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### **Farm Technology Review Commission Meeting Thursday, March 4th**

Farm Technology Review Commission: The Farm Technology Review Commission will hold its next full meeting on Thursday, **March 4th** at the MDAR Amherst Office from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

The Farm Technology Review Commission (FTRC) is chaired by the Commissioner of Agriculture, Scott Soares, and is comprised of state officials and farming representatives. The role of the Commission is to study and recommend options for updating farming technology including, but not limited to ways to promote energy conservation, collaborative purchasing, purchasing and selling of energy and energy saving technology. In addition, the Commission will also recommend alternative options for agricultural sustainability and growth, and analyze regulations and statutes to ensure that they are not impediments to the adoption of farming technology.

For details follow this link : <http://www.mass.gov/agr/programs/ftrc/meetings.html>.

For information contact: Gerard Kennedy [gerard.kennedy@state.ma.us](mailto:gerard.kennedy@state.ma.us).

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## **Southeastern MA USDA Good Agricultural Practices Training Opportunity**

Plan now to attend the USDA GAP Training Program on **March 9**, from 1 – 5:30 at the Sandwich Town Offices, 16 Jan Sebastian Drive, Sandwich. The USDA third party audit process will be discussed as well as strategies for controlling potentially microbial food safety risks from farm to fork. Rich Bonanno, PhD, UMass Extension Education and Co-PI, for the UMASS GAP Project will be the main presenter. The cost is \$50 and includes a GAP Manual and CD with templates for GAP records. Additional employees may attend for \$10 and receive the training but not the manual. The program is sponsored by Cape Cod Extension, UMass Extension, UMass Department of Nutrition, and the MA Department of Agricultural Resources. To register and for questions, contact Cape Cod Cooperative Extension: 508-375-6097.

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## **Forum for Horse and Livestock Owners**

"Managing manure and mud" is the topic of a free presentation for area horse and livestock owners Tuesday, **March 16**, at 7 p.m., in the Smith Academy Cafeteria, 34 School Street, Hatfield. The presentation by Dr. Masoud Hashemi, says Bob Wagner, chair of the Hatfield agricultural advisory committee, "will provide horse and livestock owners with current information about best practices for managing animal manure in responsible and ecologically sensitive ways."

Dr. Hashemi is an agronomist/crop physiologist and currently serves as the team leader of "crop, dairy, livestock, and equine team" of UMass Extension. He has assisted dairy, livestock, and horse owners for more than ten years with nutrient and manure management.

The presentation is free and open to the public. Hatfield Feed and Seed has donated a \$25 gift certificate as a door prize, and light refreshments will be served. The event is sponsored by the Hatfield agricultural advisory committee. For more information, contact Bob Wagner, chair, at 413-247-0147.

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## **Making Your Compost Product Work for You!**

FREE Compost Marketing Workshop/Field Day - Sponsored by the Northeast Recycling Council, Inc., Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, and New England Small Farm Institute, with funding from Northeast SARE (Sustainable Agriculture, Research, and Education)

Whether selling compost is your primary business or a side business, this workshop is for you! The workshop will provide marketing insights and sales techniques, including technical information on compost applications and benefits, feedstocks, quality standards, and marketing principles. Learn how to develop a marketing plan for your compost operation, how to position your product, the ins-and-outs of compost market segments, bulk sales vs. bagged, distribution strategies, and making money on tipping fees. Sales strategies will also be covered, including sales points, using social media and new media techniques, branding, and customer education tips.

The workshop is free, but all attendees must register in advance. To register or find out more information, contact Athena Lee Bradley at 802.254.3636 or by email at [athena@nerc.org](mailto:athena@nerc.org). Lunch will be provided.

When: Wednesday, **April 7**, 9:30 am – 4:00 pm

Where: New England Small Farm Institute, 275 Jackson Street, Belchertown, MA - <http://www.smallfarm.org> (Directions are posted on their website)

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## **MassDevelopment, Strolling of the Heifers, and the Carrot Project Launch Loan Program to Help Massachusetts Farmers**

MassDevelopment, along with Strolling of the Heifers and The Carrot Project, announced the MassDevelopment/Strolling of the Heifers Small Farm Loan Program through which eligible Massachusetts farmers can receive amounts ranging from \$3,000 and \$15,000. These funds will help farmers finance capital investments and meet operating costs. MassDevelopment and The Carrot Project will jointly administer the program. Next deadline **March 19**. More details and application at [www.thecarrotproject.org](http://www.thecarrotproject.org).

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## **2nd Statewide Agricultural Commissions Conference**

Saturday, **March 20**, Worcester State College - Student Center, 486 Chandler Street, Worcester, MA 01602

Today 130 Agricultural Commissions (AgComs) have organized across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. AgComs are actively engaged in raising the visibility of agriculture in their communities, providing a voice for agriculture in town hall, passing local Right to Farm Bylaws, protecting farmland and farm businesses, promoting farming and local farm products, establishing farmers markets, managing conflicts that arise regarding farming activities, connecting farmers to technical and financial services, and educating the public about the many benefits of retaining and encouraging farming in their communities.

This second statewide Agricultural Commissions Conference has been planned by AgCom members for AgCom members and for those interested in supporting agriculture and AgComs. Workshop topics were selected from issues that AgComs identified as high priority for education and discussion.

Attendees will also have time for networking and visiting exhibitors. We look forward to seeing you on the 20th! Agenda and Registration Form can be found at:

[www.massagcom.org](http://www.massagcom.org).

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## **Calling All Kids: The Fifth Annual 3-A-DAY of Dairy Poster Contest is Here**

The Massachusetts Dairy Industry Promotion Committee is announcing its 5th annual dairy poster contest for children in Massachusetts currently in grades K-6. At least one of the top three winners will be from grades K-3. Winning entries will be enlarged and displayed in the Dairy Booth in the Massachusetts Building at the Big E. Winners and Honorable Mention will receive four tickets to the Big E and an invitation to attend on Massachusetts Day.

### Contest Rules:

- Entries must be submitted on white drawing paper, 8 ½ x 11
- You must include three dairy products (examples: yogurt, cheese, milk, ice-cream) in your entry

- Spelling counts
  - All artwork must be original
  - Include a slogan to promote strong bones, physical fitness, and health eating
- All entries must be received by **April 30<sup>th</sup>** and winners will be notified in May:

1st Place=\$200 Savings Bond  
2nd Place=\$100 Savings Bond  
3rd Place=\$50 Savings Bond

For more information, contact Margaret Hanson at 508.867.5136 or email [hansonfarm@verizon.net](mailto:hansonfarm@verizon.net).

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MDAR's mission is to ensure the long-term viability of local agriculture in Massachusetts. Through its four divisions – [Agricultural Development](#), [Animal Health](#), [Crop and Pest Services](#), and [Technical Assistance](#) – MDAR strives to support, regulate, and enhance the Commonwealth's agricultural community, working to promote economically and environmentally sound food safety and animal health measures, and fulfill agriculture's role in energy conservation and production. For more information, go to [www.mass.gov/agr](http://www.mass.gov/agr) or follow us at [www.twitter.com/agcommishsoares](https://www.twitter.com/agcommishsoares) for the latest agricultural trends and updates.