FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Farmers are invited to Palmer Feb. 10-11 for the annual Alaska Potato, Vegetable and Fruit Growers Conference.

Conference organizer Stephen Brown, a Palmer agriculture and horticulture agent for the Cooperative Extension Service, said the event helps farmers get ready for spring planting.

“This is one of the quintessential roles of Extension everywhere — connecting the farmers with research and current recommendations,” he said.

This is the first year the conference will include fruit growers, which reflects an increasing number of fruit producers, many of them in the Mat-Su Valley, said Brown. Crops include apples, blueberries, strawberries and raspberries.

Speakers on Feb. 10 will highlight potato research, fertilizer recommendations and pest management. Vegetable and fruit topics will be covered the following day, including small fruit breeding and production, agricultural inspection programs and marketing.

The featured speakers are Sujaya Rao, an associate professor of entomology from Oregon State University, and Chaim Kempler, a research leader from the Pacific Agri-Food Research Center in Agassiz, B.C. Rao will talk about pollination and Kempler, small fruit breeding and production in coastal British Columbia. Other speakers will include representatives from the Alaska Division of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Cooperative Extension Service.

The Palmer Community Center (depot) at 610 S. Valley Way will host the conference. A schedule and registration form may be downloaded from a link at www.uaf.edu/ces. For more information, contact Extension’s Copper River/Mat-Su District Office at 745-3360.

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