
December/January Farm & Market Report

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COMMISSIONER'S COLUMN



Greetings, Mass. Agriculture and all its friends,

I need to begin by sharing some terribly sad news. We've lost a member of our MDAR family, Cathy Vollinger. A brief remembrance may be found [here](#).

As I simply can't think of any way to make a graceful transition to our traditional column, I will just press on with my normal report. Apologies for the abrupt shift.

I don't know about you, but from my perspective, 2021 just flew by!

Once we hit November, opportunities to get out in the field greatly decrease. And we welcome those we get, as it's a long way to Maple Kickoff in early March.

On a beautiful, mild mid-November Saturday, Deputy Commissioner Ashley Sears Randle and I toured the Amherst Farmers Market with State Representative Mindy Domb in recognition of its 50th Anniversary Season.

We had planned to go much earlier in the year, but some scheduling issue arose. I felt a little badly visiting so close to end of season, but my worries were unnecessary. The market was full of vendors and shoppers!

We spent time visiting with shoppers, market management, and with the numerous farmer vendors at the very nice market site on the Amherst Common. There was quite a selection of ag products; I was impressed by the number of farmers selling flowers as either their principal offering or as a component of their overall product mix.

From there we toured a little gem: Sunset Farm is tucked away on a quiet street essentially in the middle of Amherst right between the center of town and the UMass campus. With a great deal of community support the farm produces a wide range of crops that it sells onsite and at the Farmers Market.

Then we were off to get further educated about the hard cider business by visiting Headwater Cider in Hawley. Owner Peter Mitchell walked us through the entire process he undertakes: growing the crop, creating the hard cider, packaging/labeling, sales and marketing, and distribution. There has been a lot of growth in the hard cider market, and it seems to be continuing.

One of the few days of the year that I know I can never take off is the day after Thanksgiving. I've heard some misguided individuals refer to that day as Black Friday, but they are mistaken-it's Green Friday when we kick off the Christmas Tree season as we cut the ceremonial tree.

Working with the [MA Christmas Tree Growers Association](#), this event moves to a different region each year. Ashley, Rick LeBlanc from our Division of Agricultural Markets, and I started the day early to get to Great Barrington in the Berkshires, so we could present [Governor Baker's Green Friday proclamation](#) at Seekonk Tree Farm.

The Sweet family have a beautiful operation. An MDAR [APR Improvement Program](#) grant contributed to a new store construction, which has greatly enhanced the operation. As someone who has sold Christmas trees since I was a boy, I remain so impressed by the volume of trees sold at the farm. It's not on any major road. People shop there because they want to.

Last week, Ashley and I attended a dinner at MA Farm Bureau's Annual Meeting in Marlborough. We offer our congratulations to newly elected Farm Bureau President Warren Shaw and Vice President Ryan MacKay, and our thanks to Immediate Past President Mark Amato and former Vice President Laura Abrams for their very good work.

Though I didn't travel out of my home office, just last week I virtually joined Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Lowell) on his *Beacon Hill Buzz* cable TV program. We spoke for thirty minutes about MA Ag and MDAR. Link to the program is [here](#).

There are a few changes at the state government level we should discuss. One I imagine most have heard, but not so much the other.

In 2014, new legislation created the thirteen-member Board of Agriculture which replaced the previous seven-member Board of Food and Agriculture. A provision of the new law also limits appointees to a term limit of two three-year terms.

That legislation passed in 2014, but then-Governor Patrick did not make Ag Board appointments before he left office in January 2015. In 2015 Governor Baker made the necessary appointments to create the new board, and many of those occurred on 12/1/2015.

Unbelievably six years have just passed since that date, and with that, seven of those 2015 appointees left the board last week.

Please join me in thanking former Chair Laura Abrams, Alison Gilmore Carr, Don Chase, Fred Dabney, Michelle Harvey, Lydia Sisson, and Michael Smolak for six years of dedicated service to MA Ag! The board routinely meets multiple times every year. It met in person all over the state pre-covid, and virtually for the last twenty-one months.

It takes a lot of dedication to commit to serving on a public body, and I want to publicly offer my thanks to the last of the “Original 13!”

Remaining on the Board are Crystal Card, Elizabeth Keen, Lisa Colby, Meghan Russell, the newly elected Chair, Skip Vaidnais, and Lucinda Williams. We expect Governor Baker will be announcing his appointments in the near future.

The news that I expect you already know is that Governor Baker and Lieutenant Governor Polito recently announced that they aren’t pursuing elected office in the November 2022 State Election and will leave office after their present terms end in January 2023.

None of us ever knows what the future holds, but I want to inform you all that I intend to remain in my position through the end of their term, that we will keep pressing on with our work, and that we will have this agency in best possible condition for the next administration. There’s much to do in the next thirteen months!

Please call to my attention any items you’d like me to consider addressing between now and end of term. I’d be happy to review them for possible action.

With that and on behalf of everyone at MDAR and the Mosquito Control Projects, I’d like to wish all a very Happy Holiday Season and wish for all that 2022 is the year that we resolve the ongoing pandemic!



John Lebeaux

DEPUTY’S DIALOGUE

While “pivot”, “resiliency”, and “adaptations” may have been the most heard phrases in 2020, 2021 has been the year of “supply chain issues”. The one constant, however, has been the incredible collaboration across the food system and heightened awareness of how valuable the local MA agricultural sectors are to consumers and the state. To weather the supply chain issues that all industries have been facing due to the pandemic, our local producers and food system businesses have maintained their focus on access and affordability to consumers.

With labor, transportation, costs of production/inputs, inflation, and weather impacting the national supply chain, the Massachusetts food system stands ready to set itself apart. Consumers have shown their heightened interest and support of MA agriculture over the past 21 months, and it's now our opportunity to remind them how buying local and sourcing their holiday meals from a local farmer or business benefits us all. While MA farmers and producers must adjust their prices to reflect the increased costs of doing business as well, a consumer's dollar goes further when they invest in the local food system and know exactly where and how their apple/beef/potato/etc. was produced. At the Department, we continue to meet with producers and industry members to learn about the supply chain challenges they face and ways in which we can assist them.

I also wanted to share a few updates of exciting work and projects that are taking place at the Department. As many of you may be aware, the Baker-Polito Administration and our Secretariat have been focusing more closely on Environmental Justice (EJ) and how we can incorporate an EJ lens into our programs and policies. As part of our efforts, we are seeking to collect and establish a database of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) farmers. We greatly appreciate collaborating with the Buy Locals, MA Food System Collaborative, and others across the space who have helped to share this message. The more individuals we can reach, the more effective our work will be in the future. If you would like to self-identify as a BIPOC farmer or BIPOC member of the MA agricultural sector, please email myself, Ashley.Randle@mass.gov, or Rose Arruda, Rose.Arruda@mass.gov.

In September, we were informed that we were a recipient of the USDA Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network grant offered to state departments of agriculture. The \$500,000 award will help us to provide mental health and wellness training to MDAR staff, farmers, and service providers, as well as develop a mental health toolkit and formal mental health programming at the Department. It's both a timely and welcomed addition to our team's work, and I'm incredibly excited to help oversee the project as well as work with a grant contractor that we will be onboarding next month. As we rollout the program and trainings, we will be conducting outreach and coordinating across industries to ensure that all ag stakeholders are engaged, and resources made available to interested parties.

Through an earmark in the FY22 budget, MDAR was provided \$100,000 to hire a Custom Slaughter Contractor to provide technical assistance to livestock producers and assess the processing needs of the industry. The pandemic highlighted the lack of processing infrastructure and capacity on the federal and state level, and this individual will help to educate producers and work to strengthen this critical sector of the local food system. The contractor is anticipated to start in January so please be on the lookout for communications from the Department and this individual as they begin their project work.

In recent weeks, legislators passed the comprehensive \$4B American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) bill that includes many favorable provisions for MDAR and MA agriculture. A few of the notable items include \$44M for food security and local emergency food system organizations, \$100M for environmental infrastructure, \$4M to establish an agricultural fairs grant program, \$5M for the Agricultural Innovation Fund, \$5M for agriculture, cranberries, and fisheries, and \$15M for land conservation/protection. The legislation is now on the Governor's Desk for signature. We look forward to working with the Administration, EEA, and stakeholders to disburse the funding and develop programming once the legislation is signed.

On the federal front, the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) recently announced their proposal to give produce growers more flexibility to address the safety of their irrigation water under the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). MDAR's Produce Safety Program works with over 400 farms that fall under FSMA to educate and implement the rule, and this change would now have growers conduct comprehensive water assessments

rather than microbial testing for pre-harvest agricultural water. FDA will be hosting webinars in the near future, but the initial announcement has been well received by growers and industry members.

Other notable federal legislative actions include U.S. Senators Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Susan Collins (R-ME) introducing the bipartisan *Dairy Pricing Opportunity Act*, which would direct the USDA to initiate the process of holding Federal Milk Marketing Order (FMMO) hearings within six months. This would allow for producers to have a voice in terms of how Class I fluid milk is priced. This would be a significant policy change, due to the complexity of the Order and how it does not currently reflect the costs of production and market volatility. Additionally, Congressman Jim McGovern (D-MA) continues to advocate for a White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, Hunger, and Health, as the last conference was held in 1969 under the Nixon administration. We know that there have been significant impacts to hunger and nutrition programming over the past 52 years, and of course most recently due to the pandemic. It's an opportunity for further dialogue on the topic and a forum to develop meaningful, impactful programs and policies to end hunger.

In October, I had the opportunity to speak with Williams College students as part of their [Log Lunch Lecture](#) series. The lecture series dates back to 1972 and is a unique model in which students dine on a locally sourced lunch and listen to lecturers in the environmental studies field. My talk focused on the Massachusetts agricultural sector, including the opportunities and challenges presented by the pandemic and how future initiatives will involve the lessons learned from the past two years. I stayed after the lecture to speak with a group of students working on a class project on how to source local beef for the college dining programs. Being actively involved in the MA 4-H program, I truly enjoy engaging with the next generation of leaders and helping to spark excitement in them about career opportunities in agriculture. Thank you to Sarah Gardner at Williams College for the invitation and wonderful afternoon spent on this beautiful college campus.

As some of you may know, running is a passion and hobby of mine outside my daily work in agriculture. While I've trained and run marathons in recent years, I decided to take on a different kind of marathon in November and participate in [Monte's March](#). Over the course of two days and 43-miles, participants walk across Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin counties to raise awareness and funds for the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts to address food insecurity needs. I participated on a personal level, separate from my work at the Department, and was incredibly humbled by the conversations and new connections made during the march. From a baker to a software engineer to legislative colleagues and farmers/farm service organization members, we were able to come together around a common goal and share ideas about how to address food security in the Commonwealth. From my current role serving on the Food Security Task Force and work with the emergency food system through the Department's administration of the MA Emergency Food Assistance Program, this is an issue near and dear to my heart.



Clarkdale Fruit Farm Owner/Farmer Ben Clark, State Rep. Natalie Blais, and me.

Most recently, a unique collaboration for a great cause was highlighted with my participation at the Hot Chocolate Run for Safe Passage in Northampton. Due to COVID-19 protocols, the annual run was not able to provide hot chocolate at the conclusion of the race as has been provided in years past (Traditionally, runners/walkers receive a mug as they cross the finish line and then fill it with fresh, locally made hot chocolate). Instead, local business Tart Baking Co. produced the hot chocolate mix and partnered with [The Western MA Food Processing Center](#) to package the mix for participants. While the Food Processing Center has been a supporter of the event for several years (and a partner of the Department for many years), this again demonstrates how our food system partners are adapting and continuing to find ways to bring food to

consumers. It's even better when it supports a great cause and reaches over 6,000 participants on the day of the event!

It's been a memorable year on many fronts, both personally and professionally, with the highlight for me being able to meet and engage with farmers, friends, and stakeholders in-person again. Looking ahead to 2022, I'm hopeful that consumers continue to recognize the value of their local farms and businesses, we identify ways to further strengthen the MA food system, build upon the partnerships we've developed with one another, and use the challenges we've endured to create opportunities and build an even more resilient MA agricultural landscape.

I look forward to seeing you all in the New Year and wish you a safe, healthy, and happy holiday season filled with local food and gifts.

Locally grown and proud,

Ashley Randle

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FOREFRONT

Energy News

MDAR's MA Farm Energy Program (MFEP) - Energy Audits - Technical Assistance – Be Prepared!

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 too long you may not be able to have one scheduled in time! Remember our 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.

Climate Smart Agricultural Program FY2022

MDAR is funding \$1,600,000 in FY2022 under our [Climate Smart Agriculture Program](#) (CSAP) to provide financial incentives to Massachusetts agricultural operations for practices that work towards improving soil health, ensuring the efficient use of water, preventing impacts on water quality, reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, sequestering carbon, improving energy efficiency and facilitating clean energy adoption.

The Climate Smart Agriculture Program links MDAR's water, energy and climate grants together into one application. This includes the Agricultural Climate Resiliency & Efficiencies (ACRE) Program, the Agricultural Environmental Enhancement Program (AEEP), and the Agricultural Energy Grant Program (ENER). By bringing these three grants under one program, MDAR is seeking to simplify the application process for applicants. This program continues the goals of the three individual grants by implementing projects that help the agricultural sector adapt to climate change, mitigate climate change, reducing or preventing impacts to natural resources that may result from agricultural practices, and that improve energy efficiency and facilitate adoption of alternative clean energy technologies.

Apiary Program

Three new fliers and schedules updated:

- **2022 Honey Bee Education Days at State Apiaries** – In person only - [Flyer here.](#)
- **2022 State of the State: Update on Honey Bee Health in the Commonwealth** – Virtual only - [Flyer here.](#)
- **2022 New England Honey Bee Update, Lunch and Learn Series** - Virtual only - [Flyer here.](#)

[Complete details here.](#)

Beekeepers - If interested in an inspection in these counties or any other county in Massachusetts, simply go online and submit your Inspection Request [here](#). We appreciate your patience and understanding as we continue to work as a team to respond to as many of these requests as possible before the end of the season.

Voluntarily Register Your Apiary Now - Almost 1000 beekeepers have voluntarily registered their apiaries with MDAR since April, 2017 by using the [new online form](#). Please consider taking a moment to register your apiary today so that we can best communicate with beekeepers and investigate honey bee health issues in your area.

Note the NEW Apiary Program Message Line phone number: 508-281-6784. This will replace the existing message line number: 617-626-1801. [Apiary Program here.](#) Questions, send to bees@mass.gov.

The Markets Corner

Newly Updated Massachusetts Food Processors Resource Guide – How to Start Your Food Business in Massachusetts



Local growers and food businesses have been in the spotlight lately. Their resiliency is an integral part of the Massachusetts food system. The newly released Massachusetts Food Processors Resource Guide supports new and growing value-added agricultural and entrepreneurial food business.

MDAR and the UMASS Extension Food Safety Program is pleased to present the [Massachusetts Food Processors Resource Guide](#).

The on-line, on-demand Guide has approachable information about what's needed to start a food business. The focus is on growers looking to add value to their crops and food entrepreneurs in their start-up phase.

Value-added products can help farmers improve their bottom line by processing and preserving excess produce and extending the marketing season. Local farmers and food entrepreneurs are part of the formula to support local communities and boost local food security, for a food system that's more resistant to supply chain interruptions.

The Guide includes basic information about what's needed to start a food business. Incorporating safety early-on helps to keep development costs in check and avoid delays in time to market. Newly developed videos emphasize product development and food safety resources.

Guide Chapters include 1) Getting Started, 2) Performing Market Research, 3) Scaling up, Where to Make Your Product & Licensing, 4) Calculating Costs & Setting a Price, 5) Food Safety Basics, 6) Labeling, Regulations and Design 7) Business Planning, Registering a Business, Insurance 8) Marketing, Promotions & Social Media 9) Sales, Brokers, Distributors & Trade shows, 10) Resources (from all chapters), and 11) Resources for Women, BIPOC & LGBTQ+ Entrepreneurs.

Though the Guide includes regulatory information specific to Massachusetts, much of the information is relevant, no matter the state.

The Guide was developed in collaboration with Stephanie Blanchard, B. Savvy Creative; Kim Concra, Cape Cod Cooperative Extension; Jen Faigel, Commonwealth Kitchen; Stevie Schafenacker, Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA); Chris Laughton, Farm Credit East; Sharon Wyrrick, Many Forks Farm; Bonita Oehlke, Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources; Carol Coutrier, Massachusetts Specialty Foods Association; Elizabeth Newbold, Northeast Center to Advance Food Safety (NECAFS); Amanda Kinchla, UMASS Extension Food Safety Program; Kate Minifie and Liz Buxton, Western MA Food Processing Center.

The Guide was supported by the [Specialty Crop Block Grant Program](#) at the U.S. Department of Agriculture through grant AM170100XXXXG054. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not represent the official views of the USDA. Questions, contact Bonita.Oehlke@mass.gov.

Matching Market Promotion Expenses With USDA Funds

Are you a small-medium sized value-added food or seafood business considering trade shows in the US or abroad to increase sales? For products that have more than 50% US ingredients by weight, USDA-FAS funds can offset 50% of eligible costs including the booth, displays, and shipment of samples. For information on eligible products, events and program details: Bonita.Oehlke@mass.gov.

The MassGrown Exchange - Connecting farms, food suppliers and buyers.



Recent listings include: Webster Public Schools looking for [sweet potato wedges/fries](#), Meadowsweet Farm selling [greenhouse](#), and Maitland Mountain Farm selling [pickles and fermented items](#). More products and services can be found and [here](#).

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

Dairy Farmers: Getting More for Your Milk - Partner with Processors to Venture into Value-Added Sales

MDAR is launching a new initiative to connect dairy farmers with small-scale dairy processors. Ever think about starting your own brand of cheese, yogurt, or butter? Do you need help finding a co-packer to make the product for you and don't know where to start?

Join our virtual Learning Session coming February, 2022 where we'll tackle transportation, how to work with your cooperative to diversify production, food safety, business planning, the FMMO, and more.

To register, or for more information, email Rebecca.Davidson@Mass.gov or call 857-202-7699.

Dairy Tax Credit

Dairy Tax Credit farmer applications were sent out on the 7th of December. If you are a dairy farmer, and have not received your tax credit statement form, please visit www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-to-the-dairy-farmer-tax-credit-program.

*If we do not receive your paperwork by February 1, 2022, we will assume that you do NOT want to participate in the 2021 Dairy Tax Credit program. Please contact Myron Inglis at Myron.Inglis@mass.gov with any questions.

Growing Your Farm Business Planning Course

Tuesday evenings, January 11 to March 8, 2022 - 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 and is taught by professional business planners with years of experience working with Massachusetts farms and guest speakers on current topics such as succession planning and online marketing. The cost is \$150 per farm. 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 on Tuesday evenings starting January 11 and ending March 8 (with one vacation week).

We are planning on an in-person class at MDAR's office in Southborough, MA (subject to current COVID guidelines).

Farmers that complete a business plan by participating in the Growing Your Farm business planning course and then apply and get accepted to MDAR's APR Improvement Program or Matching Enterprise Grants for Agriculture may be able to waive the business planning phase of these programs, enabling them to move to the contract phase earlier to start implementing their projects. The Growing Your Farm business planning

course has been approved as a certified USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) borrower training for financial management.

In order to participate, please complete a brief [Growing Your Farm Application](#)(.doc), and email it to Michael.Parker@mass.gov, or mail hard copy to: MDAR, Attn: Michael Parker, 138 Memorial Ave, Suite 42, West Springfield, MA 01089 For more information about this course, contact Michael Parker at 857-895-0023.

Farm Succession School

Three Tuesdays - January 25, February 15, & March 15, 2022 - Greenfield, MA

MDAR is hosting Land For Good's Farm Succession School for Massachusetts farmers 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.

Meet in-person (subject to current COVID guidelines) at the John W. Olver Franklin Transit Center in Greenfield for a three-session program between 9:00am – 4:00pm on the following Tuesdays: January 25; February 15, 2022; March 15, 2022 (snow dates on each Friday of the same weeks). The cost is \$100 per farm.

[Learn more and register here.](#) Contact: Shemariah at Land For Good shemariah@landforgood.org or 603-357-1600 with any questions.

Funding for both courses provided by MDAR's Resources' Agricultural Business Training Program.

Opportunity to License State Owned Land in Lakeville

Optional Site Tour- December 16, 2021. (Pre-registration Required)

Deadline for Response to RFR – January 14, 2022 at 3PM.

- [Request for Response \(PDF\)](#)
- [Request for Response \(Word\)](#)

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources is soliciting proposals for the agricultural use of various parcels of agricultural land up to approximately 53 acres of state-owned property consisting of eight fields located at the former Taunton State Hospital property on Bridge Street/Main Street and Old Bridge St respectively in Lakeville, Massachusetts. **Deadline to respond to the RFR is January 14, 2022 at 3PM.**

An optional site tour will take place on December 16, 2021 at 10:00 AM. Participants will meet in the Department's Lakeville Office at 30 Riverside Drive, Suite 202, Lakeville, MA 02347 for a brief overview and Q&A before driving over to the sites off Bridge Street and then Old Bridge Street.

To attend the site tour, contact: Dorothy Du by email: dorothy.du@mass.gov. Please use "RFR Taunton State Hospital– Site Tour" in the subject line.

Note: All participants in the site tour will be required to sign a risk indemnification agreement prior to the tour. Depending on the number of people who pre-register the schedule is subject to change due to social distancing needs. Masks are required for entry to the Lakeville office.

The Massachusetts Urban Agriculture Program FY2022-2 Seeks Proposals

MDAR seeks proposals for projects that will support commercial urban food production in the Commonwealth.

This is the second round for FY'22.

MDAR's Urban Agriculture Program is seeking to award grants, statewide, to promote strategies addressing food insecurity, to expand and create new economic opportunities and to increase access to fresh, local produce in urban neighborhoods.

- Application deadline is **4:00 PM on December 30, 2021.**
- Applicants are responsible to refer to the [COMMBUYS link](#) for any changes or updates to the RFR.
- For questions regarding the RFR, contact Rose.Arruda@mass.gov.

It's Pesticide License Renewal Time!

Please be reminded that your Massachusetts Pesticide Licenses expires each calendar year. The 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 Saturday, 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 - eplace.eea.mass.gov



Give the Gift of Education

Each year the calendar, [Celebrating the Seasons of Massachusetts Agriculture](#), features beautiful photographs from contest winners that best spotlight crops and farms across the Commonwealth. The Calendar's goal is to showcase the diversity

of farms and crops grown in Massachusetts, as well as 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](#), [Island Grown Initiative](#), and the [MA Christmas Tree Association](#).

Supporters of agricultural education - Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom (MAC) is a 501(c)(3) educational non-profit organization and working since 1983 to provide agricultural [education and training](#) for educators. If you'd like to learn more about MAC or want to assist with their mission, feel free to attend one of their monthly zoom mtgs. Contact Bobbie Oles at massaginclassroom@gmail.com to learn more.

Learn more about MAC and ordering calendars [here](#). Start clicking your camera and submitting photos for [next years contest now!](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS/WORKSHOPS

December

- **December 13-17 - New England Vegetable & Fruit Conference** - Virtual - Topics include: Tillage Reduction; Climate Adaptation Strategies on the Farm; Tree Fruit Berry Crops; Vegetable Diseases and Pests; Soil Health; Automation for Small Vegetable Growers; Inspiration from Away. [Details here.](#)
- **December 14 - State of the State: Update on Honey Bee Health in the Commonwealth** - Virtual Only - Honey bee viruses; pesticides. [Flyer here.](#)
- **December 14 - Compaction Mitigation with No-Till Practices** - 6-7:30 pm. Learn from Freedom Food Farm manager Chuck Currie and Maggie Payne, from NRCS, about the role of minimum tillage and cover crops on compaction mitigation on farm soil. [Details here.](#)

2022 – Happy New Year!

January

- **January 11 – Growing Your Farm Business Planning Course** – MDAR Southborough offices 5:30 – 8:30 pm. 8-session course on Tuesday evenings through March 8. For established farmers to develop a farm business plan and financial projections for their farm business. Course covers topics including resource assessment, marketing strategy, financial management, risk management, quality of life, and goal setting to help your farm business succeed. [Register here.](#)
- **January 15 & 16 - NOFA/Mass Winter Conference** - 35th Annual winter gathering. Join your peers in the organic, regenerative, sustainable living movement. Gain access to presenters and information that keeps you on the pulse of the latest developments, insights and innovations happening on the farms and gardens of your local region as well as from further afield. Conf. will be held as a hybrid event, with both in-person and virtual attendance options. You'll be welcome to join us on the campus of Worcester State University or virtually. [Details here.](#)

- **January 19 - Acquiring your Farm** – 6:30 - 8:30 pm Wednesday evenings through Feb. 23. Virtual training series for aspiring new and beginning farmers preparing to access farmland. Offered by Land For Good with USDA BFPD funding. [Early registration for How to Acquire Your Own Farm Training.](#)
- **January 25 - Farm Succession School** – John W. Olver Transit Center, Greenfield. 9:00 – 4:00 pm (1st of 3-session course also meets on February 15, & March 15, 2022) - MDAR is hosting Land For Good’s Farm Succession School for Massachusetts farmers 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. [Learn more and register here.](#)
- **January 26 & 27 - Jumping Worm Conference** - Are you a land manager and have been receiving requests for more information about so-called "jumping/snake worms"? Are you a homeowner who is looking to learn more, ask questions, or perhaps you just found jumping worms on your property in 2021? No matter who you are, if you are curious or concerned about jumping/snake worms, this conference is for you! [Details here.](#)
- **January 27 - 2021 Sustainable Business of the Year Awards Virtual Celebration** - The Sustainable Business Network(SBN) presents the Sixth Annual Awards Celebration in partnership with NPR's Award-winning Host Robin Young - a second virtual rendition of this event to honor six leading sustainable businesses in Massachusetts. Learn more about sustainable business in our state and network with others who share the values of the 2021 Sustainable Business of the Year Awardees. [More here.](#)
- **January 29 - Massachusetts Food Policy Council Meeting** - 9:30 - 11:30 am, virtual. [Details here.](#)

[MDAR Calendar](#)

Classified

- **Farmers Markets Seek Vendors** - MDAR posts an updated list of winter farmers markets looking for vendors [here](#). The contacts for farmers markets posted [here](#). Questions, contact David.Webber@mass.gov.

Looking to buy or sell, visit the [MassGrown Exchange!](#)

About the *Farm & Market Report*

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Complete staff directory [here](#). Next issue to be published in February. Please send news, events, or classified information by February 1st 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 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.

