

Agricultural Officials Announce Selection of Consultant to Develop Boston Public Market Implementation Plan

BOSTON - December 9, 2010 - Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) Commissioner Scott Soares today announced the selection of Project for Public Spaces of New York City to research, develop and produce an implementation plan for the management of a new public market in Boston.

"For the Massachusetts agricultural industry, which generates \$500 million in annual cash receipts, this market will open new doors of opportunity to farmers. It will also provide a new venue for the increasing number of consumers eager to buy local agricultural products," said Commissioner Soares. "This market will support our farms and agricultural jobs and bring healthy, fresh local food to thousands of urban consumers."

"The selection of Project for Public Spaces is an important step in bringing the Boston Public Market from concept to fruition," said Mayor Thomas M. Menino. "I look forward to seeing their plan and analysis of how we can create and manage a thriving year-round public market for our local farmers, residents, and businesses."

Under the guidelines of the Request for Response issued in October, Project for Public Spaces is charged with demonstrating the long-term sustainability of the market and recommending a mix of agricultural and fisheries product vendors to occupy it. The consultant will also develop a proposed strategy to ensure a transparent and accountable market oversight and management structure, and to create a public-private partnership to lead the market's operation. The consultant's third task is to recommend a decision-making process for the design, construction and operation of the market, which is projected to open in 2012.

The market site is located on the first floor of 136 Blackstone Street, adjacent the Haymarket T stop. Also known as Parcel 7, the site is owned by the Department of Transportation (MassDOT), which made the site available for the market.

Once the Project for Public Spaces presents its recommendations to DAR, the department will launch a competitive public process to select a market operator or manager.

Several major U.S. cities operate public markets, including Philadelphia, Seattle and Milwaukee.

DAR's mission is to ensure the long-term viability of local agriculture in Massachusetts. Through its four divisions - Agricultural Development, Animal Health, Crop and Pest Services, and Technical Assistance - DAR strives to support, regulate and enhance the Commonwealth's agricultural community, working to promote economically and environmentally sound food safety and animal health measures, and fulfill agriculture's role in energy conservation and production. For more information, visit DAR's website at www.mass.gov/agr, and/or follow us at <http://twitter.com/MDARCommish>. For your gateway to locally grown products, specialty foods, and fun ag-tivities go to www.mass.gov/massgrows.