Anchorage conference to highlight agriculture

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The state’s largest agricultural conference, the Alaska Sustainable Agriculture Conference, will take place in Anchorage on Feb. 24-25.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service will host the 12th annual conference at The Lakefront Anchorage at 4800 Spenard Road.

Conference organizer Steven Seefeldt said the conference has traditionally been held in Fairbanks but is moving to Anchorage this year to reach a different audience. The conference is aimed at a broad spectrum of growers, from gardeners and backyard farmers to the biggest farms in the state.

“The focus is on improving your farm’s sustainability,” Seefeldt said. This includes production recommendations, financial considerations and stewardship of the land.

More than 50 presentations will focus on farm management, growing fruits and vegetables, and meat and fiber production. An all-day session Feb. 25 will cover qiviut production and marketing.

As usual, an eclectic mix of sessions will highlight everything from commercial pork production to farm insurance, birch tapping and Arctic gardening. Speakers will include growers, agricultural agency representatives and researchers. Researchers will provide updates on soil nutrient management and organic amendments, precision agriculture, asparagus variety trials, and ventilation and temperature control in high tunnels.

The keynote speakers will be Carrie Hull of the National Fiber Producers Cooperative and Gina Greenway of the College of Idaho, who specializes in agricultural economics. Hull will talk about developing cooperatives, and Greenway will focus on strategies for strengthening and growing Alaska agriculture.

Half- and full-day preconference workshops on Feb. 23 will highlight fiber production, farm budgeting, and on-farm food safety and marketing. See agenda and registration information at http://bit.ly/sareconf. For the first time, participants may register for a webcast. For more
information, contact Darcy Etcheverry at ddetcheverry@alaska.edu or 907-474-5107 or
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