

August / September Farm & Market Report

8/31/18

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COMMISSIONER'S COLUMN



Greetings, Mass. Agriculture and all its friends,

It's been a busy couple of months!

We appreciate the ongoing support we receive from the Baker-Polito Administration to advance MDAR's mission, but it's always special when we can join them at an agriculturally related event, and both Governor Baker and Lieutenant Governor Polito have recently been out there at them.

Governor Baker spent some time recently in Cranberry Country. First, he attended the always very well attended Cape Cod Cranberry Growers' Association Summer Meeting. After speaking to the crowd of over three hundred, the Governor than toured Kim and Jeff LaFleur's Mayflower Cranberries in Plympton. Kim and Jeff showed the Governor what they do to bring crop to harvest and discussed the joys and challenges they face as cranberry growers.

Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matt Beaton (there's also a cranberry grower named Matt Beaton. I'm told they've never both been seen in the same place. Hmm.), Department of Fish and Game Commissioner Ron Amidon and I also attended and interacted with cranberry growers.

Lt. Governor Polito and I announced in July the most recent round of MDAR's Food Ventures grants at Harding Green in Worcester's Kelley Square, the future site of one of the grant recipients, the Worcester Public Market which along with Kitchen Garden Farm in Sunderland and Commonwealth Kitchen in Dorchester received funding to increase access to locally produced food.

Lt. Governor Polito also joined me on one of my agricultural fair visits and we toured the Cummington Fair-we had a great time on a beautiful summer day. This quiet town of less than nine hundred people has thirty thousand visitors come to it over four days! It was a privilege for the Lt. Governor and me to honor Fair President George Dole on his retirement after thirty years in that capacity, and the Fair itself on its one hundred fiftieth anniversary! George has put his heart and soul into the fair. Learn a little more about him and the fair here.

We saw beautiful displays of fruit, veggies, flowers, all kinds of arts and crafts, livestock and enjoyed some great fair food. Many thanks for the 4H Food Booth burger, and the ice cream, LG!

At the same time, it's been a little quiet in the Commissioner's Office. Last time I informed you that we had a vacancy in the Assistant Commissioner position. I hoped I'd be able to report to you today who would assume that role. Sorry, I'm afraid I can't at this time, but we're actively working on it.

In late June, our Chief of Staff Alisha Bouchard took extended medical leave for double knee replacement surgery. I am delighted and a bit amazed to report that after a summer recovery period, followed by a couple weeks of working on a reduced time basis, our now bionic Chief returns to full-time right after Labor Day. Staff and I are very happy she's back, and if you deal with the Department, I suggest so should you, because she keeps the whole machine humming along and keeps the trains on time.

Last but certainly not least in the area of personnel coming and going, I note the recent retirement of longtime MDAR staffer, Craig Richov, who recently retired after forty years with the Department. Craig wore many hats during his career. For many years, he coordinated our Farm Viability Enhancement Program, a business planning program designed to look at ways of diversifying and modernizing an existing farm's operation. Craig spent a lot of time on the road interacting with farmers, and provided tremendous benefit to hundreds of farms all over the state.

Craig was hired by Department of Food and Agriculture Commissioner Fred Winthrop, who was the first of the eight Commissioners with whom Craig worked. When I invited Craig's former Commissioners about a retirement celebration staff held for him, all were extremely full of praise and appreciation:

- Fred Winthrop: "I intend to take some, if not all the credit, since I had the good sense to hire him! I was a wise old man of 38 at the time.... in retrospect, one of the best decisions I've ever made."
- Jay Healy: "Craig was a stable reliable employee who served well in many different capacities for DFA (even though I was a bit envious when I saw Craig happily tooling around Mass. farms in his spiffy Mercedes-Benz!)
- Doug Gillespie: "Craig's efforts at the helm of the Farm Viability Enhancement Program was superb in providing expertise and financial opportunities for our farmers; a program that has become a model nationwide!"
- Scott Soares: "Craig's willingness to lead the charge on some of the Department's signature programs, his pragmatism and thoughtful problem solving approach is reflected by the continued success of the programs that he managed and in some cases created."

Greg Watson was travelling outside the country, with limited access when I contacted him, but also expressed his appreciation and congratulations. Sadly, Commissioners Schumacher and Petersen are no longer with us.

Craig offered me wise counsel based on his long tenure with the department and with so many farms for which I am very grateful. It was a privilege to have the opportunity to work and learn from Craig. On behalf of MDAR and MA Agriculture, thank you, Craig, for your successful career working for the benefit of our farmers. We wish you a long, happy and healthy retirement!

I've had a lot to say this edition, and of course, once again I'm way past deadline, and Rick is tactfully trying to get me to finish this up. So just some quick headlines now:

- Legislatively speaking, I want to make you all aware of three recent changes that became law: positive changes were made on how the Mass. estate tax is calculated on farmland in certain situations; amendments were made to the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program; and the Dairy Farmer Tax Credit was increased from \$4 million to \$6 million.
- State Auditor Bump recently released an <u>audit of the APR program</u> which we have under careful study and review.

And we've been on the road:

- Not only enjoyed but met up with a high school classmate I hadn't seen in, well, a very long time, at Mill City Grows Farm to Cocktail Party, Lowell.
- Attended the ribbon cutting of the Meatworks facility in Westport, partially funded through the Food Ventures program. Congratulations to The Livestock Institute!
- Enjoyed a great tour organized by Berkshire Grown of Sky View Farm, Sheffield; Turner Farms, S. Egremont; Indian Line Farm, S. Egremont; and Balsam Hill Farm, Sheffield.
- Central Mass Grown took me out to visit Valley View Farm, Templeton; Ladybug Farm, Hubbardston; and Red Apple Farm, Phillipston.
- Saw a lot of old friends at Mass. Nursery and Landscape Association Summer Meeting at Wachusett Mountain in Princeton.
- Heard a lot of innovative techniques at the Central Mass. Dairy Twilight Meeting at Will Rogers Farm in Warren.
- Great visit at the Mass Association of Dairy Farmers Summer Meeting, Cooper's Hilltop Farm, Rochdale.
- And the fairs! So far: Barnstable, Oakham Youth (Sadly the last one after fifty-five years-Thank You, Eva Grimes!), Middlefield, Martha's Vineyard, Hardwick, Marshfield, Worcester County 4H, Cummington. More still upcoming on the schedule.
- Farmers Market visits: Copley Square, Shrewsbury, Flint Neighborhood Farmers Market, Fall River.
- SEMAP's delicious Farm to Tapas event at Barney's Joy Creek Farm, S. Dartmouth.

- Sustainable Nantucket tour of Moors End Farm, cisco brewers, Pumpkin Pond Farm, Bartlett's Farm, Boatyard Farm, and Sustainable Nantucket's Educational Community Farm represents my fourteenth and final county to visit since I became the Commissioner-took 3-1/2 years but I've now visited every one!
- Island Grown Initiative (Martha's Vineyard) tours of Island Grown's Community Lunch Program, The Grey Barn Farm, and Island Grown's Farm Hub.
- Massachusetts Tomato Contest, the KITCHEN at Boston Public Market.
- Northeast Harvest tours of Chris's Farm, Haverhill; Mann Orchards and their Riverside Farm, both in Methuen.

Like I said, we've been busy, and I know you all have been even busier. I know it's been a very varied summer ranging from an excellent season for some to, unfortunately for some, not so good. I hope everyone has a great fall season!

Best regards,

John Lebeaux

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FOREFRONT

Energy News

MDAR's MA Farm Energy Program (MFEP) - Energy Audits - Now is a BUSY 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. 413-727-3090, info@massfarmenergy.com, or visit www.massfarmenergy.com, submit a "Request Form", and we will contact you.

FY2019 AgEnergy Grant

MDAR received 60 applications totaling almost \$1.8 million in funding requests for both our Traditional and Special Projects Grant Programs, one of the, if not the, highest responses in the history of the AgEnergy Grant program – MDAR is now in the process our due diligence reviewing all applications as per the Request for Responses (RFR). Please have patience as we finalize our review toward recommending final awardees.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Gerry Palano, Energy Programs Coordinator, Gerald.Palano@state.ma.us, or 617-626-1706.

Apiary Program Updates

Welcome our new Inspector to the inspection team, Bob Grady, who is hired to fill the vacant inspector position for the 2018 bee season. His primary service area is Eastern MA. He is currently shadowing the inspection team and getting training before scheduling with beekeepers. So if you live in Eastern MA and are waiting for an inspection, you may be hearing from him soon!

A Varroa Mite Program for New England Honey Beekeepers

The Massachusetts and Maine Apiary Programs were collaboratively awarded a grant through the Northeastern IPM Center to provide Varroa mite education designed specifically for New England honey beekeepers. In an effort to determine honey beekeeper needs and design the most appropriate educational materials, please complete this survey and share your feedback: https://goo.gl/forms/BS1PLsVyotEuX3Bt2.

Did you have winter dead-outs? If so, participate in the 2017-18 Massachusetts Honey Bee Survey. Please participate in the annual Massachusetts Honey Bee Survey. This is the prime source for local data on honey bee health and also assists the MDAR Apiary Program in determining needs for future work. More responses are needed to get an adequate portrait of our winter losses this past year, especially given the unique weather conditions that honey bees were exposed and high losses verbally reported to inspectors for some areas.

Share your feedback on the Draft Apiary Regulations

An additional stakeholder meeting has been scheduled to share the draft Apiary Inspection Regulations 330 CMR 8.00 and have a group discussion before moving forward in the formal public hearing process. Given the busy bee field season and consideration of stakeholder schedules, this meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 15th, 6-8pm at the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Central Regional Office, 8 New Bond Street, Worcester, MA 01606

Prior to the meeting date, the draft regulations will be provided for review. Note that this meeting is intended to be a discussion between stakeholders and MDAR and not a formal public hearing. A formal public hearing will follow this meeting at a later date that will be announced, so there will be plenty of time to submit comments if you are unable to attend. Comments can also be submitted anytime via email to Kim.Skyrm@mass.gov.

Visit a State Apiary

Join Apiary Program Team for the remaining monthly educational demonstrations offered on each date and time at both State Apiary locations listed below. These events are open to the public, but will focus on the topics of interest to beekeepers. Please remember to bring the required protective clothing (i.e. bee suit and/or bee veil with long pants and closed toed shoes) that you will need to enter a State Apiary. Note that alternate dates will be provided in the event of inclement weather. All are held 10:00 am-noon.

Dates - Topics:

- Saturday, September 15th Fall Management Part 2
- Saturday, October 13th Winter Prep

These are held at both State Apiary Locations:

- UMass Agricultural Learning Center (ALC) Farm, 911 North Pleasant St., Amherst park in the field adjacent to the apiary
- Essex Technical High School, 565 Maples St., Danvers park in the lot behind to the old Administration building, where the school buses are lined up.



Honey Producers looking for more sales? Get listed on the "Massachusetts grown and fresher" map.

Fill out farm survey here.



Program updates made at the Apiary Program page.

Massachusetts Food System Collaborative Report – "Local and Affordable: Massachusetts-Grown Produce Less Expensive than Grocery Store Produce"

As the growing season peaks and Massachusetts farmers harvest peaches, tomatoes, and dozens of other crops, a survey released today by the <u>Massachusetts Food System Collaborative</u> finds that fresh produce is usually less expensive when purchased directly from the Massachusetts farmers who grow it than it is at grocery stores. The survey recorded prices at 11 farmers markets and 22 grocery stores, all within five miles of the nearest farmers market. In most cases, comparable items were more affordable at the farmers market, with the statewide average price of a basket of 14 common items costing 25% less.

Detailed results for each city and town surveyed are available <u>here</u>.

Financial Assistance Available for UMass Extension's Green School

UMass Extension's Green School is our bi-annual certificate course, scheduled for this fall in Milford, MA. Green School meets twice per week starting October 29 and runs through December 13, 2018. Three educational tracks are offered: Landscape Management, Turf Management, and Arboriculture. Green School will not be offered again until fall 2020.

For eligible employers, the Green School registration fee may be partially reimbursed through the Massachusetts Workforce Training Fund Express Grant Program. Employers need to submit an online application to the Express Grant program at least 6 weeks in advance of UMass Green School's starting date. To find out if you qualify and to apply for benefits, go to workforcetrainingfund.org/programs/express-program.

For complete information about Green School, including the schedule, curriculum, and registration information, go to ag.umass.edu/landscape/education/umass-extensions-green-school.

Financial Management Webinars

Reading Financial Statements - September 5th: 6:00 pm. You've kept good financial records. Now what? In this live webinar, Review your financial statements with a managerial eye: What does the Balance Sheet tell me about my business? How can I improve my profitability by reviewing by my Income Statement? Discussion on cash flow management tools. Register here.

Break-even Analysis: What do you need to sell to reach your profit goals? - September 20th: 6:00 pm. Do you know what it takes to be profitable? How much do you need to sell to cover all your costs and still have something left to pay yourself? You know that as your business grows, your expenses increase. But not all expenses increase the same way. So how do you figure it all out? In this live webinar, review: 1) how to

understand the nature of your expenses and costs 2) The basic formula for break-even and where all the numbers come from. 3) How to apply the concept of "break-even" to evaluate new opportunities. Register here.

Pricing Strategies - October 11th: 6:00 pm. What's the right price for your products? Too many times, farmers just look at what others are charging and copy it. But if you don't know your cost of production, then you may not be charging enough. Discussion on how to decide the right price – from understanding your costs, to knowing what makes your product special, to understanding the competition. Register here.

Beginning QuickBooks (Part 1) - October 23rd: 4:00 pm. QuickBooks is a powerful tool that goes way beyond just tracking income and expenses for taxes; it can help you manage cash, understand how to increase profits, and plan for growth. In the 1st session of the three-part series, 1) An overview of QuickBooks, and how to decide between online and desktop 2) Basic accounting concepts that underlie QuickBooks 3) Set-up including creating a customized chart of accounts 4) Basic transactions such entering expenses, creating wholesale customer invoices and recording bank deposits. Register here.

QuickBooks (Part 2) - October 29th: 4:00 pm. QuickBooks is a powerful tool that goes way beyond just tracking income and expenses for taxes; it can help you manage cash, understand how to increase profits, and plan for growth. In the 2nd session of the three-part series, we will cover: 1) How to use classes, customers and items to better understand your different enterprises and customers 2) General journal entries – what they are and how they can help you understand greater details of your revenue and profitability. Register Here.

QuickBooks (Part 3) - November 8th: 4:00 pm. QuickBooks is a powerful tool that goes way beyond just tracking income and expenses for taxes; it can help you manage cash, understand how to increase profits, and plan for growth. In the 3rd session of the three-part series, running reports that help you understand your profitability and manage cash flow. Register Here.

Creating Cash Flow Projections - November 28th: 4:00 pm. Join us for a live webinar on how to manage cash flow. Cover two aspects: creating annual cash flow projections and day-to-day management. First, we work through creating a yearly cash flow projection using historical data to lay-out cash needs on a monthly basis. Discussion on how to manage cash on a weekly basis to make sure you don't bounce checks. Participants in this webinar will be able to ask questions live. At the end of the session, you will receive a dynamic cash flow excel template to help with your own projections. Register Here.

Reading Financial Statements - December 11th: 4:00 pm. You've kept good financial records. Now what? In this live webinar, review the financial statements with a managerial eye: What does the Balance Sheet tell me about my business? How can I improve my profitability by reviewing by my Income Statement? Also discuss cash flow management tools. Register here.

Questions, contact Julia Shanks, julia@juliashanks.com.

Teachers and Educators - Add Agriculture to YOUR Classroom! Mini-Grants Available

As the school year begins, try adding some hands-on agriculture lessons to your curriculum. Your students can learn about food, fiber, farms, history, engineering, the environment...all are part of agriculture in our state. Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom (MAC) has lessons that are aligned with the Massachusetts

<u>Frameworks</u>. The National Agriculture in the Classroom (NAITC) website, <u>www.agclassroom.org</u> also contains a matrix of lessons by topic.

Are you planning an agricultural project for your classroom? MAC can assist with funding. MAC Mini-Grants are offered in amounts up to \$1,500. The application process is on our <u>website</u> and takes less than an hour. Be sure to send your budget on a separate Excel worksheet. Mini-Grants are made possible through the generosity of the <u>Massachusetts State Grange</u>.

Five Massachusetts Cheesemakers Earned Top Honors

Five Massachusetts cheesemakers earned top honors with 12 varieties in their categories at the prestigious <u>American Cheese Society (ASC)</u> competition, held July 25-28, 2018 in Pittsburgh. The ACS competition started in 1985, to promote excellence in U.S. made cheeses. Cheese experts judge some 1,700 entries annually, with the number of growing each year. Be sure to check in with the <u>MA Cheese Guild</u> to learn about Bay State farmstead cheesemakers and where to find their products. The list of ASC winning cheeses follows:

BLUE MOLD CHEESES - External Blue-molded cheeses - all milks

- 1st Westfield Farm: Hubbardston Bluebonnet Kim Hayes
- 2nd Westfield Farm: Hubbardston Classic Blue Log- Kim Hayes

SOFT-RIPENED CHEESES - Open Category - Soft-Ripened Cheeses - made from goat's milk

• 3rd Ruggles Hill Creamery: Hardwick - Ada's Honor- Tricia Smith

<u>FLAVORED CHEESES Cheeses</u>, butters, and cultured dairy products with flavor added. Fresh Unripened Cheese with Flavor Added - all milks

- 1st Couet Farm & Fromagerie LLC: Dudley Fran de Maquis- Marie-Laure Couet
- 2nd Couet Farm & Fromagerie LLC: Dudley Truffle Adelisca- Marie-Laure Couet
- Farmstead Cheese with Flavor Added (must conform to all guidelines in Category M) all milks
- 1st Ruggles Hill Creamery: Hardwick Claire's Mandell Hill- Tricia Smith

GOAT'S MILK CHEESES - Fresh Rindless Goat's Milk Cheese Aged 0 to 30 days (black ash coating permitted)

- 3rd Westfield Farm: Hubbardston Plain Capri- Russell Hannula
- Fresh Goat's Milk Cheese Aged 0 to 30 days (handshaped, formed or molded into pyramid, disc, drum, crottin, basket or other shape)
- 2nd Ruggles Hill Creamery: Hardwick Ellie's Cloudy Down- Tricia Smith
- Goat's Milk Cheese Aged 31 to 60 days
- 3rd Ruggles Hill Creamery: Hardwick Brothers' Walk- Tricia Smith

Goat's Milk Cheese Aged Over 60 days

• 2nd Ruggles Hill Creamery: Hardwick - Ode to Joy- Tricia Smith

<u>FARMSTEAD CHEESES - Farmstead Category Aged 60 days or more - less than 39% moisture - made from cow's milk</u>

• 2nd Cricket Creek Farm: Williamstown - Maggie's Reserve- Cricket Creek Farm

UPCOMING EVENTS/WORKSHOPS

September 11 - Emerald Ash Borer Field Day - 8:30am to 1pm, Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton. Field day devoted to the invasive emerald ash borer (EAB). The morning will begin with a classroom-style overview of ash tree and EAB identification and status, as well as insect monitoring and management options.

This training is designed for arborists, tree wardens/urban foresters, municipal officials, landscapers, land managers, landowners and tree enthusiasts. <u>More here.</u>

September 15 – Mass. Christmas Tree Assoc. Annual Meeting - 9 am - 3 pm, Chestnut Mountain Tree Farm, Hatfield. All tree growers welcomed. <u>Details here.</u>

September 15 - Honey Bee Education Day at State Apiaries - Topic: Fall Management Part 2 – 10:00 am – noon, Danvers and Amherst. <u>Details here.</u>

October 4 - <u>Celebrate the 3rd Anniversary of the Pioneer Valley Grows Investment Fund</u> - Raven Hollow Winery at Kosinski Farms, Westfield, 5-7 pm. Save the date - <u>more details to follow!</u> Contact Rebecca Busansky at <u>rebecca@pygrows.net</u>.

October 27-31 - <u>95th Annual American Rabbit Breeders Convention</u>, Eastern State Exposition, West Springfield. Hosted by the Pioneer Valley Rabbit & Cavy Conventions. Details at <u>www.pvrcc.net</u>.

Save The Dates:

- November 7 & 8, 2018 <u>Northeast Greenhouse Conference and Expo</u>, Boxborough Regency Hotel, Boxborough. For exhibit space and sponsorship opportunities, contact <u>karen@delaneymeetingevent.com</u>.
- February 27 28, 2019 <u>Harvest New England Ag Marketing Conference and Trade Show</u>, Sturbridge Host Hotel.
- Agriculture Industry Calendar
- Culinary and Agricultural Events Calendar

If you have events to submit to our two calendars, email to Richard.LeBlanc@state.ma.us.

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USDA News

Rural Development is a Working with Rural Communities in Addressing the Opioid Epidemic

USDA is a strong partner to communities in addressing the opioid epidemic on two fronts:

Through program resources for prevention, treatment, and recovery opportunities for those in need. <u>See the many ways your community can partner with USDA</u> (PDF, 528 KB) to meet immediate needs in this fight.

Through program resources to help rural communities address many of the deeper, systemic, and long-term issues making these places vulnerable to the opioid crisis in the first place. USDA's <u>infographic illustrates</u> (PDF, 4.8 MB) how USDA can help rural communities respond to the opioid epidemic by addressing some of the root causes. <u>More here</u>. Flyer

Reminder to Report Crop Damages Promptly

Producers covered by a Federal Crop Insurance Policy are reminded to monitor their crops for insurable damage throughout the growing and harvesting season. If you notice damage contact your crop insurance agent within 72 hours of discovery, 15 days before harvesting begins and within 15 days after harvesting is completed on the insurance unit.

Two other important reminders:

- Direct marketed crops must have a yield appraisal before they are harvested, if loss is anticipated.
- Do not destroy crop evidence that is needed to support your claim without clear direction, in writing, from the insurance adjuster.

Producers having coverage under the <u>Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)</u> administered by the USDA - Farm Service Agency have similar loss reporting requirements. NAP producers should contact the <u>FSA</u> <u>Office</u> that serves their farming operation to report losses.

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- <u>Farmers Markets Seeking Vendors</u> Check back periodically for updates to this list. To update your listing, please send to <u>David.Webber@state.ma.us</u>.
- For Sale, 200 gallon steel tank agricultural grade skid mounted sprayer. Fits in the back of a pick-up truck. Honda electric ignition, Hannay electric hose reel, 300 ft. hose, AR diagram pump, Rears 200 gallon steel tank with paddle agitation. Great for landscape spraying lawn or tree or small orchard spraying for remote locations. Lightly used good condition \$2500. Please call Cathy at 978-422-6217 or birdofthhandfarm@gmail.com.
- **Farm for Sale**: Diversified, 100 % Grass Fed, Organic Dairy Farm & Cheese operation for sale, with house Hardwick. <u>Details here.</u>
- Maple Syrup Farm for Sale: 9.78 acre farm, surrounded by 250 acres of maple trees owned by the
 Worcester diocese, with permission to tap them. House, barn with workshop and farm stand, Sugarhouse
 with 4x14 evaporator, 14 plate filter press, finishing pan, already tubed and vacuumed tapping system,
 Fully licensed commercial kitchen separated from house by mud room, 2 greenhouses and 1 high tunnel,
 2 ½ acre orchard with cherries, apples, crab apples, and peaches. Specialty Food Business, all recipes and
 formulations, ready markets for direct sales, wholesale accounts, etc. Jan Wentworth, The Warren Farm &
 Sugarhouse, Warrenfarm@aol.com.
- **Bulk Chicken Manure**, 22 tons loads, Approved for Organic Farming, Jim Talvy, Casella Organics, 508-612-0945.

About the Farm & Market Report

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Next issue to be published in August. Please send news, events, or classified information by October 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.

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