10th Annual Focus on Farming Conference
Back to Our Roots

November 21, 2013
Comcast Arena, Everett, WA

We celebrated our 10th annual Focus on Farming conference on November 21, 2013 at Comcast Arena in Everett. The morning began with Snohomish, King, and Pierce County elected officials proclaiming the need to work together as a region to increase the visibility and economic viability of agriculture in the Puget Sound Region.

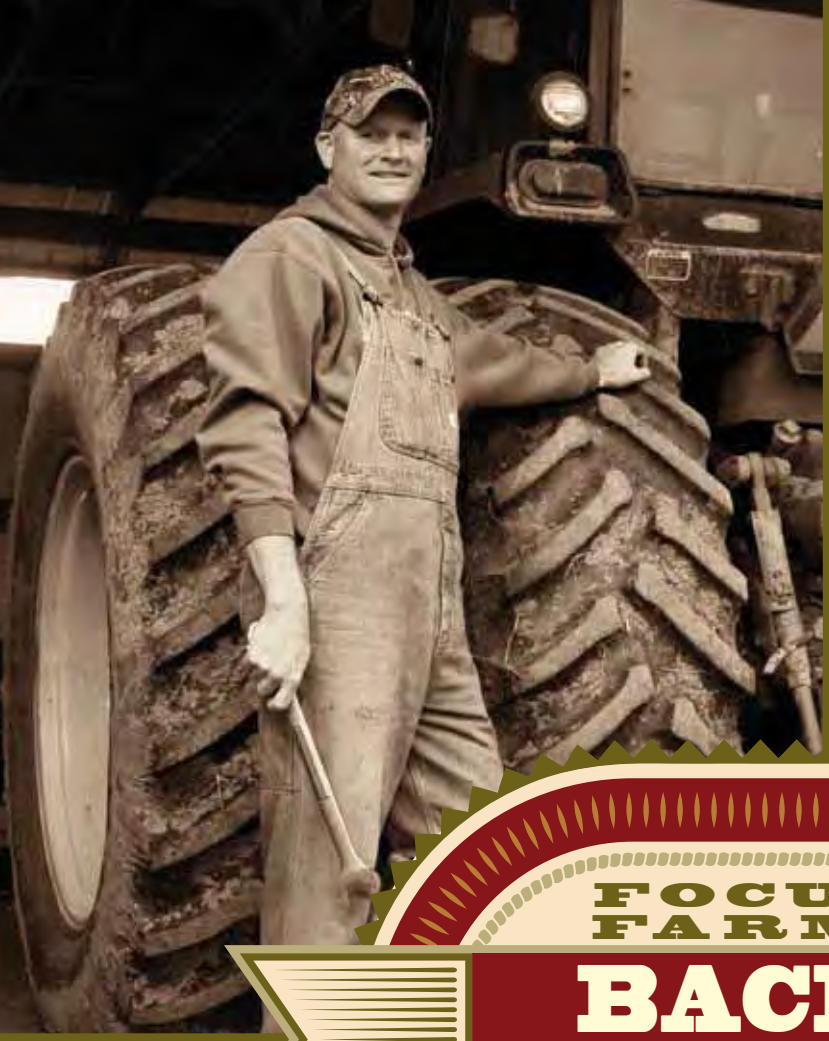
A very special thank you to our wonderful sponsors: Snohomish Conservation District, Pierce County, King County, Washington Sustainable Food and Farming Network Whole Foods Market, Dear Grove, Snoqualmie Ice Cream, Flower World, WSU Snohomish County Extension, SAGE, and James Clark Design. We couldn't put this conference on without your tremendous support of local agriculture.

Keynote Speakers
Morning keynote speaker, Will Allen, shared his success with urban farming, aquaponics, vermiculture, job training, composting, and providing fresh local food in a food desert. Attendees got a rare opportunity to not only hear his keynote address but were able to participate in a full day of workshops taught by Allen.

Lunchtime keynote speaker Rod Brooks, marketing vice president at PEMCO Insurance Company, shared the key to creating a successful ad campaign on listening to your customers. PEMCO is well known for its "we're a lot like you, a little different" profiles. The highlight of his keynote address was the Brooks' creation of our very own "Northwest Family Farmer" profile. Look for it to appear soon.

Sessions
The conference offered 24 great workshop classes in six industry tracks, presented by some of the top experts in the country (see program next page).

Trade Show
In addition to excellent keynote speakers and educational workshops, attendees got to experience a 17,000-square-foot trade show featuring everything from new tractors and irrigation equipment to greenhouses and new gardening tools.

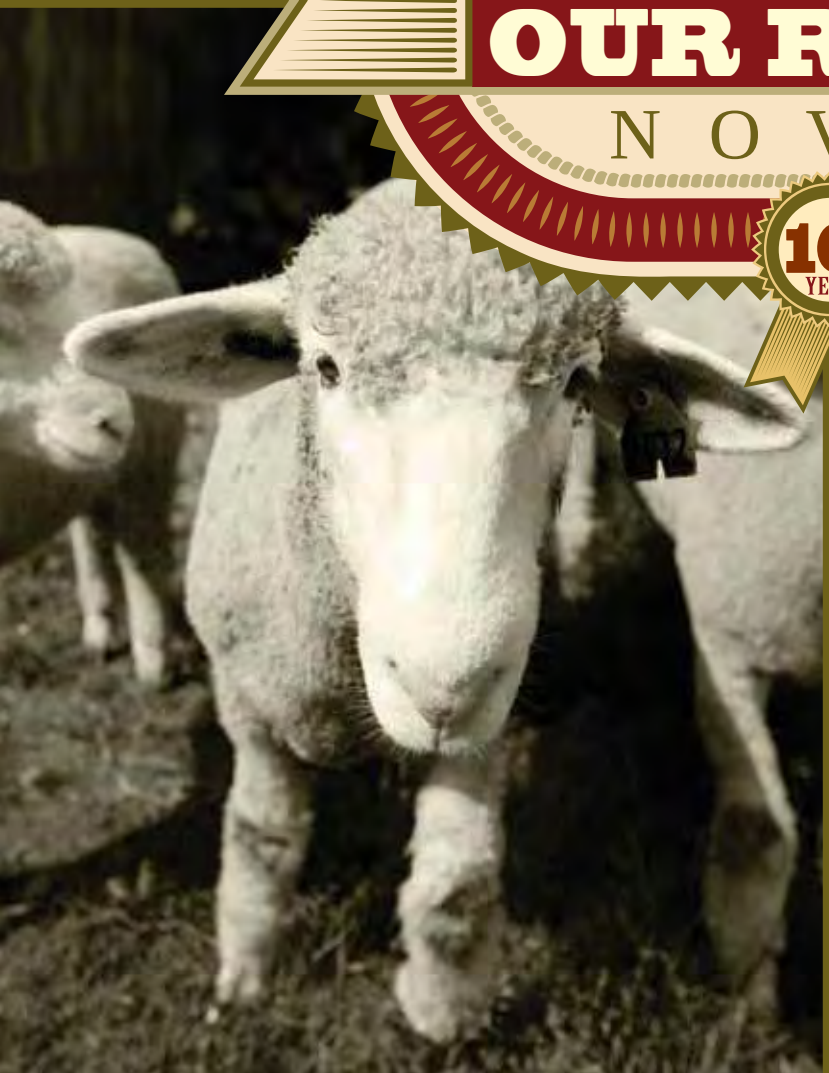


FOCUS ON FARMING

BACK TO OUR ROOTS

NOV. 21ST

10th YEAR



Welcome

John Lovick, Snohomish County Executive

Thank you for joining us today for our 10th annual Focus on Farming conference. This year, we're going "back to our roots" as we celebrate our agricultural history and look forward to its future in Snohomish County.

Today, you'll get a chance to hear from some of the brightest minds in agriculture and learn new, innovative ways to keep farming successful and relevant. With 24 workshop classes to choose from in six industry tracks, you're sure to find the inspiration you need.

Some of you may be here just for the food, which is completely understandable. This year we're featuring locally and nationally celebrated chefs – including Russell Lowell and Kaspar Donier – preparing gourmet dishes using locally grown ingredients.

We're incredibly lucky this year to feature keynote speaker Will Allen, founder and CEO of Growing Power. Will is known around the world for promoting the belief that everyone, regardless of economic circumstance, should have access to affordable, nutritious food, and for training community members to become community farmers.

We'll also hear from lunch keynote speaker Rod Brooks, PEMCO chief marketing officer and creator of the now-famous "We're just like you: A little different" advertising campaign. He's working on a new profile of the "northwest family farmer," and he wants your input. He'll also talk about how you can add value to your farming products by telling your unique story.

We hope you find this year's event valuable, and look forward to supporting your agricultural needs in the future.

Linda Neunzig, (Emcee)

Linda Neunzig is the owner of Ninety Farms, a 50-acre sustainable farm in Arlington Washington. There she raises all natural grass-fed USDA beef and Katahdin lamb for Seattle area restaurants and local farmers markets. Linda has attended "Terra Madre" in Turin, Italy three times as a US delegate for Slow Food USA. Linda was also one of five farmers chosen from across the United States to represent the American Farmer at the New York City Meals On Wheels benefit in July of 2008 and was featured in Gourmet Magazine as one of the producers. In 2008 Linda was awarded the "Women Who Inspire" award by the National Women's Chef and Restaurateurs Association. Farming is not Linda's only profession; she is also the Agriculture Project Coordinator for Snohomish County. There she is a part of the county's Economic Development team providing assistance to farmers as well as leading the Snohomish County Focus on Farming conference, the Agriculture Sustainability project, the counties centennial farms project, a first ever Western Washington wine competition at the Evergreen State Fair, leading the creation of a year-round farmers market as well as many other agriculture-related projects.

Agenda

7:00 a.m. **Registration / Check-in**

8:00 a.m. **Welcome**
Linda Neunzig, Snohomish County Agriculture Coordinator/Conference Chair

8:05 a.m. **Opening Remarks**
John Lovick, Snohomish County Executive
Fred Jarrett, King County Deputy Executive
Pat McCarthy, Pierce County Executive

8:20 a.m. **USDA Farm Bill Update**
Jay Tomkus on behalf of Congresswoman Susan DelBene

8:30 a.m. **Keynote Speakers**
Will Allen, Urban Agriculture - A New Industry

9:30 a.m. **Trade Show**

10:30 a.m. & 11:30 a.m. **Breakout Sessions in the following tracks:**
--Business of Farming
--Extending Your Season and Market
--Growing Power
--Hot Topics
--Livestock
--Nursery and Greenhouse

12:30 a.m. **Trade Show**

1:00 p.m. **Lunch** (prepared by local chefs using Northwest products)
Keynote Speaker
Rod Brooks, "Today's Marketing- It All Starts With A Story!"

Lunchtime Speakers
Ryan Holterhoff and Kara Rowe, "Food is What Washington Grown is all About"

2:30 p.m. **Trade Show**

3:00 p.m. & 4:00 p.m. **Breakout Sessions in the following tracks:**
--Business of Farming
--Extending Your Season and Market
--Growing Power
--Hot Topics
--Livestock
--Nursery and Greenhouse

5:00 p.m. **"A Local Taste," Trade Show**

7:00 p.m. **Conference Concludes**

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THE WASHINGTON SUSTAINABLE FOOD & FARMING NETWORK

Educate ✻ Organize ✻ Advocate

Farmers: Help us Help You!

What do we do? We….

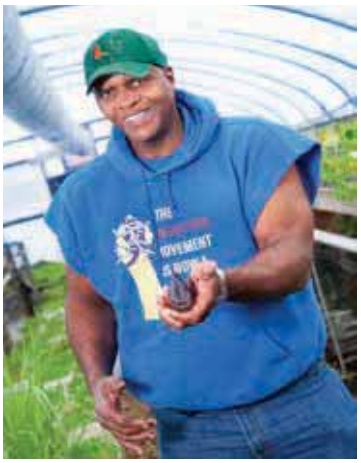
- **Educate** about local food and farming systems.
- **Organize** consumers, farmers and businesses that care about food and farms.
- **Advocate** in Olympia and DC for policies and programs that strengthen local food systems.

Please join us!
Every new voice makes a difference in growing the local food movement.

the WASHINGTON SUSTAINABLE FOOD & FARMING Network

www.wsffn.org

Keynote Speakers

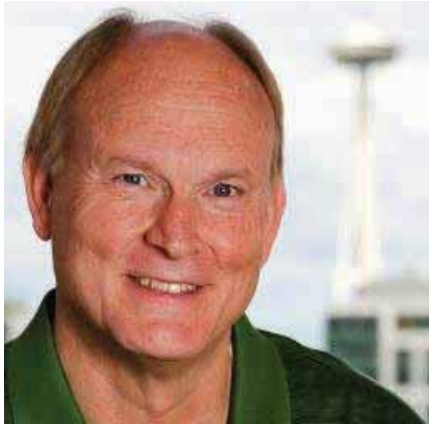


Will Allen

Will is an urban farmer who is transforming the cultivation, production and delivery of healthy foods to under served urban populations. As the son of a sharecropper, former professional basketball player, ex-corporate sales leader and long time farmer, he is recognized as a national leader in urban agriculture and food policy. After a brief career in professional basketball and a number of years in corporate marketing at Procter & Gamble, Will Allen returned to his roots as a farmer, using his retirement package to purchase a plot of inner city land with greenhouses, where he established and functions as the CEO of the country's preeminent urban farm and non-profit organization, Growing Power.

At Growing Power and in community food projects across the nation and around the world, Allen promotes the belief that all people, regardless of their economic circumstances, should have access to fresh, safe, affordable and nutritious foods at all times. Using methods he has developed over a lifetime, Allen trains community members to become community farmers, assuring them a secure source of good food without regard to political or economic forces.

In 2008, Allen was named a John D. and Katherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellow "genius grant," only the second farmer ever to be so honored. He is also a member of the Clinton Global Initiative, and in February 2010, he was invited to the White House to join First Lady Michelle Obama in launching "Let's Move!" — her signature leadership program to reverse the epidemic of childhood obesity in America. In May 2010, Time magazine named Will one of Time 100 World's Most Influential People. In 2011, Allen was named one of the World's Most Powerful Foodies by Michael Pollan and Forbes Magazine in its World Power Issue and received the NEA Security Benefit Corporation Award for Outstanding Service to Public Education in 2012 for his work with children, teachers and schools.



Rod Brooks

Rod is the V.P. and Chief Marketing Officer for PEMCO Mutual Insurance Company. "Northwest Marketing Guy." As the PEMCO campaign suggests, he's a lot like you. And perhaps... A little different as well.

Like many of us, Rod grew up right here in Snohomish County (Lake Stevens) where his parents and relatives raised and grew much of their own food, owned and managed commercial berry farms, and labored in gardens and orchards that sent crops of fruit and vegetables to local markets and canneries.

After high school, Rod attended Washington State University and became a member of the Alpha Gamma Rho – a fraternity whose mission is to make better men and through them a better agriculture. Perhaps it was today's session that Rod was being prepared for.

In 1999, Rod took the marketing helm at PEMCO Mutual Insurance Company. With the role came the opportunity to help transform an analytical and operations-based organization – with a predominantly commoditized product – into a dynamic and market-driven organization. Now, 14 years after joining the company, Rod calls the insurance business one of the biggest marketing challenges he's faced, and he views PEMCO's current campaign as one of his most rewarding.

Rod has served in numerous volunteer leadership capacities and is especially proud of his long standing service to Washington DECA. His service and contributions were recognized in 2009 when he was presented the Washington DECA Award of Merit – the organizations highest recognition for volunteer service. In 2012, Rod was presented the Communication and Leadership Award by Toastmasters International.

Speakers

Amy Allison
Attorney with Anderson Hunter Law Firm

Carlos O. Avena
Quality Assurance Manager at Willie Green's Farm
Honorary Member of the Mexican NAPPO Team

Patrice Barrentine
Advisor to the Washington State Farmers Market Association Board, and serves on the Preservation and Development Authority Council for Pike Place Market

Dorie Belisle
Dorie and her husband John founded BelleWood Acres, members of Whatcom Farm Friends and on the Board of the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association.

Neil Bell
Community Horticulturist for the OSU Extension Service in Marion and Polk Counties, in Oregon.

Barry Bettinger
Co- founded Snoqualmie Ice Cream in Maltby,

Chris Benedict
Regional Agriculture Specialist for Washington State University, Extension, Whatcom County

Chip Brown
General Manager of Willie Green's Farm, Monroe, WA

Andrew Dykstra
Partner of Feed Your Farm

Marianne Elliott
Plant Pathologist at the Washington State University (WSU) Puyallup Research and Extension Center

Brad Gaolach, Ph.D.
Washington State University Extension Community Sustainability Specialist

Paul Gleason
Resource Conservationist and Farm Planner with the USDA-NRCS in Snohomish County

Chris Guntermann
Sales Represenative working with Horticultural Services, Inc.

Tim Hohn
Chair of the Edmonds Community College Horticulture Department

Ryan Holterhoff
Director of Marketing & Industry Affairs, Washington State Potato Commission

Susan Kerr
WSU Northwest Regional Livestock and Dairy Extension Specialist

Gayle Larson
Certified Professional Horticulturist, Educator at Edmonds Community College and WSU Kitsap Extension Master Gardener Volunteer

Craig Mayberry
Heritage Lane Farms in Lynden. WA

Carol Miles, Ph.D.
Associate Professor in the Department of Horticulture at Washington State University

Jeff Miller
Founder of Willie Green's Organic Farm, Monroe, WA

Linda Miller-Baldwin
State of Washington Taxpayer Information and Education Section

Jason Niebler
Director and Founder of Sustainable Agriculture Education

Sarah Richards
Lavender Wind Farm, Whidbey Island, WA

Kara Rowe
Washington Association of Wheat Growers Director of Affairs & Outreach

Susan Soltes
Founder of Bow Hill Blueberries and Manager/Marketer of the North Sound Food Hub

Grace Sparks, Ph.D.
Seattle Central Community College Biology Department

Claus Svendsen, Ph.D.
Chair of the Skagit Valley College Environmental Conservation Department

Sponsors & Partners

Primary Sponsors

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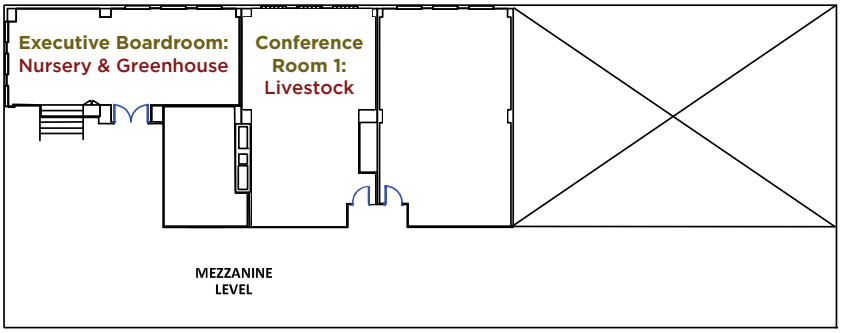
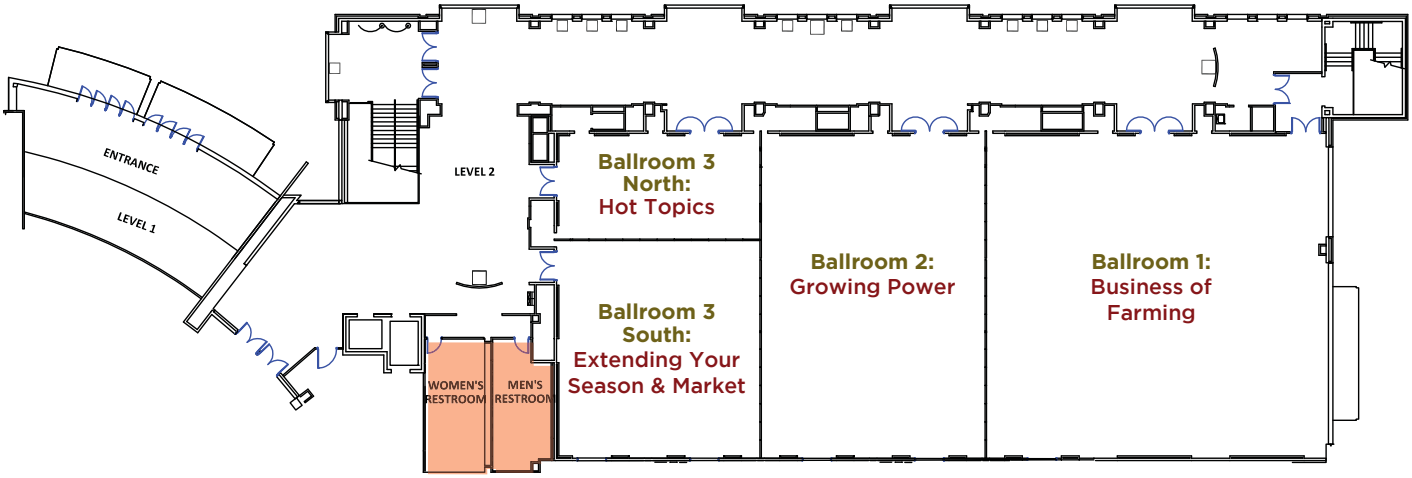
	Ballroom 1	Ballroom 3 South	Ballroom 2
Sessions	Business of Farming	Extending Your Season and Market	Growing Power
Session 1 10:30 a.m.	**State Taxes & Records for Agriculture Business** **Presenter:** Linda Miller-Baldwin, Tax Payer Information Specialist with the Washington State Department of Revenue **Description:** This presentation will show how state taxes apply to agricultural business activities in Washington State. Get your questions answered about use taxes, Business & Occupation tax filing and other useful information.	**Growin' Great Early and Late Leafy Greens** **Presenter:** Chris Benedict, Regional Agriculture Specialist for Washington State University. **Description:** Per capita consumption of leafy greens has increased over the past 15 years and, as a result, local production has steadily increased. To capitalize on this demand, targeting non-peak production periods will result in an expanded marketing season and a stronger connection with the consumers. With our mild growing conditions in western Washington growers can maximize their production periods by accurately choosing leafy green varieties and types. Chris will discuss results from field trials in western Washington, evaluating a number of leafy green types and varieties, along with mechanized seeding and harvesting tools to reduce your production costs.	**Soil Building in the City – Vermicomposting** **Presenter:** Will Allen, Urban Farmer and CEO of Growing Power. **Description:** Will is going to cover how he raises worms as one of his life stock. Why did he start his methods and what are the lessons he learned over the years?
Session 2 11:30 a.m.	**Launching Fact Sheets for the 7th Edition of the WSDA Small Farm Direct Marketing Handbook** **Presenter**: Patrice Barrentine, Education and Outreach Coordinator, Office of Compliance and Outreach, Washington Dept. of Agriculture **Description:** Since 2009, several changes have occurred in legislation and regulations that affect direct marketing farmers. Join us for the launch of new fact sheets on seed sales, recalls, wild harvested mushrooms, and more. This interactive session will show you new videos on food processing and the cottage food permit.	**Pushing the Envelope on Your Production and Market Season** **Presenter:** Jeff Miller, Willie Green's Organic Farm. **Description**: Besides providing your customers with the freshest, local and seasonally grown produce during the typical market season, how do you keep them coming back for more year after year? One tried and true way is to be the first to market with the best looking and best tasting produce! Having a well stocked and aesthetically pleasing stand at the end of the market season doesn't hurt either. Join Jeff Miller of Willie Green's Organic Farm as he lets us in on some of his most valuable production and marketing techniques designed to endure both ends of the off-peak market season.	**Aquaponics – The Integrated Systems of Fish and Produce** **Presenter:** Will Allen, Urban Farmer and CEO of Growing Power. **Description:** This topic is Will's real signature research and now production program. He has gathered tremendous amount of information over the decades he has been practicing these methods. He had seen successes and failures and he is going to share simple techniques that can be used to do well by growing fish and produce together.
Session 3 3:00 p.m.	**Value-Added Operations & Marketing** **Presenter**: Barry Bettinger, CEO/Owner, and Samantha (Zahn) Hill, Marketing Manager, Snoqualmie Ice Cream **Description:** Barry Bettinger, Owner and CEO of Snoqualmie Ice Cream will discuss operations and marketing management in a value-added industry. As a very fiscally conservative company, Snoqualmie Ice Cream has grown 10-20% a year since its acquisition in 1997. This presentation will be part strategy and part panel discussion. Discussions include operations, commodity cost management, customer relationship management, pricing, budgeting and marketing. Accompanying Barry will be his Marketing Manager, Samantha (Zahn) Hill, to discuss marketing and take questions.	**The Highs and Lows of Tunnel Production** **Presenter:** Carol Miles, Associate Professor, Dept. of Horticulture at Washington State University, and Vegetable Specialist, WSU Mount Vernon Northwestern Washington Research and Extension Center. **Description:** Many high-value specialty crops are well suited to production during the fall, winter and spring seasons in western Washington. During this session, Dr. Miles will describe the use of low tunnels and high tunnels to extend your production and marketing season. Tunnel materials and construction will be discussed, especially as they pertain to weather issues such as heavy wind and snow. Specific crops that are well suited to each type of tunnel and season will also be discussed.	**Intense Production Methods – Smart Season Extension** **Presenter**: Will Allen, Urban Farmer and CEO of Growing Power. **Description:** This topic is one of the secrets to Will Allen's successes. He perfected the hoop house system and is able to grow 365 days a year in Wisconsin. He has 100 large hoop houses now and he is growing more than 40 vegetables even during the winter months.
Session 4 4:00 p.m.	**Basic Succession Planning for Farmers** **Presenter:** Amy Allison, Attorney, Anderson Hunter Law. **Description:** Succession Planning is a continuous process to transfer management, knowledge, skills, control and ownership of business or other property to others. Learn essential estate planning concepts, estate tax considerations, and specific transfer techniques. We will also discuss goal setting and the typical challenges faced by many farm owners when contemplating succession. This presentation will be valuable to any farm owner thinking about transitioning ownership of their business or real property.	**Get Funding for Your High Tunnels** **Presenter:** Paul Gleason, Resource Conservationist and Farm Planner, USDA-NRCS in Snohomish County. **Description:** The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has a long 80 year history helping producers meet the ever changing demands of our industry. Their voluntary technical and cost share programs have helped many local farms improve and remain in business through the years. One primary area the agency has focused on is promoting locally produced and marketed products. In Washington State, seasonal high tunnel systems have been very popular to extend the growing season outside our typically short cool summers. Join Paul Gleason as he explains how NRCS can provide financial cost share to agricultural producers interested in extending their season and market by installing a high tunnel system.	**Crops Do Include People – Creating Jobs, Growing Lives** **Presenter:** Will Allen, Urban Farmer and CEO of Growing Power. **Description:** This is what Urban Agriculture really is about. We do not just need some food from somewhere. We need nutritious and healthy food that helps our body, mind and local communities. We need just food that brings joy to all involved in its production and consumption. We need food that is based on the 3Ps, People, Planet, Profit, helps to rebuild our economy, benefits the ecosystem and improves our communities.

Ballroom 3 North	Conference Room 1	Executive Boardroom
Hot Topics	Livestock	Nursery and Greenhouse
Meeting the Food Safety Challenge: The Willie Green's Experience **Presenter:** Chip Brown, General Manager and Carlos O. Avena, Quality Assurance Manager, Willie Green's Farm, Monroe, WA. **Description:** Many produce growers have to meet new federal food safety regulations and quality assurance programs for wholesale markets. Willie Green's has recently completed a new handling and packing facility and Mr. Brown and Mr Avena have developed the required GAP and HACCP operational plans that meet the new standards. Learn the details of what it takes to successfully meet the new standards.	**What's the Hype about Heritage Pork?** **Presenter:** Craig Mayberry, owner of Heritage Lane Farms in Lynden, WA . **Description:** Craig will discuss the growing interest in heritage pork production: what breeds, what is so special, how to market, what's different. He will also discuss his interest and reasons behind using fodder in his system.	**Diagnosing Plant Problems: Distinguishing Plant Symptoms from Pest Signs** **Presenter:** Neil Bell, Community Horticulturist, OSU Extension Service in Marion and Polk counties. **Description:** In this session we will look at the most common cultural and environmental problems affecting landscape plants in our area. Topics to be covered include sunburn, drought stress, soil quality issues, planting problems and nutrient deficiencies, among other problems.
Value-added Products in the Marketplace **Presenter**: Sarah Richards, Owner, Lavender Wind Farm on Whidbey Island; Dorie Belisle, Owner, BelleWood Acres, Whatcom County; Susan Soltes, Owner, Bow Hill Blueberries, Skagit County; Fred Berman, NW Agriculture Business Center, Moderator. **Description:** Join us for a dynamic panel discussion presented by three highly successful women representing a broad range of agricultural production and creative value-added enterprises. Each of these women have built unique business models of different scales and from different crops, but they're all knowledgeable about their respective niches and passionate advocates for local agriculture. Each has developed a range of products, many unconventional for a farm. Included in this panel will be a discussion of the role of food hubs in enhancing the marketing of local foods into retail, restaurants, and institutions.	**Fodder Feeding for the Dairy** **Presenter:** Andrew Dykstra, partner of Feed Your Farm (which grows and sells barley sprouting equipment). **Description:** Andrew will discuss the benefits of fodder and why he chose to use it with his dairy system. One of the only diaries locally using fodder, Andrew will discuss why this works best for him.	**Greenhouse LEAN: Things You'd Do Differently if Only You'd Known When You Started** **Presenter:** Chris Guntermann, Sales Rep, Horticultural Services, Inc. **Description:** Discussion of the different decisions facing startup on how to integrate resources to create the best greenhouse environment that will enclose and facilitate the 'production machine' inside. Attention to small details to help avoid the hindsights of "seemed like a good idea at the time" and "I'd have done it differently if I'd had the time to plan it." Information will be specific to the Northwest weather environments and our unique climate swings.
Rolling Up Our Sleeves & Getting Our Hands Dirty **Presenter:** Rod Brooks, V.P. and Chief Marketing Officer, PEMCO Mutual Insurance Company, "Northwest Marketing Guy." **Description:** Interested in hearing more about the importance of effective story telling? Want to better understand more about what to do and how to get it done? Well this workshop will do just that. Keynote speaker Rod Brooks will host an interactive session that is designed to go where you want to take it. Rod will answer your questions and offer suggestions for how to enable your farm, your products, and your services – as challenger brands – to stand out from the noise of much larger competition. This is the place where we roll up our sleeves and get into the work.	**Parasite Control in the Small Ruminant** **Presenter:** Dr. Susan Kerr, WSU Northwest Regional Livestock and Dairy Extension Specialist. **Description:** Parasites are a constant threat to small ruminant health and producer profitability. This workshop will be a brief introduction to the "new" trends in parasite control that rely less on chemical dewormers and more on selection, monitoring, targeted treatment and pasture management.	**Edibles Your Customers Will Eat Up** **Presenter:** Gayle Larson, Certified Professional Horticulturist, Edmonds Community College, WSU Kitsap Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Educator, and owner of Dancing Raven Design. **Description:** Vegetable gardening seems to be here to stay, so how do you attract customers and what are they looking for once you've attracted them? A Certified Professional Horticulturist, experienced home gardener and edible gardening coach, Gayle will discuss what the market looks like from the perspective of a client. After presenting her ideas, she'll open up the discussion to let growers and retailers share their thoughts and find ways to entice and keep gardeners coming back for more.
SAgE Collaborative: Sustainable Agriculture Education for the Puget Sound Bioregion **Presenter:** Jason Niebler, Director and Founder of Sustainable Agriculture Education; Tim Hohn, Edmonds Community College Horticulture Department; Claus Svendsen, Skagit Valley College Environmental Conservation Department; Grace Sparks, Seattle Central Community College Biology Department; Brad Gaolach, Washington State University Extension. **Description:** Now you can earn an urban agriculture and small farm certificate or degree locally. Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAgE) is a federally funded higher education collaborative in urban and small farm agriculture training and bioregional food system studies. Certificate and degree core, specialty, and applied courses emphasize agroecological principles and field experience to prepare students for innovative careers.	**Beef Quality Assurance: How to Keep Customers Coming Back** **Presenter:** Dr. Susan Kerr, WSU Northwest Regional Livestock and Dairy Extension Specialist. **Description:** Using a mix of presentation and interactive activities, this workshop will help beginning beef producers understand the importance of producing consistently enjoyable and safe products that consumers perceive as a good value so they will come back time after time as repeat customers.	**New Best Management Practices for Growing Clean Plants** **Presenter:** Marianne Elliott, Plant Pathologist, Washington State University Puyallup Research and Extension Center. **Description:** Invasive plant diseases such as Phytophthora ramorum can be expensive for growers and sellers of ornamental plants. Some new, non-chemical techniques for minimizing the impact of soil- and water-borne diseases will be discussed. These methods include steam, biological control agents, and slow sand filtration.

Floor Plan


Executive Boardroom: Nursery & Greenhouse
Conference Room 1: Livestock
MEZZANINE LEVEL


ENTRANCE
LEVEL 1
LEVEL 2
Ballroom 3 North: Hot Topics
Ballroom 3 South: Extending Your Season & Market
Ballroom 2: Growing Power
Ballroom 1: Business of Farming
WOMEN'S RESTROOM
MEN'S RESTROOM

Pierce County
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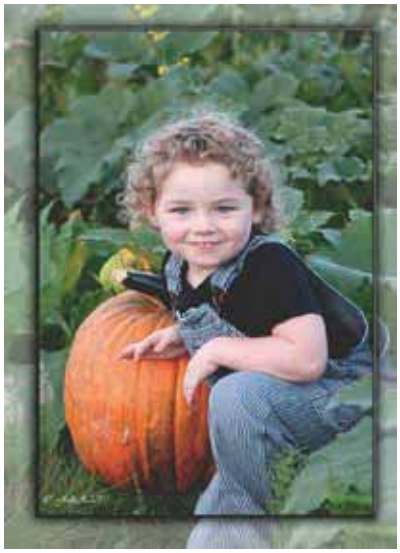
Check out our new Farming Website
www.piercecountywa.org/farming
From the small farms that dot the Key Peninsula, to the cattle ranches of Eatonville, to the large row crop farms of the lush Puyallup Valley, Pierce County has a rich history in agriculture that continues to this day!
Pierce County
Planning & Land Services



Snohomish Conservation District

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Your local conservation district can help you with:

- Managing your land
- Farm and resource planning
- Implementing farm and natural resource projects
- Native plant selection
- Addressing issues that could impact fish and other aquatic life
- Urban and small acreage landowner concerns
- Education for youth and adults

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The District offers workshops, tours, K-12 classroom education and a Firewise program for landowners. For youth, events include Envirothon, Earth Day projects and a Natural Resources Youth Camp.

Snohomish Conservation District hosts one of the largest conservation plant sales in the state. Residents can purchase low-cost trees, shrubs, ferns and groundcover during our March sale at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds in Monroe.

Check our website for details and to get on the mailing list for a notice.

Find us on Facebook

Snohomish Conservation District
528 91st Ave NE, Suite A
Lake Stevens, WA 98258
www.snohomishcd.org
425-335-5634

SNOHOMISH CONSERVATION DISTRICT

A Local Taste

Chef Kaspar Donier Classically trained in Culinary Arts in his home town of Davos, Switzerland, Chef Kaspar became world-renowned from his prestigious positions at five-star hotels like Suvretta House in St. Moritz, Beau Rivage in Lausanne, Hilton Hotel in Vancouver, Canada and later the Executive Chef at Four Seasons and Inn on the Park.In 1989, Chef Donier and his wife Nancy opened Seattle's most exciting restaurant, Kaspar's Restaurant and Wine Bar, garnering numerous awards and accolades. In 1993, Kaspar's was named by Gourmet magazine and USA Today as one of the top regional restaurants in the Pacific Northwest, and was named "Best restaurant in Seattle" by Money Magazine. Chef Kaspar also works directly with local farms, vintners, and other local businesses to source local ingredients in his menus as much as possible.

Chef Russell Lowell is the Executive Chef/Owner of Russell Lowell Catering, Russell's Restaurant in Bothell & The Garden Café at Molbak's in Woodinville. His lifelong passion for food began when he was a small boy, exploring the mangrove waterways of Cuba, catching fish and hunting small game. At the age of 15, cooking under the direction of a French chef in Southern California, Russell discovered his true calling. Over the course of his career, he traveled and worked extensively in fine dining restaurants, perfecting his skills, which led him to become the executive chef for several restaurants across the nation. In the mid-90s, he launched one of Seattle's most sought-after catering businesses, serving the most distinguished clientele in business, politics, and entertainment.

Chef Charles Ramseyer Lured from Seattle to New York City in 2006 to open Wild Salmon, Charles brought the flavor of the Pacific Northwest to the Big Apple. Swiss-born chef Charles Ramseyer returns to Seattle, where he takes on the role of Culinary Director for Tai Foong Seafood. At Tai Foong, Charles will direct the development of recipes and products for the company's all natural seafood creations offered to retail and foodservice operators in the United States. The company is focused on using quality sustainable seafood and is a Marine Stewardship Council Chain of Custody Certification. A favorite guest chef for any number of charitable causes, Charles has delighted event attendees with his delicious creations at Seattle's Taste of the Nation, the Auction of Washington Wines benefitting Seattle Children's, FareStart and the International Pinot Noir Celebration.

Chef Gregg Shiosaki has worked as a chef in Seattle since 1981. He has taught Culinary Arts in the Seattle Community College District since 1991; at Seattle Culinary Academy at Seattle Central Community College since 2005. In 2010 he was selected to be a United States delegate to Slow Food's Terre Madre in Turin Italy. Throughout his cooking career Chef has worked directly with local farmers, fisher folk, and artisan producers. At Seattle Culinary Academy he implements their "Seed to Plate" summer curriculum. During this class the Low students spend time in Skagit Valley learning from farmers about planting, crop maintenance, harvesting and marketing. Chef Shiosaki also teaches SCA's advanced "Sustainable Food System Practices" theory class. He says "Our farmers are essential to being able to produce a sustainable, quality, nutritious, local cuisine. Their hard work and passion is to be celebrated."

Chef Stuart A. Wright comes to the Comcast Arena in Everett after working at several gourmet restaurants in Manhattan, Miami and his home state of New Jersey. After moving to California 17 years ago his first stint as an Executive Chef was at Café Tiramisu in San Francisco's financial district. He was then recruited by the Bon Appétit Management Company, working at some extremely large corporate accounts. Stuart went on to become a Corporate Executive Chef at Stanford University, Cisco Systems in the Silicon Valley, and the University of Pennsylvania (UPENN) the country's oldest Ivy League College in downtown Philadelphia. Besides being trained in classic French cuisine, authentic Texas Style Barbecue is his passion. You can expect great gourmet as well as great down home cooking, home made soups as well as great Texas style barbecue at Comcast Arena from Chef Stu.

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