

Baker-Polito Administration Awards Grants to Promote Massachusetts Dairy Industry

BOSTON – August 10, 2016 – The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) and the Massachusetts Dairy Promotion Board (MDPB) today awarded six grants totaling \$183,420 to nonprofits for projects which seek to advance the image, sales and demand for Massachusetts dairy products.

“Our administration is committed to supporting the Commonwealth’s hardworking farmers, and ensuring Massachusetts residents have access to nutritious, locally produced food,” said Governor Charlie Baker. “These grants will assist initiatives and programs designed to maintain an economically viable dairy industry in the Commonwealth, and raise consumer awareness and demand for local dairy products.”

“As demand for locally-grown food increases, promotion and education are necessary to keep dairy products relevant in the marketplace,” said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito. “The Massachusetts Dairy Promotion Board Grant Program helps support our state’s dairy farmers who contribute to our agricultural and tourism industries and provide fresh, nutritious food for the Commonwealth’s residents.”

The MDPB, a nine-member board of state officials and dairy farmers formed to promote Massachusetts dairy products, is chaired by a designee of the MDAR commissioner and helps promote increased consumption of dairy products through effective use of promotion, education and research. The MDPB Grant Program, overseen by the board, is funded by the state’s dairy farmers.

“The approximately 150 family-run dairy farms in Massachusetts are a vital part of the Massachusetts food system, producing not just nutritious milk but also yogurt, cheese, butter and famous New England ice cream,” said Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Matthew Beaton. “This grant program not only supports our local dairy industry, but also assists efforts to educate consumers on buying local, which will help keep Massachusetts citizens healthy and boost our economy.”

Examples of Fiscal Year 2017 grant projects include supporting school nutrition and wellness through a mini-grant program that facilitates school breakfast program, as well as dairy promotion and education at Eastern States Exposition, along with a regional buy-local campaign educating consumers about the contributions and challenges of dairy farming.

“These grant funds will be used to build capacity with our buy-locals, regional dairy industry promotion organizations, and dairy minded non-profits to keep dairy products relevant in the market place while also educating consumers of the positive contributions dairy farming has on agriculture across the Commonwealth,” said MDAR Commissioner John Lebeaux.

New England Dairy & Food Council	Boston	\$60,000.00
MA Association of Dairy Farmers	Conway	\$46,840.00
Community Involved In Sustaining Agriculture	S. Deerfield	\$43,000.00
Eastern States Exposition	W. Springfield	\$23,000.00
MA 4-H Foundation	Framingham	\$6,746.00

“Massachusetts dairy farmers provide fresh, nutritious food across the Commonwealth and are poised to grow into an even more significant contributor to our economy,” said Senate President Stanley C. Rosenberg (D-Amherst). “These grants provide funds that will be put to excellent use, helping us build on the growing demand for locally produced food, and will provide a fantastic return on a very smart investment.”

“Supporting local farmers is good for the economy and environment,” said State Senator Benjamin B. Downing (D-Pittsfield). “I want to thank the Baker-Polito Administration for continuing to support a critical part of what makes Western Massachusetts such a special place.”

“I want to thank the Baker-Polito Administration, Commissioner Lebeaux, the Department of Agriculture Resources, and the Massachusetts Dairy Promotion Board for awarding over \$89,000 in grant funding to the Massachusetts Association of Dairy Farmers in Conway and Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture in South Deerfield,” said State Representative Stephen Kulik (D-Worthington). “By awarding these grants, it shows the Administration is committed to supporting our state's dairy farmers by helping them bolster their ability to advertise, which in turn helps educate the residents of the Commonwealth about their local dairy options. I thank them all again for helping support the buy local movement.”

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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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251 Causeway Street, Boston, MA 02114 — [\(617\) 626-1700](tel:6176261700) office / [\(617\) 626 1850](tel:6176261850) (fax)