

2005 Farming Conference Sparks New Ideas for “Growing Success”

Thursday, November 10, may have been a dreary day outside, but inside the 4-H Hall at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds the climate was anything but dull. For the 235 participants attending the County’s second annual Focus on Farming Conference, the day was alive with color, rich with the aroma of farm-fresh foods, and charged with the energy of passionate farm entrepreneurs freely sharing their ideas for growing successful farm businesses.

From the moment the doors opened at 7:15 a.m., it was an action-packed day. At exactly 8:00 a.m., County Executive Aaron Reardon kicked things off with a heartfelt welcome and an update on the Agriculture Initiative launched during the first days of his administration nearly two years ago. Though still in its early stages, the initiative has produced solid results, perhaps none more significant than the County’s improved relationship with the farming community evidenced by the highly successful Focus on Farming conferences.



County Executive Reardon hosted and emceed the day-long conference. Here, he delivers a progress report on his Agriculture Initiative.



Dale Nelson, owner and founder of Food Concepts, Inc. inspired growers with innovative ideas for new products and marketing ideas for their crops.

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Comment sheets collected at the conference contained many testimonials to this change. In answer to the question “What did you like best about this year’s conference,” one respondent simply wrote “The fact that it is happening.” Another wrote “The chance for growers and officials to exchange ideas.” Another said “The common theme to work together to produce a sustainable farming community.”

Perhaps the most succinct comment was “It was a tremendous day.” It was also a very inspiring day. At the end of their presentations, several speakers were surrounded by attendees eager for more information and wanting to learn specific ways they could adapt what they had learned to their own farming operations. “The class setup was awesome, by focusing on just the subjects that apply to my farm really seemed to maximize my time,” commented one grower.

To learn more about the Focus on Farming Conference II, please visit the Focus on Farming page on the County’s website.



Although everyone had come to learn more about building their farm business, the hands-down favorite session of the day was lunch. Sponsored by the Snohomish County Farm Bureau, participants enjoyed a lavish feast of local foods prepared by prominent Seattle-area chefs.