

# Washington State Conservation Commission

## OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2016

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



### *Federal Ag Easement Program cutoff - January 15*

Agricultural Secretary Tom Vilsack recently announced the availability of \$350 million nationally to help landowners protect and restore key farmlands, grasslands and wetlands across the nation.

Funding is provided through the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). The program was created by the 2014 Farm Bill to protect critical water resources and wildlife habitat, and encourage private landowners to maintain land for farming and ranching. Through the voluntary sale of an easement, landowners limit future development to protect these key resources. Washington's share of the \$350 million is not determined as of yet.

The application cutoff for 2016 funding has been set for January 15, 2016.

Please direct any questions to Dave Kreft at 509-323-2991 or email Dave at [Dave.kreft@wa.usda.gov](mailto:Dave.kreft@wa.usda.gov).

Application and ranking criteria are available on the NRCS-WA website. <http://goo.gl/pW6VQA>



### *WSDA Drought Economic Impact Study Released*

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) recently released their interim report on the 2015 drought and its impact to agriculture. The report estimated the economic impact of the 2015 drought on the state's agricultural industry at more than \$335 million. The total is expected to increase as the drought affected the quality and quantity of some crops going to market in coming months.



Washington  
State Department of  
Agriculture

**The full report with the economic impacts are available by going to:**

<http://agr.wa.gov/FP/Pubs/docs/104-495InterimDroughtReport2015.pdf>

For this report, WSDA limited the analysis to four major commodity groupings (fruit, field crops, animal feed crops, dryland) and divided the state into four major regions (Western, Central, Columbia Basin, and Eastern). Data from the 2015 season are not yet available for animal products (livestock and dairy) or nursery products: those sectors are not included in this report.

The 2015 crop season in Washington was one of the driest on record. At the height of this year's drought (during the last week of August 2015), 85 percent of Washington was in "extreme drought" status.

The main conclusion from this interim report is that impacts were widespread and will be ongoing. In the agricultural industry, a drought is not a single point of impact, simply because crop growing periods, seeding, drought damaged plants, and other issues take time to resolve. We will not truly know the impact of this drought for two to four years, and that is only if another drought does not occur during this time. Farming operations will struggle to stay solvent, despite their technological innovation and adapting practices, if climate and weather changes like those seen in 2015 become more regular.

**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>

## ***WWRP Application Webinar: Farmland Preservation Funding***

Do you need funding to preserve farmland? The Recreation and Conservation Office through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program will be accepting grant applications for funding awarded in 2016 for all Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB) programs.



An application webinar for all 2016 RCFB grants begins at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, February 17. You can join this webinar from your office or home using your telephone and computer. Registration for this event has not yet begun. Check the Web site at [www.rco.wa.gov](http://www.rco.wa.gov) for further information or contact: Lorinda Anderson at [Lorinda.Anderson@rco.wa.gov](mailto:Lorinda.Anderson@rco.wa.gov) or (360) 902-3009 to get notification of registration.

## ***Livestock Round Pen: 7-9pm, Wednesday Jan 27***

The mild climate and rich soils of Western Washington have made it a mecca for livestock producers from the first homesteads of the 1800s right through the expansion of the dairy industry in modern times. However, those modern-day Western Washington can be a demanding place to raise livestock as well. Challenges ranging from frequent flooding, the high cost of farmland, and trying to meet water quality standards to the expense of feed and the long distances farmers must travel to bring livestock products to local consumers all conspire to make livestock production a less than sure thing for today's farmer.



That's why we encourage anyone interested in livestock production to join us Wednesday evening, January 27, 2016 from 7:00—9:00pm at the Longhouse at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds, 14405 179th Ave SE, Monroe, WA for the first in a series of quarterly events we are calling the Livestock Round Pen.

Designed to be an informal discussion, Q&A, and networking event, there will be tables devoted to each species: cattle, goats, sheep, swine, and poultry. Lead by Dr. Susan Kerr, WSU NW Regional Livestock and Dairy Extension Specialist, you'll find opportunities to engage with experts, veterinarians, and other producers; ask and answer questions, learn about the latest news affecting livestock producers, and discover new resources to help improve and expand healthy livestock production throughout Western Washington.

Sponsored by WSU Snohomish County Extension, Snohomish Conservation District, and the Evergreen State Fairgrounds, the event is free and open to everyone interested in, or currently involved with, livestock production. To ensure we have enough resources available, we encourage you to register online at [RoundPen.BrownPaperTickets.com](http://RoundPen.BrownPaperTickets.com) by Jan. 25, 2016.

For more information on the event, visit [snohomish.wsu.edu/RoundPen](http://snohomish.wsu.edu/RoundPen) or contact Kate Halstead, [khalstead@wsu.edu](mailto:khalstead@wsu.edu), (425) 357-6024.

## ***NABC: Mobile Poultry unit wraps up second season***

[From NABC Press Release](#)

With the last harvest completed at the end of November, the second season of the Mobile Poultry Processing Unit (MPPU) project has come to a close. Launched in June of 2014, the program is fulfilling the purpose for which it was designed – to provide professional poultry processing services to farmers in Northwest Washington. About 11,000 chickens and 800 turkeys were processed for 25 farms in 2015 – a nearly 32 % increase in throughput over last year. The ultimate goal remains supporting development of a strong core group or cooperative of poultry farmers, and migrating management of the project into their hands when appropriate.



If you would like to know more about the MPPU, or processing during the 2016 season, please contact Project Manager Sera Hartman at 360-336-3727 or email [sera@agbizcenter.org](mailto:sera@agbizcenter.org).

## *Vashon - Maury Island Land Trust seeks Farmer*

The Vashon-Maury Island Land Trust is proud to announce that the search process has officially begun for an experienced farmer who will return historic Matsuda Farm to active agricultural production.

The 12 acre Matsuda Farm is the Land Trust's first farm conservation project.

To read the [Request for Proposals \(RFP\)](#) along with site soil analysis & a site map, please [CLICK HERE](#). The deadline for entries is February 29th, 2016.

More information can be found [HERE](#) in the [PRESS RELEASE](#)

If you would like to learn more about the rich cultural history of the farm & the Matsuda family, [CLICK HERE](#)

Wondering why the Land Trust is conserving farmland? [CLICK HERE](#) till have questions?

Please call 206.463-2644 or email Abel Eckhardt [abel@vashonlandtrust.org](mailto:abel@vashonlandtrust.org)

## *Thurston Conservation District Farmer Workshop Series*

These workshops are designed specifically for you, the farmer, by you! Thurston CD takes your ideas and turns them into learning opportunities for the community! Bringing you experts in production, resource management, marketing, processing, policy and regulations to meet your needs by giving you the skills to build a successful, sustainable operation and manage your land wisely.

Workshops are held the 2nd Monday of every month, 6pm – 8pm (unless otherwise noted) at the Thurston Conservation District office: 2918 Ferguson ST SW, STE A. Tumwater, WA 98512

Next workshop **January 11th - Small-scale Vegetable Seed Production - Aaron Varadi, Sunbreak Farm**

Learn the basic agricultural and biological considerations of growing small-scale commercial vegetable seed crops. Topics covered will include crop reproductive biology, planning, selection, harvest, and marketing.

Registration is NOT required to attend! Please stop on by! However, to keep a headcount for refreshments and to make effective use of our presenters time – please indicate interest in attending by calling or emailing: Sarah Moorehead 360-754-3588 x136 or [smoorehead@thurstoncd.com](mailto:smoorehead@thurstoncd.com)

## *Despite Profit Potential, Organic Field Crop Acreage Remains Low*

U.S. crop acres under USDA certified organic systems have grown rapidly since the National Organic Program (NOP) was implemented in 2002. Organic crop acreage increased from about 1.3 million to almost 3.1 million acres between 2002 and 2011. While acreage for some major field crops increased substantially, growth was modest for others. **Full story** [here](#)

### **Highlights from USDA ERS survey data**

- ◆ USDA survey data show that organic systems had lower yields and higher economic costs than conventional systems.
- ◆ Organic corn and soybeans have been profitable, primarily due to the significant price premiums paid for certified organic crops that more than offset the additional economic costs. Organic wheat has been less profitable.
- ◆ Despite potentially higher returns, adoption of the organic approach among U.S. field crop producers remains low, likely due to low crop yields and challenges of effective weed control, among other factors.

## *Conservation-Practice Adoption Rates Vary Widely by Crop and Region*

This research analyzes national and regional adoption of no-till and strip-till planting systems; cover-crop use; and nitrogen-fertilizer application rates, timing, and methods. Results show that U.S. farmers' adoption of these practices varies widely by crop and region. In addition many farmers are "partial" adopters, adopting these conservation practices on some but not all acres of their farm.

Full report available by going to: <http://goo.gl/46ZNXE>

## *Back from the brink: historic farm near Arlington, WA won't be McMansions after all*

**140-acre parcel had already been subdivided and cleaved by a paved cul-de-sac; action by Forterra returns it to agricultural use**

Recently, the regional sustainability organization Forterra turned back the clock. In an unprecedented move, it bought back a subdivision in order to return it to farming. The property's agricultural soils were poised for destruction, having been platted and permitted for fourteen 10-acre lots and physically prepared for development — including installation of electrical boxes, wells and a paved cul-de-sac driveway. Says Michelle Connor, Executive Vice President of Forterra, "Riverbend Farm's near-death experience shows what's possible even at the eleventh hour if good ideas and good people come together. We're exhilarated to have played a part."

With the newly purchased property now out of foreclosure, Forterra is raising a further \$30,000 to pay back taxes and begin dismantling the subdivision and permanently preserve the 140-acre farm, which is adjacent to the Stillaguamish River and sits on the doorstep of Arlington, defining the town's historic character as a farming community. Many people in western Washington likely know the area; it includes the well-known Biringer Farm berry-growing operation as well as a number of popular pumpkin patches.

As a final step in this farmland preservation initiative, Forterra has entered into an agreement to sell the farm — together with a conservation easement that permanently protects its agricultural character — to a young third-generation farmer and his veterinarian wife who will be buying their first farmland. The farmer, Andrew Albert, recently won Snohomish Conservation District's farmer of the year award for modeling best practices in farming operations.

As Andrew says about his operation:

"My family has farmed here in the Stillaguamish River Valley near Arlington, Washington since 1953. We had a dairy for 40 years and then shifted into crop farming.

"Beginning in 2003, I have expanded my operation from fewer than 100 acres to more than 1000, including 600 acres of grass. I saw an opportunity to provide good, locally-grown feed at a good price, direct from the farm to the consumer."

"What started out as an FFA project in high school has turned into my career and business. Farming is what I enjoy, and I believe that it is important to enjoy what you do in life, even if you don't get rich."

Washington State's vanishing farmland. Over the last decade, Washington has given up 570,000 acres of farmland. That means lost capacity for production in a time when locally-grown food is prized both by cooks and those wanting to shrink their carbon footprint. It also mean sprawl, with impacts on traffic, pollution, and lost rural character.

Says Linda Neunzig, Agriculture Coordinator for Snohomish County, "We thought this land was gone forever for farming but due to the persistence and hard work of many people and organizations we were able to preserve it forever as some of the best farmland in Snohomish County. Conserving this great piece of farmland not only keeps the land in open space but also is one more step in assuring food security throughout the county."

In addition to Forterra and Snohomish County (its Conservation Futures Fund), other project partners include the City of Arlington, the Washington State Conservation Commission, and the Snohomish County Conservation District. Thanks are due, as well, to the offices of Senator Patty Murray and Congresswoman Suzan Delbene who worked with the FDIC to overcome hurdles in unwinding the loan in foreclosure.

The Stillaguamish and Shellfish. Abutting the river and in its floodplain, Riverbend Farm is part of the Stillaguamish Clean Water District, established to address the closure of shellfish beds in nearby Port Susan and South Skagit Bay. The restored farmland will be cared for to minimize toxins and pathogens that could flow into the river, especially during floods. Impacts are sure to be less than with multiple residences on the property, each with a septic system and unpredictable reliance on fertilizers and pesticides.



The Alberts

## *Grants*

### **Organic Farming Research Foundation 2016 Request for Proposals**

The Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) grants program is currently accepting research proposals. OFRF encourages farmers, ranchers, graduate students, early career researchers, veterans, and Extension personnel to consider applying. OFRF will fund projects up to \$15k for one year. Projects addressing the priority area of soil health and water management are eligible for \$20k to be spent over two years.

**Proposals due February 8, 2016.**

Details: <http://goo.gl/KKM6N2>

### **King CD Regional Food System Grants**

The next round of funding for King Conservation District Regional Food System Grants will be announced in early February, 2016.

Eligible applicants include individual farmers, producer networks, marketing cooperatives, farmers markets, businesses, schools, special districts, nonprofit organizations, tribes, and jurisdictions within the KCD service area.

**Application process and more information can be found here:**

<http://goo.gl/IzwJLG>

### **Farmer Veteran Fellowship Fund**

The Farmer Veteran Fellowship Fund provides direct assistance to veterans in their beginning years of farming or ranching. Applicants must have served in the U.S. Armed Forces, currently be on active duty, or serving in the military reserve/National Guard. They must also be members of the Farmer Veteran Coalition.

**Applications must be received by February 1, 2016.**

Details at: <http://goo.gl/aHgCGc>

## *In Short*

### **Grant funds improve water supplies and stream flows around the state**

Twelve projects to improve water supplies, stream flows and instream habitat conditions around the state can now get underway, thanks to grants from The Watershed Plan Implementation and Flow Achievement Capital Grant Program.

Check out recipients, awards and project information by going to:

<http://goo.gl/zbSUdt>

### **Emergency Drought Declaration will not be extended into 2016**

The Department of Ecology's statewide drought emergency declaration will not be extended into 2016.

Governor Jay Inslee's Executive Water Emergency Committee (EWEC) has recommended that Ecology not extend the drought declaration at this time although another declaration can be considered next year if water supply conditions change.

You can see this and more on the Washington Drought 2015 web page:

<http://goo.gl/cc1xf2>

### **Project to Examine Orchard-Protection Potential of Falcons**

Michigan State University researchers are investigating whether crop damage in orchards decreases when the population of small falcons increases. The researchers are installing nest boxes to try and attract American kestrels to orchards because kestrels prey on many species that cause damage to fruit crops. Researchers are also interviewing cherry and blueberry growers to determine how they decide which pest-management methods to use.

**Check out more by going to:**

<http://goo.gl/dCRFev>

## ***Now Available: Updated Farmers' Recordkeeping Toolkit***

Farmers' Legal Action Group (FLAG) has announced the release of Recordkeeping Instructions and Templates for Small-Scale Fruit and Vegetable Growers. The updated toolkit contains instructions and recording templates for small-scale fruit and vegetable farmers to use in tracking their farm activities. The toolkit is free online.

**Check it out by going to:** <http://goo.gl/pt4c0p>



## *Wild Bee Decline Threatens U.S. Crop Production*

Following Obama's call for pollinator assessment, first-ever national bee map shows much farmland at risk

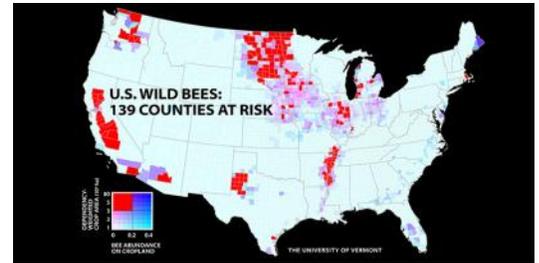
By Joshua E. Brown

The first national study to map U.S. wild bees suggests they're disappearing in many of the country's most important farmlands — including California's Central Valley, the Midwest's corn belt and the Mississippi River valley.

If losses of these crucial pollinators continue, the new nationwide assessment indicates that farmers will face increasing costs — and that the problem may even destabilize the nation's crop production.

The findings were published Dec. 21 in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Read more by going to: <http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmpr/?Page=news&storyID=22053&category=ucommfeaturea>



## *Workshop for Educators, Industry, and Producers*

**Workshop: Agriculture in a Changing Climate: Implications for Educators, Industry, and Producers**

Washington State University's Center for Sustaining Agriculture & Natural Resources (CSANR), USDA Northwest Regional Climate Hubs, and the Regional Approaches to Climate Change for Pacific Northwest Agriculture (REACCH) team invite you to participate in this upcoming workshop

**March 9-11, 2016 - Red Lion Hotel Columbia Center - Kennewick, WA**

You're invited to participate in this free workshop. Your expertise is needed to identify and plan climate mitigation and adaptation strategies for agriculture in the Pacific Northwest. There will be dedicated mitigation and adaptation sessions, with an overlapping poster networking event. Each session will feature guest speakers, panel discussions, and breakout sessions.

Registration opening soon. Limited spots available. Details here: <http://csanr.wsu.edu/ag-in-a-changing-climate/>

For more information contact Brooke Saari at [brooke.saari@wsu.edu](mailto:brooke.saari@wsu.edu) or 509-663-8181 ext. 265.

Interested in submitting a Poster Abstract? More information [HERE](#).



## *FSA Grant: Outreach & Education, Technical Assistance, & Financial Education*

**Grant: Outreach and Education, Technical Assistance, and Financial Education for FSA Programs, Functions, and Activities**

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) is offering \$2.5 million in grants to nonprofits and public institutions of higher education that develop proposals to improve farmer outreach and education on topics such as financial training, value-added production, recordkeeping, property inheritance and crop production practices. The initiative focuses on new or underserved farmers, returning military veterans, minorities, women, urban or locally-grown producers, and others. Awards between \$20,000 and \$100,000 per applicant will be available.



An archived recording of the September 28, 2015, Cooperative Agreement Informational Session, highlighting details about the grant and offering information on how to apply online is available by going to: <http://goo.gl/ZRwfr6>

All questions can be sent to [fsaoutreach@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:fsaoutreach@wdc.usda.gov).

USDA is conducting three evaluation periods to review applications, with the deadlines of January 22, 2016, March 18, 2016, and May 27, 2016.

Details on this grant opportunity can be found by going to: <http://goo.gl/ZRwfr6>

## ***NSAC Blog: Summary of Federal Appropriations Bill***

From NSAC Blog- <http://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/fy16-omnibus/>

### **Massive Year-End Funding Bill A Mixed Bag But Includes Significant Wins for Sustainable Agriculture**

Nearly three months after the end of the fiscal year, the House has released a draft of the final appropriations package for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016, which if passed will fund everything from research and rural development to food safety and farm credit programs.

The bill—known as an “omnibus”—is actually a package of 12 individual spending bills, include funding for the Departments of Defense, Transportation, Education, Interior, and Agriculture, among others.

For the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the bill provides \$21.75 billion in discretionary funding, \$925 million more than last year’s enacted level and \$34 million less than the USDA request. Congress was able to increase the overall funding level significantly because of the higher spending caps included in last fall’s budget deal.

This post breaks down the omnibus as it pertains to key sustainable farm and food priorities. You can download the updated annual appropriations chart [here](#). You can also jump down to a particular issue area of interest:

- Research, Education, Extension and Food Safety
- Rural Development and Farm Loans
- Conservation and Energy
- Legislative Riders
- Child Nutrition Reauthorization



For more details <http://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/fy16-omnibus/>

## ***WSU: Communicating with Latino Farmers: Cultural Aspects and Strategies***

WSU recently released a fact sheet titled: **Communicating with Latino Farmers: Cultural Aspects and Strategies** available at: <https://research.wsulibs.wsu.edu:8443/xmlui/handle/2376/5777>

As Washington agricultural communities become more culturally and ethnically diverse, communicating and building relationships across cultures has become more important. Many factors play a role in successful cross-cultural communication, including developing an understanding of history, language and communication aspects, cultural differences; and specific farmer needs and situations. This publication presents a high- and low-context culture model to help understand the different approaches to farming by Latino and white/Anglo populations. Bridging cultural and language differences is a key to the success of service providers in agriculture and Latino farmers.



## ***USDA Announces 2016 Agricultural Outlook Forum***

### **92nd Annual Forum's Theme Is Transforming Agriculture: Blending Technology and Tradition**

The U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) will host the 92nd Annual Agricultural Outlook Forum in Arlington, Va. on Feb. 25-26, 2016. The theme for this year's forum is "Transforming Agriculture: Blending Technology and Tradition."

The challenges and opportunities for agriculture and rural America are changing. In 2015, American farmers persevered in the face of drought and an unprecedented animal disease outbreak. Demographics are also changing in rural America and across farm households. Meanwhile, technology is rapidly opening new applications for producers and throughout the marketing chain, and new markets are emerging for U.S. agricultural products. USDA continues to seek out new and innovative ways to expand opportunity and provide support for America's farming families, and that mission will form the basis for the 92nd Agricultural Outlook Forum.

To view information about the Forum and to register, go to [www.usda.gov/occe/forum/](http://www.usda.gov/occe/forum/)

# WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

## Mark Your Calendars

<p><b>2016 Farmers Market Conference: February 4-6, 2016 - Red Lion Hotel - Olympia, WA</b></p> <p>The WSFMA Annual Conference is a great place for direct-marketing farmers to learn new skills and get inspired for a successful 2016 season. Network with peers, mingle with legislators and even visit a working shellfish farm.</p> <p><b>Farmer scholarships available!</b></p> <p>Registration details here - <a href="http://goo.gl/b9frVn">http://goo.gl/b9frVn</a></p>	<p><b>Women in Agriculture Conference March 19, 2016</b></p> <p>This years <a href="#">Women in Agriculture Conference</a> takes place at several locations across WA, OR and ID.</p> <p><b>More Info:</b> <a href="http://goo.gl/8vNbem">http://goo.gl/8vNbem</a></p> <p>Please email <a href="mailto:donna.rolen@wsu.edu">donna.rolen@wsu.edu</a> (or call 509.745.8531) for updates on our 2016 conference on March 19.</p>	<p><b>Thurston CD - Farmer Workshop Series - January 11 - Small-scale Vegetable Seed Production</b></p> <p>6pm – 8pm - 2918 Ferguson ST SW, STE A. Tumwater, WA 98512</p> <p>Learn from Aaron Varadi, Sunbreak Farm the basic agricultural and biological considerations of growing small-scale commercial vegetable seed crops. Topics covered will include crop reproductive biology, planning, selection, harvest, and marketing.</p>
<p><b>2016 San Juan Islands Agricultural Summit - Friday Harbor, San Juan Island - February 11-13, 2016</b></p> <p>Participate in hands-on workshops on Thursday and Friday, February 11-12.</p> <p>On February 13, choose from over 20 compelling sessions led by regional experts.</p> <p>Schedule and registration details here: <a href="http://sjcarc.org/summit/">http://sjcarc.org/summit/</a>. Questions? Contact <a href="mailto:summit@sjcarc.org">summit@sjcarc.org</a></p>	<p><b>Whole Foods Local Producer Meet and Greet, Bellingham - February 18 - 9AM – 4PM,</b></p> <p>Whole Foods is looking for local producers to stock the shelves of their new store in Bellingham.</p> <p>Sign up here to reserve your session: <a href="https://goo.gl/arL2SC">https://goo.gl/arL2SC</a></p>	<p><b>WA State Farm Internship Pilot Project Info Session and Q&amp;A - January 19: Tacoma - <a href="#">Centro Latino, 1208 S 10th Street</a>, 6 – 8 PM,</b></p> <p>Join L&amp;I Farm Internship Program Manager Kelly Kane, as well as Early Bird Farm Owner Rawley Johnson, for a brief presentation of how the program works, and how you can take advantage of it.</p> <p>Register here. <a href="http://goo.gl/WjE1aR">http://goo.gl/WjE1aR</a></p>
<p><b>Save the Date! Skagit Summit March 3 &amp; 4, 2016</b></p> <p><b>Location:</b> Best Western Plus Skagit Valley Inn - Mount Vernon, WA.</p> <p><b>Tickets:</b> <a href="http://goo.gl/mo2DU4">http://goo.gl/mo2DU4</a></p> <p>The 2016 Skagit Agriculture Summit (SAS) highlights new innovative ideas and farming practices while promoting agriculture.</p>	<p><b>Cultivating Cooperative Roots Conference, February 5-7, Spokane</b></p> <p>Cooperatives large and small—farmers, growers, producers, distributors, financiers, policymakers, and retailers—are invited to share their experiences and to build relationships across AK, WA, OR, ID, western MT, as well as nationally. More than 25 sessions, talks, and workshops, three field trip opportunities, a keynote speaker, and networking opportunities are planned.</p> <p><b>Details and full schedule <a href="#">here!</a></b></p>	<p><b>USDA Value Added Producer Grant Boot Camp Tuesday, Jan 26, 2016 Skagit County Fairgrounds</b></p> <p>Workshop Registration Fee: \$25.00</p> <p>Refreshments and lunch will be provided. Register at: <a href="#">VAPG Boot Camp</a></p> <p>Scholarships are available for those in need. Please contact Jeff Voltz, <a href="mailto:jeff@agbizcenter.org">jeff@agbizcenter.org</a></p> <p><b>Learn more by going to:</b> <a href="http://goo.gl/IKFEH4">http://goo.gl/IKFEH4</a></p>

“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.”