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**Fairbanks, Alaska**—The University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service will host a three-part forage workshop for hay farmers starting this month.

The first session of the Alaska Forage Growers School will take place Dec. 10 from noon to 3:30 p.m. at the Matanuska Experiment Farm in Palmer. The workshop is free and includes a lunch.

The workshop will focus on fundamentals and improving the quality, quantity and profitability of forage crops. Topics will include land preparation, soil sampling, and interpretation, fertilization and renovation of existing fields.

Both beginning and veteran hay farmers will benefit from the school, said workshop coordinator Stephen Brown, Extension agriculture and horticulture agent in Palmer. Making a profit while producing quality forage in Alaska demands remarkable management skills, biological knowledge, practical experience and a rather large measure of luck, he said. Alaska hay farmers face short, cool growing seasons and often experience dry conditions when they need rain and lots of precipitation when they want to harvest.

Forage crops are a significant part of the Alaska agriculture industry, Brown said. They comprise about 75 percent of total agricultural acreage in the state and the annual crop value is $6.5 million.

For more information or to register for the forage school, contact Penney Prickett at 745-3360 or Stephen Brown at 745-3639 or scbrown4@alaska.edu. Registration is requested by Dec. 9 so enough lunch food will be available, but participants may also register at the door. Two additional forage school sessions will be scheduled later this winter.