



MEMORANDUM
Department of Natural Resources

STATE OF ALASKA
Division of Agriculture

TO: Board of Agriculture
& Conservation

DATE: July 15, 2013

FROM: Franci Havemeister
Director

SUBJECT: Director's Report
May & June 2013

Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund (ARLF):

- Loan officer has processed incoming loan applications and prepared complete applications to be submitted for review at the July BAC meeting. Loan officer has prepared and closed loans approved at May's BAC meeting.
- Loan officer has processed loan payoffs and associated Deeds of Reconveyances and UCC filing updates, as well as other duties associated with ARLF management.
- Loan officer has had meetings and conversations both in person and over the phone with several potential new borrowers.
- Loan officer has begun drafting new letters and ARLF forms.
- Loan officer has been in contact with delinquent borrowers and borrowers in active collection. Default borrower contact list has been updated.
- Loan officer has been in process of managing loan files insurance requirements and other ARLF requirements.
- Loan officer has updated interest rate comparison and asset report

Marketing & Development:

- Nine farms were added to the Alaska Grown program in May and June.
- In recognition of Alaska Agriculture Day, staff hosted a potato planting activity at two schools reaching over 150 students; staff also sent out Media Releases encouraging consumers to find ways to support Alaska Agriculture.
- Marketing staff continue active participation with the Alaska Food Policy Council, serving on the Governing Board as well as both the Locally Grown and School Programs workgroups.
- Staff finalized a contract with Cooperative Extension Services Test Kitchen to conduct additional recipe development and feasibility studies on Alaska Grown products.
- Staff continues collaboration with the Department of Commerce on the Nutritional Alaska Foods in Schools (NAFS) grant program.
- Staff hosted a Specialty Products workshop with guest speakers from the Oregon Department of Agriculture and Oregon Food Innovation Center. The primary focus of the workshop was rhubarb market development.
- Staff participated in Country of Origin Labeling training in order to conduct retail audits in 2013.
- Staff facilitated and presented at the National Farm to School annual conference and served as the Alaska state lead at the conference.
- The VISTA volunteer has found additional funding to support the Farmers Market Quest Card Program in Bethel. Additionally she has partnered with other agencies

such as the Cooperative Extension Service and the UAA Dietetics and Nutrition department to organize outreach projects and research pertaining to the FM Quest program.

- Staff has been working on updates to the 2013 Alaska Grown Source Book as well as the 2013 Farmers Market list.
- Staff received 22 applications for the 2013 Farm to School mini-grants; 14 projects were awarded for a total of \$36,000.
- Marketing staff attended ArcGIS 1 training to develop skills in mapping.
- Staff managed the operations for the 2013 Specialty Crop Competitive Grant including: hosting two online webinars for individuals interested in applying, accepting Letters of Intent and full proposals, organizing two review committees, and selecting which proposals to move forward to the USDA.
- Staff attended the strategic planning for the state prevention of childhood obesity and creation of a coalition.
- Staff assisted the APHIS/CAPS program in pest trapping preparation by bar-coding and mailing 750 traps.
- Staff facilitated the 2013 Chef at the Market application request and contract drafting; events will take place beginning in July.
- Staff solicited nominations for the 2013 Alaska State Fair Farm Family of the Year award.
- Marketing staff conducted 31 store visits in June; supplying produce managers with promotional items for the upcoming season.
- Staff organized a meeting to discuss a pilot project using the facilities of the Fairbanks School District Central Kitchen to prep Alaska Grown products to a usable form.
- Staff facilitated the selection of a production company to create two new "Buy Alaska Grown" TV commercials that will feature the First Lady of Alaska and Hobo Jim respectively.
- Staff met with the Special Events Director for Alaska Public Media to discuss a fall banquet event featuring solely Alaska Grown products.
- Marketing staff are working on changes to the Restaurant Rewards program in preparation of launching the 2013 cycle.
- Staff attended the AK School Nutrition Association board meeting and is working to secure a spot on their annual conference agenda for next year.
- Staff continues to successfully manage the Alaska Grown and Farm to School Facebook pages. The Alaska Grown page has over 13,150 "likes"; the Farm to School page has 1890 likes.
- The marketing team put out four media releases in May and June sparking interest in farmers markets opening, farmers markets accepting Quest (food stamp) cards, and seeking nominations for the Farm Family of the Year.
- In cooperation with the Inspection section, marketing staff continue facilitating the "On Farm Food Safety Workshops." In June staff held workshops in Kenai and Homer; and prepared for a July trip to South East where four different communities will be visited. Requests for additional workshops have come from the Chena Hot Springs Resort, Kodiak and South West Alaska (Bethel).

Northern Region Inspection:

- Staff conducted phytosanitary inspections for timber exports in Kodiak and Afognak.

- Staff planned survey activities for 2013 Cooperative Agreements with USDA APHIS PPQ.
- Staff conducted training to Cooperative Extension Service Integrated Pest Management Technicians on protocols for conducting pest detection surveys in Alaska. The training was held at the Anchorage CES offices. CES staff is contracted each summer to conduct work for Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey agreements between the Division and USDA-APHIS-PPQ. This year's project will help to fund CES IPM staff salary and travel throughout the state to conduct IPM pest detection work as part of the Asian Defoliating Moths Survey Project.
- Staff conducted survey work in SE Alaska as part of the Asian Defoliating Moths Survey Project. Staff worked with USFS, CES, and CBP in SE Alaska to set insect monitoring traps for Asian Defoliators that have a potential to be introduced into Alaska via cargo ship traffic from foreign ports. Monitoring is also for defoliators that have caused significant problems for forestry and agriculture in the lower 48 that have the potential for being introduced into Alaska via the road system or the ferry system connecting Alaska to the Pacific Northwestern states.
- Staff issued phytosanitary certificates for timber exports.
- Staff assisted Palmer staff in the Fairbanks and Delta area to conduct Elk Fencing inspections.
- Staff coordinated USDA APHIS cooperative project agreements and worked on logistics for upcoming projects this summer.
- Staff finalized USDA APHIS agreements ending June 30, 2013, and has begun processing reports and data for final reporting in the fall for agreements ending on that date.

Central Office Inspection:

May activities

- Conducted (6) 300 inspections with 9 lots inspected.
- Conducted 21 greenhouse/ nursery and farmers market visits to check tomato and seed potato compliance.
- Contacted a local seed grower about proper labeling of future bags of seed potatoes sold at retail.
- Contacted local greenhouse about seed tags that were posted were from 2012 and not 2013.
- Worked with a vendor at a farmer's market that is selling potatoes for planting that is not certified.
- Conducted 7 farm visits to check grade of local potatoes and check status of plantings in the greenhouses.
- Conducted 13 retail grocery inspections.
- Responded to multiple inquiries on import requirements plant products for Alaska originating outside the US.
- Setup Early Detection Rapid Response Exotic Beetle Traps for Division of Forestry (DOF) in the Matsu Valley. This is the second year we have been assisting in this effort. The traps will be monitored biweekly and collections will be forwarded to the DOF Entomologist.
- Completed the USDA Security Awareness training in order to maintain ACO license.
- Attended informational meeting w/ Charles Breen of FDA Region 10 regarding upcoming FSMA Regulations
- Participated in NASDA teleconference re: coordinated state comments to FDA re: FSMA

- Forwarded prepared comments on Produce Safety Rule portion of FSMA to NASDA
- Worked with Alaska Peony Growers' Association regarding potential AK grade requirements.
- Scheduled and prepared for six On Farm Food Safety workshops in Kenai & Homer and Southeast AK (Haines, Skagway, Juneau and Sitka)
- Issued temporary detention order and subsequent inspection for tomato plants at a large local retail greenhouse. Plants had entered the state without mandatory inspection and treatment paperwork for late blight quarantine

June activities

- Conducted two On-Farm Food Safety Workshops in Homer in Soldotna
- Completed USDA FFV Commodity Grading Inspection refresher training
- Completed USDA General GAP Refresher Training
- Completed GAP Harmonized Refresher Training
- Conducted outreach to local growers re: GAP audit requirements for local purchasers
- Issued detention orders at 3 local nursery/greenhouse locations for plants containing invasive weeds
- Contacted retailer who was selling non-certified seed potatoes at local greenhouse
- Conducted 5 farm visits to check local produce and check grade on local potatoes.
- Completed the USDA FFV refresher training in order to maintain license.
- Reviewed and released 3 USDA permits for interstate movement of pests.
- Responded to inquiries regarding feed and fertilizer requirements for the State of Alaska.
- Contacted 4 Retail Garden Center Management for the stop sale of container stock found to be associated with the state noxious weed, Canada Thistle. Coordinated with staff to witness disposal of 162 containers of nursery stock at various locations in Alaska.
- Contacted UAF Curator of Entomology about completing paperwork for the 2013 Farm Bill awarded project, Thrips associated with Peony in Alaska. The project dates are from July 1, 2013- June 2013.
- Traveled and participated in the Potato Seed Lot trails at Washington State University, Othello, WA and at Oregon State University, Hermiston Oregon, working directly with the Montana certification group and other trainees from Oregon and Washington State. The seed lot trials at WSU and OSU involved visually inspecting over 100 rows of seed potato plants (multiple varieties) originating from multiple states and Canada (various provinces). The visual inspection involved flagging for Blackleg, Leaf roll, Mosaic (plants that expressed symptoms that are commonly associated with Potato Virus Y (PVY) infection) and other; Chemical, herbicide injury, calico, haywire, mixed variety, etc. We verified suspect PVY infection with a lab test in the field.
- Conducted 5 Elk Farm inspections. Met with farm owners and managers to discuss needed corrections.
- Conducted quarterly shell egg surveillance site visits.

Plant Materials Center

Seed Laboratory

- During this period Alaska State Seed Lab performed total of 57 seed tests including 28 Germination, 15 Purity tests, 14 Noxious weed tests.
- Seed lab staff attended Annual Meeting of the Association of Official Seed Analysts in Boise, ID.

Seeds of Success

- Seedlings from *Arctagrostis latifolia*, *Calamagrostis purpurescens*, and *Festuca rubra* were planted in the field for seed increase.
- Maintenance of field plantings and box garden.

Mat-Su Riparian Revegetation Project

- Maintenance of field plantings and box garden.

Cordova Education and Ethnobotany Garden

- Seedlings from *Chamerion latifolium*, *Iris setosa* and *Aquilegia formosa* were grown for use on Copper River Watershed Project.

Native Plant Commercialization and Revegetation

- Brome collections from Southeast Alaska will be planted in the PMC fields in July and evaluated for their revegetation and conservation value. Varieties of grass species from Iceland and Faroe Islands, Nunavut, Greenland, and Norway will also be planted and evaluated.
- Continuing work with Kenai Fjords National Park for seed collection around the Exit Glacier area. This seed will be used for revegetation projects around the park.
- An approximate 12 mile portion of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline will be surveyed. This work will be on the east side of the Sag River near Sagwon and each mile post will require a landing, vegetation survey and photo documentation.

Horticulture Program

PMC Pathology report

- Attended NRCS Spring Technical Committee meeting, presented work on fungal endophytes.
- Tested local pasture for endophyte presence.
- Tested *Meconopsis* spp. (Himalayan blue poppy) from local grower for *Potyvirus*, *Nepovirus*, *Ilarvirus*, and *Tobacco rattle virus* infection.
- Field visit with apple producer about winter damage and tested roots for *Phytophthora* spp.
- Field visit with grass and peony producer about winter damage and possible root problems.
- Field visit with wheat producer about nutrient management and possible disease issues.

Foundation Breeder Seed

Plant Materials Center Foundation Seed Sale:

- This spring 34 lots of grasses, 15 lots of forbs, and 9 lots of grain were offered for sale. By mid June, six purchases of 'Egan', 'Sourdough', and 'Nugget' were completed for a total of \$2,598.56. Three forbs were sold, Knik Germplasm wild iris, 'Caiggluk' Tilesius' Wormwvd, and Paxson Germplasm alpine sweetvetch, for a total of \$89.04. Lidal and Wooding Barley and Toral Oats were sold for \$1,533.28.

Ethnobotany Teaching Garden and Educational Programs

- The PMC coordinated programs for willow harvest with homeschool students, Mat-Su Conservation Service, and Wasilla Soil and Water Conservation District.
- Staff worked with the Copper River Watershed Program, providing programs on Alaska native plant seed, developing a multipurpose landscape garden, invasive vs. native plants, and techniques of growing native seed. These programs plus donations of native seed were given to several school groups and community groups in Cordova.
- Staff provided programs to classes at Mat-Su College on Invasive Weeds, Plant Materials Center's Programs, Ethnobotany Teaching Garden, and Revegetation Using Willows.
- Ethnobotany power-point presentations were given to several community groups in Anchorage and Mat-Su, including the Alaska Botanical Society, Alaska Native Plant Society, Anchorage Master Gardeners, UAF Students, plus three inter-active programs for "Alaska Plants as Food and Medicine Symposium, Coming Together to Promote Traditional Plant Knowledge and Ethical Harvesting" at Girdwood.
- Guided tours of the Ethnobotany Traditional Garden and the PMC were given to Rangeland Professors from Land Grant Universities throughout the U.S., "Walking the Red R.O.A.D." intertribal group, and small groups from Chickaloon, Eklutna, and Knik Tribes.
- Hands-on demonstrations about native plant uses were given to the public at "Friday Fling" and "Colony Days" in Palmer, and the fifth annual "Family Tribal Celebration and Health Fair", a joint effort of the Knik Tribal Council, Native Village of Eklutna, and Chickaloon Village Traditional Council.