



# Division of Agriculture Activities

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<http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag>

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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](mailto:Patricia.O'Neil@alaska.gov) or call 907-761-3858.



## Note From the Director

It is hard to believe the holiday season is upon us again! I don't know where the year has gone - but it seems like just yesterday we were watching a famous turkey clip on television! I had to watch the clip several times before I realized what they were highlighting – after all it was a turkey farm and what did they think happened to those birds?

At the Annual Farm Bureau meeting a few weeks ago, Danny Consenstein gave an overview of USDA as well as an update on the **Geographically Disadvantaged Farmer and Rancher (GDFR) Program**. This year's appropriations bill included a small amount of funding for the *Geographically Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (GDFR) Program*. This new program was authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, but this is the first year it has been funded. As we know, Alaskan farmers have higher production costs due to the high costs of transporting equipment, seed, fertilizer and other inputs. This new program will pay producers a small percentage of documented costs for transporting an agricultural commodity and/or for inputs used to transport an agricultural commodity more than 30 miles. Prorated payments will be made for eligible costs incurred between October 1, 2009 and September 30, 2010 and all Alaskan producers are encouraged to begin documenting eligible costs during this period. For more information about this program or other USDA programs, contact [danny.consenstein@ak.usda.gov](mailto:danny.consenstein@ak.usda.gov). If you are interested in receiving the monthly USDA Farm Service Agency newsletter, please contact [donna.kramer@ak.usda.gov](mailto:donna.kramer@ak.usda.gov).

Please take the time to review the draft cheese regulations posted on the following Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) website - <http://dec.alaska.gov/regulations/index.htm>. The Office of the State Veterinarian had hoped to host informal workshops on the draft cheese regulation this month to allow for face to face dialogue with stakeholders, but unfortunately, the State Department of Law has informed them that procedural laws for such activities prohibit them from occurring without formal oral public hearings. The small number of cheese producers and potential cheese producers in the state, as well as budgetary constraints will not allow them to hold formal oral public hearings on this regulation. **Stakeholders are encouraged to call Jay Fuller, 907-375-8213 with any questions they may have about the regulation, including clarification of language, purpose, or intent.**

The Alaska Grown Director's Finding has been amended with several date changes, including the extension of the "stop sale" date to December 31, 2010. These changes were made to allow vendors adequate time to liquidate inventory. For further details please see the Division of Agriculture website - <http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/index.htm>.

The Delta Bison Working Group has scheduled another meeting for Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30 pm at Delta Junction City Hall. This is a work session of the Working Group to continue making recommendations for the Delta Bison Herd Plan. This group continues to look for solutions to minimize the conflict between the agriculture producers and the Delta bison herd.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving!

Franci

## Calendar Events—

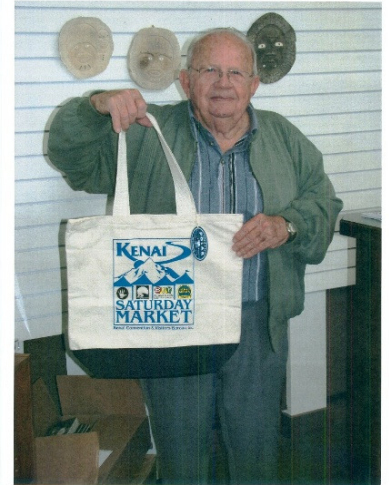
- November 26th: THANKSGIVING DAY: Enjoy the day with your family! (State Holiday)
- December 25th: CHRISTMAS DAY— State Holiday
- January 1st: NEW YEARS—State Holiday
- PMC Holiday Potluck: December 17th @ 12 noon
- <http://mat-suces.weebly.com/calendar-of-events.html>—Check out this calendar for CES Palmer activities!

## Ag in the News!

Alaska Magazine, November 2009, Pg 35, Think Locally, Eat Locally

## Marketing Section

In 2009, the Division awarded nine Farmers Market Match Grants (FMMG) for a total outlay of \$31,070. Each market was required to match the funding 50%, with a maximum grant award of \$5000. Market reports were due October 30<sup>th</sup> and overall outcomes were positive. Despite the economic downturn and the fewer tourists visiting Alaska, farmers markets were still quite successful. However, while produce vendors maintained or even increased sales, many market managers reported that craft vendors had felt the negative impact.



The Division has sponsored farmers markets' through the Cooperative Marketing Program for many years. In 2008 the FMMG program was launched with USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant

funding. Grant recipients can be as creative as desired in their efforts to promote Alaska Grown specialty crops and their market.

Projects funded in 2009 ranged from creating a web site for the Haines Farmers Market, to creating new tote bags for the Kenai Saturday Market.



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#### Plant Material Center

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### Potato Labeling Requirements

Currently, the State of Alaska has Statutory Labeling requirements for Potatoes bagged for consumption. According to 11 AAC 32.010, "All potatoes sold, displayed, or offered for sale or shipment, in a container, for general consumption, must conform to one of the potato grades stated in 11 AAC 32.020, must be packed in a container authorized under 11 AAC 32.040, and must be labeled to conform with 11 AAC 32.050."

Examples of acceptable Potato Grades are as follows: U.S. No. 1 and U.S. No. 2

Labeling requirements according to 11 AAC 32.050, "...each container of potatoes sold, offered, or displayed for sale for general consumption must be conspicuously and legibly labeled in the English language to show the following information: (1) common name of the product, unless the container is transparent and the product is easily and readily identifiable through the container; (2) name and address, including zip code, of the grower or packer; (3) net weight; and (4) grade of potatoes, in letters not less than one inch in height on containers holding 24 pounds or more, and in letters not less than one-half inch in height on containers holding less than 24 pounds..."

In addition to this "...a master container must be labeled to show the following information: (1) product name; (2) net weight of the product; and (3) name and address, including zip code, of the grower or packer. (d) All previously used labels on a used container must be completely removed or obliterated, but a permanently labeled used sack may be turned inside out. (e) A firmly attached shipping tag may be used for labeling on plain or turned sacks."

For more information on the State of Alaska Potato regulations,

[http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/folioiproxy.asp?url=http://www.jnu01.legis.state.ak.us/cgi-bin/folioisa.dll/aac/query=\[JUMP:'Title11Chap32!2C+a!2E+1'\]/doc/{@1}?firsthit](http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/folioiproxy.asp?url=http://www.jnu01.legis.state.ak.us/cgi-bin/folioisa.dll/aac/query=[JUMP:'Title11Chap32!2C+a!2E+1']/doc/{@1}?firsthit)

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## Plant Materials Center (PMC)

Everyone is invited to our annual Holiday Potluck to celebrate a successful 2009 year. It will be held on December 17 at noon at the Plant Materials Center, 5310 S. Bodenbug Spur Rd., Palmer. Please call 745-4469 if you plan on attending!

December is our time to write reports, work on budgets, and test, clean, and condition seed. Most of us are here the whole time. Call if you want to come out and meet with people. Bill Campbell: 745-8724; Gino Graziano: 745-8127; Andrew Weaver: 745-8735; Brianne Athearn: 745-8785; Stoney Wright: 745-8105; Peggy Hunt: 745-8721; Kathi VanZant: 745-8138; Lyubo Mahlev: 745-8782; Mike Bernstein: 745-8115; Ron Cotterman: 745-8104; Phil Czapl: 745-8747.

Two people are attending events out-of-town. Lyubo is taking his seed certification exam the beginning of December in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. We wish him the best! Bill will be attending The Potato Association of America seed certification section meeting and the National Potato Council seed sub-committee meeting in Detroit on December 9th and 10<sup>th</sup>. The annual meetings are attended by State Certification Officials, Canadian Certification Officials, and members of various seed potato organizations. The meetings are held to discuss information pertinent to the potato industry. Topics for this year's meeting include an update of the State/National Harmonization effort, Potato Cyst Nematode containment effort, the Necrotic Virus Management plan and international phytosanitary requirements.