



ALASKA DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE NEWSLETTER

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Planning for America's 250th Anniversary



By Director Bryan Scoresby

This year has started off with a bang. The northern region has not enjoyed the coldest December on record. Here in South Central, we did not

enjoy the windiest year many of us can remember. Preparation and care of livestock during extreme weather events are challenging. Simple things, like keeping water open, are way more challenging when the wind blows the cold through everything, including people. One grower told me that he added fresh bedding to his pig pen, and when it warmed up to -15 degrees, the mama pigs came out of the barn to lie in the sunshine on the fresh bedding.

Winter is the time to plan all our summer activities, such as hiring our labor force, ordering seeds, fuel, and fertilizer, performing equipment repairs, and ordering supplies; and as is often the case, getting financed to keep the operation properly capitalized. And last of all, putting the marketing plan together to sell all the products raised throughout the year. I encourage and try to practice, putting a smile on and your best foot forward, then execute your plan to meet the challenges we all face this year.

This coming summer, our nation will be celebrating America's 250th anniversary of the signing of

the Declaration of Independence in 1776. The great Americans who built this nation, with our constitution, our laws, and our way of life, were certainly guided. Agriculture was at the forefront of the economic base. It still is and will continue to be, with the agricultural resources our country has. We all enjoy the bounty, the wide variety, and the availability of the food that farmers, especially Alaskan farmers, produce.



USDA Secretary Rollins is promoting a nationwide America250 celebration called "The Great American Potluck." Get your Patriotism on for this summer. July 4 celebrations are coming. Organize and participate in a great potluck meal with family, friends, and neighbors. We have 250 reasons to celebrate our nation and farmers this year.



Happy New Year and Lordy, Lordy, look who's 40!



By Mia Kirk

This year marks the 40th Anniversary of the Alaska Grown logo, but where did it all begin? The Alaska Grown logo emerged in the early 1980s as a response to farmers' desire for a unified identity and stronger voice in the marketplace. By 1981, Alaska's farmers had organized under the Alaska Farmer and Stock Growers label—later reorganizing as the Alaska Farm Bureau—and began working with the state's Division of Agriculture to help consumers easily recognize locally produced goods as high-quality products. With leadership from state agriculture marketing specialists Ed Kern and Doug Warner, a plan was developed using USDA grading standards and six artists' renditions of a seal. The final design and accompanying regulations were voted on by 387 producers at the 1985 Agriculture Symposium in Fairbanks. The logo was officially trademarked by the state in 1986, marking the first time consumers could clearly identify and intentionally purchase Alaska Grown products.

New and improved Alaska Grown Directory has been launched!

When I started with the Division of Agriculture more than 18 years ago, we had an Alaska Grown Sourcebook, a hard-copy publication that connected consumers to our Alaska Grown producers and their Alaska Grown products. Following that, the sourcebook was updated for a few years in hard-copy format and then online, using a couple of different platforms, all of which faced many challenges in keeping information accurate and up to date.

I am happy to share that through the efforts of the Marketing team, the State of Alaska Information Technology (IT) professionals, and support with federal funding, we now have the new and improved Alaska Grown Directory (no longer known as the Alaska Grown Sourcebook) on our website. This directory will not only enable consumers to search for Alaska Grown Products by name, product, and location, but also allow Alaska Grown members to create a login and register to keep their farm information up to date and accurate. Check it out at <https://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/alaskagrown/>

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Division Updates: *Continued from page 2*

Annual quarantine reminders

The New Year has the inspection team preparing for the season by providing annual reminders to nurseries and greenhouses about the plant health requirements for shipping restricted plant products into Alaska. We have these quarantines in place to protect Alaska from unwanted pests and diseases. Currently, we have restrictions for seed potatoes, tomato plants, and, new to this year, the Director signed a quarantine prohibiting the import, transport, and sale of *Prunus padus* (commonly known as European Bird Cherry or Mayday tree) and *Prunus virginiana* (commonly known as the Canada Red or Chokecherry tree). If you have questions specific to quarantines and/or the importation of nursery stock and other plant products into Alaska, please email us at dnr.ag.inspection@alaska.gov. Thank you for your support in protecting our great state!

Marketing team was on the move in New Mexico!

Last week, staff attended the Western U.S. Agricultural Trade Association's (WUSATA) annual strategic planning meeting in Santa Fe, New Mexico. During that meeting, they worked with state partners, in-country contractors, and WUSATA to plan trade activities for 2026 and proposed new activities for 2027. In addition to



Members of the Western U.S. Agriculture Trade Association (WUSATA) met in Santa Fe, New Mexico this month for their annual strategic planning meeting.

the USDA's Foreign Agriculture Service, Market Access Program, there is a new opportunity for funding international trade activities under the America First Trade Promotion Program. Our partnership with WUSATA enables us to leverage these funds to support Alaska agricultural businesses interested in exploring export opportunities and diversifying their markets. WUSATA's programs are designed to help businesses learn, connect, and compete through their Export Education, Global Connect, and FundMatch Programs. For more information, please visit: <https://www.wusata.org/>



PMC battles extreme winter weather



By Casey Dinkel

As I am sure some Alaskans can relate, the new year has been off to a challenging start. The Plant Materials Center staff has

had to overcome several major weather events over the past month. The PMC has seen gale-force winds in late December and into early January. Luckily, these gale-force winds that exceeded 90mph did not damage any equipment or facilities at the PMC. Staff had worked diligently to make sure any equipment was stored safely inside our buildings. When the wind finally subsided, the temperature plummeted to -40 at the PMC. Again, our staff were prepared as we did not suffer a single frozen pipe. As of late, our beautiful snowpack of over three feet has quickly diminished, turning to glaze ice from recent rain and above-freezing temperatures. While these weather events have made our duties here at the PMC challenging, our staff is all smiles, as we know spring is not too far off.



As the days grow longer, construction crews continue to work hard on the final projects for the new seed house, cleaning line, and addition. The seed house is set to be completed and powered by the end of February or sooner. This project has been under construction since August 4, 2025. PMC staff and I eagerly await the completion of this project so we can once again begin cleaning large seed lots and offer this great service to our growers.

Meanwhile, our seed-cleaning Agronomists, Andy Nolen and Dan Coleman, have been working on a smaller seed harvest at the PMC's small seed-cleaning facility. This small cleaning facility is typically meant to clean seed lots of a few hundred pounds or less. That being said, we don't want to fall too far behind, so we've opted to clean as much as we can until the large cleaning line is back up and operational. The process is slow on the small lot, but both Andy and Dan have already cleaned through several tons of seed this winter.

To combat the short, cold days of winter, everyone at the PMC is working hard to prepare for summer projects. We look forward to our typical duties of planting grass plugs, grain, and seed potatoes, but we are also excited about conducting several new research projects. Our summer will be full of new research on industrial hemp varieties, early-harvest potato studies, and revegetation trials. While the winters in Alaska can be daunting and cumbersome at times, I often remind myself and staff that spring will be here before you know it, and with it, another chance to grow Alaskan agriculture.

2026 CALENDAR

3 Months At-A-Glance

JANUARY

1 New Years Day

23 National Pie Day

FEBRUARY

14 Valentine's Day

16 Presidents' Day

21-28 National FFA Week

MARCH

7 National Cereal Day

17 St. Patrick's Day

20 Spring Equinox