



MEMORANDUM

Department of Natural Resources

STATE OF ALASKA
Division of Agriculture

TO: Board of Agriculture
& Conservation

DATE: February 26, 2013

FROM: Franci Havemeister
Director

SUBJECT: Director's Report
Nov. /Dec. /Jan. 2012

Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund (ARLF):

- Loan officer has prepared one loan re- amortization request for review at the February BAC meeting and processed one incoming loan application.
- Loan officer attended the Alaska Greenhouse and Nursery Conference in Fairbanks January 24th and 25th and conducted a presentation on ARLF. Loan officer shared an exhibit table with Marketing where loan applications, business cards, and information about ARLF were distributed.
- Loan officer has focused on asset management and loan recovery which includes maintenance of building and equipment where ARLF collateral is located, repossessing missing collateral, preparing collateral for auction, assisting in bid processes for contractors, electricians, and auctioneers, and working with, meeting, and assisting related agencies, businesses, and hired contractors.
- Loan officer has had meetings and conversations with potential new borrowers interested in beginning farming and with current borrowers interested in refinancing or restructuring their loans or requesting new loans.
- Loan officer has processed 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 completed yearly interest rate review and comparison.
- Loan officer has been in contact with delinquent borrowers and borrowers in active collection. Default borrower contact list has been updated.

Marketing & Development:

- Staff conducted three Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) audits in November & December, closing out the COOL 2012 program.
- Seven farms were added to the Alaska Grown program between November and January.
- Marketing staff continue active involvement with the Alaska Food Policy Council (AFPC), participating in monthly calls for the Governing Board, as well as the "Locally Grown" and "School Programs" subcommittees. The marketing team will host an AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteer to work on AFPC related projects beginning in February.
- Staff conducted the 2nd annual Farm to School (FTS) Challenge in October reaching over 10,000 students.
- Staff has been coordinating with University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) Cooperative Extension Service (CES) staff on the agenda development and sponsorship support for

the 2013 Greenhouse & Nursery Conference, Produce Growers Conference, and Sustainable Agriculture Conference (SARE) Annual Meeting.

- Staff closed out the 2012 Chef at the Market and Cooperative Marketing Program (CMP) grants.
- Staff continued collaboration with the program manager for the Nutritional Foods in Alaska Schools (NFAS) grant, verifying thousands of dollars of reimbursements and answering hundreds of inquiries regarding program details.
- Staff conducted 23 store visits during December to monitor use of the Alaska Grown logo with products including potatoes, carrots and milk.
- The Restaurant Rewards program has resulted in over \$125,000 in Alaska Grown specialty crop purchases during its inaugural year.
- Staff continued active participation with the Alaska School Nutrition Association (AKSNA) board. Staff organized and lead a “Buyer/Producer Planning Meeting” held at the AKSNA annual meeting which received significant positive feedback. Additionally, staff sponsored a culinary ProStart table at the Vendor Show to highlight a roasted Alaska Grown root vegetable dish to school food buyers.
- Staff has designed a variety of promotional materials for both the Alaska Grown and Farm to School programs including: buttons, brochures, bumper stickers, bench ads, banners, food maps, posters, and more.
- Staff finalized and printed the 2012 Alaska Grown Source Book, which includes over 230 farms, as well as statewide farmers markets, farm stands and farm-related businesses. 6000 copies of the Source Book were printed and a complete overhaul of the online system was accomplished.
- Staff conducted a stakeholder survey on the Farm to School program and received over 129 responses.
- Staff continues active participation with the North American Agricultural Marketing Officials (NAAMO) Executive Board, acting as Secretary/Treasurer for the international organization.
- Marketing staff are preparing for the 2013 grant cycle with application and announcement dates being set for the Cooperative Marketing Program (CMP) grant, the Specialty Crop Competitive Grant, the Farm to School Grant and the Chef at the Market program.
- Staff gave presentations at a number of meetings/conferences in November, December and January including: the Alaska Farmers Union Annual meeting, the Alaska Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, the Kenai/Soldotna Joint Chambers of Commerce Luncheon, the Alaska School Nutrition Association Annual meeting, and the Alaska Association of Business Officials meeting.
- Staff facilitated a Taste Test of Alaska Grown root vegetables at an Anchorage school with positive results and great media coverage.
- Staff has been working with the Alaska Peony Growers Association to manage registration for the upcoming winter meeting.
- Staff continues active participation with the Western Region of the National Farm to School Network.

Northern Region Inspection:

- Staff continued efforts to coordinate Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) cooperative agreements, provide guidance, survey support to cooperators and staff pertaining to Farm Bill, Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS), and other APHIS funded projects. In conjunction with Palmer staff, submitted four Farm Bill project suggestions for funding review. Funded Farm Bill projects are scheduled to be announced within the next few weeks. Farm Bill monies will need to be appropriated by March 27 to meet the deadline of the current continuing resolution. For projects that get funded this year, work and financial plans will need to be submitted prior to March 27.
- The CAPS Pest Detection Nursery survey project submitted to APHIS for funding in 2013 was partially awarded at 32% of requested amount. Until budgets in Congress are finalized, we will not know if full requested amounts for APHIS CAPS agreements are to be funded this year. APHIS has advised that they are anticipating funding agreements at the 2012 funding levels for 2013 and to proceed accordingly.
- Staff conducted inspections for Phytosanitary export certificates in Kodiak, Alaska, in November.
- Staff issued Phytosanitary Certificate for timber exports in December.
- Staff attended Greenhouse and Nursery conference in Fairbanks, January 24-25, and fielded questions regarding the potato/tomato quarantine and related import requirements regarding inspection, treatment, and certification.
- Staff submitted reports to APHIS on cooperative agreements.
- Oct 30-Nov 2, Staff attended and presented at the Annual Gypsy Moth Review in Portland, OR, on pest surveillance and detection activities coordinated throughout the state this past summer.

Central Office Inspection:

- Staff completed 12 farm/packing shed visits and 26 grocery store visits.
- Staff conducted 4 FV 300 inspections with 5 products inspected.
- Staff conducted 63 FV 301 inspections, 36,613 packages inspected = total weight = 1,750410
- Staff conducted inspections for and issued 13 phytosanitary certificates.
- Staff conducted one shell egg inspection.
- Staff conducted one elk fence inspection.
- Staff issued one new brand.
- Reviewed and approved four USDA permits to allow interstate movement of live pests.
- Prepared and submitted two Section 10201 Farm Bill proposals; Thrips associated with Peony in Alaska in collaboration with the University of Fairbanks and Development of Best Management Practices for Cut Flowers to reduce the risk and spread of quarantine pests in collaboration with Palmer Soil and Water Conservation District.
- Prepared and completed the Section 10201 Farm Bill semiannual report on the 2012 Thrips associate with Peony in Alaska.
- Staff participated in the Alaska Pest Risk Committee quarterly meeting, discussed work plan objectives for 2013; CBP airport tour for the Society of American foresters; change in the airfreight methods at UPS which would allow for inspections of freight since it is being held for multiple days Anchorage, expanding trapping methods at ports, soliciting and expanding on membership and increasing CBP staff at the border/ ports in Alaska. Shared newly hatched wood boring pests from firewood sampled obtained in May 2012.

- Staff has been reviewing and the draft 2013 Alaska Potato Seed Certification Standards.
- Staff has been reviewing the draft Alaska Plant Health and Quarantine Regulations.
- Staff has responded to inquiries regarding bee registration, late blight quarantine restrictions and plant imports/ exports.
- Staff has been working with local wholesaler on appropriate temperatures for storage of potatoes.
- Staff coordinated and presented an On-Farm Food Safety workshop in Palmer. The purpose of the workshop was to provide food safety information to growers and suppliers who do not currently fall under regulatory jurisdiction with regard to food safety issues, but who are interested in implementing safe growing and distribution practices in their business. There were 38 people in attendance, including farmers, warehouse/distribution center personnel, and agency staff.
- Staff attended a USDA-hosted informational webinar on the newly released Draft of the Food Safety Modernization Act. Staff is reviewing the new rule, with particular attention to the "Standards for Produce Safety" document, and will prepare comments before the May 16, 2013 deadline.
- Staff attended a Produce Growers/Buyers meeting in Anchorage in January. Purpose of the meeting was to introduce growers and suppliers from around the state to school lunch program staff, in an effort to maximize opportunities to take advantage of Dept. of Commerce's Nutritional Alaskan Foods in Schools grant.

Northern Region Office

- Staff participated in high level meetings with DNR, Governor's office, and Tribal leaders regarding the Yukon Tanana Are plan updates. Issues involved the classification of state land for agriculture use near traditional Native lands.
- Staff reviewed survey plats relating to farm subdivisions
- Helped farmers update their farm conservation plans.
- Wrote a preliminary decision proposing the sale of 100 acres of agriculture land in Salcha
- Worked with DMLW on rerouting a RS 2477 trail to help facilitate the sale of nearly 2000 acres of agriculture land in Kobe North.
- Worked with Divisions of MLW and Oil and Gas, Doyon regional Corp., and other on a proposed road development project relating to drilling site on Agriculture land in the Nenana Totchaket agriculture project.
- Worked with UAF Lands relating to an easement across University land that was granted was deeded subject to agriculture use.
- Conducted an Agency review for a potential agriculture land sale.
- Met with Delta Junction farmers regarding issuing an agriculture permit to harvest grass off of state land
- Attended the presentations given by applicants for a position with Cooperative Extension Service.
- Had meeting with Extension agent for Tanana region regarding role of agriculture in the valley.