



Snohomish County Focus on Farming

Winter 2007

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Stay Current!

Mark your calendars – 2007

Snohomish County Ag Activities

Farmer's Breakfasts

April and August (dates to be announced)

Centennial Farms Registration deadline – June 15

Evergreen State Fair
Monroe Fairgrounds –
August 23 – September 3

**Snohomish County
Fall Farm Festival
& Snohomish
Festival of Pumpkins**
October

Focus on Farming IV
Lynnwood Convention Center –
November 29

Website/e-mail alerts

Visit Snohomish County's Focus on Farming website for information about county activities, classes, workshops, and more. The message board is a great resource for agricultural events and education throughout the County and beyond. You can also sign up to receive e-mail alerts and get the latest news.

Go to Focus on Farming in the far left column at www.snoco.org.

2007: The News is Good for Farmers

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon has launched an aggressive agenda this year for the Office of Economic Development, furthering the Agriculture Initiative he began in 2004.

"We have an experienced, professional team of people working to create increased visibility and economic development for the County's agricultural sector," said Steve Pottle, Manager, Office of Economic Development. "The quality of life we enjoy here is dependent on ag remaining a vital part of our greater community."

Planning is underway for a first-ever county-wide farm festival to coincide with the fall harvest season. Building on the success of the Snohomish Festival of Pumpkins, festival organizers are working with existing farm businesses and organizations to plan festivities in Arlington, Stanwood, Monroe and more. Details will be announced soon!

The county's presence at the Evergreen State Fair in Monroe will again work to bring greater focus to the rich and varied agricultural industry in Snohomish County. Expansion is planned for the Farmer and Chef of the Day programs that began last year, and more local farm products and activities will be featured. A biodiesel exhibit will give visitors a better understanding of this new and promising crop.

The fourth annual Focus on Farming Conference is scheduled for Thursday, November 29 at the Lynnwood Convention Center. Watch the www.focusonfarming.org site for details as plans come together.



The Snohomish County Agriculture Economic Development Action Team presented its report and recommendations to Executive Reardon early in February. The ad-hoc, 50-member committee identified opportunities and developed strategies for agricultural success, with subcommittees in land base, infrastructure, and marketing. A mapping project is already underway (see article inside). Stay tuned for more detail about this project.

With "Buy Local" more of a movement than a trend, value-added products finding increased shelf-space and market share in our local stores, and agri-tourism gaining ground and visibility with visitors to Snohomish County, 2007 looks like a promising year for local farms.

Conference Recap Suggestions for Follow-up Workshops

“I’d like to hear about hydroponics – converting old dairy barns for plant raising.”

“Grants for growers, how to finance your farm, urban/suburban farming”

“Loans for new farmers and marketing strategies”

“Trends in PR & Marketing”

“Transitioning – from chemical to organic farming”

“DIY/low cost small farm equipment and machinery”

“Value-added cheesemaking”



4th Annual Focus on Farming Conference, November 29, 2007, Lynnwood Convention Center



Conference Recap and Next Steps: On Track for Agriculture Success

The success of the 3rd annual Focus on Farming Conference, while in large part thanks to a professional staff and many volunteers, also rests with those who paid their registration fee and attended the conference. The energy “buzz” was felt throughout the day, with everyone fully participating, learning, and contributing. Attendance included WSU ag students from Japan, Peru and Africa.

In what must be a record number, more than 120 attendees (nearly 1/3 of the more than 450, at final count, who were able to attend) completed and returned a conference evaluation form. The forms asked the usual questions to help the

committee evaluate the conference, but more importantly, specific questions were asked to help plan future events and workshops that will help this changing industry evolve and thrive. In the left sidebar is a small sampling of the feedback provided.

The information collected has been shared with Snohomish County’s WSU Extension to guide its curriculum planning throughout the year. Visit the message board at www.snoco.org (and click on Focus on Farming) to view listings of workshops and other educational opportunities.

Snohomish County Agricultural Lands Inventory Project

A county-wide farmland inventory has begun as the first phase of Snohomish County’s Agriculture Sustainability Project. The existing tool for mapping farmland is the Comprehensive Plan’s Future Land Use Map, which shows how much land is currently designated, but not necessarily how much land is actually farmed or the type of farming taking place. The inventory will better define the land as it’s currently used.

Meetings held in November and December were attended by farmers from Arlington, Monroe, Snohomish, Stanwood and surrounding areas. Large, aerial maps of county farmland were on hand for landowners to outline their current agricultural uses, and Planning and Development staff were there to ask and answer questions. The information gathered will help the county identify acreage currently in production for agricultural uses and how those acres are used.

The inventory of ag lands is just one of the many recommendations made to Executive Reardon by the Snohomish County Agriculture Economic Development Action Team (SAEDAT) to help promote current and future farming and agricultural economic growth. When it’s completed, the Agriculture Sustainability Project will provide Snohomish County and agriculture-based businesses reliable, fact-based information to make sound business and investment decisions. A subcommittee made up of Agricultural Advisory Board members is providing project oversight and direction.

If you were not able to attend the meetings but would still like to participate, please contact Ryan Hembree, 425-388-3311, ext. 2267 or ryan.hembree@co.snohomish.wa.us.

New Research Center Opens in Mt. Vernon

The latest indication that agriculture is vital to Western Washington came with the opening of Washington State University's new Agriculture Research and Technology Building (ATRB).

More than 200 people joined the Dec. celebration and toured the 18,750 square foot building – the beginning of a major renovation and expansion of the WSU Mt. Vernon NW Washington Research and Extension Center (NWREC). Phase 2, a new four-bay 3,200 square foot research greenhouse, is under construction.

A community project in every way, nearly \$2 million was raised in donations from farm families, agriculture businesses and various other businesses and agencies.

"This is a resource that will foster world-class research that will affect the whole world," said WSU President V. Lane Rawlins, according to the Capital Press.

Interim Director Debra Inglis said, "The revitalization of WSU Mount Vernon NWREC increases the university's capacity to deliver agricultural research and extension programs throughout the northwest region. New office, laboratory, and greenhouse spaces, as well an auditorium and food demonstration kitchen, will enhance agricultural research and educational offerings, and will allow for more collaboration and synergism to address regional needs."

Seed Crop Results Look Good for Biodiesel

Imagine 120,000 gallons of bio-fuel running Snohomish County's diesel vehicles! That's the primary goal of the current test crops – to determine if enough seed can be grown to do just that. Another goal is to identify which of these seed crops will provide the largest economic return to Snohomish County farmers.

Phase one results indicate that subsequent studies are needed to gauge the full economic viability. Further studies will also better inform biodiesel industry participants as to what they can do next to increase viability.

To date, Hyola 420 Canola is the preferred crop because a market for mash as cattle feed already exists. The yield target is 6,000 pounds per acre with a 40% oil content in the seed. These numbers would generate 288 gallons of fuel per acre of canola planted (assuming 40% oil content and 90% recovery of that oil from the crusher). Since Snohomish

County's goal is to fuel all its diesel vehicles, 420 acres were needed in production. At this time, there is potential to produce 148 gallons of fuel per acre.

Ag Advisory Board

The Ag Advisory Board meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. in Public Meeting Room #1, Snohomish County Admin-East Building, 3000 Rockefeller, Everett, unless otherwise posted.

Please visit www.snoco.org and search for "Ag Board" to see past and upcoming agendas, notes from previous meetings and announcements.

Upcoming meeting dates are:

- March 13
- April 10
- May 8



Farm	Soil Type	Seed Crop	lbs. pr. Acre	% Oil	Acres
Diamond M Dave Remlinger	Heavy peat	Hyola 420 C	3615	38	8.2
		Pioneer 47A76C	4128	33	3.5
		IdaGold	4684	26	1.5
		Pacific Gold	1318	33	1.0
Lord Hill Dave Remlinger	Clay loam	Hyola 420 C	2614	43	2.1
		Pioneer 47A76C	1824	37	2.6
		IdaGold	3157	29	1.1
		Pacific Gold	1785	37	1.3
Custer's Last Stand - Dan Bartelheimer	Sandy clay loam	Hyola 420 C	2706	38	10.4
		Pioneer 47A76C	3346	37	3.5
		IdaGold	5146	29	1.5
		Pacific Gold	1948	37	1.4
Race Trac Steve Davison	Sandy	Hyola 420 C	2252	40	1.2
		Pioneer 47A76C	3313	40	1.5
		IdaGold	2215	29	1.0
		Pacific Gold	2730	40	2.3
Marsh Road Peter Alden	Light peat	Hyola 420 C	1945	40	3.4
		Pioneer 47A76C	2390	31	3.0
		IdaGold	4040	28	1.1
		Pacific Gold	1607	31	1.0

Moosings from the Field



A big thank you to all who helped put the Focus on Farming Conference together. While we had an impressive and eager crowd it

could not happen without the many volunteers who gave many hours of their time to make it happen.

Spring is near, and I'm looking forward to seeing tractors and equipment in the fields. Seeing the farms inundated with floodwaters this fall was sad – we know the water brings nutrients, but also it also takes away animals, feed and structures, items that

currently do not have insurance dollars available. Snohomish County is being proactive in working with federal and state agencies to determine if a reimbursement program for property loss could be started.

2006 was a very active year for us here at the County. A new Ag Board has been seated and they are eagerly developing a work agenda to review and discuss in 2007. Other 2007 happenings include:

- New Ag businesses contemplating locating in Snohomish County
- Two bio-digester projects are moving forward
- A bio-seed test trial has been completed with promising results

- The Northwest Ag Business Center has begun operation to assist farmers in developing value-added products, and
- Local farmers are considering planting more ground with new crops.

The Ag Industry here and in this region seems to have new vigor. If you or your group has an idea for new or expanded agriculture opportunities, we will be happy to meet with you to explore and facilitate how to make it happen. Call us and we will make time to listen.

John Roney, Agriculture Coordinator
425-388-7112
john.roney@co.snohomish.wa.us

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Aaron Reardon, County Executive



3000 Rockefeller Ave.
Everett, WA 98201

Snohomish County
Executive Office

