



## Commissioner's Column

### Change of Seasons Brings New Challenges

By Douglas P. Gillespie

The fall harvest and the foliage colors boost everyone's spirits, so autumn is a great time for Massachusetts agriculture! I know that many areas of the state were severely impacted by the summer drought, and we are working with USDA officials to gather the data necessary for disaster assistance.

We at MDFA have had an extremely challenging and busy summer. The budget reductions in the FY03 operating budget forced DFA to implement a voluntary workforce reduction program. Nearly all employees will be taking up to eight furlough days without pay during the year as a way to reduce operating costs. This means that some service levels and programs will have a longer response time, but I believe that this program was far preferable to laying off staff. Please be patient as we go through these difficult times. It is anticipated that further budget cuts will be coming as state revenues continue to come in below projections.

Passage of the Environmental Bond bill means that our APR staff will be pushing hard to close on about 50 properties awaiting final APR contracts. Our bond cap allows \$11 million in APR spending for FY03, and the program has been approved for about \$2.3 million in additional federal funds. These closings will substantially reduce the waiting list for the APR program, and through the winter and spring we'll be actively soliciting new applicants for this valuable program.

The Farm Viability Enhancement program, Agricultural Environmental Enhancement program, Agro-Tech Grant program and Aquaculture programs all received funding through the bond bill, and will continue as strong programs.

DFA has also received two federal bioterrorism grants that will be used to improve this area of service in Animal Health, Dairy Services, and Regulatory Services. Several new hires are anticipated as we try to improve the front line of defense in protecting our nation's food supply and agri-business economy. Specific details will be forthcoming on this priority initiative.

Unfortunately, budget reductions mean that valuable programs such as the commodity

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## Private Schools: New Market for Local Produce

The Department of Food and Agriculture has been awarded a \$28,350 federal grant to explore private schools as a new market for locally grown produce. The grant was awarded through USDA's Federal-State Market Improvement Program (FSMIP).

"Research shows that the majority of Massachusetts consumers prefer locally grown food and want to support our local economy by buying from local farms," explained Commissioner Doug Gillespie. "Despite the favorable climate, little of this consumer preference is currently reflected in the school cafeterias of our state."

That's why the state formed a task force last year to assess the opportunities for Massachusetts farmers to sell their products to schools. Ken Miller, food service director at the Fessenden School, a private school in West Newton, Mass., was a member of that group and an early, enthusiastic supporter of Bay State farms and their products. Miller soon forged a partnership with the Pioneer Valley Growers Association (PVGGA).

"The benefits of buying local are clear," said Miller. "We can offer our students produce that is superior in taste, appearance and nutritional value and we help preserve the quality of life in our state by supporting the local farming community."

"The task group identified private schools as a market sector to pursue because private school food service directors often have more autonomy in decision making," said Commissioner Gillespie. "And, Massachusetts has a significant concentration of private elementary and secondary schools as well as private colleges."

MDFA will survey food service directors' interests and buying habits, and will evaluate methods for increasing parent and student demand for local produce. Business opportunities will be communicated to growers.

David Taylor, Fessenden's interim headmaster, sees long-term advantages in buying local for his students. "When you offer superior quality



Commissioner Doug Gillespie (right) unloads a delivery of Pioneer Valley tomatoes with the help of Fessenden School food service director Ken Miller.

and nutrition to students it teaches them to make good food choices for a lifetime," said Taylor.

The Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) provides matching funds to state departments of agriculture and other agencies to develop innovative approaches to agricultural marketing. ♦

### Ag Workers Among Highest Risk for Fatal Injury on the Job

Landscapers and agricultural workers are among those at highest risk of fatal injury on the job in Massachusetts according to a new report, "Fatal Occupational Injuries in Massachusetts, 1991-1999," released by the state Department of Public Health recently.

Agriculture (excluding fishing and forestry) had the highest fatal occupational injury rate, more than five times the average rate for all industry divisions. Two thirds of fatalities in the agricultural industry division involved workers in landscaping and horticultural services.

"The DPH report underscores the importance of safety awareness and precautions on the farm and on related jobs," said DFA Commissioner Doug Gillespie.

To learn more, visit the DPH Occupational Health Surveillance Program web site at [www.state.ma.us/dph/bhsre/ohsp/ohsp.htm](http://www.state.ma.us/dph/bhsre/ohsp/ohsp.htm).

## Environmental News

### USDA Releases State Funding for EQIP program

Massachusetts farmers will be eligible for \$852,821 in federal funding for the federal Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). This funding will provide financial and technical assistance to farmers for conservation practices that improve soil, water and air quality; wildlife habitat; and surface and ground water conservation on eligible agricultural land, including livestock operations.

The sign up period has not started yet but farmers should begin working with their Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) field office in developing required plans to address their conservation needs. The federal programs can help implement the plans when the program funding becomes available.

EQIP is a voluntary conservation program that promotes environmental quality. For more information, contact your local NRCS office or USDA Service Center, listed in the phone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or on the web at <http://offices.usda.gov>. Or call the Massachusetts state NRCS office in Amherst, 413-253-4351.

### Water Quality Improvement

The state Agricultural Environmental Enhancement Program (AEEP) was re-authorized in the Environmental Bond Bill. Massachusetts farmers cultivating five acres or more are eligible to apply for activities that improve water quality. Examples of past funded projects can be found on the DFA website at [www.mass.gov/dfa](http://www.mass.gov/dfa). Applications will be available in December. For more information or to request an application contact Susan Phinney at 617-626-1772, [susan.phinney@state.ma.us](mailto:susan.phinney@state.ma.us). The application will also be available electronically.

### Agro-Environmental Technology

The goal of the Agro-Environmental Technology program is to stimulate the research and application of new and innovative technologies that will improve the agricultural industry in Massachusetts. This program was re-authorized in the Environmental Bond Bill. Examples of past projects can be found on the DFA website at [www.mass.gov/dfa](http://www.mass.gov/dfa). Applications will be available in December. For more information or to request an application contact Susan Phinney at 617-626-1772, [susan.phinney@state.ma.us](mailto:susan.phinney@state.ma.us). The application will also be available electronically. ♦

## USDA Organic Cost Share Program

The state Department of Food and Agriculture has been awarded funds from the USDA Organic Certification Cost Share Program for reimbursement to organic crop and livestock producers.

Reimbursement is available to operations certified and/or receiving continuation of certification during the period of November 1, 2002 through September 30, 2003. Payments to eligible producers will be limited to 75 percent of an individual producer's certification costs up to a maximum of \$500.

Newly revised reimbursement forms will be available November 1st and will be mailed to all certified organic growers. Contact Mary Jordan at 617-626-1750, [Mary.Jordan@state.ma.us](mailto:Mary.Jordan@state.ma.us). ♦

## Business Planning Courses Slated

Two farm business planning courses will be underwritten by MDFA this winter, both using the acclaimed NxLevel "Tilling The Soil of Opportunity" curriculum. Over 150 Massachusetts agricultural businesses have taken a similar course in the past five years, with mostly rave reviews. A new, more user-friendly text and workbook was used last year.

Each course is 10 weekly sessions starting in December. Courses are located where there is demand. Possible locations for 2002-03 include Plymouth/Bristol and Worcester/Middlesex counties. Contact Rick Chandler 413-577-0459, [rchandler@umext.umass.edu](mailto:rchandler@umext.umass.edu). ♦

## Risk Management Program Planned

The Department anticipates receiving a Risk Management Association grant for an education program during the winter months. MDFA will work cooperatively with UMass and the New England Small Farm Institute.

Topics will include on-farm risk management in general and crop insurance in particular. Contact Rick Chandler at 413-577-0459 or [rchandler@umext.umass.edu](mailto:rchandler@umext.umass.edu) if you would like to learn more for your commodity group, winter meeting or trade exhibit.

Rick is also seeking examples of how the current Federal Crop Insurance programs work or don't work for Massachusetts farms. Specific examples of successes or failures from your own experience would be very helpful. ♦

## Bay State Apple Growers May Benefit from Smaller U.S. Crop

With this year's nationwide apple crop forecast to be the smallest in 15 years, Massachusetts growers may benefit from increased wholesale prices and reduced competition from states that produce the major varieties grown here in New England. Local wholesale apple producers have suffered in recent years from depressed prices.

Some states, including New York and Michigan, that also produce varieties popular with Massachusetts consumers such as McIntosh and Cortland, are expected to have significantly lower crops this year. Michigan's crop is expected to be down 38 percent and New York's crop is expected to be down 28 percent, mostly due to adverse weather conditions this season.

"Massachusetts growers are the most optimistic that I've seen in the past decade," said Russell Powell, executive director of the New England McIntosh Growers Association.

"We expect a good crop in the eastern and central part of the state, though supplies may be lighter at some western Massachusetts orchards," said Commissioner Doug Gillespie. "The quality of fruit looks excellent in all locations."

Bay State growers produced some 40 million pounds – or 929,000 bushels -- of apples in 2001 on 5,000 acres of orchardland at a value of \$11 million. ♦

### Web Survey To Measure Ag Biosecurity Education Needs

This fall, farmers can provide input on biosecurity issues on the farm through a web-based survey. The Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) is identifying farmers' educational needs on homeland security. The producer survey results will guide what types of educational programs should be offered on agricultural security. The EDEN survey will be conducted from September 1 through November.

To take the survey, visit [www.agctr.lsu.edu/eden](http://www.agctr.lsu.edu/eden) and click on "Homeland Security Surveys," then click on "Survey of Ag and Horticulture Producers." The survey is anonymous and takes less than ten minutes to complete. It can be taken anywhere producers have access to the Web, including libraries and Extension offices.

The EDEN project will help measure agricultural producers' perceptions about biosecurity issues on the farm. EDEN specialists will use the information to identify educational materials and make them available to producers.

## Annual Marketing Conference Heads South

The 2003 North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference and Trade Show will be held February 3-10, 2003, at the Adam's Mark Charlotte in Charlotte, NC. The conference is sponsored by the North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association (NAFDMA).

The conference will include pre-conference and post-conference bus tours of farms in North Carolina and South Carolina, workshops, two general sessions and 35 concurrent conference sessions, and a trade show.

In addition to the educational events, the conference will also offer opportunities for networking and socializing including Race Night and the annual awards banquet.

Pre-register to ensure your spot in workshops, meals, Race Night and the banquet. Pre-registration is mandatory for the pre-conference bus tour. For registration information, call Jonathan Bates at 413-529-0386, e-mail [nafdma@map.com](mailto:nafdma@map.com) or visit [www.nafdma.com](http://www.nafdma.com).

### NAFDMA to hold first international cider contest in North Carolina

Have you found the perfect blend of apples to make the ideal apple cider? Now you have a chance to see how your cider measures up to cider from around North America in the North American Farm Direct Marketers' Cider Contest to be held in conjunction with the 2003 North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference and Trade Show, February 3-10 in Charlotte, NC.

The contest is open to NAFDMA members and is limited to one entry per farm. All cider should be unfermented (no hard cider). Judges will represent different parts of North America. Contest judging will be held on February 6 at 3:00 pm.

All entrants must complete the pre-registration form and submit it with the \$25 entry fee by January 10th. Call the NAFDMA office at 413-529-0386 to request an entry form and contest rules, or print out a form at [www.nafdma.com](http://www.nafdma.com). Mail forms to NAFDMA Cider Contest, 62 White Loaf Rd., Southampton, MA 01073.

In addition to the contest, cider makers can attend a special Cider Makers' Concurrent Session on February 7, at 3:45 p.m. The session will provide a forum to discuss cider making concepts. ♦

## UMass Dartmouth Ag Courses & Seminars

A series of agricultural courses and seminars will be offered at the Professional & Continuing Education Center in Fall River. For details and to register call 508-678-3636 or 508-999-9129.

**Computer Training for Agricultural Business:** \$50. Oct 22, 24, T/TH, 6-9 pm and Feb 4, 6, T/TH 6-9 pm.

**Composting Workshop Series:** \$75. Overview of Composting, Oct 23, T, 6-9 pm. Best Practices, Nov 19, T, 6-9 pm. Vermiculture (worms), Dec 4, W, 6-9 pm

**Intro to the Internet for Agricultural Businesses:** \$30. Nov 12, T, 6-9 pm, Feb 12, T, 6-9 pm.

**Farm Stands and Roadside Markets:** \$30. Nov 13, W, 6-9 pm.

**Quickbooks Pro for Agricultural Businesses:** \$179. Nov 18, 20 & Dec 2, 4, M/W 5-9 pm. Jan 27, 29 & Feb 11, 13, T/TH 5-9 pm.

**Success at a Farmer's Market:** \$50. Nov 19, T, 6-9 pm.

**Vegetable Growers Seminar:** Sponsored by UMass Amherst. All Day event. Dec 7, Sa, 9-4 pm

**Developing your Business Vision: Equestrian Business Law:** \$30. Dec 12, Th, 1-4 pm. Mar 20, Th, 1-4 pm.

**Financial Investment Management Seminar: Agricultural Business:** \$30. Feb 26, W, 6-9 pm.

**Agricultural Marketing:** \$30. Mar 4, T, 6-9 pm.

**Financial Management Seminar: Selling Development Rights:** \$30. Mar 5, W, 6-9 pm. ♦

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marketing grants, "buy local" campaigns, and fair prizes will not receive funds during the current fiscal year. This is simply a reality of the difficult fiscal situation, which looks to be equally challenging in the next fiscal year as well.

Later this fall the Lancaster field office will be relocating to the Army Corp's facility at the Barre Falls dam in Hubbardston. This will give us more space, including meeting facilities, and a stronger presence in this area of the state.

Congratulations to our partners at the regional "Buy Local" marketing campaigns on a very successful season. I hear nothing but positive feedback from consumers, policymakers and farmers.

Congratulations also to Gordon Price of Boxford on his recent election as Chairman of the Board of Food & Agriculture. The Price family operates Ingaldsby Farm, a diversified retail fruit and vegetable farm in Essex County, and Gordon is a former President of Mass. Farm Bureau Federation. Price succeeds Russ Davenport of Shelburne, who was a tremendous Chairman for the board during the past six years. ♦

## CLASSIFIED

WANTED: Cornell type gutter chain in good shape, clockwise direction preferred, any paddle length. 413-369-8029

Free salvaged sports dome tarp 25' x 25' sections. Opaque double acrylic surface. Foldable. Good Condition. Sample available. Contact Greater New Bedford Regional Refuse Management District, 508-763-5924 or [mea@meganet.net](mailto:mea@meganet.net).

Cape Cod Cranberries. The best quality berries direct from our bogs for your farm stand and wholesale needs. 1 lb. and 3 lb. bags and 30 lb. boxes. Antique wooden crates to loan for your store displays. P.J. Cranberries, P.O. Box 417, Sandwich, Ma. 02563. 508-888-7676 [picran@prodigy.net](mailto:picran@prodigy.net)

We will help Massachusetts farmers with a free help-wanted ad in The Caretaker Gazette. We have Massachusetts subscribers who want to work on your farm. Contact: The Caretaker Gazette, PO Box 540, River Falls, WI 54022 715-426-5500, [www.caretaker.org](http://www.caretaker.org)

Need some advice? On The Farm, "Problem-Solving for the Small Farm", is a consulting company, which can provide advice on the care, feeding, and management of livestock raised in a rural or suburban setting, for fun or profit. Will visit your site and help you devise an animal-management plan tailored to your setting and goals. For a brochure, contact Bill Graves at 413-369-4679 or Bob Duby at 413-548-9404, or [ofarm@hotmail.com](mailto:ofarm@hotmail.com).

WANTED: 30-50 acres of farmland in Mass. to buy or long-term lease. Town water/sewer preferred. Barns and outbuildings a plus. Contact Mike, 617-698-3533, [dugganlbmd@aol.com](mailto:dugganlbmd@aol.com).

Pumpkins and miniature hay bales for sale: locally grown, excellent quality, delivered or picked up, discounts on large quantities, satisfaction guaranteed. 978-264-4168.

For sale: Kelly 30 back-hoe, \$2800. 978-249-4327.

For sale: Spring-born Angora goat wethers from reg. herd. Fine mohair producers. Ideal pets or for handspinners. \$100 ea/\$80 for 3 or more. Also, fine handcrafted mohair products. Visit our farm studio. 413-624-3090.

Farmall Cub tractor, 1957, 4 cyl gas, 20-30 hours since motor rebuilt, rund excellent, fast hitch, full cultivators, fertilizer side dressers, rare hi-lo transmission, factory tractometer, \$4300. Charley, Village Power, Berlin, MA, 978-838-2484.

Subscribe to the New England Farm Bulletin. \$17/year includes 2 free farm classifieds or \$17 in free information booklets, monthly publication, annual almanac, New England fairs and farmers' market directory, monthly farm classifieds and features, access to rare farm topics and more! NEFB, Dept. MA, PO Box 67, Taunton, MA 02780.

### How to Place a Classified Ad

Classified ads are accepted free-of charge on a first-come basis. Limit: 25 words. Be sure to include a phone number. No display ads will be accepted. Only one ad per business/individual per issue, unless space permits. Ads may run in consecutive issues, space permitting.

Ads must be of interest to Massachusetts farmers. The Mass. Dept. of Food and Agriculture reserves the right to refuse any listing it deems inappropriate for publication.

Send typewritten or neatly printed copy to: Farm & Market Report, Mass. Dept. of Food and Agriculture, 251 Causeway Street, Suite 500, Boston, MA 02114, 617-626-1752 fax: 617-626-1850, e-mail: [Diane.Baedeker@state.ma.us](mailto:Diane.Baedeker@state.ma.us)

### Get the Farm & Market Report by e-mail and stay up to date!

Budget constraints may make it necessary to change or delay the printed Farm & Market Report schedule without notice. To make sure you stay in touch, sign up for our e-mail list. Send a message to [Diane.Baedeker@state.ma.us](mailto:Diane.Baedeker@state.ma.us) with your name, address and phone number.

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251 Causeway Street, Suite 500  
Boston, MA 02114  
617-626-1700  
www.mass.gov/dfa

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Diane Baedeker Petit, Editor, Farm & Market Report

This publication is available in alternate formats upon request.

## 2002 Ag Census Coming Soon

USDA will soon be conducting the 2002 Census of Agriculture. Conducted every five years, the census provides a clear picture of agriculture at the county, state, and national levels.

Forms will be mailed to farmers in December to collect data from the 2002 calendar year. Forms will be due by February 3, 2003.

Response to the Census of Agriculture is required by law. Data reported by farmers is held in strictest confidence and summarized to prevent identification of individual farms. Results will be available in printed and electronic form.

For more information, call the New England Agricultural Statistics Service at 800-642-9571 or visit [www.usda.gov/nass](http://www.usda.gov/nass).

## calendar 2003

January 25 - **16th Annual Winter Organic Conference**, sponsored by the Northeast Organic Farmers Association/Massachusetts chapter at the Quabbin Regional High School in Barre, MA. Contact Edwin McGlew, 413-247-9264 [emcglew@pssci.umass.edu](mailto:emcglew@pssci.umass.edu).

February 3-10 - **North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference and Trade Show**, Charlotte, NC. See page 3 for more information. Contact Jonathan Bates, 413-529-0386, [nafdma@map.com](mailto:nafdma@map.com), [www.nafdma.com](http://www.nafdma.com).

February 6 - **International Cider Contest** sponsored by the North American Farmers Direct Marketing Association, in Charlotte, NC. See page 3 for more information. Contact NAFDMA at 413-529-0386 or visit [www.nafdma.com](http://www.nafdma.com).

March 12-13 - **3rd annual New England Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference & Trade Show**, Holiday Inn Boxborough Woods, Boxborough, Mass. Contact: Charlie Touchette, 413-529-9100, or e-mail [info@massfarmstands.com](mailto:info@massfarmstands.com).

## Top Tomatoes in the Bay State, 2002!

Tomatoes from farms across Massachusetts competed for top honors in the 18th Annual Massachusetts Tomato Contest and Festival held in August at Boston City Hall Plaza. The event kicked-off Massachusetts Farmers' Market Week.



Entries competed for first, second, or third place tomato awards in the slicing, cherry and/or heirloom categories. A panel of judges, including food media, chefs and produce specialists, evaluated the entries on shape, color and flavor, with more value given to flavor.

The Tomato Festival also included tomato sampling for the public, cooking demonstrations featuring local farmers' market produce, and recipes, nutrition information and information on local agriculture.

The contest is sponsored by the Department of Food and Agriculture, the New England Vegetable and Berry Growers Assoc., and the Federation of Mass. Farmers' Markets. The top winners for 2002 were:

### Slicing Category

1st: Blue Heron Farm, Franklin, Trust  
2nd: Ward's Berry Farm, Sharon, Sunbeam  
3rd: Gove Farm, Leominster, Merced

### Cherry Category

1st: Red Fire Farm, Granby, Matt's Wild Cherry  
2nd: Freitas Farm, Middleboro, Sun Gold  
3rd: Freitas Farm, Middleboro, Matt's Wild Cherry

### Heirloom Category

1st: Ward's Berry Farm, Sharon, Cherokee Purple  
2nd: Red Fire Farm, Granby, Rose de Burn  
3rd: Red Fire Farm, Granby, Speckled Roman

### Heaviest Category

1st: Ward's Berry Farm, Sharon, Striped German, 1.88 lbs.  
2nd: Gove Farm, Leominster, Mountain Fresh, 1.87 lbs.  
3rd: Arena Farm, Concord, Beefmaster, 1.67 lbs. ♦

10/02

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