The Division of Agriculture Activities

February 07, 2011

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

Director of Agriculture
Franci Havemeister
907-761-3867
Franci.Havemeister@alaska.gov

In This Issue

- Director's Note
- Farm to School Conference
- Agriculture Calendar
- Cooperative Marketing Grants
- Fusarium Tuber Rot in Potatos
- Invasive Plants Strategic Plan
- Small Seed Lot Cleaning at the Plant Materials Center

To remove your name from our e-newsletter list, click here.

To be added to our e-newsletter list, click here.

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

Follow us on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/dnr.alaskagrown

Director's Note

With the New Year comes a new legislative session. I travelled to Juneau in January and presented an overview of the Division of Agriculture to the House Resources committee. The meeting went well and I was asked many questions about Agriculture in Alaska. The agriculture community may be interested in several bills that have been introduced this session; HB 18 titled Alaska Public Garden Day, HB 93 School Gardens, Greenhouses, and Farms, and HB 97 Extending Invasive Plants Law. You can track these bills or any others of interest on Alaska Basis http://w3.legis.state.ak.us.

A meeting was held in Fairbanks, February 4th, with Deputy Commissioner Ed Fogels, Division staff, and producers' affected by the Delta Bison. It was industry's first opportunity to discuss this issue with the new administration at DNR and the meeting was well received, with industry given the opportunity to voice their concerns.

If you have child/children ages 10-16 and are interested in hosting a Japanese exchange student this summer, the UAF Cooperative Extension Service and the 4-H international exchange program are in need of host families. For more information please contact the Anchorage Cooperative Extension office @ 907-786-6300 or e-mail Tony Nakazawa (atnakazawa@alaska.edu) or Marianne Kerr (mlkerr@alaska.edu). This is a great opportunity to introduce young people to Alaskan agriculture.

Please review the Division Calendar for upcoming events, as several conferences and events are scheduled for the month of February. Don't miss this opportunity to hear what other producers from around the nation have to share. If you would like an agriculture event posted on next month's calendar please contact the division at 745-7200.

-Franci Havemeister

Marketing Section

Cooperative Marketing Program Grants Available

The availability of Cooperative Marketing Program (CMP) grants has been announced. The CMP grant initiative is designed to support Alaskan agriculture producers through targeted marketing effort.

Applications for projects benefiting more than one business (i.e. 'cooperative' efforts) will be ranked higher than those promoting a single business or enterprise. Grants of up to $2000 will be available, although matching funds will be required from the participants. CMP grants are open to anyone involved in the agricultural community, provided they are an approved Alaska Grown user.

see **CMP grants**, *page 2*

Farm to School Summit

The Division of Agriculture is excited to launch the new Farm to School Program. On January 12th, we held a Farm to School Summit that was attended by 52 people - farmers, school food service professionals, community advocates, university staff, state employees and more. It was a great chance to learn about the program, ask questions, provide input and start dialogue.

Results from a research project, led by Dr. Andrea Bersamin of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, were shared with participants. Project MEALS, (**M**ore **E**ating of **A**laskan-based **L**unches in **S**chools) was a state-wide survey that asked food service professionals their perspectives about incorporating Alaskan foods into the school meal program.

see **farm-to-school summit**, *page 2*

Agriculture Calendar

Upcoming Events for February, 2011

2/11: **Forage Growers School**, **Part III**, Palmer (*details here*).
Info: Steve Brown, 745-3639

2/15 - 2/16: **Produce Growers Conference**, Palmer (*details here*).
Info: Steve Brown, 745-3639

2/16: **Mat-Su Chapter Farm Bureau Annual Banquet**, Palmer (*details here*).
Info: Marie Domer, 745-6561

2/17: **Alaska Farmers Market Association**, Palmer (*details here*).
Info: Amy Pettit, 745-7200

2/17: **Rhubarb Meeting**, Palmer (*details here*).
Info: Amy Pettit, 745-7200

2/26: **Delta Farm Forum**, Delta Junction (*details here*).
Info: Phil Kaspari, 895-4215

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

Marketing Section

CMP grants

continued from page 1

An overview, and further information about the CMP grant program is available on the Division's web site, at http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_grantsCMP.htm. The 2011 program information is now available.

Marketing staff will be giving presentations regarding these grants at many upcoming conferences – we hope to see you there! Remember to review the Agriculture Calendar on our web page, and future newsletters, for information about meetings and events.

farm-to-school summit

continued from page 1

With about 75% of the food service professionals in Alaska responding to the MEALS survey, the results represent a broad cross-section of opinion across the state. Some of the key findings were as follows:

1) there is enormous interest in incorporating Alaskan foods into school meal programs,
2) the primary purchasing considerations are product cost and reliability of supply.

Feedback from food service professionals indicated a need for further information. This is a task the farm-to-school program is ready to tackle.

The program is currently developing a strategic plan, using the HB-70 legislation as a guide. Stakeholder input is being sought, in an effort to make the program reflect community priorities, interests, and goals. We will also be working with key regulatory agencies, to ensure all procedures and policies comply with applicable state requirements. Johanna Herron is the farm-to-school program coordinator, and she is available to answer questions, connect people and resources, and receive input about the strategic plan. She can be reached at Johanna.Herron@alaska.gov or 907-374-3714.

Marketing Staff

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

Amy Pettit -
Marketing Manager
907-761-3864
Amy.Pettit@alaska.gov

Johanna Herron
907-374-3714
Johanna.Herron@alaska.gov

Inspection Section

Fusarium Tuber Rot in Potatoes

Fusarium Tuber Rot is a type of decay introduced though injuries, such as cuts and bruises, at any place on the potato. The two indicators of infection are 1) distinct open cavity and/or 2) masses of white mold. The skin will have a wrinkled appearance and the decaying tissues will become sunken. The color of the affected tissues will vary from light to dark brown or even black.

Fusarium Tuber Rot can be wet, moist and dry. Typically, it is dry at low temperatures and wet at high temperatures and never has a bad odor unless accompanied by other bacteria or fungi.

The US Grade Tolerances for Fusarium Tuber Rot differ depending if it is wet or moist and dry.

The moist and dry types allow for a 5% waste cut in US No 1 and 10% waste cut in US No 2 grades. If the affected area is dry and/ or dry with margins moist, but not enough to wet adjacent potatoes, this is described as 'dry rot'.

The wet type is considered a 'free from' defect and will be scored against the soft rot tolerance regardless of the affected area on the individual potato.

Fusarium Tuber Rot causes great losses in potatoes which can be reduced if injury during harvesting, transportation and storage is maintained. This can be accomplished by eliminating rocks, reducing harvesting equipment speeds, using padded equipment, reducing the height of the tuber drops and warming potatoes before handling.

For more information on the US Grade Standards for Potatoes follow this link, http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5068888.

Plant Materials Center

2009-2010 Annual Report Released

The Alaska Plant Materials Center (PMC) has released a combined annual report, covering the last two years. The report highlights the major program activities of the PMC, including

- Commercial Development of Native Seed & Plants
- Foundation Seed Program
- Revegetation Technology & Projects
- Rural Village Seed Production Project
- Certified Seed Laboratory
- Seed Cleaning & Conditioning
- Soil Testing & Analysis
- Potato Disease Control
- Ethnobotany Teaching Garden
- Invasive Weeds & Agricultural Pests
- Publications & Presentations

The report in available on the Plant Materials Center website, http://plants.alaska.gov/pdf/2009-2010-annual-report.pdf.

If you would like to know more about the Alaska Plant Materials Center, this document is an excellent place to start.

Inspection Staff

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

Doug Warner
Inspection Manager
907-761-3861
Douglas.Warner@alaska.gov

Mia Kirk
907-761-3853
Mia.Kirk@alaska.gov

Barb Hanson
907-761-3854
Barbara.Hanson@alaska.gov

Plant Materials Center

Small Seed Lot Cleaning Facility

When a stand of plants is mature, it is ready for harvest. Field production, and harvesting, at the Plant Materials Center is generally focused on seed. Crops are harvested either manually or mechanically, depending on the size of the field. In both cases, some unwanted material in the form of chaff, stems and seeds from other plant species are contained in the harvest. The purpose of seed cleaning is to separate this unwanted material (chaff, stems, and other seeds) from the collected raw seed to obtain pure target seed.

As the name indicates, the Small Seed Lot Cleaning Facility (SSLCF) at the Plant Materials Center is designed for cleaning small quantities of seed (up to 150 lbs). Depending on the quantity, seed is either hand-cleaned or cleaned by the use of specialized machines.

When seed is brought to the SSLCF, an initial assessment is done to determine what machines or procedures will be used to obtain pure seed from it. For example, if the target seed is round, and the sample contains other materials which are not round, then round screens are used to separate target seed from the unwanted materials (chaff, etc).

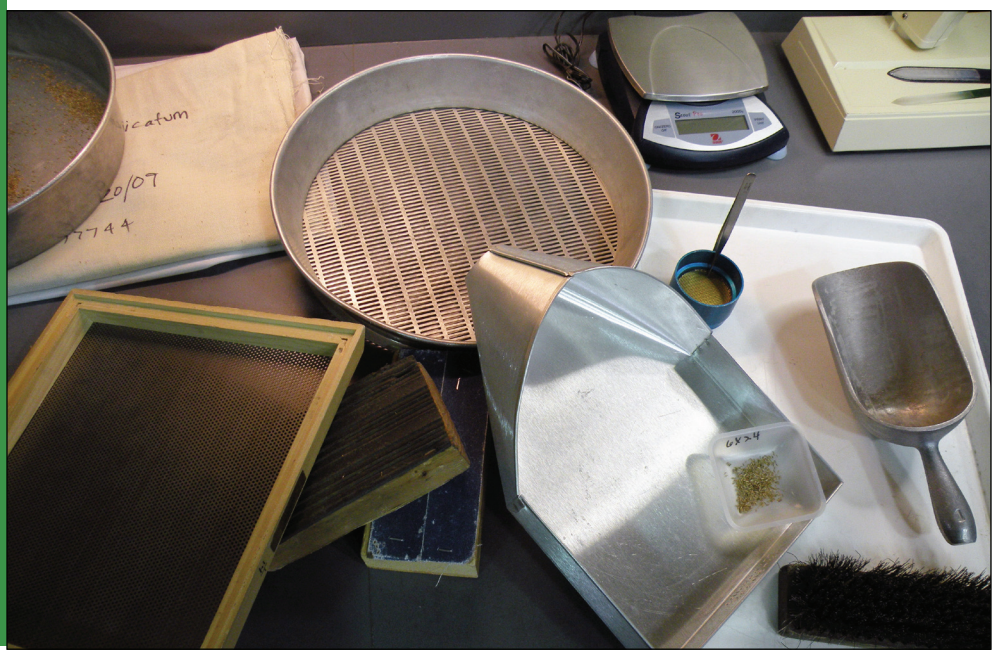
Extremely small harvests are cleaned by hand. In this method, a series of hand screens and pans are used to separate chaff and other seeds from the target seeds. The unwanted material is separated from the target seed based on the size and shape.

For harvest quantities ranging from 1 lb. to 150 lb., specialized machinery is used to clean seed. These machines operate based on the physical properties of seed (weight, size, shape and specific gravity).

Equipment used in the SSLCF operations is as follows:

- **Small bundle thresher** – Separates seed from stems (e.g. grasses)
- **Screen Separator** – Screens are vibrated to grade seeds based on size & shape; this machine separates stems, chaff and larger unwanted materials, and is the primary seed sorter used at the PMC.
- **Brush Cleaner** – Wire mesh cylinder and rotating brush assembly strips seed from stems.
- **Multiple Air-Chamber System** – separates lighter material into separate chambers using controlled air flow (for lots over 5 lbs).
- **Continuous Air-Stream Separator** (Single Chamber) – uses blowing air to separate chaff from seed for extremely small quantities (lots up to 5 lbs).
- **Gravity Separator** – Separates seeds based on specific gravity (mass).

Farmers can bring their small harvests to the PMC for cleaning. Larger lots will be sent to the large seed lot cleaning facility. Cleaning is priced at an hourly rate. Details can be obtained by calling the PMC, at (907)-745-4469



Plant Materials Center

http://plants.alaska.gov/

Main Phone: 907-745-4469

Stoney Wright
Manager, Plant Materials Center
Stoney.Wright@alaska.gov
907-745-8105

Peggy Hunt
Peggy.Hunt@alaska.gov
745-8721

Gino Graziano
Gino.Graziano@alaska.gov
745-8127

Pest Detection Section

Update on Gypsy Moth and Exotic Forest Moth Detection Surveys

The gypsy moth, *Lymantria dispar* (L.), occurs naturally in Europe, Asia, and North Africa. Since its establishment in North America, the gypsy moth has been responsible for considerable damage to the hardwood forests of the eastern United States. Millions of dollars are spent annually to mitigate the deleterious impacts and spread of this forest pest. As a caterpillar, *Lymantria dispar* (L.) can feed on hundreds of species of trees and shrubs, many of which occur naturally in Alaska.

Photo: C. Knight, DNR Agriculture

Placing a Gypsy Moth Trap

Exotic forest moth detection surveys are coordinated annually by the Division of Agriculture, through a Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine (APHIS-PPQ). Detection efforts target the European and Asian gypsy moth (EGM & AGM) *Lymantria dispar* (L.), Rosy gypsy moth, *Lymantria mathura* (Moore), Nun moth (*Lymantria monacha* (L.), and the Siberian Silk moth, *Dendrolimus superans sibiricus* (Tschetverikov).

Targeting Pathways: Working Together to Prevent the Introduction of Gypsy moth in Alaska

Early detection efforts to trap exotic pests often target pathways of introduction. The gypsy moth and other insect pests may enter Alaska by numerous pathways; hitchhiking on vehicles or shipping containers. Historically, EGM detections in Alaska have been in RV/recreational parks and AGM egg mass detections on ships destined for port communities.

Photo: J. Chumley, Cooperative Extension Service

Shipping and Storage Yard

Considering the efficiency of modern transportation, international shipping ports and airports are sites with high risk for pest introductions. With reduced presence of northern sea ice, more and more international ships are moving through Alaskan waters, utilizing Arctic shipping routes that directly connect the Eastern seaboard, Europe, and North Africa. Trade with Asian Far East countries, where AGM occurs in its native ranges, also increases the potential for port introductions. The geographic extent of Alaska presents unique challenges to survey logistics; it is not possible to survey everywhere. If the AGM were to become established, it could likely spread over a large area before being detected and would be very difficult to eradicate before it could spread to the rest of North America.

Detecting these exotic moths early, before they become established, is crucial. The Division of Agriculture is cooperating with survey partners across Alaska in a concerted effort to deploy insect monitoring traps near high risk locations. This year, traps were distributed to partners representing the UAF Cooperative Extension Service (CES), U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and the Department of Defense (Fort Wainwright, Eielson AFB, and Joint-Base Elmendorf-Richardson). The Division of Forestry and Division of Agriculture also participated in the program, as well as Harbormasters from the ports of Kodiak, Homer, and Seward. 587 traps were deployed last summer, with no detections of any targeted moths reported in 2010. Trapping efforts are scheduled to continue this summer, 2011.

USFS Cooperator monitoring a trap in Ketchikan

Fairbanks Office
907-328-1950

Charlie Knight -
Northern Region Manager
Charles.Knight@alaska.gov
907-374-3715

Curtis Knight
Curtis.Knight@alaska.gov
907-374-3732

Public Notices

Public Comment Sought for Draft Invasive Weeds Strategic Plan

The Division of Agriculture's Invasive Weeds and Agricultural Pest Management Program has released a draft Strategic Plan for public review. The plan was developed with input from agencies and partners such as the Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the Cooperative Extension Service.

The strategic plan covers a variety of issues pertaining to invasive weeds and agricultural pest management including;

- Prevention & Coordination,
- Regulations / Policy,
- Early Detection & Rapid Response,
- Control and Management,
- Inventory and Monitoring,
- Education and Research.

Strategic plans are a tool to increase coordination between the public and those involved in invasive species management. Action strategies within this plan are intended to prevent further introductions and eradicate or control existing infestations. If approved, this plan can act as a reference for those seeking funding for projects which are aligned with the plan.

The draft plan is available online, at http://plants.alaska.gov/pdf/InvasivePlantsStrategicPlan.pdf. Public comment is sought through February 25th, 2011.

Properties for sale by the Board of Agriculture and Conservation (BAC):

The State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources is offering two properties for sale.

513 South Valley Way, Palmer

Former Matanuska Maid Manufacturing Facility: Real Property and Improvements

This property sits on 3 acres in downtown Palmer, bounded by E. Dogwood Ave, Dahlia Ave, and Denali St.

ARLF LAND SALE #09-01
Over-The-Counter Offering:
Purchase Price $975,000.00.

7411 Kenai Spur Highway, Kenai

7 acres of commercial zoned land, between the cities of Kenai and Soldotna.

This parcel is being offered "AS IS, WHERE IS, W/ NO IMPLIED OR EXPRESSED WARRANTY OF CONDITION WHATSOEVER."

ARLF LAND SALE #11-01
Over-The-Counter Offering:
Purchase Price $14,000.00.

Properties are offered as fee-simple real estate, surface estate only. Financing from the Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund may be available, but is not guaranteed. For more information on these OTC offerings, please visit dnr.alaska.gov/ag/.

Questions or comments regarding the sale process may be directed to Director Franci Havemeister, at 761-3867 or by email to Franci.Havemeister@alaska.gov.

Land Sales & Grazing Leases

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

Dan Proulx
907-374-3716
Dan.Proulx@alaska.gov

Erik Johnson
907-761-3863
Erik.Johnson@alaska.gov