



# The Division of Agriculture Activities

December 03, 2012

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

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Questions or Comments?  
E-Mail or call 907-761-3864.

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## Directors Note

The holidays are my favorite time of year. Time seems to slow down during this season as everyone's busy schedules are put on hold, temporarily. My husband and I, both born and raised in Alaska, are very fortunate to have both sets of parents, some siblings, our children and now grandchildren living close by. For those not accustomed to large families, our house may seem "chaotic and crazy"; but I love the sound of boisterous conversation, smell of good food, and the endless energy of excited toddlers anxiously awaiting the arrival of Santa. After Christmas, the New Year brings a time for reflection and then a look forward as New Year's Resolutions are made. Hopefully, this year will see many Resolutions accomplished!



The Department of Natural Resources will be hosting an "Agriculture Discussion" in Anchorage on Wednesday, December 19<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 – 4:00 (if needed). This meeting is a continuation of a dialogue that began at the Annual Farm Bureau Meeting several weeks ago. The agriculture industry is encouraged to come and participate. The meeting will be held at 550 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, in room #240. Parking is available across the street. If you are unable to attend in person, a tele-conference line is available at 1-800-315-6338 (Pass Code: 8426#).

### Just a couple quick reminders:

Please take advantage of the opportunity to comment on the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) proposed regulations in Title 11 AAC - Plant and Health Quarantine. The proposed amendments more clearly define invasive weeds as pests in the existing regulations and develop a process for declaring a plant invasive and for managing invasive plants. DNR is accepting comments on the proposed weed regulations until 4 pm, January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013. You can view the proposed changes at [dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag\\_regulations.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_regulations.htm).

The 2012 USDA Census of Agriculture questionnaires will be arriving in mailboxes around the state in late December. The Census is conducted every five years and information gathered plays a part in determining federal grant funds made available to producers. Please take the time to fill out the census forms and return them by Feb. 4<sup>th</sup>. For Alaska's farmers and ranchers, the Census of Agriculture is your voice, your future and your responsibility.

As always, please take the time to peruse the news letter and mark your calendar for the upcoming events and conferences. If you have any questions or concerns, please send me an e-mail at [Franci.Havemeister@Alaska.gov](mailto:Franci.Havemeister@Alaska.gov) or call me at 761-3867.

May you and your family have a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year!

*-Franci Havemeister*

*"The best of all gifts around any Christmas tree: the presence of a happy family all wrapped up in each other."*

*- Burton Hillis*

## Agriculture Calendar

- ▶ **Wed. Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>**; 1:00 pm: **Board of Agriculture & Conservation Regular Meeting**  
Details: [here](#); Call-in: (800) 315-6338 (pass code: 122#)
- ▶ **Wed. Dec. 19<sup>th</sup>**; 8:30 am - 4 pm **DNR Agriculture Discussion, Anchorage. 550 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Ave**  
Details: [here](#); Call-in: (800) 315-6338 (pass code: 8426#)

## Agriculture Calendar

- ▶ Thu. Jan. 24<sup>th</sup> - Fri. Jan. 25<sup>th</sup>: **2013 Alaska Greenhouse & Nursery Conf.** Fairbanks  
Details: [here](#);
- ▶ Thu. Jan. 14<sup>th</sup> - Fri. Jan. 15<sup>th</sup>: **Alaska Peony Grower's Winter Conference.** Fairbanks  
Details: [here](#);

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

## Marketing Section

### Opportunities in Agritourism

The Division continually gets calls from tourism companies inquiring about agritourism events or destinations to include as part of their vacation packages.

Have you considered diversifying your farm operation to include hosting tour groups? In 2010, over 1.5 million people visited Alaska. If just 10% (150,000) visited a farm-related business and spent as little as \$5, that would result in an additional \$750,000 spent in the state annually.

There are many factors to consider before launching an agritourism-based business. Here are just a few:

1. Can you accommodate 40-50 people at once, or do you want to focus on smaller groups?
2. Do you have bathroom facilities appropriate for the groups you plan to host?
3. Do you have adequate parking, driveway

and turn-around space for large buses?

4. Do you have a website or other up-to-date promotional materials and information about your operation.
5. How will you make money? Will you charge a per head or per vehicle rate? Do you have other items to sell? Perhaps you're willing to serve a pre-packaged meal to the group? Do you have an approved value-added product from your operation you could offer for sale, such as yarn, cheese or a veggie pack?
6. What kind of insurance will you need? Safety is of the utmost importance when inviting visitors onto your agricultural operation. We recommend you visit the web site [www.safeagritourism.com](http://www.safeagritourism.com) for a wide variety of resources and discussions about agritourism.

Follow Alaska Grown on Facebook at [facebook.com/dnr.alaska-grown](http://facebook.com/dnr.alaska-grown) for all of the latest updates.



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## Alaska Farm-to-School Program Update

### Farm to School Challenge Results

The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Farm to School Challenge was again a huge success! Twenty-four entries were received, representing 40 different schools. Over 10,000 students were reached through efforts associated with the 2012 Farm to School challenge. A wide variety of projects were submitted from all over the state, including 11 from South Central, 4 from Southeast, 4 from the Kenai Peninsula, and 5 from Interior Alaska.

Our grand prize winner was Louise's Farm School in the Mat-Su Valley. Their project included several activities and educational components and reached 100% of the students in the school. Students explored the value of nutritious food, tracing the progression from farm to fork.

Over the thirteen weeks students studied a variety of topics. They learned to make cheese and moose jerky, visited a farm,

were taught how to preserve food, and much more. The objective was that students be able to identify the elements of nutrition, acquire a basic understanding of horticulture and learn to recognize and appreciate local food. On each 'theme day' they served a local, healthy and freshly prepared snack that highlighted the day's topic.

Students even took advantage of our new Local Food Hero template to highlight Amanda Hull, Spring Creek Farm Manager. If you are interested in making a poster for your community, find the template at: [dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag\\_heroFTS.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_heroFTS.htm).

For updates, news, grant opportunities, and announcements, join the Farm to School mailing list at [list.state.ak.us/soalists/akfarmtoschool/jl.htm](http://list.state.ak.us/soalists/akfarmtoschool/jl.htm). Find us at [facebook.com/AlaskaFarmToSchool](http://facebook.com/AlaskaFarmToSchool).

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## 'Nutritional Alaskan Food In Schools' Grant Program Highlights

As we've been reporting for the past few months, the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED), Division of Community & Regional Affairs has a pilot grant program designed to encourage school districts to purchase Alaskan foods. The Farm to School program continues to report on the schools and products that have received reimbursements as we learn of them.



### Haines Borough School District

During the months of October and November, Haines student nutrition services served local seafood every week: salmon fillets, salmon alfredo with whole grain pasta, fish tacos, and crab cakes. They also served local potatoes, carrots, onions, and tomatoes out of their school garden. The Haines garden (named Starvin' Marvin) was able to sell 150 pounds of produce to the school meal program for use in the salad bar and baked potato dish!

### Hoonah City Schools

In Hoonah, the student nutrition services stocked up on students favorite local fish, salmon and halibut! They are working on new recipes that meet the USDA meal requirements to serve them in the lunches.

### Juneau School District

Juneau student nutrition services connected with Merryweather Farm of Juneau and purchased all of their carrots and snap peas to serve in the school salad bar. Merryweather Farm plans to increase production next year to be able to provide more

food to the schools. They also bought an Alaska Grown cole slaw kit made with AK Grown cabbage and carrots purchased from Palmer Produce. To complement their local veggies, Juneau purchased salmon fillets and Pollock fish sticks. Alaska Grown cream of barley was served for breakfast.

### Kuspuk School District

In Kuspuk the student nutrition services linked up with nearby growers Perkins Enterprises and Barbara Carlson. They purchased potatoes, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots and kale. They also bought cole slaw kits made from cabbage and carrots purchased from Palmer Produce and fish sticks made locally.

### Pribilof Schools

In the Pribilof Islands, the schools have resumed nutrition classes that they had previously offered. Using NASF funds, they are once again teaching kids how to cook - and using local food to do it! In addition, students are preparing lunch and after school snacks with their peers. Principal John Homb was excited to learn about the FTS program. They purchased beef from Terry Van Wyhe, a variety of meats from Delta Meat and Sausage, honey from Tundra Walker, and various jams from Alaska Wild Harvest.

If you have stories about the Nutritional Alaskan Food in Schools (NAFS) grant program and would like to share, please contact Debi Kruse at [Debi.Kruse@alaska.gov](mailto:Debi.Kruse@alaska.gov) or Johanna Herron at [Johanna.Herron@alaska.gov](mailto:Johanna.Herron@alaska.gov). You can find details about the NAFS grant on the DCCED webpage: [commerce.alaska.gov/dca/grt/NAFS.htm](http://commerce.alaska.gov/dca/grt/NAFS.htm).

To learn more about the Alaska Farm to School program, contact Johanna Herron at [Johanna.herron@alaska.gov](mailto:Johanna.herron@alaska.gov) or (907) 374-3714.



*Juneau kitchen staff prepare Alaska Grown cream of Barley and Cole Slaw, purchased with funds from the 'Nutritional Alaskan Foods in Schools' grant from the Alaska DCCED*

## Pest Detection / Inspection Section

### ARLF Services

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### Buyers: Be Aware of Interstate Movement of Christmas Trees and Wreaths

Because of the continuing trend of marketing live Christmas trees and wreaths on the Internet, it is important to be aware of USDA regulations regarding the interstate movement of these items. This information will help ensure that your product can move without impediment, and help prevent the movement of pests that, if allowed to spread, could affect Alaska's beautiful landscape.

The movement of Christmas trees and wreaths is federally regulated in certain areas of the country. These regulations aim to prevent the movement of harmful forest pests such as gypsy moth, pine shoot beetle, as well as the sudden oak death pathogen, *Phytophthora ramorum*, which can be spread by the movement of a number of decorative wood products.

USDA, Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) regulations, as well as some other State's regulations, require certain conditions be met in order to move Christmas trees and wreaths out of quarantined areas. APHIS and State regulatory personnel routinely work with Christmas tree farms and other holiday greenery establishments in quarantine areas to make sure companies are aware of and follow the applicable regulations. However, there may be

farms or other entities that may not be in compliance with the regulations.

To ensure that the tree and wreath suppliers you use are in compliance, we suggest that you take the following steps.

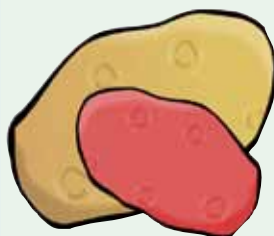
1. Check the online maps at [www.aphis.usda.gov/HolidayGreeneryPests](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/HolidayGreeneryPests) to find out if the supplying nursery is in a Federal quarantine area.
2. Contact the respective APHIS State Plant Health Director's office to learn what documentation and/or inspection is required for the supplier to move Christmas trees and wreaths from the quarantine area. A complete listing of USDA offices is at [www.aphis.usda.gov/services/report\\_pest\\_disease/report\\_pest\\_disease.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/services/report_pest_disease/report_pest_disease.shtml).
3. Contact the supplier to ensure the company has a compliance agreement with APHIS and is meeting the requirements for moving Christmas trees and wreaths interstate.



We need your help to protect Alaska's environment and natural resources from the spread of these harmful pests. Your assistance is vital and is appreciated. If you have questions, contact the Division of Agriculture at (907) 745-7200.

### DID YOU KNOW?

### Alaska's Potato Harvest



The Average US consumer eats 66 lbs. of potatoes a year.  
Alaska's population = 722,910 people  
722,910 people eat 47,712,060 lbs. (23,856 tons) annually.  
2010 Alaska potato production = 7,500 tons.

Based on the above calculations, Alaska is likely importing over 60% of the potatoes necessary to meet customer demand. Remember to **ASK FOR ALASKA GROWN** wherever you do your grocery shopping.

## Plant Materials Center

<http://plants.alaska.gov/>

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## Plant Materials Center

### Alaska Forage Manual now available at the Alaska PMC

The Alaska Plant Materials Center is pleased to announce that the Alaska Forage Manual has been printed and copies are now available at the PMC. This publication is targeted to current and future producers of forage crops, and was funded by a grant from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The Alaska Forage Manual details important considerations when raising grass, grain and legume crops for hay and silage. It includes information about soil nutrients, dietary requirements of animals and seeding methods used to grow forage crops.

A comprehensive study of nutrient values of over a dozen grass species was conducted during the 2011 growing season, and the results of this study are included as an appendix to this manual. Factors such as total dietary nutrition and relative feed value of these crops are charted over time, showing the optimal times to harvest each species.

Interested members of the public can obtain a print copy of the Alaska Forage Manual at the PMC. The publication is also available for online browsing and download at [plants.alaska.gov/forage/](http://plants.alaska.gov/forage/).

If you have questions about planting forage crops, contact the PMC at 745-4469. You can email author Casey Dinkel at [Casey.Dinkel@Alaska.gov](mailto:Casey.Dinkel@Alaska.gov).



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USDA  
United States Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Statistics Service

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YOUR VOICE. YOUR FUTURE. YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.



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# Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation: Division of Environmental Health

## **Nutrient Management and Drinking Water**

*Article contributed by Chris Miller*

DEC Drinking Water Program staff recently participated in the Western States Source Water Protection Forum sponsored by the US Environmental Protection Agency and the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality. One key message from the Source Water Protection Forum is the increased attention, at the national level, being placed on ways to minimize potential impacts of nutrient runoff (nitrogen and phosphorous) and sheet erosion on drinking water supplies.

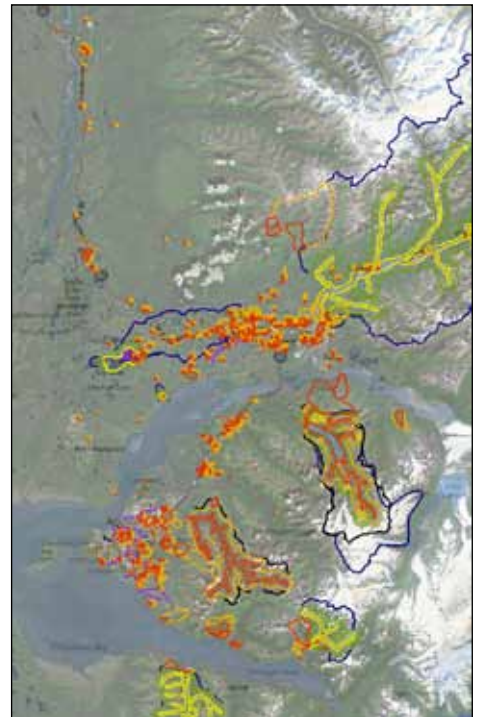
### **The Four 'R's of Nutrient Management:**

- Right Source
- Right Rate
- Right Time
- Right Place

Nutrient management for, and from, crop and animal production in relation to drinking water supplies is a new area of focus for the Alaska Drinking Water Program. Historically, nutrient management has received little attention due to limited agricultural production and Alaska's sparse population. While it is true that Alaska doesn't encounter the same nutrient concerns encountered by other states, it may still be something agricultural land managers want to keep on their radar.

Soil erosion and excessive application of nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorous, has the potential to significantly impact nearby drinking water sources. Excessive nutrients and sediments introduced to a drinking water source may lead to the requirement for public water systems to install costly treatment. Close collaboration between federal and state agencies is needed to develop protective standards that keep Alaska's waters clean and safe to drink.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has recently revised its Nutrient Management (590) standard at the national level. NRCS state offices have until Jan. 1, 2013 to make state standards comply with the national criteria on nitrogen and phosphorous discharges to the environment. If you are a potential stakeholder and want to provide input on the revision of Alaska's 590 Nutrient Management Standard, please contact Craig Smith at [craig.smith2@ak.usda.gov](mailto:craig.smith2@ak.usda.gov).



Find a map of Drinking Water Protection Areas at [dec.alaska.gov/das/GIS/apps.htm](http://dec.alaska.gov/das/GIS/apps.htm)

If you're a land manager interested in knowing whether the application of fertilizers or sheet erosion may impact a nearby public drinking water source, the Drinking Water Protection program has a resource you can use. Visit the Drinking Water Program's web page (located at [dec.alaska.gov/das/GIS/apps.htm](http://dec.alaska.gov/das/GIS/apps.htm)) and click on the Alaska DEC Drinking Water Protection Areas map to view protection areas in your vicinity.

### **Additional Resources:**

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/technical/fotg/efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/treemenuFS.aspx](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/technical/fotg/efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/treemenuFS.aspx)