



MEMORANDUM
Department of Natural Resources

STATE OF ALASKA
Division of Agriculture

TO: Board of Agriculture
& Conservation

DATE: January 23, 2014

FROM: Franci Havemeister
Director

SUBJECT: Director's Report
December 2013

Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund (ARLF):

- Loan officer has received and processed one loan resubmission.
- Loan officer has prepared and closed a loan request approved at December's BAC meeting.
- Loan officer has requested and received contract documents to enter ARLF into a sales agreement with a Kenai realtor to list the Kenai Spur property for sale.
- Loan officer has updated the asset report.
- Loan officer has processed loan payoffs, associated Deeds of Reconveyance, and UCC filing updates, as well as other duties associated with ARLF management.
- Loan officer has had conversations over the phone with potential new borrowers and forwarded them application information.
- Loan officer has had conversations over the phone with current borrowers requesting potential loan modifications and assumptions.
- Loan officer has been in contact with delinquent borrowers. Default borrower contact list has been updated.
- Loan officer has been in process of managing loan insurance requirements and other ARLF loan requirements.
- Loan officer has updated the annual interest rate comparison for review.

Marketing & Development:

- One business was added to the Alaska Grown certification program in December.
- Twenty restaurants are now participating in the Restaurant Rewards program.
- Marketing staff are making updates and improvements to the Alaska Grown Sourcebook system in anticipation of collecting data for the 2014 version.
- Staff continues to participate with the Alaska Food Policy Council, serving on the Governing Board, as the liaison for the Locally Grown group, and as a participant with the School Programs group.
- Staff participated in Access Database training.
- With input from the Executive Director of the Alaska Farmland Trust, staff created and distributed a survey to producers in the Mat Su Region asking for input about current and future farm management practices; results are being tallied.
- Staff continues to represent the state of Alaska on the Executive Board of the North American Agricultural Marketing Officials.

- Staff reviewed final reports from 2013 grant projects including the Cooperative Marketing Program (CMP) and Farm to School Mini-grants.
- Staff continues to promote the Alaska Grown and Farm to School programs through social media, reaching tens of thousands of individuals per week.

Central Office Inspection:

- Staff completed 2 FV 300 with 3 lots inspected.
- Staff conducted four farm visits and two store inspections to check quality of potatoes.
- Staff completed ten phytosanitary inspections and certifications to support the export of Alaskan products.
- Staff completed two regional shell egg surveillance inspections.
- Staff attended and participated in the National Potato Council's, Seed Potato Certification Committee Meeting and the Potato Association of America Certification Section Meeting in Memphis, TN. Participants included Seed Potato Certification Groups from Idaho, Maine, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Montana, Oregon California, Washington, Michigan, Colorado, Canada, Scotland, Idaho and Washington Seed Potato Commission, Seed Potato Growers from Idaho and USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). Topics included a Bacterial Ring Rot discussion on individual States regulations and protocols, testing requirements, ring rot plots, etc, Canada/ US Management Plan for PVY, Potato Cyst Nematode, updates on Post Harvest Testing, Blackleg in Scotland, Early Detection of Bacterial Ring Rot in Canada, Potato Wart Updates in Canada, Garden/ Catalog Potato Seed Sales, etc.
- Staff participated on the Nation Potato Council (NPC), conference call. In this meeting, the NPC discussed and agreed upon drafting up Bacterial Ring Rot recommendations to the Potato Industry and Seed Potato Producers.
- Staff is communicating with the USDA, Terry Bourgoin on the status of the USDA Harmonization Plan for seed potatoes.
- Staff submitted three proposals for the 2014 Farm Bill, Section 10201 projects. Awarded projects will be announced by April 1st.
- Staff is continuing the process of drafting the Seed Potato Regulations.
- Staff is drafting up the 2014 Late Blight letter with a listing of the approved Certified Seed Growers and varieties.
- Staff responded to one request concerning commercial production of herbs/microgreens and applicable food safety regulations.
- Staff met with PMC staff to discuss ongoing regulations re-writes.
- Staff attended the Produce Safety Alliance's monthly webinar; discussion topics included FSMA, GAP program initiatives, and state food safety training efforts.

Northern Region Inspection:

- Staff issued three Phytosanitary Certificates for timber exports.
- Staff submitted a Farm Bill proposal to continue survey efforts to monitor and survey for exotic Asian defoliating moths throughout the state. The suggestion proposes to continue the RSA cooperative efforts with UAF Cooperative Extension Service to assist in the placement of these monitoring traps. This survey has been helpful in bolstering cooperation with Extension Service pest detection and monitoring efforts as well as helping to provide means for Extension Pest Scouts to better interact with and serve the public, as this agreement helps to fund their positions and travel to locations in the state to conduct the work.

- Staff compiled data for APHIS reporting on funded projects conducted over the July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013 survey cycle and entered negative data into APHIS reporting databases for the following targeted Lepidoptera pests: *Lymantria dispar asiatica*, *Dendrolimus sibiricus*, *Lymantria Mathura*, *Lymantria monacha*, and targeted stubby root nematode pests: *Paratrichodorus allius*, *Paratrichodorus anemones*, *Paratrichodorus christiei*, *Paratrichodorus nanus*, *Paratrichodorus pachydermus*, *Paratrichodorus proximus*, *Paratrichodorus teres*, *Trichodorus minor*, *Trichodorus primitives*, *Trichodorus viruliferus*.
- Staff is currently working on semiannual reporting and data management received and collected for all pest detection and Farm Bill surveys conducted during July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014 survey cycle. Data is entered into APHIS databases for reporting purposes, and financial and narrative reports are routed through program managers in Palmer for project and financial reporting to the State Plant Health Director.
- Staff is working with APHIS and Division Staff on preparations and planning for 2014 pest detection activities.

Plant Materials Center

Invasive Weeds and Agricultural Pest Program

- In conjunction with the DNR Commissioner's office, program staff hosted a public meeting to discuss Agency efforts to control the spread of Elodea, an aquatic invasive plant found in the Anchorage area. This meeting included a presentation by Dr. Lars Anderson, retired, U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Research Service and University of California Davis who discussed the ecological dangers presented by Elodea and how other invasive aquatic plant species issues have been tackled in other states. Over 50 people were in attendance.
- Staff is coordinating the production and airing of Invasive Plant Awareness Public Service Announcements that are scheduled to air during the 2014 growing season.
- Staff is continuing to participate in efforts with the Kenai Peninsula Cooperative Weed Management Area to develop an Integrated Pest Management Plan for the aquatic invasive weed Elodea. This effort includes assisting in the permitting processes with ADEC, ADF&G, and ADNR.

Pathology

- Staff assisted Rhodiola growers in finding primer sets for species differentiation.
- Staff performed additional confirmatory testing for *Tobacco rattle virus* in peonies.

Publications

- Staff continued to edit the Alternative Plants brochure and poster.
- Staff began preparing printed template and web template for Alaska Grown Sourcebook 2014/2015 edition.
- Staff developing updated web pages for all sections at the PMC.
- Staff working to clean up space on server and acquire Smartboard training.
- Staff is planning upcoming projects for 2014.
- Staff continues to prepare monthly newsletters, BAC reports, and general web maintenance duties.

Horticulture

- All harvest data has been compiled for the 2013 season. The reports are being compiled and will be published for use by producers and the general public.
- Planning and preparation of the 2014 field season will continue over the coming months.
- Plant material has been ordered for the 2014 growing season.
- Plant propagation will be done over the next couple of months.
- Hard good materials have been ordered for the season.
- Updating of the IPM plan will be done for the 2014 growing season.
- Pesticide registration process is ongoing for chemicals not currently registered in the state that have been requested by producers in various industries throughout the state.

Seed Cleaning

- The Plant Materials Center seed cleaning program received an additional 12 lots of seed for local producers to be cleaned in the small cleaning facility this spring.
- The large cleaning facility has reached the 50% completion mark on commercial seed being cleaned this season.

Seed Laboratory

- Staff conducted 29 seed tests; including 12 purity, 9 germination, and 8 noxious weed tests.

Seeds of Success

- Staff completed cleaning of over 70 seed lots on collections from 2013.

Soil Lab

- Staff is currently working with Metlakatla Native Corporation conducting germination test for species identification, in order to track the potential vector of invasive species on and off Annette Island.

Ethnobotany and Education

- Staff worked with approximately 25 people via email and telephone regarding native plant germination, winter stratification, uses of dried materials, plans for spring gardens, and winter identification.

Foundation Seed

- Staff is entering seed viability and purity information into the database, checking seed to ensure it conforms to Alaska Seed Standards, removing seed from inventory that does not meet standards and requesting germination tests for upcoming seed sale in April.