



HOW WESTERN SARE HELPED POTATO FARMERS ON THE KENAI

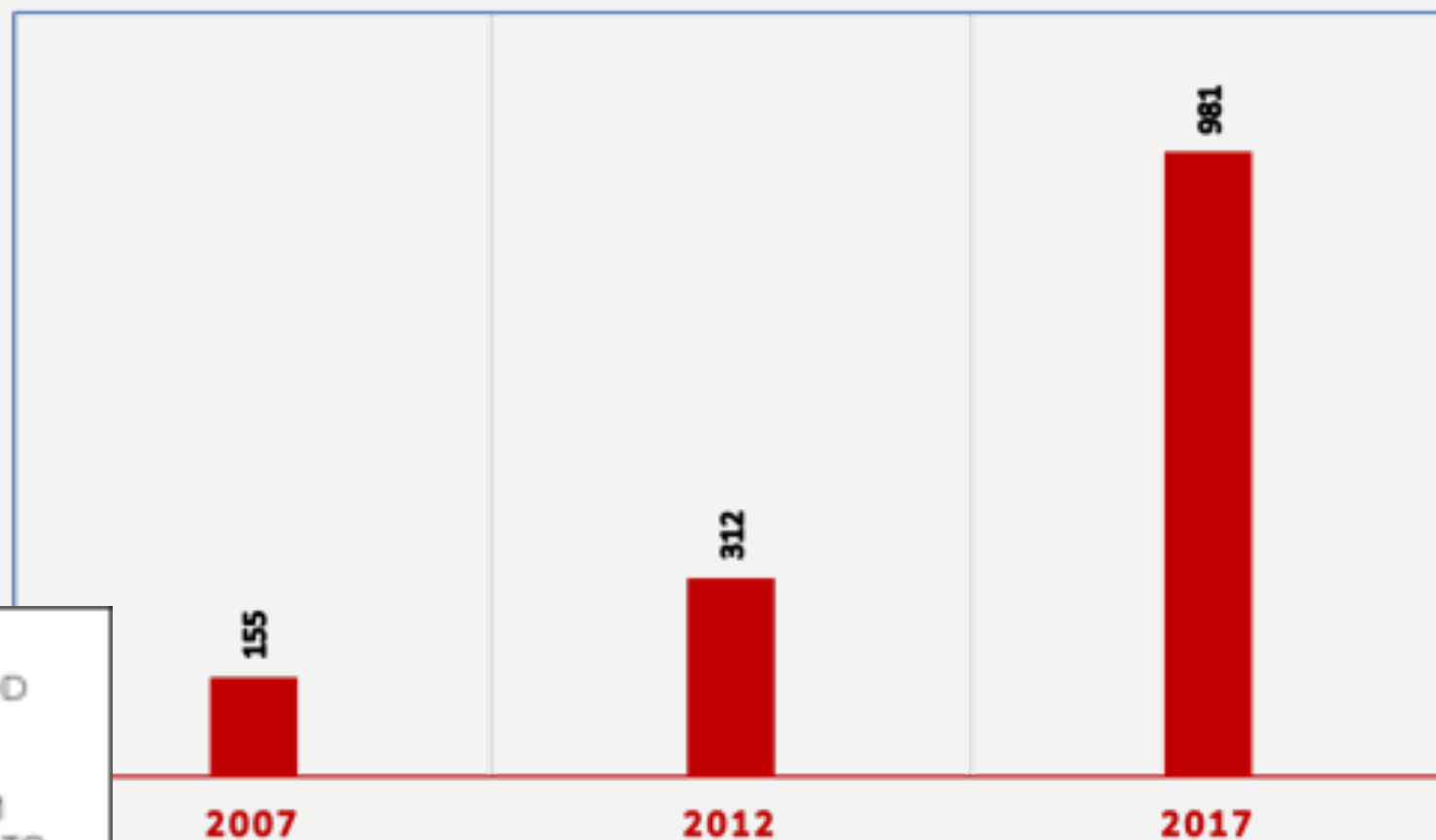


THE VALUE OF FOOD
SOLD DIRECTLY
TO CONSUMERS
INCREASED FROM
\$2.2 MILLION IN 2012 TO
\$4.5 MILLION IN 2017



KENAI PENINSULA FARM SALES

■ Food Sales Direct to Consumers (\$100K)



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RESEARCH QUESTION

“Will more efficient production using appropriately-sized technology, along with cooperative marketing, significantly increase production and market penetration of locally-grown root crops on the Kenai Peninsula?”

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- 1. To trial single-row harvester and tub-washer on 5 small-scale farms**
- 2. To quantify the environmental, economic and social impacts**
- 3. To assist producers in designing a cooperative marketing plan and evaluating the results**



MULTI- PURPOSE DIGGER

PTO drive

76" chute

Adaptable to
carrots, onions,
garlic, etc.

Base: \$4800

Upgrade: \$1100

Plus shipping



26" DRUM WASHER

Continuous feed

Batch feed

Spuds, carrots,
sturdy root veg

Base: \$4950

Upgrade: \$550

Plus shipping

gathering
hours
irrigation
weeding seed
labor root
digging
washing washing
pounds
hours spacing hours
potatoes sales
table-grade labor acres
digging gathering
varieties

DISINFECTION PROTOCOL FOR SHARED POTATO EQUIPMENT

Why sanitation matters: Potato diseases like blight and bacterial ring-rot are costly, hard to get rid of and can easily be spread from farm to farm by equipment. **PROTECT YOUR FARM** by following these steps **BEFORE** and **AFTER** use of the equipment.

BEFORE USING EQUIPMENT AT YOUR FARM

- 1) **Mix a 10% bleach solution.** In a 1-gallon (or larger) hand-pumped sprayer, mix 1 part household bleach to 9 parts water. Bleach is effective as a disinfectant, inexpensive and readily available in Alaska. *Wear appropriate personal protective equipment when using this solution.* This solution can also be used to disinfect harvest bins, hand tools and any surfaces that come into contact with potatoes.
- 2) **Has equipment been thoroughly washed?** Most disinfectants, including bleach, are inactivated by dirt and organic matter. Pressure washing cleans equipment and allows the disinfectant to do its job.
- 3) **Disinfect.** Spray equipment thoroughly and repeatedly with bleach solution so that all surfaces are covered with a wet film for 5-10 minutes.
- 4) **Rinse** thoroughly with clean water.



AFTER USING EQUIPMENT AT YOUR FARM

- 1) **Pressure-wash.** Cleaning with a pressure washer is critical because bleach, like most other disinfectants, is inactivated by organic matter. Washing with a garden hose is not sufficient. If you do not own a pressure washer, take equipment to a self-serve car wash.
- 2) **Disinfect.** Spray equipment thoroughly and repeatedly with 10% bleach solution so that all surfaces are covered with a wet film for 5-10 minutes.
- 3) **Rinse** thoroughly with clean water.

References: Bacterial Ring-Rot in Alaska Potato Crops by Stephen C. Brown, William L. Campbell and Jeffrey Smeenk, UAF Cooperative Extension publication PMC-00340, July 2016, downloadable at <https://www.uaf.edu/publications>; email correspondence with Dr. Jeffrey Smeenk, potato grower and horticulture specialist, June 2020; Disinfection 101 by Glenda Dvorak, The Center for Food Security & Public Health, Iowa State University, <https://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Disinfection/Assets/Disinfection101.pdf>



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August 2020



Affordable equipment program aims to help farmers, feed families

By VICTORIA PETERSEN
Peninsula Clarion

Kenai Soil and Water Conservation District are expanding their catalog of affordable agricultural rental equipment through a charitable project that benefits both farmers and the community.

Three pieces of equipment, which includes a potato digger, a potato washer and a potato planter, were purchased with the assistance of grants

from the Kenai Peninsula Foundation, the Rasmussen Foundation and Western SARE. The equipment can be rented to small-scale farmers for \$25 day, plus a donation of 25 pounds of potatoes to the Kenai Peninsula Food Bank. It's a small price to pay for equipment that could cost a single farmer thousands.

"I couldn't afford to buy a new potato digger," Abby Ala, owner of Ridgeway Farms, said.

The equipment works on a single row of potatoes, or another root crop, and is "infinitely faster" than the old fashioned way, Ala said.

"I would harvest on my hands and knees," Ala said. "I'm 71 years old. It would take me an hour to go halfway



Kenai Soil and Water Conservation District's newest farm equipment rental is a potato digger that will cut down on labor-intensive potato harvesting for area farmers. The equipment sits ready for use at Ridgeway Farms on Thursday, near Soldotna. (Photo by Victoria Petersen/Peninsula Clarion)

down one row."

Many small-scale farmers don't have the funds to invest in such expensive equipment. Kenai Soil and Water Conservation District is trying to

make small-scale agriculture easier and more accessible.

It took three years to get the potato digger, washer and planter equipment.

"We've been hearing from

small-scale potato farmers for years that a single row potato digger would make life so much easier," Chay said. "I

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Inaugural Harvest Moon Festival 'celebrates progress'

By VICTORIA PETERSEN
Peninsula Clarion

The peninsula's biggest food celebration commences this Saturday with live music, activities, guest speakers, cooking demonstrations, farm vendors and food trucks that will be featuring healthy dishes with Alaska-grown products.

Harvest Moon Local Food Week is in its sixth year, and for the first time, the week will end in a festival. Kenai Local Food Connection, a nonprofit group of volunteers operating under Bridges Community Resource Network, organizes Harvest Moon Local Food Week. Heidi Chay of Kenai Soil and Water District, a co-sponsor of the festival, said the event celebrates progress.

"We want to keep up the momentum," Chay said.

The festival will kick off Friday with a keynote speaker. From 6-8 p.m., at the Soldotna Public Library, Bryce Wrig-

See MOON, page A8











PROJECT RESULTS

Harvest/post-harvest hours: down 45-80%

Digging hours: 4.5 hours/acre, and improving

Washing hours: 4x faster with drum washer

MORE PROJECT RESULTS

Production and market penetration:
no increase yet.

Cooperation:
information-sharing, benchmarking,
draft plan for cooperative marketing

Over 500 # of produce donated to food banks
so far!

YOU CAN DO IT TOO

Define a project based on local needs

Search the SARE database



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Projects

Producers, agriculture professionals and researchers awarded Western SARE grant funds have found wide-ranging outcomes that can help farmers and ranchers sustain their operations and the environment in which they operate. This growing body of knowledge on sustainable agriculture can be accessed in a variety of ways.

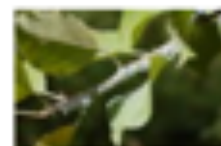
You can review descriptions of Western SARE funded proposals from 2003 to present, search the National SARE database for all progress and final reports, read a profile of grants by state, review materials created during a project or submit a report if you are a project investigator.

Search the Projects Database

Search the National SARE Projects Database to read summaries of projects and their outcomes and impacts.

SARE's mission is
to advance—to the whole

From the Field

[Pest or Beneficial? Ear](#)

For
elen
mar
pest

YOU CAN DO IT TOO

Define a project based on local needs

Search the SARE database

Gather a team

Use a SARE grant to leverage other funds

Applications due in November

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