The Division of Agriculture Activities

October 05, 2011

Find us on the web at:
http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag

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Questions or Comments?
E-Mail or call 907-761-3864.

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Directors Note

Fall is always a busy time for Alaskans, with producer's working long hours to meet the inevitable arrival of winter. Hopefully, you were successful in that challenge and in the final preparation process.

There are a few things I would like to draw your attention to, the first of which is Homeland Security's proposed new regulation. This proposed regulation was created in response to direction from Congress to "*regulate the sale and transfer of ammonium nitrate by an ammonium nitrate facility….to prevent the misappropriation or use of ammonium nitrate in an act of terrorism*." The new regulation is outlined in dhs.gov/files/laws/gc_1288878991345.shtm and proposes that each purchaser and seller will be required to apply for an Ammonium Nitrate (AN) Registered User Number with the Department, and each applicant will be screened against the Terrorist Screening Database (TSDB). Following the screening process, approved individuals will be issued an AN Registered User Number, which will allow them to engage in the sale, purchase, or transfer of ammonium nitrate. Public comments will be accepted through December 1, 2011 at regulations.gov.

The Division of Agriculture continues to work closely with Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to improve communication and collaboration between industry and the agencies. A teleconference will be held Friday, October 7th with DEC, the Division of Ag, and industry. This is an opportunity to ask questions, address concerns, and have an open dialogue. Please take advantage of this opportunity. The call in number is 1-800-315-6338; pass code 122#.

Last month I attended Farm Bureau meetings in both Kodiak and Homer to discuss the Division's Long Range Plan. Good discussion took place at both locations and it is imperative to have industry's input. I believe that the Division of Agriculture's role is to "promote and encourage" industry. If we are to be successful in that mission we need to fully understand the needs of industry. As always, if you have any ideas or concerns give me a call at 761-3867.

It is with a heavy heart that we say goodbye and good luck to Charlie Knight. He has been a tremendous asset to the division over the years and his expertise, dedication, and willingness to assist the agriculture community will be missed. We wish him well in his retirement!

-Franci Havemeister

"There seem to be but three ways for a nation to acquire wealth. The first is by war, as the Romans did, in plundering their conquered neighbors. This is robbery. The second by commerce, which is generally cheating. The third by agriculture, the only honest way, wherein man receives a real increase of the seed thrown into the ground, in a kind of continual miracle, wrought by the hand of God in his favor, as a reward for his innocent life and his virtuous industry."

- Benjamin Franklin.

Agriculture Calendar

- Fri. October 7th, 2011, 8:00 am:
  Div. of Agriculture / Dept. of Environmental Conservation Bi-Monthly Teleconference
  Call-in number: 1-800-315-6338 (pass code: 122#)

- Thur. October 13th, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm, Fri. October 14th, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm:
  Workshop on Cooperative Development in Alaska - Gorsuch UAA Commons, Anchorage
  Details: www.dnr.alaska.gov/ag/CALENDAR/CoopDevWksp101311.pdf
  Contact: Andrew Crow - (907) 786-5447, anacc@uaa.alaska.edu
  or Tony Nakazawa - (907) 460-0825, atnakazawa@alaska.edu

- Thur. October 13th - Fri. 14th, 2011:
  Sustainable Livestock Conference - Sheraton Hotel, Anchorage *Details:* uaf.edu/snras/dslp
  Registration: http://www.uaf.edu/files/snras/dslp/SLP-Registration.pdf
- Fri. October 14th, Sat. October 15th, Sun. October 16th 2011:
  8th annual Bioneers in Alaska Conference - UAA campus, Anch. *Details:* bioneersinak.org
  Contact: Janice Rowell, jerowell@alaska.edu
- Mon. October 24th, 11:00 am - 3:00 pm:
  Food Day Celebration - UAF Wood Center, Fairbanks
  Details: dnr.alaska.gov/ag/Index/UAFFoodDay10242011.pdf
  Contact: Nancy Tarnai, ntarnai@alaska.edu

As we learn about new agriculture events throughout Alaska, we will add the details to the calendar. If you have an event that you would like to add, please contact Lora Haralson.

Marketing Section

Celebrate healthy food and healthy eating with Food Day on October 24th

October 24th is Food Day! Throughout the nation, celebrations of food will take place on campuses, in living rooms and at city-wide functions. In Alaska, plans are in the making for Food Day activities from Sitka to Fairbanks. How will you celebrate? We encourage you to host/attend a food day activity to honor and celebrate our Alaska food producers. Support your local farmers and ranchers, fishers and food makers. Tell us about your Food Day plan on the Alaska Grown facebook page.

Alaska Farm-to-School Program Update

Farm to School Grant Awardees Connect Youth With Our Food System

Fall is such a busy time of year. School has started and harvest is happening all across the state! This summer, the Alaska Farm-to-School program awarded grants to several teachers and involved community members. These grants were designed to help link youth and the food system back together. September has seen the fruits of their labor pay off with several field trips to local farms, visits to schools from local farmers and chefs, and community potlucks bringing families and local food together. Here, we are highlighting a few of the 17 projects happening across Alaska.

Kathleen Vik, a family and consumer science teacher from Chugiak High School, had several guests interact with her class recently. Roger VanderWeele detailed food production from the farm side of the food system, David Thorne explained the role of transportation and logistics, and Chef Clayton Jones shared his experiences from a restaurant perspective. "You could feel the energy from my students and the staff", Vik said. "I am extending this project to include the 100 plus staff members with the tasting etc. Thank you for this opportunity."

A second project involved UAA Professor Shannon Gramse taking his students to Mark Rempel's farm in Butte. Taking a hands on approach, he is teaching farming straight from the field. Students tromped through the fields as Rempel explained the advantages of eating raw vs. processed foods as he handed them slices of raw golden beet to sample. Other topics included how to keep pests from destroying your crop, and the difference between a summer and winter squash.

During the students' second visit, snow was visible on the mountain tops as they harvested potatoes. Chilly temperatures and drizzle did not deter the fall harvest. Rempel announced that farmer's "don't stop harvesting because it's raining, or because it's Labor Day. The fields don't know that, and that's the joy of farming."

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Alaska Farm-to-School Program Update

Upon the third visit, students were treated to a day of sunny weather as they helped in farm clean-up. Grabbing plastic by the yard and rolling it into piles, the students were encouraged to come up with better ways to recycle. Rempel then rewarded them with a beautiful squash, picked moments before, to take home and enjoy.

Students from Shannon Gramse's UAA class harvest potatoes at a farm in Butte

Another Farm-to-School success story comes from Talkeetna, where Niki Weaver and Erica McCall Valentine took elementary students for a short walk to a nearby farm to learn how vegetables grow. Children picked apples to snack on for the walk back to school, and later drew pictures of what they learned.

The pair also hosted "The Healthy Taste of Alaska", a community potluck event that was a huge success. Over 130 people attended and lots of local foods were shared: moose, salmon, halibut, berries, and a great variety of locally grown vegetables. Over $510 was raised by the community to provide Talkeetna Elementary School students with a weekly lunchtime salad bar for the remainder of the school year. Well done!

For more information about the Alaska Farm-to-School program, or if you have any questions, contact Johanna Herron at Johanna.herron@alaska.gov or (907) 374-3714. You can also contact Kristi Krueger at Kristi.Krueger@alaska.gov, or (907) 761-3858. More information about Farm-to-School grants is available at dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_FTS.htm.

*Funds raised from **A Healthy Taste of Alaska,** a community potluck in Talkeetna, support a weekly salad bar for elementary students for the 2011-2012 school year*

Farm to School Challenge

Last year, the United States House of Representatives declared October National Farm to School Month, recognizing the strong role Farm to School (FTS) plays in promoting good health and strong economies. FTS programs are an effective way to encourage healthy eating and boost local agriculture sales by bringing local vegetables, fruit, and other products into schools. Alaska joined the Farm to School movement this year with a program in the Division of Agriculture, and to raise awareness of the program we are launching a Farm to School Challenge in October to coordinate with the National FTS Month.

Applying for the Farm-to-School Challenge is easy. The survey is open until Friday, November 4th, at 5 p.m. Paper applications will be accepted during the same time frame.

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Land Sales & Grazing Leases

http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_sales.htm

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The electronic Farm to School challenge application can be found at surveymonkey.com/s/FTS_challenge2011. FTS challenge applications are also available at dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_challengeFTS.htm.

Anyone who engages in, or plans to engage in, FTS activities during the 2011-2012 school year is eligible and encouraged to apply. This includes school principals, teachers, students, school food service staff, agriculture producers, other food producers, community advocates, culinary experts, gardeners, distributors, processors, parents, and others.

If you have any questions about the Farm-to-School challenge, please contact Johanna Herron at Johanna.herron@alaska.gov or (907) 374-3714. You can also contact Kristi Krueger at Kristi.Krueger@alaska.gov, or (907) 761-3858.

Inspection Section

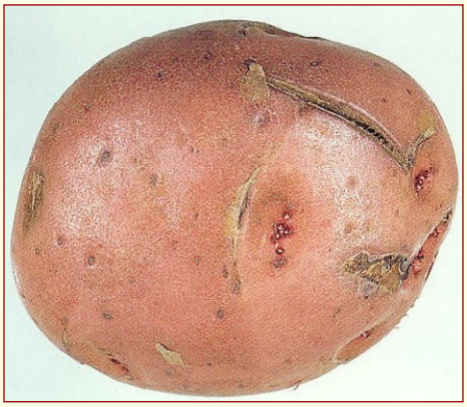
Tips for Grading US No.1 Potatoes and Carrots

The potato and carrot packing season has begun! Here are a few reminders when grading your US No.1 potatoes and carrots.

The following table represents US No. 1 allowances for some commonly seen external defects on potatoes.

Potato Defect	US No. 1
Air crack	1/3 length or diameter in aggregate or 5% waste cut (see picture below)
Bruises	5% of the surface area in aggregate or 5% waste cut
Enlarged lenticels	When materially detracting
Sunburn	5% waste cut

AIR CRACKS



U.S. No. 1 - maximum allowed

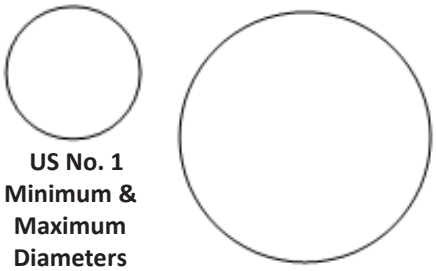
Carrots must be **Fairly Well Formed** in order to meet the US No. 1 shape requirements. Fairly well formed means that the carrot is not forked or misshapen to the extent that the appearance is materially affected.

US No. 1 shape requirements

Fairly well formed - Not lower limit

Fairly well formed - Lower limit

Carrot Size on a US No 1 grade requires the diameter of each carrot to be not less than ¾ inch or more than 1 ½ inches and the length not less than 5 inches.



US No. 1 Minimum & Maximum Diameters

Plant Materials Center

http://plants.alaska.gov/

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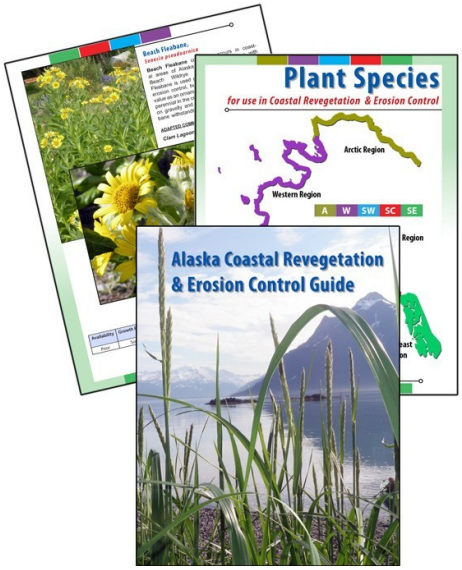
Plant Materials Center

2nd printing of Alaska Coastal Revegetation and Erosion Control Guide

Did you get a copy of the Alaska Coastal Revegetation and Erosion Control Guide? Originally published last year, this book consolidates lessons learned from over 20 years of Alaska restoration and reclamation projects and offers a comprehensive list of reclamation species adapted for use in Alaska.



The Alaska Coastal Revegetation and Erosion Control Guide was written by Stoney J. Wright and Phil K. Czapla. The second printing has just arrived at the Plant Materials Center, and is available to interested members of the public. The document can also be accessed online, at plants.alaska.gov/reveg. For more information, contact the Plant Materials Center at (907) 745-4469.

Land Management

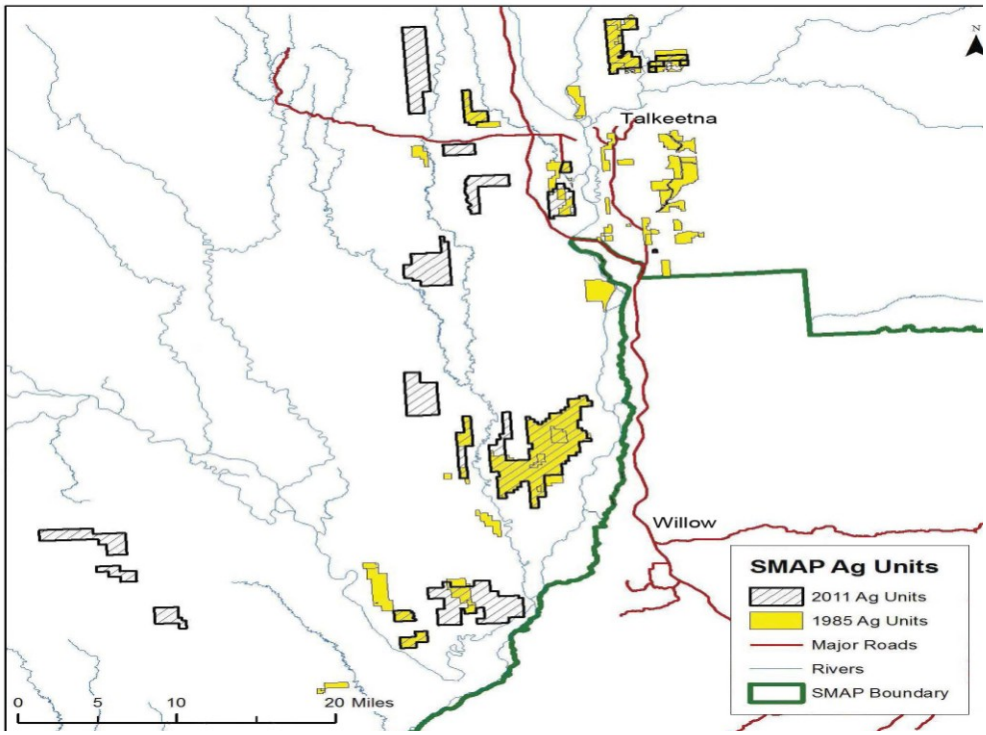
Susitna Matanuska Area Plan Released

Over 72 Thousand Acres Receive Agriculture Designation

On August 11, 2011 the Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) adopted the Susitna Matanuska Area Plan (SMAP) with August 17 as the date of issuance. The plan establishes land use designations, management intent and management guidelines for 9 million acres of state land in the Susitna and Matanuska river valleys. This plan supersedes the majority of the 1985 Susitna Area Plan.

Division staff spent many hours researching and identifying state land appropriate for agricultural development. The result of the Susitna Matanuska Area Plan is the designation of 72,137 acres for agriculture.

If you have questions about specific areas of State land designated for agriculture, please contact Erik Johnson at 761-3863, or Erik.Johnson@alaska.gov.



Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation:

Division of Environmental Health

Eradication of Scrapie in the U.S. Goat Population

Since 2001, the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has coordinated an accelerated National Scrapie Eradication Program to eliminate the disease from U.S. sheep and goats. Efforts to eliminate scrapie in sheep in the United States are succeeding. To ensure complete and successful eradication of this fatal degenerative brain disease, its occurrence in the goat population must also be addressed. Disease transmission routes, progression and genetic underpinnings of scrapie in goats are poorly understood. Low occurrence rates, underreporting and the inconvenience and cost of tissue testing for scrapie make this eradication challenging.

All states implemented efforts in 2003 to eradicate classical scrapie by adopting regulations requiring official identification of sheep and goats and implementing slaughter surveillance. Subsequently, the percentages of black-face sheep and white or mottled-face sheep found scrapie-positive at slaughter decreased by 81% and 66% respectively between 2003 and 2009. The estimated national prevalence rate in sheep was 0.05% in 2009. A USDA caprine slaughter prevalence study in 2007-08 showed zero positive of 3,032 goats sampled. This degree of sampling would have detected scrapie at a prevalence of 0.1%. There have been cases of classical scrapie in goats, however the study concluded that the prevalence is less than 0.1%. Educational information about scrapie in U.S. sheep and goats is available from the National Scrapie Education Initiative. An informative presentation with two goat scrapie case reports and a review of the National Scrapie Identification Program protocols is available at eradicatescrapie.org.

U.S. Origin Sheep and Goats May Now Transit Canada into Alaska

"Under a joint arrangement made by USDA APHIS Veterinary Services (APHIS VS) and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), non-bovine ruminant animals of U.S. origin may directly transit Canada without stopping (excepting feed, water, or rest purposes) while moving between points in the U.S. Such consignments must comply with APHIS' conditions for re-entry to the U.S.; with CFIA requirements & oversight for any applicable feed, water, & rest stops in Canada; and with CFIA's import health requirements for livestock entering Canada…"

Complete guidelines on this protocol are available at www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/animals/downloads/pro_us-origin_move_one_location_to_another.pdf.

Please remember that all animals imported into Alaska are required to meet State import requirements as well. All animals need a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI) or Health Certificate and livestock require an import permit. Other specific requirements can be found under the Import/Export heading at the State Veterinarian web page: www.dec.state.ak.us/EH/vet/.

For additional information, please contact:

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The National Scrapie Eradication Program and interstate/international animal movements require that small ruminants be identified so that they may be traced to their herd of origin in case of disease. The Office of the State Veterinarian is drafting rules to establish animal identification requirements for sheep and goats that keep the state consistent with the other 49 states to allow open movement of sheep and goats in and out of Alaska. The rules will be included in the state's animal health regulations, which will be available for review and public comment this fall.

Environmental Health

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