

WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2015

[HTTP://OFP.SCC.WA.GOV/](http://ofp.scc.wa.gov/)

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2015 legislative session update

As the legislative session turns for the final run to the scheduled April 26 conclusion, focus has shifted to crafting a biennial budget and putting the finishing touches on policy bills. April 1 marks the last day to read in committee reports from opposite house, except fiscal and transportation committees. If bills have not been moved from the policy committees by the end of the day, unless they are necessary to implement the budget, they are essentially at the end of their 2015 journey. The next key milestones will be April 7 which marks the last day to read in opposite house committee reports from the fiscal and transportation committees and April 15 which is the last day to consider opposite house bills (with some exceptions).



In previous newsletters, bills of interest included restricting the conversion of ag land as it related to the shoreline management act and the growth management act. The bulk of these bills were not moved and can be considered dead for the rest of the 2015 session. They will again be active when the legislature convenes for the short 2016 legislative session where the bill process begins again.

Some of the OFP bills of interest that are still active include the following:

ESHB 1685 - Establishing a Washington Food Policy Forum

Passed the House 53-45. Received a public hearing March 17 in Senate Agriculture and Water & Rural Economic Development committee. Executive action taken March 31. Referred to Senate Ways and Means.

Establishes the Washington Food Policy Forum (Forum) as a public-private partnership for the purposes of creating a forum in which state food policy, food-related programs, and food-related issues can be examined, improved, and better integrated. The bill was amended in the House to include provisions found in HB 1710 (which did not pass). These provisions provide for a report to be conducted by WSU Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources.

SSB 5347 - Creating demonstration projects for preserving ag land and public infrastructure in flood plains.

Passed the Senate 48-1. Scheduled for executive session April 1 in House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources.

Requires the state conservation commission and the departments of agriculture, natural resources, fish and wildlife, and ecology to jointly identify and assess three demonstration projects, located in Whatcom, Snohomish, and Grays Harbor counties, that tests the effectiveness and costs of river management. Goal of this legislation is to explore concepts for protecting agricultural lands and public infrastructure.

SB 5603 - Changing cottage food operation provisions.

Passed the Senate 49-0. Passed House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resource and Referred to Rules committee.

Increases the gross income limit for cottage food operations from \$15,000 to \$25,000. More information on cottage food at WSDA here: <http://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/CottageFoodOperation/>

SHB 2017 - Creating Washington farmers and ranchers special license plates.

Passed House 95-3. Referred to Senate Transportation Committee. No action currently scheduled.

The bill creates the Washington Farmers and Ranchers special license plate, which recognizes Washington farmers and ranchers. After the costs associated with establishing the special license plates are recovered, funds would go to the Washington FFA Foundation for educational programs in the state.

Stay in contact and sign up for the OFP-Newsletter!

Email frequency is once a month

Sign up on the web at: <http://ofp.scc.wa.gov>

Drought Watch 2015

Governor Jay Inslee declared a drought on March 13 in three regions of Washington state. This will open up funding opportunities to address hardships from drought conditions in areas of the state experiencing record low snowpack.

Governor declares drought in three state regions March 13, 2015

State drought status was declared for the Dungeness/Elwha, Hoko/Lyre, Sol Duc, Queets/Quinault, Entiat, Wenatchee, Yakima/Naches, and Walla Walla watersheds (Water Resource Inventory Areas or WRIAs).

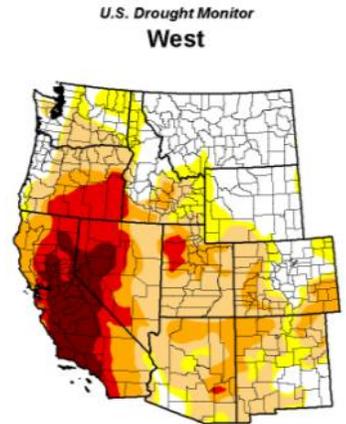
The Snow-Water-Equivalents map shows that the numbers are fairly stable except the Olympic, Central Puget Sound, and Upper Yakima which have all decreased by half over the last week.

State and Federal agencies are meeting regularly to monitor the conditions of ground and surface water sources in the State. The declaration area may expand as the year progresses.

Conservation Districts are participating in drought response efforts. If you need technical assistance, please contact your local conservation district office.

Please contact Jon Culp for further drought information or with drought questions: 509-385-7509, jculp@scc.wa.gov

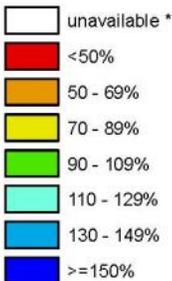
For more information on this summer's drought, go to: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/drought/>



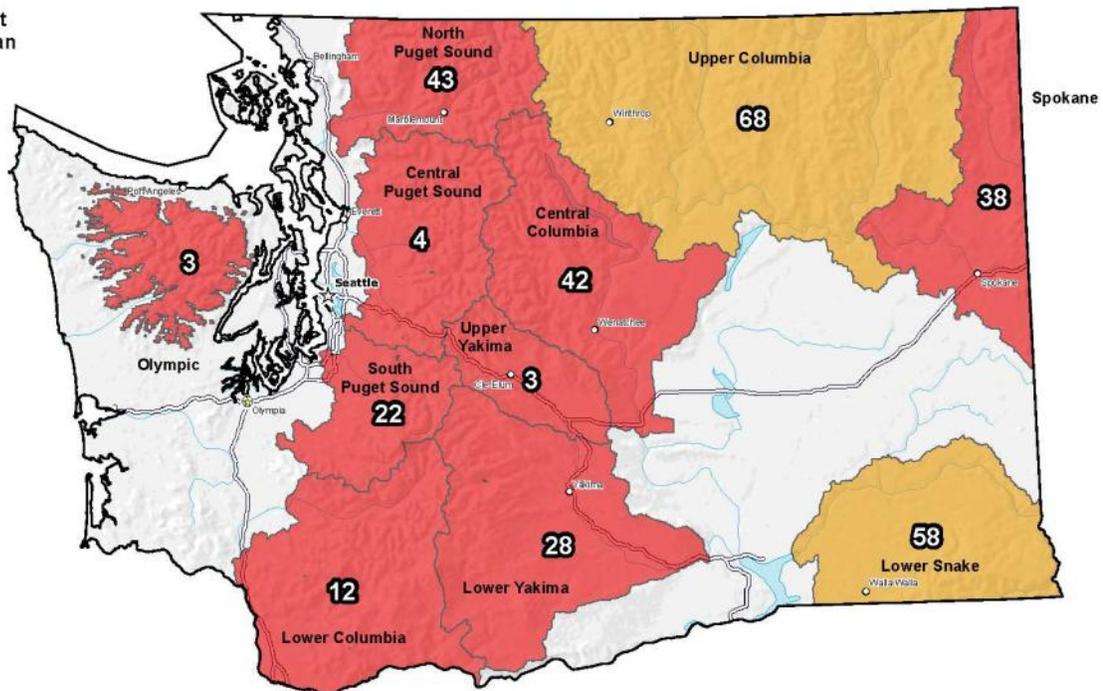
Washington SNOTEL Current Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) % of Normal

Mar 30, 2015

Current Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) Basin-wide Percent of 1981-2010 Median



* Data unavailable at time of posting or measurement is not representative at this time of year



Provisional Data Subject to Revision



The snow water equivalent percent of normal represents the current snow water equivalent found at selected SNOTEL sites in or near the basin compared to the average value for those sites on this day. Data based on the first reading of the day (typically 00:00).



Prepared by:
USDA/NRCS National Water and Climate Center
Portland, Oregon
<http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov>

Grant: Cultivating Health Communities - Aetna Foundation

The Aetna Foundation is pleased to announce the launch of the 2015 *GoLocal: Cultivating Healthy Communities* grants program.

In recent years, the Aetna Foundation has placed increased emphasis on supporting local programs that improve access to locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables in underserved communities. Beyond bringing a richer array of nutritious foods to people, these programs by nature bring communities closer together — people of all ages come together to plan and nurture gardens, take part in farming activities and visit markets where a full array of fruits and vegetables is available.

For 2015, they are launching an Open RFP called [*Local Roots: Supporting Community Gardens, Urban Farms and Farmers Markets*](#). Through this RFP they will fund the creation and expansion of community gardens, urban farms and farmers markets in underserved neighborhoods so that fresh fruits and vegetables are locally available, accessible and affordable.



Beyond the gardens, farms or farmers markets themselves, successful applicants must have programs that also engage local residents in one or more of the following:

- Nutrition education and/or cooking classes that improve knowledge and skills about health benefits of fresh produce;
- Cultivating and/or distributing produce that reflects local ethnic and cultural food traditions;
- Providing ways to learn job skills and/or entrepreneurship (within the context of the gardens, farms and markets);
- Generating opportunities for people to support the project through community service or volunteer work.

Applicant webinar will be on Wednesday, April 8. Details and sign-up here. http://aetnafoundation.s3.amazonaws.com/Foundation_Mar26th2015.html

Please [click here](#) to review the RFP for eligibility guidelines and details.

NRCS Spreadsheet Tool to Determine Economics of Cover Crops

New NRCS Spreadsheet Tool Helps Farmers Determine Economics of Cover Crops. More information [here](#).

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service has developed **The Cover Crop Economic Decision Support Tool**, a spreadsheet that helps farmers, landowners, and others make informed decisions when considering whether to add cover crops to their systems. The tool offers a partial budget analysis, derived from data that farmers enter.

The tool's analysis depends on data that farmers enter. They can run "what if" scenarios if they want to evaluate a range of values. The tool offers results in both dollars and graphs, showing short-term and long-term benefits.

Download the spreadsheet by going to: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/mo/newsroom/releases/?cid=stelprdb1250889>

The spreadsheet tool is designed to measure:

- Direct nutrient credits
- Input reductions
- Yield increases and decreases
- Seed and establishment costs
- Erosion reductions
- Grazing opportunities
- Overall soil fertility levels
- Water storage and infiltration improvements

Survey Collecting Input on Food Safety at Farmers Markets

The Farmers Market Food Safety Program is seeking input from market vendors and managers regarding their opinions and experiences with food safety at farmers markets.

This program seeks to enhance food-safety practices at farmers markets by developing educational materials and operational tools. Learn more and provide your valuable input on food safety at farmers markets by [taking the online survey](#).



House Budget proposes \$75 million for WWRP

The state House of Representatives recently unveiled their proposed capital construction budget, which included \$75 million for the [Washington Wildlife and Recreation grant program](#) (WWRP). The state Senate still has to unveil their proposed budget, and indications are it will look a bit different. The Governor's budget released earlier this year proposed \$70 million.

To review projects if WWRP is funded at \$75 million, go to: [Washington Wildlife & Recreation Program](#) (LEAP Capital Doc 2015-2)

\$75 million for WWRP =

- \$28m - Habitat Conservation
- \$28m - Outdoor Recreation
- \$12.5m - Riparian Protection
- \$6.5m - Farmland Preservation.

Grant: Farmers Market Promotion Program

The [Farmers Market Promotion Program \(FMPP\)](#) is currently open for proposals.

The goals of Farmers Market Promotion Program grants are to increase domestic consumption of, and access to, locally and regionally produced agricultural products, and to develop new market opportunities for farm and ranch operations serving local markets by developing, improving, expanding, and providing outreach, training, and technical assistance to, or assisting in the development, improvement, and expansion of, domestic farmers markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agritourism activities, and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities. The maximum amount awarded for any one proposal cannot exceed \$100,000; the minimum award is \$15,000.



Applications are due May 14, 2015. See calendar on last page for workshop details.

An AMS Webinar introducing FMPP and LFPP was held on March 25, 2015, 11 am EDT. Click [FMPP and LFPP webinar](#) to listen, and [review and print the FMLFPP Webinar Slides \(.pdf\)](#). **Program details [here](#).**

New Resource to Help Food Hubs Support Farm to School Programs

A new resource has been published titled: Using Food Hubs to Create Sustainable Farm to School Programs. This document explores the key roles that food hubs can play in the development, support, and maintenance of successful Farm to School programs. Four case studies demonstrate different ways food hubs can utilize their existing infrastructure and expertise to support and strengthen Farm to School programs. The new publication is available online in PDF.

Download a copy by going to: [Using Food Hubs to Create Sustainable Farm to School Programs](#) (PDF)



New organic spinach variety developed on Olympic Peninsula

Organic Seed Alliance (OSA) has announced the release of a new spinach variety for organic farmers, called "Abundant Bloomsdale." OSA plant breeders worked with eight farms on the Olympic Peninsula to develop the variety, which is now commercially available.

'Abundant Bloomsdale' originated from a cross between the classic open-pollinated (OP) spinach variety, 'Winter Bloomsdale,' and a multiple disease resistant variety, 'Evergreen,' bred by the late Dr. Teddy Morelock and publicly released by the University of Arkansas in 2005.

'Winter Bloomsdale' contributes excellent cold hardiness and great leaf crinkle and flavor, while 'Evergreen' is a good source of horizontal resistance to damping off, white rust, and downy mildew.

Learn more about Abundant Bloomsdale by going to: http://seedalliance.org/main_menu_header-2/research/breeding_projects/abundant_bloomsdale_spinach



In Short

Grant: USDA Local Food Promotion

The Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) offers grants to support the development and expansion of local and regional food business enterprises.

Two types of project applications are accepted under LFPP: planning grants of \$5,000 to \$25,000 and implementation grants of \$25,000 to \$100,000.

Applications are due May 14, 2015. See calendar on last page for workshop details.

Details here: <http://goo.gl/9T0sHD>

Grant: Farm to School Program

Designed to increase the availability of local foods in eligible schools, these grants help new farm to school programs get started or expand existing efforts. Four types of grants are available: planning, implementation, support service, and funds to support training and technical assistance.

Proposals for planning, implementation, and support-service grants are due by **May 20, 2015**. Letters of intent for training grants are due **April 30, 2015**.

Details here: <http://goo.gl/JKfky9>

WSDA Director Hover resigns as head of WSDA

Director Bud Hover recently announced he is leaving the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) to return to his farm in Okanogan County and spend more time with his wife and family.

Director Hover was appointed to lead WSDA on April 1, 2013. He will continue to serve through the current Legislative Session, scheduled to conclude April 26, to ensure a smooth transition.

Clean Water Act Update

On March 25, 2014, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) announced a proposed rule defining the scope of waters protected under the Clean Water Act (CWA).

The proposal revises regulations that have been in place for more than 25 years. Revisions are proposed in light of 2001 and 2006 Supreme Court rulings that interpreted the regulatory scope of the CWA more narrowly than previously, but created uncertainty about the precise effect of the Court's decisions.

This [report](#) describes the proposed rule and includes a table comparing the existing regulatory language that defines "waters of the United States" with the proposed revisions. More details [here](#)

Sustainable Food Systems: What is happening in Washington?

[21 Acres](#) is hosting several dates over the next few months as part of their [Tuesdays at 21](#) series. **Event details [here](#).**

Learn about several statewide efforts to build a more sustainable food system, and gather more information about the programs working to strengthen local food systems across the state such as the Food Systems Roundtable, the Farmers Market Nutrition Programs, and Fresh Food in Schools. Also hear from the Millionaire Charity Club in Seattle that works to supply pesticide-free produce to their meal programs and local restaurants, and discover how Seattle is making a difference in food politics.

April 28 - Biochar: Creating Clean Energy and Building Healthy Soils. This presentation will draw on Seattle Biochar Working Group's (SeaChar.org) Farm Stove Project in Costa Rica to illustrate how biochar technology can increase sustainable food production.

May 26 - Seeking Energy Independence. In this session, we'll discuss different strategies for channeling into renewable energy, its economics, and even tour an operating photovoltaic (PV) system.

June 23 - From Seed to Table: The Cost of Food. What does it really take to get food from the grower to you, and how does sustainable, conventional, and organic farming differ from each other? These questions and food system processes will be explored as we discuss sustainability and the food system.

Tuesdays at 21 are a nearly-free, crowd-sourced, evening presentation series for the broader Sammamish Valley region hosted monthly at the Center for Local Food and Sustainable Living. The goal of Tuesdays at 21 is to provide community members with a unique opportunity to learn from and to share with people in the interdisciplinary fields within sustainability.



In Short

Job Opportunity: PNW American Farmland Trust hiring a conservation program manager

American Farmland Trust has an exciting position opening up in their downtown Seattle office for a Conservation Program Manager. This position is available immediately.

Job description available here:

<http://goo.gl/i4buCy>

Job Opportunity: Friends of Ebey's Landing Fundraising Director

Friends of Ebey's Landing is a non profit 501 c 3 that works in cooperation with the Reserve's Trust Board and National Park System to fund projects and programs that protect, preserve, and enhance the cultural and natural resources and the visitor experience of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve on Whidbey Island.

Job description available at:

<http://goo.gl/CHVFQK>

New Residential Construction figures released for Washington

Privately owned authorized housing starts for Washington in February 2015 were up 73% from February 2014. Leading the way were single unit structures and structures with 5 or more units.

This is a continuation of strong growth for Washington. In 2013, Washington was among the top 10 in states which authorized new construction.

Education tutorials on topics related to sustainable ag

ATTRA, The National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service, has put together a number of online courses that allow you to delve more deeply into these topics through self-guided and comprehensive multi-lesson tutorials. These courses are designed so that you can take them at your own pace, and they include calculators, worksheets, resource lists, and other tools that you can download and print as you go. Successful case studies are also featured. Topics included scaling up for regional markets, pest management, beginning farmer tutorials and more.

Check it out by going to: <https://attra.ncat.org/tutorials/>



Public Comment: Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

USDA recently announced that they are accepting public comments on its interim final rule for the new Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), designed to help producers protect working agricultural lands and wetlands. The 2014 Farm Bill consolidated three previous conservation easement programs into ACEP to make it easier for diverse agricultural landowners to fully benefit from conservation initiatives.

The official notice of the proposed ACEP interim final rule can be found in the [Federal Register](#). Electronic comments during the 60-day comment period must be submitted through [regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). Please visit the [ACEP](#) page or [Farm Bill Program Rules](#) page for more information on the ACEP statutory changes.



Funding Announcement: Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack recently announced that U.S. Department of Agriculture is making available \$332 million in financial and technical assistance through the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will accept ACEP applications to help productive farm and ranch lands remain in agriculture and to protect the nation's critical wetlands and grasslands, home to diverse wildlife and plant species.

ACEP applications may be submitted at any time to NRCS; however, applications for the current funding round must be submitted on or before May 15, 2015. Washington State information here: <http://goo.gl/s4nTvT>

In Short

Local foods webinar highlights recent report

ERS recently hosted a webinar that provided an overview of [Trends in U.S. Local and Regional Food Systems: A Report to Congress](#). Economist Sarah Low presented the latest estimates on sales and farm participation in local food systems and provided the first analyses comparing prices between direct-to-consumer outlets and conventional grocery outlets and local food farm growth and survival between 2007 and 2012. [View the recorded webinar here](#) (you may need to install Adobe Flash before viewing).

WSU awarded \$750,000 for Antimicrobial Resistance research

USDA recently announced \$6.7 million for antimicrobial resistance research (AMR).

This includes Washington State University's efforts to discover causes and solutions for AMR impact on dairy farms and calf-rearing ranches by researching the effects of different antibiotics on AMR prevalence, the existence of AMR reservoirs and niches, and the maintenance and spread of AMR throughout the farms and ranches.

Amber Waves: School Districts Serving Local Foods

A recent article appearing in USDA Economic Research Service publication [Amber Waves](#) examined the frequency that local foods were being served by school districts. Local was generally defined as foods produced within 50 miles or within the State. Washington fared better than most coming in at 41-60 percent of school districts serving locally produced foods.

Check out the full article by going to: <http://goo.gl/tRaC09>

'Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act' Passes U.S. House Ag Committee

The House Committee on Agriculture recently approved [H.R. 897](#), the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2015. This legislation (H.R. 872 in the 111th Congress and H.R. 935 in the 112th) would clarify Congressional intent regarding pesticide regulation in or near waters of the United States.

A 2009 decision in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit erroneously applied the provisions of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permitting process under the Clean Water Act (CWA) to pesticide applications that were already fully regulated under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). As a result, many farmers, ranchers, water resource boards and public health professionals involved in mosquito control are subject to costly and duplicative burdens providing no quantifiable public health or environmental benefit.

The expansion of jurisdictional waters under the Administration's "waters of the United States" proposed rule would likely, and significantly, increase the regulatory cost and burden associated with this court decision on food production costs and mosquito control programs. The Committee on Agriculture and the full House passed this bill during the two previous Congresses, but the Senate failed to act.



Family Farms are the Focus of New Agriculture Census Data

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) reports that family-owned farms remain the backbone of the agriculture industry. The latest data come from the Census of Agriculture farm typology report and help shine light on the question, "What is a family farm?"

The 2012 Census of Agriculture Farm Typology report is a special data series that primarily focuses on the "family farm." By definition, a family farm is any farm where the majority of the business is owned by the operator and individuals related to the operator, including through blood, marriage, or adoption.

Washington State family farms make up between 95.6% and 96.5% of all our state's farms. Of these, 85-90% of

Read more: <http://goo.gl/c3wD6a>



WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Mark Your Calendars

Pacific Northwest Center for Holistic Management Spring Grazing Conference - May 6 & 7

Learn about grazing management from experienced and informed ranchers and researchers on May 6, 2015 at a spring grazing conference to be held at the Washington Family Ranch near Antelope, Oregon.

Details and registration details available by going to: <http://pnchm.org/grazing-conference-and-workshops/>

NE Washington: Quilliscut Farm School- Cultivating Success Intensive April 29th - May 3

Scholarships available

The purpose of this course is to give participants actual hands on farm experience while gaining awareness of the skills necessary for successful farming.

Details available here:

<http://goo.gl/yDh85X>

Washington State Farm to School Summit 2015 April 15 & 16 Wenatchee

WSDA is pleased to partner with USDA and OSPI Child Nutrition to present this Summit for school nutrition directors, Washington farmers and ranchers, processors, distributors, food hubs, and community partners in farm to school.

Details and registration available by going to: <http://goo.gl/IQhZu3>

Webinar - Economic Outlook with Dr. Ed Seifried - NW Farm Credit Services - April 9

Join Wall Street economist, Dr. Ed Seifried, as he helps economics make sense for your business. Gain insight on interest rates, context for making business decisions and key information to help develop assumptions in budgets and business plans.

Registration and event details at:

<http://goo.gl/1XckPy>

NABC Bench Grafting and Top Working Orchard Workshop, Bow, WA - Friday, April 17

Allen Fire Station , 9061 Avon Allen Road, Bow, 9 AM – 3 PM, \$110 - Beverages, lunch and pruning knife included

Attendees will learn how to make bench grafts and how to topwork a larger tree in an orchard.

[Register here.](#)

“The Art of Liqueurs” 2-day Workshop for crafting specialty liqueurs April 23 & 24

Instructor and award winning distiller Ryan Hembree joins NABC to present the first ever Puget Sound workshop on “The Art of Liqueurs”.

Workshop to be held at Skip Rock Distillery: 104 Avenue C, Snohomish, WA 98290. The fee is \$275 and includes all class materials, beverages & food.

Details: <http://goo.gl/G15ymZ>

Summer Vineyard Management July 18, 2015; 10:00am-1:00pm

Careful attention is crucial to getting a good harvest of high quality wine grapes. Learn the principles of canopy and crop load management; how to manipulate shoots to maximize quality; when to cluster thin; the use of micro-nutrient sprays to enhance yield and quality. Netting machine demo! Bring hand pruners, gloves, and a brown bag lunch. **To register online, visit VineyardCare.BrownPaperTickets.com**

Application Workshops: Farmers Market or Local Foods Promotion Programs - April 16 & 21

Two free WORKSHOPS will cover requirements for FMPP and LFPP; developing your ideas; preparing your proposal application; and successfully submitting it via grants.gov. [Flyer here](#)

APRIL 16 - 9:30am to 2:30pm - Central Washington University in **Ellensburg**

APRIL 21 - 9:30am to 2:30pm - Urban Grace Church in **Tacoma**

Energy generation from food, animal waste - April 14 - Monroe, WA

On-site generation of energy and soil enhancements from organic waste will be demonstrated at a free Anaerobic Digestion Bioenergy Field Day 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Tuesday, April 14, at [Willie Green's Organic Farm](#), 19501 Tualco Rd., Monroe.

RSVP is required at <http://ADFieldDay.BrownPaperTickets.com>

More information [here](#)

“OUR MISSION IS TO PROMOTE THE VITALITY OF FARMING, FARMERS, AND RANCHERS BY ENSURING THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL LANDS IN WASHINGTON STATE. WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS THROUGH POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR, THE LEGISLATURE, THE OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION AND OTHERS AND BY ENLISTING PUBLIC SUPPORT. PROGRAMS WILL BE VOLUNTARY, RECOGNIZE LOCAL PRIORITIES, AND PROVIDE FOR ECONOMIC INCENTIVES.”