
December/January Farm & Market Report

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USDA NEWS

COMMISSIONER'S COLUMN



Greetings, Mass. Agriculture and all its friends,

MDAR-TV is on the air! As part of our ongoing efforts to expand our education and outreach, we have decided to explore the use of professionally produced community access video as a tool. I'm very pleased to announce that over the course of the summer and fall, MDAR produced our first television program. The subject is pollinators, particularly honeybees.

We have titled the program Agricultural Pursuits, and our thought is to produce a series of programs on various agricultural topics. Our thought is this program and the ones we hope will follow will provide a tool that can be freely used by interested public access stations, individuals, and organizations. We were very lucky that the folks at Waltham's MAC-TV took an interest in our "show pitch" (don't worry, we're not going all Hollywood, and we are keeping our day jobs) and agreed to send a production crew out to the State Apiary at UMass Amherst and spend an entire day with us to tape a program to tell about pollinators. Many thanks to Waltham WCAC Executive Director Maria Sheehan, MAC Producer MT Nicolas, and especially, Producer Bill Heatley. Bill, ably assisted by Production Intern Jillian Heatley, donned protective gear for a long summer day of taping in Amherst-Bill has the stings to prove it, but the end product greatly exceeded our expectations!

I got to host, but the stars of the show are Crop and Pest Services Division Director Taryn LaScola and Chief Apiary Inspector, Kim Skyrn, Ph. D., who in about a half hour do a great job explaining a great deal about honeybees, beekeeping and MDAR's Apiary Program.

So now that I hope I have interested you, let me tell you how you can watch the show. One can view it at any time through this [link at YouTube](#).

It's also available to public access stations throughout the state to download so they may offer it on their channels through Mass Access. (I can't say I really understand exactly what all that means, but I understand that public access people will.) Bill explained to me, "Agricultural Pursuits is now on the Mass Access server, which is called Telvue Connect. It is now available for download by Mass Access members throughout the state. Searchable words that should bring up the show: Agricultural Pursuits, John Lebeaux, MDAR, apiary, bees. Should be pretty easy to find." If you happen to think residents in your community might enjoy viewing it, I ask that you contact the staff at your local public access provider and make them aware of how they might offer the show.

After you view, please share any comments, criticisms, suggestions, and topics for future shows. This is a new venture that we are developing as we do it.

I mentioned last column that we need to keep you updated on the subject of the developing legalized Cannabis programs. We continue to receive a considerable number of inquiries on the subject.

Within legalized Cannabis in MA, there are essentially two areas: Marijuana (under the authority of the [Cannabis Control Commission](#)) and Hemp (under the authority of MDAR). In order to be classified as hemp, the harvested product cannot possess a THC content in excess of .3% in dry weight.

MDAR's statutory responsibilities relative to Marijuana are that the Commissioner sits on the 25 member [Cannabis Advisory Board](#) and that its pesticide authority extends over Cannabis cultivation. Our statutory responsibilities relative to Hemp is that MDAR develops the program.

The CAB just concluded a very intense two month period in which its four subcommittees developed recommendations to the CCC for its consideration as it develops a regulatory structure. Lydia Sisson of Mill City Grows, Lowell, Governor Baker's Ag appointee to the CCC, and I serve on the Cannabis Industry and Market Participation Subcommittees. The CCC plans to release draft regulations by year-end, and then commence a public comment period. The regulations need to be in final form by March 15, 2018 leading to license applications being accepted and legal sales on July 1. Please browse the CCC and CAB links above for further details.

Simultaneously, MDAR is developing its Hemp program in order for legal cultivation and processing of that **non-psychoactive** plant to take place during the 2018 growing season. That effort is led by Crop and Pest Services Director Taryn LaScola and Jessica Burgess from our legal group, in close coordination with my office. We will have a program framework in the new year in advance of the growing season.

I recently attended two of the largest Ag events of the year. Mass. Farm Bureau (MFBF) had its annual meeting November 30 -December 1 at the Sheraton Framingham. I thank Farm Bureau leadership for inviting me to speak to its membership attending the 11/30 annual dinner banquet. Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Matt Beaton and I attended the breakfast meeting the next morning, at which time the Secretary addressed those in attendance.

Congratulations to President Ed Davidian on his re-election as President, to Laura Abrams for her election as Vice President, and to all the other elected and re-elected officers and board members. Sec. Beaton and I look forward to continuing to work with Farm Bureau to advance Mass. Agriculture.

I left the Farm Bureau breakfast and travelled directly to New England GROWS at the Boston Convention and Exposition Center. Founded by the Massachusetts Arborists Association, Massachusetts Association of Landscape Professionals, Massachusetts Nursery & Landscape Association, and the New England Nursery Association, it's the biggest horticultural trade event in the Northeast.

New England GROWS President Michelle Harvey of Lakeview Nurseries in Lunenburg led Representative Carolyn Dykema (D-Holliston), MDAR Assistant Commissioner Jason Wentworth and I on a tour of the show floor. I was pleased to see many old friends from my career in the Green Industry, and also very pleased to see many young people working the floor and attending the various educational sessions.

Looking at the calendar, there are few other events I attended since my last column that I want to mention:

- In late October, MDAR staff and I made a presentation to a delegation representing the Chinese Ministry of Finance which wanted to learn about MDAR's grant and technical assistance programs.
- I was delighted to join Governor Baker in the town in which he grew up, Needham, for Volante Farms' PumpkinFest at which the Governor congratulated the Volante family on the farm's 100th Anniversary.
- The Healthy Initiatives Program (HIP) was the featured topic at the November meeting of the Food Policy Council which was held at the State House. Speaker after speaker (farmers, advocates for public health and assistance to those financially challenged, government representatives) universally praised the program for providing healthy, locally grown fruits and vegetables to those who have difficulty affording those products, and for how it has positively affected many farmers' sales.
- I attended Plainville-based [Red Tomato's](#) 20th Anniversary event and offered Governor Baker's and Lt. Governor Polito's congratulations to the organization for fostering meaningful relationships between farmers and wholesale buyers.

- MDAR announced the Administration's latest Urban Agriculture grant awards at a very well attended event at the funded Urban Agriculture Greenhouse at University of Lowell.
- MDAR Chief of Staff Alisha Bouchard and I participated in the [Greater Boston Food Bank's](#) 12th Annual Chain of Giving event and joined Governor Baker, Mayor Walsh and others who led a human chain that moved about 3,000 lbs. of turkeys into its freezer.
- Sec. Beaton, Department of Transitional Assistance Commissioner Jeff McCue and I spoke at an event recognizing the start of the Winter Farmers Market season at the New Bedford Winter Farmers' Market, a program of [Coastal Foodshed](#).
- I had the opportunity to address the very well attended, very energized Massachusetts Food System Forum in Leominster on the work of the Mass. Food Policy Council. The first-time event, hosted by the [Mass. Food System Collaborative](#), was very successful judging on the response I observed from the attendees.
- That same day I also represented the Administration at the Ribbon Cutting of the new Cold Storage Building at the Western Mass. Food Processing Center at [Franklin County CDC](#) in Greenfield.
- The day after Thanksgiving marks the beginning of the season for the sale of Christmas Trees and other seasonal plants decorations. Sec. Beaton and family. Asst. Comm. Wentworth and family, and I cut the ceremonial first Christmas Tree of the season at Riverwind Tree Farm in Lancaster.
- I had the opportunity to again attend the Harold Grinspoon Foundation's [Local Farmer Awards](#) event in Northampton. What Harold, his sponsors, and his team does for farmers in our four westernmost counties is simply inspirational!
- In an annual practice, MDAR supported the State House Tree Lighting ceremony, presided over by Governor and First Lady Baker, and attended by the big guy himself, Santa Claus! MDAR coordinated with farmers and food producers to share their wares with the public. Many thanks to Appleton Farms, Ipswich and Boston Public Market; Boston Honey Co., Holliston and Boston Public Market; Hood LLC, Lynnfield; Koffee Kup Bakery, Springfield; Red Apple Farm, Phillipston and Boston Public Market; Smith Country Cheese, Winchendon: and Working Opportunities for Women, Boston!
- I also attended and greatly enjoyed the holiday meeting/dinner of the Mass. Agricultural Club in West Brookfield; I very much appreciated the opportunity to celebrate the season with new and old friends.

As I begin to wrap up, I include my frequent request that you make interested parties aware that they may subscribe to these Farm & Market Reports, follow MDAR on Twitter and friend us on Facebook (both at @MassDeptAgr), and now watch our [video](#) too!

As 2017 comes to its end, I want to wish you all on behalf of everyone at MDAR a safe and happy holiday season! I hope everyone can take some time, put work aside, and enjoy themselves with friends and family. Let's also please not forget that though it's a joyous time for many, this can be very a very tough time for others. If you know folks in that situation, please think about how you can help make the season a happier one for them.

Happy New Year, we'll catch you next in early 2018.
All the best,



John Lebeaux

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FOREFRONT

Grant Announcement: Stewardship Assistance and Restoration on APRs (SARA)

The Department invites responses from Massachusetts farmers who own or operate farm land under the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (“APR”) Program who wish to apply for Round 5 of the Stewardship Assistance and Restoration on APRs Program (“Program”) in Fiscal Year 2018. The purpose of the Program is to address stewardship issues and restore active commercial farming on land that has already been protected through the Department’s APR Program in order to maximize productive agricultural use of the protected resource. Funding of up to \$25,000, with a 15% match, may be available on a cost reimbursement basis for approved projects.

The Program provides funding to help pay for approved expenses directly associated with restoration of agricultural land on an APR farm that is inactive through no fault of the current owner. For program information including eligible projects and the application: www.mass.gov/service-details/stewardship-assistance-and-restoration-on-aprs-sara

Applications are due in the MDAR Amherst office by 4:00pm on January 16, 2018. *(No postmarks or electronic submissions will be accepted).* Applicants selected to the program must wait until a contract is signed to begin work on approved projects and complete by June 30, 2018 and then 85% of the total project costs will be reimbursed.

Contact Melissa Adams at MDAR with questions or if you would like a copy of the application mailed to you Melissa.L.Adams@state.ma.us, 413-548-1904.

Energy News

MDAR’s **MA Farm Energy Program (MFEP)** - Energy Audits – Now is a great time! MFEP funds 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.

MDAR’s Annual AgEnergy Grant Programs – FY2018 Awardees Announced

The Baker-Polito Administration awarded 38 grants totaling \$908,259 to Massachusetts farmers to implement renewable energy systems and improve energy efficiency on farms. The farms receiving funding are projected to save farmers over \$200,000 annually and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by over 660 tons each year. The grants are funded through the MDAR’s Agricultural Energy Grant Program (AgEnergy) in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER).

“Massachusetts continues to lead the nation in clean energy, and these grants will provide our farmers with the opportunity to continue adopting clean energy technologies,” said Governor Charlie Baker. “Their ensuing savings from the clean energy projects can easily be reinvested into farms across the Commonwealth and eventually lead to even better products for consumers.”

The grants are part of two agricultural energy programs, namely Traditional and Special Projects. Traditional projects focus on conventional energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies. Special Projects focus on technologies that typically require higher capital cost but could potentially yield greater savings and/or positive agricultural impacts in an effort to improve the farm’s energy efficiency and to facilitate adoption of less conventional, alternative clean energy technology applications.

This year’s AgEnergy Traditional Program will fund twenty-nine (29) projects, a combination of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects including over twenty roof- and ground-mounted photovoltaic systems for a variety of farm sector operations including vegetable & fruit, cow dairy cheese-making, vegetable & horticultural, year-round greenhouses, cut flowers, livestock, aquaculture, malting, and vineyard operations.

[The awarded projects and complete press release here.](#)

Baker-Polito Administration Awards \$350,000 for Environmental Projects at Massachusetts Farms

BOSTON - Continuing to advance environmental protection measures within the state’s agricultural sector, the Baker-Polito Administration today awarded 23 grants totaling \$350,000 to Massachusetts farmers for the installation of conservation practices that prevent or mitigate direct impacts on water and air quality and ensure efficient water use. Through the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources’ (MDAR) Agricultural Environmental Enhancement Program (AEEP), these grants will continue to advance environmental protection measures within the state’s agricultural sector and help farms across the Commonwealth fund various environmental projects, including the installation of automated irrigation systems and tailwater recovery for cranberry operations, manure storage for dairy farms, and irrigation for produce farms.

[Awardees and complete press release here.](#)

Department of Agricultural Resources Offers Tips to Keep Pets Safe During Holiday Season

During the upcoming holiday season, the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources’ (MDAR)

Division of Animal Health is reminding residents to ensure their pets remain safe and healthy by planning ahead when traveling and being aware of potentially harmful holiday foods and decorations.

“The MDAR’s Division of Animal Health is committed to maintaining the health and safety of the Commonwealth’s domestic animals,” said MDAR Commissioner John Lebeaux. “I want all families to enjoy the holiday season with their pets by planning ahead and being aware of how holiday decorations, food and even new guests in a home may affect pet health. I encourage residents to talk with their local veterinarian to discuss what types of holiday plants and other greenery items are safe to have indoors and to purchase them from a local greenhouse or nursery operation.”

“While collars and ID tags matter so very much all of the time, they can become even more valuable when traveling with your pet,” said Executive Director of the Thomas J O’Connor Animal Control and Adoption Center Pam Peebles. “In unfamiliar surroundings, an animal can act differently than normal, often more fearful, and be at higher risk of becoming lost. As an animal control center, we use local registries, social media and other tools to get animals back to their families as fast as possible. However, when animals that are not local are lost, those same tools are far less effective, leaving us to rely very heavily on the basic collar and ID tag. When an animal comes in with an ID tag, the relief we feel is immeasurable as we know this animal’s family is only a phone call away. A collar and ID tag can truly be a lost pet’s ticket home and there is no place like home.”

[More tips and complete press release here.](#)

Baker-Polito Administration Supports Local Food Ventures

The Baker-Polito Administration recently announced the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) has awarded \$799,794 to three groups through the Massachusetts Food Ventures Program (MFVP), a grant program that addresses food access and encourages new food ventures that create additional economic opportunity. The announcement follows an award of over \$700,000 to four agricultural groups in September.

[Awardees and complete press release here.](#)

Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom Updates

1) Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom (MAC), Massachusetts Farm to School, and the Massachusetts Dairy Promotion Board (MDPB) are working together to:

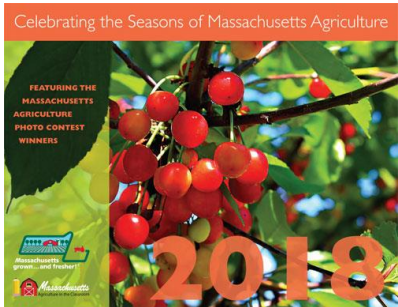
- Update the existing free directory of Massachusetts Dairy Farmers on the Mass Dairy Promotion Board website.
- Create a directory of farms interested in selling dairy products to schools.
- Identify and assist Dairy Farms with agritourism, including identifying farms interested in hosting visits from school groups.

If you would like to be included, please contact massaginclassroom@gmail.com and you will receive a brief email survey to complete.

2) **Pollinator Video Contest** - MAC wishes to let teachers know that there will be a Pollinator Video

Contest for classrooms in all grades this spring. This is a collaboration with the Massachusetts State Grange Roots Education Initiative and MAC. Team winners at each grade level will receive a monetary prize for their classroom. Start creating your script and ideas for the video now, then concentrate on filming those early pollinators when the spring weather arrives.

3) 2018 Massachusetts Agriculture Calendar



Now available is the is the [2018 Massachusetts Agriculture Calendar](#)! Each year the calendar, *Celebrating the Seasons of Massachusetts Agriculture*, features winning photos from this years’ public photo contest. Each photograph is selected that best spotlights crops and farms across the Commonwealth. Winning photos can be viewed [here](#). Each month also includes “Fun Facts” and “Teaching Tips,” which makes this a great gift to a teacher!

The annual Calendar is produced in collaboration with [Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom \(MAC\)](#), the [MA State Grange](#), and the [Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources](#), along with the many great sponsoring associations: [MA Farm Bureau](#), [MA Fruit Growers](#), [MA Maple Association](#), [MA Fairs Association](#), [Cape Cod Cranberry Association](#), [MA Flower Growers Association](#), [MA Dairy Promotion Board](#), and the [MA Christmas Tree Association](#).

Month	Winner – Photograph Location
January	Maryann Sadowski, S. Hadley – Olesiuk Farm, S. Hadley
February	Brian Leger, Leominster - Sholan Farm, Leominster
March	Jacquelyn Boyden - Poplar Mountain Maple, Erving
April	Alison Kidder, Norton - MA Audubon Broadmoor Wildlife Sanctuary, Natick
May	Shirley LeMay, N. Grafton - Tower Hill Botanic Garden in Boylston
June	David Cawston, Boston - Dairy calf at Appleton Farms, Ipswich
July	Brian Leger, Leominster - Sholan Farm, Leominster
August	Maryann Sadowski, S. Hadley – Olesiuk Farm in S. Hadley
September	Kathy Sferra, Stow – Apples at Carver Hill Orchard, Stow
October	Alison Kidder - Hunnewell Farm, Wellesley
November	Brian Wick, Carver - Slocum Gibbs Cranberry Company, Carver
December	Kathy Sferra, Stow - Captain Sargent Farm, Stow

Honorable Mentions (small photos in the calendar): January-David Cawston, Boston; March-Tom McCrumm, Ashfield; April-Jennifer Perry, Marion; May-Cheryl Lombardo, Woburn; June-Amy Wilichowski, Westboro; July and August-John Thorne, Brewster; October-Tina Bemis, Spencer; November-Alison Kidder, Norton; December-Tina Bemis, Spencer.

Details and ordering information [here](#). Learn more about [MAC](#) and get out there now and take pictures for the [2018 Photo Contest](#).

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Farm Financial Management Training

The *Making It Happen: Profitability and Success* training will give producers the ability to use four core financial management tools to improve decision-making. Participants will learn and apply financial management tools to their business that will help them answer questions such as: "Can I pay my bills?", "Is a capital investment worth it?", "Is this the right price?", or "Should I add a new product line?" The training is intended for producers with at least one year of operating experience and is approved as a Massachusetts USDA Farm Service Agency borrower training. Lead presenter: Julia Shanks of The Carrot Project. We have also invited two former farm participants to assist. Registration costs \$15 and includes lunch and two supplementary webinars.

January 5 and 12, Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture - 12:00 – 5:30 pm

**The workshop will be hosted simultaneously in two locations:

- LIVE IN-PERSON: at Holyoke Community College Kittredge Center Rm 303, 303 Homestead Ave, [Holyoke](#).
- LIVE SIMULCAST: at the Franklin County CDC (FCCDC), 324 Wells St., [Greenfield](#).

To register, [click here](#).

February 3 and 10, The NonProfit Center, 89 South St., [Boston](#) - 10 am – 3:30 pm - To register, [click here](#).

For more information, please contact Kira Bennett Hamilton, kbh@thecarrotproject.org, or visit <http://thecarrotproject.org/programs/trainings>.

MGM Springfield Supplier Opportunities

MGM Springfield opens in less than 12 months. Don't miss out on an opportunity to become a supplier for the new casino and resort. MGM Springfield is eager to work with local companies – including minority, women and veteran owned businesses.

As a leader in the hospitality and entertainment industry, MGM Resorts International believes partnerships with local suppliers, in the communities where they operate, are an integral part of the corporate culture and a vital element of their success. To support this commitment they have a full-time team of professionals dedicated to ensuring local business owners gain awareness and access to contracting opportunities with MGM Resorts.

Important to note:

- MGM does not have an open bidding system. Instead, to receive information on bids, you must register as a supplier with MGM at https://mgmspringfield.formstack.com/forms/mgm_springfield_supplier_general_registration
- The registration form asks if you currently hold a license with the Massachusetts Gaming Commission – if the answer is no, this does not disqualify you. MGM will work with you after a bid is accepted to become certified.
- Even if you cannot fully meet a request, bid on the portion of goods or services that you are able to supply. The MGM procurement team will work to piece together a number of local businesses to fulfill their total needs.

Lastly, the Manager of Food & Beverage Sourcing has a background in produce, so he is very interested in seeing Massachusetts fruit and vegetable growers register with MGM Springfield and have the opportunity to receive information on related bids.

For more information, visit www.mgmspringfield.com/suppliers/information.aspx.

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Cost Reimbursement for UMass Extension Programs

Did you know that you could be eligible for up to 50% reimbursement for attending UMass Extension Educational Programs?

The Massachusetts Workforce Training Fund Express Program:

- Is available for Massachusetts businesses with 100 or fewer employees that contribute to the Workforce Training Fund (all for-profit companies automatically pay into the fund), or companies whose employees work primarily in Massachusetts.
- Grant funds are limited to \$30,000 per company per calendar year and to \$3,000 per employee per course.
- Approved businesses will be reimbursed for up to 50% of the actual cost of training.

You must apply 6 weeks before the educational program's start date; you cannot apply for reimbursement after the fact.

For more details and FAQ's, go to workforcetrainingfund.org/programs/express-program.

Eligible UMass Extension programs in 2018 - Use these Course ID #'s when applying.

- 2/6/18 - Landscape Safety Conference (#1115118)
- 3/6/18 - Community Tree Conference: Ecological Perspectives of the Urban Forest (#1115126)
- 3/29/18 - Spring Kickoff for Landscapers: Sustainable Landscape Management Education Day (#1115117)

Invasive Plant Management Certification

- 2/21/18 - Principles and Fundamentals of Weed Science (A1) (#1115119)
- 3/13/18 - State Regulations Pertaining to Invasive Plant Management (A2) (#1115120)
- 3/22/18 - The Invasive Plant Issue & Invasive Plant ID (A3) (#1115121)
- 4/4/18 - Developing an Invasive Plant Management Program (B) (#1115122)
- 8/9/18 - Landscape & Forest Tree & Shrub Insect Workshop (#1115128)
- 10/29/18 - Green School 2018 (#1115129)

Questions? Contact the Express Program of the Workforce Training Fund, 617-717-6943, express@commcorp.org.

18 Winter Workshop Series for Farmers - “Labor Management: Policies, Practices and People”

Farmers and related business owners and operators, you are invited to participate in CISA’s seven-workshop series “Labor Management: Policies, Practices and People” beginning January 2018.

A well rounded farm operation needs to be a positive workplace that meets the needs and expectations of managers and employees. Addressing the issues of ethical management, staff retention, and effective communication and training tools, this series’ topics span the needs of multiple farm audiences. Whether you are new to farm employment or looking for advanced methods to improve staff management and workplace culture, these workshops will provide tools for a productive, healthy, and just workplace that improves farm operations. Examples in the workshops will be farm related, but the skills and methodology will be relevant to all businesses.

By participating in at least three workshops, you will be eligible to receive a one-on-one consultation to improve your staff management and operations. [Complete details and registration here.](#)

Recent Webinar: What are the Impacts of Climate Change on Maple Syrup Production and Can We Manage for Them?

[Northeast Climate Science Center](#) presented recent webinar regarding maple syrup production. Speaker: Joshua Rapp, UMass Amherst and Selena Ahmed, Montana State University. “The production of maple syrup is strongly tied to climate since sap flows only when temperatures fluctuate around freezing. Climate change will likely impact the production of maple syrup and the livelihoods on which this depends. ACERnet (Acer Climate and Socio-Ecological Research Network) is filling in knowledge gaps in how climate influences total sap flow and sap quality over the entire tapping season and in how maple producers are responding to climate change.” Seminar reports on how sap flow, sugar content, and secondary chemistry is influenced by climate variability at sites across sugar maple’s distribution, and on how maple producers are and expect to respond to changing climate and market conditions. [Details and audio here.](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS/WORKSHOPS

January 11 – Greenhouse Management and Production for 2018 - Publick House, 277 Main Street, Sturbridge , MA, 8:30 am – 3:30 pm. Commercial growers of greenhouse crops are invited to learn about greenhouse management and production tips for a successful 2018 growing season. Topics and speakers will include: Parameters that affect irrigation water quality and treatment options to control microbial, chemical, and physical water quality problems, Dr. Rosa Raudales, University of Connecticut Ext.; Using PGRs to manage the quality of spring greenhouse crops, Dr. Douglas Cox, UMass; Managing common root and foliar diseases of spring greenhouse crops , Dr. Angela Madeiras, UMass Ext.; Latest research on the impact of neonicotinoids to bees and other pollinators, Dr. Richard Cowles, Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station; How to combine biological control with conventional pesticides, Gregory Bryant, North East Representative, Bioline AgroSciences; 4 pesticide credits for category 26 have been approved. [Details and Registration.](#)

January 13 - MA Maple Producer Association 72nd Annual Meeting, Trade Show, and Workshop. 9:00 am – 3:00 pm. Mohawk Trail Regional High School, Buckland. Contact: Winton@massmaple.org.

January 13 - Annual NOFA/Mass Winter Conference – Worcester State University – Join keynoter, regenerative pioneer, Gabe Brown, and over 60 farming and gardening experts at this year’s 31st Annual NOFA/Mass Winter Conference. This year's theme is *Cover, Diversity, Regenerate*. Explore how soils can be improved and degraded soils can be restored by promoting the biological function of the soil ecosystem with living plant cover, mulches, and smart farm systems. [Details here.](#)

January 18 - MA Cheese Guild Annual Meeting, UMass Amherst - 10:00 am- 2:00 pm.
<http://macheeseguild.org/events-4/>, info@macheeseguild.org.

February 8 - Mass Flower Growers Winter Meeting - King Farm, 15 Scales Lane, Townsend. Highlights of the meeting: Ideas for retailing your plants and your business; 10+ Ways to find \$10,000 in your business, Erin Pirro, Farm Credit East; Respirator fit test and new WPs regulations and procedures for pesticide applicators (1 recertification credit); New Plants – A Spring trial tour of new plants to grow and market in 2018. [Details and information for registration to follow.](#)

February 25 – SEMAP’s 11th Annual Ag & Food Conference - Bristol County Agricultural School, Dighton, 9:00 am – 3:30pm. Updates here: <https://semaponline.org/programs/ag-food-conference/>.

February 27 & 28 – MNLA Green Industry Career Fair - Sturbridge Host Hotel & Conference Center – Feb. 27, 1:00 - 5:00 pm & Wednesday, Feb. 28, 8 am – noon. Landscape, nursery and greenhouse companies will be on hand to talk with job seekers about a wide variety of jobs. The industry needs irrigation technicians, project managers, foremen, salespeople, managers and supervisors, horticulturists and licensed applicators, landscape designers, equipment and fleet mechanics, people with CAD experience and laborers. Green industry companies have offices and need support staff on their teams, too. Cost: It’s FREE but pre-registration is required. [Click here.](#)

March 5 - 7th Annual Specialty Crop and Local Food Trade Show – Northeastern University, Boston - The Sustainable Business Network of Massachusetts (SBN) is offering the 2018 Show designed to facilitate connections and stimulate business relationships between producers and wholesale buyers of local food, with

a focus on specialty crop food products in Massachusetts. At this event, buyers will have the unique opportunity to meet nearly 100 farmers and producers who grow and craft some of New England's finest foods. Deadline to register is February 10, 2018. Please note that booths may sell out. Exhibition booths are free for specialty crop farmers + producers. [Complete details and registration here.](#)

March 16-17, 2018 - Massachusetts Urban Farming Conference (UFC) - Bunker Hill Community College, Boston. The annual Conference is designed to advance the opportunities and address the barriers involved in cultivating a resilient and thriving Urban Farming sector. The UFC is a multi-sector stakeholder forum designed to share information regarding what is currently happening in Massachusetts. The UFC fosters solutions, sustainable networks and business relationships. [More here.](#)

March 27, 2018 – Ag Day at the Statehouse

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USDA News

USDA Announces Funding Available to Help Protect Wetlands

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has recently announced the availability of funding to help landowners protect and restore wetlands in Massachusetts. The funding is provided through the [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program \(ACEP\)](#), created by the 2014 Farm Bill to protect critical water resources and wildlife habitat, and encourage private owners to maintain land for farming and ranching. Through the voluntary sale of an easement, landowners limit future development to protect these key resources.

"The benefits of restoring, enhancing and protecting critical wetlands cannot be overstated," said Christine Clarke, Massachusetts State Conservationist for NRCS. "Wetlands provide critical habitat for a wide array of wildlife species. They also store floodwaters, clean and recharge groundwater, sequester carbon, trap sediment, and filter pollutants for clean water. USDA is committed to restoring and protecting vital sensitive wetlands that provide important wildlife habitat and improve water quality."

ACEP's Wetland Reserve Easements allow landowners to successfully restore, enhance and protect habitat for wildlife on their lands, reduce damage from flooding, recharge groundwater and provide outdoor recreational and educational opportunities. Eligible landowners can choose to enroll in a permanent or 30-year easement. Tribal landowners also have the option of enrolling in 30-year contracts.

In federal fiscal years 2014-2017, 527 acres of wetlands were protected in Massachusetts under ACEP Wetland Reserve Easements. Interested landowners should apply by [Friday, March 2, 2018](#). Contact your local USDA Service Center for more information. To learn about ACEP and other technical and financial assistance available through NRCS, visit www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov.

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](#).

USDA Announces Agricultural Land Easement Application Deadline

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting applications from state and local governments, non-governmental organizations and Native American Tribes that would like to protect working farmland through an Agricultural Land Easement under the federal Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP).

Created by the 2014 Farm Bill, ACEP Agricultural Land Easements protect critical natural resources and encourage private landowners to maintain land for farming through the voluntary sale of an easement, which limits future development.

NRCS provides financial assistance to eligible partners for purchasing Agricultural Land Easements. State and local governments, non-governmental organizations and Native American Tribes that have farmland or grassland protection programs are eligible to partner with NRCS to purchase conservation easements.

Applications should be submitted to Darlene Monds, USDA-NRCS Massachusetts State Office, 451 West Street, Amherst, MA 01002 by Friday, March 2, 2018. Information on how to apply and application forms are available on the NRCS Massachusetts [website](#).

Classified

- **Hillside School is seeking an experienced Farm Director** to assume leadership of its current farm program. The Farm Director will be given the freedom to create, develop and implement their vision and make the farm a signature program. Hillside has recently earmarked, with board approval, significant financial resources for farm program and facility improvements. To accomplish this objective, Hillside will require a Farm Director who is a high-impact self-starter with an entrepreneurial spirit and results driven approach. The Farm Director will be responsible for the day-to-day operational management of the farm while concurrently considering, retooling, and implementing a bigger picture vision to ultimately create a true signature program. [More here.](#) Questions, tgochman@carneysandoe.com.
- **Two new Fellowships available** - Program for Visiting Schools Fellowship for Farm-Based Education Leaders: Two new Fellowships available from [The Farm School](#) invest in training and mentoring the next generation of farm-based education leaders. The focus is on developing practical agricultural skills, production experience and exposure to The Farm School's nationally recognized Program for Visiting Schools. The Farm School will award up to two full scholarships (including tuition, room and board, books and materials) to our year-long practical training in sustainable farming to compelling applicants who communicate a clear vision for connecting young people to the land through farming, and who demonstrate the leadership potential to start a farm-based education organization in the future, or to manage and shape an existing program at another institution. [More here.](#)
- **The Westford Conservation Commission is seeking proposals (RFP)** for the lease with restrictions, of an approximate 4.5-acre field on the "Day Agricultural and Conservation Land". The property is located

at the corner of Graniteville Road and Cold Springs Road across from 43 and 47 Graniteville Road in Westford, Massachusetts, being a portion of Westford Assessor's Map 26, Parcel 37. The lease is for five years and there may be an extension of an additional five years upon mutual agreement of the parties. RFP documents may be obtained during regular business hours 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday-Friday, beginning November 20, 2017, at the Conservation Commission Office, 55 Main Street, Westford, MA phone (978) 692-5524 and at westfordma.gov/bidlist. The Proposals must be submitted by 12 p.m. on January 5, 2018, at the following address: Westford Conservation Commission, 55 Main Street, Westford, MA 01886. The Town reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and proposals will be evaluated by representative(s) of the Conservation Commission and Conservation/Resource Planner with approval of the Conservation Commission.

About the *Farm & Market Report*

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<u>Boston Office:</u> 251 Causeway St., Suite 500, Boston, MA 02114-2151 617-626-1700	<u>Amherst Satellite Office:</u> 101 University Drive, Suite C4 Amherst, MA 01002 413-548-1900
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- John Lebeaux, Commissioner, John.Lebeaux@state.ma.us
- Jason Wentworth, Assistant Commissioner, Jason.Wentworth@state.ma.us
- Alisha Bouchard, Chief of Staff, Alisha.Bouchard@state.ma.us
- Margaret Callanan, General Counsel, Margaret.Callanan@state.ma.us

Division Directors

- Michael Cahill, Director of Animal Health, Michael.Cahill@state.ma.us
- Mary Jordan, Director of Agricultural Markets, Mary.Jordan@state.ma.us
- Gerard Kennedy, Director of Agricultural Conservation and Technical Assistance, Gerard.Kennedy@state.ma.us
- Taryn LaScola, Director of Crop and Pest Services (C&PS) Division, Taryn.LaScola@state.ma.us

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