



The Division of Agriculture Activities

February 14, 2012

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

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

To be added to our e-newsletter list, [click here](#).

Questions or Comments?
E-Mail or call 907-761-3864.

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Directors Note

January has been incredibly cold this year - the Anchorage Daily News reports that South Central Alaska is on track for having the coldest January on record. For those hardy Alaskans who live in the Interior, - 26F is a normal (perhaps even mild) winter day, but for those of us who live in the "banana belt" of Alaska, this winter has been harsh - fluctuating between extreme cold and extreme snow.

This past week, I had the opportunity to attend both the Nursery & Greenhouse Conference and the Peony Growers Conference. With guest speakers covering topics such as growing tips, fertilizer calibrations, new technologies, marketing trends and new plant varieties, it was a busy three days. Both conferences were well attended and had full agendas. The Nursery & Greenhouse Conference also discussed the potential for Rhodiola production in Alaska.

The Peony Growers Conference addressed areas such as weed management, financing options, soil testing and social media. It is exciting to watch the Alaska Peony Growers Association work together to address issues such as cold storage and packing houses. This industry continues to expand and is in the fortunate position where the demand for Alaskan Peony far exceeds current production levels. Each conference had an exciting agenda and there were many presentations to be viewed - complete with colorful photos of warmer times. Everyone departed in eager anticipation of spring's arrival and the new season it will bring.

If you are new recipient of the Division of Agriculture's Monthly Newsletter I encourage you to participate in the update of the long range plan. If interested, please contact the division at 745-7200 or email lora.haralson@alaska.gov.

As always, if you have questions or concerns please let me know at franci.havemeister@alaska.gov or 761-3867.

-Franci Havemeister

"I think the extent to which I have any balance at all, any mental balance, is because of being a farm kid and being raised in those isolated rural areas."

- James Earl Jones.

Agriculture Calendar

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Fri. Feb. 3rd, 6 pm - 9 pm;
Sat. Feb 4th, 9 am - 5 pm;
Sun. Feb 5th, 10 am - 2 pm: ▶ Tues. Feb. 7th: ▶ Tues. Feb. 16th, 3:30 - 5 pm: ▶ Sat. Feb. 18th- Sun. Feb 19th: ▶ Tues. Feb. 21st, 3:30 - 5 pm: | <p>High Tunnel Grower Training; Kenai P. College, Homer.
Questions: Carol Swartz - INCIS@kpc.alaska.edu,
Registration Information: here.</p> <p>Slugs, Bugs and Other Thugs; Mat-Su College - Palmer.
Details: here.</p> <p>DEC Animal Care Workshop - Domestic Pets; Anch.
Teleconference: (800) 315-6338; Passcode: 8213</p> <p>Raising Quality Livestock; Bunnel Bldg, UAF, Fairbanks.
Details: here. Questions: (907) 347-3571</p> <p>DEC Animal Care Workshop - Horses; Anchorage.
Teleconference: (800) 315-6338; Passcode: 8213</p> |
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- ▶ **Tues. Feb. 21st**, 8 am - 5 pm; **2012 Produce Growers Conference; Palmer Depot.**
Wed. **Feb 22nd**, 8 am - 3 pm; *Agenda: [here](#) - Registration Information: [here](#).*
- ▶ **Thurs. Feb. 23rd**, 3:30 - 5 pm: **DEC Animal Care Workshop - Dogs; Anchorage.**
Teleconference: (800) 315-6338; Passcode: 8213
- ▶ **Thurs. Feb. 23rd- Sun. Feb 26th**: **Planting Business Success Workshop; Palmer Depot.**
Details: [here](#). Questions: (907) 745-3336
- ▶ **Sat. Feb. 25th**, 9 am - 5 pm: **2012 Delta Farm Forum; Delta High School, Delta Jcn.**
Agenda: [here](#).
- ▶ **Mon. Feb. 27th**, 3:30 - 5 pm: **DEC Animal Care Workshop - Livestock; Anchorage.**
Teleconference: (800) 315-6338; Passcode: 8213
- ▶ **Tues. Mar. 6th**, 3:30 - 5 pm: **DEC Animal Care Workshop - Birds; Anch.**

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](#).

Marketing Section

Alaska Farmland Trust Hosts 3-day Business Planning Workshop

A essential component to any farm operation is a business plan. Does your farm have a business plan? When was the last time you reviewed or updated your business plan? Have you thought about retirement and what that will mean for the future of your farm?

The Alaska Farmland Trust is offering an outstanding 3 ½ day workshop to discuss all of the above and more. Renowned guest speakers will share expertise in agriculture, economics and business in an event that you won't want to miss. The cost is just \$35 per attendee, however attendance is limited to 70 participants.

This conference will cover, step-by-step:

- Developing goals
- Business planning for profit
- Putting the plan on paper
- Transfer planning

- Effective decision making
- Retirement planning
- Succession Planning
- Estate Planning



The 2012 Planting Business Success workshop is sponsored by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture and the Alaska Division of Agriculture. To see the full agenda and register for the workshop, go to www.akfarmland.com/events. You can also contact project director John Collins at (907) 745-3336 or (907) 715-7497.

Further details about these and other upcoming events happening are listed on the Agriculture Calendar, at dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_calendar.htm.

Remember to follow Alaska Grown on Facebook at facebook.com/dnr.alaskagrown.



On Farm Food Safety Project - onfarmfoodsafety.org

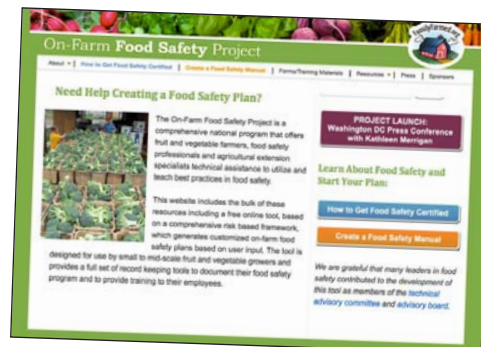
A simple way to create a Food Safety Manual.

1. Visit onfarmfoodsafety.org.
2. Click on Create a Food Safety Manual, and register.
3. Get Started. You can easily save your work & complete at your own pace.

What the OFFS Project has to offer:

- Record Keeping Templates
- Food Safety Best Practices
- Customized Food Safety Checklist
- Based on Harmonized GAP Standards
- Plan Can Be Used as Basis for GAP Audit

Please send comments & questions to:
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http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_arlf.htm

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Alaska Farm-to-School Program Update

Fairbanks Nutrition Services is “going local”!

Over the last year the director and staff at Nutrition Services in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District (FNSBSD) have been working with the Alaska Farm-to-School Program and Cooperative Extension Services (CES) at UAF to find ways to incorporate more local product.

Kate Idzorek, from CES, has been working local barley flour into the nutrition department’s roll/bun recipe. The recipe has already been tasted by staff - who commented it was of equivalent quality, taste, and flavor. The local barley was slightly darker in color but not noticeably so - an important consideration because the students have not been receptive to dark whole grain products. There are plans to test the flour on a large batch of buns that will go out to the schools in early February. The enhanced recipe also meets new USDA requirements for serving whole grain rich foods in the school meal program.



Bryce Wrigley, Jeff Johnson & Amy Rouse tour the Fairbanks Central Production Kitchen

Photo: Johanna Herron | Div. of Ag.

At the end of last summer, the Nutrition Services staff also considered the feasibility of using local cabbage. It turns out the local cabbage is \$0.64/pound cheaper than the pre-shredded cabbage they currently purchase, even accounting for the extra labor required to shred it at the Central Kitchen production facility.



Cabbage from Borman Farm in Delta Junction

Photo: Johanna Herron | Div. of Ag.

The Fairbanks Nutrition Services provides meals to 29 area schools that serve 10,000 meals a day. The commitment of FNSBSD

nutrition services to local food is evident as they make the switch to a product that will be more time-intensive, even though staff is already time-constrained.

When the Farm-to-School program spoke with Amy Rouse, director of nutrition services for the Fairbanks district, about the use of Alaska grown cabbage and barley flour in school lunches:

“We are excited to expand the use of our local products. We’ve done well utilizing Alaskan Pollock and ordering tortilla shells and chips from Taco Loco in Anchorage. Expanding to the agricultural community with cabbage and barley flour is one more way we can support our local economy.”

The Farm-to-School Program is making posters available to the cafeterias so the kids can learn more about the local farms and the connection to what they are eating. According to Amy Rouse, the FNSBSD is “working with the Farm-to-School Program ... to get the message to the students about the local producers and why it is important to know where their food comes from”.

Current plans are for Fairbanks Nutrition Services to purchase 860 pounds of cabbage on three occasions in the upcoming school year. If storage capacity is increased, there is a potential of expanding to more deliveries in upcoming years.

Barley flour will be ordered in 40 pound quantities as needed throughout the school year. There are plans for developing more of the district’s recipes to utilize the flour in multiple products.

For Farm-to-School updates, news, grant opportunities, and announcements join our listserv at: list.state.ak.us/soalists/akfarm-to-school/jl.htm. Also remember to check out the Farm-to-School facebook page at: facebook.com/AlaskaFarmToSchool.



For more information about the Alaska Farm-to-School program, or if you have any questions about the Farm-to-School program, contact Johanna Herron at Johanna.herron@alaska.gov or (907) 374-3714.

Land Sales & Grazing Leases

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

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Pest Detection / Inspection Section

Purchasing Equipment Outside? Check for Unwanted Pests Hitching a Ride

John Deere Diesel Combine - Michigan.
Gleaner Model K Combine - Illinois. 1965
Massey Ferguson 165 Tractor - Wisconsin.
These are but a few examples. With a quick internet search, one can find some great deals, along with some very nice equipment, that can be purchased and shipped to Alaska with just a few clicks of a mouse. There are even smart phones apps that allow you to shop for just about anything, anywhere.

The nation, or even the world, is a virtual showroom at your fingertips. We have a created transportation infrastructure, which we all enjoy to some degree or another, where agricultural and forest pests can be transported just about anywhere in record time. This presents great opportunity for the insects, pathogens, diseases, and weeds that can hitchhike on this equipment and also great challenges for those concerned about their spread and the destruction that comes with these pests.

There is responsibility that comes with utilizing the conveniences of modern technology and transportation. Fifty years ago, it might have taken considerable time to ship such large items great distances, but now, it can be accomplished in days. What does this mean for the pests we do not want moved around? It means they have a better chance of surviving the journey and becoming established in new areas.

In 1985, a moving company in Alaska reported gypsy moth (*Lymantria dispar*) egg masses on lawn furniture that was shipped up from the east coast. This pest has caused much damage to hardwood forests in the eastern United States and costs millions of dollars per year to mitigate.

In more recent years, a cutworm moth - Large Yellow Underwing (*Noctua pronuba*), has been detected in Southeast and Southcentral Alaska. This is a known agricultural pest, and though not specifically regulated, its movement across the U.S. has been very rapid. The [June, 2009 Division of Agriculture news-letter](#) has more specific

information regarding this pest.

There is also the potential that unwanted weeds may come to Alaska on equipment that is not properly washed and cleaned. Likewise, insects can lay overwintering egg masses inside wheel wells or on practically any concealed surface, making detection that much more difficult. Once transported to Alaska, these pests could potentially survive in parts of our state.

Many pest species are problematic because of their reproductive characteristics. Weeds can disperse thousands of seeds over great distances, and insects lay hundreds to thousands of eggs at a time. These pests conquer by sheer numbers. Once established, infestations become very difficult to control.

The good news is that we can prevent the spread of agricultural and forest pests into Alaska. A growing Early Detection & Rapid Response network of concerned agencies and cooperators throughout the state actively monitor for invasive species each year. However, many reports of invasive species come from concerned or informed citizens. If you are planning a trip to the lower 48 to pick up equipment for the upcoming season, or planning a trip up to Alaska in your RV, please be mindful of these possible hitchhikers and the destructiveness that they bring. With great technology, and great transportation infrastructure, comes great responsibility.

Additional resources can be found at: www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/plant_pest_info/index.shtml. If you have questions or concerns about Agricultural pests, you can also contact the Alaska Division of Agriculture at (907) 745-7200.



Large yellow underwing moths have been found recently in Alaska

Photo: Wikipedia.com - User:Dumi

Plant Materials Center

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

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Plant Materials Center

A Field Guide to Alaska Grasses

The culmination of three years of detailed research, **A Field Guide to Alaska Grasses** is going to the printers. This publication joins the Field Guide to Wyoming Grasses and the Field Guide to Nevada grasses, also by Dr. Quentin Skinner. Stoney Wright, manager of the Alaska Plant Materials Center is a co-author in this third guide in a series.

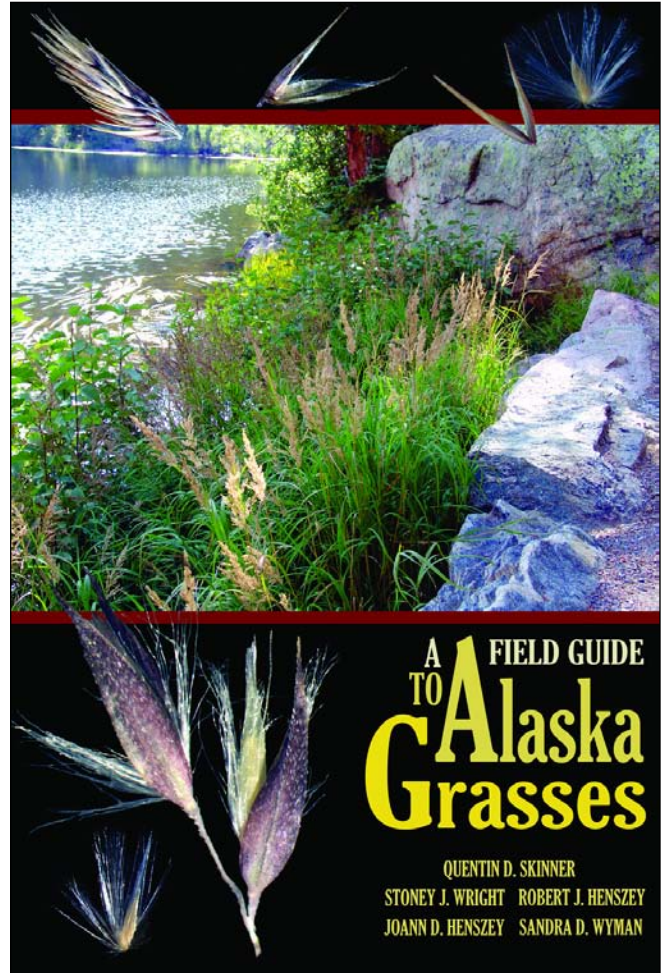
Hundreds of grass species native to and adapted for Alaska are detailed in the book. This guide is designed for use in the wild, and features high resolution photographs of the parts of each plant species for easy identification. At nearly 400 pages, this book is packed with detail about the grasses found across the 49th state.

Dr. Quentin Skinner is a retired professor of Range Science from the University of Wyoming. In addition to the Field Guide series, he has written Grasses of Wyoming. Stoney Wright and Dr. Skinner were contemporaries at the University of Wyoming, where co-authors Robert & Joann Henszey and Sandra Wyman studied under of Dr. Skinner.

Funding for this project was provided by the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the NRCS. The author's wish to

thank these agencies for making the Field Guide to Alaska Grasses possible.

The guide is expected to be available in late spring. For more information about **A Field Guide to Alaska Grasses**, contact the Alaska Plant Materials Center, at (907) 745-4469. You can also email author Stoney Wright, at Stoney.Wright@alaska.gov.



The authoritative reference for grasses of Alaska

Property for sale by the Board of Agriculture and Conservation

513 South Valley Way, Palmer

3 acres in downtown Palmer, bounded by E. Dogwood Ave, Dahlia Ave, & Denali St.

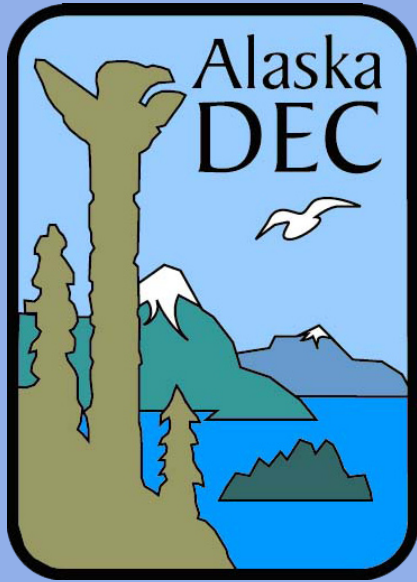


Former Matanuska Maid Manufacturing Facility: Real Property and Improvements



ARLF LAND SALE #09-01
Over-The-Counter Offering:
Purchase Price \$975,000.00.

Questions or comments regarding the sale process may be directed to Director Franci Havemeister, at 761-3867 or by email to Franci.Havemeister@alaska.gov.



Environmental Health

Alaska Department of
Environmental Conservation

Dec.Alaska.gov/eh/

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Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation: Division of Environmental Health

Wellhead Protection

Protecting your drinking water is important! The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Drinking Water Program only inspects public water systems for safety and compliance with state and federal regulations. You, the property owner, bear the responsibility for ensuring the safety of your private well.

Regardless of the age of the well, your best and first step is to test your water. Numerous labs around the state provide testing for both chemical and biologic contaminants. You can find links to certified labs on the Drinking Water Program home page: dec.alaska.gov/eh/dw/. Basic water quality tests that identify bacteria, arsenic, and nitrate contaminants generally cost between \$50 - \$100.

It is also useful to obtain your water well record (driller's well log). The well log contains important information on how the well was constructed as well as depth of the well, depth to water table, water producing interval, and basic geological information. If you can't locate the well driller, you can find your well log with the "WELTS" online well log search tool from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), located online at: navmaps.alaska.gov/welts/. If you need help interpreting your well log, you can contact the original drilling company, DNR, or a certified hydrologist.



Photo: Drinking Water Protection/AK DEC

A well potentially impacted by chemicals used for gardening

If you are drilling a new well, there are some critical considerations that will help reduce the risk of poor water quality:

- Activities on your property may impact drinking water wells. Man-made or natural activities around a well or water system may directly impact the source of drinking water. In agricultural areas,

some common potential sources of contamination include, but are not limited to the following:

- animal burial areas;
 - drainage fields/wells;
 - animal feedlots;
 - irrigation sites;
 - fertilizer storage/use;
 - manure spreading areas/pits, lagoons;
 - and pesticide storage/use.
- Always maintain proper separation between your well and potential sources of contamination. We recommend that private wells maintain minimum separation distances:
 - 150 feet: septic tanks, leach fields, pit privy and waste water treatment and disposal;
 - 100 feet: domestic animal and agricultural waste, livestock yards, silos, liquid-tight manure storage, and pesticide and fertilizer storage and handling; and
 - 75 feet: private sewer lines, petroleum lines, and storage tanks.

For all operating wells, take these precautions to avoid water contamination:

- Avoid mixing or using pesticides, fertilizers, herbicides, degreasers, fuels, motor oil, and other pollutants near the well.
- Don't allow back-siphonage. When mixing pesticides, fertilizers or other chemicals, don't put the hose inside the tank or container.
- Do not dispose of waste in dry wells or in abandoned wells. In fact, it is highly recommended that abandoned (i.e., unused or unmanaged) wells, be properly decommissioned.

Additional support for private water wells may be found from the U.S. Department of Environmental Conservation - "[Protecting your water](#)", the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - "[Private Drinking Water Wells](#)" and the University of Alaska Fairbanks [Cooperative Extension Service \(CES\) Water Quality Program](#). You can also contact the Division of Environmental Health at (907) 269-7501.