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COMMISSIONER'S COLUMN



Greetings, Mass. Agriculture and all its friends,

Though the recent rains are helpful to the water table, within MA Ag there is some sense of irony that so much of it occurred after the bulk of the growing season had ended. It was a tremendously tough season for so many, and I compliment you on all your efforts to mitigate as well as possible. Here's hoping for more moderate patterns

in the future. Please consider MDAR's [Climate Smart Agriculture Program](#) the next time it opens as a means to boost your farm's resiliency.

A big highlight for MDAR since I last wrote was the opportunity to host second in command at USDA, Deputy Secretary Dr. Jewel Bronaugh in MA earlier this week.

Dr. Bronaugh is the former Ag Commissioner in Virginia, and we worked together on some items when we were both members of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA). She previously served as the Virginia State Executive Director for the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), Dean of the College of Agriculture at Virginia State University (VSU), Associate Administrator for Extension Programs, and a 4-H Extension Specialist.

Scott Hannula of Oiva Hannula and Sons, Carver, and the Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Association (CCCGA) kindly provided Dr. Bronaugh with a hands-on cranberry harvest experience during which she and her team donned waders and joined Deputy Commissioner Ashley Sears Randle and me on a Hannula bog where we participated in a wet harvest.

The rest of her very busy visit to MA was centered on one of her focus areas, one which also became more of a focus for USDA by virtue of language in the 2018 Federal Farm Bill: Urban Agriculture.

We showed her three very different aspects of MA Urban Ag. Our first stop was [Commonwealth Kitchen](#), Dorchester which provides shared and co-manufacturing kitchen services to food businesses while promoting use of locally produced ag products.

Next we headed to the Merrimack Valley and visited the greenhouse and Rist Urban Agriculture Farm at UMass Lowell where the University and Mill City Grows have teamed up to create a very robust [operation](#) that offers a Community Supported Agriculture program, community gardens, a rooftop farm and mobile markets. UMass Lowell faculty and students also participate in various research products at the intersection of engineering and agriculture.

Her last stop was the [OASIS on Ballou Farm](#) in Dorchester, where a vacant 20,000 square foot city lot was converted to produce agricultural product and information to the local neighborhood.



At left: USDA Deputy Secretary Dr. Jewel Bronaugh, Boston Mayor Michelle Wu
At right: Apolo Catala, Farm Manager, OASIS on Ballou Farm

Congratulations to Karen Schwalbe who is leaving her position as Executive Director of the Southeastern MA Agricultural Partnership (SEMAP) to become the [new Executive Director of the MA Farm Bureau Federation!](#) I've had the opportunity to work closely with Karen during her time at SEMAP, and based on that experience, I expect that she will continue working effectively on behalf of the board and membership she represents.

As I'm out speaking to various organizations, I continue to flag two issues that are a threat to our agriculture.

The invasive insect [Spotted Lanternfly - *Lycorma delicatula* \(massnrc.org\)](#) (SLF) has been discovered in twelve of our fourteen counties. Active populations have been found in Fitchburg, Shrewsbury, Springfield, and Worcester. This invasive insect feeds on a variety of plants. Ironically, it's most preferred host is another invasive, Ailanthus (Tree of Heaven), but it feeds on a wide range of plants including, grapes, apples, and certain ornamentals.

MDAR's Crop and Pest Division works very closely with USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) on this matter but needs help from both the ag community and the public at large to identify where the insect is.

Through the link provided above, please learn how to identify SLF in all its stages from egg masses to nymphs to adults and report any potential findings so we can track its whereabouts and consider appropriate responses. That link also provides a portal to a wide range of resources relative to SLF.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) is another issue of concern, one about which poultry raisers particularly need to be aware, but about which all of us should have knowledge. Though previously mostly a late winter/early spring event, there have been findings in both domestic and wild fowl this fall in and around MA. All raising poultry are urged to practice strict biosecurity measures. For more information please view [Poultry Program | Mass.gov](#) and [USDA APHIS | Avian Influenza](#).

When I last wrote it was just before our first MA Agriculture Day at the Ballpark event in August at Polar Park in Worcester. I'm happy to report that it wildly exceeded expectations. About 150 attended in our private area on a beautiful summer evening. There was a lot of pleasant socializing; many confessed they had so much fun interacting that they barely watched the game! Those who watched saw a WooSox grand slam and a victory, and beautiful after game fireworks.

I need to mention the "First Pitch Opportunity". We knew this was part of the package and a great opportunity to feature MA Ag to the public. My plan all along was that we get farmers on the field for the ceremony, and we did: Tricia May, Spring Ridge Farm; Roxie Pin, Rockhouse Ridge Farm; Ray Raposa, Hay Ray's Farm and Feed; Dave Shepard, Elm View Farm; Mo Tougas, Tougas Family Farm; and MA legislative Food System Caucus Co-Chair Rep. Hannah Kane all joined me.

Though I really wanted to have farmers on the field to feature our producers, I admit I also had an ulterior motive: I thought we'd all be throwing a ceremonial first pitch simultaneously and that might provide me a little cover if I messed up. I had assumed that we would all be throwing a ball.

About two hours before the game, I finally became aware that though others were welcome on the field with me, there would be only one person throwing a ball, and that would be me! (Gulp.)

Though I'm a huge sports fan, I can't say I have much ability in that area. The best I did in Little League were the minors. I hadn't done any throwing to speak of since my now adult children were kids. I quickly adjourned to

the driveway and started throwing a tennis ball, trying to hit a door with a tennis ball. After about 25 practice throws, my shoulder began to hurt-uh boy!

After arriving at the ballpark and dealing with details of the overall event, it was suddenly time for us to take the field. We made our way to the dugout area and suddenly a gate opened, and we were led to a spot in front of the pitcher's mound.

They made an announcement, someone put a ball in my hand, and told me to throw my pitch ([YouTube video here](#)).

There must have been divine intervention so as not to embarrass MA Ag, because I threw a strike right into the catcher's mitt!!! No one in the ballpark was more surprised than me, and I'm hanging up my glove from now on.

It was a busy summer in the field. I want to particularly mention the Big E. Again over 1.6 million attended. MDAR manages the MA Building on the Avenue of States. Fran Pearson is our Building Manager. It's a big job having the building prepared to properly receive the almost half a million people who visited it, and Fran, the building exhibitors, MDAR staff and volunteers did a fantastic job featuring MA through some of its commercial businesses, non-profit organizations, and state agencies. MDAR's Rick Leblanc very deservedly received the Building Wall of Fame Award!



We were very fortunate to be joined in the building on Massachusetts Day by Governor Charlie Baker, First Lady Lauren Baker, and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito. They spent a great deal of time walking through the building and engaging with attendees and exhibitors.



MDAR received a very special honor this summer. One of the agency's responsibilities is to manage the contracts for the MA Emergency Food Assistance Program (MEFAP). We consider that responsibility to be a privilege. Since 1995 MDAR has managed over \$300 million in appropriations to support the four MA food banks with a portion of those funds directed towards purchase of MassGrown product. Those funds purchased over 325 million meals!



MDAR was honored by the Greater Boston Food Bank which presented its Public Advocate of the Year Award for serving as the primary state agency providing oversight to food bank state funding and its involvement in the COVID-19 Food Security Task Force.

I'll only briefly mention the NASDA Annual Meeting in Saratoga Springs, NY last month as Ashley is covering it in greater detail in her column. My good friend NASDA President and NY Ag

Commissioner Richard Ball and his team organized a fabulous meeting of important meetings discussions and presentations along with some very interesting tours. Having US Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack attend in person is always a treat. NASDA does a fabulous job representing the interests of the state ag departments in DC!

Other summer highlights include:

- Congressman McGovern farm tours in Western and Central MA
- Martha's Vineyard, Hardwick, Heath, Marshfield, Worcester County 4-H, Cummington, Blandford, Three County, Spencer, Franklin County, Sterling, and Topsfield Fairs
- MA Tomato Contest at Boston Public Market
- MDAR Apiary Program Honey Extractions, Danvers and Amherst
- Easthampton Farmers Market
- SEMAP farm tours
- CCCGA Summer Meeting
- W MA Hemp farm tours
- Boston Local Food Festival
- American Farmland Trust Board of Directors Dinner, Sturbridge
- Cranberry Month Proclamation event
- MA Food Systems Collaborative Forum, Sturbridge
- Boston Public Market Harvest Party

I often joke at how I'm torturing Rick by pushing way past his deadline, this time I really am, so I must close.

I expected this to be a long leisurely drafting session where I could mention a few things I've been planning to say while I still have this opportunity, but we remain very busy doing our work and I'm writing this while multi-tasking, so I'll share just one.

Several months ago, I was going through some old photos (not in a computer, but in an album) looking for something related to family, but I found something else. I have no memory of this photo from either 1982 or 83 of my friend since junior high Kevin and me. Nor do I really remember owning this "Massachusetts grown...and fresher!" t-shirt, but I think it proves that I've been training for this job for a very, very long time!



John

John Lebeaux

DEPUTY'S DIALOGUE

The past few months have been filled with fair visits, farmers' markets, and farm tours, as well as annual meetings and conferences. Throughout our travels, it's been a great opportunity to re-connect with ag stakeholders as well as make new connections in the agricultural community, both in Massachusetts and nationally.

Fall foliage is now peaking, as well as one of Massachusetts' most colorful and vibrant crops, cranberries! October is Massachusetts Cranberry Month and the Commissioner and I were able to join the CCCGA team at Federal Furnace Cranberry Company in Carver on October 6th to mark the occasion. As the Commissioner reported in his column, we were also honored to host USDA Deputy Secretary Dr. Jewel Bronaugh and her team earlier this week. As they had not previously visited a cranberry bog, it was an exciting opportunity for them to don the waders and experience the harvest firsthand. Thank you to CCCGA and Scott Hannula for hosting us, and for making it a memorable event for all!

As you may be aware, there has been an exciting announcement regarding leadership changes at one of our prominent state agricultural organizations. I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize and congratulate Karen Schwalbe, who was recently named the next Executive Director at Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation. Karen has served as the Executive Director of the Southeast Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership (SEMAP) for the past seven years and has helped to strengthen relationships and work with farmers and stakeholders to build a more resilient farming community in the region. She brings enthusiasm, a collaborative mindset, and new ideas to the organization. We look forward to her officially starting on November 1st and our work together continuing in this new capacity.

On the programmatic front, we are continuing to develop our mental and wellness program after receiving a \$543,000 grant award through USDA's Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN). We would appreciate your participation in a brief survey that will help inform training development and a mental health toolkit. The survey can be accessed [here](#) and will take less than seven (7) minutes to complete. We appreciate your time and valuable input to make this a truly impactful program for Massachusetts farmers, producers, service providers, and stakeholders.

We are also moving forward with the awarding of grants for the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA) in the next few weeks. We were so pleased to see such a strong response to the RFR and the interest from farms and organizations from across the state. We received 33 proposals totaling over \$18M in funding requests; a very competitive applicant pool and unenviable task for the review team. We were also recently made aware that there will be a future round of funding for the program, with the details and parameters to be released later this fall. Stay tuned for more information.

Regarding a \$250,000 earmark for local food policy councils included in the FY23 budget, we are in the process of finalizing the RFR and anticipate it will be posted by the end of the month. We appreciated the opportunity to learn more about the specific needs of local food policy councils and gain feedback from the MA Food Policy Council at their September meeting. We have taken that input into consideration, thank you.

September was a busy month on several fronts for our MDAR team. The Big E was held September 16-October 2 and was back in full swing after hosting a modified fair last year due to COVID. Overall, the vendors provided favorable feedback in terms of sales and interactions/connections made during the fair. From an MDAR perspective, our fearless Building Manager Fran Pearson once again kept all aspects of the Massachusetts Building in order and resolved any issues as soon as they presented themselves. Quick thinking on your feet (literally!) and problem solving are daily occurrences at the fair. Plus, your step count averages about 15-20,000 steps/day! Thank you to Fran, as well as others from our team, that assisted with building management

and volunteering in the MDAR booth. We know that beyond your daily workload this presents additional and often times, unique, work experiences and challenges. Thank you, Team MDAR!

Following my time at The Big E, the Commissioner and I traveled to the NASDA Annual Meeting in Saratoga Springs, NY. The Commissioner knows that this week is like Christmas and a family reunion all rolled into one for me. I love learning about the latest policy issues and hearing about programs/policy items taking place in other states, while having time to network and reconnect with colleagues from across the country. This year's meeting was particularly focused on the upcoming Farm Bill and setting the organization's priorities for the year ahead. NASDA membership put forth the following Farm Bill recommendations at the meeting: expanding funding for local and regional food processing, water quality improvement incentive programs, increased federal nutrition and food assistance, and reliable natural disaster assistance. The importance of aligning the hunger and nutrition aspects with agriculture and food production will be more important than ever heading into this next Farm Bill.

On September 28th, for the first time in 52 years, the White House Conference on Hunger, Health and Nutrition was held in DC. Congressman Jim McGovern was a tireless champion in bringing the conference to life and providing input to the administration on policy priorities. Coming out of the conference was a [National Strategy](#) that was based on stakeholder input, lived experiences of those facing food insecurity and hunger, and listening sessions leading up to the conference. Several of the recommendations in the plan are based on models we deploy in Massachusetts, including the Healthy Incentives Program (GusNIP) and medically tailored meals. With this framework now laid out, we have to make sure it remains a living, breathing document, and that these recommendations help to inform the next Farm Bill's nutrition components.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the United States is expected to import more agricultural products than it exports next year for the first time ever. This is a stark reality of climate change/weather impacts, a changing landscape of farm owners and types of operations, and global competition in the production space. As we think about how we address these challenges in our state and region, we need to continue to look at what programs and policies continue to work for our current agricultural producers while looking for new, innovative models of production. We can't achieve the goals of the White House Conference on Hunger, Health and Nutrition if we're unable to produce enough food to feed our U.S. consumers.

Following the NASDA Annual Meeting, I traveled to Madison, WI to attend the World Dairy Expo. For those that aren't familiar with the event, it's the largest dairy cattle show in the world and features the National 4-H Dairy Conference, fitting and showmanship contests, youth judging contests, a Global Dairy Forum, and tradeshow. I was invited to officiate the Intercollegiate Dairy Judging Contest for the Guernsey breed, which involves judging two classes and then listening to college students present oral reasons justifying their placings. As a member of the Cornell University judging team in college, I recognize the time and effort that goes into preparing for the competition and loved seeing the students hard work pay off. Beyond connecting with dairy friends new and old, I spent time with Secretary Randy Romanski of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and met members of his team. I first met the Secretary on our travels to the UK in June and enjoyed discussing dairy policy with him. Our discussions have evolved to include all things agriculture and it was great to continue those conversations in my trip to his home state.

October kicked off with Cranberry Month and MA Farm to School Month. It also marked the return of the MA Food System Collaborative Forum in person for the first time since 2019. This yearly event is a chance to engage with stakeholders around topics and issues facing the state's food system and to determine ways in which we can work together to address challenges, develop or identify needed policy changes, and to meet others with shared interests in the space. Topics ranged from land access and preservation, supply chain innovations, inequity in agriculture, farm to school, local food policy councils, and urban agriculture, among other topics. All

of the sessions included thoughtful discussions with the panelists and attendees, and we walked away at the end of the day with our list of action items to carry forward.

Wishing you all a successful end to the fall harvest and a safe, joyful, and locally sourced holiday season ahead.

Locally grown and proud,

Ashley

FOREFRONT

Join Us in Planning Ag Day 2023: Committee Members Sought

After a three-year hiatus, we are excited to start the planning phases for Ag Day 2023! With the State House now open and hosting meetings and events, MDAR would like to secure a date and form a committee to assist with the planning for this special day that highlights all Massachusetts agriculture has to offer. The following dates are being considered:

- April 4th
- April 5th
- April 11th
- April 12th

We would like to hear from you about date preference(s) so we are able to reserve the State House by November 1st. In addition, due to new leadership at several stakeholder organizations, we would like to re-engage the planning committee and determine who is interested in helping to plan the key aspects of this event. The committee is anticipated to start meeting in early November.

If interested in serving on the Ag Day planning committee and/or to share a date preference, please email Phu Mai: Phu.Mai@mass.gov.

We look forward to revitalizing Ag Day at the State House with new energy, faces, and topics to highlight for the legislative delegation. Join us in making this an event to remember!

State Agricultural Officials Ask Growers to Report Sightings of the Invasive Spotted Lanternfly

This past summer Massachusetts discovered new populations of the invasive insect known as the spotted lanternfly (“SLF”) in Shrewsbury, Springfield, and Worcester. This pest attacks a number of agricultural crops, including both grapevines and hops, and other states in the Northeast with large infestations are seeing impacts not only to vineyards, but to any business that does work outdoors, where these large bugs can congregate by the thousands.



We are taking a moment to reach out to grape growers and vintners across the state to alert them about spotted lanternfly and to ask you to take a few minutes today to take these three steps to prevent this pest from threatening your business:

1. Learn to id spotted lanternfly and review a checklist of items to inspect for SLF and its egg masses: <https://bit.ly/NurseryBMPs>
2. If you see anything suspicious, get a photo and report it using our online form: massnrc.org/pests/slf/
3. If you have any questions or would like to order free educational materials, please feel free to contact us at slf@mass.gov.

Pesticide License Renewal Time

Please be reminded that Massachusetts Pesticide Licenses expires each calendar year. MDAR uses the publicly accessible online system known as the EEA ePLACE Portal and no longer sends the hardcopy renewal forms via U.S. Mail. Please renew your license online using this system. You should have received an email reminder on Sunday, October 2nd asking you to renew your pesticide license. If you have not done so, please visit the EEA ePLACE Portal, log into your account, and complete your renewal. If you forgot your password or security questions or otherwise need help logging into your account, please contact the ePLACE Help Desk at (844) 733-7522. As we may be working remotely, if you have questions or issues renewing your pesticide license, please send email to pestexamlicense@mass.gov. You may also leave a voice message at on the Pesticide Examination and License Hotline at (508) 281-6787.

EEA ePLACE Portal - <https://eplace.eea.mass.gov>

New pesticide license applicants will need to create an EEA ePLACE Portal Account and register for their exam. Creating an account in the Portal is a simple process. Each account is specific to the individual applicant. While companies may sponsor their employees, they CANNOT create a company account on behalf of their employees. Follow the instructions in [this presentation](#) to register. Please visit MDAR's [Examination and Licensing website](#) to find helpful step-by-step guides and information for all your pesticide examination and licensing needs.

Energy News

MA Farm Energy Program (MFEP) - Energy Audits

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.

You will need a technical assessment to file an energy grant application whether with MDAR or USDA.

Remember MFEP pays 75% of the technical assessment, first come, first served, and still provide tele-assessments.

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.

SMART ASTGU Annual Report Posted on DOER Website

The Agricultural Solar Tariff Generation Unit (ASTGU) Annual Report form is now posted ([here](#)) on the DOER SMART website [Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target \(SMART\) Program](#). This form is required to be

completed and submitted annually for all projects with the MA Department of Energy Resources (DOER) which received qualification as an Agricultural Solar Tariff Generation Unit (ASTGU) under the SMART program. The form is provided to demonstrate conformance with the general provisions required for ASTGUs in 225 CMR 20.00; in particular pertaining to Section 20.06(1)(d) therein as well as associated ASTGU Guidelines; and specifically pertaining to annual reporting requirements.

The completed form will be reviewed by DOER and the MA Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) to determine that the farm is in conformance with all ASTGU provisions in general under the SMART Program, although more specifically to the ASTGU annual production requirements.

The MA Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) 2022 Gap III Energy Grant Program will provide \$7.5 Million and offer up to \$200,000 of grant assistance for eligible entities.

The grant program has been expanded to serve new sectors.

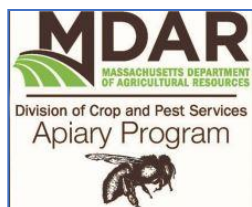
Under the leadership of MassDEP, the Clean Energy Results Program (CERP) is an integrated energy and environmental partnership with the MA Department of Energy Resources (DOER) and the MA Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) that reduces regulatory or other barriers to clean and energy efficient development across the state. The Gap Grant is a cornerstone of this partnership and is a streamlined energy grant funding model that has helped municipal water utilities reduce their energy usage, operating costs, and improve the environment. The grant is designed to fill the last "gap" in project financing, enabling and encouraging facilities to use energy utility incentives as well as funding from other sources to install selected energy efficiency and clean energy generation projects.

For the GAP III, you are eligible if you are:

- Nonprofit affordable housing
- Nonprofit agricultural/food distribution
- Small Business -Food Distribution and Processing
- Water and wastewater utility owned by a municipal, district or authority

Please visit [Massachusetts' Gap Energy Grant Program](#) for more information.

Apiary Series Released - 2022-2023 State of the State: Update on Honey Bee Health in the Commonwealth



Join MDAR's Crop and Pest Services (CPS) Division, Apiary and Forest Pest Education and Outreach Team, to get an update on honey bee health in the Commonwealth. Each event will include 1-2 presentations consisting of 90 minutes of content and 30 minutes of Q&A for attendees. Presentations will cover information and data focused on regulations, honey bee health, beekeeping practices and invasive pests. Events will be held virtually via Zoom on **Tuesdays from 7pm-9pm** and are free and open to the public.

- **December 6, 2022** - State of the State: Annual Review of the Apiary Program Activities and Inspection Data
- **December 13, 2022** - Dive Into Disease: Summary of the Molecular Analysis of Bee Samples
- **March 7, 2023** - MA Beekeeping Laws and Regulations – Including the NEW Regulations, and Spring Into Beekeeping
- **March 14, 2023** - Massachusetts Bee Aware Annual Honey Bee Health Survey, and USDA-APHIS Annual Honey Bee Health Survey

- **March 21, 2023** - Spotted Lanternfly, and Northern Giant Hornet (formerly know as Asian Giant Hornet)

Mark your calendars now to join us to get the latest **BUZZ** and **PRE-REGISTER NOW**.

Pre-Register for the [Zoom Webinar](#) and a link will be automatically sent for the presentations. Printable flyer [here](#).

Tell Us About MA Ag Health and Wellness in 7 Minutes

This is your last chance to participate!

On behalf of the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR), we ask everyone in the ag community to take a moment to provide your insights into the public health and wellness conditions facing the Massachusetts agricultural community. A few minutes of your valuable time can make a significant impact.

Farmers, partner organization members, stakeholders and State and Federal agricultural employees are encouraged to share their thoughts. Survey link here: <https://survey.cmix.com/B4E878AA/7E301C4Q/en-US>

The Markets Corner

EU Shellfish Trade Mission

In late September, Massachusetts shellfish farmer/dealers traveled to the EU and met with importers and buyers in the Netherlands and France, to explore market opportunities for oysters and clams. Representatives from ARC/Chapin Farms, Dennis; Island Creek Oyster, Duxbury; John Nagle Co, Boston; Plymouth Rock Shellfish Growers, Plymouth; and Wellfleet Shellfish Company, Wellfleet, sampled live Massachusetts oysters and clams with potential customers during one-on-one meetings and receptions in the two cities. The major EU shellfish importers are located in the Netherlands. The highest EU country consumption of oysters is in France.

Educational programs during the Mission helped to convey that Northeast harvesters and dealers maintain stringent safety protocols in growing and handling oysters, and that the oysters are grown in clean health water which is routinely monitored.



The trade of molluscan shellfish (mussels, clams, oysters, and scallops) between the European Union and the U.S. resumed in early 2022, following a 10-year break after the two sides resolved regulatory disputes. At this time, shellfish from the two states of Massachusetts and Washington are allowed to be exported to the EU.

The EU Focused Trade Mission was an important opportunity for Massachusetts shellfish dealers to explore a new market that appears to offer good potential. The European Shellfish trade representatives were enthusiastic about the quality and variety of the oysters and clams they sampled. They were also impressed with the professionalism and expertise of the US shellfish growers to produce highly marketable products that could be appealing to European consumers.

Plans for follow-up activities are in progress, including hosting EU importers and buyers to Seafood Export North America in 2023.

MDAR accessed USDA FAS funds through Food Export USA Northeast and worked with activity coordination support from the organization. MDAR is a member of Food Export Northeast, and Commissioner Lebeaux is a member of the board of directors. For more information, contact Bonita.Oehlke@mass.gov.

The MassGrown Map



Christmas Tree Farms and Agritourism farms – Are you listed on the [MassGrown map](#)? Be sure your website and description are up to date. If you have updates or edits, please send to Richard.LeBlanc@mass.gov. If you are not on the map and want to be included, please fill out our easy [two page survey \(.doc\)](#).

Looking to add “Massachusetts grown and fresher” posters and price cards to your farmstand or farmers market display, [order form here](#).

Hosting special events or music this Fall and Winter at your farm? Send web link or details to Richard.LeBlanc@mass.gov, and we’ll add them to our consumer [Events Calendar](#).

The MassGrown Exchange - Connecting buyers with fruit and vegetable farms, flower growers, fisheries, food suppliers, and more!



The Exchange includes many types of businesses: Recent listings include [Buck Hill Farm looking for a tractor](#), apples, gourds and squash by [Lanni Orchards](#), pumpkins by [Cournoyer Vegetable Farm](#), frozen certified organic cranberries by [Fresh Meadows Farm](#), and more! All current products and services can be found and [here](#).

Farmers - Looking for new buyers? [Register](#) and post today! Quick and easy registration. Over 400 businesses have registered to date.

Buyers - Be notified automatically for crops or products of interest when posted. [Register](#) and create automatic email “Alerts”.

Questions, or if you’d like one-on-one support with the MassGrown Exchange, contact Richard.LeBlanc@Mass.gov. You can also watch the [demonstration video](#) for a tour of the platform.



The Massachusetts Building at The Big E – Recap

A total of **1,603,354** visitors attended the [2022 Big E](#), an all-time single day attendance record was set when 177,789 visitors on Saturday, September 24th. Five additional daily [attendance records](#) were also set.

A special thank you to all the exhibitors who helped to make this year's fair a huge success. Visitors to the Massachusetts Building found a variety of exhibitors, including four new businesses, Common Ground Cider Works from North Brookfield, Rustic Wood Flags by Wedge from Hadley, S & P Foodies Hub from Agawam, and The Happy Face Painter from Chicopee. [Photos here](#). For a complete list of exhibitors, and to visit their websites, please visit the [Massachusetts Building Marketplace](#) - a great place to start your Christmas and holiday shopping!



The mission of the Building is to support Massachusetts agriculture, commerce, and tourism. This is achieved through a mixture of Massachusetts companies, non-profit organizations, and state agencies located inside and on the grounds of the building. If you would like to learn more about becoming a Massachusetts Building Exhibitor in 2023, please contact Fran Pearson, Frances.Pearson@mass.gov, 617-655-3511.

Register Now for MDAR Agricultural Business Training Winter Courses

- 1) **Farm Succession School** - Thursdays January 26, March 2, and March 30, 2023 from 10:00am – 4:00pm at Boyden Library, Foxborough

MDAR is hosting Land For Good's Farm Succession School for Massachusetts farmers again this winter! This is an opportunity for senior generation farmers to talk with peers, learn from advisors, and get support on the challenging process of farm succession and transfer planning.

- *Are you unsure who will take over your farm?*
- *Feel like your family needs to start talking, but you don't know where to start?*
- *Have questions about retiring that you don't know how to answer?*
- *Can the farm support two generations?*

Succession planning is a process of exploring how to transfer the farm business and assets to a future owner. Succession School provides farmers and farming partners with the structured and sustained support to make decisions, engage their families, and organize the legal and financial mechanics. We plan to meet in-person in for a three-session program in Foxborough between 10:00am – 4:00pm on the following Thursdays 1/26; 3/2; and 3/30 (snow dates on each Friday of the same weeks). The fee, subsidized by MDAR, is \$100 per farm. Contact Shemariah at Land For Good shemariah@landforgood.org or 603-357-1600 with any questions.

- 2) **Growing Your Farm Business Planning Course** - January 17 - March 14, 2023 - Tuesday evenings 5:30 – 8:30pm at MDAR office in Southborough, MA

A hands-on course to help established farmers develop a business plan and financial projections for their farm business. This course covers topics including resource assessment, marketing strategy, financial management, risk management, quality of life, and goal setting. The course is taught by a professional business planner with years of experience working with Massachusetts farms and guest speakers on topics such as succession planning and online marketing. Enrollment is open to farmers who have been operating a farm business in Massachusetts for at least the two prior years. Eight weekly classes will be held in person in Southborough on Tuesday evenings starting January 17th and ending March 14th, (no class February 21st). The course fee,

subsidized by MDAR, is \$150 per farm. The Growing Your Farm business planning course has been approved as a certified USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) borrower training for financial management.

If interested, please complete the brief Growing Your Farm [application](#) and email it to Diego.Irizarry-Gerould@mass.gov, or mail a hard copy to: MDAR, Attn: Diego Irizarry-Gerould, 138 Memorial Ave, Suite 42, West Springfield, MA 01089. For more information, see ABTP [program webpage](#) or contact Diego at 857-248-1671.

- 3) **Exploring the Small Farm Dream Course** - January 12 – February 9, 2023 - Thursday evenings 6:00pm – 9:00pm at MDAR office, Southborough, MA

[This 5-session course](#) provides guidance to aspiring farmers through the decision-making process of whether to start a farm business. Participants will learn about the many aspects of starting a farm business, assess their own skills and knowledge, and get help finding resources for support, including marketing, financing, and regulations. The course utilizes the Exploring the Small Farm Dream curriculum and workbook developed by the New England Small Farm Institute. Through four guided group sessions and a farmer panel session, participants will analyze the feasibility of their small farm dream and clarify their vision together with other class participants. This course is sponsored and financially supported by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources and is intended for new agricultural entrepreneurs planning to start their farm business in Massachusetts. The fee, subsidized by MDAR, is \$100 for up to two participants per enterprise, as space allows.

If interested, please complete the brief application found here: [Exploring the Small Farm Dream](#) and email it to Jessica.Camp@mass.gov, or mail a hard copy to: MDAR, Attn: Jessica Camp, 138 Memorial Ave, Suite 42, West Springfield, MA 01089. For more information, see ABTP [program webpage](#) or contact Jess at 617-823-0871.

Applications for these winter courses will be accepted until December 2, or until each course is full. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, with course session locations selected based on interest from those on the waitlist. If you are interested, but unable to attend the current session, please consider submitting an application to be placed on the waitlist for an upcoming session.

Funding for these courses and trainings provided by MDAR's [Agricultural Business Training Program \(ABTP\)](#).

Northeast Greenhouse Conference and Expo Webinar Series

2022 Webinar Series is produced by New England Floriculture, Inc. – These educational webinars provide pesticide applicator recertification credits. Each webinar is approved for one (1) pesticide applicator recertification credit for the six New England states plus New York in the following categories:

- 1) **Wednesday, October 26th** - Plant Diagnostic Detective: Focus on Abiotic Disorder - 11:45 am - 1:00 pm - Speaker: Brian Whipker from North Carolina State University. Production challenges can come in many forms, from living (biotic) insects and diseases to non-living, abiotic disorders. This presentation will focus on the identification of abiotic problems in the greenhouse.
- 2) **Wednesday, November 2nd** - Developing a pesticide rotation program for bedding plants in greenhouses - 11:45 am - 1:00 pm - Speaker: Juang Horng "JC" Chong from Clemson University. The development of insecticide resistance by insect and mite pests, particularly those most impactful in greenhouses, is a consistent threat to the safe and effective use of pesticides. A simple but effective way of minimizing the

risk of pesticide resistance development is rotating among pesticides of different modes of action. Presentation will provide attendees with an introduction of how pesticide resistance arises and how to manage pesticide resistance. The attendees will be provided with practical, science-based recommendations on how to best rotate pesticides for a single pest species and multiple pest species simultaneously.

- 3) **Wednesday, November 9th** - Managing Disease Caused by Fungi, Bacteria, Nematodes and Viruses in the Greenhouse - 11:45 am - 1:00 pm - Speaker: Margery Daughtrey from Cornell University. Will cover how to avoid and how to survive attacks by notable flower crop pathogens in all the major categories, including fungi like *Thielaviopsis*, *Fusarium*, and powdery mildews — bacteria like *Xanthomonas* — nematodes like *Aphelenchoides* — and viruses like Tomato spotted wilt, Impatiens necrotic spot and chili pepper mild mottle virus. Learn about how the greenhouse environment and sanitation practices can be used to avoid many of these, and about some of the biocontrols and fungicides that can be used as tools within your overall integrated pest management plan.

Registration is \$25 per webinar, or \$65 for all three. Details and registration here:

www.negreenhouse.org/virtual-series-schedule.html

Organic Certification Cost Share



Pleased to announce that MDAR is authorized by the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to reimburse certified Organic Crop and Livestock Producers and Handlers (processors) for the Federal 2022 Fiscal Year – It is a cost sharing program that reimburses certified organic farmers and food processors up to 50% (\$500 maximum) of the total certification cost.

Deadline, December 1, 2022. Details and application here: [Organic Certification Cost Share Program](#).

If you are an organic grower and sell retail, deliver, or offer mail order, be sure to be listed on the MassGrown Map as a "Certified Organic" farm. Map of certified [organic farms here](#).

Wholesale growers looking for buyers are encouraged to list crops/products on the [MassGrown Exchange](#). Questions, contact Richard.LeBlanc@mass.gov.

As You Prep for Winter, Remember to Keep Your Firewood Local

October is Don't Move Firewood Month! Whether you cut your own wood or buy it from a vendor, keep your firewood close to where you got it. Firewood can harbor insects and diseases like the [Asian longhorned beetle](#) and the [emerald ash borer](#) that are devastating to forests. If you transport firewood far from where it was cut, you risk bringing these pests to new areas that they wouldn't have been able to reach on their own. There's no hard and fast rule about how far it's safe to transport firewood, but as a general guide [Don't Move Firewood.com](#) states that #1, it's important to follow local regulations, and #2, keeping firewood within 10 miles is ideal, and moving it more than 50 miles is too far. If you're not sure what the regulations are in your area, check out this [firewood map](#) which covers the USA, Canada, and Mexico.

Up to 21 Acres of Land (3 parcels) Available to Lease in Lakeville

MDAR is soliciting proposals for the agricultural use of up to approximately 21.04+/- acres of state-owned agricultural land consisting of three fields located at the former Taunton State Hospital property on Bridge Street/Main Street in Lakeville, Massachusetts. Priority will be given to proposals which address and implement goals of the Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan. Details can be found at the State Land Licensing webpage:

For questions please email Dorothy.Du@mass.gov.

2023 Celebrating the Seasons of Massachusetts Agriculture Calendar



Massachusetts Agricultural Calendar Photo Contest Winners Unveiled on Massachusetts Day at the Big E – The 2023 Ag Calendar Now Available!

Winners from the annual photo contest were invited to [“Massachusetts Day” at the Big E](#) last month to celebrate the unveiling of the new 2023 Massachusetts Agriculture Calendar. We congratulate the winners of the annual photo contest. We received over 205 photo submissions!

Each year the calendar, [Celebrating the Seasons of Massachusetts Agriculture](#), features winning photos from this year's public photo contest. Each photograph is selected that best spotlights crops and farms across the Commonwealth. The Calendar's goal is to showcase the beautiful diversity of crops grown in Massachusetts as well as be a learning tool for teachers and educators, as each month includes “Fun Facts” and “Teaching Tips.”

The annual Calendar is produced in collaboration with [Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom \(MAC\)](#), [MDAR](#), and the [Massachusetts State Grange](#), along with the many great sponsoring associations this year: [MA Farm Bureau](#), [MA Maple Producers Association](#), [MA Flower Growers Association](#), [MA Dairy Promotion Board](#), [MA Fruit Growers](#), [MA Fairs Association](#), [Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Association](#), and the [MA Christmas Tree Association](#). Thanks also to Susan Bergeron-West at [Sirius Design](#), who designs the colorful Calendar.



This years winners of the photo contest include:

[January](#) - Bob Labrie – Sunrise at Hartsbrook Farm, Hadley

[February](#) - Desa VanLaarhoven – Nia and goat at Round The Bend Farm, S. Dartmouth

[March](#) - Jennifer Field - Benjamin Field checking the boiling sap at Field Family Sugarhouse, Leverett

[April](#) - Laurie Cuevas - Farmer Jim Thomas planting beans with antique planter at Thomas Farm, Sunderland

[May](#) - Lanna Mosca – Daily Bloom Flower Truck at the Marlborough Farmers Market

[June](#) - Dylan Barstow Manz - Skyview of Barstow's Longview Farm, Hadley

[July](#) - Emily Reckard-Mota – Dahlias and Habaneros at Groundwork Somerville

[August](#) - Niki Lankowski – Grow Food Northampton at Northampton Farmers Market

[September](#) - Kathy Diamontopoulos – Apples at Smolak Farms, North Andover

[October](#) - Christopher Wilson - Shaun Wilson operating cranberry wet harvester at Fresh From the Vine, West Yarmouth

[November](#) - Glenn Fund – Pumpkins at Wilson Farm, Lexington

[December](#) - Rachel Townzen - Reina wearing a Christmas wreath at Davagian Farm, Sutton

Honorable Mentions:

January - Melanie Brundage - “Bruin” and Elijah, Red Tail Farm, Douglas; **February** - Jim Thomas - Baby goat in milking parlor Thomas Farm, Sunderland; **March** - Jeanne Boyden - Boyden Bros. Maple, Conway; **April** -

Maryann Gubala – Lamb at Old Sturbridge Village; **May** - Justine Muir - Parrot tulips, Peterfields Farm, Westminster; **June** - Caitlin Moriarty - Jersey calves at High Lawn Farm, Lee; **July** - Safiyat Hamiss – Abdul-Quddus harvesting lettuce in home garden, Framingham
August - David Long – Sunflowers at The Farm at SummitWynds, Holden; **September** - Bethanie Crowell - Cabernet Franc grapes, Truro Vineyards of Cape Cod; **October** - Mary Erdogan – Cranberries at Decas Farms, Carver; **November** - Kristi Marshall – Purple stripe boutique garlic grown in Marion; **December** - Rachel Townzen – “Getting the Christmas tree”, Maple Hill Tree Farm, Leicester

Learn more about [MAC](#) and order calendars [here](#), they make great gifts to family and friends. If your farm offers retail sales, and would like to sell calendars to your customers, [bulk pricing is offered](#). Questions, contact Bobbie Oles at massaginclassroom@gmail.com. Start clicking your camera and submitting photos for [next years contest now!](#)



USDA NEWS

The 2023 Farm to School Grant Request for Applications is Now Open

USDA will award up to \$12 million in competitive grants to eligible entities through the Farm to School Grant Program in FY 2023. Each grant helps implement farm to school programs that increase access to local food in eligible schools, connect children with agriculture for better health, and inspire youth to consider careers in agriculture. The RFA includes three tracks - Implementation, State Agency, and Turnkey - to support a variety of projects and implementation stages.

A wide variety of entities are eligible to compete for funding through this grant opportunity. Schools and other institutions operating the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and/or Summer Food Service Program (SFSP); State agencies; local agencies; Indian tribal organizations; small- to medium-sized agricultural producers or groups of small- to medium-sized agricultural producers; and non-profit organizations are eligible for Farm to School grants. Certain entities are eligible for priority consideration if they meet criteria defined in the RFA.

Two upcoming webinars:

- [Tuesday, Nov. 8th - 2:30 pm - "Getting Familiar with the FY2023 Farm to School Grant"](#): This webinar will provide an overview of the FY2023 Farm to School grant program request for applications, including eligibility, available grant types, and more. Get familiar with the requirements of the RFA and how to submit your completed application on grants.gov.
- [Wednesday, Nov. 9th - 2:30 pm - "Getting Your Grant Package Together"](#): During this webinar, explore the key characteristics of a competitive Farm to School Grant application. Review the required components and provide technical assistance on how to submit a complete application. Attendees will learn tips for writing a succinct application that clearly outlines your farm to school project.

Frequently Asked Questions document is available on the [Farm to School Grant Applicant Resources Page](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS/WORKSHOPS

October

- **October 24 - Adapting Your Farm to Climate Change - Ditch Use, Maintenance, and Management on Commercial Farms** - 4 – 5:30pm. Free (Remote) Join CISA, the NRCS and UMass Extension for a hard look at using and maintaining agricultural ditches on commercial farms. Learn what can and can't be done when it comes to managing ditches and the water that fills them, and the kinds of support available to farm owners and managers from local organizations and agencies. Questions? Contact Stephen Taranto, stephen@buylocalfood.org, CISA Climate Program Coordinator, 413-665-7100 ext. 17. [Register here.](#)
- **October 25 - Dairy Promotion Board Meeting** - 10-11:30am, In person Southboro, and virtual. [Agenda and details here.](#)
- **October 27 - Dual-Use: Agriculture and Solar Photovoltaics Webinar** - 11:00 am. In 2018, the MA Dept. of Energy Resources (MA DOER) established the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) program. This program carries special incentives for solar systems that allow “dual-use,” defined as solar on farmland where the land continues to be used for agricultural purposes. These facilities are also referred to as “agrivoltaic” systems. This presentation will offer an overview of the guidelines for dual-use, provide a close look at the economics of a dual-use system, and outline the process for planning and installing such a system. [Register here.](#)
- **October 27 - Ecological Landscape Alliance Season's End Summit 2022** - Hybrid virtual and at New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill, Boylston. Goal to have both professionals and home gardeners is to create habitat for all. Designs with an ecological sensibility, implement with an ecological sensibility and manage our landscape with that same ecological sensibility. [Details here.](#)
- **October 27 - Meeting of the Environmental Justice Council (EJC)** - 6pm - [Details here.](#)
- **October 27 - How MA officials are Helping Pollinators – Mass Pollinator Network Monthly Meeting** - 7-8:15pm, virtual. Guests include Ryan Kingston, Sustainability Program Coordinator with the Leading by Example Program (DOER); Tara Mitchell, Landscape Architect with MassDOT; Jennifer Forman-Orth, Environmental Biologist with MDAR. [Details here.](#)
- **October 30 - Rich and Healthy: No-till for Successful Farms** - Orange, 10-5pm. Are you a farmer or market gardener seeking to start or transition to no-till methods that use simple tools, build healthy soil, reduce labor and cost inputs, promote climate resilience and increase your connection to the land? You'll learn several no-till, climate resilience techniques in this experiential, day-long workshop with seasoned farmer Ricky Baruc and no-till soil science researchers. Guest soil science researchers will share their knowledge too!— Caro Roszell from American Farmland Trust and PhD candidate Alexa Smychkovich. [Details here.](#)

November

- **November 2 - UMass Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training** - 8:30am to 5:00pm. Brigham Hill Community Farm, North Grafton. Fruit and vegetable growers and others interested in learning about produce safety, the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule, Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), and co-management of natural resources and food safety. This course will also cover the MA Commonwealth Quality Program (CQP), a voluntary 3rd-party audit program. This training satisfies the FSMA Produce Safety Rule requirement for covered farms that "at least one supervisor or responsible party" completes "food safety training ... recognized as adequate" by FDA (21 C.F.R. §112.22(c)). [Details here.](#) Contact Lisa McKeag, lmckeag@umass.edu, 413-658-8631.
- **November 2 - Strategies for Finding, Affording, and Securing Farmland in Berkshire County** - 6-7:30pm, Virtual. Workshop will build off of the recent Oct. 19th Resource Roundup [event](#) and is intended for Berkshire County farmers or those seeking access to farmland in Berkshire County. Jae Silverman, MA Field Agent at Land for Good, will lead an in-depth tutorial on land access considerations and methods.

Tina Smith, Western MA APR Program Planner at MDAR will provide information about the state's APR program and considerations for accessing or farming on conserved farmland. [Details here.](#)

- **November 4 - Successful Value Added Food Product Development for Farm and New Food Businesses: Managing Food Quality and Safety** - 9am - 1:00pm. Are you a farmer diversifying into value added production or an entrepreneur developing new and exciting products? Do you have questions about how to integrate food safety and quality into the development of a value added food product? If so, this is the program for you. [Details here.](#)
- **November 5 - Massachusetts Beekeepers Association Annual Mtg** - 8:30 - 3:30pm, Middlesex Community College Bedford Campus, Bedford. [Details here.](#)
- **November 16 - Spotted Lanternfly in MA: Quarterly Update** - 10am - Webinar hosted by MDAR to provide the green industry, environmental groups, and other interested parties with the latest information about spotted lanternfly occurrences, survey updates, and more. Session eligible for education credits. [Details here.](#)
- **November 17 - Massachusetts Food Policy Council Meeting** - 10am-noon. Room 428 , MA State House, 24 Beacon St, Boston. [Details here.](#)
- **November 17 - SEMAP Annual Meeting** - 5 - 7:30pm. [Updates and details here.](#)
- **November 17 - Virtual Greenhouse Education Program** - 8:30am - 12:00pm. Topics include greenhouse sanitation, PGRs (knowing the tools & how to use them effectively), best management practices for greenhouse insect and mite control. [Details here.](#)

December

- **December 6 - State of the State: Update on Honey Bee Health** - Annual review of the apiary program activities and inspection data - 7-9pm, [Details here.](#)
- **December 13 - State of the State: Update on Honey Bee Health** - Dive Into disease, summary of the molecular analysis of bee samples - 7-9pm, [Details here.](#)
- **December 13-15 - New England Vegetable & Fruit Conference** - Manchester, NH. [Details here.](#)

[MDAR Calendar](#)

Classified

- **Farmers Markets Seek Vendors** - MDAR keeps an updated list of farmers markets looking for vendors. You can find the list [here](#). Contact information for all farmers markets is posted [here](#). Questions, contact David.Webber@mass.gov.

Looking to buy or sell, and see job postings? Visit and register on the [MassGrown Exchange](#). *Note – most classifieds moving to the MassGrown Exchange – free to post, [sign up today!](#)

About the *Farm & Market Report*

Published bi-monthly by MDAR:

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Complete staff directory [here](#). Next issue to be published in August. Please send news and events by October 14th to Richard.LeBlanc@mass.gov. To unsubscribe, or change your email address, contact Richard.LeBlanc@mass.gov.

MDAR's mission is to ensure the long-term viability of agriculture in Massachusetts. Through its five divisions – Agricultural Conservation & Technical Assistance, Agricultural Markets, Animal Health, Crop and Pest Services, and Produce Safety – 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.

