



December 2006

Snohomish County Focus on Farming III Conference Report

www.focusonfarming.org

**SAVE THE DATE:
Focus on Farming IV
Thursday,
November 29, 2007**

Snow Doesn't Blur the Focus on Farming

Despite icy roads and the worst snow storm in years, nearly 400 farmers, growers and related industry professionals attended the third annual Focus on Farming Conference.

other. Twenty-four educational sessions throughout the day covered topics as diverse as alternative crops, marketing, value-added products, finance, dairy innovations, and nursery trends. Lunch and a wine & cheese tasting featured regional products.

This year, the conference moved from the Evergreen Fairgrounds to the Lynnwood Convention Center to better emphasize the regional nature of farming and to connect the farmer with the urban marketplace. Snohomish County partnered with King County and the new, Skagit-based Northwest Agriculture Business Center. Participants came from throughout Northwest Washington and beyond.

The Focus on Farming Conferences originated in Executive Reardon's Agriculture Initiative launched in 2003. Planning for Focus on Farming IV is already underway. Mark your calendars for November 29, 2007!



King County Executive Ron Sims and Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon.

"This conference represents the best that government can do for a group of citizens (farmers) facing challenges to their continued existence as a business sector.

During a time of economic stress, it is difficult to gain perspective and develop a long-term plan. Helping people to lift their eyes from the balance sheet and look out to the horizon is the single critical action that will help them plan for a more sound future."

- Conference participant

Thank you to all who made this conference possible, from our generous sponsors, knowledgeable speakers and gifted chefs, to everyone who braved the weather to attend.

Visit www.focusonfarming.org to view the final conference program and for updates as FoF IV takes shape, or call John Roney, Agriculture Coordinator, at 425-388-7112 for information.



Kurt Dammeier and Ellen Gerber from Beecher's Handmade Cheese.

Both keynote speakers talked about the future of agriculture. National Agritourism expert Jane Eckert's presentation, "Sowing Seeds for Profit – Right on the Farm," shared agritourism success stories along with helpful tips. American Farmland Trust's Pacific Northwest Director Don Stuart explained the interdependence of agriculture and the environment and how saving one can save the



The Lynnwood Convention Center proved to be an ideal venue for the expanded conference.

Some Conference Highlights in Pictures



A wine and cheese tasting featured local wineries and capped the day.



Farmer Linda Neunzig talks with Chef Holly Smith (Café Juanita) while she prepares “sunchokes in Bagna Cauda.”



Chef Charles Rayseyer, Ray’s Boathouse, Café & Catering, prepares a beef stew with Skagit River Ranch grass-fed beef.

Inside: Focus on Farming III Conference Report



Janet Bauermeseister (left) from the U.S. Department of Commerce, with the NABC’s Sera Hartman behind the scenes.



Mary Embleton, Cascade Harvest Coalition Executive Director.

Comments from the 120 evaluation forms returned ranged from:
 “great variety of sessions,”
 “learned a lot,”
 “practical, relevant information,” to
 “loved Don Stuart’s passion,”
 “enthusiasm of the speakers,” and
 “Jane Eckert’s ideas.”

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