

Village Corporations explore their Agricultural potential

Ruby and Galena will be the sites of two Agricultural Pilot Projects this summer. In planning the projects, latitude has been left for experimental work as well as providing a basis for subsistence production of vegetables.

Jack Hakkila began coordinating the projects when he was employed by Tanana Chiefs Conference under the Village Management Program (VMAP). When funding for VMAP was

depleted, Mr. Hakkila continued to push for projects and make them a reality on his own time.

Hakkila said in a recent summary of the projects that plans have been completed for field trials of small grains including wheat, barley and oats on two-acre plots and vegetables production on one-acre plots in each village.

The seed, fertilizer and supplies required for the

(Continued on page 12)

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(Continued from page 1)

projects have been purchased and transportation arrangements have been confirmed. Funding for the projects was obtained from Tanana Chiefs Conference and the Galena Regional Learning Center and Mr. Hakkila will be working on the projects in Ruby and Galena throughout the summer.

The field grains, Hakkila said, lend themselves well for experimentation.

Experiments will be conducted on the grain plots that will include trying various applications of fertilizer and soil heating with plastic.

Hakkila said that plans for the vegetables plots have been developed through the assistance of the University of Alaska and a recommended list for one-acre subsistence plots was prepared by the Fairbanks Town and Village Assoc. Rural Agricultural Development Committee (RAD).

The project was initiated in early April with

the cooperation of the village councils of Ruby and Galena and village corporations Notaghleedin Ltd. of Galena and Dineega Corporation of Ruby.

Soil samples were taken from five acre plots selected in each village by Roger Rayburn of the Soil Conservation Service, John Quirk of the Regional Learning Center in Galena, Wayne Selden of Galena, and Hakkila.

"We rode snowmachines to the test sites in subzero temperatures," Hakkila recalls, "and with shovels, axes and snowshoes, we took samples through four feet of snow and eight inches of frozen dirt."

The Galena City Council reserved five acres on a dry lake near the townsite at Alexander Lake for the project and the Dineega Corporation set aside a five-acre plot in Ruby at 2 1/3 mile Poorman Road. Both villages are working together in a non-profit corporation to conduct the ex-

periments.

The University of Alaska is offering a course in Agriculture both in Galena and Ruby in conjunction with the agricultural projects for college credits.

The same course will be available to high school students for high school credits.

The first lecture in this course was held in Ruby. Roger Rayburn, SCS, made a slide presentation and lectured on land clearing and soil preparation. Rayburn's presentation was then videotaped with funding from the Kellogg Foundation. John Quirk of the Galena Learning Center has used the videotape to introduce agricultural education sessions in Galena, Nulato, Manley, and other villages in the area.

The two tapes have been produced for the projects with funding assistance from the Kellogg Foundation.

One tape consisted of a panel discussion with participants consisting of Dr.

Wayne Burton, agricultural economist AES; Virgil Severns, agricultural agent with the Cooperative Extension Service; Roger Rayburn; and Joe C. Balch, of Creative Engineering. The discussion included a presentation by Mr. Balch of an easily constructed greenhouse, pilot projects as an approach to agricultural development by Dr. Burton and a history of agriculture in the Galena-Ruby area by Mr. Severns.

The third videotape was produced by KJNP of North Pole and Neil Cook, news director of KJNP, contributed his technical assistance to make the on-site taping that included an interview of Joe Balch at his commercial greenhouse on Chena Hot Springs Road

in Fairbanks. Mr. Balch discusses ideas for planting grains and Mr. Risse discusses the preparation of a seed bed.

Hakkila said that the Galena-Ruby agricultural projects were conceived as a means to demonstrate the commercial feasibility of agriculture to all villages with land selections that have food production potential through the proven combination of academic instruction and experimentation by the AES, School of Agricultural and Land Resource Management and the Cooperative Extension Service.

The projects are just the beginning to an ongoing program, Hakkila said.