

# co-op connection

Winter  
2019

## Planting Seeds for the Future

by Tom Boland, General Manager



One of the great things about kids is that they are always learning. Having four kids means that Kelly and I don't always get a lot of downtime. It also means that we keep growing as we learn and relearn

along with our kids.

That same emphasis on learning is alive and well at the co-op. We believe employees do better in an environment where training and advancement opportunities are encouraged and available. We regularly take our leadership to other cooperatives to see how they do business, and we share ideas on what works and what doesn't. It keeps us sharp and keeps us humble.

We recently took this idea in a new direction as we invited growers from Skagit, Whatcom, Island and Snohomish Counties to attend Land O' Lakes® Leadership Development Training for Young Producers. The program was entitled "Cornerstone for Engagement." We weren't sure of the timing or how it would be received, so we were thrilled to get 17 couples to join us in Leavenworth, Washington, for the program!

*Continued on next page*

**“** Giving people opportunities for growth early in their careers can help them lead lives with enhanced purpose. ”



Board member Jeff Boon and Tom Boland discuss director roles and responsibilities at SFS.



Blake and Clara TeVelde with Cascade Farms, Inc., visit with Andy Schuh from Schuh Farms during a reception at The Sleeping Lady Mountain Resort.

# Planting Seeds for the Future

*Continued from previous page*

The rustic, mountain setting of The Sleeping Lady Resort in Leavenworth contributed to the ambience. Paul Hansen, manager of leadership development with the dairy cooperative, led the group in exploring leadership techniques and opportunities in the cooperative system. I've always thought it is nice to give people opportunities for growth early in their careers; it can help people lead lives with enhanced purpose.

Growers commented that the networking at this training event was terrific. They appreciate being able to meet other growers in a constructive setting.

Our appreciation goes out to the Skagit Farmers Supply Board of Directors for encouraging this outreach. We hope we planted ideas in the minds of the attendees—seeds that could germinate into future leadership positions in our co-op.

Skagit Farmers Supply (SFS) finished its most recent fiscal year with record sales. We didn't quite reach the record earnings of last year, but we didn't miss it by much! Results like these are not possible without a good effort from the entire team. Every year is unique, and in 2018, we faced challenges that loomed large. Our team of dedicated employees not only engaged those challenges but oftentimes made the best of them and kept their humor in the process.

I hope your Holidays were filled with blessings. We wish you a Happy New Year! 🏡



**Top:** Corey Hughes of Hughes Farms and Andrew Albert of Andrew's Hay exchanged ideas at the Leadership Development Training. **Bottom:** Land O'Lakes Manager of Leadership Development Paul Hansen and Tom Boland.

# Directors Learn and Network in Spokane

The Skagit Farmers Supply Board of Directors traveled to Spokane in November for the Northwest Regional Cooperative Institute. The institute brings farmer-board members together from Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana for two days of educational meetings, industry updates and networking opportunities.

The SFS board stayed an extra day to tour our feed mill, our Country Store and our AFCO Distribution Center in the Spokane area. Our co-op sponsors barrel racer Dr. Kathy Grimes of Medical Lake, Washington, through our LMF branded feed. Dr. Grimes qualified for the National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas this past year, as well as the Calgary Stampede and has won numerous barrel racing events. The SFS board also toured her ranch. 🏡



**Top:** Lloyd Campbell, SFS VP of Wholesale and Distribution, and Kyle Morgan, SFS Mill Manager, show the board recent capital improvements at our Spokane feed mill. **Bottom:** Lloyd Campbell and AFCO Warehouse and Distribution Manager Brad Servatius give the board a tour of the Spokane distribution center.



Weed Slayer on organic blackberries.

# Weed Slayer Bursts onto the Scene



*By Jeff Howe, Agronomy Manager*

One of the benefits Skagit Farmers Supply brings to our growers is the new technology we help you to explore.


At the beginning of 2018, we could not have anticipated the valuable weed control solution we would help our growers find with the introduction of **Weed Slayer**, the first non-selective, organic-based pesticide to hit the U.S. market.

With increasing concerns in the news about the implied negative effects of glyphosate on food production, many growers have been searching for an alternative weed control system. In the past, burndown products were all our organic growers had to fight tough weed infestations. These products weren't solving the problem. They were more of a feel-good application.

viracide, bactericide and fungicide; **Agro Gold**, a unique blend of nine beneficial bacillus that regenerate the soil and promote plant health to increase mineralization and nutrient uptake. Agro Gold is WSDA organic approved; and **Stimulagro**, a unique blend of cold water seaweed extract with the highest levels of auxins, cytokines and betaines. Stimulagro promotes plant health, root growth, increased yield and is OMRI approved.

These four products had solid sales in 2018, and our market research team forecasts that will double in 2019.

Moreover, Skagit Farmers Supply has distribution agreements with Agro Research International for the states of Washington, Oregon, Hawaii and Alaska.

To find out more about any of the products we carry, please contact our agronomy department at 360-445-5015. 

---

*“We expect to apply this organic-based herbicide to both organic and conventional crops in the future.”*

---

Along came Weed Slayer from Agro Research International®. In the first year of general use, Weed Slayer has produced excellent results in perennials such as tree crops and berries. It's not just a burndown. It systemically kills at the root.

We're learning how to use Weed Slayer, and we expect to be able to apply it to both organic and conventional crops in the future.

## Other Agro Research products

We're also distributing **Thyme Guard**, an organic disinfectant,



On organic potatoes, we have Weed Slayer on the left, the middle row is a check and flame-burned to the right.

# Soil Health and Conservation



*By Steve Groen, Agronomy Sales Manager*

At the end of 2018, it's good to reflect on our progress. It's both exciting and humbling to associate with a team of professionals with more than 85 years of combined experience in agronomic consulting on a wide variety of crops. Even better, we're privileged to work with growers who have multi-generational talents and experience. Every grower visit is a learning experience.

Environmental stewardship pressures on farmers, from consumer groups and regulatory agencies, will increase. I am proud to say our proactive farmers are at the forefront of environmental stewardship. I encourage each of you to think about how to incorporate nutrient stewardship practices in your fertility programs.

A good resource can be found at [www.nutrientstewardship.com/4rs/benefits-using-4rs](http://www.nutrientstewardship.com/4rs/benefits-using-4rs). These practices protect our environment while helping farmers and consultants use the right rate and the right source of plant nutrition at the right time during our short PNW growing season. Our agronomists are planning late winter focus group sessions. Ask to be included on topics such as potato fertility and quality, corn and forage production, and soil health by emailing me at [steveg@skagitfarmers.com](mailto:steveg@skagitfarmers.com).

In-furrow fertility programs continued to gain popularity with our growers in 2018. Our strategic partnership with Nachurs® has allowed our agronomists the most innovative in-furrow and foliar applications in the industry. This partnership and others with Actagro® and Agro Research International® have given us access to hundreds of crop trials nationwide—some of which we participated in. Our staff has practical, in-field experience on a vast variety of crops.

As important as it is for farmers and agronomists to analyze and build programs around soil tests, it is equally important to incorporate sound in-furrow and foliar fertility programs into a comprehensive plant nutrition plan. If we are to continue to push yield, marketability and storability of our unique and high-value



crops, these tools are a necessity. Regardless of how balanced your soil tests are or how much manure you apply, plants need nutrition at extremely critical periods—nutrition they sometimes cannot acquire from the soil. Contributing factors include poor soil biology, extreme heat or cold, disease, and too much rain, just to name a few.

These programs don't need to add a lot of costs to your nutrition programs. Often it's the proper timing that makes a difference. Nonetheless, Return on Investment (ROI) matters and our agronomists can show you the tools for optimum yield and quality.

Our members' interest continues to grow in soil biology products and the positive effects they have on plant health, overall root development and nutrient acquisition. Skagit Farmers Supply is on the forefront of this new revolution, taking the agronomy industry by storm. Nachurs Rhyzo-Link® and AGRO GOLD SD™ have been incorporated into the in-furrow and foliar applications of many of our conventional and organic growers.

I am proud of the in-field practical knowledge and the results SFS agronomists have achieved with our growers. The soil microbiology field is exciting. We are learning more about soil biology every day—it's like going to Mars for the very first time. It is very rewarding to work with agronomists and growers who care about soil health. 🌱

# More Tons, Better Quality Potatoes



By Dan Adamson, SFS Agronomist

The agronomists of Skagit Farmers Supply have been looking for ways to increase the internal and skin quality of tubers in the valley.

Working with Yara® we have had great success increasing calcium uptake with the tubers and boosting yields an average of five tons per acre with timely applications of YaraLiva Tropicote™. Adding calcium at the right time to the potato crop is essential for holding together the expanding cells during bulking and for skin set.

Calcium is not very mobile in the plant and will not move down from foliar to the root/tuber system; the plant growth stage is also critical for available uptake of calcium.

An unexpected but exciting side effect of the YaraLiva™ Tropicote™ is uniform sizing in the tubers. See the image accompanying this article. 🌱

**Right:** A random selection of tubers taken from several test digs in one field on Fir Island. The field was applied with YaraLiva Tropicote.



## Credit Update for 2019

By Shannon Perkes, Credit Manager

Skagit Farmers Supply continues to update and refine its credit policies and procedures as agricultural marketplaces change. Even if you have been doing business with us for some time, we may request an updated credit application. In part, we need this information to disperse patronage or stock retirement checks. We would appreciate it if you would assist us in updating our records.

If you are interested in the Deferred Payment Plan for the 2019 crop season, please contact me at 360-757-6053 x1018 or write [shannonp@skagitfarmers.com](mailto:shannonp@skagitfarmers.com) to discuss the options Skagit Farmers Supply is offering this season. All Deferred Payment Plan discussions and paperwork must be completed by March 31, 2019, and, if requested, include a current crop plan and financial statements.

Our Credit Department is open Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. We are happy to answer any credit-related questions. We work closely with all departments at Skagit Farmers Supply to ensure we are meeting our patrons' needs. 🌱

**Left:** The SFS Credit Team left to right: Beverly Conn, Ashley Smith, and Shannon Perkes.

# Mission Statement

To preserve and enhance viability of the local agriculture economy through cooperative profitability.

# Vision Statement

To be the premier cooperative in the Pacific Northwest by being:

- The producers' first choice
- The consumers' first choice
- The employees' first choice

# Core Values

Customer Commitment  
People - Integrity - Performance  
Quality - Safety - Community

# Directory

**Main Office—Burlington**  
360.757.6053

**AFCO Distribution & Milling**  
800.538.8700

**Agronomy—Conway**  
360.445.5015

**Agronomy—Burlington**  
360.757.7870

**Energy—Main Office**  
360.757.6053

**Petroleum & Propane Delivery**  
360.757.6053 // 888.757.6053  
Emergency: 360.209.0310

## Country Stores

Farm · Pet · Home

Burlington	360.757.4055
Coeur d'Alene	208.772.2715
Colville	509.684.2232
Freeland	360.331.1970
Mount Vernon	360.424.4207
Oak Harbor	360.675.2277
Oroville	509.560.7088
Sedro Woolley	360.856.6567
Spokane Central	509.534.1412
Spokane Valley	509.926.6603
Stanwood	360.629.7033
Stevensville (Montana)	406.777.5527



1833 Park Lane | P.O. Box 266  
Burlington, WA 98233-0266

360.757.6053 | 888.757.6053  
[www.skagitfarmers.com](http://www.skagitfarmers.com)

PRSRST STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
VISTACOMM

## Save These Dates!

Skagit Farmers Supply has scheduled its Grower Recertification Meetings for **February 19** (organics), **February 20** (conventional ag) and **February 21** (T&O) at McIntyre Hall on the campus of Skagit Valley College. We've expanded organic training this year. As in the past, you'll be able to earn credits toward recertification. *Stay tuned for your official invite.*



## Amberley Wows Washington

The historic Lincoln Theater in Mount Vernon was filled on November 8 to hear the inspirational story of Amberley Snyder. The event was sponsored by Skagit Farmers Supply, which donated proceeds to local youth groups.

Last spring, four hundred people packed the AG "A" Building at the Spokane Interstate Fairgrounds—to hear Amberley speak. That event, also sponsored by our Country Stores, was written up in our Spring 2018 newsletter.

"I am so proud that Skagit Farmers Supply and the Country Stores could be part of such a wonderful event for our communities," said Michelle Schell, SFS Marketing Director. 