



# The Division of Agriculture Activities

May 01, 2012

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

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## Directors Note

Today is Alaska Agriculture Day and an appropriate day to thank our Alaskan producers who have dedicated their lives to providing fresh, flavorful and healthy food for the citizens of Alaska, beautiful flowers and landscape plants, and revegetation materials that bring developed land back to its natural state.

### *Executive Proclamation* by *Governor Sean Parnell*

WHEREAS, agriculture is a core foundation of every civilization and was integral in the settlement of Alaska. From early Russian trading posts to the settlers of the Tanana Valley, Alaskan frontiersmen have seen the potential for agriculture and development in the settlement and sustainability of Alaskan communities; and

WHEREAS, today, Alaska agriculture is a vital, multi-million dollar industry composed of a wide range of businesses including farms, ranches, nurseries, and gardens; and

WHEREAS, Alaskan agriculture is part of our lifestyle of self-sufficiency and adaptability. Alaska's farmers and processors provide safe, healthy, high-quality products, offering Alaskans local options, and creating food security for our state, which would otherwise be dependent on imported products; and

WHEREAS, agriculture provides what we eat, use, and wear on a daily basis. As Alaskans, it is important to teach our youth how food and fiber are produced, emphasize the essential role of agriculture in maintaining a strong economy, and appreciate the role agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant, and affordable products; and

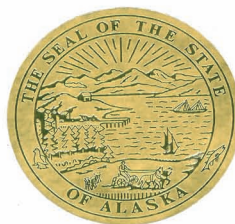
WHEREAS, Alaska agriculture producers are modern day pioneers who provide the food, fiber, and energy resources necessary to ensure a sustainable future for current and future generations. Alaska is a state rich with resources; with continued dedication, generations of Alaskans will reap the benefit of their harvest.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Sean Parnell, Governor of the State of Alaska, do hereby proclaim May 1, 2012 as:

#### *Alaska Agriculture Day*

in Alaska, and encourage Alaskans to support local agriculture by seeking out and purchasing products produced and grown in Alaska.

Dated: April 26, 2012



*Sean Parnell, Governor*  
*who has also authorized the*  
*seal of the State of Alaska to*  
*be affixed to this proclamation.*

With summer just around the corner it is time to put forward nominations for the Farm Family of the Year award. The Alaska State Fair is looking for that exceptional farm family that epitomizes the spirit of Alaskan agriculture. If you know a special family that fits this description, please send your nominations to [amy.pettit@alaska.gov](mailto:amy.pettit@alaska.gov).

This is always a busy time of year, but please takes time to review the newsletter and calendar for events and current issues. If you have questions or concerns, please let me know at [franci.havemeister@alaska.gov](mailto:franci.havemeister@alaska.gov) or 761-3867.

*-Franci Havemeister*

*"Don't judge each day by the harvest that you reap, but by the seeds that you plant."*

*- Robert Louis Stevenson.*

## Agriculture Calendar

- ▶ Tue. May 1<sup>st</sup>, 9 am: **Alaska Agriculture Day**; Activities all across the state.  
Contact [Alaska.aitc@gmail.com](mailto:Alaska.aitc@gmail.com) for info
- ▶ Tues. May 1<sup>st</sup>, 6:30 pm - 8 pm: **Composting in Alaska**; MTA Conference Room, Palmer.  
Registration details: [here](#).
- ▶ Wed. May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6:30 pm - 8 pm: **Lawn Establishment**; MTA Conference Room, Palmer.  
Registration details: [here](#).
- ▶ Fri. May 4<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm - 8 pm: **Chicken University**; MTA Conference Room, Palmer.  
Registration details: [here](#).

If you have an event that you would like to add to the calendar, please contact [Lora Haralson](#).

## Marketing Section

### Nominations needed: 2012 Farm Family of the Year Award

What do the following families have in common?

- Huppert Family
- VanderWeele Farms
- Havemeister Dairy
- Rempel Family Farm
- P & M Gardens
- Calypso Farm & Ecology Center
- Wrigley Farms
- Insanity Acres
- Lewis Farm
- Oberg-Kenley Family
- Pyrah Family, and
- Gray Owl Farm

They've all been recipients of the Alaska State Fair Farm Family of the Year Award. The Division of Agriculture is now accepting nominations for the 2012 award. If you know a family who is deserving of this rec-

ognition please nominate them. The committee will accept nominations and select a family using the following criteria:

1. Production of quality Alaska Grown products (not based on quantity);
2. Community involvement (civic organizations, school, sports, church);
3. Involvement in agricultural industry organizations (local, state and federal, etc.) and,
4. Overall farm family image, farming history, unique or special production.

Please submit your nominations via email to [Amy Pettit](#) by June 29<sup>th</sup>.

Remember to follow Alaska Grown on Facebook at [facebook.com/dnr.alaskagrown](https://www.facebook.com/dnr.alaskagrown) for the latest updates.



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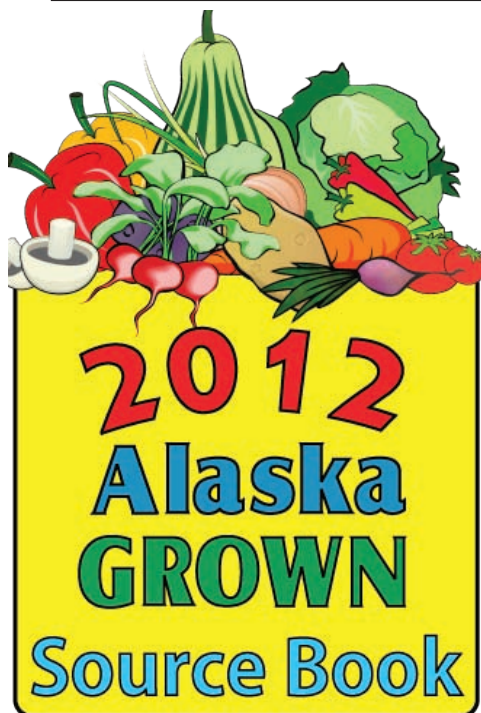
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### Act Now! Reserve your spot in the 2012 Alaska Grown Source Book

The Alaska Grown Source Book is the only STATEWIDE listing of Alaska farms, ranches and other agri-businesses. Producers of food and farm products can tell us about your business by going to [dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag\\_AKG2012.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_AKG2012.htm). You can also contact Kristi Krueger at (907) 761-3858 or [Kristi.krueger@alaska.gov](mailto:Kristi.krueger@alaska.gov).

The Division prints a minimum of 5000 copies of the Source Book, for distribution at statewide Agricultural events and fairs, farmer's markets, and at the Division of Agriculture's offices. Don't delay, reserve your place in the Source Book today!



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[http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag\\_arlf.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_arlf.htm)

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## Alaska Farm-to-School Program Update

### Sitka Fish Program Grand Prize Winner in 2011 Farm-to-School-Challenge

Sitka Conservation Society (SCS) submitted their local 'fish to school' program in the Alaska Farm to School Challenge last October. In recognition of this SCS's leadership through this innovative program and the tremendous community involvement it has generated, the Alaska Division of Agriculture was pleased to name SCS as Grand Prize Winner in the 1<sup>st</sup> annual Farm-to-School Challenge.

In Southeast Alaska the most abundant local food is found in the waters off their coast. SCS has taken the farm to school program model and applied it to their local bounty in an extremely successful way, drawing on the strengths of community stakeholders. SCS developed an impressive 'stream to plate' curriculum that comes full circle in the lunch room, where locally-sourced fish is incorporated into cafeteria lunches.

For the award presentation, we planned a fun day with one of the schools, Keet Gooshi Keen Elementary. We were joined

by a number of guest visitors; First Lady Sandy Parnell, Division of Agriculture Director Franci Havemeister, and Child Nutrition Program Coordinator Sue Lampert.

We were invited to visit some classrooms and share farm-to-school activities from other parts of Alaska. We also did a special project that focused on grain growing. On a giant map of Southeast Alaska, courtesy



First lady Sandy Parnell serves up fresh Alaskan fish to students at Keet Gooshi Keen Elementary in Sitka

of the Northern Region Office, we started by giving kids the opportunity to guess where their fish came from, vote for why they like to eat fish, and finally vote on their favorite 'fish dish'!

The top two responses for why they liked to eat fish were "Fish tastes Good" and "Fish is good for me", the most popular 'fish dish' was Rockfish

Taco's followed by the dish served that day, Rockfish Scandia. It was fun to see and talk with the kids about their fish lunches. One couldn't help but notice that you never saw any of the Rockfish Scandia left on the tray when the kids were finished eating!



Representatives from Sitka Conservation Society, State of Alaska, Nana Management Services and Sitka's Keet Gooshi Keen Elementary School



Rockfish Scandia is usually the first item to disappear from lunch trays in Sitka schools

### School Garden Census Results

The Alaska Farm-to-School Program contacted 512 schools around Alaska to find out how many school gardens are in the state. An amazing 103 schools around the state have a garden that students can learn from! We look forward to seeing that number grow.

### Does your School have a Garden?



### Local Food Hero Contest

Help promote your local food hero and win money for your youth organization! All you need to do is send us a photo and the story behind your food hero. To find out more about the contest go to: [dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag\\_FTS.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_FTS.htm).



For Farm-to-School updates, news, grant opportunities and announcements, join our listserv: [list.state.ak.us/soalists/akfarmtoschool/jl.htm](http://list.state.ak.us/soalists/akfarmtoschool/jl.htm). The FTS facebook page is at [facebook.com/AlaskaFarmToSchool](http://facebook.com/AlaskaFarmToSchool).

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## Pest Detection / Inspection Section

### Honey Bees in Alaska and Bee Registration Requirements

Honey bees (*Apis mellifera*) are not native to Alaska and are imported to the state each year for the purpose of beekeeping. April and May is the time of year when bee shipments typically arrive in state. Whether keeping one hive or a dozen, maintaining a healthy colony of bees will help to ensure a good harvest of honey.



Alaska Law ([AS 03.47.030](#) & [11 ACC 35.010 – 35.020](#)) requires bee keepers to register their bees with the Division of Agriculture. All bees brought into the State of Alaska can be registered very simply by going online to the Division of Agriculture web

page Inspection Services ([dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag\\_is.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_is.htm)) to download the [bee registration form](#) to fill out and return. Once the form is filled out, use the email button to return the form to the Division or print the form and fax or mail the form to the Division. For those who do not have a computer or prefer to register their bees in person, feel free to visit the office in Fairbanks or Palmer to pick-up a 3x5 card and fill it out.

The question has been asked concerning the need to register bees with the state. Registering bees with the Division of Agriculture helps prevent the spread of bee diseases that could adversely affect bee populations by documenting the occurrence of bee populations, and where they come from, in the state. Currently, bees are being bred in the U.S. that are resistant to American foulbrood (AFB) and chalk brood diseases and to the parasitic mites, varroa mite (*Varroa destructor*) and honey bee tracheal mite (*Acarapis woodi*). These diseases and disease causing parasites have significantly reduced honey bee populations in the lower 48 and other parts of the world.

### Knowledge, Prevention, Control - *Provided by the Univ. of Minnesota Extension Office*

Our strategy for keeping bees healthy and reducing chemical treatments follows three deliberate steps: Knowledge, Prevention and Control. We want all beekeepers to be educated about the diseases and pests that bees face, and to use the best beekeeping management practices to control them. The use of chemical treatments should be considered only as an absolute last resort.

#### Knowledge:

- **Learn** about bee diseases and mite pests.
- Be able to recognize **clinical symptoms** of diseases and understand the **life-cycle** of the mites.

#### Prevention:

- Implement **sound** beekeeping **practices** to avoid getting and spreading diseases and mites.
- **Sample** your colonies for diseases and mites to know the degree of infection or infestation.
- **Bee self-defense!** Use stocks of bees that demonstrate some resistance to diseases and mites.

#### Control:

- Use **cultural** / mechanical / non-chemical control techniques to reduce transmission if your bees do have diseases or mites.
- **Last resort:** Use chemical treatments only when absolutely necessary and according to label.

It is the responsibility of all beekeepers to maintain a healthy, disease-free hive. The Palmer office of the Division of Agriculture can help you with some of these questions, assist you in registering your bees, and inspect hives that might exhibit characteristics of bee diseases.

Organizations in the state dedicated to beekeeping can also provide a wealth of knowledge to help you maintain a thriving hive and produce great tasting honey. Look online or ask other beekeepers about these organizations.

For further information on keeping bees, refer to the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Publication [Beekeeping in Alaska](#), at [www.uaf.edu/files/ces/publications-db/catalog/anr/ABM-00230.pdf](http://www.uaf.edu/files/ces/publications-db/catalog/anr/ABM-00230.pdf).

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<http://plants.alaska.gov/>

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## Plant Materials Center

### Alaska Plant Materials Center Welcomes New Staff

The Plant Materials Center is pleased to welcome Agronomist Todd Steinlage to our team this summer. Originally from Iowa, Todd has been in Alaska for 3 years, working most recently as a technician for the USDA Agricultural Research Service.

Todd will be conducting a survey of grasses at the PMC, looking particularly at fungal endophytes - symbiotic organisms that live in a plant. Endophytes can be beneficial, allowing a plant to better survive different environmental stresses.

Some fungal endophytes can also be harmful, and are known to have a negative effect on forage quality. Further research will help broaden our understanding of en-

dophyte prevalence and host diversity in native Alaskan grasses.

The PMC also welcomes Rory Hamel to the maintenance team. Rory is a Mat-Su Valley native and a lifelong Alaskan.

Rory will be helping with groundskeeping, irrigation and fertilization of production fields at the PMC. He will be involved with the growing, production, culturing and handling of seed crops. Additionally, Rory is tasked with the eradication of weeds. Currently, he is working in the native plant nursery and in the greenhouse, and learning to identify various types of weeds.

Welcome Todd and Rory!

### Rural Village Seed Production Project Holds Training Workshop

The RVSP staff conducted a two-day marketing seminar and advanced training workshop this April. The marketing seminar was well attended with four villages represented. Nine guest speakers from the State of Alaska and the private sector provided insights about the business of producing and marketing revegetation crops.

The training workshop focused on spring land clearing and planting, as well as hands on seed cleaning with various seed cleaning machines. Participants received hands-on training in the use of hand screens and pans and other seed cleaning tools for specific applications.

The RVSP continues work on a Seed Technology Manual and the development of educational materials and handouts for participant villages, who face a steep agricultural learning curve. Staff is planning spring trips to the villages to assist them in planting activities.

You can find out more about the Rural Village Seed Production Project at [plants.alaska.gov/rvspp](http://plants.alaska.gov/rvspp). If you have questions about the program, contact the Alaska Plant Materials Center at 745-4469.

#### RVSP Participant Village Update

**Metlakatla's** fall seeding survived the winter. The community continues to culture their crop.

**Hooper Bay** is preparing to monitor and maintain several native stands of beach wildrye for a fall harvest.

**Aniak** awaits the dispersal of snow so they can access fields and prepare for seeding this spring.

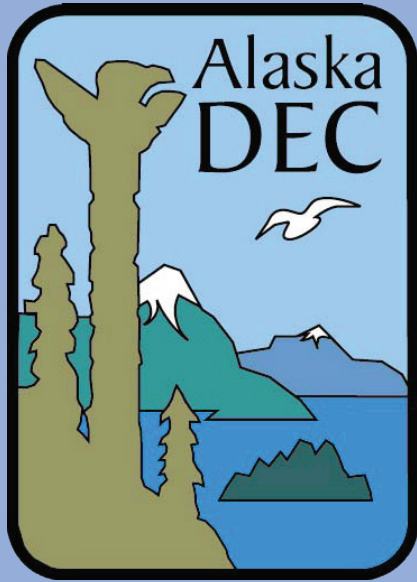
**Manley Hot Springs** is also anxiously awaiting the melting of snow. They intend to clear several acres this spring and plant in the late summer.

**Pedro Bay** has their field cleared and is waiting for the soil to be workable so they can start planting.

**Chignik Lake** will finish clearing and begin seeding their crop this spring. They intend to maintain wild stands of sedges for harvest in the fall.







## Environmental Health

Alaska Department of  
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# Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation: Division of Environmental Health

## Personal Protective Equipment Shelf Life

If you have ever applied pesticides or other chemicals at your home or farm, then you know that product labels list specific Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that you must wear to be safe. Did you know that your PPE can wear out or go bad, even if you've never used it?

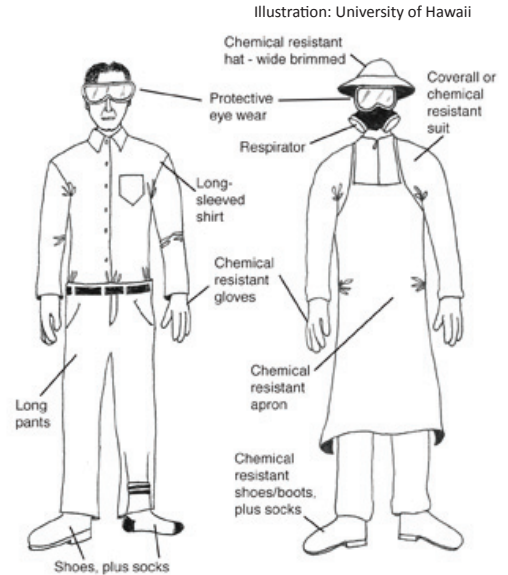
Items like gloves, aprons, Tyvek suits, and boots or shoe covers can get brittle or porous with age. Once PPE has gotten too old, it can no longer protect you from chemicals.

It's a good idea to write the purchase date on PPE when you get it so you will know how old it is. Many products already have an expiration date printed on the package.

Some items come in different sizes. It is important to make sure that the correct, properly fitted size, is available for each person who will be applying pesticides or working near them.

Respirators must also be fit tested for each individual in order to work correctly. Respirator cartridges and filters require replacement on a regular basis.

Why not go check your PPE supplies now to make sure they are still in good condition and ready for use this season?

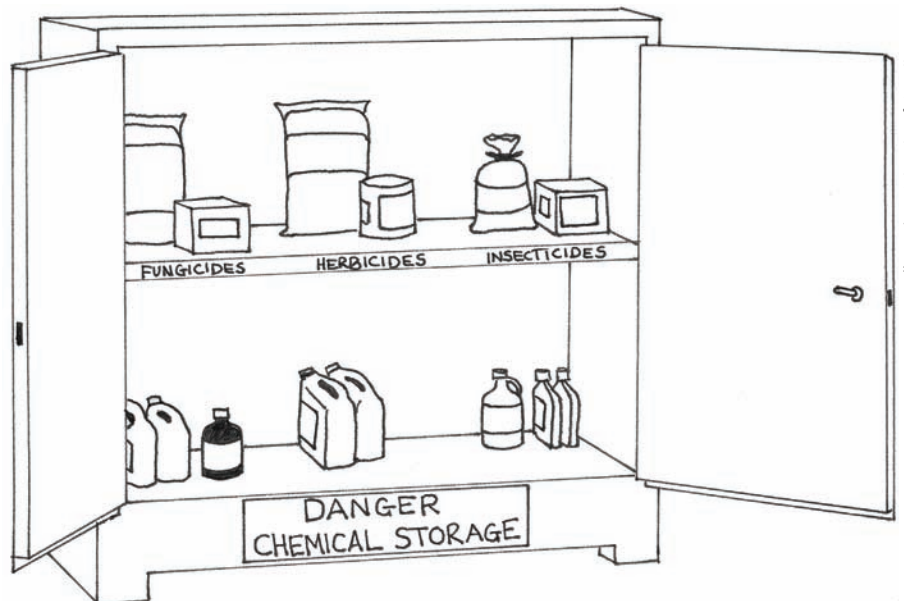


**P.P.E. must be washed and dried after each day's use and stored away from chemicals. Change gloves and respirators as per manufacturers' specifications.**

## Proper Pesticide Storage

All pesticides should be stored in a secured or locked area to prevent children or animals from contacting harmful chemicals. A clean, well-organized pesticide storage area will help ensure safety. Check for spills, leaks, expired/outdated products and proper labels.

To prevent contamination, personal protective equipment (PPE) should never be stored near pesticides or other chemicals. Spring is a great time to clean out the pesticide storage closet and make sure you have everything on hand that you will need.



*Pesticides should be stored in a locking closet or room, and be clearly labeled and organized.*

Illustration: University of Hawaii