



# The Division of Agriculture Activities

May 6, 2014

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

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To add or remove your name from our newsletter list [click here](#).

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

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## Director's Note

With temperatures in the mid to high 60's I am hopeful that spring is officially here. One thing we know about Alaska's weather is that it tends to be somewhat unpredictable – so let's just keep our fingers crossed and hope it stays. On another positive note – the forecast is clear and warm all weekend and then calling for rain mid to late week throughout the state so maybe we will get a mixture of sun AND rain this summer despite the El Nino prediction.

Today, May 6th, by Governor Sean Parnell Executive Proclamation <http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/Index/AgAppreciationDayMay62014.pdf> is declared **Alaska Agriculture Day**. This day is proclaimed in recognition of Alaska's dedicated farmers and producers who provide Alaskan residents with healthy local food choices, local plant options, fiber, and local feed for our animals and pets. This day also encourages all Alaskans to **"Look, Ask, Buy"** for Alaska Grown product when shopping for their family's needs, dining in local restaurants, or purchasing plants for garden and home beautification projects.

The month of May is also the time to nominate an outstanding farm family for **The Farm Family of the Year Award**. Each year the Alaska State Fair recognizes an Alaskan Farm Family for their commitment to the industry and their community involvement. Last year's winners were Vern Stockwell and Becky Gardner of Stockwell Farm in Palmer. Be sure to nominate someone from your community this year!

During this past session Mt. McKinley Meat & Sausage (MMM&S) was a topic that has spurred conversation in the agriculture community and amongst the Board of Agriculture and Conservation (BAC). The question was posed on how to transition the current slaughter plant or foster development of a new USDA plant that would be owned and operated by the private sector. In an effort to get a better understanding of the red meat industry and the existing processing plants the following surveys were developed:

- Red Meat Industry: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PPLLNOB>
- Red Meat Processing Plants: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CVKQS6E>

Please complete the survey(s) that is/are appropriate to your operation by May 30th.

Staying on the topic of slaughter facilities, the Niche Meat Processor Assistance Network (NMPAN) is hosting a **Webinar** on May 29th, titled "HACCP in an Hour." The 1-Hour Webinar starts at 9:00 a.m. at Alaska Time and there is no charge. As State Veterinarian Dr. Bob Gerlach stated; "Anyone who can explain HACCP in 60 minutes will be performing a miracle, so it may be worth the time." Additional information can be found at <http://www.extension.org/pages/70459/haccp-in-an-hour>. Another topic of interest is that recently, FDA has backed away from the <http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/ucm394991.htm> proposed spent grain rule. This rule would have applied stringent new food safety requirements to spent grain that breweries provide to ranchers as animal feed. FDA indicated a revised rule will be presented later this year so stay tuned.

In closing, the **BAC** still has two vacancies on the board. Board members play a crucial role in the management of the Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund and its assets. If you are interested or would like to nominate your neighbor please give me a call.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns please give me a call at 761-3867 or send me an e-mail at [franci.havemeister@alaska.gov](mailto:franci.havemeister@alaska.gov).

~ *Franci Havemeister*

*A man loves his sweetheart the most; his wife the best, but his mother the longest. ~Irish Proverb*

## ARLF Services

[http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag\\_arlf.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_arlf.htm)

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## Agriculture Calendar

- **Thur. May 8<sup>th</sup>** **Board of Agriculture & Conservation Meeting.** Div. of Ag. Office, 1800 Glenn Highway, Suite 12, Palmer. 1pm *Details:* [here](#)
- **Sat. May 17<sup>th</sup>** **Arbor Day Tree Sale.** Wasilla Soil & Water Conservation District. Meta Rose Square Building/Clock Tower, Wasilla. 10am - 12pm. [Pre-order](#)
- **Wed. May 14<sup>th</sup>** **Weed Free Forage and Gravel Inspector Certification Training.** Plant Materials Center. 5310 S. Bodenburg Spur, Palmer. 9am-4pm. *Details:* [here](#)
- **Wed. May 21<sup>st</sup>** **Plant Study - Devil's Club.** Plant Materials Center. 5310 S. Bodenburg Spur, Palmer. 11am-1pm. [Email to Register.](#)
- **Fri. May 30<sup>th</sup>** **Ethnobotany Teaching Garden Tour.** Plant Materials Center. 5310 S. Bodenburg Spur, Palmer. 1:30-3:30pm. [Email to RSVP.](#)

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

## Marketing Section

### Alaska Farmer and Rancher Survey Results 2013

#### The Results Are In!

A statewide comparison of Alaskan farmers and ranchers has been created based on surveys conducted by the Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation, local farmers in the Fairbanks region, Alaska Farmland Trust, and the Division of Agriculture.

The surveys asked farmers and ranchers a variety of questions to better gauge their demographics in the state and how they feel about certain issues. The questions ranged from farm size to what farmers feel are the biggest barriers to expanding their operations.

This was a completely voluntary survey and is not comprehensive of all farms and ranches in Alaska.

To see the statewide comparison, go to:

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/Marketing/AKFarmerSurvey2013.pdf>

For more information, contact Jacquelyn Schade at 907-761-3858 or [Jacquelyn.schade@alaska.gov](mailto:Jacquelyn.schade@alaska.gov)

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## Two Specialty Crop Competitive Grant Webinars this week!

Wednesday, May 7th from 2:30 – 3:30pm

Friday, May 9th from 10:00 – 11:00am

**Email Amy Pettit** for registration information!

# ANNUAL TREE SALE IN CELEBRATION OF ARBOR DAY!

Wasilla Soil & Water Conservation District is hosting  
a tree sale to encourage folks to plant trees to:

- Improve yards & landscaping;
- Provide aesthetic beauty;
  - Serve as sight & sound buffers;
  - Commemorate a special person

### 8" Seedlings:

White & Colorado Blue Spruce – \$ 2.00 each

### Trees:

Large 1 gallon pot – \$12.00 each

Amur Choke Cherry – 2-3 feet tall – \$15.00 each

Mountain Ash – 2-4 feet tall – \$15.00 each

**Pre-Order by contacting:**

**Chuck Kaucic**  
**District Manager**  
**907-357-4511**

[distmgr@wasillaswcd.org](mailto:distmgr@wasillaswcd.org)

Pick up is Saturday, May 17, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.  
at Meta Rose Square Building/Clock Tower in Wasilla.

Check us out on Facebook.



## Land Sales & Grazing Leases

[http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag\\_sales.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_sales.htm)

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## Pest Detection / Inspection Section

# On-Farm Food Safety Workshops

## ATTENTION ALL PRODUCERS!

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014, The Alaska Division of Agriculture will host a free On-Farm Food Safety Workshop at the Plant Materials Center in Palmer. All growers are welcome to come and learn more about Good Agricultural and Handling Practices (GAP/GHP), USDA GAP/GHP audits, risk analysis at your growing facility and distribution area, creating a Food Safety Plan with [FamilyFarmed.org](http://FamilyFarmed.org)'s new online tool, and a variety of other post-harvest produce handling topics. If you are a producer or vendor, small or large, and are interested in food safety issues, this workshop is for you. Comments from participants at the first workshop included:

*"Great at answering our questions right away with a very diverse group"*

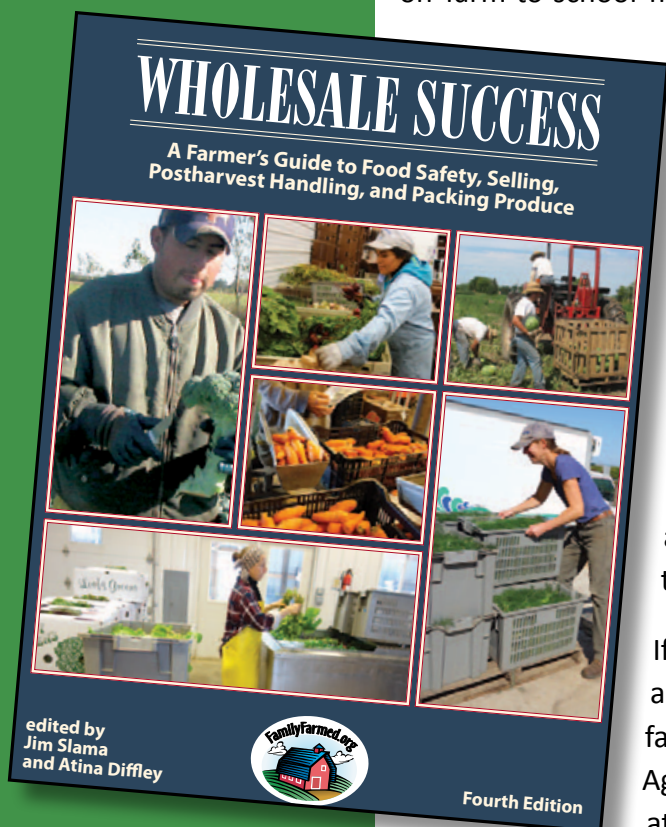
*"Very helpful – knowledge is power to move ahead in the right direction"*

The workshop will consist of presentations on water quality, compost and other soil amendments, hygiene practices at farm facilities, and safe storage and transport of your produce to market. We will also present information on farm-to-school marketing opportunities. Also, a hands-on mock food

safety audit at a local farm or greenhouse will be conducted to allow participants to see how food safety techniques can be implemented in their own facilities.

The workshop will run from 9am to approximately 2pm, with a short break for lunch. All attendees will receive resources to assist them with safe produce growing practices, including a copy of [FamilyFarmed.org](http://FamilyFarmed.org)'s book "Wholesale Success – A Farmers' Guide to Food Safety, Selling, Postharvest Handling, and Packing Produce." In addition, all attendees will receive a certificate of attendance for three CEUs for their attendance.

If you are interested in attending this free workshop, and/or hosting the mock food safety audit at your facility, please contact Barb Hanson at the Division of Agriculture at [barbara.hanson@alaska.gov](mailto:barbara.hanson@alaska.gov), or by phone at (907) 761-3854.



## Inspection Staff

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## Mt. McKinley Meat & Sausage

[http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag\\_mmms.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_mmms.htm)

**Frank Huffman** 907-745-5232  
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*Have a neighbor  
who exemplifies  
all that Alaska  
Agriculture  
represents?*

*Consider nominating  
them for the  
2014 Alaska State Fair  
Farm Family of the Year  
~ details coming soon!*

**Seed Potato Certification Application now available  
online at the Alaska Division of Agriculture Website:**

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/index.htm>

or [http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag\\_potato.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_potato.htm)

**APPLICATION DEADLINE IS JUNE 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014**



## William (Bill) Campbell Retires from the PMC After 30 Years

On April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014 Bill Campbell, "the potato guy" retired from his position at the Plant Materials Center. Bill dedicated **30 years** to the Alaska Division of Agriculture. Bill's hard work, loyalty, research, and especially his laughter, will be greatly missed. The Division of Agriculture will honor Bill's loyal service by dedicating and naming a greenhouse at the Plant Materials Center after him.

*We all wish you the best and will miss you Bill!*



## Plant Materials Center

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

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## Plant Materials Center

### PMC Hosts Aquatic Invasive Species Field Staff Training

The Invasive Weeds Program recently conducted an Aquatic Invasive Species Field Staff Training at the PMC. Nineteen participants from ADF&G, BLM, and the U.S. Forest Service attended the half-day training on field identification, sampling, and best management practices for Alaska's aquatic invasive species:

Northern Pike, Purple loosestrife, Reed canarygrass, Signal crayfish, and Elodea.

Participants also learned about 7 other Early Detection/Rapid Response aquatic invasive species potentially found in Alaska's waterbodies including the recently quarantined aquatic weeds. Field surveying supplies including a throw rake, data sheets, and native vegetation look-a-like cards were also provided to participants. The Aquatic Invasive Species Field Staff Trainings will continue to be available through the state and a web-based course will soon be available for distance learners of any interest level. For more information on invasive species visit <http://plants.alaska.gov/invasives/index.htm>.



Heather Stewart conducting the Aquatic Invasive Species Field Staff Training.

### Weed Free Forage and Gravel Inspector Certification Training for anyone interested in becoming an inspector or wants to learn more about the Weed Free Certification Programs

at the

**Alaska Plant Materials Center**  
**5310 S. Bodenbug Spur, Palmer, AK 99645**  
**(907) 745-4469**

on

**Wednesday, May 14<sup>th</sup> • 9am-4pm**

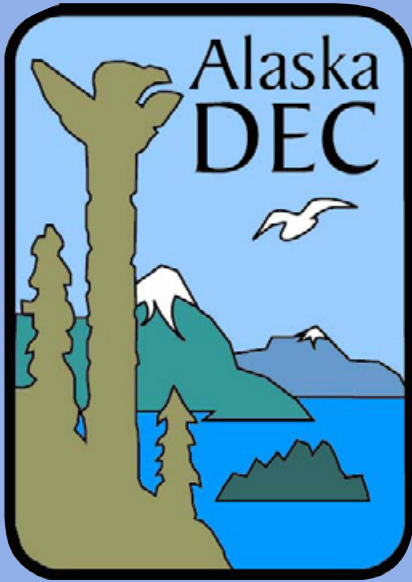
Training is free of charge, but pre-registration is required. Please follow this link to register for the class: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WeedFreeCertification>

- Bring a lunch or plan on chipping in to order a pizza!
- Afternoon session will include a demonstration field inspection so come with appropriate attire
- Training will be available by Webinar, though we recommend in-person attendance for any first-time inspectors



(Co-hosted by the Division of Agriculture and UAF Cooperative Extension Service)





## Environmental Health

Alaska Department of  
Environmental Conservation

[Dec.Alaska.gov/eh/](http://Dec.Alaska.gov/eh/)  
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# Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation: Division of Environmental Health

## **USDA: Mandatory Reporting for PEDv**

The USDA is developing rules that would require outbreaks of Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea virus (PEDv) to be reported to the government in an effort to improve tracking of the disease, which has already spread to more than 30 states, several provinces in Canada and was just identified in Mexico. There have been more than 5,500 confirmed cases since PEDv was diagnosed in an Ohio swine herd in April 2013. The virus has killed several million baby pigs causing a shortage of weaner and feeder pigs throughout the U.S. and Canada and resulting in higher prices for replacement stock. It remains unclear how the virus entered the country, both farmers and veterinarians have struggled to find ways to stop the spread of the disease.

As with most infectious diseases producers have to rely on farm management practices and a good herd health plan to protect their livestock. There is no doubt that biosecurity is the best method to prevent the spread of Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea virus. With the impact of the disease spreading across the nation the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has discussed the option of mandatory reporting with State Animal Health Officials and swine producers across the country. PEDv has a mortality rate of 50 to 100% in newborn piglets and has been difficult to track in part because local veterinarians are not required to alert government officials when it is diagnosed.

The new regulations will require veterinarians and producers who have confirmed cases of PEDv to report them so that the movement of those pigs, as well as any equipment from those farms, can be tracked. This has many of the pork farmers concerned; they support efforts to try to stop the spread of the virus but cannot fully endorse the program until they know more about the details. They do not want to see movement of hogs delayed or stopped completely and prefer to take a practical approach to the issue. State Animal Health Officials and farmers realize that this USDA action to deal with PEDv may set a precedent for other diseases. So the program must be developed so that it will work in a practical and economically sound manner for pig farmers and the rest of the livestock industry.

For more information on PEDv visit:

<http://www.pork.org/Research/4316/PEDVResources.aspx>





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[snras.blogspot.com](http://snras.blogspot.com)

[www.facebook.com/uaf.snre](http://www.facebook.com/uaf.snre)

[www.uaf.edu/snre/](http://www.uaf.edu/snre/)

## UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

### School of Natural Resources and Extension

#### Pollinators are Alaska Growers' Friends

*Story contributed by Nancy Tarnai*

Insects are essential, so farmers and gardeners benefit by studying them, according to Pat Holloway, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Professor of horticulture.

While Holloway has focused her research on peonies during the past 10 years, she has kept an eye on the insects that visit the Georgeson Botanical Garden flower gardens and berry patches for the past 30 years. "We always have honey bees; I just had to figure out what else is out there," she said.

Graduate student Rehanon Pampel discovered 19 kinds of bumblebees, with 14 being in large supply, and informally surveyed other insect visitors. The heath bumblebee (*Bombus jonellus*) appears to be the most prolific in interior Alaska.

The honey bees tend to be fickle, meaning they will jump from one type of flower to another, depositing pollen randomly as they forage. Bumblebees tend to be faithful; they work a single plant, thus increasing the chances for cross pollination from the same plant.



Bumblebees particularly love squash. "Plant a big field of squash to keep bumblebees busy," Holloway said. "This is participatory farming; try identifying the insects in your own areas, because every farm and garden is different."

Insects provide an ecosystem service to plant producers. "If you want good fruit production, you have to identify the pollinator and understand that it usually takes more than one pollen grain to make a fruit. You need lots of visits from many insects to get good fruit set," Holloway said.

Farmers can take a shotgun or targeted approach.

The shotgun, she said, is when farmers don't know what specific insects are around; they just know they need them. "They can grow great pollen and nectar sources, add a source of water, nesting and over-wintering sites, and attract insects; there's nothing wrong with that."

Targeting what to grow to attract pollinators allows growers to increase their yield. "I prefer this one," Holloway said. "It gets you into the biology of the insect and the plant."

To attract pollinators, Holloway advises growing a diversity of native and non-native flowering plants, trees, and shrubs. The Georgeson Botanical Garden website, [www.georgesonbg.org](http://www.georgesonbg.org) (under native plant research), has a guide to plants and the types of insects they attract. A few shining stars include flowering onions, coriander, sweet alyssum, mustard, delphiniums, false spiraea, honeyberries, willows, fireweed, and all kinds of cherries.

"Everybody loves the hummingbird moth," she said. Lilacs, dianthus, and wild bedstraw attract it. The caterpillar stage of this butterfly is disgustingly ugly, and it feeds mostly on members of the fireweed family. Most people want to kill it because they think it's the tomato hornworm they knew in gardens farther south.

"Not so! If you want the hummingbird moth, you also need to feed the caterpillar," Holloway said.

Growers need to be aware of competition between blooming times. "Last year, because of our very late spring, our pin cherries and wild blueberries bloomed together. The insects loved the cherries. We didn't get as much fruit from the blueberries."

Organic farms have greater diversity of insects. "If you use insecticide, read the label; don't apply when the insects are flying."

Holloway is a professor in UAF's School of Natural Resources and Extension. She can be reached at [pholloway@alaska.edu](mailto:pholloway@alaska.edu).