

# Washington State Conservation Commission

## FARMLAND PRESERVATION NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2017

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



### *2016 Certified Organic report—Washington results*

Sales of organic agricultural production in Washington continued to increase in 2016, when Washington farms produced and sold \$636 million in certified organic commodities, according to data recently released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

Results of the 2016 Certified Organic Survey show that 2016 sales were up 2 percent from \$626 million in 2015. During the same year, the number of certified organic farms in Washington increased 13 percent to 677, and the number of certified acres increased 10 percent to 78,739 acres

Washington organic production encompasses a wide range of commodities, including livestock and poultry products (primarily milk and eggs), with 2016 sales of \$65.4 million; livestock and poultry, \$37 million; and crops including nursery and greenhouse, \$533 million.

California, with \$2.9 billion in certified organic sales, continued to lead the nation in certified sales, accounting for 38 percent of the U.S. total (\$7.6 billion). It also had the largest share of certified organic acres and farms. Three states had more than 1,000 certified farms: California (2,713), Wisconsin (1,276), and New York (1,059).



### *Farm & Food Expo, November 3 & 4 at Spokane Community College*

This event offers more than 75 classes to choose from in a wide array of topics for every farmer, gardener or foodie.

The 2017 featured speakers are experts on making your operation profitable, no matter how small the acreage: Curtis Stone, author of "The Urban Farmer" and Jean-Martin Fortier, author of "The Market Gardener Handbook" will BOTH host intensive courses as well as participate in an engaging roundtable discussion on Friday evening.

Look for sessions on passing down the family farm, managing noxious weeds, baking bread, keeping chickens, growing mushrooms, cheese making, canning, beekeeping, disaster preparedness for the farm, and making apple cider vinegar, kim chi and kombucha.

Buy tickets early for the best class selection - classes are filling up! For more information, visit [www.FarmAndFoodExpo.org](http://www.FarmAndFoodExpo.org).



**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>

## *Fall Forum to highlight the state of Whatcom farmland*

All are invited to attend the Whatcom Food Network's Fall Forum on November 9th for a chance to hear from Hannah Clark, the Executive Director of the Washington Association of Land Trusts and a panel of farmers and professionals working on farmland preservation in Whatcom County.



The November Forum will focus on the state of farmland both regionally and locally, highlighting the challenges and solutions to farmland loss and accessibility. The Puget Sound region alone has lost 60% of its farmland since 1950, with rising land costs and growing populations adding to the complex set of factors that impact the availability of accessible land for farmers. Learn about what's happening in Whatcom County and what can be done to protect our local agricultural sector and the farmland it depends upon.

In addition to the presentation and panel, attendees will have a chance to network with other professionals working in our local food system and hear highlights from the 2017 Whatcom Community Food Assessment Update that will be debuted at the Forum.

**When:** November, 9th 1-4pm—**Where:** Ferndale Public Library, 2125 Main St., Ferndale To RSVP & for more information: Visit [Whatcom Food Networks Facebook Event Page](#) or call 360-647-7093 x110

## *2017 Farm Sector Income Forecast*

After 3 consecutive years of decline, net cash income and net farm income are both forecast to rise in 2017 relative to 2016 estimates. Net cash farm income for 2017 is forecast at \$100.4 billion, up \$11.2 billion (12.6 percent) from 2016. Net farm income, a broader measure of profits, is forecast at \$63.4 billion, up \$1.9 billion (3.1 percent) relative to 2016. The stronger forecast growth in net cash income is largely due to an additional \$9.7 billion in cash receipts from the sale of crop inventories. The net cash farm income measure counts those sales as part of current-year income while the net farm income measure counted the value of those inventories as part of prior-year income.

See a summary of the forecasts in the table [U.S. farm sector financial indicators, 2011-2017](#) (Excel), or see all data tables on [farm income and wealth statistics](#).

Overall, cash receipts are forecast to increase \$14.1 billion (4 percent) in 2017, reflecting an 8.4-percent increase in animal/animal product receipts. Most animal and animal product prices are expected to rise while crop prices overall are expected to decline; quantities sold are forecast to increase for both crops and livestock. Thus, rising quantities sold for crops and livestock account for nearly 90 percent of the forecast rise in 2017 cash receipts.

[Read more](#)

## *Revenue offers free tax workshop Oct. 11 in Federal Way*

Business owners in Washington are responsible for knowing which taxes to report. To help them, the Washington State Department of Revenue (Revenue) is hosting a free workshop for new and small business owners on Oct. 11 in Federal Way at the [Federal Way Library—34200 1st Way S.](#)

Business owners can register for the workshop [online](#) or by calling 425-656-5100.

Participants will learn about Washington excise taxes, reporting classifications, deductions, tax incentives, sales tax collection and record-keeping requirements. Attendees receive a workbook and helpful reference guide to Revenue's rules and regulations. Also, attendees may earn two continuing professional education (CPE) credits. Contact the workshop instructor for details.



## ***WA State Farmers Market 2016/17 Membership Report***

In 2016 member markets had their biggest sales increase in almost a decade and hit our highest annual sales ever: \$47 million in member market sales. In 2016, 3.3 million shoppers attended our markets.

Over a million dollars in food benefits redeemed at markets. Over 150,000 lbs of food donated to food banks from markets across the state.

More markets than ever accept SNAP EBT & FMNP, as well as distribute Fresh Bucks. We have come a long way in 15 years.

In 2002 there were 72 member markets reporting \$17 million in vendor sales. Presently there are 111 markets with \$47million in sales. Sales have almost tripled.

[Click here to read the report](#)



## ***Food Insecurity in the United States—USDA Report***

### **Understanding the Prevalence, Severity, and Distribution of Food Insecurity in the United States**

Each year, USDA's, Economic Research Service through the U.S. Census Bureau conducts a survey to assess the extent that U.S. households struggle to put enough food on the table for all their members. In 2016, 12.3 percent of U.S. households were food insecure—meaning that they had difficulty at some time during the year providing enough food for all their members because of a lack of resources. That level is essentially unchanged from 2015, but down significantly from 14.0 percent in 2014. Lower food insecurity rates mirror trends in other economic indicators, including decreasing poverty rates and lower food prices, over this time period. [Read more](#)



## ***U.S. Federal Reserve Highlights Economic Benefits of Organic Agriculture***

Updates to a federal nutrition program for children in early care and education (ECE) settings will mean healthier meals and snacks for millions of kids across the country without substantial cost increases for providers, according to a new report on the impact of the changes and strategies for successful implementation that is being released in time for National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month.

Each day, more than 4 million kids, many from low-income families, receive meals and snacks for which providers are reimbursed through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which provides funding to ECE sites, as well as after-school and adult day care institutions. [Read more](#)

## ***USDA Announces \$21 Million to Help Low-Income Consumers***

### *USDA Announces \$21 Million to Help Low-Income Consumers Purchase Produce through Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentives*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) recently announced \$21 million to help Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants increase their purchases of fruits and vegetables by providing incentives at the point of purchase. The funding comes from the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) program, authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill.

Eligible applicants include government agencies and nonprofit organizations.

The deadline for applications is December 13, 2017. See the [request for applications](#) for details.

[Read more](#)

## ***Food Policy—Guide Helps Assess Food System Economics***

### *Tools for Assessing Economic Impact: A Primer for Food System Practitioners*

This guide summarizes tools that food systems practitioners can use to assess economic growth. It explores both standard commercial models and alternative, community-based approaches.

Examples of studies that use each approach are included. The primer, which also contains definitions of applicable terms and several model studies, concludes with considerations for future studies.

[Tools for Assessing Economic Impact: A Primer for Food System Practitioners \(PDF\)](#)

[More information here](#)



## ***Food Policy—New law could bring produce to more low-income areas***

U.S. representatives Mike Bost and Robin Kelly are teaming up on legislation that could make it easier for farmers to provide fresh produce to food deserts – low-income areas that don't have grocery stores selling fresh vegetables.

Last summer they cosponsored the [“Feeding America through Farm Flexibility Act of 2017,”](#) which might be part of the next farm bill. The proposed law would allow farmers to plant an additional 5% of their commodity crop base acres to vegetables if the harvest is sold or donated into a food desert with a poverty rate of at least 20%.

Under the Agricultural Act of 2014, farmers already can plant 15% of their base to vegetables if enrolled in the county level price loss coverage (PLC) or county agriculture risk coverage (ARC) and up to 35% if enrolled in the individual farm-level ARC program. The Kelly-Bost bill bumps the allowed levels up to 20% for county-level programs and 40% for individual ARC, if growers meet the requirements to serve food deserts from the extra 5%.

## ***NRCS Sets Aside \$8 Million for Farmland in the Puyallup Watershed***

*By Amy Hendershot, District Conservationist, Puyallup, WA*

Whenever Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff talk with farmers in the Puyallup Valley, the discussion almost always turns to the soil. The Puyallup Valley is filled with volcanic soil from the last time Mt. Rainier erupted amended from silt deposits that the Puyallup River historically deposited, making the Puyallup Valley unique and agriculturally rich. The soil is perfect for vegetables, fruits, flowers. For those of us who have lived in or near the Valley for decades, memories of daffodils and tulips with Mt. Rainier standing guard are plentiful. Over the past decade, nearly 10,000 acres of farmland have been lost.

Keeping prime farmland arable is an important component of food security, economic viability, natural resource protection, and tourism. One of the fascinating and little-promoted aspects of agriculture is the amount of wildlife habitat it sustains. For all that agriculture provides in terms of food and fiber for us, it also provides an incredible source of habitat for nature and ecosystem benefits to water and soil quality.

For all these reasons, NRCS has partnered with Pierce Conservation District and ten other partners to provide \$8 million to local farms to preserve 1,000 acres of prime farmland through conservation easements. These easements will be voluntary legal agreements between a landowner and a nonprofit land trust to ensure that land will be used for agricultural purposes permanently. Five percent of the funds will be set aside to implement conservation activities that give a boost to both the health of the farm and to the wildlife. Sign-ups for both programs will begin in the fall.

## *In Short*

### Report: Grocery Among Fastest-Growing Retail Segments

According to a new report from global research and advisory firm IHL Group, U.S. retailers are opening 4,080 more stores in 2017 than they're closing and plan to open an additional 5,500 next year.

The report, "[Debunking the Retail Apocalypse](#)," identified grocery retailers as among the three fastest-growing core retail segments, with 674 stores expected to open.

[Read more](#)

### GRANT:

#### Western SARE Competitive Grants

Calls for Proposals Released

The 2018 Calls for Proposals for Western SARE grant programs have been released.

The three open grants programs include:

- [Professional Development](#)
- [Farmer/Rancher](#)
- [Professional + Producer](#)

Please read each call carefully for eligibility and deadlines.

### Countdown to Census: What You Need To Know

In just a couple months, farmers and ranchers across the nation will start receiving the 2017 Census of Agriculture. Producers can mail in their completed census form, or respond online via the improved web questionnaire. USDA NASS has extensively revised the online questionnaire to make it more convenient for producers. New time-saving features of the online questionnaire include automatically calculating totals, skipping sections that do not pertain to the operation, and providing drop-down menus of frequent responses. Producers still have one week to try the online questionnaire demo on the census of agriculture website ([www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov)).

[Read more](#)

## *In Short*

### WWU study highlights economic benefits of agribusiness in Whatcom County

*The Lens—Mike Richards*

As a recent Western Washington University (WWU) study highlights the benefits of agriculture to Whatcom County businesses, one of the study's authors as well as farmer advocates say they hope the information will shed light on the significant contributions the industry makes to employment and economic activity.

The [Whatcom County Agribusiness Sector Analysis](#), released August 21 by WWU's Center for Economic and Business Research, includes several key findings—[click here to learn more](#).

### Guide Helps Producers Applying for Value-Added Grant Program

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition has updated its online Farmers' Guide to Applying for the Value-Added Producer Grant Program.

USDA Rural Development will issue \$18 million in competitive grants this fiscal year.

Value-Added Grant Program funds can be used for working capital, feasibility studies, business plans, and marketing efforts to establish viable value-added businesses.

Individual producers and groups of producers, as well as farmer co-ops and producer-controlled businesses, are eligible.

[Read more](#)

### Organic Farming Research Foundation Research Grants

Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) is accepting proposals for 2018 research projects on organic farming and food systems.

OFRF encourages farmers, ranchers, graduate students, early career researchers, veterans, and Extension personnel to apply.

Priority areas are soil health, innovative weed control, management of emerging insect and disease issues, and livestock health.

**The deadline for proposals is December 15, 2017.**

[Read more](#)

# WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

## Mark Your Calendars

<p><b>Nov 9—Fall Forum to highlight the state of Whatcom farmland</b></p> <p>All are invited to attend the Whatcom Food Network’s Fall Forum on November 9th for a chance to hear from Hannah Clark, the Executive Director of the Washington Association of Land Trusts and a panel of farmers and professionals working on farmland preservation in Whatcom County.</p> <p>November, 9th 1-4pm, <a href="#">Ferndale Public Library, 2125 Main St.</a></p> <p><a href="#">RSVP &amp; for more information</a> or call 360-647-7093 x110</p>	<p><b>Starting Your Business—Business Concepts, Strategies, &amp; Terminology</b></p> <p>Tuesday, October 24, 2017 9:00AM to 3:30PM</p> <p>Skagit Farmers Supply 1833 Park Lane, Burlington, WA 98233</p> <p>There are many details to starting a business. This class is geared towards providing foundational information to help new farmers and food related businesses.</p> <p><a href="#">More info and registration here</a></p>	<p><b>37th Annual Food Safety &amp; Sanitation Workshop—November 7-8, 2017</b></p> <p>Sheraton Portland Airport Hotel 8235 NE Airport Way, Portland</p> <p>Workshop addresses basic sanitation as well as cutting edge issues related to food sanitation and food safety. .</p> <p>Link for more information and online registration: <a href="http://ext100.wsu.edu/foodsantiation/">http://ext100.wsu.edu/foodsantiation/</a></p>
<p><b>Tilth Conference—Vancouver WA November 10-12</b></p> <p>Every year, the Tilth Conference brings together hundreds of farmers, producers, researchers and food system professionals to network and learn. This is a great way to meet others in your field, enjoy locally sourced meals and participate in fun evening events around Vancouver.</p> <p><a href="#">Registration open</a></p>	<p><b>USDA Value Added Producer Grant Boot Camp—October 31</b></p> <p>8:45AM to 3:00PM Skagit Farmers Supply 1833 Park Lane, Burlington, WA 98233</p> <p>Come learn about the USDA Value Added Producer Grant program this important USDA program has benefited many producers throughout the Puget Sound region with grant amounts ranging from less than \$50,000 up to \$250,000.</p> <p>Register at: <a href="#">VAPG BOOTCAMP</a></p>	<p><b>Hands-On Biodegradable Plastic Mulch Till-Down Field Day</b></p> <p>October 13th 1-3 pm at Cloudview Farm—17305 Frey Road, Ephrata, WA</p> <p>Participate in till-down of biodegradable plastic mulch into the soil</p> <p>Interact with biodegradable plastic, polyethylene, and paper mulches as they are tilled down or removed from the field</p> <p>Learn the latest about biodegradable mulch films.</p> <p>Free event!</p>
<p><b>Save the Date!</b></p> <p><b>South Sound Food Summit—South Puget Sound Community College October 20 &amp; 21</b></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><b>Continuing Legal Education</b></p> <p><b>10th Annual Water Rights Transfers—Nov. 8 &amp; 9—Seattle</b></p> <p>This CLE will discuss the law of water rights in our state.</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><a href="#">Agenda and registration</a></p>	<p><b>7th annual Washington Young Farmers Coalition farm mixer—October 8th, Walla Walla</b></p> <p>Join WYFC at <a href="#">Welcome Table Farm</a>, for a potluck and dance. 2.30pm tour of nearby <a href="#">Hayshaker Farm</a>. 4pm tour of Welcome Table. 5pm-late dinner and dancing at Welcome Table</p> <p>They will have music, food and drinks. Bring your friends, a potluck dish, your own tableware, dancing boots, and your stories from the farming season.</p> <p><a href="#">Details here</a></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.”