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USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant

USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Concept Proposals are due Friday, **March 29** by 4:30 PM. The RFR, application materials and important grant information can be found: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/markets/specialty-crops.html>. Contact Julia Grimaldi, Julia.Grimaldi@state.ma.us or 617-626-1763.

Open Application Period for Energy & Environmental Grants

MDAR will be accepting applications from agricultural operations who wish to participate in the Department’s energy and environmental programs for Fiscal Year 2014. Interested operations are encouraged to review the applications on each programs webpage. If interested in applying applications will need to be submitted by program deadlines with any supporting materials.

Agricultural Environmental Enhancement Program (AEEP)

The purpose of AEEP is to support agricultural operations that are looking to install conservation practices that prevent direct impacts on water quality, ensure efficient use of water, as well as address impacts on air quality. By providing reimbursement directly to agricultural operations that implement eligible projects that prevent, reduce or eliminate environmental impacts, the program achieves its purpose and goals of minimizing environmental impacts from these operations for the benefit of the Commonwealth.

AEEP is a competitive, re-imbursement grant program that funds materials and labor up to \$25,000 or 85% of project costs. All projects must be completed by June 30, 2014. The deadline for applications is April 30, 2013. AEEP grant applications are available at www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/about/divisions/aEEP.html.

Ag-Energy Grant

The purpose of the MDAR’s Ag-Energy Grant is to assist agricultural operations in an effort to improve energy efficiency and to facilitate adoption of alternative clean energy technologies in order that they can become more sustainable and the Commonwealth can maximize the environmental and economic benefits from these technologies.

Reimbursement grants of up to \$25,000 will be awarded on a competitive basis. All projects must be completed by June 30, 2014. The deadline for applications is May 3, 2013. Ag-Energy Grant applications are available at www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/about/divisions/ag-energy.html.

Poultry and Livestock Workshops

Join UMass Extension's Crops Dairy Livestock and Equine Team for two upcoming workshops for small farmers and backyard farmers alike.

- Poultry and Livestock Workshop – **March 16** from 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM at Holland Elementary School, Holland MA
- Poultry Workshop - **March 30** from 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM at Hopkins Academy, Hadley MA

Pre-registration highly encouraged: \$15 for adults, \$10 for students and 4-H Contact Mallory Ottariano: 413-545-5221 mottaria@psis.umass.edu.

Last Call! SBN Buy Local Food Trade Show - March 19, at Seaport WTC

Are you interesting in sourcing more local ingredients in your products, your retail operation or the food that you serve? Consumers are now demanding it more and more, so consider this opportunity to find local suppliers!

This is the last call for Buyers (food trucks, retailers, restaurants, chefs, institutions, hospitals, colleges, farmers markets managers, schools, specialty food producers, brewers) and Sellers (farmers, specialty crop producers, value-added food producers) to participate in Sustainable Business Network's (SBN) (www.sbnmass.org) 2nd Buy Local Food Trade Show and Seminar coming up next Tuesday, March 19, from 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM at Seaport World Trade Center. All vendors booths are sold out, except for a few booths left for specialty crop farmers or food producers with more than 50% of their products made with specialty crops for New England! We also have a few more seats for the Buyer Seminar and we are sold out of the Seller Seminar, but all are welcome to sign up for the open floor trading! Vendor booths are FREE for local farmers and specialty crop producers, and we have a few more slots available, and tomorrow is the last day to sign up.

Trade Show suppliers include Red Fire Farm, Four Star Farm, Springdell Farms, Bee Field Farms as well as a few added value food producers. Buyers include Sodexo, Whole Foods Market, Covenant Health Systems, Youthville Place, Maine Public Schools, and UNH Dining, retailers and restaurants. Visit our website to register and for a current list of participants: bostonlocalfood.com/our-events/buy-local-trade-show/.

The SBN Buy Local Food Trade Show and Seminar is organized in partnership with Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) (www.mass.gov/agr/massgrown) Northeast Marine Atlantic Alliance (NAMA) (www.namanet.org) and Health Care Without Harm's Healthy Food in Healthcare Program (noharm.org).

The Specialty Crop - Agritourism Connection

Monday, March 25 - Northeast Utilities Tech Center, 107 Selden St., Berlin, CT. 8:30 AM-4:00 PM. A special workshop for CT and NE destination farm operators. With Support from a CT Specialty Crop Block Grant, RICAPE and New England FarmWays will partner with the CT Department of Agriculture to host an all-day workshop. All CT and NE farm operators are invited and welcome. Panels: Specialty Crops + Agritourism = Profits; The Town and Farm Connection: Old Zoning for the New Agriculture; Educational Programs on the farm – What Works and Why. \$45 per person (\$35 if you attended HNE!) If you qualify, your \$10 rebate will be paid at this workshop. For more information and to register, visit www.nefarmways.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/calendar.main/index.htm.

UMass Equine Field Day

Saturday April 20, UMass Hadley Farm, 111 North Maple St Hadley MA. 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

The UMass Equine Field Day will be the first of its kind at the UMass equine facility. Workshops will include sessions on reproduction, barefoot trimming, colt starting, trailering, show prep, pasture management, becoming a riding instructor and more!

Registration: \$25, \$15 for students and 4-H Contact Mallory Ottariano to register or for more information: 413-545-5221
mottaria@psis.umass.edu

The Marshfield Agricultural Commission Sponsoring Third Annual “Backyard Farm and Garden” Lecture Series

The Marshfield Agricultural Commission is sponsoring the third annual “Backyard Farm and Garden” lecture series on Saturday, **March 23**, 9:30 AM to 12 noon, at the Marshfield Senior Center, 230 Webster St, Marshfield. This popular lecture series is free and open to residents of all towns. Participants may choose two of six lectures on various agricultural topics geared to the backyard enthusiast. Each lecture will allow for question and answer time.

The four presenters bring many years of hands-on experience in their various fields of specialty. Jon Clements has twenty-five years of experience in commercial tree fruit production and tends his own research/demonstration orchards at the UMass Cold Spring Orchard in Belchertown, MA. He is also an Extension Tree Fruit specialist at UMass, Amherst. Jon will present “Backyard Fruit Trees” and “Pruning Fruit Trees”. Marte Ayers started her beekeeping career in Vermont under the mentorship of a bee inspector. She is past president of the Barnstable County Beekeepers and is presently on their board of directors. She has been a frequent presenter at the Springfield Big E and at local clubs. Marte will present “Organic Beekeeping” and “Beyond Honey: Making Products From Your Hive”. Sarah Garretson Lowry, of Garretson Cranberry Farm and Market, is a member of the Marshfield Agricultural Commission and a vendor at the Marshfield Farmers’ Market. Sarah brings outstanding organizational skills to planning and expanding her backyard gardens where she grows vegetables, herbs and flowers without the use of chemicals. She will present “Planning Your Plot and Plotting Your Plan”. Doug Lowry, a man of many outdoor interests, has a special talent for design and an infectious enthusiasm for teaching others step-by-step how to build innovative, user-friendly and inexpensive garden projects. Using his latest wooden project as a model, he will demonstrate how to “Build Your Own Seed-Starting Station”. Local vendors and community resources will be present to host displays and provide informational handouts. Door prizes and light refreshments will be provided.

Visit www.townofmarshfield.org/lecture.htm to download a detailed brochure and to pre-register (or phone 781-837-1433). Although not required, pre-registration guarantees seating and express admission to the lectures of your choice.

More Events/Workshops: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/events/>



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 mass.gov/agr, and/or follow at twitter.com/MDARCommish.