



# The Division of Agriculture Activities

January 03, 2013

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

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## Director's Note

Since you are reading this newsletter, it is safe to say that the world has safely traversed the end of the Mayan Calendar. The media hype surrounding the big day (Dec. 21<sup>st</sup>) was intriguing to me, in part because supposedly some people believed it to be true and were making the needed preparation. That poses the question – “How do you prepare for the end of the world?” Unlike death, the end of the world requires minimal planning or forethought; no need for an attorney to draw up a will, no living will to transfer the assets, no inheritance tax concerns, no outstanding bills and most of all - no worries on guardianship of your kids. So actually, those counting on the world ending the 21<sup>st</sup> probably woke up the 22<sup>nd</sup> a bit depressed and with a pressing “to-do” list for the upcoming year!

December was a busy month, but the highlight was the continuation of DNR's discussion with the Alaska Farm Bureau that began last November. DNR Deputy Commissioner Ed Fogels facilitated the December 19<sup>th</sup> meeting in Anchorage. There was good discussion covering a broad range of agriculture interests. I was pleasantly surprised by the number of participants; Over 25 participated on the teleconference and about 20 showed up in person. The meeting lasted from 8:30 – 3:30 and touched on all of the issues that were outlined on the agenda ([dnr.alaska.gov/ag/Index/AFBMTgAgenda121912.pdf](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/Index/AFBMTgAgenda121912.pdf)). DNR made a commitment to continue this dialogue in a monthly or bi-monthly teleconference format. If you were unable to attend the last meeting, but are interested in serving on a committee for agriculture research/education or a committee for agricultural land covenants/disposals/infrastructure, please [send me an e-mail](#) and I will add you to the list. I am tentatively planning for the first committee meeting to be held in mid to late January, depending on committee member's schedules. Follow-up teleconferences with DNR will be scheduled and posted to the Agriculture Calendar, at [dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag\\_calendar.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_calendar.htm).

For those who suffered agricultural damages due to the combination of weather events between September 15<sup>th</sup> and September 30<sup>th</sup>, a disaster designation was announced by the President on November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012. This announcement triggered the Farm Service Agency Emergency Loan Fund. For more information, please contact the FSA Service Center at 907-761-7772.

USDA is seeking nominations for the *Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers*. If you are interested in applying or would like to nominate an individual to the Advisory Committee please go to [www.ocio.usda.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2012/AD-755\\_Master\\_2012\\_508\\_Ver.pdf](http://www.ocio.usda.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2012/AD-755_Master_2012_508_Ver.pdf). The deadline for application/nomination is January 16th.

As always, if you have any questions or comments, please call me at 761-3867 or send me an e-mail at [Franci.Havemeister@Alaska.gov](mailto:Franci.Havemeister@Alaska.gov).

*-Franci Havemeister*

*“Even if you are on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there.”*

- Will Rogers

## Agriculture Calendar

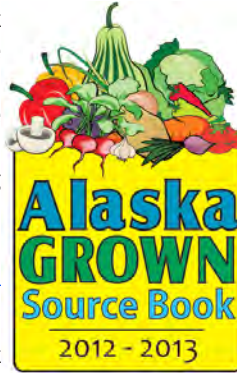
- ▶ **Thu. Jan. 24<sup>th</sup> - Fri. Jan. 25<sup>th</sup>** **2013 Alaska Greenhouse & Nursery Conf.** Fairbanks  
Details: [here](#);
- ▶ **Wed. Jan. 30<sup>th</sup>, 3:15 - 4:30 pm:** **Buyer/Producer Planning Meeting** Crowne Plaza, Anch.  
Register: [email Johanna Herron](mailto:email.Johanna.Herron);
- ▶ **Thu. Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> - Fri. Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>** **Alaska Peony Grower's Winter Conference.** Fairbanks  
Details: [here](#); Registration: [here](#).

*If you have an event that you would like to add to the calendar, please contact [Lora Haralson](mailto:Lora.Haralson).*

# Marketing Section

## Alaska Grown Source Book - Available January Statewide

The Alaska Grown Source Book has gone to press, and it will be available for pick-up soon. You can find your copy at one of the Division's offices or request a copy be mailed to you by calling 907-745-7200. The information is also available on the Division of Agriculture's website at [dnr.alaska.gov/ag/sourcebook/](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/sourcebook/).



information across the state. Use the interactive tables to filter listings by keyword and quickly locate products and services.

Want to know *exactly* where to find fresh local produce in your area? Use the interactive map on the Farmer's Market listings page to zoom in to markets in your region.

The Alaska Grown Source Book is a comprehensive STATEWIDE listing of Alaska farms, ranches and other agri-businesses. Use the online version of the Alaska Grown Source Book to access business listings and farmers market

The Division only prints information provided directly by producers and business owners. To submit information for the next edition of the Source Book or update your details, please contact [Kristi Krueger](mailto:Kristi.Krueger@alaska.gov) at 907-761-3858.



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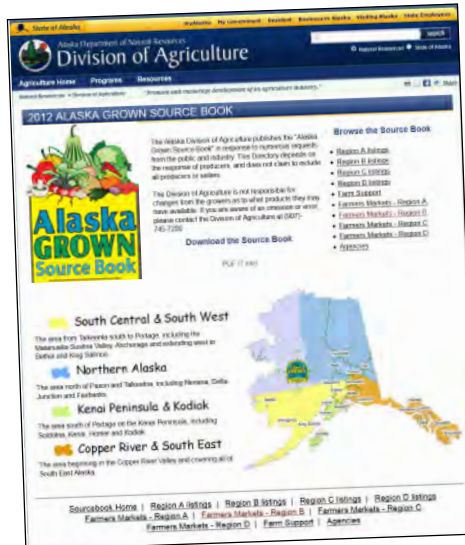
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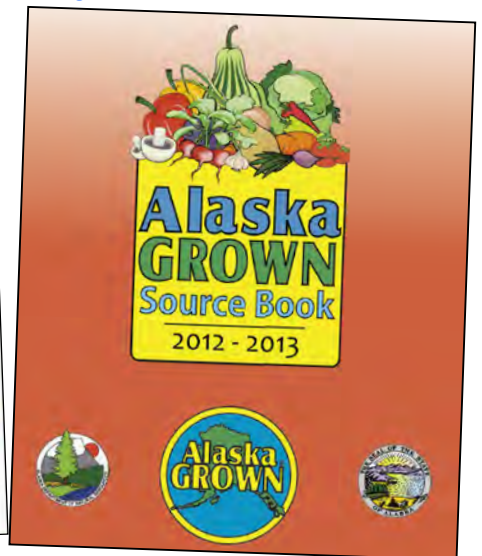
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The Alaska Grown Source Book can be found at: [dnr.alaska.gov/ag/sourcebook](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/sourcebook).



Print copies of the Source Book are available at Division of Agriculture offices.

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USDA United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service

2012 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE YOUR VOICE. YOUR FUTURE. YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.



## Alaska Grown Market Research

As you look through seed catalogs and make your plans for 2013, what marketing changes will you make? The Division of Agriculture recently commissioned market research on the Alaska Grown logo and brand.

Two focus groups were convened; one a group of Alaska Grown producers and the other a group of consumers. Highlights of two final reports are summarized in the table below:

	Producers	Consumers
<b>Price:</b>	<i>Believe their products in supermarkets are priced competitively.</i>	<i>Think Alaska Grown products are more expensive</i>
<b>Product:</b>	<i>Consider their products to be high-quality.</i>	<i>Believe quality is inconsistent.</i>
<b>Availability:</b>	<i>Think consumers will go out of their way to find Alaska Grown products.</i>  <i>Are satisfied that their products are labeled well enough.</i>  <i>Believe products are widely available at Farmers Markets.</i>	<i>Resist going out of their way for shopping.</i>  <i>Feel products in grocery stores could be more clearly labeled.</i>  <i>Value convenience and need to be reminded that more options are available at farmers markets.</i>

As a result of the above findings, the marketing firm recommends that producers continue to remind their customers about the nutritional and environmental benefits of eating locally, offer taste tests, and address the price misconceptions.

See both full reports at [dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag\\_marketingresearchdevelopment.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_marketingresearchdevelopment.htm).

Follow Alaska Grown on Facebook at [facebook.com/dnr.alaska-grown](https://facebook.com/dnr.alaska-grown) for all of the latest updates.



## Alaska Farm-to-School Program Update

### Farm to School Challenge Results

The second annual Farm to School Challenge was again a huge success! The FTS challenge had 24 applicants and some projects involved multiple schools.



Over 10,000 students were reached through efforts associated with the 2012 Alaska Farm to School challenge. A wide variety of projects involved people from all over the state. Our sincere thanks to all involved in this effort.

### Farm to School Challenge Winners

**First Place** – Megan Rock/Louise's Farm School

**Second Place** – Hannah Ragland/Tri-Valley School

**Third Place** – Carmen Thomas/Mat-Su Day School

#### Other Top Winners:

Vanessa Fefelov/Paul Banks Elementary School

Niki Weaver/Talkeetna Elementary School

Gen Armstrong/Haines Schools

Susitna Open Optional Teachers/Susitna Elementary School

Kari Natwick/Harborview Elementary School

Carlee Wells/Rae C. Stedman Elementary School

Cami Dalton/Chugach Optional School

### Congratulations!

### Introducing our new volunteer intern Avril Wiers

The Farm to School (FTS) program is excited to announce our new volunteer intern Avril Wiers. Avril gained valuable experience as a school garden supervisor for Calypso Farm and Ecology Center in Fairbanks. Since then, she has been working on her master's degree, developing agriculture

curriculum for middle and high school aged students. Avril is an FFA adviser at Effie Kokrine Charter School and a certified agriculture instructor. She also runs two school gardens in the Fairbanks area.

Avril is very involved in education and community. She offers free workshops to



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Photo: Nancy Tarnai, UAF CES

*Avril Wiers worked as a school garden supervisor before joining the Alaska Farm to School program*

teachers and community members about using gardens as instructional tools, arts and crafts and adding value to harvested foods.

Avril will work with the FTS program to create a resource that can be distributed state-wide for the curricula she has developed as well as be a local expert resource for educational outreach and program development with school gardens.

We are confident Avril will bring a lot of expertise to the Farm to School program and are thrilled to welcome her to our team!

## Alaska Farm-to-School Program Update

### Alaskan School Districts serving Alaska Grown produce, grain, and meat

As we've previously reported, the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED), Division of Community & Regional Affairs has a pilot grant program designed to encourage school districts to purchase Alaskan foods.

If you have stories about the Nutritional Alaskan Food in Schools (NAFS) grant program and would like to share, contact Debi Kruse at [Debi.Kruse@alaska.gov](mailto:Debi.Kruse@alaska.gov) or Johanna Herron at [Johanna.Herron@alaska.gov](mailto:Johanna.Herron@alaska.gov). If you have suggestions about the NAFS program, you can provide feedback at: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/NAFS\\_input2012](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NAFS_input2012).

The FTS program continues to report on the schools and districts that have received reimbursements and many school districts are now serving local products. We look forward to sharing more stories as the year progresses.

### Bering Straight School District

Bering Straight School District purchased halibut and salmon filets to serve in the school lunch program and have been work-

ing to find recipes that are compatible with the meal program and student preferences.

### Galena City Schools

In Galena the student nutrition services purchased beef, pork and duck from the Tanana Valley Fairgrounds, had them processed into a variety of dishes and then shipped them to the lucky students in Galena. They also purchased salmon to use in the meal programs.

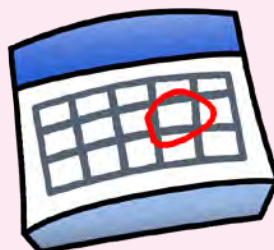
Governor Parnell has requested \$3,000,000 in his FY14 budget to continue the Nutritional Alaskan Food in Schools program for another year.

You can find details about the NAFS grant on the DCCED webpage: [commerce.alaska.gov/dca/grt/NAFS.htm](http://commerce.alaska.gov/dca/grt/NAFS.htm). To learn more about the Alaska Farm to School program, contact Johanna Herron at [Johanna.herron@alaska.gov](mailto:Johanna.herron@alaska.gov) or (907) 374-3714.



For updates, news, grant opportunities, and announcements join our listserv at [list.state.ak.us/soalists/akfarmtoschool/jl.htm](http://list.state.ak.us/soalists/akfarmtoschool/jl.htm).

### SAVE THE DATE: Invitation to Buyer/Producer Planning Meeting



To prepare for the upcoming growing season, the Farm to School Program will facilitate a special 'Buyer/Producer Planning Meeting' at the annual Alaska School Nutrition Association (AKSNA) conference in Anchorage. The meeting will take place at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on January 30<sup>th</sup>, from 3:15 - 4:30 pm.

AKSNA president Bob Eason is excited to make time on the agenda for a discussion with producers, distributors, and processors about foods the school nutrition buyers would be interested in adding to the school menus. Please save the date and join us in Anchorage January 30<sup>th</sup>.

## Pest Detection / Inspection Section

### Potato / Tomato Plant Quarantine in Effect

## ARLF Services

[http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag\\_arlf.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_arlf.htm)

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### Attention retailers and growers:

Before you order plants and seeds for the upcoming growing season, the Division of Agriculture would like to remind you of the plant health requirements that are in effect for the sale of seed potatoes and tomato plants from out-of-state sources. In order to prevent commodities infected with Potato Late Blight disease (*Phytophthora infestans*) from entering Alaska, a quarantine is in effect and is summarized below.

**RESTRICTIONS:** The following regulated articles are prohibited into Alaska except under the following conditions:

#### Seed potatoes or potato plants:

- must be produced as certified seed potatoes in the state or country of origin and be certified; and
- must be inspected in storage with no late blight found in the lot; and
- must be inspected at the shipping point with no late blight found.

#### Tomato plants imported from outside AK: (*Tomato seeds are not regulated articles*):

- must be grown in a nursery/greenhouse inspected and found free of late blight; and
- must be inspected at the shipping point and no late blight is found; and
- must be treated prior to shipment with a registered fungicide for late blight disease control.
- Each shipment of tomatoes into Alaska shall be accompanied by an official Phytosanitary Health Certificate issued by the government regulatory agency in the state or country of origin assuring that the conditions of this quarantine have been met.

Seed potatoes, potato and tomato plants that do not meet the above requirements are prohibited.

#### **Please note:**

In addition, under *Alaska Administrative Code (ACC) 11 ACC 32.050*, both Alaska

Grown and imported seed potatoes must be labeled with the following information:

- the name and address of the grower or packer; and
- net weight; and
- USDA Grade of the seed potatoes, in letters not less than one inch in height on containers of 24 lbs. or more and in letters not less than one-half inch in height on containers holding less than 24 lbs.; and
- All seed potatoes must have attached to each container or display the applicable seed certification tag or identification issued by the official certification agency of the state or country of origin.

Be advised that staff from the Division of Agriculture will be conducting inspections to ensure compliance with these requirements. Seed potatoes and tomato plants that do not meet the above requirements are prohibited and not permitted for sale. We would also like to encourage all growers to use certified seed. "Table stock" potatoes from the grocery store may carry diseases that can affect your soil, as well as that of your neighbors and commercial growers in the area, and they should never be used for planting.



Using certified seed helps keep devastating crop diseases out of Alaska. For more information, visit the inspection section on the web at: [dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag\\_is.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_is.htm).

If you would like additional information or have questions about this subject, please contact:

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- Mia Kirk at (907) 761-3853, [mia.kirk@alaska.gov](mailto:mia.kirk@alaska.gov);
- Bill Campbell at (907) 745-8725, [william.campbell@alaska.gov](mailto:william.campbell@alaska.gov).



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

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## Plant Materials Center

### Stoney Wright honored with Alaska DNR's Exceptional Service Award

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources recognized Stoney Wright for his years of service to the State of Alaska. Agriculture Director Franci Havemeister presented the 2012 Exceptional Service Award with Commissioner Daniel Sullivan and Deputy Commissioner Ed Fogels.

Since 1989, Stoney has been the manager of the Alaska Plant Materials Center in Palmer. He has pioneered the use of native plant materials for revegetation and developed techniques for the stabilization of eroded or altered land. Stoney specializes in erosion control, coastal dune restoration, riverbank erosion, mine site reclamation and wetland restoration.

While at the Plant Materials Center, Stoney developed five new cultivar releases and thirty-seven pre-certified class releases of native plants. He has conducted research and collected plant materials from all over

the world, including the Falkland Islands, South Georgia Island, the Aleutian Islands and other remote parts of Alaska. He has presented professional papers in China, Spain, Finland, Iceland, the US and Canada.

Stoney has authored or co-authored 144 publications and articles. He received awards from the International Erosion Control Association for the Alaska Coastal Revegetation & Erosion Control Guide (2010), and from the American Society of Agronomy for the Interior Alaska Revegetation & Erosion Control Guide (2012). His other notable publications include A Revegetation Manual for Alaska (2008) and A Field Guide to Alaska Grasses (2012).

You can learn more about Stoney's work by visiting the Plant Materials Center Website, at [plants.alaska.gov](http://plants.alaska.gov). He can be reached directly at (907) 745-8105 or via email at [Stoney.Wright@Alaska.gov](mailto:Stoney.Wright@Alaska.gov).



Photo: Elizabeth Bluemink, Alaska DNR

Stoney Wright receives the 2012 Exceptional Service Award in Anchorage Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>. From left: Deputy Commissioner Ed Fogels, DNR Commissioner Daniel Sullivan and Director of Agriculture Franci Havemeister, at podium.

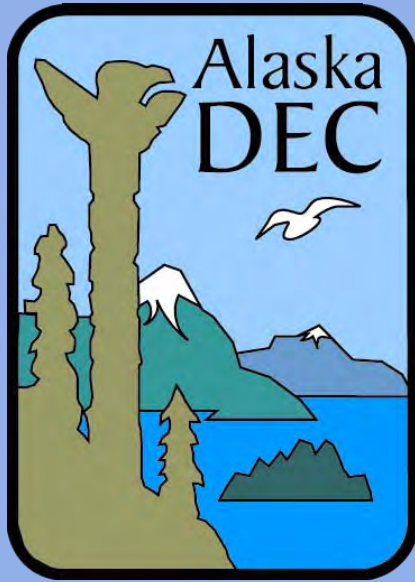
### FAST FACTS: Alaska's Growing Peony Industry

*contributed by the Alaska Peony Growers Association (APGA)*

- Peonies bloom in Alaska during July, August, and September. Peony bloom time in the rest of the world is either before or after this, giving us a unique window.
- While Alaska sold peonies in the tens of thousands in 2012, by mid-June, the Dutch had sold 34 million stems. Global cut-flower demand far exceeds supply.
- APGA members have over 120,000 roots in the ground as of the end of the planting season for 2012, triple what was in the ground in 2011.
- APGA members sold about 40,000 stems in 2012, primarily for domestic markets.
- The supply of Alaska peony cuts for 2013 is estimated to be 2 to 3 times the numbers available for 2012.
- It takes approximately 5 years from first planting until a grower has commercial quantities of cut stems.
- Alaska has almost 40 peony growers throughout the state







## Environmental Health

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# Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation: Division of Environmental Health

## Health and Safety Considerations for Small Scale Backyard Poultry Flocks Which came first? The Chicken or the Egg?

Article contributed by Jay Fuller

The Office of the State Veterinarian (OSV) for the State of Alaska is responsible for the control of animal diseases in domestic animals in the state, including disease surveillance and control. With the trend for raising home based food producing animals gaining momentum across the country, it is increasingly important to be informed on potential diseases associated with these animals. Of particular interest to Alaska is the backyard poultry flock. Poultry can harbor diseases and bacteria that cause human illness. The most significant are *Avian Influenza viruses*, *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter*.

### Avian Influenza

*Avian Influenza*, especially H5N1, became a concern with the first documented case of human infection in 1997. Waterfowl are a natural reservoir for the virus and spread the virus to other wild and domestic birds. Currently the OSV monitors for *Avian Influenza* by conducting random testing at large-scale events, such as fairs, where poultry are present. They also conduct surveillance of poultry flocks and migratory waterfowl in collaboration with State wildlife biologists.

A number of farming practices across the U.S. have changed and an increased focus on biosecurity has occurred in response to outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza. Preventative measures include:

- vaccinations of poultry workers against human flu;
- focus on farm hygiene;
- reduced contact between poultry and wild birds;
- reduced open-air markets; and
- limited purchases of live fowl at fairs and markets.

### Salmonella

*Salmonella* bacteria can be harbored in the digestive tract of poultry and may cause human disease. The illness in humans, called salmonellosis, is an acute infection of the intestinal tract that can turn into a generalized septic infection. Symptoms include sudden onset of headache, abdominal pain, diarrhea, nausea and sometimes vomiting. The infection can be contracted from contact with live birds, or consumption of raw

or improperly cooked foods. While many individuals are aware that care should be taken when handling raw meat and eggs or consuming raw or undercooked foods, it may come as a surprise to some that simply handling live poultry also presents risk of infection. Recently there was an outbreak of *Salmonella* in 27 states with reports of infection that were traced to contact with live poultry from at least one hatchery. More information on the story can be found here: [www.cdc.gov/salmonella/live-poultry-05-12/](http://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/live-poultry-05-12/).

### Campylobacter

*Campylobacter* bacteria can also be found in the digestive tract of poultry. *Campylobacter* is an acute zoonotic disease of variable severity. It is characterized by diarrhea, abdominal pain, fever, nausea, and vomiting. *Campylobacter* bacteria are a cause of diarrheal illness in all parts of the world, causing 5 to 14 percent of diarrhea worldwide. *Campylobacter* can be transmitted by poor sanitation processes and by ingesting the bacteria in under-cooked chicken.

### Sanitation and good hygiene practices are your best defense!

Any time you are feeding, handling or cleaning poultry and pens, be aware of general sanitation. Care should be taken for egg laying and poultry meat slaughter operations to prevent bacteria from getting into the human food chain. The UAF Cooperative Extension service has issued a bulletin on [Safe Egg Handling for Small Egg Laying Flocks and Operations](#) that is a useful reference for laying operations. This guideline can be found at: [www.uaf.edu/files/ces/publications-db/catalog/anr/LPM-00344.pdf](http://www.uaf.edu/files/ces/publications-db/catalog/anr/LPM-00344.pdf).

While slaughter and processing of poultry for personal use is exempt from USDA requirements under 9 CFR §381.10, small home-use flock owners should follow slaughter and processing guidelines to ensure safety of the product. A helpful resource for small-scale poultry processing, both on-farm and in small plants, is The National Center for Appropriate Technology's ATTRA Project guide, found at: [attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/summaries/summary.php?pub=235](http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/summaries/summary.php?pub=235).