



# The Division of Agriculture Activities

November 5, 2015

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

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Questions or Comments?  
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## Director's Note

These are definitely interesting times in Alaska. Between the ongoing budget shortfalls, media reports that make you scratch your head in wonder, and the discovery of an ocean sunfish in Prince William Sound in September – it appears Alaska is experiencing “change.” For some, change is a dreaded word – avoided at all costs while others welcome it and the challenges and opportunities it brings.

Over the past three years, the Division of Agriculture has experienced substantial change, most recently in new staffing. Although, we miss the employees who have left – we welcome the newcomers and the skillsets they bring with them. Most recently, Christine Macknicki and David Driscoll joined the Division of Agriculture team. Christine is housed at the Plant Materials Center (PMC) and is working in the potato program; her employment background included time with ARS – and we are very thankful to have her expertise on staff and working within the potato program. Our most recent addition is David Driscoll who has taken over management of the Marketing, Inspection, and Land Sales programs within the division. His extensive management experience and interest in Alaskan agriculture will serve the division well as we continue to adjust during the current fiscal challenge.

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](mailto:Franci.Havemeister@alaska.gov).

*~ Franci Havemeister*

**Change is the law of life.  
And those who look only to the past  
or present are certain to miss the future.**

**John F. Kennedy**



## Marketing Staff

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## Agriculture Calendar

- Sat., Nov. 7 **Alaska Farms Union Meeting.** Eagle Hotel, 918 S. Colony Way, Palmer. 10am-6pm. *Details: [here](#)*
- Mon., Nov. 9 **NRCS Board Teleconference.** 9:30am. *Details: [here](#)*
- Thur., Nov. 12 **Board of Agriculture & Conservation Teleconference.** *Details: [here](#)*
- Fri. & Sat., Nov. 13-14 **Alaska Annual Farm Bureau Meeting.** Crowne Plaza, 109 W. International Airport Rd., Anchorage. 7am. *Details: [here](#)*

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

## Marketing

# Chef at the Market 2015

Chef at the Market 2015 was a huge success! The Division of Agriculture rewarded six grants, which resulted in 42 cooking demonstrations at eight farmers markets throughout the state. Chefs were given funds to purchase all the items they would need in order to conduct the demonstrations; such as permits, Bunsen burners, and of course, the food.

Each cooking demonstration focused on a specialty crop available at the market that day. The purpose of the program is to show customers at the farmers market how to cook items they may not be familiar with or learn new ways to cook old favorites. Chefs provided the recipes to customers so they could make the recipe at home. Another benefit of the program was the connections made between the farmers, chefs, and customers. Customers became familiar with the farmers that grew their food. Farmers learned about what customers are eager to try and gained new customers. Lastly, Chefs developed working relationships with the farmers and the customers. It was a win-win-win!

Chef at the Market is funded through the Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG). The SCBG only allows specialty crops to be featured in these demonstrations. Specialty crops include fruits, vegetables, honey, and syrup.

View past Chef at the Market recipes at:

<http://eatlocalalaskagrown.org/chef-at-the-market-recipes/>

Keep checking the website for the recipes from 2015 to be added.





## Land Sales & Grazing Leases

[http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag\\_sales.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_sales.htm)

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Ms. Adams' Sherrod Elementary class harvests potatoes.

## Farm to School

### *Farm to School*

While the Farm to School Program still has no state funding, the enthusiasm for the work has increased. Thanks to Child Nutrition Programs in the Department of Early Education and Development, we have secured additional federal funds through the USDA Team Nutrition Grant to continue program services. While federal funds are not guaranteed in the long term, Farm to School has become a priority area of USDA and Alaska stakeholders as well, so we will continue working to secure funds and opportunities as feasible. One exciting development with the Team Nutrition grant award is the announcement of a VISTA opportunity with the Alaska Farm to School Program. We are currently recruiting for a VISTA intern in the Palmer office to work on an upcoming Farm to Summer Meal Site grant opportunity.

### *Farm to Institution*

Another federal funding source at the Division of Agriculture is the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. Thanks to this funding we have been able to run a number of popular programs in the past such as Restaurant Rewards and Chef at the Market. While those two programs are coming to a close we are looking forward to an upcoming Farm to University/Hospital grant cycle. We just finished the UAA Farm Stand pilot project to see if this kind of a grant opportunity would be feasible in the University setting.



The UAA Farm Stand pilot study.

### *National Farm to School Month*

National Farm to School Month was a huge success! The Alaska Farm to School Program was able to visit a total of three communities, six schools, and 11 classrooms. The total number of students that we reached was more than 300! We conducted taste tests with students to see if kids preferred local carrots to those shipped here, we soaked potatoes in water to discuss surface area and nutrition, we harvested potatoes and sold them to raise money for a school field trip, we planted garlic for next year's science projects, and we did a lot of cooking demonstrations.

Some schools also participated in Local Lunch Day: Alaska Gateway School District in Tok served 300 kids fresh halibut, a spinach salad, with mixed greens and tomatoes grown from their greenhouse, and coleslaw made with local cabbage; the kids also helped harvest the veggies from the school greenhouse for the lunch.

The Family Child Center at JBER in Anchorage served local lettuce and tomatoes in their lunch and then showed students videos about farming in Alaska.

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 or Farm to Institution programs, or if you have any questions, contact Johanna Herron at [Johanna.herron@alaska.gov](mailto:Johanna.herron@alaska.gov) or (907) 761-3870.

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# Pest Detection / Inspection Section

## USDA quality defects: Growth cracks and shape for meeting U.S. No. 1 grade in potatoes

### Growth cracks

Growth cracks may be caused by rapid growth, as when a rainy period follows a long dry spell. Growth cracking usually follows the long axis of the potato and results from internal pressure exceeding the tensile strength of surface tissues during tuber enlargement.

U.S. No. 1 requires that growth cracks are not greater than ½ the length in aggregate on round varieties, or not to be greater than ⅓ the length in aggregate on long varieties, or the depth not to be greater than outlined below:



DEPTH ALLOWED FOR GROWTH CRACKS • Diameter	Weight	No. 1 (Depth)
Potato is:	Potato is:	Not more than:
Less than 2 in.	Less than 4 oz.	⅛ in.
2 to 2-½ in.	4 oz. to 6 oz.	¼ in.
More than 2-½ to 3 in.	More than 6 oz. to 8 oz.	⅜ in.
More than 3 in.	More than 8 oz.	½ in.

### Shape

U.S. No. 1 requires that the potato be “fairly well shaped.” Fairly well shaped is defined as not materially pointed, dumbbell-shaped or otherwise badly deformed. Please see image below for maximum allowances.



## Plant Materials Center

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

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## Plant Materials Center (PMC)

**Plant Materials Center collaborates with:**

# Alaska Tilth

## Feeding Alaskans in Need & Training Future Farmers

*Imagine a box of fresh Alaska Grown produce arriving weekly at senior centers, My House, and the Mat-Su Women's Shelter...*

as the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) Family Nutrition Educator sautées garlic, cooks a meal, and teaches nutrition. The comforting aroma makes recipients feel cared for and empowers them to prepare healthy food for themselves and their families.



Behind the scenes, agriculture interns work the farms at UAF's Matanuska Experiment Farm and Alaska Pacific University's (APU) Spring Creek Farm to produce the vegetables. The Plant Materials Center donated a surplus of potatoes grown at the research facility in the Butte.

The Alaska Tilth program is able to accomplish this by accepting generous gifts of \$600 that go towards a purchase a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) share. For 18 weeks during the summer a box of fresh, local produce will be delivered to those in need. Smaller donations are also accepted towards the purchase of a share. Checks can be made out to 'Alaska Pacific University' with 'Alaska Tilth' written in the memo and then mailed to:

**APU President's Office • 4101 University Dr., Anchorage, AK 99508**

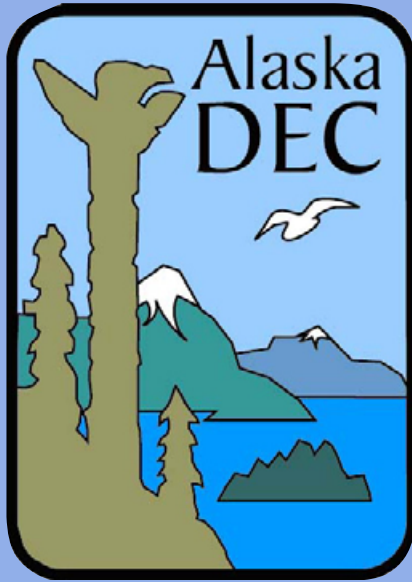
One hundred percent of donations go directly towards project costs. With these generous donations, we can provide fresh Alaska Grown produce to participants while educating the next generation of farms.

For more information contact Megan Talley at 907-746-2714 or via email at [MTalley@alaskapacific.edu](mailto:MTalley@alaskapacific.edu) or the PMC.



## Division of Environmental Health

### Cattle disease of concern



### Environmental Health

Alaska Department of  
Environmental Conservation

[Dec.Alaska.gov/eh/](http://Dec.Alaska.gov/eh/)  
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Disease outbreaks in cattle herds across the U.S. and Canada are a growing concern for farmers. Veterinarians stress the importance of keeping a good herd health plan and focus on biosecurity, as they will have a large impact on calf production and profit levels. There are many diseases that farmers need to be aware of but we will just mention a few.

**Bovine viral diarrhea** (BVD) is found most often in cattle younger than 2 years of age. It is the most costly viral disease in U.S. cattle herds today. Studies show that exposure of beef cattle to an infected animal can result in over a \$67 loss per head due to poor growth and mortalities. BVD affects the entire animal resulting in suppression of the immune system, respiratory disease, infertility and fetal infection. Early infection of a bred cow can result in the calf being born infected but not showing signs of illness. These animals shed the BVD virus throughout their entire lives causing big problems. Talk to your veterinarian and visit [www.bvdconsult.com](http://www.bvdconsult.com) for more information.

**Trichomoniasis** or “trich” is becoming more of a problem across North America and can be difficult to identify in smaller herds. The protozoan organism, *Tritrichomonas foetus*, is spread by infected bulls that carry the infection for their entire lives but do not show any signs of the disease. The infection in cows causes early fetal death, infertility and extended calving intervals for the herd. In some cases conception rates can be reduced by 70% to 80%. More information can be found at [www.trichconsult.org](http://www.trichconsult.org).

**Calf scours** or diarrhea is one of the costliest diseases for cattle farmers but often does not get the attention it deserves. The scours or diarrhea can be the result of virus, bacteria, parasites and nutritional imbalances. The sick calves are stressed and may get secondary infections (most often respiratory disease); most calves die from weight loss and dehydration. Good herd management and sanitation are important along with ensuring the calf receives a good dose of colostrum right after birth. Check with your veterinarian as your management plan may benefit from a vaccination program or use of probiotics.

It's also important to manage herd nutrition to keep mother cows in good health and in a body condition that allows them to produce a good quality



and quantity of colostrum for the calf. A cow in poor body condition due to nutritional deficiencies is more likely to have a weak calf that is susceptible to diarrhea and respiratory disease. It is a good idea to have a nutritional analysis done on your hay. Find more information at: [www.animalscience.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2012/04/beef-calf-scours.pdf](http://www.animalscience.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2012/04/beef-calf-scours.pdf).