

August / September Farm and Market Report August 13, 2015

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Commissioner's Column



I hope everyone is having a busy and productive summer. There's a lot going on.

The first thing I'd like to call to everyone's attention are the new ***Plant Nutrient Regulations*** that became effective for many on June 5th, and will become effective for agricultural land on December 5, 2015. The new regulations are the result of a law that was enacted in 2012 to provide for applications of plant nutrients by means that minimize negative environmental impact on water resources. Though the regulations were developed by MDAR after public hearing and stakeholder input, I have heard many questions and concerns from the greater Ag community. We have been working on our plan to provide education and outreach to those who apply plant nutrients: farmers, nursery professionals, landscapers, turf care professionals and homeowners. MDAR will partner with UMass Extension to deliver this education and outreach.

Once the program is rolled out and applicators begin to gain real world experience with the regulations, MDAR staff will work with the regulated community to identify any problematic issues and seek the best solutions to them. MDAR's goal is to help plant nutrient applicators understand the requirements so they can make the necessary plans to best integrate them into their operations. For further information, please visit www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/pesticides/plant-nutrient-management.html. We will provide ongoing

updates through various means including this link and the ***Farm and Market Report***. Please encourage any interested parties to [subscribe to the Report](#), so we can keep everyone up to date on education and outreach programs.

After years of planning, development, and finally construction, the [Boston Public Market](#) held its Grand Opening on July 30th! It was a very exciting event with Governor Baker and Mayor Walsh speaking and cutting the ribbon before a packed Market. The Market is located at 100 Hanover Street at the Haymarket T station and is open Wednesday-Sunday from 8 AM to 8 PM. It offers a tremendous opportunity for producers and growers of local food to directly connect with a huge population of consumers. When visiting the Market, be sure to check out the [Kitchen](#), where hands-on cooking demonstrations and other educational programs presented by the Trustees of Reservations are held year round.

So many people have worked on the project over the years, providing critical effort through the process. I want to single out one, the woman whose force of will brought the project to its Grand Opening: Boston Public Market Association (BPMA) Chief Executive Officer Liz Morningstar. Liz's energy and enthusiasm is contagious, and she led the team to bring the dream to reality.

MDAR has served as the Commonwealth's lead agency in the effort including acting as the funding mechanism for the Commonwealth's \$6.5 Million appropriation. Though I am very proud (and lucky) to be Commissioner for the opening of the Market, I must recognize some of my predecessors who played important roles. Former Commissioner Gus Schumacher serves on the BPMA Board. My immediate predecessor, former Commissioner Greg Watson, led MDAR through much of the build-out phase. I was very happy to see each of them at the Grand Opening.

I also need to report there are many personnel changes ongoing at MDAR. As a result of the Administration's Early Retirement Incentive Program, ten MDAR employees with over two hundred years of combined experience retired effective June 30th. The Department is allowed to refill some, but not all of those positions. Additionally four positions that were vacant when I arrived in February were approved for refilling, including the Chief Apiary Inspector position that has been vacant for many months. We plan to announce that appointment later this month. When all is said and done, MDAR will have a complement of seventy-five, twelve of whom (including me) are new to the agency since February.

Due to a change in legislation in the fall of 2014, the **Board of Food and Agriculture** was expanded from seven members to thirteen. The appointments of the new members was made this spring by Governor Baker, who has added members from all over the state from different Ag backgrounds. The Board met in late July, with Alison Carr, Donald Chase, Fred Dabney, Michelle Harvey, Lydia Sisson and Michael Smolak coming on board. Please join me in welcoming them!

MDAR's Agricultural Markets Division hosted the four day **Annual Meeting of the North American Agricultural Marketing Officials (NAAMO)** during July, using Salem as the base of operations. NAAMO members came from across the US and Canada (from as far away as Alaska) to participate in the meetings, presentations and tours. Led by Division Director Mary Jordan, Ag Markets, with the help of other MDAR staff, had all the bases covered and our visitors were very favorably impressed with the tremendous attention to detail MDAR provided to make this a tremendously successful conference. Our team did a fantastic job, and I want to publicly recognize them for their hard work!

Since my last report, we've continued to hit the road. Notable stops (in no particular order) include:

- **The 100th Anniversary of Clarkdale Fruit Farms in Deerfield.** It was a special treat to represent MDAR at this momentous event. Congratulations to Tom, Ben, all the Clarks and staff of this fourth generation family farm!
- **The MNLA and MFGA Annual Summer Meeting**, held this year at the Topsfield Fairgrounds. Coming out of the Green Industry, I can't pass up a chance to get back to my roots and see many old friends.
- That same day I braved I-93 south from Topsfield through the city to attend the **Twentieth Anniversary Celebration of the Milton Farmers' Market**. What a thriving market set on a beautiful site shaded by mature trees! I also had a chance to meet former MDAR staffer, Milton resident, and one of the founding members of the Market, Janet Christensen, who gave me some

interesting back story from MDAR's past.

- In June, I attended the **Mill City Grows Mobile Market Ribbon Cutting** in Lowell. This "farmstand on wheels" provides greater access of fresh locally grown food to Lowell's residents-a terrific example of the power of urban agriculture.
- Along with MDAR technical staff, I testified in late July at the **Joint Legislative Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Apiary Oversight Hearing**. This is a very important topic to all agricultural sectors-much more to follow over the coming months.
- Also in July MDAR staff and I benefited from a **Cape Cod Aquaculture Tour** of the growing operations of East Dennis Oyster Farm and Big Rock Oyster Company on the shore in East Dennis, along with the nearby Aquaculture Research Corporation, a major oyster seed hatchery.
- Later that day, I met with the **Central Mass. Dairy Producers Association** at its Twilight Meeting at Whittier Farms in Sutton. It was an excellent opportunity to see this highly regarded farm and to hear what's on the minds of many Mass. Dairy farmers.

That's going to have to do it as I'm a little late in sending this in. I'm just about to hit six months on the job; it's been a great privilege every day to work on behalf of MA Agriculture.

We at MDAR are rooting for you!



John Lebeaux, Commissioner



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FOREFRONT

Energy News

The MA Farm Energy Program (MFEP)

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, get familiar with our new contact information and find out about our technical and financial assistance opportunities!

Please visit (and bookmark) the new website: massfarmenergy.com. 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.

Solar Thermal Energy Workshop

Thursday, August 27 – 6:00 - 8:00 pm - Atlas Farm, 218 Greenfield Road, Deerfield

Do you use hot water year round? Wondering if installing a solar hot water system might be an affordable and practical option for your farm? CISA & MFEP will be coordinating a workshop on this topic at Atlas Farm in Deerfield, where you can learn about solar thermal applications for farms.

Gideon Porth of Atlas Farm will discuss his experience with PV and plans to add solar thermal; representatives from the Mass Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) will present information on their Commonwealth Solar Hot Water Program; the Center for EcoTechnology (CET) will also discuss the role of the Massachusetts Farm Energy Program (MFEP) in helping farms get energy audits and navigate funding programs; and Gerry Palano from the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources will discuss solar

thermal technology, applications, and funding opportunities. Suggested donation is \$10 and dinner will be served.

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

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Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Update

Due to the occurrence of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in the Midwest, many states have canceled poultry shows and exhibitions. Other states have implemented restrictions or additional testing requirements for birds entering their states for exhibition purposes. Massachusetts poultry producers participating in the state Salmonella pullorum testing program or National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) have their birds tested yearly for Salmonella pullorum and a small percentage (10 birds or 10 percent) of the flock are also tested for avian influenza as part of Massachusetts ongoing AI surveillance plan.

Unfortunately, the Division of Animal Health does not currently have the resources to provide additional Avian Influenza testing services for exhibition purposes. Those wishing to participate in exhibitions that require additional AI testing of the flock of origin will need to employ the services of an accredited veterinarian to perform the required testing.

Division of Animal Health staff continue to perform routine testing, triage sick bird calls, and assist our poultry producers and hobbyists in preparedness activities related to a potential incursion of HPAI in the Atlantic Flyway this fall. We appreciate your understanding.

Further questions regarding Avian Influenza may be answered by viewing this Frequently Asked Questions document located at www.mass.gov/eohhs/provider/guidelines-resources/services-planning/diseases-conditions/influenza/avian-flu.html.

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Massachusetts Tomato Contest to be Held August 20th



The 31st Annual Massachusetts Tomato Contest will be held in the KITCHEN at the Boston Public Market on Thursday, August 20th. Tomatoes will be judged by a panel of experts on flavor, firmness/slicing quality, exterior color and shape. Always a lively and fun event, the day is designed to increase awareness of locally grown produce.

Farmers who want to submit entries can bring tomatoes to the market between 9:00 am and 10:45 am on August 20th or drop their entries off with the corresponding registration form to one of several

locations around the state on August 19th. These tomatoes will be brought in to Boston on Thursday. For the complete details, including contest criteria and a registration form, click [here](#) or www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/markets/farmers-markets/tomato-contest.html.

The 31st Annual Tomato Contest is sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, New England Vegetable and Berry Growers Association and Mass Farmers Markets in cooperation with the Boston Public Market and The Trustees of Reservations.

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MA Food Systems Planning Update

After a year of public meetings, working groups, interviews and research, development of the Massachusetts Food System Plan is underway! The plan, due to the MA Food Policy Council in December, is a comprehensive assessment identifying current strengths of the Commonwealth's food system and opportunities for improvement. The goals and recommendations target opportunities where legislative, regulatory and other actions could be taken to better support the Massachusetts food system.

The goals seek to:

- Increase production, sales and consumption of Massachusetts-grown foods;
- Create jobs and economic opportunity in food and farming, and improve the wages and skills of food system workers;
- Protect the land and water needed to produce food, minimize the environmental impact of agriculture, and ensure food safety; and
- Reduce hunger and food insecurity, increase the availability of fresh, healthy food to all residents, and reduce food waste.

For information about the MA Food Systems Plan, email Project Manager Winton Pitcoff at wpitcoff@mapc.org and visit www.mafoodplan.org.

Next Meeting of the MA Food Policy Council

The next meeting of the MA Food Policy Council will be held Tuesday, September 8, 2015, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm, 100 Cambridge Street, Rooms C & D, 2nd Floor, Boston. The agenda will include a discussion about the statewide food systems planning; an update on the FINI grant coordinated by MA Department of Transitional Assistance, and next steps regarding the MA Food Trust. This is a public meeting, open to anyone with interest to attend! <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/boards-commissions/food-policy-council.html>

Food Day public release of the draft MA Food Systems Plan - Mark your calendar for Friday, October 23, 9:30 am at the State House in Boston to attend the Food Day public release of the draft MA Food Systems plan.

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Norfolk County Agricultural High School Celebrating 99 Years

This September, [Norfolk County Agricultural High School](#) in Walpole, Massachusetts will be celebrating 99 years of agricultural education and tradition. To mark this historical event, the Norfolk Chapter FFA will be hosting an Agricultural Exposition on the campus. [Agricultural vendors are invited from across Massachusetts to join us and showcase their products and services.](#)

This event will be held on September 27, 2015 and will be open to the public from 10 am-4 pm. The campus will be open to vendors for set-up at 8 am. The plan is to feature exhibitors outdoors; if weather does not permit, arrangements to use the indoor riding arena, AKC indoor ring and the gym to continue with the day's events. Vendors are asked for a \$25 donation to reserve a space, the proceeds raised by the FFA will be used to fund scholarship programs. Anyone interested in participating in the event, please contact our FFA advisor, Melissa McKenna, mmckenna@norfolkaggie.org, or 508-846-8419.

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New Plant Nutrient Regulations

New Plant Nutrient Regulations (333 CMR 31.00) were promulgated and published on June 5, 2015. 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 are now 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.

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MA Pavilion at Summer Fancy Food Show – MA Vendors Largest to Date

Sixty-three Massachusetts food and related businesses exhibited at the 2015 [International Summer Fancy Food Show](#) in New York City, June 28 – 30, at the Jacob Javits Center in New York City. These small to medium sized businesses met new customers and developed sales from the mostly independent retail buyers in attendance including farm stand operators looking to add Massachusetts value-added products to their inventory. The Massachusetts Pavilion, organized by MDAR, featured products from 26 Bay State food businesses and with a waiting list, was the largest Pavilion to date. There were 12 first time MA exhibitors. These businesses play crucial roles as part of the state's food system. Whenever it makes sense, MDAR works to make local connections to supply ingredients to these businesses, or for start-ups, work with shared use kitchens across the state.

Five Massachusetts companies earned prestigious "Sophi" awards, the Oscars of the specialty food world! Finalists included Zesty Cookie Company, Boxford, for their Hot Ginger cookies; Coop's Micro Creamery, Watertown, Vegan Hot Fudge; and Gold winners Nella Pasta, Quincy, Corn Caramelized Onion and Thyme pasta; Sauces N Love, Lynn, Pumpkin and Kale Alfredo; Tea Forte, West Concord, Vanilla Pea Tea Coops and Coop's MicroCreamy, Watertown, Salted Caramel Sauce. Coop's MicroCreamery and caramel maker McCrea's Candies, Hyde Park, collaborated to produce the award winning salted caramel topping.

Eight of the specialty food businesses exhibiting used the USDA FAS "Branded Program" to offset 50% of eligible exhibiting costs. In addition, a Buyers Mission was coordinated by MDAR and Food Export USA Northeast using FAS funds. Sixteen international buyers hosted with funds from USDA FAS met with U.S. specialty food businesses during one-on-one meetings over three days: June 26, 27, and 29th. The buyers were presented with an overview of the current US retail food market, followed by store tours of well known NYC specialty food businesses. They also met with exhibitors during the trade show, which has a

reputation as the premier marketplace for value-added foods, with 2,400 exhibitors and 24,000 attendees. [List of companies and details here.](#)

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MassGrown Map - Orchards and Farmstands



As we come into the Fall next month, 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.

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Wachusett Mountain Seeks Vendors – Last Call 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**.

Sign up by August 19 - [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; petting zoo, 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. Supported by Edible Boston, Edible Pioneer Valley, Rollstone Bank, Atlas Distributors, WSRS. 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](#). Farm Fresh Fest [video preview](#).

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MA Cheese Makers Bring Home Awards at the American Cheese Society 2015 Competition

[Ruggles Hill Creamery](#), [Westfield Farm](#) and [Wolf Meadow Farm](#) were among the "Best of Show" at the

prestigious 2015 annual American cheese competition at the [American Cheese Society](#), held in July in Providence this year. The entries represented 267 artisan cheese businesses that submitted 1,779 cheese products.

- Ruggles Hill Creamery, Hardwich, earned a third place award in the "American Made/International Style" with "Alys's Eclipses."
- Westfield Farm, Westfield, was awarded both 1st and 2nd place in the "External Blue-Molded Cheeses" with "Bluebonnet" and their "Classic Blue Log."
- Wolf Meadow Farm, Amesbury, won 2nd place in the "Mozzarella Types" category with their "Scamorza" variety.

The Massachusetts winners are members of the MA Cheese Guild which has 23 professional artisan cheese maker members featuring over 100 products. To find out where to purchase Massachusetts artisan cheeses or to visit cheese makers, go to <http://macheeseguild.org/buy-from-the-farm-and-online/>.

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New England Made Giftware & Specialty Food Show Seeks Vendors

The New England Made Giftware & Specialty Food Show (September 13-14, 2015), Sturbridge Host Hotel, Sturbridge, Massachusetts

Calling all exhibitors: The New England Made Giftware & Specialty Food Show is a juried, wholesale show featuring unique, quality New England Made products such as home decor, pottery, apparel, jewelry, accessories, toys & games, candles, books, cards & prints, glassware, personal care products, candy, nuts, spices, sauces, gourmet mixes, and other specialty food items. Is your company eligible to exhibit at the New England Made shows? If you can say "yes" to all the items listed under "Eligibility", send in your application form today!

Eligibility Requirements:

- You must be a New England (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island) manufacturer or sales representative of giftware, home furnishings or specialty food product(s) made in New England.
- Manufacturing must be done primarily in New England.
- Preference will be given to products of original design demonstrating creativity, skill, and quality.
- A proven track record to conduct wholesale business sales.
- If new to wholesale market, company is highly recommended to meet with Small Business Development Center (SBDC) counselor (free of charge) for an evaluation to assess readiness to do the show (read more on SBDCs). Companies with little wholesale experience may also be recommended to be evaluated by a SBDC

For more information: www.nemadeshows.com/register/buyer-dashboard/ or email stefa@nemadeshows.com.

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Exhibitor Opportunities at the Big E MA Building

September 24 - Massachusetts Day

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) in collaboration with the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism (MOTT) invites Massachusetts based organizations and businesses (including

individuals) to participate in the annual event "Massachusetts Day" to be held Thursday, September 24 from 9am – 7pm on the Massachusetts Building grounds located on the Avenue of States at the Eastern States Exposition, West Springfield, Massachusetts. Participants' passes for entrance into the Fair and fairgrounds will be given once participation application is received and approved MOTT will assign a specific time and/or space allocation to approved participants. Rain or shine the Day goes on. Deadline for applications is August 21, 2015. [Click here for application.](#)

October 2 - Harvest New England Day

You are invited to sample and sell on the front lawn of the Massachusetts Building as part of the 'Harvest New England Day" at the Big E for food and agricultural businesses made or grown in Massachusetts. This event is a great opportunity to get product feedback and increase awareness about your product to a large audience from all over New England. [Click here for application.](#)

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Greylock Mill in North Adams Seeks New Businesses

Greylock Mill is poised to become a transformative economic development project in northern Berkshire County.

Set across more than 200,000 sq. ft, the Mill will house craft food entrepreneurs, an incubator kitchen, cheese aging cellars, and a year round roof farm. The development will also include hospitality and residential accommodations, along with a cultural venue that reflects its central location between Mass MoCA and the Clark. Local food will be the catalyst!

Connect with Greylock Mill: Looking for all producers working with food in the region! If you are a Cider Maker, Brewer or Distiller consider future plans with the Mill to create a bottling facility to serve the region. Greylock Mill is also looking to partner with a cider making entity, groups or individuals to add infrastructure and to promote, support, and celebrate New England orchards and fruit growers. Please contact Liz Stretch, liz@latentnyc.com.

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Upcoming Events / Workshops

- **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
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Regenerative Organics." [Full workshop program here.](#)

- **August 17 - Professional Development Soil Health Workshop Series:** Soil Tests for New England and interpreting them for Phosphorous Management - MDAR Amherst Office, Slobody Building, 3:00 – 5:00 pm. [See more at here.](#)
- **August 17 – SEMAP Twilight Workshop** - Informative tour at Running Brook Vineyards in Dartmouth. Start off with a tasting of four different wines, followed by a great discussion by Pedro Teixeira on how grapes are grown and how the wine is made. [Details here.](#)
- **August 19 - MNLA Plant Geek Day** – 7:30 am – 3:00 pm – The Historic Wakefield Estate and Arboretum, Milton, MA - Plant Geek Day is about Knowledge, Networking & Fun! Back by popular demand, this expanded MCH day is for sharing a great educational opportunity with all nursery and landscape professionals within the industry. [More here.](#)
- **August 20 - 2015 Research & Demonstration Field Day** - NEFCON Research Farm / Apex Orchards, 153 Peckville Rd., Shelburne – 9 - 2 pm New England Fruit Consultants in collaboration with Apex Orchards will present the results of this year's field trials with various crop protection materials, growth regulators and other products that play an important role in crop production in New England. Pesticide license recertification credits (3.0) are available for attending the meeting. - Program (3 pesticide re-certification credits) Speaking program includes; Update on the Recent Fire Blight Epidemics and Future Implications, Effective Management of Apple Maggot with Currently Available Tools, Dealing Effectively and Constructively with Public Concerns about Pesticide Use at Farmer's Markets and PYO Operations, Flyspeck and Sooty Blotch: Late-season Control Strategies, Mr. Glenn Morin. If planning to attend, please R.S.V.P. by phone or email by Monday August 17th, 413-367-9578, TUnefcon@aol.com.
- **September 17 - Know the Soil, Know the Land** - 9:00 am – 4:00 pm, Heifer Farm, Rutland, MA - First-ever Massachusetts soil conference - Understanding soils is critical to conservation and land use planning that supports sustainable agriculture, forestry and greener urban, suburban and rural communities. This one-day conference will focus on soil information resources available through the USDA Soil Survey. The day will include classroom workshops and field demonstrations. Who should attend? Natural resource management and environmental protection professionals; agricultural commission and conservation commission members; farmers and other land owners and managers will all benefit from this worthwhile event! This training has been approved for up to seven training contact hours (TCH) for Soil Evaluator (SE) renewal under the Massachusetts Title 5 program. A certificate of completion will be provided to all participants. Sponsored by: the USDA NRCS, MA Assoc. of Conservation Districts and the Worcester County Conservation District. Visit: <http://worcesterconservation.org/massachusetts-soils-conference-47.html> or contact: Lisa Trotto, Worcester County Conservation District, 508-829-0168 ext. 5, Lisa.Trotto@ma.usda.gov.

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

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2016 USDA Dairy Margin Protection Program Enrollment Ends September 30th

Dairy Farmers have until September 30th to enroll in USDA's Dairy Margin Protection Program (Dairy-MPP) for 2016 coverage. Dairy-MPP is a voluntary program established by the 2014 Farm Bill that is designed to provide dairy farmers with a safety net when the margin – the difference between the price of milk and feed costs – falls below the coverage level selected by the farmer. Participation in the program allows dairy farmers to select coverage levels specific to their farm's needs. USDA offers online resources to help dairy farmers decide which level of coverage is best for them based on historic data and estimated future price projections. For more information, please visit <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=2015/06/0191.xml>.

Dairy Livestock Gross Margin (LGM) - (not available if producer enrolled in MPP)

LGM is a Risk Management Agency (RMA) product sold by private crop insurance agents that provides protection against loss of gross margin (market value of milk minus feed costs) on milk produced from dairy cows. LGM-Dairy uses the Chicago Mercantile Exchange Group futures prices for corn, soybean meal, and class III milk to determine the expected gross margin and the actual gross margin.

The insurance period contains the 11 months following sales closing. For example, the insurance period for the January 29 sales closing date contains the months of February through December. However, coverage begins in the second month of the insurance period, so the coverage period for this example is the months of March through December.

LGM Dairy is sold on the last business Friday of each month. Sales start after the close of markets and last until 8:00PM CST the following day.

All multi-peril crop insurance policies are available from private insurance agents. A list of agents is available on the RMA website at: <http://prodwebnlb.rma.usda.gov/apps/AgentLocator/#/>

Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for Shellfish Growers

The sales closing date for the 2016 NAP is Sept 1, 2015. NAP is administered by your local USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) office. The 2014 Farm Bill made several significant changes to the NAP program providing shellfish growers with several options to help them develop their risk management plan. The old NAP provided insurance coverage at 50% of your inventory at 55% of the establish price. The new NAP provides coverage levels of 50%, 55%, 60% or 65% and price coverage of 55% or 100%. The basic level of coverage (50% at 55% price) only requires the grower to pay a \$250 administrative fee at sign up. Growers, that purchase buy coverage, are required to pay the \$250 administrative fee plus 5.25% of the coverage liability. The payment limitation for NAP is \$125,000 so the maximum premium is \$6562.50 (\$125,000 X 5.25%). The Farm Bill also includes provision to make NAP more affordable [for beginning, limited resource and historically underserved farmers](#). FSA will waive the administrative fee and reduce the premiums by 50% for these farmers. For more information growers are encouraged to call or visit your [local FSA office](#).

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Classified / Briefs / Job Opportunities

- **MDAR: Director**, Division of Crop and Pest Services - Please find additional information on this position @ https://jobs.hrd.state.ma.us/recruit/public/3111/job/job_view.do?postingId=J49323. For State Reclamation Board positions, [click here](#).

- **MDAR: Animal Health and Dairy Inspector**, Division of Animal Health - [details here.](#)
- **ShareMySpace** offers helps venues connect with people who are looking for the perfect place to host their event. farms, farmers' markets and venues an exclusive deal. List your location on ShareMySpace.com for free through 2016 and get booked for special events. Participation in this offer would normally be valued at \$999. Offer expires August 31, 2015. To list your location, go to [ShareMySpace.com](#) and click on Add Your Spaces. Questions, call at (855) 5 SPACES.
- **Farmers Dinner seeks local sources** - [Farmers Dinner](#) brings the farm to the city by working together with farmers, chefs and customers to enjoy really good food while telling stories of life on the farm. They are hosting their first Massachusetts event in Boston on September 20th and are looking to source from local farms throughout the state. If your farm would be interested in selling products for this event and future events, please contact Keith Sarasin at info@thefarmersdinner.com, or 603-913-9854.
- **Sweetfern (Comptonia peregrina)** an excellent choice for naturalizing and mass plantings in sites where "normal" landscape plants tend to perform poorly, like parking lots and along roadways. Its solid root system holds the soil effectively, helps prevent erosion on steep slopes/bankings, thriving in impoverished soils and tolerating conditions other plants cannot. Hundreds now available in #1 (6") pots, ready to plant, \$19.95 each. Call Wayne at 508-962-1857, email: waynem@westonnurseries.com and ask about quantity rates.

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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.