



Division of Agriculture Activities

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

Director of Agriculture—
Franci Havemeister
907-761-3867
Franci.Havemeister@alaska.gov

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To remove your name from our e-newsletter list [click here](#).

Questions or Comments? E-Mail me at Patricia.O'Neil@alaska.gov or call 907-761-3858.

Note From the Director

It is hard to believe that August is just around the corner! This is a busy time of year for everyone and I encourage you to read through the newsletter to stay informed of the upcoming issues and events in the industry and the division. Also, visit the division's website at <http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/> to see "What's New" which is updated regularly. Several new items posted include the Alaska Railroad – Port MacKenzie Rail Extension and the specialty crop competitive grant as well as other informational links.

Just a quick update:

The Division is working in cooperation with Department of Fish & Game to mitigate the conflict between the Delta bison herd and the agriculture community. The unanswered question seems to be "How much damage do the bison actually cause and when do they appear in the fields?" In an attempt to gather some historical information, we need producer participation in the Delta Bison Survey. This will provide some base information and assist in defining the areas of damage. An on the ground assessment will be implemented this harvest season as a follow up to the survey. The survey will be posted the first week of August on the website

There have been several farm tours recently and an upcoming educational event about agriculture. I had the opportunity to join the Delta Farm Tour this past week. It was well attended and the bureau did a great job organizing and scheduling visits to four different farms. The Mat-Su farm tour was held July 24th and had a great turnout as well. Their tour consisted of four stops and a tour of Bodenbug loop.

Ag in the classroom is hosting their annual training session the first week in August. Vicki Naegele does an excellent job educating local teachers in both the Fairbanks and Mat-Su area on the importance of sustainability and the benefit of locally grown.

I hope your crops are growing well! Franci

Calendar Events—These events are those that we are currently aware of and this list may not be all inclusive. If you would like to have an event added on next months newsletter, please contact Patricia O'Neil @ Patricia.O'Neil@alaska.gov or 907-761-3858

- Southeast Fair (Haines) - July 30th—August 2nd
- Deltana Fair (Delta Junction) - July 31st—August 2nd
- Tanana Valley Fair, August 6-15
- Kenny Lake Fair, August 15
- Alaska State Fair (ASF)—Palmer, August 27-Sept 7
- Farm Family Night at the ASF, August 27
- See the Mat-Su CES website for more valley events: <http://mat-suces.weebly.com/calendar-of-events.html>



Inspection Staff

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

Barb Hanson

907-761-3854

Barbara.Hanson@alaska.gov

Mia Kirk

907-761-3853

Mia.Kirk@alaska.gov



Marketing Staff

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

Doug Warner

907-761-3861

Douglas.Warner@alaska.gov

Amy Pettit

907-761-3864

Amy.Pettit@alaska.gov

Patricia O'Neil

907-761-3858

Inspection Section

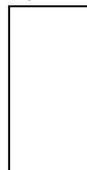
Tip burn is a physiological disease in lettuce caused by growing conditions. It starts out as small spots or narrow lesions along the edge of a leaf that are bleached light yellow to off-white. As it progresses, the affected areas usually enlarge and turn yellowish brown to brown. Areas of tip burn have irregular, veined margins.



Marginal browning is usually caused by winds or mechanical injury. The leaf margins are not irregular and appear 'clean cut'.

Do not confuse marginal discoloration with tip burn as they are similar in appearance.

Tip burn US No 1 Shipping Point* tolerances:



Score when aggregate area of tip burn exceeds a rectangle 1 inch (25.44 mm) in length and 1/2 inch (12.7 mm) in width.

Rectangle may not be USDA accurate

Marginal Discoloration US No 1 tolerances:

Yellow, brown or reddish brown discoloration is scored when more than 2 leaves are materially discolored.

Also note, Tip burn and Marginal Discoloration on Iceberg Lettuce does vary from Romaine and Leaf Lettuce, tolerances for iceberg lettuce may be found at the USDA AMS website.



*En route destination tolerances may be found on the USDA AMS website at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/standards>

Marketing Services

New Available Grants

Quite unusually, we are releasing two requests for proposals at the Division. One was released last week, and it is "intended to solely enhance the competitiveness of Alaska Grown specialty crops." This grant is called, "Alaska Grown Specialty Crop Competitive Grant" and is industry driven. Eligible crops this can apply to are specialty crops, which include: fruits, vegetables, and nursery crops including floriculture. Alaska Grown products that **DO NOT** qualify as specialty crops under the federal agreement and are therefore ineligible for this grant include: feed crops (such as barley, corn, hay, oats) livestock, dairy products, eggs, and aquaculture products. Also, applicants are encouraged to provide evidence of matching funds, either in-kind or cash.

For more information and greater details, go online to: http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_grantsSCCG.htm. We have also provided a sample proposal to help you prepare your application.

For more information about USDA COOL visit www.ams.usda.gov/cool or contact Amy Pettit.

Another grant that the Division is preparing to release on July 31st is an Alaska Teacher's Scholarship Program. This grant requires no matching funds and has



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the purpose of introducing or expanding agricultural in a teacher's curriculum. Scholarship funding can be used to purchase: books, videos, supplies, transportation to participate in a farm tour, etc. Teachers can apply independently for scholarships, and then collaborate with one another on their projects. You will find the request for proposals and a sample proposal online by Friday, July 31st at: http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/aq_grants.htm.

Data Recorders!

A new pilot program that we are beginning this year is offering the use of data recorders to Alaska farmers. What are data recorders? Data recorders log the date/time and the temperature and the humidity at that given date and time. The logging time can be adjusted from one second up to one hour increments, and everything in between. The test data recorder that was sent out, was set at one minute increments. When it was returned, we downloaded the information off of it, and put it into a spreadsheet, which was then returned to the farmer for their own use and information. Now you want to know how we expect this program to run!!!

We will come out to your farm and drop the data recorder into a produce box, while it is being harvested. Within this box we will also place a padded addressed and stamped envelope and a paper describing what the item is and what to do with it. On the back of that paper, we will record the "vendor #" the product and the date/time it was dropped, so we know who to return the information to. We will keep a list here at the Division of the farmers/vendors and their corresponding numbers, to retain confidentiality.

As a farmer, you may or may not know what box it is in. Hopefully it will be unknown to you, so preferential treatment is not given to the box. Whether your box is going to the farmers market, or it is going to a distributor or warehouse, valuable information will be recorded, returned to the Division and passed onto you, the producer. We are aware that there may be some loss involved, but we are hoping that the system is easy enough to use, that the recorders will be returned to us. If you have any questions, or would like more information, or are interested in trying out a data recorder, please contact either Patricia O'Neil @ 761-3858, or Mia Kirk@ 761-3853. If you are in an outlying area, not close to Palmer, and are interested, please contact us and we will find a way to make sure you can be a part of this project as well.

Land Sales & Grazing Leases

Dan Proulx

907-374-3716

Dan.Proulx@alaska.gov

Erik Johnson

907-761-3863

Erik.Johnson@alaska.gov

Land Sales & Grazing Leases

Does your farm qualify for the Agricultural Tax Deferment program? It's a state tax program, AS 29.45.060, that defers some of your property tax burden if 10% of your gross income comes from farming. Under the program agricultural land is generally appraised at \$350/acre across the state. The program lessens the tax burden upon farmers so they can remain productive and not be forced to develop the land into something else in order to keep up with their taxes.

It is not a tax break, it is a tax deferment. If you receive a deferment and your land is no longer used for agricultural purposes, you will have to pay back the deferment plus 8% interest for the last 7 years. Suppose a 100 acre farm in 2002 was appraised at \$200,000 (\$2,000 per acre x 100 acres). The deferment program would reduce the assessed value to \$35,000 (\$350 per acre x 100 acres). If the land is no longer used for agricultural purposes the deferred amount for the last 7 years plus 8% interest would then be owed. In this situation it would look like this: \$1,155,000 (\$200,000 - \$35,000 = \$165,000 (per year) x 7years = \$1,155,000) at a 13.0 mil rate that would be a tax bill of \$15,015 (\$1,155,000 x .013 = \$ 15,015) plus the accrued interest. That is a good incentive to continue farming.

If you are currently farming and intend to continue doing so, you need to apply



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to your borough before May 15 of next year. You will need to submit income verification documents or a copy of your federal tax returns.

Please contact your local borough Assessor's Office for an application:

Fairbanks (907) 459-1429

Kodiak (907) 486-9353

Palmer (907) 745-9640

Soldotna (907) 714-2230

ARLF Land Asset Management Staff

Ray Nix

907-761-3870

Ray.Nix@alaska.gov

Plant Material Center

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

Main Phone: 907-745-4469

Stoney Wright

Manager, Plant Materials Center

Stoney.Wright@alaska.gov

907-745-8105

Peggy Hunt—Agronomist

Peggy.hunt@alaska.gov

745-8721

ARLF Land & Asset Manager

ARLF Land Sales in July

The Division just completed a non-agricultural land sale in the Anchor Point area. The ARLF property had been offered through a lease 18 years ago, and included a purchase option. The lessee exercised their purchase option and the transaction closed on July 15, 2009. The purchase price was \$234,000. Proceeds from the sale will be deposited into the ARLF.

Upcoming ARLF Sales

The Board of Agriculture and Conservation has authorized the Division to reoffer the former Matanuska Maid Blow Mold Manufacturing Facility, including the real property and improvements located at 513 South Valley Way in Palmer, Alaska. The board made some changes to the terms that were offered in a previous disposal attempt. The significant changes from the previous offering are that the board reduced the minimum acceptable bid to \$975,000; and although ARLF contract financing is not guaranteed, the board could consider an application for ARLF contract financing. Public notice of the offering and brochures should be available in late July or early August. For additional information regarding the sale, contact Asset Manager Ray Nix in the Palmer office, or by email ray.nix@alaska.gov or by telephone at 907-761-3870.

Plant Materials Center (PMC)

Summer is flying by quickly! It's hard to believe that it is August already. We are busy weeding and harvesting. We are also looking forward to hosting several different groups of people. NRCS and national PMC folk will be here to see our programs and update us on the use of our crop database. Forestry people are coming to see our willow plantation and our operations. A grass identification course will be held here with botanists coming from all over Southeast and South-central. This is being taught by Dr. Quentin Skinner from the University of Wyoming.

On August 4th, the PMC will host the Summer Institute for Educators in the Alaska Agriculture in the Classroom program. The teachers will be working with many people here in the Valley for three days. They will be starting at the PMC with an introduction to Agriculture by Franci Havemeister, will be doing seed experiments in our seed lab and in the field, will visit several farms in the Butte vicinity, and will finish up this first day back at the PMC with other activities – some for elementary students and some for older ones. On Wednesday and Thursday they travel to many other places and learn activities from experts in the field of agriculture.

In honor of this year's program, several activities that the PMC teach the teachers are about how every organism needs food, water, shelter, and space – in the right arrangement – to grow. As we apply this to agriculture, seeds will