

Washington State Conservation Commission

FARMLAND PRESERVATION NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2017

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



2017 Legislative Session Underway

January 9th marked the start of the state's 107th legislative session. Hearings are underway with bills of all sorts receiving public hearings.

February 17th will be the first key date day during this long 105-day session. This date marks the day that policy bills must be moved from policy committees. Just a few days later, **February 24**, bills with a fiscal impact will have to have been moved from fiscal committees. The day for all bills to be moved from their respective house of origin is **March 8**. Session is scheduled to adjourn Sine Die on **April 23**.



To keep track of the legislative calendar dates, go to: <http://leg.wa.gov/legislature/Pages/cutoff.aspx>

If you are interested in commenting on a bill or contacting your legislator, the following link provides information on the various ways you can provide your opinion. <http://leg.wa.gov/LIC/Pages/hotline.aspx>

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. A sample of bills that have come up in the first few weeks are in the table below.

HB 1017	Bill Page	Addressing the siting of schools and school facilities.
HB 1544	Bill Page	Concerning small farms under the current use property tax program for farm and agricultural lands.
HB 1552	Bill Page	Concerning fostering economic growth in Washington by supporting the in-state production, processing, and distribution of food supply.
HB 1562	Bill Page	Continuing the work of the Washington food policy forum.
SB 5024	Bill Page	Concerning groundwater supply availability in areas with ground and surface water interaction.
SB 5239	Bill Page	Ensuring that water is available to support development.

U.S. Food Policy: Upcoming USDA Listening Session

USDA recently announced a Visioning of U.S. Agriculture Systems for Sustainable Production Listening Session for those interested in the long-term health and viability of U.S. Agriculture and for concurrently improving the economic, environmental, security, and health benefits to the U.S. through agriculture over the next 50 years.

Written comments by attendees or other interested stakeholders will be welcomed before and up to one week following the listening session (March 9, 2017). All statements will become a part of the official record of the OCS and will be kept on file in that office.

Details on registering and attending are available at: the Federal Register: <https://goo.gl/b4m5d9>

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>

Food Policy: Clark County 2017 Food Summit

The Clark County Food System has partnered with Clark College to convene a Summit to discuss their local food system in Southwest Washington. Join them for speakers, workshops, networking, and tasting of beer, wine, coffee and tea as you discuss issues and actions gleaned from break-out sessions.

<http://www.clarkfoodsystem.org/growing-our-future-2017-food-summit/>

Growing Our Future: 2017 Food Summit

Friday, February 10, 2017—8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Clark College Columbia Tech Center

18700 SE Mill Plain Blvd. Vancouver, WA



Clark County Hoop House

Estate Planning—Ties to the Land—Everett, WA

WSU Extension is bringing Ties to the Land in March.

Do you own or care for farm or forest land? Do you know what will happen to it when you're gone? Will it be intact and protected, or will it be divided up and sold off in pieces? Will it become a point of conflict between surviving family members or a shared and honored family sanctuary? Many landowners want to preserve their family lands and associated businesses, but don't know how to engage the next generation(s) in the process.

Join WSU Wednesday, March 15 and Tuesday, March 21, 2017 from 5:00pm to 9:00pm both nights for a two-part succession planning workshop. The focus is on helping landowners large and small start their own succession plan discussion using the award-winning Ties to the Land curriculum.

Dinner will be provided both evenings. Location is WSU Snohomish County Extension's Cougar Auditorium, 600 128th St SE Everett, WA.

Registration and details at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ties-to-the-land-registration-31306773402>

WSU BioEarth Stakeholder Workshop: February 16

Agricultural Management Scenarios for the Future

A full day workshop to be held on the WSU TriCities Campus.

This workshop will be focused on understanding outcomes of agricultural adaptation decisions in a changing climate. The program will begin with talks by WSU BioEarth researchers, discussing how models are used to investigate opportunities and challenges associated with changing management practices in Pacific Northwest agricultural systems. In the afternoon portion of the workshop, WSU will host discussion sessions to explore tradeoffs and co-benefits associated with specific near-term and long-term management decisions and to establish priorities for future research directions.

Registration and more details: <http://bioearth.brownpapertickets.com/>

To learn more about the BioEarth modeling framework see <http://www.bioearth.wsu.edu>.

2017 Skagit Ag Summit - February 25

The 2017 Skagit Agriculture Summit (SAS) highlights water, labor, land preservation and economic issues. This event allows leaders to have a public discussion on issues that are vital to Skagit County and the Washington State economy. First 100 registrants are free! Register at:

<http://skagitagsummit2017.bpt.me/>

For more information, visit our website: <http://ext100.wsu.edu/skagit/skagit-ag-summit/>



WSU Research: Crop rotation

Crop rotation: In praise of deliberate, sequenced disruption of natural systems

By Andrew McGuire—WSU Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources

For years, researchers have been looking to polycultures, biodiversity in space, as a way to improve agriculture. Behind this research is the idea that nature is the best model for agriculture.

Because we find that nature is generally a polyculture, we should mimic this biodiversity on the farm. Natural is now viewed as the best option. Today, however, I want to commend a most unnatural practice, crop rotation.

[Read more](#)



The unnatural, disruptive transition of wheat monoculture to bean monoculture – good for agriculture

Ecology updates clean water permit to regulate manure pollution

The Washington Department of Ecology recently issued an updated water quality permit requiring large-scale livestock operations in Washington to implement specific practices to better protect groundwater, rivers, lakes and marine waters from manure pollution.

Changes to the updated Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) Permit follow substantial stakeholder engagement and public feedback. The permit regulates dairies and other types of operations that confine large numbers of livestock.

Manure management is important to protect healthy swimming beaches, shellfish resources and fish-bearing waters. Also, livestock manure can cause nitrates in drinking water, which can pose a health risk.

The new permit could expand coverage from a few dairies to approximately 200 facilities. [Read more](#)



Research: Sustainable Agriculture Yield Gap at Field Scale

New MSU research addresses gap between research and practice in sustainable ag

Research led by Michigan State University's Long-Term Ecological Research team found that sustainable agriculture practices were more likely to have a yield gap compared with conventional practices at commercial field scale than in experimental plots. The researchers found a significant yield gap between conventional and both low-input and organic practices at the field scale, which they attribute to the difficulty of scaling up practices that require more time and care.

Published in the [latest issue of PNAS](#), the research — conducted by the [Long-Term Ecological Research \(LTER\)](#) team at the MSU [W.K. Kellogg Biological Station \(KBS\)](#) — compared the yields of a crop rotation of wheat, corn and soybeans under three different management practices: conventional, low-input and organic. The tests were conducted at both small experimental plots and the much larger commercial field level. Though researchers found no appreciable difference in the yields produced at either level for conventional crop management, they noted a significant yield gap for both low-input and organic management.

<http://research.msu.edu/gap-between-research-practice-in-sustainable-agriculture/>

MSU
AgBio
Research

Opportunities

Job Opening: Viva Farms is hiring for a new Farm Manager

The Farm Manager works closely with incubating farmers and is the primary provider for any and all technical assistance in aiding farmers' success in organic production. The Farm Manager will assist farmers in proactively managing risk through production planning so as to avoid problems before they occur and responding appropriately if they do.

For the full job description, please follow this link-- [Farm Manager](#)

Applications accepted until February 10.

Workshop: Farm Recordkeeping for Productivity & Profitability

Learn from experts how to set up a farm recordkeeping system to help keep your farm in the black!

Register for this in-depth, two-Saturday event, February 11, 2017, 9:00am to 4:30pm and February 25, 2017, 9:00am to 3:30pm for Farm Recordkeeping for Productivity and Profitability.

Location is WSU Snohomish County Extension's Cougar Auditorium, 600 128th St SE Everett, WA inside McCollum Park.

To register, visit:

<https://goo.gl/6t9HsB>

Grant: \$27 Million Available to Support Local Food Producers

USDA announced requests for applications for the: Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP), the Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP), and the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP), which offer \$27 million in grants to fund innovative projects designed to strengthen market opportunities for local and regional food producers and businesses.

AMS will host a webinar for potential FMPP and LFPP grant applicants on Wednesday, February 15, 2017, at 2:30 p.m. Eastern

Complete details at: <https://goo.gl/Y1YxCb>

CRP Small-Scale Grasslands Enrollment in WA

During the most recently ranking period, Washington enrolled 3,195 acres in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands program. The program included for the first time a CRP Grasslands practice specifically tailored for small-scale livestock grazing operations to encourage broader participation. Under this ranking period and for future periods, small-scale livestock operations with 100 or fewer head of grazing cows (or the equivalent) can submit applications to enroll up to 200 acres of grasslands per farm.

Of Washington's total acres, 2,763 acres were enrolled under the small-scale livestock grazing operations emphasis. Learn more about the recent enrollment in the CRP Grasslands program at: <https://goo.gl/wAihGc>

Enrollment and eligibility information can be viewed at: <https://goo.gl/NU3fqa>

USDA Reviews Microloan Program Participation and Outreach

USDA Economic Research Service recently issued a 33-page report, [USDA Microloans for Farmers: Participation Patterns and Effects of Outreach](#).

It says the Microloan program grew from 3,833 loans with total obligations of \$88.8 million in 2013 to 5,674 loans and total loan obligations of \$162.2 million in 2015. Microloans attracted 8,182 borrowers new to FSA's direct-loan programs, with beginning farmers receiving 81% of the loans.

Microloans are designed to be more convenient and accessible to groups not traditionally served through FSA's credit programs. Other features of the Microloan program include a streamlined application process and more flexible requirements for farming experience and the reporting of production history to qualify for a loan.

Learn more about the Microloan program at: <https://goo.gl/l3ENNl>



In Short

Center for Latino Farmers Winter 2017 Newsletter

The Center for Latino Farmers, based in Yakima, Washington works to encourage community development through self employment opportunities for low income entrepreneurs across central Washington.

The most recent newsletter is available by going to:

<https://goo.gl/Mr7Yho>

Farm Conservation Easement Template on agenda for RCFB meeting—Olympia, Feb 8

The next meeting of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will occur on Wednesday, February 8, 2017, beginning at 9:00 a.m.

Agenda item 11 includes a discussion/presentation on a conservation easement template for farm, forest, and habitat conservation.

The board will meet in the Natural Resources Building, Room 172, in Olympia.

The meeting materials and other meeting information is posted online at: http://www.rco.wa.gov/boards/rcfb_meetings.shtml.

Local Food Promotion Program

The Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) offers matching funds for planning and implementation grants.

These grants support the development and expansion of local and regional food business enterprises to increase domestic consumption of, and access to, locally and regionally produced agricultural products, and to develop new market opportunities for farm and ranch operations serving local markets.

Eligible applicants support local and regional food business enterprises that process, distribute, aggregate, or store locally or regionally produced food products.

Details at: <https://goo.gl/JRWEmQ>

Applications due March 27, 2017.

In Short

USDA Gathering New Data on Organic Agriculture Production

The USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is conducting the 2016 Certified Organic Survey to gather new data on certified organic crops and livestock commodities in the United States.

This effort is critical to help determine the economic impact of certified organic agriculture production in the United States.

Producers can return forms they received by mail or complete the survey online at:

www.agcounts.usda.gov

Response requested by February 19

Grant: Innovations at the Nexus of Food, Energy, and Water

National Science Foundation, USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, and others are combining resources to fund the most meritorious and highest-impact projects related to understanding interactions across the food, energy, water (FEW) nexus. Total project funding is \$40 million, with no single project to exceed \$2.5 million. There are three research tracks, with five to 10 awards anticipated in each track.

Proposals may be submitted by colleges and universities or by non-profit, non-academic organizations.

Proposals due March 6, 2017.

Details at: <https://goo.gl/crWP1v>

Participate in the 2017 National Young Farmers Survey

The National Young Farmers Coalition (NYFC) has launched a national survey of beginning and aspiring farmers to assess their current needs and challenges.

The 5-20 minute survey will gather detailed data from thousands of young farmers and ranchers to shape NYFC's 2018 Farm Bill priorities and allow it to represent the interests of America's young farmers.

The online survey is available until February 28, 2017.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TQ3HFR3>

WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Mark Your Calendars

<p>4th Annual San Juan Islands Agricultural Summit—Feb 10-12</p> <p>Where: Orcas Island, WA</p> <p>Join fellow farmers, regional experts, local food and farm advocates for 3 days of education, inspiration and camaraderie.</p> <p>More information can be found at: http://sjcarc.org/events/summit/</p>	<p>Growing Our Future: 2017 Food Summit— February 10, 2017</p> <p>8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.</p> <p>Clark College Columbia Tech Center 18700 SE Mill Plain Blvd. Vancouver, WA</p> <p>http://www.clarkfoodsystem.org/growing-our-future-2017-food-summit/</p>	<p>Changing Lands, Changing Hands—Denver, June 13-15</p> <p>Land access, agricultural land tenure and farm succession are top challenges for US agriculture. In cooperation with USDA, Land For Good is proud to host this national event.</p> <p>http://landforgood.org/our-work/changing-lands-changing-hands/</p>
<p>Law CLE: Agriculture Law February 16 & 17—Wenatchee</p> <p>There are unique regulations and legal issues faced by companies in the agriculture industry. Anyone involved in the agribusiness, be it growers, ranchers, distributors, service providers, or legal representatives, need to be up to speed on the latest issues to achieve their goals.</p> <p>Agenda and details at: https://goo.gl/aF7omb</p>	<p>Workshop: WaterTalks Groundwater Day Feb. 22—Lynden, WA</p> <p>In its fourth year, WaterTalks is a workshop that focuses on water issues in western Washington geared towards agriculture producers, policymakers, industry support personnel, and the public.</p> <p>More details and registration is available at: https://goo.gl/5vbZbO</p>	<p>2017 Washington State Farmers Market Association’s (WSFMA) annual conference—Feb 2-4</p> <p>The 2017 WSFMA Conference brings together over 250 farmers market organizers, farmers, state agencies and partner organizations to share their passion for Washington farms, food access and farmers markets.</p> <p>Join them in February at the amazing waterfront Semiahmoo Resort in Blaine, WA.</p> <p>Details: https://goo.gl/V8JlmG</p>
<p>Northwest Washington Farm-to-Table Trade Meeting—Feb 21</p> <p>What: 2017 NW WA Farm-to-Table Trade Meeting</p> <p>When: Tuesday, February 21, 2017, 8:30am-5pm</p> <p>Where: Bellingham Technical College</p> <p>Registration and Details: www.sustainableconnections.org</p> <p>Price: Early bird - Sustainable Connections members \$39, non-members \$49</p>	<p>2017 WSU Creamery Events Registration Open</p> <p>Basic - Plus Cheese Making Short Course—Feb. 7-9, 2017 - Mount Vernon</p> <p>31st Advanced Cheese Making Short Course—March 7-9, 2017 Pullman</p> <p>Pasteurization Workshop—April 19-20, 2017 - Pullman</p> <p>For more information and registration please visit: https://goo.gl/pb5EuT</p>	<p>2017 Agriculture Safety Day Feb 22—Yakima, WA</p> <p>Agriculture Safety Day is an annual training event that offers safety and health training to workers, supervisors, and managers of all levels in the agriculture industry.</p> <p>Click YAKIMA to attend February 22, 2017 at the Yakima Convention Center.</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.”