

State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources



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Retailers recognized in first-ever \$5 Alaska Grown Challenge

(Palmer, AK) – A brand-new, consumer-driven Alaska Grown marketing campaign that helped some Alaska farmers sell out of many of their 2017 products and drive plans for increased 2018 production ended with recognition to Alaska retailers that made an exceptional effort to feature Alaska Grown products in grocery stores.

In presenting an award and honorable mention to retailers today in Palmer, Governor Bill Walker stressed his goal of expanding Alaska agriculture, and giving more Alaskans access to fresh, healthy and affordable food.

The \$5 Alaska Grown Challenge encouraged Alaskans to spend \$5 weekly on Alaska Grown products at their local retailers including vegetables, dairy, meat, and grains. The Division of Agriculture developed the campaign, working with grocery retailers statewide to encourage stores to create unique displays promoting the campaign and the Alaska Grown products they carry. Participating retailers included Carrs-Safeway, Walmart, Fred Meyer, the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Commissary, Save-U-More, and Alaska Commercial Co.

Division of Agriculture Director Arthur Keyes presented the first “Golden Carrot” award to Palmer Carrs-Safeway based on the store’s creativity, consistent labeling and prominent product placement of Alaska Grown products. The Walmart stores of Alaska received an honorable mention for their marketing efforts during the June to October campaign.

While sales data of Alaska Grown items is not made public by retailers, farmers and producers throughout the state reported this year that many of their products sold out, and some are expanding their production for next year. *Mike Mosesian* with Bell’s Nursery intends to increase production of his tomatoes and cucumbers by 20 percent and *Bryce Wrigley* with the Alaska Flour Company added products to 23 additional retailers throughout the state.

“We are grateful for the support Governor Walker has given to our efforts to create a more resilient food system in Alaska,” said Wrigley. “The \$5 Alaska Grown Challenge, sponsored by the Division of Agriculture, has been instrumental in opening markets to our food products.”

If all Alaskans were to participate in the weekly five-dollar challenge, citizens would add tens of millions of dollars back into the local economy every year.

The Division of Agriculture plans to run the \$5 Alaska Grown Challenge again in 2018 and solicit more store participation.

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