



MEMORANDUM

Department of Natural Resources

STATE OF ALASKA
Division of Agriculture

TO: Board of Agriculture
& Conservation

DATE: April 9, 2013

FROM: Franci Havemeister
Director

SUBJECT: Director's Report
Feb. /March 2013

Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund (ARLF):

- Loan officer has processed incoming loan applications and prepared complete applications to be submitted for review at the April BAC meeting.
- Loan officer attended the Valley Dairy, Inc. auction March 16th, 2013 to oversee the Denali Auction proceedings, answer any questions the auctioneer, bidders, or media may have had, and to assist in making arrangements with bidders for removal of their bid item from the property.
- Loan officer has worked closely with Denali Auction company, assisting bidders and their company with any issues, frequently visiting the property to ensure that no removal of equipment has resulted in damage to the property the state is leasing, conducted a final walk through with the auction company, and have received and reviewed the final auction results, including payment, to ensure successful closure of the Valley Dairy, Inc. auction.
- Loan officer participated in final walk through of leased property with landlord.
- 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 with potential new borrowers.
- Loan officer has been in contact with delinquent borrowers and borrowers in active collection. Default borrower contact list has been updated.
- Loan officer has updated interest rate comparison and asset report.

Marketing & Development:

- Sixteen farms were added to the Alaska Grown program in February and March.
- Staff continues 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 continues collaboration with the Department of Commerce on the Nutritional Alaska Foods in Schools (NAFS) grant program.
- Staff handled registration and check-in for the Alaska Peony Growers Conference held in Fairbanks; over 140 people attended. Staff was also on the agenda to give multiple presentations regarding the Alaska Grown program, grants and marketing opportunities.
- Staff is working with rhubarb growers on market development.
- Staff has been creating new outreach documents including Local Food Hero posters, Farmer Profiles and availability charts by commodity type – i.e. USDA certified meat products.

- Staff continues management of the Cooperative Marketing Program (CMP) grants including final reporting on 2011 and 2012 projects as well as announcements and solicitations for 2013 proposals.
- Staff began meeting with corporate grocery chain representatives to discuss the upcoming growing season.
- Staff gave presentations focused on the marketing and farm to school programs at both the Produce Growers and SARE conferences, reaching over 200 audience members. Staff has also given presentations to the Eagle River Rotary, Fairbanks Rotary, and Interior Health Summit on these topics.
- The Division welcomed a VISTA Volunteer to the staff who will focus on expanding the Farmers Market EBT project throughout 2013.
- The Alaska Grown logo was featured in an "Assignment Alaska" episode focused on Alaska pride.
- Staff is researching a potential marketing campaign for the 2013 growing season.
- Staff has been collaborating with Department of Commerce colleagues on a potential in-bound trade mission with Chinese delegates featuring peonies.
- Staff has been meeting with past partners and Alaska State Fair staff on ideas for the 2013 fair presence, including the potential for the t-shirt discount, the recognition of a day as "Alaska Grown Day", and the extended presence in the Ag Barn.

Northern Region Inspection:

- Staff conducted inspections in Kodiak and Afognak for Phytosanitary export of Timber February 19-21.
- Staff issued Phytosanitary Certificate for timber exports during the week of March 11-15.
- Staff attended, presented, and fielded questions at the Peony Growers conference in Fairbanks, February 14-15. Topics discussed pertained to the industry interest in export certification along with findings associated with survey activities last summer.
- Staff submitted reports to Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) on cooperative agreements.
- Staff conducted grain inspections in Fairbanks and Delta Junction on Wheat and Hulled Barley on February 26 and 28. Collected samples were sent to Pasco, WA, for grade analysis.
- Staff assisted with bin inspections in the interior region (Nenana, Fairbanks, and Delta Junction) for seed potato certification standards on March 6-7.
- Staff assisted a shipping point inspection in Delta Junction on March 15.
- Staff attended the SARE conference in Fairbanks on March 13-14 representing the Northern Region office, Inspection, and Pest Detection programs.
- Staff began planning for upcoming survey season for funded pest detection programs with APHIS, and worked with APHIS Pest Survey Specialist who plans to assist in these projects during June 2013.
- Staff made arrangements to attend potato shipping point inspection certification training in Idaho Falls for 2 weeks in April.
- Staff worked with timber industry to plan inspection activities for April in Kodiak/Afognak for Phytosanitary certification.
- Staff fielded questions to public inquiry regarding the Phytosanitary certification process.
- The Farm Bill Spending plan was announced on March 27. State Division of Ag Projects funded for Alaska FY13 includes the Asian Defoliating Moth National Survey and the Thrips Associated with Peony in Alaska Survey. One other project for Alaska announced for Farm Bill funding was submitted by a Tribal organization entitled

Toghotthele Potato Disease Mitigation Project. Staff will begin working with Palmer staff in setting up agreements with APHIS and making necessary plans for survey activities.

Central Office Inspection:

- Staff completed seven farm/packing shed visits to check grade on potatoes.
- Staff completed 10 grocery store visits resulting in Alaska potatoes being 'stop sale' due to sprouting and greening issues. Staff worked with grocery store employees in the removal of noncompliant potatoes and discussed problem areas and solutions with storage and lighting.
- Staff conducted four FV 300 inspections with seven products inspected.
- Staff conducted 20 FV 301 inspections, 11,214 packages inspected = total weight = 336,420.
- Staff conducted inspections for and issued four phytosanitary certificates.
- Staff conducted two shell egg inspections.
- Staff reviewed and approved four USDA permits to allow interstate movement of live pests.
- Staff conducted a shipping point inspection on two lots of seed potatoes in Delta Junction.
- Staff assisted with seed potato bin inspections in the Matsu area.
- Staff completed phytosanitary certification on seed potato (in vitro plantlets) to Canada.
- Staff fielded questions and provided USDA permit information for interstate movement of plants to a local fruit grower.
- Staff responded to inquiries regarding bee registration, late blight quarantine restrictions and plant imports/ exports.
- Staff continued to review and provide input on the draft 2013 Seed Potato Standards.
- Staff provided input on invasive weed letter to be sent to nursery and garden centers in response to noxious weeds found in plants sold in 2012 and 2010.
- Staff created informational brochure for On-Farm Food Safety Workshops.
- Staff attended the annual Alaska Seed Growers meeting.
- Staff attended the Plant Health Regulation meeting which reviewed the up and coming changes to the regulations.
- Staff attended the Potato/Vegetable Growers' Conference.
- Staff attended NGFN Webinar on FSMA implementation and a study on feasibility of Group GAP/GHP audits.
- Staff attended Produce Safety Alliance's webinar w/ FDA re: clarifying exemptions to FSMA regulations.
- Staff attended mandatory annual refresher for USDA GAP/GHP Auditors in St. Paul Minnesota March 7-8, 2013.
- Staff gave a presentation on FSMA, GAP/GHP, and On-Farm Food Safety Workshops at annual SARE Conference in Fairbanks on March 13-14, 2013.

Plant Materials Center

Alaska State Seed Laboratory

- During this period the Alaska State Seed Lab performed 51 Germination tests, 16 Purity tests, and 15 Noxious weed tests.

Publications

- Alaska Grass Guide has been reprinted.

Other PMC Projects

- Cordova Native Plant Garden: Seed from *Chamerion latifolium*, *Aquilegia formosa*, *Dodecatheon pulchellum*, and *Iris setosa* was planted in S & L's for their garden.
- Copper River Watershed Program: Programs on Alaska native plant seed, developing a multi-purpose landscape garden, invasive vs. native plants, and the techniques of growing seed were provided to several school groups and community groups in Cordova.
- Environmental Education College Students: programs were provided to classes at Mat-Su College on Invasive Weeds, Plant Materials Center's Programs, Ethnobotany Teaching Garden, and Revegetation Using Willows.
- Willow Harvest: The PMC coordinated programs for willow harvest with homeschooled students, Mat-Su Conservation Service, and Wasilla Soil and Water Conservation District.
- Ethnobotany Teaching Garden: Tours and presentations were given to several groups about the garden and how to develop an ethnobotany program.
- Seed Inventory: Hundreds of seed lots were evaluated for summer use. Some will be sold at the Annual Seed Sale (April 15 – 26), used for forage research at the PMC, or planted for summer crops.