



MEMORANDUM

Department of Natural Resources

STATE OF ALASKA
Division of Agriculture

TO: Board of Agriculture
& Conservation

DATE: April 5, 2010

FROM: Franci Havemeister
Director

SUBJECT: Director's Report
Feb. & March 2010

Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund (ARLF)

Staff has been processing 11 loan applications, 8 loan disbursements, 1 loan default/AGO Assignment, 1 loan bankruptcy plan/AGO Assignment, 10 loans paid off to be closed out and 2 modification requests.

Northern Region

- Participated in a Land Surveying and Mapping Conference in Anchorage.
- Met with several surveyors working on agriculture land surveys for upcoming sale
- Attended the Alaska Greenhouse and Nursery Conference in Juneau and gave a 40-minute presentation on Invasive Slugs and Snails in Alaska.
- Attended the Master Gardeners Workshop in Juneau and participated in a discussion about the Nursery Industry in Alaska and their concerns about Invasive Plants.
- Participated in several meetings with the Fairbanks North Star Borough Planning Commission and their proposed Title 15 revision denying grandfather rights for agricultural buildings and uses.
- Met with John Peter Thompson, National Invasive Plants consultant, and attended a meeting with Fairbanks Greenhouse Owners concerning invasive plants in the horticultural industry.
- Gave a 1-hour presentation to Forest Health Protection 2010—Coordination Meeting concerning anticipated pest survey activities in Alaska for upcoming year.
- Facilitated paperwork distribution and documentation for an ARLF loan.
- Attended SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education) conference in Fairbanks.
- Participated in a SARE Review for Alaska.
- Responded to questions from many people regarding availability of agricultural land and potential future agricultural land sales.
- Working on writing new brochure for potential June agriculture sale.
- Prepared maps relating to the Delta Bison problem.
- Worked with DMLW addressing issues relating to contract/post patent covenant enforcement.
- Met with Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District regarding Farm conservation plans

Plant Materials Center

Invasive Species Management

- Staff hosted meetings with the horticulture industry in Anchorage, Juneau, and Fairbanks to address invasive species issues.
- Staff attended a Marine Invasive Species Conference and presented a strategic plan for Spartina (a saltmarsh cordgrass) early detection and management.
- Staff attended and presented invasive plant management issues at the Alaska Forum on the Environment.
- Staff worked with partners in Anchorage to guide a graduate student in developing a project to determine what factors influence reed canarygrass invasion in Anchorage.
- Staff provided a presentation at the capitol building in Juneau as part of an invasive species "Lunch and Learn" hosted by the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens Advisory Committee.

Alaska State Seed Lab

- For the month of January and February the Alaska State Seed Laboratory performed a total of 94 tests: this includes 15 Purity tests, 67 Germination tests, 10 Noxious weed tests, and 2 TZ tests.
- The majority of the tests conducted were for the spring seed sale and the Alaska Seed Growers Association (ASG).
- Seed cleaning of small seed lots for BLM: 42 lots of different species were cleaned and the number of seed per gram calculated.

General PMC

- Staff attended a two day Pesticide Applicator's Certification Course.
- Dormant willow and cottonwood cuttings were collected for the Mat-Su Riparian Revegetation Project.
- Staff responded to many revegetation and seeding questions.
- Staff coordinated with the Sustainable Local Alaskan Plant group to continue the effort of connecting growers with potential buyers of Alaskan native plants.
- Market analysis continues – to determine prices for grains and foundation seed – for the seed sale from the PMC. Public notice and sale starts in mid-April.
- Plans for summer field planting, rotating, and maintenance are being determined by the PMC staff.

Potato Disease Control Program

- Continued to solicit orders for greenhouse grown seed potatoes
- Completed bacteria tests of clone bank
- Made presentation at the Alaska Produce Growers Conference Feb 16th, 2010
- Propagated plant material to levels required
- Updated Seed Potato Certification Handbook
- Facilitating small order of novelty seed potato to Maine
- Distributed list of Certified Seed Potato Growers

Seed Cleaning & Conditioning

- As of March we have processed over 37,000 pounds of grass, grain, and forb seed through our Small Lot and Seed House processing facilities. This seed comes from PMC fields, ASG producers, and other outside sources.

Village Seed Project-ARRA

- Our long-term, non-permanent staff has started their term at the Plant Materials Center and has been busy familiarizing themselves with the Village Seed Project and the PMC activities.
- The technical staff for this project will be traveling to village locations throughout the state in the coming months to perform site assessment and to make contact with potential partners.

Marketing & Development

- Staff prepared and presented three times at the Producers' Conference.
- Staff conducted a Grant Writing Workshop at the Producers' Conference.
- Staff completed two days of Country-of-Origin Labeling Refresher course.
- Staff attended the Alaska Peony Growers Assoc and provided Division info to attendees.
- Staff participated in a Specialty Crop Block Grant webinar, for better management of grants.
- Staff prepared and presented at the Delta Farm Forum in Delta Junction.
- Staff completed 7 grocery store visits to visit with produce managers and check on the quality of Alaska Grown products.
- Staff met with the Alaska State Fair to determine level of involvement for this year.
- Staff met with Division of Forestry and Anchorage Muni to discuss production of native plants in Alaska and potential speakers for future conferences.
- Staff prepared and emailed out the Division Newsletter.
- Staff prepared the Cooperative Marketing Program (CMP) grant for announcement.
- Staff prepared a media release on the Alaska Grown meat shipment to Haines. It was aired on APRN.
- Staff has worked closely with grant applicants, by answering questions and helping them understand the scope of the grants.

Inspection

- Reviewed 1 USDA permit application for the movement of plant materials into Alaska
- Two farms applied and were accepted into the Alaska Grown Program.
- Staff completed 10 FV 300 inspections representing 721 cartons of product in February. Inspectors also completed 20 FV 301 inspections representing 12,349 packages & 670,470 pounds of inspected product.
- Staff completed 2 farm visits in November and December performing grade inspections on potatoes.
- Staff completed 2 elk farm inspections.
- Staff completed 1 egg inspection
- Inspection staff continues to participate with the Alaska Pest Risk Assessment Committee (AKPRAC). United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP) are now sharing information of "agriculture interest" to State entities. In addition to this, the committee is working on an internal system that would share information immediately when pests of interest are discovered in Alaska.
- Staff is completing required "Continuing Education Units" to maintain USDA Good Agricultural Practices & Good Handling Practices certifications.
- Performed 3 USDA Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) Audits in the Anchorage and Mat-Su Valley area.
- Staff is responding to numerous inquiries regarding the State's requirements on importing seeds and plants from outside Alaska.
- Staff prepared to participate in the annual USDA Fresh Fruit & Vegetable (FFV) refresher training in March; training is required for staff to maintain their USDA FFV inspection license.

Regulatory

- Staff has updated and renewed 99 people for the Brand Book. This is still under review.
- Staff responded to numerous calls regarding elk fencing regulations and guidelines.
- Staff has responded to several inquiries regarding the labeling and grading of eggs.