



The Division of Agriculture Activities

October 05, 2010

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

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

Director's Note

Fall has definitely come and gone and it is hard to ignore that winter is just around the corner. The snow covering on Pioneer Peak has almost reached the half way point, so it won't be long. Hopefully the brief few weeks of September sun were helpful and you had a successful fall harvest. This has certainly been a challenging summer for many producers!

Just a few quick reminders:

The Natural Resources and Conservation Development Board is still looking for nominations or possible candidates for the Southwest/Kenai Peninsula seat. If you are interested or would like to nominate someone please contact Shana Joy at 907-269-8432 for more information.

The Board of Agriculture and Conservation currently is also looking to fill two vacancies. The vacancies are in General Business and State wide Agriculture promotion. If you are interested or would like to nominate someone please contact myself at 907-761-3867 or Jason Hooley of Boards and Commissions at 907-465-3500 or online, [Boards-Commissions](#). As always, if you have suggestions or concerns please feel free to contact me.

Franci

Plant Materials Center

Monitoring and Eradication of Spotted Knapweed

Plant Materials Center staff has spent the past 14 months coordinating the monitoring and removal of Spotted Knapweed, *Centaurea stoebe*, from all known locations in Southcentral and Southeast Alaska. A marked decrease in plant numbers has been observed, and eradication of these noxious weed populations seems within reach.

Spotted Knapweed is widespread in North America and especially problematic in the Pacific Northwest, where it has displaced important forage species on rangelands and caused substantial economic loss to livestock operations. It is especially well adapted to dry upland sites, where its high tolerance for drought and vigorous seed production allow it to rapidly out-compete native species. It has degraded some Elk habitat in Montana and Idaho, specifically in winter range areas, due to its low nutritious value and displacement of more valued plants. In Alaska this potential impact to game animals seems reason enough to keep this noxious weed out, and when combined with the potential threat to agricultural lands, this makes spotted knapweed an excellent candidate for eradication from Alaska, before it gains a more permanent root-hold.

Thirteen discrete areas have been found with spotted

knapweed in Alaska, where seeds were likely introduced by vehicles and heavy equipment. A coordinated eradication effort has been underway since August of 2009, and as of site visits in September, 2010, extensive populations of this weed persist at just three primary sites.

In southeast Alaska knapweed persists in 2 known places. It still can be found along logging roads on U.S. Forest Service lands, one site near the village of Kake, on Kupreanof Island, and one at the Northern end of Prince of Wales Island. Both of these weed populations have been substantially decreased by removal efforts in 2009 and 2010, and though it will be several more years before the seed bank is depleted



Spotted Knapweed at Beluga Point, on the Seward Highway. Please report this plant if seen in Alaska, ideally by e-mailing PMAC staff a photo for identification, or by calling 1-877-4NVSASIV. Photo by Michael Ray, USF CES



Plant Materials Center

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Marketing Staff

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Marketing Administrator

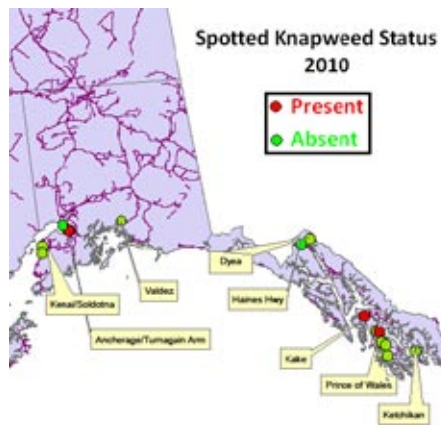
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work best.

Within a few years we hope to report that these efforts have culminated in successful eradication of this noxious weed. For more information, refer to the following websites:

[Noxious Weeds #1](#) & [Noxious Weeds #2](#).

in these areas, eradication seems within reach if monitoring and removal efforts are continued.

Efforts in Southcentral Alaska have focused on the North shore of Turnagain Arm, just South of Anchorage, with eradication seemingly successful at sites near Valdez, Kenai, and in Anchorage proper. The Turnagain Arm populations are scattered from Beluga Point to Indian, some on the Alaska Railroad corridor and some alongside the Seward Highway. Hand removal efforts seem to be very effective, and like in Southeast, continued landowner coordination and cooperation in these control efforts until the seed banks are exhausted, will

Marketing Section

Marketing Projects

The marketing section is abuzz with projects!

Have you seen our Alaska GROWN ad at the movies? We are trying to reach a new audience with a targeted message about sourcing Alaska Grown products. Hopefully it leads to additional sales for our producers.

The Division's 2010 USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG) application was approved for funding. Projects we will be implementing as a result of this funding include:

- ▶ The continued funding of our Natural Resource Specialist position,
- ▶ A yearlong marketing campaign focusing on Alaska GROWN specialty crops,
- ▶ Funding for the 2011 Alaska GROWN Eat Local Challenge,
- ▶ Funding for Alaska GROWN rhubarb market development, and
- ▶ Funding for upgrades and management of the [Alaska Grown](#) website.

Additionally, the Division accepted applications through the Specialty Crop Competitive Grant program. The four projects that will be funded with 2010 USDA SCBG money includes:

- ▶ A collaborative marketing effort between the Mat Su Farm Bureau and Chef Rob Kinneen,
- ▶ Funding for the development of an Alaska Rhodiola cooperative,
- ▶ Funding for the development of a Wild Berry Production Guide, and
- ▶ Funding for the Homer Farmers Market to launch a new marketing campaign, develop new signage and incorporate the first 'market token' program in Alaska.

For more information on any of the above SCBG projects, please contact Amy.

During September we participated at the Alaska State Fair in Palmer. We helped celebrate Alaska Grown day by providing a large veggie/flower display (thanks to the many producers who provided the produce and flowers for the display) at the Mat-Su Farm Bureau, Alaska Farmland Trust and Palmer Soil and Water District booth. They did a great job engaging the public through a "Grown Here vs. Flown Here" competition and gave away Mat-Su Farm Bureau t-shirts as prizes. It was a hit, and great to see that the majority prefer the way Alaska Grown products taste. The taste included cherry tomatoes, Mat-Su Creamery milk, cucumbers, celery, strawberries, turnips, and carrots. It was engaging and fun, and a great way to encourage the public to buy Alaska Grown. We really want to acknowledge the hard work they put into the event, and the success that it was. These events benefit all Alaskan producers.

Pyrah's Fall Festival at Pyrah's U-Pick in Palmer is another fantastic outreach event. They did a great job of providing agriculture entertainment to many families. The farm was open for picking that day, so families could enjoy



the festivities, and then pick some produce with their children. Anytime families get out to farms, it brings their food a little closer to the table, a great way to promote food grown in Alaska.

Inspection Section

Organic Production

Organic products are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. agricultural market. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, organic sales jumped 22 percent last year, with organic fruits and vegetables constituting 11.4 percent of all U.S. fruit and vegetable sales. A growing number of people are paying a premium price to purchase organic products, and to support farming techniques that are sustainable and environmentally sound. But what does “organic” really mean?

Organic food is produced by farmers who emphasize the use of renewable resources and the conservation of soil and water to enhance environmental quality for future generations. Organic meat, poultry, eggs, and dairy products come from animals that have not been given antibiotics or growth hormones, and that have been fed, housed, and managed in accordance with the organic livestock standards. Organic food is produced without the use of *most* conventional pesticides and synthetic fertilizers. It is also produced without the use of sewage sludge, bioengineering, or ionizing radiation. Organic farmers are required to adhere to certain soil and water conservation methods, and to rules regarding the humane treatment of animals.

Before any product, either domestic or imported, can be labeled ‘organic,’ a government-approved certifier inspects the farm where the food is grown to make sure that all the requirements of the USDA organic standards have been followed. Companies that handle or process organic food before it gets to your local supermarket or restaurant must be certified, as well. Those products that conform to the Organic Standards are certified by a third-party certifying agent and can display the organic logo, an organic product statement, or an organic certificate to identify the product as organic. In other words, the certifier vouches for the producer and assures buyers of the organic product’s integrity. Producers of uncertified products that make organic claims about their products can be subject to fines.

Organic certifying agencies allow several different types of organic claims for processed products, depending on the product ingredients. Products that are labeled as “100% organic” must contain 100 percent organically-produced ingredients. Products labeled simply as “organic” must contain 95% organically-produced products. Products sold as “made with organic ingredients” must contain at least 70% organically-produced ingredients. Keep in mind that the words “natural” “locally grown” and “organic” are not interchangeable. Only products labeled as “organic” are certified as meeting the USDA organic standards.



It is time!

The potato packing season has begun! With that being said, below is a table representing US No 1 and US No 2 allowances for some commonly seen external defects (list is not all inclusive). Please note: This is based on the MAXIMUM allowed on a potato 2-1/2 inches in diameter or 6 ounces in weight.

External defect	US No 1	US No 2
Air crack	1/3 length or diameter in aggregate or 5% waste cut	3/4 length or diameter in aggregate or 10% waste cut
Bruises	5% of the surface area in aggregate or 5% waste cut	10% of the surface area in aggregate or 10% waste cut
Enlarged lenticels	When materially detracting (see picture below)	When seriously detracting (see picture below)
Growth cracks	Round varieties: 1/2 the length in aggregate, Long varieties: 1/3 the length in aggregate. Depth tolerance for a 2- 2 1/2inch or 4- 6 oz. potato: 1/4"	All varieties: 3/4 the length in aggregate Depth tolerance for a 2- 2 1/2 inch or 4- 6 oz. potato: 3/8"
Rhizoctonia (Black scurf)	15% of the surface area in aggregate	50% of the surface area in aggregate
Sunburn	5% waste cut	10% waste cut

Inspection Staff

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

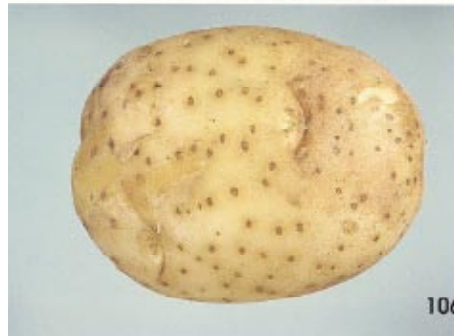
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Surface cracks	1/3 of the surface is affected by smooth shallow cracking or 5% of the surface area with rough deep cracking	10% of the surface area with rough deep cracking
Surface scab	5% of surface area in aggregate	25% of the surface area in aggregate

ENLARGED LENTICELS



U.S. No. 1 - maximum allowed*

ENLARGED LENTICELS



U.S. No. 2 - maximum allowed*

Land Sales & Grazing Leases

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Land Sales

Land Sold and Water Rights

The Division's Fairbanks office sold 202 acres of agriculture land at their Initial Over the Counter Lottery on September 3rd which brings the total to 684 acres of agriculture land sold by the Division within the last three months. We are currently working on putting together sales for next year.

If you would like more information about upcoming state land sales please follow this link: [Upcoming Land Sales](#). This site will allow anyone to subscribe to an email notification when brochures are available.

Do you have water rights on your farm? To obtain a water right you will need to apply and pay the associated fees. You can find the information on the DNR Water Resource web site: [Water Rights](#).

Are you in compliance with your State Farm Conservation Plan (SFCP)? The preparation and submission of an approved SFCP is a prerequisite to purchase state agricultural land. A SFCP is a document unique to a state agricultural parcel and its purchaser(s). The SFCP helps the state insure that appropriate site-specific soil and water conservation planning occurs prior to the purchaser acquiring management control of the land. A SFCP is completed by the purchaser, usually in cooperation with the local, federal, and state conservation specialists. It is then reviewed by the local Soil and Water Conservation District supervisors and subsequently submitted for approval to the director of the Division of Agriculture. All future development on the parcel is required to be in compliance with the information outlined in the approved SFCP. A SFCP can be amended using the review and approval process outlined above. Please contact Dan or Erik with any questions you may have regarding your current approved SFCP.

Northern Region Office

Pest Detection: Emerald Ash Borer; *Agrilus planipennis*

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is an exotic wood boring beetle that was discovered near Detroit, Michigan in 2002. It is thought to have been transported to the United States on solid wood packing materials used for cargo transport on airplanes and ocean vessels. Since its initial introduction into the U.S., EAB has been detected and /or established in Ontario, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia, Wisconsin, Missouri, Minnesota, New York, and Kentucky.

Although the adult life stage of EAB causes little damage, the larvae feed on the inner bark layers of ash trees, making it difficult for affected trees to transport water and nutrients, ultimately resulting in tree mortality. The EAB has killed tens of millions of ash trees within infested areas and has cost upwards of tens of millions of dollars to manage. Federal and state quarantines have been enacted to prohibit the movement of ash tree nursery stock, green ash lumber, pallets, and all hardwood firewood from being transported out of locations where EAB occurs. Alaska receives many tourists and concentrated RV traffic from the Lower 48 states, many of which come from EAB infested locations.

Fairbanks Office

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Though travelers must clear U.S. and Canadian Border inspections, infested items such as firewood may pass through undetected. The high level of recreational visitors to Alaska during the summer months from generally infested areas poses a considerable threat of an introduction of exotic wood borers to Alaska such as the EAB.

Although outside of its native range, true ash trees (*Fraxinus* spp.) have been introduced into Alaska by nurseries or box stores primarily as street ornamentals or landscape trees. Most notably, ash trees have been planted in and around the Anchorage and Juneau municipalities. Several species of ash can be found as far north as the Georgesson Botanical Garden in Fairbanks. The ash trees that have been planted in Alaska appear to do very well.



Beginning in 2008, a national EAB survey initiative was enacted as a cooperative effort facilitated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine (USDA-APHIS-PPQ), to include all 50 states. The purpose of the National survey is twofold: first, to determine if EAB occurs outside of the known infested areas, as well as to determine if the pest is being transported long distances via infested articles; and second, to conduct a more intensive survey where EAB is known to occur in order to better define the leading edge of the spread. There is also a strong public outreach component associated with the survey to encourage reporting and understanding of the pest.

The State of Alaska, through a Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) agreement with USDA-APHIS-PPQ, participated in the National EAB survey in 2009 and 2010. Since Alaska is outside the generally infested area, sites near ornamental ash trees or transportation networks were surveyed throughout the state.

This year, Cooperative Extension Service Integrated Pest Management technicians were contracted to set out traps in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Palmer, Kenai Peninsula, Skagway, and Valdez/Cordova. Division of Agriculture personnel placed traps in Southeast Alaska, with the assistance from US Forest Service. Traps are set out during mid to early June, and are collected in September. All traps were negative for EAB in Alaska for 2009. The 2010 survey is currently being finalized, but to date, no EAB has been detected in Alaska.

Photo Credits - Placing an EAB Trap, Sherry Bottoms, Cooperative Extension Service

Additional Information

Grants

- ▶ There is a grant available for Sustainable Agriculture Students, offered by *Annie's Homegrown*. "Annie's Homegrown is pleased to announce we are again offering \$75,000 in scholarship funds to students studying sustainable and organic agriculture. Sustainable and organic agriculture is at the very root of our philosophy: *Planet to Food. Food to People. People to Planet. **We believe healthy soils and healthy farms are the foundation for healthy foods, which help make healthy people! Therefore, we're proud to support the next generation of farmers. Undergraduate and Graduate students studying at an accredited US college or university are eligible to apply. Please visit [scholarship](#) to learn more. Our [application](#) is available online. The deadline to apply is December 15, 2010."

Workshops

- ▶ Sponsored by UAA Center for Economic Development and the UAF Cooperative Extension Service with financial support from the USDA
Friday, October 15, 2010, 8:30 am to 12:30 pm, Anchorage Hilton
Participants to this workshop will include representatives of agriculture and community food cooperatives, electrical and telephone cooperatives, credit unions, state and federal government support agencies and persons interested or engaged in creating new cooperatives. They will engage in a facilitated discussion about the needs of existing cooperative organizations, the potential for new cooperatives, opportunities for collaboration, and a potential role for the University of Alaska to provide on-going and developmental support.
8:30 – 9:00 AM Welcome by Andrew Crow, UA Center for Economic Development
9:00 – 10:00 What is the need for cooperative development and support in Alaska?
10:00 – 10:15 Break

10:15 – 11:15 Continuation: What is the need for cooperative development and support in Alaska?
11:15 – 12:15 How can the University of Alaska support cooperatives in Alaska?
12:15 – 12:30 pm Discussion and selection of a university program advisory committee
To RSVP a space or for more info about the Coop Development workshop contact:

Andrew Crow

ISERs Center for Economic Development

Email anacc@uaa.alaska.edu

Phone 907-786-5447

Or

Tony Nakazawa with Cooperative Extension Service, UAF

Email atnakazawa@alaska.edu

Phone 907-460-0825

Producing and Planting Bare Root Trees

Thursday, 21 October 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM

Alaska Division of Agriculture, Plant Material Center

5310 S. Bodenburg Spur

Palmer, AK 99645 Agenda

9:15 – Refreshments

9:30 to 12:00 - Bare root trees revealed: How to produce and store bare root trees

12:00 to 1:45 - Lunch on your own

1:45 to 4:30 - Bare root trees revealed continued, tree planting demonstration

For more information, contact email [Stephen Nickel](mailto:Stephen.Nickel). Registration fee is \$15 and is required so we can order food and beverages. Please register before 5PM on 15 October 2010 by completing the registration section and sending a check or money order to the address below. Make check payable to Alaska

Community Forest Council (We are unable to accept credit card payments) and mail with form to:

Alaska Division of Forestry

Community Forestry Program

550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1450

Anchorage, AK 99501-3566

Other News

- ▶ Check out this website to read about an entertaining potato challenge! <http://20potatoesaday.com/>
- ▶ The ATTRA news (newsletter of the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service) is dedicated to red meat production, and particularly slaughter houses this month. Check it out [here!](#)
- ▶ News came through of a CES test kitchen opening. Below is the information:
“The Cooperative Extension Service is pleased to announce the opening of its test kitchen at the University of Alaska Fairbanks for public use.
For an hourly fee, the Department of Environmental Conservation-certified facility is available for small, food-based businesses, caterers and onetime event food preparation. The idea is to aid entrepreneurs who are trying to get their businesses going but do not have access to a certified facility.
The kitchen contains two standard commercial ovens, a commercial refrigerator and freezer, three-compartment sink, hand-washing station, prep station and ample counter space. Assistance with product development and generating nutrition fact labels also are available.
The kitchen is located in the Extension state office and will also continue to be available for food product development research.
For more information, contact kitchen manager at [Kate Idzorek](mailto:Kate.Idzorek) or 474-5391.

Calendar

- ▶ Board of Agriculture and Conservation Meeting, October 13th, 2:30pm, Palmer
- ▶ Cooperative Development in Alaska Workshop, October 15th, Hilton Hotel, Anchorage
- ▶ [Bioneers Conference](#) - October 15th-17th, UAA, Anchorage
- ▶ Alaska Day, October 18th - State Holiday
- ▶ AFMA teleconference, October 19th, 7-9pm, Call Amy for call-in information
- ▶ [Alaska Invasive Species Conference](#), Fairbanks this October 26th-28th
- ▶ Fall Harvest Dinner, November 3rd, Palmer Elks Lodge