



# The Division of Agriculture Activities

June 4, 2014

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

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## Director's Note



Up until last weekend, we

Alaskans have had to keep reminding ourselves that it was only May. Because of our early spring and warm weather, by all outward appearance the month of May looked more like late June. Of course, last weekend brought us back to reality with the much cooler temperatures and new snow on the mountains. The rain this past weekend was a relief as the entire state remains extremely dry, USDA Crop Weather Summary reported this past week that topsoil measurements throughout the state range from 20-50% short and areas of subsoil moisture as high as 60% short. Although we continue to hear rumors of another El Nino season, lets keeps our fingers crossed that rain will be intermixed with the warmer weather.

The 2012 Agriculture Census was released earlier this year and reports that there has been a decrease of 4.3% in the number of farms nationwide, from 2,204,792 in 2007 to 2,109,363 in 2012. Farm acreage has also seen a decrease nationally of 0.8%, which is the third smallest decline between censuses since 1950. Alaska in comparison has broken from the national trend and has seen a 11.1% increase in the number of farms, from 686 in 2007 to 762 in 2012 but follows the trend and has seen a decrease in acreage of 5.4% from 881,585 acres in 2007 to 833,861 acres in 2012. The national average of a farmer was 57.1 years in 2007, while in 2012 was 58.3. Alaska followed that trend closely, with the 2007 average being 56.2 and the 2012 average at 57.1.

Here in Alaska, Governor Sean Parnell has proclaimed June 22nd-28th, 2014 as Alaska Invasive Weeds Awareness Week. Alaska remains in a unique position to avoid the enormous costs of widespread invasive plants that are now impacting the other 49 states. In recognition of Alaska's unique position, state, federal, local, private, non-profits, and the public are working together to increase public awareness of invasive weeds, management tools available, and the benefits of keeping our communities and environment free of invasive weeds and agricultural pests for generations to come.

In closing, just a couple of reminders.....the Board of Agriculture and Conservation (BAC) will be accepting public comment on July 2nd, 2014 at 1:00 pm regarding a transition plan for Mt. McKinley Meat and Sausage (MMM&S) from state ownership to private. If interested, you can make public comment in person, online, or in written format. Interest and involvement of the private sector is crucial in developing a transition plan moving forward. Also, the BAC currently has two positions open; if you are interested in serving on this board please submit your application to <http://gov.alaska.gov/parnell/services/boards-commissions/apply-info.html> or give me a call.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns please give me a call at 761-3867 or send me an e-mail at [franci.havemeister@alaska.gov](mailto:franci.havemeister@alaska.gov).

~ *Franci Havemeister*

*"I know of no pursuit in which more real and important services can be rendered to any country than by improving its agriculture."  
~ George Washington*



## ARLF Services

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

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## Fairbanks Office

907-328-1950

**Curtis Knight** 907-374-3732  
[Curtis.Knight@alaska.gov](mailto:Curtis.Knight@alaska.gov)



### PAST RECIPIENTS:

2000	<b>Huppert Family</b>
2001	<b>VanderWeele Farms</b> – Ben & Suus VanderWeele
2002	<b>Havemeister Farms</b> – Bob & Jeanne Havemeister
2003	<b>Rempel Family Farm</b> – Mark Rempel
2004	<b>P &amp; M Gardens</b>
2005	<b>Calypto Farm and Ecology Center</b> – Tom Zimmer & Susan Willsrud
2006	<b>Wrigley Farms</b> – Rex & Bryce Wrigley & their families
2007	<b>Insanity Acres</b> – Bob & Randy & Peterson & their families
2008	<b>Lewis Farm</b> – Brad & Pam Lewis
2009	<b>Oberg-Kenley Family</b> – Clyde & June Oberg, Carol Kenley & Family
2010	<b>The Pyrah Family</b>
2011	<b>Gray Owl Farm</b> – Craige & Kathy Baker
2012	<b>Diamond M Ranch</b> – Carrol & JoAnne Martin
2013	<b>Stockwell Farm</b> – Vern Stockwell and Becky Gardner

## Agriculture Calendar

- **Mon. June 9<sup>th</sup>** **Board of Agriculture & Conservation Teleconference Meeting.** Division of Agriculture, 1800 Glenn Highway, Suite 12, Palmer. 3 pm. *Details:* [here](#)
- **Thur. June 19<sup>th</sup>** **On-Farm Food Safety Workshop.** Plant Materials Center, 5310 S. Bodenburg Spur, Palmer. 9 am- 2 pm. *Details:* [here](#)
- **Wed. June 25<sup>th</sup>** **Niche Meat Processor Assistance Network Free Webinar - The Business of Dry Curing.** 9 am. *Details:* [here](#)
- **Wed. July 2<sup>nd</sup>** **Board of Agriculture & Conservation Meeting.** Division of Agriculture, 1800 Glenn Highway, Suite 12, Palmer. 1 pm. *Details:* [here](#)

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

## Marketing Section

The Division of Agriculture is currently accepting nominations for the

### 15th Annual Farm Family of the Year Award!

The award will be presented during the Alaska State Fair in August.

The Alaska State Fair established the award in 2000 to honor an Alaska farming family that epitomizes the spirit of the industry and to show appreciation for all the hardworking Alaskans committed to agriculture and aquaculture in the state. The 2013 award recipient was Vern Stockwell and Becky Gardner of Stockwell Farm located in Palmer.

#### Nominations are due on June 17

The Farm Family selection committee will select a family using the following criteria:

- Production of quality Alaska Grown products (not based on quantity)
- Community involvement (civic organizations, school, sports, church)
- Involvement in agriculture sector organizations (local, state, federal, tribal etc.)
- Overall farm family image, farming history, and unique or special production

Nominations will be judged by a selection committee comprised of representatives from the USDA Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service; the University of Alaska Fairbanks School of Natural Resources and Extension; the Alaska State Fair; and the Division of Agriculture. Nominations should offer details about the family and how the family members fulfill the criteria. Mail nominations to:

**Jacquelyn Schade – Farm Family**  
**Alaska Division of Agriculture, 1800 Glenn Hwy, Ste. 12**  
**Palmer, AK 99645**

Nominations may also be faxed to 907-745-7242  
or emailed to [Jacquelyn.Schade@alaska.gov](mailto:Jacquelyn.Schade@alaska.gov).

The award, sponsored by the Matanuska Valley Federal Credit Union, will be presented at the Director's Reception on the state fair's opening day, August 21. For more information contact: Jacquelyn Schade, 907-761-3858, [Jacquelyn.Schade@alaska.gov](mailto:Jacquelyn.Schade@alaska.gov)



## Marketing Staff

[http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag\\_ms.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_ms.htm)

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## Farm to School Program Mini-grant Awards!

This year, the Alaska Division of Agriculture received a record number of applications for Alaska Farm to School Program mini-grants. Twenty-three projects from all over the state – involving schools, pre-schools, home school programs and non-profit organizations – were selected to receive funding. This year's grant recipients are:

**Academy Charter School, Palmer**

**Airport Heights Elementary, Anchorage**

**Alaska Botanical Garden and 21st Century Learning Center, Anchorage**

**Alaska Gateway School District, Tok**

**Aurora Elementary School, Anchorage**

**Chugiak High School**

**College Gate Elementary School, Anchorage**

**Effie Kokrine Charter School, Fairbanks**

**Fish to Preschools, Emmonak**

**Fairbanks Native Association Head Start**

**Hydaburg School**

**Houston High School**

**Louise's Farm School, Palmer**

**McGrath School**

**Montessori Borealis, Juneau**

**South Anchorage High School**

**Susitna Elementary School, Anchorage**

**Thorne Bay School**

**Tyonek Educational Garden**

**Valley Pathways School, Palmer**

This year's projects cover a wide range, from school gardens, to cooking local foods, to hydroponics operations. We are thrilled about the growth and involvement of the program and look forward to seeing students throughout Alaska learn about Alaska Grown and harvested foods. This mini-grant program was made possible through partnership with the Alaska Obesity Prevention and Control Program.

### Welcome Becki Parham:

#### New AmeriCorps VISTA Farmers Market Quest Coordinator

I grew up in Minnesota near corn fields and dairy farms. Although I was surrounded by agriculture all through my childhood, my interest was first sparked in 2008, when I spent a summer working on a farm in Jefferson, Maine. My favorite days were the market days. We sold at a farmers' market in a low-income area and I saw firsthand the impact that fresh produce had on poverty-stricken communities. After graduating from college, I accepted a job with the Idaho Foodbank in Boise, Idaho, where I created and managed a community gardening program. Once again, I was humbled by the effects that fresh produce had in these communities. As that job came to a close, I knew I wanted to learn the science behind agriculture. I left Boise to pursue an MS degree in soil science at the University of Saskatchewan, which I completed in January 2014.

My love for farmers markets and agriculture runs deep, and I am very excited to be the AmeriCorps VISTA Farmers Market Quest Coordinator. VISTA stands for "Volunteers in Service to America" and is a federal program that works to alleviate poverty in the United States. My main duties as a VISTA volunteer involve coordinating the Farmers Market Quest program. The program provides funding to farmers' markets and farm stands to accept Quest cards (food stamps). Accepting Quest cards benefits card users and farmers alike; Quest users get fresh produce and farmers increase their clientele.

The program began in 2011 with just two markets, and this year at least 10 markets will participate and many others have expressed interest. I sincerely hope that I can reach more people this year than ever before and ensure a sustainable future for the program for many years to come. To contact Becki call 907-761-3880 or via [email](mailto:becki.parham@alaska.gov).



## Land Sales & Grazing Leases

[http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag\\_sales.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_sales.htm)

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## Mt. McKinley Meat & Sausage

[http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag\\_mmms.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_mmms.htm)

**Frank Huffman** 907-745-5232

[Frank.Huffman@alaska.gov](mailto:Frank.Huffman@alaska.gov)

## Pest Detection / Inspection Section

### Pest Detection Surveys Update for 2014

Each year, the Alaska Division of Agriculture coordinates pest detection surveys with various cooperators throughout the state. The surveys are conducted per cooperative agreements with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) through funded agreements via the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey, or CAPS, and Farm Bill pest detection programs.

The National CAPS program is a partnership among all 50 states and the USDA to detect and monitor exotic pests of importance to international trade, as well as pests of state and national concern. The Alaska CAPS Program facilitates the detection of plant pests through survey, outreach, educational activities, and interagency partnering.

The Division is currently conducting two surveys that were funded through the Farm Bill. One survey is for defoliating moths that could potentially be introduced from the lower 48 and Asian Far East countries. The target moths do not occur in Alaska and are of concern to forest and agricultural resources in the state and Pacific Northwest. Another project funded by Farm Bill is to survey and inventory insect species associated with peony crops in Alaska. The Division is working with University of Alaska Museum entomologists for identifications. This survey will have benefits for industry interests as well as helping to establish export markets.

CAPS projects being conducted include a survey to collect soil samples for an area-wide nematode project and a survey for nematodes that could vector Tobacco Rattle Virus (TRV) in peony. The Division inspection staff will also be working with Plant Materials Center staff to collect and test samples for TRV if detected in fields.

Several other CAPS projects include a nursery survey with a focus to update the nursery contact information in the state and to make note of plant material that is being imported into Alaska from outside suppliers, and a survey of small grains with a focus on sampling for insects and nematodes.

The Division will be making attempts to visit with individual farms and nurseries during the summer in order to conduct this important work. Your cooperation is voluntary but would be very much appreciated and helpful.

Most of the surveys that we conduct are for serious pests that are not known to occur in Alaska, and we hope that we do not find them. Occasionally, we do have positive detections, indicating that some of these pests are making their way to Alaska, but usually, and fortunately, our surveys are negative.

This negative data is extremely important for several reasons. First, negative information is used to help facilitate international trade in plant materials. And second, if we should find a serious pest in one of our surveys, this early detection would assist in determining the scope of the problem as well as helping to improve upon our chances of eradicating the pest before it became established. No pests of quarantine or regulatory concern were detected in any of the 2013 surveys we conducted in Alaska.



## Plant Materials Center

<http://plants.alaska.gov/>  
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**Heather Stewart** 907-745-4469  
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## Plant Materials Center

### On-Farm Crop Trials Survey

The Alaska Plant Materials Center is surveying all Alaskan agricultural producers interested in future On-Farm trials for various crop trialing. We are interested in hearing from small and large producers as well as home gardeners. If you are interested in the opportunity to be part of future trials please take the time to fill out the following survey. We will select future trial sites based on the information provided in this survey which is designed to help us match-up both producer and project needs. Help us, help Alaskan agriculture!

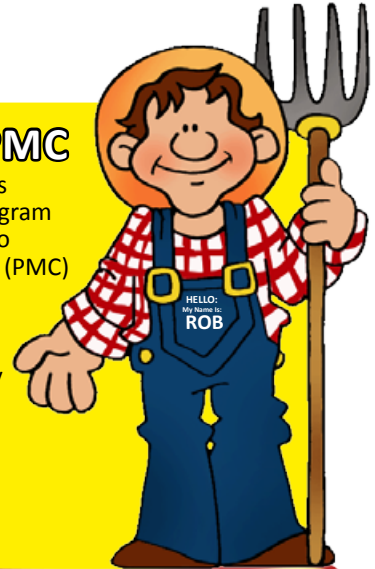
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NDY9PSQ>

For additional information please contact: Rob Carter  
[Robert.Carter@alaska.gov](mailto:Robert.Carter@alaska.gov)  
(907) 745-8127

### Agronomist II Position Open at PMC

The Department of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture, is seeking an Agronomist II. This Agronomist II position is the program lead for the Division of Agriculture's (DOA) Certified Seed Potato Production Program based at the Alaska Plant Materials Center (PMC) in Palmer, AK. This program is responsible for the production, oversight, and management of high quality seed potatoes from tissue culture, greenhouse, and field production. This position also works closely with the Alaska Potato industry on pathology and pest issues and with other DOA and PMC staff to provide technical assistance on inspection, certification, and disease identification.

For more information or to apply, visit Workplace Alaska [here](#).



### Plant Materials Center Introduces NEW Website

The staff at the Alaska Plant Materials Center (PMC) has been busy updating their [website](#). Please take a moment and visit our new pages. We hope that you find them easier to navigate and that they better identify the PMC's programs and mission.

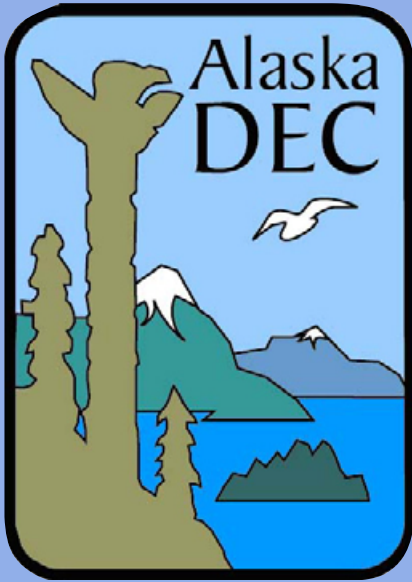
Be sure to check out the new searchable [Publications Page](#) and our [home page](#) for

up to date information on PMC projects, announcements, and reports. The [Invasive Plants and Agricultural Pest Management](#) pages now contain a plethora of information to aid the general public and agencies.

We have also added pages for our [Ethnobotany](#) Program (with up to date class information), [Horticulture](#), [Pathology](#), [Potato](#), [Revegetation](#), [Seed Production](#), and [Soil Conservation](#) Programs.

Please be aware that some of your old bookmarked pages have likely changed. If you have comments or need assistance in locating any information please don't hesitate to contact Kim Allen at 907-745-8735 or via email at [Kim.Allen@alaska.gov](mailto:Kim.Allen@alaska.gov).





## Environmental Health

Alaska Department of  
Environmental Conservation

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# Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation: Division of Environmental Health

## Poultry Outbreak: 2014 Highlights From the CDC Investigation

Over the last few years every spring, a number of families especially children have become infected with Salmonella from exposure to baby chicks. This trend has recurred again this year. Here is a link to the [CDC investigation](#).

It is important to remember that illness can occur from these baby birds or adult birds at any time of the year. Live poultry may have Salmonella germs in their droppings and on their bodies (feathers, feet, and beaks) even when they appear healthy and clean. The germs can also get on cages, coops, hay, plants, and soil in the area where the birds live and roam.

- As of May 7, 2014, a total of 60 persons infected with the outbreak strains of *Salmonella* Infantis or *Salmonella* Newport have been reported from 23 states.

- o 31% of ill persons have been hospitalized, and no deaths have been reported.

- Epidemiologic and traceback findings have linked this outbreak of human *Salmonella* Infantis and *Salmonella* Newport infections to contact with chicks, ducklings, and other live baby poultry from Mt. Healthy Hatcheries in Ohio.

- This is the same mail-order hatchery that has been associated with multiple outbreaks of *Salmonella* infections linked to live poultry in past years, including in 2012 and 2013.

- Mail-order hatcheries, agricultural feed stores, and others that sell or display chicks, ducklings, and other live poultry should provide health-related information to owners and potential purchasers of these birds prior to the point of purchase. This should include information about the risk of acquiring a *Salmonella* infection from contact with live poultry.

- o Read the "advice to mail-order hatcheries and feed stores and others that sell or display live poultry" article [here](#).

- Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water right after touching live poultry or anything in the area where they live and roam.

- o These recommendations are important and apply to all live poultry, regardless of the age of the birds or where they were purchased.



## Providing Good Husbandry Practices Will Ensure the Best Gain and Help Increase the Profit Margin for Farmers

When the weather changes and temperatures outside fall below or rise above the animal's comfort zone, the body uses more energy to stay cool or keep warm. This stress will cause an increase in food intake and decrease in weight gain or production (milk, egg). The comfort zone, or thermal neutral zone, varies with each species of animal.

### POULTRY

Chickens (layers, broilers) .....50°F - 68°F

### TURKEYS (are a bit more temperature sensitive)

Hatching .....84°F - 90°F

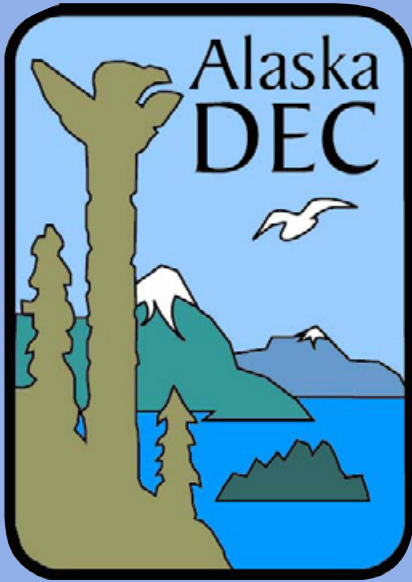
4 weeks .....75°F

10 weeks .....64°F

Over 12 weeks .....50°F

\*All adult birds have a normal body temperature of 106°F and grow faster in temperatures ranging from 50°F to 68°F. These temperatures are those measured inside the poultry house, at the bird's level.

*continued on next page*



# Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation: Division of Environmental Health

## Cattle and Bison

Dairy Cattle .....	41°F - 68°F
Beef Cattle and Bison .....	23°F - 77°F

## Swine

Piglets (first 3 days unable to regulate body temperature) .....	77°F - 90°F
Weaners.....	75°F - 86°F
Growing stock and Adults .....	61°F - 77°F

## Equine

Horses, donkeys, mules.....	41°F - 77°F
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We may not be able to eliminate all the stress from severe weather, but to maximize animal growth you need to make management decisions to minimize animal exposure to adverse weather and to wet and muddy conditions. Rain, snow, ice, and extreme temperatures are normal challenges here in Alaska and farmers need to remember that each of these factors can reduce an animal's growth and performance as that animal moves outside of its "thermal neutral zone."

Pastures and feeding areas can quickly become muddy after it rains or the snow melts and animals are walking about. This is especially the case if animals are confined to a restricted space and feeding areas are not spread out or rotated. Pastures and calving areas will become very muddy in these circumstances and the wet and mud decrease the insulation and protective nature of the hair coat. This makes lying down to rest uncomfortable; resulting in more time spent standing, more cold stress, increase risk of disease exposure and lower weight gains.

A national study recently reported that mud 4 to 8 inches deep can reduce feed intake 5 to 15 percent and therefore have a dramatic impact on weight gain and production. Even what we may consider small amounts of mud can have significant effects on livestock. When the temperature drops between 21 and 39 F° units, mud that is covering just the hoof up to the dewclaw can result in a 7% reduction in weight gain and this doubles when the mud reaches up to the shin. A normal Alaska summer day can see the temperature fall from 72° in the daytime to 51° overnight, so producers should be mindful of the potential feed intake reduction that the combination of mud and temperature change can create.

Ideally you want to contour your feeding areas and pastures to permit good drainage of surface water. Rotate positions of feed troughs to avoid depressions and troughs that will turn into mud pits when it rains or there is runoff from spring melt. Be sure to provide enough space for each animal in the herd: don't crowd too many animals in a limited space! During dry summer conditions, 125 square feet of pen space may be sufficient whereas in wet conditions, as much as 350 square feet of space may be inadequate.

The other result of muddy conditions on the farm is the effect on the public perception of farming and concerns for animal care on the farm. The last point to consider is the impact of the muddy conditions and dirty hair coat on the quality of the meat produced from the livestock.

Good farm management is very important. It will decrease stress on the animals; increase weight gains; allow you to produce the best quality meat and helps to minimize production costs.





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[www.uaf.edu/snre/](http://www.uaf.edu/snre/)

## UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

### School of Natural Resources and Extension

#### NEW UAF Veterinarian, Lisa Lunn

*Story contributed by Nancy Tarnai*

Brand new University of Alaska Fairbanks veterinarian Lisa Lunn sees her role as a bridge between farmers and veterinarians. "It's daunting to be the first person in this role," she said.

Lunn is an associate professor in the UAF Department of Veterinary Medicine and the food animal veterinarian for the UAF Cooperative Extension Service.

She and her husband, Kevin Krugle, arrived in Alaska a couple of months ago from Grenada, an island in the southeastern Caribbean Sea. "I hope I can help educate the producers who don't have veterinarians close by," Lunn said. "I'll work with veterinarians and state veterinarians to fill the gaps in knowledge."

Raised until the age of 12 in Massachusetts, Lunn's life changed radically when her mother married a dairy farmer and the family moved to Cobleskill, New York, to live on one of the area's last working dairy farms. "That started my life in farming," Lunn said. "I absolutely fell in love with cows. On our small farm we treated animals with respect. It was a lot of work but I loved it."

Lunn always knew she wanted to be a veterinarian and she joined FFA to continue her interests. Meeting young farmers from huge operations was an eye opener for Lunn because she realized that small family farms are not that different from corporate farms. "Whether it's 20 cows or 2,000 it's the same management," she said. "Some cows have names and some have numbers."

Back then the FFA conventions were held in Kansas City. "On a whim I applied to Kansas State University," Lunn said. She earned a degree in animal science, then a doctorate of veterinary medicine. "That was the greatest decision I ever made," she said. "I learned large animal and small animal medicine. It's so well rounded." She did her residency at Michigan State University then became a faculty member there.

For the past five years she has been teaching at St. George's University in Grenada. "I was exposed to Third World small ruminants, a very different form of agriculture," Lunn said. "They were happy for the knowledge."

It was in Grenada that Lunn became captivated by the One Health Initiative, a movement to unite human and veterinary medicine. "We owe it to the world to share our knowledge," she said. "This could be important in rural Alaska."

While Lunn admits it's going to be a challenge to serve the entire state, she plans to survey producers to see what their needs are and then tailor online webinars to meet those needs as best she can. She wants to have an easily accessible question and answer tool on the Extension website.

Lunn wants to encourage Alaska youth to get involved in 4-H and FFA and will work closely with the state veterinarian to try to keep everyone informed on how to be productive and have a safe food supply.

"We've got a big challenge," she said. "My to-do list gets bigger and bigger."

In the veterinary medicine classroom, she has big plans also. She's thrilled about the life-size simulated cow and horse the department will get. This way students will be able to examine the internal organs without using real animals. "The modern way is to train on simulators till students gain good skills," she said.

Offering Alaska students the opportunity to study veterinary medicine in Fairbanks is a win-win in Lunn's opinion. "To go in the lower 48 is expensive and they may not give the education needed for Alaska," she said. "We'll put an Alaska spin on it. Raising cattle in Alabama is very different from Alaska. And there are also sled dogs, reindeer, and bison."

Lunn believes the state doesn't have enough large animal veterinarians to cover the farms dotted all over. "I hope to be a resource and work with veterinarians to get information out about herd health and offer continuing education for veterinarians," she said.

Lunn is so fascinated with jersey cows she'd have one for a pet if she had the room. Meanwhile, she has three very spoiled cats.

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Lisa Lunn, new veterinarian at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, cozies up to a jersey cow at Northern Lights Dairy in Delta Junction during a field trip May 12 for UAF School of Natural Resources students. (Photo by Nancy Tarnai)