BOSTON – November 27, 2015 – The Baker-Polito Administration has declared Friday, November 27, 2015 to be “Green Friday” in recognition of the Christmas tree season. To celebrate, Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) Commissioner John Lebeaux and local officials will participate in the annual tree cutting ceremony at Coward Farms in Southwick, which grows Christmas trees for the fresh cut market.

"By declaring the day after Thanksgiving as ‘Green Friday,’ we recognize the contributions of Massachusetts Christmas tree growers to our economy, agricultural industry and holiday season," said Governor Charlie Baker. "I encourage everyone to support our Christmas tree growers this holiday season by purchasing a Massachusetts-grown tree."

Christmas tree season in Massachusetts provides hundreds of seasonal jobs at nearly 400 Christmas tree farms on approximately 3,000 acres of land from Cape Cod to the Berkshires. Approximately $1.4 million is added to the Commonwealth’s economy each year from the sale of Massachusetts-grown Christmas trees.

Christmas tree farms, which are oftentimes sited on soils that cannot support other crops, stabilize soil which helps prevent erosion and protect water supplies. When chipped, the trees can be used as a renewable source of energy to be burned as fuel, used as mulch or composted.

“Christmas tree farms are helpful to the environment and are a valuable part of the Commonwealth’s important agricultural industry,” said Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Matthew Beaton. "The Baker-Polito Administration is proud to recognize our strong Christmas tree industry, which has many family-operated businesses that provide a fun, outdoor activity for families and a special Christmas tradition."

One acre of 8 to 12-year-old Christmas trees produces nearly a half ton of new biomass each year, removing nearly 500 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and adding approximately 1,000 pounds of oxygen. Christmas tree farms also provide stable refuge and feeding areas for wildlife, allowing for a natural buildup of bird and animal populations.

“We are honored to recognize Massachusetts Christmas tree growers who work hard to grow and care for trees that are ecologically beneficial to our environment,” said DAR Commissioner John Lebeaux. "Our tree growers are committed to caring for the land, preserving open space, and implementing best management practices. I encourage residents to take advantage of the many family Christmas tree farms for their holiday tree and decorations needs."

“For many, gathering the family Christmas tree is central to their seasonal traditions,” said State Senator Don Humason (R-Westfield). "With the holidays fast approaching, today is a wonderful time to express our gratitude to the Commonwealth’s Christmas tree farms for their contributions to our local economies, the environment, and, most notably, their role in longstanding traditions across the state."

“The Christmas tree industry is very important to the Commonwealth and it’s great to be able to kick-off ‘Green Friday’ in Southwick at the Coward Family Farm,” said State Representative Nicholas Boldyga (R-Southwick). "Christmas trees farms provide jobs to residents of the Commonwealth and the trees offer many environmental benefits and I'm proud to have Christmas tree farms in my district."

Visit DAR’s farm finder to find information on Massachusetts Christmas tree farms, farmers' markets and roadside produce stands.
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.

Follow Commissioner Lebeaux on Twitter: www.twitter.com/mdarcommish
Visit our MDAR’s website:............................. www.mass.gov/agr
Visit the Energy Smarts blog:......................... www.mass.gov/blog/energy
Visit The Great Outdoors blog:......................... www.mass.gov/blog/environment

251 Causeway St, Boston, MA 02114 — (617) 626-1700 office / (617) 626 1850 (fax)