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Still a Few Openings for MDAR's *Tilling the Soil of Opportunity*

There are still a few openings in MDAR's TILLING THE SOIL OF OPPORTUNITY BUSINESS PLANNING COURSE for farmers happening this winter in Amherst!

Thursday evenings 6:00 - 9:00 pm from Feb 2, 2017 through April 13, 2017 (no class March 30) at MDAR Amherst office, 101 University Drive, Amherst (next to post office).

This course is for existing farms, to help develop a business plan and improve decision making on the farm. The course instructor, who has years of experience working with farms, guides participants through the creation of a full business plan during 10 group sessions. The instructor visits each participant's farm during the course and provides individualized assistance and confidential one-on-one financial planning. Includes expert guest speakers on topics that typically include marketing, legal, accounting, and new this year - succession planning.

If you are interested, please fill out the brief application found [here](#). Please return by email to Melissa Adams at mdarfarmviabilityprograms@gmail.com or by mail to: MDAR 101 University Dr., Amherst, 01002.

Registration cost of \$200 includes instruction, course materials, guest speakers, and networking with other farmers in the class. Course applications are accepted on a rolling basis until course is filled. If you have questions, contact Melissa Adams at 413-268-8269.

Massachusetts Dairy Farmer Tax Credit Program Now Accepting Applications

The Dairy Farmer Tax Credit Program is a safety net program that supports Massachusetts dairy farmers when either the milk prices paid to farmers fall or costs of production rise relative to one another. Massachusetts dairy farmers holding a Certificate of Registration with the MDAR are eligible to receive a refundable state income tax credit, based on the amount of milk produced and sold, if the price paid to dairy farmers drops below the Trigger Price. Applications for participation in the 2016 program are due on December 23, 2016 and can be found here: www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/animal-health/dairy/dairy-farmer-tax-credit-program-generic.html.

For more information or questions regarding the Tax Credit, contact Catherine.de.Ronde@state.ma.us or 617-626-1811.

Survey for Fruit and Vegetable Farmers

Are you a fruit or vegetable farmers who has considered participating in and/or has participated at any time in 1) farmers market nutrition incentive programs and/or 2) farm to school sales or activities? Megan Lehnerd, a PhD student at Tufts, is in need of farmers to help test out a survey she has designed for her dissertation. The survey can happen over the phone in no more than an hour, and participants receive a \$20 Amazon gift card. Megan will accept the first five who respond to her at Megan.Lehnerd@tufts.edu.

Calendar of Events

Ag-industry events and workshops, click [here](#). Culinary and consumer events, click [here](#).

MDAR's mission is to ensure the long-term viability of agriculture in Massachusetts. Through its four divisions – [Agricultural Conservation & Technical Assistance](#), [Agricultural Markets](#), [Animal Health](#), and [Crop and Pest Services](#) – MDAR strives to support, regulate and enhance the rich diversity of the Commonwealth's agricultural community to promote economically and environmentally sound food safety and animal health measures, and fulfill agriculture's role in energy conservation and production. For more information, visit MDAR's website at mass.gov/agr, and follow at twitter.com/MDARCommish.