



Division of Agriculture Activities

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

Questions or Comments? [E-Mail](#) me or call 907-761-3858.



Note From the Director

Spring is always a busy time of year. Please take the time to visit the Division's website to get up to date information on grant announcements, Board of Agriculture and Conservation meetings, conferences, land sales, and all things agriculture.

This past month I had the opportunity to attend the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education conference in Fairbanks. It was a packed schedule with presentations varying from Weed Suppression and Soil Fertility to Agricultural Tours in Alaska with Cruise Line Industry. This conference gave the 200 attendees great information as well as valuable opportunity to network. A selective group of producers and affiliates met the following day to discuss key issues related to the future of agriculture and the critical and unique needs and issues that are part of Alaskan agriculture. An overview of this meeting, as well as "table top reports" should be available soon [online](#).

A meeting was held with the horticulture industry this past month in Fairbanks to discuss the issue of invasive species. The meeting was well attended and the day was spent with presentations, overviews and lively discussion. At the end of the day, participants and Division of Agriculture staff agreed they had a mutual goal - to protect Alaska from invasive species. With industry input, the Division of Agriculture will move forward on our Invasive Species Plan. For more information on this topic or particular meeting - please contact Gino Graziano: gino.graziano@alaska.gov or Andrew Weaver: Andrew.weaver@alaska.gov.

Representative Jay Ramras has introduced House Bill 383 - Transferring Certain Duties from Department of Natural Resources to the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development which was heard in the House Labor and Commerce Committee recently. I am encouraged by the increased dialogue and believe it has provided a great opportunity to discuss and further the goals of the division of Agriculture. The sponsor is an avid supporter of agricultural development in this state and a strong supporter of agriculture education. He truly understands the importance of engaging our youth. We have talked many times about our common goals of promoting the abundant resources that not only sustain us but build our communities. I would like to thank Representative Ramras for introducing this bill and bringing some much needed attention to agriculture!

Remember, Alaska's Agriculture Day is quickly approaching and it is a great opportunity to educate our youth on the importance of what you do. Contact your local Soil and Water Conservation districts, 4-H or FFA Chapter, Ag in the classroom, or the Division of Agriculture to see how you can make a difference! As always, if you have any questions, concerns, or input please give us a call!
Franci

Calendar Events—

- Specialty Crop Competitive Grant Due May 15th
- April 8-April 23—Plant Materials Seed Sale

Marketing Section

Alaska Grown Program

Recently I attended the SARE conference in Fairbanks, which was a great event, where it was requested that I do an article on how to apply for the Alaska Grown program. I was surprised! I told her... it is on our website, it is easy to do. Then I realized that I know and work with the program every day, but for those who do not know the process, it would not seem easy. It was very good advice so I thought I would address the subject. Additionally, she requested that we make it more accessible on the website and easier to find, so we have changed the website to reflect this as well.

If you go to our home page: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/> and scroll down and look under marketing, we now have a link that says "[Alaska Grown Program.](#)" If you click on that link, it will take you to a page that explains the program and has a link to the [application](#), which you can fill out, save and keep for your records. However, because we need a signature, it is required that you either mail it or fax it in. You can email it to us so we can begin processing, but it must be followed by a hard copy. We will call you prior to final approval, to ensure you did not have any questions and to confirm that you understand the criteria set forth in the application. The most specific criteria is for the greenhouse industry. On a historical note, these criteria were defined and requested by the industry, and the Division responded accordingly.

The application is a very simple form, requesting contact information and products that you will be selling. The program is free to join and you receive permission to utilize the Alaska Grown logo to promote your products. If you are not part of the program, we encourage you to join. As we see it...you have nothing to lose, and everything to gain! If you plan on emailing in an application prior to mid-May, please email them to Patricia O'Neil.

Food & Farm Products Directory

This year we will be updating the Food and Farm Products Directory. If you are currently in the directory, you will be receiving a letter from us, with the information we currently have on file included in the letter. If there are changes to your contact information, products you are growing, or where you are selling your products, please update that portion. There is also a box to check if your information is correct. If nothing needs to be changed, make sure you check that box, sign it and mail it back to us. Regardless, we will need you to sign it and return it to us, so that we have permission to put you in the book. If you can scan your letter and email it to us, that is acceptable also. If you were in the book that was produced in 2008, but do not confirm your information this year and return the form, you will not be in the new book. We have tried to simplify the process by providing you with the information we have on hand so that you do not have to write everything out again. We hope you find this useful and timesaving.

For those who are not in the directory, we have a [form](#) available online that you can fill out, save and email to us. Include in your email, permission to publish this information, which will stand in lieu of your signature. For those who do not have email, we will be mailing an announcement and for those who we have an email for we will be emailing your announcement. If you know anyone who would like to be in the directory please be sure to share this information with them, because we would like to include all who have an interest in being in the book. Simply put, it is free advertising for your farm, in our effort to promote the Alaska Agricultural industry.



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Land Sales & Grazing Leases

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Is Alaska an open range state? If your cattle do damage your neighbor's property while grazing are you liable because you did not fence them in or is your neighbor out of luck because he did not fence them out?

From 1949 to 1977 Alaska did have a "fence out" law meaning that if you did not want cattle wandering on to your property it was your responsibility to put a fence around your land to keep them out. The only way a livestock owner could be held liable for damages to your property by his livestock was if your property were enclosed by a legal fence. This law was repealed in 1977.

In 1984 a lawsuit was filed in district court against a livestock owner for damages cause by his cattle to his neighbor's property. The livestock owner argued that western states have adopted the so-called western common law which requires a farmer or other land owner to erect barriers to wandering cattle and only after the cattle have broken down a fence will the owner of the cattle be liable. The Plaintiff argued that the court should adopt the English common law, which states that the owner of trespassing cattle is liable in the absence of a specific legislative policy. As mentioned above Alaska did have such a legislative policy until it was repealed in 1977. The district courts ruled that "... Alaska, like English "Eastern" and American common law should protect the interest of private property over that of the cattle owner."

This ruling was appealed to Superior Court on the grounds that the intent of the legislature in repealing the "fence out" statute was that Alaska would follow the common law of the western United States that holds that livestock owners are not liable for damages done by their cattle to unenclosed private property. The Superior Court ruled that "...by the repeal by the legislature...the common law rule of liability that the owner of livestock is liable for damages caused by the trespass of his livestock upon the unenclosed private land of another was reinstated as law in the state." This decision was appealed to the Alaska Supreme Court, which denied the motion to hear the case.

Having exhausted all remedies through the judicial process, the only way to make Alaska an "Open Range" state is through legislative action, and until the legislature takes such action Alaska will continue to be essentially a closed livestock district with livestock owners being liable for damages to private property caused by their livestock.

So can you graze your cattle on state land at all? The short answer is yes. Grazing leases and permits are available from the state. These authorizations contain specific stipulations on what is and is not allowed and what responsibility the livestock owner has. In addition to these authorizations Alaska regulation 11 AAC 96.020, aka generally allowed uses, says that driving livestock, including any number of reindeer or up to 100 horses, cattle, or other domesticated animals is allowed on state land without a permit. Grazing no more than five domesticated animals is allowed without any authorization from the state.

If you have any questions about Alaska's Open Range issue please contact either Dan or Erik for more information. For more information about generally allowed uses on state land, please contact your nearest DNR Public Information Center: Anchorage (907) 269-8400; Fairbanks (907) 451-2770; or Juneau (907) 465-3400

Plant Materials Center (PMC) -

Plant Material Center

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

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Every spring the Plant Materials Center (PMC) sells foundation seed and grain to commercial farmers throughout Alaska. This year the seed sale begins April 8th and ends April 23rd. It's important for Alaska's growers to have access to sufficient quantities of high-quality seed that is well suited to Alaska's climate and soils. While the majority of foundation seed produced by the PMC is for grasses and forbs native to Alaska – used for landscaping, for roadside revegetation and other uses – a significant amount is also used for grains.

After selecting the appropriate plants to generate a first generation of "breeder-class" seeds, the PMC grows foundation seeds for sale to commercial growers. These growers use foundation seed to grow their own crop of "certified" seeds, which they then sell directly to farmers or end users like construction companies. Alaska growers produce about 25 percent of all seeds used in Alaska.

This year the available seed is: **Grains:** 'Bebral' Rye, 'Nip' Oats, 'Toral' Oats, 'Nogal' Wheat, 'Vigal' Wheat, 'Weal' Barley, 'Wooding' Barley; **Grasses:** 'Alyeska' Polar Grass, 'Arctared' Red Fescue, Cantwell Downy Ryegrass, 'Egan' American Sloughgrass, 'Kenai' Polar Grass, 'Norcoast' Hairgrass, 'Nortran' Hairgrass, Pioneer Peak Pacific Reedgrass, 'Sourdough' Bluejoint Reedgrass, Polar Pumpelly's Brome, 'Reeve' Sand Ryegrass, Solomon Tufted Wheatgrass, Lowell Point Meadow Barley, Council Arctic Bluegrass, 'Gruening' Alpine Bluegrass, Teller Alpine Bluegrass, Service Sandberg Bluegrass, 'Tundra' Glauous Bluegrass, Nome Glauous Bluegrass, 'Nugget' Kentucky Bluegrass, Andrew Bay Largeglume Bluegrass, Nelchina Spike Trisetum, Wainwright Slender Wheatgrass; **Forbs:** 'Caiggluk' Tilesii's Wormwood, King Salmon Northern Goldenrod, Mentasta Staghorn Cinquefoil, Norton Sound Alpine Milkvetch, Paxson Alpine Sweetvetch, Twenty Mile Boreal Yarrow, Casco Cove Beach Lovage, Tok Jaktusk Snowparsley, Knik Iris, Franklin Bluffs Nodding Locoweed, Black Rapids Field Oxytrope, Shemya Artemisia Dusty Miller, Butte Jacob's Ladder.

A list of the available foundation seed lots, including quantities, varieties, and prices, will be posted on the Division of Agriculture's [website](#) and the PMC's [website](#). The link will also describe how growers may request foundation seeds. For information about each type of grass and forb, check out "A [Revegetation Manual for Alaska](#)" and "[Plant Flyers: Use and Cultivation of Alaska Native Plant Seeds](#)" located on the PMC's webpage.

Pest Detection Surveys in Alaska

Focus on *Phytophthora infestans*, Potato Late Blight

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Potato late blight is a disease caused by the water mold *Phytophthora infestans*. It affects both potatoes and tomatoes, as well as other members of the Solanaceae, or nightshade family. It was the cause of the great Irish potato famine during the mid nineteenth century. Today, a better understanding exists of weather conditions required for late blight to occur. Fungicidal applications are also used to mitigate outbreaks in the Lower 48. In Alaska, late blight is rare but it has occurred in previous years. The Alaska Division of Agriculture has established a quarantine on potato seed and tomato plants to ensure that late blight does not enter the state by this pathway. For further details regarding the quarantine, see the Division's [list](#).



Currently, Alaska does not have a potato late blight forecasting system similar to that used in other states. Forecasting systems are based on a network of weather stations that collect hourly data. Calculations are run on the data to determine if weather conditions are optimal for late blight occurrence. The idea of forecasting is that if you know when late blight conditions are met, you would presumably know when to watch for it in fields and possibly when to apply a preventative fungicide treatment.

In 2004, the Division acquired three weather stations for the purpose of investigating a predictive late blight modeling system for Alaska. One of the stations was set up during the fall of 2006 near Kenai, and a second one during the summer of 2007 near Palmer. The third station is planned to be installed this summer, 2010, near Delta Junction. Originally, the weather stations were to be equipped with transmitters so that the weather data would be available online, but due to outdated transmitting and receiving equipment, this has not yet occurred. Weather data are being collected both on the weather station towers and within the canopy of potatoes in adjacent fields. The idea is see if data from surrounding area weather stations, such as airports, can be used to predict conditions in local potato fields. In other words, what is the difference between temperature and relative humidity measurements recorded in the potato canopy vs. temperature and relative humidity measurements recorded at nearby stations? If this relationship is understood, the data from the surrounding area stations, which are currently available online, might be used to predict late blight conditions during the growing season which in turn would help increase the accuracy of in-field late blight surveys.

For more information on potato late blight in Alaska, please see the [publication](#) also available on the Division's website.