



March 12, 2015
Find us on the web at:
<http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag>

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

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

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The Division of Agriculture Activities



Director's Note

These are interesting times in Alaska. As the state struggles with the budget deficit and scrambles to get a grasp on the legalization of marijuana – fiscal year 2016 will bring many changes. The House of Representatives is scheduled to close out the operating budget in the next few days and then pass it over to the Senate. Legislative actions taken by the House include the elimination of the Farm to School Program and one inspection position as well as putting a “One-Time Funding (OTI)” stipulation on the Potato Program housed at the Plant Materials Center and Mt. McKinley Meat & Sausage. The OTI stipulation only secures funding for fiscal year 2016 and requires new funding to be appropriated each year to fund the programs. Once the House passes their version of the operating budget to the Senate, their budget process begins - they can either agree with the House version of the budget as presented by the House or draft their own version. Once the Senate has completed their version, any differences between the House and Senate version are taken up in conference committee and resolved. The budget version passed out of the Conference Committee is the budget that is then given to the Governor. That being said, at this stage of the budget process programs may still be added back in or deleted so.....stay tuned.

On a brighter note, March has finally arrived and the days are getting longer! Hopefully your lists of winter projects/equipment repairs have been completed and you're anxiously anticipating the upcoming growing season.

Please take the time to browse the newsletter and mark the dates of upcoming events and/or grant opportunities and deadlines.

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.

~ *Franci*

“Three grand essentials to happiness in this life are something to do, something to love, and something to hope for...” Joseph Addison



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Agriculture Calendar

- **Thur. Mar. 12** **Salmon Stream Crossings/The Intersections of Machines & Man. (Winter Conservation Series - Free)** Mat-Su College, Palmer. 7-8:30pm. *Details:* [here](#)
- **Sat. Mar. 14** **Farm Transition & Estate Planning Workshop** Mat-Su Senior Center, Palmer. 10am-3pm. *Details:* [here](#)
- **Tue. Mar. 17** **Alaska Food Policy Council, Homer Town Hall Meeting** Homer High School Commons, 600 E. Fairview Ave., Homer, 5:30-7:30 pm. *Details:* [here](#)
- **Wed. Mar. 18** **ATV Salmon Stream Crossing Construction Workshop** Mat-Su College, Rm. 202-FSM Bldg., Palmer. 9am-5pm. *Details:* [here](#)
- **Thur. Mar. 19** **Wild Edible & Medicinal Plants (Winter Conservation Series - Free)** Mat-Su College, Palmer. 7-8:30pm. *Details:* [here](#)
- **Sat. Mar. 21** **ATV Salmon Stream Crossing Construction Workshop** Mat-Su College, Rm. 103-FSM Bldg., Palmer. 9am-5pm. *Details:* [here](#)
- **Tue. Mar. 24** **Alaska Food Policy Council, Anchorage Town Hall Meeting** Downtown Soup Kitchen, 240 E. 3rd Ave., Anchorage. 5:30-7:30 pm. *Details:* [here](#)
- **Thur. Mar. 26** **3W's: Wallins Wonderful Worms (Winter Conservation Series - Free)** Mat-Su College, Palmer. 7-8:30pm. *Details:* [here](#)
- **Mon. Mar. 30** **A Farmers Market & Local Food Promotion Program: Grant Writing Workshop** UAF Matanuska Experiment Farm; 1509 S. Georgeson, Palmer. 1-5pm. *Details:* [here](#)
- **Mon. Mar. 30** **Benchmarking Webinar** 5:30pm. *Details:* [here](#)
- **Tue. Mar. 31** **Crop Insurance Webinar** 5:30pm. *Details:* [here](#)
- **Wed. April 1** **Record Keeping and Income Taxes Webinar** 5:30pm. *Details:* [here](#)

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

Showcase your **Alaska Grown** products at the 2015 Alaska State Fair in Palmer!

Contact Pamella Meekin pamella@alaskastatefair.org to take advantage of this unique opportunity for special booth space & rates available to Alaska Grown members only!

This opportunity is open to any Alaska Grown member with products to sell or display; such as raw fruits & vegetables, peonies, packaged meat, value-added products, etc. Food items that are considered "ready to eat" will not be allowed.

Marketing Section

FREE - Farm Transition and Estate Planning Workshop

Planning for the future of your farm can be difficult.



Join **Alaska Farmland Trust** for a **FREE** one day intensive workshop focusing on farm transition and estate planning. Workshop participants will learn about business transition planning and strategies, legal and tax implications, and how to plan for a comfortable retirement for yourself. Farm transition experts, local attorneys, and Alaska Farmland Trust staff will lead the sessions. Lunch and take home materials will be provided. This workshop will be broadcast via the internet for folks outside of the Mat-Su Valley.

Visit www.akfarmland.com for a complete workshop schedule.

Email info@akfarmland.com or call 745-3336 to reserve your in-person spot or to receive the workshop link.

When: March 14, 2015, 10am-3pm

Where: Mat-Su Senior Center, 1132 S. Chugach St., Palmer, AK 99645 **Cost:** Free

Chef at the Market (CATM) is accepting applications from chefs for the 2015 Farmers Market season

CATM began in 2011 and is a program where chefs apply to perform cooking demonstrations featuring Alaska Grown specialty crops at their local farmers markets. These cooking demonstrations are meant to introduce customers to new, fun ways to cook using Alaska Grown specialty crops. Another outcome that has developed from CATM are the new relationships developed between chefs and farmers at the market on demonstration days. Many of these relationships have lasted long after the demonstrations are over.

In the summer of 2014, six Alaska chefs performed a total of 36 demonstrations at ten local farmers markets.

To apply for a 2015 summer program, visit http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_grants.htm.

For more information about Chef at the Market demonstrations, contact Jacquelyn Schade at Jacquelyn.schade@alaska.gov or 907-761-3858.



The Division of Agriculture is pleased to announce the availability of the 2015 Specialty Crop Competitive Grant (SCCG)

Find full details about the application process on our website at http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_grants.htm

Two webinars will be held to introduce attendees to the grant process and answer questions:

March 17, 2015: Webinar 10:30 – 11:30am

March 26, 2015: Webinar 2:00 – 3:00pm

Sign up to attend a webinar at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/2819501121909449729>

The deadline for submitting a Letter of Intent for the 2015 SCCG is April 15th, 2015. Questions about the 2015 SCCG should be directed to Amy Pettit at 761-3864 or via email at amy.pettit@alaska.gov.

Inspection Staff

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

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FARM TO SCHOOL UPDATE

Grant Opportunity

We are excited to announce the
2015 Farm to Summer Food Service Program grant!

This grant opportunity is contingent on continued funding of the Alaska Farm to School Program. The Division of Agriculture in coordination with the Department of Education & Early Development, Child Nutrition Programs will promote a 'Farm to Summer Food Service Program' with the intent to increase specialty crop availability and consumption in Summer Meal feeding sites. The Division of Agriculture intends to award multiple grants from this solicitation for projects promoting activities that connect students, teachers, food service staff, community members, and parents with specialty crop products grown or produced in Alaska. Specialty crops are defined by USDA as "fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits and horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture."

The purpose of the Farm to Summer Food Service Program is:

- To increase Alaska youth and summer food service staff understanding about specialty crop availability and production in Alaska,
- To promote healthy food choices and increase specialty crop availability in summer meals, and
- To encourage a preference for specialty crops grown and harvested in Alaska.

To hear more about the grant opportunity and application process go to:

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

Are you selling your product to a school?

If so, send us the list of schools or districts so we can follow-up with the school and hear more. Serving local product in schools is only half the goal; we also want to educate the students and school staff about where their foods are coming from. At the division we will be going the extra mile to help share that message in the cafeteria and give lesson ideas to the teachers.

We will also feature your story in the Division of Agriculture newsletter as you share them with us.

Our first story comes from Aleutians East Borough School District in Sand Point Alaska. After attending the Farm to School conference in January, Carolyn Nielsen, linked up with two vegetable producers, ordered their food, and engaged her kids in some sampling. Carolyn is the Director of Food Services for the district and very excited to meet producers from around the state whom she could source local food from. Recently Carolyn bought potatoes, carrots, and onions from VanderWeele Farms in Palmer and beets, onions, and cabbage from Meyer Farm in Bethel. Carolyn also sources local meat from Mat Valley and Black Bear Farms which receive high marks from food service staff and the kids.

Not all of these foods are an immediate hit with the kids and food service staff all over the state work hard to find ways to get the kids to

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Mt. McKinley Meat & Sausage

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

Frank Huffman 907-745-5232
Frank.Huffman@alaska.gov

Land Sales & Grazing Leases

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

Dan Proulx 907-374-3716
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Erik Johnson 907-761-3863
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try these new local items. Carolyn got creative with her students and offered a sticker and got signatures from any student willing to taste beets. It was a real hit and even got the older kids involved showing what great role models they could be for the younger students.

Carolyn shared the feedback with Meyer Farm:

Tim: We received your produce late last week. It all looks great!

We tried the beets that we purchased from you, for school lunch on Wednesday. We encouraged each child to try the beets. Some only took a little bite, but the consensus was that the beets were really good. One little girl got her brother to try a beet, she told him they tasted like gummy bears. He tried them and though they were good, even though he wasn't sure they tasted like gummy bears. :)

A huge majority of our student had never tried beets. They had some really interesting questions about them. Thank you so much for sending them to us!

I have given the little beets, the ones you donated, to the Culinary Arts class. They have not had a chance to do anything with them yet, but the instructor was very appreciative and sends her thanks. When they have used them I asked them to send you some pictures of the finished product.

Again thank you so much and we look forward to working with you in the future.

*Carolyn Nielsen
Director of Food Services
Aleutian East Borough School District*

After hearing about Carolyn's success we have tailored two posters for her cafeteria to feature these farms. A huge thank you to all school food service and growers who work hard to feed our children the healthiest, freshest, and tastiest food they can.

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.

2015 PMC Seed Sale for Commercial Growers

The Plant Materials Center seed sale program will be switching from a bi-annual spring/fall seed sale to an annual seed sale thus making seed available throughout the production season.

This year, the seed sale will begin on **April 15th** and run through **September** while supplies last.

A complete list of available product will be posted on <http://plants.alaska.gov/> when it is completed.

For more information please contact Peter Johnson at 745-8105 or peter.johnson@alaska.gov.

Plant Materials Center

<http://plants.alaska.gov/>
Main Phone: 907-745-4469

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Plant Materials Center (PMC)

Invasive Alert! European Bird Cherry

European Bird Cherry (*Prunus padus*), also known as the Chokecherry or Mayday tree, is an ornamental tree that is highly invasive. It can survive prolonged temperatures to -33°F and its northern most extent in Alaska is the south side of the Brooks Range, north of the Arctic Circle. In Alaska, it has been planted in residential landscapes and parks, and a few remote cabins. It is rapidly invading riparian stream sides and natural forests in Anchorage (particularly Kincaid Park) and in Fairbanks. The European Bird Cherry takes over the understory of forests and forms dense thickets where native plants once grew.

Trimming & cutting European Bird Cherry will only stimulate new growth so care must be taken with managing these trees. Root suckers & fallen trees can create thickets of new trees. Seedlings and small trees can be pulled by hand. Trees up to 2" in diameter can be removed with a tool called an "Uprooter™". Note that ALL of the roots must be removed & the tree disposed of or it will re-sprout! It also creates defense chemicals called cyanogenic glycosides that under rare circumstances, can cause cyanide poisoning of moose!

Systemic herbicides are the most effective way to control European Bird Cherry because they are absorbed directly into the tree's vascular system to kill ALL parts of the plant so it cannot re-sprout. Certain herbicides can be applied to a cut stump to prevent stump and root sprouting. [UAF Cooperative Extension](#) can provide additional information on herbicides or a commercial pesticide applicator certified in Alaska can be hired to apply the herbicides for you.

To report a sighting of European Bird Cherry contact Heather.Stewart@alaska.gov, 907-745-8721.



Bark

- Bark is grey to brown & relatively smooth
- Visible pores on the bark are called lenticels

Leaves

- Leaves are ovate, elliptical, thinning at the tip
- Leaves are dark green with 2 small glands at the base of the stem
- Edges of the leaves are sharply serrated

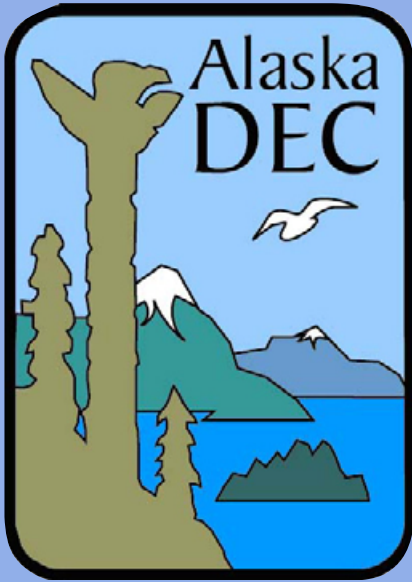
Flowers

- Flowers are white, small, & very aromatic
- Flowers are arranged in drooping cylindrical clusters
- In AK, blooms are seen between late May and early June

Fruits

- Small, bitter black cherries ripen in late summer
- Birds eat the cherries & spread the seeds





Environmental Health

Alaska Department of
Environmental Conservation

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

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Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation:

Division of Environmental Health

Spring Preparations for Backyard Flocks

After a long winter poultry flocks are ready to get outside and spring is also the time many folks start ordering chicks to raise for egg and meat production, as well as for 4-H projects. There are two important things to remember to plan for. First, outbreaks of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) are occurring across the Western U.S. in both poultry and wild birds and we are expecting the virus to move north with the migratory waterfowl. Second, relates to Salmonella infections that occurred in humans resulting from contact with live poultry including chicks, chickens, ducklings, ducks, geese, and turkeys. Poultry can carry Salmonella germs and still appear healthy and clean. These germs can contaminate a bird's body and anything in the area where they are displayed or housed. Salmonella infections were linked to handling live poultry purchased from agricultural feed stores and mail-order hatcheries resulting in thousands of illnesses, hundreds of hospitalizations, and several deaths.

The poultry flocks that have been infected with HPAI in the lower 48 generally were allowed outdoor access and were located close to open water or wetlands. Wild birds can carry the influenza virus without showing signs of illness and they shed the virus in their droppings contaminating the environment. Biosecurity is the key to reduce your risk and protect your flock and your health. A biosecurity plan should limit poultry access, especially to areas where waterfowl are present, and prevent wild birds from interacting or mixing with the flock. Feed the flock inside to prevent attracting wild birds. Focus on general sanitation and limit visitor access to your flock because your flock can be exposed to pathogens via dirty equipment, boots, or shoes. You can get more information on the USDA "Biosecurity for the Birds" webpage: <http://healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov/>

Raising backyard poultry can be a great experience and it is important to know some simple things to help reduce the risk of Salmonella. For feed stores selling birds display birds out of reach of customers, especially children, so customers can not easily touch birds. Offer hand washing stations or hand sanitizer next to poultry display areas and tell customers to wash hands right after leaving the poultry display area. In addition, clean and disinfect bird display enclosures between shipments of birds to prevent the spread of disease. You can obtain more information from the CDC websites: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/index.html> and <http://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/live-poultry-05-14/>





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UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

School of Natural Resources and Extension

Washington State University Shares Marketing Strategies with Alaska Farmers

Story contributed by Nancy Tarnai

For the first time, one of the sites for Washington State University's (WSU) Women in Agriculture Conference was in Alaska. Over 600 participants gathered at 26 sites in four states Feb. 21.

The event at the University of Alaska Fairbanks drew 29 women and one man for an all-day focus on making sense of marketing.

In between presentations from WSU by a farmer and a marketing consultant, participants worked in groups to tackle the basics of creating a marketing plan for their own farm or products. At the end of the day, the women reported they had learned to: identify target markets, understand branding and business planning strategies that incorporate marketing, condense their message, write a concise, clear, compelling, and repeatable message, deciding what to be known for. Many left with a renewed enthusiasm for updating their farm or business websites.

UAF Professor Jenifer McBeath, one of the conference organizers, said,

"Marketing is a very important issue in agriculture, especially for women."

Carolyn Chapin, co-owner of Polar Peonies and a doctoral student at UAF, said, "People are excited about what they are growing and making, and they want to get it out there. There's always something to learn. When I started farming you put a sign at the end of the field that said 'rhubarb for sale,' now so much is web-based."

Margaret Viebrock of WSU said farmers need to learn to tell their stories and include how they care for the land and soil. "It's a great day for women in agriculture," she said, encouraging the women to put into action what they learned.



Quoting the 2013 USDA Census of Agriculture, Viebrock said 1 million women in the U.S. are farmers. She urged the women to refer to themselves as farmers, not producers; to use the word farm, not *continued on next page*



operation; and customer, not consumer. “Marketing is a way to express our passion for what we do. It’s a lifetime process,” she said.

Emily Asmus of Welcome Table Farm in Walla Walla, Washington, told the gathering to build a business they enjoy that matches their lifestyle. “Take pride in what you are producing and share what you do with confidence,” she said. “And take more pictures.”

Erica Mills of Claxon Marketing in Seattle led the group through exercises to help them figure out marketing methods that will work for their farms. “Our goal is to have farmers who think like marketers,” she said. “The magic is being intrinsically who you are and infusing marketing into it.”

There is more to marketing than Facebook, she cautioned. “It’s about connection, engagement, and authenticity.”

She asked, “What does marketing success look like? Who do you want to reach for your marketing to be successful? How can you most effectively reach your ideal supporters?” Mills had the participants come up with concise and memorable messaging to represent their farms. “What do you want your farm to be known for?”

In an exit interview, many women mentioned how much they enjoyed the networking opportunities. One said she was inspired that there are so many women who are successful in different areas of agriculture. “I learned a lot about what other people are doing and how they are succeeding,” she wrote. “I met a very diverse group of people in many fields within agriculture.”

