



August/September Farm & Market Report

8/20/20

COMMISSIONER'S COLUMN

FOREFRONT

- [Energy News](#)
- [Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program](#)
- [The MassGrown Exchange](#)
- [Apiary Program](#)
- [Agricultural Composting Improvement Program \(ACIP\)](#)
- [Massachusetts Introduced Pests Outreach Blog](#)
- [Is Your Horse Protected Against Mosquito-borne Disease?](#)
- [Foreign Animal Disease: Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus in Southwestern US](#)
- [COVID-19 Survey Report](#)
- [Preventive Controls Webinar For Small and Medium Food Processors](#)
- [TickTalk with TickReport](#)
- [2020 Grants and Incentives for Northeast Agriculture](#)
- ["Eat an Oyster, Support a Local Farmer" Video](#)
- [Southeastern Massachusetts Food Hub Survey](#)
- [Organic Cost Share Reimbursement Program Coming Soon](#)
- [Farmers Market Coupon Program Certification for 2020](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS/WORKSHOPS

USDA NEWS

- [Application Period has Opened for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#)
- [Important Reminders for Federal Crop Insurance Policyholders & Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance \(NAP\) Participants](#)

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COMMISSIONER'S COLUMN



Greetings, Mass. Agriculture and all its friends,

There's still so much to discuss.

Last time we mentioned some of the initiatives the Baker-Polito Administration has taken to address food security and the resiliency of the local food system. We'll touch on them in a bit, but I first wanted to inform you all (if you haven't heard about it already) about a new one.

Winton Pitcoff from the [MA Food System Collaborative](#) and I co-chaired the Food Security Task Force's Working Group focused on how best to Reinforce and Redeploy MA Food System Infrastructure. The Working Group's recommendations included establishment of the Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program and additional funding of the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP).

Another of the Working Group's recommendations has now also been implemented to support the local food system: Centralize Food System Market Connection and Distribution Channels to Increase Access. On August 10th, Lt. Governor Polito joined Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Theoharides and me for the virtual launch event of the new [MassGrown Exchange](#).

What is it? It's a simple free online tool to make business to business connections within the local food system. If you're selling or buying food, looking for or offering processing, warehousing, refrigeration, freezing or similar services, this site will help you with that.

We worked closely with Department of Fish and Game Commissioner Ron Amidon's team at the Division of Marine Fisheries to make sure the Exchange was designed to support the fishery element of local food along with the ag sector.

No registration is required to browse the site; a simple onetime registration is necessary if you want to post anything. There are lots of helpful features: all postings will automatically expire at a date selected by the poster (it can be extended), one is automatically notified if there are certain items you wish to search on an ongoing basis, there's even a training video.

There are similar platforms out there, but as our team reviewed them, they noticed deficiencies in them and suggested to me that they could build something better. They did.

Our Agricultural Markets Division led by Mary Jordan took the lead on this project. I want to recognize the group effort, but also give a shout out to the project's leads: Rebecca Davidson (Training and Education) and Rick LeBlanc (Marketing) from Ag Markets, along with João Tavares (Web Development and Support) from our Agricultural Conservation and Technical Assistance Division.

The Exchange is off to a great start! After only eight days in operation, over fifty businesses/organizations have registered, and there are over one hundred individual postings. Please follow the link in the press release to browse the listings. Once you see the wide range of offerings, I hope you may see something that might help your particular operation, and that you'll consider adding one or more listings of your own.

The Exchange compliments our longstanding [MassGrown Map](#) platform by which consumers can source local product.

To catch up on the Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program (FSIGP), it seems to have been very well received. The [second round of awards were just announced](#) on August 18 and the wide range of awardees is just what was intended. Awards were made to non-profit organizations, farmers, food retailers, school systems, fish dealers, and aquaculturists.

The FSIGP is ongoing with rolling awards; deadline to apply is September 15. To date slightly more than six million dollars of the thirty-six million dollar total has been awarded. Please review the program and consider applying.

Last time I mentioned that another recommendation by the Task Force was to expand the Department of Transitional Assistance's (DTA) Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) that offers SNAP clients an incentive to buy locally grown produce from MA farmers at farmers' markets, farm stands, Community Supported Agriculture farms, and mobile markets. On July 22, the Baker-Polito Administration announced that as a result of five million dollars in additional funding, thirty-nine new vendors were selected based on their ability to respond to the needs of populations and communities most significantly impacted by the pandemic including communities of color and older adults, serve areas designated as food deserts or low-access areas, and reach SNAP client populations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. To insure that one hundred percent of those funds were used for produce purchases, a special "lane" of the FSIGP was established to assist with funding the equipment needed to become a HIP vendor.

I have frequently mentioned our membership in the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) and how increasingly important I have found that membership to be. NASDA's advocacy on behalf of the states with federal partners greatly benefits agriculture in the Commonwealth. I've had the opportunity to serve a year on its Board of Directors, and have served on various committees and workgroups. I currently serve as Vice Chair of NASDA's Food System and Nutrition Committee in which Deputy Commissioner Ashley Randle and I work closely with the Committee Chair, California Secretary of Food and Agriculture Karen Ross and her team.

The highlight of the year is the Annual Meeting usually held in September. I've had the opportunity to attend annual meetings in Honolulu, Hawaii; Omaha, Nebraska; New Orleans, Louisiana; Hartford, Connecticut; and Albuquerque, New Mexico; this year was scheduled for a state where I've never been: North Dakota.

Well, COVID took care of that. We now will be meeting virtually. However, in this virtual meeting, much more MDAR staff can participate. I am hopeful that what we lose by not meeting physically will be offset by the ability of many more of our team to participate.

I've managed to go out on the road a few times this summer. In honor of *Farmers' Market Week* in MA, [I read Governor Baker's Proclamation](#) at my hometown (Shrewsbury) market and at the Newton market. In Newton, Mayor Ruthanne Fuller, along other local dignitaries and I honored longtime manager Judy Dore for her forty-one years of service.

We've managed to do a couple socially distant farm tours. [Berkshire Grown](#) hosted Ashley and me at Full Well Farms (vegetables) in Adams and High Lawn Farm (dairy) in Lee. [SEMAP](#) arranged tours for us at Spring Rain Farm/Old Earth Orchards, Taunton (cranberries, produce, livestock, tree fruits); Elliot Farm, Lakeville (produce); New Bedford Community Boating Center (aquaculture education for young people); and Coastal Foodshed's (New Bedford) brand new distribution center.

Boy, it was great to get out into the field! Normally this time of year we are out straight with farm tours and fairs, and we all enjoy that very much. Unfortunately this year, we have less opportunities and more logistical hurdles, but I still find getting out to be one of the best ways to interact directly with farmers and get a real sense of what's happening in the ag space.

One of MDAR's major programs is its [Pesticide Program](#). One of its key components is conducting licensing exams for applicators. This has been the traditional physical gathering (at a function hall, school, or similar location) at which large numbers of people take the exam with Pesticide Program staff serving as proctors.

Well, COVID threw a big monkey wrench into that process. Fortunately, these exams are for individuals who need to initially pass the core or certain specialty exams. Those already licensed applicators maintain their status by accumulating continuing education credits. Though we do have several thousand licensed applicators in MA at present (numbers very similar to last year's), annually there's a big ramp up in late winter/spring as the need for additional applicators increases for the growing season.

Physical exams in the COVID environment were greatly affected by restrictions relative to size of crowds, concern for safety of applicants and staff, and venue availability.

We started with parking lot exams at which test takers took the exam from their vehicles; this was not a wholly effective method. We now offer exams at a venue that has a large outdoor tent which is a much better method, but we are still limited by the number of people who can gather. We are offering these exams on a weekly basis, as the Pesticide Program staff that serve as proctors have many other responsibilities they must address as part of their responsibilities.

One might ask in the 21st century why we aren't conducting these exams online. That's the goal but it has needed more than a little work. With a lot of help on our behalf from NASDA, EPA recently issued new guidance that opens the door to online pesticide examinations, eliminating the need for physical proctors. (Don't worry, the online options account for proctoring.)

We issued an RFP and identified a potential vendor; we are now trying to get its and the Commonwealth's IT systems to integrate. (I don't exactly know what that means, but it's not easy and it's taking time.)

We continue to brainstorm best stopgap methods, but the online platform is the way to go, and we are getting closer!

Since COVID has so changed how we interact and how certain news spreads, I find it appropriate to inform you of items that may interest us more as a community than as an industry.

So sadly, I must inform you of the passing of Doug McMillan of Cherry Hill Dairy Farm in Lunenburg, who died August 7th. I had gotten to know Doug and Marilyn a little bit as Commissioner. I last saw them at a fundraising event for them at Hollis Hills Farm in Fitchburg following a silo collapse at Cherry Hill. The turnout was extremely impressive as so many friends of the farm turned out, but even more impressive was Marilyn and Doug's can-do attitude about how they'd meet that new challenge. You may view Doug's obituary [here](#).

In closing, I want to congratulate MA Ag for stepping it up and putting its best face forward to address COVID despite its many challenges. Our residents are looking for security in their lives more than ever, and so many have realized that a local supply of ag products provides them that. Keep it up, everyone! This is a long marathon; more people than ever are counting on you!

MDAR aims to support you by remaining committed to its mission to help keep the Massachusetts' food supply safe and secure, and to work to keep Massachusetts agriculture economically and environmentally sound. We greatly appreciate your suggestions, comments, and criticisms about how we are and should be accomplishing that during these unprecedented times.

Stay safe, be well,



John Lebeaux

[Top](#)

FOREFRONT

Energy News

[MDAR's New Climate Smart Agriculture Program \(CSAP\)](#)

MDAR was pleased to receive a tremendous response of FY2021 CSAP applications as follows:

Section I: ACRE & AEEP	52 Applications	\$1,461,144 Requested
Section II: ENER	38 Applications	\$1,387,613 Requested
Totals:	90 Applicants	\$2,848,757 Requested

All applications are currently in the due diligence and review process, working toward finalizing a list of awardees.

[MDAR's MA Farm Energy Program \(MFEP\) - Energy Audits - Technical Assistance – Be Prepared: Energy Grant Season A-Coming](#)

Remember MDAR's Massachusetts Farm Energy Program (MFEP) has funds to help farms cover audits, energy efficient projects, and select renewable energy projects. We are still providing these services remotely.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Now is the time to have a technical assessment completed for any energy project you are considering in preparation for upcoming energy grants! You will need a technical assessment to file an energy grant application whether with MDAR or USDA. So start planning now; if you wait until applications come out you may not be able to have one scheduled in time! Remember MFEP pays 75% of the technical assessment, first come, first served. Our MFEP is providing tele-assessments during this trying time.

Contact MFEP now for more information through the Center for EcoTechnology (CET), our partner carrying out the MFEP. 413-727-3090, info@massfarmenergy.com, or visit www.massfarmenergy.com, submit a *Request Form*, and then you will be contacted.

[Top](#)

Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program

The Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) is accepting online applications for The Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program (FSIG) on a rolling basis now through **September 15, 2020**. The [Request for Responses \(RFR\)](#) for project proposals through its new Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program to ensure that



individuals and families throughout the Commonwealth have access to fresh, local food. The goal is to address the food system infrastructure gaps, based upon recommendations from the Food Security Task Force.

Eligible proposals include, but are not limited to, projects seeking to:

- Increase capacity for food direct delivery;
- Increase capacity of food banks and food pantries;
- Increase capacity of local food distribution partners;
- Offer innovative solutions to enable those receiving SNAP and WIC benefits to receive food more easily;
- Offer innovative solutions for urban farming and;
- Help farms, retailers, fisheries and other food system businesses adapt to the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to allow them to provide greater access to local food.

To find out more about the **Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program**, please use the following link: www.mass.gov/service-details/food-security-infrastructure-grant-program.

The MassGrown Exchange

The MDAR, in collaboration with the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF), is excited to present the MassGrown Exchange, a new online platform that facilitates business-to-business connections within our local food system.

The MassGrown Exchange platform is a tool for businesses looking to sell, donate or purchase Massachusetts crops, seafood, products and services, which includes:

- Farmers, fishers, value added producers with wholesale products to sell to restaurants, grocery stores, and other outlets.
- Buyers (including supermarkets, institutions, schools, food banks, restaurants, and retail outlets) looking for local food products.
- Farmers, fishers, specialty food producers searching for equipment or services, such as storage, distribution.
- Service and equipment providers working with businesses in the food system.

Key features:

- **Simple registration process:** Buyers and suppliers are only required to register when adding a listing. Registration is not required to browse listings.
- **Business can act as buyer and supplier:** a business can act as a buyer and a supplier, depending on whether they are looking for, or looking to provide a product or service.
- **User notifications:** This feature eliminates the need for businesses to re-visit the site to check for new listings. If a business creates a listing or alert, the system automatically notifies a business when the product/service becomes available.
- **Automatic Listing Expiration:** Listings expire after an end date specified by the user. A notification is sent with the option to remove or extend the listing.

We invite you to visit the [MassGrown Exchange webpage](#), which includes a short [video tutorial](#). For more information or questions, contact Richard.LeBlanc@mass.gov, or Mary.Jordan@mass.gov. For technical issues, contact Joao.Tavares@mass.gov.

Apiary Program

The Apiary Team is now performing routine health inspections, but only under conditions that minimize risk of COVID-19. To learn more and request an inspection, [click here](#).

The September and October 2020 State Apiary Educational Events are now canceled. We look forward to seeing everyone in 2021! www.mass.gov/service-details/mdar-state-apiaries

Note the NEW Apiary Program Message Line phone number: 508-281-6784. This will replace the existing message line number: 617-626-1801.

Get the New England Honey Bee Update by joining New England states Apiary Inspectors of America members to learn about the latest regional seasonal activity, Coronavirus (COVID-19), and honey bee health updates for our area on **Friday, September 18, 2020: 2:00pm-4:00pm ET**. Come prepared with questions to ask the inspectors. Join Zoom Meeting <https://umass-amherst.zoom.us/j/97016701631?pwd=cXhNNHd0eGlsTmQrV2hPOTk2cjdmUT09> Meeting ID: 970 1670 1631; Passcode: 774258, One tap mobile: +13126266799,,97016701631# US (Chicago)

Seeking Compensation for Colony Losses? Check out the recently updated [USDA ELAP \(Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees and Farm-Raised Fish Program\)](#) that provides financial support. Contact your [local FSA office](#) to get more information.

The USDA-ARS Beltsville Bee Lab is working in a limited capacity and now accepting only brood swab samples. Check [website](#) to get information about submissions.

[Apiary Program link here](#). Questions, bees@mass.gov.

[Top](#)

Agricultural Composting Improvement Program (ACIP)

MDAR has issued a Request for Response to the [Agricultural Composting Improvement Program \(ACIP\)](#) for Fiscal Year 2021. This grant program is intended to provide funding to MDAR Registered Agricultural Composters, and other eligible composters (see RFR for eligibility requirements) for equipment and projects which will enhance the overall management of their composting operation, and facilitate agricultural use of compost.

[COMMBUYS link](#). The deadline for response is September 30, 2020 at 4:00 PM. **All applications must be sent by email** to Dorothy.Du@mass.gov.

Massachusetts Introduced Pests Outreach Blog



Follow our [Massachusetts Introduced Pests Outreach Blog](#) for updates on invasive insects in the state and suggestions for at-home activities to stay connected to nature.

August is Tree Check Month!

It's August, and that means it's Tree Check Month! Every year, USDA APHIS PPQ recommends August as a good time to go outside and check trees for signs of invasive insects. In Massachusetts, that means keeping your eye out for Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) and emerald ash borer (EAB), especially. These insects are active right now and are voracious pests of hardwood trees. [More here.](#)

ALB is Active Again!

Asian longhorned beetle (*Anoplophora glabripennis*, "ALB") has once again begun its yearly process of emerging from the trees as fully-developed adult beetles. These wood-boring pests spend much of their life as larvae, developing inside living maple, birch, and other hardwood trees and eating away at the tree's interior, which ultimately leads to tree death. [More here.](#)

Emerald Ash Borer Updates

As of July 2020, emerald ash borer has been confirmed in the following new towns: Essex County: Beverly Topsfield West Newbury Hampshire County: Pelham Middlesex County: Carlisle Hopkinton Natick Norfolk County: Bellingham Worcester County: Mendon Millville Shrewsbury Uxbridge West Brookfield This brings the total number of municipalities in Massachusetts with confirmed populations of emerald ash borer. [Details here.](#)

[Top](#)

Is Your Horse Protected Against Mosquito-borne Disease?

[Eastern Equine Encephalitis \(EEE\)](#) is spread by mosquitos and causes fatal neurologic disease in horses. In 2019, EEE led to the death of eight horses in Mass. EEE has historically been found in Bristol and Plymouth counties. In 2019, cases occurred in Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Worcester counties and surrounding states. This means all of Massachusetts is at risk.

There is an effective vaccine. Call your veterinarian to schedule this life-saving vaccination.

Can't afford this life-saving vaccine? MDAR is partnering with local veterinarians to offer discounted EEE vaccination for equine owners with financial need. Ask your veterinarian for more information.

Reduce mosquito habitat by removing items that collect water and by cleaning bird baths and water troughs at least twice weekly.

[Click here](#) for video. For updates and to learn more, [click here](#). Protect your horse! #EEEVaccinateMA

Foreign Animal Disease: Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus in Southwestern US

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus Serotype 2 (RHDV2, Rabbit Calicivirus) was identified in New Mexico and New York in March 2020. Since that time, the virus has been found in wild and domestic rabbits in Arizona, California,

Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, Utah, and northern Mexico; in domestic rabbits in Nevada, and feral domestic rabbits in Colorado and Utah. RHDV2 affects rabbit species and does not impact the health of humans or other animals. At this time the virus has not been identified in Massachusetts and the outbreak in New York has been contained. For an updated map of reported RHDV2 outbreak locations, please visit www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/maps/animal-health/rhd.

Rabbits infected with RHDV2 may develop fever, lethargy, and respiratory or neurologic abnormalities, but most often, the rabbit is found dead, sometimes with blood around the nose. Rabbits become infected through contact with sick rabbits or infective feces or urine. Clothing and footwear contaminated with virus from wild rabbits can be brought inside and infect house rabbits.

To protect domestic rabbits, they should be kept indoors and not exposed to other rabbits. It is recommended that caretakers change out of their “street clothes” when handling their rabbits. Animals that go outdoors should not have access to rabbit areas. For many reasons, domestic rabbits should never be abandoned outside or released into the wild. In this case, release of an infected domestic rabbit could be a source of infection for wild populations.

Again, RHDV2 has not been found in wild or domestic rabbits in New England. For their own health and safety, humans and domestic animals should avoid contact with all wildlife and carcasses. Finding the occasional rabbit carcass is not cause for concern, as predation is the most common cause of death in wild rabbits. Sightings of multiple dead rabbits with no signs of trauma within several days may be cause for concern and should be reported to the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

For more complete information on biosecurity, disinfection, vaccination, and quarantining new rabbits and those returning to the colony please visit www.mass.gov/service-details/current-animal-disease-updates-for-ma. For information related to wildlife rehabilitation, please contact the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife at 508-389-6300. Suspected cases of RHDV2 must be reported to the MDAR at 617-626-1795 and US Department of Agriculture Veterinary Services at 508-363-2290.

[Top](#)

COVID-19 Survey Report

Earlier this summer, the department conducted a survey among farms to investigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Massachusetts agricultural community. The survey report contains information on farm characteristics, employment, production, produce donations, costs, and support/assistance. The information provides a deeper understanding of the Massachusetts agricultural economy. The department may explore the option for a follow up survey this fall to build on this survey’s knowledge. The department sincerely thanks all who participated in the survey!

[Survey Report here](#). For more information, please contact Senior Economist Myron Inglis: Myron.Inglis@mass.gov.

Preventive Controls Webinar For Small and Medium Food Processors

Is your business a small or medium food processor? If yes, have you ever thought about what food safety laws you should be following, and what the possible consequences are for not doing so? This 1-hour webinar is the

first in a series of three specifically designed for small and medium sized processors affected by the Food Safety Modernization Act's Preventive Controls for Human Foods Rule. The webinar will give you an easy-to-understand overview of the FDA Preventive Controls Rule and will help you learn what it means to be in compliance with these laws. This webinar is the first in a series of opportunities to learn about and receive subsidized training and technical assistance to bring your business into compliance with the Preventive Controls Rule – more details on future programs to come.

The webinar will be held on three separate dates:

- August 20th from 12 pm – 1 pm
- August 27th from 8 am - 9 am
- September 10th from 7 pm – 8 pm

To be eligible for future programming and technical assistance, you must attend one of the above sessions. Register: https://umassamherst.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6QA5XrtoQPyFZ2d. Please contact valueaddedfood@umass.edu for information regarding the series of events.

TickTalk with TickReport

Upcoming webinars with some of the top tick experts - Tune in the 2nd Wednesday of each month at noon

August 12 - Extinction of Deer Ticks in North America

Speaker: Dr. Stephen Rich, Professor of Microbiology, University of Massachusetts Amherst; Director the Laboratory of Medical Zoology

Dr. Stephen Rich will discuss a recent publication in Nature (June 2020) from the Laboratory of Medical Zoology that provides insight to the evolutionary and ecological origin of the primary Lyme disease vectors in North America. [Register here](#).

September 9 - Biology of Ticks and Other Tick-Borne Disease

Speaker: Daniel Sonenshine, Professor Emeritus, Old Dominion University; Laboratory of Malaria and Vector Research, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIH)

Dr. Rich will host Dr. Daniel Sonenshine, preeminent tick biologist who quite literally wrote the book on ticks (Biology of Ticks in two volumes, co-authored with Dr. R. Michael Roe). Dr. Sonenshine's research interest in ticks precedes the discovery of Lyme disease in North America and he is thus uniquely qualified to provide a historical context for this public health challenge.

[Register here](#).

This FREE series is brought to you by the UMass Laboratory of Medical Zoology and UMass Extension.

Preregistration is required to access the webinar. To see more sessions in the fall, or watch recordings of any of the previous webinars, visit <http://ag.umass.edu/landscape/education-events/webinars>.

[Top](#)

2020 Grants and Incentives for Northeast Agriculture

[Farm Credit East](#) has created a report which contains grants and other incentives available in the Northeast states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York and Rhode Island. The listings

include grant programs, tax incentives and loan programs from various funding sources available to agricultural producers and other entities involved in agriculture or related industries. Please note that as grant programs often change, this list should not be viewed as a comprehensive compilation of all grant opportunities.

Please visit [link for Report](#), as well the [grant writing page](#) for more information on Farm Credit East's grant writing services.

“Eat an Oyster, Support a Local Farmer” Video

Like many farm sectors, supply chain disruption from COVID-19 has had dramatic impacts on Massachusetts Shellfish Growers since at least 90% of oysters and 70% of clams are consumed at restaurants. In 2018 the value of the oyster industry was \$27.6 million dollars and hard clams was \$962,000.

To raise awareness of the versatility of Massachusetts oysters including environmental benefits, the [Woods Hole Sea Grant](#), [Cape Cod Cooperative Extension](#) and the [Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute](#) developed a [consumer video](#). The message is to encourage sales of Massachusetts shellfish to support these local farmers with oyster purchased from seafood markets, supermarkets, and wholesale dealers. A shucking demonstration is also included, though baked or grilled oysters open on their own and are delicious.

Information on MDAR's [Aquaculture Program here](#). Aquaculture farms that sell direct to the public, [click here](#).

Southeastern Massachusetts Food Hub Survey

This survey is a component of a food system assessment for southeastern Massachusetts led by the [Marion Institute](#) and [Coastal Foodshed](#) with key partners like [SEMAP](#). There are seven short sections (including this one and the thank you page) and the entire survey should take just 5 minutes or less to complete.

The USDA defines a regional food hub as "a business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified food products primarily from local and regional producers to strengthen their ability to satisfy wholesale, retail, and institutional demand." Examples of existing food hubs across New England include Worcester Regional Food Hub (MA), Fresh Start Farms (ME), Farm Fresh Rhode Island (RI), Food Connects (VT), Kearsarge Food Hub (NH), Northwest Connecticut Regional Food Hub (CT), and others.

The following questions are presented as part of an information gathering process to determine current supply chain and market challenges food producers and buyers face, as well as potential solutions a food hub based in Southeastern Massachusetts could provide to the community. We appreciate your participation in this research. If anything feels sensitive to share, trust that all data will be held in confidence and only presented in aggregate.

Survey link here: <https://bit.ly/SoutheasternMA-FoodHubFarmerSurvey>

Organic Cost Share Reimbursement Program Coming Soon

MDAR is currently applying for USDA Organic Cost Share funds to reimburse Massachusetts certified organic farmers and food processors. The program includes a new major change - applicants will now receive up to 50% (\$500 dollars maximum) reimbursement of total certification cost. Through the USDA Farm Service Agency, funds

are available to farms and food companies that are inspected and certified and/or inspected and receiving renewal of certification.

Details and application will be available later in the Fall (late September or early October) at www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-the-organic-certification-cost-share-program. Reimbursements will be available on a first come, first served basis until funds are fully expended. Organic growers may also seek their reimbursement through their local FSA office (only one reimbursement request will be accepted, through either MDAR or FSA, not both). If you have any questions, please contact Keri Cornman, Keri.Cornman@mass.gov.

Farmers Market Coupon Program Certification for 2020

The farmers market season is well underway and MDAR encourages those that have not signed up for either the re-certification or to be certified as a new participant to review the [Guidelines for Farmers and Market Managers](#). Any questions pertaining to Coupon Certification, please contact Katie Rozenas: Katelyn.Rozenas@mass.gov.

[Top](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS/WORKSHOPS

- **August 27** - [Using Biological Control and Pesticides Together to Manage Greenhouse Insect and Mite Pests: Can it be Done?](#) Lunchtime Webinar - Dr. Raymond Cloyd, Professor of Entomology and Extension Specialist, Kansas State University will discuss the fundamentals of integrating pesticides (insecticides, miticides, and fungicides) with biological control agents (parasitoids and predators) to mitigate problems with insect and mite pests. He will discuss the direct and indirect effects of pesticides on biological control agents and provide examples of situations where both pest management strategies may be integrated. Webinar is free of charge for all attendees thanks to gracious financial support from the MA Flower Growers Association. To register, [visit here](#). Questions: Geoffrey Njue at [gnjue@umass.edu](mailto:gjnue@umass.edu) or Jason Lanier at jdl@umass.edu.
- **August 30** – [Explore Farming](#) – New Entry - 10:00 am-12:00 pm. This is a free two hour workshop designed to help you identify what actions you will need to take towards a career in farming. This workshop is offered several times a year, and we will host this workshop online for the time being. As the day of the workshop approaches, people who register (below) will get an email with a link to the online meeting. [Learn more here](#).

Agricultural Water Twilight Series - The UMass Extension Vegetable Program is offering a series of online twilight meetings all about water! We will welcome extension specialists and farmers from Massachusetts and beyond to cover a range of water-related topics. All from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm. [Details here](#).

- [September 16](#) - Water Use Regulations, Water Monitoring Tools, and Efficient Irrigation
- [September 23](#) - Irrigation water sources, mapping and inspecting water distribution systems, and water testing for FSMA
- [September 30](#) - Post-harvest water quality and sanitizer use

USDA News

Application Period has Opened for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) invites potential conservation partners to submit project applications for federal funding through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). NRCS will award up to \$360 million dollars nationwide to locally driven, public-private partnerships that improve water quality, combat drought, enhance soil health, support wildlife habitat and protect agricultural viability.

This funding announcement introduces a new [RCPP Critical Conservation Area](#) (CCA): Northeast Forests and Waters. This CCA's priority natural resource concerns include water quality; wildlife habitat; and degraded plant condition on farm and forest land. The boundaries of the CCA encompass Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont, as well as the Long Island Sound. NRCS requested public comment on the (CCA) and their associated priority resource concerns as part of a review allowed by the Farm Bill once every five years CCA changes that resulted from the review.

USDA is now accepting proposals for RCPP through the RCPP portal. Proposals are due by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on November 4, 2020. For more information, view the [Application for Program Funding on grants.gov](#). A webinar with general program information for RCPP applicants is scheduled for 3:00 pm Eastern Time on Aug 27, 2020. Visit the [RCPP website](#) for information on how to participate. [Press release here.](#)

Important Reminders for Federal Crop Insurance Policyholders & Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance (NAP) Participants

Loss Reporting: 2020 has presented farmers with challenging weather conditions and producers covered by a Federal Crop Insurance policy are reminded to monitor their crops for insurable damage throughout the growing season. If you notice damage, contact your crop insurance agent within 72 hours of discovery, 15 days before harvesting begins and within 15 days after harvesting is completed on the insurance unit. Three other important reminders:

- Check with your Federal Crop Insurance agent to review any prevented planting options.
- Direct marketed crops must have a yield appraisal before harvest, if a loss is anticipated.
- **Do not destroy** any crop evidence needed to support your claim without clear direction in writing from the insurance adjuster.

Producers having NAP coverage have similar loss reporting requirements and should contact their local FSA Office to report losses and review any prevented planting options.

Remember, if ever in doubt about filing a notice of loss, always contact your agent or FSA!

Losses on Crops Not Insured under Federal Crop Insurance nor Covered under NAP or Physical Losses: Even if you suffer losses on noninsured crops or crops not covered by NAP or physical losses such as building, equipment, etc., you should still notify your local FSA Office about the loss(es). FSA is responsible for monitoring crop conditions for disaster designation purposes and also may have other programs that could provide assistance. UMass Extension works in partnership with the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture and the Northeast Extension Risk Management Education Center to educate Massachusetts producers about Federal Crop Insurance and USDA Disaster Assistance Programs. For more information, please contact UMass Risk Management Specialists Paul Russell at pmrussell@umass.edu or Tom Smiarowski at tsmiarowski@umass.edu.

Classified

- **Farmers Markets Seek Vendors** - MDAR posts an updated list of farmers markets looking for vendors [here](#). The contacts for markets are posted [here](#). *MassGrown* statewide map of farmers markets [here](#).
- **High Tech Hydroponic Greenhouse for Sale**: in Merrimack Valley of MA. Call Bill at 978-852-1456 for details and to arrange a visit.
- **Job Posting**: NOFA/Mass seeks part-time Public Relations Coordinator to join decentralized, remote team. PR Coordinator to manage social media strategy, earned media placement, and outreach efforts. [Details here](#).
- **Seeking Sustainable Farmer for Long-term Lease of North Shore Farm** - Essex County Greenbelt Association is seeking a farmer to enter into a long-term ground lease agreement on a 60-acre farm (20ac tillable) in Hamilton & Topsfield, Massachusetts. High-visibility location, adjacent to the Ipswich River; strong preference for sustainable growing practices and applicants without secure farmland access. RFP Due Sept. 15, 2020. For details and RFP, see www.ecga.org/GreenMeadowsFarmRFP.
- **For Sale: Tree spades** - two red boss tree spades, very little use on small nursery, 38" three blade asking \$9500; 48" four blades- dug less the 100 trees asking \$13500; for pictures and additional information contact psweet1@roadrunner.com.
- **Climate Adaptation Fellowship Opportunity** - Farmers & farmer advisors: The Climate Adaptation Fellowship is a SARE-funded program run by a consortium of universities to provide training on climate adaptation for farmers and farmer advisors. Short [webinar](#) with details. Applications due October 1. Details and application [link here](#).
- **Meatworks** - Designed with the highest animal welfare and humane handling standards in mind, Meatworks is a state of the art slaughter facility available to small-scale livestock producers in Southern New England. Committed to working with local farms to keep a steady supply of fresh, sustainably raised meats available to our communities, at reasonable prices. Please book your processing date today by calling 774-319-5616. For more information, visit www.meatworkswestport.com.
- **Agricultural Excavation – Grading Services** - Provide earth moving, drainage, land/pasture reclamation, greenhouse preparation, rock raking services and stump grinding. Includes but not limited to orchards/equine facilities/cranberry bogs/nurseries. Feed hay also available. Chris Merrill Excavating - merrilltrucks@comcast.net, 978-897-9977.

About the *Farm & Market Report*

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Complete staff directory [here](#). Next issue to be published in October. Please send news, events, or classified information by October 1st to Richard.LeBlanc@mass.gov. To unsubscribe, or change your email address, contact Richard.LeBlanc@mass.gov.

[COVID-19 Resources for Agriculture](#) [MassGrown: COVID-19: How & Where to Buy Local](#)

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 www.mass.gov/agr.

