

www.mass.gov/agr

- **March is Maple Month!**
 - **Massachusetts Farmers' Market Managers Professional Development Seminar - March 20**
 - **Creating a Quality Compost Product: Compost Operations and Marketing Training – March 26**
 - **CISA (Community Involved In Sustaining Agriculture) has Partnered with FamilyFarmed.org to Offer Two Wholesale Readiness Workshops**
 - **Farmers' Markets Seeking Vendors**
 - **Specialty Crop Block Grant Reminder**
-

March is Maple Month!

Marked by the March 2 ceremonial tapping of a sugar maple tree at Paul's Sugarhouse in Williamsburg, the start of the Massachusetts maple sugaring season will have begun! In addition to tapping a maple tree, Commissioner Scott Soares will read a proclamation declaring "Massachusetts Maple Month". A listing of sugarhouses can be found by going to the [MassGrown & Fresher website](#) Google map and clicking on "maple" for a complete listing of sugarhouses and restaurants. Said Commissioner Soares, "Maple sugaring represents one of the many diverse faces of Massachusetts agriculture. Visiting Massachusetts local sugar shacks is a great agri-tourism activity that the whole family can savor."

Massachusetts boasts more than 300 maple producers, who annually produce about 50,000 to 60,000 gallons of maple syrup worth almost \$3 million. Also, approximately \$1.9 million in revenue is generated by tourism during the sugaring season at maple farms, restaurants, bed-and-breakfasts, country inns, and other attractions in farm communities.

To find out more information about the Massachusetts Maple Producers Association, go to www.massmaple.org.

Massachusetts Farmers' Market Managers Professional Development Seminar - March 20

"Building a Foundation for Success" - Full day workshop for farmers' markets managers that will feature speakers, networking and plenty of discussion. Sponsored by the MDAR, Mass Farmers Markets and the Cooperative Development Institute at the Hoagland-Pincus Conference Center: 222 Maple Ave, Shrewsbury, MA. Topics include business planning and fundraising. [For more details and to register, click here.](#)

Creating a Quality Compost Product: Compost Operations and Marketing Training – March 26

Monday, March 26, 8:00 am – 4:30 pm Wrentham Developmental Center, Wrentham, MA. From product quality to siting—learn the important elements to successfully run and manage an agricultural compost operation. Training will include classroom lectures and a compost facility tour. Open to agricultural composters.

Topics to be covered:

- The Science of Composting
- Feedstocks and Overview of Recipe Development
- Composting Methods and Turning/Aeration Equipment
- Windrow Management and Monitoring
- Regulations, Permits, Registrations
- Site Design and Layout
- Managing the Operation (odors, fire, noise, dust, etc.)
- “Matching Game” – Match the Final Product with the Feedstocks
- The Importance of Making a Quality Compost Product and Tips for Success
- Compost Marketing Insights: Applications, Marketing Plan, Sales Strategies, Social Marketing
- NRCS Compost Pad Construction and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Compost Facility Tour

Wrentham Farm (Groundscapes Express) is an agricultural composting facility that composts source-separated food waste and commercial organics using a dedicated windrow turner. View on-site demonstrations of erosion control measures utilizing compost blankets, FilterMitts, berms, and the application of compost tea. www.groundscapesexpress.com **Cost:** \$20, includes lunch and materials. To register, visit the MassRecycle Conference Website - <http://massrecycle.org/conference/index.html>

Registration deadline is Tuesday, March 20. For more information, contact Athena Lee Bradley at 802-254-3636 or athena@nerc.org. A map and additional information will be emailed to all registrants.

CISA (Community Involved In Sustaining Agriculture) has Partnered with FamilyFarmed.org to Offer Two Wholesale Readiness Workshops

Finding Wholesale Success Workshop – March 7

CISA's Finding Wholesale Success workshop will feature a presentation from Atina Diffley from Organic Farming Works, LLC, who will share successful wholesaling techniques, including post-harvest handling, packing and grading, Farm Food Safety, and maintaining the cold chain for small to mid-scale farmers. A panel of buyers will also talk about how you can get your product into establishments. A panel of growers and distributors and lots of information about how to enter, expand, or increase wholesale sales. All attendees will receive a copy of the Wholesale Success: A Farmers' Guide to Selling, Postharvest Handling and Packing Produce manual edited by Jim Slama from FamilyFarmed.org. Finding Wholesale Success - March 7th, 6:00 pm

– 9:00 pm - Food Bank of Western MA, 97 N. Hatfield, Rd. Hatfield RSVP by Monday, March 5th to Devon at 413-665-7100 or devon@buylocalfood.org - all farms welcome.

Meet the Buyers Networking Session - March 12

This follow-up "Meet & Greet" on March 12 gives wholesale growers and buyers a networking opportunity to meet one-on-one with each other. The Meet & Greet is open to all purchasers and limited to Local Hero member farmers. Smith College, Campus Center – Carroll Room, 5:30 - 8:30 pm, 100 Elm Street, Northampton. RSVP by Thursday, March 8th to Devon at 413-665-7100 or devon@buylocalfood.org. Light refreshments will be served.

These workshops are supported in part by USDA/Risk Management Agency, by FamilyFarmed.org and by individual contributors and Local Hero members.

Farmers' Markets Seeking Vendors

Vendors Wanted for Healthy Kids Day in Malden

Farmers wanted for a Healthy Kids Day at the Malden YMCA on Saturday, April 28 from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm. Contact Jose Mendez for more information, 781-324-7680, x 235 or jmendez@ymcamalden.org.

Farmers' Markets Seeking Vendors to Markets Across the Commonwealth

Farmers' markets are seeking additional growers for the 2012 season. [For a complete list, click here](#). Check back often for updates to the list, as additional markets are added periodically.

Specialty Crop Block Grant Educational Session Reminder

MDAR is soliciting proposals through a competitive RFR process for approximately \$400,000 in USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant funds. Grants are awarded to projects that strengthen the market for Massachusetts specialty crops such as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture. If you are interested in submitting a Specialty Crop Block Grant Proposal it is **strongly encouraged** you attend one educational session. The RFR and educational session dates can be found on www.mass.gov/agr/markets/specialty_crop_block_grant_program.htm.



MDAR'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 – MDAR 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 MDAR's website at mass.gov/agr, and/or follow at twitter.com/agcommishsoares. For our ongoing list of events and workshops visit and bookmark: www.mass.gov/agr/events/coming_up.htm.