

# Focus on Farming Conference IV

## Breakout Sessions

*(Descriptions follow below by track)*

### **Session I: 10:30 a.m.**

Efficient Irrigation Systems for the Puget Sound Region  
Cooperative Marketing  
Growing a Community Supported Agriculture Program  
Worldwide Labor Demographics – Now and in the Future  
Biodiesel & Biogas – What’s Possible Now (Bio-energy Technologies)  
Programs & Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) Lite Insurance

### **Session II: 11:30 a.m.**

Reclaimed Water: A New Resource for Agriculture  
More Show, More Sales  
Organic Certification: Making it Work for the Small Farm  
New Markets for Your Nursery – Thinking Outside the Pot  
Bio-energy Crops: Potential for Switchgrass & Canola  
Family Business Succession

### **Session III: 2:30 p.m.**

Water & Flood Issues – A Vision for the Future  
You’ve Got to Sell What You Grow – Merchandising Tips  
Beyond Corn – a) Making Hay in Western Washington  
Environmentally Friendly Nursery Technology  
On-farm Energy – Farm Energy Use Calculators  
Risk Management – Strategic Planning

### **Session IV: 3:30 p.m.**

Water Rights – A New Approach for the Future  
Selling Local: How Local is Replacing Organic  
Beyond Corn – b) From Barley to Turnips  
Coordinating Growers, Retailers & Customer Trends  
On-farm Mortality Composting  
Farm Financing

# Track I: Water

## **I – Efficient Irrigation Systems for the Puget Sound Region**

*Speaker: Don McMoran, WSU Skagit County Extension  
Troy R. Peters, WSU Irrigation Specialist, Prosser*

Skagit County's Don McMoran and Irrigation Specialist Troy Peters will give an overview of WSU research on cost-effective irrigation systems. A recently completed study looked at "gun" vs "boom" systems with results showing boom systems more effective and cost less to operate. Drip systems will also be covered.

## **II – Reclaimed Water: A New Resource for Agriculture**

*Speakers: Steve Hirschey, Regional Water Policy Analyst, King County  
Steve Gilbert, Water Quality Project Manager, King County*

### **a. Ag Water Issues in Western WA**

Steve Hirschey will talk about some of the most important issues facing water policy in Western Washington. How must we think about irrigation water as a limited resource – even though we live in a wet climate? How might climate impacts affect our water supply? Learn some of the approaches being used to ensure water availability for agriculture in Western Washington.

### **b. Reclaimed Water: A New Resource for Agriculture**

Reclaimed water is an emerging source of valuable irrigation water. Millions of gallons of water could be available for farmers – even those without a water right and during drought years. Learn how this new resource can benefit local agriculture.

## **III – Water and Flood Issues in the Snoqualmie Valley – A Vision of the Future**

*Speaker: Erick Haakenson, Owner, Jubilee Farm, Carnation*

Puget Sound soil is some of the richest and most fertile in the country. How can we preserve this valuable resource from floods, and keep these lands for farming? Learn about innovative approaches that can save our flood plains from devastating floods *and* preserve the natural environment and farming for generations to come.

## **IV – Water Rights – A New Approach for the Future**

*Speaker: Mike Shelby, Western Washington Agricultural Association*

Skagit Valley farmers are innovative stewards, working to address agricultural irrigation, water rights, drainage and habitat restoration activities. Listen to a new approach for developing stewardship methods that work both for the environment and for farming.

# Track II: Marketing

## **I – Cooperative Marketing – When Teamwork Pays: Logistics and Planning in Organic Growers Co-ops**

*Speaker: David Rob – General Manager, Tuscarora Organic Growers Co-op*

Tuscarora Organic Growers Cooperative (TOG) is the oldest and largest organic vegetable cooperative in the US. Located in Pennsylvania 2 ½ hours north and west of Washington, DC, TOG has been operating for 19 years. Governed by its 25 farmers, TOG markets and delivers year round to over 120 restaurants, groceries, and coops in the DC and Baltimore region. TOG has a unique organizational structure that insures cooperation between farmers, strong leadership, and creative logistical solutions which have all helped TOG sustain itself and grow. David will share the “How to’s” of running a successful cooperative.

## **II – More Show, More Sales: Enhancing the Shopping Experience for Greater Profits**

*Speakers: Greg Wilkes, Calgary Farmers Market and Healthy Comm., Inc.  
Jack Habina, Habina’s Harvest; Calgary Farmers Market*

A direct farm marketer must wear many hats – and wear them very effectively – to be successful. This session will explore, in detail, the four specific hats to be worn and the skills sets that need to be employed in order to wear them all comfortably. We will look at what to consider when choosing which products to grow and ways to add value to maximize profit. We will contrast a marketing model and a sales model and look at the importance of image building and energy creation in the merchandising of products.

A key part of the presentation will be to explore the lessons learned from the very successful Calgary Farmers Market, a four-days-a-week market that grossed over \$100,000,000 in sales in its first three years of operation.

This hands-on session of slides, theory and group interaction is sure to spark at least one great idea for you!

## **III – You’ve Got to Sell What You Grow: Display & Merchandising Tips to Maximize Sales**

*Speaker: Vance Corum, co-author of The New Farmers’ Market*

Take a worldwide market tour and learn new display and merchandising ideas, even if you’re already a pro. Learn about height, color, pricing, building and maintaining customers, attitude and more. Set goals and know the mistakes to avoid. Challenge yourself to implement five ideas in your farm operation in 2008.

## **IV – Selling Local: How Local is Replacing Organic**

*Speaker: Charles Kuperus, New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture*

*Local* is the new watchword for a diet that’s healthy for the consumer, the farmer, the land and the community. Learn how local branding and cooperative marketing can build product awareness and increase sales in all segments of the agricultural marketplace. Learn from New Jersey’s successful *Jersey Fresh* program and begin planning how to work together to build sales of locally produced fresh and processed farm products.

# Track III: Local/Organic

## I – Growing a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Program

*Speakers: Julia Wiley, Mariquita Farm, Watsonville, CA  
Claire Thomas, The Root Connection, Woodinville, WA*

Leaving behind the conventional model in which only the farmer bears the risks of weather, pests, and a fickle marketplace, developing a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program on your farm allows everyone to share in the abundance at harvest time, as well as share in the failures.

A partnership between farmer and consumer, CSA members (or shareholders) pay a fee at the beginning of each growing season to meet a farm's operating expenses. Then, each week throughout the season, members receive a 'share' of the harvest. Learn what it takes to start and run a successful subscription or CSA program from two of the oldest and most well-respected CSA programs in the US.

## II – Organic Certification – Making it Work for the Small Farm (WSDA)

*Speakers: Pamela Coleman – Organic Field Inspector, Columbia Basin  
Mike Hackett – Organic Field Inspector, Northwest Washington  
Georgana Webster – Organic Field Inspector, Northwest Washington*

The fastest growing segment of the food industry centers on all things organic. And that demand brings a premium price to those who can follow the rules set by the National Organic Program. However, for small and beginning farms with limited resources, the process and paperwork can seem daunting, if not downright impossible.

Learn just what to do to start and maintain organic certification on your farm. Three members of the WSDA Organic Food Program will demystify the process, paperwork, and requirements. Topics covered will include rules specific to livestock as well as fruit and vegetable production.

## III & IV – Beyond Corn: Growing Hay & Alternative Livestock Feeds

### a. Making Hay and Haylage in Western Washington [Whether or not the Sun Shines]

*Speakers: Steve Fransen – WSU Prosser, Forage Agronomist  
Karl Hereth – Hereth Farms, Snohomish, WA*

With the price of feed spiraling out of control, lowering feed costs is paramount to the success of any livestock operation. And with the higher premium paid for grass-fed meat, it makes a lot of dollars and sense to grow your own hay whenever possible. But you've heard the stories, "Hay cannot be made on the west side," "First-cutting hay is likely not fit for man nor beast," "Good hay cannot be made in May or June," and "The only sure time to make hay is after July 4."

These and other myths continue to make the rounds in spite of the fact that farmers have been making good quality hay west of the Cascades for years. With the proper knowledge, skills, equipment, and storage you can make first-rate hay your livestock will thrive on during the winter months. Learn from the experts just what it takes...and when.

While traditional silage has been the gold standard for years, there's a growing trend on west side farms to incorporate haylage as part of a multi-level hay production program. Learn how to make high-quality haylage and take advantage of all your grassland has to offer.

## **b. From Barley to Turnips, Growing Alternative Feed & Forage Crops on the West Side**

*Speakers: Eric Williamson – Williamson Farms, Quincy, WA  
Michael Doehnel – Saanichton, BC*

Since ancient times, farmers have used thousands of different plants to feed their livestock. However, over the last fifty years, the cultivation of livestock feeds has focused on just a few crops, with corn topping the list. Unfortunately, with the rising price of corn and petroleum, it's time to look at alternatives grown locally to provide animals with the nutrition they need to thrive.

Root crops used to be a mainstay of dairy, pork, and sheep production and fell out of favor when corn became king. That's unfortunate since they pack a serious nutritional punch and are one of the most economical feedstocks to grow.

Seventy years ago, most west side farms raised their own grains for home and livestock feed. When petroleum made shipping cheap, the techniques and locally selected varieties almost became lost.

Learn how regional farmers use root crops like turnips as well as a broad spectrum of other forages and crop stubbles for forage. In addition, learn how small-scale grain production is possible in Western Washington and how you can incorporate these feedstock alternatives into your rotation to maximize livestock health and minimize feed costs.

# Track IV: Nursery & Greenhouse

## **I – Worldwide Labor Demographics – Now and in the Future**

*Speaker: Dr. Annabel Kirschner, Washington State University Extension Specialist*

Population demographics are a powerful but underused tool for understanding trends and social dynamics in communities. Between August 2006 and 2007, Dr. Annabel Kirschner spent a year on sabbatical researching demographics of the world labor force and its relevance to the Washington workforce. She'll present some fascinating and instructive findings on migration and the worldwide competition for workers.

## **II – New Markets for your Nursery: More Than Just Growing – Thinking Outside the Pot**

*Speakers: Lloyd Glasscock, Owner, Pacific Stone and Landscape  
Rick Wright, Owner, Sunbreak Nursery Company*

Lloyd Glasscock, an acute businessman and network builder with experience in both the nursery and landscape professions, will talk about a new concept for marketing plants. Expand your business by setting up a cooperative market catering to the landscape industry – much like an antique market – offering a place for landscapers to come and select plants from a variety of growers in one place.

Direct marketing and farmers markets are gaining popularity and growing steadily, presenting another selling opportunity for nurseries. Rick Wright will offer his wealth of experience and informed perspective about what sells, who buys and why local makes a difference to effectively market your business in this new venue.

### **III – Environmentally-friendly Nursery Technology: Reduce and Re-use in a "Going Green Culture"**

*Speakers: Mike Broili, Owner, Living Systems Design, Integrated Water Management  
Lisa Friend, Special Projects Coordinator, RE Sources for Sustainable Communities*

*Water, water everywhere, but none for watering plants.* Stormwater run off from impervious surfaces that scours creeks, as well as a lack of water for plants in the summer, create problems for nursery growers and gardeners alike. Mike Broili is changing that and will share his years of experience designing ways to convert that winter water runoff to a summer water supply.

*Pots, pots and more pots – solving a plastic dilemma.* Lisa Friend has the solution to those piles of plastic pots growing behind the greenhouse and filling garden sheds: re-use and re-cycle. Lisa has conducted a number of recycling events with the help of community volunteers such as WSU Master Gardeners and Master Composters, as well as cooperating agencies. She has experience with pesticide container recycling and pots, flats and baling twine. She'll offer up-to-the-minute opportunities to turn waste into a resource.

### **IV – Coordinating Growers, Retailers and Customer Trends: What's Hot, What's Not in Consumer Gardening Trends**

*Speaker: Susan McCoy, Garden Media Group/IMPACT Marketing & PR, Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania*

Garden Media Group tracks nation-wide consumer trends in the nursery and greenhouse industries for a high caliber roster of horticulture and outdoor lifestyle clients. GMG founder Susan McCoy will share some of the group's findings on customer preferences in today's changing world, along with suggestions for meeting customer trends and coordinating the supply chain to anticipate those needs. Some of her clients include Ball Horticultural Co., Garden Writers Association, Longwood Gardens, Royal Horticulture Society, as well as groups from museums to non-profits.

## **Track V: Environment & Farming**

### **I – Biodiesel and Biogas – What's Possible Now: Bio-energy Technologies**

*Speakers: Ted Durfey, Natural Selection Farms, Sunnyside, WA  
Darryl Vander Haak, Vander Haak Digester Project*

Biodiesel and biogas are two available technologies that can be implemented and used at "farm-scale" or slightly larger. This workshop features two of Washington's pioneering farmers who are using biodiesel and bioenergy technologies as a platform for sustainable agriculture management on their farms.

### **II – Bio-energy Crops: Potential for Switchgrass and Canola in Northwest Washington**

*Speakers: Steven Fransen, WSU Prosser, WA  
Kate Painter, WSU Center for Sustaining Ag & Natural Resources*

Biofuels have been the hot-topic of the last two years both in Washington and beyond. For Washington farmers to benefit from the biofuel bonanza, we need to increase our options of biofuel feedstock crops to produce. Two key crops that may give Washington farmers a competitive position in biofuel production are switchgrass and canola. WSU Extension Agronomist Steve Fransen already had switchgrass trials under production long before it was mentioned in a State-of-the-Union address. Kate Painter will highlight opportunities and challenges of canola production based on her analysis of the Snohomish County oilseed trials.

### **III – On-farm Energy: Farm Energy Use Calculators**

*Speaker: Stefanie Aschmann, USDA, Natural Resource Conservation Service*

The team at USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service has developed a series of web-based on-farm energy assessment tools. These tools are useful for farmers to understand energy use for electricity, liquid fuel, nitrogen, and also for impacts of production practices on soil carbon.

### **IV – On-farm Mortality Composting: An Alternative Method of Disposal**

*Speaker: Lynne Carpenter-Boggs, WSU BIOAg Program*

As rendering options become fewer, farmers need an inexpensive, safe method for dealing with animal mortalities. Composting, if done properly, can provide an alternative method for year-round disposal and on-farm nutrient recycling – and become a marketable product. WSU has an ongoing project in several locations around the state demonstrating safe and effective methods of composting animal carcasses over 300 pounds.

## **Track VI: Risk Management Tools for Farmers**

### **I – Programs and Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) Lite Insurance**

*Speaker: Chris Mahelona, Risk Management Specialist, USDA Risk Management Agency, Spokane*

Find out what programs are available statewide through the USDA Risk Management Agency, in particular for western Washington and diversified farms, and specifically, the AGR-Lite program. The AGR-Lite whole farm revenue program is a federally subsidized insurance plan that should be considered a risk management tool by farmers and ranchers. AGR-Lite covers virtually all agricultural income and offers protection for most farm-raised crops, animals and animal products due to unavoidable natural disasters and market fluctuations.

### **II – Family Business Succession**

*Speaker: Wendy Knopp, Assistant Vice President, AgVision (NW Farm Credit Services)*

Although 90 percent of businesses in the United States are family-owned, only a small number survive into the third and fourth generations. While many producers recognize the importance of leadership and management succession, conversations addressing family business succession can be challenging. Northwest Farm Credit Services research reveals four out of 10 producers have no ownership or succession plans, and most would be challenged to manage their business should death, disability, or divorce occur. This presentation provides participants basic tools in initiating dialogues surrounding the timing and funding of retirement, key roles and responsibilities, and the development of skills in the next generation.

### **III – Risk Management - Strategic Planning**

*Speaker: Audrey Gravley, Regional Vice President, Community Lending, NW Farm Credit Services*

Family business leaders frequently cite challenges in wearing two hats, that of production manager and general manager. Often, synergies in leveraging family business participants' experiences and insights may be enhanced through strategic family business planning. Rather than a complicated process, strategic family business planning guides participants through a series of exercises focused on answering three fundamental questions: 1) Where has the business been (and what lessons has it learned)? 2) Where is the business today? And 3) Where is the business headed? This presentation introduces participants to fundamental tools essential for successful strategic planning.

## **IV – Farm Financing**

*Speaker: Wendy Knopp, Assistant Vice President, AgVision (NW Farm Credit Services)*

What does a lender consider when making a loan? This presentation will provide participants with the basic understanding of the 5 Cs (Character, Capacity, Collateral, Capital, and Conditions) by describing these from the character of the individual – just how important *is* that credit score? – to the operation's financial position, and where do I put those assets and debts on the balance sheet. The workshop will also inform the participants of new lending programs available for young and/or beginning producers.