

Washington State Conservation Commission

FARMLAND PRESERVATION NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2016

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



2016 Legislative session adjourns

The 106th legislature recently concluded, and held extra innings to resolve supplemental budgets between the Senate and House. Late in the evening on March 29, a final supplemental operating and capital budget were passed and adopted...awaiting governor signature.

Supplemental Operating budget: <http://goo.gl/yVL9u4>;

Supplemental Capital budget: <http://goo.gl/suaKoy>



The State Conservation Commission's final budget included a proviso to convene and facilitate a food policy forum. The commission must report to the appropriate legislative committees with the forum's recommendations by October 31, 2017.

Food policy addresses how food is produced, processed, distributed, and purchased. Food policies are generally designed to influence the operation of the food and agriculture system. WSCC has been a participant in state level food policy activities since 2010. We are also currently a participant in the food policy roundtable established in the Governor's executive order. More information will be available on this effort in future newsletters.

The Office of Farmland Preservation tracks legislation as it relates to agricultural viability, regulatory impacts, protection of farmland, land use, and other topics that may have a nexus with the viability of farmland in Washington.

ESHB 2478	Bill Page	Delivered to Governor	Supporting agricultural production, including that of apirarists, through the preservation of forage for pollinators
SSB 6179	Bill Page	Delivered to Governor	Concerning water banking
SSB 6227	Bill Page	Delivered to Governor	Implementing the recommendations of the 2015 review of the Washington wildlife and recreation program
ESSB 6513	Bill Page	Delivered to Governor	Concerning reservations of water in WRIsAs 18 and 45
ESB 6589	Bill Page	Delivered to Governor	Concerning a feasibility study to examine whether water storage would provide noninterruptible water resources to users of permit exempt wells

USDA Microloans - Your farming idea is closer than you think

Access to reliable credit has been an important issue for farmers and ranchers long before President Woodrow Wilson signed into law the Federal Farm Loan Act back in 1916. In fact, even a century later, with all of the financial options available today, one of the biggest challenges to entering agriculture - or even growing an existing farming or ranching operation - still can be the cost of land and equipment.

Three years ago, FSA created a new microloan program tailored especially to borrowers who have small or medium-sized needs. With its streamlined paperwork, no mandatory minimum amount and up to \$50,000 in borrowing authority, microloans have become FSAs most popular programs to date, providing \$25.8 million to more than 17,000 borrowers, with fully 70 percent of microloans having gone to new farmers and nearly 50 percent to first-time FSA customers.

To learn more about how microloans can help you, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans or contact your local FSA office. To find your local office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.



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>

2016 USDA-RCPP: Investing in Washington State

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack recently announced that USDA and partners across the nation together will direct up to \$720 million towards 84 conservation projects that will help communities improve water quality, combat drought, enhance soil health, support wildlife habitat and protect agricultural viability. These projects make up the second round of the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) created by the 2014 Farm Bill.



Created by the 2014 Farm Bill, the RCPP is a partner-driven, locally-led approach to conservation. It offers new opportunities for USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to harness innovation, welcome new partners to the conservation mission, and demonstrate the value and efficacy of voluntary, private lands conservation.

In 2016, NRCS is investing \$8.7 million for two projects in Washington.

Check out the Washington projects by going to: <http://goo.gl/xZXUxq>

Local Foods and Farm Business Survival and Growth

USDA Economic Research Service analysis of Agricultural Census data shows that farmers who market food directly to consumers have a greater chance of remaining in business than similarly sized farms who market through traditional channels. Farmers with direct-to-consumer sales had a 6 to 20% higher survival rate. However, analysts found that direct-marketing farms increase in sales more slowly.



Read the full analysis by going to: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/>

Highlights:

- ◆ Data from the 2007 and 2012 Agricultural Censuses show that farmers who market food directly to consumers have a greater chance of remaining in business than similarly sized farms who market through traditional channels.
- ◆ While farmers who directly market to consumers are more likely to continue farming than those who do not, their businesses expand at a slower rate.
- ◆ Differences in farm survival and growth rates for farms that market directly to consumers might be explained by differences in debt-to-asset ratios, farm income risk, labor requirements per dollar of income, or preferences for farm versus nonfarm work.

USDA Offers New Toolkit to Assess Economic Impact of Local Foods

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack recently unveiled a new resource created by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Colorado State University that will help communities and businesses evaluate the economic benefits of investing in local food systems.

["The Economics of Local Food Systems: A Toolkit to Guide Community Discussions, Assessments and Choices"](#)

The Local Food System Toolkit was developed by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to help communities reliably evaluate the economic impact of investing in local and regional food systems. The Local Food System Toolkit provides detailed guidance in seven modules to measure and assess the expected economic impacts of local food investments. Using real-world projects, experiences, and applied research, it provides grounded, credible, and useable assessment methods. The Local Food System Toolkit can be used by policy makers, community leaders, private businesses or foundations to offer specific estimates that will help them decide whether to invest in initiatives that increase local food activity.



Every community wants to support initiatives that promote economic growth and create new jobs, but sometimes it can be hard to decide on the best way to accomplish these goals. This new resource can help communities make the economic case for investments in local food. **More info here:** <http://goo.gl/1LE7RJ>

In Short

Study Reveals Social Motivations of Urban Farmers

A study led by NYU Steinhardt shows that three of the four top reasons farmers grow in urban areas—food security, education, community building, and producing food for the market—have social motivations.

As urban populations grow in the United States, farming in cities is becoming more common. While food entrepreneurs seek to make money through urban farming, many urban farms are concerned with factors beyond food production, and have incorporated social goals into their missions. These missions align with a larger social movement in food – the “good food movement” – that focuses on where food comes from, who grows it, and how it’s grown.

Read the full story at:

<http://goo.gl/HwUo2q>

Open Source Software for CSAs Available

The Siskiyou Sustainable Cooperative CSA in Southern Oregon has recently unveiled innovative, open source software developed to assist CSA farmers in connecting with their members.

The CSA App provides CSA members easy access to product information, recipes, cooking and storage tips, and nutritional information for their CSA produce.

Access to the customizable Web platform is provided free of charge.

More details by going to:

<http://www.siskiyoucoop.com/csa/app/>

Publication: Government Resources Guide for Farmer Veterans

The Government Resources Guide for Farmer Veterans describes programs that directly support farmers.

The Government Resources Guide for Farmer Veterans is for veterans who are farmers/ranchers or who are interested in becoming farmers/ranchers.

This guide is designed to help veterans understand how to leverage the resources offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Small Business Administration (SBA), the Department of Labor (DOL), and the Department of Agriculture (USDA).

This publication is a result of a partnership between the Farmer Veteran Coalition and Drake Agricultural Law Center and was funded by USDA.

Download the guide at:

<http://goo.gl/OiOHhT>

Funding

Funding: Regional Conservation Partnership Program

NRCS has announced that up to \$260 million is available through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) for partner proposals to improve the nation's water quality, combat drought, enhance soil health, support wildlife habitat, and protect agricultural viability.

The program leverages local leadership to establish partnerships that can include private companies, local and tribal governments, universities, non-profits and other non-government partners to work with farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners on landscape- and watershed-scale conservation solutions.

For more information on applying, go to: <http://goo.gl/FC5Trv>

Pre-proposals are due May 10, 2016.

Funding: Conservation Innovation Grants

USDA NRCS is accepting applications for up to \$20 million in competitive national Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG). Up to \$2 million has been set aside for projects targeted to historically underserved and veteran farmers and ranchers, beginning farmers and ranchers, and those with limited resources. The CIG focus for 2016 is Water Quality and Conservation Finance.

The application period is now open through May 10, 2016.

Full details on this grant are available at:

<http://goo.gl/2D2UOS>

Funding: USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program

The USDA Agriculture Marketing Service requests applications for the 2016 Farmers Market Promotion Program. The program competitively awards grants to eligible applicants for projects that establish, expand and promote direct producer-to-consumer marketing.

The minimum FY 2016 FMPP award per grant is \$50,000 and the maximum is \$500,000.

Applications must be submitted by May 12, 2016.

[Learn more](#) or [apply today](#).

USDA Farm to School Census Results Released

The USDA Farm to School Census showed that schools purchased \$789 million in local foods during school year 2013–2014. Nationally, 42% of school districts that responded operate farm to school programs, and more than 2,000 districts plan to start in the future.



Here in Washington, 49% of districts surveyed say they participate in farm to school activities. Another 15% of districts surveyed plan to start farm to school activities in the future. (Note: of the 308 school districts in Washington, 78% completed the USDA Farm to School Census.) In Washington, \$17,440,300 was invested in local food with the average school district spending 9% of their budget on local products. Of Washington districts surveyed, 46% plan to increase local food purchases in the future.

Top districts in Washington were: San Juan Island School District, Cheney School District, and Olympia School District.

For full Washington results, go to: <https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov/find-your-school-district/washington>

The updated Farm to School Census website is accepting nominations for the "One in a Melon" award through April 15, 2016, recognizing schools that administer creative, innovative, and/or exemplary farm to school programs.

2016 Washington State Conservation Futures report

Conservation Futures is a land preservation program that protects, preserves, maintains, improves, restores, and limits the future use of threatened areas of open space, timberlands, wetlands, habitat areas, culturally significant sites, and agricultural farmlands. Conservation Futures funds, acquired through a property levy, are used to purchase the land or the rights to future development of the land.

This report highlights the thirteen counties that levy a conservation futures assessment. Futures collection is up 2.5% from the previous year to \$35,363,832.

Check out the full report by going to: <http://goo.gl/k7wZwk> (PDF)

The state Legislature first granted the authority for a Conservation Futures tax levy in 1971 (RCW 84.34. RCW 84.34.230 provides that the county may levy an amount not to exceed 6.25-cents per \$1,000 of assessed value of all taxable property for the Conservation Futures Program. Washington State has thirteen counties that levy a conservation future tax.

U.S. and State Farm Income and Wealth Statistics

The USDA recently updated their U.S and State Farm Income and Wealth Statistics.

Data files available by going to:

[Data Files: U.S. and State-Level Farm Income and Wealth Statistics](#)

(Includes the U.S. Farm Income Forecast for 2016)

These are the latest data concerning the farm income forecast, including the forecasts for the income statement for the U.S. farm sector, value added, cash receipts and value of production, government payments, farm production expenses, and the balance sheet. Included are historical U.S. and State-level farm income and wealth statistics.

Historical/State data cover the topics of net value added and net farm income, net cash income, cash receipts and value of production, government payments, farm production expenses, and the balance sheet.



FDA Seeks Input on Assessing the Risk of Raw Manure as Fertilizer

The FDA is seeking input from stakeholders as it develops the framework for a risk assessment on the use of raw manure and other biological soil amendments of animal origin as fertilizer on produce farms. The agency is concerned about their potential to contain disease-causing bacteria, while growers see them as an effective way to enrich the quality of their soil.

A Federal Register notice requests public comments and scientific data, including information about how farms use raw manure and what strategies could reduce public health risk. Register Notice - <https://goo.gl/YjwuYr>

For more information on the FDA's request for comment, see the FDA's Q&A with Samir Assar - <http://goo.gl/8vFjH4>

WSDA: Immediate, long-term focus to bolster ag's viability

By Derek Sandison - WSDA Director

When I was appointed director of this state's Department of Agriculture in June 2015, I came from the water supply development world, where I'd had the opportunity to work with farmers, ranchers and others in the agriculture community.

Since then, I have come to appreciate the range and scope of WSDA's role and services. Our work supports the strength and viability of an industry that's a major driver for Washington's economy. The \$51 billion value of the agriculture and food industry represents 12 percent of the state's economy.

WSDA's 600 permanent staff (and more seasonally) are located across the state and organized in five direct customer service divisions, along with agency-support functions.

Read more here: <http://goo.gl/kXl6vf>

WDFW drops rural land buys as counties complain

From the Capital Press

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has dropped plans to buy a ranch and riverside grasslands in Eastern Washington, signaling the agency's increasing sensitivity to complaints that state land purchases rob taxes from rural counties. WDFW had identified 5,542 acres of Lincoln County rangeland and 2,560 acres in Walla Walla County along the Touchet River as among 10 properties it might pursue in 2017. Both pieces of land have been used for agriculture, though are not currently in production, according to WDFW.

Read the rest of the story here: <http://goo.gl/HZSqY1>

New agribusiness publication for Washington State

Washington Agribusiness: Status and Outlook 2016 is the inaugural issue of a new annual publication. Produced by WSU economic sciences faculty, it examines the opportunities and challenges facing Washington agriculture. Each issue will come out in January and will provide an update on Washington's major sectors, including wheat and barley, specialty crops, tree fruit, beef, and dairy, as well as feature articles on specific issues unique each year.



Download a PDF of the publication by going to: <http://goo.gl/0gMIg8>

A major focus this year is on the Trans Pacific Partnership trade agreement currently awaiting action by the U.S. Congress. In his article, "Status of Washington Agricultural International Exports," writer Andrew Cassey highlights the importance of trade to Washington agriculture and discusses potential impacts of the trade agreement. Writer Randy Fortenbery gives the small grains economic forecast in his piece "Situation and Outlook for Small Grains." In addition, there are two interesting articles that review the results of recently completed research projects that focus on the beef and hard cider sectors in Washington.

In Short

<p style="text-align: center;">Webinar: Legal Levers of Food Policy</p> <p>Check out a recent webinar on the legal levers of food policy. This webinar, coordinated by the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future and the Chesapeake Foodshed Network, features the Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic as they share their expertise on the legal concepts of local food systems.</p> <p>Learn about the legal, regulatory and administrative levers that can be used to achieve effective policy change and explore emerging food policy issues being addressed by food policy councils across the nation. View a taped recording of the webinar here:</p> <p>https://youtu.be/J0m_eSYHwk8</p> <p>Find out about upcoming webinars, events and new food policy resources by joining the Center's listserv:</p> <p>https://lists.johnshopkins.edu/sympa/subscribe/fpn-clf</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Free Publication: Scaling Up for Institutional Markets: Midwest Case Studies</p> <p>A recent ATTRA publication, "Scaling Up for Institutional Markets: Midwest Case Studies," profiles two types of institutional food buyers working to bring fresh, local, and regional food to institutions—a farm to college food service with locations nationwide and a local food aggregator in northeast Iowa.</p> <p>Although the institutions are located in the Midwest, the lessons from this free publication can be applied across the country.</p> <p>You can find the publication at:</p> <p>https://goo.gl/QKYaja</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Legislature OKs Authorization for Growing Industrial Hemp - Governor vetoes</p> <p>The Washington State legislature has passed a bill that would allow licensed growers to produce industrial hemp in Washington as part of a research program.</p> <p>The measure would allow Washington State University to study if widespread hemp production in the state is feasible and if there's a market for it. The university would report findings to the Legislature in January of 2017.</p> <p>The measure was vetoed by Governor Inslee due to the legislature not reaching a budget agreement by the conclusion of the legislative session.</p> <p>Read more about the bill here:</p> <p>http://goo.gl/jLfsOm</p> <p>Read the veto message here:</p> <p>http://goo.gl/JtMwJO</p>
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In Short

<p style="text-align: center;">Position Announcement: Okanogan County Extension Director and Agriculture Specialist</p> <p>This position is a full-time, 12-month, non-tenure, promotion track faculty position at the rank of Assistant or Associate Professor within the WSU Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Program Unit, a unit of WSU Extension and the College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences (CAHNRS). The position is headquartered at the WSU Extension Okanogan County Office in Okanogan, Washington.</p> <p>To apply visit: https://www.wsujobs.com</p> <p>Screening begins on April 18, 2016.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Call for Proposals: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation</p> <p>The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is seeking innovative studies that have strong potential to reduce children's excess calorie intake and eliminate racial, income, and/or geographic disparities in childhood obesity rates. Up to one-third of the available funds will be allocated to research focused on the rural United States, including the Appalachian region, American Indian children, and/or Asian/Pacific Islander children.</p> <p>The deadlines for concept papers start on May 11, 2016.</p> <p>Complete details are available in the call for proposals, which includes grants for investigators who historically have been disadvantaged and underrepresented in research disciplines.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">House Subcommittee Highlights Innovative, Voluntary Conservation Practices</p> <p>The House Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry recently held a hearing to highlight the unique and innovative conservation practices that farmers and ranchers are voluntarily utilizing to conserve and protect natural resources. Members heard from two panels of witnesses including Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Jason Weller and stakeholders who are using voluntary, incentive-based programs and new technologies to protect and restore water quantity and quality, air quality, and wildlife habitat.</p> <p>Written testimony provided by the witnesses is available at:</p> <p>http://goo.gl/qM5Ynu</p>
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WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Mark Your Calendars

AFT No Farms No Food® Speaker Series: Re-Imagining Local Grains - May 2 - Seattle

The No Farms No Food® Speaker Series showcases local leaders working on food, farm, and farmland issues. This month American Farmland Trust will host Dr. Steve Jones from the WSU Bread Lab. Learn more about Dr. Jones at: <http://goo.gl/9VDWic>

Event details and registration at: <http://goo.gl/Oitqmu>

Reduced Tillage Organic Ag & Cover Crop Research Field Day - April 25 - Puyallup

Washington State University researchers and cooperating farmers are evaluating cover crops and equipment for use in organic reduced-tillage production. This afternoon field day will highlight winter cover crops and strategies for incorporating reduced tillage.

Details: <http://goo.gl/iFm9mV>

Seminar Group: Floodplain Development: Regulation under FEMA and ESA - Seattle - May 19

Seminar Available via Live Webcast.

To view full agenda, which includes registration information and pricing, go to the link below.

To register over the phone, or if you have any questions please call 800-574-4852.

<http://goo.gl/qCz9EO>

7th National Small Farm Conference Sept. 20-22 - Virginia Beach, VA

The 7th National Small Farm Conference, "Creating and Sustaining Small Farmers and Ranchers," will take place in September. This conference will consist of short courses, oral and poster paper presentations, exhibits, success stories and educational tours in and around Virginia Beach and the Chesapeake Bay.

Details: <http://goo.gl/B0c0Cg>

Medicinal Herb Growing and Marketing Conference April 15-17 Port Townsend

This gathering for Pacific Northwest farmers, wildcrafters, and herb companies will feature workshops, panels, round-table discussions, keynote speakers, network building, and more. Conference tracks include farming practices, marketing, regulations, and nursery production.

Details: <http://goo.gl/xn9V5B>

8th National Farm to Cafeteria Conference - June 2-4, Madison, Wisconsin

hosted by the National Farm to School Network in Madison, Wisconsin. We hope you will be able to join your farm to cafeteria colleagues this June 2-4.

Register - <http://goo.gl/ZGnshH>

Conference homepage - <http://goo.gl/X7gpoy>

Workshop: Forage Testing & Pasture Management Wed Apr 13, Everett

Learn about Forage Testing and how to use the results to balance livestock rations throughout the year. Both hay and haylage will be covered. In addition, this workshop will focus on the basics of Pasture Management.

Cost is \$25 per farm (up to three) or \$15 per person.

Details and registration at: ForageTesting.BrownPaperTickets.com

Solar Energy on the Farm - April 25 Badger Mountain Vineyard Kennewick

Join Tilth for Solar Energy on the Farm Part III. Come learn how Badger Mountain Vineyard has incorporated solar energy into its operations and about their organic grape production.

This farm walk is free and open to the public, however pre-registration is required to receive lunch. You can register [online](#) or by phone at (206) 632-7506.

Washington Cattlemen's Association 1st Annual Washington Young Cattlemen's Tour

April 2, 2016 - Ellensburg WA

Join WCA for farm tours and a training with the Beef Commission. Lunch provided

Questions: Call Lindsey at 509-527-4635 or Gary at 360-391-7290. Registration available at: <https://goo.gl/DJKaDJ>

There registration cost for this event.

"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."