

Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR)

Farm & Market Report

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Commissioner's Column

Dear Friends,

The Commonwealth's trees are showing the first glint of color as we transition from a rather soggy summer to fall. And while isolated hail storms and heavy rains have unfortunately been detrimental to some farms, others, like maple syrup operations, have fared extremely well this season. Ah, the capriciousness of Mother Nature!

Since my last letter, I am pleased to say that we have seen many gains for the agricultural community overall. This summer boasted a record 160+ farmers' markets that offered a rich array of locally grown products to customers. In spite of the weather, we also saw great attendance at agricultural fairs throughout the Commonwealth as many vacationers opted for pocketbook-friendly "stay-cations." And our biggest fair, "The Big E", was a great success this year thanks to the hard work of DAR staff that played a significant role in preparations to get the Massachusetts building in full swing.

One of the great highlights this summer has been the passage of the Dairy Farm Preservation Act signed by the Governor on August 14th. This act will greatly benefit both dairy and non-dairy farmers alike and was brought to fruition by the long hard work of Assistant Commissioner Scott Soares, key legislators (Senators Brewer and Rosenberg and Representatives Bosley, Evangelidis, Knapik, and Kulik), and the other members of the Dairy Task Force. Key provisions include a Farm Linked Loan Program, a Dairy Farm Income Tax Credit, and an increase of the distance farm vehicles may travel on roads without a registration. More information can be found on our website: [Summary of Dairy Farm Preservation Act](#) [pdf].

I hope many of you were able to attend the September 20, 2008 20th Farm Aid Concert. The benefit concert was well attended and included a visit by Governor Deval Patrick (who also went to the "Big E" for Massachusetts Day!). The Department was able to set up a VIP booth to promote the agriculture specialty license plate a.k.a. "Ag Tag", where we collected over 300 good leads for the plate. Speaking of which, we are now officially 1/3 of the way to our goal and hope the "Go Locally Grown!" momentum will continue to translate into new reservations!

Tragically, there have also been some bumps on the road since my last letter. On the very same day as the Farm Aid concert, Verrill Farm in Concord suffered a devastating fire which destroyed their farm stand business. Our thoughts go out to the Verrill family as they rebuild their operation which is not only enjoyed by so many but is an important pillar to the local economy.

Bad news also continues to plague the Worcester area as now the area of positive identification of [Asian Long Horn Beetle \(ALB\)](#) includes additional areas in southern Worcester. This has resulted in the significant expansion of the regulated area from 33

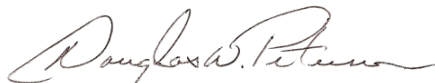
square miles to 62 square miles. ALB attacks a wide variety of hardwood trees, particularly maples, and is considered a serious threat to the nursery, lumber, wood products, maple syrup, and tourism industries in our state. We continue to work with other state agencies and local officials to coordinate a management plan to eradicate this species in Massachusetts.

As you well know, the economy is putting severe pressure on everyone, including our farmers who are faced with mounting energy and grain costs. It would be foolish to gloss over the seriousness of our present financial predicament but in spite of these strains I am nonetheless encouraged to see that the burgeoning interest for locally grown initiatives is poised to help benefit farmers during this difficult period ahead.

Over the past few months, DAR has also been faced with a number of escalating issues related to disputes between farms and the residents who abut these farms – primarily noise and odor issues. I believe the importance of finding ways for farming and non-farming communities to co-exist is crucial to long-term sustainability of the agricultural community. Success is critical amid mounting concerns regarding food safety, rising food and energy costs, and the encroachment of suburban sprawl on rural areas, especially as farmers expand their operations to meet growing demands for food, including for the local market. To this end, DAR will continue to work closely with farmers to provide assistance for economically- and environmentally-sound improvements to farm operations.

I know this is a busy time of year for farmers throughout the Commonwealth and encourage any and all who read this column to visit the many wonderful farmers' markets, roadside stands and pick-your-own destinations for a taste of Massachusetts!

Best regards,



Doug Petersen, Commissioner

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Bob Ritchie, DAR General Counsel, Receives Rhyne Award

Our DAR General Counsel, Bob Ritchie, has been bestowed with the Rhyne Award. The International Municipal Lawyers Association was founded in 1935, by Charles Rhyne. Charles led the organization as its Executive Director until 1988. He was one of the foremost Supreme Court advocates of his day, he was the youngest ABA president ever - a distinction he still holds, he was instrumental in creating "Law Day" and honoring the rule of Law. In honor of Charlie's memory, IMLA established the Charles S. Rhyne Lifetime Achievement in Municipal Law Award, the highest award this organization

presents. It is not intended to be bestowed on a regular basis, only occasionally and then to a truly uncommon individual. The award was created to honor the recipient's lifetime achievements in the field of municipal law and to be a lasting commemorative to Charles S. Rhyne's significant role in the founding and nurturing of this organization and to his life's work.

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MDAR Energy News

USDA's Energy Efficiency/Renewable Energy Grant Awardees Announced for 2008

USDA's 2008 Rural Development awardees for their Section 9006 Energy Efficiency/Renewable Energy Grant Program were recently announced and they included 15 Massachusetts businesses, 14 which are farms. The projects, listed below, include a wide variety of technologies and farming sectors, from thermal blankets in greenhouses to photovoltaic systems and wind turbines in orchards, dairy farms, vegetable farms and livestock operations, sawmills and aquaculture. The Massachusetts Farm Energy Program (MFEP) provided grant writing assistance for 7 of these recipients. The MFEP is managed by the Berkshire Pioneer (BPRC&D) & Patriot (PRC&D) Resource Conservation Development Areas, with support and assistance provided by the MA Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) and the Amherst, MA office of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Congratulations to all the awardees!

- Red Apple Farm \$19,985, Ag - Orchard, 15 kW wind project
- Devine Farm, Inc. \$1,525, Ag - Dairy, variable speed drive on dairy vacuum pump
- BOVF, LLC \$280,230, Ag – Orchard/vegetable greenhouse, 250 kW wind turbine
- Morning Glory Farm Inc. \$50,000, Ag – livestock/vegetable/greenhouse, 50 kW wind turbine
- Tripp Farm Family Limited Partnership 16,605, Ag – Dairy 10 kW wind turbine
- Cricket Creek Farm, LLC \$30,231, Ag - Dairy/Livestock, Biomass wood pellet stove
- Pioneer Gardens, Inc. \$33,538, Ag – greenhouse horticultural, thermal blanket and lighting
- Whitney's Farm Market, LLC \$6,589 – Ag – greenhouse horticultural/vegetable, thermal blanket
- Elysium, LLC \$250,000 – small business office building, energy efficiency
- Hall Tavern Farm, Inc. \$43,063, Ag - lumber/sawmill 23 kW PV system
- Four Star Farms, Inc. \$160,409, Ag - aquaculture – 89 kW PV system
- Kenneth Foppema \$19,819, Ag – vegetable/farm stand, 9.75 kW PV system

- Brooks McCutchen \$18,641, Ag – maple sugaring, 9.0 kW PV system
- Carter and Stevens Farm \$28,828, Ag - dairy, 15 kW wind turbine
- Andrew Pollock/dba Silverbrook Part, \$20,714, Ag – vegetable/greenhouse, 10 kW wind turbine

Massachusetts Farm Energy Program (MFEP):

The 2nd phase of the Berkshire Pioneer RC&D MFEP, Technical Assistance, continues to make progress with the RFQ/P advertised for energy consultants interested in providing technical assistance in the form of energy audits to farms across the state being well responded to and received. Follow-up interviews with potential consultants are in the process as well as the development of farm program applications and relevant agreements and contracts. Phase 2 technical audit services are still anticipated to be available to farms this fall. For more information on this program, please visit: www.berkshirepioneerrcd.org.

Massachusetts Bio-fuel Crop Trials

The MA bio-fuels crop trials are on-going with all switchgrass and crambe plantings completed, both on UMass lands and participating external farms. Progress reports are being developed evaluating the progress and results of these trials. The crop trials are the result of a combined effort of The Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (EOEEA), the Massachusetts Division of Energy Resources (DOER), the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC) and the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) working with research professors from the UMass Amherst MA Department of Plant, Soil, and Insect Sciences, with an intention to research the development of a sustainable fuel crop on marginal land, i.e., one not considered a good candidate for food production.

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Agricultural Business Development Programs

- Need help sorting those piles of receipts and to-do-lists into meaningful information to make informed plans for the future?
- Old enterprises on the farm not yielding a sustainable income, and need to know what to do next?
- Preparing for a changing of the guard from one generation to a new one?
- Can't qualify for the loans you need?
- Think you may be farming material, but need a feasibility test for your ideas before you invest?

Gather with your peers for a few evenings in a friendly setting with professional guidance and develop some measurable plans for your farm enterprise! These courses are taught by folks who have seen what works and what doesn't on many farms. The peer group in each session is often the most valuable resource – farmers and/or hopeful farmers learn

best from each other when given the excuse. No pizza shop plug-in business plans here. No online template you fill in mindlessly and regret later. This is YOUR idea explored with others who speak the same language and want you to succeed.

MDAR will offer three learning formats in 2009. Courses are sited around the state wherever enough folks have let us know they want a course. We also love to work with local/regional ag organizations - at no cost to you other than your help with recruiting and site logistics.

1) **For Experienced Farmers** – Take the national farm entrepreneur course NxLevel© “Tilling the Soil of Opportunity” with our experienced Instructor and team of topic experts. This 10 session (one per week) course has been successfully completed by over 250 MA ag businesses in the last eight years. Almost universally, they love it and continue to tell us so years later. Limited to already-working farms with access to land, this course runs January-early April, 2009 in Western/Central MA and possibly also in the SE region. Participant fee is state supported at \$200 per business (more than one participant may attend if that helps the farm). Signup is October-early December.

2) **For New Farmers** – Take “Exploring Your Small Farm Dream” for those contemplating or just beginning a new farm enterprise. MDAR partners with the New England Small Farm Institute (NESFI) to offer this popular 4 session “litmus test” to see if you should start your farm now, wait a bit, keep your day job, or move on to a different idea. We expect to offer a session this year in late winter 2009 in Southeastern MA and another location to be announced. Fee is \$125 per business. Signup is October through January.

3) **For those “in between”, we offer a new guided workbook format called “The Small Farm Planner”**. If you took Explorer and need some more input before you jump in – or if you have recently moved from “hobby” to “intend to make a profit” over the past year but you haven’t quite nailed down all the specifics that give you full confidence – NESFI’s new “Planner” is for you. We will meet for a kick-off session and hand out the self-guided workbook. Additional meetings to share progress and thoughts can be scheduled as needed, with a “wrap-up” session about six months later. In the interim, the facilitator will be available by email for ongoing support. This is a pilot year for us with Planner, and we don’t know exactly how it will evolve. So we will offer it for the cost of the materials plus a modest fee - \$100 total. Since minimal travel is needed for this primarily guided-workbook format, we will offer the pilot only in Western MA.

Why not something “free” or that only takes an hour or two in a seminar?

These courses are not one-shot-wonders or cursory overviews. They don’t provide one-size answers from a book. Our Instructors and Facilitators put lots of extra time into each individual participating enterprise to clarify your goals and how you might reach them. You will get proportional return on your personal investment. We find that farm businesses that make a moderate investment of time and money in a significant course go on to demonstrate the commitment needed to get results.

Please call or email (preferred) to make your interest known and to get questions answered. You can also find information and applications on our website at <http://www.mass.gov/agr/programs/abtp/index.htm>. We will send you an application and additional information as soon as you request it!

Contact: Rick Chandler, MDAR, 25 West Experiment Station, UMass, Amherst, MA 01003

Phone: 413-577-0459 Fax: 413-577-3820, email: rchandler@umext.umass.edu

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Updates in Culinary Tourism

1) Our DAR Culinary Tourism website is currently being developed; learn more about Culinary Tourism opportunities, submit your November culinary events (by Oct.17) and participate in our Farm-to-Table Survey. Check it out at http://www.mass.gov/agr/markets/culinary_tourism.htm.

2) Tourism U: Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism (MOTT) is hosting a series of free roundtable tourism workshops in October and November. Attend one near you to learn more about tourism programs offered through MOTT and your Regional Tourism Council. Roundtable details and registration is available on www.massvacation.com.

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New England Greenhouse Conference & Expo

Come to the largest nationally recognized floriculture industry show in New England. Mark your calendar for the New England Greenhouse Conference & Expo, which will be held from **November 5 thru November 7th at the DCU Center in Worcester, MA**. If you are a garden center or greenhouse retailer, or grower of bedding plants, perennials, outdoor cut flowers, or potted plants, don't miss this event!

Each day will feature consecutive tracks of educational programs. Educational sessions focusing on advanced perennial production, advanced propagation, strategies for growing and marketing green, special in-depth symposiums on retail marketing strategies and time management considerations for the retail grower, and a biological control symposium will be featured on Wednesday, November 5th.

The program on November 6th & 7th will feature seminars on various greenhouse and perennial crop production tips, fertility and water management, various pest & disease

control issues, retail marketing, energy efficient greenhouse crop production tips and alternative energy options, marketing trends, and many other topics.

There will also be two days of tradeshow shopping and learning with demonstrations on the show floor. Over 175 exhibitors including “incubator” displays for companies new to the industry will be featured in the trade show.

New England Greenhouse Conference & Expo is sponsored by the Extension programs of the six New England State Universities and Cornell University, the growers’ Associations in New England and New York and New England Floriculture, Inc. For more information about the New England Greenhouse Conference and Expo, visit the web site, www.negreenhouse.org, call 802-865-5202 or email info@negreenhouse.org.

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Transitioning to Renewable Energy for Greenhouse Heat

December 4, 2008, 8:30-4 pm

Sturbridge Host Hotel and Conference Center, Sturbridge, MA

This one-day conference will focus on alternative technologies & fuel sources that are immediately available, locally produced, and economically favorable in comparison to traditional fossil fuels. While the emphasis will be placed on showcasing the experiences of growers who have made the switch to renewable fuels, we will also provide information on sources of funding that may be available, conservation strategies, and procuring, producing, and using wood and corn as biomass fuels.

Sponsored by the University of Massachusetts Extension Floriculture Program, Extension Vegetable Program, New England Vegetable & Berry Growers Association and Massachusetts Flower Growers Association

Contact Tina Smith, 413-545-5306, tsmith@umext.umass.edu, Andy Cavanagh, acavanagh@psis.umass.edu, 413-577-3976, Paul Lopes, 508-295-2212 ext. 24, lopes@umext.umass.edu University of Massachusetts Extension.

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Alternative Greenhouse and High Tunnel Crops

University of Massachusetts Extension, University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System, and Northeast SARE are sponsoring a “Alternative Greenhouse and High Tunnel

Crops” conference to be held at the Sturbridge Host Hotel, Sturbridge, MA on **Friday, December 12, 2008.**

This all day conference will address topics of interest to those with greenhouses and unheated high tunnels. Among the speakers at the conference are: Vern Grubinger from the University of Vermont, who will be speaking on Growing in Greenhouses and High Tunnels. Becky Grube from the University of New Hampshire will be speaking on Growing Winter Sprouting Broccoli in Unheated High Tunnels for the Fresh Market. Sandie Shores from Herb’s Herb & Such, will be speaking on Growing Fresh Cut Herbs and Edible Flowers. Sandie is the author of “Growing and Selling Fresh Cut Herbs” and will have autographed books available for sale. Pete Johnson of Pete’s Greens, in Craftbury, Vermont will discuss Growing Greens. David Zemelsky from Starlight Gardens in Durham, CT will discuss Salad Greens for High Tunnel Production and Missy Bahret and Casey Steinberg from Old Friends Farm in Amherst, MA will talk about Growing and Marketing Ginger Root.

A pre- registration fee of \$35.00 is due by December 5th. Please make checks payable to the University of Massachusetts and mail to: Greenhouse Crops Program, Room 203 French Hall, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003. Cost of admission includes: handouts, lunch, snacks and beverages during break.

For more information see: <http://www.umass.edu/umext/floriculture/> or Contact: Tina Smith, University of Massachusetts, 413-545-5306, tsmith@umext.umass.edu; Paul Lopes, University of Massachusetts 508-295-2212 ext 12 or lopes@umext.umass.edu or Leanne Pundt, University of Connecticut, 860-626-6240, leanne.pundt@uconn.edu.

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Keeping Farms in Your Community

Farmers and municipalities can take advantage of a variety of tools for preserving agricultural landscapes. Learn about the historic, economic and environmental significance of agriculture. Find out how to establish an agricultural commission, use land preservation tools such as chapter 61 and Agricultural Preservation Restrictions, and create municipal policies that are agriculture-friendly. Featuring Cris Coffin, New England Director, American Farmland Trust; Cheryl Lekstrom, Director of Member Relations, Massachusetts Farm Bureau; and Bonnie Parsons, Principal Planner/Manager, Historic Preservation Programs, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

This workshop will be offered twice – attend either:

- Thursday, October 9, 6:30 – 8:30 pm - Blackstone River & Canal Heritage State Park/River Bend Farm Visitor Center, 287 Oak St., Uxbridge, MA

- Thursday, October 30, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m - Sturbridge Town Hall, 308 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA

Directions available upon request. Workshops are free and open to all, but pre-registration is required. Please register at least two days in advance by e-mailing or calling Joanna Doherty, Blackstone Heritage Corridor (joanna_doherty@nps.gov or 401-762-0250) or Bob Levite, Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor (boblevite@hotmail.com or 508-831-1223 x244).

This workshop is part of a series being offered through the Heritage Landscape Inventory partnership between the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission, and the Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor, Inc. Other workshops in the series include "Building Support for Landscape Preservation" and "Bringing New Life to Mills." For more information, see www.nps.gov/blac/parkmgmt/heritage-landscape-inventory.htm

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Biosecurity in Fish Farming Operations

Saturday, Oct 18th, 9 am to 4 pm - Franklin County Technical School, 82 Industrial Boulevard, Turners Falls, MA

A team of aquaculture scientists will present a program on fish health, fish diseases and how to protect your facility from fish pathogens. In the morning, we will meet at Franklin County Technical School to learn the latest information concerning fish diseases in the Northeast.

In the afternoon, we will take part in a biosecurity assessment of Four Star Farms, in Northfield MA (15 minutes from Turners Falls). Four Star Farms grows largemouth bass in ponds, RAS and in season-shifting tanks to allow for year-round spawning. They are also developing a trout culture system.

REGISTRATION – All individuals interested in finfish production are encouraged to attend. There is no charge for the meeting but pre-registration is encouraged. Participants who are pre-registered will receive a free lunch. **To register or for more information:** call Craig Hollingsworth at (413) 545-1055, or email chollingsworth@umext.umass.edu.

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Zone-Tillage & Soil Health Conference

December 1; 9am – 3:30 pm. Publick House, Rt. 131, Sturbridge, MA.

Do you want to save \$44/acre in diesel fuel? Would you like to improve the organic matter levels, structure and fertility of your soils? Do you have a soil compaction problem or a plow pan? Does water tend to pool on the surface of your fields leaving crops vulnerable to wilts and rots? Did you have trouble with soil erosion with all the rain in 2003, 2004, 2006 and 2008? Do you have trouble getting on to your land to plant when it is too wet or planting on schedule when it is too dry? Would you like to improve crop quality and yields without increasing nutrient inputs? Are you tired of pick-ing rocks after plowing and harrowing? Would you like to rent land from a trust or municipality, but they won't let you conventionally-till their land? Well maybe it is time to look into a better way of farming called zone-tillage. Come hear researchers, Extension folks and growers describe what zone-tillage can do for your farm and why they would never recommend conventional tillage again!

Pre-registration: \$35 by Nov. 21 (rain or shine, no refunds), \$40 at the door – if space is available. Send name of attendee(s) and a check made out to UConn, to the University of Connecticut, Cooperative Extension System, 24 Hyde Ave., Vernon, CT 06066. Contact: Jude Boucher, 860-875-3331, jude.boucher@uconn.edu (Note: this meeting is at the Publick House, around the corner from the Sturbridge Host Hotel, not at the Sturbridge Host Hotel) Sponsored by Northeast SARE, and the University of Connecticut, University of Rhode Island and Cornell University Cooperative Extension Systems

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Seminar: Developing a Marketing Plan for Canada!

This program offers first-hand market information about the Canadian Market as well as feedback regarding the business prospects for your food and agricultural products and entry or business expansion strategies.

Wednesday, November 5th, 2008 from 9am to 4pm, at the New Hampshire International Trade Resource Center in Portsmouth, NH

In the morning, Kathy Boyce, Canada's in market representative, will share a detailed presentation on Canada's retail and food service sectors and market opportunities. After lunch, you can meet with her to specifically discuss your products and market strategies. The registration deadline is Friday, October 31st, 2008. The registration fee is \$50.00 per person that includes breakfast, coffee, lunch and beverages. This program is sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, Food Export USA Northeast and the New Hampshire International Trade Resource Center. For more information, send an email to bonita.oehlke@state.ma.us or dhruv.sood@state.ma.us 617-626-1753.

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2009 Northeast Buyers Mission

February 9, 11 & 13, 2009 • Philadelphia, New York City & Boston

The Northeast Buyers Mission is a low-cost, low-risk opportunity to meet pre-qualified buyers from over 20 countries. You'll gain one-on-one feedback about your product's exporting potential. You will have approximately 20 minutes to meet with each buyer that you have pre-selected prior to the mission based on buyer profiles that will be available to you in the future. In addition to establishing new relationships and initiating new export sales, these meetings provide an opportunity for you to gain valuable feedback regarding your product in relation to the various country markets.

The Northeast Buyers Mission is the largest Buyers Mission of the year! Last year, over 90 U.S. suppliers met with the international buyers. They reported almost \$1 million in actual export sales, with over \$8.4 million in projected export sales as a result of this event. This success could be yours!

The one-on-one matchmaker meetings will take place in Boston on Friday, February 13, 2009. For more information please contact: Bonita.Oehlke@state.ma.us 617-626-1753 or Dhruv.sood@state.ma.us 617-626-1736

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UMass Extension's Green School

UMass Extension's Green School is designed for landscape professionals, lawn care specialists, arborists and other horticultural practitioners who want to gain or increase their understanding of horticultural fundamentals and strategies and their relationship to environmental quality.

This is a comprehensive 11-day certificate short course for Green Industry professionals taught by UMass Extension Specialists and University of Massachusetts faculty. Green School students come away with the knowledge needed to make environmentally appropriate decisions related to turf and plant selection, arboriculture, plant maintenance, and pest and nutrient management.

Green School runs November 6 – December 18, 2008. It is held 1 to 2 days a week from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Doubletree Inn, 11 Beaver St., Milford, MA.

Green School's curriculum is based on research and information emphasizing

environmental stewardship and integrated pest management (IPM). Participants develop an understanding of how proper management practices impact natural resources such as soil and water.

Students choose a “specialty track” when registering. Three specialty tracks are offered:

- * Turf Management
- * Landscape Management
- * NEW THIS YEAR - Arboriculture, specifically geared toward professional arborists.

The full schedule is at http://umassgreeninfo.org/programs/green_school.html

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MassWildlife - Landowner Incentive Program: Upcoming 2009 Application Period and Information Sessions

The application period for the Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) for FY 10 opens October 27, 2008, with applications due on or before December 19, 2008, at 4:00 PM. Private landowners who want to actively manage their property to benefit wildlife habitat are invited to attend one of several scheduled LIP events listed below to learn more about wildlife habitat management techniques and tools and also about potential funding through this program. Individual landowners, land trusts, sportsmen's clubs, and other conservation organizations are encouraged to attend these FREE events and to consider applying to the program.

In 2008, The Landowner Incentive Program received 51 applications for species-at-risk habitat enhancements and restoration for the upcoming fiscal year (FY 09). Of these applications, 35 were selected to receive funding. MassWildlife is partnering with these private landowners to finance management on a total of 2,640 acres, funding the grants with a total of \$806,158. Of the 35 grants awarded, ten went to land trusts, 12 to conservation organizations, one to a sportsmen’s club, and 12 to other private landowners. Of the projects funded, 71 percent applied for manual restoration, 80 percent applied for invasive/exotic plant removal, 26 percent applied for the seeding or planting in their project area, and none applied for a prescribed burn. Of the properties selected (by county), four are in Barnstable, seven in Berkshire, one in Bristol, one in Dukes, two in Essex, four in Franklin, three in Hampden, six in Hampshire, one in Middlesex, two in Nantucket, one in Plymouth, and three in Worcester County.

- Tuesday, October 7, 5:00 PM - Bushnell-Sage Library, 48 Main St, Sheffield - Hosted by the Nature Conservancy
- Thursday, October 16, 6:00 PM - 300 Westgate Center Dr, Hadley - Hosted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, (Please note: a photo ID is required at this facility)

- Monday, October 20, 6:00 PM - Appleton Farms, 219 County Rd, Ipswich - Hosted by the Trustees of Reservations
- Thursday, October 23, 6:00 PM - North River Sanctuary, 2000 Main St, Marshfield - Hosted by Mass Audubon

www.mass.gov/masswildlife - [October Newsletter](#)

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“4-H Cares About Community” Food Drive Launches October 5

Massachusetts 4-H is seeking food donations to benefit area shelters and pantries as part of its “4-H Cares About Community” food drive, which begins October 5. Sponsored by Cumberland Farms, the food drive coincides with the start of National 4-H Week.

4-H club members and adult volunteers across Massachusetts will be collecting food and donating it directly to their local pantries and shelters – many of which have reported depleted food reserves recently. Additionally, Cumberland Farms stores statewide, will have collection boxes available from October 27 through November 15 to accept donations of non-perishable items, which 4-Hers will also be transporting to those in need.

One in every seven Massachusetts residents lacks adequate food, according to the USDA and US Census Bureau. That is nearly 450,000 people in the Commonwealth alone. Hunger is on the rise and the Project Bread Status Report on Hunger in Massachusetts reports that the prevalence of hunger in low-income communities has reached an all-time high. With the current economy and winter approaching, many more families will need to choose between heat and food this year.

Those who would like to donate food, but don’t know a 4-H member or have no Cumberland Farms store nearby, are being encouraged to call a local 4-H office, to visit the 4-H website at www.mass4H.org, or to call 1- 800-374-4446 for details, suggestions of food items, and information on how to help 4-H reach those in need. Monetary donations are also greatly appreciated and can be sent to a local 4-H office, payable to the Massachusetts 4-H Foundation.

“With a difficult winter approaching, thousands of people need your assistance and 4-H thanks you for any help you can give,” noted UMass Extension 4-H Educator Gretchen May. Last year, 4-H clubs in Massachusetts collected more than six tons of food for area shelters and food pantries.

MA 4-H is a youth development program of UMass Amherst Extension, University Outreach. National 4-H Headquarters, which operates out of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), is the federal partner of 4-H programs and is

implemented by the Cooperative Extension System of the nation's 106 land-grant colleges and universities and is located in 3,150 communities across the nation.

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RFAs Released for Two Northeastern IPM Grants Programs

The Northeastern IPM Center is pleased to announce the availability of funding for 2009 through two separate grants programs: the IPM Partnership Grants Program and the Northeast Regional IPM Competitive Grants Program. Both programs are supported by the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, and funded projects will foster the development and adoption of integrated pest management (IPM). Full Requests for Applications (RFAs) for each program are linked from <http://NortheastIPM.org/grants.cfm>. Eligibility and application requirements are briefly described below. If you have questions about either program, please contact grants manager John Ayers, co-director of the Northeastern IPM Center, Pennsylvania State University (phone 814-865-7776; email jea@psu.edu).

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2009 Massachusetts Calendar Awards, Special Events, and a Visit from the Governor mark "Massachusetts Day" at The Big E

Sept. 18th was "Massachusetts Day" the Eastern States Exposition(The Big E) and highlights included Governor Patrick's visit to the fair's Massachusetts Building, an array of awards and entertainment, and promotion of the "Ag Tag" license plate to benefit Massachusetts agriculture.

Massachusetts Day events revolve around the Massachusetts Building on the Avenue of States – an attraction that features replicas of the original capitol buildings of each New England state. Managed year-round by the Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR), the Massachusetts Building offers fair attendees an opportunity to take a virtual tour of the state's landmarks, sample Bay State cuisine, and shop for Massachusetts-made products. The 90-year-old building's mission is to promote Massachusetts agriculture, commerce, and tourism.

DAR, once again, used The Big E to promote the [Ag Tag](#), a specialty license plate designed to support Massachusetts agriculture. Once the Registry of Motor Vehicles receives the 1,500 orders needed to begin producing the plates, Ag Tag sales are expected to yield \$60,000 annually for a new Massachusetts Agriculture Trust Fund. Fairgoers had the chance to pose for photographs with a live tableau that mirrors the Ag Tag's cow-and-produce design – including a cow from Talvy Farm in North Brookfield.

Celebrating the Seasons of Massachusetts Agriculture



“The Big E is a fabulous annual opportunity to showcase all that the Commonwealth has to offer – in particular, our rich agricultural heritage,” said DAR Commissioner Doug Petersen, who announced the winners of this year’s Massachusetts Agriculture Calendar Photo Contest, and the Massachusetts Dairy Industry Promotion’s “3-A-Day” poster contest.

Calendar contest winning photos and honorable mentions have been included in the 2009 Massachusetts Agriculture Calendar published by Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom in cooperation with DAR and the US Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resource Conservation Service. Each winner received two Big E tickets and two complimentary calendars. Winning calendar photographers are:

- [January](#) – Heather Welch of Tisbury (“White Alpaca”)
- [February](#) – Elizabeth Albritton of Jamaica Plain (“Goat at Russell Orchards, Ipswich”)
- [March](#) – David Rainville of Ashby (“Kids with Buckets”)
- [April](#) – Monica Press of Williamstown (“Rainbow”)
- [May](#) – Alison W. Bell of Northampton (“Fruit Tree Blossoms”)
- [June](#) – Ruth Curtis of Danvers (“Eight-Week-Old Calf”)
- [July](#) – Julian Robinson of Oak Bluffs (“Horse Show”)
- [August](#) – Bernie Kubiak of Amherst (“Hot Air Balloon Over Cornfield”)
- [September](#) – Susie Mulliken of New Braintree (“Storm’s Coming – Hay Baling”)
- [October](#) – Heather Aboody of South Yarmouth (“Cranberry”)
- [November](#) – Bernie Kubiak of Amherst (“Misty Cornfield”)
- [December](#) – Casey Vandervalk of Mendon (“Christmas Tree Farm Gift Shop”)

In addition, honorable mentions went to: Kelley DeBettencourt of Edgartown, Jennifer McCafferty of Hudson, Joe Podles of Uxbridge, Lauren Novick of Belchertown, Barrie Goldberg of Brookline, Jerry Horbert of Uxbridge, Kent Boynton of Harvard, Sandra Pipczynski of Hadley, Lisa Westervelt of Cummington, and Heather Welch of Tisbury.

Calendars can be purchased for \$10 each (\$5 wholesale cost), with proceeds benefiting Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom, a nonprofit organization that works with teachers to develop classroom materials. Send check payable to [Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom](#) to PO Box 345, Seekonk, MA 02771. Retail Farms are encouraged to sell them on consignment. Contact Debi at debi.hogan@earthlink.net. Special thanks to Diane Baedeker Petit and Catherine Ulitsky with NRCS who assisted with the design of the Calendar.

In addition to DAR and a number of Bay State companies offering Massachusetts-made products, exhibitors in the Massachusetts Building include: Hampden County Bee

Keepers Association, Western Massachusetts Master Gardeners Association, Massachusetts Federation of Farmers Markets, New England Apple Association, Massachusetts State Grange, Massachusetts Conservation Districts, Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom, Massachusetts Association of Campground Owners, Massachusetts Dairy Industry, Massachusetts Maple Producers Association, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, Massachusetts State Police, Massachusetts State Treasurer's Office, and Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency.

The front lawn stage at the Massachusetts Building featured a performance by country musician Laura Bryna, who is also spokesperson for the US Air National Guard. The 5 p.m. parade included antique farm trucks, Massachusetts marching bands, the Massachusetts State Police, Smokey the Bear, Miss Massachusetts, and more.

If interested in exhibiting next year or having meetings at the Massachusetts Building, click here for more information: www.mass.gov/agr/fairs/massbuilding/index.htm.

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A Note From Steve Verrill of Verrill Farm, Concord

We want to thank everyone in this community and beyond for the over whelming support after our devastating fire at the farm stand on last Saturday, September 20. Fortunately, the fields were untouched. We are harvesting our crops daily and will be selling corn, tomatoes, pumpkins, mums and more from our wagon and tents along Wheeler Road from 9 am - 6 pm every day. In addition, a temporary building has been put up here. Although the selection will be smaller than at the farm stand, you will find familiar items including our own baked goods, produce and other items. Many of you have asked how you can help. One important way is to shop at our temporary stand which supports both the farm and our employees. And, for those of you who would like to contribute to the rebuilding of the stand, we have set up a special account, the Verrill Farm stand Fund, at the Middlesex Savings Bank, 1208 Main Street, West Concord, MA 01742, Steve Verrill.

Opportunities to Support Verrill Farm: www.verrillfarm.com/fundraising.html
Fund Raising Events

Thanks to all of you who are planning benefits for the Verrill Farm stand Fund. Events will be posted here as we learn about them. We appreciate your thoughtful support.

- **Saturday, October 4** - Acton Oktoberfest - The Acton Farmers Market group is setting up a raffle at the Oktoberfest. Proceeds will go to the Farm stand Fund.
- **Sunday, October 5th** from noon - 3pm, The Old Manse on Monument Street, Farmers Market: A cooperative effort of over a dozen local farms. Proceeds will be donated to the Farm stand Fund.

- **Sunday, October 19**, 2 - 5 pm, Main Street Market & Cafe, Musical group Two for the Show, which regularly performs at Verrill Farm events, is arranging a benefit of musicians. Proceeds will go to the Farm stand Fund.
- **November 1:** Harvest Dinner/Fundraiser for Verrill Farm, 4pm, Hartman's Herb Farm, Barre. RSVP to Lynn Hartman, hartmansherb@hotmail.com, 978-355-2015. Let her know if you would like to donate produce/meats to the dinner.
- **Loweco Polar Fleece Clothing**
Betsy Lowe of Loweco will donate some of the proceeds from her December Barn Boutique Show to the Farm stand Fund.

www.verrillfarm.com

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NEWS FROM USDA

Western MA Broadband Workshop

Western Massachusetts Broadband Workshop sponsored by USDA and Senator Edward M. Kennedy.

October 15, 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Grand Ballroom, The Hotel Northampton, 36 King St., Northampton, MA 01060

This FREE workshop is for businesses, local governments, economic developers, educators, libraries, health care and emergency services agencies and others who want to learn more about broadband matters relevant to this region. Topics to be covered include potential funding sources for Broadband through USDA Rural Development, and broadband issues and opportunities in western Massachusetts. Time will be available for individual meetings of prospective loan or grant applicants with Rural Development staff.

To register: Please email Maril Alsup-Stockwell at Maril.Stockwell@ma.usda.gov. Please provide name, title, organization/company, and phone number for each attendee. For questions on the USDA Rural Development broadband programs, please visit www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/ or contact Mary Campanola at 202-720-8822 or Mary.Campanola@wdc.usda.gov.

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USDA Grants \$3.4 Million for Farmers Markets Nationwide - Three Awards to Massachusetts

Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer announced in September 85 grants totaling \$3,445,000 directed by the new farm bill to spread the use of farmers markets. Eighteen of the 85 grants promote a new electronic benefit transfers (EBT) to help low-income consumers buy locally-grown fresh fruits and vegetables.

"Farmers markets are an increasingly popular source of fruits and vegetables," said Schafer. "Locally grown and locally known sales of fresh produce strengthen the connection between farmers and the community."

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service helps increase domestic consumption of agricultural commodities and improve farmers' income. The grants are authorized under the amended Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976. Regional local governments, nonprofit and economic development corporations, agricultural cooperatives and tribal governments in 43 states may use the money to establish, expand and promote farmers markets and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities. Under this third year of funding, the Massachusetts grantees are as follows:

\$56,989 to Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture, Inc., South Deerfield, Mass., to educate farmers about winter crop varieties and products; train farmers on direct marketing, financial planning, merchandising, and food safety; increase market managers' understanding of the benefits of selling extended-season agricultural products; and educate consumers on availability of agricultural products year-round.

\$72,813 to the Massachusetts Federation of Farmers & Gardeners Markets, Waltham, Mass., to develop a "viral marketing" (word-of-mouth) model for farmers markets, develop a Web site to help consumers to locate farmers markets, and provide low-cost promotional materials in an effort to identify alternatives to conventional advertising for farmers markets.

\$70,818 to Nuestras Raices, Holyoke, Mass., to train immigrants and refugees in farming skills and business necessary to raise and sell products at farmers markets and other direct-to-consumer venues in Western Massachusetts; provide infrastructure for farmers to participate in markets and farm stands; and develop a multi-lingual (English, Spanish, and Russian) advertising and EBT marketing campaigns for the community to support local farmers markets.

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IN EVERY ISSUE

CLASSIFIED ADS

- Compost: For sale; \$3.00/Yd picked up with a 10 yard minimum. Saugus, MA. Rockyhillfarm@comcast.net.
- One year old bull for sale. 1/2 Devon-1/2 jersey shorthorn cross. \$250 or best offer. Phone 508-867-5735, iugf@hotmail.com.
- WANTED: Individual or family interested in growing medicinal herbs on our 1,200 acre certified organic farm in the Champlain valley of Vermont. These herbs will be used in our natural skin care product line. Most of the infrastructure for production is already in place including tractor and implements, greenhouse, irrigation supplies, drying facilities, some equipment and staff. We are seeking someone experienced in row-crop style agricultural production and personnel management. Women are encouraged to apply. To learn more contact: Corinne Ferry at (802) 465-4287, or email: Corinne@tatanaturalalchemy.com.
- Seeking Land: Immigrant & Refugee Agriculture Initiative (IMMAG), based in Westfield, MA, seeks land to expand its program to new participants and assist new farmers in establishing their own operation. Currently, the program leases space at the Nuestras Raices farm in Holyoke, MA. Both projects have farmers that have trained on this farm and are ready to begin independent operations on four to five acre parcels for vegetable production. We are searching for either individual locations (~4-5 acres) where our farmers could lease or a ~20-acre farm that IMMAG would oversee and support several farmer operations. In addition, we have a number of farmers that are interested in expanding their livestock operations. Again, we could site individual pastureland or have a collective space of ~50-100 acres. We are open to discussing what would work best for all involved. To learn more, visit www.immag.org or www.nuestras-raices.org. Please contact Shemariah Blum-Evitts, IMMAG project coordinator, at sblum@lcssne.org or 413.562.6015, with questions or to offer land/support. This can be a very fruitful partnership between a landowner and our refugee and immigrant farmers.
- Need a property caretaker for your farm? Massachusetts farmers can run a free caretaker-wanted ad in THE CARETAKER GAZETTE. Please call (830) 336-3939 or visit www.caretaker.org.
- 44 acre APR parcel in Northampton: Comprised of 15 acres currently non-organically farmed in corn, and 29 acres of lovely woods, streams, high and low lands, an on-again off-again beaver pond, etc. Extra income can be realized through firewood and lumber sales. A 24/7 farming operation would be eligible to build a home on the site. \$299,000. pethews@yahoo.com.
- Proposed new farmers market for 2009. Acton - Contact Jennifer at 978-877-1657 or Jenna1607@msn.com.

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.

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CALENDAR

- **November 1:** Harvest Dinner/Fundraiser for Verrill Farm, 4pm, Hartman's Herb Farm, Barre. RSVP to Lynn Hartman, hartmansherb@hotmail.com, 978-355-2015. Let her know if you would like to donate produce/meats to the dinner.
- **November 5 - 7:** New England Greenhouse Conference and Expo, DCU Center, Worcester, MA. If you are a garden center or greenhouse retailer, or grower of bedding plants, perennials, outdoor cut flowers, or potted plants, don't miss this event! For more information about the New England Greenhouse Conference and Expo, visit the web site, www.negreenhouse.org.
- **December 1:** Zone-Tillage & Soil Health Conference; 9am – 3:30 pm. Publick House, Rt. 131, Sturbridge, MA. Pre-registration: \$35 by Nov. 21 (rain or shine, no refunds), \$40 at the door – if space is available. Send name of attendee(s) and a check made out to UConn, to the University of Connecticut, Cooperative Extension System, 24 Hyde Ave., Vernon, CT 06066. Contact: Jude Boucher, 860-875-3331, jude.boucher@uconn.edu.
- **January 23-24,** Massachusetts Agricultural Commissions' Conference: Making a Difference in Our Communities, The Crowne Plaza, 10 Lincoln Square, Worcester, MA 01608 - www.massagcom.org/conference. If you have any questions, please contact Irene Winkler, USDA NRCS, Pilgrim RC&D Program at 508-295-1317 x 130 or email at: irene.winkler@ma.usda.gov.
- **February 25 & 26:** Second Annual Harvest New England Farmers' Agricultural Marketing Conference and Trade Show - Save the Date!
Growers from across the Northeast will convene at the Sturbridge Host Hotel and Conference Center in scenic Sturbridge Massachusetts. Over 700 attendees joined us for our first conference in February, 2007. Plans for 2009 are for even a bigger and better conference. This unique marketing conference targets New England farmers interested in learning new marketing ideas or fine-tuning strategies for business success. Over the course of two days, there will be over 20 workshops with a wide range of marketing and business planning topics to be covered. Ag technology, farmers' markets, agritourism, media relations, and starting new farmer information are just some of the workshops planned. **For information on how to participate in the trade show please visit:** www.harvestnewengland.org.

*** If you have events you would like listed to our Ag industry calendar webpage, [www.mass.gov/agr/events/coming up](http://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.

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