

From: pl hamlett [plhamlett@hotmail.com]
Sent: Friday, August 31, 2012 11:54 PM
To: info@communitycouncils.org
Subject: FW: From the Desk of Senator Johnny Ellis: Alaska Farming

pls forward to CPCC members

Thanks
PETER HAMLETT

From: Senator_Johnny_Ellis@legis.state.ak.us
To: Senator_Johnny_Ellis@legis.state.ak.us
Subject: From the Desk of Senator Johnny Ellis: Alaska Farming
Date: Thu, 30 Aug 2012 18:32:28 +0000

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**SENATOR
JOHNNY ELLIS**
**Working hard
Solving problems
Getting things done**
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August 30th , 2012

Farming Alaska
Alaska's Family Farms, Farmers Markets, and Food Security

Friends and Neighbors,

Alaska farmers grow some of the largest, most delicious produce in the world. The long days of sunlight and cool nighttime temperatures provide an environment perfect for growing a host of high quality products. As the "[local food movement](#)" has gained national momentum, Alaskans are eager to get their hands on [Alaska Grown](#) produce.

Each year, on the opening day of the [Alaska State Fair](#), [Representative Bill Stoltze](#) of Chugiak invites legislators and staff to tour farms in the Mat-Su Valley. Participants have an opportunity to visit with the Alaskan farmers who grow the produce that often ends up in grocery stores, farmers markets and restaurants around the state this time of year.

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Red and green leaf lettuce, cabbage and carrots line the fields in Palmer, Alaska.

Many of the farms featured on the Mat-Su Farm Tour have belonged to Alaskan families since the [colonial farming experiment in the early 1930's](#). For decades these families have struggled against the elements and extremely short growing season to yield a crop capable of sustaining them over the long winter. Building on decades of uniquely Alaskan knowledge and tweaking modern farming techniques, farmers can now consistently produce world class vegetables which are eagerly consumed by Alaska residents.



"Micro-tenting" an innovative technique employed by Arthur Keyes at Glacier Valley Farms allows for crops to be planted two weeks earlier than many other Mat-Valley farms, extending his growing season and producing high yield crops.



Strawberries thrive in Alaska due to the long summer days and cool nighttime temperatures. As a result Alaskan strawberries are among the sweetest available on the market today.

Farmers Markets

It's the time of year when Anchorage's farmers' markets burst with fresh produce and other delectable Alaska goods. From super-sweet strawberries and carrots, to hearty greens and potatoes, Alaska's produce is some of the best in the world. Most markets also feature a wide selection of Alaskan honey, jams, jellies, and baked goods—the perfect treat for the chill of the fall. Take full advantage of the harvest season, and head to your local market! Remember, most markets can accept Quest and WIC/Senior nutrition program payments.

Here are [Anchorage's major markets](#):

[Anchorage Downtown Market & Festival](#)

Location: 3rd Avenue Between C & E Streets Anchorage

Time: **Saturday & Sunday**, 10:00am - 6:00pm

Runs through September 9

[Anchorage Farmers Market](#)

Location: 1420 Cordova Street Anchorage

Time: **Saturday**, 9:00am - 2:00pm

Runs through October 13

[Center Market](#)

Location: Anchorage, Mall at Sears: Benson & Denali

Time: **Wednesday**, 11:00am - 6:00pm Year-Round,

Saturday 10:00am- 4:00pm Summer-Only

Runs year-round (Inside October to June, Outside June to October)

[Northway Mall Market](#)

Location: 3101 Penland Blvd at the Northway Mall

Time: **Wednesday**, 9:00am - 4:00pm

Runs through September

[South Anchorage Farmers Market \(Saturday\)](#)

Location: Subway Sports Centre/Cellular One Sports Anchorage (Corner of Old Seward and O'Malley)

Time: **Saturday**, 9:00am - 2:00pm

Runs through October

[South Anchorage Farmers Market \(Wednesday\)](#)

Location: Behind Dimond Mall, in front of Dimond Center Hotel

Time: **Wednesday**, 10:00am - 4:00pm

Runs through September

[Spenard Farmers Market](#)

Location: Under the Windmill at Spenard, between 25th & 26th Avenue

Time: **Saturday**, 9:00am – 2:00pm

Runs through September

Food Security

While the shelves are stocked with high quality local foods during the summer months, it is difficult not to notice the eventual transition to produce imported from the Lower 48. Alaska currently imports between 85-90 percent of its overall food. This is a dangerous trend considering our susceptibility to large scale natural disasters such as the **[1964 earthquake](#)**. In the event of a massive disruption to our supply lines, Alaska would have only 3-5 days' worth of food on the shelves of our grocery stores. This statistic highlights our reliance on the outside world and should encourage us to promote and support our local food producers.

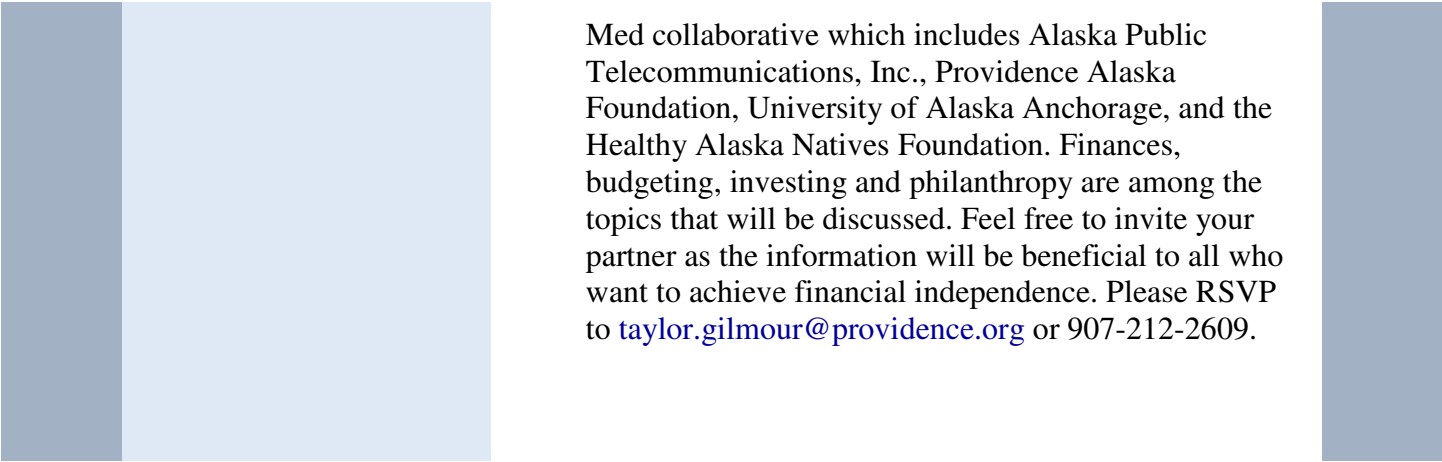
To address this concern, as well as a host of other dietary related subjects, the **[Alaska Food Policy Council](#)** has been formed. The AFPC is tasked with spurring local economic development, increasing food security and improving nutrition and health in Alaska. The AFPC has effectively brought together dozens of stakeholders to develop and ultimately implement a **[comprehensive approach to food security in Alaska](#)**. Food security is an important issue in Alaska, and I plan on supporting the AFPC in their efforts to encourage local food production and instill healthy eating habits in our young people.

Until Next Week,



Senator Johnny Ellis

P.S. Coming up **[FREE Life Planning Seminar: Women and investing for the future](#)**. **Wednesday, September 12 6-7:30 pm** at the University of Alaska Anchorage, Consortium Library, 3rd floor – parking is complimentary. The event is being hosted by the U-



Med collaborative which includes Alaska Public Telecommunications, Inc., Providence Alaska Foundation, University of Alaska Anchorage, and the Healthy Alaska Natives Foundation. Finances, budgeting, investing and philanthropy are among the topics that will be discussed. Feel free to invite your partner as the information will be beneficial to all who want to achieve financial independence. Please RSVP to taylor.gilmour@providence.org or 907-212-2609.