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CLASSIFIED

COMMISSIONER'S COLUMN



Greetings, Mass. Agriculture and all its friends,

Mass. Agriculture and MDAR lost a great friend and supporter with the passing of former Commissioner [Gus Schumacher](#) who died on September 24th.

Gus served as MDAR Commissioner from 1985 to 1990 and a lot happened during his tenure. He continued MDAR's work in farmland preservation through the Agricultural Preservation Restriction program which had been established just a few years earlier, under the administration of then Commissioner Fred Winthrop. Gus also was a strong advocate for farmers markets, seeing their great benefit to both farmers and consumers. Always looking to improve and promote Mass. Agriculture, while Commissioner he created events like the still ongoing Mass. Tomato Contest.

Gus deeply cared about those lacking the financial means to regularly buy locally produced, fresh and healthful agricultural products. What I believe to be one of his greatest accomplishments while Commissioner was that (according to the MDAR website) Gus "...created the Farmers' Market Coupon program in 1986, a program that provides coupons to low-income mothers and elders to use at farmers' markets. The program also helps to develop markets for local farmers. The coupon program was replicated by numerous other states and eventually became a federal program."

Though I knew him by name and reputation, I didn't know him personally prior to my appointment as Commissioner. Well, that changed very quickly, as once we initially spoke, I regularly heard from Gus on a host of matters. He'd call me to discuss what interested him in Ag, and more frequently sent me news items, videos he made talking with farmers and patrons at farmers markets, suggestions, and an occasional "Attaboy!" to something he noted MDAR had done.

Those interactions were always very interesting and enjoyable. Gus didn't meddle into MDAR's business, but like all the other former commissioners, he never stopped caring about the Department, its people (several of Gus's hires are still at MDAR) and its mission, along with all things agricultural, including expansion of consumer

access
to
locally



produced food.

Gus was full of warmth, energy, enthusiasm and good humor, and nothing exemplified that better than the annual racing of the very popular Zucchini 500 at the Truro Ag Fair. Many participate in making the event happen, but make no mistake-it was Gus's baby! Like with everything else, he was invested 110% to make that event successful and fun.

Gus truly touched so many people's lives, and while we mourn his passing, we also celebrate a life of humanity and accomplishment. I shall miss Gus terribly, but am lucky I had the chance to get to know him a little. On behalf of the entire Department, we offer our deepest sympathies to Susan and family.

Directly related to Gus's core priorities is the very successful Mass. Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) that provides SNAP (Supplemental Food Assistance Program) recipients an instant dollar for dollar match for purchases of fresh fruit and produce from participating farm stands, farmers market vendors, mobile markets, and Community Supported Agriculture farms. What a great benefit both for SNAP recipients and our farmers! The program, a cooperative venture of the Department of Transitional Assistance (lead agency), the Department of Public Health, and MDAR, is in its first year of a three-year commitment. It has wildly exceeded expectations, and reports from participating farmers all over the state is increased sales. SNAP clients and farmers can learn more about how they may participate in HIP [here](#).

Fair season has passed. This year I attended the Sheep & Woolcraft Fair, Barnstable County Fair, Oakham Youth Fair, Westfield Fair, Heath Fair, Worcester County 4-H Fair, Blandford Fair, Three County Fair, Franklin County Fair, Sterling Fair, Belchertown Fair, The Big E and the Topsfield Fair. Jason attended the Hardwick Fair, Marshfield Fair, and the Middlesex 4H Fair.

I really enjoy the fairs. Besides seeing all the fabulous Mass. Agricultural products, it allows me the opportunity to speak one on one with multiple farmers, without any "buffers" acting on my behalf, or the farmers'. It's interesting how those conversations may differ so much from more formal interactions I have with other interested parties. I learn so much from these chats. When what I hear differs substantially from "conventional wisdom", it often makes me wonder a little.

Along the same lines are farm tours. Whether organized by MDAR, a Buy Local organization, an industry association, or a legislator, they also provide staff and me insight into the pressing issues, hearing them right from the farmer's mouth. This season Berkshire Grown, SEMAP, and Northeast Harvest hosted MDAR for some excellent tours. The Gilmore Cranberry Company and CCCGA hosted a harvest tour for EEA and MDAR, at which MDAR personnel joined me. Our program staff often don't get the opportunity to be exposed to the totality of an operation; tours like these put everything into perspective, which I see as asset to our program development and service delivery.

If I'm going to mention farm tours, I must acknowledge Congressman Jim McGovern's annual two-day ag tour that he conducts every August in his district, to which he kindly invites MDAR. As he is one of only two New England members on the 46-member US House Agriculture Committee, it's greatly appreciated that the Congressman keeps himself so well informed on the particular federal issues that Mass. and other northeast farmers face. With a new Federal Farm Bill on the horizon, we need consideration on what our farmers do, which often differs from agriculture's priorities in the big commodity states. I couldn't make his tour this year (Jason and some staff did), but I look forward to attending next year.

Until the process and programs are developed, I think it's appropriate I keep you updated on matters relative to legalized marijuana and industrial hemp. The [Cannabis Control Commission](#) has authority over legalized marijuana. It is up and running and recently concluded a series of listening sessions around the state. It is seeking written comments about its development of regulations which may be sent to the Cannabis Control Commission by email at cannabiscommission@state.ma.us or by mail to Cannabis Control Commission, One Ashburton Place, Room 313, Boston MA 02108, ATTN: Regulations.

As I mentioned last column, Lydia Sisson of Mill City Grows in Lowell is Governor Baker's public appointee to the Cannabis Advisory Board (CAB). We both serve on the CAB's two subcommittees that are related to Agriculture, one with a component on cultivation, the other on local agriculture and growing cooperatives.

At the same time, we at MDAR are developing an industrial hemp program that conforms to the law as passed by the voters and amended by the General Court. Our plan is to have a program in place so one can grow hemp in 2018, but acknowledge that real life lessons will likely lead to changes and improvements being made to the program over time.

Lastly, I'm writing this just before MDAR's celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) legislation. Since passage in 1977, over 900 farms in 171 municipalities all over the state, containing over 70,000 acres of the state's highest quality agricultural soils, have been permanently preserved for commercial agricultural use. The event takes place Friday, October 20th, 1:30 PM, at Mount Sugarloaf in South Deerfield. The location atop Sugarloaf allows one to look down into the Connecticut River Valley and see numerous APR farms.

The APR program was the first state program of its type in the nation. It has served as a model for similar programs across the country. I thank the General Court for creating the program 40 years ago, and for its support since then. I also congratulate our present APR team, and all those who preceded them for all their hard work over the years to provide a tool that allows many farmers to continue doing what they want to do, to farm their land.

Hoping the fall finishes up well for everyone,



John Lebeaux

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FOREFRONT

MDAR Launches Online Renewal of Pesticide Applicator Licenses

In August of this past summer, the Department mailed out 9,400 informational letters to pesticide applicators. This letter describes the Department's new online examination and licensing system and the functions it performs. The new system is known as the Environmental Information and Public Access System or EIPAS. Another letter was also mailed to some 2,300 pesticide companies or employers of the pesticide applicators in an effort to make them aware of the new system.

The informational letter was accompanied by a PIN or Link Letter that provided instructions on how applicators needed to create an online account on the Commonwealth's ePLACE Portal and using the unique codes, provided in the PIN letters, link their existing pesticide examination and licensing records to their new ePLACE accounts

Calendar Year 2018 Online Renewals Now Underway

The Department will use the new online system this fall to process Calendar Year 2018 Renewals. At this point, the Department is working to assist applicators to complete the following:

- create online ePLACE accounts and link them to existing pesticide applicator records; and
- complete online pesticide applicator renewals for Calendar Year 2018.

Need a PIN / Link Letter

Individuals that have yet to set up their ePLACE Account and need PIN / Link Letter should contact by email Sandra Payne at Sandra.Payne@state.ma.us or by phone at 617-626-1720. Please provide your complete name, address, license number, email address, and telephone number.

If you have NOT already done so, please create a new account on the ePLACE Portal and use the PIN or Link letter provided by MDAR to link your pesticide records.

EEA ePLACE Portal

<https://permitting.state.ma.us/citizenaccess/>

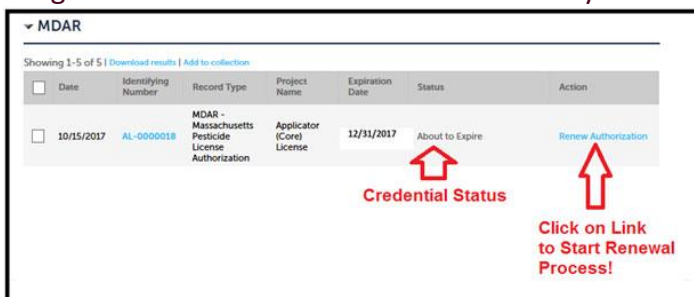
Please be careful to record your password, user name, and security questions to avoid problems logging into the new account. Bear in mind that passwords and answers to security questions are case sensitive and must match exactly what you provided when you created the account or you will NOT be allowed to login.

After you create the new ePLACE Portal account and link it to your records, please click on “My Records” and then the “Renew Authorization” hyperlink to initiate the renewal process (see image below). Commercial pesticide applicators must be sure to have the required Certificate of Insurance (pdf file) available for upload into the system when prompted.

Need Help with Your ePLACE Portal Account

Need ePLACE Help? Is your user name or password not working? For technical assistance in using the ePLACE Portal, please call the ePLACE Help Desk Team at 844-733-7522.

Image of Record in the ePLACE Portal – Ready for Renewal Process



Date	Identifying Number	Record Type	Project Name	Expiration Date	Status	Action
10/15/2017	AL-0000018	MDAR - Massachusetts Pesticide License Authorization	Applicator (Core) License	12/31/2017	About to Expire	Renew Authorization

Credential Status

Click on Link to Start Renewal Process!

Energy News

MDAR's MA Farm Energy Program - Energy Audits – Now is a great time! MDAR's Massachusetts Farm Energy Program (MFEP) has funds to help farms cover audits, energy efficient projects, and select renewable energy projects. Contact us now for more information through the Center for EcoTechnology (CET), our partner

carrying out the MFEP. Call 413-727-3090, or e-mail: info@massfarmenergy.com. You may also visit www.massfarmenergy.com, submit a Request Form, and we will contact you.

UPDATE on SMART Regulations

Here are some key updates on DOER's new SMART Program.

From the beginning - DOER's website: "The Massachusetts DOER is in the process of designing a new solar incentive program pursuant to Chapter 75 of the Acts of 2016. DOER is working to create a long-term sustainable solar incentive program to promote cost-effective solar development."

The new program is named SMART – Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target Program – and will continue in the familiar spirit of the former SREC –I and –II programs. This time, for the first time, is an incentive promoting the dual-use of agricultural land whereby solar PV designs optimize both crops and energy generation, under the regulation definition of Agricultural Solar Tariff Generation Units. Part of the requirements for these units is in the regulations; some are left to Guidelines. Relevant Agricultural Solar Tariff Generation Unit Guidelines per the SMART regulations are being developed to provide clarity to qualifications and parameters (SMART 225CMR20; 20.06;1;d.). DOER plans to issue a first draft of these guidelines to the stakeholder listserv group shortly for comments. If you wish to receive stakeholder updates on the program please sign up for the "Solar PV Contact list include SREC contacts" list by filling out the following form: <https://signup.e2ma.net/signup/1374704/1356542/?v=aUpdates>.

Some Key Chronological Updates:

SMART Regulations Filed

On Monday, June 5, 2017, DOER filed 225 CMR 20.00, the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) Program, with the Secretary of the Commonwealth as an emergency regulation. DOER will separately announce the timing of public hearings and the written public comment deadline in the coming weeks. Copies of the regulation and accompanying guidelines were available for stakeholder review.

RFP for Solar Program Administrator

On July 18, 2017, the electric distribution companies issued an RFP for the Solar Program Administrator responsible for the SMART program. Interested bidders must be registered within the Eversource "SAP Ariba Sourcing" purchasing system. Please contact Eversource by July 28, 2017 to register, view the RFP and submit a bid.

DOER Files Final Regulation with the Secretary of State

On August 11, 2017 DOER filed its proposed final version of the 225 CMR 20.00 Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) Program regulation with the Secretary of State's Office. DOER expects this version to be published in the State Register on August 25, 2017 with minimal to no changes. The version below is the UNOFFICIAL version of the final regulation that was filed with the Secretary of State, www.mass.gov/eea/docs/doer/rps-aps/225-cmr-20-draft-clean-081117.pdf

DPU Notice of Filing and Request for Comment

On September 12, 2017, the electric distribution companies filed a Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target tariff with the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) to implement An Act Relative to Solar Energy. The DPU has docketed this petition as D.P.U. 17-140. Details regarding the docket can be found in the [Notice of Filing and Request for Comment](#). You can find out more about this effort at www.mass.gov/eea/energy-utilities-clean-tech/renewable-energy/rps-aps/development-of-the-next-solar-incentive.html or contact Gerry Palano at Gerald.Palano@state.ma.us

MDAR's Annual AgEnergy Grant Programs – Awardees to be Announced Soon

Following up the previous news on the FY2108 AgEnergy Grant Programs, this year 43 total applicants submitted a variety of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects for both Traditional and Special Projects Programs, totaling over \$1,200,000 in requests. Final recommended and approved awardees will be announced shortly. MDAR thanks the continuous annual interest from farms and developers alike in your support for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects on farms across the Commonwealth. As importantly, MDAR is thankful and grateful to the MA Department of Energy Resources (DOER) for once again contributing significant funding toward both these grant programs in a partnership arrangement. This is all in an effort toward the goal of assisting our MA Agricultural sector in becoming more energy sustainable through energy efficiency and clean energy project implementation, while simultaneously achieving the MA goals of GHG reduction as well as those established our 2015 MA Food System Plan, the first since 1974.

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EPA Programs

Local Foods, Local Places Program

[Local Foods, Local Places](#) helps communities reinvest in existing neighborhoods and revitalize downtowns through the development of local food systems. To date, nearly 80 communities have benefitted from assistance with support from EPA, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Appalachian Regional Commission, and the Delta Regional Authority.

Learn how to apply for the Local Foods, Local Places Program: www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/local-foods-local-places-2017-2018-application.

Healthy Places for Healthy People Program

[Healthy Places for Healthy People](#) helps community leaders and health care partners focus on health as an economic driver and catalyst for downtown and neighborhood revitalization. Health care partners include community health centers (including Federally Qualified Health Centers), nonprofit hospitals, and other health care facilities. To date, 10 communities have benefitted from assistance with support from EPA and the Appalachian Regional Commission. Healthy Places for Healthy People provides assistance for communities that are economically challenged, including those in rural Appalachia.

Learn how to apply for the Healthy Places for Healthy People Program: www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/healthy-places-healthy-people-2017-2018-application.

Farm Succession School Returns to New England

Help for farmers looking toward retirement in MA, CT & RI. Deadline extended through November 17th!

One of a farmer's biggest challenges is planning for farm succession. The Farm Succession School provides farmers and farming couples looking toward retirement and farm transition the structured and sustained support to make decisions, engage their family, and organize the legal and financial mechanics. Topics include

goal setting, estate planning, retirement planning, family communications, taxes, legal structure, Medicaid, and bringing on a successor.

A commitment of just three days over the winter months will allow farmers to develop a concrete plan for their farm business, their land, and their retirement. Program includes presentations, group discussions and individual exercises, with "assignments" between sessions. Farmers who have participated loved the amount of attention they received and valued the trust and sharing that developed among the participants, regardless of scale or type of enterprise. "It opened my mind to all that's involved and not be afraid to seek help from professionals," shared one farmer. "A must do! Definitely would recommend it. Well worth the time!" shared another farming couple. [Read more of what farmers had to say.](#)

[Details and Registration here.](#)

Upcoming Extension Food Safety Events

Product Development: Beyond the Concept: November 6 - Commonwealth Kitchen, Dorchester, MA. In partnership with the regional processing centers in Massachusetts, this 1-day, content-filled course will have food safety and product development expert Amanda Kinchla from the University of Massachusetts Food Science Department discuss the technical considerations necessary to successfully launch a new food product. Do you want to better understand the food safety principles behind your process? Do you need help with product development for your current or future food product? Propel your business to the next level by delving into product development and food safety. [Click here to register.](#)

Better Process Control School, ACIDIFIED PROGRAM, November 15 & 16, UMass Amherst. This course will train food processors principles of acidification, and container closure evaluation programs for acidified canned foods as required by FDA regulations in CFR 108 and 114. The purpose of these regulations is to help ensure the safety of consumers by training producers. This course will satisfy both USDA and FDA regulatory requirements. This event is sponsored by Umass Extension, Department of Food Science and Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA Science). [Click here to register.](#)

Food Emulsion Short Course, November 30 – December 1, UMass Amherst. This workshop will present the basic principles, concepts and techniques of emulsion science, and show how this information can help to understand, predict and control the properties of real food products and ingredients. This course will be taught by academic and industry instructors with extensive experience in emulsion technology. [Click here to register.](#)

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UPCOMING EVENTS/WORKSHOPS

October 22-24 - Women in Meat Northeast Conference - Harvard Forest, Petersham, MA. The Women in Meat Northeast Conference is an event designed for women whose livelihood intersects with the world of livestock such as butchers, farmers, processors, chefs, value-added producers, distributors, and service providers across all segments of the industry. Our goal is to provide women with the opportunities to learn from and network with one another, while developing valuable skills and growing and strengthening their respective businesses and brands. Whether you are raising livestock or creating and selling products with

it, this conference has you covered. See the Agenda, Full Workshop + Conference descriptions, and tickets at: www.universe.com/wmn2017.

October 26 - Farm to School Awareness Day - Grand Staircase, Massachusetts State House, Boston.

Come celebrate Massachusetts Farm to School Month by joining us at our First Farm to School Awareness Day at the Massachusetts State House on October 26th at 11:00 am! Join fellow farm to school advocates and partners from around the Commonwealth to celebrate all things farm to school. This day will be a great opportunity to meet with your legislators and share the exciting farm to school activities happening in your community, as well as visit with other farm to school organizations, and congratulate this year's *Kale Blazer Award* recipient. [More here.](#)

October 30 - NO-TILL Conference - Carter and Stevens Farm, 500 West Street, Barre, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm. NRCs Resource Conservationist Kate Parson will talk about "Why No-Till and How it Works," Tom Morris of UConn will talk about "Nutrient Management in No-Till," and Katie-Campbell-Nelson of UMass will talk about "Pest Management and IPM practices in NO-Till." Plan to have an equipment trade show and close out the day with a panel of farmers. The event is Sponsored by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Massachusetts Association of Conservation Districts, and Worcester County Conservation District, Umass Extension, Carter and Stevens Farm, and SARE. [Registration is available here](#), questions, contact Lisa.Trotto@ma.usda.gov.

November 1 - Mass. Food Policy Council Meeting - 9:30 am – 12:30 pm, Massachusetts State House Room 428, Boston. Focus on the Healthy Incentive Program: Support programs that facilitate access to healthy foods for underserved communities. A current focus is to provide support to leverage the Department of Transitional Assistance's USDA/FINI grant award, known as the Healthy Incentives Program, which will increase use of SNAP at farmers markets, farm stands, mobile markets, and for community supported agriculture (CSA) programs, providing fresh, healthy food for low-income families, and increasing sales for Massachusetts farmers. Additional examples include the MA Food Trust and the MA Food Ventures Program. Next mtg: January 12, 2018: 9:30 – 12:30 pm – location to be announced - www.mass.gov/service-details/massachusetts-food-policy-council-fpc.

November 8 - Maximizing Profits Education Program for Greenhouse Growers and Garden Center - D & D Farm, Stow MA 01775, 1 – 4:00 pm. Erin Pirro, Farm Business Consultant with Farm Credit East, Enfield Connecticut will lead a two-hour interactive discussion on how to maximize profits in your business: 10+ ways to find \$10,000 in your business. this will be followed by a one-hour panel discussion on business diversification as a tool for maximizing profits. [Details and registration.](#)

November 17 - Massachusetts Food System Forum - 9:30 am - 3:30 pm, Doubletree Hotel, 99 Erdman Way, Leominster. The Massachusetts Food System is full of activity, energy, and innovation – from the growth in urban agriculture, to increased access to healthy foods, to innovative education and supports for food system entrepreneurs, to efforts to reduce food waste, to schools integrating nutrition and farming into their curricula, and much more. Much has been accomplished, and there is an abundance of work underway and more challenges to address. Join Massachusetts food system leaders, organizers, activists, advocates, and mobilizers as we check in on progress toward a more sustainable and equitable food system, and discuss opportunities for collective action. It has been two years since the completion of the Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan. The 2017 Massachusetts Food System Forum is an opportunity to learn about what has been accomplished since then toward the goals of the Plan, and to have discussions to develop plans and

strategies for future collaborative work. Registration is only \$15. More information, and [online registration here](#).

November 17 – Ribbon Cutting for New Cold Storage Facility at the Western MA Food Processing Center – 4:00 pm - 6:30 pm – 324 Wells Street, Greenfield, MA. Come celebrate the new cold storage facility at the FCCDC Annual Meeting. [Details coming soon here](#).

November 29 – December 1 - New England GROWS – Boston Convention and Exhibition Center. Professional conference and exposition designed specifically for the commercial horticulture or green industry. Green industry professionals, educators, students and members of allied professions are invited to attend. [More here](#).

November 30 - Grunder @ GROWS - 7:30 am – 4:00 pm - Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, Boston. [Take Advantage of Business-building Seminar at GROWS!](#) President and CEO of one of the most successful landscaping companies in the Midwest, Marty Grunder coaches green-industry professionals around the country about how to take their companies to new heights. As a working landscape pro, Marty shares the same struggles as everyone in today's green industry: to sell, manage, motivate, and satisfy customers and employees. He's been there and he's doing that! Count on him to deliver proven strategies along with practical advice to help you grow your company and reach your fullest potential. Sign up now for this focused, fun, hard-working seminar — with everything you need (and nothing you don't) to build your business. [REGISTRATION](#) by October 31st \$299 per person (includes 3-day GROWS Expo pass). Attendance is limited to keep the focus on you, your questions, and the challenges you face. Sign up now at [NewEnglandGROWS.org](#).

November 30 – December 1 - MA Farm Bureau Annual Meeting - Sheraton Framingham Hotel, Framingham, MA. Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation's (MFBF's) Annual Meeting will be hosted by Worcester County Farm Bureau. The 2017 meeting will be held on Nov. 30 and Dec. 1 at the. [Details here](#).

December 5 – 7 - 2017 Community Food Systems Conference - Boston Park Plaza, 50 Park Plaza, Boston, MA. This conference will address common underlying themes between food security, social justice and sustainable agriculture including obstacles in urban and rural environments and fostering community empowerment to create and sustain resilient local food systems. [More here](#).

December 12 - 14 - New England Vegetable and Fruit Conference - Radisson Hotel, 700 Elm St, Manchester, NH. The New England Vegetable & Fruit Conference and Trade Show will include more than 25 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. There is also an extensive Trade Show with over 120 exhibitors. [Registration information](#).

January 13, 2018 - 31st Annual NOFA/Mass Winter Conference – Worcester State University – [Details here](#).

Save the Dates!

- **March 16-17, 2018 - Massachusetts Urban Farming Conference** - Bunker Hill Community College, Boston, MA

- [March 27, 2018 – Ag Day at the Statehouse](#)

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USDA News

The USDA Farm to School Grant Request for Applications

The purpose of the USDA Farm to School Grant Program is to assist eligible entities in implementing farm to school programs that improve access to local foods in eligible schools. On an annual basis, USDA awards up to \$5 million in competitive grants for training, supporting operations, planning, purchasing equipment, developing school gardens, developing partnerships, and implementing farm to school programs. The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 tasked USDA with supporting farm to school efforts through grants, training, technical assistance, and research. For FY 2018, we offer the following grants:

The USDA Farm to School Grant Request for Applications just went live! We wanted to highlight a few key resources:

- [Applicant Resource Page](#)
 - [RFA on Grants.gov](#)
-

Community Food Projects (CFP) Competitive Grants Program

In FY 2018, NIFA's CFP intends to solicit applications and fund two types of grants. The types are entitled (1) Community Food Projects (CFP) and (2) Planning Projects (PP). The primary goals of the CFP are to: Meet the food needs of low-income individuals through food distribution, community outreach to assist in participation in Federally assisted nutrition programs, or improving access to food as part of a comprehensive service; Increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for the food needs of the communities; Promote comprehensive responses to local food access, farm, and nutrition issues; and Meet specific state, local or neighborhood food and agricultural needs including needs relating to: Equipment necessary for the efficient operation of a project; Planning for long-term solutions; or The creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers. <https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/community-food-projects-cfp-competitive-grants-program>

USDA Accepting Applications for Value-Added Producer Grants

Looking for funds to start a farmer-run local food hub, expand your dairy brand to artisan cheeses, or explore specialized grain milling? USDA is once again accepting applications for [Value-Added Producer Grants \(VAPG\)](#). These matching funds grants, administered by the Rural Business Cooperative Service, provide money for farmers or farmer-controlled groups to make a marketing plan (up to \$75K) or run an added-value business (up to \$250K). Applications must be submitted by January 31, 2018. If you are considering applying for a VAPG grant, contact your local [Rural Development Office](#).

Federal Crop Insurance and Risk Management Programs Updates

It's time to consider your Risk Management options for 2018

As farmers complete the final activities of 2017 it is time to prepare for 2018. Farmers have faced several weather challenges, in the past few years, that have resulted in crop losses. Now is the time to start considering your risk management options for 2018. USDA offers a variety of crop insurance policies that are designed to allow growers to select both price and yield coverage. The USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) offer policies, through private agents, for apples, clams, cranberries, corn, fresh market sweet corn, forage, nursery, potatoes and tobacco. The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides coverage for all non-insured crops through the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). Growers must evaluate each product and purchase the coverage level that meets their needs by the appropriate sales closing date. The sales closing dates are as follow:

Date / Crop Policies / Source

- November 15th - Forage, Pasture & Rangeland - Private Crop Insurance Agents
- November 20th - Apples, Cranberries, Peaches - Private Crop Insurance Agents
- November 20th - All other perennial crops - Farm Service Agency
- November 30th - Cultivated Clams - Private Crop Insurance Agents
- March 15th - Potatoes, Corn, Tobacco, Fresh Market Sweet Corn, Whole Farm Revenue Protection - Private Crop Insurance Agents
- March 15th - All other annual crops - Farm Service Agency
- May 1st - Nursery Commodity - Private Crop Insurance Agents
- September 1st - Aquaculture - Farm Service Agency

Crop insurance is sold and delivered through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers or [here](#).

Pasture, Rangeland and Forage Insurance

Sales Closing Date: 11/15/2017

A new crop insurance policy can provide livestock and hay producers with protection against drought. The [Pasture, Rangeland and Forage](#) is a single peril policy that is designed to provide protection based on rainfall near your farm in two month periods. The grower can insure up to 100% of his pasture and hay acres at a productivity factor from 60% to 150% of the county base value. This production will be distributed in 2 month intervals as determined by the grower. If precipitation falls below the selected trigger level in a 2-month period, your crop insurance company will issue an indemnity payment based on the % of production selected for that period. The grower does not have to keep records, report production, losses etc.

The Rainfall Index uses NOAA data for a 17 X 17-mile grid that encompasses your farm. You can review the performance of this program at this website maps.agforceusa.com/prf/ri/.

Crop insurance is sold and delivered through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers or on the RMA website at <https://prodwebnlb.rma.usda.gov/apps/AgentLocator/#/>.

Bristol County has an Approved Crop Insurance Policy for Grapes

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has developed and approved a crop insurance policy for

grapes in Bristol County. Growers have many levels of coverage available for both yield and prices. The policy offers coverage from 50% to 85% of your average yield and a range of prices based on grape variety. Crop insurance is sold and delivered through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers or on the RMA website at: www.rma.usda.gov/tools/agents/. Growers in a county, other than Bristol County, can request coverage through a written agreement. We encourage you to contact your crop insurance agent. For more information, check out the fact sheet for grapes. The deadline to purchase a crop insurance policy for [grapes](#), for 2018, is November 20th, 2018. UMass Extension works in partnership with the USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) to educate Massachusetts producers about Federal Crop Insurance and Risk Management Programs. For more information, please visit www.rma.usda.gov or contact UMass Risk Management Specialists Paul Russell at pmrussell@umass.edu or Tom Smiarowski at tsmiarowski@umass.edu.

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Classified

- **Winter Farmers Markets Looking for Vendors:**
 - Swansea, Sundays, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm, year round, Contact Erin Babbitt, 401-465-4832 or rdonna247@aol.com. Seeking produce growers.
 - Winchester/Mahoney's Garden Center, Saturdays 10:00 am – 2:00 pm, January 20 to March 10. Contact Heidi Briggs, 781-529-5900, x 247 or hbriggs@mahoneysgarden.com. Seeking produce growers.
- **The Farmer's Edge – On-Line Business Course + Consulting Collective** - This 3 month, online course is designed to give farmers the skills and tools needed to cultivate financially sustainable businesses. Julia Shanks Food Consulting. [More here.](#)
- **Agricultural Excavation – Grading Services** - provide earth moving, drainage, land/pasture reclamation, greenhouse preparation, and rock raking services. Includes but not limited to orchards/equine facilities/cranberry bogs/nurseries. Chris Merrill Excavating merrilltrucks@comcast.net, 978-897-9977.
- **Help with Organic Certification?** If daunted by the paperwork associated with filing for certification, I can help. I was Baystate Certified Organic for nine years in Massachusetts. My field is flock health, feeding whole grains, organic pasture management, vegetable and flower gardens and planting whole grains for small harvest. Reasonable rates. Will travel with compensation. Contact cyndatwilliams@yahoo.com or 508-763-5901.

About the *Farm & Market Report*

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Next issue to be published in December. Please send news, events, or classified information by December 1 to Richard.LeBlanc@state.ma.us. To unsubscribe, or change your email address, contact Richard.LeBlanc@state.ma.us or call 617-626-1759.



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 www.mass.gov/agr.

