



The Division of Agriculture Activities

September 1, 2013

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

Director's Office

Franci Havemeister, Director
907-761-3867
Franci.Havemeister@alaska.gov

Curt Sandvik
907-761-3866
Curt.Sandvik@alaska.gov

Lora Haralson
907-761-3851
Lora.Haralson@alaska.gov

Rebecca Jeffers
907-761-3850
Rebecca.Jeffers@alaska.gov

In This Issue

- [Director's Note](#)
- [Agriculture Calendar](#)
- [Marketing Team Changes](#)
- [New Program Assistant](#)
- [FSMA Comment Period Extended](#)
- [PMC Seed Sale](#)
- [Cross Border Livestock Conference](#)
- [Alaska in Agricultural Trade?](#)

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

Questions or Comments?
E-Mail or call 907-761-3864.

Follow us on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/dnr.alaskagrown

Director's Note

This year has been memorable in many ways. The late snowfall, the hot dry summer, and now what seems to be endless days of rain. For those of us who live in south central, with the rainy season comes the Alaska State Fair in Palmer. Each year, the fair recognizes a farm family that is outstanding in their field. This year, I would like to congratulate Vern Stockwell and Becky Gardner of Stockwell Farm (Palmer) for receiving the 2013 Farm Family of the Year Award.

Several weeks ago, I had the opportunity to travel to North Carolina and attend a Food Safety Forum hosted by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture. For those of us traveling from out of state, the trip began with a tour of a farm which produces and packs cantaloupe and watermelon, among other things. It was insightful to see the amount of re-tooling the packing facility had recently done in anticipation of the implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). The Food Safety Forum was well attended, with an estimated 500 people participating in the morning session which was focused around FSMA. Guest speakers included FDA Deputy Commissioner for Foods, Michael Taylor as well as other FDA staff who provided an overview of several of the proposed rules, including the Rules for Preventive Controls for Human Food Facilities and the Supply Chain Verification and Imported Control. The FSMA continues to gain national interest as it is the first major overhaul of food safety practices since 1938, and while it is estimated the proposed rules and the implementation of FSMA will impact only 21% of farms, it will affect 90% of farmed acreage. More information can be found at [USDA FDA FSMA](#). Public comments can be submitted at [Government Regulations](#) through November 15, 2013.

On a state level, Governor Parnell recently signed Administrative Order No. 266, establishing Regulatory Efficiency Guidelines (REGS) for State agencies in the executive branch to use in the review, oversight, adoption, amendment, and repeal of regulations and in the recommendations of improvements to the Alaska Statutes. The Department of Natural Resources will soon be soliciting public input on the statutes and regulations that affect its operations through our website at [Department of Natural Resources](#). If you have any issues, concerns, or suggestions about regulations and statutes that are related to Agriculture or any other areas of the Department's responsibilities please check the website in the near future. The submission link on our website should be operational after September 23rd, 2013.

This month, I am sad to say goodbye to our Farm to School Coordinator, Johanna Heron. Johanna has worked tirelessly to create a nationally recognized Alaska Farm to School Program and will be a valuable asset to her new home state of Vermont. We wish her and her family the best on her future endeavors!

As always, please take the time to peruse the newsletter for upcoming conferences, events, and deadlines. If you have any questions or concerns please give me a call at 761-3867, or drop me a line at franci.havemeister@alaska.gov.

~ *Franci Havemeister*

"Winter is an etching, spring a watercolor, summer an oil painting, and autumn a mosaic of them all."

- Stanley Horowitz

Marketing Staff

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

Amy Pettit, Marketing Manager

907-761-3864

Amy.Pettit@alaska.gov

Kyla Byers 907-761-3880

[VISTA Volunteer]

Kyla.Byers@alaska.gov

Jacki Schade 907-761-3858

Jacquelyn.Schade@alaska.gov

Taylor Berberich 907-761-3855

Taylor.Berberich@alaska.gov



Fairbanks Office

907-328-1950

Curtis Knight 907-374-3732

Curtis.Knight@alaska.gov

Jamie Peterson 907-374-3715

Jamie.Peterson@alaska.gov

Land Sales & Grazing Leases

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

Dan Proulx 907-374-3716

Dan.Proulx@alaska.gov

Erik Johnson 907-761-3863

Erik.Johnson@alaska.gov



Agriculture Calendar

- ▶ **Tue. Sept. 10th** **Low Stress Animal Handling Demonstration.** Palmer. Details: [here](#);
- ▶ **Tue. Sept. 17th - Oct. 1st** **Fall Seed Sale for Commercial Growers .** Palmer. Details: [here](#);
- ▶ **Sun. Sept. 29th - Oct. 3rd** **8th Circumpolar Agricultural Conference UArctic Inaugural Food Summit.** Girdwood. Details: [here](#);

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

Marketing Section

Marketing Team Changes

We regretfully announce the departure of Farm to School (FTS) Coordinator Johanna Herron this month. Johanna did such a fabulous job establishing the Alaska FTS program; it comes as no surprise that the Vermont Agency of Agriculture is excited for her to take the reigns of their program. To say that Johanna will be missed by many is an obvious understatement.

The long-term future of the FTS program is unclear as the program is scheduled to sunset in June 2014. Although the program has been incredibly successful working towards the goals laid out in the original HB 70 language – such as increasing the use of Alaska Grown foods in schools, supporting agriculture curriculum, and increasing the number of school gardens in the state – there is still much work to be done. Johanna worked tirelessly to raise awareness about Alaska agriculture, increase communication between producers and School Food Service Staff, and educate all about food safety.

The short-term future of the FTS program is business as usual. We plan to conduct the Farm to School Challenge, distribute Farm to School Mini-Grants, and continue supporting any/all efforts that increase consumption of Alaska Grown foods in schools. The remaining members of the marketing team will work hard to meet the needs of the community. Should you have a specific question, please don't hesitate to [contact Amy Pettit](#).



Pictures Left to right: Jacki Schade, Taylor Berberich, Amy Pettit, Jamie Peterson, Johanna Herron, Kyla Byers.

NEW FACES: **New Division of Agriculture Program Assistant: Jacquelyn Schade**

Jacki Schade was raised in Eagle River, Alaska. She received her Bachelors of Animal Science, Equine Option, at Montana State University in Bozeman. Jacki worked in the Kentucky thoroughbred racing industry in Lexington, KY for a year after she graduated. She returned to Alaska to be closer to her family and pursue a career here. She feels very fortunate to be a member of the Alaska Division of Agriculture. Jacki previously worked with the Division as a Natural Resource Specialist and is looking forward to being an active member of the marketing team. [Email Jacki](#).



ARLF Services

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

Amanda Swanson, Loan Officer

907-761-3869

Amanda.Swanson@alaska.gov

Mt. McKinley Meat & Sausage

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

Frank Huffman 907-745-5232

Frank.Huffman@alaska.gov

Inspection Staff

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

Doug Warner, Inspection Manager

907-761-3869

Douglas.Warner@alaska.gov

Mia Kirk 907-761-3853

Mia.Kirk@alaska.gov

Barb Hanson 907-761-3854

Barbara.Hanson@alaska.gov

Kirk Brown 907-761-3857

Kirk.Brown@alaska.gov

Pest Detection / Inspection Section

FSMA COMMENT PERIOD EXTENDED

The FDA's Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) was signed into law in 2011, and will make sweeping changes to the nation's food protection system. The rules have not yet been finalized, and FDA has again extended the public comment period for proposed rules until November 15, 2013. The law will take effect 60 days after it is finalized, and will cover produce and animal feed, both domestic and imported.

The five parts of the proposed regulations include:

1) PRODUCE SAFETY STANDARDS

The proposed Produce Safety Rule regulates the production and handling of fruits, vegetables, and berries. Some commodities (those that are rarely consumed raw) are exempted, as are those that are produced for personal or on-farm consumption, or destined for commercial processing.

The Produce Safety Rule establishes science-based minimum standards for safe growing, harvesting, packing and holding of produce on farms. The proposed rule focuses on identified routes of microbial contamination of produce, specifically:

- *Agricultural Water*: Water is a common source of pathogens. The Produce Safety Rule will require water that is used for irrigation, hand washing, or washing produce, and water that contacts produce or food-contact surfaces, to meet minimum microbial standards. It will also require that water be tested periodically.

- *Biological Soil Amendments of Animal Origin*: The use of any soil amendments of animal origin, including compost, manure, fish fertilizers, compost tea, and worm castings and "juice", will be regulated to reduce the chances of pathogen transmission. The rule addresses methods of treatment and methods of application of these amendments, and proposes time intervals between the application of these amendments and the harvesting of food crops.

- *Health and Hygiene*: Since many foodborne illnesses are due to human transmission, the proposed rule requires use of hygienic practices, including hand washing, and hygiene training for farm personnel who handle produce or food-contact surfaces, as well as for supervisors.

- *Domestic and Wild Animals*: To reduce introduction of pathogens from animal

feces, the proposed rule requires waiting periods before harvesting produce from areas where animals have been grazing. It also addresses domestic and working animals in growing areas, requires farms to monitor for the presence of wildlife in fields, and prohibits harvest of produce from areas that have been visibly contaminated with animal waste.

- *Equipment, Tools and Buildings*: The proposed rule sets standards for certain equipment, tools, buildings, and sanitation used for produce operations on farms.

- *Recordkeeping*: Certain recordkeeping requirements are also proposed.

The FSMA proposes stringent new requirements for sprout growers, due to the high risks presented by sprout growing methods. Requirements include treating sprout seed before sprouting, testing spent irrigation water or the sprouts themselves for pathogens, and monitoring the growing environment for listeria contamination.

The FDA is proposing that farms with an average annual income from food sales of \$25,000 or less would be exempt from this rule, although the exemption can be revoked under certain circumstances. However, sales of ALL types of food, including those not generally eaten raw and other types of food such as meat, milk, jams, and grains would be included in this income threshold. Growers would be allowed time to comply with the various requirements after the law comes into effect.

2) RULE ON PREVENTIVE CONTROLS FOR HUMAN FOOD

The second component of FSMA is the proposed Preventive Controls Rule, which applies to farms that manufacture or process food (including cutting, freezing, or drying produce). It also applies to farms that pack or hold food that is grown on another farm. The rule proposes that each covered facility would have a written food safety policy in place that addresses the following:

- Hazard Analysis
- Risk-Based Preventive Controls
- Monitoring Procedures
- Corrective Actions
- Verification
- Recordkeeping

The rule as it is currently proposed

Plant Materials Center

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

Main Phone: 907-745-4469

Stoney Wright, Manager

907-745-8105

Stoney.Wright@alaska.gov

Rob Carter 907-745-8127

Rob.Carter@alaska.gov

Bill Campbell 907-745-8724

William.Campbell@alaska.gov

Peggy Hunt 907-745-8721

Peggy.Hunt@alaska.gov

Brianne Blackburn 907-745-8785

Brianne.Blackburn@alaska.gov

Alicia Holladay 907-745-8104

Alicia.Holladay@alaska.gov

Lyubo Mahlev 907-745-8782

Lyubomir.Mahlev@alaska.gov



Phil Czapla 907-745-8747

Phil.Czapla@alaska.gov

Rusty Foreaker 907-745-8092

Rusty.Foreaker@alaska.gov

Casey Dinkel 907-745-8108

Casey.Dinkel@alaska.gov

Todd Steinlage 907-745-8138

Todd.Steinlage@alaska.gov

Kimberly Allen 907-745-8735

Kim.Allen@alaska.gov

Michael Keen 907-745-4469

Michael.Keen@alaska.gov

Heather Stewart 907-745-4469

Heather.Stewart@alaska.gov

exempts farmer's market vendors and Community Supported Agriculture businesses (CSAs) from the Preventive Controls Rule.

3) FOREIGN SUPPLIER

VERIFICATION RULE FOR IMPORTERS

This regulation will require importers to verify that foreign suppliers follow procedures that provide the same level of health protection as that required of domestic food producers under the FSMA.

4) ACCREDITED THIRD PARTY CERTIFICATION

This section of the FSMA will require accreditation of third-party food safety auditors who oversee the production of imported food, to ensure that it is grown in

compliance with U.S. food safety laws.

5) PREVENTIVE CONTROLS FOR ANIMAL FOOD

This rule will regulate the use of preventive controls at animal food facilities, to ensure that they are similar to those for human foods.

FDA is conducting extensive outreach to growers, consumers, industry, and government agencies in an effort to collect comments on the proposed rule before it is finalized. To find out more about the specifics of the FSMA proposals, go to <http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/default.htm>. The proposed rules and supporting documents are filed in FDA's official docket on <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Plant Materials Center

Plant Materials Center Alaska Native Grasses and Flower Seed Sale

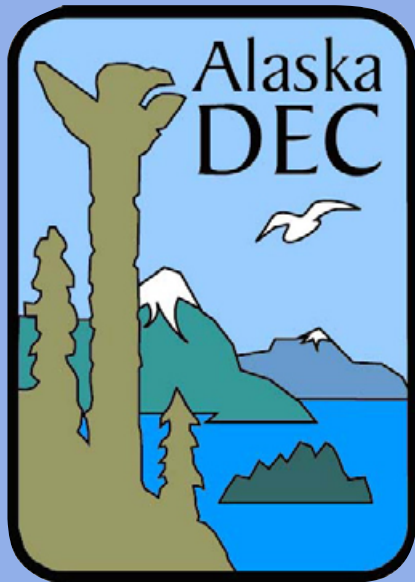
The Plant Materials Center (PMC) sells foundation and natural selection grass, forb, and grain seed to commercial growers in the fall and spring. Our fall seed sale begins **September 17 and runs through October 1, 2013**. The seed we offer is needed for the revegetation, agriculture, and landscape industries here in Alaska. The farmers who purchase our seed plant their crops at least a year in advance so that they can have it in the ground to produce either seed or plugs for upcoming industry needs. This seed is not sold to individual consumers for personal use.

Growers who have established crops ready for sale are encouraged to put their business on the "[Directory of Alaska Native Plant Sources](#)", updated as needed by the PMC. This Directory can be found on our [website](#). People who require native seed or plants for big or small projects refer to this list to find suppliers.

The list of seed for sale will be available on the Division of Agriculture and the Plant Materials Center's [website](#) or via request to [Peggy Hunt](#), (907-745-8721). A public notice through the Alaska Department of Natural Resources is posted prior to the sale.



Commercial Field of Alpine Bluegrass, North Pole, AK.



Environmental Health

Alaska Department of
Environmental Conservation

Dec.Alaska.gov/eh/
907-269-7501

Elaine Busse Floyd
Director
Environmental Health
Elaine.Busse.Floyd@alaska.gov

Kim Stryker
Program Manager
Food Safety & Sanitation
Kimberly.Stryker@alaska.gov

Bob Blankenburg
Program Manager
Solid Waste/ Pesticides
Bob.Blankenburg@alaska.gov

James Weise
Program Manager, Drinking Water
James.Weise@alaska.gov

Patryce McKinney
Lab Chief
Environmental Health Lab
Patryce.McKinney@alaska.gov

Robert Gerlach
Alaska State Veterinarian
907-375-8214
Bob.Gerlach@alaska.gov

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation: Division of Environmental Health

Cross Border Livestock Health Conference Held in Anchorage

The Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER) is a bi-national organization consisting of both government and private sector members from the United States and Canada. Participating states and territories include Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Alaska, Alberta, Yukon Territory, Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories. The mission of PNWER is to establish a collaborative region-wide organization to address common issues and interests. The organization has several working groups to focus on specific topics such as Agriculture, Invasive species, Cross Border Livestock Health, and Trade and Development.

The Agriculture Working Group focuses on three main agricultural topics: food safety, mutual reliance of food testing results, and crop protection products. The Cross-Border Livestock Health Working Group seeks to enhance relationships and networking between U.S. and Canadian jurisdictions, exchanging information on animal health issues, developing a common understanding of disease policies, exchanging information on emergency response to emerging and foreign animal disease, advancing Canadian and American animal health interests, and identifying and executing action items to collectively address animal and cross-border issues.

This year, PNWER held the Cross-Border Livestock Health Conference in Anchorage the week of July 15-19, 2013. The Cross Border Livestock Health Conference covered several topics impacting livestock producers, including antibiotic resistance and livestock production; animal care and welfare impact on livestock production and marketing; One Health- implications for cross-border trade and local food consumption; and electronic certification, cross-border trade and animal movement.

Antibiotic Resistance and Livestock Production

This has been a major issue over the last few years since the use of antimicrobials on the farm is being blamed for development of resistant bacteria that threaten public and environmental health. The risks and benefits of antimicrobial use in livestock

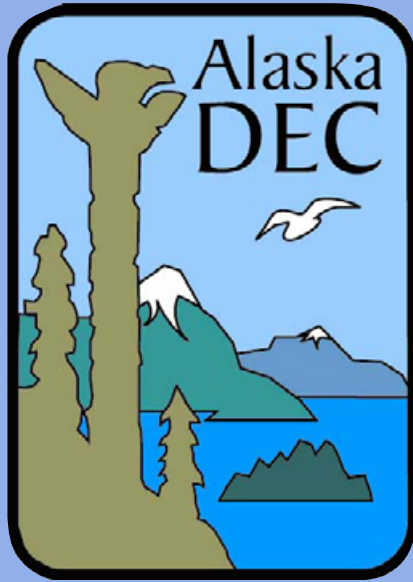
are not communicated to the public in a balanced fashion. Perception by the public is that antimicrobial use in livestock is creating resistant pathogens that may be transferred to humans and is reducing the effectiveness of antimicrobials in human health. These perceptions may lead to lost consumer confidence in food safety, and increased regulation that doesn't improve human health or animal health.

The use of antimicrobials provides great benefits: improved animal health, higher production, and in general, a reduction in foodborne pathogens. The statistic that is often quoted is **80 percent of antibiotics sold are used in animal agriculture**. The FDA reported that 13,067,100 kilograms were sold for use in food production animals. But about three-quarters of the antibiotics that farmers use on animals are not used at all by humans or are used very infrequently. The largest amounts of antimicrobials used in livestock are the ionophores (ex. Monensin) that are used as growth promotants; these are not used in human medicine. Recent surveillance studies in Canada and the US on antimicrobial resistant organisms show resistance to the antibiotics that are most important for treating human illnesses are extremely uncommon in healthy North American cattle. The best way to avoid the overuse and misuse of antimicrobials is to work with your veterinarian.

Animal Care and Welfare Impact on Livestock Production and Marketing

Animal care and welfare issues generate a negative public perception of the livestock industry. The public wants an established set of animal care standards that ensure animals are raised, handled and transported in an ethical manner. This public pressure is leading to food producers being held to a high standard. Dr. Edwards Callaway of JBS, USA presented how they are responding to this public pressure. David Fikes of the Food Marketing Institute gave an overview from the retailer's perspective. The food markets are caught between the livestock producers who supply the product raised in an efficient manner, and the public

continued on next page



Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation: Division of Environmental Health

who demand free range animals and have the perception that farms should be like “Old McDonald’s Farm;” a harmonious, carefree environment. The problem is that there is such a divide between the farming community and the urban public that people today do not know where their food actually comes from. The fact is that the vast majority of producers do take good care of their animals; they know that good husbandry produces the highest quality product. The food retailers are in a very competitive market, relying on a 1-2% profit margin. Their priorities are: food safety, health regulations, consumer confidence in the food supply, animal welfare, and genetically modified products.

The conflict comes into play when the consumer is dictating the method of production but refuses to pay the increased prices for the products. Surveys show that the primary concerns of the consumers are: #1 cost (Can we afford this?), #2 taste (Will the kids eat it? How do I prepare it?), #3 Health benefit (Is it good for me?). Down farther on the list are: Is it locally produced? Is it environmentally sensitive, organic, or genetically modified? Then there are animal welfare concerns.

Food retailers believe animals should and can be raised, handled, transported, and processed in ways that ensure they are clean, safe, and free from cruelty, abuse, or neglect. They support that the critical components of a responsible food industry include the necessity to simultaneously and scientifically assess the impacts of animal care and handling practices on animal well-being, food safety, and food quality. Now, they have established animal welfare committees to evaluate the source of the products that they sell in their stores. It is important that there are animal care standards that are followed and that the producer can show that the animal products that they produce are handled in an ethical manner.

One Health – Implications for Cross Border Trade and Local Food Consumption

Dr. Jim Berner gave an overview of the one health concept as it relates to Alaskan residents. He discussed foodborne and zoonotic disease issues that public health

officials deal with on a regular basis and the focus on new emerging diseases that are being found more frequently due to global markets, transportation of animals and people, and changes in human-animal interactions. Bob Harding presented the Canadian Swine Health Board’s new focus on zoonotic diseases such as swine flu that, due to misinformation, has generated a negative impact on the swine industry. The important point of his presentation was that such an issue can impact any portion of the livestock industry. He gave the example of the salmonella outbreaks in the U.S. associated with contact with poultry and poultry products.

Electronic Certification, Cross Border Trade, and Animal Movement

There has been quite a bit of effort in the last three conferences to push state and federal government agencies to develop a more efficient process to move animals and animal products over state, provincial and international borders. The current paper system is inefficient, and costly to the producers in regulatory fees. In addition, the prolonged delays at the border pose an animal welfare issue and result in a significant shrinkage to the final carcass and profit loss. Dr. Cindy Gaborick outlined the United States Department of Agriculture’s electronic certification program for a few animal species traveling between certain countries. Dr. Bill Brown, Kansas State Veterinarian, gave an overview of the electronic permit and health certificate system being developed by a group of western states (KS, CO, TX, OK, UT, MT, WA, OR, ND, AK.) The system is gaining wider acceptance through the eastern states. The pressure is now on the Canadian Government (CFIA) to take the step and update its procedures. The goal is to move animal and animal products at the speed of commerce instead of a snail.

You can obtain more information and view some presentations from this year as well as previous years at:

www.cblhconference.com



UNIVERSITY OF
ALASKA
FAIRBANKS



SCHOOL OF NATURAL RESOURCES
& AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

Martha Westphal

907-474-7188

mmwestphal@alaska.edu

Marilyn Childress

907-474-7083

mlchildress@alaska.edu

Nancy Tarnai

907-474-5042

ntarnai@alaska.edu

snras.blogspot.com

www.uaf.edu/snras

facebook.com/uaf.snras

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

School of Natural Resources & Agricultural Sciences

Does Alaska Have Potential in Global Agricultural Trade?

Story contributed by Nancy Tarnai, Public Information Officer

Steven Beasley came to the state in July to try to answer that question. Beasley is Senior International Marketing Specialist in the Office of Trade Programs, Foreign Agricultural Service, USDA.

Beasley is also an alumnus of the University of Alaska Fairbanks. In addressing an audience at UAF, he said the last time he was in front of UAF professors was when he defended his thesis about preserving farmland in the Mat-Su Valley. "Now I notice the farmlands have shopping centers, condos and espresso bars. What the heck happened?"

In recent years Beasley has worked with the university to open the market for disease-free potato exports to China. "Yours is the only state that can sell potatoes to China," he said. "There is no reason Alaska couldn't be part of the mix." He also mentioned the emerging peony market.

The FAS plays a critical role in supporting agriculture, Beasley said. "It's a fairly small agency in the U.S. government compared to the Forest Service." FAS has 1,000 employees stationed in 150 countries. They help U.S. farmers export products and assist with international development.

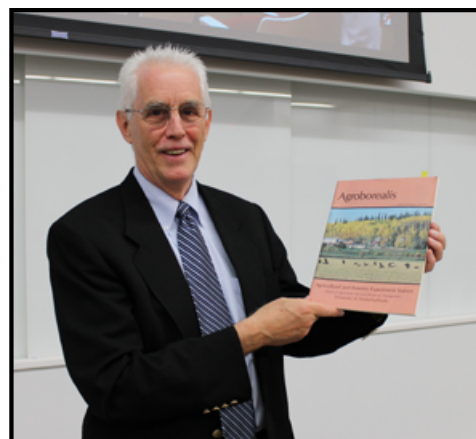
While exports may not be going gangbusters in Alaska (except for the seafood industry), they are crucial to the U.S. economy, Beasley said. Over 25 percent of farm cash receipts come from exports. For each dollar in exports, another \$1.65 is created in supporting economic activity. Agricultural exports support over 1.6 million jobs on and off the farm. The U.S. exports more than it imports.

Exports are important to President Obama, Beasley said, quoting the president's national export initiative: "We need to export more of our goods around the world. We will double our exports over the next five years, an increase that will support 2 million new jobs in America. To meet this goal, we're launching a National Export Initiative that will help farmers and small businesses increase their exports and expand their markets." (State of the Union Address, Jan. 27, 2010)

Cotton is the country's most exported agricultural product, followed by almonds.

Beasley said factors that will affect U.S. and global food and agricultural markets over the next decade include global economic growth and the rise of the middle class in developing countries, value of the U.S. dollar, worldwide biofuels production, role of trade and trade liberalization, energy and agricultural input prices, biotech developments and additional crop land.

He predicts that economic growth in emerging



Beasley visited Alaska in July, stopping at UAF, Palmer, Nenana and Delta Junction farms and meeting with state officials.

markets will remain buoyant. In the U.S., 6 cents of a dollar is spent on food, while in China, India and Vietnam, it is 38 cents of a dollar. As middle classes increase in developing countries Beasley predicts that agricultural imports will continue to increase. Over the past decade, developed country imports have increased 121 percent while in developing countries the number is 399 percent.

According to the Global Trade Atlas, global agricultural trade is projected to reach \$1.1 trillion by 2021. Biofuels and biotechnology will be a large part of the increases, Beasley said. "These new technologies are here and farmers are looking for ways to cut prices. Biotechnology is a tool to save costs and reduce chemicals that go into the land. Farmers in a growing number of countries are embracing this technology.

"There are a lot of unknowns. We have to wait and see what happens."

Beasley and Professor Jenifer McBeath toured farms in Delta Junction and Palmer and met with government officials, including the lieutenant governor and officials at the Division of Agriculture.

"You have enormous land resources in Delta and the Mat-Su Valley," Beasley said. "There is very strong interest in Alaska seed potatoes in China. Alaska farmers need to understand exports can be important. They will have to take risks and have an entrepreneurial spirit to supply a steady product." He said a steady supply, quality product and fair price are critical if Alaska is going to be successful in a global market. "We can make progress if everybody works in sync.

"I'm encouraged by what I saw but there are challenges."