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Department of
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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

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Division of Agriculture announces \$1.8 million in food security for Alaska

(Palmer, AK) – More than \$1.8 million will be invested in Alaska’s agricultural economy through two new U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) grant programs – the Micro-Grants for Food Security Program (MGFSP) and the Meat and Poultry Inspection Readiness Grant (MPIRG).

The Alaska Division of Agriculture awarded more than \$1.6 million through the MGFSP, which is part of the 2018 Farm Bill that created a special program for Alaska, Hawaii and the U.S. Territories for improvements to food security. The program helps individuals and organizations increase the quantity and quality of locally grown food in food insecure communities through small-scale, agricultural-related projects. The Division of Agriculture received over 2,300 pre-applications and more than 1,000 proposals for funding in the inaugural year of the program. Of those, 234 were approved for funding by the USDA Agriculture Marketing Service.

The Division focused funding on projects critical for food security, with a priority on Alaska’s critical rural supply chain. The USDA approved 60+ grants totaling more than \$360,000 for greenhouse projects; 40+ grants totaling over \$320,000 for gardening proposals; almost 30 grants totaling over \$260,000 for proposals related to storage facilities; and 25+ grants totaling \$145,000 for fencing projects.

“The response to this program has been overwhelming”, said David W. Schade, director of the Division of Agriculture. “Many awards were reduced from the requested amount, as we endeavored to provide funding to as many people and organizations as possible.”

Successful applicants will be notified of their funding status by e-mail this week. The Division will provide additional grant opportunities through the Micro-Grants for Food Security Program, anticipated to be available February 2022. Information for the next opportunity will be available through the Division of Agriculture’s Grants web page: http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_grants.htm

The Division of Agriculture is also happy to announce that Mat Valley Meats in Wasilla was awarded \$200,000 through the Meat and Poultry Inspection Readiness Grant program, a new program funded by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021. MPIRG was designed to help existing meat processors upgrade slaughter facilities so that the plant(s) meet USDA inspection requirements. With assistance of the Division of Agriculture, a proposal to upgrade current Mat Valley Meats facilities and to purchase a mobile slaughter unit was approved on December 7.

“We are very pleased that these grant projects will be spread across Alaska,” said Governor Mike Dunleavy. “Food security is a high priority for my administration; I am excited to see all the gardens, greenhouses, storage facilities, fencing and the increase in slaughter facilities that will help move Alaska toward greater food independence”.

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