



New Program Provides Technical Training and Cash Benefits to Massachusetts Lobstermen

Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Sea Grant College Program and Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association recently filed a petition under the USDA Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program on behalf of the Commonwealth's lobster industry. Evidence was provided to support the claim that prices and production of American lobster in Massachusetts were negatively affected by foreign imports in 2009. On September 24, 2010, that petition was certified, paving the way for the Commonwealth's lobstermen to receive benefits through the TAA program.

What is TAA?

The TAA program provides free technical training and cash benefits for eligible farmers and fishermen whose businesses have been adversely impacted by foreign imports. The program is designed to help individuals increase profitability, improve production efficiency, consider marketing opportunities and evaluate alternative enterprises.

What does TAA mean for you?

Eligible individuals may apply for free technical training, business planning and cash benefits of up to \$12,000. Technical training will be offered through a series of informational workshops and free business planning assistance will be provided by professional business consultants.

What do I need to apply?

You must be able to provide documentation that you commercially harvested and sold lobsters in Massachusetts in 2009 and *at least one* other year between 2006 and 2008. In addition, you must certify that your average gross non-fishing income for 2009 did not exceed \$500,000, and that your average adjusted gross fishing income in 2009 did not exceed \$750,000.

How do I receive TAA benefits?

There are four phases for the TAA program:

Phase 1: Attend an orientation workshop that provides an overview of TAA.

Phase 2: Attend a minimum of twelve hours of technical training. Training workshops will generally be 2-3 hours each with a variety of business planning topics to choose from.

Phase 3: Complete a short worksheet about what was learned from the training and how it will be used in the operation business plan. Upon completion participants are qualified to receive up to \$4,000*.

Phase 4: Develop a detailed business plan. A professional business planning consultant will be provided to help develop the business plan. Participation in Phase 4 requires successful completion of the first three phases; however, participation in Phase 4 is not required. Upon completion of Phase 4 participants are qualified to receive up to an additional \$8,000*.

*Payment may be prorated depending on the number of applicants. Applicants will be notified of payment level prior to the initiation of each program phase.

How do I apply?

Individuals must complete an application form and submit it **by December 23, 2010**.

Completing an application does not obligate you to participate in the program. However, if you do not submit your application by the deadline you will not be able to participate. *Please note:* We will be holding informational meetings at which you may apply for the TAA program, so be sure to contact Bill or Madeleine (see information below), if you are interested.

If you are unable to attend a meeting, you may complete an application and submit it to your local USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) office. However, we *highly encourage* you to seek assistance from MLA, MIT Sea Grant or FSA in order to properly complete the application.

Alternates

You may designate an alternate to attend the training workshops. Some workshops will have both the option of taking the technical assistance online or in-person, so families or businesses may want to consider identifying an alternate comfortable with taking online training.

Application form

The application is available online at: <http://www.taaforfarmers.org>, under "Information for Producers of Approved Commodities." Click on "lobster" and then download form 229-1. You may also contact Mass Lobstermen's Association, MIT Sea Grant, or FSA office to obtain an application.

TAA Contacts for Massachusetts:

For information, to obtain an application or assistance with completing one, contact:

Madeleine Hall-Arber

State TAA Contact, MIT Sea Grant
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Bill Adler

Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association
781-545-6984

Farm Service Agency Office Locations:

Essex and Middlesex Counties

Lynn Vozniak
County Executive Director
319 Littleton Rd Ste 205
Westford, Ma 01886-4133
(978) 692-1904 ext 3

Norfolk and Bristol Counties

Julie Viveiros
County Executive Director
Bristol County Farm Service Agency
84 Center St
Dighton, Ma 02715-1229
(508) 669-6621

Plymouth, Barnstable, Nantucket and Dukes Counties

Steve Ward
County Executive Director
Plymouth County Farm Service Agency
15 Cranberry Hwy
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