

# Washington State Conservation Commission

## FARMLAND PRESERVATION NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2019

[HTTP://SCC.WA.GOV/OFP/](http://SCC.WA.GOV/OFP/)



### *2019 legislative session rolls on*

As the legislature continues in their 105-day legislative session, key cutoffs for bills up quickly approaching. **February 22** marked the first key date whereby policy bills must have been moved from policy committees. Bills are then referred to either a fiscal committee or respective chamber. **March 1**, marks the day that bills with a fiscal impact need to have been moved from committee. The day for all bills to be moved from their respective house of origin is **March 13**. Session is scheduled to adjourn *Sine Die* on April 28.



To track of the legislation of interest, go to: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/>

For committee calendars and agendas, go to: <http://leg.wa.gov/legislature/Pages/Calendar.aspx>

If you are interested in commenting on a bill or contact your legislator, the following link provides information on the various ways you can provide your opinion: <http://leg.wa.gov/lic/Pages/default.aspx>

The Office of Farmland Preservation tracks legislation as it relates to agricultural viability, regulatory impacts, protection of farmland, land use, and other topics related to viability of farmland in Washington. The following table is a sample of bills that are alive in the process.

HB 1587	<a href="#">Bill Page</a>	Increasing access to fruits and vegetables for individuals with limited incomes.
HB 1731	<a href="#">Bill Page</a>	Continuing the work of the Washington food policy forum.
HB 1733	<a href="#">Bill Page</a>	Retaining productive farmland. (Companion bill SB 5443)
HB 1964	<a href="#">Bill Page</a>	Requiring the written consent of a lessee before DNR may terminate a lease for reasons other than default.
SB 5259	<a href="#">Bill Page</a>	Encouraging the success of agriculture on agricultural land.
SB 5443	<a href="#">Bill Page</a>	Retaining productive farmland. (Companion bill HB 1733)

### *RCO WWRP Farm and Forest Webinar—March 7*

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) is accepting grant applications in 2019 for two Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) categories: [Farmland Preservation](#) and [Forestland Preservation](#). These two categories provide grants for the purchase of conservation easements to protect lands for agriculture or commercial timber production. **Pre-applications are due May 1st.**

RCO's application webinar is set for Thursday, March 7, 10 a.m. [Register here](#). This one hour session includes information to help you prepare and submit a grant proposal for the grant programs open this year.

**Stay in contact and sign up for the OFP-Newsletter!**

Email frequency is once a month

Sign up on the web at: [HTTP://SCC.WA.GOV/OFP/](http://SCC.WA.GOV/OFP/)

## *Western SARE—Protecting At-Risk Cattle through Nutrition*

The 2019 edition of Tilth Alliance's Farm Guide is now open and ready for sign up. Be sure your farm or farmers market will be part of it! Options for both print and web listings available.



The Farm Guide connects consumers with what's sustainable, local and in season across the state. Available in print, online and mobile app, the Farm Guide is a great way to reach people wherever they are. The guide gets distributed to over 300 locations throughout the Puget Sound region. **Listings and ads due Friday, March 8.**

Be sure to check out the [Farm Guide 2019 Media Kit](#) for advertising specs and rates. Want to see content from last year? [View Farm Guide 2018](#).

Important links:

- [Farm Listing order form](#) — due Friday, March 8
- [Display Advertising order form](#) — due Friday, March 8
- [Media Kit](#)

Don't have the funds, but still want to be listed? A limited amount of financial support is available for farms in need on a first come, first served basis. Contact [farmguide@tilthalliance.org](mailto:farmguide@tilthalliance.org) with questions about getting listing support.

## *2018 Farm Bill Listening Session now available*

A February 26, 2019 USDA listening session for the implementation of the 2018 Farm Bill is [now available to view](#). The listening session provided an opportunity for stakeholders to share their thoughts about how USDA can streamline and improve program delivery, as well as enhance customer service.



The 2018 Farm Bill provides support, certainty, and stability to our nation's farmers, ranchers, and land stewards by enhancing farm support programs, improving crop insurance, maintaining disaster programs, and promoting and supporting voluntary conservation.

Check out the YouTube video by going to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7180xpmMmyA>

## *Farm Survey from WSDA & DOH - invitation to participate!*

The Washington State Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health invite you to take our joint Farm Survey, as part of an ongoing effort to understand the impact of our programs and improve the resources we provide.

Take the survey by clicking here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GFMJDJF>

Tome la encuesta haciendo clic aquí: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GFMJDJF?lang=es>

WSDA conducts a farm survey every two years. All Washington farms are welcome to take the survey. We especially encourage small and mid-scale farms, direct-marketing farms, and farms participating in food assistance programs to complete the survey. The survey is available in English and Spanish.

Survey participation is voluntary, and it should take less than 20 minutes to complete.

**The survey will close on March 31st.** Questions? Email survey coordinators Laura Raymond (WSDA) and Alyssa Auvinen (DOH) at [FMsurvey@doh.wa.gov](mailto:FMsurvey@doh.wa.gov).

## *In Short*

### NRCS 2019 EQIP Signup Deadline

The deadline for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) in Washington is [April 19, 2019 for funding in fiscal year 2019](#).

EQIP is a voluntary, technical and financial assistance program designed to help farmers, ranchers, private forestland owners, tribes and other private landowners/managers improve irrigation efficiency; manage nutrient run-off and/or animal waste; improve the health of native plant communities; and reduce soil loss. In most instances, program participants pay for roughly half of the costs of the conservation measures or practices.

### Annie's Sustainable Agriculture Scholarships

Annie's is accepting applications from undergraduate or graduate students studying organic and/or regenerative agriculture.

The [Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship](#) program supports students working to shape the future of the food system through the lens of three regenerative agriculture principles: Building soil health, fostering aboveground biodiversity, and promoting resilient farm communities.

**Applications are due by March 15, 2019.**

[Read more](#)

### Retired farmer Open Space Farm and Ag legislation introduced

A bill introduced this session in Olympia would exempt land removed from open space or farm and agricultural land classification from interest and other penalties if the land is owned in whole or in part by a retired farmer.

The bill received a public hearing February 26 in the House Finance committee. You can view the testimony from the prime sponsor [here](#) (seven minute clip).

More on the bill and status here

[HB 2087 Bill Page](#)

## *Farm Business Management and Benchmarking Competitive Grants Program*

USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture is accepting applications for the [Farm Business Management and Benchmarking \(FBMB\) Competitive Grants Program](#).



FBMB provides grants up to \$500,000 to improve farm management knowledge and skills of individuals directly involved in production agriculture. Specifically, this involves maintaining and expanding the farm financial management database and expanding farm management and producer-association partnerships, as well as funding projects that demonstrate data collection, data sharing, improving information access, or improving producers' abilities to successfully manage their agricultural operations through periods of high risk, volatility, and financial stress. **Applications are due by April 9, 2019.**

United States Department of Agriculture  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture

## *'Grazing Resources' Showcases Some of ATTRA's Best*

Looking for resources on grazing, nutrition, and soil health? Check out ATTRA's new [Grazing Resources handout](#) for a description of some of their very best publications, videos and tutorials.

You can download Grazing Resources at no cost here, and the resources it includes also are available by searching the ATTRA website or by calling 800-346-9140. **Included in Grazing Resources**

- Pasture, Rangeland, and Grazing Management
- Building Healthy Pasture Soils
- Managed Grazing tutorial
- Ruminant Nutrition for Graziers
- Nutrient Cycling in Pastures
- Intensive Grazing video series
- ... and more!

## *In Short*

### **Organic Grain Report Outlines How to Increase U.S. Production**

The U.S. Organic Grain Collaboration and the Organic Trade Association have released [U.S. Organic Grain—How to Keep It Growing](#).

The report identifies key barriers to expanding domestic organic grain production and suggests specific industry solutions.

The report recommends new contracting mechanisms, development of markets for rotation crops, and more organic coaching and technical assistance for growers.

### **National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition Explores 2018 Farm Bill**

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition has released a series of blog posts that examines how the 2018 Farm Bill affects sustainable agriculture policies and programs.

Posts detail how the new farm bill is likely to impact working-lands conservation (CSP and EQIP), local/regional food programs, nutrition-incentive and anti-hunger programs, and beginning/socially disadvantaged farmers.

[Read more](#)

### **Online Tool Helps Craft Farm Leases**

Land for Good has created Build-A-Lease, an online tool to help landowners, tenants, and advisors learn about and craft farm leases.

The tool includes definitions, FAQs, sample language, and fill-in spaces for the most common sections of a farm lease.

The tool is designed to educate all parties and support the development of sound lease agreements.

[Learn more](#)

## *Big changes ahead in land ownership and farm operators?*

### [AgriPulse](#)

Dig into U.S. farmland tenure to see what's happening and what's likely for the future, and Carson Futch's 87-year-old dad, Alvin, is very typical.

Carson, a real estate agent specializing in farmland for Lakeland-based Saunders Real Estate in central and south Florida, says his dad was a fifth-generation farmer with no family members who wanted to farm, so he put his land into a family corporation and has rented it out for decades to another large farmland manager for growing strawberries.

It often happens, he says: "Farmers have invested in their land and in their operation all these years, so their land is where they will get their retirement money." [Click through](#) to see other likely trends for the years ahead:

## *Food Policy Council Report 2018 Released*

The number of food policy councils (FPCs) continues to grow in the United States and Canada, according to findings from an annual survey of FPCs by the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future (CLF)'s Food Policy Networks project (FPN).

At the end of 2017, the FPN project recorded 341 active FPCs in the United States and Canada, up from 329 in 2016. Almost every state (47 out of 50 states) in the United States has at least one food policy council. North Dakota and New Hampshire joined their peers with the formation of a new FPC in each state.

The annual survey of FPCs is a cornerstone of the FPN project. It serves to track the progress and inform the understanding of the similarities and differences among FPCs in the United States and Canada, and guide resource development and technical assistance provided by FPN for FPCs.

FPN also makes the data available to other researchers to reduce duplicative information requests of FPCs. This report reflects responses from 278 FPCs, including 40 FPCs in Canada, 236 FPCs in the United States, and two Native American FPCs. [Download the report here](#)

## *In Short*

### Food Hubs Play Role in Local Health and Economy

A feature in the "Michigan Good Food Stories" series looks at the role that food hubs are coming to play in local communities.

For example, ValleyHUB is not only selling produce from local farms, but also growing food indoors in an urban setting. ValleyHUB is supplying food to local grocery stores, restaurants, and Bronson Healthcare.

Together, ValleyHUB and Bronson are exploring how to make local food more affordable and accessible to a broad section of the community.

[Read more](#)

### Beginning Farmer Institute Accepting Applications

National Farmers Union's Beginning Farmer Institute (BFI) is a free training program that prepares beginning farmers of all ages and operation types for a successful future in agriculture.

Applications for the 2019-2020 BFI cohort are open through April 15, 2019.

Participants will attend three in-person learning sessions over the course of the year, one each in Washington, D.C., Northern California, and Savannah, Georgia.

[Learn more](#)

### Slide Hammer Seeder Offers Controlled Planting for Small Seeds

An article published in HortTechnology by USDA Agricultural Research Service scientist Eric Brennan describes how to construct and use a low-cost, jab-style, Slide [Hammer Seeder](#) that allows controlled planting of small seeds.

The tool can be built in two to four hours with parts from a local hardware store.

A [one-hour video](#) describes how to make and use the tool.

## *Crop Progress and Condition (Released Feb 26)*

Heavy, wet snow hit western Washington in early February. Lewis County had several outbuildings collapse, including a dairy barn and two empty poultry buildings. Calving started, however many producers had trouble sourcing hay for their livestock.

Producers were concerned about seed crops in Skagit and Island Counties. Jefferson County had saturated ground and pastures leading to poor rangeland. Indoor greenhouse seeding began. Most early season plant life budded out in San Juan County. The cold and wet temperatures damaged some winter crops in Skagit County. Snohomish County had many vegetable farmers harvest past their regular window due to the mild temperatures earlier in the season. The February snow storm collapsed high tunnels, greenhouses, sheds, and barns in Snohomish and King Counties.

Benton County reported 30 foot drifts from the snow with freezing temperatures to cement them. Spring wheat planting was delayed. Calving began in Chelan County, with minimal calf deaths reported. Temperatures with wind chill in Okanogan and Ferry Counties were not above -20 degrees Fahrenheit for three consecutive days. Canola and wheat crops died as winds blew snow cover off of fields. Ranches in Klickitat County had difficulty keeping calves alive in the snowstorm. Yakima County was mostly spared from the snow with only 1.25 inches of snowfall. However, sustained winds from the storm caused over 1,000 dairy cows to die. There were isolated reports of bud damage in some peach and nectarine orchards.

Stevens County had single digit and negative temperatures for the first part of February, followed by a foot of snow. Higher than average winds caused cover to be removed from fall planted grains in Pend Oreille and Spokane Counties; some winter kill on fall grains was reported. Calving issues also ensued due to the inclement weather. Columbia County had slow winter wheat emergence and progress. Livestock were under stress and feed stocks were running low. Winter wheat in Whitman County was in good condition. The warm and wet fall and early winter helped emergence. Late seeded crops had some winter damage. Spring seeding was delayed. Some livestock producers lost calves.



# WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

## Mark Your Calendars

### Resilience for Land and Livestock Conference—March 27-28, 2019 Pendleton, Oregon

Presented by Roots of Resilience, this conference includes keynote speakers Temple Grandin and Gabe Brown, a panel discussion with producers and scientists, a low-stress animal-handling demonstration, and presentations from ag professionals.

Learn more [here](#)

### Healthy Soils, Healthy Region Workshop—March 12-14, 2019 Pendleton, Oregon

The Healthy Soil, Healthy Region Workshop is a region-wide approach to bring together agricultural professionals and producers from Washington, Oregon, and Idaho for a 3-day workshop to improve awareness of existing, new, and evolving regional soil health practices and assessment methods.

View agenda and registration information [here](#)

### WSFMA Conference March 21-23, 2019—Walla Walla

The Washington State Farmers Market Association (WSFMA) is pleased to announce the 2019 Washington Farmers Market Conference. This will be their 40th Anniversary!

**Date:** Thursday, March 21 to Saturday, March 23 2019

**Location:** Marcus Whitman Hotel in historic downtown Walla Walla

[Details and registration here](#)

### REGISTER NOW-Produce Safety Alliance Training, March 18, 2019

The course will provide a foundation of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and co-management information, FSMA Produce Safety Rule requirements, and details on how to develop a farm food safety plan.

After attending the entire course, participants will be eligible to receive a certificate from the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO).

[Registration details](#)

### WSU NWREC Brown Bag seminar March 7, 12pm Sakuma Auditorium, Mt. Vernon

**Title:** Swinomish agland management: Past, present and future

This talk will review the history of agland development on the Swinomish reservation and modern efforts to manage the landscape for the benefit of fish, wildlife and the broader community for this generation and those to follow.

WSU Mt. Vernon—[Map](#)

### Ties to the Land – Succession Planning for Family Forests & Farms—March 9, Chehalis

Ties to the Land is an award-winning succession planning workshop offered by WSU Extension. Succession planning is the human side of estate planning, and is a way for families to maintain their ties to the land across multiple generations, building awareness of the key challenges facing family businesses, and motivating families to address the challenges. [Registration details](#)



“OUR MISSION IS TO PROMOTE THE VITALITY OF FARMING, FARMERS, AND RANCHERS BY ENSURING THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL LANDS IN WASHINGTON STATE. WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS THROUGH POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR, THE LEGISLATURE, THE OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION AND OTHERS AND BY ENLISTING PUBLIC SUPPORT. PROGRAMS WILL BE VOLUNTARY, RECOGNIZE LOCAL PRIORITIES, AND PROVIDE FOR ECONOMIC INCENTIVES.”