Department of Agricultural Resources Awards Attleboro Business with Commonwealth Quality Innovator Award

ATTLEBORO – April 16, 2015 – Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) Commissioner John Lebeaux was joined by state and local officials in awarding Ashley Driscoll and John Irving, co-owners of 2 Friends Farm, with the Commonwealth Quality Innovator Award. The honor recognizes entrepreneurial farm businesses that have effectively developed a new idea, device or process in food production.

“The Commonwealth Quality Program (CQP) is designed to identify locally sourced products that are grown, harvested and processed right here in Massachusetts using practices that are safe, sustainable and environmentally friendly,” said DAR Commissioner John Lebeaux. “This program provides growers with a competitive edge in the wholesale and retail marketplace, and assures consumers receive the safest, most wholesome products available.”

Founded in 2013, 2 Friends Farm’s mission is to provide consumers with an alternative to unhealthy food. Located in Attleboro, the indoor, urban farm is housed in a brick warehouse. The organic growing of microgreens and miniplants allows community members and high-school students with the opportunity to harvest rows and rows of tiny greens in an impressive array of varieties that contain about five times more vitamins and carotenoids than mature vegetables.

“The CQP program has assisted our small business with market expansion, reaching consumers through retail channels, and satisfying buyers need for a certified food safety certification,” said Ashley Driscoll, Founding Friend of 2 Friends Farm.

Currently there are approximately 100 CQP participants across six agricultural sectors. The CQP brand recognizes and assists Massachusetts farm businesses that promote sustainability, quality, and safety in their practices. The program also helps safeguard the Commonwealth of Massachusetts’ natural resources by influencing the choices consumers make, and helping them to identify locally grown or harvested products that meet environmental, safety and quality standards.

“With the help of the Commonwealth Quality Program, Ashley Driscoll and John Irving’s innovative small business is doing a fantastic job of promoting healthy eating and lifestyle choices by growing food locally,” said State Senator Richard Ross. “This great program has offered them, and other local growers, the tools they need to succeed and I look forward to witnessing 2 Friends Farm’s continued growth and development in our community.”

“I was absolutely thrilled to see quality organic produce being grown in Attleboro,” said State Representative Paul Heroux. “It was truly astonishing to see the scope and size 2 Friends Farm has grown to in a very short period of time. The award given to them by the Department of Agriculture is well deserved and I am excited to see 2 Friends Farm continue to thrive in Attleboro.”

Urban Agriculture is an important component to the growing local food movement, nationally and across the Commonwealth. DAR recognizes that urban food production will play an important role in addressing health, social, economic and environmental issues and is working with organizations and sister agencies to support initiatives for urban, sustainable food production.

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DAR’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 – DAR 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 DAR’s website at www.mass.gov/agr, and/or follow at twitter.com/mdarcommish.

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