



Snohomish County
County Executive's Office

For immediate release – Monday, November 8, 2004

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Snohomish County to 'focus on farming'

More than 300 local farmers and business owners expected to attend agriculture summit Thursday, November 18 in Monroe

Snohomish County farmers, business leaders, and government officials will gather at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds in Monroe on Thursday, November 18, to begin laying out an economic development plan for local agriculture.

Co-sponsored by Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon and County Council Chair John Koster, the event is called the "Snohomish County Focus on Farming Conference: Obstacles and Opportunities for Local Agriculture."

The conference is just the latest initiative aimed at boosting Snohomish County agriculture.

"I want to provide farmers with new opportunities to increase production, enter new markets and improve their bottom line," Reardon said. "It is why we are convening this conference and it is why one of my administration's first acts was to appoint an Agriculture Coordinator to work with local farmers.

"The only way that we can preserve farmlands in our County is if we give farmers means by which to stay in the business."

Said Koster, “It is critical that County Government do its part in helping to promote and protect agriculture in Snohomish County. There are many ways government can help farming interests, not the least of which is making sure we are not getting in the way with cumbersome regulations. There will be a lot to discuss on Nov. 18.

“I am very excited to be working with our farmers toward setting a positive and constructive course of action for Snohomish County agriculture.”

The one-day conference will feature presentations from industry experts on current economic conditions, regulatory issues, and new business opportunities for the county’s growers, farmers, and ranchers. Following the presentations, attendees will get together in break-out sessions to provide feedback on these topics to Reardon and Koster.

Conference presenters will include Dr. John Ikerd, a nationally recognized agricultural economist from the University of Missouri. He will be joined by Dr. Carolyn Henri, a local agricultural economics consultant; and Craig Ladiser, Planning and Development Services Director for Snohomish County.

Although Snohomish County is the official sponsor of the conference, all program planning, group facilitation, and event coordination are being performed by a group of volunteer farmers, agricultural interest groups, Snohomish Conservation District, WSU Cooperative Extension, and staff from Snohomish and King counties.

The conference will get underway with a 7:00 am coffee and continental breakfast hour in the 4-H Building at the Monroe fairgrounds. Attendees will be treated to a gourmet lunch of local farm products including Snohomish County branded grass-fed beef, an exciting new farm product that will make its public debut at the conference.

There is no charge to farmers and members of the local agriculture community for attending the Focus on Farming Conference. But pre-registration is required. Attendance will be limited to 350 participants. Reservations can be made by contacting Ann Averill, Snohomish County Executive Office, 425-388-3879, or emailing ann.averill@co.snohomish.wa.us.

Registrants must provide contact information.

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