



AK Agriculture Insider

August, 2017

Back to School

Some tips and tricks for students and staff on restoring your school greenhouse and/or garden for a fall harvest.

Alaska State Fair

It's one of the best times of the year to see our Alaska Grown produce, livestock and locally made products on display. Plus a special discount.

From the Director

The latest on the Agriculture industry in Alaska from Division Director Arthur Keyes.

Recipe of the Month

Caramelized Broccoli - even the traditional broccoli dislikers will love this sweet twist on Alaska Grown Broccoli.

Meet me at the Market

Find out which Farmer's Markets the Division of Agriculture will be at during the month of August.

Big Enough Broccoli

Size does matter when it comes to selling this green vegetable. Learn what the USDA standards are.

Meet the Team

Get to know our Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund Loan Officer, Amanda Swanson.

Land Sale Opportunity

Three parcels of state land for agricultural development are open for bid in Northern Alaska.

From the Director

Hello,

We are just weeks away from a big annual celebration of Alaska's agriculture industry - the Alaska State Fair! It's a great event that showcases the growing capabilities of our farmers, gardeners and livestock throughout the state. One of my favorite parts of the fair (besides the food) is seeing the reaction and admiration of hundreds of kids and their families when they walk through the agricultural exhibits. It is truly impressive what Alaska's agriculture community is capable of. Don't forget they will announce this year's Farm Family of the Year on opening day and Thursday, Aug. 31 is Alaska Grown Day! If you wear your Alaska Grown apparel on Thurs. Aug. 31, you get \$2 off the admission price at the Fair Gates. Also, if you're in the Interior, the Tanana Valley State Fair begins Friday, August 4th, and the Kenai Peninsula Fair is August 18 - 20th. Be sure to check out and support the agricultural exhibits there.

It's been a little bit of a "funky" growing season - it seems that our last couple of summers of sensational growing weather may have cooled off. Many of our growers and producers around the state are reporting about a two-week delay of their regular crop and harvest production. That means we should be seeing a variety of July crops such as broccoli and cauliflower available this August. Let's make sure we continue to support our farmers and producers by choosing Alaska Grown in stores and at the markets.

The Division of Agriculture will be at a variety of farms and functions this month including in the Interior and on the Kenai Peninsula. Our goal is to connect more with our agricultural community and share with Alaskans the incredible work of our growers and producers. Our Alaska Grown Facebook page is a great resource to see what Farmer's Markets we will be at and what farms we are visiting. If you haven't liked or followed our page you can do so at:

<https://www.facebook.com/dnr.alaskagrown/>
I hope you enjoy the rest of the summer, the State Fair and Alaska Grown.

Until next time,

Arthur Keyes - Director of Agriculture

State Land Auction

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is pleased to announce the rescheduling of the Kobe North Agricultural Sealed Bid Auction #481. The Kobe North Agricultural Sealed-bid Auction #481, under AS 38.05.055, began July 10, 2017 and sealed auction bids will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on August 18, 2017.

This year's auction features three parcels in the Kobe North Agricultural Project. An electronic version of the brochure with information about the bidding procedures and the parcels is available at: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/landsale/ag/brochure/481.pdf>



Auction bids will be opened and apparent winners will be announced on August 23rd, beginning at 1:00 p.m. at DNR's Northern Region Office located at 3700 Airport Way, Fairbanks, Alaska. Attendance at the bid opening will not affect the outcome.

The successful bidder will be required to submit a State Farm Conservation Plan (SFCP) that is first reviewed by the local Soil and Water Conservation District and is then sent to the Division of Agriculture. The director of the Division of Agriculture is responsible for approval of farm plans. For parcels purchased during the sealed bid auction, the SFCP must be submitted to the Division of Agriculture for approval no later than 5:00 p.m., October 13, 2017.

If you have any questions about the auction, please contact Erik Johnson in the Division of Agriculture Palmer office at (907) 761-3863 or email erik.johnson@alaska.gov or, contact the Fairbanks Public Information Center at (907) 451-2705.



Broccoli Size Standards

When it comes to growing and selling broccoli there are sizing requirements set by the USDA for U.S. No. 1* Broccoli. The U.S. Grade Standards for Broccoli apply to Bunched Broccoli, Broccoli Crowns and Broccoli Florets. So what are the differences between these three versions?

Bunched broccoli are stalks bound together to form a single unit. Crowns are the heads of the stalks that have cutoff shortened stems. If at the grocery store, crowns are individually sold in bulk, on the shelves in the produce section. Florets are bud clusters closely trimmed from the head, with remaining stalk usually being one inch or less.

The U.S. Grade Standard Size Requirements for U.S. No. 1* Broccoli include the following:

Broccoli	Diameter ¹	Length ²
Bunch	No requirement; may be specified	5 inches min.- 9 inches max.
Crown	No requirement; may be specified	3.5 inches min.- 6 inches max.
Floret	Not less than 1 or more than 4 inches	1.5 inches min.- 4.5 inches max.

¹ The diameter is defined as the average measurement across the bud cluster at the top of the stalk, crown or floret.

² The length is defined as the total length of the stalk measured from the base of the stem to the top of the bud cluster.

*Please note: The U.S. Grade Standards allow for size to be “unless otherwise specified.” Please see the USDA link for more information, <https://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards/italian-sprouting-broccoli-grades-and-standards>



Back to School

As you head back to school this month, you may be finding your school garden could use a little TLC; it's not uncommon to find Chickweed, Lamb's Quarter, and all the other weeds that have taken over. But don't worry, there's still time to salvage what you planted in the Spring and finish the year with a healthy harvest. Here are some tips for restoring your school garden into top green shape.

Weed It

Get out and weed the garden(s). Pull out all the plants that aren't what you planted as those weeds are competing for the same nutrients your garden plants need. Before and after photos of this process can help you see your accomplishments. We don't often think to use our parent volunteers for something like this, but some may enjoy this gardening task on a nice day.

Potatoes

Hill your potatoes. If you planted potatoes you will want to pile up soil around the base of the potato plants. The potatoes near the surface must not be exposed to sunlight as those potatoes will turn green – when tubers are exposed to light (even after harvest), the potato wants to send out new shoots, and chlorophyll (the green pigment that helps the plant absorb sunlight) is formed as well as glycoalkaloid called solanine. Solanine causes a bitter taste and can irritate the digestive system as well as trigger allergic reactions. So, to avoid green potatoes, keep a nice layer of soil on them by piling up garden soil around the base of the potatoes or “hill” them. Let them stay in the ground until just before the deep, soil-freezing frosts.



Back to School Continued...

Root Veggies

Once you weed around all the root veggies, you can keep them in the ground until the first gentle frost – then, harvest them that day. Treat the root veggies just like the potatoes; if you are going to store them – keep them dirty, if you are going to eat them right away – wash them and cook.

Leafy Greens

If you planted kale or collards or chard, you can harvest them after the first frost. Lettuces and other greens need to be harvested prior to the frost but the hardier greens can handle a little freeze before you bring them inside for lunch.



Other Veggies and Fruits

Harvest all these tasty goodies before the first frost. Celebrate your harvest – take pictures – send notes home to the parents – have a blast, you’ve earned it!

Meet the Team

Amanda Swanson has been with the Alaska Division of Agriculture for more than six years. She serves as the Loan Officer for the Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund (ARLF). The ARLF is designed to help promote the development of the agriculture industry in Alaska by providing moderate interest rate loans. Amanda helps farmers through the application process so they can obtain reasonable loans for farming development in our state.

“My favorite part about my job is helping people turn their farming dreams into a reality,” said Amanda Swanson.

Amanda grew up in a military family and has lived all over the United States. The military brought her family to Alaska where her father decided to retire. Amanda



has been in Alaska for 20 years, and pursued a professional career in banking and credit unions. She joined the Alaska Division of Agriculture in 2011 to increase her work experience and to diversify her banking background. When she’s not at work, Amanda enjoys spending time with her daughter and taking care of their many pets, including their pet ducks.

If you ever have any questions regarding agricultural related loans in Alaska, please feel free to reach out to Amanda at Amanda.Swanson@alaska.gov or give her a call at (907) 745-7200.

Alaska State Fair

Be sure to check out the agricultural exhibits at the 2017 Alaska State Fair which runs from August 24th through September 4th. Alaska Grown Day is Thursday, Aug. 31 and if you wear your Alaska Grown Apparel on this day, you’ll get a \$2.00 discount on your admission price at the Fair gates. Thank you for supporting our Alaskan Farmers and Alaska Grown!



\$2 off State Fair Admission when you wear your Alaska Grown Apparel on August 31st!

Recipe of the Month

Carmelized Broccoli w/ Garlic



(recipe & photo adapted from www.foodandwine.com)

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 heads of Alaska Grown broccoli (1 1/4 pounds total), stems peeled and heads halved lengthwise
- 1/2 cup water
- 3 Alaska Grown garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- Pinch of crushed red pepper
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Directions

In a large, deep skillet, heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil. Add the broccoli, cut side down, cover and cook over moderate heat until richly browned on the bottom, about 8 minutes. Add the water, cover and cook until the broccoli is just tender and the water has evaporated, about 7 minutes. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil along with the garlic and the crushed red pepper and cook uncovered until the garlic is golden brown, about 3 minutes. Season the broccoli with salt and black pepper, drizzle with the lemon juice, and serve.

Meet me at the Market

This summer the Division of Agriculture has been visiting Farmer's Markets to promote the Alaska Grown \$5 Challenge and to get feedback from attendees on their market experience. Farmer's Markets are a popular way for Alaskans to access fresh Alaska Grown products throughout the summer and they are available all over the state. For a current list of available Farmer's Markets visit:

www.buyAlaskaGrown.com



To see which Farmer's Markets the Division of Agriculture will be at during the month of August please visit the "events" section of our Facebook page. Alaska Grown swag will be provided, including \$5 Challenge bags (while supplies last) for those who purchase \$5 worth of Alaska Grown products at the market.



Events

August 4th - Tanana Valley State Fair Begins

August 5th - National Oyster Day! Support Alaska Grown Aquaculture with some fresh Alaska Oysters!



August 18-20th - Kenai Peninsula Fair

August 24th - Start of the Alaska State Fair

August 31st - Alaska Grown Day at State Fair

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