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## *WSDA Centennial – some facts and figures of 1913 and today*

*The Washington State Department of Agriculture became an official state agency on June 10, 1913, when state legislators pulled together nine areas of responsibility under one roof, giving to WSDA a wide range of responsibilities related to the state's agriculture industry. This included programs covering animal health, dairies and food, horticulture, oil, bakeries, fairs, feed, fertilizer and stallions and jacks. By August 1913, the agency had published its first pamphlet detailing the rules for the state's agriculture industry.*

### **WSDA IN 1913:**

- June 10, 1913 – WSDA's Birthday. Gov. Ernest Lister, known for his interest in making state government more efficient and economical, promoted and signed legislation to officially create the Washington State Department of Agriculture.
- J.H. (John Henry) Perkins was named the state's first Commissioner of Agriculture, serving one year. Perkins was an Adams County school superintendent and dairy farmer who later became a state legislator and county assessor.
- WSDA's initial duties spanned nine areas relating to agriculture.
- Washington had more than 56,000 farms -- a ratio of 5.1 farms for every 100 residents.
- More than 80% of the state's farms owned horses and 75% had dairy cows, with an average of four per farm. Washington farms produced a wide range of crops with wheat and hay the state's top agricultural commodities, and apples making up almost 80% of the fruit acreage.

### **WSDA TODAY:**

- Current WSDA Director Don "Bud" Hover was appointed by Gov. Jay Inslee effective April 1, 2013. Bud and his wife, Tonya, manage a hay and cattle ranch in Winthrop, WA.
- WSDA operates 26 programs that carry out duties under 58 state laws.
- Washington currently has 39,500 farms -- a ratio of 0.5 farms for every 100 residents.
- Some 300 commodities are produced commercially. The top six are apples, milk, wheat, potatoes, hay and cattle. Washington leads the nation for production of 11 crops, including apples, sweet cherries, pears, red raspberries and hops.
- Washington's \$46 billion food and agriculture industry employs approximately 160,000 people and accounts for 13% percent of the state's economy.
- More than \$15 billion in food and agricultural products were exported through Washington ports in 2011, the third largest total in the U.S.