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Restaurant Rewards Program enters its second year

(Fairbanks, AK) – The Alaska Division of Agriculture is extending the popular Restaurant Rewards Program for a second year. The purpose of the program is to increase the use of locally-grown produce in Alaska restaurants and increase partnerships between restaurants and specialty crop producers throughout the state.

Nearly 40 restaurants participated in the Restaurant Rewards Program last year, boosting their menu offering of Alaska Grown products such as local broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, lettuce and onions.

"Local restaurants doubled what they bought from me over last year. This program has increased my bottom line and I'm very thankful for that," says Gretchen Kerndt, owner of Basically Basil in Fairbanks.

Restaurant Rewards Program participants are partially reimbursed for the cost of purchasing eligible Alaska Grown products. This year, the reimbursement has been set at a flat rate of 17 percent. The maximum reimbursement within a 12-month period will be $6,000, until program funds are exhausted. To find out more program details, go to http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_RR.htm.

The following criteria will be used in the program:

Eligible Food Service: Any restaurant, caterer, or food vendor that serves Alaska Grown food to the public.
Non-Eligible Food Service: Schools, institutions, universities, or food vendors that supply schools, institutions, or universities.
Eligible Products: Any type of Alaska Grown specialty crop intended for consumption. Alaska specialty crops are fruits and vegetables. The product must come from a registered Alaska Grown member.
Non-Eligible Products: Alaska Grown products such as milk, meat, eggs, and grain and Alaska Grown value-added products such as cheese, mead, jams, jellies and sauces are NOT eligible for reimbursement due to the source of funding for this program.

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