



# Thurston County

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

## The AG Sounder Newsletter



## October 2022

Do you have an event or story you would like featured in The Ag Sounder? Let us know!

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## Community Value-Added Food Processor Specialist Wanted!

Do you want to be a part of an innovative local program focused on getting more farm fresh produce into school lunches? Are you able, willing, and excited to do some of the hard work to process vegetables in a safe and sanitary manner, and prepare them for distribution? This job could be for you!

The WSU Thurston County Extension program is looking for a temporary part-time food service, food processing, culinary, or food science professional to work in a community farm-to-school food processing facility. The successful candidate will process fresh-cut vegetables, collect basic data on operating times, and work with partners to distribute processed produce. This temporary position is funded by a USDA Rural Business Development Grant and will run for approximately 6-8 months starting at the date of hire. Funding affords 5-8-hours per day, and 1-3 days per week, averaging 15 or fewer hours per week over the course of the project.

For information about this position, [please visit the job posting](#), or contact Stephen Bramwell at [bramwell@wsu.edu](mailto:bramwell@wsu.edu).

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**Fall Grazing Association meeting, tomorrow November 2 from 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm. This event is free!**

Join us for the Fall 2022 Grazing Association Meeting to connect with other local ranchers, shepherds, and grazers. We will hear from the Audubon Conservation Ranching Initiative to learn more about their certification program for beef products and the benefits of a specialty label like their “Bird Friendly Land” label. Come ready for dinner and a discussion about value-added labeling, meat co-ops, and your thoughts and needs. Virtual attendance option available.

Wednesday, November 2nd  
5:30 – 7:00 PM  
Dinner provided  
Kodiak Room  
225 Sussex Ave W, Tenino, WA 98589

RSVP here.

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**Soil Testing in Pastures Workshop**, tomorrow October 27 from 10 am-12 pm at the Veterans' Ecological Trades Collective in Rochester.

Come out to the Veterans' Ecological Trades Collective to learn about:

- Soil sampling techniques
- Soil nutrient management
- Identifying grazing strategies that can be used to improve soil health

RSVP to [nwhite@thurstoncd.com](mailto:nwhite@thurstoncd.com) for directions

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# PROFITING FROM YOUR PIVOT



## PROFITING FROM YOUR PIVOT

Craft your path through recovery with  
customized consulting for your farm business

[BUSINESSIMPACTNW.ORG/PIVOT](https://BUSINESSIMPACTNW.ORG/PIVOT)

### Profit From Your Pivot, November 2022 - April 2022.

WSDA Regional Markets and Business Impact NW have teamed up to offer a new bilingual business coaching and free professional services program for small and regionally marketing Washington farms. Profiting from Your Pivot is specifically designed to help you navigate uncertainty and plan for future farm business success in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. You'll be paired up with your own personal business coach, farm mentors, training, and approximately \$700 in professional services to achieve those goals.

**PRIORITY APPLY** by October 31, 2022.

- 1:1 monthly business coaching sessions
- Monthly WA Farm Mentor Workshops
- 1:1 mentorship with Washington farmers
- Guided access to live and on-demand courses matching your business needs.
- Two-hours of professional bookkeeping and accounting services
- Plus an additional \$700 in professional services focused on: Accounting, Marketing, and/or Food safety planning and GAP audit preparation
- \$700 can be applied to reimburse the cost of your first successful USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification

**Find out more about Profit From Your Pivot here.**

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## **Plight of WA's Hmong farmers underscores disparities in US agriculture.**

Hmong flower farmers took a big hit when Puget Sound farmers' markets closed at the outset of the pandemic, leaving the farmers with a wealth of tulips, dahlias, and daffodils and nowhere to sell them. One farmer, May Yang, had a 70% drop in sales that year, barely keeping her family business afloat. Now, two years later, Yang's livelihood is again being upended: After a miscommunication between her landlord and a fellow farmer, she found out in June that she has to vacate her rented farmland by March. The timeline is short notice for her, as her business depends on the annual planting seasons of more than 25 flower varieties she grows on about 3 acres of farmland. "It's very devastating," Yang said. "Eighty percent of my income depends on the farm." To advocates, Yang's situation is indicative of an annual trend: Hmong farmers get displaced for one reason or another, hustling to find farmland so they can make it to next spring with flowers to sell. Yang's plight also speaks to the power dynamic between landowners and their farmland tenants, who rarely negotiate formal lease contracts, as well as the longstanding disparity in who owns farmland in the first place. The Hmong Association of Washington, which helped Yang and other farmers keep their businesses alive early in the pandemic, is now trying to help her and a handful of peers find stable, fertile land where they can transplant their flowers, avoiding the nightmare scenario of losing an entire year of sales.

**[Read the Seattle Times article here.](#)**

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## **Invasive emerald ash borer expected to kill many ash trees in WA State.**

Landowners and municipalities should be prepared to report sightings and deal with the aftermath of an aggressive borer insect recently confirmed to be in the Pacific Northwest, which could have dire consequences for Washington's native and ornamental ash tree species. The emerald ash borer (EAB) is an invasive pest that causes high levels of mortality of North American ash species. It was accidentally introduced to North America in Michigan in the 1990s. Its first known occurrence on the West Coast was confirmed in northwest Oregon in July 2022. The Pacific Northwest region can expect significant losses of the native Oregon ash (*Fraxinus latifolia*) as well as the ornamental ashes commonly found in urban forests and home landscapes in communities around the region. The introduction of EAB has changed forests and communities in the eastern United States by practically eliminating ash species from the landscape. Many states and communities have tried to mitigate the spread and impact of EAB, but its recent spread to Oregon demonstrates the difficulty of containing this aggressive pest. Land managers and communities are being encouraged to prepare for the seemingly inevitable spread of EAB into Washington.

**[Read the full article about ash borers in WA State here.](#)**

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Mazama pocket gopher



Oregon spotted frog



Taylor's checkerspot butterfly



Oregon vesper sparrow



**WSU Extension information night for farmers and rural landowners: New easement opportunities for working and conservation grasslands in **Thurston County's Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP).****

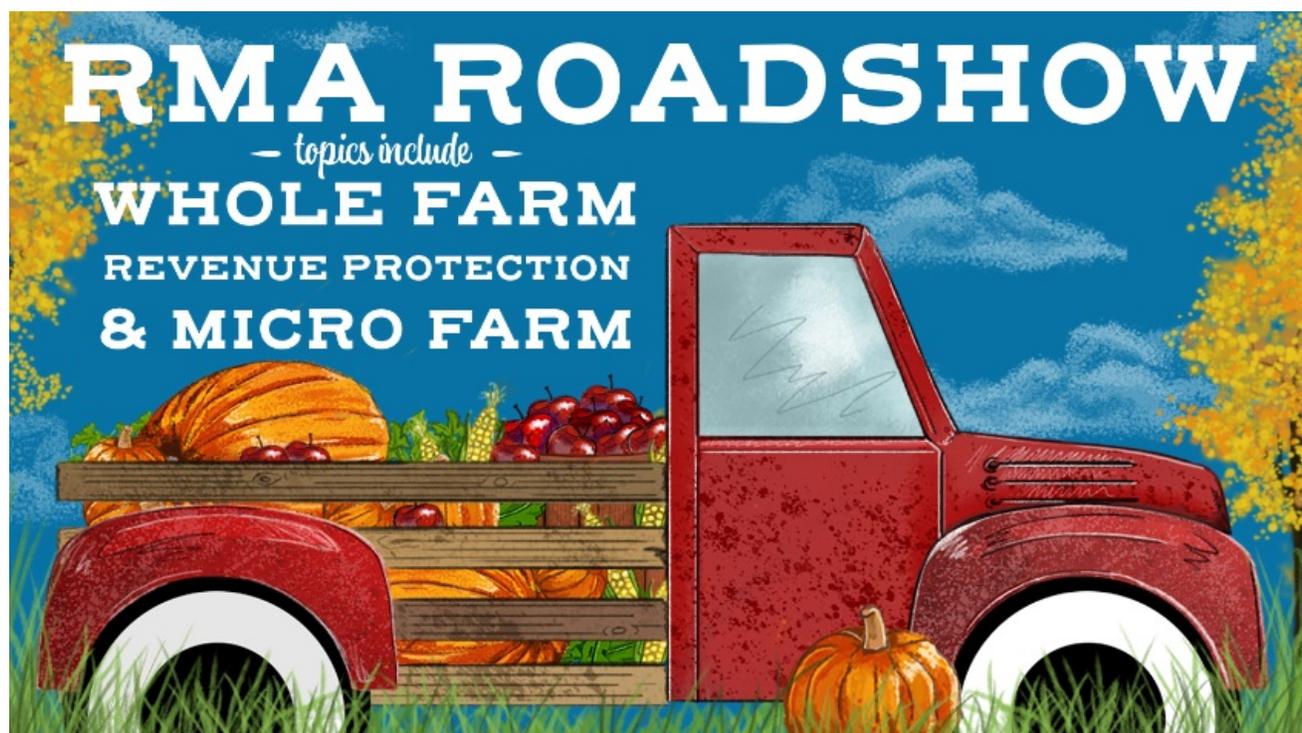
-Wednesday November 9th, in Rainier.  
Sportsman's Club, 404 Alaska St, Rainier 6:00-8:00 pm

Agricultural grasslands support people and serve as a habitat for rare species. With the passage of Thurston County's HCP, significant funds will soon be available to keep grasslands in agriculture and conservation. Come learn what opportunities are available for your property.

Short presentations by WSU Extension and Thurston County will be followed by an opportunity to speak with service providers about your property.

Refreshments included. Contact Sierra Smith for more information at [sierra.smith1@wsu.edu](mailto:sierra.smith1@wsu.edu) or leave him a voicemail at (360) 867-2165.

**Get the most current information about Thurston County's Habitat**



## Crop Insurance for your small farm.

The Risk Management Agency (RMA) is offering virtual workshops on Nov. 15 and Dec. 13 for agricultural producers, which are especially important for specialty crop, organic, urban, and direct market producers so they can learn about the latest updates and improvements to the Whole-Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) and the Micro Farm insurance options.

RMA will host these workshops for agricultural producers via Microsoft Teams events to help them understand and know more about these very important insurance options. The Roadshows will include RMA Administrator Marcia Bunger and other team members, highlighting important improvements to Whole-Farm and Micro Farm and answering questions about these insurance options.

**[Find out more about the virtual workshops here.](#)**

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## **Starting in November, the Southwest Washington Food Hub will partner with the City of Lacey to offer Workplace Wellness Farmshares.**

This 12-week food box subscription program aims to help city employees eat more vegetables and fruits for better health. The program, based on successful programs in Wisconsin and Kentucky, consists of two components:

- A weekly box of delicious, fresh, regionally grown organic produce supplied by the Hub, delivered directly to the workplace.
- Nutrition education in the form of weekly cooking videos and newsletters containing tips and recipes to support healthy eating habits.

By offering convenient workplace pick-up and nutrition education, the Worksite Wellness Farmshare has the potential to attract those who may like the idea of regionally grown foods, but do not routinely buy them.

**For more information, contact program coordinator Marilyn Sitaker at [marilyn.sitaker@wsu.edu](mailto:marilyn.sitaker@wsu.edu)**

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November 8-9, 2022



**The Northwest Food Safety & Sanitation Workshop is November 8th-9th in Portland OR.**

The Northwest Food Safety & Sanitation Workshop addresses basic sanitation as well as cutting-edge issues related to food sanitation and food safety. Topics having broad interest are covered in the general sessions. There are more specific subjects discussed in small breakout sessions, with basic and advanced tracks available.

**[For more information on the workshop or to register please click here .](#)**

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## Check out SW Washington Food Hub's Local Farm Boxes!

The Local Farm Box is a monthly subscription box that sources produce, meat, and value-added products from Southwest Washington Growers Co-op farms and artisans. Each box comes with a corresponding recipe, to help you get the most out of your local bounty.

Subscriptions go out on the first Wednesday of every month. Pick your box up at the Tumwater warehouse from 4-7 pm. Purchase just one box or subscribe for the year for a discount.

**[Subscribe to the 2022 Local Farmbox here!](#)**

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## **Western SARE Funding Opportunities, for farmers, ranchers, and farm professionals!**

### **Farmer/Rancher Deadline: Nov. 2, 2022**

The Western SARE Farmer/Rancher Research & Education Grant Program focuses on advancing on-farm sustainability solutions by funding innovative producer-driven research and outreach. This grant program involves agricultural producers (main applicants) and technical advisor(s) implementing projects to address identified needs in sustainable agriculture. Projects with 1-2 producers may apply for up to \$25,000 and projects with 3 or more producers working together may apply for up to \$29,900.

### **Professional + Producer Deadline: Nov. 3, 2022**

This grant program involves an agricultural technical advisor (main applicant) and producers implementing projects to address identified needs in sustainable agriculture. With the collaboration of at least three producers, projects must integrate research and education aiming to advance the three components of sustainable agriculture - environmental, economic, and social- and use innovative educational outreach to disseminate new knowledge to producers and other agricultural stakeholders. It is expected that the outcomes of funded projects will result in quantifiable benefits for producers, increase the preservation of the natural and social resources upon which agriculture relies, and be shared with other producers. \$75,000 limit/one-three years in scope.

### **Professional Development Program Deadline: November 9, 2022**

This grant program focuses on training agricultural professionals to help them spread knowledge about sustainable agriculture concepts and practices. Grants can run for up to three years, with the final year to be focused on project evaluation. Ag professionals and

educators are eligible to apply. \$100,000 limit/one-three years in scope.

[Find out more about Western SARE Grants here.](#)

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## **The Garden Club of America Board of Associates', Centennial Pollinator Fellowship grant is now open!**

The Garden Club of America (GCA) Board of Associates Centennial Pollinator Fellowship provides funding to a current graduate student to study the causes of pollinator decline, in particular bees, bats, butterflies and moths, which could lead to potential solutions for their conservation and sustainability. The selection criteria are based on the technical merit of the proposed work and the degree to which the work is relevant to this objective. Funding may vary in amount, but normally will be in the range of \$4,000 for study and research that will advance the knowledge of pollinator science and increase the number of scientists in the field. A recipient may reapply for an additional year of funding.

The categories under which applicants may apply are:

- Effects of nutrition, genetics, pesticides, pathogens, parasites and disease on pollinators
- Pollinator habitat development, assessment or monitoring
- Plant-pollinator interactions and pollination biology
- Research that examines other aspects of pollinator health, including cutting-edge, original concepts.

[Apply here.](#)

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## **WA State Farm Walk Podcasts**, brought to you by WSU Extension and Tilth Alliance.

This episode of the Farm Walks Podcast features Rachael Taylor-Tuller of Lost Peacock Creamery in Olympia, WA. Rachael shares her inspiring story of transition and transformation from an Air Force service member to being a full-time farmer and how working with animals was her key to mental health and wellness. Later in the episode, they interview with Grant Weber of Vets on the Farm, a veteran focused farm created by the Spokane Conservation District, aiming to support a new mission and a way for veterans to transition back into civilian life through careers in agriculture and farming.

### **The Lost Peacock Creamery Episode.**

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## **Events, News, Farms, Funding, Jobs**

- **Sapsuckers, a Community Science Program for Bigleaf Maple Sugaring**
- **Nisqually Pilot Project May Protect Streams and Fish**



# Thurston County

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