



ALASKA DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE NEWSLETTER

Issue 26 | September 2026

Weather, farmland and policy shape Alaska's 2026 agriculture season



By Director Bryan Scoresby

Farmers' markets have had a very active year and are drawing to a seasonal close for most. A couple of markets are continuing throughout

the year. Farmers in the north have struggled with wet and cold weather this summer. Spring arrived late; cooler daytime temperatures slowed plant growth. We have not seen these weather challenges for several years but have had other challenges to contend with. I am sure that in future years, we all have thoughts that this year will be one of our best or one of our worst.

I was very pleased to be asked to participate in an SB208 bill signing with Governor Dunleavy. This bill simplifies the leasing process for agricultural lands statewide. The biggest simplification is leasing land WITHOUT a costly, confusing appraisal. SB208 was written to get farmable land into a producer's control to produce food. Expanding production, businesses, and creating jobs have measurable returns for the state and citizens.

With the 2026 agriculture land sale closing, the Division of Agriculture is always looking for land to sell in future sales. If you are a reader of this



Director Scoresby speaks at the SB208 signing.

and know of some state-owned land next to you or in your area, please get hold of us so we can nominate these lands for a future sale. You can also request leasing of lands due to SB208. We will work diligently with you on all parcels to evaluate them for a future sale or lease.

Nationally, the Farm Bill has passed out of the Senate Agriculture Committee for consideration by the full Senate. The actual bill is available online with a Google search. The farm bill has historically been renewed every 5 years. The current 2018 farm bill has been extended 3 times. This election season makes us wonder what changes are coming for our state's agricultural community.



Scoresby holds up the 40th anniversary recognition certificate from the legislature.

Spotlighting Alaska agriculture at the State Fair



By Mia Kirk

Every year, the Alaska State Fair brings great opportunity to celebrate our agricultural community. This year, we at the Alaska Division of Agriculture kicked off the first day with a legislative farm tour. When I first joined the Division, a legislative farm tour was an annual tradition we organized to highlight local agriculture, and it was exciting to bring it back. This year's tour included visits to VanderWeele Farms and Pyrah's Pioneer Peak Farm, followed by a chef demonstration featuring Alaska Grown products and a facility tour at the Plant Materials Center. Alaska producers whose products were showcased during the chef demo were invited to share insights about their operations and the stories behind their products. The day concluded at the Alaska State Fair Director's Reception, where Anchor Point Greenhouse was honored as the 2026 Farm Family of the Year. We hope to continue offering these tours in future years to help spotlight Alaska's vibrant and growing agricultural sector. Photos of the tour are available on the last page.

Senate Bill 208 Signed into Law

On the Colony Stage at the Alaska State Fair, Governor Dunleavy signed SB208, delivering important updates designed to strengthen

Alaska agriculture. The bill creates a clearer and more accessible framework for agricultural land leasing and sales, making it easier for Alaskans to secure farmland and invest in long-term development. It also modernizes key components of Alaska's industrial hemp program, reducing barriers and supporting farmers as they grow and diversify their businesses. And in celebration of Alaska's farming heritage, the state has officially designated the iconic giant green O-S Cross cabbage as our state vegetable.

Recognition of the Alaska Grown Program's 40th Anniversary

Following the bill signing, the Alaska Legislature recognized the Alaska Grown Program's 40 years of service to Alaska's agriculture with an [official certificate](#) honoring its longstanding commitment to promoting local producers and strengthening the industry.

2026 Agricultural Land Sale Reminder

A reminder that the 2026 Agricultural Land Offering closes on September 30, 2026. This year's sale features 10 parcels in the Nenana-Totchaket area and nine parcels in the North Fork Micro-Ag area. Full details are available on the DNR Division of Mining, Land, and Water (DMLW) website: <https://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/landsales/ag/499/>

Harvest season at the Plant Materials Center



By Casey Dinkel

As one would expect, September in south-central Alaska brought cooler temps and a fair amount of rain.

Fortunately, Mother Nature gave us some moments of reprieve. We took full advantage of any sunny weather windows to get in the field and harvest. PMC staff started harvesting foundation fields of native grass throughout August and completed combining the last fields in the first week of September. Most of the PMC foundation grass seed fields took longer to mature because of a delayed spring and a cool summer. Several commercial grass seed growers throughout Alaska will use some of this grass seed in the 2027 growing season. As PMC bolsters its foundation seed stocks, we continue to seek out new commercial grass seed growers in Alaska.

Once we harvested and dried all our foundation grass fields, PMC staff shifted their focus to potato harvest. Again, we took advantage of a small weather window on September 17. Staff harvested all our field maintenance blocks in one day. This effort took nearly all the PMC staff and some much-appreciated help from a few DNR volunteers. With everyone digging in and getting dirty, we harvested 145 varieties of spuds. We will bag these potatoes and store them in a large walk-in cooler for the winter. We use these spuds as a backup in case we lose our G-Zero plantlets. Having several backups is vital when maintaining such a large amount of genetic diversity at the PMC.

Seed cleaning services for native grass seed and small grains continued through August and September at the PMC. Staff were able to successfully clean over 70,000 lbs. of “Wainwright” Slender Wheatgrass throughout August and September. This grass seed will be utilized on large-

scale revegetation projects across Alaska in 2027. Additionally, staff cleaned roughly 25,000 lbs. of foundation oats and barley that will be sold as seed to commercial growers for scale-up next growing season. The new commercial seed cleaning line has allowed the PMC to clean seed more efficiently and three to five times faster than in the past. These improvements will allow the PMC to better serve Alaska’s farmers as our agricultural industry grows.

As termination dust moves its way down the mountains and we swiftly approach winter, PMC staff and I are working hard to winterize greenhouses, complete outside construction projects, and prepare equipment for the cold and snow. With another growing season under our belt and bountiful harvest stored away, we are thankful to live and work in such a great state. We are already looking forward to next year’s growing season.

2026 CALENDAR

3 Months At-A-Glance

SEPTEMBER

4	National Food Bank Day
7	Labor Day
22	Autumnal Equinox

OCTOBER

12	National Farmers Day
16	World Food Day
18	Alaska Day
26	National Pumpkin Day
31	Halloween

NOVEMBER

3	National Sandwich Day
11	Veterans Day
14	National Pickle Day
26	Thanksgiving



2026 Legislative Farm Tour

The 2026 Legislative Farm Tour highlighted Alaska agriculture with visits to VanderWeele Farms and Pyrah's Pioneer Peak Farm, a chef demonstration featuring Alaska Grown products, and a tour of the Plant Materials Center. Alaska producers shared the stories behind their operations and products, showcasing the people and hard work that help grow Alaska's agricultural community.

