



AK Agriculture Insider

July and August, 2018

Farm Family of the Year

The 2018 Farm Family of the Year is the Olson's of Soldotna. They will be formally recognized at this year's Alaska State Fair!

From the Director

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

Recipe of the Month

A quick and tasty way to enjoy some Alaska Grown broccoli. Even the kiddos won't pass on this recipe!

Meet the Team

Making sure it makes the grade, get to know our Development Specialist, Mia Kirk.

Homegrown by Hereos

The Division has partnered with this program to honor and support our U.S. Veteran farmers in Alaska. Learn more about the program.

History of AK Grown

Where did it all start? Learn more about the history of Alaska Grown, and how old this well-known logo is.

Marketing Award

The Alaska Division of Agriculture won a national Marketing Excellence award for its development of the Alaska Grown \$5 Challenge.

From the Director

Hello,

First off I would like to congratulate the 2018 Alaska State Fair Farm Family of the Year, the Olson's of Soldotna! From the amazing specialty Alaska Grown products they create, to the countless hours of time they spend supporting our agriculture community, we are thankful for all of their hard work and effort. I'd also like to thank those who took the time to submit nominations for the Farm Family of the Year and recognize the invaluable work of our farmers throughout Alaska. I hope you can join us at the State Fair to honor the Olson's on Thursday, August 23rd.

Throughout the summer, the Division attended multiple farmer's markets around the state to promote Alaska Grown and gather data about market attendees to further inform our future marketing efforts. It has been great to meet new farmers and market goers, and see the amazing products that are being grown and produced. We also have more than 40 grocery retailers participating in the \$5 Alaska Grown challenge which runs through the end of October, and have seen some impressive displays and promotion of Alaska Grown in our grocery stores. We are thrilled to see Alaska Grown Peonies enter the local retailer market and the flowers were sold at various Fred Meyer stores this season.

The Division is continuing to develop the industrial hemp pilot program and we anticipate to have some more information to release this fall. In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns regarding the future industrial hemp pilot program, you can email your questions and/or comments to:

industrialhemp@alaska.gov

Until next time,

Arthur Keyes - Director of Agriculture

Farm Family of 2018

The Olson family of Soldotna has been selected by the Alaska agriculture community as the 2018 Alaska State Fair Farm Family of the Year. They will be honored at the Alaska State Fair on Thursday, August 23, 2018. Brian and Laurie Olson operate their farm and winery, Alaska Berries, on the Kenai Peninsula. They moved to Alaska from Montana in 1990 and began farming in 2002.



Brian and Laurie both came from multi-generational farm families. Brian's father still lives on their family's homestead in South Dakota. Laurie's parents farmed in eastern Montana until the mid-1950s. The Olsons officially started Alaska Berries in 2007 when they began planting more berry bushes and selling berries at the local farmer's markets. Today, the farm/winery sells plants and handcrafted value-added Alaska Grown products such as wine, jam, syrup, juice and vinaigrette. They also raise bees, chickens and ducks. The winery was licensed in 2012 and their Alaska Grown wines have won ribbons at the Alaska State Fair, in addition to several medals at the Northwest Wine Summit.



Brian and Laurie hire both seasonal and year-round help, from teenagers to grandparents. In the future, the Olsons would like to increase production of their value-added products.

History of AK Grown

The Alaska Grown logo is considered to be the most widely recognized logo in the state of Alaska, and is known nationally as the second longest continuously promoted state branded agricultural program in the nation - a title it has gained after being in existence for only 33 years. The Division of Agriculture created the Alaska Grown logo in 1985 with the desire to increase consumer awareness and consumption of local Alaskan produce and products, as well as establish a consistently productive market for producers in the state. Alaska is a vastly diverse landscape



which provides unique challenges in the way of agricultural production, but also gives us an exceptional opportunity for growth and development. The Division of Agriculture saw the need for a marketing campaign to promote buying food and farm products grown within the state as opposed to products imported to Alaska, and recognized that agricultural industries in the state are as diverse as the landscape. To develop a symbol that could fairly and accurately represent all agricultural industries while labeling them as grown in Alaska, a contest was put on to create a logo. The contest logos were then voted on at the Alaska Agriculture Symposium in Fairbanks and thus, the Alaska Grown logo we know and love today was born.

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The Farm Family of the Year award, sponsored by the Matanuska Valley Federal Credit Union, was established by the Alaska State Fair in 2000 to honor an Alaska farming family and show appreciation for all the hardworking Alaskans committed to agriculture. After reviewing nominations, an awards committee chaired by the Alaska Division of Agriculture selected the winning family based on production of quality Alaska Grown products, community and agricultural organization involvement, and overall image. Recent Farm Family of the Year winners include the McCollum and Pinkleman families of Northwest Land & Livestock and Delta Meat & Sausage, Inc. (2017), the Plagerman Family of Scott Plagerman Farms (2016) and the Pettit Family of Little Pitchfork Ranch (2015). Please join us in congratulating the Olson family of Soldotna as this year's Farm Family of the Year and thanking them for their years of service to Alaska's agriculture development and community.

Homegrown by Heroes

The Alaska Division of Agriculture is pleased to announce a new working partnership with the Homegrown by Heroes program. Homegrown by Heroes is operated by the Farmer Veteran Coalition, and serves as the official farmer veteran branding program of America. Members of the program can utilize the Homegrown by Heroes label, which informs consumers that their agricultural products were produced by U.S. military veterans. The program will be expanding outreach efforts in Alaska this year by partnering with the Division of Agriculture's Alaska Grown program. Alaska military veteran farmers can sign up for the program at the following link:



<https://www.farmvetco.org/hbh/>

A formal event announcing this new partnership will be held at the Alaska State Fair on Thursday, August 30th at 4:00 p.m.

History of AK Grown

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Governor Sheffield unveiled the brand new Alaska Grown logo at a market in Anchorage the following year, 1986, and the program began adopting members. The program has enrolled over 900 members over the last 30 years, producing everything from produce to fiber, to mariculture and livestock.



The Alaska Grown logo has expanded over the years to include not only producers farming in our great state, but associate members that buy or sell Alaska Grown producers food and farm products such as retail, farmer's markets, distributors and restaurants.



Currently the Alaska Division of Agriculture is working on a new, online digital directory to list all of the Alaska Grown program members, and create a place where consumers can easily search for specific products and find the farms near them that produce it. The Division is excited for the future of Alaska Grown and anticipates to announce information about the new directory this fall.

Crop Insurance Date

The USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) is reminding Alaska producers that the final date to apply for forage production crop insurance for the 2019 crop year is September 30th. Current policyholders who wish to make changes to their existing coverage also have until the September 30th sales closing date to do so. You can learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at www.rma.usda.gov

Marketing Award

The Alaska Division of Agriculture received the North American Agricultural Marketing Officials (NAAMO) 2018 Agriculture Marketing Excellence Award for its development of the Alaska Grown \$5 Challenge. The NAAMO Marketing Excellence Award is given annually to recognize and award innovative and effective agricultural marketing projects by states and provinces. The award also helps with sharing knowledge and ideas for

projects that other states and provinces could consider for agriculture marketing use. The Alaska Division of Agriculture launched the \$5 Alaska Grown Challenge initiative building on the efforts of the Alaska Farm Bureau and Kenai Soil and Water Conservation District. In 2017, the division took the program state-wide with a focus on partnering with grocery retailers to improve the marketing of the Alaska Grown products they carry. The campaign also markets to consumers the numerous benefits of spending \$5 on Alaska Grown items each week and encourages residents to seek out and buy Alaska Grown products when they shop. Past state recipients of the NAAMO Marketing Excellence Award include Oklahoma, Colorado, and North Carolina. for the Western Region.



Meet the Team

Mia Kirk has been with the Alaska Division of Agriculture for 11 years, and currently serves as a Development Specialist providing inspection and certification services for various agricultural producers and products throughout the state. Mia first started her career in agriculture working for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in Pennsylvania, conducting federal inspection work. Her work with the USDA brought her to Alaska, and in 2007 she started working for the Alaska Division of Agriculture. When Mia first started with the division she spent much of her time



grading potatoes. For the past five years, Mia has been conducting field inspections of potatoes for seed potato certification. She also conducts export certifications, harmonized GAP audits, fresh fruit, vegetable, eggs, elk, and bee inspections, and imports and agriculture



regulations. Her favorite part about her job is getting to work out in the field and working with with the farmers. Her favorite Alaska Grown item is potatoes. When not at work, Mia loves to spend her time venturing outdoors

including camping, hiking, and biking with family and friends. In the wintertime, Mia likes recreating in the snow including skiing and snowboarding.

Recipe of the Month

Parmesan Roasted Alaska Grown Broccoli (adapted from the Food Network)



Ingredients

- 6 to 7 cups fresh Alaska Grown broccoli florets
- 3 to 4 tbsp. olive oil
- 1/4 cup Italian style breadcrumbs
- 1/2 cup freshly shredded parmesan cheese
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp black pepper

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with tinfoil and coat with non-stick spray.
2. Combine the broccoli and olive oil in a large zip-lock bag and shake to coat. Add the breadcrumbs, parmesan cheese, garlic powder, salt and pepper to the bag and shake to coat. Use your hands to rub the bag and help the coating to stick to the broccoli.
3. Spread the broccoli in an even layer on the baking sheet, picking up any coating that's on the bottom and dispersing it over the broccoli as needed. Bake for 12 minutes, then stir and flip the broccoli, bake for an additional 10 to 15 minutes, until crisp-tender. Enjoy!

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