

**Skagit Valley Value Added Agriculture Innovation Partnership Zone**

**Business Plan**

**2018 - 2021**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

More than 150 years of farming history laid the foundation for Skagit Valley’s current role as the most important agricultural valley remaining in the Puget Sound. Successful farmers in the Skagit Valley have a long history of innovation; it has been integral to their survival. This successful adaptation is illustrated in the ECONorthwest 2010 report[[1]](#footnote-1), which states that the aggregate net income for the county’s farmers, adjusted for inflation, has increased from about

$20 million in 1969 to about $80-$100 million today. This longstanding culture of ingenuity has been growing and attracting like-minded individuals to the area. Located within 100 miles of 6.5 million people, Skagit Valley is the heart of a corridor between Vancouver, B.C., to Portland, Ore., that has been dubbed the “innovation corridor” due to the concentration of individuals with innovative ideas and goals.

In addition to the human capital, Skagit Valley boasts some of the best soils in the world, making it an ideal location for producing a variety of value-added agriculture products. The alluvial delta formed by the Skagit River provides the source for these fertile soils. Among the top crops in this region are specialty potatoes, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, tulips, daffodils, and spinach, cabbage and Brussels sprouts seed. More flower bulbs are grown here than in any other U.S. county. Wheat and barley serve as valuable rotation crops. Local livestock, poultry and dairy producers boast award-winning homestead cheeses and pasture- raised meat. According to the 2007 U.S. Agriculture Census, Skagit County was home to 1,215 farms covering 108,541 acres. In 2011, Skagit Valley farmers sold $281 million worth of product.

To successfully produce each of these products and minimize the amount of fallow acreage during the year, farmers in the Skagit Valley partner on a unique level to seasonally lease, swap, exchange and barter for the cultivation of a variety of crops. This communal sharing of lands allows the necessary rotation for the major cultivated crops. This intricate and specialized crop rotation and isolation practice improves soil condition. It also lessens the need for multiple fertilizer and pesticide applications on crops, providing both secondary economic and environmental benefits.

The research efforts of the Washington State University (WSU) Research Center, located in Mount Vernon, are directed toward the farms of Skagit County and surrounding counties, with faculty and graduate students engaging local farmers in research projects. The WSU research programs include vegetable, vegetable seed, and small fruit pathology; vegetable, small fruit and cider horticulture; weed science; entomology; food and beverage fermentation; livestock production, soil health and sustainable agriculture; and the Bread Lab and plant breeding program.

The Research Center also supports The Bread Lab located at the Port of Skagit. The Bread Lab is a research bakery focused on helping regional bakers, millers, maltsters and farmers identify the best varieties and uses for locally grown and sourced grains. It is the only such lab in the nation.

The graduate research focus of the plant breeding program includes breeding for traditional and organic farming systems, farmer participatory breeding, converting wheat to a perennial crop, increasing water and nitrogen-use efficiencies, the evolution of the wheat species, marker- based selection and non-GMO use of wild species for wheat improvement. Researchers work to breed improved varieties of wheat and other crops for both traditional and organic systems, incorporating diverse rotations and systems. With an emphasis on crops grown for local markets, the WSU program reaches out to area farmers to leverage their expertise in the research, planning and decision making process. Breeders work closely with farmers to set research priorities. On

occasion, the collaborative efforts result in farmers developing their own varieties to be uniquely adapted to their farming system.

The main goal of The Bread Lab is research, but some services can be performed for small-scale millers and bakers. Samples for testing this year came from Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona, Maine and North Carolina. The Bread Lab is an integral part of the Grain Gathering, which is held each summer. Attendance at the 2017 Grain Gathering included 350 bakers, millers, farmers and regional food enthusiasts from 23 states, and 7 countries.

The innovative and commercially valuable research occurring at WSU supports the formation of the Skagit Valley Value-Added Agriculture IPZ. It also ensures the long-term environmental and economic health of farming in Washington State while producing safe, high quality food crops.

### **MISSION**

The Skagit Valley Value-Added Agriculture IPZ supports and promotes innovative approaches within the agricultural industry that combine research and technology resulting in new jobs, industries and an overall robust economy centered around the Valley’s rich agricultural resources.

### **VISION**

Vision Statement – Identify, capture and promote the unique value and exceptional quality of the agricultural products of the Skagit Valley Region

### **GOALS**

* Facilitate the start-up of successful new enterprises in the Skagit Valley, capitalizing on research conducted at the Washington State University Research Center
* Encourage the development of new high-margin, value-added agribusiness products stemming from the research focus at the Washington State University Research Center
* Create new private sector jobs based on the production, processing, packaging, marketing and distribution of regional agricultural products
* Recruit new innovative partners from research institutions and start-up companies utilizing emerging technology
* Increase the net profit per acre as a result of partnerships between the research sector and agribusiness
* Support succession planning to sustain generational farms and ensure agriculture survives and thrives in Skagit County
* Promote continued collaboration and networking opportunities among research and private sector partners
* Collaborate with Skagit Valley College to ensure well trained, qualified workforce
* Enhance the potential of the IPZ through federal and/or state grant funding opportunities

### **LEADERSHIP/GOVERNANCE**

Management Team and Roles:

The management team for the Skagit Valley Value-Added Agriculture IPZ includes representatives from a diverse group of partner organizations. The Skagit Valley IPZ effort is a natural fit with the missions of each of these organizations. This highly collaborative group shares a common goal for the survival and advancement of region’s agricultural community and the ongoing economic growth and development of Skagit County.

**Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County (EDASC)**

John Sternlicht, Executive Director, brings senior executive experience in law, economic development, community relations, public policy, finance, and government relations.

**Washington State University Mount Vernon Research Center**

Chad Kruger, Director, provides the link to the commercially valuable research for innovative farming practices and uses for agricultural products.

**Knutzen Farms**

Kraig Knutzen, owner/partner, assists with the links between agribusiness and commercially viable research.

**Skagit Valley College**

Dr. Thomas Keegan, President, represents the workforce training sector and contributes to the team’s ability to match skilled workers with companies as they grow.

**Port of Skagit**

Patsy Martin, Executive Director, provides access to Bayview Business Park and potential startup space for new ventures, which aligns with the Port’s mission of generating jobs at, or above, living wage.

**Sakuma Brothers Farms**

Steven Sakuma, Chairman of the Board, contributes his expertise in managing a vertically integrated, multi-generational company of farmers, processors, wholesale marketers and retail marketers.

**City of Mount Vernon**

Jill Boudreau, Mayor, provides the continued focus of county-wide collaboration to strengthen the region’s economy through the City’s strategic economic development plan.

**Skagit Valley Malting**

Dave Green, President/CEO, provides the team with his 30+ years’ experience in the food processing industry and current work negotiating local, regional, national and international contracts for malted barley and other grains.

**Skagit County**

Tim Holloran, County Administrator, assists the team with his leadership skills, background in county policies and vision for the economic potential of the region.

**Northwest Agriculture Business Center (NABC)**

David Bauermeister, Executive Director, contributes to the team with his entrepreneurial background and relationship capital among area farmers and agricultural agencies.

**Northwest Resource Innovation Resource Center (NWIRC)**

Diane Kamionka, Interim Executive Director, provides the team with her strong background in the entrepreneurial and innovation start-up arena.

**Skagit Farmers Supply**

Tom Boland, Chief Executive Officer, provides the team with his understanding of the local farming community and his experience running a diverse ag-based cooperative.

Anticipated partner involvement and investment:

The Skagit Valley Value-Added Agriculture IPZ focuses on merging agricultural and high tech sectors in the region. The vision is to find, develop, match and support value-added agricultural products stemming from researchers at the WSU Research Center with innovators in the private sector. Partners intend to accomplish this vision through ongoing cultivation of productive working relationships and the connection of regional assets.

Partners participate in monthly meetings to ensure a successful foundation for the IPZ. The management team elects members to serve in leadership roles for a one year term. The following members have committed to serving in leadership roles for the term June 1, 2017 through May 31, 2018:

* **Chair** - Dr. Stephen Jones, WSU Research Center and Patsy Martin, Port of Skagit serve as Co-Chairs - Set agendas and run meetings
* **Vice-chair** – David Bauermeister, NABC - Fill-in for Chair as needed
* **Secretary / Treasurer** – John Sternlicht, EDASC - Keep meeting notes, send out agendas, etc. / Manage any monies obtained by the IPZ
* **Community Outreach / Marketing Chair** – Committee of Board Staff - Track media coverage, produce press releases and coordinate marketing for the IPZ.

**Monthly meetings will follow the general format:**

* Review previous meeting notes
* Report on any media coverage for the zone
* Research update from WSU Research Center
* Discuss potential for Ag/technology projects/businesses/jobs
* Identify action steps to implement selected ideas
* Compile data collection needs and methods based on action items
* Other

Sustainability Plan (over the next four years):

To initiate the IPZ endeavor in 2013, members committed cash ($14,000) and in-kind hours to complete the application process for IPZ designation. Of the original cash commitment $1,500 remains. As a future financing plan, the members intend to utilize in-kind contributions of time for

IPZ activities, including reporting. The goal of the IPZ is not to create an administrative position; the desired job creation is in the private sector, not government. If the need arises for paid staffing, the members are open to an additional cash contribution or seeking alternative funding sources. Each

of the members is committed to collaborating and leveraging their individual strengths to advance the efforts of the IPZ over the next four years.

The management team has established the following next steps to complete over the next four years:

1. Identify the steps necessary to implement the Skagit Valley IPZ vision. Some initial ideas include:

* Identify and facilitate new markets and startups that capitalize on research conducted at the WSU Northwest Research Center and the Bread Lab.
* Encourage the development of new high-margin, value-added agribusiness products stemming from the research focus at the WSU Northwest Research Center and the Bread Lab.
* Create new jobs based on the production, processing, packaging, marketing, and distribution of regional agricultural products.
* Recruit new innovative partners from research institutions and start-up companies utilizing emerging technology.
* Increase the net profit per acre as a result of new markets and partnerships between the research sector and agribusiness.
* Support succession planning to sustain generational farms and ensure agriculture survives and thrives in Skagit County.
* Support innovative farm practices and agribusinesses that will help agriculture thrive in Skagit County.
* Promote continued collaboration and networking opportunities among research and private-sector partners.
* Collaborate with Skagit Valley College, WSU and other educational institutions to ensure a well-trained, qualified workforce.
* Enhance the potential of the IPZ through federal and other grant funding opportunities.
* Create and sustain an agricultural workforce.

1. Continue the IPZ think tank to communicate priorities to community leaders to ensure protection of Skagit Valley agricultural land and the Skagit Valley agricultural brand.
2. Build support for the IPZ vision.
3. Develop a brand strategy for the valley.

5. Develop a communications plan to share this vision.

### **STRENGTHS OF THE IPZ**

The Skagit Valley Value-Added Agriculture IPZ possesses numerous strengths. Within its borders lies an active farming community, the Washington State University Research Center at Mount Vernon, the Bread Lab, Northwest Innovation Resource Center, Northwest Agriculture Business Center, Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County, the Port of Skagit, a high concentration of innovators, Skagit Valley College, and an agricultural-based infrastructure that has supported regional farming for more than 150 years.

Technology:

The research mission of the WSU Research Center is directed toward the needs of farms of Skagit County and the surrounding agricultural areas of Northwest Washington. The Center is committed to the exploration and creation of new agricultural products, technologies, management practices and agricultural systems that will be economically viable in the changing world of agriculture. In addition, the Center is launching a new undergraduate degree program in Agriculture & Food Systems through the WSU Everett campus that is designed to couple with regional community colleges like Skagit

Valley College to provide students the option to attain a B.S. degree. The Center houses several, well established research programs that include: The Center houses research programs including vegetable, vegetable seed, and small fruit pathology; vegetable, small fruit and cider horticulture; weed science; entomology; food and beverage fermentation; livestock production, soils and environmental science; and the Bread Lab and plant breeding program..

The Entomology research program focuses on integrated pest management strategies for small fruits and vegetable seed crops. The Plant Breeding program concentrates on crops fitting into diverse annual and perennial rotations, and it utilizes farmer participatory approaches and other innovative methods to improve crops. The Vegetable Horticulture program focuses on developing, testing and promoting high value, organic and sustainable vegetable production systems including the use of high tunnels and biodegradable plastics. WSU’s Vegetable Pathology program investigates the biology and management of fungal and oomycete diseases of fresh and processing vegetables, as well as vegetable disease diagnosis and control recommendations. The Vegetable Seed Pathology program focuses on diseases affecting small-seeded vegetable seed crops grown in the Pacific Northwest. Approximately 90 countries import vegetable seed from this region. The program’s research and outreach contributes to a sustainable and secure food supply worldwide. The Weed Science program focuses on providing management solutions for problem weeds in western Washington. The small fruit horticulture program focuses on improving management practices for pollination and plant physiology. The Small Fruit Pathology program focuses on management of common diseases affecting the fruit of blueberry and red raspberry. The Cider Horticulture program is focused on variety evaluation and mechanization of cider apple production. The new food and beverage fermentation program is focused on education and training opportunities related to hard cider and mead production. The livestock program is focused on animal welfare and alternative forage opportunities. A new program focused on soil health and

sustainable cropping systems will be established in early 2018. The sustainable agriculture program is focused within Northwest Washington on improving manure and nutrient management systems and consequent impacts on water quality and food safety and evaluating the impact of climate change on regional production systems.

Human Capital:

The Skagit Valley Value-Added Agriculture IPZ is located in the “innovation corridor” between Vancouver, B.C., and Portland, Ore. The result of this concentration of innovators has been a series of new companies producing value-added products. Three of the most recent value- added agricultural products developed in Skagit County include:

* Skagit Valley Malting developed specialty equipment to malt barley for the craft beer and spirits industry.
* Northwest Mills and Specialty Grains developed a specialty flour mill focused on milling healthy, fresh flours from local grains.

The IPZ also has the human capital necessary to supply a talented workforce for these newly created businesses. Skagit Valley College provides hands-on training in 25 professional and technical programs, offering two-year Associate in Technical Arts (ATA) degrees, as well as one-

year and two-year certificates. These training areas include: business management, workforce training, environmental conservation and environmental sustainable agriculture. Each of these fields relate closely to the human capital needs of the IPZ. Skagit Valley College partners with local businesses and industry leaders to ensure the relevance and applicability of each program relative to state and industry standards. Through these working relationships the college identifies and strives to provide the skills that employers in the surrounding communities seek in potential employees.

As the workforce training entity, Skagit Valley College’s Environmental Sustainable Agriculture Program will be responsible for providing a large portion of the human capital needed by the zone. The program focuses on foundational skills in sustainable agriculture, food systems, natural resource management and conservation through the following program options:

* Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Certificate
* Sustainable Agriculture Fundamentals Micro-Certificate
* Greenhouse-Nursery Operations Micro-Certificate
* Sustainable Culinary Practices Micro-Certificate

Upon completion of this program, students will have fundamental, agriculture-related knowledge and skills to fill the IPZs human capital needs in farm management, greenhouse production, plant propagation or food systems (farm to table).

Skagit Valley College has also established the Skagit Valley College Brewing Academy, a program unique in Washington State. The program provides an overview of the craft brewery/distillery business – from farm to glass. The certificate program is structured to help students learn brew science theory through hands-on experience in the brew laboratory and at local breweries/distilleries. The program includes industry professionals in the classroom, industry tours and several internship experiences at local breweries/distilleries.

Upon completion of the Brewing Academy program, students will not only have the ability to design and brew a beer that meets generally acceptable standards, but will understand the business concepts of the brewing industry and the day-to-day activities involved with the operation of a solvent brewing / distilling facility.

Infrastructure:

The agricultural industry is built on a complex infrastructure of research, planning, irrigation, crop inputs, equipment, suppliers and markets.

Approximately 90,000 acres in Skagit County are zoned for agricultural uses. The feasibility and efficiency of commercial agriculture relies on large, unencumbered acreage. Skagit County farmers, in the early 1970’s, were the first in Washington to create 40-acre minimum lot sizes.

This fundamental planning policy set the stage for subsequent farmland protection efforts pursued by the agricultural community. Skagit County farmers recognized early on the need to have strict land use laws and zoning, balanced with programs to sell and transfer development rights in order to protect their land base. The County’s policies and regulations reflect this priority.

The riparian and coastal geography of Skagit County’s agriculture, combined with the rainfall and stream flow patterns, put high importance on drainage and irrigation infrastructure and the policies and relations impacting this complex system. The extensive network includes 147 miles of levees and dikes, with 380 miles of drainage ditches and approximately 130 tide and flood gates.[[2]](#footnote-2) In 2010,

the valley’s drainage districts, under the leadership of the Western Washington Agriculture Association, entered into a historic agreement known as the Tidegate Fish Initiative (TFI) to permit the maintenance of tidegates in conjunction with habitat restoration activities for the Skagit Chinook. Groups such as Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland continue to advocate for policies and regulations that positively impact the infrastructure of the agricultural sector.

An infrastructure element important to the success of this collaborative venture is the ability to

easily connect to the digital world. Led by the City of Mount Vernon, Skagit County offers high speed, broadband fiber optic internet connectivity. This fiber optic network makes it possible for Skagit County researchers, growers, value-added producers and educators to easily connect locally and globally with peers, partners and prospective customers. The Port of Skagit is working with multiple local partners to expand fiber optic connectivity through construction of a county-wide publicly owned fiber optic backbone.

Critical infrastructure for the region also includes the ability to process locally grown products and to purchase crop inputs and machinery. Examples of local processing companies serve the area include: Sakuma Brothers, Gielow Pickles, Northwest Mills and Specialty Grains, and Skagit Valley Malting, all securing raw products from Skagit County growers. The Puget Sound Food Hub provides another distribution option for local producers. Businesses, institutions and buying groups are able to order fresh, seasonal produce, meat and dairy products online through the Hub. Farms bring their orders to the Hub, where local buyers can pick up orders from multiple farms at one location. In addition, the Hub delivers orders to Seattle customers. The Valley is also home to two major Ag-supply dealers: Skagit Farmers Supply and Wilbur-Ellis.

### **LONG-TERM MARKET GROWTH FOR THE TECHNOLOGY**

Solving the national and global need for sustainable food sources is one of the greatest challenges of this century. The future of agriculture will have dramatic effects on humanity and the global environment. As identified by the Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland, there are four key elements to the long term viability of agriculture in this region: farmland protection; economic viability; agricultural infrastructure and community support. Skagit County has each of these elements in place, making it an ideal location to sustain long-term growth resulting from research into value-added agriculture products.

Established in 1996 by the Skagit County Commissioners, the County’s Farmland Legacy Program assesses a 6-1/4% per $1,000 of property valuation Conservation Futures tax on all properties in the County. These monies are leveraged with Federal, State and private donor funds and distributed via a rigorous evaluation process to worthy farmland preservation projects. Through this program, Skagit farmers are compensated for the removal of the right to develop their farm and to maintain its “highest and best (agricultural) use”.

Through the engagement of the farming community, cities, non-profits and citizen advocates, the Farmland Legacy Program removed development pressure on valuable fertile grounds and now protects 11,026 acres or 12% of the County’s farming land base in perpetuity.[[3]](#footnote-3)

This success involved government collaboration and private donors for financing, along with the development of a viable, strong farming community vision.

Farmers involved in the program benefit from being paid for their development rights and the thriving agricultural community.

The political leaders, entrepreneurs, farmers and citizens working together to ensure the strength and well-being of the rural agricultural economy in Skagit County are key driving forces for the agriculture industry. They ensure the viability of the region’s food system

through farmland protection programs, strong agricultural infrastructure and community support.

Setting land and water aside for farming alone cannot guarantee that farms in Skagit County will yield enough income for farmers to continue using their land for farming. Emerging opportunities for farmers to increase their income come from the value-added products and the industry’s responsiveness to market forces. The research performed at the WSU Research Center provides

prospects for new crops, technologies and farming practices with the potential to maximize the net profit per acre.

### **ENTREPRENEURIAL CLIMATE IN THE ZONE**

Skagit County maintains one of the largest and most diverse agricultural communities west of the Cascade Mountains. Local farmers produce about $300 million worth of crops, livestock and dairy products on approximately 100,000 acres of land.[[4]](#footnote-4) There is a strong organically grown entrepreneurial spirit. Eagerness exists among the Ag community to meet, share challenges and successes, and consider new opportunities. This is evidenced by the networking opportunities and programs already in place. There are numerous organizations, businesses and agencies serving Skagit County Agriculture (Appendix A).

WSU Field Days:

Skagit Valley farmers work to increase their competitiveness by lowering costs and increasing efficiency. A common strategy to achieve this outcome involves farm-specific decisions to adopt seeds, breeds and farming methods which increase output and lower costs. These opportunities often stem from research provided by the WSU Research Center at Mount Vernon. The Research Center hosts field days throughout the year for local producers to tour the research fields and discuss production. The Small Grain Field Day held in June 2017 focused on the production of wheat, oats, rye, barley, and buckwheat in Western Washington for food, feed and malt. In attendance were farmers, millers, bakers, maltsters, distillers and brewers.

Monthly AG Leaders Meetings:

In addition to hosting field days, the WSU Research Center gathers local agriculture leaders for a breakfast meeting on the first Friday of each month.

AG Summit:

Skagit County Commissioners tasked WSU Extension Director Don McMoran to organize an Ag Summit for the region. The second Ag Summit was held on February 25, 2017. The agenda topics included water and labor issues as well as economic viability. The management team for the IPZ sees the Ag Summit as an opportunity to promote and expand the partnerships of the IPZ.

Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland (SPF):

More land in agricultural production within Skagit County increases the overall financial viability of the agricultural sector. As its mission states, “Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland exists to ensure the economic viability of Skagit County agriculture and its required infrastructure through farmland protection, advocacy, research education and public awareness.” This group supports the existing agribusinesses and the entrepreneurial climate for the new ones.

Additionally, the **Northwest Agriculture Business Center** (NABC)**;** and the **Economic**

**Development Alliance of Skagit County** (EDASC) provide infrastructure to support entrepreneurs. Both have strong entrepreneurial support systems that offer business development services to start-up companies. These programs successfully assist new businesses with planning, product development, marketing/sales assistance, organizational development, infrastructure development, office resources and access to capital.

Several real life examples of the entrepreneurial spirit that exists in the Skagit Valley can be found in the most recent innovative, value-added agriculture businesses: Skagit Valley Malting; and Northwest Mills and Specialty Grains. The IPZ will enhance the existing entrepreneurial climate with the formal cultivation of the research opportunities into commercialization.

### **COMMERCIALIZATION PLAN**

The role of the IPZ in the commercialization process is to help determine the most promising technologies, help identify the commercialization pathway (new business formation or licensing and transfer to existing companies), and to organize and stimulate collaboration. Dependent upon the research outcomes, a commercialization plan may vary from company to company.

The intent of the IPZ is to improve commercial opportunities through a supportive forum which connects researchers, individual farmers and entrepreneurs. The IPZ will assist companies with early stages of business plan development, industry support and access to facilities, infrastructure, capital and other resources. The management team consists of a talented group of individuals and entities with diverse backgrounds and significant potential to support commercial opportunities. The research will guide these prospects.

### **PLAN FOR MEASURING AND REPORTING**

Consistent with statutory requirements, the Zone Administrator, EDASC, will collect and report annual performance criteria.

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| **GOAL** | **REPORTING** | **ACTION AGENT** |
| Facilitate the start-up of successful new enterprises in the Skagit Valley, capitalizing on research conducted at the Washington State University Research Center | Track start-ups | **Port, EDASC & NWIRC**  Patsy Martin  John Sternlicht  Diane Kamionka |
| Encourage the development of new high- margin, value-added agribusiness products stemming from the research focus at the Washington State University Research Center | Track new products | **WSU**  Chad Kruger  Steve Jones |
| Create new private sector jobs based on the production, processing, packaging, marketing and distribution of regional agricultural products | Track new jobs | **EDASC & NABC**  John Sternlicht  David Bauermeister |
| Recruit new innovative partners, businesses and technologies from research institutions and start-up companies utilizing emerging technology | Track new IPZ partners, businesses and technologies | **EDASC & NWIRC**  John Sternlicht  Diane Kamionka |
| Increase the net profit per acre as a result of partnerships between the research sector and agribusiness | Track net profit per acre before partnerships and after | Steve Sakuma  Don McMoran |
| Support succession planning to sustain generational farms and ensure agriculture survives and thrives in Skagit County | Track activities initiated or supported by the IPZ relative to succession planning | Steve Sakuma &  Kraig Knutzen  (bring in Skagitonians to preserve farmland) |
| Promote continued collaboration and networking opportunities among research and private sector partners | Track attendance at monthly meetings and other opportunities for networking as initiated or supported by the IPZ | **EDASC**  John Sternlicht |
| Collaborate with Skagit Valley College to ensure a well-trained, qualified workforce | Track existence of, and enrollment in, relevant Skagit Valley College programs / courses. | **Skagit Valley College**  Kenny Lawson  Chad Kruger |
| Enhance the potential of the IPZ through federal and/or state grant funding opportunities | Track opportunities for grant funding as appropriate | **ALL** Leaders try to be aware of potential grant opportunities that may become available |

**\*** **Reporting** will be centered on the research conducted at the WSU Research Center and the team’s ability to connect the right entrepreneurs with the right opportunities for commercialization. This part of the annual report will be qualitative in nature, providing quantitative results when appropriate.

**APPENDIX A**

Organizations, Businesses, and Agencies Serving Skagit County Agriculture

Compiled by the Washington State University Skagit County Extension in its “2015 Skagit County Agriculture Statistics”

Ag Alternative

Agrilink Foods

Bank of the Pacific

Bio Huma Netics, Inc.

Brim Tractor

Cascadian Farms

Cucumber Industry Advisory Committee

D & D Farms

Farm Service Administration

Farmers Equipment Co.

Gielow Pickles

Natural Resources Conservation Service

NW Ag Business Center

NW Agricultural Research Foundation

NW Bulb Growers Association

NW Food Processors Association

Peoples Bank

Puget Sound Seed Growers Association

Rabo Bank

Rijik Zwaan Seed

Sakata Seed Company

Sakuma Brothers Farms

Schafer Agriculture Services

Skagit Bank

Skagit Conservation District

Skagit County Cattlemen’s Association

Skagit County Dairy Federation

Skagit County Farm Bureau

Skagit County Farmland Legacy Program

Skagit County Horticultural Pest Board

Skagit Dairy Women

Skagit Farmers Supply

Skagit Seed Services

Skagit Valley Red Potatoes Growers Assn.

Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland

Small Fruit Advisory Committee

Sorensen Seed Co.

Syngenta Seeds, Inc.

USDA Farm Service Agency

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Tree Fruit Industry Advisory Committee

Twin City Foods

Valley Pride Sales

WA Blueberry Commission

WA Lettuce and Vegetable Commission

WA Red Raspberry Commission

WA Seed Potato Commission

WA State Dairy Federation

WA State Potato Commission

WA Strawberry Commission

Washington Tractor

Western WA Agricultural Association

Western WA Fruit Research Foundation Western WA Small Seed Advisory Committee

Wilbur Ellis Company

WSU Mount Vernon Northwestern Washington Research & Extension Center

WSU Clallam County Extension

WSU Jefferson County Extension

WSU Skagit County Extension

WSU Whatcom County Extension

1. “Economic Indicators of Agriculture’s Future in Skagit County” by ECONorthwest, November 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “Agricultural Drainage Fact Sheet” by Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Skagit County Farmland Legacy Program 2017 Annual Report. 11,026 acres is 12% of 90,000 total ag zoned acres. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. WSU Skagit County Extension’s 2015 Agriculture Statistics report estimates $262,347,668 crop value to producers in 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)