



Kitsap  
County

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION



## KITSAP FARM MENTOR PROGRAM

2020

### BY THE NUMBERS

- 7 approved Farm Mentors from 5 farms in Kitsap County
- 8 intensive group classes delivered to approximately 20 interns in Kitsap
- 5 interns provided additional free educational offerings through WSU Regional Small Farm programming.



### ISSUE

The number of small farms in Kitsap have been increasing, as well as the interest in sustainable farming across the region. Because of this, the need to train the next generation of farmers is ever pressing. Also, experienced farmers in Kitsap had for years been hosting interns separately, creating a siloed environment of learning for interns. WSU Kitsap Extension helped support the development of a farm mentor program and has coordinated it since 2015, based off a model started in Jefferson County. The original program in Kitsap had limited capacity, providing limited resources to assist farm mentors in the education of their interns.

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*The Kitsap Farm Mentor Program now provides a multidisciplinary study into sustainable agriculture, providing curriculum support for approved farmer mentors.*

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### RESPONSE

In 2020, WSU Kitsap was able to dedicate a half time position to the Regional Small Farms program. With this added capacity, the program was redesigned to primarily emphasize supporting Farm Mentors, and the name was changed to the Kitsap Farm Mentor Program. The program now provides a multidisciplinary study into sustainable agriculture, providing curriculum support for approved farmer mentors. Formal instruction is provided by each farmer mentor and WSU specialists. Farm mentors provide their chosen interns with comprehensive instruction in the operations of their farm. Farm-based learning is supplemented by monthly collective workshops in topics such as livestock systems, soil management, crop production, and pasture management.



## IMPACTS

- The redesign of the program for 2020 enabled the focus on supporting farm mentor as educators.
- WSU Kitsap was able to provide administrative support, curriculum support and online class facilitation for topics not able to be led on farm during COVID.



- Seven approved Farm Mentors took part, with eight group classes delivered to interns from April to October of 2020.
- In addition, Kitsap Farm Mentor interns are provided the opportunity to take part in all Regional Small Farms classes and programming free of cost.

