



**Snohomish County**  
**County Executive's Office**  
**Aaron Reardon**  
*County Executive*

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## **Executive Reardon to honor Wanser family for 100 Years of farming**

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*The Wanser family will receive Snohomish County's Centennial Award during  
Opening Day ceremonies at the Evergreen State Fair*

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon will officially open the 2006 Evergreen State Fair tomorrow, Thursday, August 24, at 2:00 p.m. with a presentation that includes honoring the Wanser family for continually farming their land for 100 years.

“Our family farms are vitally important to Snohomish County’s economy, our quality of life and our cultural heritage,” said Executive Reardon. “It is only fitting that we honor those families who not only represent our farming heritage, but who continue to define our agricultural future.”

The original Wanser family came to Snohomish County in 1905 and settled near Flowing Lake. Dairy cattle were the farm mainstay until the 1950s when they transitioned to beef cattle and sheep. Today, Anna Rose Wanser, wife of third generation farmer William David Wanser, maintains a small orchard, raises sheep and keeps a few chickens. The family was active in 4-H, with many summers spent at the Evergreen State Fair.

“The Centennial Award is a real milestone for our family—one that we appreciate,” said Anna Rose Wanser.

For generations Snohomish County farms have nourished people with wholesome and diverse foods, generated jobs and dollars for our local economies, and bred an ethic of stewardship for the land. But today, many local small and mid-sized family farms are facing market pressures that are threatening their financial futures.

To preserve the County’s farming industry, Executive Reardon early in his administration, convened a Focus on Farming conference attended by 350 farmers, ranchers and growers. From this event innovative strategies were developed to

strengthen the agriculture industry in Snohomish County. On March 15, 2005, he implemented by Executive Order, the Snohomish County Agriculture Action Plan which was developed in partnership with representative members of the agriculture community and County staff.

Today, several large initiatives—Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) and Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) policies have been implemented to preserve the County’s existing agriculture land for future farming interests instead of for commercial or residential development.

Working hand-in-hand with the agriculture community, the County is continuing to make improvements to its regulatory processes, making access to local agriculture permit applications quicker and easier. Also, connections between the farming community and local, regional and state leaders have been built to create dialogue to build awareness of, and develop solutions to, the business needs of the agriculture community.

Most recently, the Snohomish Agricultural Economic Development Action Team (SAEDAT) was formed, as part of the Ag Action Plan, to make recommendations on ways to diversify local farm products. SAEDAT will develop financial and marketing strategies to grow the County’s agricultural economy for the next 100 years.

Among the strategies to be evaluated by SAEDAT is whether there is potential for building new-economy businesses such as bio-fuel products. Grown from local crops, these new bio-fuel products could serve to stimulate economic development and generate new revenue streams.

“The past and future benefit of our farms is invaluable to the health and economy of Snohomish County,” said Executive Reardon. “I am proud to present the Centennial Farm award to the Wanser family—one of our County’s most valued assets.”

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