



ALASKA DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE NEWSLETTER

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Slaughterhouse update and Division welcomes new ARLF loan officer



By Director Bryan Scoresby

The Palmer slaughterhouse is about two months out on appointments for getting animals killed and processed.

Having a two-month waiting period is a good sign that the slaughterhouse is occupied with beef, hogs, and other animals, with the staff there having steady kill and processing work. With a two-month lead time, all producers will need to plan earlier and schedule their slaughter appointments in advance.

I applaud the current slaughterhouse management team, who are diligently looking for opportunities to increase volume and company revenue. The increased processing of animals leads to efficiencies, which in turn create new opportunities in our agriculture industry. This allows producers to raise more animals, providing a more secure business opportunity for everyone who raises them to sell and feed Alaskans. To make an appointment for USDA slaughter services in Southcentral Alaska, call the Palmer plant. If you are in the Fairbanks area, Mid States Meats is in North Pole, and Delta Meat and Sausage is in Delta. A USDA inspection is required if you want

to sell your meat in the retail, food service, or restaurant trade.

Channcie Alfred is our new ARLF loan officer. She comes to us from the Division of Public Assistance and has a prior background in mortgage banking. She has work experience as a mortgage loan processor, loan closer, and escrow officer. The chance to work on loans that support farmers and the agriculture industry is exciting and enriches her background, as she comes from a farming family. We welcome her to the Division of Agriculture team in Palmer and invite you to visit our table at the Farm Bureau convention in November.

We are pleased to learn that Palmer FFA advisor and agriculture teacher, Corinne Henderson, was awarded Career and Technical Educator of the Year. During the award ceremony, heartfelt notes from her students were read about her impact on them personally and professionally. In her career, she has supported other teachers in developing their agriculture programs across the state and encouraged students to seek meaningful career experiences in agriculture and natural resources. Corinne's support of her community and students is a testament to the service-based leadership she teaches through FFA.



Honeybees in focus this October



By Mia Kirk

For the Alaska Grown \$5 Challenge, we are highlighting Alaska's beekeeping industry, which produces honey available for you to enjoy year-

round. Did you know that there are approximately 80 beekeepers who are Alaska Grown Members? There are plenty of options across the state to support your local beekeeper in purchasing Alaska Grown honey. If you are a beekeeper and interested in the Alaska Grown program, please contact our team at dnr.alaskagrown@alaska.gov.

Grants and more Grants!

The last round of Micro-Grants for Food Security awards is being distributed. The federal government's hold on grant programs earlier this year delayed the process, which is now coinciding with the previous round of Micro-Grants distribution of payments. We would like to thank you for your patience since both processes have taken longer than anticipated.

We would also like to share that the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) grant award has been mostly distributed. We are really excited about this, as the purpose of this grant is to build resilience across Alaska's food supply chain for

food crops. In Alaska, there are 17 equipment projects totaling \$1,028,708.57, and three Infrastructure projects totaling \$1,598,073.61, with 20 recipients, resulting in nine storage-related, 14 value-added processing, five delivery-related, and four post-harvest production projects. Locations of these projects are across the state, including Port Lions, Anchorage, Kodiak, Soldotna, Juneau, Palmer, Anchor Point, Chugiak, Ester, Fritz Creek, Talkeetna, Wrangell City, Prince of Wales, Kachemak Bay, and Douglas. We hope to share the progress of these projects in future newsletters, which will strengthen local and regional food systems by creating more diverse market options, increasing economic opportunities for communities, and opening new revenue streams for producers.

Pest Alert: Small Hive Beetle

Lastly, we are unhappy to report that a new pest, the small hive beetle (SHB) *Aethina tumida*, family: Nitidulidae, of honeybees was detected in Alaska. This first known instance of small hive beetle (SHB) in Alaska was at an apiary in the Copper River area, which had acquired bee packages from Mississippi. This pest was discovered by Alaska Division of Agriculture staff during an inspection in August and officially confirmed as part of the USDA National Honey

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Bee Disease Survey. Bee packages imported to or overwintered in the Copper River region should be considered potential sources of SHB and monitored carefully.

SHB was originally identified in the United States approximately 30 years ago and has since spread across most of the contiguous US. SHB negatively impacts honeybee colonies by consuming brood and fouling honey stores, which can result in financial losses for the beekeeper through colony loss and reduced honey production. Any imported packages of bees, particularly those without a health certificate, can be a potential source of SHB. Preventing pests and diseases begins before the bees arrive in Alaska; beekeepers should only receive packaged bees from reputable suppliers. Per Alaska Statute, any person importing bees into Alaska is required to obtain a health certificate signed by a qualified apiary inspector. Alaska state regulations also require anyone with honey bees to register their colonies within 72 hours of acquisition and annually thereafter. Additionally, a person moving or transporting bees from one geographic area to another within the state must notify the Division before doing so.

[Click here](#) to register
your honeybees today!

The Honeybee Registration program is designed to protect beekeepers, and the Division of Agriculture will notify them of new detections. For more information on the small hive beetle, an [Alaska Division of Agriculture Pest Alert](#) has been developed to inform Alaskan beekeepers how to identify, control, and report it, with the goal of eradicating the pest before it can become established in the state.



Small hive beetle in comb. Image Credit: Jessica Louque, Smithers Viscient, Bugwood.org

2025 CALENDAR

3 Months At-A-Glance

OCTOBER

- 12** National Farmers Day
- 15** National Mushroom Day
- 16** World Food Day
- 18** Alaska Day
- 26** National Pumpkin Day
- 31** Halloween

NOVEMBER

- 11** Veterans Day
- 13-15** 2025 Alaska Agriculture Conference & Grazing Lands Symposium
- 14** National Pickle Day
- 27** Thanksgiving

DECEMBER

- 5** World Soil Day
- 21** Winter Solstice
- 25** Christmas Day



PMC finishes harvest, prepares for winter



By Casey Dinkel

With winter knocking at the door, PMC staff finished harvesting several foundation seed barley varieties. As usual,

September was cool and rainy, which presented its challenges during grain harvest and drying. Generally, most of the grain harvested in September was pulled from the field at 18 to 22% moisture. This grain was then transferred to drying wagons for several days to dry each variety down to 12% moisture or less. With over half a dozen varieties being harvested around the same time, this led to significant challenges with separation and drying. Due to the increase in foundation grain seed production over the past few years, the PMC will be installing several smaller-capacity drying/storage bins next summer. This new system will enable the PMC to dry and store foundation seed more quickly and efficiently than ever before. The addition of this system will ultimately help the PMC provide higher-quality grain seed to farmers throughout Alaska.

After the grain harvest was completed, staff at the PMC started the process of winterizing machinery and greenhouses for the cold weather ahead. With the new cold storage barn finally complete, we were able to get PMC farm machinery under cover from Alaska's brutal elements. This new cold storage barn will help protect the PMC's machinery investment for many years to come.

Switching gears once again, the staff finished the harvest of our G-Zero potato seed within our

production greenhouse. With all the spuds harvested and in the cooler for the winter, the production house was cleaned, sterilized, and winterized. Spuds produced in the G-Zero greenhouse will be sold in the spring, providing disease-free seed potatoes for Alaska potato farmers.

Phil Czapla, manager of the industrial hemp program, collected the final field data for a 3-year hemp variety trial. This trial aims to identify suitable hemp varieties that thrive in Alaska's short growing season. We are hopeful that several germplasms will emerge as top performers for future growers to produce industrial hemp fiber and seed. This fiber and seed can be processed into a myriad of products that can be highly beneficial for Alaska. Products such as hemp insulation, seed oil, CBD, and erosion control products can be manufactured from a successful variety.

Finally, construction and renovations on the PMCs' seed house continued through September. With the entire cleaning line installed, electricians made lots of progress installing all the necessary conduit, wiring, and panels needed to run the new cleaning line. Contractors have also made headway on the mechanical room addition located on the east side of the seed house. This addition will not only house all the mechanical equipment needed, but it will also have a section that will be dedicated to an office, bathroom, and a small tool room. We anticipate the seed house to be completed and operational by the first quarter of 2026. With harvest complete, all of us here at the PMC are already hard at work preparing for next year's growing season.