

Patrick-Murray Administration Awards Matching Grants for Beginning Massachusetts Farms

BOSTON – Wednesday, May 8, 2013 – Massachusetts Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rick Sullivan today announced that matching grants totaling \$82,600 have been awarded to ten projects that will help beginning farmers grow or improve their new farm operations.

“We are delighted to be able to support our new farmers in their efforts to ensure a sustainable future for their farms,” said Secretary Sullivan. “I congratulate all of this year’s award recipients.”

Awarded through the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources’ (DAR) Matching Enterprise Grants for Agriculture (MEGA), grants went to farms in the communities of Brewster, Charlton, Edgartown, Great Barrington, Lanesborough, Needham, North Dighton, Westport and Yarmouthport.

“This grant program not only provides farmers in their critical first to fifth year with some capital, but also business planning and technical assistance to help ensure their success,” said DAR Commissioner Greg Watson. “For Massachusetts agriculture to remain viable, we need to encourage the enthusiasm and new ideas that beginning farmers bring to the industry.”

The grants will help fund the purchase of equipment and other non-land based assets necessary for financially viable agricultural businesses. Projects include equipment to improve production and post-harvest operations, and to create value-added products, as well as infrastructure improvements such as irrigation systems and farmstands. Selected farmers participate in a business planning process, after which they are eligible to receive a grant of up to \$10,000 that they match dollar for dollar.

“I am pleased by the administration's release of these farming grants. Farming remains a critical backbone of our Commonwealth, and these funds will help ensure the continued growth and prosperity of our agricultural community,” said Sen. Marc Pacheco, Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on the Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture.

“Secretary Sullivan and Commissioner Watson continue to show their support for the agricultural community,” said Rep. Anne Gobi, House Chair of the Joint Committee on the Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture. “These grants, which touch every corner of the Commonwealth, provide new generations of farmers with needed revenue to enhance their farms and keep them competitive while providing quality products to the people their communities.”

Today’s grant recipients:

Table: Tap to View

DAR's mission is to ensure the long-term viability of agriculture in Massachusetts. Through its four divisions – Agricultural Conservation and Technical Assistance, Agricultural Markets, Animal Health and Crop and Pest Services – DAR strives to support, regulate and enhance the rich diversity of the Commonwealth's agricultural community in order to promote economically and environmentally sound food safety and animal health measures, and fulfill agriculture's role in energy conservation and production. For more information, visit DAR's website at www.mass.gov/agr and follow us on twitter at [@MDARCommish](https://twitter.com/MDARCommish) and [@massgrown](https://twitter.com/massgrown).