



ALASKA DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE NEWSLETTER

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Alaska's agriculture industry poised for growth in 2025



By Director Bryan Scoresby

We look forward to the things coming up this new year with excitement. Alaska imports most (95%) of the food consumed in

the state. For Alaskans to be 100% independent and grow all our own food, we would need in the state a laying flock of about 1,000,000 hens to produce the eggs, raise about 15,000,000 broilers, slaughter about 135,000 beef, grow and harvest about 600 acres of lettuce, 100 acres of cabbage, 200 acres of carrots and 5700 acres of potatoes. I cannot possibly list all the foods eaten by Alaskans.

To raise the chickens and beef in the state, we would need to harvest over 300,000 acres of barley and 335,000 acres of hay. In the 1950s, Alaska produced about 50% of the food necessary to feed the residents. If we increased our 5% local production to 10%, our current acreages and output would double. We would then produce about 2% of the red meat consumed, increase hay from the current 21,000 acres to 42,000 acres, and increase small grains to 16,000 acres.

Imagine the economic growth this activity would bring to our agriculture industry. Size

and scale create the environment where people see an opportunity to engage in the business of agriculture, growing, manufacturing, processing, capital, and supporting industry to produce commodities and make them into consumable products.

In the 2022 Census of Agriculture, Alaska was one of the leaders among states with new farm starts and percentage growth in new farms. Individuals who recently began a farming operation saw some economic value, embraced the farming lifestyle, and seized the opportunity. Sound business planning and the pursuit of stated goals turn those dreams into successful operations.

Every economic opportunity has challenges in all areas of business. Our Alaska Grown logo can be very helpful when selling your products. The membership application is available anytime on our website. Membership has its privileges.



We are here to help and provide you with the services we offer, and we can refer you to other people and institutions for other services.

Programs and services update



By Mia Kirk

Greetings, my name is Mia Kirk, and I am a Natural Resource Manager 2 with the Division. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce programs that support our agricultural industries within the Agricultural Development Section of the Alaska Division of Agriculture. These programs are the Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund (ARLF), Alaska FFA, Inspections, Agricultural Lands Management, Marketing, and Grants. I am excited to share information, opportunities, and activities along with the great work our staff is doing each month to support agriculture in Alaska.

BAC meeting to discuss loans

The Board of Agriculture and Conservation (BAC), through the Division of Agriculture, will hold a meeting on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, at 9 a.m. The meeting's purpose is to discuss loan applications and other board business. It is open to the public.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/91419935554?pwd=gCCAlaltGrTEBuqSbi1lW1hw33Rpk2.1>

Meeting ID: 914 1993 5554,
Passcode: 12211#

Dial in by phone

+1 907-202-7104, 929722903# United States, Anchorage.
Phone conference ID: 929 722 903#



Specialty Crop Block Grant opens for applications January 15

The Alaska Division of Agriculture is soliciting interest for the 2025 USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBG). The grant program seeks to enhance the competitiveness of Alaska Grown specialty crops, sustain farmers' livelihoods, and strengthen local communities. Letters of Intent for proposed project ideas are due to the Division by 5 p.m. on Monday, February 10, 2024. The request for proposals, including application and deadline information, is available at: https://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_grants/specialty_crop_block_grant.htm. Also, if you are an Alaska specialty crop producer or industry stakeholder and would like to provide input on what should be this year's top funding priorities, please complete the survey by March 1: [2025 SCBG Funding Priorities Survey](#).

It is time to renew your brand registration

Brand applications have been sent out to current registrants. Upon receiving your Brand notification, please review and return to the Division of Agriculture with the enclosed fee by March 1, 2025. Brand books are updated every 5 years; therefore, this registration will be valid through December 31, 2030. Currently, the State of Alaska does not have a brand registration-for-life program. If your brand is not renewed at this time, it will be available to others for registration. If you have any questions regarding the brand program, please email akbrands@alaska.gov.

Further information is available from the Division of Agriculture, 1801 S. Margaret Dr., Suite 12, Palmer, Alaska 99645, or by phone at 907-745-7200. Thank you for taking the time to read this article and wishing you all the best in 2025!



PMC set to modernize seed cleaning facility, add new cold-storage barn



By Casey Dinkel

As we move forward into the new year, the Alaska Plant Materials Center's (PMC) staff will reflect briefly on the accomplishments of 2024. During 2024, the PMC raised 3.2 acres of field maintenance potatoes that consisted of 225 different varieties. These potatoes are stored in a climate-controlled cooler over the winter and replanted each year to maintain a backup of varietal genetics. In addition to the field stock, 1,071 lbs. of disease-free seed potatoes were grown for farmers throughout Alaska. This disease-free seed stock consisted of 49 different varieties. The following year, these varieties will be propagated and sold to table stock producers. In the following field season, table stock producers will bulk up their production and provide large quantities of Alaska-raised potatoes to retail grocery stores throughout the state.

Also in 2024, our seed cleaning staff worked tirelessly to turn out record numbers of cleaned grass and grain seeds. Grass seed varieties such as 'Nortran' tufted hairgrass, 'Wainwright' slender wheatgrass, and 'Gruening' alpine bluegrass were cleaned and tested for purity and germination. Over 50,000 lbs. of grass seed was processed through the PMC seed cleaning facility during the 2024 calendar year. This seed will be utilized for revegetation and erosion control projects throughout the state. Additionally, over 50,000 lbs. of wheat, 40,000 lbs. of rye, and 6,000 lbs. of barley were conditioned and cleaned during the fall of 2024. This made for a grand total of 96,000 lbs. of grain that made its way through the PMC. These small grains will be utilized for animal feed, brewing/distilling, and human consumption.

Lastly, the seed cleaning facility cleaned and tested roughly 12,000 lbs. of foundation-level seed. This seed has a higher purity and

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germination standard than a common seed. This foundation seed also has a higher genetic integrity and is more authentic to its original varietal origin. This seed will be sold to farmers to bulk up the seed stock in the following years to the certified seed level. Once at the certified seed level, farmers will then plant on large-scale production to produce small grains for animal and human consumption.

2025 is looking to be an exciting year for the PMC. The PMC will renovate its seed cleaning facility starting in June 2025. Renovations include a new fully integrated seed cleaning line that will allow the PMC to clean grass and grain seed three to five times faster than in the past. This modernization will enable the PMC to keep up with the demand for seed cleaning as our agricultural industry in Alaska grows in the coming years. The PMC will also construct a new cold storage barn in 2025 to house large and small farm machinery necessary to maintain breeder and foundation-level seed. These facility updates will significantly increase the PMC's ability to provide core services to the agricultural industry and the state of Alaska. We look forward to the next year as we work and live in this great place we call home.



2025 CALENDAR

3 Months At-A-Glance

JANUARY

- 7** ARLF Application entry deadline for January BAC meeting
- 15** Application period opens for 2025 Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG)
- 20** Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Alaska Division of Agriculture offices will be closed.
- 21** BAC meeting
- 23** National Pie Day
- 28** ARLF Application entry deadline for February BAC meeting
- 29** SCBG Webinar 12 p.m.-1 p.m.
- 31-1** Interior Alaska Farm Forum @ Pike's Waterfront Lodge, Fairbanks

FEBRUARY

- 10** SCBG Letter of Intent due by 5 p.m.
- 11** BAC meeting
- 14** Valentine's Day
- 15-22** National FFA Week
- 17** Presidents' Day, Alaska Division of Agriculture offices will be closed.
- 18-20** 2025 Mariculture Conference of Alaska, Sitka
- 22** Delta Farm Forum, Delta Junction
- 25** ARLF Application entry deadline for March BAC meeting

MARCH

- 3** SCBG qualifying projects can apply
- 7** National Cereal Day
- 11** BAC meeting
- 17** St. Patrick's Day
- 20** Spring Equinox
- 28-29** 2025 Alaska Food Festival and Conference, Kodiak
- 31** Seward's Day, Alaska Division of Agriculture offices will be closed.