



MEMORANDUM

Department of Natural Resources

STATE OF ALASKA
Division of Agriculture

TO: Board of Agriculture
& Conservation

DATE: August 1, 2012

FROM: Franci Havemeister
Director

SUBJECT: Director's Report
June - July 2012

Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund (ARLF):

- Loan officer has prepared and submitted one loan request for BAC meeting, the other application which was received in June is still pending further documentation.
- Loan officer has closed loans approved at previous board meeting, processed Deeds of Reconveyances, Deeds of Trust, UCC filings, warrant requests, and four loan payoffs.
- Loan officer has been in contact with delinquent borrowers, updated delinquent borrower contact list, and focused on asset management. On July 24th, loan officer will travel to a Delta Junction farm to evaluate equipment as part of asset management.
- Asset report has been completed and updated.
- Interest rate comparison has been updated.
- Loan Officer is in the process of researching and developing a new five year business plan form and model agricultural business plan for current and prospective borrowers. The business plan will be submitted for approval at the next BAC meeting before being published online. A copy of the approved model business plan will also be included in the ARLF letter being mailed to current borrowers regarding the ARLF loan program.
- Loan officer has participated in agricultural webinars to gain more knowledge about the industry and has also visited some of the local farms in the area.

Marketing & Development:

- Marketing staff completed training on the Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) program.
- In conjunction with Inspection staff a two day "On Farm Food Safety" workshop was hosted in Fairbanks; plans are being made for a south central workshop as well.
- Staff organized and participated in two Alaska Agriculture Innovation Grant (AAIG) project reports; a farm tour of Kahiltna Birchworks and a PowerPoint presentation by Allie Barker of Chickaloon Farm.
- Staff updated the Farmers Market Manual on our web site.
- Staff completed informational updates for the 2012 Alaska Grown Source Book; layout, design and print preparations are now underway.
- Staff coordinated efforts for the 2012 Farm Family of the Year award.
- During June, staff visited seven stores, eight farmers markets and one restaurant to deliver Alaska Grown marketing supplies and verify compliance with Alaska Grown standards.

- Staff presented the seed tape demonstration at a summer camp, reaching 30 students with special needs.
- Staff reviewed applications for the 2012 Alaska Agriculture Innovation Grant (AAIG) and Specialty Crop Competitive Grant.
- In conjunction with the UAF Test Kitchen in Fairbanks, staff has released recipes intended for use in school kitchens that include the use of Alaska Grown barley flour; recipes are now available in large and small batch form on our website.
- Staff has been working with the Mat Su Farm Bureau on arrangements for the 2012 Mat Su Farm Tour.
- Staff prepared and submitted applications to the USDA Farm to School program as well as the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant program.
- Staff created a new Farm to School bookmark for promotional and informational use.
- Staff launched a Farmers Market Poster Contest to increase communication and networking amongst the 40 farmers markets in the state.
- Staff are preparing for Alaska Grown events at both the Tanana Valley and Palmer State Fairs.
- Marketing staff appeared as a guest on Country Legends (local radio) to speak about farmers markets and the availability of Alaska Grown produce.
- Staff finalized and delivered to the 53 school districts an Alaska Grown produce availability chart targeted at the school food service professional.
- In response to feedback, staff dropped the "Fresher by Far" newsletter, typically released during the summer months only, and created the new "Farmer Profile" weekly update, which is receiving positive feedback through Face book promotions.
- Staff is working with the Palmer Visitor Center to create a new "Alaska Grown" sign outside the demonstration garden.

Central Office Inspection:

- Staff traveled to Korea to conduct Export Certification work on approximately \$8 million dollars worth of timber exports in June.
- Staff met with the U.S. Embassy staff in Seoul to review and update embassy staff on Alaska activities in Korea and China.
- Staff conducted inspections for log exports to China in Kodiak, Afognak, and Ketchikan areas and met with exporters to review phytosanitary protocol.
- Phytosanitary Certificates Issued: Five
- Shell Egg Inspections: Two
- FV-301 Inspections: 20 / Total Packages: 12,175 Total Weight: 365,230
- Staff participated in online Market Inspector Training - Refresher training on June 7, 2012.
- Staff met with WSDA (Washington State Dept of Ag) staff while they were in Alaska for inspection visits, met to discuss this year's applicants/inspections and future inspections
- Staff created an "On-Farm Food Safety" PowerPoint and informational presentation for growers (small and large) who are interested in Food Safety issues, Growing for School lunch programs, and other markets. Presented the workshop on two days June 28, 2012 and June 29, 2012 in Fairbanks for approximately 25 attendees, along with Div Ag. Farm to School staff. Workshop was very well-received, and a future workshop in the Mat-Su is being planned.
- Staff answered several calls about Organic certification

- Staff visited eight grocery stores/commissaries and one garden center to check compliance with retail requirements and inspect product
- Approved six and denied one USDA permits for interstate movement of plant pests and products into Alaska.
- Coordinated and participated in the agriculture cooperative inspection effort and firewood exchange at the Alcan border station. A total of 232 personal vehicles/passengers were interviewed, originating from 43 states and five countries. It was determined that approximately 10% of the vehicles crossing the border at this time were originating in European Gypsy Moth states. A total of six firewood samples were inspected and three were exchanged; TX (originated in OK), OR and Canada Confiscated items per state regulations were seed potatoes from Oregon (originated in AK last year), one Tomato Plant (originating OK) and a hydrangea plant from a garden with soil (originating ID). Four boats were inspected for aquatic invasives; two from WA, one CA, ID and vehicles originating in European Gypsy Moth states were also inspected.
- Staff assisted JoAna Phillips, USDA, Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and Smuggling Interdiction & Trade Compliance (SITC) with store visits in Mat-Su. USDA APHIS SITC focuses on agriculture products that may have entered the US undetected and without proper certification.
- The Division of Forestry, Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) detection traps were set near landfill in Mat-Su Valley. Staff is monitoring and collecting specimens bi-weekly throughout the summer. This is the first time that we are working with Division of Forestry on this project.
- The Division of Agriculture hosted an Adult Bark Beetle and Wood Borer Workshop held at the Division of Agriculture, Plant Materials Center, and the week of June 4, 2012. This workshop was instructed by nationally recognized experts Jim Labonte and Josh Vlach from Oregon Department of Agriculture. The Division of Agriculture, in cooperation with the Division of Forestry was awarded a USDA Farm Bill Grant, to evaluate high risks pests associated with firewood imported into Alaska. A component of the grant was to receive insect identification training to assist with efforts in prescreening for nonnative insects associated with firewood sampled. It was decided it would be most beneficial to share this training opportunity, in the form of an insect identification workshop, with individuals that participate in identification, inspection and early detection programs.

Northern Region Inspection:

- Staff worked with USDA APHIS Plant Protection Quarantine (PPQ) staff visiting Alaska in South East Alaska to work with cooperators with Cooperative Extension, Customs and Border Protection, and US Forest Service to set traps for Asian gypsy moth, Nun moth, Siberian Silk moth, Rosy gypsy moth and Emerald Ash Borer in fulfillment of APHIS Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) and Farm Bill cooperative agreements.
- Staff assisted in the coordinated effort to respond to a USDA APHIS trace forward headed APHIS PPQ staff visiting Alaska of potential Sudden Oak Death: SOD (*Phytophthora ramorum*) contaminated nursery stock that had been shipped to an Alaska nursery in SE Alaska. APHIS issued an Emergency Action Notice (EAN) to the nursery to hold any potential material from sale in isolation until further confirmation of the presence of SOD could be determined. Due to the limited APHIS staff in South East Alaska, Palmer Division of Agriculture office staff coordinated efforts with US Forest Service pathologist in South East Alaska to collect samples of the nursery

stock and have samples sent to the USDA lab for confirmation. APHIS released the EAN on the nursery once all samples had been determined to be negative for SOD. This effort proved to be a successful interagency cooperative effort to respond to phytosanitary issues in Alaska and helped to bolster capacity building among partners in the event future issues arise.

- Staff closed out the Tobacco Rattle Virus (TRV) Nematode Survey for 2011 with APHIS and began to survey peony fields in Alaska for the 2012 season under the new cooperative agreement to continue monitoring efforts for the stubby root nematodes that could vector TRV if found in conjunction with the virus. To date, no stubby root nematodes have been found to be associated with peony fields, though some plants have illustrated symptoms of the TRV.
- Staff began sampling peony fields for insects associated with peony, focusing on thrips species. Specimens will be sent to the UAF museum for identification services via a reimbursable services agreement with the museum curator of entomology. This project is part of a Farm Bill survey cooperative agreement with APHIS.
- Staff held a CAPS committee meeting in Palmer with APHIS representation. Topics discussed were survey guidelines, current and future projects, updated member list, and discussed the Alaska priority pest list. CAPS projects for 2013 are scheduled to be submitted for APHIS review by August 15. Staff also met with CES in Delta Junction to discuss a CAPS survey of small grains tentatively scheduled for next summer to align with insect phenology of targets.
- Staff continued efforts to coordinate APHIS cooperative agreements, provided guidance, and survey support to cooperators.
- Staff responded to multiple phytosanitary questions regarding peony exports to Asian markets.