

www.mass.gov/agr

- **Meat “Steakholders” to Gather for Inaugural New England Meat Conference**
 - **Northeast Harvest Agricultural Conference**
 - **UMass Community Tree Conference**
 - **Webinar - Understanding Multifunctional Farms in New England and their Relationship to Regional Food Systems: Finances and Entrepreneurship**
 - **Mass. Farm to School Project Survey**
 - **Organic Bee School**
 - **Apply for a Farm to School Month/Food Day Planning Grant**
 - **Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Coverage**
 - **CISA Emergency Farm Fund Re-Opens to Aid Farms Damaged in Recent Blizzard**
-

Meat “Steakholders” to Gather for Inaugural New England Meat Conference

March 22-23, Grappone Conference Center, Concord, NH.

Producers, processors, and other meat professionals are invited to participate in two days of networking, education and celebration at the first ever New England Meat Conference. The goal of the conference is to enhance the production, processing, and marketing of sustainable, nutritious, humanely-raised, and delicious meat from New England farms.

In addition to a wide variety of educational sessions, the conference will feature live cutting demonstrations from Master Butchers Kari Underly, author of *The Art of Beef Cutting*, and Cole Ward of the *Gourmet Butcher*. Speakers and panelists presenting at the conference are among the leading professionals in their field and this event will provide all stakeholders with the opportunity to come together to learn, collaborate, and network. For producers, workshop topics will include heritage breeds, economics of grass fed beef, and working with distributors. For processors, topics will include processing equipment, value added meats, and training and managing labor. Everyone will benefit from sessions on financing, crisis management, and appropriately scaled technology.

Register for the conference, buy tickets to the Meat Ball, and get more information at:

www.NewEnglandMeatConference.org or by contacting the event manager, Lori Walter at 603-573-3306.

Northeast Harvest Agricultural Conference

March 19, Topsfield Fairgrounds, 9 AM - 3 PM

Northeast Harvest Buy Local will host the Annual Northeast Harvest Agricultural Conference on Tuesday, March 19 from 9 AM to 3 PM at Coolidge Hall at the Topsfield Fairgrounds.

Consumers, farmers, farmers' markets managers, agricultural commissioners, state officials, and legislators from Middlesex and Essex Counties are invited to attend.



The conference will include sessions on: New FDA Regulations, Backyard Poultry, Farmers' Markets, Farm to Table Cooking, and an opportunity to earn two Spray Credits. The topics of the new fruit fly and the stink bug will be discussed for earned credits. Please visit our website www.northeastharvest.com for registration.

Pre-Registration: \$20, Registration Day of: \$25. Coffee in the morning - Lunch will be provided. Questions? Call 978-887-5000 or email joy@topsfieldfair.org.

UMass Community Tree Conference

Saving Our Trees: A Conference for Arborists - Foresters - Tree Wardens - Sugar Bush Owners & Anyone Who Loves Trees

March 12, Stockbridge Hall, UMass Amherst - <http://umassgreeninfo.org/>

This one-day conference is designed for arborists, tree wardens, municipal managers, city planners, foresters, sugar bush owners and landscape architects who are involved with the management of property, both private and public. The University of Massachusetts Extension, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation and the USDA Forest Service sponsor this annual conference.

Two pesticide contact hours available for Applicator's License, categories 36 and 40. Association credits available: 5 ISA, 1 CTSP, 1 MCA, 2 MCLP, 1 MCH, 5 SAF, and 5 CFE's.

Cost is \$65/person for first registration, \$40/person for each additional registration from the same company. Coffee break and parking pass included in registration fee (lunch is on your own). For more information, contact UMass Extension at 413-545-0895, eweeks@umext.umass.edu, or Dennis Ryan at 413-545-6626, dr@nrc.umass.edu.

Webinar - Understanding Multifunctional Farms in New England and their Relationship to Regional Food Systems: Finances and Entrepreneurship

March 13, 12 PM to 1 PM

Presenter: Kathleen Liang, University of Vermont
Moderator: Lisa Chase, University of Vermont Extension

Given the growing interest in understanding the relationship between food systems and small/medium-sized farming operations, this webinar will share results from surveys of farms in the New England region. An overview of the survey results was presented in December 2012 and is available at www.uvm.edu/tourismresearch/agritourism/. This webinar will offer more detailed information with respect to financial outcomes, expectations, challenges, and entrepreneurial assessments. This survey is the second segment of a study on multifunctional farms funded by the USDA AFRI Program (project # 2011-67023-30106). Collaborators include Drs. Mary Ahearn (USDA ERS), Stephan Goetz (Penn State University), and Jason Brown (USDA ERS).

To access the webinar on March 13, please follow the link below ten minutes before the webinar begins:
<https://sas.elluminate.com/m.jnlp?sid=2009421&password=M.09128CCEAEDF572FBC85931DAAC985>

If you have not used Blackboard Collaborate before, please visit www.uvm.edu/extension/bb-collaborate/newuser at least one day before the webinar. For technical assistance, please contact Blackboard Collaborate 24-hour support at 1-877-382-2293 or email Lucy.Carrasco@uvm.edu. For more information about the webinar, contact Kathleen at cliang@uvm.edu or Lisa at lisa.chase@uvm.edu. The recorded webinar will be posted online at www.uvm.edu/tourismresearch/agritourism/ a few days after the webinar.

Mass. Farm to School Project Survey

M A S S A C H U S E T T S
Farm to School
P R O J E C T

At the Mass. Farm to School Project, spring means survey season. Each year, we conduct a short survey in order to help us assess and assist farm to institution sales statewide. We also compile a free directory of farms interested in selling to schools, colleges, hospitals, and other institutional customers based on info collected from the survey.

Please follow [this link to the survey](#). Complete the survey by Monday **March 11th**, and you will be entered into our drawing to win a \$100 gas card. If you would prefer to complete the survey by phone, please send us an email at info@massfarmtoschool.org or call 413-253-3844 and we'll assist you. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Organic Bee School

Saturday, March 23 and Sunday, March 24 - 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM both days. Boston University, 755 Commonwealth Avenue, Room 314, Boston, MA 02215

For those who are thinking about getting bees or are new to beekeeping, this is a great way to learn the Hows, Whys, and Whens of organic bee management. During this two-day Bee School, Jean-Claude Bourrut will go over the basic techniques of organic beekeeping, including materials and equipment, beehive structure, the life cycle of bees, hive development and dynamic, seasonal apiary work, honey and hive products, common

pests and diseases, and their organic management. Hands-on workshop in the apiary, April 13 is included in the Organic Bee School.

Pre-registration required. [REGISTER HERE](#). Cost: \$125 members/ \$145 non-members. Books will be provided on the day of the class, for an additional \$12. For more information, please contact Drew Love by email at drew@nofamass.org or by phone at 330-801-0389.

Apply for a Farm to School Month/Food Day Planning Grant

The National Farm to School Network (NFSN) is teaming up with United Natural Foods Institute Foundation and Food Day to offer eight mini-grants of \$1,000 each to schools that are planning Food Day celebrations/events during 2013 National Farm to School Month (October).

National Farm to School Month and Food Day are closely aligned annual events that take place every October. National Farm to School Month was officially designated by Congress in 2010 as a time to celebrate the importance of Farm to School programs as a means to improve child nutrition, support local economies, sustain local farms and ranches and educate children about the origins of food. Food Day, held annually on October 24, is a nationwide celebration and a movement toward more healthy, affordable, and sustainable food. Food Day was created by the Center for Science in the Public Interest. [Details here.](#)

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Coverage

The Farm Service Agency's Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory or prevented planting occur due to a natural disaster. Eligible producers must apply for coverage of non-insurable crops using Form CCC-471, and pay the applicable service fee at the FSA office where their farm records are maintained. The application and service fee must be filed by March 15, 2013, the application closing date for spring seeded crops.

An eligible producer is a landowner, tenant or sharecropper who shares in the risk of producing an eligible crop and is entitled to an ownership share of that crop. As authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Act), an individual's or entity's average nonfarm adjusted gross income (AGI) limitation cannot exceed \$500,000 to be eligible for NAP. The service fee is the lesser of \$250 per crop or \$750 per producer per administrative county, not to exceed a total of \$1,875 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

Limited resource producers may request a waiver of the service fee. To qualify for an administrative service fee waiver, the producer must meet established criteria. For more information contact your local [FSA office.](#)

CISA Emergency Farm Fund Re-Opens to Aid Farms Damaged in Recent Blizzard

The CISA Emergency Farm Fund was launched in October 2011 by Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA), in partnership with Whole Foods Market and Equity Trust, in response to the damage suffered by farms in western Massachusetts due to Hurricane Irene. The Fund offers zero-interest loans to assist farmers and farm businesses struggling to meet their immediate needs in the aftermath of natural disasters.



CISA announced recently that the revolving fund has been re-opened to aid Pioneer Valley farms damaged by the recent blizzard of February 8. "Most of the storm damage we have heard about so far has been greenhouse collapses," says Philip Korman, CISA's Executive Director. "Farmers who lost greenhouses that they use for winter or spring growing now find themselves in a difficult situation. We hope these loans will offer those farmers the option to rebuild or repair immediately to minimize future harvest losses."

The creation of the loan fund was catalyzed by a \$50,000 matching grant provided by an anonymous donor. Since then business and individual support has been heartfelt and impressive, with gifts from \$5 to \$20,000 pouring in. Whole Foods Market and The Farm Table at Kringle Candle each contributed \$20,000. Other large donors included Farm Credit East, The Beveridge Family Foundation, Easthampton Savings Bank, Smith College, Florence Savings Bank, Deerfield Academy, and numerous individuals. "We are so pleased that the community stepped up for our farmers, since our farmers make possible the food that sustains our families every day of the year," said Korman.

The CISA Emergency Farm Fund is offering zero-interest loans up to \$10,000 to farms impacted by the February 8th blizzard. [The application period will close on March 31, 2013.](#) Application information can be found at www.buylocalfood.org.

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.