

County Showcase

2007 WSU Extension Agriculture and Natural Resource Days

Skagit County:

Skagit County is 60 miles north of Seattle. It is 24 miles wide (north and south) and 95 miles long (east and west). Several islands in the Puget Sound area are included in the county. Snowcapped Mount Baker (in Whatcom County), elevation 10,778 feet, dominates the northeastern edge of the county and is the start of the North Cascades wilderness area and National park. The Skagit River, which is famous for steelhead and salmon fishing and serves as important bald eagle feeding grounds, begins in the North Cascade mountain area. The upper Skagit has three hydro-electric dams which provide power for the northwest. Below the dams, the Skagit is fed by the Sauk, Cascade, Suiattle and Baker rivers. The Skagit River flows through the "upper valley" and continues through 100,000 acres of fertile farm land before emptying into Puget Sound.



Seed Production

State the Issue: The need to generate new revenue streams for agriculture producers has created a potential for canola production to ruin the vegetable seed industry in Skagit Valley.

What was done? Meetings were held to allow producers of Vegetable seeds in Skagit Valley to discuss their issues.

Impact: Bills in House and Senate to support Skagit Valley's vegetable seed producers.



InFARMation:

State the Issue: There is a need to educate the public about the uniqueness and value of the Skagit Valley.

What was done? WSU Skagit County Extension partnered with Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland to assist in creating material for a low frequency radio station to give residents and travelers to the area information on places of interest and the many agriculture related facts through seasons of change throughout the year and harvest events.

Impact: Residents and travelers through the Skagit Valley are greeted by a sign that asks them to please tune into the inFARMation radio station that has a 14 minute continuous loop broadcast of items of interest and agriculture related material.



Northwest Agricultural Business Center

State the Issue: Agriculture producers need help in creating new sources of revenue from agricultural operations such as innovative marketing of products, development of new value-added products and other revenue generating opportunities.

What was done? The Community Trade and Economic Development created funding to establish the Northwest Agriculture Business Center (NABC). NABC works with government organizations and other organizations to support the health and vitality of Northwest Washington farms.

Impact: Currently NABC is working with 15 clients, completed three client projects and has nine regional projects for 2007.

Potato Research

State the Issue: Potato Growers in the Skagit Valley had not formerly articulated their research goals.

What was done? Extension Educator, Don McMoran consulted with each of the Potato growers in Skagit County about their biggest problems. Additionally a survey was created and sent out via the Skagit County ag list serve to get input from other crop producers as well.

Impact: Collaborators have been organized and two proposals are currently being presented to the WA State Potato Commission for \$50,000 to help resolve the number one (Silver Scurf) and two (Flea Beetle) problems associated with growing potatoes in the Skagit Valley.



WSU Northwestern Research and Extension Center (NWREC)

State the Issue: The 50 year old facilities at the WSU NWREC were worn out and insufficient to do modern research and extension.

What was done? A large capital campaign was organized to raise funds for a new facility. Local community members chaired various aspects of the campaign.

Impact: A new \$8 million dollar facility was completed in December of 2006. Over two million dollars were raised by Skagit County producers, government and local citizens.



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