



February 3, 2014

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

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Questions or Comments?  
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# The Division of Agriculture Activities

## Director's Note

This past week it was hard to remember that it was only January. With temperatures hovering in the high 40's to low 50's during the day, it was another weather anomaly for Alaska. The warm weather may have been a welcome change for most Alaskans, but for those involved in agriculture the freeze/thaw cycle brings concern. Whether your interest is peony, hay, or apple trees – this weather makes us wonder what the spring ramifications will be. The past years weather has been challenging, but for now, we will keep our fingers crossed, hope for the best and as one farmer told me "we'll just have to wait and see what spring brings."

We may need to wait on the results of spring, but we know what February brings – many conferences and the continuation of the second session of the 28th legislature. Several conferences are scheduled for this month and March so be sure to check the newsletter and mark your calendars. This session has already seen several new bills introduced and several that were carried over from last year that are of particular interest to agriculture.

The following bills were introduced during the first session:

**Senate Bill (SB) 61** – (Sponsored by Senator Coghill) "An Act relating to the board, loans, records, and lobbying contracts of the Alaska Commercial Fishing and Agriculture Bank, and providing for an effective date."

**House Bill (HB)121** – (Sponsored by Representative Seaton) "An Act relating to the rapid response to, and control of, aquatic invasive species and establishing the aquatic invasive species response fund."

**HB 121** – (Sponsored by Representative Feige) "An Act relating to the board, loans, records, and lobbying contracts of the Alaska Commercial Fishing and Agriculture Bank, and providing for an effective date."

**HB 202** – (Sponsored by Representative Feige) "An Act raising the application fee for a drawing permit for the hunting of bison to \$20; requiring the game management plan for bison in the Delta Junction Bison Range Area to include mitigation of bison damage to farm crops and farm and personal property; and authorizing the commissioner of natural resources to make grants to mitigate or prevent damage caused by bison."

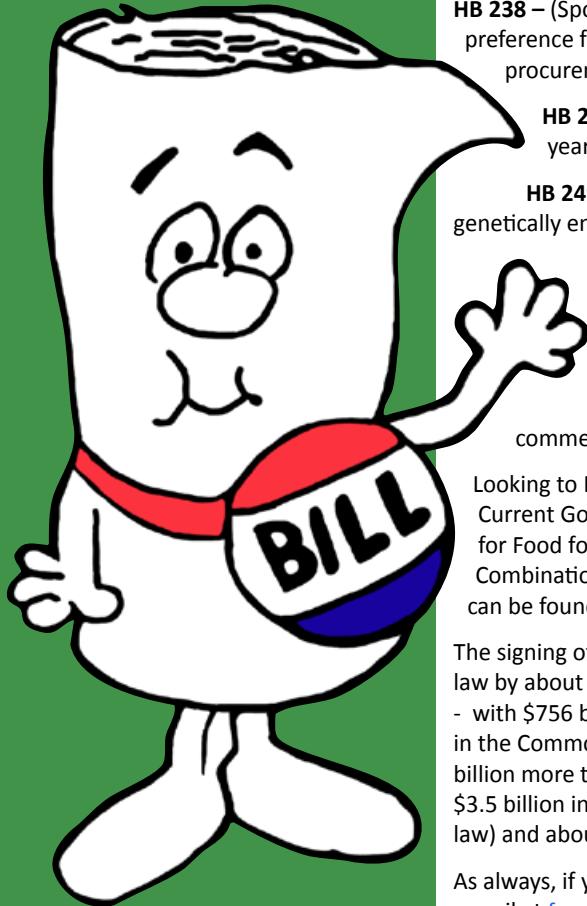
**HB 207** – (Sponsored by Representative Feige) "An Act establishing the Board of Agriculture, Conservation, and Development; transferring the powers and duties of the Natural Resource Conservation and Development Board to the Board of Agriculture, Conservation, and Development; transferring to the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development the authority to approve loans from the agriculture revolving loan fund; terminating the Natural Resource Conservation and Development Board; and providing for an effective date."

The following bills were introduced this second session:

**HB 201** – (Sponsored by Representative Gara) – "An act relating to the application of non-riel pesticides and broadcast chemicals near fish habitat or water for human consumption, and in public places."

**HB 215** – (Sponsored by Representative Tarr) – "An Act relating to the labeling of food; relating to the misbranding of food; requiring labeling of food produced with genetic engineering; and providing for an effective date."

**HB 224** – (Sponsored by Representative Drummond) – "An Act limiting the application of neonicotinoid pesticides."



**HB 231** – (Sponsored by Representative Chenault) – “An Act eliminating the Department of Revenue’s duty to register cattle brands.”

**HB 238** – (Sponsored by Representative Tarr) – “An Act relating to the municipal procurement preference for state agricultural and fisheries products; relating to legislative oversight of that procurement preference; and providing for an effective date.”

**HB 248** – (Sponsored by Representative Kawasaki) – “An Act establishing May 15 each year as Think Local Day; and providing for an effective date.”

**HB 249** – (Sponsored by Representative Kawasaki) – “An Act prohibiting the use of genetically engineered seeds or plants to produce or grow agricultural products for sale.

For those that are interested, bills can be tracked at [Alaska State 28th Legislature in the Bill Action Status Inquiry System](#). I encourage you to contact your legislators and let voice your voice be heard on bills of interest to you.

Another topic of local interest is the extension of the comment period for the Wosnesenski and Chirikof cattle herds. The new deadline is February 20, 2014 and comments can be sent to [Fw7\\_akmaritime@fws.gov](mailto:Fw7_akmaritime@fws.gov).

Looking to National interest, FDA has extended the comment period on the proposed Rule: Current Good Manufacturing Practice and Hazard Analysis and Risk-Based Preventive Controls for Food for Animals and the Draft Qualitative Risk Assessment: Risk of Activity/Animal Food Combinations for Activities Conducted in a Facility Co-Located on a Farm. More information can be found at <http://www.fda.gov/fsma>.

The signing of the \$956 billion dollar Farm Bill happened today, effectively cutting the existing law by about \$16.5 billion over the next 10 years. The following is the proposed breakdown - with \$756 billion in Food Stamps and Nutrition (\$8 billion less than existing law), \$44.4 billion in the Commodity program (\$14 billion less than existing law), \$90 billion in Crop Insurance (\$7 billion more than existing law), \$57.6 billion in Conservation (\$4 billion less than existing law), \$3.5 billion in Trade (little change over existing law), \$1.1 billion in Energy (small cut to existing law) and about \$2.3 billion in Miscellaneous.

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*

*“And on the 8th day, God looked down on his planned paradise and said,  
“I need a caretaker.” So God made a Farmer.”*

— Paul Harvey

## Agriculture Calendar

### ARLF Services

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

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907-328-1950

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► Thur. Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>

**Wild Edible and Medicinal Plants.**

Mat-Su College, College Road, FSM 103, Palmer.  
7-8:30 p.m.; Details: [here](#)

► Sat. Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>

**Specialty Food Workshops.**

Various Locations  
10 a.m.-1 p.m.; Details: [here](#)

► Thur. Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>

**Backyard Plantings for Beauty and Wildlife.**

Mat-Su College, College Road, FSM 103, Palmer.  
7-8:30 p.m.; Details: [here](#)

► Sat. Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup>

**2014 Delta Farm Forum.**

Delta High School Small Gymnasium, Delta Junction.  
9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.; Details: [here](#)

► Tue. Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>

**Farmer's Market Training.**

& Wed. 26<sup>th</sup>

Video and Teleconference.

10 a.m.-1 p.m.; Details: [here](#)

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## Marketing Staff

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► Thur. Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>

**How to Construct Low Cost Framing Projects.**

Mat-Su College, College Road, FSM 103, Palmer.

7-8:30 p.m.; Details: [here](#)

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

## Marketing Section

### Chef at the Market Program Accepting 2014 Applications

For the first time, Chef at the Market is accepting applications for winter demonstrations! Applications are due by February 28, 2014. The winter CATM season will run until April 30, 2014. Visit this [webpage](#) for more information on how to apply.

The “Chef at the Market” program began in 2011 to help Alaskans learn new ways to prepare fresh Alaska Grown specialty crops\*. As the chefs entered the markets, this program turned into much more. Chefs have created relationships with local food vendors and consumers, helping bring local produce to family homes and local restaurants. In the summer of 2013, the program boasted 6 Alaskan Chefs performing a combined total of 27 demonstrations at 9 local farmers markets and special events. To find out more information about “Chef at the Market” demonstrations and how to apply, email [Jacquelyn Schade](#) or call (907)761-3858.

*\*Specialty crops are defined by the Specialty Crop Competitiveness Act of 2004 and the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 as: Fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture). Eligible plants must be intensively cultivated and used by people for food, medicinal purposes, and/or aesthetic gratification to be considered specialty crops.*

### Does your restaurant or a restaurant you know source Alaska Grown Specialty Crop products?

If so, your restaurant is eligible to receive a 17% reimbursement for all Alaska Grown Specialty Crop purchases. This includes produce, fruits, honey, and birch syrup.

[Visit our web page](#), call 907-761-3858, or [email Jacquelyn Schade](#) for more information on how to join Alaska Grown Restaurant Rewards!



## CALLING ALL ALASKAN PRODUCERS!

Here is your chance to tell the State Division of Agriculture what they can do for you! Fill out this short survey and let the agencies know what is missing. This is the same survey featured in the December newsletter for the Mat-Su area. If you have already filled out this survey, your answers will be added to this survey's results.

[Fill out the survey here:](#)

The survey will close at 5:00 pm on February 28th, 2014. Feel free to share this survey with fellow Farmers and Ranchers across the state! If you have any questions about the survey, please call Jacquelyn Schade at 907-761-3858, or [email](#) her for more information.



### Land Sales & Grazing Leases

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

Dan Proulx 907-374-3716  
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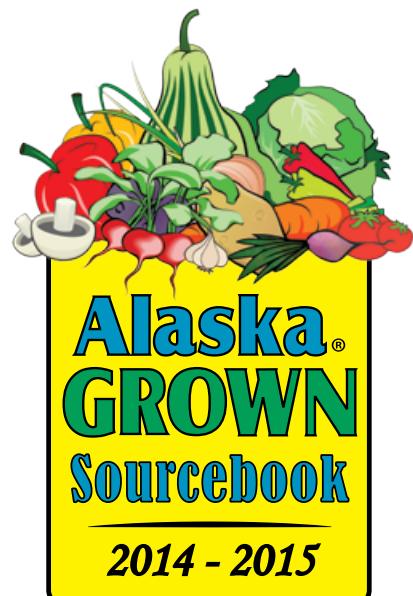
Erik Johnson 907-761-3863  
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## We are now accepting applications for the 2014-2015 Alaska Grown Sourcebook!

The Source Book is the 'go to guide' for finding Alaska Grown products; the Division will print and distribute over 5,000 copies and has spent hours upgrading the online version of the tool.

Don't forget this is **FREE ADVERTISING** for you and your farm business, so click the link that applies to you below and submit your information. Remember that we **CAN NOT** include your data unless you respond to the information request each year. If your farm business was included in 2012, we cannot automatically include you in 2014 - we need your permission each time.



Also, just because you signed up to be a member of the Alaska Grown program, **DOES NOT** mean your information will be included in the 2014 Book. Again, you must respond to the new request for information each time.

[Complete the farmer and vendor application here.](#)

[Complete the agriculture services application here.](#)

## 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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## Pest Detection / Inspection Section

### Potato Late Blight Quarantine Reminder and Notice to Retailers

We are approaching that time of the year when growers and nursery retailers are beginning to ask where they can find certified seed potatoes for sale and planting this spring. Each year, the Division updates the Alaska certified seed potato grower list and reminds retailers to be mindful of the seed potato and tomato plant late blight quarantine currently in effect. The letter to retailers and grower contact list with certified varieties can be found at the Division of Agriculture, [Inspection Section webpage](#).

The letter outlines the requirements for the sale of seed potatoes and tomato plants from out-of-state sources, as well as the requirements for the sale of Alaska Grown seed potatoes. If you are a retailer, please review these requirements to ensure compliance. Division staff will be conducting inspections to ensure compliance with the quarantine requirements.

Please note that tomato plants from seed and seedlings grown in Alaskan greenhouses and nurseries are not subject to the quarantine requirements. Alaska seed potatoes are subject to the State seed certification requirements and must be accompanied by an official certified seed tag attached to the container or sales display.

Adhering to these requirements will help to maintain Alaska agricultural environments to be free from serious bacterial, fungal, and virus diseases, as well as insect pests and nematodes that have proven to be problematic in other parts of the country. Once contaminated with a serious agricultural or environmental pest, it can be very costly and difficult to eradicate. It is much better to prevent an introduction and take measures to reduce the spread of unwanted pests.

Information on Late Blight in Alaska can be found on the [Plant Materials Center website](#). If you have questions concerning the quarantine and compliance, please contact the [Division of Agriculture](#) Inspection Staff.



Late Blight symptoms on Potato Plants - Photos: Cornell University



Late Blight symptoms on Tomato Plants - Photos: Cornell University

## Plant Materials Center

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

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Todd Steinlage 907-745-8138  
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Heather Stewart 907-745-4469  
[Heather.Stewart@alaska.gov](mailto:Heather.Stewart@alaska.gov)

## Plant Materials Center

### Be Aware of What You Plant in Your Garden

Thinking about planting your garden already? If you're anything like me, noticing the recent melting of snow and ice have you thinking about and planning this spring's garden already. Luckily, I know that I have a little time, since it's only February, to think about what to plant. This year, I think I'll plant something new to add a little variety and color to the flower beds. There are so many beautiful options! This being Alaska, most of us are subject to planting what looks healthy and happy in our local nursery or greenhouse. But...do you really know what you grow?

Some of the most beautiful ornamental plants could be an invasive species. As Alaska gardeners, we may plant these invasive ornamentals without knowing their growth habit, and later find ourselves consistently pulling those plants later in the season or year after year because they are overtaking other areas of our gardens. Invasive plants also have the ability to thrive and spread aggressively outside their natural range. Without the help of native insects, disease and foraging animals that naturally limit plant growth, invasive plants can eventually take over natural areas. Invasive plants can disrupt ecosystems and ultimately impact natural and agricultural resources. Not all non-native ornamentals you find are invasive, so it's important to educate yourself on what you're planting; I know I try to! But, where do I find the resources to educate myself?

The Plant Materials Center is promoting alternative plant options for Alaska gardeners to replace their invasive ornamentals. When you are in your local nursery or greenhouse looking for those beautiful ornamentals to plant, ask for a "Do you know what you grow?" brochure or keep your eyes open for our Alternative Plants poster. In the promotions, we have included suggestions like the native Yellow Monkshood instead of the Common Toadflax (also known as Butter and Eggs) or Ussurian Pear instead of European Bird Cherry tree. We also make suggestions on how you can prevent invasive plants in your garden.

If you'd like more information about what to plant in your garden this spring, about invasive plants, or a copy of our brochure, please contact us at the [Plant Materials Center, Invasive Species Program](#), or click on the image below for a close up view of this [Alternative Plants poster](#). We can help you know exactly what you grow.

### Alternative Plant Suggestions for Alaskan Gardens

Avoid Planting These Invasive Plants → Replace With These Plant Alternatives



Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)  
Replace with Lupine



Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)  
Replace with Brook Saxifrage



Orange Hawkweed (*Hieracium aurum*)  
Replace with Pot Marigold



Common Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*)  
Replace with Beach Fleabane



Lupine (*Lupinus nootkatensis* or *L. arcticus*)  
Avoid "Bigleaf" Lupine



Brook Saxifrage (*Saxifraga bronchialis*)



Pot Marigold (*Calendula officinalis*)



Beach Fleabane (*Senecio pseudoaeratus*)



Oriental Pink (*Impatiens glandulifera*)  
Replace with Queen of the Prairie



European Bird Cherry (*Prunus padus*)  
Replace with Ussurian Pear



Oriental Bellflower (*Platycodon grandiflorus*)  
Replace with Queen of the Prairie



Common Toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*)  
Replace with Yellow Monkshood



Queen of the Prairie (*Filipendula rubra*)



Ussurian Pear (*Pyrus ussuriana*)



Feather Reed Grass (*Calamagrostis acutiflora*)



Yellow Monkshood (*Aconitum anthora*)



Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*)  
Replace with Brûlé Feathers



Oxeye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*)  
Replace with Shasta Daisy



Rampion Bellflower (*Campanula rapunculus*)  
Replace with Peach Leaved Bellflower



Bird's Nest (*Fragaria vesca*)  
Replace with Eskimo Potato



Shasta Daisy (*Leucanthemum maximum*)



Peach Leaved Bellflower (*Campanula persicifolia*)



Eskimo Potato (*Hedysarum alpinum*)



White Sweetclover (*Melilotus albus*)  
Replace with Fireweed



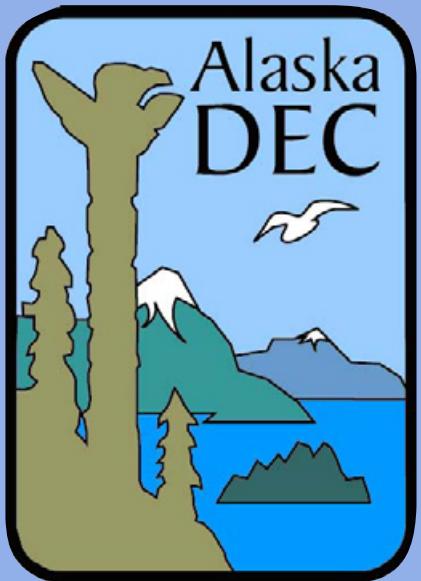
Creeping Charlie (*Glechoma hederacea*)  
Replace with Bugleweed

Invasive plants have the ability to thrive and spread aggressively outside their natural range, without insects, disease, and foraging animals that naturally keep their growth in check.  
Invasive plants can disrupt ecosystems and ultimately impact natural and agricultural resources. Not all non-native plants become invasive, so it is important to know what you're planting!



Printed by the Plant Materials Center, January 2014

\*These characters grow rapidly. Keep plant roots from spreading by placing in bags or using containers.



# Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation: Division of Environmental Health

## Successful Local Meat Marketing

Local food production and sustainable livestock production have been important topics of discussion in several conferences and meetings sponsored by UAF Cooperative Extension and the Division of Agriculture. The USDA over the last two years has funded two studies to evaluate the business relationship between livestock producers and processing plants across the U.S. They were trying to determine what is required to provide a sustainable meat supply to the local market as the consumer interest to "buy local". The studies looked at three categories of local meat markets: "very local", "local independent" and "regional-aggregated."

- Very local: The farmer sells live animals directly to household buyers before slaughter. Buyers place cutting orders, pay the processor directly and pick up frozen meat. In regard to poultry, the farmer is often the processor.
- Local-independent: The farmer arranges and pays for processing, picks up the meat and markets it through a variety of direct and local marketing channels, including farmers' markets and local retail outlets.
- Regional-aggregated: Multiple farmers sell finished animals to a branded meat company, which arranges for processing and distribution, and handles marketing, largely to wholesale accounts.

Farm size was not a factor as to which category it would be classified or the success of the overall local market. A "very local" producer could sell 100 or more animals per year as farm gate sales, directly to consumers, while a farmer could be in a "regional" classification and only send a few animals per year to the name brand market and sell the rest of the animals through conventional marketing channels (sale barns).

The development of local markets may provide potential for increased revenue for farmers and business for processors, while filling the consumer-demanded local meat and poultry products. The studies found there are essential factors that need to be present for the system to be sustainable. In addition several challenges were identified: transportation and distance between the farm and processing facility, seasonality of the production process, and processing costs due to economies of scale were the primary issues.

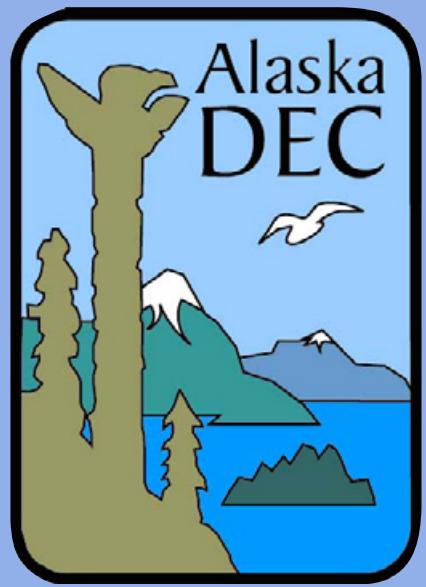
The report stated that, "without a steady throughput to generate continuous revenue, processors cannot overcome significant, year-round expenses that include a skilled workforce, costly equipment, utilities and other costs." For example the USDA says very small processors can expect total expenses of approximately \$231,000 and so a need to process approximately 462 beef animals to break even each year.

Despite what may seem to be an overwhelming challenge some livestock and poultry processors are finding success with farmers bringing locally grown meats to the market place. The success is dependent on committed business relationships and a long-run interdependence between processors and farmers.

"Commitment matters on both sides: it is important for processors to demonstrate a commitment to providing, maintaining, and improving quality services. Processors can also help their producer-customers with advice and support with marketing, distribution, and other aspects of their meat businesses. By building these business relationships, processors work more effectively with their customers, build loyalty, and ultimately increase demand for their own services."

There has to be a guaranteed delivery of healthy animals to the processor and quality

*continued on next page*



## Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation: Division of Environmental Health

product to an established group of regular customers. Good communication is essential among the parties to determine needs, roles, and abilities of each partner to deliver. In addition, there must be a way to evaluate or measure each partner's performance to ensure their commitment is fulfilled.

The report also describes the what efforts may be required to support the local meat market that includes: providing technical expertise for small processors; facilitating farmer-processor communication and mutual education; encouraging businesses important to the rest of the supply chain; engaging with regulatory agencies for clarity and consistency.

References to the studies are listed below.

[Local Meat and Poultry Processing: The Importance of Business Commitments for Long-Term Viability](#), by Lauren Gwin, Arion Thiboumery, and Richard Stillman, USDA, Economic Research Service, June 2013

[Slaughter and Processing Options and Issues for Locally Sourced Meat](#), by Rachel Johnson, Daniel Marti, and Lauren Gwin, USDA, Economic Research Service, June 2012





SCHOOL OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
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[facebook.com/uaf.snras](http://facebook.com/uaf.snras)

# UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

## School of Natural Resources & Agricultural Sciences

### Bill Johnson Has A Vision: To Get Microgreens Into As Many Alaskans' Diets As Possible.

*Story contributed by Nancy Tarnai*

Johnson's Family Farm churns out 5,000 plastic clamshell containers of microgreens each week for Fairbanksans, and owner Johnson is fairly bursting with excitement. "I'm so proud of it," he said of his facility.

Johnson opened his first controlled environment hydroponic center three years ago on South Cushman and in 2012 relocated to 30th Avenue. The current facility is a 6,000- square-foot building in the warehouse district. Unbeknownst to passersby, inside is an oasis of humidity and greenery where Johnson grows microgreens, wheatgrass, basil and lettuce.

JFF grows microgreens from radish, sunflower and snow pea seeds as the staples, and is experimenting with beets, carrots, onions, cilantro, garlic and corn (at the request of a local chef).

The basil is a special heirloom variety, a blend of genesis and Italian large leaf. He currently has 900 basil plants growing. Lettuce is an especially tasty kind of Romaine that can last up to three weeks if properly stored with its roots attached.

Currently, JFF sells products to Homegrown Market, Lavelle's Bistro, Zydeco Way, Fairbanks Memorial Hospital cafeteria, Double Eagle Restaurant, the Pump House, Gold Hill Express and Speedy Subs. The hospital is Johnson's biggest customer but he hopes someday it will be the smallest, that he will have even larger buyers. He also sells to the school district.

A retail outlet inside the warehouse allows customers to buy directly from the grower. Johnson dreams of the day when he has farms in Kodiak and Dutch Harbor, and is able to supply fresh greens to fishing crews.

Inside the warehouse, for optimal growing conditions, the temperature is maintained at a constant 58.6 degrees and a computerized climate system monitors carbon dioxide and humidity levels to avoid vapor pressure deficit in the building.

Johnson doesn't trust city water, so he puts his water through a reverse osmosis process to purify it, then removes the minerals and adds his own. "I start with a clean slate," he said.

Johnson believes wholeheartedly in the health benefits of microgreens. "Their antioxidants have medicinal value," he said. "It's fresh, live food that has remarkable nutritional value. It's gold."

Another beauty of the growing system is that with two weeks' notice, Johnson can grow greens to fill special orders.

The JFF brochure proclaims the vitamin and mineral content of each type of microgreen. For example, the sunflower shoots are high in protein, fiber, iron, vitamins A, C, D and E. Wheatgrass boasts iron, calcium, potassium, amino acids, fiber, protein, chlorophyll, vitamins B 12, C, D and E.

Johnson still has his day job, delivering cement to Pogo Mine six days a week and has hired helpers to assist with the farm. Family members, including his wife and brother-in-law, have also been enlisted to help.

"I want to feed the whole state," Johnson declared. "Day to day we are knocking it out. It's a real labor of love and a work in progress. "It's peachy; I'll make it work."

Contact information:

[www.jffalaska.com](http://www.jffalaska.com)

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