

# Skagit County Agritourism Support

Outreach and Engagement Plan | **Draft** January 14, 2021

---

## Purpose

The Skagit County Board of Commissioners has requested that Skagit County Planning and Development Services (PDS) evaluate the impacts of agritourism in the county. BERK Consulting, Inc. will work with PDS to develop a study, engage stakeholders, and provide a range of recommendations to policies and codes.

The study is anticipated to involve the following stages over 12 -18 months:

- Identify stakeholders and facilitate conversation and public engagement (e.g. create a common understanding of agritourism and understand producer and neighbor needs).
- Develop a situation assessment and policy concepts that addresses the various forms of agritourism, how agritourism affects agricultural viability (keeping land in production), influences the agricultural land base, community quality of life (e.g. circulation, noise, etc.), and ways to enforce any changes to county code.
- Propose amendments to the county Comprehensive Plan, land use map and development code to address agritourism.

The study will address potential food service on farms and other agritourism activities, such as wedding venues, temporary event spaces, etc.

## Public Outreach & Engagement Guiding Principles

The County has a community that includes residents speaking English, Spanish, and other language groups. There are a wide variety of agricultural products and industries. Proposed guiding principles are meant to direct engagement efforts and include:

- Create an open and inclusive outreach process for community members and stakeholders.
  - Choose meeting times and formats that are accessible to as many participants as possible recognizing the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic and need for social distancing methods.
  - Create opportunities for engagement for populations that have barriers to participation due to language, availability, or others.
- Reach out to different county agricultural communities and producers.
  - Engage producers in different county regions and engage producers representing different commodity groups.
- Educate the communities and interested agencies about the Agritourism Support project purpose and progress as early as possible and throughout the project.

- Provide for ongoing communication and updates.
- Provide easy and convenient access to project information that is useful, timely, and pertinent.
  - Create multiple ways to engage.
  - Collaborate with other County initiatives and make outreach efforts cohesive to minimize participant fatigue.
- Communicate clearly about constraints, values, and trade-offs associated with the Agritourism Support project.
- Engage stakeholders to gather current information and ideas that inform Agritourism evaluations and policy options.
- Document and learn from outreach efforts.
  - Make time to reflect on the outcome of each activity – what went well, what could be improved, and what was learned.
  - Respect the feedback received and honor it in project outcomes.
- Ensure elected officials, the planning commission, staff, and consultants understand community and stakeholder concerns and link the input to Agritourism Support products; and
- Comply with the State Growth Management Act (GMA) requirements for continuous public participation (RCW 36.70A.035 and 140)

## Stakeholders & Audiences

The Outreach and Engagement Plan is designed to reach all audiences that may have an interest in the Agritourism project, including but not limited to:

- Producers
- Rural Residents
- Agricultural trade, tourism, Chambers of Commerce, and economic development organizations (e.g. EDASC)
- Interested property owners
- Community organizations
- Agricultural Agencies: WSU Extension, Conservation District, WSDA
- Local governments, Port of Skagit, and service providers
- Appointed and elected officials

Across the audiences, ensure that outreach techniques and materials reach residents, property owners, and businesses including those with different ethnicities and primary languages (e.g. Spanish). See Attachment A.

This would involve engaging interpreters to help translate materials into these languages, and to support in-person selected outreach events as appropriate.

#### Initial List of Stakeholders:

- Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board:  
<https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/NRAgAdvisory>
- Skagitonians to Protect Farmland: <https://www.skagitonians.org/>
- Friends of Skagit County: <http://www.friendsofskagitcounty.org/>
- WSU Extension: <https://extension.wsu.edu/skagit/>.
- Planning Commissioners: <https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/PlanningCommission/main.htm>
- Western Washington Agriculture: <https://westag.org/>
- Port of Skagit: <http://www.portofskagit.com/>
- Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County (EDASC): <https://www.skagit.org/>
- Skagit Farm Bureau: <https://wsfb.com/county-bureaus>
- Skagit County Cattlemen's: <https://skagitcountycattlemens.com/>
- Skagit Valley Coop: <http://www.skagitfoodcoop.com/>
- Conway Feed Store: <https://www.conwayfeedinc.com/>
- WSU Extension Ag Summit (January): <https://extension.wsu.edu/skagit/>
- Potential cultural communities standards and resources:
  - WSU Extension: <https://extension.wsu.edu/skagit/>.
  - Skagit County Public Health and Community Services

## Public Engagement Strategies & Activities

Public engagement strategies will include use of a project website, stakeholder interviews and focus groups, an online survey, public workshops, and attending events such as a farmer's market. It also includes targeted outreach and engagement for groups that do not typically engage in planning processes within the community.

### BUILDING AWARENESS

For this phase, activities could include:

- Set up dedicated County web page.
- Develop templates for outreach materials (e.g. frequently asked questions).
- Distribute materials (e.g. fliers) at events (e.g. farmers markets) and standing meetings of stakeholder groups.

## ADVERTISING EVENTS

Methods of advertising the online survey and public meetings include:

- Project website
- Press releases
- Postcards, fliers, and FAQs
- Sending information to key stakeholders to distribute to their networks.
- Other methods the County has found effective.

## OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

### Engagement Activities and Events

It is anticipated with COVID-19 that means of gathering input will be through digital means this fall (e.g. survey, interviews, etc.) In spring 2021, there may be an opportunity to conduct some outdoor socially-distanced events.

- Interview key stakeholders. Use interviews to help identify participants in focus groups as needed.
- Conduct focus groups to get targeted input on the effort, particularly with individuals that may not participate in workshops or meetings. Consider impromptu focus groups, e.g. vintners, brewers.
- Develop online survey questions as appropriate.
- Develop story maps in coordination with PDS.
- Consider participation in WSU Agriculture Summit – likely early 2021 based on prior years. <https://extension.wsu.edu/skagit/agriculture/calendar/>.

### Legislative Meetings

Support the legislative review process with the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners including public hearings, drafting the adopting resolution or ordinance, and providing supporting materials on the planning process and public outreach during the project development.

The project will begin with the Planning Commission on November 24, 2020 with a presentation of this Outreach/Engagement Plan.

Meetings with the Agricultural Advisory Board and others are anticipated in early 2021 where early situation assessment results can be shared.

## ACTIVITIES AND ROLES

This section summarizes the key outreach strategy and activities and roles and responsibilities between County staff, the consultants, and others.

**Exhibit 1. Activities and Roles**

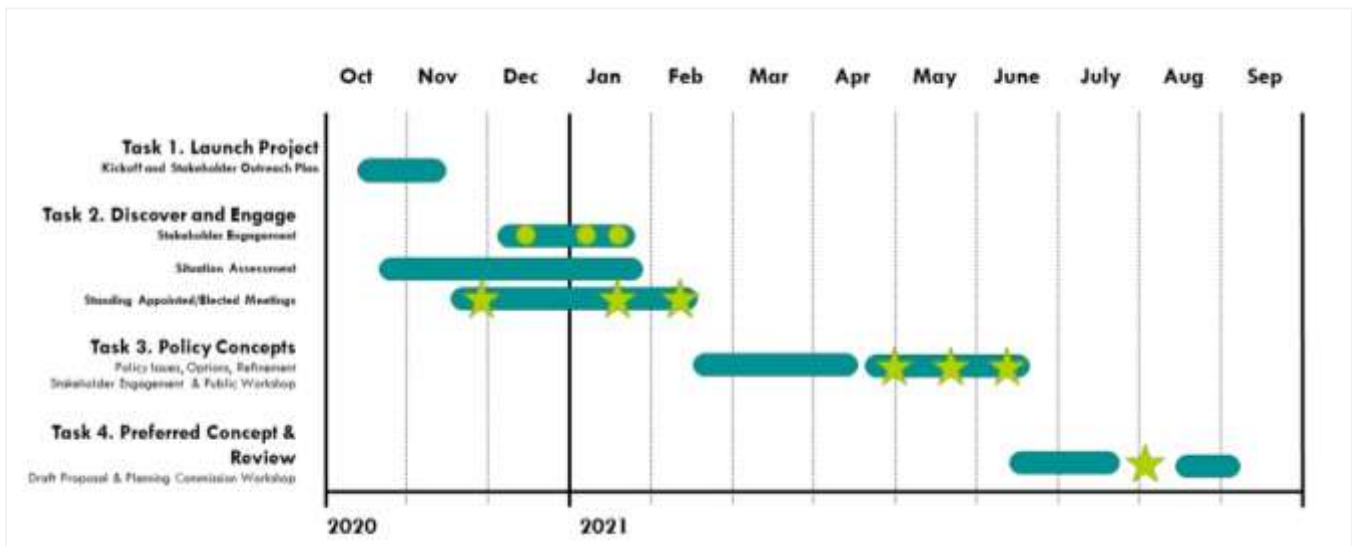
Outreach Strategies Phases/Activity	Key Actions	Roles & Responsibilities
Building Awareness		
Dedicated Website	Develop content. Share schedule.	Content: BERK and PDS Website Update: PDS
Outreach Material Templates	Develop logo/templates.	BERK
Advertising Events		
Project Website (Public Input platform)	Regular updates with material or schedule.	BERK: Content PDS: Create website and Update periodically
Press Releases	Develop in advance of project events.	BERK or PDS: Content PDS: Distribution
Postcards, Fliers, FAQs	Regular updates with material or schedule.	BERK: Content PDS: Update
Sending information to key stakeholders	Send information and updates at milestones.	PDS
Outreach and Engagement		
Interviews	Develop questions and reach out to contacts.	BERK lead PDS review/support (e.g. contacts)
Focus Groups	Develop agendas and discussion guides.	BERK lead PDS review/support (e.g. meeting logistics if in field)
Online Survey/Story Map	Develop questions, maps, and deploy.	BERK draft content PDS review, deploy as appropriate
Stakeholder Meetings/Events	Attend Stakeholder Meetings of Standing Groups, Conferences, or Develop Tours/Meetings.	PDS: Standing meeting logistics BERK: Material for conference or tours
Legislative Meetings	Regular updates and materials.	PDS Lead BERK provide deliverables

# Schedule

The Skagit County Agritourism Support project includes tasks designed to develop quantitative and qualitative information, engage stakeholders, and develop draft policies and code, as follows:

- Task 1. Launch Project
  - Kickoff and Stakeholder Outreach Plan
- Task 2. Discover and Engage
  - Stakeholder Engagement
  - Situation Assessment
  - Standing Appointed/Elected Meetings
- Task 3. Policy Concepts
  - Policy Issues, Options, Refinement
  - Stakeholder Engagement & Public Workshop
- Task 4. Preferred Concept & Review
  - Draft Proposal & Planning Commission Workshop

**Exhibit 2. Conceptual Schedule**

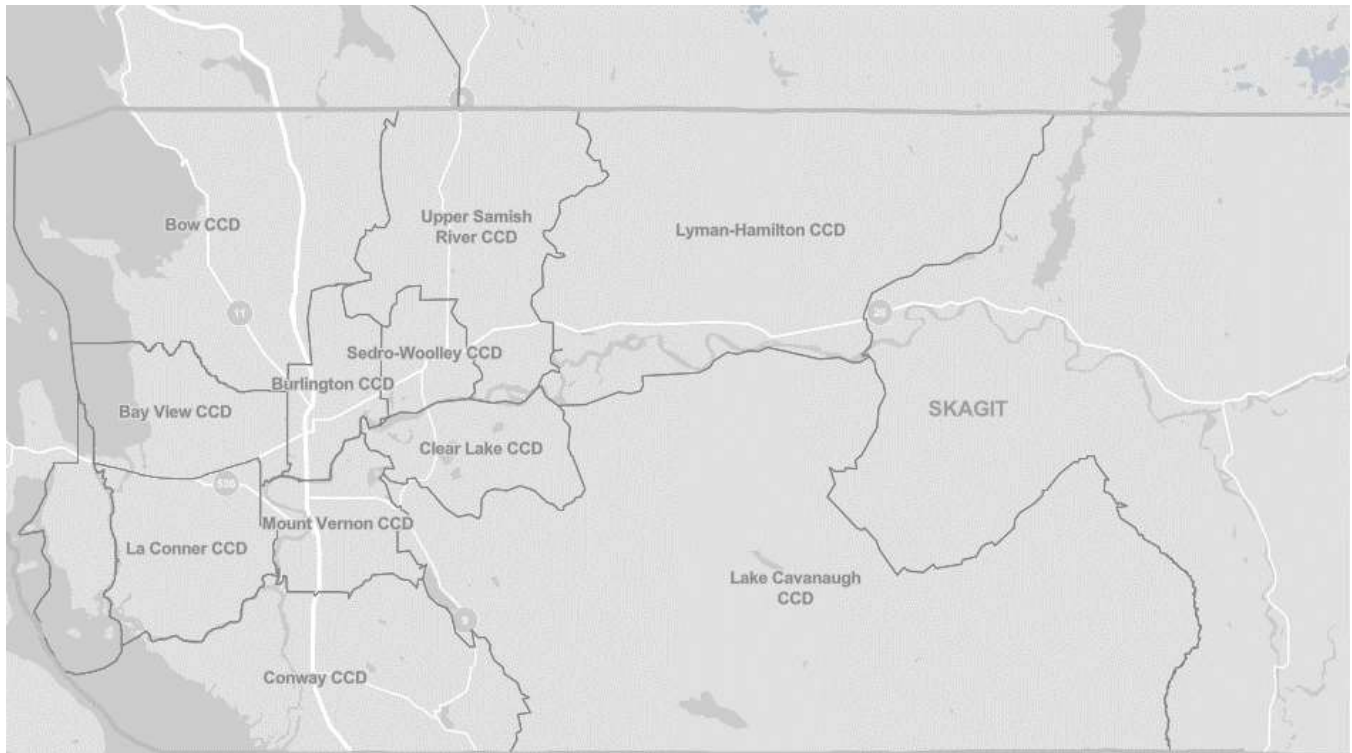


## Adapting and Learning

It is anticipated this Outreach and Engagement Plan will adapt and change over time as early engagement results illustrate key issues, potentially new stakeholders, or which events or activities are more effective.

# Attachment A: Demographics

**Exhibit 3. Skagit County Census Subdivisions**



**Exhibit 4. Rural Census County Divisions 2014-2018: Race and Ethnicity**

Metric	Bay View CCD	Bow CCD	Clear Lake CCD	Conway CCD	East Skagit CCD	Lake Cavanaugh CCD	Lyman-Hamilton CCD, it	Swinomish Reservation CCD,	Upper Samish River CCD, Skagit
Total population	3,579	6,567	1,995	3,507	4,697	3,044	2,856	2,915	4,467
Non-Hispanic white alone	89%	77%	94%	89%	87%	90%	88%	73%	82%
Non-Hispanic Black alone	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	3%
Non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native alone	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	2%	18%	4%
Non-Hispanic Asian alone	3%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Non-Hispanic Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander alone	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Non-Hispanic some other race alone	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Non-Hispanic two or more races alone	2%	5%	0%	4%	2%	3%	6%	3%	2%
Hispanic or Latino	5%	16%	5%	6%	6%	7%	4%	3%	8%

**Exhibit 5. Rural Census County Divisions 2014-2018: Languages**

Metric	Bay View CCD	Bow CCD	Clear Lake CCD	Conway CCD	East Skagit CCD	Lake Cavanaugh CCD	Lyman-Hamilton CCD	Swinomish Reservation CCD	Upper Samish River CCD
Total population age 5+	3,477	6,232	1,832	3,354	4,485	2,932	2,664	2,833	4,243
% of population that speaks only English or speaks English "very well"	98.5%	88.7%	96.8%	98.8%	100%	98.9%	98.7%	99.5%	97.1%
% of population that speaks English less than "very well"	1.5%	11.3%	3.2%	1.2%	0.0%	1.1%	1.3%	0.5%	2.9%
% of population that speaks Spanish	2.4%	6.8%	2.9%	5.0%	1.6%	2.7%	2.9%	0.6%	3.2%
% of population that speaks another Indo-European language	3.1%	1.3%	9.8%	1.4%	1.0%	0.0%	0.8%	1.1%	4.6%
% of population that speaks an Asian or Pacific Island language	1.5%	1.5%	0.0%	0.6%	0.5%	0.0%	1.2%	0.6%	0.4%
% of population that speaks another language	0.0%	7.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%

**Exhibit 6. Census County Divisions with Cities and Towns 2014-2018: Race and Ethnicity**

Metric	Anacortes CCD	Burlington CCD	La Conner CCD	Mount Vernon CCD	Sedro-Woolley CCD
Total population	21,278	13,748	3,332	37,375	14,547
Non-Hispanic white alone	89%	62%	83%	58%	83%
Non-Hispanic Black alone	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native alone	1%	0%	1%	2%	0%
Non-Hispanic Asian alone	3%	3%	0%	3%	0%
Non-Hispanic Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander alone	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Non-Hispanic some other race alone	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Non-Hispanic two or more races alone	3%	2%	3%	2%	3%
Hispanic or Latino	5%	31%	12%	33%	14%



**Exhibit 7. Census County Divisions with Cities and Towns 2014-2018: Languages**

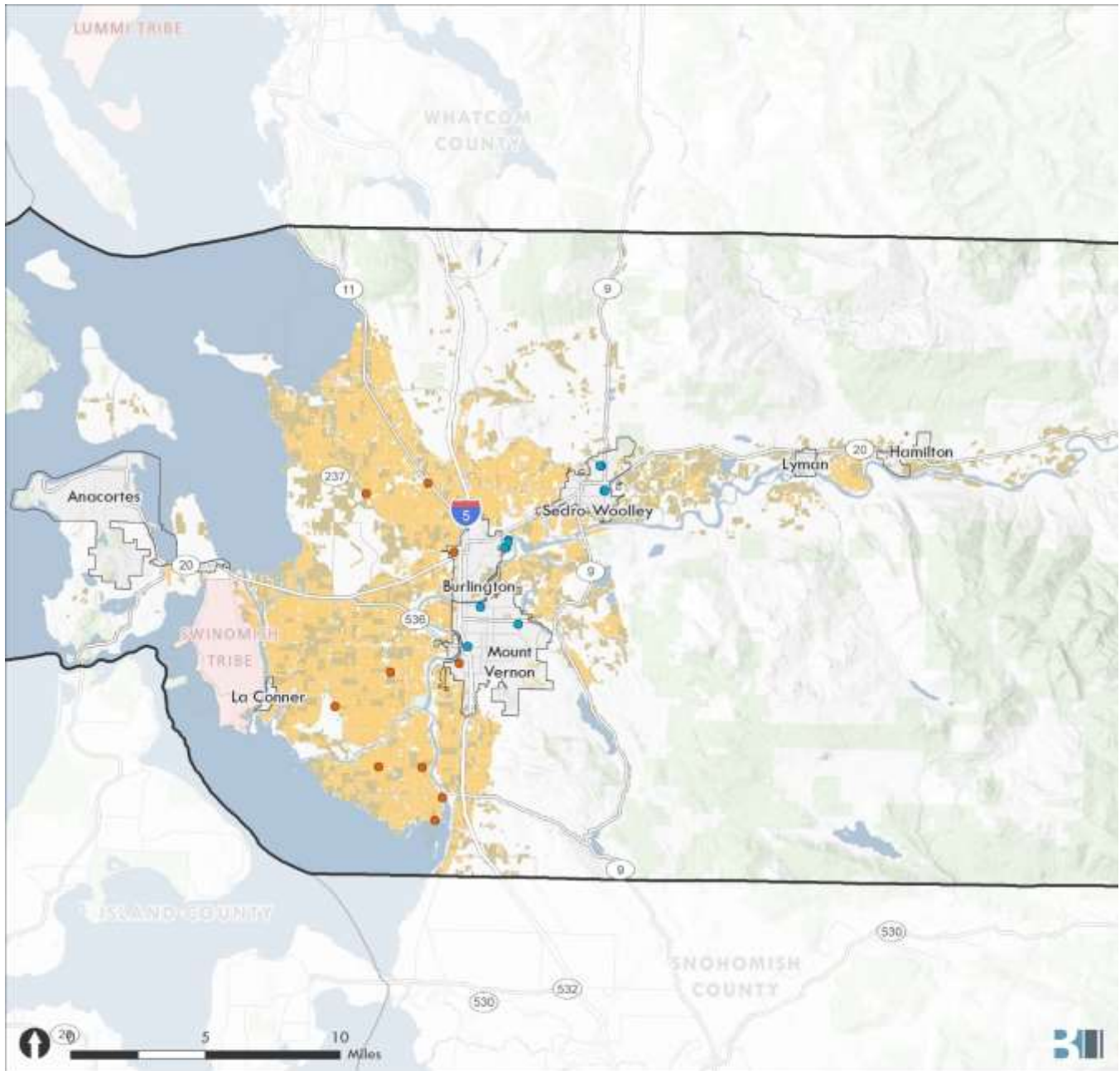
Metric	Anacortes CCD	Burlington CCD	La Conner CCD	Mount Vernon CCD	Sedro-Woolley CCD
Total population age 5+	20,200	12,789	3,156	34,610	13,528
% of population that speaks only English or speaks English "very well"	98.6%	87.5%	93.9%	85.4%	97.3%
% of population that speaks English less than "very well"	1.4%	12.5%	6.1%	14.6%	2.7%
% of population that speaks Spanish	2.0%	24.2%	7.3%	28.3%	7.3%
% of population that speaks another Indo-European language	1.3%	2.7%	1.7%	1.9%	0.7%
% of population that speaks an Asian or Pacific Island language	1.5%	1.6%	0.3%	2.5%	0.2%
% of population that speaks another language	0.1%	0.9%	0.0%	0.3%	0.1%

# Attachment B: Preliminary Agricultural Inventory Information

## Exhibit 8. Skagit County - Agricultural Acreage by Crop Group 2019

Crop Group	Acreage
Hay/Silage	18,309
Other	3,761
Cereal Grain	14,724
Orchard	395
Seed	3,845
Vineyard	32
Pasture	11,523
Herb	2
Vegetable	16,014
Developed	417
Turfgrass	583
Berry	2,896
Green Manure	99
Nursery	958
Commercial Tree	206
Melon	-
Oilseed	-
Flower Bulb	851
Shellfish	9,504
<b>Total</b>	<b>84,119</b>

Exhibit 9.10. WSDA Crop Type Map 2019



**Farmworker Housing Type:**

- Migrant
- Year-Round

**Agriculture Type:**

- Irrigated
- Non-Irrigated/Unknown

**Other Layers:**

- County Boundary
- Cities
- Tribal Land
- Public Ownership

**Skagit County**



Map Date: July 2020

**Exhibit 109. Census of Agriculture, 2017<sup>1</sup>**

---

Number of farms 1,041

Land in farms (acres) 97,664

Percent of farms that:

- Farm organically 5%
- Sell directly to consumers 18%
- Hire farm labor 25%
- Are family farms 96%

Market value of products sold: \$287,096,000

Share of Sales by Type (%)

- Crops 67%
    - Vegetables, melons, potatoes, sweet potatoes
    - Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, sod
    - Fruits, tree nuts, berries
  - Livestock, poultry, and products 33%
    - Milk from cows
    - Cattle and calves
- 

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online\\_Resources/County\\_Profiles/Washington/cp53057.pdf](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online_Resources/County_Profiles/Washington/cp53057.pdf)