



The Division of Agriculture Activities

March 07, 2013

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

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Director's Note

Alaska has once again turned the long corner of winter and spring is rapidly on its way. The days are getting longer and headlights are no longer a necessity driving to and from work. Sitting in my living room yesterday, I caught the first sighting of the farm's resident eagles. Each year, they return and nest along the tree line between the field and lake. The adult pair and their offspring provide our family and visitors with great photo opportunities each year, and their return signifies the arrival of March.

January and February are always busy months for conferences and meetings, and this year was no exception. I had the pleasure of attending the Peony Grower's Conference in Fairbanks last month and was impressed with the number of growers and the continuing expansion of production. Alaska's ability to produce peony during the summer months continues to draw interest from customers in the lower 48 and abroad. The Delta Farm Forum again had an interesting agenda and a great turnout. Deputy Commissioner Ed Fogels addressed the group in the morning and stayed through the delicious lunch, which featured many Alaskan produced foods.

The legislative session is now well under way and has passed the half way mark. The bills mentioned in the last newsletter continue to be of interest to agriculture: [HB40: Municipal Tax Exemption](#); [HB89: Aquatic Invasive Species](#); and [HCR001: State Food Resource Development Group](#). If these bills are of interest to you, I encourage you to engage in the public process and voice your support or concern. All hearings and legislation can be tracked at w3.legis.state.ak.us.

If you are interested in agriculture research, education, or land sales; please participate in the teleconferences that are scheduled in March. These teleconferences are a direct result of the meeting held in Anchorage with the Commissioner's office last December. The information gathered in these meetings will be incorporated in long range planning for the Division of Agriculture. The next [Research and Education committee meeting](#) is scheduled for March 27, 2013 at 9:00 a.m.; this meeting will include information brought forward by the two sub committees (research and education) which have met independently over the past month. A follow up [Agriculture land meeting](#) has been scheduled for March 27, 2013 at 1:00 p.m. Call in numbers and agenda's can be found on the calendar below.

As always, please look through the newsletter for topics of interest, grant availability and upcoming conferences. If you have any comments or concerns please give me a call @ 761-3867 or send an email to Franci.Havemeister@Alaska.gov.

-Franci Havemeister

"Experience is a hard teacher because she gives the test first, the lesson afterward"

- Vernon Law

Agriculture Calendar

- ▶ **Thu. Mar. 7th**, 7 pm - 8:30 pm: **SWCD Winter Conservation Series.** Mat-Su College. 'An Alaskan Garden thru the Seasons' - [Details: here](#);
- ▶ **Fri. Mar. 8th - Sat. Mar 9th:** **Alaska Botanical Garden Spring Garden Conf.** Anchorage. [Details: here](#);
- ▶ **Mon. Mar. 11th - Fri. Mar. 15th:** **ARLF Auction Preview.** 7805 E. Palmer-Wasilla Hwy, Palmer. 11AM-4PM; Item Photos: denaliauction.com/dairy.html
- ▶ **Tue. Mar. 12th - Thu. Mar. 14th:** **Sustainable Agriculture Conference.** Fairbanks. [Details: here](#); [Registration: here](#).
- ▶ **Thu. Mar. 14th**, 7 pm - 8:30 pm: **SWCD Winter Conservation Series.** Mat-Su College. 'Vegetable Production the Organic Way' - [Details: here](#);
- ▶ **Sat. Mar. 16th**, 10 am: **ARLF Public Auction.** 7805 E. Palmer-Wasilla Hwy, Palmer. [Details: here](#); Item Photos: denaliauction.com/dairy.html
- ▶ **Tue. Mar. 19th:** **Registration Deadline: AACD Spring Conf.** Fairbanks. Conference dates: April 18th - 20th; [Registration: here](#);

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- ▶ **Thu. Mar. 21st, 7 pm:** **Alaska Seed Growers Meeting.** Plant Materials Center
Agenda: [here](#); Teleconference: 800-315-6338, passcode:122#
 - ▶ **Thu. Mar. 21st - Fri. Mar. 22nd:** **Managing your Farm Business Workshop.** Mat-Su College.
Details: [here](#); Registration: [here](#).
 - ▶ **Wed. Mar. 27th, 9 am -11 am:** **Agriculture Research & Education Committee Mtg;** Palmer.
Details: [here](#); Teleconference: 800-315-6338, passcode: 122#
 - ▶ **Wed. Mar. 27th, 1 pm -3 pm:** **Agriculture Land Meeting;** Palmer.
Details: [here](#); Teleconference: 800-315-6338, passcode: 122#
 - ▶ **Sat. Apr. 6th, 8 am - 5 pm:** **2013 Alaska Master Gardeners Conference.** Palmer.
Details: [here](#);
 - ▶ **Tue. Apr. 9th, 1 pm:** **Board of Agriculture & Conservation Meeting;** Palmer.
Details: [here](#); Teleconference: 800-315-6338, passcode: 122#
 - ▶ **Mon. Apr. 15th - Fri. Apr. 26th:** **PMC Spring Seed Sale;** 5310 Bodenbug Spur Rd. Palmer
- If you have an event that you would like to add to the calendar, please contact [Lora Haralson](#).*

Marketing Section

Call for 2013 Cooperative Marketing Program (CMP) grant applications

The Division of Agriculture is now accepting applications for the 2013 Cooperative Marketing Program (CMP) grant. You can find the full application and relevant information online, at dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_grantsCMP.htm.

Cooperative Marketing ranges from general advertising to classroom education. Successful applications will focus on marketing and promotion of Alaska Grown products. As the title suggests, the grant targets cooperative efforts. Projects that principally enhance

individual operations will not be considered for funding. The CMP grant is open to anyone involved in the agricultural community; producers involved in the project must be members of the Alaska Grown program.

The CMP grant requires dollar for dollar match funding. Applications are due to the Division of Agriculture by Friday, March 29th. Any questions pertaining to this program should be directed to Kristi Krueger, at Kristi.Krueger@alaska.gov or (907) 761-3858.

Alaska Farm to School Program Update

Buyer/Producer Planning Meeting

At this year's Alaska School Nutrition Association (AKSNA) Conference, the Farm to School program hosted a 'Buyer/Producer Planning Meeting'. About 20 people joined a room full of school food buyers to discuss local food specialties, needs, and potential partnerships. Farmers, produce processors, distributors, local food chefs, and other members of the local food industry were present. Some who could not attend provided written input ahead of the meeting.

Some key points and feedback from the discussion are summarized below.

Buyers:

- Want foods that are pre-cooked or pre-processed to save preparation time
- Want more processing of local foods.
- Are concerned about the shipping and logistics issues of getting local foods.
- Would like to see a list of products available from local producers that are interested in selling to schools.

Producers:

- Need to know the buying program is going to last for more than a year.


- Do not want to invest into new processing equipment without assurance of sustained demand.
- Need to know what schools want.

Processors:

- Can't find enough local 'food safe audited' producers to supply the demand.
- Need to know what the buyers want.

To expand upon the great conversation started during this session, Sandy Daws, AKSNA president elect and conference coordinator, has started planning a half day workshop for the 2014 AKSNA Conference.

For more information about the Farm to School program, contact Johanna Herron at Johanna.Herron@alaska.gov or (907) 374-3714. The FTS website is located at: dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_FTS.htm.

For updates, news, and announcements join the Farm to School listserv at: [list.state.ak.us/soalists/akfarmtoschool/jl.htm](mailto:listserv@alaska.gov). Our facebook page can be found at: [facebook.com/AlaskaFarmToSchool](https://www.facebook.com/AlaskaFarmToSchool). 



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Pest Detection / Inspection Section

Summer Preparations for Invasive Pest Trapping Surveys

It certainly appears that spring is just around the corner. In Fairbanks, the days are becoming noticeably longer. Soon, insects will begin to appear in the leaf litter where the snow has melted away. Overwintered adult butterflies and moths will begin to flutter around; lady bugs, lacewings, and leaf hoppers will become active in the warmth of the sun. This is also the time of year when growers, gardeners, and nursery operators begin gearing up for another Alaskan growing season.

With the advent of spring, there is renewed concern that invasive pests may be introduced into the state from other regions, both foreign and domestic, where they are actively causing problems. Wood boring insects may hitch a ride on solid wood packing material or in out-of-state firewood. Gypsy moth, Asian Long-horned beetle, Emerald Ash Borer, and other pests could travel on a ship bound for one of our port communities or on recreational vehicles brought up from the lower 48.

The Division of Agriculture is preparing to coordinate pest detection surveys once again this summer. Ideas and project proposals are submitted to USDA, Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ). Funding may be provided for projects that address state, national, or international pest concerns, as well as the surveys that support the Division's phytosanitary certification services.

Surveys are coordinated via the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey program (CAPS), a program based on cooperative

agreements between the State of Alaska and the USDA-APHIS-PPQ. Currently, submitted project proposals are being reviewed at the national level. Final determination of project funding will occur in March. This is a busy time of year, as project proposals are turned into agreements and preparations for summer survey activities begin.

Last summer, the Division coordinated pest detection surveys for exotic Asian defoliating moths, nematode vectors of Tobacco Rattle Virus in Peony, and a survey of Thrips and other insects associated with Peony grown in Alaska. The Alaska CAPS program intends to continue these and other survey efforts in 2013, funding permitting.

In 2012 the Division also finalized projects for Giant Hogweed in SE Alaska, Emerald Ash Borer trapping around ornamental Ash grown in-state, and an out-of-state firewood pest survey.

For information on the Alaska CAPS program, or the surveys conducted, please contact Curtis Knight, State Survey Coordinator, in the Northern Region office. He can be reached at 907-374-3732 or Curtis.Knight@alaska.gov.

Photo: Rusty Haskell, University of Florida, Bugwood.org



Egg laying female Asian gypsy moths discovered on a tire of a commercial vehicle

Photo: Manfred Mielke, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org



Asian gypsy moth and egg mass found on a military transport container. Customs inspections of vessels from foreign ports is the front line of defense against this transmission pathway. Trapping surveys conducted by the Division of Agriculture are a secondary defense in the early detection of infestations.

Plant Materials Center

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

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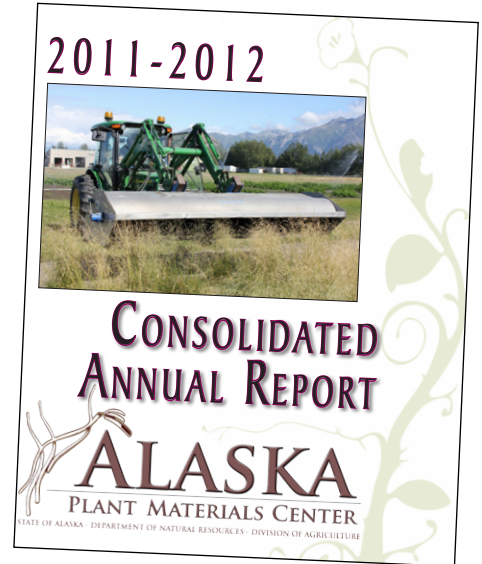
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Plant Materials Center

Plant Materials Center releases Consolidated Annual Report

The PMC has released a Consolidated Annual Report, summarizing agency activities during 2011 and 2012. The report covers the following activities:

- Commercial Development of Native Plants
- Foundation Seed Program
- Seed Cleaning and Conditioning
- Foundation Seed Sales
- Revegetation and Erosion Control
- Rural Village Seed Production Project
- Horticulture Program
- Plant Pathology Laboratory
- Quantitative Seed Analysis Laboratory
- Soil Testing & Analysis
- Surveys and Research
- Potato Disease Control
- Educational Facilities
- Invasive Plants & Agricultural Pests
- Awards and Recognition
- Staff Presentations & Publications



The consolidated annual report will be available soon on the PMC website at plants.alaska.gov.



**PALMER,
APRIL 6th**

SAVE THE DATE: Alaska Master Gardeners Conference: Backyard Food Security 2013



April 6th, 2013: 8:00 am - 5:00pm
Palmer Community Center (Depot),
610 W. Valley Way, Palmer AK 99645

More Details @ MatSuMasterGardeners.org
Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

akfarmland.org or call 907-745-3336 for more information' and 'Travel & housing stipends now available'. A logo for 'ALASKA FARMLAND TRUST' is also present."/>

Farm Business Workshop

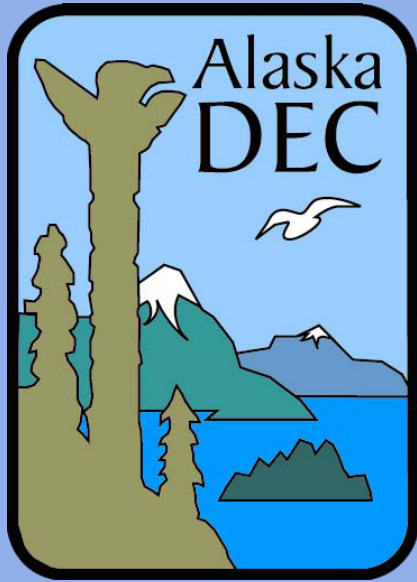
March 21 - 22, 2013
9 AM - 4 PM
Mat-Su College, Palmer, AK

Register online at akfarmland.org
or call 907-745-3336 for
more information

Travel & housing stipends
now available

USDA/RMA
RightRisk
www.RightRisk.org

ALASKA FARMLAND TRUST



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Alaska Department of
Environmental Conservation

Dec.Alaska.gov/eh/
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Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation: Division of Environmental Health

Worker Protection Standards

Article contributed by Karin Hendrickson

If you produce agricultural plants, use pesticides, and have employees, then Worker Protection Standards (WPS) apply to you! Make sure you understand and follow the rules.

Pesticides are an important agricultural tool, but, they can be dangerous if not used properly. WPS requirements are designed to protect agricultural employees against harm from pesticides.

WPS require employers to:

- post information about pesticide safety and pesticides that have been used;
- train employees about pesticide safety;
- notify employees prior to applying pesticides;
- keep everyone out of treated areas ;
- provide basic decontamination supplies in case of exposure;
- supply and maintain required personal protective equipment;
- provide detailed label information to pesticide handlers; and
- post emergency assistance information.

Information about pesticides

Information about pesticides must be posted at a central location where it can be easily seen and read by employees. Three types of information must be displayed:

1. **Safety Poster** - An approved WPS safety poster with information about

how to avoid pesticide exposure. Contact the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation to get a free copy of the required poster!

2. **Emergency Medical Center** - The name, telephone number, and address of nearest emergency medical center.
3. **Pesticides Used** - Details about each pesticide that has been applied within the last 30 days. Information about pesticides should be posted prior to application of pesticide, and must stay in place for 30 days after the restricted-entry interval is over. Information must include;
 - The location and description of the treated area;
 - Product name;
 - EPA registration number;
 - Active ingredients;
 - Time and date of application; and
 - Restricted-entry interval.

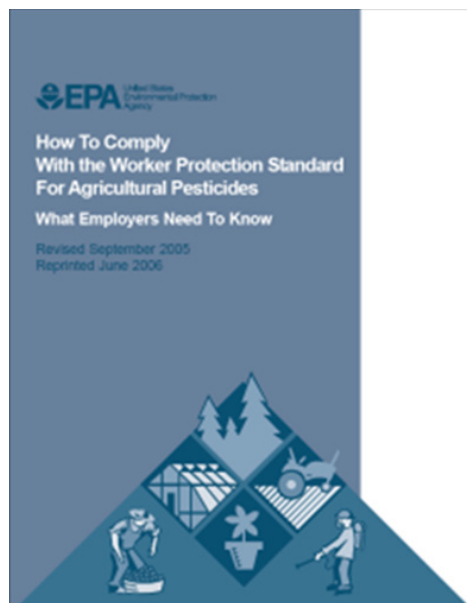
Pesticide Training

All employees must receive basic pesticide safety training prior to entering any area that has been treated with pesticides within the last 30 days. More detailed training must be given before employees spend more than five days working in treated areas. Comprehensive training is also required before employees may handle or apply pesticides.

The person who conducts the pesticide safety training must be either a certified pesticide applicator or have completed a DEC-approved training program. Training must cover a variety of subjects, including hazards of pesticides, how to avoid exposure, signs of pesticide poisoning, and other topics. Contact Alaska DEC to obtain free training videos and other resources.

Details on requirements can be found in the EPA's manual "How to Comply with the Worker Protection Standards" available at www.epa.gov/agriculture/htc.html.

For more information or assistance in determining which requirements apply to you, contact the Pesticide Control Program at 907-376-1870 or visit dec.alaska.gov/eh/pest.



The EPA's Worker Protection Standards manual



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UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

School of Natural Resources & Agricultural Sciences

Experimental growing with LED lighting

Article contributed by Nancy Tarnai

In March 2012, UAF horticulture professor Meriam Karlsson gazed at rows and rows of sunflowers with a look of puzzlement. Research doesn't always go as predicted and this was one of those times.

Karlsson planted *Sunny Smile* dwarf sunflowers in January of 2012, as part of a lighting experiment in the School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences's new greenhouse on the UAF campus. Half of the plants were placed under red or blue light-emitting diode (LED) lamps at 14 days, with the other half joining them after 24 days. "They all flowered at the same time," Karlsson noted. "It's not what I expected."



Professor Meriam Karlsson studies LED lighting at UAF

"Everyone says it's so critical to have the right light initially," Karlsson said. This experiment showed the potential of using LEDs, which are more energy efficient than high-pressure sodium lamps, to start flowers or seeds.

Basking in the 72-degree greenhouse, the perky sunflowers looked exactly the same, regardless of the lighting. "Next time, we will leave them under different lights and let them stay until they flower and see if there are differences," Karlsson said.

Her research was spurred by a growing interest in LED lights. Overseeing a graduate student research project, Karlsson observed that plants such as lettuce and black-eyed Susans reacted differently when placed under red or blue LED lights. "They didn't flower as fast," she said.

The best light is natural, full spectrum light, which has all the wavelengths and colors of light. Since that isn't available in a Fairbanks winter, artificial light is needed. While high-pressure sodium lights have long been the standard, research is showing the advantages of LEDs. Sodium lights don't have a blue range, for example, important for certain processes in plants. Without blue rays, the plants look different.

The plants' pigment reacts to light and chlorophyll is used in photosynthesis. "The most effective light for photosynthesis is red and blue, but there are more things going on in plants than photosynthesis. Other pigments absorb the green and orange" Karlsson said.

While sunflowers are a beautiful landscape plant, Karlsson ponders the broader implications of using LEDs. "I wonder about the nutritional value of food grown under certain lights," she said. "NASA has been looking at this.

"LED is a completely different technology," Karlsson said. "It's monochromatic light. It may be red or blue, or even orange. There is a peak of light quality and nothing in between. What happens after the plant absorbs these wavelengths of light?" In addition to energy savings, another advantage of LEDs is they run cool, so they can be placed closer to the plants.

Karlsson's fascination with growing things began on her family's farm in Sweden, where barley, oats, hay and potatoes were grown. "I was always interested in plants and crop production," she said. She earned a doctorate in horticulture at Michigan State, where she first became interested in studying the effects of lights on plants.

After coming to Alaska, her focus on lighting increased. "Up here, light is really important," she said. "Nobody knows why plants grow so well in 24 hours of light; they really shouldn't."

Working in the new greenhouse attached to Arctic Health Research Building is exiting, Karlsson said. "You can do so many things with the shade and lighting via computer." Karlsson took a call from a technician who monitors the temperature and lighting in the greenhouse. "We have to figure out the light levels, because it changes every day," Karlsson said.

Karlsson is convinced greenhouse manufacturers should use Fairbanks as a testing ground. "If they can make it work here it would work anywhere in the U.S.," she said.

She firmly believes Alaska should step up its agricultural research. "We should do much more," she said. "We have unique conditions in lighting and temperature variations. We can do a lot the rest of the world could learn from. We can be more productive here because we have excellent growing conditions and we don't have to fight many pests and diseases that are devastating to crops in other areas."

Note to readers: It's the time of year when you can reserve a plot in the Fairbanks Community Garden. Visit fairbankscommunitygarden.com, or contact Lara Lotze (457-8216, lara@alaska.net) for the information you need to get growing! Plot rental is \$35, which includes water and tools.