

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

AGENDA REQUEST

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Kellie Henwood, WSU Extension Regional Small Farms Coordinator

DATE: June 12, 2023

SUBJECT: WORKSHOP re: Overview and update of Regional Small Farms Program activity for 2023, including Food Access programming

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

After a WSU Extension county department brief in April 2023, the Regional Small Farms Coordinator would like to expand upon and inform the BOCC with program updates regarding agriculture in Jefferson County and the food access work happening across the North Olympic Peninsula.

ANALYSIS:

RECOMMENDATION:

An opportunity to have 15-30 mins to present our collective Food System programmatic work.

REVIEWED BY:


Mark McCauley, County Administrator

5/10/23
Date



Clallam/Jefferson/Kitsap County
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
Regional Small Farms



REGIONAL SMALL FARMS PROGRAM

2022

BY THE NUMBERS

- A total of 115 farmers provided technical assistance
- 10 total Class/Educational offerings in 2022 (5 virtual events, 1 ten-week Cultivating Success course and 4 in person farm walks)
- A total of 160 attendees accessed online and in person classes

QUOTES



Nice to have an in-person Dirt Talk and really be able to see what other farmers are doing and how their crops are responding. Can be a challenge at times with the online format"

- Farm Walk Attendee



So glad to have attended. I appreciated the encouragement tempered with realism throughout the event, and I'm looking forward to signing up for more on this topic."

- Farm Walk Attendee

ISSUE

The WSU Regional Small Farms program serves Clallam, Jefferson and Kitsap Counties and strives to support a thriving food and farming sector in our region. Comparing past data, there is a trend in the number of farms increasing in our region while the size of those farms has continued to decrease. In

2017, there was a reported 698 farms in Kitsap County with the average farm size being 13 acres. In Clallam County, there was a reported 528 farms with an average size of 33 acres, and in Jefferson County a reported 221 farms with an average of 62 acres.

The increase in the number of farms in our region has created a need for more small farm education, technical assistance, experiential opportunities,

and resources for our area farmers. In 2022, the program saw an increase in farming needs to include more pest identification and management assistance as well as the need for livestock technical assistance. Additionally, it was noted that farmers began to want more in person opportunities for learning and networking.

RESPONSE

WSU Regional Small Farms has actively been supporting new and beginning farmers needs as well as strategizing how to continue to provide exceptional programming and services across our region. In 2022, Jefferson County was able to continue to support a full-time regional small farms coordinator for the program. Kitsap County was able to continue to provide a full-time food systems coordinator working with the program. Clallam County was able to continue supporting a part-time integrated pest management specialist to the team and secure funding to hire a new livestock specialist that started in early 2022 serving the region.

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[extension.wsu.edu/
regionalsmallfarms/](https://extension.wsu.edu/regional-small-farms/)

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IMPACTS

In 2022, the Regional Small Farms program was able to continue providing educational opportunities and resources to small farms in Clallam, Jefferson and Kitsap counties, both virtually and in person. Some highlights from the year include:

- Delivered five online educational events. Topics included: Downy Mildew, Slugs & Snails, Agritourism, and Meet Your Livestock Specialist (2 events).
- Launched new in-person farm walk opportunities called Dirt Talk Farm Walks. Facilitated a total of four farmer hosted events connecting farmers on topics such as: High Tunnel Production, Low-till for Small Farms, Meat Goat Production & Pasture Management, and Collaborative Farm Enterprises and Land Sharing.
- Offered regional participation and facilitation for 12- week Cultivating Success Whole Farm Planning course. Farmers were provided instruction, resources and networking to build a solid plan for their farming or food related business.
- Engaged a total of 160 farmer participants in Regional Small Farms class and event offerings across Clallam, Jefferson and Kitsap counties.
- Provided technical assistance to 115 farmers across Clallam, Jefferson and Kitsap counties. Assistance was delivered in person, via phone and through email. The top inquiries for 2022 included:
 - ⇒ Integrated Pest Management
 - ⇒ Animal Agriculture
 - ⇒ Crop Production & Soils
 - ⇒ Access to Land & Farmland Succession
 - ⇒ Farm Business Planning
- Provided additional assistance and partnerships in community events such as:
 - ⇒ Jefferson Farm Tour
 - ⇒ The Sawtooth Ranch Guided Tour
 - ⇒ Two Bears Garden Tour
 - ⇒ Lavender Connection Essential Oil Extraction
 - ⇒ Clallam County Harvest Festival
 - ⇒ The Western Meat School

Additional Projects:

- Provided farmers resources through Small Farms website and monthly agriculture focused newsletter.
- Acquired certification and began planning for Produce Safety Producer Trainings 2023.
- Provided farm-to-school technical assistance to partners in Clallam, Jefferson and Kitsap counties.
- Administered Kitsap Farm Mentor Program - supporting 8 farmers through group class offerings.
- Provided support and technical assistance in food access programming to Farmers Markets & Farm Stands.
- Supported continued expansion and outreach of Eat Local First marketing campaign and online farm directory.
- In conjunction with North Olympic Development Council and the Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau provided 9 farms and both Clallam farmers markets with professional photos for use in marketing their businesses.
- Conducted on-farm sweet potato trials with 7 farms across the region.
- Coordinated visit with specialist Dr. Chakradhar Mattupalli and Dr. Lisa DeVetter to tour 3 blueberry farms located in Kitsap and Clallam Counties.
- Acted in an administration, facilitation and/or advisory capacity for multiple community partnerships/groups, including:
 - ⇒ Jefferson LandWorks Collaborative
 - ⇒ Know Your Cost to Grow Program
 - ⇒ Kitsap Agritourism Group
 - ⇒ Kitsap Food Systems Round Table
 - ⇒ Kitsap Farmland Preservation work group
 - ⇒ Clallam AgWorks
 - ⇒ Clallam County Conservation Futures Board

