Agriculture in West Virginia Poster Contest Winners Announced

Each year, WVFB’s Womens Leadership Committee sponsors the Agriculture in West Virginia Poster Contest. In a society that is increasingly unaware of where their food comes from, the contest strives to bring attention to the importance of agriculture. All fourth graders across the state can participate, and this year, schools in 24 counties submitted posters for the competition.

This year’s winning posters, pictured right, top to bottom: First place, Loren Burner from Glenwood Elementary School in Mercer County; second place, Tommy Fluharty of Scott Teays Elementary in Putnam County; third place, Madison LaVinge, South Jefferson Elementary School in Jefferson County.

Each winner receives a cash prize and their posters will be featured at the West Virginia State Fair at the WVFB booth. The posters will also grace placemats at the WVFB Annual Meeting in November. Congratulations to all!

Articles for NewsBytes must be submitted by the 15th of the month prior to publication. Time-sensitive announcements must be submitted no less than 8 weeks prior to the date of the event. Electronic submissions, including photos, are preferred. Send to joanh@wvfarm.org.
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The EPA’s final rule defining ‘Waters of the U.S.’ (WOTUS) was published in the Federal Register on June 29, 2015. This final rule is even worse that we had been expecting. It establishes federal power far beyond what EPA had proposed just over a year ago. Under this rule, EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers will be given control of virtually all water and all land in the United States. The extent to which this wipes away our private property rights is mind-numbing.

Let me give you a few examples of the waters that will be controlled under the new rule:

- All navigable water
- All tributaries of navigable waters
- Any waters within 4000 feet of a tributary
- Any pothole, pool, pond, wetland, ditch, ephemeral, or land feature that has any connection to any of the above-mentioned waters
- All waters within a 100-year floodplain

Just these definitions of controlled waters take in virtually all waters in West Virginia and in the rest of the country. So, if all our waters are included in the rule, that means that all of our land will be included and controlled under the rule as well.

This control of land use has long been an objective of the EPA. As we have warned in the past, there will be limitless new regulations and permit requirements for what have always been normal farming practices. These permits will be accompanied by fees that EPA can set at their discretion.

Never before have we seen a non-elected government agency seize private property rights as the EPA does under this rule. EPA has a long history of overreach, but this far outpaces anything they’ve attempted before. This rule destroys the basic right of ownership and use of private property.

Congress must act. EPA should be de-funded and returned to the role it was originally intended to have, rather than the activist role it has now assumed. The power to make and implement these kinds of excessive rules and regulations should never have been given to any government agency, and it must be ended.
Stop the Madness – Discussion continues to be generated across the nation and within our state on EPA’s latest push forward with their final rule defining “Waters of the U.S.” (WOTUS). This comes in spite of the fact that extensive input has been generated from across the private sector, including agriculture, about the unintended and intended consequences of this rule, deemed by many as a government power grab that could cripple or destroy American agriculture as we know it.

Our June 11, 2015 update from American Farm Bureau Federation gets directly to the point – Final “Waters of the U.S.” Rule: No, No, No! No Clarity, No Certainty, No Limits on Agency Power. Highlights from AFBF’s summary include:

The definition of “tributary” has been broadened to include landscape features that may not even be visible to the human eye, or that existed historically but are no longer present. The agencies (EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) rejected requests from commenters to exclude features that carry water only when it rains and to require more than just the presence of the highly subjective bed, bank and ordinary high water mark. Instead, the final rule broadened the definition and made so-called tributaries even more difficult for landowners to identify. The final rule also allows the agencies to identify tributaries based entirely on past conditions rather than current conditions.

The final rule explicitly regulates many ditches as “tributaries.” The rule excludes ditches with ephemeral (after rainfall) flow that “are not a relocated tributary or excavated in a tributary” and ditches with intermittent (e.g. seasonal) flow that “are not a relocated tributary, excavated in a tributary, or drain wetlands.” But, based on the agencies’ broad notion of “tributary,” AFBF has serious concerns that many, perhaps most, agricultural ditches that flow only ephemerally will be categorically regulated as “excavated in” a tributary or as a “relocated” historical tributary. Farmers will be at great risk of enforcement if their activities cause any materials (such as fertilizer or herbicide) to fall into ditches, even when the ditches are dry. AFBF has similar concerns regarding agricultural irrigation ditches, which often flow either perennially or intermittently.

All waters “adjacent” to other WOTUS, including those invisible tributaries, are regulated. Waters are automatically regulated if any part of the water, or any part of a wetland adjacent to the water, is within 100 feet, or within the 100-year floodplain and not more than 1,500 feet, from certain other jurisdictional waters, including “tributaries.” The new standard is confusing, hard to apply and lacks clarity.

The rule sets forth a number of exclusions, but questions loom large in determining if the exclusions apply. The refusal to clearly define key terms means the agencies will have broad discretion to identify “waters,” and to limit the scope of most of the exclusions. As with any ambiguous regulation, the agencies will hold the trump card later in interpreting what’s arguably the most important word in this rule: WATER.

Bob Stallman, AFBF President, nailed it in some of his recent comments – “The Environmental Protection Agency finally released its new clean water rule and actually managed to make it worse than we expected . . . Our analysis shows yet again how unwise, extreme, and unlawful this rule is . . . It’s time for Congress to step in and check EPA’s blatant overreach.” Last month AFBF General Counsel Ellen Steen testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee, explaining how the EPA abused and distorted the normal rulemaking process to pre-determine the outcome of its highly controversial “Waters of the U.S. rule.” Keep up the great work AFBF! Your leadership and involvement, combined with the efforts of our friends in Congress and the ag community nationwide, will help to stop the madness. Until next time, KEEP SMILING FRIENDS, God bless you and your loved ones, and God bless America.
Attorney General Patrick Morrisey is leading a bipartisan coalition of nine state Attorneys General in a lawsuit challenging a new rule from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Environmental Protection Agency that unlawfully expands the federal government’s regulatory reach over small streams, land and farms.

“This rule is a staggering overreach by the federal government and violates the very law it claims to enforce,” Attorney General Morrisey said. “It will have dire consequences for homeowners, farmers and other entities by forcing them to navigate a complex federal bureaucracy and obtain costly permits in order to perform everyday tasks like digging ditches, building fences or spraying fertilizers.”

The rule, known generally as the “Waters of the United States” rule, would extend the EPA and Corps of Engineers’ regulatory jurisdiction to an untold number of small bodies of water, including roadside ditches and short-lived streams or any other area where the agencies believe water may flow once every 100 years.

“The way this rule is written creates a series of absurd scenarios for which people can be fined,” Morrisey said. “If you dump a wheelbarrow of dirt in the creek bed behind your house, and you don’t get a permit first, you could be fined, even if that creek was never previously subject to federal regulation. This rule expands a scheme whereby property owners have to ask the EPA for permission to do yardwork – it’s regulatory lunacy.”

Failure to comply with the new regulations could result in fines of up to $37,500 a day.

In the complaint filed in U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Georgia, the Attorneys General of West Virginia, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, South Carolina, Utah and Wisconsin argue the final rule put out by the EPA and Corps of Engineers violates the Clean Water Act, the Administrative Procedure Act and the U.S. Constitution, and usurps the States’ primary responsibility for the management, protection and care of intrastate waters and lands.

While the Clean Water Act gave the EPA and Corps authority to regulate “navigable waters” – defined as “waters of the United States” – Congress made sure that states would retain their constitutional, sovereign responsibility over non-navigable, intrastate lands and waters. The U.S. Supreme Court has twice rejected the agencies’ attempts to expand their authority (in Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County v. Army Corps of Engineers and Rapanos v. United States). However, this latest rule written by the two administrative agencies gives them virtually limitless power over these waters.

The complaint asks a federal judge to declare the rule illegal and issue an injunction to prevent the agencies from enforcing it. It also asks the judge to order the agencies to draft a new rule that complies with the law and honors States’ rights.

The American Farm Bureau Federation, Texas Farm Bureau, Matagorda County Farm Bureau, and 11 other agricultural and industry groups have asked a federal court to vacate the controversial new rule redefining the scope of federal jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act. The complaint, filed in federal district court in Texas, claims the new rule grants EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers broad control over land use far beyond what Congress authorized in the Clean Water Act. The lawsuit also claims vagueness and over-breadth of the rule violate the U.S. Constitution. The groups also challenged EPA’s aggressive grassroots advocacy campaign during the comment period, which reflected a closed mind to concerns expressed by farmers and others.

EPA and the Corps first proposed the rule in March 2014, promising clarity and certainty to farmers, ranchers, builders and other affected businesses and landowners. “Instead we have a final rule that exceeds the agencies’ legal authority and fails to provide the clarity that was promised,” AFBF General Counsel Ellen Steen said. “AFBF filed this lawsuit to do everything we can to protect the interests of farmers and ranchers, but litigation is not a quick or perfect fix. It is long, cumbersome and expensive, and it leaves farmers and others facing immediate harm and uncertainty under this rule.”

While AFBF and others turn to the courts, a bill currently before the Senate, if passed, would require EPA and the Corps to abandon the rule and conduct a new rulemaking. “Lawsuit or no lawsuit, we need Congress to act,” AFBF President Bob Stallman said. “We need legislation that requires an honest rulemaking from EPA. EPA water regulations must protect water quality without bulldozing the rights of farmers and others whose livelihoods depend on their ability to work the land.”

According to the AFBF complaint, “the Agencies are determined to exert jurisdiction over a staggering range of dry land and water features – whether large or small, permanent, intermittent or ephemeral, flowing or stagnant, natural or manmade, interstate or intrastate.” The “opaque and unwieldy” rule “leaves the identification of jurisdictional waters so vague and uncertain that Plaintiffs and their members cannot determine whether and when the most basic activities undertaken on their land will subject them to drastic criminal and civil penalties under the (Clean Water Act).”

The AFBF lawsuit follows four similar suits filed by officials representing 27 states, all within two days of the rule’s publication on June 29. A group of nine states – West Virginia, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Kansas, Kentucky, South Carolina, Utah and Wisconsin – has asked a federal district court in Georgia for a preliminary injunction to stop implementation of the rule while the lawsuit is resolved. Ohio and Michigan have a separate suit in Ohio also seeking preliminary relief. “We appreciate the leadership and dedication of all the states that have challenged the rule, and we fully support their efforts,” Steen said.

AFBF’s co-plaintiffs are the American Petroleum Institute, American Road and Transportation Builders, Leading Builders of America, National Alliance of Forest Owners, National Association of Home Builders, National Association of Manufacturers, National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, National Corn Growers Association, National Mining Association, National Pork Producers Council and Public Lands Council.
Help Young Riders Avoid Injury

Matt Nicol  Sponsor Relations Account Executive
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Simple Steps to Reduce Risk of ATV Injury or Death

All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) are frequently used on the farm or ranch to haul supplies or get to the field, but ATVs often serve another purpose: recreation. Unfortunately, children are frequently victims of accidents on ATVs. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, four out of every 10 people treated each year in emergency rooms for ATV injuries are under age 16.

It’s important to know that liability for off-premises recreational use of an ATV is not covered by most farm policies. So if you or your family ride your ATV(s) off your property, you may not have coverage. Make sure your agent is aware of how you use these vehicles, so he or she can ensure the proper coverage is in place. The AgriChoice® policy from Nationwide Agribusiness can be endorsed to provide liability coverage for off-premises recreational use of an ATV. Without that endorsement, most policies limit coverage to on-premises use.

Must-know Rules for Riding

Parents should determine each family member’s readiness to operate an ATV based on physical size, coordination, balance, ability to judge distances, willingness to follow rules, and peripheral vision.

It’s important all family members know and follow necessary precautions every time ATVs are used – for work or for play. Here are the ATV Safety Institute’s Golden Rules:

• Always wear a helmet and other protective gear.
• Never ride on public roads.
• Never ride under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
• Never carry a passenger on a single-rider vehicle.
• Ride an ATV that’s right for your age. General guidelines are:
  Age 6 and older – Under 70cc
  Age 12 and older – 70cc to 90cc
  Age 16 and older – Over 90cc
• Supervise riders younger than 16 – ATVs are not toys.
• Ride only on designated trails and at a safe speed.
• Take a hands-on safety training course.

Nationwide offers several all-terrain vehicle (ATV) insurance coverage options to protect you, your ride and others. Farm Bureau members are eligible for up to a 5% discount on ATV insurance. Other discounts may be available such as multi-vehicle, multi-policy and safety course completion. For information about protecting your ATV, contact a local Nationwide agent or visit www.nationwide.com/wvfb.
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- **Much smaller than I imagined and they don’t interfere with wearing glasses.** – Bruce M.
- **This is a company with integrity.** – Brian D.
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**West Virginia Farm Bureau News 9**
Along the winding Patterson Creek Road in Burlington, West Virginia (Mineral County), you will find Patterson Creek Apiary, nested on a shaded hill just off the beaten path.

story and pictures by Marla Pisciotta
For nearly three decades William Barbe has had a love affair with bees. He started working with honeybees in 1988 as a hobby. That hobby has since turned into a family business operated by Barbe, his son William Jr., and daughter-in-law Annette. Barbe’s operation has over 800 beehives with approximately 75,000 bees in each hive. Patriarch Barbe transformed what had been a baby calf house into a honey building.

This is the time of year to harvest honey and being in this business is a sticky venture, no matter how much is harvested. At Patterson Creek, six to ten tons of honey is harvested from frames hanging in the hives each season, depending on the weather. Barbe said sometimes when a late freeze hits, fewer blooms are on the plants, resulting in less nectar.

Once the frames are brought into the honey building, Annette Barbe and a helper remove them from what are called supers. “Supers are the box form that holds the individual frames within the hive,” Annette explains. Honey laden frames hang on the sides of the supers, which are open-ended.

The frames are loaded into a machine that removes or “uncaps” the wax cap. Beekeepers without such a machine have to do this by hand with a hot knife.

Left, checking the hives is occasionally done to monitor their condition. Above, Annette Barbe holds a frame ready to put on a machine for retrieval of honey.
Baskets are placed under the frames to catch the wax and the honey runs into containers under the machine. The frames are also hand scraped to remove any honey residue. The frames, 20 at a time, are then put into a stainless steel tub that spins.

“Centrifugal force pushes the remaining honey out of the frames,” Annette said. All the collected honey is strained through cheesecloth before it is bottled into quarts, pints and 12-ounce Honey Bear containers.

Getting to this point is the task of the bees. The queen bee, only one per hive, is the only bee with fully developed ovaries. She can live for 3-5 years, mating only once with several male or drone bees, and will remain fertile for life, laying up to 2,000 eggs per day.

Above, combs are cut into 12-ounce squares. Right: Harvesting honey from supers, a large machine at the Patterson Creek Apiary is used to remove honey from the frames.
Fertilized eggs become female or worker bees and unfertilized eggs become male or drone bees. When the queen dies or becomes unproductive, the other bees will ‘make’ a new queen by selecting a young larva and feeding it a diet of royal jelly. Royal jelly is made of pollen, which is chewed up and mixed with a chemical secreted from a gland in the nursing bees’ heads.

This milk or pollen mush is fed to all the larvae for the first two days of their lives. The larvae chosen to become queen continues to eat only royal jelly and grows one and a half times larger than an ordinary bee.

Honey is a popular commodity. Barbe senior said, “There is a demand for honey and the by-products are unlimited.” By-products include everything from hand cream to candles, honey sauces and wines.

But perhaps the most important benefit of bees is pollination. Pollinators are a critical link in our food system. More than 85 percent of earth’s plant species – many of which compose some of the most nutritional parts of our diet – require pollination to exist. Fifty-two percent of grocery stores’ produce mix has to be pollinated - including apples, avocados, broccoli, cantaloupe, carrots, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, kale and greens, just to name a few.

In a quote some attribute to Albert Einstein, it is said, “if bees disappear from the earth, man would have no more than four years to live.” So the next time you cringe at the thought of a bee sting, think instead about all the delicious, vital foods we would be without if it weren’t for these amazing little creatures!
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Working Towards a Common Goal for Ag Education

Julie Tesch

Throughout the agricultural community, we are regularly looking for ways to help America’s youth better understand agriculture. But we all have busy schedules, and many people may think it is somebody else’s job to work with students and teachers. Surely somebody will help agriculture come together and tell our story, right? Unfortunately, many times there are anti-agriculture organizations posing as friends of agriculture while playing into the hearts and minds of youth, teachers and parents with false information. They play on emotions and tell an inaccurate story of agriculture. They are nimble, well-funded and like to wax poetic with their romanticized view of agriculture.

Fortunately, there are two organizations working together to tell the real story of agriculture. The National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization is a nonprofit organization representing most of the state Agriculture in the Classroom programs around the country. Its mission is to educate K-12 teachers and students about the importance of agriculture by creating classroom materials and awards programs as well as hosting a national conference to demonstrate how agriculture can be applied in teaching core subject areas.

The American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture is proud to support the important work of the National Ag in the Classroom Organization by providing comprehensive, accurate materials that AITC coordinators can utilize in their states. The Ag Foundation is also proud to be sponsoring the NAITCO annual conference and providing scholarships to classroom teachers and volunteers to attend. This year more than 400 educators nationwide will attend the conference in Louisville, Kentucky, June 16-20, to learn to incorporate real-life agricultural applications into science, social studies, language arts, math and nutrition lessons.

Resources are tight everywhere, so we consider it our duty at the Ag Foundation to help create programs and products that can easily be used by AITC coordinators across America from the tip of Alaska to the coast of Florida. In order to keep telling the story of agriculture accurately both the Ag Foundation and NAITCO need your continued help and support. Next time you have questions about how to work with teachers or students, please contact your AITC state coordinator or the Ag Foundation. We are happy to help you tell the story of agriculture.

Making accurate, trusted educational resources available to youth is not a limited market. While we may come from different organizations and backgrounds, we share a common goal and will continue to work together for the common good of agriculture. All are welcome under the tent and we look forward to working with you!
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Herbal Formula Eases Farmers’ Aches And Pains

“I read about Steuart’s Pain Formula in a farm magazine,” says Rickey D. Snow, Hood, California. “I hurt my shoulder January 18th, 2013, and had constant pain until the middle of March. My doctors could do nothing, within 10 minutes of applying pain formula, the pain was completely gone.”

Warren Ward of Pemberton, Minnesota says his knees ached so terrible at night that he couldn’t get to sleep without taking pain killers. “An orthopedic surgeon told me both my knees were shot, I had bone rubbing on bone, and I needed knee replacement surgery. Then someone told me about Steuart’s Pain Formula. I started using it and in 3 days I had no pain in my knees. I went right to sleep at night and I haven’t taken a pain killer since.”

Jack Zimmerman from Elysian, Minnesota is a disabled Afghanistan war veteran. He stepped on an IED in 2011 & lost both of his legs. He is confined to a wheel chair because of his injuries. “After I spend a day in my wheel chair I end up with a lot of back, neck, & shoulder pain. Within a half hour of applying Steuart’s Pain Formula I am pain free. Prior to knowing about Steuart’s I could not tolerate a whole day in my wheel chair.”

The cream contains extracts of the herbs Comfrey and Arnica in a liposome base that penetrates the skin rapidly, says Gary Steuart who founded the company in 1982. “People use the product to relieve joint and muscle pain associated with arthritis and injuries,” Steuart says.

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Wood County Safety Day buries Time Capsule to Celebrate Anniversary

The Wood County Farm Bureau held their annual safety day program May 27th and May 28th at the 4-H campground in Mineral Wells, while celebrating Progressive Agriculture Foundation’s 20th year anniversary by burying a time capsule to be retrieved in 2035. Inside the time capsule were a coloring book furnished by the West Virginia Forestry Association, information from the American Cancer Association, an ATV safety sheet, a Nationwide key chain and a copy of the Safety Day schedule for the day.

For the past 20 years, the Progressive Agriculture Safety Day program has continued the mission of providing education and training to make, farm, ranch and rural life safer and healthier for children and their communities. The Wood County Farm Bureau has been helping the program achieve this mission since 2002 when JoEllen Blair and Paul George started the program in Wood County.

Above, Carlos Velez, a 4th grade student at Franklin Elementary School, holds the time capsule.
The 2015 Summer Ag Institute was held June 23 & 24 in Morgantown. On day one, teachers visited Mt. Zion Nursery in Fairmont; toured Lambert’s Winery in Weston and went to Jackson’s Mill in Lewis County. They came away with information on tree growing; producing wine; blacksmithing; WVU Extension’s History Hitting the Road program and more. Teachers also experienced WVFB’s Mobile Ag Education Lab, just as have thousands of schoolchildren across the state, conducting an experiment and learning about all the products that come from agriculture.

During the second day, attendees learned about bee pollination; tactile learning; mapmaking; container gardening; roots, stems and leaves as food and Project Learning Tree.
I love food. I love to grow it, cook it, and eat it. I love being able to step right out of the back door and pick fresh tomatoes and cucumbers from the garden for dinner. And nothing is more satisfying in the dead of winter than grabbing a jar of homegrown green beans to go with the roast beef that was raised right here on our green hills of West Virginia.

More and more, I am asked if my family’s beef is organic. It is not. We are proud conventional farmers. Our cattle are fed through the winter on corn silage and hay that we grow and harvest ourselves, and are fattened on mountain grass. Our cattle
“With all the forces working against agriculture...we cannot afford to have this internal fight between organic and conventional farmers. There is room for both ways of production.”

are healthy and happy. And the meat we produce is healthy and nutritious, despite not carrying an organic label.

I hate to see farming be criticized by anyone; but it really upsets me when people within the farming industry criticize their counterparts. For example, the organic vs. conventional farmer wars with each side insisting that the food they grow is better than the other. While I certainly don’t agree that organically or naturally grown food is any more healthy or nutritious than conventionally grown food, I am not going to criticize a farmer who decides that organic is the way he or she wants to grow food. With all the forces working against agriculture (EPA, HSUS, PETA, federal taxes, etc), we cannot afford to have this internal fight between organic and conventional farmers. There is room for both ways of production.

We are incredibly blessed to have the food choices that we do, and there is a huge demand for organically grown food. However, it is impossible to feed our world using just organic methods. Conventional agriculture, including the use of genetically modified seeds, is critical to be able to produce enough food for our increasing world population. We should not – and cannot – be competing against one another.

While I may not buy organic and my family has no plans of raising organic beef, I support the farmers who grow food bearing that label. We are all farmers. We all grow food. We are all contributing to this industry that we love. We all have to come together.

Have a blessed summer and when you sit down to a picnic feast, give thanks for the plentiful food that is on your plate. Whether organically grown or conventionally grown, a farmer grew it.
Farmers never take days off and neither does Ram 1500.

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Sensational Seafood on the Grill

The fresh, enticing flavors of the sea are calling. This summer, amp up your outdoor dining experience with recipes that offer a nutritious and delicious alternative to garden-variety grilled fare like burgers and steaks. Low in fat and sodium, and high in heart-healthy omega-3s, Alaska seafood takes on a whole new appeal when prepared over an open flame. Grilling Alaska seafood is easy with simple preparations, such as these, that let the flavor of quality seafood stand front and center. For more guest-worthy recipes, visit www.wildalaskaseafood.com.

Serve a smarter entree option

Families who want to feel good about what they eat can feel confident when they serve Alaska sockeye salmon, a versatile protein that is sustainably harvested. From one of the most bountiful fishing regions in the world, Alaska salmon have never been listed as endangered or threatened. In fact, sustainable seafood practices are so essential to Alaska, it’s written into the state’s constitution.

As a flavor-packed source of omega-3 fatty acids, high-quality protein and other nutrients, such as selenium, phosphorus and potassium, wild Alaska sockeye salmon makes a great mealtime addition. At only 220 calories per 3.5-ounce serving, it’s a delicious, low-calorie entree.
Border Grill Grilled Alaska Cod Tacos
Prep time: 35 minutes
Cook time: 10 minutes
Servings: 4
Marinade:
2 1/2 tablespoons cumin seeds
3 jalapeño chiles, stemmed and cut in half
2 cloves garlic
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper
1/4 cup freshly squeezed lime juice
1 large bunch cilantro
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 1/2 pounds wild Alaska cod fillets
12 small (4 to 6-inch) corn tortillas, warmed
6 lettuce leaves, torn in half
1 cup high-quality, store-bought salsa fresca
1 cup guacamole (see recipe below), or high-quality, store-bought guacamole
Lime wedges, for serving
Guacamole:
5 ripe avocados, preferably California Hass
6 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
1 medium red onion, diced
4 jalapeño chiles, stemmed, seeded and finely diced
3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lime juice
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
For marinade, lightly toast cumin seeds in dry skillet over low heat just until aroma is released, about 5 minutes. Transfer seeds to blender. Add jalapeños, garlic, salt, pepper and lime juice and puree until cumin seeds are finely ground. Add cilantro and olive oil and puree until smooth. Using hands, generously cover cod entirely with marinade and let sit at room temperature for 20 minutes.

Preheat medium-hot grill, broiler oven or pan on stovetop over medium-high heat. Cook fish until nearly opaque throughout, about 2–5 minutes per side, depending on thickness. Remove fish from heat, cool slightly and pull apart into large flakes.

To make guacamole, cut avocados in half. Remove seeds, peel, quarter and place in mixing bowl. Mash with potato masher or fork until chunky. Add remaining ingredients and combine with fork. Serve immediately. To assemble tacos, place warm tortillas on work surface and line each with piece of lettuce. Top with chunks of fish, a generous spoonful of salsa fresca and guacamole. Serve immediately accompanied by lime wedges.

Notes: Guacamole recipe will yield 3 cups total. To warm tortillas, dip corn tortillas in water, shaking off excess. Toast, in batches, in nonstick pan over moderate heat, about 1 minute per side. Wrap in towel to keep warm.

Alaska Sockeye Salmon with Herbs and Garlic
Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 13 minutes
Servings: 4–6
1 1/2 pounds Alaska sockeye salmon, fresh or thawed
Cooking spray
1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/2 cup white wine
2 tablespoons melted butter or extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons finely minced fresh garlic
2 tablespoons chopped fresh herbs
Remove salmon from refrigerator 15 minutes before cooking. Heat grill to 375°F.
Cut 2 pieces of wide, heavy-duty aluminum foil about 6 inches longer than salmon side. Stack foil pieces (shiny side down) on baking sheet and spray generously with cooking spray. Place salmon, skin side down, in middle of foil. Fold foil sides and ends up (1–2 inches) to make shallow pan around salmon, leaving at least a 1-inch margin around fish. Season salmon with salt and pepper.

In small bowl, mix together wine, butter, garlic and herbs. Spoon mixture over top of salmon, drizzling with any remaining liquid.

Carefully transfer foil pan to center of preheated grill. Do not cover salmon with foil or close foil over salmon. Close grill cover and cook 10–13 minutes, cooking just until fish is lightly translucent in center — it will finish cooking from retained heat. Remove from grill and let rest a few minutes before serving.

Cook’s tip: Check salmon for doneness at 10 minutes.
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