

2019
LONG-RANGE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

CHANCELLOR'S INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking time to view the long-range plan for the UAF Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center.

The Matanuska Experiment Farm has been a hub for research in Alaska for more than 100 years. The Matanuska Experiment Farm has served as a center of research, housing many faculty scientists and technicians. In the past the work of those individuals was devoted to research in traditional plant and animal agriculture and natural resources. While the MEFEC has a long history of serving the agricultural and natural resource fields, more recently it has become a focal point as the home for Extension in the Mat-Su and the Copper River Valleys. Located in the middle of the largest and fastest growing population centers in our state, the future of the UAF Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center is dependent upon meeting the future with flexibility and responsiveness to the changing needs of the state of Alaska.

The plan put forth here involves many activities that are already in practice, while also providing an optimistic look at future possibilities so that UAF can maximize benefit to citizens of Alaska by fully developing the Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center to the greatest benefit of all Alaskans.

Daniel M. White
Chancellor

Looking east with the farm property and Johnson Lake in the foreground and the Chugach Mountains in the background.

INTRODUCTION

The University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center (MEFEC) is an extremely valuable asset of Alaska's Land Grant University. Located in the heart of the Matanuska-Susitna (Mat-Su) Borough, the MEFEC acts as UAF's touchstone to the fastest growing population center in Alaska, and provides an established home in Southcentral Alaska for UAF to fulfill its tripartite mission of teaching, research, and outreach to the State of Alaska.

The MEFEC is a working farm, able to support UAF researchers and other external partners by providing land, facilities, and technical expertise for agricultural and herbivore studies. The MEFEC supports UAF research programs throughout the state by supplying cattle to the UAF Veterinary Medicine Program, and hay for the UAF Reindeer Research program and R.G. White Large Animal Research Station (LARS). The MEFEC supports other state programs by supplying hay to organizations such as the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) Ungulate Nutritional Studies Program and the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center (AWCC) component of the ADF&G Wood Bison Reintroduction Program.

The MEFEC is home to the Mat-Su/Copper River Cooperative Extension Service and the statewide office for Alaska's National Future Farmers of America Association (FFA). An array of community outreach programs are offered at the MEFEC including best agricultural practices, sustainable energy concepts, home economics, human nutrition, and healthy lifestyles. The MEFEC plays an integral role in the community's youth development 4-H and FFA programs by providing farm resources, and a location for club meetings, leadership development programs, and educational events. The MEFEC also collaborates with the Alaska Pacific University on the Alaska Tilth project to educate the local community on food security best practices and nutrition.

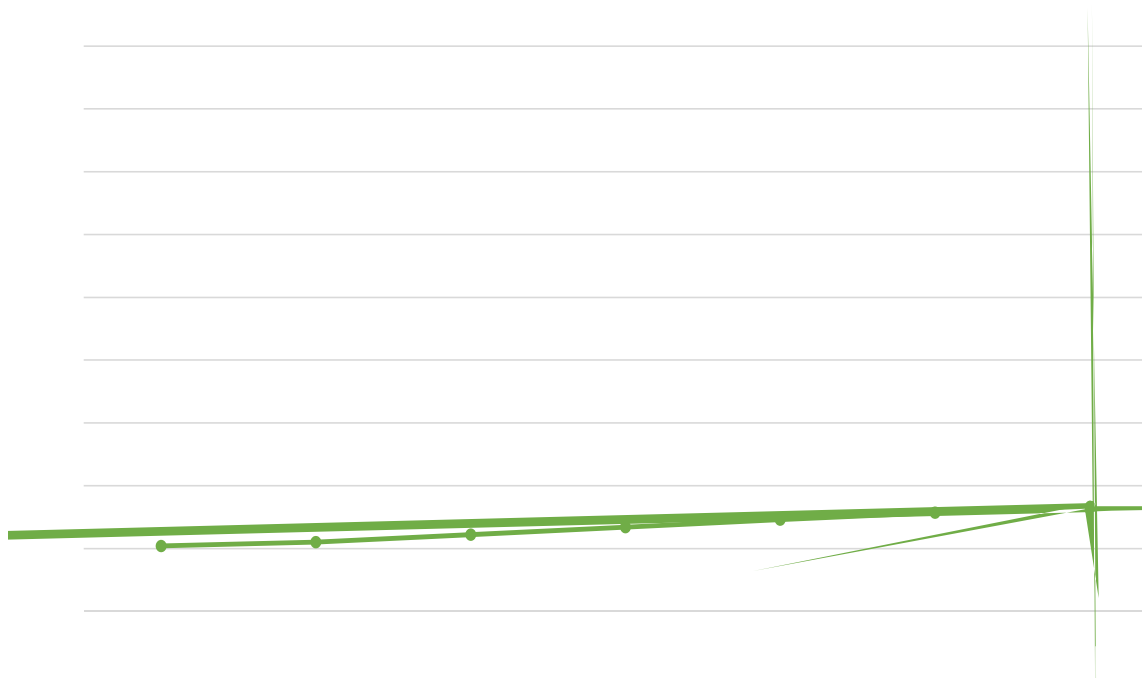
HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

Formal pursuit of agricultural research in Alaska began in 1898 when the federal government initiated the establishment of several agricultural research stations located throughout the territory. In 1915,

the USDA identified land for development of an agriculture research station near the junction of the main line of the railway and the branch line leading to the Matanuska coalfields. With the consent of the Alaska Engineering Commission, two parcels of land with a total acreage of roughly 900 acres were selected. The Matanuska Experiment Station officially came into existence in 1917 when Dr. Milton Snodgrass, then the superintendent of the Kodiak Experiment Station for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, established the Matanuska Experiment Station. Concurrently, Territorial Governor John Strong accepted the federal land grant that led to the establishment of the Alaska School of Agricultural and Mines, now the University of Alaska Fairbanks. In 1932, the federal government transferred the entire Matanuska Experiment Station to the college.

Work on the farm began in earnest in 1917, and by August of that year the Superintendent's house, one of the first houses in the Mat-Su Valley to be built with dimensional lumber, was completed. The farm played a key role in the development of agricultural activity and research in the Mat-Su, especially in the development of crop varieties specifically bred for Alaska conditions. Since the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) withdrew from Alaska in 2010, the MEFEC's emphasis has been more heavily weighted on public outreach. The Matanuska Experiment Station was renamed as the Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center in 2014 when the Mat-Su/Copper River Cooperative Extension District moved to the Matanuska Experiment Farm in order to meet the diverse needs of the Mat-Su Valley rural sector, as well as its growing urban population, through integration of research efforts and Cooperative Extension programming.

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Horticulture employees planting potatoes using a D12 Allis Chalmers Tractor, May 2009.

Community gardens at MEFEC.

A learning opportunity at an MEFEC event

Free produce seeds from MEFEC crops.

Farm crew baling high moisture hay for a research project

MEFEC LONG-RANGE PLAN OBJECTIVES

Using the UAF Strategic Plan as a guide, a series of objectives for the MEFEC has been created. Matrices are used to relate each action item to the particular objective(s) they support.

- Strengthen community collaborations

The MEFEC will continue to grow already established community collaborations and will work to develop new relationships that support attaining the long-range objectives.

- Advance food security research and education programs

Market the MEFEC as a subarctic agricultural, boreal forest, and freshwater lake system research site for local and global researchers. This commitment will take time to see revenue generation, however, becoming a sought-after research site will pull the MEFEC into research proposals and large grants.

- Participate in the UAF One Health Initiative

The MEFEC will be a site for the UAF One Health Initiative research, teaching, and outreach in Southcentral Alaska. Mat-Su Valley communities are beginning to work on livable community initiatives that strive to create healthy communities in concert with the One Health Initiative. The MEFEC is ideally positioned to play a leading role in this work.

- Expand statewide occupational certificate programs

Offer face-to-face and distance-delivered short-term programs that meet the training and education needs of various professions in Alaska.

- Become a long-term agroecological site

MEFEC is ideally located for participation in long-term monitoring networks for subarctic agroecological and forestry research. Once involved, researchers will bring research to the site as well as increase the potential for the MEFEC to become an ecotourism destination.

- Develop on site STEAM/Citizen Science Center

The MEFEC will be the site of the premiere Science Technology Engineering Arts and Mathematics Center where multi-disciplined citizen science groups can gather, meet, create, and research

FACILITIES ACTION ITEMS

								S-F1. Complete Phase II of Kerttula Hall boiler replacement project (see results of Phase I in graph below)
								S-F2. Replace MEFEC Campus septic treatment system
								S-F3. Begin design on ADEC Compliant teaching kitchen
								S-F4. Determine improvements needed to make Mess Hall compatible to house MEFEC guests
								S-F



Trunk Rd

George Parks Hwy

A dark gray rectangular area with a thin blue border, located in the bottom-left corner. It contains two labels: "Trunk Rd" and "George Parks Hwy", both written in a light gray, italicized font and rotated slightly counter-clockwise.

MEFEC IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY: SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEMS (CONTINUED)

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Extension Agent Julie Cascio demonstrates food preparation.

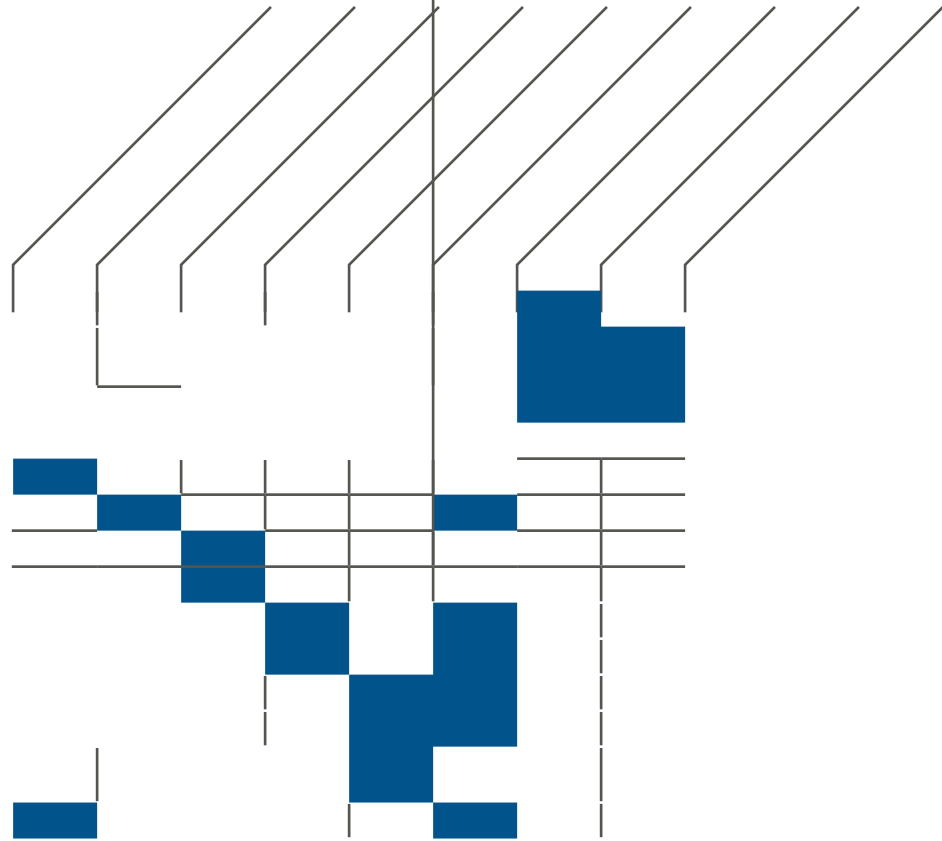
Dr. Lisa Lunn demonstrates proper animal care.

Spring starts in the green house.

Red Angus cattle at the MEFEC.

An Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) moose.

MEFEC IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY: LONG-TERM ACTION ITEMS



ONGOING PLANS

ENDNOTES

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