

## **Media Advisory – Oct. 6, 2008**

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### **Focus on Farming Conference returns Nov. 20**

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon welcomes farmers, chefs, growers and retailers to the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Focus on Farming Conference to be held Thursday, Nov. 20 at the Lynnwood Convention Center.

The annual conference, initiated by Reardon and local farmers in 2004, continues to grow in attendance and participation from a broad sector, including new rural residents with an interest in farming, government agencies and individuals interested in food, sustainability and regional agriculture.

Titled “Breaking New Ground,” this year’s conference offers a diverse program featuring renowned speakers including 2008 MacArthur Fellowship winner David Montgomery, author of “Dirt: The Erosion of Civilizations.”

Montgomery is a doctorate-level professor at the UW Department of Earth & Space Sciences, where he studies the evolution of topography and the influence of changing landforms on ecological systems and human societies. His most recent studies have taken him around the world, only to discover that humanity’s most necessary natural resource is most likely its soils. Yet, current mechanized agriculture has eroded much of the land, putting humanity’s future at risk.

Montgomery is expected to talk about ways to overcome these agricultural hurdles. In addition, participants will enjoy top-notch sessions on successful farming, new techniques and lucrative advice from regional experts.

All this will be pleasantly interrupted by a world-class lunch featuring local fare prepared by the Northwest’s premier chefs. The evening will end with wine tasting featuring Washington State vintners.

Breakout sessions still are being planned but participants will have a chance to learn more about distillation and wine-making, green gardens, container gardens, polyculture, product marketing, seed drying for profit, pest control and much more.

The conference will run from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Lynnwood Convention Center, 3711 196<sup>th</sup> St. SW. Early registration is \$35 and runs through Nov. 6. After that, the cost to attend is \$45. Register online at [www.focusonfarming.org](http://www.focusonfarming.org) or by calling 425-388-7492.

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