



Focus on Farming Conference II

November 10, 2005

Speaker Bios

We are grateful to the following presenters for volunteering their time and expertise for this conference. Thank You:

Keynote Speaker Read Smith graduated with a B.S. degree in Agriculture from Washington State University in 1969. After four years in the Yakima Valley with Del Monte Corporations, he joined his father on the family farm near St. John, Washington. Read has been a Conservation District official since 1974, serving as President of the Washington Association of Conservation District and President of the National Association of Conservation Districts from 2001 to 2003. He has also served on the Washington Conservation Commission, the Washington Ecological Commission and was appointed by the Washington Governors and the Secretary of Agriculture to special commission and councils.

The National Association of Wheat Growers, the National Endowment for Soil and Water Conservation, and Farm Futures Magazine have all recognized Read and his farming operations nationally for conservation systems implementation and management.

Read is a member of Columbia Plateau Producers, which markets value-added wheat flour under the "Shepherd's Grain" label. This small group of direct seed, food alliance-certified producers is providing sustainable food products from local family farms.

Read Co-Chairs the Ag Energy Work Group, an alliance of National Ag Leaders promoting agriculture's potential contribution to the nation's energy problems through renewable energy solutions from our nation's Ag and forestlands.

Read, wife Deanna and son Jeremy operate the 9,000 acre Smith family farming interests.

Smith Farms - Read Smith
11751 Lancaster Rd.
St. John; WA 99171
(509) 648-3922 reads@stjohncable.com

Steve Appel has been Washington Farm Bureau President since 1994. He grows wheat and barley in Whitman County, and first became active in the Farm Bureau in 1974, as Chairman of the Whitman County Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee. He later served as President of the Whitman County Farm Bureau, and member of the State Board of Directors, and as first and second Vice President of the Washington Farm Bureau. Steve also currently serves as Vice President of the American Farm Bureau Federation, the world's largest general farm organization with nearly six million member families. In this role he represents the nation's farm and ranch community by testifying in Congress and meeting with high-ranking administration officials. Under Steve's leadership as President, the Washington Farm Bureau has experienced tremendous growth in member benefits, and influence in Olympia and Washington D.C. and an eighty-five percent growth in its membership during the last six years. **Contact: Steve Appel, President; Washington Farm Bureau; P.O. Box 2009; Olympia, WA 98507; (800) 331-3276.**

William Brookreson has served the Washington State Department of Agriculture as Deputy Director since 1999. He began his career with the Department in 1974. In 1988 he was a recipient of the Governor's Distinguished Management Leadership Award. William graduated from the University of Illinois with an M.A. in Russian and Balkan History; and with a B.A. in History and Political Science from Western Washington University. William was born in Las Cruces, New Mexico and raised in the Kelso-Longview area. **Contact: (360) 902-1810; bbrookreson@agr.wa.gov**

Ty and Julie Costa have been breeding Arabian horses since 1975. They also train Arabians and Quarter horses; participate in trail classes; have been active in Snohomish County 4-H Class A; and participate in open shows in the Western, Hunt Seat, and Dressage categories.

Bruce Dunlop operates a specialty food business which he started in 1997, and a small, diversified livestock farm. He sells his food products throughout the Northwest. During the past several years he has been active in the formation of Island Grown Farmers Cooperative, a livestock processing cooperative; and managed the development, construction and testing for the first USDA Inspected on-farm livestock-processing unit. This has led to an unexpected occupation as consultant for other farm groups to help rebuild the nation's small-scale meat-processing infrastructure needed by independent farmers. He received Bachelor of Science degrees in Biology and Chemical Engineering from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario Canada and then

worked in the food and agricultural products industries. Bruce lives on his farm on Lopez Island in Washington State and produces grass-fed lamb and pasture raised pork to help feed his community.

Steve Evans is Farm Specialist for the King County Department of Planning and Development and is involved in developing better economic opportunities for farmers in the Puget Sound Region. Steve helped develop the Puget Sound Fresh program, as well as Farmlink – a program that links people who want to farm with landowners who have available farm land.
steve.evans@metrokc.gov

Keith Graves, Tree Farmer, and his wife Sally make their home near Arlington on their 1961 land purchase of 11.5 acres. Over succeeding years through sound financial planning and opportune timber harvesting they have accumulated a total of 228 acres. Currently 170 acres is in timber production and 58 in pasture. Mr. Graves diligently maintains their well-stocked conifer plantations and practices sustainable forestry. **P O Box 213, Arlington, WA 98223; Phone: (360) 435-3712**

Mike Hackett is a faculty member for Snohomish County Agriculture Development Extension. He serves Snohomish County's agriculture communities by providing education and resources relating to profitability/sustainability. His goal is to empower all key groups and decision makers to find practical, lasting solutions for maintaining a strong agricultural base for food and fiber production/marketing. This effort includes citizen/consumer education to support "their" local farmers/ranchers by purchasing locally. The end goal is for a safe and reliable local food & fiber system for Snohomish County. "Sustainable agriculture is the key to our children's future."
Contact: Washington State University Snohomish County Extension, 600-128th St. S.E., Everett, WA. 98208-6353; Ph. (425) 357-6017; Fax (425) 338-3994; hackett@wsu.edu

John Keller has worked in the forestry profession in the Pacific Northwest for over twenty-five years, almost twenty of which have been with the WA Dept. of Natural Resources. Currently he coordinates the Forest Stewardship Program in northwest Washington, where he provides non-regulatory one-on-one technical assistance to family forest owners through personal site visits to people's property's. He also administers the Forest Land Enhancement Program which provides financial cost-sharing assistance (when funding is available). Jointly with WSU Extension, he helps provide educational programs dealing with topics such as forest health, timber stand improvement, harvesting and regeneration. John also helps forest landowners become certified under the American Tree Farm System. John holds a degree in forest management from WSU and is a Certified Forester in the Society of American Foresters. John owns and manages his own family forest located in Cowlitz County.
Contact: Office (360) 856-3491; Cell (360) 708-1430; john.keller@wadnr.gov

Tristan Klesick, Stanwood. Their family operates The Organic Produce Shoppe and the Klesick Family Farm which delivers organic fruits and vegetable directly to homes and offices. They also produce grass fed beef, honey and hay. Tristan has also served on the Agricultural Advisory Board for the past five years, Northwest Agricultural Incubator Task Force, and recently appointed by Aaron Reardon to Co-chair the Snohomish County Economic Development Action Team. **Contact: The Organic Produce Shoppe, 24101 Miller Rd, Stanwood, Washington 98292; (360) 629-5350**
tristan@organicproduceshoppe.com
www.organicproduceshoppe.com

Gerry Labish owns Riverend Ranch, east of Monroe Washington, where he has lived with his family and raised beef cattle since 1989. As President of the Snohomish County Cattlemen's Association for the past three years, his main goal has been keeping farming alive and well in Snohomish County. He helped establish the Cascade Range Beef Company which markets local grass-fed/grass-finished beef. **Contact: 16603-275th SE, Monroe, WA 98272; (425) 387-2496; (360) 793-2018; glabish@msn.com**

Bobbi Lindemulder has been with Snohomish Conservation District for 8 years and is a Certified Farm Planner. A graduate of Montana State University with a degree in Range Resource Management, Bobbi oversees the district's small farm and cost-share programs. Bobbi teaches farm-related classes throughout the year, consults with landowners on issues affecting their farms, assists with public outreach events, manages several grants, and serves on the state livestock committee. She is also a board member of the King Conservation District. Bobbi and her husband Chuck own West Valley Beef, a grass-fed beef operation in Duvall where they are working towards the goals of sustainable farming and promoting local agriculture. **Contact: (425) 335-5634, ext 109; bobbi@snohomishcd.org**

Abbi Little is a local food broker and owns Abbi's Northwest that sells locally grown produce, meats, and cheeses to end markets. Abbi's Northwest works with a network of farmers who are interested in sourcing alternative outlets such as institutions, large catering companies, regional retailers, and cruise lines. In addition, she runs a farm to school program that pulls from farmers all over the state and distributes to schools throughout the region. Abbi has 20 years of sales and marketing experience in the manufacturing industry. She specializes in market and route development. **Contact: 1414 Oakes Ave, Everett, WA 98201; (425) 280-4180; abbilittle@yahoo.com**

Bob Lovejoy has been in the wholesale nursery business since 1973 – thirty-two years. He started his own company in 1979 and has a wholesale nursery of approximately 100 acres. He grows a wide range of outdoor shrubs and trees and supplies garden centers and landscapers in northwest Washington. **Contact: (425) 754-0786; bob@lovejoynursery.com**

Ed McConkey is President and CEO of McConkey Co headquartered in Sumner, Washington. McConkey Co has been a hard goods supplier to horticultural businesses for more than six decades. With locations in Washington, Oregon and California, they supply containers, soils, fertilizers, equipment, structures and irrigation solutions throughout the western US and Canada. **Contact: McConkey Co, PO Box 1690, Sumner, WA 98390; I(800) 426-8124; emcconkey@mcconkeyco.com**

Miles McEvoy, WSDA Organic Program Manager, received his Bachelors Degree from Evergreen State College in 1985 and completed his Masters in Entomology from Cornell University in 1988. He has worked for the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) Organic Food Program since 1988 as an inspector and program manager. Miles was one of the founding directors of The Food Alliance, a non-profit organization that recognizes farmers who produce food in environmentally and socially responsible ways. Miles helped establish the National Association of State Organic Programs (NASOP) in 1998 and served as NASOP President from 2001-2003. In 2000, he helped establish WSDA's Small Farm and Direct Marketing Program. **Contact: WSDA, P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, WA 98504-2560; (360) 902-1924; agr.wa.gov/foodanimal/organic/default.htm; mmcevoy@agr.wa.gov**

Wally Michalec is a professional forester and the owner of a forestry consulting business, Michalec and Associates, Inc. He is a 1975 graduate of the University of Washington, College of Forest Resources, with a B.S. in Forest Management and Forest Sciences. He was a forester for the Pilchuck Tree Farm in Arlington, Washington between 1976 and 1986, and has since operated his forestry consulting business, specializing in forest management on private forest lands. Through his Arlington business, Wally manages properties throughout Western Washington. Most of his work involves timber appraisal, timber harvest, reforestation, and plantation management. **Contact: Michalec and Associates, Inc., 915 E. First S., Arlington, WA 98223; (360) 435-4263; wallymichalec@comcast.net**

Tim Miller has been working for Washington State University as an extension weed scientist since 1997, and is stationed at the WSU Northwestern Washington Research and Extension Center. Tim earned his Ph.D. in plant science from the University of Idaho. His program includes weed control research in western Washington crops, as well as studying control of non-native vegetation on agricultural, range, and forest lands. **twmiller@wsu.edu**

Curt Moulton, Director of the WSU Extension office in Snohomish County, is an agriculture economist by training and is part of the County's Focus on Farming implementation team. He has been with Extension for over 25 years and has worked in King, Pierce and King Counties over that time span. His work has included development of new markets and farm organizations, organization of workshops and conferences, and the creation of grant-funded agriculture programs. **Contact: WSU Extension, Snohomish County, 600-128th St. SE, Everett, WA 98208; ph. (425) 357-6015; fax (425) 338-3994; moultonc@wsu.edu; <http://snohomish.wsu.edu>**

Dale Nelson is owner and founder of Food Concepts, Inc., a full-service specialty food development company in Washington State. With 25 years experience in the food industry, Dale generates a passion in this artisan environment. Under the leadership of Dale Nelson, Food Concepts is made up of several business themes; Woodring Orchards at Pike place Market, Cashmere Coffee Company, Vitalli Syrup Company and Cacao D'Oro. Founded in 1991, the company drew upon Mr. Nelson's expertise in product innovation, new product development and a desire to create a quality specialty food experience, establishing the diverse organization that exists today. **Contact: Food Concepts, Inc.; PO Box 707; Monroe, WA 98272; ph. (360) 794-9778; fax (360) 793-6842; javafci@earthlink.net**

Linda Neunzig is owner and operator of Ninety Farms in Arlington. Ninety Farms is a 50 acre farm which produces herbicide/pesticide free produce to some of the finest restaurants in Western Washington as well a local CSA program specializing in the hard to find and unusual varieties. Linda also raises all natural grass fed beef, Katahdin Hair sheep as well as ethically raised milk and grass fed veal. Educational farm tours are also a large part of her farm where she teaches school children about where their food comes from. Linda also serves on the Snohomish County Agricultural advisory board. **Contact: Ninety Farms, 22912-67th Ave NE, Arlington, WA 98223; Farm (360) 435-9304; Cell (360) 631-1286**

Steve Nissley has a B.S. in biology from the University of California at Irvine and an M.S. in forestry from the University of Washington. He has served for 27 years with the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Eastern, Central, and Western Washington. Steve currently is the District Conservationist in the Mount Vernon Field Office. **Contact: Ph: 428-7684, Ext. 131; steve.nissley@wa.usda.gov**

Jon Pettit has been with Steuber Distributing, Inc for 27 years. Since 1976 this family-owned business has been a wholesale supplier of equipment and materials for nursery, floral, and landscaping operations. They distribute soil, burlap, greenhouses, lighting, heaters, irrigation pipes, etc. The business is in Snohomish, Washington, between 3rd & 4th Streets. **Contact: Steuber Dist. Co. - P.O. Box 100 – Snohomish, WA 98291, I(800) 426-8815, jonp@steuberdistributing.com**

John Postema is President of the Snohomish County Farm Bureau. He also owns and operates Flower World in Maltby in South Snohomish County. Flower World is a wholesale-retail nursery, which grows annuals, potted plants, nursery stock, perennials and tropical plants on one hundred acres of land, eleven acres of greenhouses. Ninety-five percent of sales are retail. Between March 1 and the end of October of each year Flower World's farm stand is also open, selling vegetables grown on the premises. **Contact: John Postema, 19127-99th Ave SE, Snohomish, WA 98296; 360) 668 2178; johnpostema@w-link.net**

Dale Reiner, a native of Monroe, raises registered Black Angus cattle, Christmas trees and hay on 300 acres in the Tualco Valley, some of which is land homesteaded by his great grandfather in 1873. Eighty-one acres of the farm is currently in the CREP Buffer program; and Dale has built two miles of the Haskell Slough Restoration project on his land. He is also President of the Snohomish-Skykomish Agriculture Alliance, past President of the Snohomish County Farm Bureau, past President of the Snohomish County Cattlemen's Association and he serves on the WIRA 7 Salmon Forum Board of Directors. Dale is an active partner in the Snohomish Basin Biogas Project (a partnership of the Tulalip Tribes, Northwest Chinook Recovery and the Sno/Sky Agriculture Alliance); and he represents agriculture as a member of Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon's Citizens Cabinet on Economic Development. **Contact: Dale Reiner, PO Box 936, Monroe, WA 98272; (425) 344-2940; DaleReiner@hotmail.com**

Lois Ruskell has been with Snohomish Conservation District for 16 years and currently serves as the Information & Education Coordinator. A graduate of Arizona State University with a degree in Ag Industry, Lois coordinates the district's website, publications, plant sale, workshops and tours. She co-owned a commercial dairy for 12 years in Minnesota and has worked as a farm technician, farm planner, grant manager, contract officer, and with Cooperative Extension in two states. **Contact: (425) 335-5634, ext 108; lois@snohomishcd.org**

Kelli Sanger is the direct marketing coordinator in the Washington State Department of Agriculture Small Farm and Direct Marketing Program. She works with farmers, processors, farmers markets and others to enhance the localized food system. The program provides information on direct marketing, facilitates marketing opportunities for farmers, and assists in developing processing infrastructure and distribution modes to support market access for small farms. As a Washington native, she currently lives and works in Olympia, and holds a B.A. in Sustainable Agriculture and Community Development from Evergreen State College. **Contact: Agriculture PO Box 42560 Olympia, WA 98504-2560; Ph: (360) 902-2057; Fax: (360) 902-2089; ksanger@agr.wa.gov; <http://agr.wa.gov/Marketing/SmallFarm/>**

Charlie Schwab has 28 years of experience in the nursery business and has owned and operated Western Nursery Sales for the last 15 years. He is a grower and wholesale supplier to the landscape industry and construction trade. Western Nursery employs ten people on 100 acres in Snohomish and Skagit Counties. **Contact: Western Nursery Sales; 4715 SR 530 NE; Arlington, WA 98223; phone (360) 474-1494; fax (360) 474-1470; P/O Box 2475, Mount Vernon, WA 98273; westernnurserysales@verizon.net**

Alan Shank - As a certified dairy and small farm planner with the district since 2000, Alan has written many farm plans for dairies and horse operations. He has written and reviewed grant applications, planned dairy educational workshops, and written dairy articles for the Nexus. He received a SCD Merit Farm award for managing two horses on a small acreage using best management practices and has conducted tours at his farm. He is a graduate of the Washington Agriculture Forestry Leadership program. He has BA in Liberal Arts from Principia College, a B.S. in Agribusiness from Illinois State, and an M.S. in Agricultural Economics from Ohio State. **Contact: Alan Shank; (425) 335-5634, ext 120; alan@snohomishcd.org**

Terry Smith - Smith Gardens is a 104-year old floricultural company with nurseries in Bellingham and Marysville, Washington, Aurora, Oregon and Watsonville, California. The company focus is to supply Home Depot, Lowe's and Wal-Mart in Washington, Oregon and Alaska with quality flowering potted and bedding plants. Smith Gardens is being lead by the fourth generation of Smiths and has made a commitment to its 500 employees and to the community to do its part in adding to the quality of life. Formerly Terry Smith served 10 years on the Snohomish County Agricultural Advisory Board, and was recognized in 2000 as Grower of the Year for the United States by Greenhouse Grower Magazine. **Contact: (360) 733 4671, ext 221.**

Duane Weston is a professional forester. He graduated from the University of Washington's Forest Resources program in 1962 and has over forty years of experience working for a family-owned tree farm in North Skagit and South Snohomish Counties. He and his wife Anna Marie have owned a forty-six acre tree farm near Arlington since 1977. In 1992 they were named Washington State Tree Farmers of the Year. In 2002 Duane retired as Chief Forester and General Manager of Pilchuck Tree Farm, and is currently a member of the Board of Supervisors for Snohomish Conservation District. He is also Chairman of the Washington State Tree Farm Committee of Foresters. This group certifies qualifying family-owned tree farms as Sustainable in accordance with the American Tree Farm Program. **Contact: Duane Weston, PO Box 33, Arlington, WA 98223-0337; (360) 474-8736; duaneweston@cs.com**