

Washington State Conservation Commission

FARMLAND PRESERVATION NEWSLETTER

MAY 2016

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



Attention Producers: Value Added Producer Grants

The Value Added Producer Grants program helps agricultural producers enter into value-added activities related to the processing and/or marketing of bio-based, value-added products. Generating new products, creating and expanding marketing opportunities, and increasing producer income are the goals of this program. You may receive priority if you are a beginning farmer or rancher, a socially-disadvantaged farmer or rancher, a small or medium-sized farm or ranch structured as a family farm, a farmer or rancher cooperative, or are proposing a mid-tier value chain. Grants are awarded through a national competition. Each fiscal year, applications are requested through a notice published in the Federal Register and through an announcement posted on Grants.gov.



Details available by going to: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html?keywords=Value%20added>

Maximum Grant Amount: \$75,000 for planning grants; \$250,000 for working capital grants

Matching Funds Requirements: 50% of total project costs

Application Deadline: Paper Application: July 1, 2016 | **Electronic Applications:** June 24, 2016

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition has put together a guide to help farmers navigate the value added grant application, check it out by going to: <http://goo.gl/XIs2tR>

Underway: Gypsy moth treatments in Western Washington

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) is recently began conducting several treatments to eradicate Asian and European gypsy moths, highly destructive, invasive pests found in several Western Washington sites. In total, WSDA will treat about 10,500 acres with Btk (*Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki*), which is approved for use on organic food crops and has been safely used in previous gypsy moth eradication projects for many years.



To eliminate the gypsy moth caterpillars, WSDA is planning to use Btk, a biological insecticide approved for use on organic food crops. Btk only targets caterpillars. WSDA has safely and effectively used it for more than 25 years, applying it to foliage that is then consumed by gypsy moth caterpillars.

Btk is not considered harmful to humans, pets, birds, fish, or bees. It is registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which considers it a low-risk product. Btk is found naturally in the environment and has an excellent safety record. Although the risk is low, the Washington State Department of Health, as a precaution, recommends that people can minimize their exposure by remaining indoors during spraying and for 30 minutes afterwards. If you come into contact with the product, wash with soap and water.

The treatments will be done by air and range from 25 minutes for the smallest treatment area in Capitol Hill to three hours for the largest treatment area in Tacoma. Each site will be treated at least three times with applications three to 10 days apart. WSDA anticipates all the work will be completed in about four weeks.

Visit the agency's gypsy moth web page at <http://agr.wa.gov/PlantsInsects/InsectPests/GypsyMoth/> to learn more or call the WSDA toll-free hotline at 1-800-443-6684.

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>

The WSDA Small Farm Direct Marketing and Farm to School team is hiring!

WSDA Seeking a farm to institution specialist

WSDA recently expanded their team to work on some exciting grants and projects, and they're looking for one more person to complement the team. This position will serve as lead/coordinator on a current grant-funded farm to institution project, with a goal to increase purchases and promotion of Washington-grown foods in state agencies, employee cafeterias, pre-schools, and senior meal programs.



Follow the link for more details: [WSDA Education & Outreach Specialist \(Commerce Specialist 3\)](#)

FSMA Information: Agricultural water versus indirect water

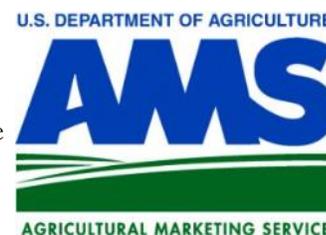
The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) regulates irrigation water testing in growing fresh produce and what water needs to be tested. Recent changes have been made that can make a difference in the amount of testing required of growers.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) is the most sweeping legislation regarding raw agricultural products since 1938. Recently, the FDA published the final FSMA Rule and it is extremely complex. One area of particular complexity is the issue of irrigation water testing and what water needs to be tested. Some very important points were clarified that slightly alter who might need to sample irrigation water. **Read the full article at:** <http://goo.gl/0C7uCz>



USDA Offers New Toolkit to Assess Economic Impact of Local Foods

The USDA Agricultural Marketing Services (AMS) Specialty Crop Program (SCP) recently conducted an interactive webinar on the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) recently finalized "Standards for the Growing, Harvesting, Packing and Holding of Produce for Human Consumption" regulation under the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). The webinar was led by Leanne Skelton, Biological Science Specialist with the AMS SCP and the USDA's FDA Liaison, and Samir Assar, Director of FDA's Division of Produce Safety.



The webinar covers the key provisions of the final regulation and its applicability in your business. It covers strategies for how to comply with the new regulation and provides the technical assistance./resources available to you including upcoming training from the Produce Safety Alliance and Food Safety Preventative Controls Alliance.

Check out the one hour webinar at: <https://goo.gl/Y6buk5>

Whatcom County farm fined \$20,000 for polluting creek

A berry farm in Whatcom County faces a \$20,000 fine for allowing water contaminated with manure to discharge into local waterways that flow to British Columbia. Sarbanand Farms, LLC, which operates a farm at in Sumas, applied manure solids as a mulch on fields of newly planted blueberry shrubs that were not yet producing berries. Applying manure in late fall without appropriate best management practices has a high risk of causing polluted runoff.

Recently, the Washington Department of Ecology issued a penalty notice for two separate discharges that occurred on Nov. 17 and Dec. 9, 2015. Samples taken of the runoff contained high concentrations of fecal coliform bacteria, which ultimately flowed into Saar Creek, a tributary of the Sumas River. The samples showed fecal coliform amounts up to 175 times greater than the acceptable level. Water polluted with manure can contain pathogens that can make people sick.

"Manure can be a valuable fertilizer, soil amendment or mulch when properly managed – but timing is everything," said Doug Allen, manager of Ecology's office in Bellingham. "Applying manure in the fall, at the start of our rainy season, is always risky."

Cliff Woolley, representing Sarbanand Farms, commented, "Unfortunately, runoff was caused by heavy rains that flooded our fields. We are working with the Department of Ecology to develop a plan to avoid future problems."

In Short

Attention King County Farmers

King County has a new web site for farmers. [Farm King County](#) is a one-stop web-based resource that connects local farmers to services, information, and technical resources that make it easier to farm and grow farm businesses in King County.

[Farm King County](#) contains locally relevant technical resources on a wide range of farm and farm business concerns.

In addition to the web based directory of resources, [Farm King County](#) also offers a network of technical experts that are available to answer questions, assist in navigating the directory, and connect users to organizations and service providers that can provide additional support.

[Farm King County](#) is multi-stakeholder collaboration between organizations committed to expanding the local agricultural economy.

Spotted Wing Drosophila Survey for Organic Growers

Attention organic berry growers! If soft-fruited berries (cherries, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, etc.) are part of your farm operation, organizers of a [NIFA OREI](#) project would like some information on your knowledge of and experience with this invasive small fruit pest that primarily attacks raspberries, blackberries and blueberries but may also infest strawberries, grapes, and stone fruit.

The survey will take 10 minutes to complete and will be open through June, 2016.

Here is the link to the survey (after the introductory text, click on the arrows below it to get to the survey):

<https://goo.gl/ZXje17>

USDA Issues Proposed Rule to Amend Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices, Including Poultry Living Conditions; Invites Comments

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) recently announced that the agency will propose amending the organic livestock and poultry production requirements, in order to ensure consistent application of the USDA organic regulations for organic livestock and poultry operations and maintain confidence in organically labeled products.

The proposal is designed to provide clear guidance for organic producers and handlers to provide for their animal's welfare.

Learn more at: <https://goo.gl/NCdH5T>

In Short

WSU: \$11M funds food safety tech transfer to markets

Consumer demand for safe, high quality, additive-free packaged foods is on the rise. Washington State University is advancing toward meeting this demand thanks to two recent investments in innovative food processing technology based on microwave energy.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) awarded WSU a \$4 million grant to establish a Center of Excellence that will accelerate the technology transfer to mainstream commercial markets.

Meanwhile, a \$7.2 million investment was announced in March by the Australian government to adopt microwave assisted thermal sterilization (MATS) technology. WSU and industry partner 915 Labs (will provide the system to Australia's Ministry of Defence.

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

NCREIF - Farmland Returns Off to a Slow Start in 2016

The National Council of Real Estate Investment Fiduciaries (NCREIF) has released the first quarter 2016 results of the NCREIF Farmland Index.

The annual total farmland return was 9.59% for the year ending first quarter 2016, down from 12.28% over the prior 12-months and 17.44% over the year ending first quarter 2014.

Quarterly total returns for the Pacific West (1.96%), were more moderate, yet still outperformed the total returns for farmland overall.

Review the full release with info graphs and more at:

<http://goo.gl/neBljW>

Northwest Farm Credit: 1st quarter Land Values Regional Trends

The Northwest FCS Land Value Survey is an overview of agricultural real estate values and trends throughout the Northwest. Written by Northwest FCS appraisers, it is released quarterly.

Northwest agricultural real estate values were stable to increasing through the first quarter of 2016. Although sales transactions are limited, most areas report steady demand for good quality agricultural properties. In Washington, the average dollar per acre land values have been mostly stable since 2011. An increase shown in 2015 is due to a limited supply and strong demand for cropland and lands with permanent plantings.

Review the full report with info graphs and more at: <https://goo.gl/Ttd6uC>

Attention Northwest Washington Eaters!

Sustainable Connections recently announced the release of the 2016-17 Whatcom Food & Farm Finder and the NW Washington Culinary Agritourism Map. Produced and published by Sustainable Connections, this free guide to local farms and food is made possible by support and contributions from Whatcom County, the City of Bellingham, Industrial Credit Union, Bellingham Farmers Market, and Haggen. This year's map contains a brand new section: CSA Farms and Home Delivery, which help residents find easy and convenient ways to eat local.



STAY Connected
FROM FARM TO FORK

The Whatcom Food & Farm Finder is distributed to 350+ locations throughout Whatcom and neighboring counties. It is also available online at www.eatlocalfirst.org.

The NW Washington Culinary Agritourism Map is a popular condensed version of the guide, and helps promote Whatcom and Skagit County as premier destinations for foodie and farm exploration. The map is designed to help connect visitors with local farm adventures, farm-to-table dining options, farmers markets, wineries, breweries, lodging and more.

More at: <http://sustainableconnections.org/foodfarming/guidetoeatinglocal>

WSDA releases annual pesticide report

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) investigated 123 potential violations of the state's pesticide laws between July 2014 and June 2015, the fiscal year covered by the agency's latest annual report to the state Legislature, released this month. This represents an 18 percent increase in investigations compared to figures from last year's report. The "[2015 Annual Report to the Legislature](#)" is available on the agency website.



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

Highlights from the report include:

- Of all investigations, about half (61) involved agricultural applications.
- Seventeen percent were for commercial and industrial pesticide use.
- Of the investigations, 58 involved pesticide drift, with less than half (48%) involving possible human exposure.
- 9,704 pesticide license exams were conducted.

Of the investigations, 57 resulted in some type of enforcement action, with seven resulting in a civil penalty for the violator.

Download the full report by going to: <http://goo.gl/15jNIV>

Yakima Basin Water Bill passes U.S. Senate

Senate Passes Sen. Maria Cantwell Yakima Water Bill, a National Model for Addressing Water Challenges through Collaboration

Recently, U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell ranking member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, secured passage of S. 1694, the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project Phase III Act, as part of the bipartisan energy bill that passed the Senate with a vote of 85 to 12. The bill authorizes an integrated and collaborative approach to addressing basin-wide water challenges in drought-stricken communities. This bill is a model for water management in the 21st century, particularly as communities throughout the West are impacted by drought and climate change.

The bill addresses long-standing water challenges in the Yakima River Basin, which is one of the West's most productive agricultural regions and once was one of the nation's most productive salmon fisheries.

Read more here including a link to watch Sen. Cantwell's floor speech. <http://goo.gl/RS2AD1>



In Short

USDA Reports Record Growth In U.S. Organic Producers

The USDA recently announced a significant increase in the number of certified organic operations, continuing the trend of double digit growth in the organic sector. According to new data, there are now 21,781 certified organic operations in the U.S and 31,160 around the world.

According to data released by the Agricultural Marketing Service's (AMS) National Organic Program (NOP), the number of domestic certified organic operations increased by almost 12 percent between 2014 and 2015, representing the highest growth rate since 2008 and an increase of nearly 300 percent since the count began in 2002. The total retail market for organic products is now valued at more than \$39 billion in the United States and over \$75 billion worldwide.

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

In the News: U.S. Ag Subcommittee Examines Growing Farm Financial Pressure

Recently, the House Agriculture Committee's Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management held a hearing on the growing financial pressures faced by U.S. farmers and ranchers.

Conditions in farm country today contrast sharply with those during the formulation of the 2014 Farm Bill. While high prices for many farm commodities led to tremendous growth in net farm income through 2013, many of those prices have spiraled downward over the past three years. Read more about the hearing here: <http://goo.gl/uIcDII>

Written testimony provided by the witnesses from the hearing is linked here: <http://goo.gl/t4jeu8>

145 House Members Demand Answers from EPA on Anti-Farmer Campaign - EPA funds used in anti-farmer campaign in Washington

Recently, Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-WA), House Agriculture Committee Chairman Mike Conaway (R-TX), and Rep. Brad Ashford (D-NE) were joined by 142 Members on a bipartisan letter to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Administrator Gina McCarthy.

The Members request answers on EPA Region 10's funding of whatsupstream.com website and advocacy campaign in Washington State that attempts to influence legislators for greater regulation of farmers and ranchers.

The letter and the list of signers in alphabetical order are included in the link below. For the full text of the letter with footnotes, click [here](#).

View the full press release by going to: <http://goo.gl/gkuvQD>

In Short

Attention WA Farmers: Participation Invited for Farmer Health Care Study

As part of a 4-year USDA funded grant, the Health Insurance, Rural Economic Development and Agriculture (HIREdNag) research project aims to understand the unique health insurance needs of farm and ranch families (<http://www.hirednag.net/>). We are in the process of recruiting farmers and ranchers in 10 states to participate in our research interviews, discussing experiences with health insurance and the farm enterprise. Participants will receive \$200 over the course of 2 confidential phone interviews.

If you are interested in participating in the research study or would like more information, contact (802)-656-0257 or katlyn.morris@uvm.edu

See the flyer here: <http://goo.gl/MiVclh>

Job Opening: Fido's Farm - Farm Facilities Lead, Olympia WA

Fido's Farm is a 100-acre sheep farm, dog training facility and dog boarding kennel located in Evergreen Valley eight miles south-east of Lacey. Evergreen Valley Lamb is grassfed and natural and is marketed through direct sales.

Salary: Position range \$12 -\$15/hr.

Duties: The person in this position will attend to the maintenance and functioning of Fido's Farm, and will assure that it is a safe, neat facility that meets our customers' expectations. Typical work will include maintaining farm vehicles and power equipment, supervising temporary workers, preparing facilities for events, managing landscaping, and farm work.

See the full description by going to:

<http://goo.gl/qMybLY>

Workshops prep Yakima Valley farmers to explore and expand local market opportunities

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) is hosting a three-part workshop series in the Yakima Valley to help small and mid-sized farmers develop the skills to meet growing consumer demand for locally grown produce. All workshops will offer Spanish interpreters.

The first workshop, Wholesale Success, is May 3 at the Yakima County Resource Center in Union Gap, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Register online at wsda.eventbrite.com or learn more by visiting [WSDA Small Farm Direct Marketing Program](#) and WSDA [Bridging the GAPs Project](#).

WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Mark Your Calendars

<p>AFT No Farms No Food® Speaker Series: Re-Imagining Local Grains - May 2 - Seattle</p> <p>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</p> <p>Event details and registration at: http://goo.gl/Oitqmu</p>	<p>Summer Vineyard Management - Sat. July 16, 2016; 10:00am-2:00pm</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Details: http://goo.gl/4vFhaJ</p>	<p>Seminar Group: Floodplain Development: Regulation under FEMA and ESA - Seattle - May 19</p> <p>Seminar Available via Live Webcast.</p> <p>To view full agenda, which includes registration information and pricing, go to the link below.</p> <p>To register over the phone, or if you have any questions please call 800-574-4852.</p> <p>http://goo.gl/qCz9EO</p>
<p>7th National Small Farm Conference Sept. 20-22 - Virginia Beach, VA</p> <p>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 presentations, exhibits, success stories and educational tours in and around Virginia Beach and the Chesapeake Bay.</p> <p>Details: http://goo.gl/B0c0Cg</p>	<p>Water Rights in Central Washington: Self-Assessment and Acquisition Wenatchee, WA - June 16, 2016</p> <p>This seminar is designed to provide information of vital interest to water right holders, water purveyors, conservancy board members, developers and advocates in Central Washington and beyond.</p> <p>To view full agenda, which includes registration information and pricing, go to: http://goo.gl/7hY2iw</p>	<p>8th National Farm to Cafeteria Conference - June 2-4, Madison, Wisconsin</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Register - http://goo.gl/ZGnshH</p> <p>Conference homepage - http://goo.gl/X7gpoy</p>
<p>Farm & Fiber Education Days May 21-22, 2016 - Lake Stevens</p> <p>"On the Edge of Urban" offers a week-end of seminars and hands-on workshops in specialty areas of farming and natural fiber production, for family farms, those that seek to live a more rural life, and folks who would like to purchase or use products and food from local farms.</p> <p>Learn more at: http://goo.gl/iDEcCY</p>	<p>WSDA Wholesale Success Workshop 9am - 5pm - May 3, Union Gap, WA</p> <p>Come explore and expand your market opportunities! Learn to tap the increasing demand for locally grown fruits and vegetables. Meet your buyers' expectations with best practices for post-harvest handling, packing, food safety, and business management. Learn strategies to become more efficient and profitable. Registration is free, details at: http://goo.gl/3Lt9aS</p>	<p>Business Of Making Cider June 20, 2016, The Dalles, OR</p> <p>The Northwest Agriculture Business Center, WSU - Northwest Washington Research & Extension Center, and the Northwest Cider Association will present a one-day cider making business development workshop for new or existing operations.</p> <p>Learn more at: http://goo.gl/JOHL9R</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."