

Farm and Market Report

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COMMISSIONER'S COLUMN



The Winter of 2015 ever so slowly relaxed its relentlessly snowy, cold and rigid grip on Massachusetts during March and early April as the days grew longer and the sun grew stronger-finally, it's Spring!

Certainly a major agricultural event every year is the annual Agriculture Day events at the State House, and 2015 was no exception. So many Ag people came out to remind government officials of the tremendous importance of a healthy agricultural sector. Among the many highlights of Ag Day were the participation of Governor Charlie Baker and Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Matt Beaton, both of whom made clear their understanding of the very important role agriculture plays in so many aspects of our state.

During the program Governor Baker congratulated the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation on its One Hundredth Anniversary and presented MFBF President Rich Bonanno with a citation in recognition of its Centennial. MDAR adds its congratulations to MFBF for a century of service!

There are many to thank for making Ag Day so successful and I am fearful that if I make a list here I will inadvertently miss someone or some group, so I will refrain from doing so, but please know that it was just a fabulous event. I congratulate all who participated in making it so.

I am going to single out just one individual from Ag Day, 4-H member Lily Raposa, who with great eloquence and poise spoke to the several hundred in attendance about how her participation in 4-H has been a positive influence in her life. Her remarks were inspiring; having the young people that Lily represents involved in Agriculture bodes well for our future!

Ag Day isn't Ag Day without the *Taste of Massachusetts* festivities in the Hall of Flags. Thanks to the Culinary Arts and Hospitality Program from Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School for their delicious preparation of a menu that sourced much of its ingredients from donations from over twenty-five Massachusetts farms.

My only regret is that I couldn't stay long at the *Taste* to enjoy the great food and socialize with the attendees. Sec. Beaton and I had to quickly head north to Methuen to testify at the Joint Ways & Means Committee hearing on the state budget.

At Ag Day MDAR announced release of its **2014 Annual Report** which may be viewed online at www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/annual-reports.html. I hope you'll take a little time to acquaint yourself with the many programs MDAR offers. Some may be of direct benefit to you.

I had the great pleasure on April 15 to present 2 Friends Farm of Attleboro MDAR's *Commonwealth Quality Innovator Award*. Farm Owners Ashley Driscoll and John Irving organically grow microgreens indoors fifty-two weeks a year in a previously long vacant industrial space. Their business has greatly expanded in its output of highly nutritious produce since its founding in 2013, resulting in additional space occupied and expansion of its year-round staff. MDAR staff also toured Homestead Hard Cider's cidery located in the same building as 2 Friends. Homestead sources its cider from a Massachusetts orchard. My last stop was an unplanned one at Briggs Garden and Home beautiful garden center/greenhouse operation in North Attleboro.

Following in my predecessors' footsteps I contribute regularly to our Twitter feed [@MDARCommish](https://twitter.com/MDARCommish). I hope you might sign up to keep track of what I'm doing. I know that sounds like I am very technically inclined, but nothing can be further from the truth. I do take photos and write tweets (that are generally too long). Fortunately, MDAR staff gets my tweets down to size, generally helps me out and "tweets" on my behalf.

Some of you may know that my family's business continually posted really corny horticultural sayings on a changeable letter board at our business for over fifty years. In that spirit, please know that we at MDAR will go out on a limb for you!

Have a great spring!



John Lebeaux, Commissioner



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FOREFRONT

MDAR Announces Open Application Period for Grant Programs

MDAR will be accepting applications from agricultural operations who wish to participate in the Department's grant programs. Interested operations are encouraged to review the applications on each programs webpage. If interested in applying applications must be submitted by program deadlines with any supporting materials included with the application.

Farm Viability Enhancement Program (FVEP)

This popular business planning and technical assistance program provides management advice and grants from \$25,000 up to \$100,000 to implement farm growth and sustainability strategies. Farm operators not only receive up-front cash awards for signing a 5 or 10 year Agricultural Covenant, but also receive valuable consultations and visits from a team of experts to discuss farm production and management, marketing, and business planning. Typical uses of funds from the Farm Viability Program include building or repairing farm structures, modernizing field equipment, purchasing delivery vehicles and tractors, adding farm kitchens and improving retail marketing structures. FVEP applications are available at www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/about/divisions/fvep.html. The deadline for applications is June 23, 2015.

Ag-Energy Grant (Ag-Energy)

The purpose of the MDAR's Ag-Energy Grant is to assist agricultural operations in an effort to improve energy efficiency and to facilitate adoption of alternative clean energy technologies in order that they can become more sustainable and the Commonwealth can maximize the environmental and economic benefits from these technologies. Reimbursement grants of up to \$25,000 will be awarded on a competitive basis. All projects must be completed by June 30, 2016. The deadline for applications is June 11th, 2015. Ag-Energy Grant applications are available at www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/about/divisions/ag-energy.html.

Agricultural Environmental Enhancement Program (AEEP)

The purpose of AEEP is to support agricultural operations that are looking to install conservation practices that prevent direct impacts on water quality, ensure efficient use of water, as well as address impacts on air quality. By providing reimbursement directly to agricultural operations that implement eligible projects that prevent, reduce or eliminate environmental impacts, the program achieves its purpose and goals of minimizing environmental impacts from these operations for the benefit of the Commonwealth.

AEEP is a competitive, re-imbusement grant program that funds materials and labor up to \$25,000 or 85% of project costs. All projects must be completed by June 30, 2016. The deadline for applications is June 5th, 2015. AEEP grant applications are available at www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/about/divisions/aEEP.html.

Agricultural Food Safety Improvement Program (AFSIP)

The purpose of AFSIP is to support agricultural operations that are looking to upgrade food safety practices within their operation. By enhancing food safety measures these operations are able to maintain or increase their market access while working towards minimizing the risk of microbial contamination and food-borne illnesses.

AFSIP is a competitive, re-imbusement grant program that funds projects up to \$20,000 or 75% of project costs. All projects must be completed by June 30, 2016. The deadline for applications is June 17th, 2015. AFSIP grant applications are available at www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/about/divisions/afsip.html.

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MA Food Systems Planning Update

As you know, the Massachusetts Food Systems Planning is in full motion! This will be the first comprehensive food system plan since 1974. This year's focus to date has been on the engagement process and beginning synthesis and analysis of all of the input toward the plan's eventual goals and strategies. Working groups have been meeting, have made mid-course changes to ensure that they were engaging a broad range of participants and covering all of the critical issues, and began refining ideas into objectives and recommendations. Team members held numerous meetings with key individuals and groups, gathering their input and building a wide network of support for the eventual plan. **Visit www.mafoodplan.org to see remaining dates for working groups, as well as to comment.** A MA Food System Plan Listening Session will be held April 30, Forbush Memorial Library, 118 Main Street, Westminister, 4:00 – 5:00 pm. Email Chelsea Patriss for more information: chna9northcentral@gmail.com

Writing has begun on some of the core sections of the plan: the preamble, a chapter laying out the existing conditions of the Commonwealth's food system, and a chapter documenting the engagement work done throughout the process are all underway, along with a gap analysis of the food economy and workforce. Through the website, comments on draft chapters as they are released can be made.

A full description of the plan and working group lead contacts is at www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/boards-commissions/food-policy-council. A few opportunities remain to join the working groups before they wrap up recommendations at the end of the month.

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and three partnering organizations (Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Franklin Regional Council of Governments, and Massachusetts Workforce Alliance) are facilitating the planning process and will help to draft the plan, on behalf of the MA Food Policy Council (MFPC), through a contract managed by MDAR.

The plan will provide general framework for goals and objectives that will improve Massachusetts' agricultural economy, enhance the resiliency of the Commonwealth's food system, and improve the nutritional health of the state's population. The plan will have a heavy, but not exclusive emphasis, on food production in the Commonwealth and the economic viability of the agricultural sector.

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MEMA Submits Declaration Request - Farms Need to Submit Forms ASAP

[Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency](#) (MEMA) has submitted a declaration request to FEMA / the President to obtain agency-level declaration for economic injury to see if MEMA may be able to make the Small Business Association's (SBA) Economic Injury Disaster Local program (EIDL) available to Massachusetts businesses.

NOTICE: Report Your Farm/Business Economic Impact from Winter Storm. Estimated Disaster Worksheet is for any farms/businesses that may have suffered a substantial economic injury (unable to meet its obligations and pay its ordinary and necessary operating expenses) as a direct result of the January/February snowstorms. A minimum number of businesses are needed to meet SBA requirements for a declaration, the [Estimated Disaster Worksheet](#) needs to be

completed for each affected business. Eligible businesses within a declared disaster area are: small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, and most private nonprofit organizations. The revenue decrease experienced by these businesses should show at least a 40% uninsured loss. Completing a form does not commit a business to applying for a SBA loan in the event the program is activated.

Farms / businesses that may qualify are encouraged to fill out and submit the form back to MEMA as soon as possible, so that the program can be turned on for all businesses in the affected counties.

[Click here for *Estimated Disaster Economic Injury Worksheet for Businesses*](#)

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Reminder Horse Owners Vaccinate Against Mosquito-Borne Diseases

Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) are advising horse owners to plan “spring shots” with their veterinarians to ensure proper protection from mosquito-borne diseases like West Nile Virus (WNV) and Eastern Equine Encephalitis virus (EEE). MDAR reminds equine owners that annual vaccinations should be timed so that their animals are protected prior to the peak arboviral season beginning in late July and August and to ensure that the vaccine will remain protective through the first hard frost. Owners are urged not to wait until positive cases are reported in their area, since it can take several weeks for an animal to be fully protected by a vaccine. Young animals or those not known to be vaccinated previously will likely need two vaccines for adequate protection. If timed correctly previously vaccinated animals may need only a single dose for the season.

Other species such as pheasants, emus, llamas, and alpacas can be affected as well, especially by EEE. Although the vaccines are only licensed for use in horses, they have been shown to protect llamas and alpacas too. Owners should consult with their veterinarian regarding these other at-risk species, and their particular situation.

In addition, owners should reduce potential mosquito breeding sites on their property by eliminating standing water from containers such as buckets, tires, and wading pools - especially after heavy rains. Water troughs may provide mosquito breeding habitat and should be cleaned periodically during the summer months to reduce mosquitoes near paddock areas. Horse owners should consider keeping horses in indoor stalls during times of peak mosquito activity between dusk and dawn to reduce their risk of exposure to mosquitoes. Use of approved repellents should also be considered.

While infected animals are not generally considered to play a role in further spread, if an animal is suspected of having WNV or EEE, owners are required to report to the Division of Animal Health by calling 617-626-1795 and to the Department of Public Health (DPH) by calling 617-983-6800.

The State Reclamation and Mosquito Control Board within the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources oversee mosquito control in Massachusetts. For more information call 617-626-1735 or visit www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/pesticides/mosquito/.

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Update Your Farm Information on Massgrown Map

Reminder for farms to check your information on the Massgrown map to make sure your farm information is up to date, www.mass.gov/agr/massgrown/map. Our Massgrown portal is getting more web traffic than ever! In past year, the number of page-views for the MassGrown portal increased by 26% to over 500,000 pageviews. That means that more and more consumers are finding out about your farm and activities across the state! Send your edits to Rick LeBlanc, Richard.LeBlanc@state.ma.us. If you would like to be added to the map, please fill

out the two page marketing survey, click [here](#) ([.pdf](#), [.doc](#)).

Also, let us know about your special farm events! Our [Agricultural and Culinary Events Calendar](#) is one of our most popular Massachusetts grown...and fresher website features. Curious locavores and culinary travelers are eager to find a farm, culinary or community event. Submit your calendar listings [here](#). Have a favorite farm/family recipe? Send that in as well to Julia.Grimaldi@state.ma.us and we will look to feature it as [Recipe of the Month](#). We also tweet them out from time to time [@Massgrown](#).

"Massgrown and Fresher" price cards and posters are now available. [Click here](#) to see our various Massgrown posters, price cards, and order form.

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Farmers' Market Updates

[Farmers' Market Seeking Vendors](#) - Many farmers' markets across the state are looking for additional vendors for the 2015 season. [Check here](#) to see if there is a market for you. The list will be updated throughout the season, so check back for updates.

[SNAP Wireless Equipment Options](#) - There are currently two programs for farmers market managers and farmers looking for wireless equipment to process SNAP payments. For more information, including eligibility criteria [visit here](#).

[Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Certifications](#) - The [Massachusetts Farmers' Market Nutrition Program](#) (FMNP) is a state-administered federal nutrition program that provides women and children enrolled in the WIC (Women, Infants and Children) program and low-income seniors, with coupons redeemable for fresh locally grown produce from Massachusetts farmers' markets. The Massachusetts program is administered by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) in cooperation with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, WIC Nutrition Program, and Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

WIC participants receive \$20 in coupons and seniors receive \$25 in coupons (\$2.50 each for each coupon) to use at authorized Massachusetts farmers' markets. The FMNP runs from June through October. Authorized farmers are reimbursed for the face value of the coupons.

Farmers may accept coupons only at markets authorized to participate in the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. All markets and farmers that are new to the program must receive training. We are conducting webinars for new markets and farmers, and for any participants who would like to be reminded of the program guidelines. For more information, or to become an authorized farmer or market, contact Rebecca Davidson at 617-626-1744, or at Rebecca.Davidson@State.ma.us.



Dana Prouty, Mike Cerra and
Program Coordinator Bob Rondeau

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Tractor ROPS Program in "First" Gear

Clover Hill Farm in Gilbertville is the first to take advantage of the new ROPS Rebate Program in Massachusetts. The ROPS program allots farmers that retrofit tractors with rollover protective structures a rebate of 70% of the cost of purchase and installation up to \$865.

Clover Hill Farm is designated a Century Farm and the Prouty family has been farming in Gilbertville for five generations since 1888. Clover Hill Farm grows a variety of crops that are used for their custom blended animal feeds,

including hay, corn, and soy. A variety of meat products (beef, poultry, and lamb) are also sold to local markets. Howe cranberries are grown in the flats next to the Ware River and four varieties of hops are grown for local brewers.

During a recent visit, Dana Prouty and Mike Cerra took some time to answer a few questions. Dana grew up on Clover Hill Farm and when asked how long he has been farming answered “all my life.” He found out about the ROPS program from Kip Graham, USDA FSA Holden office. “I find out about everything through him.”

Why did you install a protective structure to your tractor? “Along with the rollover protection, the canopy protects us from the sun and allows us to think better during the long hours of hay production. We don’t farm much level ground. We also have some younger relatives that are coming into the business that we want to protect,” said Dana. Did the ROPS Program meet your expectations? “Yes, absolutely, the forms took a little bit of time, but were pretty simple. We received the full \$865 rebate.”

The Massachusetts [Rollover Protective Structure Program \(ROPS\)](#) is a PILOT Program designed to assist farmers in installing rollbars by offering a rebate of 70% of costs up to \$865. With the help of the New York Center for Agricultural Medicine & Health, MDAR is pleased to introduce a Tractor Rollbar Rebate Program for Massachusetts. This Pilot Program has limited funds, but we hope to assist in retrofitting 28 to 35 tractors with rollbars in 2015. Participants in the ROPS program will be chosen in a first come first served manner.

How the ROPS Rebate Program works for Massachusetts:

All participants must apply on-line at www.ropsr4u.com or by calling the ROPS Hotline (1-877-ROPS-R4U or 1-877-767-7748). ROPS Hotline staff will provide estimated costs as well as sources for purchasing certified ROPS. Prior to ordering, participants must call for Pre-approval. Pre-approval is required to ensure funds are available. We do not guarantee the rebate until approval is given. This effectively helps us to track how much money is spent, promised out, got left, etc. Once Pre-approval is given, the participant may order the ROPS and then must re-contact the ROPS Hotline staff (within a day or two) to confirm where they ordered and what the estimated price is. [Flyer and complete details here.](#)

Contacts: Barbara Bayes - ROPS Hotline (1-877-ROPS-R4U or 1-877-767-7748), bbayes@nycamh.com, Bob Rondeau, MDAR, 617-626-1804, robert.rondeau@state.ma.us.

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Statewide Ag Fairs Judging Workshops

The MDAR is pleased to present three Agricultural Fair Judging Workshops this spring to be held in the western, eastern and northeastern area of the State. In order to be a Certified Judge for Fruits, Vegetables, Canning and Community/Grange Exhibits, a judge candidate needs to attend instructional training as well as take a test based on the information presented at instructional training. Information covered is based on the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Agricultural Fairs Blue Book. To become a Class One Certified Judge, the judge candidate will be required to pass the test with a score of 80% or higher. To become a Class Two Certified Judge, the judge candidate will be required to pass the test with a score of 80% or higher as well as mentor a Massachusetts Certified Agricultural Fair Judge(s) to at least 3 agricultural fairs held in Massachusetts within the next 18 month from the date of passing the test. Each from 8:00 am – 4:00 pm.

Meeting Locations and Details:

- **Saturday, May 9 - Western Area:** Main floor of the Massachusetts Building located on the Eastern States Exposition Fairgrounds, 1305 Memorial Avenue, West Springfield.
- **Saturday May 30 - Northeastern Area:** Carriage House located at the Topsfield Fairgrounds, Route 1 in Topsfield.
- **Saturday May 16 - Southeastern Area:** Marshfield Fairgrounds Administration building 140 Main St, Marshfield.

To Register: Contact Ellen Hart at MA Department of Agricultural Resources, fax or email attached [registration form](#)  to Ellen Hart, fax: 617-626-1850 or email: Ellen.Hart@state.ma.us. Deadline for registering is the Wednesday prior to the Saturday meeting location.

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Massachusetts Animal Fund Update



The Massachusetts Animal Fund, established as a proactive measure to provide assistance for the wellbeing of Massachusetts' most vulnerable animals, works with animal control officers to distribute vouchers for free spay/neuter surgery for stray dogs and cats housed in animal control facilities and those dogs and cats owned by families who would not otherwise be able to afford these services for their pets. The Fund also provides training to Massachusetts animal control officers. The Fund operates solely on donations made either via a tax check-off (Line 32f) on the Massachusetts resident income tax return and online at massanimalfund.com/donate.

Department of Agricultural Resources' Massachusetts Animal Fund Spays and Neuters 526 Animals during Commonwealth Fix Event - The Department of Agricultural Resources' Massachusetts Animal Fund continued its effort to end animal homelessness in Massachusetts by spaying and neutering 526 dogs and cats during its inaugural Commonwealth Fix event, which ran from March 22 to March 28. These dogs and cats joined the 3,470 other animals in the Commonwealth that have been fixed since the Spay/Neuter Voucher Program began just nine months ago. [More here.](#)

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EPA Worker Protection Standard Train-the Trainer Course for Organic and Non-certified Pesticide Users

UMass Extension is offering half-day formal WPS Train the Trainer courses this spring. These programs are geared toward organic growers and other farmers who are not certified pesticide applicators. After you leave the training, you will have the ability and authority to conduct both handler and worker trainings for your employees as required by EPA.

Training Dates:

- Central MA: Tuesday, April 21 from 9am-1pm - Brigham Hill Community Farm, 37 Wheeler Rd., North Grafton, MA
- Western MA: Tuesday, April 28 from 9am-1pm - Brookfield Farm, 24 Hulst Rd., Amherst, MA

WORKSHOPS ARE FREE, but pre-registration is required. Contact Lisa McKeag at 413-577-3976 or lmckeag@umext.umass.edu.

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Massachusetts Shellfish Aquaculture Economic Impact Study

Last year CCCE/Woods Hole Sea Grant/SEMARC contracted with the UMASS Center for Marketing Research to conduct an economic survey of the aquaculture industry in Massachusetts. Since their survey went out in 2014 all values were based on 2013 activity.

MA Summary of Economic Impact:

- The output of the shellfish aquaculture industry in Massachusetts was valued at approximately **\$25.4m** in 2013, which in turn generated approximately **\$45.5m** in the Massachusetts economy, or **1.79** times the activity
- Shellfish farmers were responsible for approximately **909 jobs**
- Shellfish farmers paid approximately **\$11.9m** in wages in 2013. Their economic activity generated additional labor income of **\$8.2m**, for a total of approximately **\$20.1m** in labor income in MA

Link to complete study here: [MA Aquaculture Economic Impact Study 2015](#)

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Vendors Invited for 6th Annual Boston Local Food Festival On The Greenway

Sunday, September 20, 2015 - 6th Annual Boston Local Food Festival. Farms, restaurants, specialty foods, and local food related organizations are invited to participate!

The Boston Local Food Festival, considered New England's largest one day farmers market, is Boston's premier food event connecting thousands of eaters to healthy sustainable foods grown and produced close to home.

The Boston Local Food Festival showcases farmers, local restaurants, food trucks, specialty food producers, fisher folks, and organizations focusing on healthy food and fitness from New England. The festival also features lively chef & DIY demos, a seafood throwdown competition, diverse music and performances, family fun zone and more. In 2014 crowds topped 50,000+ for our most successful year yet!

To learn more and register for the Boston Local Food Festival, visit our website at: bostonlocalfoodfestival.org.

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Plant and Donate Surplus Crops to Boston Area Gleaners

Farmers, as you are developing your crop plans for the season, consider planting one extra row of your crops such as cabbage, corn, potatoes, carrots, etc. Call Boston Area Gleaners to glean it, and your neighbors in need will be provided with a healthy, fresh, local food source! All volunteer groups are supervised by experienced staff and can be organized with minimal notice (1-2 days). BAG's current geographic area is within a 1-hour driving distance from their Waltham office. To learn more, visit www.bostonareagleaners.org/farmers-click-here.html. Please contact Matt Crawford, Lead Gleaning Coordinator, if interested; office: 781-894-3212, cell: 978-578-5647, email: coordinator@bostonareagleaners.org. Boston Area Gleaners, Inc. is fully insured and provides accurate harvest records.

Boston Area Gleaners is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to rescuing surplus farm crops for people in need. BAG delivers high quality, local produce to pantries and meal programs by working closely with local farmers, providing volunteer labor to harvest what would otherwise be plowed under or what was specifically planted for donation.

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MA Food Plate Update



The 1,500 sign up goal has been met, but this is where the rubber meets the road. Once we have the \$40 checks / payments in hand from all 1,500+ people who have expressed interest, we will be able to send the complete package to RMV to print the plates. **Help us put a MA food plate on the road!** Sign up for your special Massachusetts Choose Fresh and Local Food Plate. Show your support for healthy, nutritious food, working landscapes, and vibrant community markets by [signing up for your special food plate](#)

today! The additional cost of a special plate is a tax-deductible charitable contribution. Signing up does not obligate you

to purchase a plate until we reach our 1,500 plates committed goal. Here is [how it works](#). Join us in putting the plate on the road!

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MA Agriculture Calendar Photo Contest - Now Accepting Entries



Did you snap a great picture of kids picking strawberries last summer? Or maybe your camera captured a herd of dairy cows on sunny hillside, or the vibrant color of a cranberry harvest in the fall. With a wealth of farm and horticultural products and landscapes to choose from, these are just a few of the possibilities for amateur photographers competing in the 2015 Massachusetts Agriculture Calendar Photo Contest. **The deadline for submissions is June 1, 2015.**

When sending in photos, keep in mind all seasons of the year; 12 photos will be selected, one for each month. We are seeking photos that represent the traditional (maple sugaring, cranberries, dairy cows, flowers/plants, fall fruits, farmers and farm families), as well as the new and dynamic, such as on-farm renewable energy systems and urban agriculture. Winning photographers will be credited in the 2016 Ag calendar and will be invited to a ceremony at the Eastern States Exposition (The Big E) in West Springfield this September (tickets to the fair included). Besides being featured in the printed Calendar, winning images are posted each month on the MDAR's [homepage](#), and sometimes even in our [blog posts](#). It is a great way to get featured in many local news publications as well.

The calendar each year is produced in collaboration with the [Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources](#) (MDAR), [MA Ag in the Classroom](#) (MAC), and [MA Farm to School](#). It also includes sponsored pages by the many great Ag associations in the state. Last year included the [MA Maple Producers Assoc.](#) (March), [MA Farm Bureau](#) (January and May), [MA Dairy Promotion Board](#) (June), [MA State Grange](#)(July), [MA Fairs Association](#) (August), [MA Fruit Growers Assoc.](#) (Sept.), [MA Flower Growers Assoc.](#)(October), [Cape Cod Cranberry Association](#) (November), and the [MA Christmas Tree Assoc.](#) (December). View pictures of last year winners at [aginclassroom.org](#).

***New this year – submitting photos online – [Click here for entry form and instructions](#) .**

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UPCOMING EVENTS / WORKSHOPS

- **April 20 - The Sterling Agricultural Commission is hosting a talk on MGL Chapter 61** and its application for real estate tax assessments for agriculture and forestry lands at 7:00 PM. The talk will be held at the First Church Parish Hall, Sterling. The speaker is Brad Mitchell, Director of Government Relations for Mass. Farm Bureau. Agriculturalists and the general public from Sterling and other communities are encouraged to attend. www.sterling-ma.gov/agricultural-commission
- **April 23 - Improving Your Website's Performance** - 6:00 – 8:00 pm - HCC Kittredge Center Room 303, 303 Homestead Avenue, Holyoke. Part of CISA's Local Hero Program. The first of two advanced classes on web marketing, this class will teach you how to use Google Analytics to understand how people find and use your website. Carey Baker of Midnightson Designs will explain the wealth of information available from Google Analytics and how to use it to analyze traffic flow on your website, improve the impact and usability of your

website, and think strategically about online advertising. Dinner provided. Cost is \$12 for Local Hero members and \$15 for non-members. RSVP by 4/21 to Kristen at kristen@buylocalfood.org or 413-665-7100, ext. 12.

- **April 27 - Scouting for Early-Season Landscape Pests and Problems** - 4:30 - 6:30 pm, UMass Amherst. Join Randy Prostack, Extension Weed Specialist, Nick Brazee, Extension Plant Pathologist, and Rick Harper, Extension Assistant Professor in Urban & Community Forestry, for a walk through the landscape as they discuss and demonstrate how to put IPM practices to work efficiently and examine some of the most common pest and cultural problems of woody ornamentals. Dress for walking; workshop held rain or shine. Bring a clipboard, pencil and hand lens if possible. Preregistration required, [Details here](#).
- **April 30 - MA Food System Plan Forum** - Forbush Memorial Library, 118 Main Street, Westminister - 4:00 – 5:00 pm. The development of the Massachusetts Food System Plan relies on input from everyone in the food system: everyone who eats. It is a discussion among producers, processors, distributors, regulators, social service providers, and others, all trying to address fundamental questions about the future of food in our state. Questions like: How do we ensure that farms can remain viable and be supported in their efforts to protect natural resources? How can we provide better access to fresh, healthy, local foods to families who traditionally haven't had access? How do we develop an innovative system of processing and distributing local foods, while providing living-wage jobs for thousands of employees? Everyone is invited to raise questions, and to help find answers. For more information, go to www.mafoodplan.org or email Chelsey Patris at chna9northcentral@gmail.com.
- **May 1 - A World of Taste at Showcase Live**, Foxboro. First ever wine, food, and beer (and liquor) tasting coming to [Gillette Stadium and Patriot Place](#). Celebrity guests from the Patriots and Revolution have been invited. This event will have 40-50 vendors showcasing worldly and local products for you to TASTE. Tickets now on sale online at www.aworldoftaste.com. **For sponsorship opportunities**, vendor space, and media access, please email: info@aworldoftaste.com. Vendors include: Cabot Creamery Cooperative, Sam Adams Brewing Company, Plymouth Winery, Mill River Wines, Downeast Cider, Cambridge Brewing Company, and many many more! 100% of proceeds of this event will be going to charity. For more information, visit www.aworldoftaste.com.
- **May 3 - Urban and Suburban Carbon Farming to Reverse Global Warming** – 9:00 am – 5:00 pm, Harvard Science Center, 1 Oxford Street, Cambridge. Come spend the day with fellow climate activists, gardeners, scientists, educators, homeowners, and community organizers. Learn how soil restoration is key to reversing climate change and about the contributions urban and suburban dwellers can make! Atmospheric carbon dioxide is at dangerous levels. If we work with nature, photosynthesis (plants) can remove excess CO2 from the air and store it safely in the form of soil carbon for centuries or millennia. More carbon in the soil means rich biodiversity, healthy plants, abundant food, thriving local economies ... and a cooler planet. [More here](#).
- **May 4 – 2015 SEMAP Twilight Series Kickoff: Pastured Poultry** - 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm - Copicut Farms, Dartmouth, MA. Includes a farm tour, where folks will get a close up of the brooder, the broiler field coops, the laying hens, and the pig pastures, followed by some time touring the slaughtering facility. There will be in-depth conversation about the set up and daily functioning of the slaughtering facility as well as discussion about the resources available in the state for folks to do their own poultry processing using the State licensed Mobile Processing Unit. [Details here](#).
- **May 5 - Central Mass Grown Networking Follow-up meeting** – 10:30 am – 12:30 pm - Tower Hill Botanic Garden, Boylston, MA. Come share what you need to succeed and hear about the many resources offered by area organizations including Tower Hill Botanic Gardens, MA Dept. of Environmental Protection, MA Farm to School, the Regional Environmental Council, and the Central Mass. Regional Planning Commission. RSVP to Isabel@massfarmtoschool.org by April 30th.
- **May 16 - Slow Poultry Seminar: Sustainable Poultry Production** - 9:00 - 5:00 - Red Shirt Farm - 60 Williamstown Road, Lanesboro, MA. [Jim Adkins](#), founder of the [Sustainable Poultry Network \(SPN\)](#), will be presenting an 8-hour workshop that focuses on "Slow Poultry"—birds that can naturally reproduce, be genetically maintained, are capable of thriving on outdoor pasture and grow at a normal rate. Normal "slow" growth translates to a strong skeletal structure, normal organ development, more muscle, better texture and

greater nutrition in the meat, and a stronger immune system. Register here: sustainablepoultrynetwork.com/event/slow-poultry-western-ma/ or contact: Jim Schultz 413-822-9250, jschultz@pittsfield.net.

*For others and our ongoing list of ag-industry events and workshops, visit and bookmark www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/events/. For culinary and consumer events, click [here](#).

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USDA NEWS

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service Grant Opportunities

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) and The Federal State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) will be solicited through a competitive RFR process through the Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR).

- **Federal State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) - Deadline May 1, 2015** - The [Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program \(FSMIP\)](#) enables states to explore new market opportunities for U.S. food and agricultural products and to encourage research and innovation aimed at improving the efficiency and performance of the U.S. marketing system. Agricultural and commodity organizations, community-based organizations, economic development organizations, and groups that represent Native American and socially disadvantaged producers are encouraged to apply. Multi-state and/or regional initiatives are also encouraged to apply. Details here: www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/markets/fsmip.html
- **Specialty Crop Block Grant Program - Farm Bill - Deadline May 8, 2015** - The purpose of the [Specialty Crop Block Grant Program \(SCBGP\)](#) is to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Specialty crops are defined as "fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture)." Details here: www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/markets/specialty-crops.html

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USDA Offers Farmworker Housing Loans and Grants

Pre-applications for construction or purchase and sub-stantial rehab of off-farm housing are due June 23. Rental Assistance and operating assistance are available. Projects serving high poverty census tracts will receive additional points. Contact a [Rural Development state office](#) for an application package.

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BRIEFS / CLASSIFIED / JOB OPPORTUNITIES

- **Education Program Manager Job Opening** – [Groundwork Lawrence \(GWL\)](#), seeks an Education Program Manager to lead, implement, and teach a variety of youth education programs. Reporting to the Deputy Director, this position provides leadership, direction, development, management, and evaluation of GWL's education programs for youth, families, and groups. The Manager will supervise and collaborate with two other Education Coordinators, a Program Coordinator, an AmeriCorps member, and temporary seasonal staff and interns to deliver top quality environmental and public health youth programming. To apply: Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Please submit letter of interest describing your relevant experience and interests and your resume by April 24th to: Groundwork Lawrence, Attn: Human Resources, 60 Island Street, Lawrence, MA 01840, fax: 978-974-0882, or hr@groundworklawrence.org. [Details here](#).
- **Wine Shop Manager Wanted** - The [Massachusetts Farm Wineries and Growers Association](#) is looking for a Manager for our Wine Shop in the Boston Public Market. The initial set up and day to day management of our new Massachusetts Wine Shop at the Boston Public Market, Boston, MA. This is full-time salaried position. In addition to managerial responsibilities of inventory, loss prevention, scheduling and financial reporting, Wine Shop Manager must consistently greet customers

cheerfully, provide informed tastings, initiate, close and cash out sales, respond to constant consumer questions and keep store stocked and clean, either when working alone and/or with an associate(s). Anticipated hire date: June 15, 2015
Anticipated opening date of Wine Shop: July 11, 2015. Complete details can be obtained by email to MAFWGA@gmail.com
. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until the position is filled.

About the *Farm & Market Report*

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Next issue to be published for June/July. Please send news, calendar and/or classified information by June 8 to Richard.LeBlanc@state.ma.us, or fax to 617-626-1850. To unsubscribe or change your address, send an e-mail message to Richard.LeBlanc@state.ma.us or call 617-626-1759.



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/MDARCommish.