

ALASKA DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE NEWSLETTER



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Photo credit: Stephanie Stillman

Alaska Completes its Harvest Season

A Message from Director Bryan Scoresby

This last month has been a whirlwind for farmers across the state, who have tirelessly worked from dawn to dusk to complete their harvest. We salute their dedication and hard work, those who got all other field crops in, and the last of the root vegetables harvested and stored especially those who finished their second cutting of hay before the snow. Our Plant Materials Center (PMC) was no exception. Despite the rain, our staff harvested potatoes and stored each variety for the winter. Earlier this month, we had more days with sunshine and our staff could harvest all the grain plots between rainstorms. As a result, we now have more foundation-level seed in reserve at the PMC than we have had in many years. This abundance of foundation-level seed is a significant step towards ensuring food security for our state.

Kevin Fochs, Alaska's FFA Executive Director for the past 10 years, has retired. His love for Alaska and his dedication to the growth of FFA in our state have been genuinely inspiring. Although he has moved back to Montana, he will keep his residence in Alaska. We wish him well in retirement and look forward to his visits. Taylor Nelson is leading our FFA group this month, along with the state FFA officers at the National Convention in Indianapolis and 85,000 other students. If the school where your kids or grandkids go does not have an FFA program, and you are interested in more information on how to start a chapter, please contact Taylor.

Two staff members have been selected to participate in the Department of Natural Resources Future Leaders Summit. The summit is designed to help participants along their career paths and meet career goals, an investment in our staff's success as future leaders.

Our Grants team has been diligently advancing the microgrants from the previous competition and is now accepting applications for the next round through Tuesday, November 26 at 5:00 p.m. If you want to enhance your family's food security or make a meaningful community contribution, we strongly encourage you to apply and invite your friends to do the same. The success of the last round, with approximately one in three applicants being awarded a microgrant, is a testament to the program's effectiveness.

We scheduled a Slaughterhouse listening session this month to offer our producers an opportunity to discuss the impact of the closure and provide direction and solutions. We had over 60 participants during this listening session, including our legislatures and representatives from DEC and FSIS. Early in this discussion, it became clear that this plant is critical to many producers for the continued development of the livestock industry. Many others also spoke of how important the plant is to the success of their retail businesses; these businesses support our local economy by supporting local products. If you could not participate and would like to review, or if you were present and would like to listen again, we have posted this video on YouTube at this address: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7DNigh02BEs>. The session was about an hour long—many thanks to all who called in and participated.

Election season is here, and many of us look forward to when it ends. I want to encourage all of you to schedule the date and time when you can cast your ballot in this election. As citizens, we have the privilege, honor, responsibility, and duty to participate. Study the candidates, initiatives, and ballot propositions to cast an informed ballot. Discuss the same with your family and friends. I plan to cast my vote early and will proudly wear the "I voted" sticker through election day.



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