Detection: Surveying Pest Pathways

Agricultural pests may enter Alaska by numerous pathways. Many pests hitchhike on vehicles or shipping containers. Farm machinery must be pressure washed before it is brought to Alaska to remove weed seeds from the undercarriage. Shipments of feed and seed coming from Canada or the Lower 48 often contain weed seeds, insects or plant diseases. Gypsy Moths have been found in RV parks in Alaska. Asian Gypsy Moth egg masses have been found on ships destined for Alaska. Silver Y Moths have been found in shipping containers headed for Alaska. Plant nurseries and box stores often ship in plants that have pests as hitchhikers. International shipping ports and airports are common sites of pest introductions.

Since Alaska's agricultural industry is relatively small, compared to the Lower 48, one might assume that other states wouldn't be too concerned about the economic losses associated with an exotic pest introduction into Alaska. However, Alaska is such a large area and close to the Asian continent that if a pest were to become established in Alaska, it would very likely spread over a large area before it was detected and would be almost impossible to eradicate before it could spread to the rest of North America.

With recent climate change and the resulting reduction of northern sea ice, more and more international ships are moving through Alaskan waters, utilizing Arctic shipping routes that directly connect the Eastern seaboard, European Countries, as well as North African countries, with Alaska. Flying insects are often attracted from ships to lights along the shore. It is to our benefit that our summers are so light that few shore lights are used.

Most insects and plant diseases are capable of living on a wide range of host species, not just agricultural crops. In our Early Detection efforts to trap exotic pests, we often trap the pathway rather than the most likely agricultural host. A good example of trapping the pathway is our recent placement of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) traps in Southeast and Central Alaska. EAB is a beetle that recently invaded ash trees (*Fraxinus* species) in the North-central U.S. Alaska does not have a native population of true ash (mountain ash, *Sorbus* species, is not a true ash), but numerous ash trees have been planted as landscape trees and are commonly sold in nurseries and box stores in Alaska. A major pathway for EAB movement is in firewood and solid wood packing material (forklift pallets, etc.). This summer, we placed traps in Alaska near transportation hubs and other potential EAB pathways.



Photo: US Forest Service Cooperator helping to set insect traps in Ketchikan, Alaska. Targeted pathways in the Ketchikan area include tourist ships, an international airport, shipping container traffic, and international logging operations.