



January 7, 2015

Find us on the web at:

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag>

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Questions or Comments?

E-Mail or call 907-761-3864.

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The Division of Agriculture Activities

Director's Note

Well, 2014 has definitely been an interesting year. Between Alaska's weather phenomena, becoming the 4th state to legalize recreational marijuana, and the current price of oil – the phrase "there is nothing permanent except change" seems appropriate. Although 2015 brings many challenges, challenges are often opportunities and I am looking forward to what this New Year brings.

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome the new FFA state Director, Keven Fochs. Kevin moved to Alaska the first week of December; he is from Livingston, Montana where he taught agricultural education for over 30 years. He brings a lot of experience, insight and ideas to the table and we look forward to working with him in the year to come. His office is located at the Palmer Experimental Station – so if you're in the neighborhood, stop by for a visit.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service has established a 60 day comment period on the interim final rule that outlines how it will improve the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), one of USDA's largest conservation programs. The rule includes program changes authorized by Congress in the 2014 Farm Bill. Comments are due by Feb. 10, 2015. The link to the official posting can be found here: <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2014/12/12/2014-28941/environmental-quality-incentives-program-eqip>

The Division of Agriculture has scheduled a **meeting for the Potato Industry on January 22, 2015 at 7:00 pm** at the Plant Materials Center. The meeting will include information on the past growing season, certification information, overview of test results, as well as an introduction and presentation by Bryan Bowen, the new lead for the PMC potato program. The agenda, including a call in number can be found here at <http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/Potato/AGENDAPotatoMeetingJanuary222015.pdf>

Links to the presentations that will be presented at the meeting will be available on the agenda January 20, 2015 on the Division website under "Potato Meeting Agenda."

In closing, please take the time to peruse the newsletter and mark your calendars for the many upcoming conferences. As always, if you have any questions or concerns please give me a call at 761-3867 or send me an email at franci.havemeister@alaska.gov

Wishing you and yours a happy, healthy, and prosperous new year!

~ *Franci*

*Coming together is the beginning.
Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."
~ Henry Ford*

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Agriculture Calendar

- **Tue. Jan. 13-14** **Farm to School Conference.**
Marriott Hotel, 820 W. 7th Ave., Anchorage.
8 am-5 pm. *Details:* [here](#)
- **Thur. Jan. 15** **Introduction to Alaska Gardening.**
(Winter Conservation Series - Free)
Mat-Su College, Palmer. 7-8:30 pm. *Details:* [here](#)
- **Thur. Jan. 22** **The Down & Dirty.**
(Winter Conservation Series - Free)
Mat-Su College, Palmer. 7-8:30 pm. *Details:* [here](#)
- **Thur. Jan. 22** **Potato Industry Meeting**
Plant Materials Center, 5310 S. Bodenbug Spur,
Palmer. 7-9 pm. *Details:* [here](#)
- **Thur. Jan. 29** **Choosing the Right Greenhouse.**
(Winter Conservation Series - Free)
Mat-Su College, Palmer. 7-8:30 pm. *Details:* [here](#)
- **Fri. Jan. 30-Feb. 1** **Alaska Peony Conference.**
Westmark Hotel Conference Center, Fairbanks. 8 a.m.
Details: [here](#)

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

Marketing Section

Input On Specialty Crop Competitive Grant (SCCG) NEEDED!

Do you grow specialty crops...
fruits, vegetables, herbs, or floriculture products?

Have you ever applied for or received a
Specialty Crop Competitive Grant (SCCG)?

The Division of Agriculture marketing team is seeking input from the industry on the SCCG program for 2015. Please take part in our brief survey, available at <https://www.research.net/s/AKSCCG>

For more information about the SCCG as a whole, to review reports on projects funded in the past or to see the 2014 Request for Proposals, visit our website at http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_grants.htm.

FARM TO SCHOOL UPDATE

CONFERENCE UPDATE

Next week we will be hosting the first ever Alaska Farm to School Conference in Anchorage.



We now have over 100 people registered representing 36 communities from around the State. We will have a showcase on each day of the conference with 12 projects participating in the Farm and Fish to School Showcase and 10 producers in the Local Producer Showcase. Thanks to the USDA Farm to School Grant award, we are able to offer this conference free of charge, provide some wonderful resources to conference participants, and award 36 people financial assistance to attend.

We are honored to have in attendance special guest Deborah Kane, the National Director for the USDA Farm to School Program. Deborah and the Alaska Farm to School Program will be featured on Talk of Alaska, Tuesday, January 13th. Remember to tune in! Other out of state guests include: Kristie Hubbard from the Western Region USDA Farm to School Team and Amy Gilroy, the Farm to School Manager for Oregon Department of Agriculture.

For updates, news, grant opportunities, and announcements join our listserv at: <http://list.state.ak.us/soalists/akfarmtoschool/jl.htm>

For more information about the Alaska Farm to School program, or if you have any questions, contact Johanna Herron at Johanna.herron@alaska.gov or (907) 761-3870.

The State of Alaska is currently recruiting for an AmeriCorps VISTA position:



The Alaska Farmers' Market-Quest Card Program (AFMQP) provides funding and assistance to farmers' markets and farm stands to help them accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) electronic benefits transfer (EBT) cards. This VISTA position will serve as the AFMQP Coordinator and work to further develop the structure and sustainability of the program. This is a one-year position located with the State of Alaska Division of Agriculture in Palmer, Alaska. For more information and to apply for this position, visit: <https://my.americorps.gov/mp/listing/viewListing.do?id=53159&fromSearch=true>

Applications will be accepted until February 1, 2015. The position will start in April.

AmeriCorp VISTA benefits include: Monthly living allowance (\$1,222), relocation costs (\$0.34/mile up to \$1000) and settling in allowance (\$550), health benefits, child care assistance, training, and an Education Award (\$5,730).



Sustainable Agriculture Conference

March 3 –5, 2015 • Westmark Fairbanks Hotel and Conference Center

Defining Our Goals



Preconference Workshop March 3, 2015



Holistic Management and Improved Decision Making

with *Phil Metzger*, Holistic Management International

What are the questions you need answers to when making farming decisions, and who should be involved in the discussion? Learn to manage toward profitability, land health and social well being.

March 4 – 5, 2015

We are inviting YOU to volunteer talks! Do you have something to say? Would you like to give a talk? Send an idea or thought for us to consider.

We have the following sessions:

- Meat and Fiber Production
- Marketing
- Starting a Farm
- Plant Breeding and Variety Selection
- Fruit Growing
- Vegetable Growing
- Policy/Regulations
- Hydroponics
- Sustainable Practices

For more information, visit www.uaf.edu/ces/ah/sare/conference/ or contact Darcy Etcheverry • 907-474-2422

ddetcheverry@alaska.edu
877-520-5211 • www.uaf.edu/ces

UAF is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer and educational institution.

This conference is sponsored in part by



Mt. McKinley Meat & Sausage

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

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Land Sales & Grazing Leases

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Pest Detection / Inspection Section Livestock Brand and Mark Program in Alaska

There are currently 161 registered brands in the State of Alaska that include cattle, horses, elk, and reindeer.

Current brand holders will be receiving renewal letters beginning January 2, 2015. You will have until March 31, 2015 to re-apply. At the end of March 2015 any brand or mark that has not been renewed is open for others to register. New brand books will be available to each individual holder when they are published.

The State of Alaska Brand statutes are in Chapter 03.40 titled "Brands and Marks". Under section 03.40.010, any person owning cattle, reindeer, bison, musk ox, elk, sheep, horses, and mules or asses may adopt a brand or mark. After recording the brand or mark, as provided in AS 03.40.030, the person has the exclusive right to its use.



The Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources has designated the Division of Agriculture (DoAg) the responsibility of managing the brand program. The DoAg publishes a brand book every 5 years. The period covers years that end in either a 0 or 5. A copy of the brand book can be obtained by contacting the DoAg office in Palmer or Fairbanks.

The Division of Agriculture will send out renewal letters to registered brand owners so it is important to keep us notified of your current address. If you have a brand that you would like register go to the Division of Agriculture website at: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/Marketing/2010BrandApplication.pdf>.

Asian Defoliating Moths Survey Update

Each year, the Division of Agriculture, via the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) and recently through Farm Bill projects, coordinates survey efforts to monitor high risk locations for Asian defoliating moths of concern that are currently not present in Alaska. During the summer of 2014, detection surveys for Asian Gypsy Moth, Rosy Gypsy Moth, Nun Moth, and Siberian Silk Moth were conducted throughout the State. Alaska's forest products, agricultural resources, and tourist industries would potentially be at risk should any of these forest pests become established. The forest moth trapping and monitoring efforts in Alaska began in 1983.

Most of these species are found overseas in Asian countries and in Far East Russia. The European Gypsy Moth, however, is found in the Northeastern U.S. and is spreading westward, costing millions of dollars to manage each year. One of the key differences between the North American and the Asian variety of Gypsy Moth is that the Asian female moths can fly, making them much more successful at expanding their range more quickly, and that the Asian moths have a much broader

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host range (about 600 total species compared to roughly 250 species for the North American, or European, Gypsy Moth). Several trap detections of the European Gypsy Moth have been documented in the Fairbanks area over the years since the survey has been conducted. The last detection occurred in 2006. These detections were isolated singleton moths that hitch-hiked a ride on recreational vehicles traveling from the lower 48 states and ended up in one of the monitoring traps.

Trapping efforts this summer focused primarily on the likely pathways for introduction, particularly port communities, international borders, shipping and container facilities, and high use recreational sites. The Asian Gypsy Moth, for example, has been documented numerous times on the superstructures of ships and cargo originating from infested ports and locations in Asia where the species occurs natively. The likelihood of an introduction into North America increases when populations outbreak in their native ranges. This summer, Customs and Border Protection intercepted viable egg masses on a ship near Juneau. In previous years, interceptions by Customs Agricultural Officers have been made near Ketchikan. Asian Gypsy Moth interceptions this year have also been numerous in the Pacific Northwest. The Division of Agriculture is planning to continue survey and monitoring efforts for next year, 2015, funding provided. The trapping survey provides a second line of defense to detection efforts in the event they are not initially detected at the source of transport.

What you can do:



If you have seen a green trap hanging in a tree, like the ones in the images on the left, it is likely they are baited with a pheromone to attract a male moth of one of the targeted species. The pheromones are not toxic to humans or animals and simply mimic that of the associated female moth. Most of the traps have been collected for this year's survey, as the flight period for the moths has generally ended in their native ranges. But should you see one of these traps next year, please remember that these survey traps are among our best detection mechanisms for detecting an introduction or established population of these moths should they be introduced to Alaska.

Remember that the female Gypsy Moths deposit egg masses on a variety of surfaces, such as recreational outdoor equipment. This includes but is not limited to grills, lawn chairs, vehicles (including farm equipment transported to the Alaska), back packs, and firewood. Please be mindful if you are traveling to and from the lower 48 states, especially if you are travelling to locations where there is an USDA Animal Plant Health Inspections Service Gypsy Moth Quarantine in affect (http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/plant_pest_info/gypsy_moth/downloads/gypmoth.pdf).



The survey is made possible by cooperating with agencies across the states. Cooperative Extension Service helps to set out a majority of the traps each year and has knowledgeable staff regarding these, and other pest related concerns. If you have questions about this survey please contact the Alaska Division of Agriculture or your local Extension office.

Plant Materials Center

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Plant Materials Center (PMC)

ATTENTION COMMERCIAL SEED POTATO GROWERS



Please be thinking of what varieties and quantities of Generation zero (G0) seed potatoes you will be requesting from the Plant Materials Center for planting on your farm during 2016. In order to establish our greenhouse production plans for 2015, we need to receive your requests by **January 31, 2015**. As a first step toward limiting disease issues in Alaska potato production, **we encourage you to renew your seed stocks as often as possible with disease free seed** from the PMC. In this regard

we are here to serve you and provide the industry with a healthy start.

Please review the [online list of available material](#) and visit www.plants.alaska.gov/PotatoSeedProduction.html for ordering information. The list represents 36 varieties which have seen order activity in Alaska the past four years. If you don't see a variety of interest please contact us to explore possibilities. Based on production logistics we are setting a minimum order limit of five pounds per variety. The price per pound will remain the same as last year, \$12.00/lb.

For more information contact Bryan.Bowen@alaska.gov or at 907-745-8724.



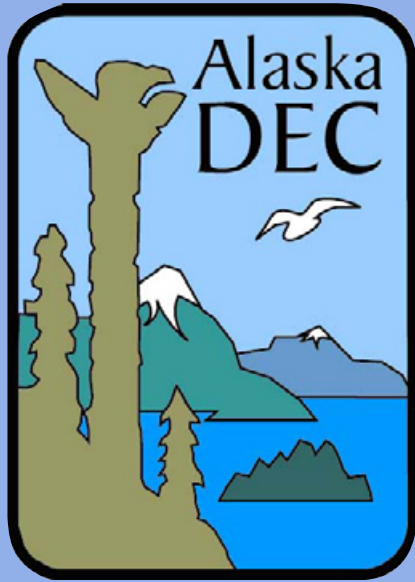
UAF REQUESTS YOUR HELP WITH A PEST SURVEY

The UAF Cooperative Extension Service recently received a very useful grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture in their Crop Protection and Pest Management program. The grant funds four part-time pest scouts in Kenai, Palmer, Fairbanks, and Delta Junction, who will be tasked with the goal of visiting every farm and ranch in Alaska over the next three summers. During these visits they will scout the fields, pastures, and animals for pests. They will teach the owners how they do this, and they will provide information on how to report anything new that the owner may find at some future date.

To train our scouts, we need to find out what are the most important weeds, diseases and insects in your area of the state.

We would like **anyone who grows crops or raises animals for food, or anyone who is in an agency that works with farmers and ranchers, to participate in a statewide survey**. This survey will let us know your main pest concerns and help us tailor our first year of outreach. The survey is straightforward, it does not take much time, and it will provide important information we need to prioritize our pest management trainings and efforts.

Thank you in advance for providing your information.
The survey can be accessed at: <http://bit.ly/akfarmpests>



Environmental Health

Alaska Department of
Environmental Conservation

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Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation: Division of Environmental Health

Disease Outbreaks on the Farm are Usually a Result of Multiple Stressors

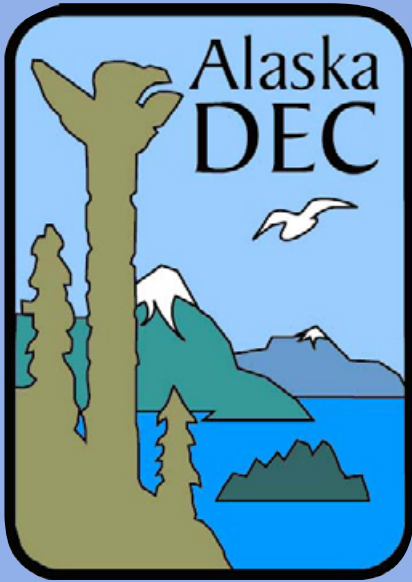
Stress can be the result of change in weather conditions, high burden of parasites, shipping or transporting, and handling for husbandry practices (castration, weaning, vaccinations, ear tagging). Often the disease-causing pathogens are already on the farm such as *campylobacter*, *E. coli* and *salmonella* in the manure or Bovine Viral Diarrhea (BVD) in infected calves. These calves are born from affected cows, show no signs of the disease and are classified as persistently infected. They can be an important source of bovine viral diarrhea virus in cattle, but they might also cause respiratory disease on the farm as well.

The persistently infected animals are found in a relatively small percent of the herd, but can play an important role in disease outbreaks since they shed a large quantity of virus. The BVD virus can cause diarrhea in herd mates but it suppresses the immune system, making cattle more susceptible to other infections caused by bacteria and viruses, especially respiratory diseases.

Histophilus somni (formerly *Haemophilus somnus*) is a Gram-negative bacterium that is found in the respiratory system of cattle and distributed worldwide, so all cattle will be exposed at some point in their life. Since these bacteria are generally present in the herd, to cause disease they just need a weakened immune system. Young growing cattle age 6-12 months are most commonly infected and show clinical disease, which can be severe. Signs may range from infection in the brain called thrombotic meningoencephalitis (TME), respiratory disease, cardiac infection (myocarditis), joint infection (polysynovitis), inner ear (otitis media), mastitis, and reproductive tract problems.

Once these bacteria enter the bloodstream, they cause an inflammation of the blood vessels and thrombosis (clots) which leads to white blood cell infiltration and tissue death, necrosis, and formation of an abscess. Clinical signs vary depending on which organ is affected. Cattle with neurologic disease (TME) may die suddenly or show fever, depression, weakness, ataxia, and may appear blind. In calves with myocarditis, may show signs of heart failure (exercise intolerance, open-mouth breathing, cough, etc.) but sudden death may be the only clinical sign. Cattle with the respiratory form show nonspecific signs of pneumonia: fever, off-feed, coughing and labored breathing.

Prevention of disease is dependent on a good herd health plan and management strategies to reduce stressors on the cattle.



Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation: Division of Environmental Health

New USDA Rules are in Effect and Being Enforced

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has instituted its Animal Disease Traceability Program (ADTP) to improve its ability to trace livestock, including horses, in the event of a disease outbreak. Under the final rule, unless specifically exempted, livestock moved interstate would have to be officially identified and accompanied by an interstate certificate of veterinary inspection or other documentation, such as owner-shipper statements or brand certificates.

Under the new federal regulations, cattle, sheep, goats, swine, poultry and horses moving interstate must have official identification and be accompanied by an Interstate Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (ICVI). The new system is built on methods of identification and movement documentation that are already employed in the horse industry, e.g., written descriptions, digital photographs, brands, tattoos, electronic identification methods, and interstate certificates of veterinary inspection. The person or entity responsible for moving the horse interstate must ensure that it has an ICVI or other document required by the new rule.





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UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

School of Natural Resources and Extension

Calypso Finds Structure is Key to Successful Farmer Training

Story contributed by Nancy Tarnai

There's a lot more to farming than putting seeds in the ground and watching them grow. And now there is farmer school to teach the complexities of becoming a proficient, all-around agriculturist.

Calypso Farm and Ecology Center in Ester (near Fairbanks) has been offering a farmer training program for the past three summers. Christie Shell, Calypso's assistant director, said even though the farm has long had an internship program, people would spend a summer working on the farm and when it was time to leave they didn't have the skills to start their own farm.

"Our mission is encouraging farmers," Shell said. "This program includes the students in the decision making. Now when they leave they say they are ready."

"We've learned a lot," said Susan Willsrud, Calypso's farm director.



A farmer-in-training is delighted with the carrot haul at Calypso Farm in Ester. (Photo courtesy of Calypso Farm and Ecology Center)

When the school was in the pilot stage in 2012, activities were loosely scheduled but with time Willsrud realized that the better the plan the smoother things run. "We've been on a learning curve," she said. "We keep a pretty detailed calendar. It's hard to fit it all in."

From the first week of May to the end of September, every single day is mapped to a T. Students learn planting, weeding, harvesting, composting, blacksmithing, farm planning, working with animals, sewing, cooking, metalsmithing, woodworking and more.

Visiting instructors help teach the wide variety of lessons. Only five people are accepted each summer and Willsrud guides potential students through a rigorous application and interview process to make sure they are a good fit. "I encourage them to take their time and make a decision after thinking it over seriously," she said. The small size is beneficial because it allows some flexibility to tailor the program for each person depending on what their interests and passions are.

"We had to learn how to tailor it, yet give them breadth," Willsrud said. "So far, so good. They find their strong area of interest. We hope they gain

continued on next page



UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

School of Natural Resources & Agricultural Sciences

the confidence and base level of skills to start an economically viable small farm. While not everyone will start a farm, every single person comes out knowing how to grow their own food.”

This type of school is growing in popularity, but until a couple of years ago there were very few. At Calypso, students pay \$3,000 tuition, which includes room and board. Students come from all over; one even came from Ghana, West Africa. “We get a range of people, experience and ages,” Willsrud said. “It makes it interesting.”

While some students have farm experience, some have never even visited a farm. During the interviews, Willsrud asks potential students what role farming will play in their future.

For now, Willsrud and Shell want to keep the school at its small size. “We want to keep improving it,” Willsrud said.

“And we want to meet the needs of the participants,” Shell said. Another goal is to attract a more diverse audience, including young farmers, military veterans and people from various socio-economic backgrounds.

Calypso volunteer Kaiyuh Cornberg, who will attend the training program next summer, said it appealed to her because she’s not a classroom learner. “I love being outside and I really want to grow food in Alaska,” she said. “This is an on-the-ground way to create change.”

An alumnus of the program from Colorado wrote, “The farmers training program has taught me the ins and outs of what it takes to run a farm and a CSA. It has been a phenomenal learning experience and I think it is one of the best choices I have made to come to beautiful Alaska for a summer. Farming at Calypso has solidified my passion for environmental education and opened many new doors into the world of human ecology.”

While the program is probably filled for 2015, Willsrud encouraged prospective students to study Calypso’s website if they are interested in attending in the future.

Contact information:

www.calypsofarm.org

