



The Division of Agriculture Activities

October 03, 2012

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

Director's Office

Franci Havemeister
907-761-3867
Franci.Havemeister@alaska.gov

Curt Sandvik
907-761-3866
Curt.Sandvik@alaska.gov

Lora Haralson
907-761-3851
Lora.Haralson@alaska.gov

Connie Cannon
907-761-3850
Connie.Cannon@alaska.gov

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

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Directors Note

Saturday, September 30th, left quite an impression on residents of south central Alaska. The moderate dusting of snow was definitely a change from the horizontal rain and wind we had experienced the week before, and fortunately for those of us who were not yet prepared for winter, it did not stay long. The old adage "In like a lion.. Out like a lamb" has not been an accurate reflection of the weather for Summer 2012.

As most of you are aware, 2012 is the year for the Agriculture Census. Please take the time to respond to the census, as this is your opportunity to provide information that accurately reflects the health of not only agriculture in Alaska but agriculture in the United States. For more information visit www.agcensus.usda.gov/Newsroom/.

October is a transitional month – moving from primarily outside work to inside activities. Hopefully, your winter schedule allows time to attend one of the many scheduled conferences and events. Please take the time to review the enclosed calendar, fill out any needed registration forms and mark your calendars for the upcoming events.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please send me an e-mail at franci.havemeister@alaska.gov or call me at 761-3867.

-Franci Havemeister

"The diligent farmer plants trees, of which he himself will never see the fruit."

- Marcus Tullius Cicero



Agriculture Calendar

- ▶ **Wed. Oct. 17th**, 1:00 pm; **Board of Agriculture & Conservation Meeting; Palmer**
Phone participants: (800) 315-6338; Passcode: 122#
Details: [here](#).
- ▶ **Thu. Oct. 18th - Fri. Oct. 19th**; **Feeding/Grazing Practices: Problems & Prospects; Wasilla**
Details: [here](#).
- ▶ **Fri. Oct. 19th - Sat. Oct. 20th**; **AK Fiber Production: From Agriculture to Art; Palmer**
Details: [here](#).
- ▶ **Wed. Oct. 24th**, 6:30 pm; **Harvest Dinner; Palmer Senior Center**
- ▶ **Tue. Oct. 30th - Thu. Nov. 1st**; **Alaska Invasive Species Conference; Kodiak**
Details: [here](#).
- ▶ **Fri. Nov. 9th**, 8:00 am; **Alaska Farm Bureau - 2012 Farm Forum; Anchorage**
Details & Agenda: [here](#).
- ▶ **Sat. Nov. 10th**, 8:00 am; **Alaska Farm Bureau - 2012 Annual Meeting; Anchorage**
Registration information & Agenda: [here](#).

If you have an event that you would like to add to the calendar, please contact [Lora Haralson](#).



Marketing Staff

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

**Amy Pettit -
Marketing Manager**

907-761-3864

Amy.Pettit@alaska.gov

Johanna Herron

907-374-3714

Johanna.Herron@alaska.gov

Kristi Krueger

907-761-3858

Kristi.Krueger@alaska.gov

Marketing Section

Livestock and Fiber Production Workshop Coming to the Mat-Su Valley

- Are you involved in animal agriculture?
- Are you interested in learning more about how grazing practices impact fleece and fiber production?
- Do you know a fiber artist who is looking to source more Alaska Grown wool, mohair, qiviut, or other product?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions then the upcoming Livestock and Fiber production workshop is for you, and you need to register now! The workshop takes place October 18, 19 and 20 at the Grandview Inn in Wasilla and the Palmer Center for Sustainable Living. Find more information and register online at www.uaf.edu/snras/dslp.

Feeding & Grazing Practices for Multiple Species in Alaska: Problems and Prospects

The keynote speaker to address grazing issues is Dr. Ben Bartlett. Dr. Bartlett has three decades of experience with Michigan State University prior to his retirement and has been one of the most visible figures in upper Midwestern grazing. Ben and his wife operate a 640 acre grass farm in the heart of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. In 2011 Ben and his wife lambed 400 ewes, produced 640 lambs and backgrounded 200 dairy steers.



Dr. Ben Bartlett

Ben has been a leader in the Holistic Management school of grazing and has applied these principles to his farm where over the past thirty years he has dealt with the encroachment of woodlands and predatory

wildlife including bear, wolves and coyote. Holistic Management is often considered to be a Western rangeland management system. Ben will share how its principles are applicable in northern environments, or wherever grazing is practiced.

Alaska Fiber Production: From Agriculture to Art

The keynote speaker to address fiber issues is Dr. Lyle McNeal. In addition to his skills as an educator, Dr. McNeal is widely known and respected for his work with the Navajo Nation. Together with his wife, he founded the Navajo Sheep Project; Serving People, Preserving Cultures, Inc., established in 1977.



Dr. Lyle McNeal

His almost 30 years of pioneering work in genetic conservation of domestic animals with the Navajo-Churro sheep, and outreach education in the Intermountain West and on the Navajo Nation has brought national and international recognition to that program. Lyle and his wife, Nancy have been married for 50 years (this year). They have eight children and ten grandchildren.

This is not Dr. McNeal's first trip to Alaska. In 1997 he judged the sheep and fiber show at the Alaska State Fair and gave presentations to Alaska sheep producers – and many years ago, did fiber analysis in his Wool & Animal Fiber Lab at USU, for the Musk Ox Project in Palmer.

For more information about these workshops, or to register, visit the conference website at www.uaf.edu/snras/dslp.

Alaska Farm to School Program Update

National Farm to School Month is Here!

October is National Farm to School Month and we have just launched the 'Alaska Farm to School Challenge'. For details and project ideas go to: dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_challengeFTS.htm.

Anybody that conducts a farm-to-school activity with school kids through October, is eligible for a Farm to School challenge award. Projects will be accepted through October 31st at:

www.surveymonkey.com/s/2012AFTS_challenge.

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



Fairbanks Office

907-328-1950

Curtis Knight

907-374-3732

Curtis.Knight@alaska.gov

Jamie Peterson

907-374-3715

Jamie.Peterson@alaska.gov



MMM&S

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

907-745-5232

Frank Huffman

Frank.Huffman@alaska.gov

Jim Crigger

James.Crigger@alaska.gov

Farm to School Mini-Grant Projects are in Full Swing

In May we awarded 19 mini-grant projects around the state and many of them had projects going on this fall. We are excited to provide the following project updates:

Airport Heights Elementary School:

'Farm Tours', Emily Becker

Airport Heights has grown a school gar-



Photo: Marco Carter

den for the last three seasons, and is raising enough produce to provide the entire school (300 children) with an Alaska Grown snack. In addition, the school donates produce to a local soup kitchen. The garden provides children with a hands-on opportunity to study plants. In addition, students can see that carrots are root vegetables with wild, green, leafy tops, and potatoes are very fun to dig up.

Airport Heights students were also able to tour two farms, Have-meister Dairy and Glacier Valley Farm, and get hands on experience with food production in the Mat-Su Valley. There is nothing more powerful than hearing straight from kids about the impact of visiting a farm. Quotes from the kids can be seen on the school's blog, at: airportheights.org/2012/09/dreaming-big-at-the-dairy/.

Kodiak Island Borough School District :

'Food System Education', Lucy Murdock

Through hands-on learning, the Kodiak Farm to School Program teaches students about the path from farm to fork and instills healthy eating habits that can last a lifetime. The mini-grant was used to establish a garden site in one of Kodiak's rural school sites – Ouzinkie. Ouzinkie will start a garden bed, use water barrels to harness rain for use in the garden and will use a vermiculture composting system in the classroom.



Produce grown and harvested at the Peterson Elementary School school garden

In addition to building and reviving garden beds, the Kodiak Farm to School Program has adopted the Alaska Ag in the Classroom (AITC) curriculum. The AITC curriculum, along with other Farm-to-School teacher resources, is available district wide to faculty and staff through the official [Kodiak Farm to School website](http://KodiakFarmtoSchool.org).

Johnson Youth Center:

'School Garden and Skills Training', Jo Dahl

The Johnson Youth Center is a youth facility in southeast Alaska. They have had a school garden at their facility for years. With the mini-grant they were able to expand their garden this year and offer some cooking activities with the students. Hearing from students about the impacts of garden projects is a rewarding experience. We are happy to share a story of how this school garden impacted one particular child;

"We had a student who was rather unenthusiastic with a short fuse. He was not interested in working in the garden; yet a few minutes later he was observed working as directed and when asked how if he enjoyed it he responded 'Yes, a little'. Three days later (and after we had dug a few potatoes for our soup), he asked if we were going to dig potatoes that day. He was disappointed when he heard he would have to wait a couple of days and said he was looking forward to digging. He followed this up with a genuine smile and said how much he enjoyed the activity. In 3 short weeks not only has the garden become an OK thing for him to do but he is anticipating the next outdoor session in a positive light."

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

Visit the Alaska Farm-to-School facebook page at: facebook.com/AlaskaFarmToSchool.



ARLF Services

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

Amanda Swanson
Loan Officer

907-761-3869
Amanda.Swanson@alaska.gov



Inspection Staff

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

Doug Warner
Inspection Manager

907-761-3861
Douglas.Warner@alaska.gov

Mia Kirk
907-761-3853
Mia.Kirk@alaska.gov

Barb Hanson
907-761-3854
Barbara.Hanson@alaska.gov

Kirk Brown
907-761-3857
Kirk.Brown@alaska.gov

Pest Detection / Inspection Section

Certified Organic Producers Eligible for Cost Reimbursement

If you're thinking about becoming certified organic, USDA offers a reimbursement program that will benefit you.

The Organic Certification Cost Share Program, administered by the USDA National Organic Program, reimburses certified organic farmers, ranchers, processors, and handlers for up to 75 percent of their certification expenses per year. This year, Alas-

ka, along with 48 other states, Puerto Rico and The U.S. Virgin Islands, is offering cost share assistance.

This program is not competitive, and money is available in all participating states. Applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis until the allocated funds are spent.



How To Apply:

1. Contact the Alaska Division of Agriculture

Or, to find out-of-state contacts and other information (including applications for some States) online, visit www.ams.usda.gov/NOPCostShareProgramParticipants.

2. Assemble your supporting documentation

Application for reimbursement includes of a one-page form and the following information:

- Proof of USDA organic certification (a copy of your certificate)
- Itemized receipts showing expenses paid for certification inspections & fees
- Employer Identification Number, Social Security Number, or a W-9 tax form

Most certification-related expenses are eligible for reimbursement. However, keep in mind that items such as late fees, inspections due to noncompliance, and inspections for certifications other than USDA-approved Organic are not eligible for reimbursement under this program. You may receive one reimbursement per year for a new certification or a renewal of cer-

tification, provided that the annual maximum reimbursement does not exceed \$750 per certificate.

Still have questions? Contact Barb Hanson at the Alaska Division of Agriculture, at Barbara.hanson@alaska.gov or call us at (907) 745-7200. You can visit the National Organic Program's cost share webpage at www.ams.usda.gov/NOPCostSharing.

On-Farm Food Safety Workshop Planned for November

Staff from the Division of Agriculture's Inspection and Farm to School Programs are planning an "On Farm Food Safety" workshop in the Mat-Su / Anchorage area for early November.

Topics will include: Good Agricultural and Handling Practices (GAP/GHP) Audits, Risk Analysis of Water Sources, Creating a Food Safety Plan with FamilyFarmed.org's new online tool, and a variety of other post-harvest handling topics. If you are a producer or vendor, small or large, and are interested in food safety issues, this workshop is for you.



Please contact Barb Hanson at the Alaska Division of Agriculture, at barbara.hanson@alaska.gov, or by phone at (907) 761-3854 for more information. Watch for the announcement of the workshop date in next month's newsletter, and on the Division of Agriculture's calendar - at dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_calendar.htm.

Plant Materials Center

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

Main Phone: 907-745-4469

Stoney Wright

Manager, Plant Materials Center
907-745-8105

Stoney.Wright@alaska.gov

Bill Campbell

907-745-8724

William.Cambbell@alaska.gov

Peggy Hunt

907-745-8721

Peggy.Hunt@alaska.gov



Alicia Holladay 907-745-8104

Alicia.Holladay@alaska.gov

Lyubo Mahlev 907-745-8782

Lyubomir.Mahlev@alaska.gov

Phil Czapl 907-745-8747

Phil.Czapl@alaska.gov

Casey Dinkel 907-745-8108

Casey.Dinkel@alaska.gov

Brianne Blackburn 907-745-8785

Brianne.Blackburn@alaska.gov

Dan Coleman 907-745-8061

Dan.Coleman@alaska.gov

Rob Carter 907-745-8127

Rob.Carter@alaska.gov

Brennan Low 907-745-8092

Brennan.Low@alaska.gov

Todd Steinlage 907-745-8138

Todd.Steinlage@alaska.gov

Michael Keen

Michael.Keen@alaska.gov

Plant Materials Center

Interior Alaska Revegetation and Erosion Control Guide - now available

The Alaska Plant Materials Center is pleased to announce the availability of the Interior Alaska Revegetation and Erosion Control Guide. Published this summer, this guide is targeted to professionals involved in mining, construction or clean-up activities in Alaska.

A focus of the guide is to encourage the use of native species already adapted to Alaska's harsh climate. Detailed case studies of past revegetation projects in the mining and transportation industries share lessons learned in the field.

The Interior Alaska Revegetation and Erosion Control Guide was written by Phil Czapl and Stoney J. Wright. The manuals have arrived at the Plant Materials Center and are available to interested parties involved in erosion control projects.

The Interior Alaska Revegetation and Erosion Control Guide is available online, at plants.alaska.gov/revveg/interior.php. To obtain



print copies of the book, contact the Alaska Plant Materials Center at (907) 745-4469.

Garlic Variety Trials Underway at the Alaska Plant Materials Center

Staff from the Alaska Plant Materials Center planted several varieties of garlic this fall, to gauge their ability to over-winter in southcentral Alaska. Successful varieties will be increased to support the PMC's horticulture program. For more information about the trials, contact Rob Carter at Rob.Carter@alaska.gov, or 907 745-8127.



Several varieties of garlic were planted this fall, part of the PMC's new horticulture program.

Land Sales & Grazing Leases

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

Dan Proulx

907-374-3716

Dan.Proulx@alaska.gov

Erik Johnson

907-761-3863

Erik.Johnson@alaska.gov



Agricultural Land Sales

Fall 2012 Alaska State Agricultural Land Offering

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Mining, Land and Water, in cooperation with the Division of Agriculture, is holding a sale of agricultural land by sealed-bid auction and is accepting sealed bids through October 26th, 2012. The sale consists of one tract of land in Interior Alaska, 637 acres in size. The parcel has an estimated farmable acreage of 240 acres and will be sold to the highest bidder. The tract will be subject to a 40-acre clearing requirement and agricultural covenants. The minimum bid has been established by fair market value appraisal, and is set at \$57,500.



Sale name: Auction #471

Bidding period: Sept. 26th - Oct. 26th, 2012

Opening of bids: 1 p.m., Oct. 31st, in the large conference room at:

DNR Northern Region Office
1300 Airport Way,
Fairbanks, Alaska, 99709

Parcel Locations: Kobe (Near Anderson) just past the Coghill Bridge at milepost 275

Parks Highway at Kobe Road.

Printed copies of the brochure are available at the Anchorage and Fairbanks DNR Public Information Centers and the Division of Agriculture offices in Fairbanks and Palmer. In addition, the brochure is available at locations around Nenana, Healy, Fairbanks, and Delta. Please call 907-374-3716 for those locations. The brochure is also available on-line at dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/landsale.

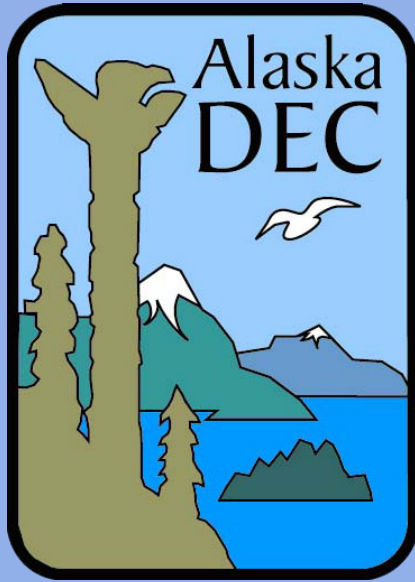
Potential purchasers are encouraged to thoroughly review the sale brochure and personally inspect the parcel prior to the auction. Bidders must include 5% of their bid when submitting a bid. Please see [brochure](#) for details.

For more information on bidder qualifications and auction procedures, please see [the brochure](#) or contact any of the DNR Public Information Centers or the Division of Agriculture offices in Fairbanks or Palmer. For additional information concerning the parcel, please call the Division of Agriculture Fairbanks office at 907-374-3716 or 907-328-1950. You can also email Daniel Proulx at Dan.Proulx@alaska.gov.



The Alaska DNR, Division of Mining, Land and Water is holding an agricultural land sale through October 26th. Interested bidders can find out more information by going to the Land Offering page, at dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/landsale/471ag/.





Environmental Health

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

Dec.Alaska.gov/eh/
907-269-7501

Elaine Busse Floyd
Acting Director,
Environmental Health
Elaine.Busse.Floyd@alaska.gov

Lorinda Lhotka
Acting Program Manager
Food Safety & Sanitation
Lorinda.Lhotka@alaska.gov

Bob Blankenburg
Program Manager
Solid Waste/ Pesticides
Bob.Blankenburg@alaska.gov

James Weise
Program Manager, Drinking Water
James.Weise@alaska.gov

Patryce McKinney
Lab Chief
Environmental Health Lab
Patryce.McKinney@alaska.gov

Robert Gerlach
Alaska State Veterinarian
907-375-8214
Bob.Gerlach@alaska.gov

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation: Division of Environmental Health

Cottage Food Exemptions to the Alaska Food Code

Article contributed by Lorinda Lhotka

On June 25, 2012 new Alaska Food Code regulations were adopted to allow the sale of non-potentially hazardous foods directly to the consumer without a permit if certain conditions are met.

Examples of non-potentially hazardous foods:

Jams, jellies, pickled vegetables, bread, kettle popcorn, confections, trail mix, granola, tortillas, fry bread, fermented fruit and vegetable products, pastries, and waffle cones.

What does a food producer need to do to fall under this exemption?

- Have and provide detailed knowledge about the ingredients of the food product and how it was processed, prepared and packaged.
- Have the food product recipe or formulation available in case there is ever a concern about the safety of the product. For pickled or dried product the producer needs to have information available about the pH or water activity. Producers may work with Alaska Cooperative Extension, or test their product to show that the product is safe.
- Process, prepare, package, and sell the product only in Alaska.
- Sell directly to the consumer by an individual who knows what ingredients were used to make the product and how the food was prepared and packaged. This individual must be able to answer consumers' questions about the product, including whether allergens are present in the food product.



- In order to qualify for the exemption, the processor may not distribute the product to stores or restaurants or by mail order or on consignment.
- Keep total gross receipts of sales of food items to show gross sales do not exceed \$25,000 within a calendar year.
- If the food is not prepared in a permitted, approved, or inspected kitchen, inform the consumer by a card, placard, sign, or label placed in a conspicuous area that states the following:

"THESE PRODUCTS ARE NOT SUBJECT TO STATE INSPECTION"

- Label packaged food with either:
 - Alaska Business License number or
 - The name, physical address, and telephone number of the individual who prepared the food to allow DEC to trace the product back to the producer if there is a problem or complaint.

What is a non-potentially hazardous food?

Foods that do not support the growth of dangerous bacteria because of their water activity values, pH values or a combination of the two.

A good method to determine whether a product is non-potentially hazardous is whether it requires refrigeration to keep it safe or preserve it. If it does not require refrigeration, it is most likely non-potentially hazardous.

Prohibited Foods under this exemption:

Meat, poultry and fish products; cheeses, custards, stuffed breads, non-acidic canned foods, pestos, garlic in oil mixtures, and other foods that require refrigeration for safety.

If a producer is unsure about the safety of their product or whether it requires refrigeration for safety, they should contact their local Cooperative Extension Office or the Alaska DEC.