

Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources - www.Mass.gov/AGR



Farm & Market Report

Vol. 86, No. 5, October / November

In this issue:

LOCAL NEWS

- [Commissioner's Column](#)
- [MDAR Energy News](#)
- [2009 Sees Record Attendance at State Fairs Across the Commonwealth](#)
- [Agricultural Business Planning Courses to Expand for 2009-2010](#)
- [The Media Measure: More Interest in Agriculture Evident?](#)
- [Savor MA Culinary Tourism Initiative and MA Wine and Cheese Trails Announced!](#)
- [Forest Viability Applications Available](#)
- [2010 Licensed Pesticide Applicator Renewal Forms Due by December 1, 2009](#)
- [DAR and DTA Announce Program to Promote the Use of SNAP Benefits at Farmers' Markets](#)
- [Are You Growing Hops or Do You Have Interest to Grow Hops?](#)
- [Greenhouse Meetings](#)
- [Beginning Goat Keeping Workshop – Nigerian Dwarf Style](#)
- [Strolling of the Heifers Microloan Fund for New England Farmers](#)
- [New Festival of Trees](#)
- [First Fall Conference for Educators](#)
- [Two USDA Good Agricultural Practices \(GAP\) Training Programs](#)
- [5th Annual Bioneers by the Bay: Connecting for Change](#)
- [Northeast SARE's Farmer, Partnership, and Sustainable Community Grants](#)
- [The 2010 "Celebrating the Seasons of Massachusetts Agriculture" Calendar](#)

NEWS FROM USDA

- [Patrick-Murray Administration Secures Federal Relief For Massachusetts Farmers](#)
- [USDA Implements Farm Storage Facility Loan Program](#)
- [FSA State Executive Director Announces BCAP Implementation](#)
- [USDA Seeks Applications for Value-Added Producer Grants](#)

IN EVERY ISSUE

- [CLASSIFIED](#)
- [CALENDAR](#)
- [About the *Farm & Market Report*](#)

Commissioner's Column

The New ABCs (Agriculture's Benefit and Connections)

Dear Friends,

A soggy spring has yielded to a delightfully temperate fall as evidenced by the bountiful offering of fresh fruits and vegetables to be found at Massachusetts farm stands and now at a



record 200 [farmers' markets](#) located throughout the state.

Nonetheless the weather-related crop damage suffered during the primary growing season was very severe indeed with some growers having reported losing their entire crop. We began monitoring the impact of the weather early on along with our partners at the University of Massachusetts Extension Service and the USDA Farm Service Agency. Reported losses exceeded the 30% loss threshold in 10 of our 14 counties making those counties eligible for a USDA Secretarial Disaster Declaration. On August 27, based upon the reported losses and our efforts to find some relief for growers, Governor Patrick requested a Secretarial Disaster Declaration for the affected counties. On September 25th, the Massachusetts congressional delegation joined in advocating for relief to hard-hit farmers. I am happy to report that the Governor's request received a favorable response and as a result additional financial resources will be made available for growers across our Commonwealth. We have coordinated with USDA Farm Service Agency to provide informational opportunities at upcoming meetings across the state that will be announced as the dates are finalized.

Our ongoing battle against the [Asian Longhorned Beetle](#) in Massachusetts continues to gain momentum. Following Governor Patrick's proclamation of August as Asian Longhorned Beetle Awareness Month ([reported in the Aug/Sept Farm & Market Report](#)), our MDAR staff has been busy organizing community training events around the state in recognition of the critical role that public partners will play in controlling and ideally eradicating this invasive pest. We are grateful for the many people who have stepped up to help "see the trees (and more importantly the beetles!) for the forest" and give thanks for their front line efforts.

As for the continuing dairy crisis, I recently joined my counterpart Secretary and Commissioners from New England at Conant Dairy Farm in Richmond, Vermont to jump start a program that has been developed in an effort to address public interest in supporting the dairy industry in Massachusetts and New England. Surveys and collected data all point to the fact that consumers are willing to pay more for milk as long as there is certainty that the additional amount they pay goes directly to the dairy farmer. [Keep Local Farms](#) is first being adopted at various Colleges and Universities throughout New England and working toward a co-branding program that will ultimately provide consumers with the opportunity to directly support Massachusetts and New England dairy farms. Although this program will not be the silver bullet for the dairy industry crisis, we are hopeful that it provides some relief parallel to our other efforts, including the current formation of a USDA Dairy Advisory Commission, now underway. We and our federal counterparts recognize that we must find viable solutions for this integral and important part of our agricultural identity.

I also had the opportunity recently to interact with my counterparts from across the country at the annual meeting of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture. The dairy crisis was discussed at length and has clearly risen as a top priority nationally. Other commodity sectors are also feeling the pinch including meat producers (pork and beef) as well as poultry. With these issues in mind, amongst the Secretaries, Commissioners and Directors of Agriculture from across the country, we have already begun talking about the 2012 farm bill as well as opportunities within the existing 2008 farm bill to help stabilize the agriculture industry. Some of those opportunities are reflective of the ways that Massachusetts agriculture has become a national leader in linkages between consumers and agriculture, preserving working landscapes, and enhancing equitable access to locally grown agricultural products. Our farmers continue to serve as a national model for many of these opportunities, such as: Farm to School, Farmers' Market development that is inclusive of EBT (electronic benefit transfer) technology, alternative energy, and implementation of conservation practices as an economic and environmental benefit. In fact, efforts to increase the Commonwealth's commitment to preservation of land and working landscapes have led to increased federal support in recognition of our successful efforts as a leader in national farm land protection. For Fiscal Year 2009, we permanently protected nearly 2,000 additional acres through 33 different parcels, a new annual record, adding to the more than

63,000 acres of permanently protected Massachusetts farm land.

The pace at DAR has not slowed for a moment since my last August/September letter and I am pleased to report some measurable achievements both for the agricultural community and the agency. A most impressive and measurable successes to date has been our ability to significantly gain visibility for agriculture in Massachusetts. Using media contact as a measure: in 2008, DAR sent out 17 press releases and was averaging 1-2 media calls per week. By the end of this year, DAR will have sent a minimum of 40 press releases (that's double!) and is averaging 1-2 press calls a day. These calls are often specific to developments in Massachusetts agriculture and have given us the ideal opportunity to further support our "buy local" interests. Importantly, DAR staff, working alongside an accomplished and supportive press team at the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, is doing an excellent job to draw attention to all of the many important programs and services that span our agency – from shellfish & award-winning wine, to energy initiatives, to EEE vaccinations to IPM school plans. This is a remarkable achievement given the small size of our agency and the fact that we are working within the confines of an extremely challenging budget. Accordingly, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the exceptional staff that I have the privilege of working with everyday.

With fall also comes the close of the Fair season where, when the weather was with us, we saw phenomenal attendance and interest. This year, as was true for the last three seasons, we hosted Governor Patrick at the Massachusetts Building on Massachusetts Day at the Big E and also hosted a number of Legislators including many members of the Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts and Cultural Development. During our annual meeting of the Massachusetts Board of Agriculture we were also very happy to welcome new Board member Mr. Fred Dabney of Quansett Nursery in South Dartmouth who was appointed by Governor Patrick in September. We are already planning for the 2010 Exposition and looking forward to opportunities to improve an already great event for our collective interests.

As Commissioner, my goal is to make sure that locally grown transcends the potential status of fad to become a permanent fixture in the Commonwealth's nutritional repertoire. Outreach, partnership building, and innovation will be the benchmarks to reaching this goal. I invite you to read on about the many exciting things happening in agriculture and stay tuned for many exciting updates to come!

Best,



Scott.J. Soares, Commissioner

MDAR Energy News

Massachusetts Outdoor Hydronic Heater Change-Out Program RFP

(The following solicitation is applicable to all our farms and agri-businesses wishing to upgrade to the new Massachusetts DEP Outdoor Wood Boiler regulations.)

The Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Outdoor Hydronic Heater Change-Out Program Request for Proposals has been released.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: 3 PM, NOVEMBER 3, 2009

All information regarding this program are available at www.comm-pass.com

Search Key Words: "RFP-ENE-2010-007" OR [CLICK HERE](#).

Please share this announcement widely to those that may be interested. Each application is eligible to receive up to \$20,000 to install a new wood boiler that that complies with Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's

regulations for cleaner burning units.

Each unit considered for this program must meet the following requirements:

- meet the local Board of Health requirements
- is allowed under Mass Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regulations 310 CMR 7.26 (50) through (54) found at www.mass.gov/dep/air/laws/regulati.htm#owb (if applicable) and that
- the replacement equipment (if an OHH) is listed at: www.mass.gov/dep/air/community/certooh.htm

Please refer to the RFP for complete requirements and program details.

Massachusetts High Performance Buildings RFP

(The following [press release/solicitation](#) is applicable to all of our farms and agri-businesses.)

Patrick Administration Solicits Proposals for Projects that Demonstrate Energy Solutions for Massachusetts Buildings

\$15 million in stimulus funding allocated for trailblazing “high performance” building projects that deliver dramatic energy savings and economic benefits

As part of Governor Patrick’s Massachusetts Recovery Plan to secure the state’s economic future, the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) is inviting proposals for \$15 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding for projects that demonstrate dramatic increases in energy efficiency in buildings across the Commonwealth. The stimulus funding opportunity is open to both public and private entities, including businesses, hospitals, universities, municipalities, community organizations, and others.

DOER’s Program Opportunity Notice seeks proposals for innovative projects offering solutions to long-standing building energy challenges. The Massachusetts High Performance Buildings Grant Program is a key component of the Commonwealth’s State Energy Program for investment of ARRA funding, which the US Department of Energy approved in July. Demonstrating ways to significantly reduce energy use, as well as substituting clean energy alternatives for fossil fuel, the program will pave the way for widespread building energy performance improvements beyond measures provided through existing state- and utility-run efficiency programs.

Successful proposals, which are due to DOER by October 28, must be shown to work throughout Massachusetts in buildings of similar size and type. Proposals must also provide evidence that projects will yield significant economic, energy, and environmental benefits.

DOER is seeking projects that address one or more of these challenges:

- Demonstrate a deep energy retrofit at one or more existing buildings that achieves at least a 50 percent reduction in annual energy consumption at each building;
- Demonstrate technologies such as high efficiency and ultra low emissions biomass-fired boilers and furnaces, solar thermal space heating and/or cooling systems, passive and/or active thermal energy storage; and high efficiency cold-climate heat pumps;
- Implement high impact energy conservation measures in buildings heated with fuel oil, propane and other unregulated fuels;
- Mobilize community approaches to achieve energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy deployment through significant increases in the rate at which energy customers choose to participate in energy savings programs.

Awards under this program are expected to range from \$500,000 to \$5 million each for projects that are ready to begin immediately after the award and can be completed within three years. DOER expects to announce awards in December.

To view the Request for Responses, visit www.mass.gov/doer

Massachusetts Farm Energy Program (MFEP):

Even as FY 2009 USDA REAP and EQIP energy program deadlines have passed, the Massachusetts Farm Energy Program (MFEP) continues to help farmers access:

- The Massachusetts Farm Energy Discount Program of MDAR
- Electric and gas public utility energy conservation & efficiency programs
- The Massachusetts Renewable Energy Trust (MRET) Initiatives
- MFEP Technical Assistance and Incentives
- Any other energy related program(s)

Through MFEP's "AUDITS & INCENTIVES PROGRAM", the MFEP will make referrals to existing audit and incentive programs, provide "targeted" energy audits and/or renewable energy assessments, and provide financial incentives for implementation of audit recommendations. Higher priority will be given to farmers with less access to other audits and incentives programs. MFEP audits, assessments, and consultations will be paid at 75% with the applicant responsible for the remaining 25%.

Please visit: www.berkshirepioneercd.org/mfep/energy.php to see how you can participate in the Massachusetts Farm Energy Program.

USDA's 2009 Renewable Energy for America Program (REAP)

As noted in the previous MFEP article, USDA's Renewable Energy for America Program (REAP) deadline for this year's grant proposals was July 31, 2009. An initial round of successful applicants included three (3) Massachusetts businesses – one of these was an agricultural producer and two were small businesses. Further details will be forthcoming. We await further announcements in the coming weeks.

REAP renewable energy grants can provide up to 25 percent of eligible project costs, up to \$500,000. Loan guarantees or grant and loan guarantee combinations are capped at 75 percent of eligible project costs. If you were unable to participate in this year's cycle, please plan on possibly participating in next year's cycle. More details on the current program are available in the Federal Register at <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-12178.pdf> or on the USDA Web site <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/busp/9006grant.htm>.

USDA's EQIP Energy Program -2009

For the first time, in FY 2009 the Massachusetts Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) division of USDA sponsored energy related complete grants under their Air and Quality Program. Several farms have been pre-approved. Similar to the REAP grants, further details will be forthcoming. In the meantime, we anticipate another round of Massachusetts USDA NRCS energy related grant funding for FY 2010 which begins October 1, 2009. Please contact and stay in touch with your local USDA NRCS for more information as this becomes available. Similar to the REAP Grants above, this funding opportunity can be significant toward building qualified energy efficiency and/or renewable energy projects.

Department of Public Utilities (DPU) Net Metering – Regulations and Model Tariffs

As noted in the previous [Farm and Market Report](#), Massachusetts Net Metering Regulations have been adopted effective July 10, 2009. [See this link for the details.](#)

In conjunction with the Net Metering Regulations is a corresponding Net Metering Tariff which also must be placed into service concurrently with the adopted net metering regulations to be utilized by the utilities and net metering customers alike. DPU held a final technical conference July 21, 2009 followed by a DPU Order to all effected utilities to submit final model tariffs which they did. As a matter of protocol, the next step is for DPU to issue notices for public hearings for each of the utility companies. It is anticipated that all the public hearings will be held at the DPU on October 14, 2009. Final adoption of the tariffs will depend on the significance of intervention at the public hearings.

BIG E Features Working Photovoltaic (PV) Display

In addition to the solar powered Big Belly trash compactors located all around the fairgrounds, and once again provided by the Massachusetts Renewable Energy Trust (MRET) and the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC), the BIG E will feature a working PV display behind the Massachusetts Building. The display was fabricated and installed by Berkshire Photovoltaic Services (BPVS) of Adams, MA, a family owned solar company owned by Chris Derby Kilfoyle for over 25 years, serving all of Massachusetts and New England. BPVS is widely known to the farming community having installed several PV systems for farms here in MA. The BIG E PV display features two (2) 200-watt PV panels manufactured by Massachusetts based GreenRay of Westford, MA, which by themselves features self-contained DC-to-AC inverters. The panels are mounted on a barn-like structure and are electrically inter-connected to a breaker panel at the back of the Massachusetts building which serves all of the outside electrical needs, including the building's refrigeration truck. A HUGE thank you to Chris Kilfoyle and BPVS for their donated time and effort, to GreenRay for their product, as well as to Western Massachusetts Electric Company (WMECO) who worked hard and quickly to provide the necessary temporary inter-connect required to make this impressive working display part of this year's BIG E.

2009 Sees Record Attendance at State Fairs Across the Commonwealth

Governor Patrick, Commissioner Soares, and Assistant Commissioner Nathan L'Etoile were out at the fairs this season in support of our agricultural diversity, superb local artisans, and Massachusetts livestock to be found at agricultural state fairs across the Commonwealth.

Governor Patrick and Commissioner Scott Soares attended both Massachusetts Day at the Big E September 24th as well as the Grand Opening of the Topsfield Fair on October 3rd. At the Big E, the Governor made a special effort to seek out the dairy folks and also recognized many of the vendors exhibiting inside the Massachusetts Building at the Big E.



The Governor toured the Topsfield Fair grounds on Opening Day. Commissioner Soares was on hand at the giant pumpkin weigh-in contest. Bill Rodonis of Litchfield, NH was this year's winner with a winning pumpkin weighing 1,461.60 pounds!

Asst. Commissioner Nathan L'Etoile presents the first place award to Clarkdale Fruit Farms for their outstanding fruit produce. "In particular, their honey crisp apples were delicious"

Asst. Commissioner L'Etoile stated. Frosty Beane, President of the Franklin County Fair said that "we have a wonderful group of volunteers here that all contribute to making this fair a success".



Also, as a key component of the Fair, waste management is a source of pride for the volunteer group that manages this project. Amy Donovan, who is the coordinator of the excellent recycling, composting and energy conservation project said that we all have a role in keeping our fairgrounds clean and disposing the waste products in a environmentally responsible manner.

Agricultural Business Planning Courses to Expand for 2009-2010

MDAR is once again planning to offer two very popular courses for both aspiring and experienced farmers during the coming winter months:

1) Exploring Your Small Farm Dream (Explorer)

The Explorer Program is intended for those who are considering farming as a small and likely part-time business. Its purpose is to help pre-venture, aspiring farmers learn what it will take to start and manage their own profitable agricultural enterprise, and to decide whether this is a path they really want to/can take. Explorer makes use of four guided group sessions, an acclaimed workbook, Instructors experienced in starting ag businesses, and extensive supporting resources. The goal of Explorer is to help you decide whether starting an agricultural business is right for you and, based on that decision, to help you plan practical next steps. It was created to help you articulate the clear vision and goals you will need to guide a new agricultural venture. Explorer meets four times (6-9 PM) over a six week window, usually beginning in January or February.

2) Tilling the Soil of Opportunity (TTS)

This innovative, farmer friendly course focuses on existing agricultural businesses that will benefit from an organized look at their current operation in order to plan for growth and change. Over 240 Massachusetts agricultural enterprises have completed TTS.

The course Instructor guides participants through creation of a business plan to improve decision making on the owner/operator's farm. MDAR has enhanced the 35 hours of group meetings with additional individualized technical assistance and confidential one-on-one financial planning. The Instructor visits every participant's farm/ag enterprise at least once during the course.

- TTS is facilitated by a nationally certified and experienced Instructor, and is monitored by the Director of the MDAR Agricultural Business Training Program. Our local partner agencies and organizations contribute additional and ongoing regional resources for participants.
- Guest speakers are drawn from local farm businesses and service providers to personalize the key concepts of many sessions
- After the course ends, selected students receive additional individual technical assistance in topic areas most important to completing a working business plan. Basic costs for this service are included.
- The TTS business plan can simplify eligibility for federal, state and local assistance programs
- This course qualifies as a "Borrower Training Program" for the USDA Farm Service Agency, and can enhance efforts to secure funds from any lender

TTS meets 10 times (6-9 PM) on a once weekly basis over an 11 week window that begins in January.

***As usual, we locate Explorer and TTS courses according to demand in a region. We have tentative plans to offer a session of each in Amherst and a session of TTS in Southeastern Mass. The sooner you get information and register (see information below), the sooner we can get them scheduled!

3) NEW! In addition, we will be piloting one session (in Amherst) of a new offering for past Explorer graduates who are still working on taking the next steps but are not ready for TTS. We are calling this session Small Farm Planner. It will begin in December and will meet three times over three months, with extensive email interaction between. If you have completed Explorer – here in Massachusetts or elsewhere – and are familiar with the workbook for that course, please contact Rick Chandler (see below ASAP!

TO RECEIVE REGISTRATION INFORMATION OR TO TALK TO THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR CONTACT:

Rick Chandler, MDAR

101 University Drive, Suite C-4

Amherst, MA 01002 - Email: rick.chandler@state.ma.us, Phone: 413-548-1905.

The Media Measure: More Interest in Agriculture Evident?

Continued, unprecedented interest in "locally grown" and changes at MDAR over the past 6 months have put Massachusetts agriculture in the spot light. On April 10, 2009 Scott Soares was appointed Commissioner of the MDAR and the pace at the Department hasn't been the same since! One of the Commissioner's key objectives has been to build and strengthen partnerships at the local, state, and federal level. This coupled with the increased interest in locally grown initiatives has brought with it expanded outreach and PR opportunities. Media inquiries about agricultural news events as well as many of the Department's programs and services have jumped from 1-2 calls per week in 2008 to 1-2 calls minimum per day! Below is the 2009 press schedule which also highlights not only the uptick in releases but also the span of activity across the Department's four divisions (Agricultural Development, Animal Health, Crop & Pest Services, and Agricultural Technical Assistance). In 2008 the Department logged 17 press releases. By the end of 2009 it will have released well over 40 through the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs press office. The Department is also exploring the utilization of a blog site and Flickr Gallery to further highlight ag-achievements in our Commonwealth. Stay tuned!"

2009 Press Schedule ([click here to view the News Archive](#)):

LAND Grants Funding	27-Jan
USDA Census	12-Feb
Agricultural Grants - Dairy farming, biofuels and farm labor study projects funded	6-Mar
Massachusetts Maple Month Kickoff	6-Mar

Ag Day at the State House	10-Mar
Advisory: Signs of Asian Longhorned Beetle Damage	25-Mar
Rabies Vaccination Clinics	3-Apr
Scott Soares Appointed as New DAR Commissioner	6-Apr
New Amherst Office	16-Apr
New Round of Agricultural Grants	8-May
Ag Tag Promotion	19-May
Farm and Market Report (June/July Issue)	June/July
Energy Grants	9-Jun
Bay State Farmers' Market Season Begins	19-Jun
\$100,000 in Buy Local Grants Awarded	29-Jun
Agri-Tourism Promotion	30-Jun
DAR Advisory – Invasive Plants	1-Jul
Agricultural Fairs – media advisory and brochure	3-Jul
Town of Hadley Honored for APRs	7-Jul
MA Wine and Cheese Trail/Savor MA Kick-off	8-Jul
Media Alert Shelburne Falls Farmers' Mkt visit (Commissioner)	8-Jul
Holyoke Farmers' Mkt visit (Commissioner)	22-Jul
Despite Rain Delay, Berry Season Bursts into the Bay State	5-Aug
Advisory West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis	5-Aug
Asian Longhorned Beetle Awareness Month	11-Aug
Massachusetts Tomato Festival Winners	18-Aug
Farm Viability Enhancement Program Investments for FY09 Nearly \$1 Million	25-Aug
Davis Square Farmers' Market (Commissioner)	1-Sep
Integrated Pest Management in Schools	1-Sep
Agritourism & Apples	11-Sep
Keep Local Farms Program – Northeast Dairy Farmers Initiative	17-Sep
Massachusetts Harvest for Students Week	18-Sep
Big E and Massachusetts Day	28-Sep
Federal Relief for Massachusetts Farmers	pending
AEEP Grants	pending
Traditional Vs Non-Traditional Crop Availability	pending
Aquaculture	pending
Thanksgiving / Holidays	30-Oct
Christmas Trees, Wreath Making & Specialty Foods	27-Nov
Responsible Pet Adoption	4-Dec
Eggs	29-Dec
CSA's	29-Dec

Savor MA Culinary Tourism Initiative and MA Wine and Cheese Trails Announced!

Recently, DAR's "MassGrown and Fresher" and the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism (MOTT) hosted a kick off of the new culinary tourism initiative: Savor Massachusetts that included the new Massachusetts Wine and Cheese Trails at Nashoba Valley Winery, Bolton.

"Savor Massachusetts is one of our newest Massachusetts Grown and Fresher Programs and a natural extension of our efforts to promote agri-tourism throughout our Commonwealth," said DAR Commissioner Scott Soares. "I invite residents and visitors to the Bay State to celebrate and enjoy Massachusetts farms, farm products, and festivals - one taste at a time."



"The local farm to table industry is a vital part of the Commonwealth's appeal" said Betsy Wall, executive director Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, "and a rising interest among visitors looking for fresh and unique culinary experiences."

Culinary tourism is a growing industry that helps tourists plan trips based on what and where they want to eat. The emerging niche market helps develop and promote local food and drink as the main attractions for culinary travelers, fostering support for local communities and economic development.

Go to www.mass.gov/massgrown and click on **Savor Massachusetts** for a guide to culinary opportunities available in Massachusetts.

The Massachusetts Wine and Cheese Trails, produced by DAR and the Massachusetts Farm Wineries Association, is available at www.masswinery.com, or to request copies send an email to MDAR.brochure@state.ma.us.

The Massachusetts Wine and Cheese Trails include 18 Massachusetts cheesemakers that make more than 75 varieties of artisan and farmstead cheeses, and 11 of them give public tours by appointment. There are 34 licensed wineries across Massachusetts and at least 21 are open for tours and tastings of award winning-grape and fruit wines.

Savor Massachusetts Updates:

If you haven't already, email your upcoming fall events to julia.grimaldi@state.ma.us. Deadline for event submission is the last Monday of each month.

Does your farm or locally-minded business offer a "culinary experience"? Complete our culinary tourism survey and be included in the growing number of Savor Massachusetts resources available at www.mass.gov/massgrown.

Looking for something to sip and savor? Massgrown and Fresher is pleased to announce our new Wine & Cheese Trails Guide - a must have culinary resource filled with over 30 Massachusetts wine and cheesemakers. Request a copy today at MDAR.brochure@state.ma.us.

Savor Massachusetts was developed collaboratively by DAR and MOTT, with funding from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Specialty Crop program. In May 2008, DAR received \$62,000 to develop the culinary tourism initiative. A second installment of the grant was awarded in April 2009 for \$40,000. The first ever Massachusetts Wine and Cheese Trail was funded through a \$26,000 USDA Rural Development Grant awarded to DAR.

Forest Viability Applications Available

Applications for the Forest Viability and Enhancement Program are currently available and are due to the Farm Bureau office in Ashland on Friday, October 16, 2009.

Forest landowners may apply to the Forest Viability and Enhancement Program under any one or a combination of the three business categories below:

- 1.) **Traditional Forest Products** – 100 acre minimum: Development of a Forest Viability Enhancement Plan to achieve greater economic return through the marketing, processing, and sale of traditional forest products such as saw logs, cordwood, and pulp.
- 2.) **Non-Traditional Forest Products** – 20 acre minimum: Development of a Forest Viability Enhancement Plan to grow, produce, or make non-traditional forest products including: medicinal and nutraceutical plants (ginseng, witch-hazel, and slippery elm bark) food products (maple syrup, mushrooms, and nuts) decorative and handicraft products (wreaths, greens, landscaping plants, basket splints, birch bark or other wood/vine products) or rustic furniture
- 3.) **Recreation and Wildlife** – 100 acre minimum: Development of a Forest Viability Enhancement Plan to achieve economic return based on recreational and wildlife activities including: cross-country ski/hiking trails, wildlife viewing, and environmental education.

Groups of landowners may jointly apply for a Forest Viability and Enhancement Plan in order to achieve the recommended acreages, but in turn they must all agree to sign a letter of intent with DCR to maintain their forest on their respective properties for a 7-year period. Further, they must all agree to sign a 20-year covenant on their properties if they accept funding for Plan implementation. The forest landowner(s) must also agree to sign a contract with DCR to implement the approved Forest Viability and Enhancement Plan.

Landowners who are not currently engaged in a forest-based business may be eligible if they can demonstrate a proficient knowledge and experience of their proposed forest-based business.

Applications are available on the Farm Bureau website (www.mfbf.net) or by mail. Requests for mailed applications should be sent to Kent Lage at 466 Chestnut Street, Ashland, MA 01721 or kent@mfbf.net.

2010 Licensed Pesticide Applicator Renewal Forms Due by December 1, 2009

The Pesticide Program in the Division of Crop and Pest Services is currently mailing out the 2010 pesticide license renewal forms and letters. The renewal forms and letters are being sent only to those individuals who maintained their private or commercial pesticide credentials in the 2009 calendar year.

If you let your pesticide credential expire at the end of calendar year 2008 and did not renew it before June 30, 2009, you must retest to be issued a new pesticide license.

The 2010 renewal forms will be due on December 1, 2009. If you maintained your Massachusetts Pesticide Credential in 2009, but do not receive a renewal form and letter by November 1, 2009, please call Steven Antunes-Kenyon, Pesticide Operations Coordinator at (617) 626-1784 or email steve.kenyon@state.ma.us.

DAR and DTA Announce Program to Promote the Use of SNAP Benefits at Farmers' Markets

On Wednesday, September 16th Commissioner Scott Soares and Commissioner Julia Kehoe, from the Department of Transitional Assistance, teamed up at the Lawrence Farmers' Market to show off their healthy cooking skills and announce a new partnership to bring increased EBT access to Massachusetts Farmers' Markets. Before helping UMASS Extension cook up a vegetable stir fry, the Commissioners announced DAR and DTA are working together to enhance the

availability and use of SNAP (formerly Food Stamps) at farmers' markets throughout the state. An announcement was made by the Departments of release of \$50,000 in the form of grants to farmers' markets to facilitate the purchase an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Terminal and promote the use of EBT at their market. Farmers' market managers will receive more information about this opportunity in the near future. To read more about the event, [click here](#).



Are You Growing Hops or Do You Have Interest to Grow Hops?

The MDAR is working with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture to identify the market for locally grown hops, as well as identify technical issues related to growing and production. The increase in the number of microbrewers and craft brewers with strong interest in sourcing local hops as well as different varieties of hops is increasing. New England and New York were the major hop producing areas of the country until diseases, downy mildew in particular, pushed the production to the west. Small scale hop production is appearing in New England, New York and Pennsylvania. Please send an email to: Bonita.Oehlke@state.ma.us.

Greenhouse Meetings

Nutrition for Greenhouse Crops

October 20, 2009, Publick House, Rte. 131, Sturbridge, MA

Time: 9:30 AM – 3:30 PM

Nutrition for Greenhouse Crops will feature practical information on using water soluble fertilizers, options for organic growers, using controlled release fertilizers, identifying nutritional disorders and correcting them and interpreting water tests for fertilizer selection. Program details and registration is available at:

www.umass.edu/umext/floriculture/upcoming_events/index.html

Cost: \$40

Sponsored by University of Massachusetts Extension, University of Connecticut and Northeast SARE.

For more information, contact: Tina Smith 413-545-5306 – tsmith@umext.umass.edu

Program details: www.umass.edu/umext/floriculture/upcoming_events/index.html

Greenhouse and High Tunnel Tomato Conference

November 3, 2009

Place: Sturbridge Host Hotel and Conference Center, Sturbridge, MA

Time: 9:15 AM – 3:30 PM

Nationally recognized speakers will present information on different types of tunnels and costs, various components of greenhouse tomato production and leading growers in the industry will share their expertise.

Cost: \$40

Sponsored by University of Massachusetts, University of Connecticut, University of Rhode Island and Northeast SARE.

For more information, contact: Tina Smith 413-545-5306 – tsmith@umext.umass.edu

Program details: www.umass.edu/umext/floriculture/upcoming_events/index.html

Beginning Goat Keeping Workshop – Nigerian Dwarf Style

Hames & Axle Farm - Ashburnham, MA 01430 - www.hamesaxle.com/Workshops.html

Every day people are waking up with a desire to know where their food is coming from. For some, that means a finding a farmer's market or starting their own gardens, but for others, it's a thought about keeping a family milk supply.

Nigerian dwarf goats, such as those raised by Hames & Axle Farm in Ashburnham, MA are ideal for today's small family. Easy to handle, affectionate and with amazingly sweet milk, these little goats are increasingly finding their ways into backyards and hobby farms throughout the nation. As more people seek goat's milk and goat cheeses, Nigerian dwarf goats are a great way to raise those products personally.

Keeping a dairy goat isn't difficult, but finding enough information can be a challenge, especially for these miniature dairy goats. Pat Stewart, the farmer at Hames & Axle Farm and the author of "Personal Milkers: A Primer to Nigerian Dwarf Goats," will be conducting a workshop entitled "Beginning Goat Keeping – Nigerian Dwarf Style," at the farm on Saturday, October 17, 2009.

Participants will learn about housing, feeding, veterinary concerns, as well as things to look for in a goat, how to milk and handle the milk for safe consumption. The workshop starts at 10 a.m. and will continue until approximately 4:00 p.m.

Those interested in attending the workshop, for which there is a \$50 fee, should contact Pat Stewart at Farm@hamesaxle.com or 978-827-1305. Attendees should bring a lunch, and the Stewart's will provide beverages.

Strolling of the Heifers Microloan Fund for New England Farmers

Deadline November 27, 2009

The Microloan Fund for New England Farmers next application deadline is November 27th, 2009. Loan applications for amounts ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000, for terms up to 5 years, will be accepted from prequalified applicants. Applications will be limited to farms located in Western Massachusetts (Berkshire, Hampshire, Hampden and Franklin Counties) with a primary focus on small loans to small-sized farms that use sustainable and organic methods (or are moving toward them), and that are marketing at least a portion of their products to local markets. Eligibility is limited to farms with 250 acres, or less, in active production, and annual gross revenue of \$250,000 or less. Acceptable purposes for the loans are capital investments and other expenses that help improve efficiency or quality, or that expand production and sales; repairs necessary to maintain farm operations; short term operating needs such as inventory, supplies or labor; and emergency funds to deal with business interruptions from fire, natural disasters, or other unforeseen events. Prequalification questionnaires are available at www.thecarrotproject.org/farm_financing or at info@thecarrotproject.org or Dorothy Suput at 617-666-9637.

We will also be hosting an educational workshop The Microloan Fund for New England Farmers – Is it right for my farm? If you are asking yourself if credit is right for your business or want to find out more about the Microloan Fund for New England Farmers as well as other financing and business planning resources. Please join us at 10 am on Wednesday, November 4th in the conference room at the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture offices in Amherst. To learn more or register view our website, www.thecarrotproject.org, or contact workshop@thecarrotproject.org or call 617-666-9637.

New Festival of Trees

Be a Vendor at the Massachusetts Horticultural Society's First Festival of Trees being held at Elm Bank **November 27-December 4, 2009**. The Vendor opportunity is Friday November 27-Sunday November 29th. Space is limited. Our most recent summer events have been well attended and our last symposium was a sold out crowd. We expect that this

new venture will be equally successful. The application deadline is Nov 1, 2009 for Festival of Trees.

Early response allows both you and our staff to plan for and promote your attendance. Your space will be in the Education Building with the Festival of Trees in the Hunnewell Building. Each space will be 4'x 6' and you will be provided with a 6' table and 2 chairs. Please take some time to review the information attached. Contact Kathleen Thomas, Massachusetts Horticultural Society, 617-933-4981, kmthomas@masshort.org.

First Fall Conference for Educators

[Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom](#) is sponsoring a conference for educators on **Saturday, November 7th** from 9:00 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Clay Center of the Dexter and Southfield Schools in Brookline.

Four concurrent workshops/tours will be held during each of the four workshop sessions. All workshops will focus on composting, gardening at the school, taking the garden into the classroom, herbs, recycling and other green initiatives. You may also choose to Tour Allandale Farm and the solar panels, wind turbine and planetarium at Clay Center.

The \$45 fee includes all workshops; workshop materials; breakfast snack; beverage and dessert at lunch, and 10 pdp's for those who attend the full day conference, carry out a related classroom activity, and send in a brief report of their experience. Sign up early, while the all sessions are still available. You can register by sending your workshop choices and the registration fee to me at MAC P.O. Box 345 Seekonk, MA 02771. The full conference schedule is at www.aginclassroom.org. This is our first fall conference and we hope to make it an annual event in the future.

Two USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Training Programs

1) **December 3, 2009** 12:45pm to 4:45pm - Cape Codder, Hyannis MA

Sponsored by: UMass Extension, UMass Department of Nutrition and the MDAR

Recent contamination outbreaks for tomatoes and spinach have raised concerns about the safety of fresh produce. UMass Extension, the UMass Department of Nutrition and the M Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) are pleased to present a USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Training Program for growers and other fresh produce handlers as a workshop option for the MA Farm Bureau Annual Meeting. This training begins at 12:45pm. Non-members of the Farm Bureau can participate in the Bureau's luncheon and hear their keynote speaker prior to the GAP training. If you are interested in doing so, please register directly with the Farm Bureau for this option.

At the training, you will learn more about:

- the costs and impact of diseases and outbreaks caused by foodborne pathogens
- strategies for controlling potential microbial food safety hazards before planting and throughout all phases of production - planting, production, harvesting and postharvest handling
- the USDA Third Party Audit process

You will also:

- receive a manual filled with GAP resources
- receive a CD loaded with templates needed to maintain records to verify USDA GAP that can be customized for your farm

At the end of the session, you will receive a certificate of participation including hours and one pesticide credit for participating through UMass Cooperative Extension.

The key presenter for the training is Rich Bonanno, Ph.D.. Rich is an Extension Educator with UMass Extension and

the co-Principal Investigator on the UMass GAP project. He is also responsible for weed management in vegetable and small fruit crops. Currently, Rich serves as the Vice President of the MA Farm Bureau Federation and as a Public Member to the Massachusetts Pesticide Control Board. He is the former president of the New England Vegetable & Berry Grower's Association.

The cost for this GAP training is \$35.00. The deadline for registration is November 25, 2009. Registration at the door will increase to \$50.00. For registration, please contact Shirley Mietlicki-Floyd at 413-545-4420 or mietlicki@umext.umass.edu or John Conners at 508-881-4766 or john@mfbf.net.

2) **December 14, 2009** 1:00-5:30pm - The Center of New Hampshire, Radisson Inn, Manchester NH

Questions: For registration, contact Shirley Mietlicki-Floyd at 413-545-4420 or mietlicki@umext.umass.edu For program, contact Rich Bonanno at 978-361-5650 or rbonanno@umext.umass.edu or Becky Grube at 603-862-3203 or becky.grube@unh.edu.

5th Annual Bioneers by the Bay: Connecting for Change

October 22-25, 2009 | Downtown New Bedford, MA

Bioneers by the Bay: Connecting for Change, the Marion Institute's 5th annual conference will be held in historic Downtown New Bedford, MA, on October 22-25, 2009. Bioneers by the Bay provides an opportunity for concerned citizens to meet with environmental, scientific, and social justice innovators to address the Earth's most pressing challenges. We are planning a rather remarkable three days of live keynote speakers, afternoon workshops, an extensive Youth Initiative program, a downlink of the 20th Annual Bioneers Conference in California [www.bioneers.org], an exhibition hall featuring sustainable businesses and organizations, a 350 Day of Action event, films, music, art installations, a farmers' market and local & organic food. If you purchase your 3 day pass before September 18th, you will save 30% off of the regular admission price. Also we have scholarships and volunteer opportunities available—if you want to come to the conference we want to help get you there. For more information, please visit connectingforchange.org or call 508.748.0816

Northeast SARE's Farmer, Partnership, and Sustainable Community Grants

Northeast SARE's Farmer, Partnership, and Sustainable Community grants are now on the web site and available in print.

To download an application from the web site, choose a grant program below.

[Farmer Grants](#)--for commercial farmers who have a new production or marketing idea that will likely boost profits, improve stewardship, and strengthen the farm community.

[Partnership Grants](#)--for agricultural service providers who have a sustainable production or marketing idea they would like to test in cooperation with one or more farmers.

[Sustainable Community Grants](#)--for organizations seeking new ways to integrate agriculture and community development in ways that make farming more sustainable.

For Farmer Grant applicants, we also have an updated **["How to Write a SARE Farmer Grant."](#)**

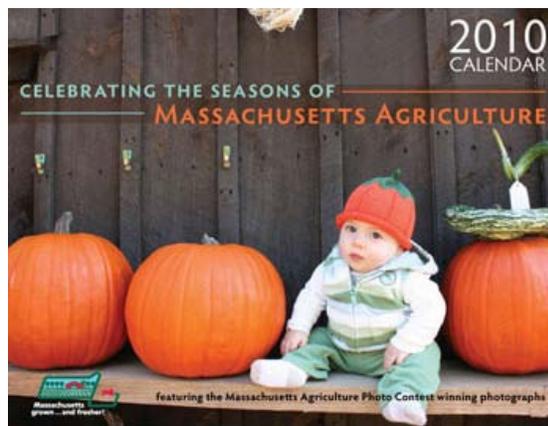
Please note that the cap on all these grants has been changed to \$15,000. <http://nesare.org/get/farmers/>

The 2010 "Celebrating the Seasons of Massachusetts Agriculture" Calendar

The 2010 Ag Calendar photo contest has become a popular annual line-up that is now featured on the Department's [Homepage](#). Each month's winning photo adds a colorful touch highlighting the rich diversity of our Commonwealth's agricultural community.

Many of the awardees were honored on Massachusetts Day at the Big E, September 24th where they were presented with an Award Certificate by Commissioner Scott Soares.

Your purchase of this unique local calendar will show your enthusiasm for Massachusetts agriculture, and will also support the many educational efforts of Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom (MAC), the designated recipient of the proceeds. This attractive calendar will make a nice hostess or holiday gift for any friend or family member who has an interest in agriculture. Calendars can be purchased for \$10 each (\$5 wholesale cost at 10 minimum). Send check payable to Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom to PO Box 345, Seekonk, MA 02771. *Farms and businesses are encouraged to purchase at wholesale cost on consignment. Contact Debi at debi.hogan@earthlink.net.



Commissioner Soares awarding Erick Brown and his son, Andrew

Thanks to association sponsors; [MA Farm Bureau](#) (Jan), [MA Maple Producers Assoc.](#) (March), [MA State Grange](#)(April), [MA Flower Growers Assoc.](#)(May), MA Dairy Promotion Board (June), [MA Fairs Assoc.](#) (July), [MA Assoc. of Roadside Stands and PYO Farms](#) (August), [MA Fruit Growers Assoc.](#) (Sept.), and [MA Christmas Tree Assoc.](#) (December). Special thanks to Diane Baedeker Petit and Catherine Ulitsky with NRCS who designed the Calendar.

NEWS FROM USDA

Patrick-Murray Administration Secures Federal Relief For Massachusetts Farmers

Governor Deval Patrick recently announced that United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack has granted the Commonwealth's request for federal disaster relief in 12 Massachusetts counties that suffered agricultural production losses due to this summer's abnormally cool and rainy weather.

Farms in Berkshire, Bristol, Essex, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth and Worcester

counties, which were declared primary natural disaster areas, are now eligible for loans and other assistance from the FSA, provided that individual farms meet eligibility requirements. In addition, farms in Barnstable and Suffolk County, which were declared contiguous disaster areas, are eligible for FSA loan assistance.

“I am grateful to Secretary Vilsack for granting this disaster declaration, which will give Massachusetts farmers who were affected by the rainy and cool weather we suffered this summer access to loans and other assistance,” said Governor Deval Patrick. “I would also like to thank the members of our Congressional delegation for their support of the Commonwealth’s farmers during this difficult growing season.”

“Thanks to Governor Patrick’s quick response and priority on Massachusetts agriculture, farmers across the state will be able to recover from the devastating effects of this summer’s unusual weather pattern,” said Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Ian Bowles.

“This is a lifeline for the thousands of farmers across Massachusetts who were walloped by this summer’s unseasonable temperatures and heavy rainfall. I’m grateful to Secretary Vilsack for answering our calls for help and providing our farmers with the relief they need to get back on their feet,” said US Senator John Kerry.

“I would like to thank Secretary Vilsack for granting the state’s request for disaster relief. The weather has caused significant hardship for Massachusetts farmers,” said US Representative Barney Frank. “This funding will help mitigate the losses they have suffered.”

“This is welcome news for the more than 500 farmers in the Fifth Congressional District and thousands of others across the state,” said US Representative Niki Tsongas. “I thank Governor Patrick and Secretary Vilsack for acting quickly on their behalf.”

“This summer’s unseasonable weather adversely impacted Massachusetts farmers and I am pleased to see that with Governor Patrick’s help, farmers across the state will now be eligible for federal assistance,” said U.S. Representative Stephen F. Lynch.

“This declaration is good news for Massachusetts, as it will make assistance available to our eligible farming communities who have been weathering a challenging growing season in this already tough economic climate,” said US Representative John F. Tierney. “I applaud Secretary Vilsack’s decision and urge impacted communities to take full advantage of these funds.”

Excessively wet and cool weather in May, June, and July have had a negative impact on growing conditions and production levels of many of the state’s major crops, including yellow corn, strawberries, tobacco, potatoes, and tomatoes. June 2009 was the second gloomiest June on record in Massachusetts since 1885, according to the Blue Hills Observatory in Canton. The cool and wet conditions created an ideal environment for destructive pathogens such as early blight, Septoria, and late blight. Heavy hail in Berkshire and Franklin County and flooding in Barnstable, Bristol, Essex, Middlesex, and Norfolk also harmed crops.

The state’s farms have seen losses ranging from 30 percent to 100 percent because of persistent inclement weather or disease. The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) continues to work with the UMass Extension and with USDA officials to monitor the amount of damage to crop output this season.

“I thank Governor Patrick for his continued support of our Commonwealth’s agricultural interests,” said DAR Commissioner Scott Soares. “This favorable support of the Governor’s request for a secretarial disaster designation will provide additional important tools for our agricultural industry.”

The United States Farm Services Agency (FSA) will consider each farm’s application based on the extent of losses, security available, and repayment ability. Local FSA offices can provide affected farmers with further information regarding available assistance. For more information on FSA loans [click here](#).

USDA Implements Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

The Massachusetts State Executive Director for the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Richard Burke announced that changes to the Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program have been implemented in accordance with the 2008 Farm Bill. FSA administers FSFL on behalf of the USDA Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC).

"This program helps to ensure that producers have adequate capacity to store their harvested production until they sell it on the open market," said Burke.

The FSFL Program provides low-interest financing for producers of eligible commodities to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities. The maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Participants are required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. Loan terms of seven, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. Interest rates for each term rate may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the Treasury Department.

Payments are available in the form of a partial disbursement and the remaining final disbursement. The partial disbursement will be available after a portion of the construction has been completed. The final fund disbursement will be made when all construction is completed. The maximum amount of the partial disbursement will be 50 percent of the projected and approved total loan amount.

Applications for FSFL must be submitted to the FSA county office that maintains the farm's records. An FSFL must be approved before any site preparation or construction can begin.

The following commodities are eligible for farm storage facility loans:

- Fruits and vegetables – includes cold storage facilities
- Corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley or minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain
- Corn, grain sorghum, wheat, oats or barley harvested as other-than-whole grain
- Hay
- Renewable biomass

For more information about FSFL or other FSA price support program, please visit your FSA county office or www.fsa.usda.gov, or contact Noreen Vassallo at the Massachusetts State FSA Office at (413) 253-4500.

FSA State Executive Director Announces BCAP Implementation

Eligible Facilities Should Begin Applying for BCAP Qualification Online

The Massachusetts State Executive Director for the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Richard Burke announced that biomass conversion facilities may begin to apply for qualification under the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP). This allows producers or owners of eligible material who sell to these facilities to apply for matching payments under the collection, harvest, storage and transportation (CHST) component of BCAP.

"BCAP will provide financial assistance to owners of eligible material who deliver the material to qualified biomass conversion facilities that use biomass to produce heat, power, biobased products or advanced biofuels," said Mr. Burke.

An eligible material owner may be eligible for a matching CHST payment for eligible material delivered to a qualified biomass conversion facility which will be paid at a rate of \$1 for \$1 per dry-ton equivalent received from a qualified biomass conversion facility, not to exceed \$45 per dry-ton equivalent. An eligible material owner may receive payments for a period of two years. The purpose of the matching payments is to assist biomass producers with the

CHST cost of delivering biomass to a qualified biomass conversion facility.

For example, if a qualified biomass conversion facility pays a producer \$30 per dry ton for biomass, the material owner or producer would be able to apply for a matching payment of \$30 per dry ton from FSA.

An added benefit of BCAP is the reduction of fuel loads on forest and range lands that reduce the risks associated with wildfires and other natural disasters. Contractors who harvest the forest thinning on National Forest System land may be eligible to apply for a matching payment for those materials sold to a qualified biomass conversion facility; however, they must work with the Forest Service and conform to any rules, permits, or other guidance applicable to the National Forest System.

Biomass conversion facilities may become “qualified” by signing an Agreement with FSA state offices. The Agreement generally provides the framework that facilitates the making of CHST matching payments to eligible material owners or producers who plan to deliver biomass to that facility.

After a biomass conversion facility becomes “qualified” by signing an Agreement with FSA, eligible material owners or producers, who market eligible material to that biomass conversion facility, must apply for the CHST matching payment program at their nearest FSA county office before the eligible material is delivered. Eligible material owners must provide an agreement with the qualified biomass conversion facility as part of an application for a CHST matching payment. After the product is delivered, a producer must provide FSA with documentation of product quantity, quality, and payment rate. County offices will validate payment requests under the terms of the Agreement with the qualified biomass conversion facilities.

Biomass conversion facilities should visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/energy> and contact John Devine at the Massachusetts State FSA Office (413) 253-4500.

[\[back to table of contents\]](#)

USDA Seeks Applications for Value-Added Producer Grants

USDA Rural Development State Director, Jay Healy has announced that USDA is accepting applications for grants to assist agricultural producers seeking to add value to the commodities they produce. About \$18 million will be awarded nationwide.

USDA plans to award planning grants of up to \$100,000 and working capital grants of up to \$300,000 to successful applicants. Applicants are encouraged to propose projects that use existing agricultural products in non-traditional ways or merge agricultural products with technology in creative ways. Businesses of all sizes may apply, but priority will be given to operators of small and medium-sized family farms – those with average, annual gross sales of less than \$700,000. The competitive grants to be awarded under this notice are part of USDA Rural Development’s annual budget and are not funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Applicants must provide matching funds equal to the amount of the grant requested. Ten percent of the funding being made available is reserved for beginning farmers or ranchers and socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers. An additional 10 percent is reserved for projects involving local and regional supply networks that link independent producers with businesses and cooperatives that market value-added products.

To view the Notice of Funding Available (NOFA) in the Federal Register please see the following website: http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/VAPG%20NOFA%20REISSUE_09012009.PDF

Paper applications must be submitted to the Rural Development state office for MA, CT and RI in Amherst, MA (USDA Rural Development, 451 West Street, Suite 2, Amherst, MA 01002. Attention: Dan Beaudette). Electronic applications must be submitted through www.Grants.gov. Applications submitted by electronic mail or facsimile will

not be accepted. Each application submission must contain all required documents in one envelope, if by mail or courier delivery service. Paper applications for both reserved and unreserved funds must be postmarked and mailed, shipped, or sent overnight no later than November 30, 2009, to be eligible for FY 2009 grant funding. Late applications are not eligible for FY 2009 grant funding. Electronic applications for both reserved and unreserved funds must be received by November 30, 2009, to be eligible for FY 2009 grant funding. Late applications are not eligible for FY 2009 grant funding.

Applicants are encouraged to contact their State Offices well in advance of the deadline to discuss their projects and ask any questions about the application process. Applicants may submit drafts of their applications to their State Offices for a preliminary review any time prior to October 1, 2009. The preliminary review will only assess the eligibility of the application and its completeness. The results of the preliminary review are not binding on the Agency.

IN EVERY ISSUE

CLASSIFIED ADS

- Seeking Land: Lutheran Social Services offer assistance to some of Massachusetts' newest farmers. We are seeking long-term leases for up to ten acres of vegetable production with irrigation potential. Preferred sites will be located within 20 minutes of West Springfield and Worcester. Storage structures, greenhouse and tractor use/hire desired. The sites will likely host a variety of cultures and operations ranging from ¼ acre to 5 acres in size. Opportunity to mentor or lease to a single new grower if preferred. If you are a landowner interested in working with diverse cultures and supporting new growers, we look forward to hearing from you. Contact Shemariah Blum-Evitts at sblum@lssne.org or 413.562.6015. Visit www.immag.org or www.lssne.org for more information.
- Very clean Wheat or Barley Straw available; \$5.00/bale in barn; Call Four Star Farms, at 413-498-2968
- For sale: Bulk quantities of Uber-rare plants: Wild highbush blueberry bushes. Bulk buyer wanted for special, special offering: northern hardy Wild highbush blueberry plants, . Roughly a hundred available, about 3/4 are 2-3 year old plants (from rooted cuttings) and the rest root balled much much older more bushy plants/divisions not tall but most from 3-12 stems, variably bushiness. Largest balled plants have moving for \$28 each; smaller were listed av. \$15; rooted cuttings av. \$8. from USDA zone 5 (just below the southern border of New Hampshire)...for those preferring the unique traits and advantages of wild type blueberries. "Once in a blue moon" rarest opportunity for your plant nursery, farm, public project, etc. If interested, sincerely suggest acting fast. Entire-lot offers OR part-amount over \$500 offers only please. Eric Ilinitch, Bush Hill Farm, 86 Front St, Winchendon, MA 01475. heathflax@yahoo.com, (978)297 3501.
- The Happy Chicken Tractor from our Little Chicken Factory - Low-cost, mobile chicken tractor for small urban and backyard flocks and meat birds. Sturdy and light weight in 6 and 12-foot-long sizes. Information at <http://www.chicktrac.com> or 978-724-6662.
- Town of Southbridge AgCom seeking persons or business' interested in participating in a yet to be formed Southbridge Farmer's Market. Please contact Marshall Morse 508.764.3231 days, 508.764.2898 evenings before 9, or e-mail marshall@morselumber.org.
- Misty River View Quality Fencing - high tensile, no climb woven wire, barb wire, electric board fence, deer fence. Post pounding with a rock spike. Keeping your animals in and predators out ! 508-867-9005.

How to Place a Classified Ad

Classified ads are accepted free-of charge on a first-come basis. 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 Massachusetts Dept. of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) reserves the right to refuse any listing it deems inappropriate for publication. E-mail, fax or mail ads to: Farm & Market Report, MDAR, 251 Causeway Street, Suite 500, Boston, MA 02114, fax: 617-626-1850, Richard.LeBlanc@state.ma.us.

[\[back to contents\]](#)

CALENDAR

- **November 12-14:** The Farm-Based Education Association Conference, Tarrytown, NY. and is hosted by The Farm-Based Education Association and the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture. www.farmbasededucation.org/page/2009-farmbased-education. This conference is an exciting opportunity to learn about various happenings in farm-based education in addition to collaborating with others to enhance your agriculture programs.
- **December 12:** Winter Gatherings for Western MA Farmers and Ag Commissions, Deerfield Town Hall - Saturday, Dec 12 - 8:30 to 3:30pm. Sessions will include (1) General Roundtable for Ag Commissions, (2) Panel Discussion on Hot Current Agricultural Issues, Laws, Regulations, and News, and (3) Panel Discussion and Informational Displays on Sources of Funding, Technical Assistance, Incentives, and Information for Farmers on Marketing, Conservation Practices, and Farm Energy Programs.
- **December 15, 16, 17** - The New England Vegetable & Fruit Conference and Trade Show will be held this at the Radisson Hotel in Manchester, NH. The conference will include 27 educational sessions over 3 days, covering major vegetable, berry and tree fruit crops as well as various special topics. A farmer-to-farmer meeting after each morning and afternoon session will bring speakers and farmers together for informal, in-depth discussion on certain issues. The trade show will feature over 100 exhibitors. This conference gathers the best speakers from within our region and across the country to tell you about the latest innovations and advances in the fruit and vegetable industry. Almost every session includes both farmers and research or extension personnel, so you are getting the "best of both worlds." For program details and registration information, go directly to the [New England Vegetable and Fruit Conference website](#). For information contact: [Frank Mangan](mailto:fmangan@umext.umass.edu), fmangan@umext.umass.edu.
- **January 9:** Winter Gatherings for Western MA Farmers and Ag Commissions, Hancock Shaker Village - Saturday, Jan 9 - 8:30 to 3:30pm. See above Dec. 12th.

*** If you have events you would like listed to our Ag industry calendar webpage,

www.mass.gov/agr/events/coming_up, or

Consumer events at: www.mass.gov/agr/events, email Rick LeBlanc at richard.leblanc@state.ma.us.

[\[back to contents\]](#)

About the *Farm & Market Report*

Published bi-monthly by:

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Deval Patrick, Governor
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Ian Bowles, Secretary
Department of Agricultural Resources, Scott Soares, Commissioner

<u>Boston Office:</u> 251 Causeway St., Suite 500, Boston, MA 02114 617-626-1700, Fax: 617-626-1850	<u>Amherst Satellite Office:</u> 101 University Drive, Suite C4 Amherst, MA 01002 413-548-1900, Fax: 413-548-1901
--	--

- Scott Soares, Commissioner, Scott.Soares@state.ma.us
- Nathan L'Etoile, Asst. Commissioner, Nathan.L'Etoile@state.ma.us
- Anna Waclawiczek, Chief of Staff, Anna.Waclawiczek@state.ma.us

Division Directors

- Michael Cahill, Director of Animal Health, Michael.Cahill@state.ma.us
- Lee Corte-Real, Director of of Crop and Pest Services, Lee.Corte-Real@state.ma.us
- Mary Jordan, Director of Agricultural Development, Mary.Jordan@state.ma.us
- Gerard Kennedy, Director of Agricultural Technical Assistance, Gerard.Kennedy@state.ma.us

Next issue to be published for Deceber / January. Please send news, calendar and/or classified information by November 30th 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.