The Division of Agriculture Activities

March 9, 2016
Find us on the web at:
http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag

Director's Office

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In This Issue

To add or remove your name from our newsletter list click here.

Questions or Comments?
E-Mail or call 907-761-3861.

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Director's Note

Greetings from the desk of Director Arthur J. Keyes IV!

I was appointed Director of the Division of Agriculture on February 17, 2016. I am honored and excited to be working with the division. I have been busy meeting with all the employees and what an outstanding team of employees we have!

I look forward to attending farm forums, farm and industry meetings, and any additional functions related to agriculture. I am excited to be a champion for the Alaska agriculture community!

I am also looking forward to the future of the division and ready to accept the challenges and opportunities that we can work together on. Please feel free to contact me at 907-761-3867 or Arthur.Keyes@alaska.gov.

Thank you for the privilege and opportunity to work for you.

Sincerely, *Arthur J. Keyes IV*

"Agriculture is our wisest pursuit, because it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals, and happiness."
~ Thomas Jefferson

Agriculture Calendar

• Thur., **March 31**	**Public Hearing on Mt. McKinley Meat & Sausage & Board of Agriculture Regular Meeting.** Division of Agriculture Conference Room. 1800 Glenn Highway, Suite 12, Palmer. 1-3pm. (Teleconference available). *Details:* here
• Sat., **March 19**	**Women in Agriculture Conference.** Multiple Locations, Fairbanks and Soldotna, 7:30am - 2:30pm. *Details:* here

If you have an event that you would like to add to the calendar, please contact Lora Haralson.

THE STATE of ALASKA
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

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March 4, 2016

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Boards Support Section
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-526

If approved, Board of Game Proposition 90 would have detrimental effects on Alaskan sheep and goat producers, Alaskan food security, and the agricultural industry in general. The Division of Agriculture recommends against adoption of Proposition 90.

Removing domestic sheep and goats from the "clean list" would have a direct negative impact on wool and fiber sales, meat, milk and cheese sales. The Future Farmers of America (FFA) & 4H programs, Alaskan grain and hay producers, and farm equipment and hardware stores would also be impacted by this proposal.

No Dall sheep deaths have occurred due to contact or interactions with Alaskan domestic livestock and we believe that the suggested buffer zone of 15 air miles harms livestock producers without providing any real benefits to Dall sheep. When livestock get loose, they generally stay close to their home range. The Palmer Alaska State Fair is only 7 miles from Dall sheep habitat, but we do not believe there is a realistic threat of animals escaping their pens, crossing several roads and rivers, and infecting Dall sheep with pneumonia on Pioneer Peak.

The proposed double fence requirement would be a huge financial burden on sheep and goat producers with minimal tangible results. The double fence is being proposed to eliminate "nose-to-nose" contact between wild Dall sheep and symptomatic (sick) domestic sheep and goats. First, there is a low likelihood of Dall sheep leaving their mountainous natural habitat and approaching an active farm. Second, when sheep and goats get pneumonia, farmers typically remove them from the main herd and treat the sick animal in an isolated area such as a barn or animal shed.

The Division of Agriculture is opposed to a requirement to obtain an Alaska Department of Fish and Game permit to own domestic livestock. We believe this is an onerous requirement that is not supported by existing law. Furthermore, the authority to regulate domestic livestock should remain with the Department of Environmental Conservation rather than ceded to the Department of Fish and Game.

Sincerely,

Arthur J. Keyes IV
Director

Marketing Staff

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

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Public Hearing Notice

Mt. McKinley Meat and Sausage Plant • March 31, 2016

The Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund currently owns Mt. McKinley Meat and Sausage (MMM&S), a slaughter and meat processing facility, located in Palmer, Alaska. The Department of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture, Board of Agriculture and Conservation (BAC) is seeking public comment on the disposal or lease of MMM&S. Oral comments will begin at 1:00 p.m. at the Division of Agriculture conference room, 1800 Glenn Highway, Suite 12, Palmer, AK. The hearing will be held from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. and may be extended to accommodate members of the public who have indicated they wish to make comments during this time but did not have an opportunity to testify. Public comments will be limited to three minutes each. If you would like to attend this meeting telephonically, dial 1-800-315-6338 and at the prompt enter the code 12211#. Further information is available from the Division of Agriculture, 1800 Glenn Highway, Suite 12, Palmer, AK 99645; or by phone, 907-761-3851. Alternative communication accommodations may be made with the ADA Coordinator (TDD No.907-269-8411).

Written testimony will be accepted until March 30, 2016 to the Board of Agriculture and Conservation, c/o Lora Haralson, 1800 Glenn Highway, Suite 12, Palmer, AK 99645-6736; by fax at (907) 745-7112; or email Lora.Haralson@alaska.gov.

The regular BAC meeting will be held immediately following this public hearing.

Marketing Alaska GROWN Source Book

The 2016-2017 Alaska Grown Source Book to go online!

Future editions of the Source Book will now be digital which means you can update your information and be added ANYTIME during the year.
To check out the digital version go to:
http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/sourcebook/sourcebookindex2014.html.

Remaining 2014-2015 Alaksa Grown Source Book printed versions are still available on request while supplies last.

To be added to the **Online Alaska Grown Source Book** please submit the following information by email to: Kim.Allen@alaska.gov or Jacquelyn.Schade@alaska.gov.

- Region (Interior, Kenai Peninsula, SC, SE, SW)
- Farm name
- Your name, address, telephone number
- Email and web address
- Selling location (including if you are a CSA or Upick)
- Any additional information (less than 75 characters)
- Farm products available or farm services offered

Everyone who has previously submitted an application for the 2016-2017 Alaska Grown Source Book will be automatically included in the online version. If a farm was listed in the previous version of the Online Source Book, their listing will be maintained and updated by request to reflect their services.

If you have any questions or require assistance please call or email Kim Allen at 907-745-8735 or Jacquelyn Schade at 907-761-3858.

2016 Fiscal Year Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG) Request for Proposals

Alaska's Division of Agriculture announces the availability of grant funds for the purpose of enhancing the competitiveness of Alaska's specialty crops including fruits, vegetables, horticulture and nursery crops. These funds are awarded through a competitive review process guided by industry, nonprofit and government stakeholders.

The timeline for this application cycle is:

March 17, 2016: Webinar 2:30pm – 3:30pm
Register at: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4842016484749153281

March 25, 2016: Webinar 10:30 – 11:30am
Register at: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2370777239599518721

April 7, 2016: Letter of Intent (LOI) due by 5:00pm

April 18, 2016: LOI feedback returned to applicants

May 23, 2016: Full applications due by 5:00pm

June 6, 2016: Final decisions made

July, 2016: State plan submitted to USDA
(some adjustments to projects may be required by AMS at this point)

October, 2016: Funds disbursed from USDA (exact date TBA)

For more information and application instructions visit:
http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/Grants/Final_16_SCBG_RFP.pdf

or contact:
Johanna Herron
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Palmer, AK 99645
Fax: (907) 745-7112

NEWS FLASH

FDA Seeks Public Comments, Data and Information on Assessing the Risk of Raw Manure as Fertilizer

(Constituent Update, March 3, 2016)

The FDA wants input from stakeholders as it develops the framework for a risk assessment on the use of raw manure and other biological soil amendments of animal origin as fertilizer on produce farms.

This has been a controversial issue as the FDA proposed, and recently finalized, the Produce Safety rule mandated by the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). The agency is concerned about the potential of raw manure and other such amendments to contain disease-causing bacteria. Growers see raw manure and other such amendments as an effective way to enrich the quality of their soil.

The FDA is planning to conduct a risk assessment to determine how much consumer health is put at risk by the use of raw manure as fertilizer in growing crops covered by the final Produce Safety rule, and what can be done to help prevent people from getting sick.

Before starting the assessment, the agency wants the help of stakeholders in the produce industry, the animal agriculture industry, academia and members of the public in developing the model for this work.

A notice published in the Federal Register requests public comments and scientific data and information, including information about how farms use raw manure and what strategies should be considered to reduce public health risk.

For more information visit Federal Register Notice for the Risk Assessment **and** FSMA Final Rule on Produce Safety: Raw Manure; Questions and Answers with Samir Assar

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Pest Detection / Inspection Section

Phytosanitary Export Services and Fees

Are you planning on exporting agricultural/plant products from Alaska to a foreign destination? If so, what do you need?

If you are interested in exporting agriculture products outside of the United States it is necessary to know the import requirements of the country of destination. Depending on the country, these requirements may vary; for example some countries may require a phytosanitary inspection/certificate, import permit etc.

How do I find out what the agricultural requirements of the importing country are?

Please contact the Division of Agriculture at 745-7200 if you would like assistance in determining import requirements. It is best to do your research well in advance to determine how and if the requirements can be met.

The Alaska Division of Agriculture provides this service as licensed by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) – Animal Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS) – Plant Pest Quarantine (PPQ) as an Authorized Certified Official (ACO). An ACO will be able to provide you with the import requirements of the country and perform an inspection if necessary. If the inspection results determine compliance of the importing country's requirements, a PC is issued.

As an exporter, you will be required to file an application through the USDA Phytosanitary Certification and Issuance and Tracking (PCIT) System at https://pcit.aphis.usda.gov/pcit/. If you are new to the system and need assistance, Division of Agriculture inspection staff can assist you.

When do I schedule the inspection?

Once you have determined a date for export it is important to contact the Division of Agriculture as soon as possible to schedule an inspection. We currently have one licensed ACO located in Palmer and at this time we are in the process of training other staff. We work diligently to assure industry needs can be met, but due to travel costs and staff availability it is best to schedule early.

What are the fees?

If a phytosanitary certificate is required the fees below are applied when the certificate is issued:

$70.00 - Alaska noncommercial shipment valued at less than $1,250

$125.00 - Alaska commercial shipment valued at more than $1,250

$25.00 – Alaska replacement certificate

Retail Reminder! Late Blight Quarantine!

The Division of Agriculture would like to remind you of the Potato Late Blight (*Phytophthora infestens*) Quarantine that is in effect within the State of Alaska.

This quarantine was established in 1999 to prevent commodities infected with Potato Late Blight from entering Alaska. The following regulated articles are prohibited into Alaska except under the following conditions:

- Seed potatoes or potato plants are produced as certified seed potatoes in the state or country of origin and are certified; and are inspected in storage and no late blight is found in the lot; and are inspected at the shipping point and no late blight is found.
- Tomato plants (Tomato seeds are not regulated articles) are grown in a nursery, or greenhouse officially inspected and found free of late blight; and are inspected at the shipping point and no late blight is found; and are treated prior to shipment with a registered fungicide for late blight disease control.

In order to verify the above requirements, each shipment of seed potatoes, potato and tomato plants into Alaska shall be accompanied by an official certificate issued by the government regulatory agency in the state or county of origin assuring that the conditions of this quarantine have been met. If you have any questions regarding this quarantine please contact Mia Kirk at 907-761-3853 or email at Mia.Kirk@alaska.gov.

For more information on Late Blight please refer to the Alaska Cooperative Extension publication #PMC-00338: Late Blight Disease of Potato and Tomato in Alaska, http://www.uaf.edu/files/ces/publications-db/catalog/anr/PMC-00338.pdf.

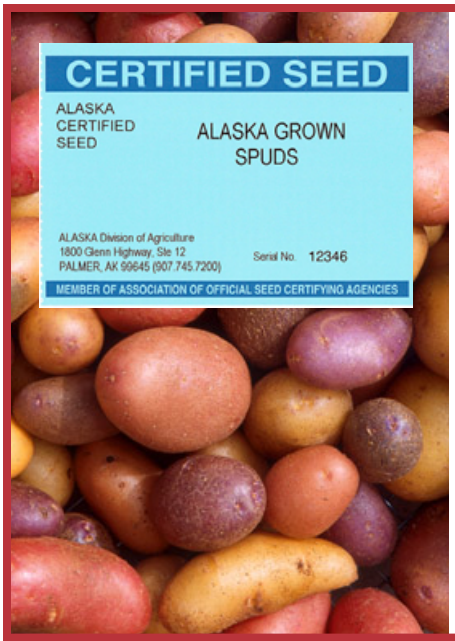
Alaska Bee Registration Reminder

Spring is almost here and it is time to start thinking about Bee hives and honey. In accordance with Alaska Law AS 03.47.030 & 11 ACC 35.010 – 35.020) "ALL" Bees must be registered in the State of Alaska.

Why is it important to register your bees? This information allows the division to respond in-case of an outbreak of Foulbrood or any other bee related diseases. If an outbreak or suspicion of a diseased hive is reported, the division will take a sample and have it tested.

The registration form is now available online at the Division of Agriculture website dnr.alaska.gov/ag/. Under the "Programs" title you will see a category titled "Inspection Services", there you will find "Bee Registration" to directly access the application.

When you open the application online, you can type your information straight into the application. When you have completed the form, click "Save As" to save for your own records. If you choose to email the document in, simply click on the "Email" button at the top of the application, and if you are using Outlook or something similar (a "desktop application"), it will automatically fill out the necessary information and attach your application. If you are using "Internet Email" you will need to copy Kirk.Brown@alaska.gov into the "To" line, and attach your application. Hard copies of the application are also available and accepted at the Division at: Division of Agriculture, 1800 Glenn Highway, Suite 12, Palmer, AK 99645, phone: 745-7200, fax: 745-7112. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions.



Are you a nursery, greenhouse, garden center, etc. searching for Alaska Certified Seed Potatoes for Spring 2016?

The 2016 Certified Seed Potato Grower and Variety Lists are now on the Alaska Division of Agriculture website (under Programs/Inspection Services).

Over 70 varieties are available.

Please contact an Alaska Certified Seed Potato Grower from the list above to place your order for AK GROWN SPUDS!

Save the Date!

Alaska Master Gardeners Conference 2016

Grow Your Own
from the soil up

UAA Lucy Cuddy Center • **April 16, 2016**

http://www.alaskamastergardeners.org/AMGA_Conference.html

The Mat-Su Master Gardener Program will be also be offering its next course **May 23, 2016 to August 12, 2016**

http://www.uaf.edu/ces/gardening/mastergardeners/online/

Registration begins February 29, 2016 at https://elearning.uaf.edu/
Sign up for ED F595P (50942) or NRM F595P (51014)

Mt. McKinley Meat & Sausage
http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_mmms.htm

Frank Huffman 907-745-5232
Frank.Huffman@alaska.gov

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

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Alaska GROWN

Plant Materials Center

http://plants.alaska.gov/

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ALASKA PLANT MATERIALS CENTER

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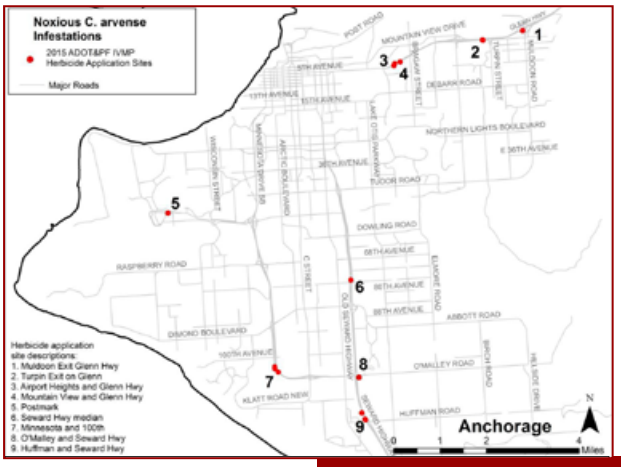
Plant Materials Center (PMC)

Canada thistle Management Progress Report

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Division of Agriculture classifies Canada thistle as a Top Priority invasive species for control, eradication and prevention. It is identified as a prohibited noxious weed in Alaska (11 AAC 34.020), and in 34 other states.

Canada thistle is not native to Alaska and it threatens natural plant communities by directly competing for resources and displacing native vegetation. Canada thistle plants produce allelopathic chemicals which can inhibit the growth of other plants in close proximity. It's dense, rhizomatous growth has the potential to impact natural and agricultural resources statewide.

Figure 1. Map depicting Canada thistle herbicide application sites.



Since 2009, Canada thistle has been mechanically and manually managed to prevent the dispersal of seeds. However, because it spreads through rhizomes, this management has not been effective in having site-specific eradication. During 2014, PMC staff *chemically* managed Canada thistle for the first time using products with the active ingredients aminopyralid, triclopyr, and glyphosate. During the 2015 field season, PMC staff recorded results of effective management on high priority sites, and treated 9 sites (Figure 1). Staff then collaborated with Alaska Department of Transportation Integrated Vegetation Management Plan environmental staff, and Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation to complete this project.

The Canada thistle Program's goal is to contain and prevent this noxious plant from becoming an agricultural problem in Alaska

The Canada thistle Program's goal is to contain and prevent this noxious plant from becoming an agricultural problem in Alaska. Efforts are concentrated in Anchorage in order to protect the Matanuska-Susitna Valley, and to effectively manage high priority infestations to prevent the invasion of natural areas. The PMC staff also collaborated with the Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation District to distribute grant funds to aid in the treatment of Canada thistle infestations with their jurisdictions outside of Anchorage.

During 2016, staff will continue to monitor the chemically managed sites and review and update half of the Alaska Natural Heritage Program's Exotic Plant Information Clearinghouse's records to determine if and how much Canada thistle is present and record its location to determine management jurisdiction. Additional surveys in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley will be conducted so the extent of Canada thistle infestations is understood in a this agriculturally important area. Finally, outreach and education will continue to become an integral part of finding new infestations.

For more information on Canada thistle visit http://plants.alaska.gov/invasives/canadathistle.html

Division of Environmental Health

New Antimicrobial Wash for Fresh Produce

Sometimes it takes time to find a winning formula. That's how it was with First Step+ 10, according to Joshua Gurtler, an Agricultural Research Service scientist at the Eastern Regional Research Center in Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania.

Gurtler and his collaborators at NatureSeal, Inc., tested hundreds of antimicrobial formulations, in a series of carefully designed laboratory experiments, before they found the right combination of lactic acid, fruit acids, and hydrogen peroxide for a wash that reduces the risk of food-borne pathogens contaminating fresh produce in food processing operations.

"It's an exacting process, finding the right organic compounds and formulating them into a solution that will perform effectively," says Gurtler.

Escherichia coli, Listeria, Salmonella and other food-borne pathogens sicken approximately 48 million people each year, or about 1 in 6 Americans. Food-borne pathogens caused an estimated 4,200 hospitalizations and 80 deaths in 2013, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A recent U.S. outbreak associated with cucumbers sickened over 765 people in 36 states and killed 4.

First Step+ 10 is designed to reduce those numbers and is expected to be used in flumes and rinse tanks to wash fresh produce. Several NatureSeal constituent processors have already expressed an interest in using it, Gurtler says.

Along with recently securing approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Gurtler and NatureSeal have filed a patent application and presented findings at scientific meetings. NatureSeal, based in Westport, Connecticut, already markets an anti-browning wash developed by another ARS team in the 1990s for sliced apples and 18 other types of produce.

To save water, some food processors reuse wash water, a practice that can contaminate produce in subsequent washes. "Our number-one concern in commercial operations is cross-contamination from the wash water and pathogen levels," Gurtler says.

To test the winning formula, Gurtler inoculated fresh-cut apples, baby spinach, cantaloupe rind, and cherry tomatoes with highly resistant outbreak strains of E. coli, Listeria, and Salmonella. He soaked them in the wash and then measured pathogen levels in the wash water and on the produce. The antimicrobial wash reduced pathogen levels on the produce up to 99.99%. It also rids the wash water of 100% of the pathogens, making it safer to reuse.

The wash can be shipped in concentrated form. Specific concentrations and treatment time used in a wash cycle will depend on the produce being treated and other factors, Gurtler says. But it will cut back on water waste because processors won't have to replace water in their tanks as often.

The wash ingredients are all classified as Generally Recognized as Safe by the FDA. The wash has also been approved for use in Canada; is USDA listed for organic use; is biodegradable; can be used with flume tanks and other industrial food processing equipment; and does not affect the taste, texture, smell, or appearance of produce.

The antimicrobial wash is one of two recently developed by ARS scientists. The other wash (AgResearch, September 2015) has different ingredients and is intended to minimize the risk of harmful bacteria in fresh-cut produce. —By Dennis O'Brien, Agricultural Research Service Information Staff.

Environmental Health

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Backyard Cage-Free Chickens are at a Higher Risk for Infectious Disease & Parasites

Researchers found that backyard chickens are more likely than chickens on commercial chicken farms to be infested by pathogenic bacteria and ectoparasites, such as fleas, lice, and mites that live on the exterior of a birds. Recent studies in California and Canada found that more open, cage-free, or free-range type habitats increase the risk of acquiring and spreading of pathogens and ectoparasites. These increase the stress for the chickens which results in slower weight gain, poor feed efficiency, decreased egg production and increased incident of disease outbreaks. The pathogens can be spread to other animals and humans when they handle the chickens or consume the eggs or meat.

Surprisingly ectoparasites were found on 80 percent of the flocks surveyed in the California study, and lice were the most common and abundant. Exposure to wild birds and pests like rodents exposes the flock to a variety of viral and bacterial pathogens as well as parasites. Rodents can consume and transmit disease agents from their local environment and spread them over a wide area. Recent studies indicate that the threat rodents pose to the health of poultry and humans has been underestimated. About 25% of the rodents caught around poultry farms were carrying multidrug resistant strains of the bacteria such as E. coli and salmonella. The research suggests what appears to be an idyllic free range lifestyle of backyard chickens results in an increased likelihood of ectoparasites and diseases.

With that in mind, chicken owners should focus on preventing introduction of pathogens and ectoparasite infestations with a good biosecurity procedures as a part of the flock management plan because control products or treatments are limited. Biosecurity requires the adoption of attitudes and behaviors by the flock owners to reduce risk. The variable inputs on to the farm can be difficult to control and include air, water, feed, people, supplies, equipment and pests, in addition to the animals themselves. So you need to be excluding wild birds and other animals (wildlife and rodent pests) from coming into contact with the flock, limiting the addition of new birds to the flock, temporarily quarantining birds that are brought into the flock and limiting outsider visitation (many of these parasites and pathogens can hop a ride on people or equipment).

In regard to ectoparasites if a chicken owner decides to use insecticides, make sure to read and follow the label. This is also true for treating internal parasites (coccidia, intestinal worms) or an outbreak of a disease. The label is the law, and helps prevent unsafe exposure to the chemical, drug or pesticide. If products not meant for use on laying hens, broilers, game birds or turkeys are used, farmers risk exposure when consuming the eggs or meat from the poultry.

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS
School of Natural Resources & Agricultural Sciences

Women in Agriculture Conference, March 19, 2016

Women farmers from Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington will gather at 31 sites March 19 for the 2016 Women in Agriculture Conference and practical farming advice.

Alaska participants will meet in **Room 107 of the Murie Building on the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus** and at the **Kenai River Center in Soldotna**. The event will run from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and will include speakers via videoconference and on-site activities.

This year's event, "Power Up Your Communication, Power Up Your Farm," covers your communication style and how you use it to manage, motivate and influence people. Keynote speakers will include Wendy Knopp and Michael Stolp with Northwest Farm Credit Services and Shelly Boshart Davis, a third-generation grass seed farmer from Tangent, Oregon, who will talk about how she developed her communication approach to improve her business strategies and increase sales.

More than 650 farmers participated in the annual conference last year at 27 sites, including 29 people in Fairbanks. Meriam Karlsson, a UAF horticulture professor and site coordinator, said attendees included peony growers, women who grew produce for farmers markets, students and others.

"We have a lot of women farmers in Alaska," she said.

Washington State University sponsors the conference. Karlsson said organizers believe women farmers have distinct challenges, learn differently than men and appreciate networking with others. The conference is designed for women who have been farming for years, as well as new and aspiring farmers. Supporting spouses, students, interns or people who own an agriculture-related business are also welcome.

The $30 registration fee includes a light breakfast, lunch and conference materials.

Scholarships are available for beginning farmers, college agriculture students, and 4-H and FFA members. The scholarship deadline is March 11. Online registration and the scholarship application are available at www.womeninag.wsu.edu.

For more information about the UAF event, contact Karlsson at 907-474-7005 or mgkarlsson@alaska.edu or Heidi Chay in Soldotna at 907-283-8732, Ext. 5, or kenaiswcd@gmail.com or visit http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2495976.

Submitted by: Debbie Carter, Public Information Officer for the UAF Cooperative Extension Service.

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ww.snrenews.blogspot.com/

www.facebook.com/uaf.snre

www.uaf.edu/snre/