



AK Agriculture Insider

March and April, 2018

Bee Registration

With the spring arrival of our bee packages, make sure your bees are registered with the State of Alaska.

From the Director

The latest on the Agriculture industry in Alaska from Division Director Arthur Keyes.

Recipe of the Month

Wow your Spring dinner guests with a wonderful grilled marinated Alaska Grown Leg of Lamb.

Meet the Team

Get to know Casey Dinkel, an Agronomist with the Plant Materials Center.

2017 AG Census

Alaska farmers still have time to get their USDA 2017 Census of Agriculture submitted. The census occurs every five years.

Membership Renewal

It's time for a membership renewal and update for Alaska Grown members as we put together a new agriculture directory.

Hemp Bill Passes

The Alaska Legislature has passed a bill authorizing the commercial farming of hemp in Alaska. So what exactly is hemp?

From the Director

Hello,
Spring has sprung and we are not too far away from what will hopefully be a nice, sunny summer! It has been a busy spring at the Division of Agriculture as we prepare for the upcoming growing season with seed cleaning, farmer's markets, the \$5 Alaska Grown Challenge, a new restaurant recognition program, and a state agricultural land sale. We've also been working with our state lawmakers in Juneau, advocating for the needs and support of Alaska's agriculture industry. I was pleased that the Industrial Hemp Production Bill passed both the House and Senate, and I look forward to helping develop the pilot program for this new agricultural opportunity in our state once it is signed into law. This crop could have many great benefits for our growers from providing feed for our livestock to creating economic and market opportunities. Alaska Agriculture Day is quickly approaching and is on Tuesday, May 1st this year. This a great time to do something agriculture related whether its providing a presentation in a classroom, planting your garden, visiting a greenhouse, or your local farm. Last year, I started a new tradition, "Drive Your Tractor to Work Day" the day before Alaska Ag Day. I hope you'll join me this year by safely driving your tractor to work on April 30th, and sharing photos with us. It's a fun way to raise awareness and support of our local agriculture in our communities!



Until next time,
Arthur Keyes - Director of Agriculture

Bee Registration

Spring is here and it is time to start thinking about your arriving Bee packages. In accordance with Alaska Law (AS 03.47.020 & 11 ACC 35.010 – 35.020) "ALL" Bees imported must be registered in the State of Alaska and have an official health certificate that states that the bees came from an apiary free of bee diseases. Why is it important to register your bees? This information allows the Division of Agriculture to respond in-case of an outbreak of foulbrood or any other bee related diseases. If a suspicion of a diseased hive is reported, the division will take a sample and have it tested. If the test is positive, the Division of Agriculture will take action necessary to prevent the spread of bee disease.



The bee registration form is available online on the Division of Agriculture website. To access the information and the applications, please [click here](#). When you open the application online, you can type your information straight into the application. When you have completed the form, you can email it to the Division of Agriculture at:

kirk.brown@alaska.gov

Hard copies of the application are also available and accepted at the Division. You can mail the completed registration form to the Division of Agriculture, 1800 Glenn Highway, Suite 12, Palmer, AK 99645. You can also fax the form to (907) 745-7112. Feel free to call us at (907) 745-7200 if you have any questions or need assistance.

2017 Farm Census

Alaska farmers and ranchers still have time to be counted in the 2017 Census of Agriculture, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). NASS will continue to accept Census information through the spring to get a complete and accurate picture of American agriculture that represents all farmers and ranchers.

2017 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE
YOUR VOICE. YOUR FUTURE. YOUR OPPORTUNITY.

As of early March, NASS reported a 38 percent return of the completed Census forms from Alaska's agricultural producers. Data from the Census of Agriculture are used by all those who serve farmers and rural communities – trade associations, agribusinesses, local, state and federal governments, and many others. The census is taken every five years.

Federal law mandates that everyone who received the 2017 Census of Agriculture questionnaire complete and return it, even if not currently farming. NASS will continue to follow-up with producers through the spring with mailings, phone calls, and personal visits. To avoid these additional contacts, farmers and ranchers are encouraged to complete their Census either online at:

www.agcounts.usda.gov

or by mail as soon as possible. For questions or assistance filling out the Census, call toll-free (888) 424-7828. You can also contact the Northwest Regional field office at (888) 435-5883. www.farmtoschoolalaska.org/haestofthem

Membership Renewal

Are you an Alaska Grown Member? The Division of Agriculture needs your help updating the Alaska Grown Membership Program. We are looking to simplify the program, verify member activity, and better categorize the membership types. We are also creating a new online directory of our Alaska Grown Members, similar to the Sourcebook, but formatted more specifically for our mobile online users. If you haven't yet, please fill out the short survey in the link below, which should only take between 5 to 10 minutes.



Membership Renewal Link: [Click here](#)

If you don't remember your Alaska Grown Membership number, just fill out the rest of the survey and we can add that in for you. If you are unable to attach photos of your farm, business or operation for promotional and marketing use into the survey, you can email photos to jennifer.castro@alaska.gov. We appreciate your response!

State Hemp Bill

A bill that legalizes the production of industrial hemp through a pilot program in Alaska has passed the state House and Senate. It will need to be signed by Governor Bill Walker to become a law. The legislation will allow Alaska farmers under a pilot program to grow and sell hemp, which can be used as a fiber, and for hundreds of other useful products such as feed and bedding for livestock. *(Article continued on page 3...)*

State Hemp Bill Continued...

What is Hemp?

Hemp is a variety of *Cannabis sativa* and is of the same plant species as marijuana. However, hemp is genetically different and distinguished by its use and chemical makeup. Industrial hemp refers to *Cannabis* varieties that are primarily grown as an agricultural crop and are low in THC (delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol, marijuana's primary psychoactive chemical), typically less than 0.3 percent.

How is Hemp Used?

Hemp is used in thousands of products globally including fabrics and textiles, spun fibers, carpeting, paper, construction, composites, animal bedding, cosmetics, personal care, oils, supplements, pharmaceuticals, and much more.

Where is Hemp currently produced?

More than 30 U.S. States have legalized the agricultural production of hemp. China is the largest producer of hemp growing roughly 20 percent of the total production worldwide. The crop can thrive among a variety of climates, and can have many agricultural benefits including soil health, mitigating erosion, and obstructing weed development.

When can Alaska Farmers Grow Hemp?

If the legislation is signed by the Governor, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Alaska Plant Materials Center will promulgate regulations and oversee industrial hemp production in the state. Alaskan farmers will eventually be able to register with the State to grow the crop under a pilot program. Additional information on the pilot program, registration and production will be provided. Interested producers or processors should stay tuned for more information as the program develops.

Meet the Team

Casey Dinkel works as an Agronomist with the Plant Materials Center (PMC) near Palmer. Prior to being at the PMC, Casey traveled throughout much of the west and mid-west states working on reclamation and soil remediation projects where he collaborated with local growers, collecting and analyzing baseline water, vegetation, and soils data.



At the PMC, Casey works on many different projects dealing with native seed production, soil nutrient composition and movement, soil erosion control, and revegetation. Casey is the author of the Alaska Forage Manual and Growth Curve Technical guide. Currently, he is the project leader for Alaska Soil Health and

Denali Alfalfa projects. “Alaska is a very large and diverse place,” said Casey. “I thoroughly enjoy working here and undertaking all of the challenges that I encounter.” Casey has a Bachelor’s of Science degree in Rangeland Ecology and Watershed Management from the University of Wyoming. In his free time, Casey loves to fish, hunt and be outdoors.



Recipe of the Month

Grilled Marinated Alaska Grown

Leg of Lamb

(adapted from Epicurious)



Ingredients

- 1 (4 1/2- to 5-lb) butterflied boneless leg of Alaska Grown lamb, trimmed of fat
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 4 garlic cloves minced
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon of black pepper
- large (2-gallon) heavy-duty sealable plastic bag
- 3 or 4 (10- to 12-inch) metal skewers

Directions

1. Combine oil, lemon juice, garlic, oregano, salt, and pepper in sealable plastic bag. Add lamb and seal bag, pressing out air. Turn bag to coat lamb, then put bag in a shallow baking pan and marinate, chilled, turning bag over occasionally, at least 8 hours.
2. Bring lamb to room temperature, about 1 hour, before grilling.
3. Prepare grill for cooking over direct heat with medium-hot charcoal (moderate heat for gas)
4. Remove lamb from marinade (discard marinade) and run 3 or 4 skewers lengthwise through lamb about 2 inches apart. Grill on a

lightly oiled grill rack, covered only if using gas grill, turning over occasionally and, if necessary, moving around on grill to avoid flare-ups, until thermometer registers 125 to 128°F, 8 to 14 minutes total for medium-rare.

5. Transfer lamb to a cutting board and remove skewers. Let lamb stand, loosely covered with foil, 20 minutes. (Internal temperature will rise to 135°F while meat stands.) Cut across the grain into slices.

AG State Land Sale

The state is holding an upcoming agricultural land sale near Willow, Alaska with parcels between 40 and 300 acres. The land is being sold in a sealed bid auction process and is strictly for agricultural use.

Agriculture Land Auction #485 Schedule

March 1, 2018	Public notice of sale, public comment starts
April 5, 2018	Public Comments due by 4:00 p.m.
April 26, 2018	Bidding begins at 10:00 a.m. Online and hardcopy brochures available
June 2, 2018	Public invited to on-site parcel inspection between 12:00 - 4:00 p.m.
June 7, 2018	Bidding ends at 4:00 p.m.
June 14, 2018	Opening of sealed bids for Auction #485 at 1:00 p.m.

For additional information, please visit:

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

Upcoming Dates

- April 26th- Bidding for Land Auction #485
- April 30th- Drive Your Tractor to Work Day
- May 1st- Alaska Agriculture Day

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