The Division of Agriculture Activities

October 6, 2014
Find us on the web at:
http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag

Director's Office

Franci Havemeister, Director
907-761-3867
Franci.Havemeister@alaska.gov

Curt Sandvik
907-761-3866
Curt.Sandvik@alaska.gov

Lora Haralson
907-761-3851
Lora.Haralson@alaska.gov

Rebecca Jeffers
907-761-3850
Rebecca.Jeffers@alaska.gov

In This Issue

- Director's Note
- Alaska Grown Survey
- Alaska Food & Festival Conference
- Farm to School Conference Awarded Grant
- October is Farm to School Month
- State Accepting Sealed Bids for Ag Land
- FDA Issues Proposed Amendments to FSMA
- Heather Stewart Accepts Invasive Plants Coordinator Position
- PMC Potato Harvest Results
- Foot Rot Can Cause Lameness
- Garlic Growing in Alaska Examined

To add or remove your name from our 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

Fall season is in full swing throughout Alaska! Although I was born and raised here, on a recent drive to Anchorage I was once again amazed at how picturesque Alaska is this time of year and how fortunate I am to call Alaska home. Although weather has been unpredictable this year, hopefully the skies remain clear for a few more days and harvests can be completed throughout the state.

Several federal programs remain on the forefront, some of which are the recently unveiled programs USDA has developed to help farmers better manage risk. New tools have been developed to assist in choosing the new safety net program that is right for your. Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) are cornerstones of the commodity farm safety net programs in the 2014 Farm Bill. This new coverage differs from the direct payment program which paid farmers in both good years and bad, in that the new initiatives are based on market forces and include county and individual coverage options. There are online tools available to help farmers choose which program is right for them and can be found at www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

In the news again is the Food Safety Modernization Act. This law was signed by President Obama in January of 2011 and is the first major overhaul of the food safety system in 70 years. The first round of proposed rules met with so much industry resistance that FDA agreed to make some changes based on comments received and now the latest revisions to the proposed rules have been released. FDA is now accepting public comment on the new rules through December 12, 2014. Be sure to read http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/default.htm to find the links and more information regarding the changes to the original proposed rules. Additional information is included in on page 6 of this newsletter.

In local news, I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation District for their rapid response in the treatment of a ¼ acre Canada/Creeping thistle infestation found in the Zentner Creek Drainage above Pasagshak Bay. The infestation was located and treated within weeks – and demonstrates the great partnership between the State of Alaska, Division of Agriculture and the Soil and Water Conservation Districts around the state. Great job Kodiak SWCD!

Another success story within the state is the partnership between the Department of Corrections (DOC) and DNR/Division of Agriculture.

continued on next page

DOC has been a strong supporter of Alaskan agriculture through purchasing local product to serve in their prison facilities, supplying inmate labor to MMM&S, and most recently, working with the Division of Agriculture on a pilot program to provide inmate labor to a local producer. The shortage of dependable farm labor continues to plague the nation, and Alaska is not immune to the problem.

Palmer producer, Paula Giauque of Gold Nugget Farms recently participated in the program of which its goal was to provide inmate labor to a farm experiencing a labor shortage. Minimum security inmates were cleared through DOC to participate in the program, fitted with an ankle monitor, and then transported daily to work at Golden Nugget Farms. Paula reported that her fall harvest was a success and even finished ahead of schedule. When asked about the inmate's quality of work - she responded that they were professional, prompt, eager to work, and did a great job. If your operation is struggling to find dependable labor and is interested in learning more about access to inmate labor please give me a call. It is important to note that inmate labor is not provided as a cheaper work force alternative, not subsidized, not intended to take the place of current workers, and may not be available in all areas.

The Board of Agriculture continues to search for a representative from the Northern Region. This seat has been vacant for a year and although we continue to look for an interested volunteer we have been unsuccessful to date. If you or someone you know is interested in serving on the board, please contact Sarah Heath with Boards and Commissioners at 269-8095 or myself. If we are unable to fill this position with a representative from the Northern Region we will begin to look to other areas of the state to assure that we have a full board.

As always, please take the time to read the newsletter as it is full of great information and upcoming conferences, events, agriculture land sales and deadlines. If you have any questions or concerns, please give me a call at 761-3867 or send me an email at franci.havemeister@alaska.gov.

~Franci Havemeister

"Progress always involves risks. You can't steal second base and keep your foot on first."

- Frederick B. Wilcox

ARLF Services

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

Amanda Swanson, Loan Officer
907-761-3869
Amanda.Swanson@alaska.gov

Fairbanks Office

907-328-1950

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

Marketing Staff

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

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

Jacki Schade 907-761-3858
Jacquelyn.Schade@alaska.gov

Beki Parham 907-761-3880
beki.parham@alaska.gov

Johanna Herron 907-761-3870
Johanna.Herron@alaska.gov

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

Marketing Section

The Alaska Grown Marketing Program Needs Your Input!

Did you know that next year marks the

30th anniversary of the Alaska Grown program?

In an effort to better gauge the needs of the Alaska Grown certification mark authorized users, the marketing team created a brief survey. If you are an **Alaska Grown** member – please take a few minutes to provide your feedback. Information gathered in the survey is strictly confidential and will help guide the program focus in the immediate future.

https://www.research.net/s/AKG_feedback

The Alaska Food Policy Council is hosting the inaugural Food Festival & Conference November 7-9th at UAA in Anchorage and there are many opportunities for Alaska Grown producers to be involved! Take a look at the full agenda, registration, vendor and sponsor information at http://akfoodpolicycouncil.wordpress.com/conference/

Whether you're just interested in attending or you'd like to have a booth presence to sell your Alaska Grown items – sign up early to reserve your space. If you have any questions about the event, feel free to email Amy Pettit who serves as a governing board member of the Alaska Food Policy Council.

FARM TO SCHOOL UPDATE

Farm to School Conference Awarded Grant

We are excited to announce that the Alaska Farm to School Program has been awarded a grant from USDA to host the first ever Farm to School Conference in Anchorage! We have set aside the majority of the funds to be used as travel assistance so we can get as much state representation as possible.

When: January 13-14, 2015

Where: Anchorage Marriott Downtown

Agenda: (TBD) We are taking session suggestions and planning the agenda this month. Topics will be things like; garden based education, farmer/producer networking session, farm to school success stories, how to make farm to school sustainable, and farm to school funding discussion.

Who: If you are interested in selling food to the schools or participate in farm to school activities this conference is for you! We are looking for a strong producer and grower presence at the conference.

Cost: There is no registration fee to attend this conference. We will have travel scholarships available on a first come first serve basis.

Contact: For more information please contact Johanna Herron at johanna.herron@alaska.gov or 907-761-3870.

October is National Farm to School Month

Farm to School month is a time to recognize the importance of farm to school programs as a means to improve child nutrition, support local economies and educate children about the origins of food. Farm to school enriches the connection communities have with fresh, healthy food and local food producers by changing food purchasing and education practices at schools and preschools. Students gain access to healthy, local foods as well as education opportunities such as school gardens, cooking lessons and farm field trips.

Over the past decade, the farm to school movement has exploded across the United States, reaching millions of students in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. In addition to improving child health, when schools buy local, they create new markets for local and regional farmers and contribute to vibrant communities, a win-win-win scenario.

Whether you are a food service professional, a farmer, a teacher or a food-loving family, there are plenty of ways to celebrate and get involved!

- Hold a special day or event that features a food producer or local chef and talk with students and faculty about local food.
- Invite a food producer, local chef, or expert from the community to come talk to your class about the food system.

- Assign a class project to search the media for news related to Farm to School.
- Host a taste test with local product to see what is the most popular.
- Participate in a Local Lunch Day at the school if they offer one.

Don't forget to share what you are doing with us for a chance to win an Alaska Grown t-shirt! To submit what your community or school is doing this month go to: https://www.research.net/s/LLDay_FTSmonth2014

For updates, news, grant opportunities, and announcements join our listserv at: http://list.state.ak.us/soalists/akfarmtoschool/jl.htm

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) 761-3870.

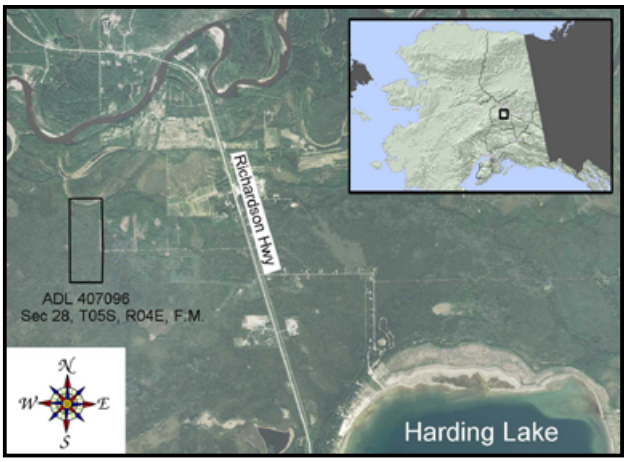
Students from Rabbit Creek Elementary participated in a taste test with local carrots during National Farm to School Month in 2011. Local carrots won 5 to 1 as the tastier carrot!

Students from Randy Smith Middle School samples a recipe that featured local ingredients during National Farm to School Month in 2012.

Land Sales & Grazing Leases Section

State Accepting Sealed Bids for Agricultural Land Sale

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources is accepting sealed bids for an agricultural land sale comprising one 100-acre parcel in Interior Alaska. This parcel located near Salcha, will be subject to a 10-acre clearing requirement and agricultural covenants and will be sold to the highest bidder. Sealed bids will be opened on Oct. 22. The minimum bid is $40,500 and was established by a fair market value appraisal.



A brochure describing the parcel is available online

continued on next page

Land Sales & Grazing Leases

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

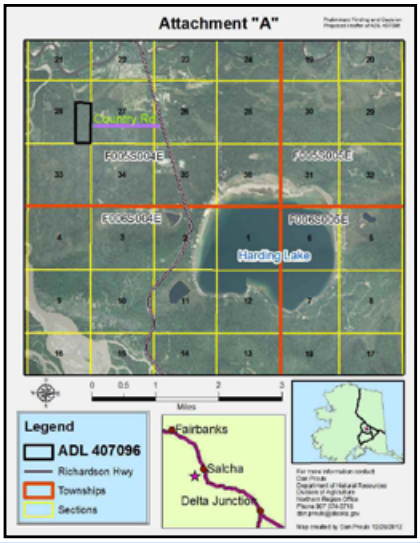
Dan Proulx 907-374-3716
Dan.Proulx@alaska.gov

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

Mt. McKinley Meat & Sausage

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

Frank Huffman 907-745-5232
Frank.Huffman@alaska.gov



at http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/landsale. Print copies of the brochure are available at the Anchorage and Fairbanks DNR Public Information Centers, the DNR Public Land Counter in Juneau, and the Division of Agriculture offices in Fairbanks and Palmer. In addition, the brochure will be available at locations around Salcha, Delta Junction, and Fairbanks. Please call 907-374-3716 for additional information.

Pest Detection / Inspection Section

Inspection Staff

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

Doug Warner, Inspection Manager
907-761-3869
Douglas.Warner@alaska.gov

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

Kirk Brown 907-761-3857
Kirk.Brown@alaska.gov

FDA Issues Proposed Amendments to FSMA

(Adapted from FDA's Constituent Update 9/14/14)

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently released revisions to the four rules of the FDA Food Safety and Modernization Act (FSMA) that were proposed in 2013: Produce Safety, Preventive Controls for Human Food, Preventive Controls for Animal Food, and Foreign Supplier Verification Programs.

FDA is proposing new ways to make the original proposals more flexible, practical and targeted. The changes were based on thousands of responses received from stakeholders during the public comment period, and address several issues, including agricultural water, raw manure and compost use, environmental testing of facilities, and imported foods and suppliers. The revisions also include the re-definition of both a "farm" and a "very small" (exempt) business with respect to determining what facilities are subject to the Preventive Controls Rule.

The FDA will accept comments on the revised provisions for 75 days after the proposals are published in the Federal Register on September 29, 2014. They will also continue to review comments already received on the original proposed rules. No additional comments will be accepted on the original proposals. FDA will consider both sets of comments—on the original proposed rules and on the revisions—before issuing final rules in 2015.

For Additional Information, please see the FDA fact sheets for each rule at the web addresses below:

- Proposed Rule for Produce Safety
  http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/ucm334114.htm
- Proposed Rule for Preventive Controls for Human Food
  http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/ucm334115.htm
- Proposed Rule for Preventive Controls for Animal Food
  http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/ucm366510.htm
- Proposed Rule for Foreign Supplier Verification Programs (FSVP)
  http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/ucm361902.htm

Plant Materials Center

http://plants.alaska.gov/
Main Phone: 907-745-4469

Alicia Holladay 907-745-8104

Rob Carter 907-745-8127
Rob.Carter@alaska.gov

Michael Keen 907-745-4469
Michael.Keen@alaska.gov

Casey Dinkel 907-745-8108
Casey.Dinkel@alaska.gov

Phil Czapla 907-745-8747
Phil.Czapla@alaska.gov

Rusty Foreaker 907-745-8092
Rusty.Foreaker@alaska.gov

Brianne Blackburn 907-745-8785
Brianne.Blackburn@alaska.gov

Kimberly Allen 907-745-8735
Kim.Allen@alaska.gov

Lyubo Mahlev 907-745-8782
Lyubomir.Mahlev@alaska.gov

Todd Steinlage 907-745-8138
Todd.Steinlage@alaska.gov

Heather Stewart 907-745-4469
Heather.Stewart@alaska.gov

Plant Materials Center (PMC)

Heather Stewart Accepts Invasive Plants Coordinator Position

The Plant Materials Center would like to welcome and congratulate Heather Stewart as the new Invasive Plants Coordinator. Heather has been employed as a Natural Resource Specialist under a long-term contract with the Invasive Weed and Agricultural Pest Program for over a year. She has contributed greatly to the Elodea and Canada thistle management efforts and will begin her new duties as coordinator on October 1st.

Heather holds a Bachelor degree from the University of Dayton in Environmental Geology and received her Master of Science degree at the State University of New York at Buffalo in Geology.

Heather is and will continue to be a valuable asset to the program. The PMC is fortunate to have her aboard! For more information or to speak with Heather directly call at 907-745-8021 or via email at heather.stewart@alaska.gov.

PMC Potato Harvest Results

On September 9th, 2014 the Plant Materials Center harvested 164 varieties of potatoes from their fields. These potatoes are used for varietal identification, virus and disease monitoring, and germplasm maintenance. This germplasm is used to reinitiate tissue culture production.

On September 14th, the PMC also harvested from their greenhouse 41 varieties of 'Generation Zero' certified seed potatoes as ordered by Alaska Certified Seed Growers.

The Plant Materials Center has been maintaining a clonal potato germplasm for 31 years and will continue to do so to ensure ideal varieties for our Alaskan conditions.

For more information please contact Robert Carter at 907-745-8127 or email robert.carter@alaska.gov.

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation:

Division of Environmental Health

Foot Rot Can Cause Lameness

Foot rot is an infectious condition that causes swelling and inflammation in the feet of cattle, sheep, reindeer, goats and causes severe lameness. Swelling and lameness can appear suddenly, with the animal walking normally one day but limping the next day. Affected animals can lose body condition rapidly because they are painful, keep off their feet and will decrease their walking to feed and water. The incidence of foot rot increases during the wet conditions of spring and fall. A wet environment will soften the inter-digital skin, promote growth of anaerobic (do not need oxygen to grow) bacteria that are primarily responsible for the infections

Generally several anaerobic bacteria are identified but the most commonly found are *Fusobacterium necrophorum* and *Truperella pyogenes*. These bacteria are commonly found in manure so an outbreak is more likely to occur when stocking density is increased. Once bacteria breaks the skin barrier they seem to work together releasing toxins that accelerate the progress of the infection, increasing bacterial numbers and spreading to adjoining tissues that rapidly damage the entire foot. The animal will look fine one day and be severely lame the next day due to the overwhelming inflammation and swelling.

The incidence of foot rot in a herd varies not just seasonally but also year to year dependent on the pathogenicity of the bacteria, i.e. ability to produce toxins. So you need a wet environment, contaminated with fecal material and some trauma that will abrade the skin, like walking on gravel or breaking thru the frozen surface layer of the muddy ground and sharp pieces of ice. One animal with foot rot will discharge bacteria from the lesions and increasing the contamination for the rest of the herd.

This condition that may be controlled with good herd management. During wet times of the year be sure to keep the herd out of wet muddy areas, decrease stock density, rotate grazing areas or keep paddocks and loafing areas cleaned of excess manure. Keep the environment as clean and dry as possible, and try to reduce foot abrasions (avoid gravel areas). If an outbreak is identified, good management decisions will decrease the number of animals affected and reduce the cost of treatment.

Good quality balanced rations are also a factor that can reduce the incidence of foot rot. Some mineral additives (zinc) may be beneficial to keep the skin and hoof healthy.

Make sure that you are dealing with foot rot and not a papillomatous digital dermatitis (strawberry foot rot, hairy heel warts, etc). Digital dermatitis causes a rough ulcerative lesion in the skin between the hooves and is caused by a spirochete bacteria (*Treponema*). The surface of the ulcer may have swollen granular projections and can be confused with foot rot.

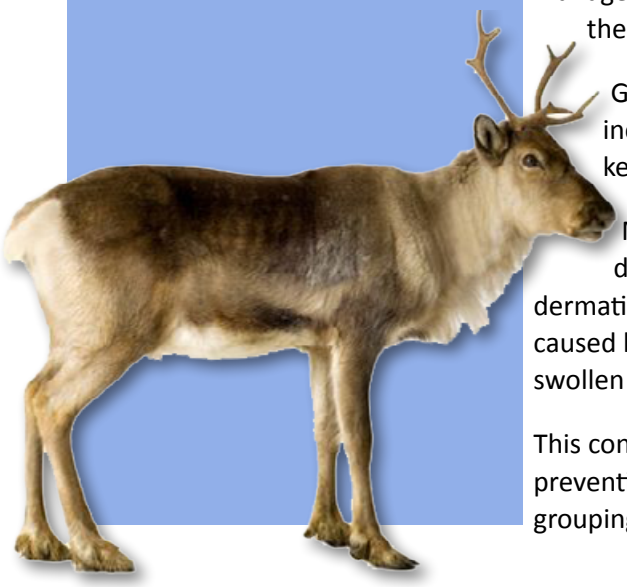
This condition can be difficult to treat so good management is the key to prevention. This means improving hygiene, reassessing stock densities, avoid grouping infected and healthy cattle and watch animal lesions.

Environmental Health

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
Dec.Alaska.gov/eh/
907-269-7501

Robert Gerlach
Alaska State Veterinarian
907-375-8214
Bob.Gerlach@alaska.gov

Jay Fuller
Assistant State Veterinarian
907-375-8213
Jay.Fuller@alaska.gov



Garlic Growing in Alaska Examined

Story contributed by Nancy Tarnai

How does your garlic grow?

That's what Tribes Extension Project Director and Educator Heidi Rader wanted to know. Rader, who works for the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service and Tanana Chiefs Conference, sent a survey to growers around the state in late July.

"I needed to do a short YouTube video and I've been hearing a lot about garlic," Rader said. "I don't have a lot of information." But due to the success of the survey, she has a lot more facts and figures now.

Nearly 50 people from the Southeast to Galena completed the survey. Rader learned that garlic seems to be a relatively recent crop for Alaska. "Some had been growing garlic for five to 10 years but most had been for less than five. It's a new trend."

Rosie Creek Farm is one exception. "I have 13 years' experience growing garlic commercially," said Rosie Creek owner Mike Emers. "I plant 200 pounds every year with varying success. It is labor intensive and foot by foot not very profitable. Only certain varieties are worth growing.

"There is huge demand and we use it to attract customers to buy our other crops. We will continue to grow it because of its draw for customers."

At Calypso Farm and Ecology Center, Susan Willsrud said garlic is great for personal use. She has noticed a huge market demand. "Garlic is a really fun crop because of the fall planting; it's so nice to have a crop coming up in the early spring," Willsrud said.

"In terms of a commercial crop, the cost to grow the crop is significantly higher than what it can be sold for, particularly because the average pounds yielded to pounds planted is way less than it is in other climates. In my opinion it makes a really suitable, wonderful crop for home consumption, but a questionable one for market farming."

Seed garlic is expensive and is often sold for a similar or sometimes lower price per pound as a final product, Willsrud said. "I think most of us are really excited when it comes up and then when we get a harvest out of it," she said. "So a farmer is likely to say something favorable because it's easy to forget how many pounds we had to buy, plant, tend, harvest and clean in order to get that crop. Overall, even with great market demand, it's a risky, low-value crop for the farmer."

At the Alaska Botanical Garden in Anchorage, Executive Director Julianne McGuinness has been growing garlic for 15 years and has conducted many variety trials. "I definitely want to offer any encouragement I can for garlic as a productive crop for Alaska farms and gardens," she said.

continued on next page

Martha Westphal
907-474-7188
mmwestphal@alaska.edu

Marilyn Childress
907-474-7083
mlchildress@alaska.edu

Nancy Tarnai
907-474-5042
ntarnai@alaska.edu

snras.blogspot.com

www.facebook.com/uaf.snre

www.uaf.edu/snre/

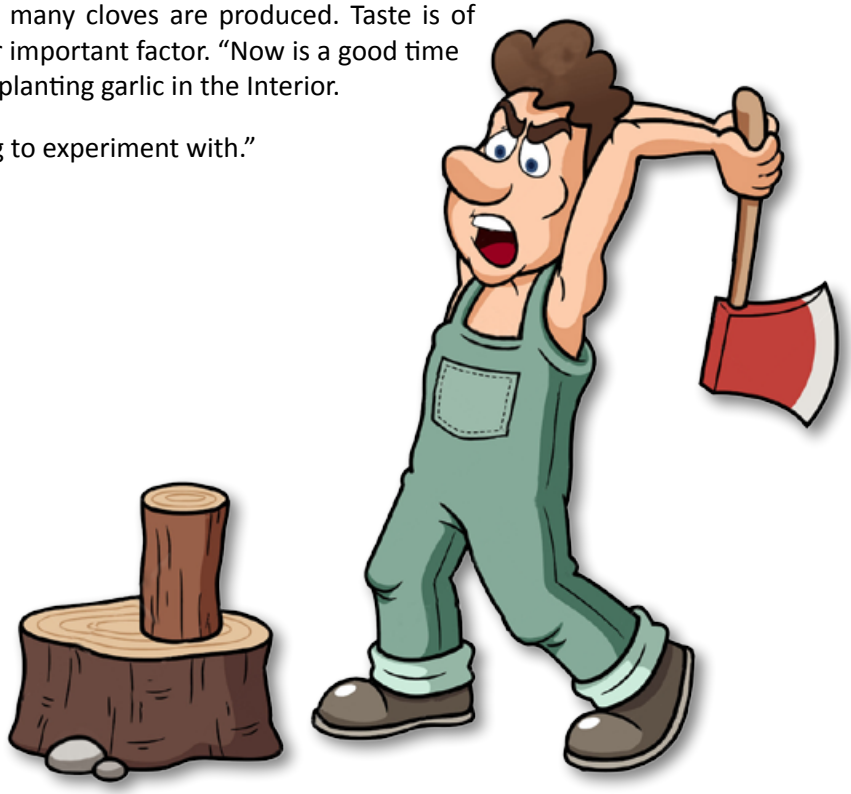
This column is provided as a service by the UAF School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences and the Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station. Nancy Tarnai is the school and station's public information officer. She can be reached at ntarnai@alaska.edu.

Maggie Hallam observes the garlic she grew at Cripple Creek Organics near Fairbanks. UAF photo by Nancy Tarnai

Rader, who also grows garlic at her own farm, explained that there is a bounty of varieties, with two subspecies, hard-necked and soft-necked. “The hard is better for Alaska,” Rader said. “That at least is a starting point.”

Some of the popular varieties in Alaska are Music, Siberian, Chesnook Red and German White.

Garlic is planted in the fall a week or two after the first killing frost and covered with mulch. “You fertilize it a little bit and harvest it the next summer,” Rader said. “It’s no harder to grow than onions; it’s similar, but you do it in the fall.”

Rader recommends trying a few varieties and note the survival rate, how big they grow and how many cloves are produced. Taste is of course another important factor. “Now is a good time to think about planting garlic in the Interior.

“It’s a fun thing to experiment with.”