



ALASKA DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE NEWSLETTER

Issue 11 | June 2025

Growing season underway in Alaska



By Director Bryan Scoresby

With the summer growing season underway, we have planted sweet corn and potatoes in the flower gardens here at our office. The cold spring has not been suitable for growing corn. Two years ago, we had a sweet corn crop to enjoy, talk about with others, and showcase our skills in growing crops. Last year, we had cutworms that killed off most of our corn. Like our farmers in the field, we suffered a crop loss and had some difficulties. Our entry is decorated outside with sweet corn and potatoes, and inside, in the arctic entry, potted tomatoes.

Staff inside this office are working on farm visits outside the office. For our Agriculture Revolving Loan Fund (ARLF) borrowers, we aim to visit each customer in person at their farm at least every two years. Please make Christy welcome when she calls to arrange a visit. Our loan program for the past two years has been robust, working closely with the Board of Agriculture and Conservation (BAC) to set rates that attract lending activity and enable our principal to earn interest. From our \$21 million principal, we now have over \$17 million under loan, earning interest. The earnings make this fund self-sustaining, covering all ARLF operational

expenses and contributing to further growth of the fund.

Nenana Agriculture Day last month was a massive success, with the City of Nenana organizing and leading the event. Thanks to Mayor Verhagen and the many volunteers who put this promotion day together. The Silent Springs FFA in Fairbanks served 65 lunches consisting of brats, hot dogs, chips, and soda at the event, raising over \$1,000 to fund their trip to the National FFA Convention. An organized tour of the farms showed sweet corn and potatoes planted by energetic farmers. This is the third year for the owners, who purchased their farms in late 2022. We look forward to the next sale in 2026. Look for the official announcement later this year.

The farmers market season is here! I hope each of you can visit a farmers' market regularly this summer. As the saying goes, know your farmer, know your food. At the farmers market, you can surely get to know your farmer. When shopping in the store, look for the Alaska Grown logo, which draws attention to local products. If you cannot find your favorite Alaska Grown products, ask for them. Customer demand will drive the market to acquire more local farm products in retail stores. As always, spend \$5.00 each week or more, maybe much more on Alaska Grown products.

Hydroponics, Cooking with Alaska Grown



By Mia Kirk

For the Alaska Grown \$5 Challenge this month, we are recognizing hydroponic farming. Hydroponic farming

is a way of growing fresh produce in a climate-controlled environment not limited by weather or season. At first, it may seem odd to recognize this type of farming in June while our field crops are in production, yet harvesting those field crops are a couple of weeks out. If you are craving fresh, flavorful greens for your Summer Solstice celebration, you can visit your local retailer, farmer's market or source them directly from a producer.

Last month, we started the new video series, "Cooking with Alaska Grown." These cooking videos will explore new recipes utilizing Alaska Grown ingredients. Our latest video was shared on Father's Day, featuring a Rhubarb Crisp sweetened with Alaska Grown honey and birch syrup. If you are interested in this recipe along with the Alaska Grown ingredients, please see the recipe card below. Additionally, if you would like to share a recipe that utilizes Alaska Grown



products, please email our marketing team at dnr.alaskagrown@alaska.gov.

The 2025 Farm Family of the Year nominations have been extended! We, at the Alaska Division of Agriculture in partnership with the Alaska State Fair, invite the public to submit nominations for the 26th annual Farm Family of the Year award! Since 2000, this award has honored hardworking Alaskan Farm families. Don't delay, nominate a farm family by June 30th at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2025FarmFamily>. The winning Farm Family of the Year will be presented with the award at this year's Alaska State Fair Director's Reception in Palmer, Alaska.



Click here to watch:
Cooking With Alaska Grown
Rhubarb Crisp

Honey-Birch Syrup Rhubarb Crisp

- 4 cups **Alaska Rhubarb stems, cut into 1/2" slices**
- 1/4 cup **Alaska Wild Harvest Pure Birch Syrup**
- 1 Tbsp **Corn Starch**
- 1/2 cup **Heavenly Leaven Wholegrain All-Purpose Flour**
- 1/2 cup **Rolled Oats**
- 1/4 cup **Butter**
- 1/2 cup **Alaska Honey (We used Crusty's Bees & Berries)**

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix the rhubarb, birch syrup, and corn starch in a 8×8 square pan. In a separate dish, cut the butter into the flour and oats. Gently mix in the honey. Place mixture on top of the rhubarb. Bake for 45 minutes or until golden brown on top. Serve warm with ice cream!



Planting, production in high gear this June



By Casey Dinkel

The unusually cool and rainy weather during May may have slowed crop production slightly, but it did not slow down the staff at the Plant Materials

Center (PMC). During May, PMC staff worked hard to plant 35 acres (five varieties) of foundation-level grain such as barley and rye. Our microbiologist, Mickenzie, successfully planted three acres of maintenance block potatoes, which consisted of 216 different varieties, maintained at the PMC. (See photos, page 4.) These spuds may be utilized in the future as backup genetics if a disease issue should arise in the PMC tissue culture program. Additionally, staff planted 65 varieties of potato plantlets in our generation-zero production greenhouse. These plantlets will be harvested this fall to provide disease-free seed tubers for many potato farmers throughout Alaska.

Greenhouse production continues to maintain approximately 1,100 forbs, 2,000 trees, 300 shrubs, and 15,000 grass plugs and/or potted plants. These plants will be utilized on a variety of revegetation projects throughout Alaska this growing season. Also, some plugs will be transplanted to PMC grounds to establish new foundation-level seed production fields. Seed cleaning efforts continued as staff worked in shifts to clean over 20,000 lbs. of native grass seed in our large cleaning facility. Staff also cleaned several small lots of native grass seed in the PMC small seed cleaning facility. This seed was cleaned to the highest level in preparation for seeding into breeder-level blocks next growing season.

Our invasive program coordinator transported and staged equipment and herbicide at Alexander and

Sucker Lakes. This mobilization effort will enable staff to treat these water bodies in June, once the weather permits.

Finally, the PMC seed testing and pathology laboratory staff have been working tirelessly to process the daily influx of seed and tissue samples received at this time of year. These efforts support our growers by ensuring that they maintain the proper germination and purity required for producing native seed. They also support the PMC's efforts in producing disease-free seed potato tubers for local farmers. With everything planted in the field, our staff will be very busy this summer maintaining fields, greenhouses, and working on off-site projects. Staff and I look forward to this coming fall, when we can reap the reward of our labor.

2025 CALENDAR

3 Months At-A-Glance

JUNE

- 3** National Egg Day
- 15** Father's Day
- 18** Sustainable Gastronomy Day
- 19** Juneteenth
- 21** Summer Solstice

JULY

- 4** Independence Day
- 18** National Ice Cream Day

AUGUST

- 5** National Oyster Day
- 19** National Potato Day
- 24** National Waffle Day



PMC Potato Planting

May 22, 2025