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February/March Farm and Market Report

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Commissioner's Column



Dear Friends,

As you no doubt know by now, "Punxsutawney Phil" did NOT see his shadow this Groundhog Day, which means we should expect an early spring. I'm guessing that farmers don't make their plans around Phil's pronouncement, but I'd certainly wager that his prediction comes as no surprise to energy planners and environmental researchers whose job it is to think about how society will need to adapt to climate change.

At a recent [MIT panel discussion](#) to which I was invited to participate, MIT Professor Kerry Emanuel put it clearly, "...no one really cares if the temperature goes up a few degrees.... what we really care about are the side effects of that global warming."

Those side effects include drought, flooding, and more intense hurricanes – not to mention new invasive species. This means an uncertain and challenging scenario will be unfolding before our agricultural community – not just here in Massachusetts, but around the world.

The Patrick-Murray Administration has established itself as a national leader by developing a climate adaptation roadmap. The Commonwealth has set goals to reduce emissions 25 percent below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80 percent by 2050.

How will Massachusetts's agriculture respond to a changing climate? No one can say for sure but the fact that our state is not a large commodity-based agricultural system has huge advantages. Our 7,700 farms tend to be small, diversified, and thus better able to adapt to external conditions than energy-intensive monoculture systems. I look forward to conversations at the local, state, and federal level that will build even greater degrees of resiliency into our agricultural sector.

But a truly sustainable local food system here in Massachusetts will not happen on good will and enthusiasm alone. It will require capital investment. We need to integrate more alternative energy sources like wind turbines, solar panels, and anaerobic digesters into our farm operations. We need to continue to preserve our prime agricultural lands and ensure responsible stewardship of the 68,000-plus acres of agricultural land that has been permanently preserved to this point. We need efficient and affordable transportation infrastructure so that every resident in every corner of the state has access to healthy, locally grown food. We need hoop houses, rooftop greenhouses, and other innovative techniques that will extend our growing season. We need resources to train the next generation of farmers, ensure best management

practices, and to prevent invasive species like the Asian Longhorned Beetle and Plum Pox Virus from threatening our agricultural assets. And, we should be looking at every arable surface and ask "Why not here?"

Smart growth revenue streams and venture capital can lead this kind of strategic thinking and innovation. In my travels around the state, I am seeing a great deal of interest from private investors and philanthropies in sustainable agriculture as a means of strengthening our economy and our communities while enhancing our quality of life.

MDAR is also confident that the Governor's FY14 budget will enable us to keep pace with the cost of maintaining current programs (this is in large part thanks to a combination of advocacy from our ag community and unprecedented support from the Patrick-Murray Administration).

For the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) of which MDAR is a part, the Governor's budget represents a more than \$21 million / 10% increase over the amount available (post-9C) in FY13 and \$17 million / 8% increase over FY13 (initial) GAA.

While much of the Governor's revenue proposals for FY14 highlight transportation and education, they are also helping EOEEA in very important ways. In terms of advocacy it's important to note that the funding level being proposed this year for EOEEA would simply not be possible without revenue growth. Continued support from the agricultural community for the Governor's overall budget is critical.

In the meantime, I invite you to peruse below the many exciting events and stories happening throughout the state related to agriculture. I am pleased (but not surprised) to report that passion for locally grown continues to grow. By way of example, the February 9 Urban Farming Conference (see below) in Roxbury is completely sold out and has a waiting list! As an attendee at a Farm to School event in Sandwich commented as we dined on our locally-sourced lunch: "Local Agriculture is HOT!"

Best,



Gregory C. Watson, Commissioner



PS. With the Superbowl yesterday, my favorite ad was on the work of a farmer:
www.farms.com

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Special Guest Column

by Dave Dumaresq

CSA: New way of marketing or new way of farming



I had been thinking of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) for about five years before I first started my own. At the time I was leasing a farm with a farmstand on a busy road and was also bringing my produce to several farmers' markets. But as I was already marketing most all of my product directly, there didn't seem a lot of reason yet for me to pursue a CSA business model.

Things changed when I bought my own farm in 2006. The thought of not having the farmstand, but still having the monthly mortgage to pay left me feeling financially vulnerable. That next year, I decided to start my own CSA and it has grown every year since. If my new farm had been in a different location or if there had been no mortgage, I cannot say if my CSA would exist today. Adversity is the father of innovation!

Since colonial times, Massachusetts's agriculture has been cutting edge not only in production systems, but also in distribution systems as evidenced by our state being amongst the top ten nationally in farmland protection and in direct marketing such as farm stands, PYO's and farmers' markets.

Community Supported Agriculture is relatively new to the direct marketing scene. While direct marketing tends to shrink the value chain, the CSA tends to shrink that value chain even more. With seasonal prepayments by customers, the financing costs are often removed, as is the need for the lenders. Most of the R&D is often done in-house, originating from member feedback and allowing for a faster response to trends in the market. The shipping costs are removed or reduced eliminating the need for some trucks on the road. The inevitable shrinkage involved in putting product on retail display is removed – thus adding efficiencies. Most advertising costs are eliminated since the customer does not need to be reminded that they should buy an in-season product every week.

The CSA reorganizes economies in favor of the farmers and the consumers. In fact, the CSA model can make the food system work much more efficiently. The farm is more viable and better able to provide the food that the consumer is requesting rather than the food that the market is requesting.

In the CSA model the farmer is encouraged to "grow to feed the members" rather than "grow for the market". The advantage is that the farmer makes a commitment to the season beforehand and into which the share member buys. The farmer is driven to give the best share possible so that members will renew their membership the following year. This longer term approach tends to create a healthier product and a more sustainable system.

Free from most government standards and regulations, the CSA has grown "organically". As a result, CSA has evolved to include as many different approaches as there are farmers. CSA was originally food from a single farm. With its current growth in the marketplace, the CSA is taking on new farms. With endless iterations as to how a CSA is defined (local, organic, diversified products, etc.), there are many unanswered questions to the future integrity of the movement. Certainly its success

and long-term viability will be driven by its members who if they like what they receive during the season will sign on for the next.

The recent movement away from the modern food system is putting pressure on our food system to correct itself. Yet, that correction will be slow and for many it will never be sufficient. Massachusetts farmers will continue to adapt to the changes that surround them. The CSA model has been extending out into many areas of Massachusetts agriculture (there are over 144 locations currently throughout the state). We have CSAs not only providing vegetables, but now also fruit, flowers, seafood, meat, honey, and maple syrup. Multiyear crops such as firewood and Christmas trees should soon be added to the list. With the ingenuity of Massachusetts agriculture, the question becomes not only “what system will they think of next”, but also “what system will they go back to next”?

Since his youth selling his families pears off a small trailer at the end of his parents driveway, to his teenage and college years working on local fruit and vegetable farms, to his post college years as a crop extensionist with a Peace Corps in Ecuador, Farmer Dave has been passionate about growing healthy food for everyone. When Farmer Dave returned from the Andes in 1997, he continued to grow a wide array of over 100 different fruits and vegetables on rented farms. In 2006 he purchased his own APR preserved farm and now grows on 90 acres. He offers his products at his two farms stands: the Brox Farm in Dracut and the East Street Farm in Tewksbury. Farmer Dave also spent time in the Republic of Georgia building a program that tripled the winter greenhouse vegetable production of the country and helping to create jobs while also teaching organic methods and helping to improve the health of the people.

Farmer Dave and his experienced staff grow nutrient rich strawberries, raspberries, apples, melons, sweet corn, tomatoes, carrots, beets, potatoes, cucumbers, beans, romanesco, arugula, lettuce, spinach and a variety of ethnic crops. His product can be found at several farmers' markets in Eastern Massachusetts. But his CSA program gives Farmer Dave his closest connection with those who savor the labors of his nurturing soils. Members from more than a dozen communities receive a weekly share of the harvest for nine months of the year. Though he enjoys helping others in the global community to create their own healthy and sustainable food system, Farmer Dave is happiest growing for his own community. www.farmerdaves.net/

FOREFRONT

Energy News

New Net Metering “System of Assurance” Has Begun

The Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities (DPU) has adopted a new process to admit renewable energy projects for net metering purposes. This “System of Assurance” will ensure an eligible net metering project a place in the net metering queue while the project is being implemented. This is different from the past where projects were admitted into net metering only after the project was constructed, commissioned and feeding electricity into the grid and if there was still room in the net

metering cap.

For net metering projects that have an interconnection service agreement and are about to begin construction, the state has developed a "System of Assurance" of Net Metering Eligibility. The "System of Assurance" has begun accepting applications on January 24, 2013. An application must be filed to secure a project's eligibility for net metering, which is a state incentive program that has a maximum cap. The System of Assurance will be implemented by the Cadmus Group, Inc. as an internet-based application process to be located at the website: www.massaca.org (live next week). Cadmus will provide support to applicants through the website, through a new electronic distribution list ("list-serv"), and through a web-based seminar ("webinar").

For those farms that are in the process of installing an eligible, net metering renewable energy project, please contact your installing contractor regarding your need to be part of this new process.

For details and important dates in January, please refer to the official DPU Memorandum ([click here](#)), and if you have questions, please contact the Hearing Officer at the contact information listed below:

Laura C. Bickel, Hearing Officer
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Public Utilities
1 South Station, 5th Floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02110
Office: 617-305-3588
laura.bickel@state.ma.us

Commonwealth Outdoor Hydronic Heater Change-Out Program

The MA Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) and the MA Department of Energy Resources (DOER) will distribute grants of up to \$15,000 (but not to exceed 100% of the equipment and installation costs), to replace problematic and nuisance OHHs.

Application Deadline: 3 PM, February 22, 2013. For more information, [please refer to MassCEC website.](#)

Both programs are part of the wider Commonwealth Biomass and Heat Pump Pilot Program, which includes incentives toward pellet stoves, heat pumps and wood boiler replacements. To be notified of program updates, please contact the MA Farm Energy Program (MFEP) at mfep@berkshirepioneerccd.org.

USDA/NRCS EQIP Funding Announcement - For Farm Energy Upgrades

NRCS recently announced their new rounds of funding as part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), which helps to support on-farm energy conservation. The first application deadline was December 21, 2012. The second application deadline will be February 15, 2013.

Some of the eligible technologies include:

- [Maple Producers](#) - Efficient evaporators, steam enhanced units and reverse osmosis.
- [Greenhouses and Nurseries](#) - Efficient heating systems, energy screens, and HAF.

Dairies, Orchards and Vegetable Farms - Additional measures may be supported including electrical efficiency upgrades.

For more information please see the following link and refer to "Energy" listings on the page: www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/documents.html

Farms interested in applying are required to meet NRCS [eligibility requirements](#).

To find out more about NRCS eligibility or to apply, please contact your [local NRCS field office](#) or get more information and updates [on their website](#).

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New Folks on the MDAR Block

[Catherine de Ronde](#) joins the team as MDAR's Agricultural Economist. Catherine has a M.S. degree from UCONN in Resource Economics with a focus in integrated watershed management and policy. Her graduate research focused on economic models – determining the socially optimal allocations of water amongst competing users specifically municipal and agricultural users. Catherine will be working with staff and the Massachusetts farming community to analyze and communicate the economic impact of MDAR's initiatives. She has already started examining below cost for dairy; direct marketing; and, urban agriculture.



[Click to see the full size image.](#)

[Tara G. Zadeh, Esq.](#) joins MDAR as General Counsel to serve as Chief legal advisor for the MDAR and the State Mosquito Reclamation Board. Tara's experience includes serving as Senior Counsel at the Nature Conservancy; General Counsel for the LSP Board at DEP; and General Counsel at the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture (1989 – 1997). Tara's prior knowledge-base of MDAR's agricultural programs and services gives the Legal Services team the ability to "hit the ground running" as it lends its expertise to the challenges and opportunities of the Commonwealth's agricultural sustainability.

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Smile! MDAR Got Your Picture

Noli Taylor with daughter Tilly, Commissioner Greg Watson and Ali Berlow in attendance at the soon-to-be-formed Cape and Islands Farm to School Network meeting held February 2nd, Camp Burgess, Sandwich. Well more than 60 people from across the region participated – from parents, farmers, teachers, and school administrators. Said



[Click to see the full size image.](#)

Commissioner Watson, "The enthusiasm was infectious!"

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Maple Producers - Be Sure Your Info is Updated on *MassGrown & Fresher*

Connecting consumers to Massachusetts producers and vice versa is an important part of our mission. The online [MassGrown map](#) is a popular tool for the public to find you. As a producer, you are eligible to "reap" the many benefits of being part of our award-winning *MassGrown & Fresher* initiative.

What's to reap?

- *MassGrown & Fresher* is your gateway to farm products, specialty foods, and fun "ag-tivities"
- One of the biggest advantages of joining *MassGrown* is the powerful prominence the [website](#) enjoys via Google searches
- Easy to use: the site is simple to navigate and find what you're looking for
- One-stop shopping – Massachusetts grown and produced products are all here at one convenient place
- More and more popular every month! Many media sites now link to *MassGrown & Fresher* as a go-to resource; and, monthly site visits continue to increase
- *MassGrown & Fresher* recently received a "[Bright Ideas](#)" award from the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University
- In November 2012, mentioned in [Government Technology Magazine](#)

If you would like to be included on our [Agri Google Map](#), please click here ([.pdf](#), [.doc](#)) for our Farm Marketing Survey. Already a part of *MassGrown*? Make sure your

information is up-to-date on our map. Send updates/edits to Rick LeBlanc: Richard.LeBlanc@state.ma.us. If you host special events that you would like to be featured on our *MassGrown calendar*, send to Julia Grimaldi, [Julia Grimaldi, Julia Grimaldi, @state.ma.us](mailto:Julia.Grimaldi@state.ma.us). For Twitter users, follow us on [@MassGrown](https://twitter.com/MassGrown).

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Something to Smile About During Tax Time! Opportunity to Help Animals

Now,
Something to
Smile About
During Tax



[Click to see the full size image.](#)

Time! - your 2012 tax form gives you the opportunity to help animals.

The Homeless Animal Prevention and Care Fund is part of a new law that took effect on October 31, 2012. Massachusetts residents may now check off a donation on Line 32f of their 2012 tax return; contributions to this fund will:

- Help reduce the number of homeless cats and dogs by spaying/ neutering and vaccinating animals in shelters and animal control facilities
- Assist families who would not otherwise be able to afford these services for their pets
- Provide training to municipal animal control officers so that they can safely and effectively protect animals and people in their communities

The text of the authorizing statute can be found here:

www.malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2012/Chapter193

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Agricultural Commissions Update

Interest in Agricultural Commissions (AgComs) continues to grow and now is the time to take action if your community expects to go on record as supporting agriculture.

What are AgComs doing? They serve as a resource to town boards and staff on development proposals, farmland protection, energy programs, and agricultural inventory; Serving as a resource to farmers and residents by assessing agricultural needs, adopting local Farm Preservations bylaws, starting local Farmers' Markets, obtaining technical assistance on nonpoint source pollution, conservation farm planning, manure



[Click to see the full size image.](#)

management, environmental stewardship, providing conflict resolution on farm related disputes, agricultural exemptions, informational brochures, hosting educational workshops on intergenerational transfer of property, farm viability, Chapter 61 lands, and Agricultural Preservation Restrictions to name a few.

To get started, ask for a toolkit, including sample warrant articles, set up an informational meeting by contacting Peter Westover: westover03@comcast.net, 413-665-4077 or Cheryl Lekstrom, clekstrom@me.com, 508-835-2452. The website, www.massagcom.org is under construction, but additional information may be found at www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/boards-commissions/agricultural-commissions.html.

Helpful resources include board members of the Massachusetts Association of Agricultural Commissions (MAAC). Dick Ward, President MAAC, rjward7@comcast.net.

The MAAC Annual Meeting with workshops is being held:

Saturday, March 2, 2013
Sturbridge Host Hotel, 366 Main St., Sturbridge, MA

Registration 9:30 AM
Sessions start at 10:00 AM
lunch and annual meeting 12:00 noon
Sessions 1:15 - 4:30 PM
Social 4:30 PM

RSVP by February 15, 2013, Cost \$30.00 conference & lunch, Cost \$20.00 lunch & annual meeting only

Make checks payable to MAAC, and mail to: Laura Sapienza-Grabski, 2 Brookview Road, Boxford, MA 0192. Questions, contact Laura at brookviewfarm2@verizon.net, 978-887-2431.

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Mass Dairy Promotion Board Grant Program



The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources ("MDAR") and the Massachusetts Dairy Promotion Board ("MDPB") are soliciting proposals for projects that advance the image and sales of, and demand for Massachusetts dairy products. This grant program is for public entities, 501 (c) (3) and 501 (c) (6).

The following project areas will be considered for grant funding: Promotional activities that advance the image and sales of, and demand for Massachusetts dairy products generally (non-branded promotions); Research activities including, but not limited to, studies testing the effectiveness of market development and promotion efforts, studies relating to the nutritional value of milk and dairy products and other related efforts to

expand demand for dairy products; or Education which includes those activities intended to broaden the understanding of sound nutritional principles, including the role of milk and dairy products in a balanced diet. Contact Julia.Grimaldi@state.ma.us with questions.

Proposal deadline is March 5, 2013. Apply here: RFR 

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UPCOMING EVENTS

The Urban Farming Conference This Week and Sold Out!

The Urban Farming Conference is being held on Saturday, February 9, 2013, 8:30 am - 4:00 pm at the Reggie Lewis Center in Roxbury and is presented by City Growers and Urban Farming Institute of Boston and in partnership with Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR). The event is SOLD OUT.

The annual Massachusetts Urban Farming Conference (UFC) is designed to advance the opportunities and address the barriers involved in cultivating a thriving urban farming sector. The UFC is a forum to share information regarding what is currently happening in Boston and other local urban communities and to map out a vision for urban farming in Massachusetts. Boston and other local urban communities in Massachusetts have the potential to offer a fresh, local, and healthy food supply while promoting economic and environmental sustainability, as well as healthy communities, employment at livable wages, food security, youth engagement and more.

Commissioner Greg Watson will be leading the Urban Farming Thought Leader discussion and several MDAR staff will be participating in the daylong conference. The Urban Agriculture Life Time Achievement Award will also be presented. Special guests [Eliot Coleman, Organic Farmer, Four Season Farm](#) and [Malik Yakini, Executive Director, Detroit Community Food Security](#) will be offering Keynote remarks.

Link to the event page: <http://www.eventbrite.com/event/4701198411>

The conference will bring together many practitioners and entrepreneurs who will share and learn with community leaders, investors, and representatives from government agencies, all with a focus on investing in urban farming. Though this event is sold out, there is a follow up conference being planned for October 24, 2013, which is also the 3rd annual "[Food Day](#)", a national event being celebrated state wide.

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NE Grows!

February 6-8, 2013

[Boston Convernition and Exhibitor Center, Boston, MA](#)

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.

New England Grows connects 13,000+ green industry professionals with the brightest horticultural ideas, hottest selling plants, latest green industry technology, and best outdoor equipment at its 1,100+ booth horticulture tradeshow.

Add to that dozens of ground-breaking green industry seminars led by world-renowned experts, and you'll understand why New England Grows is the ultimate green industry event for you and your business.

Details and registration at www.newenglandgrows.org/.

Visit the MDAR booth at #454 and get a free [ALB](#) tote bag!

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New England Agricultural Marketing Conference & Trade Show

February 27 - 28, 2013

[Sturbridge Host Hotel, Sturbridge, MA](#)

The Harvest New England Agricultural Marketing Conference & Trade Show is once again coming to Sturbridge, MA in February 2013. This is the 4th biennial New England conference and it draws hundreds of farmers and farm industry members to idea-laden workshops and to hear motivational speakers.



Mark your calendars now and join your fellow regional agriculturists for a jam-packed program!

The theme of the 2013 conference is ***Making "Cents" in Today's Marketplace.*** Attendees will find 26 workshops on topics such as marketing, agri-tourism, social media, financing and more. There will be a panel discussion with the agricultural chiefs from each of the New England states. Don't forget the trade show with a large variety of agricultural vendors and the New England Farmers' Market Managers Workshop.

Keynote addresses will feature Roberta MacDonald, Senior VP for Marketing at Cabot Cooperative Creamery. MacDonald has over 30 years of experience in consumer products and trade marketing including 20 at Cabot.

Also providing a keynote address is Bob Burke, Co-Founder of the Natural Products Consulting Group. Burke helps to bring all categories of natural, organic and specialty products to market. Prior to this, he served 11 years as the VP of Sales and Corporate Development at Stonyfield Farm Yogurt.

Early Bird registration is now open until February 7th. Click [here](#) for more information. Program details and lodging options are also available at this site. Register early for the best deals!

Harvest New England (HNE) is a cooperative marketing program created by New England's state departments of agriculture in 1992. It has sponsored this regional conference since 2007. For more information, contact David Webber, 617-626-1754, David.Webber@state.ma.us.

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Ecological Landscaping Association 19th Annual Conference

February 27 and 28, 2013. Springfield, MA

Build your ecological connections at ELA'S 19th annual Conference, Sustainable Habitats: Building Ecological Connections. Admission includes educational sessions and workshops, Continental breakfast and lunch, Jazz Social Hour, and networking opportunities throughout the day.

Wednesday offers two intensive workshops. Ecological Systems + Design = Living Spaces explores the interplay of soil, water, soil, and habitat in creating landscapes. Local Food, Local Landscapes looks at integrating and sustaining edibles in the landscape. Optional Keynote Dinner features Jeff Lowenfels, author of Teaming with Microbes, A Gardener's Guide to the Soils Food Web.

Thursday's educational lineup includes three concurrent education tracks - two tracks with classroom-style sessions and one track of panel discussions - covering a wide range of topics relevant to ecological landscape design and maintenance. Optional Keynote Dinner features Rebecca McMackin, Brooklyn Bridge Park Horticulturist.

For additional information and registration, visit www.ecolandscaping.org/conference.

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Growing Greens for the Winter Market Workshop Series

This workshop series takes place at farms throughout Massachusetts doing commercial winter production and one homestead doing home-scale production. All seven workshops will present options for greenhouses, information on growing systems, timing for winter greens, information on selecting appropriate varieties for winter greens, using row covers and microclimates, and crop rotation in the greenhouse. Additionally, all of the commercial workshops will discuss their marketing approaches including winter CSAs, winter farmers' markets, and/or restaurant sales.

Workshops are \$25 for NOFA members; \$30 for non-members. An additional \$5 discount applies for registering at least 14 days before each workshop. Click [here for online registration](#) or the mail in registration form.

List of Winter Growing Workshops in Winter 2013:

Continuous and Efficient Production through Winter - February 7 - 10:00 am to 12:00 pm

Natick Community Organic Farm, Natick, MA. Instructor: Jean-Claude Bourrut and Jill Shea

Farm Systems for Harvesting Food Every Season - February 9 - 9:00 am to 12:00 pm
Simple Gifts Farm, North Amherst, MA. Instructor: Jeremy Barker-Plotkin

Ten Month Salad Greens on a Small Piece of Land - February 16 - 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Kittredge Farm , North Brookfield, MA. Instructor: Dan Kittredge

Producing Greens for Winter CSA - February 23 - 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

First Light Farm, Hamilton, MA. Instructor: Mike Raymond

Producing for Various Winter Greens Markets - March 2 - 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Indian Line Farm, South Egremont, MA. Instructors: Elizabeth Keen and Pete Salinetti

Growing Greens on Homestead Scale - March 9 - 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Noonday Farm, Winchendon Springs, MA. Instructors: Bob Jennings and Beth Ingham

High Tunnels for Winter and Spring Greens Production - March 16 - 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Brix Bounty Farm, Dartmouth, MA. Instructor: Derek Christianson

Details on sessions at www.nofamass.org/events/type/winter.

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4th Annual UVM Extension Winter Hops Conference

February 22, Essex, Vermont, 9 am – 4:30 pm

With support by the MDAR, featured speakers include Graham Ollard, a hops consultant the Yakima Valley in Washington will speak on fertility and pest management in hops. Krista Delahunty & Jason Johnston of Aroostook Hops in Westfield, Maine will discuss the results of their Northeast SARE Farmer grant, which evaluated the impact of cover crops and irrigation on hop yields. Colorado organic hop farmer, Rich Andrews, will present on his innovative solar hop and herb dryer design, as well as his experiences with growing organic hops. Join Vermont Pub and Brewery and Bobcat Café and Brewery as they facilitate an educational sensory panel to highlight the importance of proper drying and storage techniques. Also learn about the latest hop research results from the NW Crops and Soils Team. Varietal evaluations, pests, fertility, and cover crops will be discussed. The conference flyer provides more details: www.uvm.edu/extension/cropsoil/wp-content/uploads/2013-Hops-Conference-flyer-4.pdf.

To register: www.uvm.edu/extension/hopsconference

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MAC's 12th Annual Winter Conference

Saturday, March 9,
2013, Paul R. Baird
Middle School, Ludlow,
MA



Massachusetts Agriculture
in the Classroom (MAC) will

hold its *12th Annual Winter Growing Minds Through Massachusetts Agriculture Conference*. This year, for the first time it is being co-sponsored with the Connecticut Agriculture in the Classroom Program. There will be four workshop sessions, with eight con-current workshop choices 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. See the full workshop schedule below and visit the MAC website to read a description of each workshop or print a schedule.

Registration Scholarships are available for new teachers, urban teachers and farm-based educators thanks to a grant from the Northeast Farm Credit AgEnhancement Program. These scholarships are open to both Massachusetts and Connecticut teachers. Read the Scholarship guidelines or fill out an application form.

Thanks to Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources for providing funding to support the school gardening workshops through a Specialty Crops Grant.

Complete workshop schedule and registration at : <http://aginclassroom.org/>

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SBN Buy Local Trade Show and Seminar

Tuesday, March 19, Seaport World
Trade Center, Boston, 8:30 am - 12:30
pm



Sustainable Business Network of Massachusetts

(SBN) is excited to announce its second Buy

Local Food Trade Show and Seminar --***Connecting local food growers and producers to local wholesale buyers.*** This event is designed to facilitate

connections and stimulate trade between local buyers and sellers of specialty crop food products and includes expert panels on overcoming barriers to selling and buying local products and open floor trading. This event is organized by SBN in partnership with the [MDAR, Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance \(NAMA\)](#) and [Health Care Without Harm's Healthy Food in Healthcare Program \(HCWH\)](#). SBN Buy Local Trade Show space is sponsored by Seaport World Trade Center and the Trade Show is supported in part by a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. SBN's first Buy Local Trade Show, held in 2010, was well attended and resulted in the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, among others, developing important new relationships with local food producers and farmers. A recap of the event is highlighted [here](#).

This years SBN Buy Local Trade Show and Seminar will attract:

- Massachusetts and New England-based specialty and non-specialty crop growers, fishermen, and value-added producers who are looking to connect to buyers
- Massachusetts and New England-based buyers including college and healthcare institutions, restaurants, retail grocers and more
- Exhibitors that support or do business with food growers, producers or buyers

SBN is currently looking for interested buyers, sellers, exhibitors, panelists, and volunteers. For more information on participating and to register for this year's Trade Show, click [register here](#).

Please help us spread the word by forwarding this information to anyone you think may be interested in participating as a buyer or seller at this event! If you have any other questions regarding registration, please email Jessica at: jessica@sbnmass.org or call 603-465-8255.

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USDA News

USDA Finalizes New Microloan Program

Microloans up to \$35,000 aim to assist small farmers, veterans, and disadvantaged producers

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced recently a new microloan program from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) designed to help small and family operations, beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers secure loans under \$35,000. The new microloan program is aimed at bolstering the progress of producers through their start-up years by providing needed resources and helping to increase equity so that farmers may eventually graduate to commercial credit and expand their operations. The microloan program will also provide a less burdensome, more simplified application process in comparison to traditional farm loans.

The new microloans, said Vilsack, represent how USDA continues to make year-over-year gains in expanding credit opportunities for minority, socially-disadvantaged and young and beginning farmers and ranchers across the United States. The final rule establishing the microloan program will be published in the January 17 issue of the Federal Register.

Administered through USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) Operating Loan Program, the new microloan program offers credit options and solutions to a variety of producers. FSA has a long history of providing agricultural credit to the nation's farmers and ranchers through its Operating Loan Program. In assessing its programs, FSA evaluated the needs of smaller farm operations and any unintended barriers to obtaining financing. For beginning farmers and ranchers, for instance, the new microloan program offers a simplified loan application process. In addition, for those who want to grow niche crops to sell directly to ethnic markets and farmers markets, the microloan program offers a path to obtain financing. For past FSA Rural Youth Loan recipients, the microloan program provides a bridge to successfully transition to larger-scale operations.

Producers interested in applying for a microloan may contact their local [MA Farm Service Agency office](#).

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IN EVERY ISSUE

Classified Ads

- Position Open: Cricket Creek Farm, Farm Manager. Cricket Creek Farm is a grass-based dairy in Williamstown, MA, milking 30 Brown Swiss and Jerseys. All milk is used on-farm for producing award-winning cheeses and raw milk sales. The

Farm Manager will work in a collaborative environment with the General Manager and Creamery Manager to oversee daily operations. More information can be [found here](#).

- Central MA Farm for Lease: 8.5 acres includes 3-4 bedroom farm house, 2 bay garage, 2-stall horse barn, pond, workshop, commercial greenhouse, mature lavender crop. \$1,500/mo. Town of Oakham, Quabbin Regional School District, 20 minutes from Worcester. Available for cultivation upon signed agreement, available for occupancy May 1 or earlier. Includes appliances, large screened porch and deck, gardens, sunroom, frost-free hydrants, total privacy. Ideal for hobby farmer or beginning grower. Owners reserve right to inspect and approve all pets and livestock, crops, and can offer agricultural technical assistance within reason. 508-882-3777, leave message.
- CSA Manager Position: Weir River Farm, Hingham MA. CSA Manager has management responsibility for an established Community Supported Agriculture operation at Weir River Farm, a property of the Trustees of Reservations. Responsibilities include crop production planning and management, staff supervision, budget management, planning, marketing, procurement, and shareholder relations. The CSA Manager reports to the Superintendent of the South Shore Management Unit and works closely with other non-CSA farm staff. The position is full-time year round with a seasonally variable work schedule. There are currently 4.5 acres available for vegetable production. [Details here](#).
- Agricultural Excavation – Grading Services - 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, 978-897-9977.
- NOFA Certified Organic Hay: High quality 1st, 2nd, and 3rd cut in small square bales. Delivery available. Williamstown. 413-458-3424 or jmygeog@yahoo.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.

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