



Snohomish County
Office of Economic Development

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Snohomish County
Focus on Farming Conference IV

Highly anticipated conference to feature national agriculture leaders

"From Soils to Sales," the fourth annual Snohomish County Focus on Farming conference, gets underway at 8 a.m. Thursday, November 29, 2007, at the Lynnwood Convention Center. The conference will feature nationally recognized agricultural leaders, a broad range of subject-specific breakout sessions and a trade show exhibition.

Presenters of note include Snohomish County Executive **Aaron Reardon**, Washington State Congressman **Rick Larsen**; keynotes **Chad Kruger**, BIOAg educator for Washington State University's Center for Sustaining Agriculture & National Resources, and **Dr. Fred Kirschenmann**, Distinguished Fellow, Iowa State University's Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture; Charles Kuperus, New Jersey's Secretary of the Department of Agriculture; Claire Thomas of The Root Connection, Washington state's oldest Community Supported Agriculture program; and Dave Robb, General Manager of Tuscarora Organic Growers Cooperative in Pennsylvania which provides produce for Washington, DC as well as other mid-Atlantic states.

"Our partnership with farmers across the region has allowed us to identify innovative ideas and proven strategies to promote agriculture," said Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon. "This year's Focus on Farming line-up draws on the expertise of national leaders to invigorate and sustain our farm economy."

The annual conference, initiated by Executive Reardon and Snohomish County farmers in 2004, has experienced growing attendance and participation from a broad sector, including new rural residents with an interest in farming, government agencies, and individuals interested in food and sustainability and other advocates for regional agriculture.

"Our farms are a key part of Snohomish County's quality of life and the successful diversification of our economy," Executive Reardon continued. "We must do what we can to ensure their success. The conference agenda offers strategies relevant to every farmer throughout Puget Sound."

This year's focus, "From Soils to Sales," will give farmers "more resources to meet the demands of a changing marketplace and shifting environmental conditions. Conference workshops will include the latest research, methodology and techniques for on-farm efficiency and will explore

trends in local and organic farm to market; alternative grains; environmentally-friendly nursery technology and bio-energy.

- WSU's Chad Kruger will present the morning keynote, "Climate Change Impacts on Regional Agriculture." Mr. Kruger currently serves as the Director of Outreach for the Climate Friendly Farming™ Project, which is researching agricultural practices and technologies that reduce agricultural greenhouse gas emissions and provide renewable, biomass substitutes for fossil fuel-based products.
- Dr. Kirschenmann, renowned for his work with national and international sustainable agriculture, will present the lunchtime keynote, "Meeting Agriculture's Challenges in a Rapidly Changing World." Dr. Kirschenmann recently completed a five-year term on the US Department of Agriculture's National Organic Standards Board and manages his family's 3,500-acre certified organic farm in North Dakota. A professor of religion & philosophy at Iowa State, he has written extensively about ethics and agriculture, earned numerous awards including a Rockefeller Fellowship and sits on many food and agriculture-related boards across the country.

As in previous years, participants will feast on a delicious gourmet lunch created by top regional chefs using farm-fresh local products. A tasting reception with Puget Sound wines and artisan cheese makers will end the day.

Cost: \$30 prior to November 15; \$40 after November 15 and at the door
Cost includes two keynote addresses, workshops, lunch and a wine & cheese tasting

For information, contact Laura McLeod, Snohomish County, 425.388.6465 or visit www.focusonfarming.org.

The Focus on Farming Conference is a project of Snohomish County's Office of Economic Development. Presenters and key sponsors include King County, Washington State University Snohomish County Extension, Northwest Agriculture Business Center, Flower World, Inc., and Northwest Farm Credit Services.

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