Conference to highlight sustainable agriculture

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Participants in the Sustainable Agriculture Conference March 23-24 in Fairbanks will hear about a variety of topics, from novelty potato research to raising dairy goats.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service will host the seventh annual conference at Fairbanks Princess Riverside Lodge. Speakers will include producers, researchers and representatives of agricultural agencies.

Special guest speaker Lorrie Conway, who runs a licensed raw milk dairy in Washington state with her husband, Shaun, will talk about how raising dairy goats and making cheese can be successful on a small family farm. Speakers also will address various considerations of running a small dairy, including raw milk regulations, cheese and meat regulations in Alaska and sheep and goat parasites.

Other topics will include agriculture funding programs, organic fertilizer research, school gardens, community supported agriculture in Homer, the Alaska rhubarb industry, small fruits and berries and raising chickens in Interior Alaska. Panels will discuss food security, root cellars and employment strategies for small Alaska farms.

Two preconference workshops will take place on March 22. Lorrie Conway and Susan Kerr, a veterinarian and county Extension director from Washington state, will lead a goat and small dairy workshop from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Fairbanks Princess Riverside Lodge, and the Conways will teach goat cheesemaking, from 3 to 6 p.m. in the Hutchison Institute of Technology kitchen.

Preconference workshops are $35 and registration for the two-day conference is $75 or $55 for one day. Preregistration is requested for planning purposes. See a full conference schedule or download a registration form at www.uaf.edu/ces.

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