

# CULTIVATE THE SOIL

## RESOURCES FOR BEGINNING AND SMALL-SCALE FARMERS AND RANCHERS IN WASHINGTON STATE



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❖ **Cover Artwork by Betsy McPhaden**

# CULTIVATE THE SOIL

## Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

As golden streams of late-afternoon sunlight fall across your apple orchard, you exhale deeply. It has been a long day of work, and you are tired but content. Biting into a crisp, sweet apple, you smile as you remember how the rich soil felt when you first planted trees and how your friends' and neighbors' faces lit up as they tasted the fruit for the first time. You marvel at the challenges you overcame and the skills and knowledge you gained in building your own agricultural business. This is it-- you are living your dream, here in beautiful Washington State. You are a farmer, and it sure feels good.

\* \* \*

Becoming a farmer or rancher will feel good, but before you can get to that sunset scene, you must put in a lot of work. There are many questions you must ask yourself, many things to think about, and many hours you must spend creating and implementing the plan for a new agricultural enterprise.

- Why do you want to be a beginning farmer or rancher?
- What do you know thus far about farming or ranching? What are your abilities?
- Where will you find land?
- How can you make sure you will have enough water and healthy soil?
- What do you want to produce?
- Will it be profitable?
- Will your land be appropriate for what you want to do?
- How will you finance this endeavor?
- Where can you get help learning how to run a small business?
- How will you market your product(s)? To who?
- What if your crop fails?
- Who can provide you with insurance?

- Will your business be able to support you or will you have off-farm income to have a year-round supply of money?
- If demand shifts for your product, how will you adapt?
- Are you interested in agricultural education?
- Do you want to grow organically?
- Do you want to incorporate sustainable practices?
- Can you save money and farmland through agricultural land conservation programs?
- Can you reduce costs through energy efficiency?
- What support networks are out there for minority farmers and ranchers in Washington State?
- What are the additional resources in your county or region?

Although you will have many questions about your new agricultural enterprise, there are numerous resources out there to help you find answers. You should expect planning to take awhile. In order to develop a thorough and solid plan, remember to have patience and give yourself time. It will be well worth it. So grab an apple, have a seat, and see what you can learn by reading this guide. *Cultivate the Soil* will help you through the process of becoming a successful farmer or rancher in Washington State.

*Cultivate the Soil* directs beginning and small-scale farmers and ranchers to resources which support agricultural enterprises in Washington State. Although the guide is divided into separate sections, reading through the entire booklet will be most useful, as this information is intended to be considered as a whole. *Cultivate the Soil* first presents details of the Beginning Farmer/Rancher Loan Program, offered through a partnership between the Washington State Housing Finance Commission and Northwest Farm Credit Services. The guide then provides many useful resources within outlined chapters to address the questions above. At the beginning of each chapter you will find a list of more specific questions, designed to help you think about the importance of each subject. These questions are then addressed within the text and resources of each chapter. *Cultivate the Soil* is specifically designed for Washington State farmers and ranchers, although the questions and subjects within this guide should be relevant to all new farmers and ranchers across the country.

By farming or ranching, you provide an invaluable asset to your community, the State of Washington, the United States, and the world at large. Local individual and

family farms and ranches provide crucial environmental, economic, cultural, and social functions. These farms and ranches protect critical agricultural land from division and development, help build and support local economies, ensure food security, and provide fresh, healthy food for our communities. By farming or ranching in Washington, you are supporting and promoting a sustainable local food economy. Know that your hard work is much appreciated.

Note:

Please be aware that some of the contact information, individuals involved, and services offered in the resources below will change over time. New programs, resources, and organizations that support farmers and ranchers are constantly being developed. *Cultivate the Soil* reflects this working list of resources, compiled in the fall of 2008.

Many of the included resources offer multiple services, and could be placed under every chapter of this booklet, although they are listed under only one. Thus, I recommend reading the full descriptions of all resources listed, and reading this booklet as a whole, rather than isolating chapters.

## Chapter 2: BEGINNING FARMER/RANCHER LOAN PROGRAM

[www.wshfc.org/FarmRanch/index.htm](http://www.wshfc.org/FarmRanch/index.htm)

The Washington State Housing Finance Commission, in partnership with Northwest Farm Credit Services, provides below-market interest rate loans for beginning and small-scale farmers and ranchers in Washington State.

These loans are available for up to \$450,000.

Low-interest loans can be used for:

- Land acquisition
- Agricultural improvements (such as constructing or purchasing agricultural buildings, drainage systems, erosion control and soil improvements)
- New and used depreciable agricultural property and equipment (such as machinery, irrigation systems, and animals for work, breeding, and dairy)

To qualify for a loan, you must be:

- An individual or family who has not owned *and* operated a farm or ranch
- An individual or family who *has* owned and operated a farm or ranch that is less than 30% of the county's median farm size
- An individual or family prepared to directly manage and work the farm or ranch

Loan dollars may be distributed as follows:

- Land and improvements to land (\$450,000 max)
- New depreciable agricultural property/equipment (\$125,000 max)
- Used depreciable agricultural property/equipment (\$62,500 max)

For questions concerning eligibility for the Beginning Farmer/Rancher Program, contact:

Tia Peycheff, Washington State Housing Finance Commission  
206-287-4416 or 800-767-4663  
[tia.peycheff@wshfc.org](mailto:tia.peycheff@wshfc.org).

For questions about loan terms and qualifications, contact:

Wendy Knopp, Northwest Farm Credit Services  
509-340-5476  
[wendy.knopp@farm-credit.com](mailto:wendy.knopp@farm-credit.com).

To find median county farm sizes, 30% of a county's median farm size, and to download an application, please visit: [www.wshfc.org/FarmRanch/index.htm](http://www.wshfc.org/FarmRanch/index.htm).

Beginning Farmer/Rancher Loans may be combined with other loans and grants, and beginning farmers and ranchers may have off-farm income.

## Chapter 3: BUSINESS PLANNING

- What do I need to do to become a farmer or rancher?
- What are my overall goals and how will I achieve them?
- How can I ensure this will be a successful enterprise now, and in the future?
- Where can I find business planning workshops worksheets?
- Where can I find information on how to keep records of my business?

It is imperative you develop and keep a business plan as an agricultural entrepreneur. A business plan outlines goals, objectives, and strategies for the management, finance, production, and marketing of a business. A thorough plan may include an overview of your project, your background and experience, your vision, mission, and goals, a production plan for your product(s), a financial plan with both current and projected balance sheets and income statements, and a defined marketing strategy.

While short-term planning keeps an operation running from day to day, long-term planning helps provide stability and success for the future. A business plan is needed to start and develop a successful operation, increase profits, develop and market products, and provide flexibility for unknowns. Remember there is a learning curve for anything new, and you may not reach your full potential of profits right away.

You will want to keep accurate and thorough records of your business and finances to ensure success in your agricultural enterprise. Records allow you to evaluate your business plan, financial situation, and how efficiently you are running your business. Records also help in planning for the future, making decisions, obtaining credit, and managing taxes.

The resources in this section provide:

- Informational business tool packets
- Worksheets and templates
- One-on-one assistance and training
- Publications
- Some possible sources of funding
- Workshops and classes to help you create and maintain a business plan
- Resources for keeping records

## **Northwest Farm Credit Services**

Administrative Offices for Northwest Farm Credit Services

PO Box 2515

Spokane, WA. 99220-2515

509-838-9300 (phone)

509-838-9400 (fax)

[www.farm-credit.com](http://www.farm-credit.com)

[info@farm-credit.com](mailto:info@farm-credit.com)

Northwest Farm Credit Services makes loans for the purchase, improvement or refinancing of debt of real estate. They provide financing for expenses associated with the production, processing, and marketing of food and fiber, as well as equipment, facilities and livestock. Northwest Farm Credit Services also offers crop insurance, life insurance, country home and lot loans, leasing, financing for young and beginning producers, financing for agricultural cooperatives, management education and networking, and strategic planning facilitation, among other services.

The Business Management Center provides education, networking, and planning facilitation, as well as business management publications, industry and economic insights, financial tools, and links.

## **Small Farms Team**

**Washington State University (WSU)**

7612 Pioneer Way East

Puyallup, WA. 98371-4998

253-445-4514/4597 (phone)

253-445-4569 (fax)

[www.smallfarms.wsu.edu](http://www.smallfarms.wsu.edu)

Clayton Burrows, [claytonburrows@wsu.edu](mailto:claytonburrows@wsu.edu)

Marcy Ostrom, [mrostrom@wsu.edu](mailto:mrostrom@wsu.edu), 509-663-8181

The WSU Small Farms Team develops research and educational programs targeted to the needs of small-scale and urban farmers. Courses and workshops are offered on an ongoing basis in agricultural entrepreneurship, sustainable small-scale farming techniques, and farm internships.

Find resources for considering a new agriculture business, business license, food handler's permit, reselling agricultural products, taxation and filing taxes electronically, labor, federal agricultural assistance, economics of scale here:

[www.smallfarms.wsu.edu/marketing\\_business\\_planning.php](http://www.smallfarms.wsu.edu/marketing_business_planning.php)



## **U.S. Small Business Administration, Seattle and Spokane Offices**

Seattle Washington District Office/ 2401 4th AVE

Seattle, WA. 98121

206-553-7310 (phone)

206-553-7099 (fax)

[www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)

District office in Spokane: 509-353-2800

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) offers technical and counseling assistance to small businesses in business planning, financial planning, management planning, marketing, and access to capital. It provides resources for SBA-backed loans including free SBA loan briefings in Seattle, Spokane, and Tacoma. It also provides research, lender lists, training programs, and other free workshops.

“Small Business Resource Guide: Everything you need to know to start and grow your business,” This Washington State specific guide includes downloadable templates for business plans and financial statements found here:

[www.sba.gov/idc/groups/public/documents/wa\\_seattle/sdo2008rg.pdf](http://www.sba.gov/idc/groups/public/documents/wa_seattle/sdo2008rg.pdf)

Find resources to plan, start, and manage a small business here:

[www.sba.gov/smallbusinessplanner.index.html](http://www.sba.gov/smallbusinessplanner.index.html)

Take free online courses here: [www.sba.gov/services/index.html](http://www.sba.gov/services/index.html)

Read free and informative publications on Financial Management, Management and Planning, Marketing, Emerging Business, and Products/Ideas/Inventions here:

[www.sba.gov/tools/resourcelibrary/publications/index.html](http://www.sba.gov/tools/resourcelibrary/publications/index.html)

## **Northwest Agriculture Business Center (NABC)**

419 South 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Suite 200

P.O. Box 2924

Mt. Vernon, WA. 98273-2924

360-336-3727 (phone), 888-707-2021 (toll free)

360-336-3751 (fax)

[www.agbizcenter.org](http://www.agbizcenter.org)

[info@AgBizCenter.org](mailto:info@AgBizCenter.org)

The Northwest Agriculture Business Center provides Washington farmers with business development services, primarily for business training, producing value-added products, and creating market opportunities. It offers one-on-one counseling services, local workshops, and on-farm training at the new CSA Training Center on Whidbey Island.

## **Washington Small Business Development Centers**

(Centers located throughout Washington State)

[www.wsfdc.org](http://www.wsfdc.org)

This website offers resources for small businesses in Washington, and provides access to local Small Business Development Centers and business advisors throughout Washington State.

## **ShoreBank Enterprise Cascadia**

PO Box 826

203 Howerton Way, SE

Ilwaco WA 98624

360-642-4265 or 206-447-9226 (phone)

360-642-4078 (fax)

[www.sbpac.com](http://www.sbpac.com)

[info@sbpac.com](mailto:info@sbpac.com)

(Regional Offices throughout Washington)

Larry Baker, Fund Manager, [lbaker@sbpac.com](mailto:lbaker@sbpac.com)

This nonprofit conservation organization offers financing, marketing, and business consulting services. ShoreBank Enterprise Cascadia makes loans, with a maximum of \$750,000, to businesses in rural and urban areas, individuals and businesses owned by low-income people, minorities, women and immigrants, businesses that create family-wage jobs in low-income communities, and private businesses organized as sole proprietorships, partnerships, corporations or non-profit organizations that benefit the trade area.

## **National Agricultural Library**

**United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)**

Abraham Lincoln Building

10301 Baltimore Avenue

Beltsville, MD 20705-2351

[www.nal.usda.gov](http://www.nal.usda.gov)

The National Agricultural Library is an excellent resource for farmers and ranchers, providing information on animals and livestock, education, food and nutrition, laws and regulations, marketing and trade, natural resources and the environment, plants and crops, research and technology, rural and community development, and farm bill updates.

“Small Farm Funding Resources” includes articles and worksheets on Developing a Farm Business Plan, Financial and Planning Resources, Funding and Program Assistance, Farm Disaster Assistance, Organizations and Websites:

[www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/small\\_farm\\_funding.htm](http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/small_farm_funding.htm)

### **Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)**

Western Region SARE

Utah State University, Room 305, Agricultural Science Building

Logan, Utah. 84322-4865

[www.sare.org](http://www.sare.org)

Bob Newhall, Western SARE Coordinator, 435-797-2183

Andy McGuire, WA Coordinator 509-754-2011 x413

SARE helps farmers and ranchers adopt practices that are economically viable, environmentally sound, and socially responsible, and it administers a competitive grant program for research and education purposes. Western SARE provides grants to farmers and ranchers for on-site experiments, and for marketing and organic production projects. SARE Outreach, the communications and outreach arm of SARE, provides and exchanges information on sustainable agriculture systems, including information on weed management, cover crops, small dairy resources, soil, marketing, livestock, and more.

### **Washington State Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises**

P.O. Box 41160

Olympia, WA 98504-1160

866-208-1064 (toll free)

360-586-7079 (fax)

[www.omwbe.wa.gov/](http://www.omwbe.wa.gov/)

Cynthia Cooper, Director, [cynthiac@omwbe.wa.gov](mailto:cynthiac@omwbe.wa.gov), 360-753-9679, x105

Free seminars and workshops for all (not only minorities and women) beginning and current small businesses owners, offered often and throughout Washington State.

### **Center for Rural Affairs, Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunities**

145 Main St, PO Box 136

Lyons, NE 68038

402-687-2100 (phone)

402-687-2200 (fax)

[www.cfra.org](http://www.cfra.org)

[info@cfra.org](mailto:info@cfra.org)

Mike Heavrin, Executive Director, [mikeh@cfra.org](mailto:mikeh@cfra.org)

“Successful Strategies for Beginning Farmers:”

This series of articles addresses what beginning farmers should consider before getting started:

[www.cfra.org/files/adviceforbeginners.pdf](http://www.cfra.org/files/adviceforbeginners.pdf)

**“Building a Sustainable Business: A Guide to Developing a Business Plan for Farms and Rural Businesses”**

Published by the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (2003), this guide to developing a business plan focuses on agricultural businesses and includes worksheets, farmer profiles, and testimonials:

[www.sare.org/publications/business.htm](http://www.sare.org/publications/business.htm)

**“Exploring the Small Farm Dream: Is Starting an Agricultural Business Right for You?”**

Published by the New England Small Farm Institute (2003), this workbook assists individuals thinking about starting a small farm. To purchase (\$22), call The New England Small Farm Institute at (413) 323-4531.

**“Starting an Ag Business: A Pre-Planning Guide”**

Written by Steve Richards of New York FarmLink (2004), this guide includes worksheets to help beginning or diversifying farmers explore the feasibility of their agricultural business. Download for free at:

<http://beginningfarmers.cce.cornell.edu/Ag%20Biz%20PrePlanning%20Guide.pdf>

**“Farm Business Records: An Introduction”**

Written by Richard W. Carkner of Washington State University, this publication covers the importance of record keeping, tips on record keeping, and sample record-keeping templates:

<http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/eb1904/eb1904.pdf>

**“Whole Farm Planning for Economic and Environmental Sustainability”**

Written by Rhonda Janke of Kansas State University, 2000, this publication includes information on Whole Farm Planning, with worksheets included:

[www.umassvegetable.org/food\\_farming\\_systems/farm\\_planning/pdf\\_files/KSU\\_Whole\\_Farm\\_Planning.pdf](http://www.umassvegetable.org/food_farming_systems/farm_planning/pdf_files/KSU_Whole_Farm_Planning.pdf)

## Chapter 4: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- How will I finance my agricultural business?
- Where should I look for agricultural loans and grants?
- What do I need to know to approach a lender?
- What other sources of funding can I use with the Beginning Farmer/Rancher Loan Program?
- How do I save tax money if my agricultural land qualifies as “open space?”

Your business plan should include thorough and precise financial statements. These statements will help you effectively communicate your goals and needs to a lender, and will render you a desirable borrower. Financial statements include actual and projected balance sheets, income statements, profit and loss statements, cash flow projections, sources and uses of funding, tax returns, statements of owner equity, and schedules of existing indebtedness.

Funds for new businesses generally come from personal loans, but since beginning a farming or ranching enterprise is a relatively risky business, many conventional banks will not offer loans. Thus, beginning farmers and ranchers must often seek financing from alternative lenders dedicated to agriculture and rural affairs, such as Farm Credit Services, the USDA Farm Service Agency, and other organizations and entities. Although grants are a great opportunity because the funds do not need to be paid back, make sure to plan ahead for grants. Application processes are often lengthy and some accepted grants may take more than a year to process.

The Beginning Farmer/Rancher Loan Program (See Page 6) can be used with other loans and grants. However, not all loans and grants in this section may be used in conjunction with the Beginning Farmer/Rancher Program. Contact Northwest Farm Credit Services or the Washington State Housing Finance Commission for clarification.

This section provides:

- Sources of funding specific for beginning farmers and ranchers and small-scale farmers and ranchers in Washington State
- Information on the Washington State Open Space Taxation Act, which helps qualifying agricultural landowners save money.

## **Northwest Farm Credit Services**

[www.farm-credit.com](http://www.farm-credit.com)

(For more contact information, see the Business Planning chapter)

Northwest Farm Credit Services makes loans for the purchase, improvement or refinancing of debt of real estate. They also provide financing for expenses associated with the production, processing, and marketing of food and fiber, as well as equipment, facilities and livestock.

Learn how to approach a lender through these thorough and concise informational brochures offered by Northwest Farm Credit Services: *The Borrower-Lender Relationship: A Two-Way Street*; *How Lending Decisions are Made*; *Business Planning*; *Managing Your Interest Rate Risk*; *Preparing Agricultural Financial Statements*; and *Understanding Key Financial Ratios and Benchmarks*.

## **Young and Beginning Producer (AgVision) Program**

[www.farm-credit.com/Default.aspx?pageid=355](http://www.farm-credit.com/Default.aspx?pageid=355)

The AgVision Program offers financing, resources, and programs for young, beginning, minority, and/or small farmers. Financing is available at competitive rates with possible loan fee reductions for real estate purchases, operating expenses, livestock and equipment purchases, refinancing existing debt, and leasing. The program provides financial and business management skills, conferences and workshops for financial and management training, grants for education, and a mentorship program to increase business management skills.

## **USDA Farm Service Agency**

Washington State FSA

316 West Boone Avenue, Suite 568

Rock Pointe Tower

Spokane, WA. 99201-2350

509-323-3000 (phone)

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

Jack M. Silzel, State Executive Director, [jack.silzel@wa.usda.gov](mailto:jack.silzel@wa.usda.gov)

The USDA Farm Service Agency provides subsidized direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans for beginning farmers and ranchers. Direct and guaranteed loans are also offered for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers buying and operating family-sized farms and ranches. The 50% guaranteed FSA loans may be used with loans issued by the Washington State Housing Finance Commission for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers, although the 90% guaranteed FSA loans may not be used with this program. The maximum direct farm ownership or operating loan is \$300,000. The maximum guaranteed farm ownership or operating loan is currently \$949,000, and is adjusted for inflation. For direct loans, apply to your local FSA office, and for guaranteed loans, apply to a commercial lender who participates in the Guaranteed Loan Program. Find more information by clicking on “Farm Loan Programs” at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

### **Evergreen Community Development**

(Western Washington Main Office)  
901 5<sup>th</sup> AVE, Suite 2900  
Seattle, WA. 98164-1040  
206-622-3731 (phone), 800-878-6613 (toll free)  
206-623-6613 (fax)  
Philip Eng, President, [peng@ecda.com](mailto:peng@ecda.com)  
[www.ecda.com](http://www.ecda.com)

Evergreen Community Development provides a revolving loan fund for rural businesses to finance land and/or building purchases, new construction and/or building renovation, machinery and equipment, inventory, working capital funds, and to refinance existing business debt. Evergreen Community Development provides low and long-term fixed interest rate financing.

### **USDA Rural Development**

(WA State Office)  
1835 Black Lake Blvd. SW, Suite B  
Olympia, WA. 98501-5715  
360-704-7740 (phone)  
360-704-7742 (fax)  
[john.brugger@wa.usda.gov](mailto:john.brugger@wa.usda.gov)  
[www.rurdev.usda.gov](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov)  
Jon DeVaney, State Director, [jon.devaney@wa.usda.gov](mailto:jon.devaney@wa.usda.gov)

Value Added Producer Grant Program:

This grant can be used for producing and marketing value-added agricultural products, and can also be used for farm-based renewable energy: [www.rurdev.usda.gov/wa/BUSVAPG\\_26.htm](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/wa/BUSVAPG_26.htm)

Rural Business Loans:

Loans for businesses that create or preserve rural jobs and/or promote a clean rural environment: [www.rurdev.usda.gov/wa/busloans.htm](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/wa/busloans.htm)

Additional possible grant and loan opportunities for business and cooperative programs: [www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/index.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/index.html)

### **Open Space Taxation Act**

#### **Washington State Department of Revenue**

1-800-647-7706

[http://dor.wa.gov/docs/Pubs/Prop\\_Tax/OpenSpace.pdf](http://dor.wa.gov/docs/Pubs/Prop_Tax/OpenSpace.pdf)

The Open Space Taxation Act allows eligible landowners to have their farm and agricultural land valued for tax purposes at its current use (agriculture) rather than at its highest value use (development). Landowners can save through this tax program, if they apply and qualify for “open space land.” Participation in this program alleviates pressures from development.

Go to <http://dor.wa.gov> for an application.

**ShoreBank Pacific**

PO Box 400

Ilwaco, WA 98624

360-642-1166 (phone), 877-326-4326 (toll free)

360-642-3780 (fax)

<http://eco-bank.com>

[ecobank@shorebankpacific.com](mailto:ecobank@shorebankpacific.com)

Contact in Seattle: (206) 340-2700

Offers farm project financing and farm sustainability financing.

**Frontier Bank**

PO Box 1124

119 East College Way

Mount Vernon, WA 98273

360-848-1200 (phone)

Scott DeGraw, VP & Commercial Loan Officer, [sdegrow@frontierbank.com](mailto:sdegrow@frontierbank.com)

Provides loans for beginning farmers and ranchers and small-scale farmers and ranchers in Washington State, through a partnership with the Farm Service Agency.

**Bank of America, Business Banking**

230 E. Fairhaven

Burlington, WA. 98233

360-676-2861 (phone)

360-755-9554 (fax)

Sigrid Schumacher, Client Manager, [Sigrid.W.Schumacher@bankofamerica.com](mailto:Sigrid.W.Schumacher@bankofamerica.com)

Provides loans to full-time, part-time, and beginning farmers and ranchers with the Farm Service Agency Guarantee.

**Farm Bureau Bank**

P.O. Box 33427

San Antonio, Texas 78265-3427

1-800-492-3276 (toll free)

[services@farmbureaubank.com](mailto:services@farmbureaubank.com)

[www.farmbureaubank.com](http://www.farmbureaubank.com)

Offers farm equipment loans, part-time and full-time farm loans, vehicle loans, mortgage loans, and financial tools.

**Whole Foods Local Producer Loan Program**

[www.wholefoodsmarket.com/values/local-producer-loan-program.php](http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/values/local-producer-loan-program.php)

[LPLP@wholefoods.com](mailto:LPLP@wholefoods.com)

The Whole Foods Local Producer Loan Program provides low-interest loans to small, local producers in areas with Whole Foods stores. The loans range from \$1,000 to \$100,000 and can be used for purchasing more animals, investing in new equipment, or converting to organic production.



**Iowa State University Extension Publications**

[www.extension.iastate.edu/store](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/store)

At the above website, these informative financial management publications are available to download for free: Your Farm Income Statement, Your Net Worth Statement, Farm Financial Statements, Twelve Steps to Cash Flow Budgeting, and Flexible Farm Lease Arrangements.

**“Strategies for Financing Beginning Farmers,” Center for Rural Affairs**

This handout includes key sources of funding and explanations of USDA beginning farmer loans:

[www.cfra.org/files/BeginningFarmer\\_%20Financing\\_Strategies\\_0.pdf](http://www.cfra.org/files/BeginningFarmer_%20Financing_Strategies_0.pdf)

## Chapter 5: MARKETING

### *PRODUCTION AND PRICING*

- How does the location of my land affect what I can grow?
- Who are my potential customers, and when will they want my product(s)?
- During which season(s) do I want/need to focus on production?
- How will I price my product(s)?

All crops and livestock require certain environments in order to survive and thrive. The climate, location of your land, and your access to resources must be considered when choosing what to grow. It is important to choose a commodity that both interests you personally and will have market demand. If your product appeals to a specialty niche market, learn how to market appropriately. Consider many options. Do you have potential to make great profits growing organically, growing a new variety of a popular product, or growing for a local ethnic market? For example, ethnic markets are expanding and potentially lucrative, but are often not thoroughly tapped into. Ask potential consumers what they desire and see if it fits with your needs. Demand often varies with seasons and certain holidays. Think about what seasons you want/need to be growing and producing your product, and if you will operate year-round or not.

The price of your product(s) will depend on the cost of inputs, market prices, competition, transportation costs, and your customers. The scale of your farm/ranch, if you are growing organically or conventionally, and the geographic location of your land will also affect your budgeting. Thus, it is imperative you do some research to learn what you can grow on your land, and what kind of returns you may see from your product(s). Remember to incorporate the costs of your inputs, such as fertilizers, seeds, labor (hourly rates, benefits, workers compensation), machinery (both overhead and operating), and land into your pricing budget.

Along with the resources below, talking to local WSU Extension personnel and local farmers can help with planning the production and pricing of your commodity.

The resources in this section provide:

- Information and statistics on Washington agriculture
- Tools that can assist you with figuring out what to grow and how profitable your production may be
- General marketing support

### **National Ag Statistics Service**

[www.nass.usda.gov/index.asp](http://www.nass.usda.gov/index.asp)

Access quick statistics on specific crops, and find information on crop plantings, harvests, yield, production, price, and value of production in Washington State. From this website, you can access state and county-level data, as well as the Census of Agriculture. To find additional statistics on Washington, and to sign up for electronic updates and reports for crops in your region, go here:

[www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics\\_by\\_State/Washington/index.asp](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Washington/index.asp)

### **USDA Economic Research Service**

1800 M Street NW  
Washington, DC 20036-5831  
202-694-5050

[www.ers.usda.gov](http://www.ers.usda.gov)

[InfoCenter@ers.usda.gov](mailto:InfoCenter@ers.usda.gov)

The USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) measures and forecasts the economic performance of US agriculture, major crops, livestock and their products. It examines the supply, use, prices, and trade for certain commodities. The ERS also provides research data and briefs on extensive agricultural topics. See “Farm Economy” and “Farm Practices and Management” from the home webpage for detailed crop pricing and productivity, economics, and management assistance.

### **Agricultural Marketing Resource Center**

1-866-277-5567

[www.agmrc.org](http://www.agmrc.org)

[AgMRC@iastate.edu](mailto:AgMRC@iastate.edu)

Craig Chase, [cchase@iastate.edu](mailto:cchase@iastate.edu), 319-882-4275

The Agricultural Marketing Resource Center provides information on commodities and products, markets and industries, business development, and renewable energy.

Washington State resources, including individual contacts for producing specific value-added commodities found here:

[http://www.agmrc.org/directories\\_\\_state\\_resources/agmrc\\_directories/washington\\_state\\_resources.cfm](http://www.agmrc.org/directories__state_resources/agmrc_directories/washington_state_resources.cfm)

Worksheets and calculators to help project income and expenses for various commodities, as well as organic crop budgeting tools and vegetable budgeting tools found here:

[www.agmrc.org/agmrc/business/businessworkbench/enterprisebudgetingtools.htm](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc/business/businessworkbench/enterprisebudgetingtools.htm)

### **USDA Agricultural Marketing Service**

[www.ams.usda.gov](http://www.ams.usda.gov)

This website provides information on agricultural marketing including commodity areas, market news and transportation data, grading, certification and verification, science and research, the national organic program, commodity purchasing, agricultural transportation, wholesale and farmers markets (including a link to a list of all Washington farmers markets), fair trading regulations, industry marketing and promotion, and international marketing.

### **FarmAid Farmer Resource Network**

[www.farmaid.org/ideas](http://www.farmaid.org/ideas)

The Farmer Resource Network connects family farmers to organizations delivering new approaches to agricultural production and marketing. This online searchable database provides resources specifically for beginners as well.

### **“Enterprise Budgets A-Z”**

#### **North Carolina State University**

[www.cals.ncsu.edu/value-added/profitable-agriculture.html](http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/value-added/profitable-agriculture.html)

Enterprise Budgets help estimate costs and returns of crops and livestock production. North Carolina State University provides enterprise budgets for various agricultural commodities that are intended to be used only as examples, because every product differs in costs and returns depending on its location, the current market, and other factors.

## ***DIRECT SALES***

- Where and how should I market my product(s) for the highest profit?
- What should my strategy be? If I sell locally, where can I find local consumers, markets, restaurants, and grocery stores to purchase my food?
- How can I learn more about local farm-to-school and farm-to-cafeteria initiatives in Washington?

Your marketing strategy should be shaped by what you produce, the location of your land, the resources you seek, and the contacts you make. How close you are to a main road, markets, and a large population center will affect how you market your product. You could sell your products directly to consumers, restaurants, through wholesale, mail order, roadside stands, and/or grocery stores. Creating a website and selling your products online may dramatically increase your sales. You could collaborate with other producers to promote your products. If your business expands, you could think about working with brokers and distributors, and selling nationally or internationally.

Although there are various methods of marketing an agricultural product, for many beginners and small-scale producers, direct marketing is the best way to start. Direct marketers sell their products directly to a consumer, without going through a broker or wholesaler. It is difficult for small-scale producers to compete in the global agricultural market, and direct marketing helps small to medium-sized entities achieve economic stability and increase their revenue potential. When producers deal directly with consumers, each side can better understand what the other wants and needs. Cooperative marketing is also used by many farmers and ranchers, for it allows producers to supply larger volumes and wider varieties to consumers, and distributes responsibilities such as selling coordination, billing, and building relationships with buyers among the producers.

There is growing interest in and support for local food in Washington State. Washington farmers markets thrive, consumers flock to restaurants featuring seasonal local produce, grocery stores must carry local foods to stay competitive, and Farm to Cafeteria initiatives bring farm fresh food to school, college, university, hospital, nursing home, and business cafeterias. If you sell locally, it is important to build good relationships with the local community. Consistency with quality, supply, and service will help you with marketing and maintaining a reliable consumer base. Make sure to keep your good reputation by following food safety guidelines.

Do as much as you can to get your products out on the market, because this is how you will bring in revenue. Market aggressively and creatively. Approach your potential buyers, face to face. Do not underestimate the power of interacting in-person with potential customers-- by introducing yourself, your product, and your farm or ranch, you will leave a lasting impression. Most buyers will not be aware of your product until you introduce it to them, and you should try to contact buyers pre-season. Developing a

successful relationship with buyers will foster customer loyalty, and will provide you with timely and constructive feedback. Once others see the passion for what you do, they will be drawn to your agricultural products.

Below you will find:

- Resources for selling your agricultural products, with a focus on local and direct sales
- Resources to help you locate food and agricultural suppliers and markets, including restaurants and grocers that purchase local products

### **“The Green Book: The Handbook of Regulations for Direct Farm Marketing”**

Small Farm and Direct Marketing Program

Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA)

P.O. Box 42560

Olympia, WA. 98504

360-902-1884

[smallfarms@agr.wa.gov](mailto:smallfarms@agr.wa.gov)

The Green Book is a thorough publication on regulations governing the sale of farm products in Washington State. It is a comprehensive guide to direct marketing strategies, and provides resources for relevant organizations and publications. It includes information on licensing, taxation, farm labor and insurance in Washington, direct marketing strategies, information on selling specific products, labeling, certifications, publications, organizations, and local health department contact information, and is available in Spanish. This booklet has a list of resources in the back that can assist with marketing strategies, such as creating brochures. Farm Planning Publications and worksheets are included on pages 103-104.

Available for free: <http://agr.wa.gov/Marketing/SmallFarm/greenbook.htm>

### **Tilth Producers Directory (of Washington Tilth)**

[www.tilthproducers.org/directory/tpdirportal.htm](http://www.tilthproducers.org/directory/tpdirportal.htm)

(For WA Tilth contact information, see the Sustainable and Organic Agriculture section)

An excellent directory of Washington organic and sustainable growers, CSA farms, farmers markets, grocers, restaurants, caterers, and inns who purchase locally, as well as local wholesalers, brokers, packers and shippers, processors, farm suppliers, seed companies and nurseries, consultants and services, and resources and education.

### **Farmer Chef Connection**

[www.farmerchefconnection.org](http://www.farmerchefconnection.org)

This updated directory assists farmers with finding retailers and restaurants in Washington to sell their local products to, and assists these buyers in finding local farms. It provides a directory of restaurants, retailers, and local producers, with detailed contact information. The Farmer Chef Connection provides information on farm products that are commonly requested by buyers, as well as the monthly availability of products from each farm listed.

### **Washington State Farmers Market Association**

P.O. Box 445  
Suquamish, WA. 98392  
206-706-5198

[www.wafarmersmarkets.com](http://www.wafarmersmarkets.com)

The Washington State Farmers Market Association establishes, encourages, and supports farmers markets throughout Washington State.

### **Washington State University**

(For more contact information, see the Business Planning chapter)

Links to information on direct marketing strategies for farmers and ranchers, general information and regulations, obtaining a business license and food handler's permit, understanding Washington consumers, on-farm processing, wholesale markets, and much more:

[http://smallfarms.wsu.edu/marketing\\_business\\_planning.php](http://smallfarms.wsu.edu/marketing_business_planning.php)

### **Growing Washington**

P.O. Box 30282  
Bellingham, WA. 98228  
[www.growingwashington.org](http://www.growingwashington.org)  
[info@growingwashington.org](mailto:info@growingwashington.org)  
Clayton Burrows, Director, 206-719-0056

Growing Washington creates markets between local producers and local consumers. This organization assists farmers with finding markets, selling, and transportation of products, and sponsors a farm coalition.

### **“Farm to Cafeteria,” WSDA Small Farm and Direct Marketing Program**

<http://agr.wa.gov/Marketing/SmallFarm/farmtocafeteria.htm>

Washington State supports Farm-to-Cafeteria programs through state law. Farm-to-Cafeteria programs promote and serve locally-produced foods to K-12 schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, nursing homes, businesses, and other institutions. Many of these programs exist in Washington State.

This Washington State Department of Agriculture website provides technical assistance to communities, farmers, and buyers interested in farm to cafeteria programs. This website is an especially excellent resource for Washington Farm to School programs. It includes the *Farm to Cafeteria Connections: Marketing Opportunities for Small Farms in Washington State* free publication. Published in 2003, this resource provides local information, case-studies, how-to information, and other resources for farmers, food service professionals, and communities interested in local small-farm marketing.

**Farm to School**

[www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org)

This website includes information about Farm to School programs and resources, including information on the Washington State Farm to School Program, national programs, publications and research, funding opportunities, involved groups and organizations, and policies and legislation.

**PCC Natural Markets**

4201 Roosevelt Way, N.E.

Seattle, WA. 98105-6092

206-547-1222 (phone)

206-545-7131 (fax)

[www.pccnaturalmarkets.com/products/vendors/](http://www.pccnaturalmarkets.com/products/vendors/)

PCC purchases local agricultural products from all around the state. This website includes application information and materials for producers, provides a list of PCC's largest and most-used distributors, and answers frequently asked questions.

**Washington State Food and Agricultural Suppliers, WSDA**

<http://impact.wsu.edu/Wasuppliers>

This site provides a list of food and agricultural suppliers in Washington.

**Local Harvest**

[www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org)

This site includes searchable lists of farms, farmers markets, restaurants, and groceries that support local food, although the lists are not comprehensive.



## ***LABELING AND ADVERTISING***

- How can I make my product stand out?
- How can I show consumers my commodities are locally-produced?
- How could value-added products and agritourism help me with marketing and increasing revenue?

In order to market your product effectively, it must look good. Consumers are drawn towards items with attractive labels and packaging. Regional and state-wide labels support local produce and educate consumers on where their food is from. Certain labels and certifications will set your product apart from others and attract more consumers. If you want to grow organic and/or sustainable products, make sure and research how to market these products, and how to obtain the labels and certification you desire. Local labels are becoming increasingly popular in Washington State.

Even with increasing support for local agricultural products in Washington, you should protect your enterprise by including flexibility and diversity into your marketing plan. What makes your product unique? Do you want to produce value-added products? A value-added product is a product with additional inputs to the raw materials, such as jams and relishes, wine, ice cream, organic vegetable home-delivery service, grass-fed USDA meat, herbal extracts, braided garlic, and farmstead chesses. Value-added products open new markets, have a high return, and add variety to a farm operation. You may want to test your products out at a farmers market before committing fully to them.

In addition to making your product aesthetically pleasing and unique, you should think about advertising. If no one has ever tasted, seen, or experienced what you have to offer, they may be less convinced to buy it. Think about advertising; think about sending out samples, hosting tastings, and even holding events at your place of operation. Agritourism, which is promoting tourism of your agricultural product, farm, or ranch, provides a great source of revenue and publicity for many farmers and ranchers. Farm tours, visiting days, corn mazes, harvest celebrations, and U-Pick-It farms are examples of agritourism. Try to get listings of your events in local newspapers, and get the media to cover those events. Share your story by developing a brochure, having a presence on the web, creating a newsletter, or sending out postcards. When consumers know more about you, they will be more likely to purchase your products.

The resources in this section provide:

- Local, sustainable, environmentally and socially responsible labels and certifications

See the other marketing sub-sections for more resources on producing value-added commodities, and for agritourism. “The Green Book” is especially relevant and useful.

**Puget Sound Fresh** (of Cascade Harvest Coalition)

[www.pugetsoundfresh.org](http://www.pugetsoundfresh.org)

(For more contact information, see Cascade Harvest Coalition in the Additional Washington Resources chapter)

Puget Sound Fresh provides a label which promotes and supports local food products, and the webpage includes a database of producers and farmers markets in the Puget Sound region.

**From the Heart of Washington**

c/o Washington State Department of Agriculture

1111 Washington Street SE

PO Box 42560

Olympia, WA. 98504-2560

360-902-1800 (phone)

[www.heartofwashington.com](http://www.heartofwashington.com)

[HOW@agr.wa.gov](mailto:HOW@agr.wa.gov)

From the Heart of Washington provides a Washington label, which promotes and supports local food. The website includes a listing of restaurants and grocery stores that purchase local agricultural products, as well as a calendar of special events.

**The Food Alliance**

1829 NE Alberta, Suite 5

Portland, OR. 97211

503-493-1066

[www.foodalliance.org](http://www.foodalliance.org)

[info@foodalliance.org](mailto:info@foodalliance.org)

The Food Alliance provides a certification for environmentally and socially responsible producers.

**Certified Naturally Grown**

1-877-211-0308

[www.naturallygrown.org](http://www.naturallygrown.org)

[info@naturallygrown.org](mailto:info@naturallygrown.org)

Certified Naturally Grown is an alternative certification program for small-scale direct-market farmers using natural production methods. This recognized certification maintains high standards for natural production practices, but is offered without the heavy financial burdens of standard organic certification.

**Stewardship Partners/ Salmon-Safe**

1411 4th Avenue, Suite 1425

Seattle, WA 98101

206-292-9875 (phone)

206-292-9876 (fax)

[www.stewardshippartners.org](http://www.stewardshippartners.org)

[info@stewardshippartners.org](mailto:info@stewardshippartners.org)

Stewardship Partners provides a “Salmon-Safe” agricultural certification label which promotes farming practices that protect water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and on-farm biodiversity. This market incentive program encourages private landowners and consumers to restore and preserve land in Washington.

## Chapter 6: INSURANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- How can I protect myself from the many risks in farming?
- What happens if my crop fails or there is a natural disaster?
- Where can I find insurance for all aspects of my operation?
- How do I develop a risk-management plan?
- Where can I find information about health insurance and workers compensation?

Do not overlook insurance while planning your farm business-- it is incredibly important to have coverage for all of your agricultural activities. Because many hazards and disasters cannot be predicted, agriculture is a high-risk industry. However, with the right planning, you will be prepared for unknowns. Through a risk management plan, you can analyze potential events and activities that may cause loss or be hazardous to your business, and prepare strategies to prevent these risks, as much as possible. Risk management includes both insurance coverage and informal protections. You can address risk informally by diversifying your products and your sources of income.

The USDA Risk Management Agency and Washington State University encourage farmers to address “five main types of risk:

- 1) Production Risk: the risk that production yields will be lower than desired due to weather or some other unpredictable event.
- 2) Marketing Risk: the risk that prices received for production will be lower than desired due to volatile market conditions.
- 3) Financial Risk: the risk that returns from production will not be great enough to support a farm or ranch over time.
- 4) Legal Risk: the risk that legal issues, such as interpretations of contract provisions and environmental obligations, will threaten the cash income of farm or ranch operation.
- 5) Human Resource Risk: the risk that events affecting people who work on the farm—such as death, illness, or poor personal management—will seriously disrupt an agricultural operation”

(“Insurance Resources for Farmers,” WSU Agriculture and Natural Resources Fact Sheet #537)

As there are many risks, there are many different types of insurance. Certain commodities require unique types of insurance, and the size of your farm or ranch may also affect the type of coverage you need. It is important to manage the risks associated with all aspects of your food production. Food safety is of the utmost concern to public

and governmental agencies, so insurance for food handling, marketing, and distribution should be considered in a risk management plan.

This section provides:

- Resources which will assist you in managing risks and insuring your agricultural business and life on the farm or ranch

### **USDA Risk Management Agency**

(Spokane Regional Office)

11707 E Sprague Ave, Ste 201

Spokane Valley, WA 99206-6125

509-228-6320 (phone)

509-228-6321 (fax)

[www.rma.usda.gov](http://www.rma.usda.gov), <http://farm-risk-plans.usda.gov>

[rsowa@rma.usda.gov](mailto:rsowa@rma.usda.gov)

The Risk Management Agency offers:

- Federal crop insurance plans and coverage: [www.rma.usda.gov/policies](http://www.rma.usda.gov/policies)  
This federal insurance program fosters an environment of financial stability at a reasonable cost to the American agricultural producer.
- Farm risk planning tools: <http://farm-risk-plans.usda.gov>
- A search engine for local agents who provide insurance coverage for Crops and Livestock: [www.rma.usda.gov/tools/agents/companies](http://www.rma.usda.gov/tools/agents/companies)
- Publications on crop insurance, irrigation and water issues, program integrity and compliance, risk management, and specialty crops: [www.rma.usda.gov/pubs](http://www.rma.usda.gov/pubs)
- The Ag Risk Education Online Library with hundreds of documents on risk management, production risk, specific types of insurance, diversification, new technology, and grants: [www.agrisk.umn.edu](http://www.agrisk.umn.edu)
- The Adjusted Gross Revenue Lite (AGR Lite) Coverage program, which covers multiple types of crops under one plan, and provides reimbursement on a sliding scale depending on the level you choose. This coverage can be combined with other federal crop insurance plans, and covers revenue losses due to natural disaster or market downturns. A portion may be paid by the government.

### **Country Companies Insurance Group**

(Western Regional Office)

2150 Country Drive

Salem, OR. 97302

1-866-221-3839

[www.countryfinancial.com](http://www.countryfinancial.com)

Country Companies Insurance Group offers crop, business, farm and ranch, home and renter, life, auto, long-term care, disability income, Medicare supplement, annuities, and personal umbrella coverage. The website has a search locator for local representatives.

### **WSDA Insurance and Risk Management**

1111 Washington Street SE, PO Box 42560

Olympia, WA 98504-2560

360-902-2057

[smallfarms@agr.wa.gov](mailto:smallfarms@agr.wa.gov)

<http://agr.wa.gov>

WSDA provides insurance resources, information on building a risk management plan, tools to calculate crop insurance premium, small business insurance publications, and information on food safety:

[http://agr.wa.gov/Marketing/SmallFarm/Insurance\\_Risk\\_Management.htm](http://agr.wa.gov/Marketing/SmallFarm/Insurance_Risk_Management.htm)

Food Processing Rules and Regulations:

[www.agr.wa.gov/foodanimal/foodprocessors/default.htm](http://www.agr.wa.gov/foodanimal/foodprocessors/default.htm)

This site includes information on the Food Processor License Application and Handbook, food processors export certificate, hazard analysis and critical control point, laws and rules, winery and brewery sanitation information, and related links.

Food Processors License Application and Handbook:

<http://www.agr.wa.gov/foodanimal/foodprocessors/LicenseHandbook.htm>

This site provides licensing information for operating a business in Washington, information and regulations on obtaining a Department of Agriculture food safety license, regulations for processing facilities, packaging and labeling, and other requirements for various operations.

### **Northwest Farm Credit Services**

[www.farm-credit.com](http://www.farm-credit.com)

Northwest Farm Credit Services offers crop and life insurance, among many services.

## **Washington State Department of Labor and Industries**

P.O. Box 44000

Olympia, WA. 98504-4000

360-902-5800 (phone), 1-800-547-8367 (toll-free)

360-902-5798 (fax)

[www.lni.wa.gov](http://www.lni.wa.gov)

Additional offices located throughout WA State

This State Department provides business, worker, and medical provider information and links. The website includes information on workplace safety and health rules, claims and insurance, workplace rights and employee responsibilities, and trades and licensing.

## **American Farm Bureau Insurance Services, Inc.**

[www.afbisinc.com](http://www.afbisinc.com)

This site offers various agricultural insurance services to meet the needs of state farm bureaus. It provides a local search directory for insurance agents covering multiple peril crop, crop hail, livestock, pasture, rangeland, forest, catastrophic, income protection, and other forms of insurance.

## **Washington State Farm Bureau**

975 Carpenter Rd NE, Suite 301

Lacey, WA 98516

360-357-9975 (phone)

1-800-331-3276 (toll free)

[www.wsfb.com](http://www.wsfb.com)

Washington State Farm Bureau provides members with healthcare, as well as a workers compensation and safety program.

## **Small Business Administration Online Library**

(For more contact information, see Business Planning section)

[www.sba.gov/tools/resourcelibrary/publications](http://www.sba.gov/tools/resourcelibrary/publications)

This library provides the *Small Business Insurance and Risk Management Guide*, found in “Management and Planning Series” Publications.

## **“Safe Handling of Farm Produce”**

<http://king.wsu.edu/foodandfarms/documents/SafeProduce.pdf>

This WSU document provides information and resources on minimizing the risk of contaminating fresh farm food.

**“Disaster Preparedness for Livestock”**

<http://king.wsu.edu/Livestock/documents/DistPrepLivestock.pdf>

This WSU document provides a list of first aid supplies, a dietary chart for various farm animals, and an outline for developing a risk management plan for livestock.

**Agri-Services Agency**

[www.agri-servicesagency.com](http://www.agri-servicesagency.com)

[info@agri-serviceagency.com](mailto:info@agri-serviceagency.com)

1-800-654-8840 (customer service)

1-866-297-7729 (sales center)

This agency offers medical and dental coverage, workers’ compensation, disability, life and long-term care insurance for farmers and ranchers, their families, and their employees.



## Chapter 7: LAND ACQUISITION

- Where can I find farm or ranch land?
- Do I want to lease or buy?
- What do I want to produce and how much land will I need for this production?
- How do I tell if the soil is healthy and appropriate?
- Where will my water come from?
- How do I tell if the climate is right for what I want to produce?
- Where can I learn how my land is zoned?

Washington State produces more food, feed, and seed crops than any other state in the nation except California. Washington leads the nation in the production of apples, pears, sweet cherries, red raspberries, hops, spearmint and peppermint oil, Concord and Niagara grapes, carrots, wrinkled seed peas, and sweet corn.<sup>1</sup> Thanks to its rich soils, Washington provides beginning farmers with a wide range of opportunities for choosing what to grow.

While figuring out what you want to produce, look for land that matches your needs. If you already know the location of your land, find out how that land could best be used. Research the value of commodities you are interested in, how much land you need to be profitable, what your market opportunities are, how your land is zoned, if the soil and climate of the area will support your goals, and if your water supply will be adequate for your crop or livestock operation. Learn what other farmers and ranchers are producing in the region to gain an idea of your land's capabilities. Crop rotation is important for some crops in order to manage disease, weeds, and soil nutrients. You should factor crop rotation into your land acquisition planning, as it may require more acreage.

The quality of your soil, your access to water, and how your land is zoned will impact the success of your operation. The presence or absence of certain nutrients, chemicals, and acidity in the soil will affect productivity and the safety of your products. Your ability to irrigate will be based on your water rights. Water rights deal with how much water, if any, you can legally access from wells, rivers, and other sources. Make sure to ask for a detailed water analysis when purchasing land. It is important to know the salt content, pH, and minerals in the water, for these factors will greatly affect your agricultural production. Zoning is determined county to county, and affects how your

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<sup>1</sup> "2007 Data Book: Washington's Rank in the Nation's Agriculture." Washington State Office of Financial Management. 2008. <<http://www.ofm.wa.gov/databook/resources/nt14.asp>>

land can be used. If your land has certain agricultural zoning, you may benefit financially and have priority access to special programs, such as farmland preservation programs.

This section provides resources for:

- Acquiring the most suitable land
- Testing soil quality
- Learning about water rights
- Researching zoning regulations

Remember you can also contact realtors in your quest for land.

## ***FINDING LAND***

### **Washington FarmLink**

(A program of Cascade Harvest Coalition)

4649 Sunnyside Avenue North, Room 123

Seattle, WA. 98103

206-632-0606 (phone)

[www.cascadeharvest.org/programs/washington-farmlink](http://www.cascadeharvest.org/programs/washington-farmlink)

Mary Embleton, Executive Director, [mary@cascadeharvest.org](mailto:mary@cascadeharvest.org)

Washington FarmLink connects those interested in acquiring agricultural land with farmland owners ready to sell, lease, or otherwise transition their farming operations. It facilitates the transition of land to new farmers through a farmer and landowner matching service, workshops, a comprehensive one-stop resource center, and one-on-one guidance and assistance.

Do you want to buy or lease land? Learn about the benefits and disadvantages of these options by contacting Cascade Harvest Coalition for advice and by going to the FarmLink webpage for a document on the topic.

### **Northwest Farm Credit Services**

[www.farm-credit.com](http://www.farm-credit.com)

Current rural property listings can be found under “Resources” at this website.

### **Washington State Department of Natural Resources**

PO Box 47000

1111 Washington Street SE

Olympia, WA 98504-7000

360-902-1000 (phone)

[www.dnr.wa.gov](http://www.dnr.wa.gov)

Pat Ryan, Agriculture Program Manager, [PATRICK.RYAN@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:PATRICK.RYAN@dnr.wa.gov), 360-902-1873

Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) leases some State Trust land for agriculture and grazing through public auctions:

[www.dnr.wa.gov/BusinessPermits/Topics/LandLeasing/Pages/Home.aspx](http://www.dnr.wa.gov/BusinessPermits/Topics/LandLeasing/Pages/Home.aspx)

**Other sites to search for farmland:**

[www.capitalpress.info](http://www.capitalpress.info)

[www.farmseller.com](http://www.farmseller.com)

[www.craigslist.com](http://www.craigslist.com)

**U.S. Bureau of Land Management**

[www.blm.gov](http://www.blm.gov)

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) leases public lands for grazing:

[www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/grazing.1.html](http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/grazing.1.html)

***SOIL, WATER, AND ZONING***

**USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service**

WA State Office

316 W Boone AVE, Suite 450

Spokane, WA. 99201-2348

509-323-2900 (phone)

509-323-2909 (fax)

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides soil maps and tests, soil science information, and organic soil management information.

- Find the quality of soils in your area through this database, which provides information on land classifications, land management, vegetative productivity, water management, building site development, and more:

<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>

- Receive localized knowledge and assistance, a soil map and soil survey for your area, contact your local Resource Conservationist or District Conservationist by clicking on “Employee Directory” from the Washington NRCS site:

[www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov)

- Identify your soil types and the strengths and weaknesses of your soil for agriculture by obtaining a soil survey from the NRCS:

<http://soils.usda.gov/survey>

**National Agricultural Library**

Soil and Water Management

[http://afsic.nal.usda.gov/nal\\_display/index.php?tax\\_level=1&info\\_center=2&tax\\_subject=293](http://afsic.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?tax_level=1&info_center=2&tax_subject=293)

The National Agricultural Library provides information on soil quality and testing, soil amendments and nutrient management, cover crops, green manures and mulches, compost and composting, conservation tillage practices and erosion control, whole farm systems, water conservation, and water-saving irrigation techniques.

### **WSU Soil Services Link**

<http://cru84.cahe.wsu.edu/cgi-bin/pubs/EB1578E.html>

(Download the free PDF)

Washington State University (WSU) provides a helpful link to a list of local private-sector labs and consultants that provide services for soil chemical analysis, living organisms, nutrition, and general services for soil.

### **Washington State Department of Ecology**

P.O. Box 47600

Olympia, WA. 98504-7600

[www.ecy.wa.gov](http://www.ecy.wa.gov) (home)

[www.ecy.wa.gov/org.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/org.html) (regional office contacts)

[www.ecy.wa.gov/PROGRAMS/wr/rights/water-right-home.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/PROGRAMS/wr/rights/water-right-home.html) (water right information)

The Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) provides water resources, including water rights, laws and rules, measuring water use, water supply info, conservancy boards, and more. Water claims, water rights, permits, certificates, and other water right documents are maintained in the Department of Ecology's records. Each region in Washington has staff available for public service, to research property water right records. Visit the website for office locations.

The Department of Ecology recommends that when you request water information, you have a copy of your deed or an accurate legal description of the property including Township Range and Section, you identify the source of water and location of diversion or withdrawal, and you ideally also have a map or aerial photo of the land from the Farm Service Agency or your county. The Department of Ecology can then review their records to find water rights associated with the property. Much of the water in Washington State is already allocated, so new water rights are increasingly difficult to obtain, although it is possible to change existing water rights.

### **Zoning Information**

Contact your **county** to determine the zoning, land use, and development regulations for a particular parcel of land.

## Chapter 8: EDUCATION

- How can I learn more about farming or ranching?
- Where can I get a related degree or academic certificate?
- Where can I find more about week-long classes, internships, hands-on learning, farm walks, or workshops and conferences?
- What can I learn from my local Washington State University extension office?

Although you can learn much from trial and error on your farm or ranch, some more formal agriculture-based education may benefit you. A wide range of agriculture-based educational opportunities exist for beginning farmers and ranchers in Washington State. Whether you are interested in obtaining a degree or going to a few weekend workshops, the opportunities are out there. Twelve-week courses provide in-depth information for starting an agricultural business, weekend conferences and workshops help you refine or learn important skills, farm walks provide exposure to new ideas and different communities, and hands-on internships help you learn if farming or ranching is really for you. These educational opportunities and gatherings are excellent ways to meet others involved in agriculture, to obtain new ideas, and to network. You can learn so much by simply listening to other farmers and ranchers tell their stories. Talk to as many people as you can, do your research, and seek out the educational resources you need.

Resources in this section provide:

- Degrees
- Programs
- Internships
- Workshops and Counseling
- Guides
- Courses of varied lengths
- Extension office resources

## **Washington State University (WSU)**

Washington State University is a public land grant university and research institution. It has extension offices in every county, which bring education and the results of agricultural research to those who need it. Washington State University offers many educational opportunities for farmers and ranchers as part of its mission and values. Beyond offering various degrees in agriculture, Washington State University's Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources has a Small Farms Team and a Cultivating Success Program, which provide information, resources, and education for beginning and small-scale farmers and ranchers in Washington State.

### **Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources (CSANR)**

<http://csanr.wsu.edu>

[csanr@wsu.edu](mailto:csanr@wsu.edu)

Marcy Ostrom, [mrostrom@wsu.edu](mailto:mrostrom@wsu.edu), 509-663-8181

CSANR offers degrees, certificates, summer field courses, publications, workshops, field days and farm walks, seminars, counseling, and other resources for sustainable and organic agriculture:

<http://csanr.wsu.edu/calendar/index.asp>.

### **Small Farms Team**

[www.smallfarms.wsu.edu](http://www.smallfarms.wsu.edu)

(For more contact information, see the Business Planning chapter)

The Small Farms Team provides information, resources, and education for farmers on animals, local food production, soils and compost, pest management, crops, marketing, farm resources, publications, and immigrant farmer programs, with specifics to Washington State.

Subscribe to the Washington Family Farmer Resource (WFFR) email announcement list (E-News) at the Small Farms website for news and announcements of opportunities.

### **Cultivating Success Program**

[www.cultivatingsuccess.org](http://www.cultivatingsuccess.org)

WSU courses are offered throughout Washington State in Agricultural Entrepreneurship, Business Planning, and Sustainable Small Acreage Farming and Ranching. On-Farm Mentorships are available, as well as semester-long courses in academic and non-academic settings to assist with farm and business planning, and increase agricultural experience. Week-long, twelve week-long, weekend courses and immigrant farmer-focused courses are also offered.

### **Extension Offices**

<http://ext.wsu.edu/locations>

(In every Washington county)

WSU Extension provides services and education to beginning farmers and ranchers and small-scale farmers and ranchers. This website provides links to county extension directories and websites.

### **College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences (CAHNRS)**

Hulbert 421, PO Box 646242

Pullman, WA. 99164-6242

509-335-4562 (phone)

<http://academic.cahnrs.wsu.edu>

Bachelor of Science in Agricultural and Food Systems, with five possible majors: Agricultural Business and Technology Systems, Organic Agriculture Systems, Agricultural Education, Pest Management Systems, and Plant and Soil Systems. Various internships are available. Contact [afs@wsu.edu](mailto:afs@wsu.edu) or <http://afs.wsu.edu/>

Bachelor and Master of Science offered in Crop Science and in Soil Science

Master of Science in Agriculture offered through distance education technology

### **Bainbridge Graduate Institute**

Bainbridge Island, WA.

206-855-9559

[www.bgiedu.org](http://www.bgiedu.org)

Bainbridge Graduate Institute offers an MBA in Sustainable Business, with a concentration in Sustainable Agriculture and Food.

### **Small Business Administration**

[www.sba.gov/localresources/district/wa/](http://www.sba.gov/localresources/district/wa/)

(For more contact information, see the Business Planning chapter)

The Small Business Administration offers free workshops on small business taxes and bookkeeping, SPA loan briefings, starting a small business, and more workshops and trainings throughout Washington.

### **Washington Agriculture and Forestry Education Foundation, Leadership Program**

9211 E Mission, Suite J

Spokane, WA. 99206

509-926-9113

[www.agforestry.org](http://www.agforestry.org)

[leaders@agforestry.org](mailto:leaders@agforestry.org)

This two year educational fellowship program provides seminars in leadership and communication skills, business, rural, and social issues, and state and national governments, with a focus on agriculture/forestry/fishing. Students must remain in an agriculture, forestry, or fishing profession during the fellowship term.

## **Washington State Farm Bureau**

975 Carpenter Rd NE, Suite 301  
Lacey, WA 98516  
360-357-9975 or 1-800-331-3276  
[www.wsfb.com](http://www.wsfb.com)

Young Farmers and Ranchers Program: [www.wsfb.com/programs/yfr](http://www.wsfb.com/programs/yfr)

This program provides opportunities for leadership development, legislative awareness, educational conferences, networking with other farmers/ ranchers, competitive events, and involvement with the Farm Bureau program for farmers and ranchers aged between 18 and 35. This program provides undergraduate scholarships for students studying agriculture or other related fields.

Agriculture Promotion and Education: [www.wsfb.com/programs/education](http://www.wsfb.com/programs/education)

Through collaboration with other agricultural education groups, the Farm Bureau educates both youth and adults in farming, and provides information on conferences and agricultural education materials.

## **The Evergreen State College**

2700 Evergreen Parkway NW  
Olympia, Washington 98505  
360-867-6000  
Dave Muehleisen, contact for the Center for Ecological Living and Learning:  
360-867-6702

The Evergreen State College offers experiential and classroom-based agricultural education which provides students with the skills needed to manage an agricultural production facility. This college also provides education on global and local agriculture systems.

## **Plain Language Guides**

<http://mnifp.org/node/147>

These clear and concise documents were designed to help reduce misunderstandings and errors in agriculture.

The Plain Language Guides include:

Starting a Value Added Food Business; Harvesting Your Crops; Managing Risks on the Small Farm; Applying for a Farm Service Agency Loan; Guide to Selling at a Farmers' Market; and USDA's NASS End of Season Fruit and Vegetable Inquiry. The guides were put together by Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE), the USDA Risk Management Agency, and the Northeast Network of Immigrant Farming Projects.



## **Chapter 9: SUSTAINABLE AND ORGANIC AGRICULTURE**

- Where can I learn about sustainable and organic agriculture?
- Are there specific regulations or recommendations for Washington State?
- Are there special funding opportunities for sustainable and organic agriculture?
- How can I connect with sustainable and organic markets?

Washington State organic production is increasing at a fast rate. This change mirrors the rising consumer demand for fresh, locally produced, nutritious foods. More and more farmers and ranchers are turning away from chemically-intensive industrial agriculture to adopt organic and sustainable practices. These business choices are inspired not only by market economics, but also by environmental awareness and human health.

Washington is fortunate to have many regional and community support networks for organic and sustainable agriculture. Washington State University's history with organic agriculture highlights the dedication of Washington to this industry. Washington State University employees organized the first U.S. organic farming symposium at the American Society of Agronomy National Meeting in 1981, and Washington State University was the first university in the nation to provide students with an Organic Agriculture major in 2006. Tilth Producers of Washington, Cascade Harvest Coalition, and the Washington State Department of Agriculture also provide great support for local, sustainable, and organic agriculture.

Many of the organizations listed below possess a common mission to create and support food and farming systems that are economically-viable, environmentally sound, and socially responsible. When agriculture is economically profitable, healthy for our earth, communities, neighbors, and bodies, what should stop us? Go for it and dig in!

The resources in this section provide:

- Opportunities for learning about sustainable and organic agriculture, both in classrooms and in the outdoors
- Information on growing organic and sustainable products in Washington State
- Current research and news
- Grant opportunities
- Assistance with business and risk management
- Marketing guidance

The previous Marketing section provides further resources for sustainable, local, and organic marketing.

**Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources (CSANR)  
Washington State University**

7612 Pioneer Way

Puyallup, WA 98371-4998

253-445-4626

<http://csanr.wsu.edu>

[csanr@wsu.edu](mailto:csanr@wsu.edu)

Marcy Ostrom, [mrostrom@wsu.edu](mailto:mrostrom@wsu.edu), 509-663-8181

The Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources provides information on organic agriculture (education, research, and information on crops, livestock, soil and fertility, pest management, organic certification, and organic agriculture statistics), research on climate-friendly farming, and a research and education program on biologically intensive agriculture and organic farming.

Educational Opportunities:

<http://csanr.wsu.edu/EducationOpps/>

- Bachelor of Science in Agriculture and Food Systems with a Major in Organic Agriculture Systems, see: <http://afs.wsu.edu/majors/organic.htm> and contact John Reganold at [reganold@wsu.edu](mailto:reganold@wsu.edu) or (509) 335-8856 for more information.
- Graduate Sustainable Agriculture Certificate
- Certificate in Sustainable Small Acreage Farming and Ranching  
Offered for both degree and non-degree seeking applicants.
- Certificate in Organic Agriculture  
Offered for undergraduates, working professionals, and non-degree seeking applicants, on campus or entirely online through the distance degree programs.
- Practicum in Organic Agriculture  
A 12-week summer field course offered at the Pullman campus for anyone interested. Contact Brad Jaeckel for more information: [jaeckel@wsu.edu](mailto:jaeckel@wsu.edu).
- Cultivating Success Program  
(For more information, see the Education chapter)  
For those who do not desire an academic degree, but want to take courses to begin farming or ranching, Cultivating Success is a great option. Courses are offered in Sustainable Small Farming and Ranching, On Farm Apprenticeships, Agricultural Entrepreneurship, Organic Gardening and Farming, Organic Farming Practicum, Ecological Soils Management, Sustainable Small Acreage Livestock Production, Science Society &

Sustainable Food Systems, Field Analysis of Sustainable Food Systems, World Agricultural Systems, and AgriTourism.

Access links to relevant publications here:

[http://whatcom.wsu.edu/CultivatingSuccess/CS\\_links.html](http://whatcom.wsu.edu/CultivatingSuccess/CS_links.html)

Attend farm transition workshops, educational field days and farm walks, seminars, counseling, and other workshops and events:

<http://csanr.wsu.edu/calendar/index.asp>

Read publications on organic agriculture, including specific research, facts and figures for Washington organics, and articles from the USDA Economic Research Service here:

<http://csanr.wsu.edu/Organic/resources.htm>

“Organic Food Production and Certification in Washington State,” WSU. This publication is a thorough resource for Washington organic information:

<http://cru84.cahe.wsu.edu/cgi-bin/pubs/EB1888.html>

**Small Farms Team**  
**Washington State University**

[www.smallfarms.wsu.edu](http://www.smallfarms.wsu.edu)

(For more contact information, see the Business Planning chapter)

Subscribe to the Washington Family Farmer Resource (WFFR) email announcement list (E-News) at [www.smallfarms.wsu.edu](http://www.smallfarms.wsu.edu) for opportunities and news.

Sustainable Agriculture Resources:

Links to free online publications including information on federal financial assistance and programs, resources for adopting sustainable practices, adding value, grant writing tips, diversifying cropping systems, and interviews and insight from successful sustainable framers and ranchers:

[http://smallfarms.wsu.edu/crops\\_sustainable\\_agriculture.php](http://smallfarms.wsu.edu/crops_sustainable_agriculture.php)

Organic Resources:

State Laws, Federal Laws, Organic Trade Links, Certification Requirement and Application, Transitioning to Organics, Weed Management, WSU research, and other resources found at:

<http://smallfarms.wsu.edu/crops.php>

**Tilth Producers of Washington**

P.O. Box 85056

Seattle, WA. 98145

206-442-7620 (phone)

206-524-7702 (fax)

[www.tilthproducers.org](http://www.tilthproducers.org)

Nancy Allen, Administrative Director, [nancy@tilthproducers.org](mailto:nancy@tilthproducers.org)

Tilth Producers of Washington promotes ecologically-sound sustainable agriculture. This organization provides educational farm walks, information on conferences, linking services for farmers and apprentices, information on legislative issues and action, and produces *Tilth Producers Directory*, a directory of Washington organic and sustainable growers, farm suppliers, and resources.

“10 Reasons to Buy Your Food from Regional Family Farms,” 2006 publication:

[http://foodcoop.coop/index.php?page=change\\_world\\_1\\_fork\\_at\\_a\\_time](http://foodcoop.coop/index.php?page=change_world_1_fork_at_a_time)

**Organic Food Program, WSDA**

1111 Washington Street

PO Box 42560

Olympia, WA 98504-2560

360-902-1805 (phone)

360-902-2087 (fax)

<http://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/Organic>

[organic@agr.wa.gov](mailto:organic@agr.wa.gov)

Miles McEvoy, Program Manager, [mmcevoy@agr.wa.gov](mailto:mmcevoy@agr.wa.gov)

The Organic Food Program provides informational brochures on organic agriculture, technical information and resources on organic standards and certification for Washington State, and assists in the development of organic markets.

For a list of certified organic food handlers, food processors, and food producers in Washington go here:

<http://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/Organic/default.htm>

The “Organic Resource Manual” publication provides a comprehensive overview of what needs to be considered while producing organically in Washington State:

<http://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/Organic/docs/OrganicResourceManual.pdf>

**Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC)  
National Agricultural Library**

10301 Baltimore Avenue, Room 132  
Beltsville, MD 20705  
301-504-6559 (phone)  
301-504-6927 (fax)  
<http://afsic.nal.usda.gov>

AFSIC provides information and resources on sustainable food systems and agriculture, and reference services from the National Agricultural Library and other databases. This center also provides information on plants and crops, education and research, farm energy options, grazing systems and alternative livestock breeds, farms and community, organic production, alternative marketing and business practices, ecological pest management, and soil and water management.

**National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service (ATTRA)**

P.O. Box 3657  
Fayetteville, AR 72702  
1-800-346-9140  
[www.attra.ncat.org](http://www.attra.ncat.org)  
Teresa Maurer, Project Manager

ATTRA provides educational resources, marketing, business and risk management assistance, sustainable agriculture and organic news, events, funding sources, and access to publications.

The online resources cover vast sustainable agriculture issues including the organic production of specific fruits, vegetables, herbs and flowers, field crops, information on agro-forestry, greenhouse production, soils and compost, water management, pest management, farmers markets, and Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs). Workbooks, templates, forms, documents, and sample letters are available for organic producers. ATTRA provides access to information on organic marketing, organic livestock, grass farming, business and risk management, farm energy, internships, and publications in Spanish.

Sign up for the free Weekly Harvest Newsletter online and receive updated news and resources, funding opportunities, and coming events.

“Sustainable Agriculture: An Introduction”

This helpful resource for beginners is a comprehensive overview of sustainable agriculture, with resources attached:

[www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/sustagintro.html](http://www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/sustagintro.html)

### **Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)**

[www.sare.org](http://www.sare.org)

(For more contact information, see the Business Planning chapter)

SARE provides many sustainable agriculture resources including grant opportunities, research, and publications related to sustainability, concepts, marketing, and production.

### **Sustainable Northwest**

813 SW Alder, Suite 500

Portland, OR 97205

503-221-6911 (phone)

503-221-4495 (fax)

[www.sustainablenorthwest.org](http://www.sustainablenorthwest.org)

[info@sustainablenorthwest.org](mailto:info@sustainablenorthwest.org)

Sustainable Northwest helps sustainable producers access regional markets, provides a network of organizations and individuals pursuing sustainable efforts and enterprises, and provides access to publications, conferences, awards, meetings, workshops. The Ranchland Renewal Program assists ranchers with finding business models and markets to finance sustainable operations.

### **Washington Sustainable Food and Farming Network**

P.O. Box 762

Mount Vernon, WA 98273-0762

360-336-9694 (phone)

360-336-1579 (fax)

[www.wsffn.org](http://www.wsffn.org)

[info@wsffn.org](mailto:info@wsffn.org)

This advocacy organization for sustainable agriculture and family farms provides education, organizing, policy advocacy, and lobbying.

### **Animal Welfare Approved Grant**

P.O. Box 3650

Washington, DC. 20027

703-836-4300

[www.animalwelfareapproved.org](http://www.animalwelfareapproved.org)

[info@animalwelfareapproved.org](mailto:info@animalwelfareapproved.org)

Animal Welfare Approved provides a grant of up to \$10,000 for the sole purpose of improving animal welfare on the farm through projects such as conversion of buildings and fences, improvement of water quality, mobile housing, farm planning, innovative chick transportation, alternatives to antibiotic use, and improvements in the slaughter process.

### **Sustainable Farmer Magazine**

[www.sustainablefarmer.com](http://www.sustainablefarmer.com)

For farmers and consumers, this online magazine provides sustainable agriculture-related articles, videos, blogs, and forums.

### **Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture**

209 Curtiss Hall

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa. 50011-1050

515-294-3711 (phone)

515-294-9696 (fax)

[www.leopold.iastate.edu](http://www.leopold.iastate.edu)

[leocenter@iastate.edu](mailto:leocenter@iastate.edu)

The Leopold Center is a research and education center invested in keeping small to mid-sized farmers on the land. The Leopold Center provides marketing and energy efficiency grants for marketing, policy, and ecology initiatives.

Find product origins of 95 different fruits and vegetables typically sold in US supermarkets, and see which state is the leading domestic producer of these products:

[www.leopold.iastate.edu/resources/fruitveg/fruitveg.php](http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/resources/fruitveg/fruitveg.php)

### **Organic Seed Alliance**

P.O. Box 772

Port Townsend, WA. 98368

360-385-7192

[www.seedalliance.org](http://www.seedalliance.org)

[info@seedalliance.org](mailto:info@seedalliance.org)

Supports the ethical development and stewardship of seed through advocacy, education, events, resources, publications, and provides a seed producers database.

## **Chapter 10:**

# **FARMLAND PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION**

- Why is farmland preservation important?
- Is it true that I can get paid to work my land and preserve it for future farmers and ranchers?
- What is a conservation easement, and how can it benefit me?
- If there are critical habitat areas on my property can I receive financial and technical assistance to restore and protect these habitats too?

Agriculture is Washington's leading industry, but farmland is rapidly diminishing in Washington as it is in the rest of the country. This loss is due to rising land costs from development and high growth centers, from retiring farmers, and from minimal interest in farming or ranching by younger generations. Since the average age of a Washington farmer or rancher is currently between 55 and 60, a great amount of farmland will change hands in the next 10-20 years. We must preserve this working agricultural land in order to sustain our local economies. Fortunately, there are programs that allow landowners to benefit financially by preserving valuable farmland.

We must preserve our farmland if we want access to fresh food, food security, and a sustainable local economy. Preserving farmland is important to the federal and Washington State governments, many city and county governments, private land protection organizations known as land trusts, and communities throughout the United States. Land trusts and other authorized entities can purchase or assist with the purchase of development rights on agricultural land from a landowner, forever protecting the land and certain types of development and subdivision. This transaction is known as a Purchase of Conservation Easement (PACE). When landowners voluntarily sell or donate the development rights on their land, they can receive tax deductions and other significant benefits in return. Through PACE programs, landowners continue to manage and own their land, while the easement holder (a government entity or land trust) ensures compliance with the terms of the agreement.

Conservation easements benefit landowners by providing cash, which can enhance the economic viability of an operation, and can be helpful for retirement, family, and investing. Although there are other ways to protect farmland-- through agricultural zoning, transfer of development rights projects, and growth management controls-- conservation easements are crucial in preserving valuable farmland. If you are interested in selling or donating a conservation easement, you can contact your county, local land trusts, conservation district, and other entities listed in this section.



The resources in this section include:

- National and local government agencies and land trusts that provide incentives for farmland protection and preservation
- Organizations that provide technical assistance and education for farmland conservation
- Conservation programs that may benefit landowners possessing critical ecological resources, such as wetlands, grasslands, and wildlife habitat

## ***NATIONAL RESOURCES***

### **American Farmland Trust**

(Pacific Northwest Office)

3211 Beacon AVE. South, #26

Seattle, WA. 98144

206-860-4222 (phone)

[www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org)

[info@farmland.org](mailto:info@farmland.org)

Don Stuart, Director, [dstuart@farmland.org](mailto:dstuart@farmland.org)

The American Farmland Trust conserves productive farmland and promotes environmentally conscious farming. The Trust holds agricultural easements to protect economically-viable agriculture.

Learn about various farmland preservation and conservation programs and how they work: “The Farmland Protection Toolbox” fact sheet:  
[www.farmlandinfo.org/documents/27761/fp\\_toolbox\\_02-2008.pdf](http://www.farmlandinfo.org/documents/27761/fp_toolbox_02-2008.pdf)

Learn about conservation easements: “Agricultural Conservation Easements” fact sheet:  
[www.farmlandinfo.org/documents/27762/ACE\\_06-10.pdf](http://www.farmlandinfo.org/documents/27762/ACE_06-10.pdf)

The Farmland Information Center, a public and private partnership between the American Farmland Trust and the Natural Resource Conservation Service, provides Washington statistics, laws, contacts, and legislative updates:  
[www.farmlandinfo.org/washington/](http://www.farmlandinfo.org/washington/)

### **USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)**

[www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov)

Centers throughout Washington State: [www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/fieldoffices.html](http://www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/fieldoffices.html)

509-323-2900 (phone)

Washington State website: [www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov)

Contact [Gus.Hughbanks@wa.usda.gov](mailto:Gus.Hughbanks@wa.usda.gov) or [David.Brown@wa.usda.gov](mailto:David.Brown@wa.usda.gov)

The USDA National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) administers the conservation programs in the Farm Bill, and provides extensive information and

resources to farmers and ranchers on many aspects of agriculture. It works with conservation districts and others to help landowners, governments, and community groups conserve land. NRCS provides financial and technical conservation assistance to help design local community projects to improve social, economic, and environmental conditions. Limited resource farmers and ranchers may be eligible for special payment rates. Find information for farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural producers:

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/partners/for\\_farmers.html](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/partners/for_farmers.html)

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program:

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/frpp](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/frpp)

The NRCS provides matching funds to purchase development rights from farmers and ranchers to preserve productive farmland. State, tribal, local governments, and/or a non-governmental organization must provide half of the funds for the purchase of the conservation easements, and must have an existing farm or ranch land protection program. A landowner can submit an application to one of these entities, and then may be awarded funds by the NRCS through a competitive process.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program:

This conservation program provides financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers to promote both agricultural production and environmental quality.

Conservation Security Program:

This program supports ongoing stewardship of agricultural working lands through payments to landowners.

Conservation Innovation Grants:

Grants are awarded to support innovative approaches and technologies for conservation.

All above programs and more possible incentive programs found at:

[www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov/programs](http://www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov/programs)

The Natural Resource Conservation Service provides the following incentive programs to landowners, which are not targeted towards agriculture, but can be used on land held by farmers and ranchers.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program:

This program provides financial and technical assistance to landowners to develop upland, wetland, riparian, and aquatic habitat on their property.

Wetlands Reserve Program:

This program provides financial incentives to eligible landowners to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands.

Grasslands Reserve Program:

This program provides financial and technical assistance to landowners to restore and protect grassland, rangeland, pastureland, shrubland, certain other lands, and to rehabilitate grasslands.

Additional Programs: [www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs)

**Farm Service Agency (FSA)**

**United States Department of Agriculture**

(For more information, see the Financial Resources chapter)

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP):

The Conservation Reserve Program provides annual payments and technical assistance to landowners to establish long-term conservation on eligible farmland/ranchland. This program helps protect topsoil from erosion and other natural resources. It requires a commitment to keep some land out of agriculture for 10-15yrs, although alternative uses of the land, such as growing reclamation grasses for seed, are permitted.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP):

Through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, the state, local governments, or non-governmental entities provide annual payments to eligible farmers and ranchers to conserve and enhance the natural resources of farms. This program helps protect environmentally-sensitive land, decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat, and safeguard ground and surface water.

The Farmable Wetlands Program and the Grassland Reserve Program also offer incentives to eligible landowners.

**Land Trust Alliance**

(Northwest Office)

1331 H St. NW, Suite 400

Washington DC, 20005

(202) 638-4725 (phone)

[www.landtrustalliance.org](http://www.landtrustalliance.org)

[info@lta.org](mailto:info@lta.org)

The Land Trust Alliance unites and provides resources for land trust organizations. It promotes land conservation to benefit communities and the natural environment. Land trusts vary in their commitment to farmland preservation. Find all statewide and local land trusts here:

[www.ltanet.org/landtrustdirectory/](http://www.ltanet.org/landtrustdirectory/)

## **WASHINGTON STATE RESOURCES**

### **Washington State Conservation Commission Office of Farmland Preservation**

PO Box 47721

Olympia, WA. 98504-7721

360-407-7474 (phone)

<http://ofp.scc.wa.gov>

Josh Giuntoli, [jgiu461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:jgiu461@ecy.wa.gov)

The Washington State Conservation Commission assists, guides, and provides grant funds to conservation districts to work with local communities for the preservation of working farmland. Conservation Districts provide technical assistance to landowners, especially concerning soil and water conservation, and many are also involved in farmland preservation. Search contact information for all Conservation Districts in Washington:

[www.scc.wa.gov/index.php/contact/Conservation-Districts](http://www.scc.wa.gov/index.php/contact/Conservation-Districts)

Access a list of potential grants for conservation, including Private Foundation Grants, State Agency Grants, and Federal Grants:

<http://www.scc.wa.gov/index.php/Grant-News/Listing-of-Potential-Grants/Private-Foundation-Grants.html>

### **Pioneers in Conservation**

[www.farmland.org/pioneers](http://www.farmland.org/pioneers)

Contact Brian Ferrasci-O'Malley, 206-691-0700, [bferrasci-omalley@evergreenfc.com](mailto:bferrasci-omalley@evergreenfc.com) or Cara Rose, 503-417-8700, [cara.rose@nfwf.org](mailto:cara.rose@nfwf.org), or Don Stuart, 206-860-4222, [dstuart@farmland.org](mailto:dstuart@farmland.org)

Pioneers in Conservation provides matching grants of up to \$75,000 for projects that address salmon habitat restoration and protection on or affecting working agricultural or forest lands. This program is sponsored by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Washington State Conservation Commission.

### **Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office**

P.O. Box 40917

Olympia, Washington 98504-0917

360-902-3000 (phone)

360-902-3026 (fax)

[www.rco.wa.gov](http://www.rco.wa.gov)

[info@rco.wa.gov](mailto:info@rco.wa.gov)

The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) of the State Recreation and Conservation Office provides grants to cities and counties to preserve farmland through conservation easements. Landowners can approach their city or county to see if funds are available.

**PCC Farmland Trust**

909 N.E. 43rd Street, Suite 208

Seattle, WA 98105

206-547-9855 (phone)

206-547-9734 (fax)

[www.pccnaturalmarkets.com/farmtrust](http://www.pccnaturalmarkets.com/farmtrust)

[farmlandtrust@pccsea.com](mailto:farmlandtrust@pccsea.com)

Kathryn Gardow, Executive Director, [kathryn.gardow@pccsea.com](mailto:kathryn.gardow@pccsea.com)

The PCC Farmland Trust conserves and preserves farmland throughout Washington State, while also working to sustain or transition this farmland for organic production. PCC places organic conservation easements on purchased land, then sells the land to farmers at a discounted rate.

**Cascade Land Conservancy**

615 Second Avenue, Suite 600

Seattle, WA 98104

206-292-5907 (phone)

206-292-4765 (fax)

[www.cascadeland.org](http://www.cascadeland.org)

[info@cascadeland.org](mailto:info@cascadeland.org)

Contact Udi Lazimy, [udil@cascadeland.org](mailto:udil@cascadeland.org)

The Cascade Land Conservancy conserves working farms in King, Kittitas, Pierce, Mason and Snohomish counties through conservation easements and other strategies.

## Chapter 11: ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- How much money can I save by becoming energy efficient and using alternate sources of energy?
- How much energy am I using now, and what are the costs?
- Is there a way to calculate what I could save through different methods and systems of farm production?
- Where can I find technical and financial assistance?
- Are there tax incentives and credits for energy efficiency?

When you are more energy efficient, you save. Your operating costs decrease and you have less of an impact on the environment. The first step to becoming energy efficient is reviewing your energy bills and assessing your current use. To help with this, some utility companies provide energy audits specifically designed for agricultural producers. Once you figure out your energy costs, you can prioritize ways to reduce those costs and seek out resources. Both the federal government and Washington State promote energy efficiency through tax incentives and credits. These financial incentives support your use of sustainable energy. You can also greatly reduce costs on your own.

There are many ways to cut farm energy costs. By keeping tractors and other farm equipment in good shape, you will have high and efficient performance. You can adapt conservation tillage or no-till strategies, as tillage is the primary use of fuel for many operations, and can quickly erode the soil. You can switch to fluorescent lighting, increase your irrigation and electric motor efficiency, carpool to market if possible, and not use conventional petroleum-based fertilizer. If you become a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) farm, you can distribute produce boxes to one central location rather than multiple locations for pick-up. Remember that using less energy and conserving resources in your home will also help you save.

Resources in this section provide:

- Financial incentives for energy efficiency
- Tools for measuring your current and projected energy costs
- Tools to examine projected savings from alternate energy sources and different methods of production
- Tips on how to reduce costs
- Additional technical and financial assistance for your energy needs

**Washington State Department of Community Trade and Economic Development (CTED)**

906 Columbia Street SW

PO Box 42525

Olympia, WA 98504-2525

Energy Policy Executive Director: Toni Usibelli, 360-725-3110 (phone)

360-586-0049 (fax)

[www.cted.wa.gov](http://www.cted.wa.gov)

CTED provides extensive information on state and federal tax incentives and credits for energy efficiency. CTED also provides low-income energy assistance and other programs for the use of environmentally-sound energy:

[www.cted.wa.gov/site/526/default.aspx](http://www.cted.wa.gov/site/526/default.aspx)

**Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements Program**

USDA Rural Development

[www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/energy](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/energy)

The federal government provides grants and loan guarantees to spark the growth of renewable energy use and energy efficiency for farmers, ranchers, and small rural businesses through the Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements Program. The Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) program financially supports farmers and ranchers in developing clean energy technologies. The 2008 Farm Bill also provides incentives and tax credits for biofuels, and provides energy crop incentives for growers.

**National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service (ATTRA)**

<http://attra.ncat.org/energy>

(For more contact information, see the Sustainable and Organic Agriculture chapter)

You can find farm energy-related equipment, funding, and technical assistance in Washington State, with specifics on anaerobic digesters, ethanol, wind, biodiesel, funding, energy efficiency, and solar energy at this site:

<http://attra.ncat.org/farmenergysearchtool>

ATTRA provides links to energy calculator planning tools. Energy calculators are designed to help producers cut energy costs by assessing costs and saving electrical energy, fuel, and fossil-fuel-based fertilizer:

[http://attra.ncat.org/energy\\_calculators.html](http://attra.ncat.org/energy_calculators.html)

**USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service**

<http://energytools.sc.egov.usda.gov>

Contact [Stefanie.aschmann@por.usda.gov](mailto:Stefanie.aschmann@por.usda.gov)

(For more contact information, see the Farmland Preservation and Conservation section)

These Energy Estimation and Energy Consumption Awareness Tools can help you estimate potential energy and cost savings associated with irrigation, nitrogen use, various tillage systems, and animal housing operations on your farm or ranch.

**“Farmstead Energy Audit”**

[www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/ageng/structu/ae1366.pdf](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/ageng/structu/ae1366.pdf)

Published by North Dakota State University Extension Service, this guide provides tips on how to improve energy efficiency and reduce energy expenses. Topics include tractor and field operations, grain drying, home, indoor and outdoor lighting, farm shop, irrigation, livestock buildings, and livestock water systems.

**Northwest Sustainable Energy for Economic Development**

[www.nwcommunityenergy.org](http://www.nwcommunityenergy.org)

[info@nwcommunityenergy.org](mailto:info@nwcommunityenergy.org)

This organization develops community-based clean energy investments, with specific assistance for landowners.

**National Farmers Union**

<http://nfu.org>

The National Farmers Union provides a Carbon Credit incentive program.

**Database of State Incentives for Renewable Energy**

[www.dsireusa.org](http://www.dsireusa.org)

Maintained by North Carolina Solar Center, this database provides a list of financial incentives for renewable energy and energy efficiency, specific to Washington State counties



## Chapter 12: ADDITIONAL WASHINGTON RESOURCES

- What other resources are out there for farmers and ranchers?
- How can I learn more about agriculture in Washington?

Many organizations and individuals in Washington strongly support and promote local agriculture. This support can be seen in the rising number of farmers markets across the state, in local initiatives supporting agriculture, and in public and private commitment to beginning farmers and ranchers. You are in a good place for what you want to do.

This section includes:

- Cascade Harvest Coalition, an excellent local source of information and support
- Fact sheets and publications on Washington
- A food system directory (see *Direct Sales* in the Marketing chapter for more)
- A small farm magazine
- A documentary on successful sustainable farming in Washington

### **Cascade Harvest Coalition**

4649 Sunnyside Avenue North, Room 123

Seattle, WA. 98103

206-632-0606

206-632-1080

[www.cascadeharvest.org](http://www.cascadeharvest.org)

Mary Embleton, Executive Director, [mary@cascadeharvest.org](mailto:mary@cascadeharvest.org)

Cascade Harvest Coalition provides key programs and resources for farmers in Washington State, disseminates information from other organizations, and can refer you to additional programs and organizations.

Cascade Harvest Coalition offers five main programs:

1. Puget Sound Fresh-- providing local farm product branding and consumer education
2. Washington FarmLink-- connecting beginning farmers with land, assisting with farm transition and farmer education
3. Farm to Table Workshops-- providing direct connections and new market opportunities for local farmers and local food buyers
4. Puget Sound Food Project-- assessing the needs for multi-purpose processing facilities to serve small and mid-sized producers in the Puget Sound region
5. Helping Hands-- addressing issues of food access

Cascade Harvest Coalition develops and distributes the *Puget Sound Fresh Farm Guide*, a guide to Puget Sound area farms, farmers markets, farm stands, local

grocers carrying local farm products, and includes a seasonal harvest calendar. It also produces a Community Supported Agriculture Directory (both available at [www.pugetsoundfresh.org](http://www.pugetsoundfresh.org)). Cascade Harvest Coalition provides regional support for harvest celebrations and runs an annual Eat Local for Thanksgiving campaign.

Send an email to Mary Embleton to receive email updates for local agricultural happenings, including news and farm information, farm walks, workshops, other educational opportunities, job announcements, and more.

**Washington State Fact Sheet**  
**USDA Economic Research Service (ERS)**  
[www.ers.usda.gov/StateFacts/WA.htm](http://www.ers.usda.gov/StateFacts/WA.htm)

The ERS provides information on the economics of food, farming, natural resources, and rural America. The Washington State Fact Sheet includes facts on population, income, education, employment, farm characteristics, farm financial indicators, top commodities, exports, and specific counties in Washington.

**Washington Food System Directory (Ag Wiki)**  
<http://wafoodsystem.jot.com/WikiHome>

Ag Wiki is a database of organizations in Washington involved in food and agriculture, with sections on Urban and Sustainable Agriculture, Environment, Land Preservation, Marketing, Public Policy, Culinary Community, Economic Development, Education, and more.

**“Good Food”** (2008). This documentary, directed by Melissa Young and Mark Dworkin, highlights various sustainable and organic farmers across Washington State. It focuses on individual stories, and on the importance of sustainable, local, and family farms.

**“Small Farms: The Heart of Washington Agriculture”** (2005). This WSU technical report provides an introduction to small farming in Washington State, with numbers, trends, and specific needs of Washington farmers and ranchers.

**Small Farm Today** (Magazine)  
3903 W Ridge Trail Rd  
Clark, MO. 65243-9525  
573-687-3525 (phone)  
[www.smallfarmtoday.com](http://www.smallfarmtoday.com)  
[smallfarm@socket.net](mailto:smallfarm@socket.net)

Small Farm Today is a how-to magazine of alternative and traditional crops and livestock, direct marketing, and rural living. Articles are on agritourism, aquaculture, grazing, specific crops and animals, high value crops, grant funding, publications, and more.

## Chapter 13: MINORITY-SPECIFIC RESOURCES

- Where can I find additional resources for minorities and/or socially-disadvantaged farmers?

Although all of the resources in *Cultivate the Soil* may be helpful to minorities and socially-disadvantaged farmers, the Minority-Specific Resources provide additional services and assistance. Many agricultural publications and websites are also available in Spanish and other languages.

Resources in this section provide:

- Financial services
- Business planning assistance
- Educational opportunities and outreach programs
- Training and support networks
- Technical assistance

### **ShoreBank Enterprise Cascadia**

PO Box 826

203 Howerton Way, SE

Ilwaco WA 98624

360-642-4265 or 206-447-9226 (phone)

360-642-4078 (fax)

[www.sbpac.com](http://www.sbpac.com)

[info@sbpac.com](mailto:info@sbpac.com)

(Regional Offices throughout Washington)

Larry Baker, Fund Manager, [lbaker@sbpac.com](mailto:lbaker@sbpac.com)

This nonprofit conservation organization offers financing, marketing, and business consulting services. ShoreBank Enterprise Cascadia makes loans, with a maximum of \$750,000, to businesses in rural and urban areas, individuals and businesses owned by low-income people, minorities, women and immigrants, businesses that create family-wage jobs in low-income communities, and private businesses organized as sole proprietorships, partnerships, corporations or non-profit organizations that benefit the trade area.

### **USDA Farm Service Agency**

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

(For more contact information, see the Financial Resources chapter)

Socially disadvantaged beginning and family-sized farmers and ranchers can apply for Farm Ownership, Farm Operating, Beginning Farmers and Rancher, and Socially Disadvantaged Persons Loans from the Farm Service Agency.

Native Americans can also apply for Indian Land Acquisition Loans:

[www.usda.gov/news/pubs/indians/charter3.htm](http://www.usda.gov/news/pubs/indians/charter3.htm)

**Small Farms Team, Washington State University (WSU)**

[www.smallfarms.wsu.edu](http://www.smallfarms.wsu.edu)

Marcy Ostrom, [mrostrom@wsu.edu](mailto:mrostrom@wsu.edu), 509-663-8181

(For more contact information, see the Business Planning chapter)

WSU Small Farms Team provides bilingual Hmong and Latino outreach specialists to adapt educational programs for diverse cultures.

**Young and Beginning Producer (AgVision) Program**

**Northwest Farm Credit Services**

[www.farm-credit.com/Default.aspx?pageid=355](http://www.farm-credit.com/Default.aspx?pageid=355)

The AgVision Program offers financing, resources, and programs for young, beginning, minority, and/or small farmers. Financing is available at competitive rates with possible loan fee reductions for real estate purchases, operating expenses, livestock and equipment purchases, refinancing existing debt, and leasing. The program provides financial and business management skills, conferences and workshops for financial and management training, grants for education, and a mentorship program to increase business management skills.

**Washington State Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises**

P.O. Box 41160

Olympia, WA 98504-1160

866-208-1064 (toll free)

360-586-7079 (fax)

[www.omwbe.wa.gov/](http://www.omwbe.wa.gov/)

Cynthia Cooper, Director, [cynthiac@omwbe.wa.gov](mailto:cynthiac@omwbe.wa.gov), 360-753-9679, x105

Washington State Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises provides free seminars and workshops for all beginning and current small businesses owners, offered often and throughout Washington State.

**Plain Language Guides**

<http://mnifp.org/node/147>

These clear and concise documents were designed to help reduce misunderstandings and errors in agriculture.

The Plain Language Guides include:

Starting a Value Added Food Business; Harvesting Your Crops; Managing Risks on the Small Farm; Applying for a Farm Service Agency Loan; Guide to Selling at a Farmers' Market; and USDA's NASS End of Season Fruit and Vegetable Inquiry. The guides were put together by Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE), the USDA Risk Management Agency, and the Northeast Network of Immigrant Farming Projects.

**National Immigrant Farming Initiative (NIFI)**

P.O. Box 8

Athens, NY 12015

518-945-2160

[www.immigrantfarming.org](http://www.immigrantfarming.org)

[mapyalvarez@gmail.com](mailto:mapyalvarez@gmail.com)

NIFI provides training, information sharing, networking opportunities, grants for immigrant and refuge farming projects, and other resources to support immigrant farmers.

**Center for Latino Farmers**

24 S Third Avenue

Yakima, WA. 98902

509-453-3157

[www.centerforlatinofarmers.com](http://www.centerforlatinofarmers.com)

[latinofarmers@charter.net](mailto:latinofarmers@charter.net)

This organization primarily assists Spanish-speaking farmworkers in their transition to farm ownership through business planning and workshops, preparing loan packages, and one-on-one services.

**Heritage University**

3240 Ford Road

Toppenish, WA. 98948

509-865-8500 or 888-272-6190

[www.heritage.edu](http://www.heritage.edu)

Kazuhiro Sonoda, Arts and Sciences Dean, [Sonoda\\_k@heritage.edu](mailto:Sonoda_k@heritage.edu)

Heritage University offers undergraduate and graduate courses throughout Washington State-- in Seattle, Wenatchee, Moses Lake, Yakima, Toppenish, and Tri-Cities. This university supports the highest proportion of minority and low-income undergrads of any university in the state, and offers degrees that can assist with small farm business planning and other aspect of agriculture.

**“The Green Book”** (see the Marketing section) and **ATTRA publications** (see the Sustainable and Organic Agriculture section) are available in Spanish.

**Heifer International  
Pacific Northwest Program**

PO Box 739

Ellensburg, WA. 98926

509-925-7350 or 800-481-9507 (phone)

509-925-7359 (fax)

[www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org)

Colleen Donovan, Program Manager: [colleen.donovan@heifer.org](mailto:colleen.donovan@heifer.org)

Heifer International's Pacific Northwest Program partners with community groups, non-profits, or associations to support projects that help rebuild local food systems, social justice and food sovereignty. Heifer offers hands-on field support and multi-year funding. Approved projects receive help with participatory planning, group development, networking, technical assistance, training, livestock and horticulture.

**Community to Community Development**

203 W Holly #317

Bellingham, WA. 98225

360-738-0893

[www.foodjustice.org](http://www.foodjustice.org)

[decomunidad@questoffice.net](mailto:decomunidad@questoffice.net)

Community to Community helps farm workers and organic farmers find collaborative solutions for producing organically and locally. This organization is also working to develop a domestic Fair Trade label. Community to Community is committed to social, economic, and environmental justice, and although it primarily assists farm workers in Whatcom County, it strives to assist all farm workers in Washington.

## **Chapter 14:**

# **COUNTY AND REGION-SPECIFIC RESOURCES**

- What additional resources are in my region, county, city, or town?

Although the previous sections contain helpful national and state-wide resources, the following regional and county resources may also be of great assistance. Every county has a WSU extension office, and land trusts, conservation districts, farm bureaus, and small business development centers are located throughout Washington State. Many counties, cities, and towns also have websites you can use to search for agricultural information.

This section provides:

- Links to offices and organizations throughout Washington State that support agriculture, especially through education, networking, conservation, and business support
- Information on the beneficial Open Space Taxation Act
- Additional resources for specific regions and counties

### ***THROUGHOUT WASHINGTON***

#### **Tilth Producers Directory**

[www.tilthproducers.org/directory/tpdirportal.htm#region](http://www.tilthproducers.org/directory/tpdirportal.htm#region)

Search for growers, CSA farms, farm stands, u-pick farms, value-added products, markets, grocers, restaurants, wholesalers, brokers, processors, suppliers, consultants, services, and education by region. This directory is divided by region, and is very useful.

#### **Washington State University Extension Offices**

<http://ext.wsu.edu/locations/>

WSU Extension has offices in every county which provide education, local events, research, resources, and assistance to farmers and ranchers. This webpage provides a list of websites and directories for local extension offices.

#### **Conservation Districts**

[www.scc.wa.gov/index.php/contact/Conservation-Districts/](http://www.scc.wa.gov/index.php/contact/Conservation-Districts/)

Conservation districts are independent governmental entities that support landowners, specifically with regards to water and soil conservation, and help provide incentive-based conservation on private lands, through cost-share programs. This site provides contact information for county and regional conservation districts in Washington.

### **Small Business Development Centers**

Centers located throughout Washington

[www.wsfdc.org](http://www.wsfdc.org)

Search by zip code to find nearby small business development centers.

### **Land Trusts**

[www.ltanet.org/landtrustdirectory](http://www.ltanet.org/landtrustdirectory)

The Land Trust Alliance provides a search tool for all state-wide and local land trusts.

### **Open Space Taxation Act**

#### **Washington State Department of Revenue**

(Department of Revenue offices throughout the State)

1-800-647-7706

[http://dor.wa.gov/docs/Pubs/Prop\\_Tax/OpenSpace.pdf](http://dor.wa.gov/docs/Pubs/Prop_Tax/OpenSpace.pdf)

The Open Space Taxation Act allows eligible landowners to have their farm and agricultural land valued for tax purposes at its current use (agriculture) rather than at its highest value use (development). Landowners can save through this tax program, if they apply and qualify for “open space land.” Participation in this program alleviates pressures from development.

Go to <http://dor.wa.gov> for an application.

### **Washington Counties**

[www.mrsc.org/byndmrsc/counties.aspx](http://www.mrsc.org/byndmrsc/counties.aspx)

The Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington provides links to Washington county, city, and town government websites.

### **Washington State Farm Bureau**

360-357-9975 (phone)

[www.wsfb.com](http://www.wsfb.com)

The Washington State Farm Bureau provides resources for farmers and ranchers such as health insurance, education, training, and scholarships for young and beginning farmers. It provides leadership and support for farm and ranch families at the local, state, and national levels. Access events and meetings for your local county farm bureau, and become a member at this website:

[www.wsfb.com/membership/join](http://www.wsfb.com/membership/join)



## ***REGIONS AND COUNTIES***

### **Cascade Region**

Cascade Foothills Farmland Association

[www.visitwashingtonfarms.com](http://www.visitwashingtonfarms.com)

This association promotes agritourism, and provides a directory of services in the foothills of the eastern Cascades.

### **Clallam County**

Clallam Grown

[www.clallamgrown.org](http://www.clallamgrown.org)

Clallam Grown provides education on eating locally, and its website includes links to grocery stores, markets, restaurants, CSAs, and local farms.

Friends of the Fields

P.O. Box 1201

Carlsborg, WA. 98324

360-683-7750 (phone)

[www.friendsofthefields.org](http://www.friendsofthefields.org)

Friends of the Fields supports and advocates for agriculture, supports agritourism, works to educate the public, and protects farmland through conservation easements for Clallam County farmers and ranchers.

### **Island County**

South Whidbey Tilth

P.O. Box 252

Langley, WA. 98260

360-678-4168

[www.southwhidbeytilth.org](http://www.southwhidbeytilth.org)

[info@southwhidbeytilth.org](mailto:info@southwhidbeytilth.org)

South Whidbey Tilth supports and promotes sustainable agriculture.

### **Jefferson County**

Jefferson LandWorks Collaborative

[www.jeffersonlandworks.org/](http://www.jeffersonlandworks.org/)

Jefferson LandWorks Collaborative is a network of nine local organizations working to keep farmland and forestland economically viable in the region. The Collaborative helps farmers and beginning farmers find land to lease or purchase, and locates funding for conservation easements and specific grants. It also provides business planning, financial planning, marketing, production, processing, and estate planning assistance.

## King County

### King County Water and Land Resources Division

#### Agriculture Program:

[www.kingcounty.gov/environment/wlr/agriculture-program.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/wlr/agriculture-program.aspx)

King County helps preserve prime agricultural soils, protect water resources, and ensure the economic vitality of agriculture through the Agricultural Drainage Assistance Program, King County Agriculture Commission, and Puget Sound Fresh.

#### King County Agriculture Commission:

[www.kingcounty.gov/environment/waterandland/agriculture/commission.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/waterandland/agriculture/commission.aspx)

The Agriculture Commission aims to influence regional policy to support agricultural land, economically viable agriculture, and to educate the public on the benefits of local agricultural products.

#### King County Farmland Preservation Program:

[www.kingcounty.gov/environment/wlr/agriculture-program/farmland-preservation-program.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/wlr/agriculture-program/farmland-preservation-program.aspx)

Contact Judy Herring at [judy.herring@kingcounty.gov](mailto:judy.herring@kingcounty.gov)

Landowners can sell development rights to King County for farmland preservation. Land must be in an Agricultural Production District to qualify.

#### King County Natural Resource Lands:

[www.kingcounty.gov/environment/waterandland/natural-lands.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/waterandland/natural-lands.aspx)

The county conserves tracts of ecologically-sensitive lands, working farms, and forests. These acquisitions are made through the King County Open Space System plan.

### King County Office of Business Relations and Economic Development

MS BOA-EX-2000

701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2000

Seattle, WA 98104

206-205-0700 (phone)

206-205-0719 (fax)

[www.metrokc.gov/exec/bred/](http://www.metrokc.gov/exec/bred/)

The Office of Business Relations and Economic Development provides access to information on loan opportunities, including King County Small Business Loan Program, Small Business Administration 7 (a) Loan Guarantee, Certified Development Company (504) Loan, HUD Section 108 Loan Guarantee, and Cascadia Revolving Fund:

[www.kingcounty.gov/exec/bred/resourcedirectory/businessfinprograms.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/exec/bred/resourcedirectory/businessfinprograms.aspx)

WSU King County Extension: Food and Farms

<http://king.wsu.edu/foodandfarms/foodfarmfacts.htm>

At this website, you can find resource handouts on: Farm Supply and Equipment Vendors, Tips for Buying Farm Equipment, Financial Resources, Insurance Resources, Value-Added Enterprises for Small-Scale Farmers, Livestock, Marketing, Sustainable Agriculture, Weeds and Pests. Each handout includes relevant organizations and contact information, publications, and other resources.

Department of Natural Resources and Parks Grant Exchange

<http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/PI/grants.htm>

King County offers grants and technical support for watershed protection, habitat restoration, reforestation, salmon conservation, and natural resource stewardship.

Snoqualmie Stewardship Program

[http://stewardshippartners.org/prog\\_snoq.html](http://stewardshippartners.org/prog_snoq.html)

The Snoqualmie Stewardship Program implements habitat restoration projects with landowners and farmers, and connects farmers to other organizations and agencies that can provide resources and cost-sharing opportunities to help them improve their farm practices and economic viability. Stewardship Partners also has a “Salmon-Safe” certification program that provides market incentives to encourage and promote salmon habitat restoration.

Sno-Valley Tilth

P.O. Box 48

Carnation, WA 98041

360-794-6081

[www.snovalleytilth.org](http://www.snovalleytilth.org)

[info@snovalleytilth.org](mailto:info@snovalleytilth.org)

Sno-Valley Tilth supports organic and sustainable agriculture.

21 Acres

P.O. Box 2001

Woodinville, WA. 98072

425-487-3037

[www.21acres.org](http://www.21acres.org)

21 Acres is an agricultural and environmental learning center with a biodiverse farmstead, trails, demonstration plots, and community gardens.

Vashon Island Growers Association (VIGA)

[www.vigavashon.org](http://www.vigavashon.org)

VIGA is a group of growers working together to access markets and sponsor classes and workshops.

PCC Natural Markets, Metropolitan Market, and Madison Market are a few grocers that buy directly from local producers throughout Washington, with stores located in King County.

## **Kitsap County**

Kitsap Community and Agricultural Alliance

[www.kitsapag.org](http://www.kitsapag.org)

This organization promotes bonds between agriculture and communities.

## **Lewis County**

Farm Bank Project

186 Tingle Road

Winlock, WA. 98596

360-785-4927

[www.farmlbankproject.com](http://www.farmlbankproject.com)

This project works to preserve local farms and farmland, supports sustainable local food economies, and builds community through events.

Lewis County Farm Bureau

[www.lewiscountyfb.com](http://www.lewiscountyfb.com)

## **Okanogan County**

Methow “Buy Local”

[www.methownet.com/buylocal.html](http://www.methownet.com/buylocal.html)

This website includes a listing of local farms and ranches in the Methow Valley.

Partnership for a Sustainable Methow

[www.sustainablemethow.net](http://www.sustainablemethow.net)

Partnership for a Sustainable Methow provides workshops and events, a quarterly journal, and a directory of local services dedicated to sustainability.

## **North/Central Washington**

Chelan-Douglas Land Trust, Conservation Buyer Program

[www.cdlandtrust.org](http://www.cdlandtrust.org)

Contact [bob@cdlandtrust.org](mailto:bob@cdlandtrust.org)

This land trust sells conservation properties (properties protected from development by conservation easements at or prior to the time of the sale).

North Central Washington Resource and Conservation Development Council

[www.ncwrcd.org](http://www.ncwrcd.org)

This council assists with conservation in Douglas, Chelan, and Okanogan counties.

Education and Agriculture Together

[www.eatncw.org](http://www.eatncw.org)

Education and Agriculture Together is a community food system group that promotes local agriculture.

## **Pierce County**

Open Space: Farm and Agricultural Tax Program

[www.co.pierce.wa.us/pc/abtus/ourorg/at/opsp\\_agricultural.htm](http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/pc/abtus/ourorg/at/opsp_agricultural.htm)

This program adjusts taxes to relieve agricultural landowners from development pressure.

Farming Assistance, Revitalization, and Marketing (FARM) program

Pierce County Planning and Land Services

[www.co.pierce.wa.us/pc/services/home/property/pals/other/pcfacs.htm](http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/pc/services/home/property/pals/other/pcfacs.htm)

The FARM program works to preserve and promote the long-term viability of agriculture. It is an umbrella organization for all agriculture-related issues in Pierce County.

King-Pierce County Farm Bureau

[www.kingpiercecobf.org](http://www.kingpiercecobf.org)

This farm bureau provides educational scholarships and local resources.

## **San Juan County**

San Juan County Land Bank

[www.co.san-juan.wa.us/land\\_bank](http://www.co.san-juan.wa.us/land_bank)

San Juan County will help buy easements on land that is considered an important conservation resource, has public support, and is vulnerable to development. San Juan County Land Bank also has a Conservation Buyer Program, and sells land to private owners.

Agricultural Resources Committee (ARC) of San Juan County

[www.sjcarc.org](http://www.sjcarc.org)

This Committee aims to protect and restore the agricultural resources of San Juan County.

## **Skagit County**

Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland

PO Box 2405

Mount Vernon, WA 98273

360-336-3974 (phone)

[www.skagitonians.org](http://www.skagitonians.org)

[spf@anacortes.net](mailto:spf@anacortes.net)

Allen Rozema, Executive Director, [allenr@skagitonians.org](mailto:allenr@skagitonians.org), 360-630-9560

Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland works to protect farmers, farming, and farmland.

Skagit County Farmland Legacy Program

[www.skagitcounty.net](http://www.skagitcounty.net)

Skagit County purchases agricultural easements on farmland:

<http://www.skagitcounty.net/Common/asp/default.asp?d=ConservationFutures&c=General&p=main.htm>

## **Spokane County**

Spokane Tilth

W 35 Main

Spokane, WA. 99201

509-325-6911

[www.spokanetilth.org](http://www.spokanetilth.org)

[office@spokanetilth.org](mailto:office@spokanetilth.org)

Spokane Tilth supports and promotes sustainable agriculture.

## **Thurston County**

Thurston County Farm Map

[www.soundfoodshed.org](http://www.soundfoodshed.org)

This website provides an online map and an alphabetical listing of farms in Thurston County.

## **Whatcom County**

### **Sustainable Connections**

[www.sconnect.org](http://www.sconnect.org)

Sustainable Connections is a membership organization of Washington business and community leaders working to support a sustainable economy of strong communities, a healthy environment, meaningful employment, and local goods.

#### **Whatcom County Farm Map:**

A 2005 map of u-pick farms, roadside stands, farmers markets, local restaurants, retailers, and farm events for Whatcom County, Washington:

[www.sconnect.org/\\_uploads/docs/2005%20Farm\\_Map\\_final.pdf](http://www.sconnect.org/_uploads/docs/2005%20Farm_Map_final.pdf)

#### **Whatcom County Purchase of Development Rights Program:**

[www.co.whatcom.wa.us/pds/planning/agricultural\\_program.jsp](http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/pds/planning/agricultural_program.jsp)

#### **Community to Community Development**

203 W Holly #317

Bellingham, WA. 98225

360-738-0893

[www.foodjustice.org](http://www.foodjustice.org)

[decomunidad@questoffice.net](mailto:decomunidad@questoffice.net)

Community to Community helps farm workers and organic farmers find collaborative solutions for producing organically and locally. It is also working to develop a domestic Fair Trade label. Community to Community is committed to social, economic, and environmental justice, and although it primarily assists farm workers in Whatcom County, it strives to assist all farm workers in Washington.

#### **Whatcom Farm Friends**

1796 Front Street

Lynden, WA. 98264

360-354-1337

[www.wcfarmfriends.com](http://www.wcfarmfriends.com)

[farmfriends@wsfarmfriends.com](mailto:farmfriends@wsfarmfriends.com)

Whatcom Farm Friends is dedicated to preserving agriculture.

#### **Community Food Co-op Farm Fund**

1220 North Forest Street

Bellingham, WA 98225

360-734-8158

<http://communityfood.coop>

[info@communityfood.coop](mailto:info@communityfood.coop)

This co-op supports the growth of sustainable agriculture in Whatcom County.

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