



The Division of Agriculture Activities

August 03, 2011

Find us on the web at:
<http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag>

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Questions or Comments?
E-Mail or call 907-761-3864.

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Directors Note

It is hard to believe that August is already here and fall is just around the corner. I know it is a busy time of year but please take the time to check the calendar that is enclosed in each and every newsletter. The calendar will keep you posted on upcoming events and provide a chance to participate if desired.

One such opportunity is the monthly teleconference with the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Division of Agriculture. Ron Klein, with DEC Food Safety and Sanitation and Bob Gerlach, the State Veterinarian have been involved in the last two calls and continue to express interest in increasing communication between the agriculture industry and their offices. If you have questions involving DEC, I encourage you to participate in the next teleconference which will be held on October 7th, 2011 at 8:00 am. The call in number is 1-800-315-6338 pass code: 122#.

Each fall, the Alaska State Fair honors a farm family that is exemplary in agriculture and community. I would like to congratulate the 2011 Farm Family of the Year, Craig & Kathy Baker of Gray Owl Farm. Their 40 acre farm is well known for its commercial greenhouse/nursery and sod operation. The Bakers came to Alaska from Iowa in 1985, raised three children in Palmer and are the proud grandparents of six grandchildren.

The 2011 Mat-Su Governor's Family Picnic, at the Alaska State Fairgrounds featured Alaska Grown products and was a resounding success. This year's theme was "Healthy Food Builds Strong Families" and featured Alaska Grown burger, pork, salad, potatoes, ice cream and rhubarb lemonade. With over 1200 served, it was a fun community event highlighting what Alaskan producers do so well!



The next Board of Agriculture & Conservation meeting is scheduled for August 24 at 1:00 pm in the Division of Agriculture conference room. Those interested in calling in or making public comment can do so by calling 1-800-315-6338 pass code: 122#.

If you have questions, comments or concerns please give me a call.

-Franci Havemeister

"When tillage begins, other arts follow. The farmers, therefore, are the founders of human civilization."

- Daniel Webster

Agriculture Calendar

- ▶ Fri. August 19th - Sun. August 22nd: **Alaska Peony Growers Summer Conference** - Kenai Peninsula
(Details [here](#)) Please [Register](#) in advance.
- ▶ Wed, August 24th, 2011, 1:00 pm:
Board of Agriculture & Conservation Meeting - Division of Agriculture Conference Room
Call-in number: 1-800-315-6338 (pass code: 122#)
- ▶ Fri. October 7th, 2011, 8:00 am:
Div. of Agriculture / Department of Environmental Conservation Bi-Monthly Teleconference
Call-in number: 1-800-315-6338 (pass code: 122#)

As we learn about new agriculture events throughout Alaska, we will add the details to the calendar.
If you have an event that you would like to add, please contact [Lora Haralson](#).

Marketing Section

Alaska Grown Program Raises Awareness of Alaska Grown Products

The Division of Agriculture marketing team has been busy promoting Alaska Grown throughout the State and in many formats.

- We have five bench advertisements outside Carrs/Safeway stores in the southcentral area - this is a very effective form of direct advertising, in that customers are reminded to “Look for, Ask for & Buy Alaska Grown products”, right as they are walking into the produce department of their local store.”



- In cooperation with the Mat-Su Chapter of the Farm Bureau and the Palmer Soil & Water Conservation District, the Division entered into a contract with KTUU Channel 2 & Chef Al's “What's Cookin” program. Every Wednesday morning during the morning news, Chef Al will feature Alaska Grown products in his recipes. So far four recipes have been featured and we will see four more throughout the month of August.
- Five Chefs were awarded funding through the Chef at the Market pro-

gram. which has the two primary goals of promoting the farmers markets and teaching customers new ways to utilize Alaska Grown products. So far it's been a big hit; the five Chefs will be present on 16 different market days throughout the season, and at farmers markets from Palmer to Homer.

- We continue to see increased traffic on the Alaska Grown Facebook page, with over 4800 individuals ‘following’ us. Summer Intern Rachel Kenley launched a new program called “Taste Test Tuesdays”, where members of the public taste Alaska Grown products on camera, and she then posts these videos to our Facebook page. These videos and photo updates spur the interest of your potential customers. The Alaska Grown Facebook page can be found at www.facebook.com/dnr.alaska-grown.
- Print advertising is also a key component of our efforts this summer. The Division has a full page ad in Alaska Travel Guide magazine, targeting visitors to the State, a 1/2 page ad in Alaska Wellness Magazine and two weekly advertisements in the Anchorage Daily News.

We hope producers are seeing the impact of these efforts on their sales of Alaska Grown products. The marketing team would love to hear your feedback. Please contact us at (907) 745 - 7200.



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Alaska Farm-to-School Program Update

School Lunch Cabbage Feasibility Study

The Farm-to-School program will soon be conducting a feasibility study for the use of cabbage in school lunches.

Questions to be answered include:

1. How much staff time is required for cabbage to be sliced before purchase?
2. What quantity of shredded cabbage is made from 5 heads?
3. Is the price for shredded cabbage competitive with what the schools already spend for prepared cabbage?
4. What does it cost to deliver product from Delta to Fairbanks, and can this be done while keeping the total price competitive?
5. How long will the cabbage store, and how does this affect the nutritional quality of the food?



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Marketing Section

Alaska Gateway School District

The cabbage feasibility study is an idea that appeals to food service director Ann Pennington. Eager to try Alaskan cabbage in the district's cole slaw, Ann will tour a Delta Junction farm and pick up some product for testing in the Alaska Gateway School District.

The marketing team at the Division of Agriculture will be working to promote the use of Alaska Grown product in the schools, with informational posters, activity sheets, and messages to the public.

School Garden Visit

The Farm-to-School program toured the Fairbanks School Gardens and farm stands, and discovered the fruits of some hard work by local teenagers. Youth participants in the EATinG program are learning how to grow food.



A large cabbage from the Pearl Creek School Garden, Fairbanks.

The Fairbanks EATinG program is run by Calypso Farm and Ecology Center. More

Farm-to-School Grant Program

The Farm-to-School program announced last month that we received a total of 24 grant applications, 17 of which were funded.

The grants awarded were evenly distributed between rural and urban school districts, with 9 rural and 8 urban districts receiving funds. The regional distribution of grants is shown in the chart at right:

- Southcentral: 6 projects
- Southeast: 3 projects
- Southwest: 2 projects
- Kenai Peninsula: 1 project
- Interior: 5 projects

information can be found at: www.calypso-farm.org/eating.htm



Produce and kohlrabi samples from the Hunter School Garden, Fairbanks



Kohlrabi, from the Pearl Creek farm stand, Fairbanks

For more information about the Alaska Farm-to-School program, contact Johanna Herron at Johanna.herron@alaska.gov or (907) 374-3714.

Also, remember to check out on facebook at: www.facebook.com/AlaskaFarmToSchool.



We will be visiting a variety of project sites to follow their progress, and keep everyone informed about their success! Questions? Contact Farm-to-School program coordinator Johanna Herron, at Johanna.Herron@alaska.gov or (907) 374-3714.

Land Sales & Grazing Leases

http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_sales.htm

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Inspection Section

US Origin Sheep and Goats may now transit Canada into Alaska

Under a joint arrangement made by USDA APHIS Veterinary Services (APHIS VS) and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), non-bovine ruminant animals of U.S. origin may now directly transit Canada without stopping (except for feed, water, or rest purposes) while moving between points in the U.S. Such consignments must comply with APHIS' conditions for re-entry to the U.S.; with CFIA requirements and oversight for any applicable feed, water, and rest stops in Canada; and with CFIA's import health requirements for livestock entering Canada.

Complete guidelines for Shipments by Land of US Origin Non-Bovine Ruminant Animals from one point in the US to another point in the US through Canada are available at: www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/animals/downloads/pro_us-origin_move_one_location_to_another.pdf

Please remember that all animals imported into Alaska are required to meet State import requirements as well. All animals need a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI) or Health Certificate, and livestock require

an import permit. Other specific requirements can be found at the State Veterinarian web page, under: [Animal Import Regulations](#).

For additional information please contact:

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Food Safety Audits Available Through Alaska Division of Agriculture

Over the past few years, increasing attention has been directed toward the safety of the nation's food supply. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Federal and State Departments of Agriculture, private industry and grower groups are all working to develop and implement practices that help to ensure food safety, from farm to table.

The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service has developed a voluntary, audit-based program designed to verify that produce growers, shippers, and handlers are adhering to recommendations made by the FDA to minimize food safety hazards for fresh fruits and vegetables. This program, called the **Good Agricultural Practices and Good Handling Practices** (GAP/GHP) Audit Verification Program, assesses a company's efforts to provide a safe product to the consumer.

Various sections of the audit address issues including:

- farm and business management practices
- employee training

- temperature controls
- facility engineering
- cleanliness
- product recall abilities

While farms and distributors are not required to have a GAP/GHP audit, many retailers and food distributors now request them from food suppliers, as a way to help ensure the safety of the product they sell.

The Alaska Division of Agriculture has Inspection Staff certified to conduct USDA GAP/GHP audits. If you would like more information about the audits, or more information about food safety practices in general, please contact the Division of Agriculture.



Plant Materials Center

<http://plants.alaska.gov/>

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Plant Materials Center

Late Blight in Alaska

Late blight is a serious fungal disease affecting tomatoes and potatoes. It can be spread by spores over large areas in a very short time. The disease is caused by the fungus *Phytophthora infestans* and requires a live host for reproduction. Late blight was discovered in commercial plantings in the Matanuska Valley in September of 2010, and there is still concern that this disease can cause further problems in 2011.

History

Late blight was found in commercial fields in 1995, and again in 1998, 2005 and 2010. In all instances, late blight had been reported in the lower 48 earlier in the growing season. It was thought that the disease had been brought in on infected plant material, and subsequently escaped to infect Alaskan fields.

The lack of detection of late blight in the years following the outbreaks, given that the weather was conducive for its growth, led us to conclude that the disease had not successfully overwintered. The data shows this hypothesis to be suspect, however.

DNA testing has shown the late blight found in Alaska in 1995 was the US 7 strain, while the 1998, 2005 and 2010 finds were typed as the US 11 strain. The most common strains of late blight found in the continental US during 2009 and 2010 were US 22, US 23 and US 24. US 11 has not been identified for several years, however. If the disease was freshly imported, the strain found here would likely be the same as those strains found outside of Alaska.

Causes

Late blight can overwinter in host plant tissue, and also as a spore which results from sexual reproduction. The Alaska Plant Materials Center has identified stored tubers as the most likely source of repeat infections.



Potato Late blight causes a characteristic discoloration of the leaf and stem of a diseased plant

Management

Late blight requires specific environmental conditions to grow. The wind-borne spores require water on the surface of the plant, either as rain or dew, for a minimum of three hours to infect the plant. The time period from infection to new spore release can be as few as 2½ days. The quick spread of this disease can be devastating to a crop, making good management practices critical.

Alaska's cool air temperature may help slow down late blight's growth rate. Given that the strain infecting Alaskan potatoes is now somewhat rare, this supports the idea that late blight has been here since 1995, and weather conditions were not conducive for an epidemic.

Cull potatoes are considered the most likely source of renewed infection the year following field identification of Late Blight. Infected seed can also provide the source of infection. Discard any seed potatoes showing obvious rot. Once planted, infection will travel up the stem, causing brown lesions on the stem, above the soil line. The next symptom would be water soaked areas on leaves that are dark in color. Suspicious plants should be pulled and put into plastic bags for disposal, to keep spores from spreading.

Control measures include close examination of the seed to remove diseased tubers, treating seed with a fungicide, regular scouting of fields, and being prepared to apply a protectant fungicide.

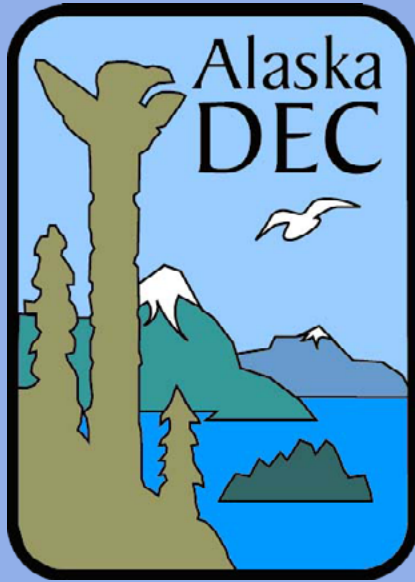
The Alaska Plant Materials Center, in cooperation with uspest.org, now offers a web based tool to aid growers in monitoring for late blight. Growers can view risk models for the disease, based on real-time weather data for many locations across Alaska, at plants.alaska.gov/potato-program.

Education

The Alaska Cooperative Extension publication #PMC-00338: Late Blight Disease of Potato and Tomato in Alaska can be accessed at: www.uaf.edu/ces/publications-db/catalog/anr/PMC-00338.pdf. Detailed photos of late blight symptoms can be also be found at www.longislandhort.cornell.edu/vegpath/photos/lateblight_potato.htm.

If you have any questions or concerns about potato late blight, please contact the Plant Materials Center, at 745-4469, or email Bill Campbell, at William.Campbell@alaska.gov.

Photo: Margaret T. McGrath Cornell University



Environmental Health

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Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation: Division of Environmental Health

Food Safety Update

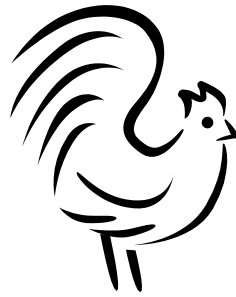
Important Information for Poultry Producers in Alaska

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation is committed to assisting producers, retailers and consumers in understanding the state and federal requirements for selling poultry in Alaska. These requirements are intended to promote safe and healthy foods for Alaskans, increase Alaska's food security and reduce the need to import foods to Alaska.

The processing and sale of poultry is regulated by *18 AAC 31*, also called the Alaska Food Code. Federal regulations, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, described in *9 CFR Part 381*, also exist.

Poultry under mandatory USDA inspection includes:

- Chicken
- Duck
- Turkey
- Goose
- Ratites
- Guinea Hen
- Squab (young flightless pigeons)



Alaska Food Code section *18 AAC 31.200* (food condition and source), requires that poultry slaughtered, processed, distributed, or sold commercially and intended for human consumption must come from a facility under a (mandatory or voluntary) USDA inspection program, governed by the regulations found in *9 CFR Part 381*. There are, however, exemptions which enable the retail sale of dressed poultry slaughtered without inspection, under certain circumstances.

USDA exempts and does not provide inspection services to operations that:

- Slaughter or process less than 20,000 poultry;
- Are poultry producers who raise and slaughter poultry on their own farm, if the producer:
 - slaughters less than 1,000 poultry during a calendar year
 - does not buy or sell poultry products other than those produced on the farm; and
 - only sells within Alaska

Questions have been raised as to whether poultry from a USDA-exempt operation is considered an approved source for a facility that is regulated under the Alaska Food Code (*18 AAC 31*).

- A **processor** who is operating under *18 AAC 31* or a USDA permit and wishes to utilize poultry in one of their products, or a **market** operating under *18 AAC 31*, must obtain the poultry from a producer who has slaughtered/processed the poultry under USDA inspection.

Poultry sold in Alaska under the USDA exemption is limited to dressed poultry. "Dressed poultry," means slaughtered, defeathered, eviscerated whole birds with the head and feet removed; i.e., a ready-to-cook whole bird. Prepared or processed poultry (cut-up, marinated, breaded, etc...) are not considered to be dressed poultry.

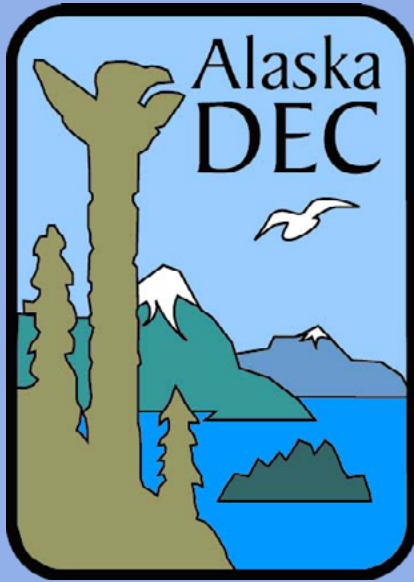
- A **food service** operating under the Alaska Food Code (*18 AAC 31*) may accept poultry **directly** from a producer who slaughtered/processed the animal, if the producer qualifies for an exemption.

Producer/Grower or Other Person (PGOP) Exemption

The term "Producer/Grower or Other Person" (PGOP) refers to a single entity, which may be:

- A poultry grower who slaughters and processes poultry that he or she raised for sale directly to household consumers, restaurants, hotels, and boarding houses, to be used in those homes and dining rooms for the preparation of meals served or sold directly to customers.
- A person who purchases live poultry from a grower and then slaughters and processes such poultry for sale directly to household consumers, restaurants, hotels, and boarding houses, to be served in those homes or dining rooms for the preparation of meals sold directly to customers.

The slaughter and processing at the pro-



Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation: Division of Environmental Health

Food Safety Update

ducer/grower or other facility must have been conducted so as to ensure prepared poultry products are wholesome, sound, clean, and fit for human food consumption (i.e., not adulterated in any way).

Shipping containers used in intra-state commerce must bear:

- The processor's name,
- The address, and
- The statement, "Exempted P.L. 90-492".

This labeling is used by producers who are claiming the PGOP exemption, instead of the inspected product labeling requirements.

Shell Eggs

Shell eggs in a retail food establishment:

- Must be clean and sound;
- May not exceed the restricted egg tolerances for United States consumer Grade B as specified in *7 CFR Part 56* and *9 CFR Part 590*, adopted by reference in *18 AAC 31*;
- If in a carton (most should be),
 - in good condition
 - in a package that protects integrity of contents to protect from adulteration or potential contaminants
 - labeled in accordance with requirements specified in *18 AAC 31.060*, including safe handling instructions for eggs that have not been specifically treated to destroy all viable *Salmonellae*



The Alaska Division of Agriculture specifies certain requirements for producers/farmers in Alaska offering shell eggs for sale. These requirements are governed by *11 AAC 32.110 - 11 AAC 32.190*.

Further information may be found in the publication, "Safe Egg Handling for Small Egg Laying Flocks and Operations" published by the University of Alaska, Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service. It is available at dnr.alaska.gov/ag/Inspection/LPM00344.pdf.

Questions about whether eggs produced outside of Alaska meet federal regulatory requirements should be posed to the USDA directly.

For more information or questions about the Alaska Food Code, contact the Alaska DEC, Division of Environmental Health, at (907) 269-7501, or visit our website at: www.dec.alaska.gov/eh/fss/.

Public Comment Period for Proposed Amendments to Alaska Food Code Extended until September 6, 2011

On June 3, 2011, The Department of Environmental Conservation issued a NOTICE OF PROPOSED CHANGES proposing to adopt regulation changes in Title 18 of the Alaska Administrative Code, Chapter 31 dealing with the Alaska Food Code, including the following:

- Revising language at *18 AAC 31.012* dealing with activities and facilities that are exempt from permit requirements;
- Amending *18 AAC 31.990* to clarify definitions; and
- Making other changes necessary to improve the regulations, including those changes that appear necessary after reviewing public comments.

For a copy of the proposed regulation changes, contact Kimberly Stryker, Division of Environmental Health, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, 555 Cordova Street, Anchorage Alaska 99501; or by email at Kimberly.Stryker@alaska.gov; or you can go to DEC's Notices of Proposed Regulations section on the state's Online Public Notice Website, at notes3.state.ak.us/pn/publicnotic.nsf