

June/July Farm and Market Report

June 18, 2015

[Commissioner's Column](#)

Forefront

- [Application Period for Three Farm Viability Grant Programs Due June 23](#)
- [MA Food Systems Planning Update](#)
- [Energy News](#)
- [New Plant Nutrient Regulations](#)
- [Urban Ag Resources](#)
- [Massachusetts is the Sweet Spot - Maple Producers Have Record Year](#)
- [Farmers' Market Updates](#)
- [Strawberry and Pick-Your-Own Farms](#)
- [Wachusett Mountain Seeks Vendors for First Annual Farm Fresh Fest](#)
- [New Exhibit on the History of Agriculture in Massachusetts Opens](#)
- [Logan Airport Welcomes Congressman Neal, Celebrates Success of Berkshire Farms Market](#)
- [Celebrating "June is Dairy Month"](#)

USDA News

- [Acreage Reporting Deadline - July 15th](#)
- [Agricultural Producers in Massachusetts Still Have Time to Apply for Direct Farm Ownership Loans](#)
- [Massachusetts Farm Service Agency County Committee Nomination Period Begins](#)
- [USDA Announces \\$235 million Available for Innovative New Conservation Partnerships](#)
- [Celebrating National Pollinator Week – June 15 - 21](#)

[Upcoming Events / Workshops](#)

[Classified / Briefs / Job Opportunities](#)

Commissioner's Column



We're in the growing business, and what that generally refers to are crops and livestock. But we're growing something else in Massachusetts: the skilled workforce needed for our industry's future.

One of my initial priorities coming into my position as Commissioner was to visit our four agricultural high schools. Starting with a visit to Bristol County Agricultural High School in Dighton, we've made our way throughout the state to Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School in Northampton, then to Norfolk County Agricultural High School in Walpole, and last but not least, Essex Agricultural and Technical High School in Danvers.

Each school has its own programs, its own qualities, and its own culture, but what they have in common are a dedicated faculty, creative administration, proud and active alumnae, and most importantly, a highly self-motivated and eager student body. Each Ag student has signed up for the high school academic program required of all Massachusetts students plus the specialized programs offered by an agricultural high school. A successful Ag student must have a great deal of discipline and commitment, and that makes for great employees.

The next time you need to add to your staff, please give consideration to our Ag school grads.

May 15th was a particularly excellent day. It was “Plant Something Day,” a program of the Massachusetts Flower Growers’ Association and the Massachusetts Nursery and Landscape Association. Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Matt Beaton and I joined the students of the Hawlemont Regional School in Charlemont to plant a beautiful Flowering Crabapple tree. Hawlemont Regional School has its HAY (Hawlemont, Agriculture, and You) Program, a unique Pre-K to Grade 6 agricultural curriculum. We met with the students, families, faculty, staff and supporters of the school and recognized Hawlemont HAY teacher Jean Bruffee for receiving the 2015 Massachusetts AgriScience Excellence Award, sponsored by the Trustees of the Eastern States Exposition, in cooperation with Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom. Many thanks to Wanczyk Nursery of Hadley for donating the tree, and Snow & Sons of Greenfield for providing installation.

That was only the beginning of our day in Franklin County! Hosted by Charlemont resident and former MDAR Commissioner Jay Healey, MDAR staffers and I toured his family’s Tavern Hill Farm sawmill operation, visited with Tom and Ben Clark at Clarkdale Fruit Farm in Deerfield (which will celebrate its 100th Anniversary on July 19th), and met with Franklin County Community Development Corporation Executive Director John Waite and staff at the very innovative Western Massachusetts Food Processing Center in Greenfield.

I conclude this column on a much more serious note, I call to your attention the most current information about the Avian Influenza outbreak that is moving east across the US. I urge anyone involved with raising poultry in Massachusetts to read information posted at www.mass.gov/eea/docs/agr/animal-health/docs/ai-alert-6-5-15.pdf and mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/id/epidemiology/cdc-animals-pet-safety.html. Keeping up to date on current conditions and suggested best management practices are the best way to take necessary actions to limit possible future exposure.

Here’s hoping the recent rains are a signal that the extremely dry season has ended, and now it’s “Full Seed Ahead” for everyone!

Have a great spring!



John Lebeaux, Commissioner



[Top](#)

FOREFRONT

Application Period for Three Farm Viability Grant Programs Due June 23

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) is accepting applications from farmers who wish to participate in these Department programs in Fiscal Year 2016.

[Farm Viability Enhancement Program](#)

This popular business planning and technical assistance program provides management advice and grants from \$25,000 up to \$100,000 to implement farm growth and sustainability strategies. Farm operators receive grant awards for signing a 5 or 10 year Agricultural Covenant, and receive valuable consultations and visits from a team of consultants to discuss farm production and management, marketing, and business planning. Typical uses of funds from the Farm Viability Program include building or repairing farm structures, modernizing field equipment, purchasing delivery vehicles and tractors, and improving retail marketing structures or food processing capacity. Applications and program information are available by clicking on this link [AGR- FVEP-16-23](#).

[APR Improvement Program \(AIP\) – for APR farms](#)

The APR Improvement Program (AIP) helps sustain active commercial farming on land that has already been protected through the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program. AIP provides technical assistance and business analysis to improve farm productivity and profitability of APR farms selected to participate in the program. Grants from \$25,000 up to \$100,000 may be available on a reimbursement basis to implement identified on-farm infrastructure improvements. AIP funds are used primarily for capital improvements, such as constructing or repairing barns, farm stands, livestock housing, or processing facilities; or land management, such as reseeding hay fields, pasture improvements, fencing, or establishing perennial crops. AIP applications and program information are available by clicking on this link [AGR-AIP16-7](#).

[Matching Enterprise Grants for Agriculture Program \(MEGA\) - Grant Program For Beginning Farmers in MA](#)

The Matching Enterprise Grants for Agriculture Program (MEGA) seeks to help farmers who have been in business for at least one, but no more than five years, acquire equipment and other non-land assets, or make infrastructure improvements, that can help insure the financial viability of their commercial farm businesses. Priority will be given to new farms that can use program investment to increase farm production, marketing, and income. Matching funds of up to \$10,000 is available on a cost reimbursement basis to implement improvement strategies after individual business review and analysis provided by the Department. MEGA applications and program information are available by clicking on this link [AGR- MEGA-6](#).

List of MDAR Grant and Funding Programs [here](#).

[Top](#)

MA Food Systems Planning Update



In May, the Massachusetts State Food Plan’s planning team began sorting through all of the materials generated by the public forums, working groups, literature review, one-on-one interviews, and other outreach, to start developing the goals and recommendations for the final plan.

The materials generated by the working groups will form the core of the plan’s goals and recommendations, and there was enormous amount of excellent work done by the working group leads, ten volunteers who managed to fit many meetings and many hours of analysis and writing into their already busy schedules including:

Distribution: **Jeff Cole**, Massachusetts Farmers Markets

Farming: **Brad Mitchell**, Massachusetts Farm Bureau

Fisheries: **Valerie Nelson**, Water Alliance

Food Access, Security and Health: **Jessica del Rosario**, Massachusetts Convergence

Partnership Inputs: **Lorenzo Macaluso**, Center for Eco Technology; **Jenny Rushlow**, Conservation Law Foundation

Land: **Cris Coffin**, American Farmland Trust Processing: Nico Lustig, Franklin County Community Development Corporation

Urban Agriculture: **Ruth Goldman**, Merck Family Fund; **Pat Spence**, Urban Farming Institute

While this phase of the project is more inwardly-focused than the active engagement of the last few months, there is still a great deal of ongoing communication with working group leads, advisors, and other key informants who are stepping up when we have questions about how to fill gaps in the information we've gathered and when we need individuals to review the distillations of findings and recommendations.

At the same time, team member Mary Praus from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments completed a first draft of the chapter on the Massachusetts food system's existing conditions, findings that will be used to support and inform the goals and recommendations. Team member David Elvin of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission also completed a first draft of the chapter detailing the project's engagement work thus far.

The project Executive Committee met at the end of May to review all of the working groups' recommendations and to begin discussing ideas for eventual implementation of the plan.

Winton Pitcoff from MAPC made a presentation at the June 1 MA Food Policy Council meeting in central MA. The MA Statewide Food Systems planning was a major part of the agenda. The FPC discussed the status of the report as well as considerations for an implementation strategy moving forward, once the plan is delivered.

There will be continued outreach and meetings with key constituents and organizations, providing opportunities to comment. If there are organizations or individuals whose input should be solicited and have not been previously engaged, please contact Winton Pitcoff, WPitcoff@mapc.org.

[Top](#)

Energy News

The MA Farm Energy Program (MFEP)

The MDAR and our new MFEP partner The Center for EcoTechnology, Inc., (CET) want you to know the MA Farm Energy Program is here to help you. Please visit our new website, www.massfarmenergy.com, get familiar with our new contact information and find out about our technical and financial assistance opportunities! Have you been meaning to get an energy audit for your farm? Are there energy efficiency projects you would like to complete? To learn more about how you can improve your farm's operations, reduce your energy use and save money, please complete the Request Form online or email us at info@massfarmenergy.com or call 413-727-3090. We look forward to hearing from you!

USDA REAP Deadlines

There is still one more deadline for USDA REAP – **June 30, 2015**

USDA Rural Development (RD) has issued an update regarding their Renewable Energy for America Program (REAP). Their Final Rule for REAP and the FY15 NOSA were published in the December 29, 2014 edition of the Federal Register.

<https://federalregister.gov/a/2014-30184> = NOSA

<https://federalregister.gov/a/2014-30133> = Final Rule

Renewable Energy Systems (RES)/Energy Efficiency Improvements (EEI) Grant Application deadlines:

1st deadline is April 30, 2015 and 2nd deadline = June 30, 2015

RES/EEI Guaranteed Loan Application deadlines:

Reviewed and processed on a monthly basis the first business day of each month.

Applications are being accepted from small rural business and agricultural producers for grants for the installation of energy efficiency improvements & renewable energy systems.

The MA application templates for 2015 have been revised. There are 6 available templates, based on project size:

- 1) EE_small_80K or less= Energy Efficiency with Total projects cost of \$80,000 or less

- 2) EE_middle_80K+-199K= Energy Efficiency with total project costs between \$80,001-199,999
- 3) EE_Large_200k+ Energy Efficiency with total projects costs of \$200,000 or more
- 4) RE_small_80k_less =Renewable Energy projects with total Project Cost of \$80K or less
- 5) RE-middle_80K+-199K=Renewable Energy projects with total projects costs between 80,001-199,999
- 6) RE_Large_200k+=Renewable Energy projects with total project costs of \$200,000 or more

Constructions costs incurred prior to the submission of a complete application & agency environmental review will not be considered.

It would be most helpful, while giving advice on realistic expectations of funding to have a working pipeline of potential applications per state. If you plan on submitting a REAP application for this upcoming funding cycle, please send an email to Anne Correia at Anne.Correia@ma.usda.gov with the following:

- 1) State that the project located in
- 2) Name of applicant/organization
- 3) Amount or approx. range

This information is not public. It does not have to be exact, and you will not penalized if do not submit. A separate email will be sent when the REAP application deadline has been published. Please call USDA's RD Energy Coordinator if you have questions, Anne Correia, Energy Coordinator, BCP Specialist, Business & Cooperative Programs, Rural Development, USDA, West Wareham, MA. 508-295-5151 Ext. 3, www.rurdev.usda.gov/ma.

MassCEC Announces Program Extension - Clean Heating and Cooling Programs extended through September 30, 2015!

MassCEC Clean Heating and Cooling programs include:

- Residential Air-Source Heat Pumps
- Ground-Source Heat Pumps
- Central Wood Pellet Heating
- Solar Hot Water Programs

Visit our [Clean Heating and Cooling programs page](#) to learn more about these programs. *This extension doesn't apply to the Woodstove Change-Out program.

[Top](#)

New Plant Nutrient Regulations

New Plant Nutrient Regulations (333 CMR 31.00) were promulgated and published on June 5, 2015 ([click here](#)). The Department developed these regulations in response to "An Act Relative to the Regulation of Plant Nutrients" (Act) passed by Massachusetts Legislature in 2012. The regulations ensure that plant nutrients are applied in an effective manner to provide sufficient nutrients for maintaining healthy agricultural and non-agricultural land, including turf and lawns, while minimizing the impacts of the nutrients on surface and ground water resources to protect human health and the environment.

The Act and regulations establish standards for the applications of plant nutrients to agricultural land and non-agricultural turf and lawns. The regulations for non-agricultural turf and lawns became effective on June 5, 2015. The regulations for agricultural land will become effective on November 5, 2015.

The Department is developing outreach and educational materials to assist agricultural producers, turf professionals and homeowners with the implementation and compliance with these regulations. Information and resources will be available on [MDAR website](#). The Department will also provide outreach at various agricultural events and meetings. Questions, contact Hotze Wijnja, Hotze.Wijnja@state.ma.us, 617-626-1771.

[Top](#)

Urban Ag Resources

MDAR's Urban Agriculture Program web page has expanded with a new resource section, as we strive to support and promote this growing new sector in Massachusetts. Our existing [Urban Ag Program webpage](#) includes grant information, regional maps focused on factors affecting access to healthy food, and details from the recent *Urban Ag and Community Planning Symposium*.

Many know that urban food production plays an important role in a stronger local food system, as well as addressing economic and environmental issues. Now, practitioners, organizations, and municipalities can easily find resources that will guide and inform them as they work to build and strengthen their urban agriculture enterprises and projects.

You will find information on zoning ordinances, tool kits and training information, policy reports, mapping and so much more [here](#). For more information on the this program, contact Rose.Arruda@state.ma.us.

[Top](#)

Massachusetts is the Sweet Spot - Maple Producers Have Record Year



Massachusetts maple producers made 75,000 gallons of syrup during the 2015 sugaring season, surpassing what had already been a run of two banner years with excellent production, according to figures from the National Agricultural Statistics Service. The winter was cold and long, but when the sap did begin running in late March, sugarmakers produced a bumper crop of Massachusetts' sweetest harvest.

Nationally, production of maple syrup was up by about 6%, according to a report released by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (<http://www.usda.gov/nass/PUBS/TODAYRPT/crop0615.pdf>), but Massachusetts saw a gain of 23%, a greater increase than all but one other state. Sugarmakers in the Commonwealth set 310,000 taps according to the survey, 20,000 more than in 2014, continuing the steady growth of the maple industry in Massachusetts. The state is ranked ninth in maple production nationally.

"Massachusetts sugarmakers were wondering if spring would ever come, and when it did they made the most of it," said Massachusetts Maple Producers Association (MMPA) Coordinator Winton Pitcoff. "This year's crop had excellent flavor, and sugarmakers around the state have plenty of maple syrup, cream and candy available for sale."

This year's maple season was highlighted by Maple Weekend, March 21-22, when more than 40 sugarhouses around the state were open to visitors who got to see syrup being made, learn about the process and history of maple production, and sample and purchase the Commonwealth's sweetest crop. Nearly 40 restaurants featured menu items made with 100% pure Massachusetts maple syrup that weekend as well. The [Massachusetts Maple Producers Association](#) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and promotion of maple sugaring in Massachusetts.

[Top](#)

Farmers' Market Updates

[Farmers' Market Seeking Vendors](#) - Many farmers' markets across the state are looking for additional vendors for the 2015 season. [Check here](#) to see if there is a market for you. The list will be updated throughout the season, so check back for updates.

[SNAP Wireless Equipment Options](#) - There are currently two programs for farmers market managers and farmers looking for wireless equipment to process SNAP payments. For more information, including eligibility criteria [visit here](#).

Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Certifications - The [Massachusetts Farmers' Market Nutrition Program](#) (FMNP) is a state-administered federal nutrition program that provides women and children enrolled in the WIC (Women, Infants and Children) program and low-income seniors, with coupons redeemable for fresh locally grown produce from Massachusetts farmers' markets. The Massachusetts program is administered by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) in cooperation with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, WIC Nutrition Program, and Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

WIC participants receive \$20 in coupons and seniors receive \$25 in coupons (\$2.50 each for each coupon) to use at authorized Massachusetts farmers' markets. The FMNP runs from June through October. Authorized farmers are reimbursed for the face value of the coupons.

Farmers may accept coupons only at markets authorized to participate in the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. All markets and farmers that are new to the program must receive training. We are conducting webinars for new markets and farmers, and for any participants who would like to be reminded of the program guidelines. For more information, or to become an authorized farmer or market, contact Rebecca Davidson at 617-626-1744, or at Rebecca.Davidson@State.ma.us.

[Top](#)

Strawberry and Pick-Your-Own Farms



As we come into summertime, a reminder for farms to check your farm information on the Massgrown map to make sure it is up to date, www.mass.gov/agr/massgrown/map. Send your edits to Rick LeBlanc, Richard.LeBlanc@state.ma.us. If you would like to be added to the map, please fill out the two page marketing survey ([.pdf](#), [.doc](#)).

Also, let us know about your special farm events! Our [Agricultural and Culinary Events Calendar](#) is one of our most popular *Massachusetts grown...and fresher* website features. Curious locavores and culinary travelers are eager to find a farm, culinary or community event. Submit your calendar listings [here](#). Have a favorite farm/family recipe? Send that in as well to Julia.Grimaldi@state.ma.us and we will look to feature it as [Recipe of the Month](#). We also tweet them out from time to time [@Massgrown](#).

"Massgrown and Fresher" price cards and posters are now available. [Click here](#) to see our various Massgrown posters, price cards, and order form.

[Top](#)

Wachusett Mountain Seeks Vendors for First Annual Farm Fresh Fest



Wachusett Mountain Ski Area has a long history of hosting festivals throughout the summer and fall, and is very excited to introduce a new event -- ["Farm Fresh Fest"](#) - **August 29 – 30, 2015.**

Wachusett Mountain is reaching out to organizations, farms, and specialty food producers to help make this event one of the best festivals of its kind in the state in its very first year. Historically, Wachusett Mountain festivals draw audiences from throughout Massachusetts. Being this is the event's first year, it anticipates approximately 5,000 people over the two days. ([AppleFest](#), the longest running festival, averages 10,000 - 12,000 people per weekend so, with your help, we're confident this event will grow quickly.)

This two-day event will feature a variety of locally grown specialty foods and farm-to-table vendors. Goal is to highlight local produce; specialty foods; an extensive farmers' market; live animal displays; agricultural education; craft beers; local wine growers and cooking demos. It will also feature live music, family entertainment, local crafts and our popular SkyRide chairlift ride to the summit. For more info. on sponsoring or collaborating, contact Audra Kirtland, Marketing and Special Events Manager, 978-464-2300 x3703, audra@wachusett.com. For vendor opportunities, [click here](#).

[Top](#)

New Exhibit on the History of Agriculture in Massachusetts Opens

[Posted by State Library Staff](#): Opening this week at the [State Library of Massachusetts](#) is a new exhibition entitled: *Cultivating the Commonwealth: A History of Agriculture in Massachusetts*. Agriculture has been a vital component of Massachusetts life since people here first began growing crops and raising animals to feed themselves. This exhibition features publications, images, and artifacts from the State Library of Massachusetts to illustrate the Commonwealth's long and colorful history of agricultural practices and traditions.

The exhibit runs from June 8 through September 4, 2015 and can be viewed outside of the Library, Room 341 of the State House. Library hours are Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm. This exhibit will also be available to view online as a set of images on the State Library's [Flickr site](#).

Logan Airport Welcomes Congressman Neal, Celebrates Success of Berkshire Farms Market



Last month Congressman Richard Neal visited Berkshire Farms Market at Boston's Logan International Airport to celebrate the success of the market, its impact on the local food economy and to recognize the contribution of Berkshire Farm & Table to the partnership.

Congressman Neal's visit marked the

one-year anniversary of Berkshire Farms Market in the Terminal B connector, the newest grab-and-go retail outlet from San Mateo, Calif.-based Tastes on the Fly Restaurant Group, which specializes in bringing outposts of local dining establishments to airports.

The success of the market is a significant contribution to artisan food makers in the Berkshire region. [Berkshire Farms Market](#) was projected to achieve \$1.7 million in sales for its first year of operation, and has surpassed \$3.4 million in the first year (12 months of sales) with an average daily customer count of 980. Terminal B, where Berkshire Farms Market is located, services 11 million total passengers each year. "Berkshire Farms Market is a remarkable sales and marketing opportunity for our region," said Angela Cardinali, founder and director of [Berkshire Farm & Table](#). "With Logan International servicing 31.9 million passengers annually, this retail space provides a high-volume outlet to increase local food producer revenue and presents a platform to establish the Berkshires as a food source and destination for travelers." [More here](#).

[Top](#)

Celebrating “June is Dairy Month”



On Monday, June 15, in recognition of “June Dairy Month” and New England Dairy & Food Council’s 100th Anniversary, Massachusetts dairy farmers were honored for all they’ve done to “fuel greatness” in the Springfield Public Schools. Massachusetts dairy farmers support the “[Fuel Up To Play 60](#)” program that has been incredibly successful in increasing student’s access to health and wellness programs, specifically school breakfast. Sodexo, New England Dairy & Food Council, the City of Springfield, Garelick Farms, and the NFL, spent the morning thanking all of the FUTP60 partners, especially local dairy farmers Darryl and Lucinda Williams, who farm in Hatfield. Special guest New England Patriot, Duron Harmon also spoke to the attentive crowd of 2nd & 3rd graders and encouraged them to fuel up with exercise and a healthy breakfast full of nutritious dairy foods everyday – just like he does!

[#JuneDairyMonth](#)

[Top](#)

[Upcoming Events / Workshops](#)

- **June 20 – Mass Bee Annual Field Day** - UMass Agronomy Farm, River Rd. South Deerfield, MA. 9:00 am - 3:30 pm. Participants can choose from twenty-four, one hour beekeeping workshops. The event is FREE to all beekeepers, but registration is required for this special all-day event. You are highly encouraged to pre-register. Also, we will have a BBQ lunch available for \$10 each. The lunch must be pre-ordered on the registration form below. In addition, ice cream will be available for purchase at the event following lunch. A schedule of speakers will be provided at the event. Workshop topics will be appropriate for all, from beginners to advanced beekeepers. This event is a collaborative effort with the University of Massachusetts, the MA Beekeepers Assoc. and the Franklin County Beekeepers. [Details and registration here.](#)
- **[June 24 - UMass Agricultural Field Day](#)** - Crop and Animal Research Education Center, 89-91 North River Road, South Deerfield, MA. Join UMass staff for a guided tour of their research farm, The event will include presentations on growing malt barley in New England, hardwood biochar in agricultural soils, no-till and forage radish cover crops, growing mustard as a biofumigant, effect of bee disease and hedgerow plantings, dual-purpose cover crops, and more. No registration fee but pre-registration is strongly encouraged. Pre-register by e-mailing Kelly Kraemer at kkraemer@umass.edu. [Lunch will be provided. Three CEU credits for Certified Crop Advisors will be available.](#)
- **July 23 – *Down to Earth* – 2015 Annual Summer Conference and Trade Show** – Topsfield Fairgrounds. Sponsored by MA Nursery and Landscape Association and the MA Flower Growers Association. Featured keynote speaker, Bill McCurry, writes a monthly financial advice column, “Profit Planet,” for Green Profit magazine. As competition gets stiffer and industry professionals of all shapes and sizes look to differentiate, it's more important than ever to stay on the cutting edge of trends both inside and outside of the industry. The 2015 Educational Program will be dynamic and innovative with expanded hands-on demonstrations: Challenge yourself in the Land Op demo and equipment area, What's all the buzz? Learn the ins and outs of bee keeping, Get dirty as you participate in the hands-on Hardscape demo. [Details and registration here.](#)
- **August 14 – 16 - NOFA Summer Conference** – UMass Amherst, MA - This year's main conference features 144 individual sessions with 27 different topic areas. Workshops address organic farming, gardening, land care, draft animals, homesteading, sustainability, nutrition, food politics, activism, and more. The theme for this year's Conference is "Healing the Climate, Healing Ourselves: Regeneration through Microbiology". This year, among

the five pre-conference intensives will be an all-day seminar on Friday, August 14, given by Natasha Campbell-McBride, on the healing potential of food for overcoming chronic illness. She will also give the first keynote on Friday night. Our second keynoter, Ronnie Cummins will speak on "Reversing Global Warming & Rural Poverty through Regenerative Organics." [Full workshop program here.](#)

*For more ag-related events and workshops, visit and bookmark www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/events/. For culinary and consumer events, click [here](#).

[USDA NEWS](#)

Acres Reporting Deadline - July 15th

Massachusetts farmers are reminded of the need to report their acreage of spring planted crops to their crop insurance agent and/or Farm Service Agency (FSA). Accurately and timely reporting of your 2015 acreage is required to maintain crop insurance and program eligibility. Growers also are required to submit your 2014 crop production for inclusion in your Actual Production History (APH) database. A little cooperation with your crop insurance agent or FSA can minimize inaccurate data being added to your database.

Failure to report acreage and/or production can lead to a ZERO being added to your database. A ZERO added to a 4 year database can reduce your crop yield by 25%! It is also important growers review records submitted for acreage and production reports to insure the proper crops, varieties and units are precise. Growers should review the completed records provided by your agent or FSA to insure they are accurate and complete. Once an error is included in YOUR records it may result in lower indemnity or program payments. Ultimately the accuracy of your records is your responsibility! Growers, if you are unsure of your acreage you may request measurement service from your local FSA office. Measure Service is a paid service FSA provides to growers to help them comply with program requirements.

For more information, please visit www.rma.usda.gov or contact UMass Risk Management Specialists Paul Russell at pmrrussell@umext.umass.edu or Tom Smiarowski at tsmiarowski@umext.umass.edu.

[Top](#)

Agricultural Producers in Massachusetts Still Have Time to Apply for Direct Farm Ownership Loans

Low-Interest Loans Can Help Producers Start or Expand Farms

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Massachusetts Farm Service Agency (FSA) recently announced that farmers still have time to apply for low interest loans available through the FSA direct farm ownership program. Applications must be approved by Sept. 30, 2015, to take advantage of the funding available. Eligible farmers can borrow up to \$300,000 to buy farmland, construct or repair buildings, pay closing costs, or promote soil and water conservation. The interest rate can be as low as 1.5 percent with up to 40 years to repay.

New farmers, military veterans, and underserved farmers also are encouraged to apply. Each year Congress targets 80 percent of available loan funds to beginning and targeted underserved farmers. Targeted underserved groups include American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asians, Blacks or African Americans, Native Hawaiians, or other Pacific Islanders, Hispanics and women. For more information about farm loans, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans, or contact your local FSA office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <https://offices.usda.gov>.

[Top](#)

Massachusetts Farm Service Agency County Committee Nomination Period Begins

The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently announced that the nomination period for local Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees began on Monday, June 15, 2015. It is important for county committees to reflect America's diversity, all eligible farmers and ranchers, including beginning farmers are encouraged to get involved in this year's elections. FSA has seen an increase in the number of nominations for qualified candidates, especially among women and minorities – a trend the Agency would like to see continue. To be eligible to serve on a FSA county committee, a person must participate or cooperate in an agency administered program, be eligible to vote in a county committee election and reside in the local administrative area where they are nominated.

Farmers and ranchers may nominate themselves or others. Organizations representing minorities and women also may nominate candidates. To become a candidate, an eligible individual must sign an FSA-669A nomination form. The form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections. Nomination forms for the 2015 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on Aug. 3, 2015.

FSA will mail election ballots to eligible voters beginning Nov. 9, 2015. Ballots will be due back to the local county office either via mail or in person by Dec. 7, 2015. Newly elected committee members and alternates will take office on Jan. 1, 2016. While FSA county committees do not approve or deny farm ownership or operating loans, they make decisions on disaster and conservation programs, emergency programs, commodity price support loan programs and other agricultural issues. Members serve three-year terms. Nationwide, there are about 7,800 farmers and ranchers serving on FSA county committees. Committees consist of three to 11 members that are elected by eligible producers.

[Top](#)

USDA Announces \$235 million Available for Innovative New Conservation Partnerships

Local coalitions can now apply for funding to improve soil health, preserve clean water, combat drought, protect wildlife habitat.

USDA recently announced an investment of up to \$235 million to improve the nation's water quality, combat drought, enhance soil health, support wildlife habitat and protect agricultural viability. The funding is being made available through the [Regional Conservation Partnership Program \(RCPP\)](#), the newest conservation tool of the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

RCPP, created by the 2014 Farm Bill, empowers local leaders to work with multiple partners—such as private companies, local and tribal governments, universities, non-profit groups and other non-government partners—along with farmers and forest landowners to design solutions that work best for their region. Local partners and the federal government both invest funding and manpower to projects to maximize their impact. This will be the second round of projects funded through RCPP. The RCPP program helps USDA build on already-record enrollment in conservation programs, with over 500,000 producers participating to protect land and water on over 400 million acres nationwide.

USDA is now accepting proposals for RCPP. [Pre-proposals are due July 8, 2015](#). For more information on applying, visit the [RCPP website](#).

[Top](#)

Celebrating National Pollinator Week – June 15 - 21

Three-fourths of the world's flowering plants and about 35 percent of the world's food crops depend on animal pollinators to reproduce. More than 3,500 species of native bees help increase crop yields. Some scientists estimate that one out of every three bites of food we eat exists because of animal pollinators like bees, butterflies and moths, birds

and bats, and beetles and other insects. This week we celebrate pollinators during National Pollinator Week. [National NRCS Insects & Pollinators page](#)

USDA Blog: [Protecting Pollinators through Habitat Conservation is Critical to Preserving Food Supply](#)
[Top](#)

Classified / Briefs / Job Opportunities

- **State Reclamation Board (Mosquito Control) Positions** - SRB Operations Coordinator, Entomologist, Administrative Assistant, Director-Mosquito Control Project. [More here.](#)
- **The Trustees of Reservations seeks a fulltime cheese monger and retail manager** to oversee shop in the Boston Public Market (slated to open in July.) The shop will feature cheese, yogurt and grass-fed milk from the dairy at [Appleton Farms](#) and other Massachusetts cheeses. Contact: David Beardsley, dbeardsley@ttor.org for a complete job description.
- **Farm for Sale** - Farm in Montague, MA. It's about 36.8 acres, 18 is woodlot. Has blueberries, raspberries, asparagus and a few fruit trees. Part of the property is protected by Mount Grace Land Trust and the other is under APR. Contact lisaadams3@verizon.net.
- **Faneuil Hall Marketplace Christmas Tree Search** - Looking for an organization to secure an 80+ ft. tree for the holiday season. The scope of work includes, bringing it to Boston around November 5th, erecting and securing the tree, setting up the electrical requirements, stringing the lights, hanging the star, decorating the tree and working with the production company Parker 3D to make sure that the light and sound show is working by November 18th in preparation of a live television show on WBZ-TV the night of November 21st. Beginning on January 4th, the crew will need to return to remove all lights and decorations, dismantle the tree and remove it from the property. Interested parties should contact Ed Hurley, Marketing Director, at 617-523-1300 ext. 7030 or via email at ed.hurley@faneuilhallmarketplace.com.
- **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.
- **Extension Educator Position** - The Center for Agriculture, Food and the Environment at the University of Massachusetts Amherst has an immediate opening for an Extension Educator – Entomology Specialist. [Details here.](#)
- **Report Cliff Swallow Sightings:** Cliff swallows, a once-common species in New England have been undergoing a long, slow decline in Massachusetts. As agriculture has declined in northeast, so have the cliff swallows. Audubon conducting a state-wide survey this spring to determine where cliff swallows are breeding in the state, and you can help! Identifying breeding sites is the first step in addressing the decline in this species. [More here.](#)

[Top](#)

About the *Farm & Market Report*

Published bi-monthly by MDAR:

Boston Office: 251 Causeway St., Suite 500, Boston, MA 02114 617-626-1700 Fax: 617-626-1850	Amherst Satellite Office: 101 University Drive, Suite C4 Amherst, MA 01002 413-548-1900, Fax: 413-548-1901
---	--

- John Lebeaux, Commissioner, John.Lebeaux@state.ma.us
- Alisha Bouchard, Chief of Staff, Alisha.Bouchard@state.ma.us

Division Directors

- Michael Cahill, Director of Animal Health, Michael.Cahill@state.ma.us
- Lee Corte-Real, Director of of Crop and Pest Services, Lee.Corte-Real@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

Next issue to be published for August / September. Please send news, calendar and/or classified information by July 31 to Richard.LeBlanc@state.ma.us, or fax to 617-626-1850. To unsubscribe or change your address, send an e-mail message to 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 mass.gov/agr, and/or follow at twitter.com/MDARCommish.