



The Division of Agriculture Activities

July 09, 2012

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

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

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Directors Note

The Department of Natural Resources held a land sale in June. Two agricultural parcels, located 23 miles south of Nenana, were offered for sale by sealed bid and received a considerable interest. The two parcels drew a total of 30 bids, and the winning bids came in at approximately 150% of the appraised price.

Just a quick reminder - the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is working on several new proposed regulation changes. I encourage you to read through the Animal Care Standards www.dec.alaska.gov/eh/docs/vet/ACS/Draft_ACS_05.24.2012.pdf and send any comments you may have to jay.fuller@alaska.gov. If you are interested in reading the minutes from the workshops already held, they are also available on DEC's website. A 60 day formal comment period will begin later this summer. DEC is also accepting comments on the proposed Pesticide Regulations (found at www.dec.alaska.gov/eh/pest/publicnotice.htm) until 5 pm, August 2, 2012.

For those interested in receiving automated state notices, you can visit list.state.ak.us/ and sign up for automated e-mails for those items of interest to you.

As always, please give me a call if you have any particular comments or concerns. You can reach me at franci.havemeister@alaska.gov or (907) 761-3867.

-Franci Havemeister

"I had rather be on my farm than be emperor of the world"

- George Washington

Agriculture Calendar

- ▶ **Thurs. July 19th**, 9 am - 5 pm: **2012 Delta Farm Tour**; Delta Junction.
\$50/person includes lunch.
Details: [here](#).
- ▶ **Thurs. July 26th**: **Matanuska-Susitna Farm Tour**;
\$55/person includes lunch.
Details: [here](#).
- ▶ **Sun. July 29th**, 2 pm - 6 pm: **Alaska Farmland Trust's Free Valley Farm Picnic**;
Diamond Ridge Farm, Wasilla.
Details: [here](#).
- ▶ **Wed, August 1st**, 1:00 pm: **Board of Agriculture & Conservation Regular Meeting**
Details: [here](#).
Call-in number: 1-800-315-6338 (pass code: 122#)
- ▶ **Thurs. - Sat. August 9th - 11th**: **Alaska Peony Growers Summer Conference**; Palmer
Registration [here](#).
Questions: apga.events@gmail.com

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



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Marketing Section

A Summer Full of Farm Tours



Bill Longbrake of Country Garden Farms addresses a tour group on the 2011 Mat-Su Farm Tour

Have you ever been on or hosted a farm tour? What was your favorite part? Seeing the farm up close? Hearing the farmer speak about his/her background? Farm tours are a great way to connect with your customers.

July and August will bring at least three farm tours: the Delta Junction Farm tour on July 19th, the Mat-Su Farm tour on July 26th and the Alaska Peony Growers Mat-Su Farm tour on August 11th. Information about all

three tours can be found on the [Division of Agriculture's calendar](#).

Marketing team staff are prepared to assist with registration. We are also available to review agendas and provide feedback.

The marketing section's home page is located at dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_ms.htm. You can also follow Alaska Grown on Facebook, at facebook.com/dnr.alaskagrown.



Alaska Agricultural Innovation Grant Reports

Visited the [Innovation Grant report section](#) of the Division web page recently? Many reports from completed projects have been added - you can now learn about blueberry cultivation in South East Alaska, birch syrup production in the Mat-Su or the LED lighting system at Chena Hot Springs. Find a full list of reports at dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_grantsAAIG.htm.

Agricultural Land Sales

Results of the DNR's June 29th Agricultural Land Sale

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Mining, Land and Water, in cooperation with the Division of Agriculture, held a sale by sealed-bid auction of agricultural land in the Kobe North Agricultural Project last month (Auction #468).

The sale consisted of two tracts of land in Interior Alaska. These 650 & 677 acre tracts are subject to 40-acre clearing requirement and agricultural covenants. Minimum bids were determined by fair market value appraisal at \$36,000 to \$36,500. Each parcel received more than 15 bids, and the apparent high bids were \$51,107 and \$57,777.



More sales in the Kobe North Agricultural Project are planned in the future. For more information about land sales and grazing leases, contact the Division of Agriculture offices or visit dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_sales.htm.

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

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Alaska Farm-to-School Program Update

First On-Farm Food Safety Workshop: A Success

June 28th and 29th marked the first official 'On-Farm Food Safety' workshops offered by the Division of Agriculture. For the first round of workshops, we looked to the agriculture community for guidance and feedback. While there was a lot of information, most felt it was reasonable and really liked the resources that were provided.



Barb Hansen demonstrates a mock Good Agricultural Practice audit with Gretchen Kerndt at Basically Basil Farm

Summer is not the ideal time to leave your farm to learn about Food Safety on the Farm. Nevertheless, several farmers made time in their busiest season to attend this workshop. We were thrilled to see the dedication and interest from participants. It was widely agreed that the on-site farm portion was worthwhile. Eleven of the twelve attendees responded they were 'very likely' to recommend this workshop to other farmers or producers.



Sanitation is key to safe food handling on the farm.

The workshop covered:

- schools as a market,
- good agricultural practices (GAP),
- good handling practices,
- water sources, testing, and use,
- minimizing risk on the farm,
- record keeping,
- liability insurance,
- creating a 'Farm Food Safety Plan',
- traceability of product, and
- a mock GAP audit at a farm



The first On Farm Food Safety Workshop had representatives from 7 farms, one school garden, Cooperative Extension Services, and Department of Environmental Conservation.

For updates, news, grant opportunities, and announcements join our listserv at: list.state.ak.us/soalists/akfarmtoschool/jl.htm. Also check out the Farm-to-School facebook page: facebook.com/AlaskaFarmToSchool.

For more information about the Alaska Farm-to-School program, or if you have any questions, contact Johanna Herron at Johanna.herron@alaska.gov or (907) 374-3714. The FTS home page can be found at dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_FTS.htm.



Using an outdoor handwashing station is a good agricultural practice.

Land Sales & Grazing Leases

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

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Pest Detection / Inspection Section

Food Safety for the Home Garden

Many Alaskans love to take advantage of our long summer days by growing their own vegetables in the home garden. But to ensure that your home-grown bounty doesn't result in a case of home-bound dysentery, you need to learn safe production practices! Be sure that you've considered the following food safety measures before you start your home garden project.



LOCATION: When determining the best location for your garden, remember to avoid areas where soil may have been previously contaminated, or where your crop may be subject to hazards from runoff from roads, manure piles, septic systems, etc. Also, be sure to dispose of brush, leaves, and decaying plant materials far away from the garden to eliminate hiding and nesting places for rodents and other animals, which can carry disease to your garden. Be sure to keep domestic pets out of the garden as well – animal and human waste are one of the most common causes of food borne pathogens.

SOIL AMENDMENTS: Be sure that all fertilizers, pesticides, and compost, etc. are safe for (and labeled for use in) vegetable gardens. Untreated manure and improperly treated compost pose an especially great risk of contaminating food with pathogenic bacteria, virus, and parasites.



In order to be safe, compost piles must maintain a temperature of between 131 and 170 degrees F. for at least three days. Small compost piles often do not reach these high temperatures – in this case, it is best to consider the compost untreated, and apply it only in the fall, not during the growing season.

WATER SUPPLY: Public drinking water or ground water (from a well) are both much safer for irrigation than surface waters from a pond, stream, or even a rain barrel, which can be contaminated with chemicals and bacteria. If you must use surface water for irrigation, be sure that it does not come in contact with produce that will be harvested within a week or two. When washing harvested produce, potable (drinking) water should always be used.



To protect your water source, wells should be located at least 100 feet from septic systems, livestock areas, dog kennels, and other sources of potential contamination. A tight-fitting well cap and proper soil grading around the well (to prevent pooling around the casing) are also important. Homeowners should have their well water tested for *coliform* bacteria at least annually, and install backflow prevention devices where necessary, to prevent contaminated water from being siphoned back into the well in the event of loss of pressure.

SANITATION PRACTICES: Prevent cross-contamination by cleaning and disinfecting gardening equipment, clothing, and surfaces. Shoes, gloves, and equipment can spread pathogens from compost materials to crops and food containers. Diluted bleach (a teaspoon per quart of water) or pure white vinegar will safely sanitize surfaces.



Happy (and healthy) Gardening!

Plant Materials Center

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

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Plant Materials Center

Potato Growers: Watch your Crop

Potatoes are now up and growing and growers are advised to keep a watchful eye on their crop. Potato plants are susceptible to environmental conditions and diseases. Late blight was observed in the Matanuska valley in 2010 and 2011 and in the Delta Junction area in 2011. The disease causing organism, *Phytophthora infestans*, may still be waiting to pounce given the right conditions. Cool and rainy weather provides the environmental conditions necessary for the spores to find their way to potato plants.

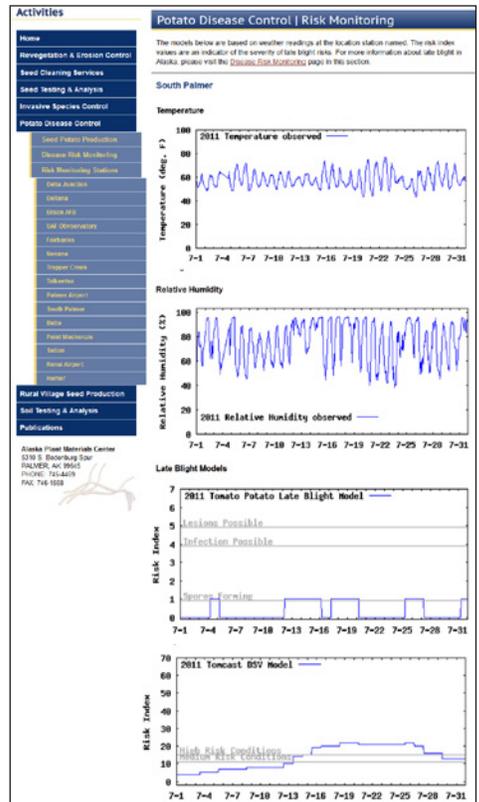
The spores come from infected tissue. Last year's tubers used for seed or improperly disposed tuber waste are the primary suspects for new infections. Imported plants and tubers of the susceptible crops, tomato and potato, are also known as potential sources for introducing this disease. Preventing the introduction of the disease is why Alaska enforces the quarantine imposed on potentially diseased host plants.

Prevention is always the best management approach. Check to make sure that disposed potato waste is buried or burned, and inspect potato plantings. Missing hills or poorly growing plants need further investigation. Remove plants that are hurt or are not growing well. Then bury, burn or place debris in a plastic bag. The idea is

to prevent any spores from being produced by the infected plants and eliminate the potential sources for disease spread.

A history of Late Blight in Alaska can be found at plants.alaska.gov/potato-program/potato-diseases.php. Detailed information about Late Blight can be found in 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>). Photos of late blight symptoms can be also be found at www.longislandhort.cornell.edu/vegpath/photos/lateblight_potato.htm.

The Alaska Plant Materials Center, in co-



Late blight risk monitoring tools are available on the Plant Materials Center website, at plants.alaska.gov/potato-program



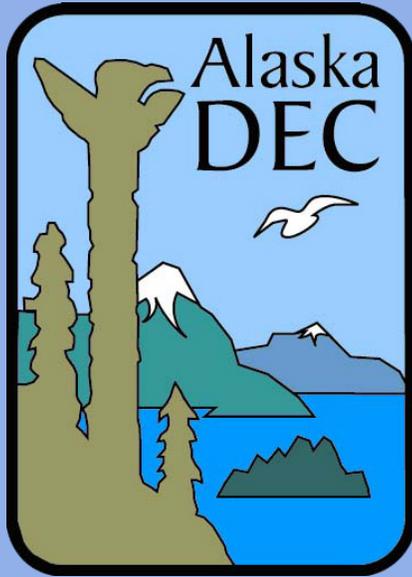
Late blight causes characteristic stem and leaf lesions on infected plants



Photo: Megan T. McGrath Cornell University

operation with uspest.org, now offers a web based tool to aid growers in monitoring for late blight. Growers can view risk models for the disease, based on real-time weather data for many locations across Alaska, at plants.alaska.gov/potato-program.

If you have any questions or concerns, or please contact the Plant Materials Center, at 745-4469, or email Bill Campbell, at William.Campbell@alaska.gov.



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Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation: Division of Environmental Health

DEC to Host Workshops on Animal Care Standards

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Office of the State Veterinarian will be hosting a third series of public workshops regarding proposed animal care standards. These workshops will help DEC develop animal care standards that provide more detail on what constitutes adequate feeding, watering, and care for common livestock and domestic animals. The public is invited to discuss what they think should be included in animal care standards for Alaska.

The workshops will cover general care standards, humane euthanasia and will also have open forum time for comments on specific animal species. The workshops will be held from 3:30 p.m. until 5 p.m. on June 27 and July 2.

All interested persons are invited to attend by telephone at 1-800-315-6338 (use pass code 8213 when prompted) or in person at the State Environmental Health Laboratory at: 5251 Dr. MLK, Jr. Ave, Anchorage, AK, 99507. Those unable to attend meetings

can submit comments to the Department in writing via mail or [email](#).

No proposed regulations have been formally public noticed for comment at this time. Animal care standards regulations will be proposed and a formal public comment period will be held for the entire regulation package later this year. Questions regarding these workshops can be directed to:

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More information on the workshops, minutes from prior meetings and a working draft of the proposed animal care standards are available at: dec.alaska.gov/eh/vet/AnimalCareWorkshop.html.

A "Heads Up" for Horse Owners and Transporters

A herd of wild horses captured near Haines Junction, Yukon Territory will have to be destroyed; Recent tests have confirmed all five animals have a deadly disease called equine infectious anemia [EIA], which is incurable, say Canadian government officials.

The small herd has been running free for years in the Canyon Creek area west of Whitehorse. But this past winter, they started hanging around the Alaska Highway corridor, where they became a traffic hazard. The ownership of the horses is unknown, and no one has made a claim since their capture in April 2012.

Kevin Bowers, Agricultural Supervisor with the Yukon Government, said federal regulations leave few options. "It's a disease that there's no cure for, and we have some tough decisions to make about euthanizing those horses as a result of their positive test results," Bowers said. "Unfortunately, [under] the circumstances for permanent quarantine, the horse has to remain on that premise; it has to be secured against infecting other horses and neighbors, notifications [must be given], all those kinds of things," Bowers said.

He said the small Canyon Creek herd was remote enough that it likely did not infect other free-ranging horses in the region. At least a dozen more animals still roam the Takhini Valley west of Whitehorse, Bowers said. He said quarantine was not an option.

Many animals show temporary recovery from the severe stage of EIA and may even appear normal for 2 to 3 weeks before relapsing with similar, but less severe signs.

Control of the disease is based on surveillance testing, identification, and destruction or life-long quarantine of infected animals, mandatory testing of imported horses, and preventing the spread of the virus by controlling insect and mechanical vectors that carry the disease. There are effective mosquito and fly controls for horses, and they should be used, along with fly masks and any other protection for the horse.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) restricts importation of animals and animal products from countries where EIA is known to occur, through Port-of-Entry Inspections done by the Canada Border Services Agency or the CFIA.