

SPRING 2024

  
**SKAGIT**  
**Farmers Supply**

# CO-OP CONNECTION

*Pictured is the garden center at SFS's Freeland store.  
Visit all 10 COUNTRY STORES for spring plantings.*

## DOING MORE WITH LESS

– Tom Boland, President & CEO



It was nice to see a full house for our annual meeting last month. We appreciate you sticking with us as we moved locations a few times. The consensus is that McIntyre Hall is a good venue for us, and we plan to be back there next year.

This was our 90th Annual Meeting, and we were pleased to share good results from our latest fiscal year. The meeting moves along quickly and follows the same pattern from year to year, yet it serves an important function for Skagit Farmers Supply. It gives members a chance to hear from the board and management about the health of the co-op, and to hear what we are thinking about for the future.

Agricultural cooperatives serve a significant role for farmers across our country, and it is important

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“Gaining efficiencies was a common theme at our annual meeting and at our recent board planning meeting.”

for farmer-members to understand what the farmer-directors contend with as they make decisions which will impact the membership. We do appreciate your interest and your support.

At the annual meeting, I discussed with our membership the need for efficiency. We are swimming against the same currents you do, with the higher cost of wages and lack of workers available to fill roles. In general, the cost of doing business has gone up more quickly than can be planned for. That is true for wages, insurance, and any capital investments we make.

Gaining efficiencies was also a common theme at our board planning session in Victoria, BC in late January.

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Earlier this year, Tom Boland served on a panel at the 2024 AgVantage Software Executive Conference in Savannah, Georgia. Also on the panel: AgVantage CEO Michelle Blomberg (center) and Roggen Farmers Elevator CEO Keith DeVoe.

We continue to try to automate processes and invest in time saving technology. In general, we try to do more with less. We lease our TerraGators so we have the latest technology available for our staff. This allows for quicker onboarding of fresh staff, a more accurate field experience, and more data tracking points.

We are in the final year of a long-term plan to add automation to our Aslin-Finch Mill in Spokane. We have an American-Newlong system on order, with a Fuji stacking robot ordered for our mill. This will allow us to nearly double our production with the same staff we have in place now.

We are working with our AgVantage Software and Square 9 Softworks to automate a portion of our document flow. We will eliminate redundant keystrokes and processing time and use our admin staff more productively. Those are just a few examples of things we are working on and how we are planning for a more efficient future.

On a philosophic level, life is a journey. Cooperatives survive longer than other companies, so a cooperative's journey is multi-generational. We are servicing the kids and grandkids of former members. We are using the assets and locations that others placed in service. Those

are advantages we have that other businesses have trouble replicating.

Even if we are opening a new location, we are not usually starting from scratch. We have the internal knowledge and support facilities in place to grow our business. We must grow the business to continue to spread our costs over more sales and margin dollars. We are also fortunate enough to have done that successfully, and that success can feed growth as well.

Despite a nice mild winter that we all can enjoy (although it is not good for our energy business) we still have momentum. We are attracting new sales and planning for a long journey ahead.

Sunday, March 17, 2024, was a sun-filled day in Skagit County. A good day to get yard work done and toss a ball around. Father McMichael's sermon that morning followed the life of St. Patrick, and many of us were wearing our green.

My wife, Kelly, and her family owned a large Irish Pub, restaurant, and night club on the corner of Selby and Snelling in St. Paul, MN for three generations. St. Patrick's Day was always the busiest day of the year. Tens of thousands of people would make an annual pilgrimage to O'Gara's to drink a pint and share corned beef and cabbage with friends. It was a great cross section of people from the greater St. Paul area who would gather each year with music in the air, a piper leading the world's shortest parade from one entrance to another, and empty hands waiting patiently for their Guinness to be served.

We have a lot of St. Patrick's Day memories that all bubbled up this year as we at our shepherd's pie and Kelly's Irish soda bread that Sunday evening.

Wishing you all a safe spring.



## SHARE THE ROAD WITH LARGE VEHICLES

– Sally Jo Merenz, Director of Safety

I wish this message did not need to be delivered, but too many drivers follow semi's too closely, hang out in blind spots, and pass buses when they shouldn't.

Skagit Farmers Supply and its AFCO wholesale division own and operate a fleet of 170 licensed vehicles ranging from cars, pickups and smaller service trucks all the way up to box trucks and semis. In addition, we license about 60 cargo trailers.

As spring and summer driving season approaches, The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) will observe its annual OUR ROADS, OUR SAFETY WEEK from May 5-11, 2024. Let's remember what it takes to share the road safely.

Large trucks and buses have large blind spots, long stopping distances, and make wide turns, which is why it's vital for everyone on the road to plan for road safety. Courtesy of the FMCSA, here are four tips passenger vehicle drivers can take to help avoid crashes.



- 1 AVOID BLIND SPOTS**  
Try to avoid lingering in blind spots; if you can't see a truck or bus driver's face in their mirror, they can't see you.
- 2 BE AWARE OF LONG STOPPING DISTANCES**  
Large trucks and buses need the length of up to two football fields to safely stop. Leave extra space when merging in front of these large vehicles, to give them the stopping space they need.
- 3 ANTICIPATE WIDE TURNS**  
Trucks and buses need extra space and time to make wide turns carefully. Wait for large vehicles to finish turning before continuing your journey. Pay close attention when trucks and buses are turning right, as they may not be able to easily turn from the right lane and may initially move left to create enough turning space.
- 4 STAY BACK**  
Trucks are much higher off the ground than a passenger vehicle. In the event of a crash behind a truck, passenger vehicles could slide (or be pushed) under a truck. Stay a safe distance back when stopped behind a truck or bus, particularly going up an incline, where large vehicles might roll backward.

For more tips on sharing the road safely with large vehicles, visit FMCSA's website at [fmcsa.dot.gov](https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov).



# A DECADE OF GROWTH

– SFS Board of Directors

The second Wednesday in March is an important date each year for Skagit Farmers Supply (SFS). It is the day when members are invited to hear updates on the financial performance of the co-op at our annual meeting.

This year, the meeting was held at McIntyre Hall in Mount Vernon on March 13, 2024. The room was full, stock retirement checks were handed out, lunch was served, and door prizes were awarded. It might seem routine and formulaic, but the success and future of the co-op are not predetermined. Success is built on hard work, planning, and execution—all while sticking to our Mission Statement in service of agriculture in northwest Washington.

Again this year, Vice Chair Spencer Fuentes gave the Director's Report and discussed the importance of SFS and our strong legacy as we celebrated our 90th annual meeting. *NOTE: Area farmers founded Skagit Farmers Supply in 1934.*

The entirety of your 2013 stock in SFS was retired this year. That totaled \$1,164,550. In June, we will allocate \$4,590,419 of patronage, and will pay 50% of that patronage in cash. Our patronage payments have doubled in the past eight years when compared to the eight prior years. Our annual capital reinvestment is up more than 50% in that same time. We are well-positioned for the future.



Conway Manager Jon Schmidt and SFS member Aaron Deboer.



Board Chair Nels Lagerlund was re-elected via mail- in voting.

“In 2013 we reported \$98 million in sales with 340 employees. We completed 2023 with \$173 million in sales with the same number of employees.”

President & CEO Tom Boland shared thoughts on the record performance in fiscal 2023, including sales, margins, and net income. He also shared concerns about record expenses accompanying the other records. We have devoted a lot of resources to getting more efficient. We've improved automation in our fertilizer and feed manufacturing facilities and in our fleet, and we've eliminated redundant and costly processes that do not contribute to our members' experience.

In addition to the strong financial performance, Tom shared another remarkable statistic. In 2013, we reported \$98 million in sales. We completed 2023 with \$173 million in sales. Yes, there is some commodity inflation in those numbers, but there is a lot of growth in those numbers, too. The \$75 million increase came with the same employee count we had in 2013. We have 340 employees this year, and that is what we had a decade ago. Investments and reductions in costly processes have helped us grow. Growth is challenging, but not overwhelming.

Skagit Farmers Supply has a dedicated and engaged workforce. We have strong assets, and we have customers who want to do business with us. We were happy to share the good results with everyone in Mount Vernon on March 13th. It was a well-attended meeting with a lot of good energy.

Thank you for your continued support. Please stay safe in the fields and on the roads this spring.



CEO Tom Boland delivered the Manager's Report.



Energy Salesman Greg Fisher and SFS member Dale Wolters.

# STANWOOD NOW EVEN BETTER!



– Lance Carsten, Director of Retail

Our biggest and busiest Country Store has completed a facelift to the exterior, with many new features that are already adding a positive impact for our customers. Our Stanwood Country Store has been updated and upgraded in a much-needed remodel that is bringing new products and services to discerning pet owners, gardeners and hardware shoppers.

We've expanded the retail space, the fence yard, propane storage, and our hay barn. We've added a new garden center. We've added full-service pet grooming, a three bay self-wash, and a 12-door freezer and refrigerator for frozen and fresh pet food and treats. The improvements are already being well received by both new shoppers and longtime members in Stanwood.

"Raw frozen pet food has been one of the fastest growing categories over the last few years," observes Category Manager Candi Thomas when asked about the doubling of our frozen capacity at the location. More recently, a gently cooked frozen option has experienced even more rapid growth."

"Our customers are very impressed with the presentation and better shopability of our new freezers. There is definitely a WOW factor!" adds Store Manager Allene Stuller. "We have the largest selection in dog and cat supplies in the area, and we're continually adding new and exciting items for our customers," she adds. The pet category is one of the largest categories in our Country Stores, and across our AFCO Distribution network.

The grooming salon and pet wash are market-driven additions to the location. Appointments for many groomers are made weeks or months in advance, so



"We've added a new garden center, full-service pet grooming and a 12-door freezer/refrigerator for frozen and fresh pet food."

it was a natural extension of what we're already doing in Stanwood. We have plenty of room in the store, and the grooming space was planned all along with our remodel. Guests can check in on their dog's progress while they are shopping or come back and pick them up after the appointment.

Long-time General Manager Ken Kadlec opened a location in Stanwood more than two decades ago. It's grown to become our busiest location. The co-op rented the location up until two years ago. In the meantime, the building did not get the reinvestment that it needed to keep up with current customer expectations. We're excited to be able to bring that update to the community now.

One of our vendor representatives, who had not seen our store prior to our remodel, commented on how nice our "new building" is--not realizing we had renovated a building that was built in 1969. That is quite a compliment!

Our Stanwood location has 3,600 square feet for True Value hardware, a 4,000-square-foot clothing pad, 5,000 square feet of pet and feed, and 2,500 square feet of lawn and garden, in addition to a 4,000-square-foot exterior garden center and an additional 30,000 square feet of warehouse space.



Our Stanwood staff along with retail leadership outside our new entrance



The expanded clothing pad at our Stanwood Country Store



Pet Groomer Emily Scheller grooms a golden doodle named Charlie



Frozen and fresh pet has been one of the fastest growing categories in the industry

## STEVE HARTLEY: CARICATURES ARE REAL ART!

– Brianna Hackler, Graphic & Multimedia Specialist



If you've been to a Skagit Farmers or Country Store event in recent years, you've probably seen Steve Hartley. He's usually in a corner with a large pad of white paper, a box of black pens, a big smile, and a long line of people, waiting for Steve to draw their likenesses – or their pets!

Steve has become a staple at many company events, from the Country Store's Pet-A-Palooza sale and the annual Producer Picnic, to most recently, the company's employee holiday party.

"They try to include me in everything," Steve said with a laugh. "I can't believe it."

Steve has been a full-time caricature artist for more than 40 years. He started drawing caricatures when he was attending art school in Denver. A guest speaker in one of his classes had the students practice some caricature drawings. After the lecture, the speaker sought Steve out to ask him to partner to take on more caricature-drawing gigs.

For many years, Steve says he didn't recognize how valuable his work as a caricature artist was. Instead, he thought of it as a side-gig to pay his bills.



The artist in front of some of his creations.



Steve paints a mural on the wall of Stanwood Country Store's grooming salon.

"People would come up to me and say, 'So do you do any real art?' " Steve recalls. "And that would really get me."

However, Steve learned to lean into his gift as a caricature artist, and his popularity speaks for itself. Some of the most well-attended days of the annual Pet-A-Palooza sale are those when Steve is drawing pet caricatures at the Country Store.

"I love what I do," Steve says. "People sit in front of me – or have their pets sit in front of me – because they want that art. They want to see themselves as art."

As part of the Stanwood Country Store remodel, Steve created caricatures of employees' pets, which now hang on the walls of the store and the pet grooming salon. At the end of March, Steve painted a mural on the wall of the grooming salon – a dog, sitting in a barber chair, asking for "just a little off the top."

For more information about Steve Hartley or his business, Muggshotz Caricatures, visit [www.muggshotz.net](http://www.muggshotz.net).

## STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITIES

Together with the CHS Foundation, Skagit Farmers Supply (SFS) recently presented a check for \$10,000 to Skagit County Fire District 13 based at LaConner. This 50/50 donation will help the local fire district purchase a cordless cut-off saw, lithium-ion batteries, a battery charger, work lights, a helicopter landing zone kit and other equipment essential to the district's emergency services.

"Skagit Farmers Supply and CHS support many efforts to strengthen communities where our members and employees reside," says SFS Marketing Assistant Wendy Ringhouse. "Supporting efforts to make sure first responders have as many of the emergency tools they need to work safely and to save lives is important to all of us."



Presentation of the check, from left to right: Wendy Couch, SFS, B. Stanovich, C. Parkerson, J. Grande, Capt. J. Strinden, Chief W. Weiss, C. Petershagen, Ryan Nootenboom, SFS, and C. Mardesich.

## GROWER RECERTIFICATION MEETING

– Jon Jarvis, Agronomy Sales Manager



SFS Agronomy Sales Manager Jon Jarvis welcomes everyone on the morning of February 7, 2024.

The co-op's Agronomy Department hosted our Annual Grower Recertification Meetings February 7-8 at McIntyre Hall in Mount Vernon.

We held these meetings both in person and virtually for our customers to be able to earn WSDA continuing education credits to maintain their pesticide licenses. Over 200 people attended in person and just under 100 people joined us virtually.

We're happy to host these meetings free-of-charge to our customers. Both our vendors and our growers look forward to them each year. Thanks to everyone who participated in this successful event!



# SCHUH FARMS GIVES PEOPLE WHAT THEY WANT

– Brianna Hackler, Graphic & Multimedia Specialist



When Steve Schuh was 10 years old, his 4-H garden won a blue ribbon. Today he's doing something similar, just on a larger scale.

"A lot of times, when I meet people and tell them my name, they'll say, 'Oh, you know Schuh Farms?' " Steve says. "I'll just laugh and say, 'Yeah, that's me.' "

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"Adapting to public demand helps the farm grow but also helps educate people who come to the farm."



Schuh Farms is a family operation, started by Susan and Steve Schuh (left.) Today, Jennifer (second from right) helps her dad run the farm, with help from her children, Andrea & Steven Breckenridge.

For more than half a century, Schuh Farms has been a staple in the Skagit Valley. The farm's 100-year-old white barn on Memorial Highway is visible for miles. The barn becomes even more iconic during the fall when it is adorned with a pumpkin cut-out that is several stories high.

The farm is operational from April through December and opens even earlier in the year to sell pies on March 14, Pi Day. Each month brings a new season, different produce, and lots of fun.

"We always think people should have fun," says Steve's daughter, Jennifer Schuh, with a laugh.

Steve married his late wife, Susan, in 1963, and the couple immediately began farming on Bradshaw Road in the valley. Originally, the Schuhs grew green peas and seed crop, but when the pea processors left the area, the couple pivoted to serve the public instead.

"It was all Susan," Steve says. "She could see the way things were

going, and she knew the best way was to just give the people what they wanted."

In the late 1970s, Susan convinced Steve to plant a u-pick strawberry field. Jennifer remembers playing in (and then later working in) the field with her siblings and friends. The kids put up a berry stand on the property and began selling to the public.

By the late 1980s, the family had outgrown the location on Bradshaw Road. They moved to their current location on Memorial Highway. Jennifer said the operation continued to grow organically as the Schuhs added whatever produce people asked for.

"People would come [to the berry stand] and they would say, 'Oh, I wish you had corn,' so we'd say, 'Well, let's grow corn!' Jennifer recalls. "They kept asking for more, and we kept growing more."

The farm still has a large u-pick field during the summers. In addition to the

original strawberries, they also offer raspberries, blueberries, marionberries, tayberries, boysenberries and Kotata blackberries.

"It is such an experience for people to be in the field, picking the berries, and eating the berries," says Jennifer. "That's part of the u-pick experience, right? You have to try the berries to make sure you like them!"

In addition to selling at the farm, Schuh Farms' berries and produce can be found at farmers markets across the region, including 11 markets a week in Seattle plus markets in Anacortes, Sedro Woolley, Mount Vernon and Stanwood.

Skagit Farmers Supply supplies Schuh Farms with berry poles, fuels, fertilizers, and assists with agronomy work at the farm.

As the farm continued to grow, the Schuhs added more operational months, products, and events. Winter brings holiday pies, freshly made wreaths, holiday decorations,



The farm has a u-pick pumpkin patch each fall and fall-themed activities daily for kids and families, including a barrel train, lawn mower train, hayride, corn maze and animals.



During the winter, Schuh Farms offers Christmas trees and fresh-made wreaths and holiday décor.

and Christmas trees. Spring brings veggie and herb starts, hanging baskets, Art in the Pickle Barn and the Tulip Festival, and spring animals. Summer sees a boom in u-pick berries, farmers markets, and produce from Eastern Washington, while autumn brings the iconic pumpkin patch. In every season, the barn is packed with seasonal produce, baked goods, fresh-cut flowers, and other local delicacies.

Jennifer said the ability to adapt to public demand has not only helped the farm grow but has also helped educate people who come to the farm. For example, when the farm first started selling raspberries, customers didn't want them because they didn't know what they were or how to prepare them.

"We couldn't give raspberries away!" Steve laughs.

The Schuhs had to convince customers to branch out by providing recipes and writing

articles about the berries, as well as having products like freezer jam, popsicles, milkshakes, and pies in-store.

"There's lots of education and conversation back and forth," Jennifer says. "People do have a lot of questions, so it's fun to share your knowledge with people."

She says she sometimes encourages customers to sample produce while they're shopping to nudge them to branch out. She strives to make the experience of coming to the farm special.

"People make a huge effort to come here," Jennifer says. "It is so much easier to get off work and stop by the grocery store. They can go anywhere, but they make a special effort to come here; so they need to have a special time."

In addition to selling produce, the Schuhs host annual events, such as the Art-in-the-Pickle Barn art

show during the Tulip Festival, and daily activities for kids and families during fall harvest time. Even these events grew organically over the years. The fall activities started with a barrel train, similar to one the Schuhs saw online when watching train videos with Jennifer's son when he was young. The family figured out how to build a barrel train for themselves, then added a lawn mower tractor train, hayride and corn maze.

The farm opened on March 14 this year, selling pies in honor of Pi Day. That date matches the first three digits of pi. Even that was started organically, when engineers from PACCAR called the farm many years ago to request pies in honor of the mathematical holiday.

"You always have to change things up," says Jennifer. "That's what makes this fun."

To learn more about Schuh Farms or see their produce schedule, [www.schuhfarmswa.com](http://www.schuhfarmswa.com).



Schuh Farms opened on March 14 this year, selling pies in honor of Pi Day because the date matches the first three digits of pi.



# NEW DRY FERTILIZER COATING

– Jon Jarvis  
Agronomy Sales Manager, CCA

NanoCote™ from Aqua-Yield® at Sandy UT, is a cutting-edge agricultural product that has revolutionized dry fertilizer coating practices for Skagit Farmers Supply (SFS). Utilizing nanotechnology, NanoCote enhances the efficiency of nutrient absorption in plants, leading to healthier crops with increased yield potential.

By encapsulating essential nutrients, NanoCote ensures optimal delivery, which maximizes nutrient uptake in plants. This results in improved crop quality, increased resistance to stressors such as drought and disease, and ultimately higher yields for Skagit farmers. Additionally, NanoCote's innovative formulation reduces environmental impact by minimizing nutrient runoff, making it an eco-friendly solution for sustainable agriculture.

Overall, NanoCote represents a game-changing advancement in farming technology, offering SFS a competitive edge in the ever-evolving agricultural industry.



Nano Yields Territory Sales Manager Jeff Howe watches the first NanoCote™ liquid product being applied to dry fertilizer at our Conway Agronomy Center.

# AUTOMATED LIQUID BLENDING AT BURLINGTON

– Ryan Hill, Agronomy Manager



SurePoint Ag, headquartered at Atwood, KS, is a leading provider of liquid blending systems. These systems offer innovative solutions for agricultural operations. They have revolutionized the way farmers mix and apply fertilizers, pesticides, and other chemicals to their crops.

Until now, SurePoint has exclusively manufactured mobile liquid blending systems, mounted on the back of a spray trailer and moved from field to field. These systems add efficiency and precision to spray applicators.



*The SurePoint AG Quickdraw Automated Liquid Tender System recently installed at our Burlington Agronomy Plant. This system reduces mixing times up to 50% and can be run by one person.*

SurePoint is now beginning to manufacture stationary systems which have a place at liquid farms like ours at the Burlington Agronomy Plant.

SurePoint approached Skagit Farmers Supply (SFS) with the idea of a stationary system about two years ago at a trade show in eastern Washington. Since then, we've ordered the system, and it has been installed at Burlington. Though other systems are currently being installed, SurePoint recently informed us that ours will be the first in the world to become operational.

A key feature of the SurePoint Ag liquid blending system is its precision and accuracy. It is equipped with advanced technology that ensures the correct ratio of chemicals and fertilizers are mixed every time, eliminating human error and ensuring consistent results. This level of precision not only saves SFS time and money but also reduces waste and shrink. We can easily program the system to mix specific formulas, adjust settings, and monitor the blending process in real time. This user-friendly interface allows us to customize blends according to specific needs, resulting in optimal crop performance and operational efficiency.

This system can handle a wide range of chemicals, from liquid fertilizers to herbicides, making them suitable for various agricultural applications. With their precision, ease-of-use, versatility and reliability, these systems have helped farmers and retailers streamline their operations, increase productivity, and achieve better crop yields.

We're currently testing our new automatic blending system on approximately 40,000 gallons of a liquid blend being sent to Hawaii. The liquid will be applied to 3,000 acres of macadamia nuts.

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The new system is equipped with advanced technology that ensures the correct ratio of chemicals and fertilizers are mixed every time.”

## TERRAGATOR® OPERATOR TRAINING

In March, Sales Manager Jon Jarvis and I conducted a thorough training class on operations of TerraGator® application equipment. The training included over 30 staff members from the department and hosted guest speakers Tom Roorda (Wallace Farms) and Agri-Service Technician Monte Shangle.

TerraGators play a crucial role in modern agriculture. They are essential for efficient soil management and crop production. At SFS, we apply dry fertilizer and occasionally crop protection products with four TerraGators. Three are 70-foot air boom machines and the fourth is a spinner spreader. In order to operate these complex machines effectively, proper training is necessary.

One of the reasons why TerraGator training is essential is to ensure the safety of operators and other individuals working for SFS. These machines are large and powerful, requiring operators to have a thorough understanding of their functions and potential risks. Through training, operators can learn how to operate the TerraGator safely, reducing the likelihood of accidents and injuries.

Furthermore, TerraGator training helps operators maximize the efficiency of these machines. By learning how to use the various features and technologies of the TerraGator effectively, operators can improve their productivity and achieve better results in soil management and crop production. Training also enables operators to troubleshoot common issues that may arise in the field, minimizing down-time and ensuring smooth operations. In addition, training provides operators with the knowledge and skills needed to make informed decisions in the field.

Understanding soil types, nutrient requirements, and crop management practices is essential for optimizing the use of TerraGators. The training covered topics such as soil sampling, nutrient application and equipment calibration, equipping operators with the tools they need to operate these machines.

As TerraGators continue to evolve with enhancements in precision agriculture and data analytics, training ensures that operators are equipped to leverage these technologies effectively. By staying current with industry trends and best practices, operators can adapt to changing conditions and improve their overall performance in the field.

It all comes down to serving you, the grower, better.



*Monte from Agri-Service training agronomy staff on the innerworkings of the TerraGator.*



*Agronomy Manager Ryan Hill shows agronomy staff how fertilizer is blown through the tubes of a TerraGator.*



# NURTURING CHAMPIONS DOMESTICALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY



– Melissa Weems, Administrative Manager, AFCO & LMF

LMF Horse Feeds has long been recognized for its unwavering commitment to superior equine nutrition, a commitment that is significantly enhanced through its strategic partnership with Performance Horse Nutrition (PHN). This collaboration underscores LMF's dedication to the science of equine health, ensuring that every feed formulation is grounded in the latest nutritional research and tailored to meet the specific needs of horses across all life stages and disciplines. By joining forces with PHN, LMF Horse Feeds not only elevates its product offerings but also strengthens its position as a leader in the industry, committed to delivering excellence and innovation in equine nutrition.

In the realm of equine nutrition, LMF Feeds has established itself as a beacon of excellence, not only within the domestic arenas of the United States but also across the international equestrian landscape. The brand's commitment to superior horse nutrition is twofold:

1. Domestically, it is championed by a distinguished cadre of LMF Rider Ambassadors
2. Internationally, its expansion and reach are facilitated through strategic partnerships, notably with the Japanese Racing Association.

This dual approach underscores LMF Feeds' mission to nurture champions and support the equine community.

“Sharing knowledge and resources with horse owners, trainers, and professionals worldwide, LMF contributes to a more informed and connected equine community.”

## LMF RIDER AMBASSADORS

LMF Feeds leverages the knowledge and experience of its Rider Ambassadors, a select group of elite equestrians from various disciplines. These ambassadors not only exemplify the pinnacle of horse care and performance but also share their insights and experiences, emphasizing the critical role of nutrition in achieving excellence. Through their achievements and public engagements, these ambassadors exemplify the transformative impact of LMF Feeds on equine athletes, serving as living testimonials to the brand's quality and effectiveness.

LMF Ambassador Kathy Grimes, from Medical Lake, WA, recently showcased her exceptional talent and dedication at the American Rodeo, where she was one of the five-barrel racers who qualified for a shot at the prestigious \$1,000,000 prize. What makes Grimes's experience at this year's American even more remarkable is the horse she competed on. Six years ago, Grimes competed in the American on her mare KG Justiceweexpected aka Issy. This year she will be returning to the American on Issy's son, KG Jukebox Hero aka Tillman, who Grimes bred and raised herself. Grimes's journey is a testament to her unwavering dedication to the sport and her beloved horses. It also speaks of her trust in the quality of LMF Horse Feed products, which she has relied on for over 25 years.

The successes of LMF Feeds Rider Ambassadors, marked by victories and achievements at the highest levels of equestrian sport, are a testament to the brand's role in their journeys. Each win--each milestone achieved--underscores the importance of nutrition in unlocking a horse's full potential. But beyond the ribbons and accolades, the legacy of the Rider Ambassador program lies in its contribution to healthier, happier horses and a more informed, connected equestrian community.

## THE JAPANESE RACING ASSOCIATION

The Japanese Racing Association (JRA) is a pivotal institution in the world of horse racing, overseeing the management and regulation of Japan's thoroughbred racing events. The JRA is responsible for organizing prestigious races, managing racecourses, and implementing strict breeding and training standards to ensure the integrity and high quality of the sport. The association is renowned for hosting some of the most highly anticipated and financially lucrative racing events in the world, such as the Japan Cup, attracting elite horses, jockeys, and trainers globally.

The JRA's commitment to excellence has not only elevated the status of Japanese horse racing on the international stage but has also significantly contributed to the local and global horse racing culture, setting a benchmark for excellence, innovation, and passion in the sport.

LMF Feeds has formed a significant partnership with the Japanese Racing Association, a testament to its global impact and commitment to equine excellence. This collaboration brings LMF Feeds' nutritional expertise to the high-stakes world of Japanese horse racing, a sector known for its rigorous standards and the exceptional quality of its thoroughbreds.

This partnership involves tailored nutritional programs designed to meet the rigorous demands of racing thoroughbreds, focusing on optimizing performance, endurance, and recovery. LMF Feeds contributes its nutritional science expertise, working closely with trainers, veterinarians, and care teams to ensure that the dietary needs of these elite equine athletes are precisely met.

## THE GLOBAL IMPACT OF NUTRITIONAL EXCELLENCE

The dual approach of working closely with Rider Ambassadors domestically and collaborating with the Japanese Racing Association internationally illustrates LMF Feeds' comprehensive expertise in equine nutrition. Moreover, these partnerships highlight LMF Feeds' commitment to education and innovation. By sharing knowledge and resources with horse owners, trainers, and professionals worldwide, LMF contributes to a more informed and connected equine community. The company's efforts to tailor its products and services to meet the specific requirements of various disciplines and performance

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LMF Rider Ambassador Kathy Grimes.



levels ensure that every horse, from the American show jumper to the Japanese racehorse, receives the nutritional support needed to thrive.

LMF Feeds' strategic partnerships with its Rider Ambassadors and the Japanese Racing Association showcase the brand's global leadership in equine nutrition. LMF Feeds not only enhances the performance and well-being of horses across the world but also sets new standards in nutritional science and education. Through these efforts, LMF Feeds continues to impact the equestrian world positively, offering unmatched nutrition solutions that cater to the nuanced needs of equine athletes across continents.

As LMF Feeds grows and evolves, its dedication to quality, innovation, and community remains steadfast, promising a future where every horse has the nutritional support to thrive and achieve its full potential.

LMF Rider Ambassador Jake Gorrell with Gorrell Performance Horses. Jake has shown in the reined cow horse industry for over 20 years.



## AG CUSTOMERS NOW PAY EXEMPT PRICE

– Ryan Nootenboom, Energy Manager

The Climate Commitment Act (CCA) went into effect on January 1, 2023. This added a fee to every gallon of fuel that is purchased in Washington State. Many of us see this increased cost each time we fill up our vehicles.

While the consumer is paying this additional CCA fee, many farmers would qualify for a CCA exemption. This exemption was put in place by our state's Department of Ecology. Skagit Farmers Supply (SFS) has worked hard to find a way to implement this ag exemption. We looked to our local refineries for answers, and it took time for them to put policies in place.

On February 1, 2024, SFS returned \$509,263 dollars to our ag customers who qualified for the CCA exemption. Those funds came as a rebate from our fuel supplier for dyed diesel purchased from January 1 through July 31, 2023. Our SFS's energy team worked hard to collect all required CCA forms from our ag fuel customers and implement reporting documents that will be required in the event we are audited by the DOE.

We changed fuel suppliers in August 2023 so that we could offer dyed diesel to our farmers at the exempt price, eliminating rebates and the need to wait months to get these funds back.

### READY FOR SPRING

SFS is ready to supply all your refined fuel needs for the upcoming planting season. This includes CCA ag exempt diesel for qualifying farmers.



"We changed fuel suppliers in August 2023 to eliminate rebates and the need to wait months to get these funds back."

Looking for engine oil and grease for your farm or construction equipment? Our Burlington Country Store offers the Cenex® line of top-quality lubricants and grease. We have you covered from a one-gallon jug to a 300-gallon bulk farm delivery.

We have DEF (diesel exhaust fluid) in stock, too, in one-gallon jugs, 55-gallon barrels or 330-gallon totes. Contact our Energy Department at 360-757-6053 to set up a delivery.

## THE BASES ARE LOADED. WE'RE LINING UP FOR A GRAND SLAM SHOW!



Our AFCO Buying Show returns to the Spokane Convention Center on **May 9-10, 2024**. We're growing again and have moved into a larger space with over 125 brands represented.

This annual event is a chance for retailers to learn about the latest trends, discover new products, network with vendors and other industry professionals; all while taking advantage of the best deals of the year!





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WWW.SKAGITFARMERS.COM



### 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-LYNDEN

360.755.3615

### 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

Burlington.....	360.757.4055
Colville.....	509.684.2232
Freeland.....	360.331.1970
MountVernon.....	360.424.4207
OakHarbor.....	360.675.2277
Oroville.....	509.560.7088
SedroWoolley.....	360.856.6567
SpokaneCentral.....	509.534.1412
Stanwood.....	360.629.7033
Stevensville(MT).....	406.777.5527