



Division of Agriculture Activities

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Note From the Director

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

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To remove your name from our e-newsletter list [click here](#).

Questions or Comments? E-Mail me at Patricia.O'Neil@alaska.gov or call 907-761-3858.



The Division is pleased to announce that Governor Palin has appointed Stuart M. Davies and Anthony T. "Tony" Nakazawa to the Board of Agriculture and Conservation (BAC). "Stu" Davies, moved to Alaska in 1979, and produces native grass seed, hay, and grain on his 300 acre farm in North Pole. His seat represents commercial grain producers. Tony Nakazawa is an economics professor with the University of Alaska Cooperative Extension Service. He has many published works addressing Alaska state government, economics and agricultural education. He has been involved with Alaskan agriculture since 1981. He has filled the seat for statewide agricultural promotional organization. Both new members bring a fresh perspective to the table and I look forward to their participation on the board.

On a different note - USDA is seeking to engage stakeholders and producers to hear not only their concerns about the National Animal Identification System, but also potential or feasible solutions to those concerns. The information and ideas gathered will assist Secretary Vilsack in making decisions about the future direction of animal traceability in the United States. For more information on the upcoming meetings please visit the following website: [Learn more about the NAIS Dialogue](#)

In closing, June 21st - 27th has been declared Alaska Invasive Weeds Awareness Week. This week has been designated to prevent the spread of noxious and invasive weeds through outreach and education. Our hope is that through education, Alaska will continue to offer its residents a pristine place to dwell.

Franci

Calendar Events—These events are those that we are currently aware of and this list may not be all inclusive. If you would like to have an event added on next months newsletter, please contact Patricia O'Neil @ Patricia.O'Neil@alaska.gov or 907-761-3858

- AITC—Ag in the Classroom Institute, Fairbanks—June 2-4
- Multi-Location Abattoir (slaughter facility) Tour, Kodiak—June 4
- Global Food Alaska, Soldotna—June 10-11
- Alaska Invasive Weeds Awareness Week—June 21-27

Inspection Staff

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Inspection Section

What efforts are being done to protect our potato industry?

*In 1999, The Division of Agriculture established a quarantine restricting the movement of tomato plants and potato seed in order to prevent commodities infected with Potato Late Blight (*Phytophthora infestans*), entering into Alaska. Since 1995, there have been 3 introductions of Late blight into Alaska and tomato plants have been suspected of carrying the disease. These outbreaks have been eradicated and Alaska is one of very few states that do not have this disease, which could devastate our potato industry.*

Alaska Division of Agriculture is working with Customs and Border Protection to enforce this quarantine.

During the first week of May 2008, the Division of Agriculture worked cooperatively with CBP and USDA/ APHIS at the Alcan land border. During this time, it was discovered that there were tomato plants crossing the border in passenger vehicles as well as in semi trucks destined to Garden Centers. The tomato plants in vehicles were being transported by individuals that lived 'seasonally' in Alaska. These plants were mature and producing fruit. They did not have any of the required certification and therefore were forfeited and disposed of at the land border. Most of the semi trucks with tomato plants had appropriate certification for entry and others were confirmed at a later date.



As a result of last year's cooperative effort, CBP has directed their personnel to enforce this quarantine if tomato plants are found in passenger vehicles without the appropriate certification. In addition to this, staff at the Division of Agriculture have been doing surveillance at Nurseries and Garden Centers verifying that the tomato plants for sale have met the State's certification requirements. For more information on the requirements visit this link, <http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/Inspection/PotatoList.pdf>

Alaska Division of Agriculture is providing outreach to the gardening industry.

In April, Division of Agriculture staff spoke on Jeff Lowenfel's "Garden Party" radio show on KBYR AM 700 and discussed the importance of buying certified potato seed and how doing so will protect our potato industry by not unintentionally introducing pests and harmful pathogens, such as Late Blight. The plant health requirements for seed versus edible potatoes were discussed as well as the surveillance being done at Alaska Garden Centers and Nurseries to ensure that the seed for sale has met state plant health requirements. It was also mentioned that by buying Alaska seed that there is more of a variety if interested in growing different types such as Peanut, AK red, AK blue, Iditared, Butterball and Fingerlings, etc.

Jeff Lowenfels, ADN Gardening Columnist, mentioned in his April column: "It is very important that you only buy Alaskan, certified, seed potatoes versus planting shriveled, sprouting, edible potatoes that have been left over from a long winter or have been purchased from the supermarket. This is crucial to the health of potatoes up here to prevent introduction of Late Blight which would hurt our potato industry. Lower 48 potatoes do not pass this test."

Marketing Staff

http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_ms.htm

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Please note that Farmers Markets are opening statewide; check out the new Alaska Farmers Market Association web site www.alaskafarmersmarkets.org for a complete list of markets.

We also have a list available markets on our website at: http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_ms.htm

Marketing Services

Nominations for the 2009 Alaska State Fair Farm Family of the Year

Due June 30, 2009

Alaska agriculture is a vital, 32 million dollar industry, composed of a wide range of businesses including farms, ranches, nurseries, and gardens. The Alaska State Fair and the agricultural community want to applaud the efforts of these farmers by honoring one family that epitomizes the spirit of Alaska farming.

We need the public's help in nominating friends and neighbors for the 10th Annual Farm Family of the Year award. The Alaska State Fair established the award in 2000 to honor an Alaska farming family and show appreciation for all the hardworking Alaskans committed to agriculture and aquaculture in the state.

The 2008 recipients were Brad & Pam Lewis, third generation Palmer farmers. Along with their sons, the Lewis' have been successfully producing high quality potatoes for the past 16 years.

The selection committee is comprised of members from the Farm Services Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the University of Alaska Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, the state Division of Agriculture, and the Cooperative Extension Service.

The Farm Family selection committee will accept nominations and 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 agricultural industry organizations (local, state and federal, etc.) and,
- Overall farm family image, farming history, and unique or special production.

The award, sponsored by the Matanuska Valley Federal Credit Union, will be presented at the Fair on Governors Day, August 27, 2009. Nominations should offer details about the family and how the family members fulfill the criteria. The nomination should be mailed to:

Amy Pettit – Farm Family
Alaska Division of Agriculture
1800 Glenn Hwy, Ste. 12
Palmer, AK 99645

Nominations may also be emailed to: Amy Pettit at Amy.Pettit@alaska.gov or faxed to: (907) 745-7254. The deadline for nominations is June 30, 2009.

Alaska State Fair Farm Family of the Year Past Recipients

The Alaska State Fair Farm Family of the Year award was established in 2000 to honor an Alaska farming family and show appreciation for all the hardworking Alaskans committed to agriculture and aquaculture in the state. Nominations are accepted annually, and the winner must meet criteria such as production of quality Alaska Grown product, community and agricultural organization involvement, and overall image.

2000 Huppert Family

Paul Huppert came to Alaska in 1952 and homesteaded in the Mat-Su Valley. He worked as Produce Manager for Matanuska Maid until the Produce Division was sold in 1964. Paul purchased the Produce Division and formed Palmer Produce. Today many members of the Huppert family are involved in the farming enterprise including Paul's son Gerald Huppert, his daughter Paula Giauque, his grandson Josh Lutz, and his granddaughter Terri Bernowski.

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Marketing Services

2001 VanderWeele Farms – Ben & Suus VanderWeele

Ben and his wife Suus began their farming operation in the Mat-Su Valley in 1967. Today the VanderWeele operation consists of 160 cultivated acres that are operated by Ben, Suus, and their three children – Glenn, Rodger & Michelle and 25-30 seasonal employees. VanderWeele Farms successfully produces a variety of vegetables including potatoes, carrots, lettuces, cabbages and onions.

2002 Havemeister Farms – Bob & Jeanne Havemeister

Bob's parents, Arnold & Emmy arrived in the Mat-Su Valley in May, 1935, one of 200 Colony families selected by the federal government to settle and farm here during the Depression. Today the farm covers 200 acres owned and leased, and the Havemeisters milk about half of their 150 cow herd, producing approximately 2.2 million pounds of milk/year. The current operation is a high-tech dairy that tags and logs in the cows and tracks milk production, age and offspring.

2003 Rempel Family Farm – Mark Rempel

The Rempel Family Farm came into operation in 1960 when Mark Rempel's father, Dietrich, purchased the acreage from the federal government. Mark bought the farm in 1990, became organic in 1992 and USDA Certified Organic in 1995. Today Mark operates 12 acres producing 70 varieties of organic vegetables. The Rempel Family Farm booth is always popular at area farmers markets.

2004 P & M Gardens – Paul Dinkins

P and M Gardens opened in 1976. Today it consists of a nursery wholesale operation with 10 acres of land, 200,000 square feet of growing houses, a retail store, shipping and warehouse area and a fleet of trucks that deliver plants across the state. The success of P & M Gardens has led to the need for over 70 employees during the peak season.

2005 Calypso Farm and Ecology Center – Tom Zimmer & Susan Willsrud

Calypso Farm began in 2000 as an effort to educate the community about local food supplies. Today Calypso is home to a fast-growing Community Support Agriculture (CSA) operation which has supported as many as 45 shareholders. The farm consists of 2.5 cultivated, terraced acres in a forested area 10 miles out of Fairbanks. In addition to growing food, Calypso works collaboratively with local organizations to provide hands-on educational and research opportunities in ecology and sustainable agriculture.

2006 Wrigley Farms – Rex & Bryce Wrigley & their families

Wrigley Farms was formed in 1983 when Rex & Bryce moved their families to Delta Junction from Idaho. Over the years Wrigley Farms has successfully produced oats, oat hay, barley, brome, broccoli, potatoes and hogs. Rex and Bryce are both active in their area Soil & Water Conservation District and Farm Bureau Chapter. The family is also active in their church and community.

2007 Insanity Acres – Bob & Randy & Peterson & their families

The Peterson family moved to Delta Junction from Missouri in 1996. They raise oats and barley for grain, seed grasses, hay and potatoes. They family is very active in their community, including involvement in the Salcha-Delta Soil & Water Conservation District, the Delta Farm Bureau, the Delta Chamber of Commerce and the Delta Fair.

2008 Lewis Farm – Brad & Pam Lewis

Brad Lewis is a third generation Palmer farmer whose acreage in the past has produced lettuce, radishes, and a variety of other vegetables. For the past 16 years Brad and his wife Pam have been perfecting their 30 acre patch of premium potatoes. Brad's son Wendel successfully ran a greenhouse operation in Palmer, selling corn, tomatoes, cucumbers and flower baskets.

MMM&S

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Mt. McKinley Meat & Sausage (MMM&S)

It's been BBQ season for about a month. You have to start barbecuing, because our season is so short!

Despite the fact that America's food supply is among the safest in the world, the unappetizing fact is that sometimes the food we eat can make us sick. Why? Because under the right conditions an invisible enemy, called bacteria, can appear, and it can make a good day go bad, very quickly!

A FEW FACTS:

- Bacteria are part of all living things and are found on all raw food products.
- Harmful bacteria can be transferred from food to people, people to food, and from one food to another.
- Bacteria can grow very rapidly at room temperature.
- Food related illness can be mild to severe, and it can occur from 30 minutes to two weeks after eating food containing harmful bacteria.

Remember, when it is a BBQ, you want it to be a HAPPY BBQ!

TIPS:

1. Bacteria can be stopped or slowed by refrigerating and/or freezing.
2. Clean & prepare as much as possible at home under clean conditions.
3. Wash hands, utensils & surfaces with hot soapy water before & after food preparation—especially after preparing meat, seafood, eggs (cross-contamination).
4. Remember if you are outside to keep your BBQ items in a cooler WITH ice until barbecuing or serving it, including salads. A good example of this is potato salad—it contains eggs & mayo. Also, chicken can quickly go bad.
5. Use tongs when you BBQ, not a fork, to keep juices inside meat for flavor.
6. After the BBQ, put things back under refrigeration—before you take a nap!
7. Keep cold things cold, and hot things hot!

Best Barbecue Meats:

- Pork: Steak, Spare Ribs, Chops, various Sausages
- Beef: Ground beef, Steaks, Ribs & Brisket—cook very slowly
- Chicken: All parts—best if precooked, then grilled
- Fish: Salmon, Halibut, Trout, Catfish, etc.

Most bacteria is on the outside. Heat kills last, but not least! Invest in a simple instant-read thermometer and take all the guesswork out of serving perfectly cooked meat.

USDA Recommended Safe Minimum Internal Temperatures

- Steaks & Roasts - 145 °F
- Fish - 145 °F
- Pork - 160 °F
- Ground Beef - 160 °F
- Egg Dishes - 160 °F
- Chicken Breasts - 165 °F
- Whole Poultry - 165 °F

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Pest Detection Surveys in Alaska

In this issue, we would like to highlight a particular agricultural pest that is relatively new to Alaska, the European Yellow Underwing (*Noctua pronuba*). The detection of the European Yellow Underwing through the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) program in Alaska has been via incidental detections while surveying for other targeted forest Lepidoptera, such as the Gypsy Moth (*Lymantria dispar*). The European Yellow Underwing, however, is of concern primarily as it has spread across North America and into Alaska during a relatively short period of time and it is a pest of agricultural crops grown here in Alaska.

Since its introduction into Nova Scotia in 1979, it has spread throughout Canada and the United States at an alarming rate, an average of about 450 miles per year during the period from 1998-2002 (FHP, 2007). By 2002, the European Yellow Underwing was detected in British Columbia and was first discovered in Haines, Alaska, in 2005. Detections throughout Southeast and Southcentral Alaska have been documented since 2005, and the moth is expected to continue extending its range northward and into the Interior by the end of the decade (FHP, 2007).



The adult European Yellow Underwing is a relatively large moth, with a wingspan of 40-60 mm. They are active fliers from July through September. The larvae, or caterpillars, hatch in late July to August and are cutworms

that can damage or fatally injure plants by cutting off plants at the base or feeding on the foliage (FHP, 2007). Agricultural plants in Alaska that are susceptible hosts include tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, beets, cabbage, strawberries, rhubarb, grasses, and various other herbaceous plants.

As mentioned above, the European Yellow Underwing is not a targeted pest for CAPS surveys in Alaska. However, we do survey for other exotic Lepidoptera throughout Alaska, and it was brought to our attention by the Alaska Forest Health Protection Unit, Fairbanks Entomologist, that *Noctua pronuba* is also attracted to the pheromones used to trap the Rosy Gypsy Moth (*Lymantria Mathura*) which is a targeted species. This only emphasizes the importance of documenting incidental survey detections.

For further information regarding the European Yellow Underwing in Alaska, see:

Forest Health Protection (FHP, 2007), European Yellow Underwing, Leaflet R10-PR-13, USDA Forest Service, Alaska Region, available online: http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/spf/fhp/leaflets/european_yellow_underwing.pdf

Photos: Adult *Noctua pronuba*, Holger Gröschl, Caterpillar of *Noctua pronuba*, Serigrapher

Plant Materials Center (PMC)

Plant Material Center

[http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_pmc.htm)

[ag_pmc.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_pmc.htm)

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The new Davis Instruments weather station that was purchased in late winter has been assembled and configured. This new wireless system will register readings of soil moisture and temperature from the field (via a repeater) as well as temperature, humidity, solar radiation, wind speed/direction, barometric pressure, rainfall, and leaf wetness. After final installation, it will be connected to the PMC server computer where anyone may access the data. Evapotranspiration, growing degree days, and other agricultural parameters will be calculated by the Agricultural/Turf Management software.

Native Alaska plant seed treated and sown last autumn is germinating well this spring. Many of these seedlings will be ready for transplanting into the Ethno botany Garden later this summer. The seed flats containing Ostrich Fern spores that were sown last winter now are covered by a lovely green mat of prothalli. Fronds will eventually sprout from this mat, and after growing a few inches, these ferns will be divided and transplanted into the Ethno botany Garden.

Our biggest challenge always seems being able to keep ahead of the weeds. In the fields the laborers are busy spraying herbicides. We have a new monster multi-row cultivator that should help tremendously in keeping our rows relatively weed free. Of course, we still need to use hoes and hands in many places—especially around the grounds. Many of these weeds are pretty and useful. But, what is the definition of a weed? A weed is a plant that grows where it is not wanted. If we want to produce a weed-free seed, the easiest way is to remove the weeds before they produce seed. If we want nice looking gardens, the lambs quarters, pigweed, bindweed, dandelions, and pineapple-weed need to be removed. This is a challenge for us all, but even more so when we have 200 acres in production! *Peggy Hunt*