Extension will host sustainable agriculture conference

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CONTACT: Debbie Carter, Extension information officer, 907-474-5406, dscarter@alaska.edu

The Sustainable Agriculture Conference March 13–14 in Fairbanks will cover a variety of topics, from harvesting rainwater to agritourism.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service will host the ninth annual conference at the Fairbanks Princess Riverside Lodge. Conference organizer Michele Hebert says sustainable agriculture is an approach to farming that is good for the environment and the community.

Preconference workshops on March 12 will kick off the event. Billy Kniffen of San Antonio, Texas, will talk about water cisterns and developing rain barrel and irrigation systems, and New Mexico farmer Don Bustos will cover low-cost sustainable farming methods.

During the conference, Minnesota food analyst Ken Meter will talk about how Alaskans can find ways to grow food that are economically, socially and environmentally viable. Meter runs a nonprofit organization in Minneapolis that works with communities to support sustainability.

Several conference sessions will focus on ways agricultural businesses can incorporate tourism, from reindeer ranches to farm stays. Other topics will include a farmer-to-farmer training program, sustainable farming and gardening practices, heating greenhouses with passive solar, food safety, marketing and agency updates. Panels will discuss improving the fertility of farms and expanding agriculture in the Interior.

Preconference workshops are $50 each or $55 for two and the conference is $60 for one day or $85 for two. Student rates also are available. See agenda and registration information linked from www.uaf.edu/ces.

ADDITIONAL CONTACTS: Taylor Maida, Extension program assistant, at 474-2422 or temaida@alaska.edu.

ON THE WEB: www.uaf.edu/ces

NOTE TO EDITORS: Information here

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