



MEMORANDUM

Department of Natural Resources

STATE OF ALASKA
Division of Agriculture

TO: Board of Agriculture
& Conservation

DATE: July 8, 2010

FROM: Franci Havemeister
Director

SUBJECT: Director's Report
May/June 2010

Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund (ARLF)

Staff has been processing 5 loan applications, 9 loan disbursements, 1 loan default, 3 AGO Assignments, 1 loan paid off to be closed out, and ARLF Reports.

Plant Materials Center Foundation Seed

- Two fields of barley were planted, Weal and Thual.
- Annual rye was planted in fallow areas.
- Cultivation and weeding of broad leaf and grass weeds started as soon as they appeared. A minimal pesticide permit was given us on June 14, allowing us to use only the pesticides we had in storage and that were allowed by the state. Our best broad leaf pesticides were sprayed on several of our main grass fields before we ran out. We are now using up the rest of our stock, with poor results. Running a production farm without pesticides is an immense, unreasonable exercise. Our production results this year will reflect this lack.
- Mowing of fescue and timothy fields helped control the release of seeds by weeds.
- Several of the forb fields have been mulched with straw to control weeds.
- Irrigation is set up for potatoes and barley fields.
- Grass seed plugs of Wainwright, Egan, Nugget, Council, Andrew Bay, and Ninilchik were started in the greenhouse. These will be planted at the same time seed from the same lots are to insure a good beginning crop for these varieties. Without the needed pesticides we may find that the seed will be unable to compete and the plugs will survive. Even though farmers usually plant crops with seed, we are a production farm for commercial farmers – thus, we have to grow the plants in the most guaranteed fashion possible.
- POMS records continue to be updated.
- Answers to questions from the public and agencies are answered about plant requirements, plant choices, and plant diseases.
- Seed for research and experimental studies were sent out to designated individuals.
- The new pesticide permit application for 2011 is in the works.
- Weather statistics are reported weekly to Alaska Agriculture Statistics.
- Several non-profit groups were given plants and seeds for revegetation and rain garden projects.
- Presentations were provided to students, general public, interns, and agencies.

Ethnobotany Garden and PMC Landscaping

- Weeding, mowing, and cultivating are continuous.
- New trees for “South-east” Alaska were planted, as well as strawberries, blueberries, and kinnikinnick. Many woodland and tundra plants were planted also. The arctic and western sections of the garden still have not been planted as we wait for construction to begin on the bridges.
- The waterworks upper and lower ponds were opened and planted with a variety of water plants. The Yukon is still in the final development stages with gravel being covered and soil incorporated into planting areas for streamside vegetation.
- Visitors to the garden come unannounced weekly. Some stroll through on their own, others stop in for a small guided tour. All are impressed and excited to see it finished.

- The grounds and gardens look beautiful. They show what individuals and landscapers can do to beautify their yards with native Alaskan plants.

Alaska State Seed Lab

- For the month of May and June, the Alaska State Seed Laboratory performed a total of 27 tests. This includes 4 Purity tests, 22 Germination tests, and 1 noxious weed test.
- Staff attended the Flower Seed Workshop and Annual meeting of AOSA/SCST (Association of Official Seed Analysts/Society of Commercial Seed Technologists) in St. Louis, MO.

Invasive Weeds and Pests

- Hired intern to manage Canada thistle and Purple loosestrife in Anchorage during this summer field season.
- Attended meeting in Fort Nelson, Colorado with the USGS Fort Collins Science Center to further invasive species early detection and management actions using predictive modeling.
- Gave a presentation to the Alaska Rock Products Association about this summer's work to inventory gravel pits for invasive weeds, and the potential to start a weed free gravel certification program in Alaska.
- Received proclamation from Governor Parnell for Invasive Weeds Awareness Week, June 20-26.

Potato Program

- Clone bank tested for bacteria
- Propagation continuing of plants destined for planting in greenhouse
- 2009 seed potatoes packaged for pick up by growers
- Greenhouse cleaned and readied for planting
- Greenhouse planting begun
- Tubers samples of 2009 greenhouse crop planted
- Organizing for field inspections

Village Seed Project-ARRA

- The Village Seed Project Team visited the Metlakatla Indian Community (MIC) June 7-9, 2010. Milo Booth, Director of the MIC Natural Resources and Forestry Office invited us to meet with the community council members. It was a very beneficial trip, resulting in MIC wanting to be a participant in the program. MIC has serious potential to be the southeast representative for the RVSP.
- RVSP team is busy working with new consultant Bartz Englishhoe. Bartz is currently working to contact regional corporations around Alaska to promote the RVSP. His understanding of the project as whole is growing as the team continues to provide him with proper terminology and reading material. We have increased our state wide community interest levels since Bartz was brought on in May.
- Looking forward, the RVSP is continuing work on which communities will best suite the framework of the project. July and August will be spent sending out Letters of Interest to idea candidates and possibly traveling to 2 or 3 more locations.
- The RVSP team looks forward to attending the Alaska Federation of Natives event in Anchorage in September.

Coastal Revegetation Guide

- The guide is coming together well and should be ready for publishing by mid July. Document will be around 140 pages
- Website is being established to access the contents of the publication online.

Other PMC Activities

- Seed increase of small seed lots for BLM: 11 lots of different species were planted in transplanting containers (9 containers per species, each with 32 cells.)
- Willow and cottonwood cuttings were transplanted in deep pots for the Mat-Su Riparian Revegetation Project.
- Weed Management in Field 3 continues.

- Three PMC staff members went to Eagle to revegetate a landfill site. Applied seed mixture and fertilizer application.
- Three PMC staff members went to Kenai to apply fertilizer to a boat launch site on the Kenai River.

Northern Region

- Attended Western Plant Board Meeting in Tacoma, WA
- Set out pest traps and coordinated with CES, USFS, and CBP in Juneau, Wrangell, Ketchikan, and Sitka.
- Conducted one field inspection for grass seed certification
- Conducted a teleconference with Extension Service IPM Technicians regarding pest detection surveys for this summer
- Submitted a proposal to APHIS for funding for insect identification training for IPM Technicians, Ag inspectors, and Master Gardeners
- Preparing for Interior Agricultural Land Sale Auction #457 on June 29
- Inspected land in Kobe North area for future land sale
- Responded to several growers' questions regarding the certification requirements for seed potato export to China
- Met with representatives of Cooperative Extension Service, Salcha Big Delta Soil and Water Conservation District, Delta Farm Bureau, and the Dept. of Fish and Game regarding assessing bison damage on Agricultural crops this summer

Marketing & Development

- Staff reviewed the 2010 Competitive Grant applications.
- Staff attended the Alaska Chefs' Association Gala Dinner as a guest speaker where the importance of requesting Alaska Grown was emphasized.
- Staff prepared reports necessary for compliance with USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant funding.
- Staff continues to participate with the Alaska Community Agriculture Association.
- Staff met with various industry representatives to begin discussions for the 2010 Alaska Grown Eat Local Challenge, to be held August 22nd – 28th.
- Staff participated in training for a program to enhance marketing projects, such as the Food and Farm Products Directory (FFPD) and newsletters produced in our section.
- Staff began compiling data received for the FFPD.
- Staff released the announcement for the Alaska Teachers Scholarship Program (ATSP).
- Inspection staff visited 22 nursery, greenhouse and 'box store' locations to verify compliance with state seed potato and tomato regulations. Inspection staff also spoke to the media regarding the seed potato industry, quarantines, etc.
- Staff responded to 4 Phytosanitary certificate requests in the month of May.
- USDA FV 300 Issued: Two certificates were issued (470 total cartons inspected)
- USDA FV 301: 20 certificates issued (total weight = 381,930 lbs)
- Inspection staff performed five farm visits while commercial planting was taking place.
- Staff completed four COOL audits, two in Juneau and two in Cordova.
- Inspection staff performed two Good Handling Practices/Good Agricultural Practices (GHP/GAP) audits.
- Staff attended the South Central Beekeepers Association meeting as the guest speaker to both respond to inquiries regarding hive registration as well as inform the 50+ attendees of a new nationwide survey being conducted by USDA to research various disease issues.

Regulatory

- The 2010 Alaska Brand book was finalized and released to the printer.
- One application was reviewed and approved for the Alaska Grown program.
- Three beehives were registered.