



MEMORANDUM

Department of Natural Resources

STATE OF ALASKA
Division of Agriculture

TO: Board of Agriculture
& Conservation

DATE: December 5, 2012

FROM: Franci Havemeister
Director

SUBJECT: Director's Report
October 2012

Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund (ARLF):

- Loan officer has prepared one loan modification request for the December BAC meeting.
- Loan officer has had conversations with potential new borrowers interested in beginning farming. Loan officer has also had conversations with current borrowers interested in refinancing or restructuring their loans. Several have stated they will be submitting an application at the next BAC meeting however; no new applications have yet been received.
- Loan officer has processed four loan payoffs and associated Deeds of Reconveyances and UCC filing updates, as well as warrant requests and other duties associated with ARLF management.
- Loan officer has been in contact with delinquent borrowers, updated delinquent borrower contact list, and focused on asset management.
- Loan officer has contacted Alaska Mint and Oxford Metals to see if either would be interested in purchasing the Seiko Men's Gold watch, the remaining asset from Matanuska Maid memorabilia. A response has not yet been received.
- Interest rate comparison has been updated.

Marketing & Development:

- Staff conducted four Country of Origin Labeling audits in September and October.
- Staff added ten new farm businesses to the Alaska Grown program.
- Staff launched the 2nd annual Farm to School (FTS) challenge in October, engaging those involved in FTS activities throughout the State.
- Staff conducted multiple store visits to deliver marketing point of sale materials and encourage their use by produce managers.
- Marketing staff created a new "Local Food Hero" poster template to be utilized in a variety of school settings; each poster features an Alaskan farmer who is selling products to schools.
- Staff continues to work with the Alaska Food Policy Council.
- The marketing team welcomed a new staff member to the Northern Region office; she will be splitting her duties amongst the Land Sales, Inspection and Marketing sections.
- Staff participated in the Communication Officers of State Departments of Agriculture (COSDA) annual meeting.
- Staff conducted four webinars to increase awareness and understanding of the Nutritional Alaska Food in Schools (NAFS) grant. Staff conducted site visits with the

Anchorage School District, Alaska Gateway School District, Kenai Peninsula School District, and the North Star Borough School District to offer suggestions about funding utilizations; staff continuously fielded questions and offered ideas to other districts and individual schools as well. Staff also provided verification to the program administrator when reimbursements were claimed for Alaska Grown products.

- Staff distributed over \$9600 to participating restaurants from the Restaurant Rewards program in September and October; staff is creating a recognition certificate for each participating restaurant.
- Staff toured Johnson Family Farm in Fairbanks, a micro-greens operation. Staff then facilitated a taste-test event in a local school to gauge acceptance of this new product as an addition to a salad recipe.
- Staff has been collaborating with the Department of Education & Early Childhood Development (DEED) and Child Nutrition Programs (CNP) on the creation of an Alaska food group map that will showcase which items from different food groups are produced in Alaska.
- Marketing staff partnered with UAF School of Natural Resources staff to add a "Fiber Day" to the Alaska Diversified Livestock Association annual meeting. Staff facilitated bringing up keynote speaker Dr. Lyle McNeal, renowned fiber expert from Utah State University.
- Staff spoke at a Seward Chamber of Commerce luncheon about the Farm to School program.
- Staff continues promoting the Alaska Grown & Farm to School programs through social media. The Alaska Grown page has over 11,900 likes; the Farm to School page has over 1500 likes.
- Staff participated in both the research and workshop components of the "Food Security & Local Food Production in Alaska" project being conducted by UAA on behalf of the Rasmussen Foundation.
- Staff collaborated with DEED, CNP and the Department of Health & Social Services Obesity Prevention & Control Program to launch "Local Food Day" on October 24th. Each school district was challenged to showcase and feature local foods on their school lunch menu that day; 38 school sites participated.
- Staff was successful in receiving 2012 USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant funding. The 2012 grant consists of eight projects and a total of \$194,889.46.

Central Office Inspection:

- Staff conducted 2 FV 300 inspections with 2 products inspected.
- Staff conducted 20 FV 301 inspections, 10,494 packages inspected = total weight = 315,120
- Staff conducted two farm and two grocery store visits addressing local potato greening issues.
- Staff conducted inspections for and issued 13 phytosanitary certificates.
- Staff conducted one shell egg inspection.
- Staff reviewed and approved four USDA permits for interstate movement of plant pests and products into Alaska.
- Staff completed most of the labeling and data entry for the insect specimens obtained from sampling at Alaska peony fields this summer. These specimens were forwarded to the University of Fairbanks for identification services. This project is being done through a cooperative agreement with APHIS to identify insects, focusing on thrips associated with Peony.
- Staff participated in the Alaska Pest Risk Committee quarterly meeting, discussed firewood project insect findings, specifically, live insects that were found in Canadian wood that is required to be heat treated prior to making entry into the US. Barbara

Chambers, State Plant Health Director-Alaska, will follow up with Canadian Agriculture. She also mentioned that Washington State was having issues with Wood Packing Material and are questioning the efficacy of the heat treatments.

- Staff provided guidance to a local wholesaler with the labeling requirements for mixed potato bags. The US Grade standards now allow for different potato varieties mixed in a bag but they have to be labeled appropriately.
- Staff provided information on the US Grade Standards for Seed Potatoes, allowances, defects, etc. to a new grower in Nenana.
- Staff worked with the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to determine regulatory requirements for commercial growers of sprouts and microgreens.
- Staff prepared and presented a power point presentation on the Alaska Firewood project at the 2012 Fall Stewardship Meeting in Anchorage and at the 2012 CNIPM Conference in Kodiak. The presentation was well received by both groups.
- Staff is planning an On-Farm Food Safety Workshop for Mat Su area first week in November.

Northern Region Inspection

- Staff continued efforts to coordinate APHIS cooperative agreements, provide guidance, and survey support to cooperators and staff pertaining to Farm Bill, CAPS, and other APHIS funded projects.
- Staff collected traps for exotic forest moths and Emerald Ash Borer surveys in SE Alaska during the end of Sept., beginning of Oct. Traps and data have been received by other cooperators throughout the state and staff is currently compiling results.
- Staff conducted inspections for Phytosanitary export certificates.
- Staff attended and presented at the Annual Gypsy Moth Review in Portland, OR, on pest surveillance and detection activities coordinated throughout the state this summer. Asian Gypsy Moth interceptions by Customs Border Protection and Canadian Agricultural Officials were high this summer due to an exploding population overseas in Asian countries this year. The trapping survey conducted in the state is a second line of defense to detecting these defoliating moths early on. Staff plans to continue survey efforts under 2013 Farm Bill funding for next summer and is currently in the process of submitting suggestions for this work.

Ethnobotany

- Staff is working on several annual curricula focusing on different aspects of the Ethnobotany Traditional Teaching Garden. This is in conjunction with the Matanuska/Susitna School Borough and the intertribal group, "Walking the Red Road."
- Staff continues to attend Alaska Native and Native American events in Anchorage and the Valley. November is Alaska Native and Native American Heritage Month. At these activities, flyers about the Garden are distributed and discussions with many people generate future ideas for the use of the Garden. A display with dried Wormwood enables interaction with all ages and brings back memories for some elders.

Foundation Seed

- Inventory continues with old lots having no germination and Arctic collections being removed from the working inventory, POMS. New information from the Seed Lab on recent cleanings is recorded in POMS. Each new lot of foundation seed is reviewed for compatibility with established standards.
- Several growers were given tours of the PMC in October and November.
- The PMC hosted the "On Farm Food Safety" program, given by Barb Hanson, in the conference room and greenhouse. Answers about the PMC were given to participants.

Publications

- 600 copies of the Alaska Forage Manual have been printed, and are available at the PMC.
- Staff is preparing a new invasive plant reporting form for plants.alaska.gov
- Staff created logo for 2013 WASDA conference in Anchorage, work continues on sponsorship and attendee brochures.