

Patrick Administration Kicks Off Farmers Market Week with Massachusetts Tomato Contest

Governor Deval Patrick Proclaims August 18-24 as Massachusetts Farmers Market Week

BOSTON – Monday, August 19, 2013 – State environmental and agricultural officials today kicked off Farmers Market Week with the 29th Annual Massachusetts Tomato Contest at the farmers market at Boston's City Hall. Governor Patrick has proclaimed August 18-24, 2013 as Massachusetts Farmers Market Week.

"Massachusetts ranks seventh in the nation for its many farmers markets," said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rick Sullivan. "Supporting local farmers on the ground level is critical to keeping our rich agricultural heritage alive for generations to come."

"Farmers Market week allows families across Massachusetts to enjoy the remaining summer weather and purchase delicious, locally-grown fresh foods," said MDAR Commissioner Greg Watson. "Massachusetts residents and visitors have a chance to support and take part in the Commonwealth's thriving agricultural industry."

Sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR), New England Vegetable and Berry Growers Association and Mass Farmers Markets and hosted by the Boston Public Market, tomatoes from farmers across the state were judged by a panel of experts on flavor, firmness, slicing quality, exterior color and shape. The contest is designed to increase awareness of locally grown produce.

Information on healthy eating and local foods was available from MDAR, Mass Farmers Markets, Mass Farm to School Project, Massachusetts WIC program, USDA and UMass Extension.

The contest winners are below as follows.

SLICING CATEGORY

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CHERRY CATEGORY

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HEIRLOOM CATEGORY

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HEAVIEST

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DAR's mission is to ensure the long-term viability of agriculture in Massachusetts. Through its four divisions – Agricultural Conservation & Technical Assistance, Agricultural Markets, Animal Health, and Crop and Pest Services – DAR strives to support, regulate and enhance the rich diversity of the Commonwealth's agricultural community 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 at twitter.com/mdarcommish.