



**ALASKA FARM BUREAU
NEWSLETTER
April 2013**

TELECONFERENCE ON THE 25TH OF IMPORTANCE TO GROWERS AND PROCESSORS OF FOOD FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION HERE IN ALASKA

The Food Safety Modernization Act proposed by FDA will significantly impact growers, packers and processors. You will have the opportunity to learn more about the proposed Produce and Preventive Control for Human Food Rules that will be used to regulate the food industry in the coming years. Food growers, packers, and processors are encouraged to take the opportunity to learn more about the proposed rules on April 25, 2013 during a video conference. The conference will be held from 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. at the following locations:

Anchorage Muldoon Library, the Homer Library, the Delta Career Advancement Center and the Fairbanks UAF Campus Butrovich Building in Room 109 A&B.

You have the opportunity to submit comments to FDA by their May 16, 2013 deadline. More details can be found at their website: <http://www.fda.gov>

THE ALASKA TURNIP PROJECT

Gardeners are invited to participate in the production of new turnip varieties suitable to their particular location. The project involves using two varieties of turnips planted next to each other and allowed to cross-pollinate, thus creating an F1 hybrid. The offspring of these hybrids are then grown and selected for whatever characteristic is preferred (early, root maggot resistance, sweetness, etc.) Hybrid turnip Hakurei will also be planted to begin selection from its offspring for stable, open-pollinated varieties suitable for Alaska.

Volunteers need not commit for more than one season, but this project will need three to five years before the first new varieties are stable. Turnip storage and seed processing will be the responsibility of the Alaska Turnip Project and will be discussed and demonstrated in the autumn.

For more details contact Kurt Wold of Pingo Farms at 907-479-7977 or Steven Seefeldt of UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Tanana District at 907-474-2423 or e-mail him at ssseefeldt@alaska.edu.

CHAPTER GRANTS HAVE GREAT IDEAS FOR INCREASING MEMBERSHIP, PROMOTING THE FARM BUREAU, AND/OR PROMOTING AGRICULTURE

The Alaska Farm Bureau's Chapter Grant program provided the impetus for a great variety of projects.

Kenai Peninsula Chapter will use the funds to begin the groundwork for a Homer Peony Festival by planting peony plants in public places such as City Hall, Chamber of Commerce, the college, etc. as well as private businesses on Pioneer Avenue and the By-Pass. Some plants will be donated and some purchased. Other costs such as soil preparation and fertilizer will be supplied by the grant. Their project will be a two-year project, as they will not be allowing blooms this year in order to encourage root growth. The Peony Festival will have signage with the Farm Bureau as the sponsor. It is hoped that the Peony Festival will continue in future years. Peony plants can live up to 50 years, so this will be a long-term project that will certainly go a long way towards beautifying downtown Homer and calling attention to Alaska's newest and most successful agricultural industry.

Mat-Su Chapter will be adding an educational component to their presence at the Alaska State Fair this year. They will be scheduling agricultural presentations at their Mat-Su Farm Bureau's Hay Bale Theater. The presentations will include gardening, greenhouse techniques, pest control, gathering wild produce, etc. They will be using grant funds as well as their own to purchase seed packets for those attending the theater as well as brochures and leaflets.

Kodiak Chapter will be purchasing ads announcing their Chapter meetings in the local paper and the SWCD newsletter trying to reach those who are not currently members. They will assist the farmers market with obtaining tables and displays to better show their products. The tables will have the Kodiak Farm Bureau's name on them. The chapter wants to provide produce bags with "Kodiak Grown" and their chapter name as well.

Delta Farm Chapter will be purchasing a sound system for their farm tours. They have five tours scheduled for this year. One will be their annual public tour and they have four scheduled with tour companies. One of these will be with a tour group from the Netherlands. Grant funds will be used to purchase insurance policy addendums to expand coverage for the Chapter for each of the tours. The remainder of funds will be used to print membership brochures.

Fairbanks Chapter will be holding social/educational events open to the public. They will include presentations about local agricultural enterprises featuring family farms or businesses that will include brief tours. Each event will include a fresh harvest component featuring an Alaska Grown product that is in season or in has been in storage. The venues include the Chena Hot Springs Renewable

Energy Fair, the North Pole Grange Fall Agricultural Festival, the Tanana Valley State Fair and a mid-summer yet to be planned event as part of Golden Days. As a recruitment incentive, the Chapter will pay half of the membership dues for any new members that join Farm Bureau during these events. Credit will be given to the current member that invites the new member to join. This credit will be towards the enroll-five new members-have your travel expenses paid to attend the Alaska Farm Bureau's Annual Meeting.

Copper River Chapter will be purchasing an egg incubator that will be used in schools as part of their education program. They expect several hatchings this year. They will be selling the chicks and adding the funds earned to their education program. They will be making a float for the Glennallen parade with remaining funds.

BILL TO RESTRUCTURE THE BAC INTRODUCED FOR 2014

Representative Eric Feige has introduced HB 207: "An Act establishing the Board of Agriculture, Conservation, and Development; transferring the powers and duties of the Natural Resource Conservation and Development Board to the Board of Agriculture, Conservation, and Development; transferring to the Department of Commerce, Community, and Development the authority to approve loans from the agricultural revolving loan fund; terminating the Natural Resource Conservation and Development Board; and providing for an effective date."

The bill can be found on the Alaska Farm Bureau website at <http://akfb.fb.org> Look under the category "OTHER" for "2014 Juneau legislation."

Farm Bureau members are now being given the opportunity to analyze it and decide what in the bill you think will improve agriculture and what you do not like. Your comments, suggestions and ideas will all be taken into consideration. Please send them to the Alaska Farm Bureau Office at PO Box 760 – Delta Junction, AK 99737 or e-mail them to the executive director at janehamilton99737@yahoo.com.

This is a wonderful opportunity to have your input on legislation, which if passed, will have a big impact on the BAC, on ARLF loans and agriculture in general. We will compile all of your comments and suggestions into a document and present them to Rep. Feige. Although there is no deadline, there is no time like the present-before the busy farming season begins.

HOUSE BILL 202 IS SECOND BILL INTRODUCED FOR NEXT SESSION

The second bill introduced by Rep. Feige is HB 202: "An Act raising the application fee for a drawing permit for the hunting of bison to \$20; requiring the

game management plan for bison in the Delta Junction Bison Range Area to include mitigation of bison damage to farm crops and farm and personal property; and authorizing the commissioner of natural resources to make grants to mitigate or prevent damage caused by bison.”

The bill would increase the application fee for a drawing permit from \$10 to \$20.

The game management plan would be changed to include mitigating bison damage to farm crops and farm and personal property.

The bill adds making grants to persons whose property or crops have been damaged or are likely to be damaged by bison to mitigate or prevent bison damage and that the grants made may be used for fencing costs. The bill can be found on our website: <http://akfb.fb.org>

COMMITTEE MEETINGS WITH DNR TO RESOLVE ISSUES CONTINUE

Two committees were established during our daylong meeting and teleconference with Commissioner Dan Sullivan, Assistant Commissioner Ed Fogels, Division of Ag Director Franci Havemeister and the agricultural community in December 2012. The committees are Research and Education and Land. Both have now met several times to explore and resolve issues.

The Education and Research Committee has divided into two subcommittees, one addressing educational and one addressing research issues.

The Educational Committee has decided to explore creating a Farm Center. The Center would serve as a depository and clearinghouse for research and other documents. It would become a reliable, dependable and resource center for farmers as well as those considering going into farming. This would be a continual process of informational updates. It would be a producer driven resource center that would be able to provide access to consultants who would provide follow-up service. This would most likely be a virtual center in the beginning. Hopefully, it would become a walk in center in the future. A committee has been formed to begin the process. The resources needed, personnel, salary, etc. will be identified with the intent to go to the legislature next year to secure funding.

The Research Committee's plan is starting to firm up. They have grouped research needs into five broad areas: Micronutrient Levels, Diseases and Prevention, Meat Production, Variety Trials, and compiling existing information into a searchable data base.

The Education and Research Committee will hear reports from the subcommittees during their next meeting in the morning of June 6th.

The Land Committee began with the definitions and current laws and then expanded into discussions about ag rights, land sales, clearing requirements, land prices and farm conservation plans in general, as well as details regarding home sites. Discussions have included what should be included and/or required in future land sales and what laws should be changed to accommodate future sales. This committee will meet next on in the afternoon of June 6th. Plans will be finalized before telling Commissioner Sullivan what direction the committee suggests.

THINK YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO ATTEND ANNUAL MEETING EVENTS?

If you think attending the Alaska Farm Bureau events at Chena Hot Springs this November is too expensive for your budget, you may want to think again. There are ways to make attending the Friday Forum conference and the Annual Meeting quite affordable.

First, there is the free method. Farm Bureau pays for two nights hotel and travel expenses-mileage or airfare for those who enroll five (5) NEW members. Just be sure that your name is written on each of their membership applications so you receive credit for their enrollment.

Next, there is the "spread out the payments" plan. The registration form is on our website <http://akfb.fb.org> now. Register now, make your hotel reservations in another month or two and get these payments out of the way early.

Then, there is the "painless savings plan". I have two of these. First is the \$5.00 method. You save every \$5.00 bill you receive as change. You'd be surprised at how many you get. Save every one, they add up quickly. We are taking the grandchildren to Walt Disney World this year using this method. I have an envelope in the freezer for this purpose-I read somewhere that thieves never look in the freezer. Then, there is the coin jar method in which you never spend any change. If something costs \$1.49, you give the clerk \$2.00 and save the 51 cents in a jar or coffee can-I know, they are plastic now. It does add up quickly and the change is heavy taking it to the bank, but it works (hotel in Florida!).

Mark your calendar. Bernie and Connie Karl, owners of Chena Hot Springs Resort and Fairbanks Farm Bureau members themselves, have given us some great discounts that we are passing on to our members. Thursday, November 14th is your travel day and we will be having a free workshop that night that begins at 6:00 P.M. Friday, November 15th will be the Friday Forum conference. There won't be any charge for your noon lunch (compliments of Farm Bureau). The Awards Banquet and Scholarship Auction will be that evening. The Farm Bureau is contributing towards the prime rib banquet so the charge to you is only \$25/person. The lunch on Saturday during the Annual Meeting is compliments of COUNTRY Financial; so no charge to you that day either. Coffee and doughnuts will be compliments of the Farm Bureau on both Friday and Saturday mornings

during registration (if you want to skip bacon and eggs at the restaurant on these mornings). Everyone is working to make these days at a wonderful resort a retreat for you as affordable as possible.

WHAT DID HAPPEN IN JUNEAU?

The first legislative session ended last week. Despite all the attention paid to oil and gas, there was some other legislation to be noted:

Farm to School: Funding for this great program was in the Governor's budget and removed by the DNR subcommittee. Thanks to all you who wrote and called your legislators, funding was put back in the budget. This means that the final year of this four-year program supporting farm to school projects and community efforts around the state will continue for another year.

HB 15: Commercial Motor Vehicle Requirements. This bill raises the gross vehicle combination weight from 10,000 to 14,000 pounds. The bill has been signed into law and becomes effective on July 8, 2013.

HB 40: Municipal Tax Exemption for Farm Structures. Passed the House and Senate and is awaiting transmittal to the Governor as of April 12, 2013.

SB 61: Commercial Fishing and Agriculture Bank: Adds commercial agriculture, changes the principal amount of the loan not to exceed \$50,000 up from \$25,000. Introduced by Senators Coghill and Ellis. Has been referred to Labor and Commerce. HB-121 is the companion bill that was introduced by Rep. Feige has been referred to Finance.

HCR1 and SCR1 were both passed. The Governor will establish a state food resource development-working group. The Governor will direct state departments to work with this group and the Food Policy Council to increase the production and consumption of local food.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Farm for Sale: 70-acre ag parcel for sale for \$80,000. It is almost all cleared with a good 40-45 acres planted to a brome/timothy mix. There is a creek that runs through the property. The area around the creek has not been cleared. The remaining land is in berms. No buildings. The farm is located at Mile 315 Parks Highway, about 9 miles north of Nenana. The property is listed with realtor Gene DuVal, Re/Max Real Estate. His office phone is 907-452-4363. If you have questions or would like to talk with the owner, call Bill Spencer at 907-832-5280.

Classified Ads are placed without charge. Send your ad to the editor, Jane Hamilton at janehamilton99737@yahoo.com

WHAT'S GOING ON

Delta Chapter Scholarship: A \$2,000 scholarship is offered to graduating seniors or former graduates of the Delta Junction area that are continuing their education in an agricultural field. This may include agricultural business, animal science, botany, horticulture, soil and environmental sciences, natural resources management, etc. Applications and supporting information may be picked up at the Delta High School counselor's office (895-4460), the Cooperative Extension Office (895-4215) or the Raven Correspondence School (895-2280). Applications, supporting materials, course transcripts and letters of reference are due by May 1st at the high school counselor's office.

Circumpolar Agriculture Conference and Uarctic Inaugural Food Summit- Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security in the Circumpolar North. Ayleska Resort in Girdwood, Alaska. September 29-October 3, 2013. More information at www.uaf.edu/cac/

Alaska Farm Bureau Workshop: November 14th - "Have I Got A Story For You". Fewer and fewer people have any first-hand experience with farming, yet many are vocal about issues including government farm programs, animal welfare and safe food. Farmers need to speak out so their side of the story is heard. In this workshop, you will assess what you know and don't know about the media. You will learn how to convey your main points during an interview, practice proven techniques to prepare for interviews and explore proactive ways to sell your story. This interactive workshop will held from 6:00 to 9:00 P.M., the night before the Friday Forum begins. There is no charge for the workshop, but it is limited to only 25 participants. Registration will be on the same form as the Friday Forum, Awards Banquet, Scholarship Auction and the Alaska Farm Bureau's Annual Meeting that will be held on November 15th and 16th. All of the events will be held at Chena Hot Springs Resort, north of Fairbanks.

Friday Forum: Farm Bureau's agricultural conference on November 15th. Awards Banquet and Scholarship Auction that evening. Registration form on the Alaska Farm Bureau web page: <http://akfb.fb.org>.

Annual Meeting: Alaska Farm Bureau Annual Meeting on Saturday, November 16th. Held at Chena Hot Springs Resort.

GM ROLLS OUT NEW TWO-YEAR MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

General Motors is now offering a two-year scheduled maintenance program with the purchase of new 2013 Chevrolet Silverado or GMC Sierra 1500 trucks. The program offers buyers a two-year/24,000 mile scheduled maintenance plan that includes all oil and filter changes, tire rotations and multipoint inspections. The maintenance program is in addition to GM's three-year/36,000 Bumper-to-Bumper Warranty and five-year/100,000 Powertrain Warranty programs. The

program can be combined with the \$500 discount given to eligible Farm Bureau members when purchasing a qualifying new GM vehicle.

SMITHSONIAN PARTNERSHIP

The Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, in partnership with the American Farm Bureau Federation has launched an Agricultural Innovation and Heritage Archive website. Farm Bureau members have the opportunity to donate objects and stories into the national collection for a new "American Enterprise" exhibit opening in 2015.

The Smithsonian's National Museum of American History is asking for your help to preserve the innovations and experiences of farming and ranching across the United States. The museum hopes to build a comprehensive digital archive of modern agriculture through user-submitted personal stories, photos and other ephemera. Changes in American agriculture have affected us all. This initiative will help all Americans explore and appreciate this aspect of our shared experience. To find out more on how to participate or share your story go to their website: [www. Americanhistory.si.edu/agheritage/](http://www.Americanhistory.si.edu/agheritage/). Surely, Alaska's agricultural history needs to be told!

Happy trails.....