

Farm & Market Report Extras - Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) -

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NRCS Offering Energy Efficiency/Renewable Energy Assistance as Part of EQIP – Deadline May 1, 2009!

The MA Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) and our MA Farm Energy Program (MFEP, <http://www.berkshirepioneeracd.org/mfep/index.php>) are pleased to announce that the USDA-NRCS in Massachusetts is now offering, for the first time, energy efficiency/renewable energy assistance as part of EQIP. **The deadline to apply is May 1, 2009!** Below is relevant information. Contact your local NRCS field office for more information.

EQIP Air Quality Initiative

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is working to help farmers with conservation practices that improve air quality. Under the 2008 Food, Conservation and Energy Act (2008 Farm Bill), NRCS will provide eligible producers with program support through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to implement cost effective and innovative practices that improve air quality.

Funds are being made available in areas whose air quality does not meet the health-based standards established for ground-level ozone pollution. In Massachusetts, this includes all counties (see National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ground-level ozone and EPA Air Data Maps at <http://www.epa.gov/air/data/nonat.html?st~MA~Massachusetts>).

For the first time, NRCS is offering energy related assistance.

EQIP Air Quality financial assistance is being offered for the following practices:

Anaerobic Digester – Controlled Temperature (366) and associated practices, including:

- Waste Storage Facility
- Composting Facility
- Waste Transfer
- Vegetated Treatment Area
- Critical Area Planting

Atmospheric Resource Quality Management (370)

- Greenhouse Energy/Shade Screens
- Greenhouse Horizontal Air Flow (HAF) Systems

Irrigation Water Management (449)

- Cranberry Auto-Start Systems

Renewable Energy Production (716)

- Solar PV, Solar-Thermal and Wind Turbines (600 KW or less)
- GenSet for Methane Digester
- Energy audit and renewable energy assessment required

Participation in the EQIP Air Quality Initiative is voluntary. Applications are received on a continuous basis. Contact your local USDA Service Center to speak with one of our conservation professionals to begin the planning and program application process. Applications received by **May 1, 2009** will be evaluated in the first funding round.

Massachusetts Nutrient Density Field Trainings, May, July, and September

During the 2009 growing season, the Northeast Nutrient Density Network, a collaboration between the Northeast Organic Farming Association/Massachusetts Chapter (NOFA/Mass) and the Real Food Campaign, is holding five hands on full-day field trainings on maximizing the nutrient density of crops. Nutrient density is achieved along with improved yield, flavor and shelf life through biological farming techniques that maximize the nutrition provided to plants.

What sets these trainings apart from many other field day workshops is that they

emphasize the continuity of the farming cycle. People can come to a workshop in May and observe and participate in the application of fertility techniques that they can then try out on their own operations throughout the season. In September, participants will have a chance to return to the same exact experiment plots to see what results the techniques produced and gain further insight about what is working and what could be improved further. They will also learn season-specific fertility practices during each workshop. All three of the hosting farms are actively working with biological management practices and are happy to share their progress with the broader farming community through these workshops.

Workshops with Mark Fulford of Lookfar Agricultural Services

Location: Simple Gifts Farm, 1089 N. Pleasant St, **Amherst MA** 01002

- Wednesday, May 13, 9a.m.–5 p.m.
- Sunday, September 13, 9a.m.–5 p.m.

More workshops with Mark Fulford

Location: Lindentree Farm, 10 Old Concord Road **Lincoln, MA** 01773

- Thursday, May 14, 9a.m.–5p.m.
- Monday, September 14, 9a.m.–5p.m.

Workshop with Dan Kittredge of the Real Food Campaign

Location: Many Hands Organic Farm, 411 Sheldon Rd., **Barre, MA**

- Saturday, July 11, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m

Participants pay \$15 less for the second (and third) workshop than they pay for the first workshop. Members of NOFA and/or the Real Food Campaign pay \$55 for one workshop or \$95 for two workshops. Attendance at each workshop is capped at 30 people.

Further details and information you need to sign up for these exciting workshops is online:

<http://www.nofamass.org/programs/extensionevents/nutrientdensity.php>

For questions, contact Ben Grosscup, Event Coordinator, ben.grosscup@nofamass.org, 413-658-5374.

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Food Safety Training

Wednesday May 6, 2009, 1:00-5:30 PM - UMass South Deerfield Research Farm

Foodborne outbreaks linked to fresh produce have increased in recent years. To address this issue, UMass Extension, the UMass Dept. of Nutrition and the MA Department of Agricultural Resources have teamed up to implement a USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Training Program for growers and other fresh produce handlers. This event will be held Wednesday, May 6 from 1-5:30 PM at the UMass South Deerfield Research Farm, River Road, S. Deerfield. Attendees will learn about bacteria associated with fresh produce, strategies for controlling food safety hazards in all phases of production and USDA Third-Party GAP Audits. Participants will receive a GAP manual, a certificate of participation, and one pesticide credit is offered. Presenters include: Rich Bonanno, Ph.D., UMass Extension Educator 978-361-5650, rbonanno@umext.umass.edu; David Nyachuba, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, UMass Dept. of Nutrition 413-545-0552, dgn@nutrition.umass.edu; Scott Soares, Commissioner, MDAR, and Mike Botelho, MDAR.

Preregistration is required. Registration deadline: April 27, 2009. To register, send \$50.00 payable to UMass to: Shirley A. Mietlicki-Floyd, UMass Dept. of Public Health, 205 Arnold House, 715 North Pleasant St., Amherst MA 01003-9304.

Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Seeks Dialogue with Producers and Stakeholders on National Animal ID

Link: <http://www.usda.gov/2009/04/0108.xml>

WASHINGTON, April 15, 2009--Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack today held a roundtable discussion with a variety of stakeholders representing the full spectrum of views on the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). The event kicks off a listening tour to gather feedback and input that will assist the Secretary in making decisions about the future direction of animal identification and traceability in the United States.

"Much work has been done over the past five years to engage producers in developing an animal identification system that they could support," said Vilsack. "However, many of the issues and concerns that were initially raised by producers, such as the cost, impact on small farmers, privacy and confidentiality and liability, continue to cause debate. In the spirit of President Obama's call for transparency in government, now is the time to have frank and open conversations about NAIS. We need to work collaboratively to resolve concerns and move forward with animal traceability."

USDA is seeking to engage stakeholders in an effort to hear not only their concerns but potential or feasible solutions to those concerns. The listening tour will seek input from communities throughout the country.