

Washington State Conservation Commission

FARMLAND PRESERVATION NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2016

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



Conservation District Showcases Farmland Preservation Efforts

On May 17, Eastern Klickitat Conservation District (EKCD) hosted members of the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) and partners on a tour featuring the district's ground-breaking work to preserve local farmland.

The tour visited sites within the Rock Creek watershed where the district has started helping interested landowners explore how to preserve the farming industry and landscape for future generations.

One new tool in the district's "farmland preservation toolbox" is agricultural conservation easements. Agricultural conservation easements are voluntary agreements that give landowners the option to sell their right to develop their property to an entity, which in this case is the conservation district. The agreement adds a permanent restriction on development and subdivision to the property title. Landowners are paid the portion of the property value that the development right represents and retain all other rights.



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

See pictures from the tour at: <https://goo.gl/cggVbK>

Child Nutrition Assistance Act moves from committee

Committee Approves Bill to Reauthorize, Improve Child Nutrition Assistance

The House Committee on Education and the Workforce, recently approved H.R. 5003, the Improving Child Nutrition and Education Act of 2016. Introduced by Rep.

Todd Rokita (R-IN), the legislation reauthorizes and reforms federal child nutrition programs to ensure states and schools have the flexibility they need to provide children with access to healthy meals without additional or prohibitive costs. The bill passed the committee by a vote of 20 to 14.



EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN JOHN KLINE

More information: edworkforce.house.gov

During the markup, the committee accepted a number of amendments, including:

- An amendment offered by Rep. Joe Courtney (D-CT) that would provide schools more flexibility in purchasing milk for students;
- An amendment offered by Rep. Rick Allen (R-GA) to study how utilizing private-sector partnerships can improve child nutrition programs;
- An amendment offered by Rep. Jared Polis (D-CO) that would clarify the secretary of agriculture can consult with pediatricians, dieticians, and parents as he or she reviews nutrition standards;

Opening statements, amendments, and other markup materials will be available [here](#).

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 Farm Walk Schedule

Join Tilt Producers and WSU for the 13th year of the Farm Walk program. Walks will take place across the state focusing on topics including pest management, diversified markets, value added products, and conservation planning. Unless otherwise stated, farm walks are 12:30pm - 4pm. Cost is \$15 for members and \$25 for non-members. Registration is available online or by phone at (206) 633-0451 ext.137. **Details at:** <http://goo.gl/SY3Eoh>.

Dates this year are:

- **July 20** - Managing Pests and Diseases on the Farm
- **August 8** - Organic Orchard Management
- **August 15** - Diversified Markets and Value Added Products
- **September 12** - Starting a Sustainable Draft Powered Farm
- **September 19** - Whole Farm Conservation Planning
- **October 5** - Solar Energy on the Farm



Know Where Your Food Comes From with USDA Foods

From USDA Blog—<http://goo.gl/ILlyx4>

Do you know where your food comes from? If you can pinpoint where your food was grown and produced, you can make more informed decisions to maximize quality, freshness, and nutritional value. You can also help support local economies through your purchases. The USDA Foods program takes this mantra to heart and publishes [state of origin reports](#) with procurement information on all USDA Foods every year. As we like to say at FNS, “All USDA Foods are local to someone.”



All purchased commodities purchased by USDA in 2015 totaled over \$63 million. Top Washington commodities purchased included a variety of canned fruits and processed cranberries.

USDA Foods are 100 percent American grown and produced. Each year, USDA procures more than 200 types of food, including meat, poultry, fish, fruits, vegetables, flour, cereals, and dairy products, totaling approximately \$2 billion.

Read More—<http://goo.gl/ILlyx4>

Pierce County Agricultural Infrastructure Study released

Pierce County recently completed an agricultural infrastructure survey and study. The survey was completed by a partnership between Pierce County Agriculture Program, Pierce County Economic Development, WSU Pierce Co Extension, Pierce Conservation District, Forterra and funded by The Russell Family Foundation through the Agriculture Community of Interest (COI). They surveyed farmers in Pierce County and buyers throughout the Puget Sound region.

There was no one specific and glaring project that was identified, showing just how diversified farms are in Pierce County. For the most part, farm demographics mirrored the most recent agriculture census data. However, there were some important key findings that will help continue to shape what work the Ag COI and partners pursue next.



Pierce County Farmland—Pierce County

Check it out by going to: [Pierce County Infrastructure Study](#) (PDF)

USDA Offers New Loans for Portable Farm Storage and Handling Equipment

Portable Equipment Can Help Producers, including Small-Scale and Local Farmers, Get Products to Market Quickly

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will provide a new financing option to help farmers purchase portable storage and handling equipment. The loans, which now include a smaller microloan option with lower down payments, are designed to help producers, including new, small and mid-sized producers, grow their businesses and markets.



The program also offers a new "microloan" option, which allows applicants seeking less than \$50,000 to qualify for a reduced down payment of five percent and no requirement to provide three years of production history. Farms and ranches of all sizes are eligible. The microloan option is expected to be of particular benefit to smaller farms and ranches, and specialty crop producers who may not have access to commercial storage or on-farm storage after harvest. These producers can invest in equipment like conveyers, scales or refrigeration units and trucks that can store commodities before delivering them to markets. Producers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply.

Earlier this year, FSA significantly expanded the list of commodities eligible for Farm Storage Facility Loan. Eligible commodities now include aquaculture; floriculture; fruits (including nuts) and vegetables; corn, grain sorghum, rice, oilseeds, oats, wheat, triticale, spelt, buckwheat, lentils, chickpeas, dry peas sugar, peanuts, barley, rye, hay, honey, hops, maple sap, unprocessed meat and poultry, eggs, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt and renewable biomass. FSFL microloans can also be used to finance wash and pack equipment used post-harvest, before a commodity is placed in cold storage.

To learn more about Farm Storage Facility Loans, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport or contact a local FSA county office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

WA Weekly Crop Progress and Condition Report - Week of May 31

WA State Experienced Dryness, Rainfall, and Early Cherry Harvest

Pasture and forage conditions were in excellent condition throughout the state. Cattle and other livestock were rotated into new pastures. Many hay and alfalfa producers finished their first cutting and began preparing for a second. Snohomish County reported some operators had already completed a second cutting. Many counties throughout the state had quality issues with their first hay and alfalfa cuttings due to the rain.

Skagit, San Juan, Kittitas, Yakima, Lincoln, Asotin, and Garfield Counties reported being too dry. Spinach had to be replanted in Skagit County due to poor germination from the dry conditions. Some farmers expressed concerns over having another drought situation this year. San Juan County began irrigation several weeks early.



Block of pears in Yakima Valley

Snohomish County reported that early radishes and baby head lettuce were in the markets. There were also some tomatoes put in fields. Rainfall was reported in many areas. Frost control measures to protect fruit were reported in Yakima and Kittitas Counties. San Juan and Yakima Counties continued to thin their apple trees.

San Juan County reported having a strong fruit set in their plum crop. In Chelan and Douglas Counties, cherry producers began preparation for an early cherry harvest. Grant County began their cherry harvest in the southern area of the county. Franklin County continued their early cherry harvest. Yakima County harvested sweet cherries and asparagus. Bins were moved into apricot blocks in anticipation of harvest.

Pacific County's cranberry bloom slowed down due to the cooler weather. Blackberries were in full bloom and raspberry bloom was finishing up in Snohomish County.

Columbia, Walla Walla, Asotin, and Garfield Counties reported rust problems in their wheat fields. Some wheat farmers began their third spraying for rust. Overall, Washington producers were wanting rain and cooler temperatures to protect and maintain the crops that had been planted.

In Short

Water: a vital ingredient for crops!

A recent [Washivore](http://www.washivore.org) web article highlights irrigation and technological advances in delivering water throughout Eastern Washington.

Highlights include the upgrades and expansion related to the Odessa groundwater replacement program.

<http://www.washivore.org/water-is-here>



Construction on the Weber Siphon

More at the Department of Ecology Project Page: <http://goo.gl/YpBBjV>

Kittitas County twenty-year comprehensive plan update rolls on

Kittitas County is updating its Comprehensive plan as required by the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA). Kittitas County's comprehensive plan will establish policies for community growth and development for the next 20 years. Kittitas County's update process is required to be completed by June 30, 2017.

Follow their progress as well as check out the Community Visioning Summary Report on their website:

<https://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/cds/comp-plan/twenty-year/meetings.aspx>

Check out their recent newsletter at:

<http://goo.gl/sT2X4a>

Attention Thurston and Lewis agricultural producers—Ag Producer Listening Sessions

Breakfast provided!

Washington State University Extension, and partner organizations, want to hear from Thurston & Lewis County farmers about agricultural issues, research, workshops and projects that interest or concern you.

Please join them for a listening session in or near your community. All sessions start at 8am and conclude at 10:30am.

Olympia (McLane Grange) June 23

Rochester (Swede Hall) June 27

Rainier (Sportsman's Club) June 28

Register for a listening session:

<http://goo.gl/4LmcU5>

In Short

Grant Opportunity: FSA Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program provides low-interest financing so producers can build or upgrade permanent facilities to store commodities. Eligible commodities include grains, oilseeds, peanuts, pulse crops, hay, honey, renewable biomass commodities, fruits and vegetables. Eligible facility types include grain bins, hay barns and facilities for cold storage.

Also eligible is mobile refrigeration facilities and in some cases vehicles used to transport produce.

Learn about eligible projects and eligible applicants by going to: <https://goo.gl/vl8KLe>.

Fact sheet for more details:

[Farm Storage Facility Loan Program \(PDF\)](#)

Attention farmers: Vegetable Production Platform Utilizing Furrow Guidance

Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education reports that University of Kentucky researchers have designed a low-cost, mechanized system for organic vegetable production.

Researchers retrofitted an old three-wheeled tobacco harvesting aid with furrow guidance to help small-scale growers reduce their labor costs, increase their scale of operations, reduce input costs, and increase production. Design plans for the machine, a parts spreadsheet, and costs for materials and parts are available [online](#).

See how the machine works in this [University of Kentucky video](#).

Changes to the real estate excise tax inheritance exemption

Recently passed legislation authorizes a new method to claim and document a valid inheritance exemption from the Real Estate Excise Tax (REET).

The exemption is updated (effective of June 9, 2016) to allow it to be claimed by presenting a "Lack of Probate" affidavit along with a certified copy of the death certificate to the county. This is in addition to the other traditional methods (noting that the affidavit of surviving spouse option will be absorbed by the lack of probate affidavit option).

For more information, contact Department of Revenue at 360-534-1503

Farmers Take On Ownership of Puget Sound Food Hub

The Puget Sound Food Hub Farmer Advisory Committee recently determined to form a cooperative and take on the ownership of the Puget Sound Food Hub. The Hub provides a web-based platform and aggregation and distribution services for local farms. This past year more than 60 farms used the Hub and sold to 220 customers throughout the Puget Sound region.

The unique feature of the Puget Sound Food Hub is that the sales transaction is directly between the farmer and buyer with the farm name identified throughout the transaction including the web site, invoice, and case label. The system enables a buyer to purchase from multiple farms, but the product arrives on one truck with one invoice. A buyer selects and purchases products via the web site. Farmers are notified via e-mail and then harvest, pack, and deliver the products to an aggregation site, where they are combined with other farms' product to be route-delivered to multiple buyers.

In 2012, the Puget Sound Food Hub began as a partnership between the Northwest Agriculture Business Center and 21 Acres, which provided the first "hub" aggregation site and distribution services into the Seattle market for King and Snohomish County Farms. In 2013 NABC and 21 Acres joined forces with Bow Hill Blueberries, providing cold and freezer storage aggregation for the North Sound Food Hub, allowing customer pick-ups several days a week and serving farm and business customers in Skagit, Whatcom, Island and San Juan counties. In 2014 Cloud Mountain Farm Center was added as a third aggregation site in Whatcom County, providing delivery to Whatcom and Skagit customers.

Learn more and watch a YouTube video at: <http://goo.gl/W3J4DO>



Organic Trade Association 2015 Report

A recent Organic Trade Association's report details the U.S. organic sector and its largest-ever dollar gain in 2015, with total organic product sales growing by \$4.2 billion, reaching \$43.3 billion. According to the report, the booming U.S. organic industry jump is represented by organic food sales of \$39.7 and non-food organic products accounting for \$3.6 billion, the latter up by 13 percent. The report indicated nearly 5 percent of all the food sold in the U.S. in 2015 was organic.



Check out the report by going to: <http://ota.com/resources/market-analysis>

In response, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack released a statement noting USDA's continued support for organic foods was instrumental in helping the industry reach new heights and expressed continued commitment by the federal agency.

"America's organic industry is booming, creating important opportunities for farmers and ranchers and adding to the vibrancy of rural America. Under the Obama Administration, we've made transformative investments to help the organic sector thrive by making certification more attainable, providing more support for organic operations, and expanding international markets. As consumer demand continues to grow, USDA is here to support producers and help them access the hunger for American-grown organic products."

Learn more about how USDA supports this industry by going to: <http://goo.gl/tBeYxN>

In Short

Gypsy moth treatments wrap up across Western Washington

WSDA recently concluded its gypsy moth treatments that began on April 16.

“This was the most challenging gypsy moth eradication project we have had in many years due to the number of treatment sites, the multiple detections of the very destructive Asian gypsy moth, and the warm weather that caused the caterpillars to emerge earlier than in previous years,” Jim Marra, WSDA’s Pest Program manager, said. “

WSDA will now plan its summer trapping to detect any new introductions of gypsy moths and evaluate the effectiveness of this year’s treatments. WSDA set 19,000 traps in Western Washington last year, but will set more this summer and include Eastern Washington in surveillance efforts.

Learn more about Gypsy Moths at:
<http://goo.gl/LC4hjA>

New wastewater permit for fruit packers up for review

A general wastewater permit for the fresh fruit packing industry is being updated for 191 facilities across WA.

The Department of Ecology permit provides assurance that fruit packers are protecting nearby lakes, rivers and groundwater when managing the wastewater coming from their facilities. The permit is required for new or existing fresh fruit packing facilities in the state, and is updated every five years.

The [draft permit is available for review](#) and comment through June 17. Also check out the economic impact analysis as well as fact sheets on the permit.

Learn more at: <http://goo.gl/F6UEMg>

Results of National Food Hub Survey Available Online

Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems and the Wallace Center at Winrock International have released Findings of the 2015 National Food Hub Survey.

The report details findings on the financial state of food hubs, the numbers and types of farmers and ranchers that they work with, and the types of customers they serve.

Overall, the survey indicates that variations on the food hub model can be financially successful.

Check it out by going to:

<http://goo.gl/rsz494>

In Short

Attention WA farmers: Survey Assessing Animal Health Needs of Small-Scale and Urban Livestock and Poultry Producers

University researchers are conducting a needs assessment regarding animal health concerns on small-scale farms and urban agriculture operations in California, Colorado, Oregon, and **Washington state**.

The 15-minute online survey aims to identify the needs of livestock and poultry owners related to animal health, animal husbandry, and food safety, and the role that veterinarians play on small farms.

Learn more or access and complete the survey today.

<https://goo.gl/w8bKOS>

USDA Unveils Online Training for Local Food Funders

USDA has unveiled a new online interactive training to help potential funders—from traditional financial institutions to nonprofit and philanthropic partners—understand the work of regional food enterprises that are connecting local producers with local markets.

What's the Big Deal? Assessing and Financing Regional Food Enterprises helps funders and investors better understand and assess regional food businesses by providing an introduction to the food sector and regional food enterprises, a framework for conducting due diligence, and a case-study exercise to practice assessment.

Check it out by going to:

<http://goo.gl/SHK9Sx>

Grant Opportunity: USDA Risk Management Education Partnerships Program

USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) has announced that \$4.3 million is available for the Risk Management Education Partnerships Program, which provides money for the development of general nationwide crop insurance education as well as other risk management training programs for producers.

A broad range of risk management training activities are eligible for funding consideration.

Applications are due by July 3, 2016.

Grant materials here:

<http://goo.gl/oWMRGt>

WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Mark Your Calendars

<p>Financing The Farm - July 11th 6pm - 8pm Thurston Conservation District</p> <p>Northwest Farm Credit Services staff will describe financial resources for farmers and ranchers, how to prepare for your lender, how loan decisions are made, and special loan programs for low down payment real estate purchases, startup capital, and operating expenses. Sign up at: SMoore-head@thurstoncd.com</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>Tilth Producers/WSU Farm Walk July 20 - Newaukum Valley Farm - Chehalis</p> <p>Scouting, Row Cover and Crop Rotation: Managing Pests and Diseases on the Farm. Explore the organic approaches to pest, disease and weed management that bring success to this diversified vegetable farm.</p> <p>Registration is available online or by phone at (206) 633-0451 ext.137.</p> <p>Details: http://goo.gl/rytPIZ</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 paper 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>WSU Anaerobic Digestion Systems Field Day on June 9th - Lynden</p> <p>This field day will showcase anaerobic digestion and nutrient recovery technologies and the lessons learned over the past three years.</p> <p>The event includes bus transportation to and from the farms, so registration is required.</p> <p>For more information and to register for this event please visit: http://csanr.wsu.edu/ad-field-day/</p>
<p>2016 Small Grains Field Day June 23, 3-6pm - Mt Vernon</p> <p>Free and open to the public. Join researchers to tour research fields and to discuss the production of small grains such as wheat, barley, buckwheat, oats, and rye in western Washington for food, feed, and malt.</p> <p>WSU Mount Vernon—16650 SR 536</p> <p>For more information: http://thebreadlab.wsu.edu/</p>	<p>Slow Poultry Seminar - A Strategy for Sustainable Poultry Production Port Ludlow WA, June 25</p> <p>This eight hour seminar provides an overview and strategy for developing sustainable poultry production. Learn how to start effectively breeding, growing and marketing poultry products that are both sustainable and profitable.</p> <p>Details and registration at: http://goo.gl/BxqW3K</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."