

Washington State Conservation Commission

FARMLAND PRESERVATION NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2017

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



Annual Land Values Report Released

USDA NASS recently released the [annual Land Values Report](#). The United States farm real estate value, a measurement of the value of all land and buildings on farms, averaged \$3,080 per acre for 2017, up \$70 per acre (2.3 percent) from 2016 values.

Regional changes in the average value of farm real estate ranged from a **8.7 percent increase in the Pacific region** to 1.8 percent decrease in the Northern Plains region.

The United States cropland value remained unchanged at \$4,090 per acre from the previous year. In the Southern Plains region, the average cropland value increased 6.0 percent from the previous year. However, in the Northern Plains region, cropland values decreased by 4.4 percent.

The United States pasture value increased by \$20 per acre (1.5 percent) from 2016 values. The Delta region had the highest increase of 2.9 percent from 2016. The largest decrease, at 1.7 percent, was in the Corn Belt region.

Washington farm real estate experienced a 5.3 percent increase from 2016 to an average of \$3,000 an acre. The biggest gains in land value for Washington was irrigated farm land which increased 5.5 percent from 2016 to \$8,700 an acre. Since 2013, irrigated ground has increased by 20 percent.



Free Webinar: Advantages and limitations of LLCs in Ag

On Wednesday, August 16, at 12 noon (ET), the Agricultural & Food Law Consortium presents a free webinar, “Using LLCs in Agriculture: Beyond Liability Protection.”

Since every state statutorily authorized the Limited Liability Company (LLC) as a business structure, the LLC has become a popular entity choice for farm businesses. But while often touted as a silver bullet for liability protection, the LLC is limited in its ability to shield a business from liability. Conversely, the LLC provides other benefits for agriculture beyond liability protection. This webinar will provide an overview of the history of the LLC and an explanation of divergences between state LLC statutes, then will focus on recognizing the limitations of LLCs while capitalizing on other values LLCs offer agriculture.

Beginning farmers, attorneys, students, and ag professionals seeking additional understanding of issues related to farm incorporation will want to attend.

Details on this free webinar, including sign-in information, are 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>

WSDA - Surface Water Pesticide Monitoring Program - Skagit County

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) has been conducting monitoring of pesticides in surface water in Skagit County. Most pesticides detected are found at very low concentrations and are not of concern. Preventing further contamination is important for agriculture and maintaining pesticide product use.



**Skagit
County**

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Certain pesticides have been detected in recent years at concentrations that are approaching an aquatic benchmark or level of concern. These detections are considered Pesticides of Concern (POC). A surface water POC is a detection that is greater than 50% of an aquatic benchmark. Protecting aquatic systems and fish is very important while maintaining the proper use of crop protection pesticides.

Read more here—<https://goo.gl/4SnZix>

Specialty Crop Multi-State Program Funding Announcement

USDA AMS has released their 2017 Request for Applications for the Specialty Crop Multi-State Program (SCMP). SCMP is funded through the Farm Bill and for 2017 there is approximately \$7 million available to enhance the specialty crop industry. Grant amounts range between \$250,000 and \$1,000,000. The purpose of the SCMP is to competitively award funds to State departments of agriculture to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops by funding collaborative, multi-state projects that address the following regional or national level specialty crop issues:



Food Safety; Plant pests and disease; Research; Crop-specific projects addressing common issues; and Marketing and promotion

USDA is looking for specialty crop producer associations and groups, state agencies, Tribal governments, universities, nonprofits, and other stakeholder groups and organizations to submit proposals to one of the participating state departments of agriculture. All SCMP proposals must have at least two partners with substantive involvement in the project, and the partners must be located in different states.

Learn more at: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/SCMPRFA2017.pdf>

Washington State Department of Agriculture will be accepting applications until 2:00 p.m., PST, September 25, 2017. Please submit proposals to: SCMP@agr.wa.gov. Be sure to follow the guidelines for submittal in USDA's Request for Applications (RFA).

Northwest Farm Credit Services Land Values Report

The [June 30 Land Value Survey report](#) is now available.

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

Agricultural property listings remain low, with many transactions occurring between landlords and tenants. Additionally, many areas report increased investor interest in quality agricultural properties.

Drivers for land values include stable to increasing real estate values, limited sales transactions and steady demand. Generally, real estate values are stable to increasing through the first half of 2017. Limited supply has resulted in lower transaction volume year to date (YTD). Demand remains stable for land in most agricultural segments with trends differing by area.

NCREIF Farmland Property Index 2nd Quarter Report

The National Council of Real Estate Investment Fiduciaries (NCREIF) has released the second quarter 2017 results of the NCREIF Farmland Index.

[Press release of survey here](#)

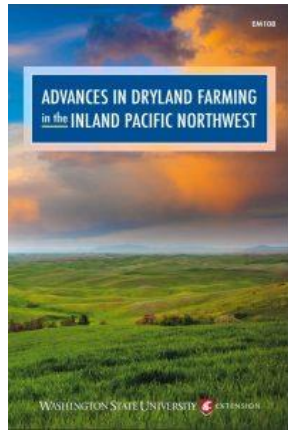
The total return for the second quarter was 1.63%, up from 0.49% last quarter and 1.25% in the second quarter 2016. Farmland appreciation had its best performance since fourth quarter 2015, following slight depreciation last quarter.

Two regions – Pacific West and Northwest – had solid appreciation of 1.49% and 6.23%, respectively. For the Pacific Northwest, this supported the strongest quarterly total return across the regions, at 7.05%.

Read the full report at: <https://www.ncreif.org/news/2q2017farmland/>



Advances in Dryland Farming in the Inland Pacific Northwest



By Georgine Yorgey

Dryland crops are a common sight east of the Cascades, and cover a LOT of acreage in the Pacific Northwest – more than 5.8 million acres according to recent statistics. Over the last three years, a group of us at CSANR have had the privilege of working with more than 40 co-authors (!) from our region's three land grant universities – WSU, University of Idaho, and Oregon State University – and from USDA Agricultural Research Service to summarize the most up-to-date scientific knowledge about our region's dryland systems. That work has now been published as a book, *Advances in Dryland Farming in the Inland Pacific Northwest*. Read more [here](#)

Advances in Dryland Farming in the Inland Pacific Northwest represents a joint effort by a multi-disciplinary group of scientists from across the region over a three-year period. Together they compiled and synthesized recent research advances as well as economic and other practical considerations to support farmers as they make decisions relating to productivity, resilience, and their bottom lines. Find the report at here: <http://extension.wsu.edu/publications/pubs/em108/>

Food Policy: Children's Food Security and USDA Child Nutrition Programs

USDA recently released the report [Children's Food Security and USDA Child Nutrition Programs](#). This report presents updated statistics on food insecurity among households with school-age children from the Food Security Supplement to the Current Population Survey for 2014 and 2015. It summarizes recent research on the effects of child nutrition programs on children's food security and diets and discusses recent developments in nutrition assistance for school-age children.

What Did the Study Find?

The study found that among households with children and incomes below the Federal poverty line during the 2-year period 2014-15, 44 percent experienced food insecurity among any members and 23 percent experienced food insecurity among children specifically.

Also that food insecurity was more prevalent in households with older children than in households with younger children. Children were food insecure in 4.3 percent of households with only young children ages 0 to 4. Children were food insecure in 10 percent of households that included teenagers.

See more study findings and the full report at: <https://goo.gl/G8BzZs>

New Cowgirl Camp Offers Deep Dive Into Ranching Skills

Many forward-thinking women dream of careers in ranching—spending time outdoors, working with animals, stewarding the land, producing healthy food. But how do you get started if you didn't grow up in a ranching family? New Cowgirl Camp is for novice ranchers, career explorers and experienced ranchers who want to try a more holistic approach to ranching.



“At New Cowgirl Camp women will get an intensive 5-day deep dive into the ranching traditions and skills. And they'll learn about the latest in science-based regenerative ranching,” says camp leader and fourth-generation rancher Beth Robinette, MBA, Sustainable Business.

Third-generation rancher Sandra Matheson, DVM, will co-lead the camp. Matheson and Robinette are ranch owners, entrepreneurs, and accredited Holistic Management professionals. Robinette, a Millennial, and Matheson, a Baby Boomer, bring generation-spanning perspectives. Robinette's ranch, the Lazy R, in Cheney, Wash., will host New Cowgirl Camp. The Lazy R has been practicing regenerative ranching for over 20 years.

More information, including registration information, is available at <https://goo.gl/Eqa2dM>.

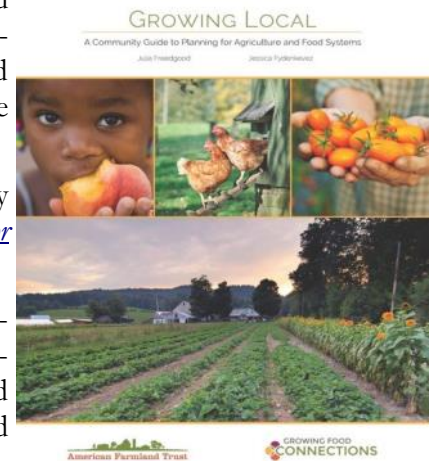
August 28 through September 1, 2017, Lazy R Ranch, Cheney, Washington

Food Policy: Growing Food Connections

Interest in local food and community food systems is growing by leaps and bounds. Across the United States, people, businesses, institutions, and organizations are buying directly from local farms and ranches, creating new markets and infrastructure, and working to improve community food security using diverse and creative approaches.

In response, American Farmland Trust and Growing Food Connections recently release the publication of [*GROWING LOCAL: A Community Guide to Planning for Agriculture and Food Systems*](#).

The national guide showcases ways communities can strengthen their food systems through planning, policy and public investment. It includes the most comprehensive collection of local policies ever assembled to support local farms and ranches, improve access to healthy food, and develop needed distribution and infrastructure. Written for farmers, community residents and food policy councils, as well as planners and local government officials, this practical guide highlights real life examples of ways communities are growing food connections from field to fork.



Read more at: <https://www.farmland.org/initiatives/growing-food-connections>

A New "Bracero Program" May Be in the Works

By Kausha Luna on July 31, 2017—From Center for Immigration Studies

At the end of last week, Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue held bilateral meetings with his Mexican counterparts, focusing on the benefits of the commercial relationship between both countries. As part of these talks, which took place in Mexico City, the subject of temporary foreign workers in the U.S. agricultural sector was addressed.

Read more at: <https://cis.org/Luna/New-Bracero-Program-May-Be-Works>



Grants

Attention grant applicants interested in Beginning Farmer Rancher Development Program

Webinar: Budget and Matching Funds for [Beginning Farmer Rancher Development Program](#) (BFRDP) Applicants

August 15 // 1-2 ET

New Entry and their partner, Allison Goin, will present another webinar in their Beginning Farm and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) webinar series for potential applicants.

This webinar will dive into the budget and match requirement for the BFRDP grant application.

[Register here.](#)

Western SARE Competitive Grants—Farmer/Rancher Research & Education

2018 Call for Proposals

Submission Deadline: Dec. 6, 2017, 1:00 pm MST

With a Farmer/Rancher Research & Education Grant, a producer, working with a technical advisor, develops a proposal to conduct research and education (outreach) on a sustainable agriculture topic.

Learn more about how to apply and criteria for eligibility.

https://wsaregrants.usu.edu/grants/docs/CFP_PG.pdf

Clif Bar family Foundation

Clif Bar Family Foundation Small Grants are awarded for general organizational support as well as funding for specific projects.

Small grants average approximately \$7,000 each. Applications are reviewed three times a year; the deadlines are the 1st of February, June, and October.

Award Amount: \$7,000

Deadline: October 1, 2017

For More Information, [Click Here](#)

In Short

Domex Superfresh Growers July Orchard Update



Check out the latest video update from Dave Gleason, Chief Horticulturist for Domex Superfresh Growers as he shares progress with this year's cherry harvest.

Ideal growing conditions and large fruit helped create a record Pacific Northwest cherry crop this summer.

Watch the video [here](#)

Weathercatch: Heat wave and winds will drive smoke across Inland Northwest—WSU

By Nic Loyd, WSU meteorologist, and Linda Weiford, WSU News

An extended heat wave will combine with winds to allow wildfire smoke to drift as far south as Spokane and across the region.

The National Weather Service issued an air quality alert for Spokane, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Stevens, Okanogan, Chelan, Douglas and Ferry counties through noon on Saturday.

A weak weather system out of British Columbia is expected to create conditions for winds from the north, carrying wildfire smoke from Canada and Western Montana into Eastern Washington.

Read more [here](#)

National and Washington Farmers Market Week

August 6 - 12

Governor Jay Inslee [recently declared August 6-12 Washington Farmers Market Week.](#)

Will O'Donnell, Executive Director of the Washington State Farmers Market Association recently met with Governor Inslee to talk about farmers markets.

[Click through](#) here to learn about cooking at the mansion and more from his time with the Inslee'.

In Short

New Land Access Training Program to Help Beginning Farmers

American Farmland Trust (AFT) has announced that 24 Land Access Trainers will help beginning farmers and ranchers secure agricultural land as part of a nationwide, four-year project.

Through a competitive process, AFT selected experienced agricultural educators and service providers from across the country to serve as the inaugural class of trainers. They will help develop and deliver comprehensive land access curriculum.

Learn more at:

<https://goo.gl/WYchqV>

Washington Farm Internship Project Expands

Washington's Farm Internship Project, overseen by the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries, has added three more counties and been extended until December 31, 2019. (Lewis, Clark, and Walla Walla counties). This brings the total number of counties to 16.

Farms with annual sales of less than \$250,000 per year may participate in the project. Under the project, interns have workers' compensation protection along with the opportunity for a valuable education and hands-on experience in farming activities. Applications and curriculum resources are available online.

Learn more at: <https://goo.gl/ZNx7ZL>

New Study: Health Insurance Costs Threaten Farm Viability

According to a new U.S. Department of Agriculture-funded study put out by the University of Vermont, lack of access to affordable health insurance is one of the most significant concerns facing American farmers, an overlooked risk factor that affects their ability to run a successful enterprise.

Study results were based on a March 2017 mail survey of farmers and ranchers in 10 study states and interviews with farm families in each of the study states in 2016.

Click through to see the full study results.

<https://goo.gl/cseGkC>

In Short

FACT Workshop Scholarships for Livestock & Poultry Farmers

FACT will award scholarships of up to \$100 to livestock and poultry farmers to cover the cost of farm tours, field days, workshops, conferences, or any other training related to humane farming techniques. Any workshop, field day, conference, or training in the continental United States that covers humane animal husbandry practices is eligible.

Scholarships are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

Learn more at:

<https://goo.gl/BHMrNm>

Voluntary Stewardship Program—agricultural activities

The Department of Commerce has issued a Draft Rule proposing to amend WAC 365-196, Procedural Criteria for Adopting Comprehensive Plans and Development Regulations. The proposed rule addresses issues related to the Voluntary Stewardship Program and critical area regulations for agricultural activities.

A public hearing is scheduled for August 23rd, starting at 10am, Bldg 307, Department of Commerce, 1101 SE Plum Street in Olympia. Comments will be accepted until 5pm on August 23rd and can be emailed to: Scott.Kuhta@commerce.wa.gov.

More at:

<https://goo.gl/7BKx48>

FoodSearcher Tool Highlights Value-Added Businesses

Agricultural Marketing Resource Center and MarketMaker have introduced the FoodSearcher Tool, an interactive map that highlights MarketMaker registered businesses producing specific agricultural products.

The map encompasses the nation and includes producers of livestock, fruit, and vegetables.

Viewers can use the map to find producers in their own areas.

Check it out by going to:

<http://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/foodsearcher-tool/>

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>Cultivating Success Farm Walks— Hazel Blue Acres, Silvana, WA— August 28</p> <p>This uniquely diverse farm originally was a dairy, and like so many others, transitioned over the years to other crops and ventures. Starting in 2008, the current generation planted certified organic blueberries for U-pick and year-round frozen sales. They also raise hazelnuts, hay, haylage, wheat, barley, and silage corn.</p> <p>Details at: https://goo.gl/PDNWaj</p>	<p>Save the Date—Cascadia Grains Conference—Olympia WA January 19th & 20th, 2018</p> <p>Check here for updates. https://cascadiagrains.com/</p> <p>Questions can be directed to: wsujeffcoevents@gmail.com</p>
<p>Transitioning to Organic Certification—Monday, August 7; noon-4 p.m.—KS Orchards, Royal City</p> <p>Are you interested in becoming certified organic, but unsure of the process? Join Tilt and WSU at KS Orchards in Grant County where growers will share their experience in adopting organic practices and completing the certification process.</p> <p>Details and registration at: https://goo.gl/yK7twk</p>	<p>Inland Northwest Permaculture Convergence—September 1-3</p> <p>The 7th annual Inland Northwest Permaculture Convergence will take place in the abundant, beautiful and welcoming community of Hot Springs, MT, between Kalispell and Missoula on Labor Day weekend, September 1-3, 2017.</p> <p>Learn more and register.</p>	<p>Grays Harbor County WSU Ext. Peak Season Potluck—Elma WA— Aug. 26th 5:00-8pm</p> <p>Attention local farmers & producers (or anyone interested in farming). Feel free to bring a dish to share of your choice.</p> <p>Beverages will be provided: coffee, tea, & lemonade. Details</p> <p>For questions please contact Kiley at 360-482-2934 kiley.smith2@wsu.edu</p> <p>Location: WSU Extension Office— Elma Fairgrounds</p>
<p>Save the Date! 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! 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.”