



Clallam/Jefferson/Kitsap County  
 WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
 Regional Small Farms



# REGIONAL SMALL FARMS PROGRAM 2023

## QUOTES

“ *Our presenter was wonderful - just the right balance of 'you can do this' and 'try this' and 'this works'.*”

“ *This webinar combined with information I received from Laurel about wire worms was super helpful in formulating my sweet potato growing plan. Thank you!*”

“ *Outstanding presentation. Grateful to have been able to participate and for the high-quality resources.*”

## ISSUE

The WSU Regional Small Farms program serves Clallam, Jefferson and Kitsap Counties and strives to support a thriving food and farming sector in our region. Comparing historical data, there is a trend in the number of farms increasing in our region while the size of those farms has continued to decrease. In 2017, there were a reported 698 farms in Kitsap County with the average farm size being 13 acres. In Clallam County, there were a reported 528 farms with an average size of 33 acres, and in Jefferson County a reported 221 farms with an average of 62 acres.

The increase in the number of farms in our region has created a need for more small farm education, technical assistance, experiential opportunities, and resources for our area farmers. In 2023, the program saw an increase in farming needs to include identification and management of on-farm pests, animal agriculture, food safety, crop production, soil management and farm business assistance.

## RESPONSE

WSU Regional Small Farms has actively been supporting new and beginning farmers' needs and strategizing how to continue to provide exceptional programming and services across our region. In 2023, Jefferson County continued supporting a full-time regional small farms coordinator and Kitsap continued to provide a full-time food systems coordinator working with the program. Clallam County continued to support both a part-time integrated pest management specialist and a part-time livestock specialist serving the region.

In addition to the ongoing support and educational opportunities for farmers, the program also applied and received a Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education grant (SARE Award #2022-38640-37490) through the Clallam Extension office, to conduct three years of sweetpotato trials on farms in all three counties. The research project will investigate the efficacy of wireworm-resistant sweetpotato advanced breeding lines in western Washington, assess the yield potential of sweetpotato cultivars, and develop sweetpotato production guidelines for growers in western Washington State.

[extension.wsu.edu/  
 regional-small-farms/](https://extension.wsu.edu/regional-small-farms/)

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## BY THE NUMBERS

- Workshop evaluations indicated that **83%** of participants reported an overall high value of the educational offerings.
- Responded to **103** technical assistance requests serving **83** farmers. The top two topics included Integrated Pest Management and Animal Agriculture issues, solidifying the need for this expertise in our counties and reflecting the impact of hiring two part-time specialists to deliver targeted technical assistance.
- Delivered **25** educational events (8 online, 7 farm walks and 10 additional in-person classes) to **381** farmer attendees. Nearly half (48%) of attendees have been farming for 10 years or less.

## IMPACTS

In 2023, the Regional Small Farms program continued providing educational opportunities and resources to small farms in Clallam, Jefferson, and Kitsap counties, both virtually and in person. Some highlights from the year include:

- Engaged **381** farmer participants in Regional Small Farms class and event offerings:
  - ◇ Delivered **8** online educational events. **Topics included:** NRCS Information & Programs; Social Media Basics for Farmers; Season Planning & Seed Starting; L&I Farm Internship Class; Propagating & Growing Sweet Potatoes; IPM Flea Beetles; Sweet Potato Cultivation; and a WSDA Infrastructure Grant Farmer Forum.
  - ◇ Hosted **7** in-person farm walk opportunities called Dirt Talk Farm Walks. **Topics included:** Aquaponics; Basic Goat Care; Spring Pasture Management & Goat Kidding; Lean Farming; Greenhouse Management; Farm Infrastructure; and IPM & Multi-farm Collaboration.
  - ◇ Hosted **10** additional, in-person, educational opportunities. **Topics included:** Cattle Artificial Insemination School; Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training; Developing a Food Safety Plan; Basics of Sanitation and Good Management Practices; Growing Sweetpotatoes; Sweetpotato Field Day at Mt. Vernon; Harvesting & Curing Sweetpotatoes; Is a Small Farm in Your Future; and co-presenting the annual Tilth Conference, with an Integrated Pest Management Science Symposium.
- Offered regional participation and facilitation for an 11 - week Cultivating Success Whole Farm Planning online course. Farmers were provided instruction, resources, and networking to build a solid plan for their farming or food related business.
- Offered regional participation and facilitation for a 12 – week Cultivating Success Agriculture Entrepreneurship online course. Farmers gained in-depth knowledge around business planning with special emphasis on the financial and legal issues unique to farm based businesses.
- Responded to **103** technical assistance requests serving **83** farmers across Clallam, Jefferson, and Kitsap counties. Assistance was delivered in person, via phone and through email. The top inquiries for 2023 included:
  - ◇ Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
  - ◇ Animal Agriculture
  - ◇ Crop Production
  - ◇ Soils





## ADDITIONAL PROJECTS

In addition to educational opportunities for farmers the program engaged in ongoing projects and county-based work around identified farming and community needs. Project highlights for 2023 include:

- Provided farmers resources through the Small Farms website and monthly agriculture focused newsletter with over 1,200 subscribers and an average 40% open rate.
- Administered the Kitsap Farm Mentor Program - supporting seven farmer mentors with ten group class offerings delivered to eight farm interns.
- Provided support and technical assistance in food access programming such as SNAP and SNAP Market Match to Farmers Markets & Farm Stands in the region.
- Assisted the Kitsap Agritourism Coalition with group administration and coordination of the 1st Annual Kitsap Farm Tour.
- Co-presented the 21st Annual Jefferson County Farm Tour and served on steering committee.
- Served as a member of the statewide Eat Local First collaborative, helping develop an online food and farm directory.
- Partnered to deliver two, four-hour education sessions at Sunfield Farms and Waldorf School in Port Hadlock, teaching ten youth about cattle and soil fertility
- Co-organized and hosted the 2023 statewide Tilth Annual conference for small farms held in Port Townsend, WA
  - ◇ **375+** participants from across the Pacific Northwest attended.
  - ◇ Two local farm tours offered.
  - ◇ Conference scholarships provided to eight regional farmers totaling \$1,200.
  - ◇ 80 participants took part in the special IPM Science Symposium.
- Received a Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education grant (SARE Award #2022-38640-37490) to conduct three years of sweetpotato trials on farms in Clallam, Jefferson and Kitsap Counties
  - ◇ 12 farms participated in the trial: 5 in Clallam, 2 in Jefferson and 5 in Kitsap.
  - ◇ Six sweetpotato classes and workshops were offered online and in person.
  - ◇ Farmers were invited to research trials in Mount Vernon at the first ever Sweetpotato Field Day in September.
- Distributed **\$201,880** worth of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to **74** farms across all three counties. Equipment provided under a statewide Department of Health grant.
- Acted in an administration, facilitation and/or advisory capacity for multiple community partnerships/groups, including:
  - ◇ Clallam AgWorks
  - ◇ Clallam County Conservation Futures Board
  - ◇ Kitsap Agritourism Coalition (KAC)
  - ◇ Kitsap Food Systems Round Table
  - ◇ Kitsap Farmland Preservation Work Group
  - ◇ Kitsap Community & Agricultural Alliance (KCAA)
  - ◇ Kitsap Harvest
  - ◇ Jefferson LandWorks Collaborative
  - ◇ Formation of the Port of Port Townsend Short's Farm Steering Committee

