

Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources - [www.mass.gov/agr](http://www.mass.gov/agr)



## Farm & Market Report

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## Commissioner's Column

Greetings,

The New Year is just around the corner and I hope as we wind down 2011 you are able to enjoy a relaxing holiday season with your family and loved ones. And as this newsletter is a bi-monthly one, I wish all a happy and healthy start to 2012 as well!

At MDAR we are already busy setting 2012 calendar-year objectives in anticipation of continued opportunities and challenges across the agency. The weather vane points to a still-challenging FY'13 ahead and this too is being factored into our road map. To the latter, there remains one [budget hearing](#) to which the public may submit comment about their priorities. It will be held Thursday, December 15th in Pittsfield between 5:30-7:00 pm. Written comments may also be submitted.

MDAR staff is also busy collecting data for its 2011 annual report due to be released in early 2012. Namely, one of my first priorities when I became Commissioner in 2009 was the reinstatement of an annual report. Not only do I believe that such a report serves as a valuable historical resource (one that also meets the statutory reporting requirements for the agency), more importantly I feel it is an effective vehicle by which we can measure progress and be accountable to the public we serve by presenting the myriad activities that are undertaken by the agency.

In spite of significant fiscal challenges, there are already some remarkable highlights that stand out in 2011. These include the disbursement of nearly 70 energy and environmental grants to farms across the Commonwealth; the announcement of specialty crop block [grants](#) to twelve agricultural organizations; Governor Patrick's executive order for the formation of a Public Market Commission focused on the opening of a [year-round public market](#) in downtown Boston; the establishment of a [Food Policy Council](#) committed to the advancement of a vibrant local food system in Massachusetts; a revisiting and correction of the [Dairy Farm Tax Credit](#) program; and the creation of a Massachusetts [gleaning network](#). Of note too are the agricultural ambassadors of the [Commonwealth Quality Program](#) who continue to advance this important initiative to establish safe, sustainable, and environmentally friendly products. And finally the [Agricultural Preservation Restriction \(APR\)](#) program reached a new milestone of permanently protecting 804 farms (that's over 67,000 acres!) and ranks one of the top in the nation for the sum of federal money received through the Farm Ranchland Protection Program.

Meanwhile our outreach efforts to promote farms, farmers' markets, farm stands, agri-tourism destinations and more have been tracking positive measurable results. Page visits to [MassGrown & Fresher](#) jumped from 1,000 to 4,000 page views per day at the end of 2011 as the site continues to gain traction as a one-stop shopping site to find locally grown and produced products. The majority of the nearly fifty [press releases](#) that went out over the course of the year were picked up by media outlets including local newspapers, radio and TV stations. This does not include the many social network media venues that the agency now uses to promote agricultural commodity groups that include blogs and Twitter.

And as a tickler to 2012, I invite you to read about an exciting *MassGrown & Fresher* [commuter rail initiative](#). In partnership with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), we have planned a truly unique



opportunity to work with and promote our agricultural community to maximize the specialty crop block grant MDAR has allocated to this project.

Businesses and government should also be measured by how they do when there are bumps in the road and here too I think our MDAR team performed well in 2011. When natural disasters occurred, staff reacted swiftly and professionally, whether it was working with the Administration to secure federal disaster relief following Tropical Storm Irene or collaborating with partner organizations to establish a [revolving loan fund](#) for farmers impacted by Irene and other disasters. Additionally, the Division of Animal Health organized seven workshops throughout the state to discuss with town officials improvements to animal emergency response plans.

In the matter of the dairy farm tax credit, early in Governor Patrick's first term he demonstrated his support for the dairy industry which, unlike other sectors of our agricultural community, is held to federal rules that establish the pricing of their product. His work, alongside a similarly supportive Legislature, brought about the establishment of the Dairy Farm Preservation Act – a part of which provided for the dairy farm tax credit as a safety net measure intended to address the volatility experienced by our dairy producers. Thanks to that continued interest and support, 2011 also saw quick work to statutory and regulatory provisions that allowed for a correction to the tax credit calculation resulting in a \$3 million tax credit to Massachusetts dairy farms for the 2010 tax year.

As MDAR measures its progress to date, is there room for improvement? Of course. In 2012 we will continue to seek out efficiencies and identify strategies that make us as responsive as we can be to our increasingly diverse constituency.

And while budget constraints remain an encumbering reality to our agency, I believe strong partnerships and collaborations at the local, state, and federal level are helping to forge out-of-the-box solutions to maintaining the exciting momentum that is support for a vibrant agricultural future. I am looking forward to another year of strengthening those partnerships to ensure that agriculture in Massachusetts remains a strong pillar in the foundation of our identity.

In the meantime, Happy Holidays and a very Happy New Year!

I invite you to read about the many other things going on in our newsletter below. And please feel free to follow me on Twitter for (*almost*) daily updates: [www.twitter.com/AgCommishSoares](http://www.twitter.com/AgCommishSoares).

Best,



Scott J. Soares, Commissioner



[www.twitter.com/AgCommishSoares](http://www.twitter.com/AgCommishSoares)

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## Special Guest Column

by USDA Deputy Secretary Kathleen A. Merrigan

**What role does USDA play in developing regional food systems?**



In 2009, [USDA](#) launched the “[Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food](#)” initiative to create new economic opportunities and to promote local and regional food systems that help keep wealth in rural communities, and to encourage a national conversation about what we eat and where it comes from in order to benefit producers of all sizes.

USDA continues to support local and regional food systems by providing farmers and ranchers with the information and support they need to take advantage of growing local and regional markets. Through loans, loan guarantees, grants, and guidance we can support a diverse range of farming and ranching operations that will ultimately enhance the way food is grown, processed, distributed and consumed by Americans. That includes educating consumers and helping to connect them with local and regional farmers and ranchers.

As we develop these new markets we are giving producers of all sizes opportunities to improve their bottom line, keeping American farmers and ranchers on the farm, and strengthening the American agricultural economy – while simultaneously improving access and options for consumers.

For example, our Specialty Crop Block Grants are awarded directly to state Agriculture departments, encouraging them to increase competition for local crops, expanding access to local food in underserved communities and promoting projects like community and school gardens. Currently, there are more than 7,000 farmers markets across the country, 2,200 farm to school programs in 48 states and agricultural branding programs in all 50 states.

In Massachusetts, there are over 94 farm to school programs. For example, the Massachusetts Farm to School Project matches farms with local schools of all levels to support local farmers and educate school customers about the importance of local food integrity when making purchasing decisions. This project alone has paired local farms with 402 schools in 217 state districts.

### **What are the USDA's top priorities?**

Most recently, [Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack](#) and I have been traveling the country to talk about the American Jobs Act. The passage of this legislation, even if it's broken down into pieces, is crucial to putting Americans back to work and rebuilding our nation's infrastructure. Specifically, the American Jobs Act would provide tax cuts to small businesses, which will in turn provide opportunities to develop and expand regional food systems that keep wealth and jobs in rural communities.

Additionally, as Congress writes 2012 Farm Bill, we are working hard to provide them with guidance on how to build on the success of the agricultural economy and help America prepare for the challenges and opportunities ahead. Recently, in a speech to the 84th FFA Convention, Secretary Vilsack laid out three three core principles the next farm bill should focus on to help shape the success of the American farmer over generations: maintaining a strong safety net, supporting sustainable productivity and promoting vibrant markets.

This legislation addresses farming, but also deals with many important aspects of life in America. It's about supporting the jobs of the future, it's about keeping pace with the changing needs of agriculture and rural America, and it's about providing a safe and ample food supply for the nation.

Lastly, 2012 also marks the [150th Anniversary of our Department](#). USDA continues to fulfill the vision President Abraham Lincoln set forth when he called us the “People's Department” – touching the lives of every American, every day. During the next year, we are looking to reflect on our accomplishments as a Department while also looking for ways to move American agriculture forward.

### **Given tight budgets, how is the USDA fulfilling its identified goals and objectives?**

Something that is important to remember during these tough financial times is that agriculture is responsible for one out of every twelve jobs in our economy. I think that the overarching perspective in Washington about agriculture is that it's a strong sector, but that doesn't mean we don't want to continue to support it and find ways to make it

stronger.

In October, a bipartisan leadership group in Congress, also known as the Supercommittee, submitted a proposal to the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction. Specifically, their proposal wants to cut \$23 billion out of the farm bill over the next ten years. While these numbers are by no means final, we have to understand that there will be considerably less funding. Therefore, our priorities must be clear and ultimately we must do more with less.

One way to do so is by simplifying existing programs, reducing redundant provisions, and putting a premium on creating innovative solutions to addressing our current and future problems. Ultimately, we must recognize the importance of making targeted investments to keep agricultural productivity high and our rural communities vibrant.

The important thing to remember is that the writing of the bill is essentially congressionally driven, but USDA is providing technical support.

### **As Deputy Secretary, what do you most love about your job?**

The best part of my job, without a doubt, is what I call intelligence-gathering – going out beyond Washington to talk to farmers and ranchers about how USDA can help them. When I can talk to farmers to find out which programs work, which programs can be enhanced and how we as a department can support farming and ranching communities across the country – it makes me a better Deputy. Of course I enjoy managing the day to day operation of our many agencies here in Washington, but seeing firsthand what the USDA is doing to help rural America and hearing about the concerns folks have is the most rewarding experience.

In September, I visited my home state of Massachusetts to meet with farmers who were recovering after Hurricane Irene—stopping at Greenfield Community College and the Western Massachusetts Food Processing Center with the Franklin County Community Development Corporation. I also toured farms with Congressman McGovern in Medway, Holliston, Northboro and Westborough—to talk about storm damage as well as what they were doing to help develop regional food systems.

### **What do you see are some of the unique challenges/opportunities for the agricultural community in Massachusetts?**

It has been a tough few months for Massachusetts agriculture because of Hurricane Irene and the unusual snow storm in October, but Northeast farmers are resilient. We have many programs in place to aid farmers who suffer crop losses. The USDA Massachusetts [Farm Service Agency](#) and [Rural Development](#) offices are there to help farmers get back on their feet.

The biggest challenge regarding the agricultural community in Massachusetts is knowing what disaster aid is out there and how to get it. It is the top priority of both Secretary Vilsack and myself to ensure that we communicate effectively with impacted farmers and make sure they have access to loans that would cover crop loss. To that effect, farmers must be diligent about documenting their losses during these difficult times.

On the other hand, Massachusetts agriculture has great opportunities to support local and regional food efforts both in state and throughout the Northeast. One example of how farmers can get involved is to participate in local [farm to school](#) programs that enable schools to feature healthy, locally-sourced products in their cafeterias. USDA is sending teams out to school districts to work on farm to school issues. Some of these programs also incorporate nutrition-based studies, as well as food-learning opportunities such as farm visits, gardening, cooking, and composting activities.

*Kathleen A. Merrigan is the Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Working alongside Secretary Tom Vilsack, Merrigan oversees the day-to-day operation of USDA's many programs and spearheads the \$149 billion USDA budget process. She serves on the President's Management Council, working with other Cabinet Deputies to improve accountability and performance across the federal government. Recognizing the history and scope of her work, Time magazine named Dr. Merrigan among the "100 Most Influential People in the World" in 2010.*

*Before becoming Deputy Secretary, Merrigan served for eight years as Assistant Professor and Director of the Agriculture, Food and Environment graduate program at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, Boston, Massachusetts.*

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## FOREFRONT

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### Energy News

#### MDAR FY2012 AgEnergy Grant Awards Announced

MDAR is pleased to announce 32 final grant awards totaling \$455,000 for this year's AgEnergy Grant Program. This was another great year of competition with 59 applicants submitting a variety of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects totaling over \$1.25 million in requests. As well, it was another great year of farm camaraderie as many of the final recipients accepted less than what they requested in order to help us stretch our funds and build more great energy projects. Without further ado, here are the FY 2012 AgEnergy Grant recipients:

North Hadley Sugar Shack	Reverse Osmosis; Evaporator	\$10,000
Stow Greenhouses, LLC	Thermal Blanket	\$25,000
Clarkdale Fruit Farm	Cold Storage Upgrade	\$25,000
Cider Hill Farm	(1) Outdoor Wood Boiler	\$12,500
Eldredge Farm	Heating; Thermal Blanket; Shade Screen	\$20,000
Stonegate Farm	RO Upgrade; Steamaway & Hood for Evaporator	\$14,000
West Branch Farm	Outdoor Wood Boiler	\$6,000
J.P. Bartlett Co.	Shade Screen	\$10,000
Podbelski Farm	Plate Cooler; VSD Vacuum Pump; Heat Reclaim	\$10,971
Maple Corner Farm	RO Upgrade; Evaporator	\$8,000
Turner Farms, Inc.	Heat Reclaim; Variable Speed Vacuum Pump	\$9,536
Lawton Family Sugarhouse	RO Machine	\$7,180
Red Fire Farm	Geothermal	\$22,500
Paul's Sugarhouse	Reverse Osmosis	\$6,740
Linabella's Gourmet Garlic Farm, LLC	Solar Thermal	\$22,500
Marini Farm, LLC	(1) Biomass Corn Boiler	\$15,000
Valley Malt, LLC	Biomass Boiler	\$14,500
Hilltown Farmers Biodiesel, LLC	Grain Cleaner for Biodiesel	\$7,735
Sunshine Farm	PV 60 kW ground mount	\$15,000
Little Farm on Cape Cod	PV - 13.4 kW	\$15,000
Full Bloom Market Garden, LLC	PV - 103 kW	\$22,500
Wheelview Farm	PV - 9.87 kW	\$15,338
Patterson Farms, LLC	PV - 10.3 kW pole mount	\$20,000
Willow Spring Vineyards	PV - 5.6 kW powered geothermal -	\$20,000
Copper Beech Farm, Inc.	Aquaculture FLUPSY PV	\$6,000
New Salem Preserves	PV - 9.4 kW pole mounts	\$23,000
Savage Farms, Inc.	PV - 33.12 kW	\$17,000

Handy Cranberry	PV 9.8 kW	\$8,000
Rock Maple Farm	PV 9.2 kW	\$16,000
Justamere Tree Farm	Maple pre-heater/PV - 4.6 kW	\$10,000
Shinglebrook Farm	PV - 3.3 kW	\$5,000
Edgewood Bogs	PV - 25 kW ground mount	\$15,000

### **MassCEC Announces New Commonwealth Organics to Energy Program**

The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) has announced their new Commonwealth Organics to Energy Incentive Program for assisting the evaluation of or planning for organics-to-energy projects. This comes about in conjunction with the state's desire to recycle more of our organics. For more information, please see the specific MassCEC website at: [www.masscec.com/index.cfm/cdid/12432/pid/11161](http://www.masscec.com/index.cfm/cdid/12432/pid/11161)

### **USDA NRCS Announces EQIP Signup Dates – Energy Efficiency Included**

The United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has announced three rounds of funding for four conservation program in Massachusetts. These federal programs, authorized under the 2008 Farm Bill, provide financial and technical help to farmers and forest land owners to protect soil, water and other natural resources.

The assistance is available through the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#), the [Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program \(WHIP\)](#), [Agricultural Management Assistance \(AMA\)](#), and the [Grassland Reserve Program \(GRP\)](#), all administered by NRCS.

NRCS will offer three ranking periods with the following closing dates: February 3, March 30, and June 1, 2012. Farmers can submit applications for these programs anytime throughout the year; all complete applications will be batched and ranked on these closing dates for funding decisions. For an application to be considered complete for ranking, the following criteria apply:

1. All land and producer eligibility requirements must have been met.
2. A conservation plan identifying conservation practices to be included for proposed funding must be finalized for the enrolled land.

As well with regarding to energy projects, farmers wishing to apply to the "Clean Air and Energy" component under EQIP will need to submit an NRCS approved energy audit. Farmers will need to apply to NRCS' AgEMP program for this audit. Eight energy efficiency funding opportunities will be available, including greenhouse and maple sugaring technologies. For more information please contact your nearest NRCS office and see the following website: [www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov/news/news\\_Programs\\_sign-up\\_FY2012.html](http://www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov/news/news_Programs_sign-up_FY2012.html)

### **Reminder - MA Net Metering Reaching Capacity**

The latest documents filed recently by the qualifying electric distribution companies at the request of the MA Department of Public Utilities (DPU) show that the 1% non-government project net metering cap will soon be reached. This includes NGRID, NSTAR, WMECO and Unitil. Anyone in our agricultural community who favors net metering can contact your local legislators to request this extremely beneficial clean energy incentive be expanded to allow more projects to enjoy the benefits of net metering.

### **Reminder - Federal 30% ITC Cash Option**

For those still interested in pursuing the Federal Investment Tax Credit Cash Option for selected renewable energy technologies, the original deadline of December 31, 2010 for "Beginning Construction" for this opportunity was extended until December 31, 2011 by the lame duck session congress at the end of last year. Enacted as part of the 2009 ARRA stimulus package, this option provides non-residential commercial projects the opportunity to receive cash at the completion of the project in lieu of receiving a tax credit. Eligible renewable energy projects must now

need to have been completed in calendar years 2009, 2010 or 2011 *OR* meet the are eligibility provisions for those initiating the project by the end of December 31, 2011, including executing a financial contract, executing an installing contractor contract and demonstrating at least 5% project expenditures by this date. This means if you can at least begin implementing an eligible renewable energy project by the end of this year you could still be eligible for the tax credit cash option. For more details on all eligibility requirements and other information please see:

[www.treas.gov/recovery/1603.shtml](http://www.treas.gov/recovery/1603.shtml).

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## ***MassGrown & Fresher Riding the Rails***

MDAR is already planning for next year's promotional campaigns to help enhance economic growth for Massachusetts' agricultural community. To this end, we are pleased to announce what we think is one of our more exciting *MassGrown & Fresher* projects planned for the spring of 2012: *MassGrown & Fresher Riding the Rails*.

Thanks to a recent \$10,000 USDA Specialty Crop grant and unique opportunities to partner with sister agencies like the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) and Mass.Gov, MDAR is able to offer commodity groups a cost-effective, broad-reaching marketing package to promote local agriculture in the Commonwealth.

Via eye-catching train posters, we'll be expanding upon our successful pilot effort that put signage using "QR" codes on some MBTA trains to drive riders to the MassGrown webpage. Through this new effort we'll be targeting the MBTA's North/South/Metro West Commuter Rails which spider out from Boston as far as Kingston, Stoughton, Franklin, Worcester, Fitchburg, Lowell, Haverhill, Newburyport, Rockport, Middleborough and Providence.

Simply and directly put, the more funds we get to help match our \$10,000 grant, the more we can achieve maximum marketing penetration to the benefit of all. How do we know that? As referenced from our pilot MBTA effort and other outreach efforts, we are tracking measurable results; our [MassGrown](#) web pages this fall tripled in page views from 2010.

- *MassGrown & Fresher* website hits spiked from 1,000 to 4,000 per day in the fall of 2011
- Google Page Ranking grew to an impressive 6 out of 10
- An increase of newspapers, bloggers, and websites linking directly to the [MassGrown & Fresher Agri-Google Map](#) (often to specific commodity sectors)

What does participating in the spring 2012 Riding the Rails campaign mean for you? It means that businesses in your associations will enjoy greater market visibility not otherwise possible with stand-alone promotions.

We hope you'll take a few moments to learn about the benefits of our planned spring campaign in this [brief presentation](#). For additional information, contact Rick LeBlanc at 617-626-1759 or [Richard.LeBlanc@state.ma.us](mailto:Richard.LeBlanc@state.ma.us).

**\*All Farm Businesses (retailers and wholesalers):** As part of our on-going marketing efforts, we highlight Massachusetts farms and agricultural businesses through various publications, special events, B2B opportunities, and most importantly, on our website, [www.mass.gov/massgrown](http://www.mass.gov/massgrown). Helping you find profitable markets for your products is an important part of our mission. As a Massachusetts producer, you are entitled to the many different listings on the MassGrown website and brochures. If you would like to be included, or update your information, please click here ([.pdf](#), [.doc](#)) for our Farm Marketing Survey. If questions, contact Rick LeBlanc, [Richard.LeBlanc@state.ma.us](mailto:Richard.LeBlanc@state.ma.us).

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## **Commonwealth Quality Program Update**

The [Commonwealth Quality Program](#) continues to expand and evolve. Currently, we have 65 certified participants enrolled, including 46 growers, 10 forest product manufacturers, and nine lobster fishermen. The addition of five more businesses in December will bring our 2011 Commonwealth Quality participant numbers to 70.



Over the coming winter months, many exiting program-related activities will take place. Some program standards will be re-authored, making them more comprehensible for both program participants and consumers. What's more, two more agricultural sectors are scheduled to join the program in early 2012.

Continuing our education and outreach efforts, Commonwealth Quality will have a presence at the following industry conferences and trade shows:

- Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting, Fitchburg, MA, December 1 – 2
- New England Vegetable and Fruit Conference, Manchester, NH, December 13 – 15
- New England Home Show, Boston, MA, February 23 – 26
- Worcester Spring Home Show, Worcester, MA, March 9 - 11

And finally, a new CQP website is in the works. The upgraded site will feature new design and layout as well as enhanced sector areas.

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## **Farm Energy Discount Program Goes Online**

The Department is continuing to make changes to the [Farm Energy Discount Program](#). Last year the Department required only participants who had account changes to send back a renewal form. All other participants were renewed automatically. This year the Department is further simplifying the process for renewing participation in the Massachusetts Farm Energy Discount Program by providing an online option for participants who like to manage information using the internet. Please note that, as was the case last year, all participants with no changes to their accounts will be renewed automatically. Participants do not have to worry about losing their discount.

In the next week participants will receive a letter which provides a website address and a password from the Department to access account information. Participants who have internet access will need to enter an email address in order to access the site and should review their account details to ensure that they accurately reflect their natural gas and electricity providers. If there are no changes to the account, simply click on the “no changes” button.

If a participant in the program has a new account or needs to delete an account, the change can now be made online and submitted to the Department by clicking the “submit” button.

We realize that not all participants are interested in managing their accounts online. Farmers who are unable to make the changes online should notify Linda Demirjian who coordinates the [program](#) at 617-626-1733. All other questions should go to Linda who can also be contacted via email at [linda.demirjian@state.ma.us](mailto:linda.demirjian@state.ma.us).

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## **The Department of Labor H-2A Webinar - December 8th**

The Department of Labor (DOL) Office of Foreign Labor Certification (OFLC) will be holding a Webinar (an online meeting) for the New England Region for employers anticipating filing an H-2A application for this coming season. DOL will be holding two additional Webinars in early January which will be identical to the session on the 8th in the event you can not participate that day. We will announce those dates next week.

Stakeholders may join using the instructions below. Please distribute widely to H-2A users in your district or state and encourage them to participate.

**When: December 8th from 10:30 AM to Noon Eastern Time**

To join the Webinar, follow these steps:

1. Go to <https://dol.webex.com/dol/j.php?ED=147751287&UID=1225425662&PW=NZWMwY2M3ZWNj&RT=MIMxMQ%3D%3D>
2. If a Security Information message appears, click "Run" or "Yes"
3. Enter your name and email address
4. If you are prompted for a meeting password, enter "Webinar#12"
5. Click "Join"

During the webinar, you will have an opportunity to email questions. If you wish to submit your question ahead of time, you can email [H2Aquestions2012@dol.gov](mailto:H2Aquestions2012@dol.gov)

In addition, stakeholders can dial a toll-free number to hear the conversation. The toll-free number to call is 888-810-6750 and the passcode is 6530947. (Please note that due to the large number of participants, callers will be not have the ability to ask questions over the phone line.)

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## **Update on C.O.O.L Inspections**

MDAR has completed and submitted all C.O.O.L Inspections for 2011 ahead of schedule. MDAR is under a multi-year cooperative agreement with the USDA {AMS} to conduct retail surveillance audits for compliance of the Country of Origin Labeling law. The USDA currently has COOL cooperative agreements with all 50 states. For 2011, 85 inspections were assigned to Massachusetts.

COOL is a component of the U.S Farm Bill which requires grocery stores to label certain food commodities for country of origin at the point of sale for consumers (covered seafood items have an additional requirement to identify the method of production [wild caught vs. farm raised]). In addition to labeling requirements, retailers are required to maintain records to substantiate county of origin claims provided to consumers.

Our COOL inspector audits locations assigned to the Department by the USDA. After each inspection the report is filed with the Massachusetts COOL manager as either having findings (violations) or no findings. The MDAR COOL manager then reviews the findings and receives any outstanding records from the retailer prior to sending the report to USDA. Any findings (violations) are not official until verified by the USDA.

For additional information on COOL: [www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/COOL](http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/COOL)

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## **Where's the (Local) Beef? – New England Wide Study Identifies Promising Models for Local Beef Producers to Gain Access to Lucrative Local Markets, Albeit with a Few Barriers to Overcome**

While increased access to locally grown agricultural products at institutions such as schools and hospitals are providing opportunities to address nutritional concerns it is also proving to be a profitable market for many New England fruit and vegetable farmers. In an effort to grow such opportunities, new market research has provided

valuable information for beef producers interested in tapping in to this expanding sector.

The study, commissioned by the six New England Departments and Agencies of Agriculture, found that there is immediate potential to begin directing up to 1.3 million pounds of locally grown-and-processed ground beef to schools, colleges, hospitals, and other larger-scale organizations.

“We see great potential to build on the current successes of our agricultural community to supply locally sourced beef to meet the growing demand for locally grown products,” said Scott J. Soares, Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. “As part of a broader marketing mix, the ability to meet high volume demand has the potential to increase profitability for our region’s dairy and beef producers.”

The research team, led by Rose Wilson, business and marketing consultant based in Norwich, Vermont presented two models that may begin to pave the road for large institutions in New England to viably opt for local beef. In the first model, the meat processing facility would be the driving force to connect with distributors and cost-driven institutions such as K-12 schools. This model is working effectively at a number of New England institutions already and offers streamlined order fulfillment and optimized operating expenses -- creating a mechanism to re-direct a portion of the region’s annual beef supply to local processors, rather than shipping product outside of the region. In the second model, the beef producer would be the driving force by connecting directly to health-conscious institutional buyers such as hospitals that may have further requirements for the beef they are purchasing such as grass-fed or organically certified.

Nearly one third of the institutional buyers who responded to the survey were interested in buying direct from a local producer and could support a price threshold of up to \$5 per pound. Additionally, more than half of buyers would consider local beef if the price was below \$3 per pound, and if it were available through their standard suppliers.

While the ability to meet large-scale demand is seen as challenging for many producers, the study found that over 70% of New England’s processors could increase production without requiring expansion or new infrastructure. They reported that the processor-driven model would allow them to manage institutional demand without hindering their ability to meet existing demand for products and services.

The study also identified some policy barriers that pose challenges for New England states in particular. As an example, in 2008 10,000 pounds was the lowest bid accepted by the USDA Food Program – a threshold out of reach for New England producers or processors. The study recommends the implementation of a state- or regional-level bidding process that would decrease the volume to a level that is feasible for New England processors to service. It also suggests the creation of preferential contracting options for “micro-enterprises” that have fewer than 100 employees – a number that is far more realistic in its representation of the New England business landscape than the 500 employees identified as “small business” by the current program.

To help build this new market, researchers found that staff and financial resources will be necessary to educate institutional buyers about the opportunities to purchase local beef, help build the supply and demand channels, and encourage networking between interested suppliers, buyers, distributors, and processors.

- [Executive Summary](#)
- [Full Report](#)

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## University of Vermont Multifunction Farm Survey

In their efforts to survive and prosper, many small farmers have become creative and innovative. Dr. Kathleen Liang, University of Vermont, has designed a unique research project to study creative and innovative strategies developed and implemented by small farmers in New England beyond traditional farming operations. The focus of this study is about “multifunctional farm enterprises” which often involves agritourism, value added, and off farm works. Using the

census approach to include all farmers in New England region, this study will examine: (1) the types of innovative strategies small farmers have applied; (2) success, risks, challenges and barriers for small farmers to survive and prosper in rural areas; and (3) financial implications on long term farm development and rural economic development associated with multifunctional farm operations. A screening survey (a postcard) has been delivered to all farmers in New England region in October and November 2011 to gather information about types of creative/innovative practices. A follow-up survey will also be delivered to a selected group of farmers in the spring of 2012 to gather more information about farm profile, operation details, and assessment on impacts of multifunctional operations. The results of this study will allow small farmers to share stories and exchange information with their counterparts. Many reports and articles using the findings of the study will be prepared for farmers, service providers, agricultural extension educators, researchers, and other organizations that work with farmers and farm enterprises directly. More importantly, this study will generate policy recommendations and reports to the USDA that will be considered in policy development and implementation to assist small farmers across the nation. The participation of the farmers will be the key to success of this study. New England farmers are urged to respond to the initial screening survey and the subsequent follow-up survey to ensure that their voices are heard.

Please contact Dr. Kathleen Liang for any questions or comments:

Dr. Kathleen Liang, University of Vermont, Department of Community Development and Applied Economics  
Burlington, VT 05405, (802) 656 0754, [CLIANG@uvm.edu](mailto:CLIANG@uvm.edu).

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## Request for Applications -- Northeastern IPM Partnership Grants Program

The Northeastern Integrated Pest Management Center is pleased to announce the availability of funding through the IPM Partnership Grants Program, which is supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. A total of up to \$200,000 will be available in 2012 to fund projects that foster the development and adoption of integrated pest management. The program seeks applications for four project types: IPM Working Groups, IPM Issues, Regional IPM Publications, and IPM Planning and Assessment Documents. Learn more about the program and download the RFA on our website.

**Eligibility:** Public and private institutions or organizations, businesses, commodity groups, and private individuals are eligible to apply. Project Directors (PDs) must reside in the Northeast or provide sufficient justification as to why they are seeking funds from outside their own region. Co-PDs may be from outside the region.

**Submission deadline:** Applications must be submitted online and are due Wednesday, December 14, 2011. [See the complete RFA for full submission instructions.](#)

**Questions:** If you have questions about the program, please contact our grants manager, John Ayers ( [jea@psu.edu](mailto:jea@psu.edu); 814-777-1291) or our director, Carrie Koplinka-Loehr ( [ckk3@cornell.edu](mailto:ckk3@cornell.edu); 607-255-8879).

The NEIPMCommunication-L list is owned by the Northeastern IPM Center, which fosters the development and adoption of integrated pest management, a science-based approach to managing pests in ways that generate economic, environmental, and human health benefits. We use the list periodically to distribute news about IPM funding opportunities, research and extension projects, and great IPM information sources. To join or unsubscribe from the list, please send a request via e-mail to [NortheastIPM@cornell.edu](mailto:NortheastIPM@cornell.edu).

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## Crops Still Available to Harvest?

Farmers: Do you have any crops left out in the fields that you are not going to Market?? Before you plow them under,

consider contacting [Boston Area Farm Gleaning Project](#). We will send experienced volunteer crews out to your fields to harvest same and transport to Food For Free, a Cambridge food bank that delivers to over 60 food pantries and shelters. We are ready to come out in November and December before the freeze comes to harvest all the greens, also any excess root crops. Last year we harvested collards, kale, broccoli, cabbage, winter squash, also carrots all the way up to December 14, well appreciated at food pantries and shelters! To contact B.A.G. you can e-mail us at [volunteer@bostonareagleaners.org](mailto:volunteer@bostonareagleaners.org) or call 781 894-3212, or you can call the coordinator Oakes directly at 781-648-5117.

Updates on the Statewide Gleaning Network: [www.mass.gov/agr/docs/mdar-gleaning-network.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/agr/docs/mdar-gleaning-network.pdf)

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## Central American Buyers Visit Massachusetts

Through a partnership with New England Apples, the US Apple Export Council, UMASS Amherst and a USDA Specialty Crop grant through MDAR, five Central American apple buyers were hosted in Massachusetts by JP Sullivan on October 10th. The buyers included Marco Venegas Renault, Fresh Garden; Randall Rodríguez, WalMart / Hortifruti; Armando Rojas, Fruta Internacional; Jose Francisco Ramírez, Frutas del Mundo; and Virgilio Galo, Fruvesa Honduras.

The reverse trade mission was sponsored to support a Specialty Crop project with the goal to expand export markets for apples produced in Massachusetts and New England. Markets in Central America, now the largest market for US apples in the world, are the focus of this project. Given the fact that McIntosh apples are the number one apple variety produced in New England, and as importantly not grown in Washington State, an emphasis for this project is on Macs. In a preliminary market analysis in Central America conducted by Mildred Alvarado, a UMass doctoral student, consumers were very enthusiastic about the sweet/tart flavor characteristics of Macs based on in-store sampling.

Because of the positive consumer response and the buyers meeting with JP Sullivan, sample shipments of McIntosh apples are being sent to markets in Central America this fall. Promotional materials detailing the uniqueness of McIntosh apples, and a marketing strategy including promoting McIntosh apples as a “Christmas apple” due to its green and red color and coming from snowy New England are being produced in Spanish. Dr. Wes Autio of UMass is taking the lead on putting together best-management practices and educational materials for the transportation and handling of McIntosh apples.

UMASS, New England Apples and MDAR will continue to work with the US Apple Export Council (USAEC) on this



Left to Right: Kris' representation (Apple Commission), Randall Rodríguez (Walmart Centro America), Monica Romero (Apple Commission), Marco Venegas Renault (Fres Garden), Mildred Alvarado (UMass), Ned (JP Sullivan), Armando Rojas (Fruta Internacional), Jose Francisco Ramírez (Frutas del mundo), Virgilio Galo ( Fruvetza), Bonita (MDAR)



Mildred Alvarado (UMass) and Virgilio Galo, Honduras (Fruvetza)

project. USAEC was started 1993 as a voluntary group that came together to generically promote apple exports from 11 apple producing states including New England, New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Virginia and California. Based just outside of Washington, DC the USAEC became an independent, incorporated non-profit trade association in 2005. Collectively the USAEC states account for nearly 40% of US apple production. The USAEC board includes representatives from each of the USAEC states/regions and collectively makes strategic planning decisions including funding new programs and developing new markets. The USAEC receives funding from the US Department of Agriculture to conduct market development and promotion programs around the world. Currently the USAEC conducts programs in Europe, Canada, Mexico, Central America, Brazil, India, Russia and Southeast Asia.

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## **Cummington Fair's George Dole Receives Massachusetts Agricultural Fairs Association Hall of Fame Award**

George Dole, of Shelburne, MA., was recently inducted into the [Massachusetts Agricultural Fairs Association](#) (MAFA) Hall of Fame, during the organization's annual convention held Nov. 5 at the Crown Plaza in Pittsfield, MA.

Dole is the president of the Hillside Agricultural Society, Inc., which operates the annual Cummington Fair, a four day event held every August in the Hampshire County town. He began his association with fairs at an early age participating in 4-H judging contests with his family's award-winning Milking Shorthorn cattle.

After graduating from the Wentworth Institute in Boston where he studied architectural engineering, Dole returned to Shelburne to establish Dole Brothers General Contractors with his brother Buck. Since 1963, George and Buck and their crew have completed projects as diverse as the Temple Israel synagogue in Greenfield that was featured in Architectural Record to barns, houses, industrial buildings, school and municipal projects, and churches.

As assistant cattle superintendent, then cattle superintendent of the Cummington Fair, Dole managed the cattle ring for many years, working his way up to taking the reins of the organization as its president in 1989. Today the Society is run by Dole, 12 vice presidents (six men and six women), a secretary, treasurer, superintendent of livestock, the last ex-president and a delegate to the MAFA executive committee.

Dole Brothers General Contractors used their expertise to gradually upgrade the fairgrounds completing projects over the years including the drawing ring, offices, the exhibit hall, pavilion, restroom facilities and several barns.

George is known for generously sharing his time, energy, resources and insight with community organizations. He has served on various town boards, notably the Finance Committee, worked with the Shelburne Center Volunteer Fire Department, and he is a dedicated member of the Shelburne Falls Kiwanis Club.

In 1994 the Shelburne Center Grange recognized him with the Community Citizen Award, honoring his community commitment. He served as president of the Massachusetts Agricultural Fairs Association in 2001 and 2002.

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## **BUSINESS**

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### **Business Planning for Massachusetts Agricultural Enterprises**

MDAR announces a new seasonal offering of a course to help farmers and food enterprises hone their business skills while taking a customized look at their existing and potential operations.

Directed at farms and ag-based businesses with at least two years of operating history, MDAR is in its 15th year of offering and tweaking the NxLevel course “Tilling the Soil of Opportunity”(TTS), featuring 10 evening group meetings, extensive one-on-one plan writing support, individual farm site visits and the opportunity for post-course technical assistance – all for one registration fee of \$225. Up to two participants from one enterprise can attend for no additional fee.

This course offers a professionally guided chance to assemble documentation for decision making in order to more confidently assess, regroup, redirect, consider, plan expansion, or prepare for ownership transfer. TTS draws on extensive peer experience among course participants, experienced instructor knowledge, and guest speakers with experience in farm finance, marketing, risk management and other topics that emerge in each class.

TTS is certified by FSA as “Borrower Training” for current or prospective USDA loan candidates, and the comprehensive Business Plan completed by most participants has a track record of improving eligibility for internal or external financing, government grant and loan programs and as a tool for facilitating farm transfer discussions. Importantly, almost every evaluation form expresses enthusiasm for the friendly dynamic of the classes and the immediate utility of the ideas that emerge.

The TTS course is offered in both Amherst and Marlborough MA, meeting one night per week for 10 consecutive weeks, beginning in early January 2012. If you operate a farm/food based enterprise in Massachusetts and would like more details or an application form, please contact [program](#) director Rick Chandler at [Rick.Chandler@state.ma.us](mailto:Rick.Chandler@state.ma.us).

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## SEMAP Offers Workshop Series

### **Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership (SEMAP) Offers Workshop Series: “So, You Want to Be a Farmer?” March-April 2012**

SEMAP offers the “So, You Want to Be a Farmer” series an opportunity for aspiring farmers to learn the essential building blocks of starting a new farm enterprise and to provide information on the network of existing services available. SEMAP received funding for 20 people to attend this 5-session workshop series.

The five-session workshop series is comprised of:

- 1) So, You Want to Be a Farmer? The Dirty Truth
- 2) What is a Business Plan and Why You Need One
- 3) The Dollars and Sense of Financing a Small Farm
- 4) News Flash! You Don't Need To Own The Land You Farm
- 5) Farm Tour: What A Real Farm Smells Like

For more information and to apply [Click Here](#), or visit [www.semaponline.org](http://www.semaponline.org).

Funding for this project was provided by the Northeast Center for Risk Management Education, the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

### **Barn Raising: Marketing Your Farm Business - Increasing Your Sales**

SEMAP has partnered with Kelly Pelissier owner of Sage Hill Design and Katie Cavanagh Farms Forever Coordinator to offer a very comprehensive workshop series that takes you through the steps of developing a marketing plan for your farm.

The workshop series will help you:



- Develop a branding concept for your farm
- Develop an overall marketing campaign for your farm - plus mini-campaigns for different seasons
- Understand and decide what marketing tools (web, print, etc.) best attract customers to your farm
- Learn how to plan and create the framework for your farms website
- Plan and create a WordPress website for your farm

For more information and to register [Click Here](#) or go to [www.semaponline.org](http://www.semaponline.org)

## **SEMAP will be sponsoring this FREE workshop - Southeast Ag. Mediation Workshop: Conflict Resolution Skills**

Wednesday, January 18, 2012 - 6pm - 8pm - Carver Public Library - 2 Meadowbrook Way, Carver MA

This interactive workshop will introduce farmers and agricultural commissions to basic communication and conflict resolution skills to enhance their ability to address conflicts that arise in day-to-day dealings with customers, suppliers, neighbors, the public, etc. Participants will take a look at their own perceptions of conflict, and also learn effective techniques for better communication, as well as managing and resolving conflict. The workshop also includes a “conflict clinic” where participants have the opportunity to discuss real conflicts and get tips on how to address these situations.

Facilitated by Courtney Breese is the Program Manager at the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration (MOPC) and runs the Agricultural Mediation Program at MOPC & Loraine Della Porta is Deputy Director of the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration (MOPC).

For more information and to register [Click Here](#) or go to [www.semaponline.org](http://www.semaponline.org)

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## **Small Plot Intensive (SPIN) Farming Workshop**

Small-Scale Intensive Farming Workshop.

This workshop will focus on commercial crop production on small land bases. It is designed for beginning and established growers who are interested in learning how

to manage a sustainable farm business with limited land and capital resources. The workshop will showcase techniques, particularly from SPIN-Farming, for producing high crop yields and efficiency measures that can increase profits, while maintaining soil and crop quality. Andy Pressman, Sustainable Agriculture Specialist with the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) and the ATTRA Project, will lead participants in exploring the theory and application of small-scale intensive crop production, drawing on his experience in sustainable farming systems.

Sponsored by the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project. **Friday, December 9, 2011** from 10 am to 4 pm. Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine. 200 Westboro Road, North Grafton, MA. \$40, Lunch Included. RSVP at: <http://tinyurl.com/SPIN-NESFP>. Contact Becca Weaver at [bweaver@comteam.org](mailto:bweaver@comteam.org) with questions.



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## **Are You Interested in Starting a Small Farm Business?**

Whether you're thinking half an acre of vegetables or half a thousand laying hens, New Entry's Farm Business Planning Courses help you write a business plan for your budding farm enterprise, covering everything from marketing to enterprise selection to production planning. And you aren't just signing up for a six week course: graduates can

apply to lease land on our incubator training farms or work with our Land Match Coordinator to find land elsewhere, get free access to our series of hands-on field trainings, and gain the support and assistance that comes with joining New Entry's growing community of beginning farmers, service providers, and other local food champions.

You can take the Farm Business Planning Course in either a classroom or distance learning setting. Although the full course fees are \$400 for the classroom version or \$500 for the online version, we offer many need-based tuition scholarships which can lower the fee to as little as \$80. Both courses begin their next session in January 2012, and applications are due by December 26, so don't delay! You can find more about the classroom course [here](#) and the online course [here](#). For questions about the online course, please email [maura.beaufait@tufts.edu](mailto:maura.beaufait@tufts.edu). For other questions, please email [sanderson@comteam.org](mailto:sanderson@comteam.org) or call 978-654-6745.

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## BioIntensive Farming Workshop

Upcoming Event to Teach Growing Method of Sustainable Food-Raising: GROW BIOINTENSIVE®

Acclaimed Author and Lecturer John Jeavons to Lead a One-Time Workshop on How to Grow More Vegetable Than You Ever Thought Possible on Less Land Than You Can Imagine - "John's methods are nothing short of miraculous."—Alice Waters

John Jeavons, the Director of Ecology Action, will present a One-Day GROW BIOINTENSIVE Sustainable Mini-Farming Workshop **at Mass Audubon's Drumlin Farm on January 15, 2012**. This workshop is an exciting opportunity for farmers and gardeners of all levels to gain an in-depth understanding of the GROW BIOINTENSIVE philosophy and techniques developed by John Jeavons and the Ecology Action staff over the past 40 years for food-raising—in urban and rural settings everywhere.

"Using the GROW BIOINTENSIVE method can be the first step towards achieving food self-sufficiency while living more gently on the Earth" said John Jeavons, "... and in world with increasing food prices, financial instability and as little as 50 years' worth of soil productivity remaining, it's more important than ever to learn to raise food in a way that is efficient, fun, works with nature, and builds the soil to ensure continued fertility." The resource-conserving, life-giving GROW BIOINTENSIVE method discussed in these seminars is based on successfully tested agricultural techniques that are thousands of years old. John Jeavons and Ecology Action are researching and rediscovering the scientific principles behind the method and are teaching the techniques to farmers and gardeners across the globe.

GROW BIOINTENSIVE Sustainable Mini-Farming uses open-pollinated seeds and only a fraction of the water, fertilizer and energy resources typical of conventional agricultural practices, but makes it possible to attain—organically—the type of high yields usually expected from "Green Revolution"-style growing methods that typically require large chemical inputs and heavy machinery to accomplish.

The workshop will consist of lectures, discussions, and demonstrations and will include a full range of information on topics such as: Soil Preparation, Sustainable Soil Fertility, Fertilization, Compost, Compost Crops, Efficient Resource Use, Crops for Full Nutrition, and Crops for Income—as well as the perspective and whole-system approach which tie all these topics together and help you learn how to grow your own food in a truly sustainable way. John will also provide time for questions and answers concerning East Coast small-scale farming, long-term sustainable soil fertility, and climate and market challenges. The workshop will be fun and instructive and will provide a unique chance to network and learn from others who have an interest in sustainable food-raising and living.

NOTE: This workshop requires pre-reading and pre-registration. For more information, please visit: [www.johnjeavons.info](http://www.johnjeavons.info).

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## The Carrot Project Announces Loan Fund

Massachusetts Winter Loan Deadline: January 6, 2012 - The Carrot Project is pleased to announce that our loan fund serving farms and on-farm value added businesses in Massachusetts will be accepting applications for our winter deadline through January 6, 2012 for loans of \$35,000 or less. There is one additional upcoming deadline on March 2, 2012.



For more information, please go to: [www.thecarrotproject.org/programs/loan\\_programs](http://www.thecarrotproject.org/programs/loan_programs)

Or contact Benneth Phelps at: [bphelps@thecarrotproject.org](mailto:bphelps@thecarrotproject.org) or 617-674-2371.

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## Opportunity for Local Producers at Boston Wine Expo

Exhale Magazine is teaming up with the Boston Wine Expo to create a Farmers' Market right in the middle of the two day event January 21st and 22nd at the Seaport World Trade Center.

The Boston Wine Expo welcomes 3,000 consumers a day to a spectacular showcase of food and wine. Strolling through the beautifully decorated hall, guests will experience the wine, food and culture of four regions of the world—Western Europe, the Mediterranean, the Southern Hemisphere and North America. The vision is to create an authentic indoor Farmers' Market where local farms and producers can display, sample 2 oz. servings and sell pre-packaged foods onsite. For more information, contact Tim Stansky at 617-261-4600 ext.123 or [tim@exhalelifestyle.com](mailto:tim@exhalelifestyle.com).

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## Last Chance for 2012 Ag Calendar Stocking Stuffer



In its twelfth year, the 2012 Agriculture Calendar was unveiled and released on Massachusetts Day (Sept. 22nd) at the Big E. Each year the photo contest has become a popular annual opportunity to highlight and feature farms and products across the Commonwealth. Besides having the photographs in the Calendar, they are also featured on the Department's [Homepage](#). Each month's winning photo adds a colorful touch highlighting the rich diversity of our Commonwealth's agricultural community.

The Calendar was produced in collaboration with MDAR, MA Ag in the Classroom (MAC), and MA Farm to School Project. Each month features a photo a farm business or crop grown across the Commonwealth, along with teaching tips, statistics, and fun facts on Massachusetts Agriculture.

This year's photograph winners were honored on Massachusetts Day at the Big E, September 22nd where they were presented with complimentary calendars, and an Award Certificate by Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' (EEOEA) Secretary Rick Sullivan.

**2012 Calendar Winners (click on month to see featured photo):**

- **January** – Barbara Ronchetti, Vineyard Haven (Alpaca Company Farm, Martha's Vineyard)
- **February** – Monica Elefterion, Dudley (Canning Jars at the Mind Barn, Dudley)
- **March** – Tom Adams, Williamsburg (Hanging Mountain Farm, Westhampton)
- **April** – Leonora Giguere, Leicester (Green Gate Farm)
- **May** – Dr. Mary Melonis, Montague (Purple Dahlia)
- **June** – Shelley Baker, Swansea (Baker Farm, Swansea)
- **July** – Larry Flaccus, Shelburne (Kenburn Orchard, Shelburne)
- **August** – Becky Prior, Watertown (Hutchins Farm booth at the Belmont Farmers' Market)
- **September** – Leonora Giguere, Leicester (Stephanie Giguere at Blossoming Acres, Southwick)
- **October** – Sasha Purpura, Middleboro (Plato's Harvest Organic Farm, Middleboro)
- **November** – Jerry Horbert, Uxbridge (Cranberry Harvest Festival, A.D. Makepeace, Carver)
- **December** – Susie Mulliken, New Braintree (Kip's Christmas Tree Farm, New Braintree)

Honorable Mentions include Sasha Purpura of Middleboro; Richard Antinarelli of Dedham; Gene L'Etoile of Northfield; Tamara Leclerc of Ashby; and Robin Cohen of Arlington.

Your purchase of this unique local calendar will show your enthusiasm for Massachusetts agriculture, and will also support the many educational efforts of Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom, the designated recipient of the proceeds. This attractive calendar will make a nice gift for any friend or family member who has an interest in agriculture. Calendars can be purchased for \$10 each (\$5 wholesale cost at 10 minimum). Send check payable to [Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom](#) to PO Box 345, Seekonk, MA 02771. \*Farms and businesses are encouraged to purchase at wholesale cost on consignment for resale to at your retail farms. Contact Debi at [debi.hogan@earthlink.net](mailto:debi.hogan@earthlink.net).

Thanks to associations who also sponsored pages; [MA Maple Producers](#), [MA State Grange](#), [MA Flower Growers](#), [MA Dairy Promotion Board](#), [MA Farm Bureau](#), [MA Fairs Association](#), [MA Fruit Growers Assoc.](#), and the [MA Christmas Tree Association](#).

Keep clicking your cameras away and visit our MDAR's website for next year's Photo Contest held in the spring!

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

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### **New England Vegetable & Fruit Conference & Trade Show**

**December 13, 14, 15 2011:** Center of New Hampshire Radisson Hotel, Manchester, NH

Three full days with over twenty educational sessions that cover all of the major vegetable, berry, and tree fruit crops, as well as various special topics such as cut flowers. A Farmer to Farmer meeting after each morning and afternoon session will bring speakers and farmers together for informal, in-depth discussion on certain issues.

There is also an extensive Trade Show with over 100 exhibitors. We hope that you will enjoy your time here, and meet with fellow growers, advisors, researchers, and industry representatives. We want you to leave with new ideas and new information that will have a positive impact on your farm. More info at [www.newenglandvfc.org](http://www.newenglandvfc.org).



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## NOFA 25th Annual Winter Conference

Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) / Massachusetts Chapter - 25th Annual Winter Conference  
**Saturday, January 14, 2012:** Worcester State University, 486 Chandler Street, Worcester, Massachusetts

Featuring Keynote Speaker John Jeavons: "Food & Our Future"  
Including All-Day Seminar with John Jeavons, developer of GROW BIOINTENSIVE mini farming

65 Workshops, Dozens of Exhibitors and Vendors, Children's Program, NOFA/Mass Annual Meeting

Registration opens October 15th: [www.nofamass.org/conferences/winter/index.php](http://www.nofamass.org/conferences/winter/index.php)

For more information about the 2012 Winter Conference, please contact:

Cathleen O'Keefe, Winter Conference Coordinator, [wc@nofamass.org](mailto:wc@nofamass.org)

For information on workshops, please contact: Michal Lumsden, [michal@nofamass.org](mailto:michal@nofamass.org)

For information on sponsorships or exhibiting, please contact: Bob Minnocci, [bob@nofamass.org](mailto:bob@nofamass.org).

### Apply Now for Beginning Farmer Scholarship to NOFA/Mass Winter Conference

NOFA/Mass is offering a limited number of beginning farmer scholarships to our Winter Conference on January 14, 2012, at Worcester State University. Applicants must have fewer than 10 years farming experience and be members of (or join) NOFA/Mass. To learn more about the scholarships, [visit here](#). Apply now! Application deadline December 15. Questions? Contact Michal Lumsden, NOFA/Mass beginning farmer program coordinator, [michal@nofamass.org](mailto:michal@nofamass.org).

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## Annual NOFA Accreditation Course in Organic Land Care

January 9-13, 2012, Worcester, MA. The Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) annual Accreditation Course in Organic Land Care will be held January 9-13, 2012 (snow date Jan. 15) at Worcester State University

The five-day intensive course provides professionals and master gardeners with the education needed to create thriving landscapes. "Our course teaches a way of landscaping that is much healthier for people, by not using toxic chemicals that get in our skin, our lungs and our water. The same methods also promote and respect biodiversity, creating a better environment for everyone," says Bill Duesing, CT NOFA Executive Director.

The course is sponsored and organized by the NOFA Organic Land Care Program, which published the Standards for Organic Land Care: Practices for Design and Maintenance of Ecological Landscapes, the first of their kind in the country. These standards form the basis for the curriculum of the Accreditation Course in Organic Land Care.

The 30 hour course features a faculty of respected scientists and experienced organic land care practitioners. Class topics include: Site Analysis, Design, and Maintenance; Rain Gardens and Storm Water Infiltration; Soil Health; Fertilizer and Soil Amendments; Client Relations and Running a Business and more. Four hands-on case studies are also included in the course. Attendees may take an optional exam on the final day of the course to become NOFA Accredited Organic Land Care Professionals (AOLCPs). AOLCPs are entitled to use the NOFA Organic Land Care logo and be listed in the AOLCP Online Searchable Database at [www.organiclandcare.net](http://www.organiclandcare.net) as well as in online and print versions of the annual NOFA Guide to Organic Land Care.

This year, NOFA will be offering a group discount of 15% off total registration to any company, agency or organization sending three or more members or employees to the Accreditation Course. For information, contact the Program Coordinator, Caro Roszell at 508-360-0874 or [caro@nofamass.org](mailto:caro@nofamass.org) or visit [www.nofamass.org/programs/landcare/](http://www.nofamass.org/programs/landcare/) to register online.

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## Upcoming Ag Commission Meetings

### [Western Mass Agricultural Commission Gathering](#)

[December 10, 2011](#) - 9:00am - 3:00pm

Deerfield Town Hall, 8 Conway Street, South Deerfield

Everyone welcome! – AgCom members, town officials, farmers, and those interested in starting an AgCom and in supporting local agriculture

### [Western Mass Agricultural Commission Gathering](#)

[January 14, 2012](#) - 9:00am - 3:00pm

Hancock Shaker Village, Route 20, Hancock/Pittsfield

Everyone welcome! – AgCom members, town officials, farmers, and those interested in starting an AgCom and in supporting local agriculture

For questions contact: Pete Westover, 413-665-4077, [westover03@comcast.net](mailto:westover03@comcast.net).

### **SAVE THE DATE - February 24th - MA Association of Agricultural Commission's Dinner and Annual Meeting**

- Sturbridge Host Hotel - Social 5:00pm, Buffet Dinner 6:00pm, Annual Meeting, 7:00pm. Details soon at

[www.massagcom.org](http://www.massagcom.org).

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## Save the Date

### **2013 Harvest New England Agricultural Marketing Conference and Trade Show February 26-28, 2013, Sturbridge Host Hotel, Sturbridge, MA**

It may be a year away but planning has begun for the 4th bi-annual Harvest New England Agricultural Marketing Conference and Trade show sponsored by the six New England State Departments of Agriculture. The 2011 conference had dozens of workshops with over 800 attendees from across New England attending and a sold out trade show.



If you have conference questions or if you are interested in participating on the conference planning committee, contact Jaime Smith at [jaime.smith@ct.gov](mailto:jaime.smith@ct.gov). Trade Show questions can be sent to David Webber at [david.webber@state.ma.us](mailto:david.webber@state.ma.us).

Visit [www.harvestnewengland.org](http://www.harvestnewengland.org) after Jan 1, 2012 for more information.

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## NEWS FROM USDA

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### **Signup Established for Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) for Tornado Damage**

USDA announced that the official signup for cost-share assistance under the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) begins on November 30, 2011 and ends on January 31, 2012. Owners of farmland in Hampden and Worcester Counties who suffered severe damage from the June 1st tornados may be eligible for assistance under the ECP. While the

USDA-FSA has already been accepting applications from farmland owners, this announces an official signup period that is required by program regulations.

A farmland owner qualifying for ECP assistance may receive financial assistance levels not to exceed 75 percent of the eligible cost of restoration measures which are aimed at restoring farmland related resources. The following types of measures may be eligible:

- Removing Debris from Farmland
- Restoring Permanent Fences

To be eligible for assistance, practices must **not** be started until **all** of the following are met:

- an application for financial assistance (FSA-848) has been filed
- the local FSA County Committee (COC) or its representative has conducted an onsite inspection of the damaged area
- the Agency responsible for technical assistance, such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has made a needs determination.

Farmland owners in Hampden and Worcester Counties who may have suffered a loss should contact their local USDA Office.

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## **FREE Interactive Webinar - "Grant Opportunity: Enhancing the Competitiveness of Specialty Crops"**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) presents "Grant Opportunity: Enhancing the Competitiveness of Specialty Crops" - A FREE Interactive Webinar

Thursday, Dec. 15, 2011 - 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. EST - Subject: USDA's Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Background: Guest speaker, Trista Etzig, Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Manager for AMS, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, will introduce you to the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. She'll share information on how you can apply for grant funds to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops, such as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture.

Many projects funded in the past by the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program focus on marketing and promotion, education, production, research, food safety, and pest and plant health.

Specialty crop project applications must be submitted to your State Department of Agriculture for funding consideration. State Departments of Agriculture are encouraged to partner with specialty crop stakeholders, including socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers.

There will be a live question and answer session following the formal webinar presentation. Attendees of previous webinar sessions have included growers, processors, packers and distributors of all sized operations and others along the produce supply chain, as well as representatives from academia and government.

Don't miss this informative webinar. Visit <http://bit.ly/v21Rfi> to register before the Dec. 9, 2011 deadline.

For additional information about the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program go to our website at [www.ams.usda.gov/scbpg](http://www.ams.usda.gov/scbpg) or contact Trista at 202-690-4942 or [trista.etzig@ams.usda.gov](mailto:trista.etzig@ams.usda.gov)

If you have any questions about USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, please contact Christopher Purdy at 202-

720-3209 or [christopher.purdy@ams.usda.gov](mailto:christopher.purdy@ams.usda.gov).

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## USDA Offers More Free Email Subscriptions for Ag Statistics

USDA, in cooperation with the Ag Library at Cornell, offers free subscriptions to over 100 reports from various statistical agencies within the Department. Most reports contain statistics for individual states as well as regional and U.S. totals. The reports arrive in your mailbox within minutes after release time. Auction reports are also available from all across the nation, all at no charge.

The USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) also invites you to provide your feedback as a current subscriber to the agency's data reports. If you are interested, we will occasionally ask for your comments about the agency's data products and services. To join, sign in at <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/subscriptions> and look for "NASS Data User Community." You may unsubscribe at any time.

The second new offering is for the "Census of Agriculture." This subscription will alert you to products and services generated by all NASS census programs. These census data offer more detail than is available in other NASS reports issued annually. This new subscription is available at <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/subscriptions> under the letter "C" for Census.

Questions? Call 1-607-255-5406 or email [help@usda.mannlib.cornell.edu](mailto:help@usda.mannlib.cornell.edu).

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## USDA Announces Sign-up Dates for Conservation Programs in Massachusetts

NRCS has announced three rounds of funding for four conservation program in Massachusetts. These federal programs, authorized under the 2008 Farm Bill, provide financial and technical help to farmers and forest land owners to protect soil, water and other natural resources. The assistance is available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA), and the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), all administered by NRCS. NRCS will offer three ranking periods with the following closing dates: February 3, March 30, and June 1, 2012. Farmers can submit applications for these programs anytime throughout the year; all complete applications will be batched and ranked on these closing dates for funding decisions. Read more at: [www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov/news/news\\_Programs\\_sign-up\\_FY2012.html](http://www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov/news/news_Programs_sign-up_FY2012.html)

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## IN EVERY ISSUE

### Classified Ads

- **Unique Farming Opportunity** in Eastern Massachusetts. Historic farm property 26 miles west of Boston with 6A crop and pastureland, fantastic barn with re-use potential, outbuildings and 4BR renovated farmhouse. Fifteen additional acres available. Owners seek farmer with vision, experience and commitment to bring this locally significant farm back to life. Owners wish to collaborate in an operating LLC, with farmer responsible for operations. Many enterprise options. Owners will contribute to start-up costs and infrastructure improvements. Favorable 5-year renewable lease with opportunity to build equity. Potential for purchase option or long-term lease. Contact [Kathy@landforgood.org](mailto:Kathy@landforgood.org) for open house and application information.

**Job Opening at CISA:** Part-time, one year Program Assistant position - [Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture \(CISA\)](#) is a non-profit organization that strengthens local agriculture by building connections between farmers and the community. The Program Assistant will support CISA staff in program implementation, communications, grants and event management. Tasks will include event logistics, phone inquiries and reminders, writing and proofreading, and support for grant reporting and submissions. [Please find full job description here.](#) CISA is an equal opportunity employer and encourages people of color and women to apply. Please send cover letter and resume to CISA, One Sugarloaf Street, South Deerfield, MA 01373 or email to [jennifer@buylocalfood.org](mailto:jennifer@buylocalfood.org). Review begins 12/7/11, position open until filled.

- **Agricultural excavation** – Grading services: We provide earth moving, drainage, land/pasture reclamation, greenhouse preparation, and rock raking services. Includes but not limited to orchards/equine facilities/cranberry bogs/nurseries. Chris Merrill Excavating, [merrilltrucks@comcast.net](mailto:merrilltrucks@comcast.net), 978-897-9977.
- **For Sale:** Mail order business of "Alpine window box ivy geraniums of Europe." Hundreds of (UPS) customers in 48 states for 20 years. 860-342-2374, 888-geranium, [www.wheelerfarmgardens.com](http://www.wheelerfarmgardens.com)

## How to Place a Classified Ad

Classified ads are accepted free-of charge on a first-come basis. Be sure to include a phone number. No display ads will be accepted. Only one ad per business/individual per issue, unless space permits. Ads may run in consecutive issues, space permitting. Ads must be of interest to Massachusetts farmers. The Massachusetts Dept. of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) reserves the right to refuse any listing it deems inappropriate for publication. E-mail, fax or mail ads to: Farm & Market Report, MDAR, 251 Causeway Street, Suite 500, Boston, MA 02114, fax: 617-626-1850, [Richard.LeBlanc@state.ma.us](mailto:Richard.LeBlanc@state.ma.us).

## Calendar

December	
10	<b>Western Mass Agricultural Commission Gathering</b> , 9:00-3:00pm, Deerfield Town Hall, 8 Conway Street, South Deerfield. Everyone welcome! – AgCom members, town officials, farmers, and those interested in starting an <a href="#">AgCom</a> and in supporting local agriculture. <a href="#">Details and registartion here.</a> For questions contact: Pete Westover, 413-665-4077, <a href="mailto:westover03@comcast.net">westover03@comcast.net</a> .
13, 14, 15	<b>New England Vegetable &amp; Fruit Conference and Trade Show</b> , Radisson Hotel, Manchester, NH. Will include 27 educational sessions over 3 days, covering major vegetable, berry and tree fruit crops as well as various special topics. A Farmer to Farmer meeting after each morning and afternoon session will bring speakers and farmers together for informal, in-depth discussion on certain issues. <a href="http://newenglandvfc.org">newenglandvfc.org</a>
15	<b>One Day Boot Camp &amp; Networking Event: “Financing Your Consumer Products Company,” Natural, Organic, Specialty, Premium, Retail...</b> 9:00am – 4:30pm; Burlington, MA. The Natural Products Consulting Institute announces a comprehensive seminar and networking event with expert speakers to provide entrepreneurs and executives an in-depth understanding of what it takes to raise capital. Led by industry veterans Bob Burke & Michael Burgmaier, the seminar de-mystifies capital-raising terms and provides insights to improve odds for successfully obtaining necessary financing. In addition, attendees will hear directly from industry-leading entrepreneurs who raised equity capital, venture capital/private equity investors, an angel investor, an investment banker and other industry experts. <a href="#">Details and registration here.</a>
January 2012	

14	<b>NOFA/Mass Annual Winter Conference</b> , Worcester, MA. Conference draws about 1,000 people from MA and neighboring states. Participants include seasoned farmers, urban homesteaders, hobby gardeners, landscapers, food activists and many other engaged learners. To read more about the conference visit <a href="http://www.nofamass.org/conferences/winter/2012_Workshop_Proposals.php">www.nofamass.org/conferences/winter/2012_Workshop_Proposals.php</a>
14	<b>Western Mass Agricultural Commission Gathering</b> , 9:00 - 3:00pm, Hancock Shaker Village, Route 20, Hancock/Pittsfield. Everyone welcome! – AgCom members, town officials, farmers, and those interested in starting an <a href="#">AgCom</a> and in supporting local agriculture. <a href="#">Details and registration here</a> . For questions contact: Pete Westover, 413-665-4077, <a href="mailto:westover03@comcast.net">westover03@comcast.net</a> .
16	<b>Announcement: Important Revisions to Dairy Tax Credit</b> , Hearing Date Announced: 10:00 am Amherst Office of the Department of Agricultural Resources, 101 University Drive, Suite C-4, Amherst. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Notice of Public Hearing</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">330 CMR 29.00 Dairy Farmer Tax Credit Emergency</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">330 CMR 29.00 Dairy Farmer Tax Credit Second Set</a></li> </ul>
<b>February</b>	
1 - 3	<b>NE Grows</b> - The Northeast's leading horticulture trade show and green industry seminars await you at New England Grows, one of the largest and most popular horticultural and green industry events in North America. <a href="http://www.newenglandgrows.org">www.newenglandgrows.org</a> - help celebrate 20 years of Grows!
3	<b>NH Women in Agriculture Conference</b> - Empowering Women in Agri-Business Today, Manchester, NH. <a href="http://www.nh.gov/agric/documents/womeninag.pdf">www.nh.gov/agric/documents/womeninag.pdf</a>
24	<b>SAVE THE DATE - MA Association of Agricultural Commission's Dinner and Annual Meeting</b> - Sturbridge Host Hotel - Social 5:00pm, Buffet Dinner 6:00pm, Annual Meeting, 7:00pm.
<b>March</b>	
10	<b>Growing Minds Through Massachusetts Agriculture for Educators</b> , Paul R. Baird Middle School, Ludlow. MA Agriculture in the Classroom (MAC) will hold its 11th Annual Winter Conference which will include four workshop sessions, with six concurrent workshops in each session related to the many different aspects of agriculture in the classroom. Each will be taught by a teacher or farm educator. The fee for the conference; all materials; breakfast snack; lunch from Randall's Farm in Ludlow, and professional development is \$50. Early registrations of \$45 if arrive by Dec. 31st. <a href="#">Conference details</a> .
<b>April</b>	
3	<b>Agriculture Day at the Statehouse</b> - Save the Date!

**For a Complete Ongoing List of Events and Workshops, [Click Here](#).**

\*\*\* If you have events you would like listed to our Ag industry calendar, or Consumer events, email Rick LeBlanc at [Richard.LeBlanc@state.ma.us](mailto:Richard.LeBlanc@state.ma.us).

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## About the *Farm & Market Report*

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