

Washington State Conservation Commission

FARMLAND PRESERVATION NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2017

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



Study Examines Potential of Grassfed Beef Industry

Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture has released *Back to Grass: the Market Potential for U.S. Grassfed Beef*.

This study found that grassfed beef is inaccessible to many consumers due to price premiums, but that the price of grassfed beef could come down significantly if the industry were to establish well-managed grass-finishing operations that take advantage of economies of scale in processing, distribution, and marketing. The study found that a number of labels and standards confuse the marketplace and the consumer.



[The complete 58-page report is available online.](#)

Grassfed beef in the U.S. is a fast-growing consumer phenomenon that is starting to attract the attention of more cattle producers and food companies, but there is a lack of coherent information on how the market works. While the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) produces a vast body of data on the conventional beef sector, its data collection and reporting efforts on grassfed beef are spotty. Pockets of information are held by different private sector organizations, but they have rarely been brought together.

This report addresses that gap by providing a comprehensive overview of the U.S. grassfed beef sector, with a focus on market and economic dynamics. It brings together available data on the current state of the sector, identifies barriers to growth and highlights actions that will help propel further expansion. It analyzes consumer demand, supply chains and both domestic and imported grassfed beef production models, all the while comparing grassfed beef with conventional beef to highlight their differences.

Large Family Farms Continue To Dominate U.S. Ag Production

Family farms play a dominant role in U.S. ag. In 2015, these farms accounted for 99 percent of U.S. farms and 89 percent of production. On family farms, the principal operators and their relatives (by blood or marriage) own more than half of the business's assets—in short, a family owns and operates the farm.

In 2015, 90 percent of U.S. farms were small family operations with under \$350,000 in annual gross cash farm income (GCFI)—a measure of revenue that includes sales of crops and livestock, Government payments, and other farm-related income. These small farms, however, only accounted for 24 percent of the value of production. By comparison, large-scale family farms with at least \$1 million in GCFI made up only 2.9 percent of U.S. farms but contributed 42 percent of total production. Nonfamily farms accounted for only 11 percent of agricultural production. **Read more at: <https://goo.gl/01rLsO>**

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>

FSA County Committee Nomination Period Begins June 15

The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently announced that the nomination period for local Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees begins on Thursday, June 15, 2017.

County committees are made up of farmers and ranchers elected by other producers in their communities to guide the delivery of farm programs at the local level. Committee members play a critical role in the day-to-day operations of FSA.

Farmers and ranchers may nominate themselves or others. Organizations, including those representing beginning, women and minority producers, may also nominate candidates to better serve their communities. To be eligible to serve on an FSA county committee, a person must participate or cooperate in an agency administered program, and reside in the local administrative area where the election is being held.

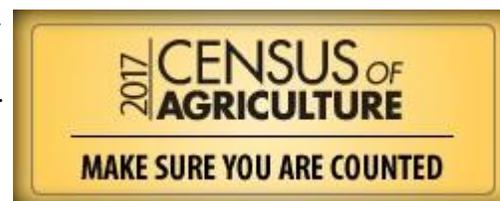
Committees consist of three to 11 members and meet once a month or as needed to make important decisions on disaster and conservation programs, emergency programs, commodity price support loan programs, county office employment and other agricultural issues. Members serve three-year terms.

Locate your local Washington State office at <https://offices.usda.gov> and visit to get more information.



Census Of Ag Countdown Begins For America's Farmers And Ranchers

America's farmers and ranchers will soon have the opportunity to strongly represent agriculture in their communities and industry by taking part in the 2017 Census of Agriculture. Conducted every five years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the census, to be mailed at the end of this year, is a complete count of all U.S. farms, ranches, and those who operate them.



Producers who are new to farming or did not receive a Census of Agriculture in 2012 should sign up to receive the 2017 report form by visiting www.agcensus.usda.gov and clicking on the 'Make Sure You Are Counted' button before the end of June. NASS defines a farm as any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year (2017).

For more information about the 2017 Census of Agriculture and to see how census data are used, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov or call (800) 727-9540.

U.S. House Committee on Agriculture statement on Trump budget

From U.S. House Committee on Agriculture—<https://goo.gl/7HtuqW>

May 23—Washington, D.C. – Following the release of the Trump administration's FY 2018 budget proposal, House Agriculture Committee Chairman K. Michael Conaway (TX-11) and Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) issued the joint statement below:

“We support the Trump administration's goal of achieving three percent economic growth for our nation. USDA's latest estimates find agriculture, food, and related industries contribute \$992 billion to our economy. As we debate the budget and the next Farm Bill, we will fight to ensure farmers have a strong safety net so this key segment of our economy can weather current hard times and continue to provide all Americans with safe, affordable food. Also, as a part of Farm Bill discussions, we need to take a look at our nutrition assistance programs to ensure that they are helping the most vulnerable in our society.”

Host a Better Field Day

From SARE Press Release—Lizi Barba (associate@sare.org) <https://goo.gl/aYY19u>

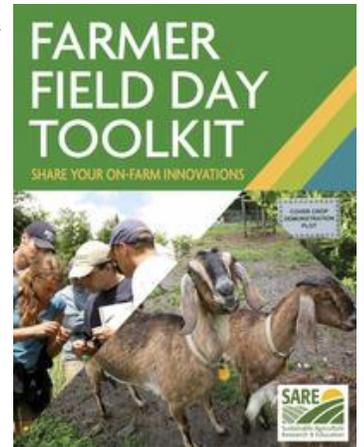
You've done some interesting work: You had a great idea, tried it on your farm and got surprising results. Now, you want to share those results with other farmers and ranchers. The only problem is, you're busy and constantly pressed for time. Who has time to plan a field day? Thankfully, SARE's new Farmer Field Day Toolkit is here to take off some of the pressure and get the right tools and tips into your hands.

Our free, digital Farmer Field Day Toolkit is a comprehensive resource of step-by-step instructions, timelines, and downloadable tools and templates for planning and hosting a successful event. Plus, users will learn the ins and outs of working with the media, creating press releases and PSAs, generating public interest, capturing the event with video and sharing it online.

Whether through trial and error or the completion of an on-farm research project, farmers and ranchers are the keepers of knowledge and skills that can help others succeed. With advance planning and coordination, you can use your field day to educate others on best practices, specific management practices and equipment, or to highlight research methods and results. It's a win-win for you, who may benefit from an increased market and brand recognition, and your attendees, who may be inspired to take what they've learned and adapt it for their own production system.

Download the toolkit now—<https://goo.gl/aYY19u>

This toolkit offers ideal support to farmers and ranchers who have received a SARE grant and are interested in holding a field day to fulfill their outreach requirement. But our toolkit can be used by anybody interested in hosting a field day, so download it now and start planning an event of your own.



Organic Industry Survey Shows Growth in Market Share

Organic Trade Association - Press Release—<https://goo.gl/RVC81K>

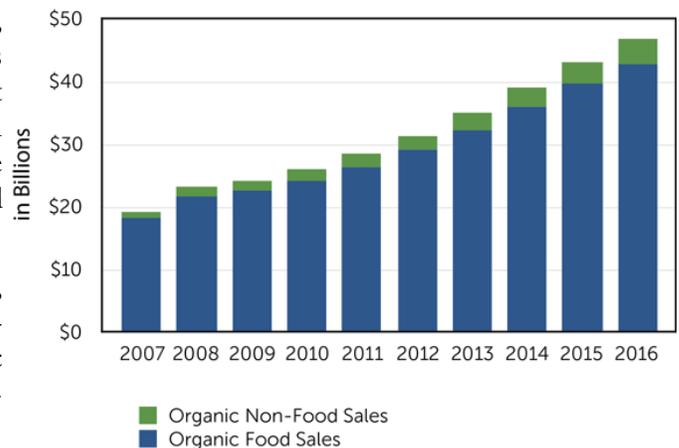
Organic Trade Association survey pegs 2016 market at \$47 billion, and shows greater market share

The robust American organic sector stayed on its upward trajectory in 2016, gaining new market share and shattering records, as consumers across the United States ate and used more organic products than ever before, according to the Organic Trade Association's (OTA's) 2017 Organic Industry Survey released Wednesday at OTA's Annual Policy Conference.

Organic sales in the U.S. totaled around \$47 billion in 2016, reflecting new sales of almost \$3.7 billion from the previous year. The \$43 billion in organic food sales marked the first time the American organic food market has broken through the \$40-billion mark. Organic food now accounts for more than five percent -- 5.3 percent to be exact -- of total food sales in this country, another significant first for organic.

Organic food sales increased by 8.4 percent, or \$3.3 billion, from the previous year, blowing past the stagnant 0.6 percent growth rate in the overall food market. Sales of organic non-food products were up 8.8% in 2016, also handily surpassing the overall non-food growth rate of 0.8 percent.

Total U.S. Organic Sales and Growth, 2007–2016



Governor's Veto Derails Popular Short Line Rail Bill

By TJ Martinell - May 17, 2017—Lens—<https://goo.gl/vRwS00>

Governor Jay Inslee this week vetoed a bipartisan bill approved by the state legislature that would have loosened the state Growth Management Act's (GMA) rural land development restrictions and provided employers with critical freight mobility access.

The decision was panned by sponsors of ESHB 1504 for what they say was placing ideology over economic development in southwestern Washington. A two-thirds override by lawmakers is being contemplated.



The proposal would have given counties and cities east of the crest of the Cascade mountains the authority to decide whether to allow freight rail development on land normally designated for preservation. Proponents argued this was necessary to attract new employers – who required short line rail access only feasible on preserved lands – to Clark County, which in turn could have provided thousands of new jobs.

In his May 16 veto letter, Inslee wrote: “While this bill might help rural counties to develop adjacent to short line railroads in designated counties, it would undermine our longstanding commitment to preserve working farms and promote our agricultural economy.

Read the rest of the article which includes response from the bill sponsor by going to: <https://goo.gl/vRwS00>

Ecology set to commemorate 100 years of water law in WA

The Washington State Department of Ecology is commemorating Washington's first water law, which is turning 100 this year. The 1917 law was needed to address conflicts over the use of water, a resource held in common by Washington state citizens. Over time, the law has been changed to ensure that competing needs are addressed, including water to support the environment and fisheries, growing communities and individual homes, farms, and industry.

Over the past 100 years, the law has changed because of court decisions related to conflicts between water users, the role of tribal treaty rights, and environmental concerns that have increased protection for important fishery resources and species threatened with extinction. These court decisions have dramatically changed the way we manage water. The water law continues to evolve and play an important role in Washington water management.



Information on a video for this event, and also the June 19 the in-person Water Resource Advisory Committee to mark this occasion —agenda coming soon. <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/hq/waterlaw-100.html>

Food Policy: Policy Report on Shared-Use Kitchens

The Food Corridor, LLC, a Colorado-based software company that connects food entrepreneurs with commercial kitchen space, has released an in-depth report on the state of national shared-use kitchen policy.

Based on surveys and interviews with more than 30 incubator and commissary kitchen operators from across the United States, the policy report concludes that inconsistencies in municipal, county, and state food codes may be limiting growth in local food systems. The report includes insights about kitchen clientele, best practices for onboarding clients, health department procedures and relationships, insurance considerations and the future of incubator kitchen policy. The report can be found at <http://www.thefoodcorridor.com/resources/> or directly download at: <https://goo.gl/GcxrwQ>

In Short

Grant Guide for Farmers Available Online

Food Animal Concerns Trust has published *Get Your Farm Funded*, a free, 20-page guide that offers tips and insights to farmers looking for grant funding.

The guide, available online in PDF, covers strategies for finding funding opportunities, discusses how to systematize the writing process to save time, and offers tips for creating a more successful proposal.

Check out the publication by going to: <https://goo.gl/kcSt9B>

Grant Opportunity: USDA Seeks Applications for Community Development Grants

USDA is making grants available under the Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI) program to strengthen the rural economy.

Applicants must have capacity-building experience for these types of projects and must provide matching funds at least equal to the RCDI grant.

Grants range from \$50,000 to \$250,000.

For more information on how to apply, [see page 24281 of the May 26 Federal Register](#).

The deadline to submit paper applications is **July 25, 2017**. For more information, visit www.rd.usda.gov

Teff Hay a Drought-Tolerant Option for Dairy Cows

Researchers at Kansas State University have found that teff hay has the potential to replace alfalfa and corn silage in the diets of lactating dairy cows.

Teff is a warm-season grass native to Ethiopia, well-suited to drought conditions, and also used for human consumption.

In study trials, intake, milk yield, and milk-fat percentage were no different when cows were fed teff diets versus a control diet, although milk-protein levels were higher for cows on the teff diets.

Check out the findings by going to:

<https://goo.gl/U1bMLT>

In Short

Local Foods Impact Conference: resources now available!

A month ago was the Local Foods Impact Conference in Washington D.C. The conference was attended by an engaged, motivated audience, with over 300 people filling auditorium seats and another 500 tuning in via livestream for the plenary sessions.

If you were able to attend in person or join via the livestream, you can review videos, slides and workshop handouts at the following link.

<http://localfoodsimpact.org/>

Documentary Highlights Work of Farm Advocates

A new documentary film produced by Farm Aid, *Homeplace Under Fire*, celebrates 30 years of work by Farm Advocates.

A Farm Advocate works one-on-one with individual farmers to help them navigate the complex world of farm lending, state and federal regulations, contracts, and government programs.

The film is being screened at events around the country. A trailer is available online.

Check it out by going to:

<https://www.homeplaceunderfire.org/>

Report:

EPA-Funded What's Upstream? Advocacy Campaign Did Not Violate Lobbying Prohibitions

The EPA Office of Inspector General recently released their investigation results into the controversial What's Upstream advocacy campaign.

The EPA and Northwest Indian Fish Commission complied with applicable laws, regulations and policies. The EPA properly funded the What's Upstream? advocacy campaign and did not violate lobbying related prohibitions.

Click through for response to the congressional committees five concerns and full report.

<https://goo.gl/SRJec5>

WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Mark Your Calendars

<p>Cider & Perry Production A Foundation, October 9-13, Mt. Vernon, WA</p> <p>This five-day course located in Washington's Skagit Valley provides students with expert knowledge of cider and perry principles and practices. The curriculum includes information regarding cider culture, production, and business. Students of this course will participate in hands-on sensory demonstrations, laboratory exercises, and blending trials.</p> <p>Details at: https://goo.gl/bjGajl</p>	<p>3rd Annual Breakfast: Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland—June 7</p> <p>Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland invites you to their annual celebration of past, present, and future Skagit Valley agricultural leaders over a hearty breakfast. Free to attend; financial support will be requested. This event is a great way to connect with regional businesses and farmers, celebrate successes, and start the day feeling informed and inspired.</p> <p>Learn more about the event here and please RSVP if you're interested!</p>	<p>Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) - Info Session and Compliance Resources</p> <p>Thursday, June 15, 2017 6:00 - 7:30 PM</p> <p>Swede Hall 18543 Albany St. SW Rochester, WA 98579</p> <p>No cost event - https://goo.gl/VBE7sG</p>
<p>Season Extension in Specialty Crops—July 10; noon - 4 p.m. Growing Washington, Everson</p> <p>Upcoming Tilth Farm Walk. Growing Washington is a 70 acre diversified, certified organic farm spread across eight sites in Whatcom and Skagit Counties.</p> <p>WSU specialists will be on hand to provide additional information about season extension and specialty crops.</p> <p>Details at: https://goo.gl/zM1EEw</p>	<p>2017 Small Grains Field Day - June 30, WSU Mt. Vernon—1-3pm</p> <p>Attention farmers, millers, bakers, maltsters, distillers, brewers, and grain enthusiasts: Join WSU to tour their research fields and to discuss the production of small grains such as wheat, barley, and buckwheat in western Washington for food, feed, and malt.</p> <p>Free and open to the public.</p> <p>WSU Mount Vernon—16650 State Route 536—Mount Vernon, WA 98273</p>	<p>Forest and Range Owners Field Day Dayton, WA—June 24, 9am—4:30</p> <p>The field day will be held on Saturday, June 24, from 9 am to 4:30 pm at the Dickinson Family Land (at Cougar Canyon) just southeast of Dayton, Wash.</p> <p>The field day is designed to prepare landowners to plan and execute management activities that meet their personal objectives, reduce risks and protect their financial investment.</p> <p>Check out the flyer at https://goo.gl/TgbBx9</p>
<p>Save the Date!</p> <p>South Sound Food Summit—South Puget Sound Community College October 20 & 21</p> <p>Join the South Sound Food System Network (SSFSN) in October for a two day summit. SSFSN is comprised of local businesses, non-profits, educational institutions and local government agencies with a mission to grow a vibrant local food economy, ensure broad access to healthy foods, and steward the environment in the South Sound.</p>	<p>Save the Date!</p> <p>Whatcom Food Fest & Whatcom Farm Tour - September 8-10th.</p> <p>The Sustainable Connections Food & Farming program asks you to save the date! The Whatcom Food Fest will feature an expanded farm tour that will now be two days long including a number of other County wide food events.</p> <p>Check this newsletter or Sustainable Connections this summer for more details. https://goo.gl/IGtekQ</p>	<p>SARE: Our Farms, Our Future Conference—April 2018</p> <p>USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program (SARE) and NCAT/ATTRA will host the Our Farms, Our Future conference April 3-5, 2018, in St. Louis, Missouri.</p> <p>Every decade, SARE hosts a conference to look at the progress of sustainability in agriculture and to understand the trajectory for the future.</p> <p>Details at: https://goo.gl/PSfQi5</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.”