



The Division of Agriculture Activities

July 01, 2011

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 longest day of the year has come and gone and July is already here. This is always a busy time but please take the time to review the monthly calendar and keep up to date on upcoming events.

The Division of Agriculture and the Department of Environmental Conservation thought it would be beneficial to begin bi-monthly teleconferences with industry. Please take advantage of this opportunity as these calls will be informal opportunities for industry to ask questions and participate in open dialogue with both agencies. The next call is scheduled for July 15th at 8:00 am. Please see the calendar for the teleconference details.

The Board of Agriculture and Conservation is pleased to welcome the newest member, Troy Shelden. Troy was raised on a farm in the mid west, has substantial banking experience and is a great addition to the board. The Division of Agriculture is pleased to have a full seven member board and looks forward to working cooperatively with this group.

The 2011 Mat-Su Governor's Family Picnic is once again just around the corner. This year's theme is "Healthy Food Builds Strong Families" and will feature Alaskan Grown products. If you are interested in partaking in delicious food, great entertainment and excellent company, plan on attending on July 22nd, 4-7 pm at the Alaska State Fairgrounds.

Have a safe and Happy 4th of July!

-Franci Havemeister

"Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic; but destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country."

- William Jennings Bryan



Agriculture Calendar

- Sat., July 9th (10 AM - 6 PM): **Midsummer Garden and Art Faire** - Downtown Palmer
- Wed., July 13th (6 AM): **Whats Cookin with Chef Al** - KTUU Channel 2 (televised broadcast).
- Fri. July 15th (8 AM): **Dept. of Environmental Conservation / Div. of Agriculture Teleconference**
To Participate: 1-800-315-6338; pass code:121#
- Fri. July 22nd (4 - 7 PM) **2011 Governor's Family Picnic** - Raven Hall, Alaska State Fairgrounds.

As we learn about new agriculture events throughout Alaska, we will add the details to the calendar. If you have an event that you would like to add, please contact [Lora Haralson](#).



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Marketing Section

Alaska Grown is Everywhere

The Division of Agriculture has been busy highlighting the availability of *your* Alaska Grown products. We are conducting store visits, reminding produce managers that the local Alaska Grown products will be arriving soon, and providing promotional and point of sale materials. The marketing team has been visiting farmers markets and providing Alaska Grown program members with signage, promotional and point of sale materials to highlight their products.

Alaska Grown at Palmer's Midsummer Garden and Art Faire

The Midsummer Garden and Art Faire is on Saturday, July 9th from 10am – 6pm on the green between the Palmer Public Library and the Mat-Su Borough Building. The Division of Agriculture is going to be there educating children about Alaska Grown produce.

Planned activities include a storytelling tent, where kids can listen to a story ("Who Grew my Soup?") about where the produce in our soup comes from. After the story, kids will be given a bag with "Alaska Grown" money to go into the "Farmers Market" tent to "purchase" produce from local farms to take home and to make their own soup. Our goal is to educate and have a hands-on activity to bridge the gap between farm to table.

"What's Cookin with Chef Al"

The marketing section has been working with Alaska Chefs to help them not only source Alaska Grown products, but also strengthen relationships and knowledge by visiting Alaska farms and making new connections.

We are advertising Alaska Grown through many outlets. The Division of Agriculture has purchased advertising space in Alaska Travel Magazine, Alaska Wellness Magazine, and the Anchorage Daily News.

The Division of Agriculture also promotes Alaska Grown daily, through the Alaska Grown Facebook page, which now reaches over 4600 people. You can find our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/dnr.alaskagrown.

Division of Agriculture staff were present at a KTUU Channel 2 taping of four episodes of the "What's Cookin' with Chef Al". These episodes will air during the months of July and August and feature recipes from local chefs using all Alaska Grown products; from shellfish and pork to dairy, veggies and herbs. The first episode will air July 13th. Recipes will be available on www.KTUU.com/features/whatscookin when the episodes air.



Chef Al Levinsohn will feature Alaska Grown products on his upcoming television program

Alaska Farm-to-School Program Update

Farm to School Grant Roundup

We are excited to announce that the Farm-to-School program received a total of 24 grant applications, 17 of which we are able to fund at this time. The project ideas that were submitted show how much interest and motivation there is across Alaska to build healthy food connections with our youth. We look forward to following the progress of funded projects, and observing their contributions to local communities.

Alaska Gateway School District

The Farm-to-School program made our first connection with a rural school district: the Alaska Gateway school district, located in the Tok area. We talked about possibilities, future plans, and procurement challenges. It was exciting to see the cooperation that can happen in a small district when everyone is on the same page.

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Want to be featured in an upcoming Farm to School Brochure?



The Division of Agriculture is creating an Alaska Farm to School Brochure and we want you to be involved. We are looking for quotes and pictures from Alaskans involved

Fairbanks School Farm Tour, part two

Earlier this year, the Farm-to-School program toured the Fairbanks central production kitchen with nearby agricultural producers, and had a conversation about procurement opportunities. This month we took a tour of two farms in Delta.

In attendance were representatives from



Representatives from the Department of Environmental Conservation and Division of Agriculture recently visited Borman farm in Delta Junction

Fairbanks School District Food Service, Division of Agriculture, and Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). We started at the Borman Farm, where we were shown the greenhouse, fields, crops, and windmill set-up. We discussed questions and concerns related to direct product purchases and brainstormed solutions.

Next we visited Wrigley Farms and saw the barley storage site and crops. The Farm-to-School program is organizing a pilot grain project focused on product development using barley flour. One challenge identified is the milling capability required to make the flour. The representative from DEC worked with Wrigley farms on the facility requirements for a milling operation.

in farming or education, highlighting what people think the FTS program has to offer; including the benefits of such a program to youth, community, food producers, and school food service.

There is no prize, but entries selected will be featured on the brochure, which will be distributed statewide! Submit a picture or quote describing the benefits of participating in farm to school activities. If you send a photo, please be sure to include the photographer's name, so that they can be credited.

Please send your quotations or photos to Johanna.herron@alaska.gov or fax them to (907) 328-1951. Winning entries will be published on the new Alaska Farm-to-School brochure.

Some of the tour highlights include:

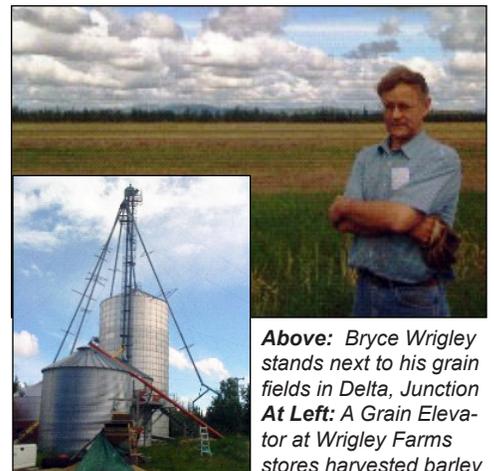
- Discussion about farm products that schools could incorporate into their meal planning. Cabbage and kohlrabi are being considered for use in the district's cole slaw.
- Forward movement on the planning phase for getting a facility and mill operation to handle large quantities of barley for flour.

Other Farm-to-School Developments

The Farm-to-School program reached out to two youth leadership groups recently. We have prepared a draft program evaluation plan, and school garden safety guidelines (currently undergoing stakeholder review).

The Farm-to-School program's facebook page continues to grow. We invite you to stop by, at 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.



*Above: Bryce Wrigley stands next to his grain fields in Delta, Junction
At Left: A Grain Elevator at Wrigley Farms stores harvested barley*

Land Sales & Grazing Leases

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

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Inspection Section

USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable (FFV) Inspections

If you are part of the vast U.S. Fruit and Vegetable Industry, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) official inspection services can make your farm or company more profitable. How can Fresh Fruit and Inspection services benefit you?

- Institutional buyers and government agencies use inspection services to ensure deliveries meet requirements;
- Shippers of fresh produce can have commodities graded for quality and condition, thereby establishing the quality of their product;
- Receivers can use the grading services to determine whether a shipment meets contract terms and to ensure that products meet their expectations for quality;
- Processors have their raw commodity deliveries inspected, using grading services to determine grower payments;
- Members of industry find inspection reports useful in determining produce storage life, and choosing the best use for particular lots.

To provide inspection services nationwide, AMS maintains cooperative agreements in 48 States and Puerto Rico. Under Federal-State agreements, licensed inspectors work throughout the country at points of origin, sometimes working in the fields as crops are being harvested. In addition, inspection services are provided at 31 Federal terminal markets and approximately 100 Federal-State terminal markets.

In order to give industry a 'common language' to describe quality requirements for each grade, AMS has developed 166 official grade standards for 86 fresh fruits, vegetables and related commodities. AMS works to ensure that the standards are uniformly applied throughout the country.



Fresh Fruit and Vegetable inspections are paid for by user fees. Inspections may be conducted as the produce is being packed for shipment to market or at the destination, either for the receiver's use in handling the lot or to settle questions that may arise between the shipper and the receiver. If a request for inspection is based on U.S. grade standards, the official certificate covering the shipment will show which AMS grade the product meets. These certificates are accepted as legal evidence in all Federal courts.

To request a Fresh Fruit and Vegetable inspection, contact the Division of Agriculture Inspection Office, at 907-761-3857.

Opportunities

Grant Opportunity Available for Value-Added Products

The U.S. Dept of Agriculture has announced the availability of \$37 million in competitive grant funds, to assist agricultural producers with the development and marketing of value-added products.

Grant awards are available for up to \$100,000 for planning activities, or for up to \$300,000 in working capital. The grants are targeted at assisting independent producers, producer groups, farm and ranch cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures. Grant monies may

be used to fund projects directly related to the processing and/or marketing of value-added agricultural commodities.

Grants will be administered through USDA's Rural Business-Cooperative Service agency, and the application deadline is August 29th. Contact Chad Stovall of USDA at (907) 761-7718 for more information.



Plant Materials Center

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

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Plant Materials Center

Rural Village Seed Production Project Welcomes New Staff

The Rural Village Seed Production Project would like to welcome Sue Lincoln and Dan Coleman to the RVSP team. They will each be working with the communities involved with the project, and helping to set

up native seed production and train the local workforce. We are excited to have them on board and are looking forward to a busy couple months traveling to rural communities across Alaska!



Dan Coleman is a Natural Resource Specialist, working with Rural Village Seed Production



Sue Lincoln is an Agronomist who will be developing training materials for the RVSP

Photos: B. Blackburn, Plant Materials Center

RVSP Participant Communities Selected

The Rural Village Seed Production Project has selected six communities to develop project sites across Alaska. Each participating community will receive funding to purchase equipment to prepare the land, produce native seed, and market seed for restoration and revegetation efforts in their region.

The RVSP would like to thank all of the villages that expressed interest or submitted applications to be part of this project. The communities identified are:

- Chignik Lake
- Pedro Bay
- Metlakatla
- Manley Hot Springs
- Aniak
- Hooper Bay

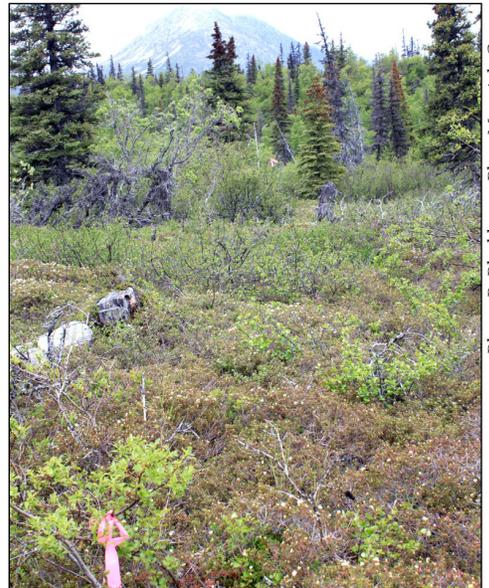
Each location is independent and will tailor their project to regional goals and local markets. RVSP staff will help select appropriate species for the areas and travel to each community throughout the year to assist in production activities and training.

For more information about the Rural Village Seed Production Project, please contact Brianne Blackburn, at (907) 745-8785, or Brianne.Blackburn@alaska.gov.



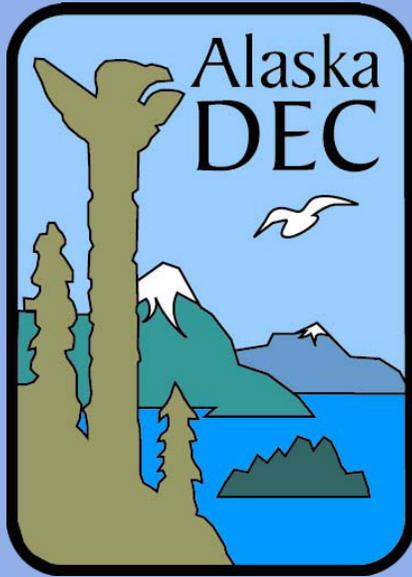
A planting site in Metlakatla is being prepared for planting of revegetation crops including Beach wildrye, Spike trisetum and others

Photo: Metlakatla Indian Community



This site in Pedro Bay will be cleared and tilled, and used for planting revegetation crops

Photo: B. Blackburn, Plant Materials Center



Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation: Division of Environmental Health

Food Safety Update

Alaska Food Code Amendments

Last month, The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) provided advanced notice of our intent to amend the Alaska Food Code. These amendments would eliminate or reduce permitting requirements for certain public events and foods sold directly to consumer which pose a low risk for food borne illness. The proposed changes would also make the regulations easier to understand.

On June 6, 2011 we issued a public notice about the opportunity to comment on those proposed changes. Comments must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on August 2, 2011 to be considered.

DEC is also hosting several public workshops to explain the changes and discuss potential impacts. The workshops are designed to help affected parties better understand the proposed regulations in order to make more comprehensive written comments.

Our first workshop was held on June 28, 2011 in Soldotna. Additional scheduled workshops are listed below. If you live on the Kenai Peninsula and missed the Soldotna workshop, or are otherwise unable to attend a workshop, you may call in to any of the scheduled workshops.

► Juneau

July 7, 2011, 5:00 pm

Location: Juneau Department of Environmental Conservation Conference Room at 410 Willoughby, Juneau, AK

Teleconference: 1-800-315-6338 PIN: 7628

► Anchorage

July 11, 2011, 5:00 pm

Location: Anchorage Department of Environmental Conservation Conference Room, 555 Cordova Street, Anchorage, AK

Teleconference: 1-800-315-6338 PIN: 7628

► Mat-Su

July 14, 2011, 5:00 pm

Location: Mat-Su Department of Environmental Conservation Conference Room 1700 E Bogard Road, Building B, Wasilla, AK

Teleconference: 1-800-315-6338, PIN: 7628

► Fairbanks

July 28, 2011, 5:00 pm

Location: Fairbanks Department of Environmental Conservation Conference Room 610 University Avenue

Teleconference: 1-800-315-6338, PIN: 7628

After the public comment period ends on August 2, 2011, DEC will review the submitted comments and decide if other changes are warranted. The language of the final regulations may be different from that of the proposed regulations. We urge you to comment within the time allowed if your interests could be affected.

You can get more information from our website at: <http://www.dec.alaska.gov/eh/fss/>.

Food Safety Training Opportunity

Do you want to learn about Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) to make sure the produce you sell is safe?

The National GAPs Program at Cornell University is providing an online, three-week course about Implementing Good Agricultural Practices. It is an engaging learning experience that combines relevant coursework, stimulating discussions with fellow farmers, facilitation by a subject-matter expert, and a flexible course structure that lets you work when and where it is convenient for you.

Information on the course is available at www.ecornell.com/gaps. Start dates for the next three courses are July 6, August 3, and August 24, 2011.



Environmental Health

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