
February/March Farm & Market Report

2/12/21

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CLASSIFIED

COMMISSIONER'S COLUMN



Greetings, Mass. Agriculture and all its friends,

I have always found this first column of the year the toughest to write. It's largely because it's the time of year that I am least likely in the field, and because many (but not all!) of our stakeholders have throttled down a little because of the holidays and because of the seasonality of many ag practices.

Usually mid to late January, organizations start having meetings, often their annual business meetings, and we start attending them. Obviously, with COVID restrictions still necessarily in place, they aren't going to occur as they normally do.

We've all been managing taking care of our essential business through an endless series of phone calls and virtual meetings. I've Zoom(ed), Team(ed), Webex(ed), Go(ne)ToMeeting, Google Met, FaceTimed, Skyped, and likely used one of them or some other platforms I don't even remember every working day since March! As I mentioned, we all seem to be getting done what we need to accomplish, but sadly, much is lost in those environments.

I have found that often the most important things to come out of those meetings is frequently not what's on the agenda (which obviously is important!), but the informal exchanges that are the result of simply by being in the room. That's where I often learn a great deal.

I miss those interactions a lot, and though I've learned an enormous amount of information in those exchanges that greatly assist my work, I admit it isn't all strictly business.

Actually that's a bit of a case study about much of how we all conduct ourselves during COVID-we are all generally managing to get our work done, but so many of the niceties, the routine interpersonal interactions, and often what just makes it fun have fallen by the wayside, and that's too bad.

I have managed to get out in the field a couple times since Green Friday in November.

In late January, I was very happy to attend the ribbon cutting for the nonprofit [Daily Table's](#) third retail outlet; this one located in Central Sq., Cambridge. Fortunately, it was a sunny winter day for this event held outdoors to ensure safety with social distancing.

Daily Table's mission is "...providing fresh tasty, convenient and nutritious food to communities most in need at prices everyone can afford" which positioned it to receive a grant from the [MA Food Ventures Program](#), which contributes to the financial needs of local food enterprises, supporting the creation of new food ventures, sited primarily in or near communities of low or moderate income, including Gateway Cities and rural communities. The MFVP supports organizations that increase access to healthy, affordable food options and improve economic opportunities, as well as implementing the goals of the [Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan](#).

My second winter event was in the more rural type of location I usually find myself: at a farm. On Thursday February 11, MDAR Deputy Commissioner Ashley Randle and I were very happy to join Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Kathleen Theoharides at Riverland Farm in Sunderland where she [announced over \\$13 million of grant awards](#) as part of the final rounds of the \$36 million Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program. In total the program has awarded over \$35 million to more than 360 recipients.

I had previously been to Riverland last August as it was a stop on Cong. Jim McGovern's annual series of farm tours. Farm operators Emily Landeck and Meghan Arquin share a passion for growing certified organic vegetables that is just as strong on a hot day in the middle of season as a (not too) cold day in February!

As we start to see the days slowly get longer, we start to see the annual signs of the approaching season. We are looking forward to getting out into the fields as much as present circumstances allow. That will shortly begin in earnest-Maple Month is approaching!

I am so looking forward to this year's Maple Kickoff, March 5th, at Debra and Tom LeRay's sugarhouse in Royalston. Last year's Kickoff at Sunrise Maple Farms in Colrain was our very last pre-Covid public event. This

year's event will be adapted to meet Covid considerations; though it won't be as well attended as other years, I think all will find it a sign of hope, renewal, and testament that agriculture endures in good times and bad.

I'm getting really itchy to get out, and I'm very optimistic that things will improve to allow that. I'm even trying to expand my home growing this year. We have a lot of south facing glass in our house. It's very pretty but not as warm as if there were more walls and less windows. This year I'm trying to take advantage of those cool but sunny conditions to see if I can successfully raise any potted winter lettuce in a spot like that. I have 2 successive plantings of 4 different varieties growing. I'll let you know my progress.

Speaking of progress reports, at last writing our online [Pesticide Licensing exams](#) program had just begun. We are very pleased with how successfully to date the industry has interacted with the platform; we'll continue to monitor to see if any tweaks may be needed.

MA Agriculture deserves to be very proud of its work growing its products in 2020. Already close connections between producers and consumers grew even closer; it would not surprise me that many of these close connections develop into even tighter bonds that last well after the pandemic ends.

Last year is in the books; there's a new season ahead with new challenges and opportunities. Let's see what MA Ag can do in 2021 now that it has a sense of the playing field!

My best wishes for a successful 2021, be well and stay safe, everyone,



John Lebeaux

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FOREFRONT

Energy News

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

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

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

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

Governor Baker signs transportation and economic development bills into law; funds electrification of transport and establishes commission to advance farm-based renewable energy

On January 14, 2021, Governor Baker signed [H.5250 - An Act Enabling Partnerships for Growth](#). H.5250 establishes a special commission to conduct an investigation regarding the needs of agriculture in the Commonwealth in the 21st century, including climate change resiliency and energy needs of farms. Specifically, the commission would be directed to review:

- The development of tax incentives and credits for equipment related to farm-based renewable energy projects;
- The effects of zoning ordinances and bylaws on farm-based renewable energy projects and potential zoning exemptions for farm-based renewable energy systems;
- The feasibility of establishing an incentive program to facilitate the growth of non-solar renewable-energy distributed-generation projects on farms;
- The development of potential grant programs in support of farms to develop farm-based renewable energy capabilities; and
- Methods of promoting and facilitating more prompt interconnection of energy projects owned or operated by agricultural producers.

The commission would be required to report its findings to the general court by June 30, 2021.

Apiary Program

State of the State - Spring Updates on Honey Bee Health – Join MDAR and UMass Teams to hear updates on March 8, 15, and 22nd. **New England Honey Bee Updates** - April 2, June 4, and August 6th. Details and Zoom links in the [2021 Spring newsletter \(.pdf\)](#)

2021 Honey Bee Education Days at State Apiaries

Are you interested in learning more about honey bees, their health and colony management techniques? Join the Bee Team from the MDAR Apiary Program to get a tour of live working honey bee colonies, hands-on demonstrations of hive management techniques, and exposure to the latest knowledge on how to best sustain healthy honey bee colonies in Massachusetts. These events are virtual this year, free and open to the public, but will focus on topics of interest to beekeepers. Registration is not necessary to attend. The events will be held on Saturdays from 10 am-12 pm unless listed below. [Dates and details here.](#)

Get to Zoomin' Virtually in 2021 with the New England Honey Bee Update

Due to the popularity and interest from the [1,279 attendees](#) at the 8 virtual meetings filled with a total of 16 hours of education, community and dialogue offered in 2020, we are planning to continue these Zoom sessions with regional apiary inspectors in 2021! To receive updates about these events and others, join the Apiary Program mailing list of currently [504 subscribers](#) by submitting your email address using the link: www.mass.gov/forms/join-the-apiary-program-mailing-list.

Voluntarily Register Your Apiary Now!

A total of [601 beekeepers](#) have voluntarily registered their apiaries with MDAR since April, 2017 by using the [new online form](#). Please consider taking a quick second 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

Mary Jordan, Director – [Division of Agricultural Markets](#), Mary.Jordan@mass.gov.

Spring officially begins in five weeks!.....and with seeds being ordered and market plans underway, we encourage to take a look at the conferences being held in the upcoming months including information below on the 8th biennial Harvest New England Agricultural Marketing Conference and Trade Show – virtual this year!

Our Division staff are very pleased to have student interns join us with our state wide marketing efforts through early May. We welcome their talent and skills and are happy to introduce these fine students to our agricultural industry. You may get a call/email in the future from these students:

- [Matthew Aliberti](#) is studying for his Masters in Communications, Public Relations and Advertising from Suffolk University, Boston. Matt will be developing social media posts on the promotion of Massachusetts agriculture as well as writing articles and assisting with the development of the Farm & Market Report as well as other published notifications.
- [Lucia Nicastro](#) is a senior at the University of Massachusetts – Amherst majoring in Agricultural Business with an Italian minor. Lucia will assist with various marketing and specific promotional initiatives including webpage development for value-added food business that have on-line fulfillment/ecommerce in a specific category and will assist the Massachusetts Building management with a strategic opening plan.
- [Olivia Palumbo](#) is a senior at the University of Rhode Island majoring in General Business Administration and minoring in Public Relations. She was born and raised in Londonderry, New Hampshire. Olivia is interested in social media marketing and event management and will be assisting Katie with content development for the Mass Dairy Promotion Board Facebook page as well as MDAR's outreach calendar.
- [Sophia Palumbo](#) is a sophomore at Boston University majoring in Political Science and minoring in Urban Studies. She will be assisting in gathering information from the various Agricultural Education groups and organizations in Massachusetts for the Department to determine what opportunities there might be for sharing best practices and bring greater awareness to the many Agricultural Education programs in the Commonwealth.

The Biennial Harvest New England Agricultural Marketing Conference and Trade Show



February 24th and 25th

Registration is now open for the 8th biennial Harvest New England Agricultural Marketing Conference and Trade Show. The virtual program is set for two half days and offered at no cost to attendees. Reserve your spot at the conference at www.harvestnewengland.org.

This year's conference theme is ***Diversifying for Agri-Businesses: Strategies for Weathering the Storms***. Kicking off the educational workshops on Wednesday, February 24 at 8:45 am is best-selling author and seventh generation farmer, Forrest Pritchard from Berryville, Virginia. His presentation, entitled ***Lessons from 2020***,

Opportunities for 2021, will examine what the past year taught us about business operation, marketing, and personal growth, and how farmers can use these lessons to make positive changes for 2021 and beyond.

Additional workshops will follow on Wednesday and Thursday that will include farmers and experts from across the region. Program topics include:

- Sharing Experiences on Navigating Farm Businesses Through the Pandemic (*regional farmer panel*)
- Increasing Profits Through Season Extension and Diversification by Adding Value to Your Farm Products
- Diversification: Business Planning Tools to Achieve Your Goals
- Considerations for Diversifying Your Farm Operation (*regional farmer panel*)
- Effective Marketing Solutions – How to Make the Best of a Difficult Situation

Information about all of the workshops, schedule and speakers, can be found at www.harvestnewengland.org.

*Harvest New England is also hosting a **New England Farmers' Market Managers Seminar** to be held in conjunction with the conference on February 22 and 23. Topics include market challenges and successes of 2020, creating effective community partnerships, conflict resolution, creating a welcoming and inclusive environment, SNAP program participation. Complete program information can be found at www.harvestnewengland.org.

Harvest New England (HNE) recognizes that this year has been unprecedented for producers in many ways, and feels strongly that now more than ever, it's important to provide agricultural businesses throughout the Northeast with the tools to remain viable, cultivate innovators, and foster the next generation of farmers. HNE is a cooperative marketing program created by New England's state departments of agriculture in 1992. It has sponsored this regional conference since 2007. For more information, visit www.harvestnewengland.org.

Winter Farmers Market Initiative Provides Access to Local Foods Over the Winter

The Massachusetts Farmers Markets Association (Mass Farmers Markets) received funding in the FY21 Commonwealth of Massachusetts Governor's Budget to design and construct market stalls - kiosks to keep farmers markets open as critical food access points, especially for SNAP-eligible individuals and families this winter. The kiosks allow for outdoor shopping with protection from the elements for vendors.



On February 11th, Mass Farmers Markets joined local officials in Codman Square to set up the kiosk for the opening of the market that day. These modular market stalls can be set up at the beginning of the winter season and disassembled in early spring for storage. Set up and breakdown can be accomplished by two people in 60 minutes with minimal tools. The structures include capabilities for refrigeration and storage of foods and goods along with shelving and display areas, open counter space for selling/purchasing products, and a locking mechanism for closed market days. All fabrication and materials were locally produced and sourced to invest back into the local economy.

The staff at Mass Farmers Market has partnered with six existing farmers markets and associated municipalities to install and pilot an initial set of 10 market stalls. In addition to Codman Square, sites slated to receive kiosks in the coming weeks include, Cambridge/Central Square, Newton, Orleans, Springfield and Wayland. For more information, visit www.massfarmersmarkets.org/2021winterinitiative.

Massachusetts Building 2021 Application Update



Due to the current state of the pandemic, the 2021 Massachusetts Building Exhibitor Application will have a delayed release.

Please check [website](#) for updates.

The MassGrown Exchange



Looking for Business-to-Business connections and listings? Buying, selling, or offering services? The MassGrown Exchange is the place for you! Recent posts include beef, granular maple sugar, eggs, chicken, and pork. Non-food posts include job postings and grading services. [See them all listed here.](#)

Tabulating year end results from the MassGrown Exchange (which started August 10, 2020), the platform had:

- 234 Businesses registered (only businesses with active listings are shown online)
- 260 Products and Services listed
- 6,622 Email notifications were sent
- 22,319 Pageviews (13,464 unique)

If you are new to the [MassGrown Exchange](#), we encourage you to learn more, explore the Exchange, and watch the [demonstration video](#) for a tour of the platform. Register to start using the Exchange today! For more information or questions, contact Richard LeBlanc at MDAR: Richard.LeBlanc@mass.gov.

Export Opportunities

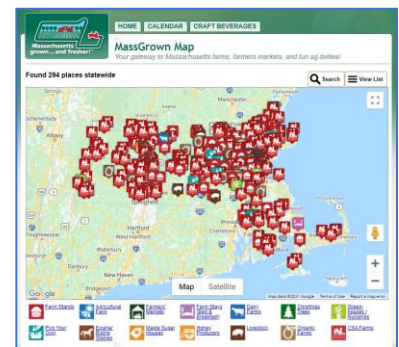
A recent seminar described USDA resources for small food, value-added ag, beverage, and seafood companies to enter international markets. Why should you consider export opportunities while you are working to increase your local and regional sales? Programs to help you meet international buyers can also support your US agenda when you exhibit at trade events such as Natural Products Expo, National Restaurant Association, Fancy Food and ingredient trade shows. And it helps to know about programs and services before you need them! For a recording or for any related questions: Bonita.Oehlke@mass.gov

The MassGrown Map

As we come into 2021, a reminder for farms and farmers markets to update their online map information. [Are you listed on the map?](#) Be sure your website and description are up to date. Search yourself under the various query options.

The MassGrown Map just had its' anniversary last year and we had over 295,490 map views! a 32% increase over 2019 with 224,679 map views.

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 \(.doc\)](#).



We also have “Massachusetts grown and fresher” price cards, stickers, and ten different designed posters. [Take a look and send in your order today!](#)

The Massachusetts Urban Farming Conference



The Massachusetts Urban Farming Conference (UFC) hosted by the Urban Farming Institute and in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR), is designed to advance opportunities and address barriers involved in cultivating a resilient and thriving Urban Farming sector. Our local urban farming community, along with cross-sector partners, will address challenges, highlight successes, and share resources at one of the best

educational and networking events for this thriving sector.

Yes, it will be virtual, and will have fantastic keynote speakers and knowledgeable practitioners with many networking opportunities.

Conference Keynote Speakers :

- Jillian Hishaw (Esq. L.L.M., F.A.R.M.S.), Founder is an innovative strategist, and Attorney in the areas of agriculture, food systems and asset protection, she was recently recognized by the Clif Bar Co. as a "Food Industry Changemaker."
- Emmanuel Pratt (Co-Founder and Executive Director, Sweet Water Foundation) is an urban designer creating a model of resident-driven community development in neighborhoods that have suffered the effects of long-term disinvestment.
- Karen Washington (Co-Owner, Rise & Root Farm; Co-Founder, Black Urban Growers) has lived in New York City all her life, and has spent decades promoting urban farming as a way for all New Yorkers to access fresh, locally grown food.

[Learn more and order your tickets for the 7th Massachusetts Urban Farming Conference today!](#) For more information or for youth, college, or group tickets, please contact Rose Arruda, Rose.Arruda@mass.gov.

Mass Animal Fund's Voucher Program



The Mass Animal Fund's Voucher Program was created in July of 2014 as a mechanism to provide assistance to Massachusetts' most vulnerable companion animals. The Voucher Program is dedicated to bringing resources to homeless animals and animals owned by low-income Massachusetts residents through a collaborative network of animal control officers, and veterinary providers. Since inception, the Mass Animal Fund has spent over \$1.7 million dollars to sterilize and vaccinate over 13,500 animals across the Commonwealth. The Fund's

Voucher Program is made possible through donations collected on line 33f of the Massachusetts Resident Income Tax Form. Invest in the responsible care of animals. **File taxes, help animals! #line33f.** mass.gov/animalfund.

Grow Produce in Massachusetts – Register Your Farm!

Produce farms that grow, harvest, pack or hold produce in Massachusetts may fall under the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)'s [Produce Safety Rule](#) that has been in effect since 2016. Your farm's status under the Rule is one of the following: exempt, qualified exempt, and full compliance. To help MDAR determine whether

your farm is covered under the Rule, or if you already know you fall under full compliance, we ask that you register your operation with us!

To make registration easy, we will be sending out a mailing within the next couple of weeks. Please complete the form and mail back to us to the address provided. If you do not receive the form in the mail, or prefer to complete the registration online, please complete the online registration form found [here](#). All information collected is confidential.

As always, The Produce Safety Team is available to answer any questions regarding compliance under the Produce Safety Rule, information on audits and inspections, upcoming trainings, educational opportunities, as well as scheduling voluntary farm visits to discuss best practices for your operation.

To learn more, please reach out to Alexandra Hachem by email at Alexandra.Hachem@mass.gov or by phone at 857-507-6346.

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MDAR Seeks Responses for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

The purpose of the [Specialty Crop Block Grant Program \(SCBGP\)](#) is to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Specialty crops are defined as “fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture).” Additional specialty crop categories and details [here](#).

For details and how to apply, [click here](#) - Deadline to apply is April 9, 2021.

Informational webinars where questions may be asked will be held for interested applicants on the dates listed below. Please specify which webinar date you would like to sign up for:

- Thursday, February 18th, at 9:00 am
- Tuesday, March 2nd, at 4:00 pm
- Friday, March 19th, at 12:00 pm

Please contact Rebecca Davidson at Rebecca.Davidson@mass.gov to join a webinar. Note, webinars will be recorded.

MDAR Seeks Responses for the Federal State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP)

The [Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program](#) (FSMIP) is a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) grant program that funds 3-year projects that improve the efficiency and success of the U.S. agriculture marketing system. Every year, Congress decides on the appropriation amount, which generally falls between \$1.1 and 1.3 million. The maximum project award is \$250,000.

Eligible projects range from:

- Determining best methods for processing, distributing, or marketing agricultural products.
- Eliminating barriers to movement of agricultural products in various channels.
- Exploring new uses or markets for certain commodities.

The deadline to submit a proposal to MDAR is April 16, 2021. [Click here](#) to access the RFR and for more information on FSMIP. A webinar is scheduled on March 2, 2021 at 4:00 pm and March 19, 2021 at 12:00 pm. To sign up, or for more information about this opportunity, please contact Rebecca Davidson, FSMIP Coordinator, Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, Rebecca.Davidson@mass.gov.

Massachusetts Introduced Pests Outreach Blog



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

Spotted lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*, "SLF") is an invasive sap-feeding insect first discovered in the state of Pennsylvania in 2014. This highly destructive pest targets over 70 different species of plants, including many that are common in the nursery and landscaping industry. [SLF Guidance for Nurseries and Landscapers](#).

Pest ID Tools: Spotted Lanternfly Egg Masses - Female spotted lanternflies will lay eggs on nearly any flat surface, which makes them a challenge to survey for, and means there is a big risk of them being accidentally introduced into our state from vehicles or goods that come here from infested states. [More here](#).

Emerald ash borer update: February 2021 - Emerald ash borer remains a pest of concern throughout the state. As of February 1, 2021, 6 new municipalities in 6 different Massachusetts counties have been confirmed to have emerald ash borer. The communities [listed here](#).

Notice of Public Comment Period and Virtual Public Meeting - Massachusetts Shellfish Initiative (MSI)

Review of DRAFT MSI Strategic Plan

At the request of the Massachusetts Shellfish Initiative (MSI) Task Force, the MSI Strategic Plan working group has developed a draft MSI Strategic Plan for public comment. The draft plan is the product of an iterative and collaborative process initiated with the goal of enhancing the economic, environmental, and social benefits of shellfish resources to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and its residents. Recommended actions included in the draft Strategic Plan were developed to address the growing and competing demands and management challenges associated with the Commonwealth's shellfish resources, and were derived from information included in the MSI Scoping and Assessment Reports.

The MSI Task Force encourages the public to review the draft Strategic Plan and to submit comments related to the proposed recommended actions and/or comments related to additional actions that may support the established MSI goals and objectives. Comments will be reviewed by the MSI Strategic Plan Work Group prior to the submission of a final draft to the MSI Task Force. The draft Strategic Plan document is available online: <https://bit.ly/3iGredq>.

[Complete details, meetings and links here.](#)

Choosing Pollinator-Friendly Native Plants in Home Gardening or Landscaping

Have you seen MDAR's [online resources](#) for native plant pollinator gardens?



- [Creating Pollinator-Friendly Gardens with Native Plants: Locally Available Options](#)
- [Native Pollinator Plants Seed List](#)
- New - [Garden Centers and Nurseries that sell Native Plants](#)
- New - [Massachusetts Native Plants and Pollinators Poster](#)

Recent updates include [the link](#) to spotlight nurseries across the state that offer native plants to their customers. Is your nursery/greenhouse/garden center missing from this list? If so, contact Jennifer.Forman-Orth@mass.gov with your business name, location, website, and a recent plant availability list.

The Legal Food Hub's Free Winter Webinar Series Kicks Off Next Week

The [Legal Food Hub's](#) free annual Winter Webinar Series will begin on Tuesday, February 16th. Each week we will spend an hour covering a legal topic of significance to New England farmers, food entrepreneurs, and food-oriented nonprofits. *All webinars are free and run from 12-1PM*

- [February 16](#): Understanding Purchase and Sale Agreements in Real Estate Transactions - Presenter: Attorney Rich Cavanaugh, Common Grow LLC.
- [February 23](#): Resolving Challenging Issues through Agricultural Mediation - Presenter: Matt Strassberg, Director of the Environmental Mediation Center
- [March 2](#): Hiring Your First Farm Employees - Presenter: Attorney John S. Gannon, Skoler-Abbott LLC.
- [March 9](#): Opening Your Farm to Visitors and Controlling Liability - Presenters: Attorney Mary Rose Scozzafava; Stuart Farnham, AFIS Vice President of Frazer Insurance Agency, Inc.; Lisa Chase, University of Vermont Agritourism Expert
- [March 11](#): Options for Forming a Social Enterprise - Presenters: Colin Antaya, Legal Fellow for Conservation Law Foundation; Kohei Ishihara, Owner of Movement Ground Farm

[Complete details here.](#)

Adding Value to Local Produce Through Freezing

Is it profitable for farmers in Mass. to sell high-quality, local frozen produce in the retail market? UMass Amherst Department of Food Science researchers worked with the Western Mass. Food Processing Center (WMFPC) at the Franklin County Community Development Corporation to find out.

The team conducted market research to identify whether consumers would want to buy retail frozen blueberries. The project also ran production trials using blueberries and spinach to identify the best way to process a safe, high-quality product, and conducted a cost/ return analysis. Using these results, the team developed a food safety plan and other tools to help farmers determine if frozen local produce is appropriate for their business.

The market research tested two populations of consumers – a representative sample of consumers in the Northeast region, and a convenience sample of “buy local” consumers. Results show that consumers think where

they purchase the product is very important, and they value information about where the product was grown, as well as where it was frozen. Of course, consumers also care about the price, but consumers who already purchase local foods are less sensitive to high prices than the general consumer.

For blueberries, production costs using the WMFPC equipment are low enough that the product is likely to be profitable, while spinach is unlikely to be profitable since it requires costly manual labor.

How does a farmer or food hub know if creating a frozen product is a fit for their business? A cost calculator tool on the UMASS project page can customize operational considerations (equipment, production volume, scale, labor, etc.) to estimate the potential profitability of frozen retail blueberries. Businesses can also use the tool for other potential frozen products by entering information for other fruits and vegetables. In addition, the process parameters, quality protocols and food safety plan are available to aid others that may be interested in processing safe, high-quality frozen blueberries and spinach. The food safety plan created through this project is available as an educational resource to help producers comply with the FSMA Preventive Controls Rule for Human Food.

Visit the [UMass Value Added website for this project](#). Questions, contact Amanda Kinchla at Amanda.Kinchla@foodsci.umass.edu.

Successful Value-Added Food Product Development: Managing Food Quality and Safety

Hosted by CISA and presented by food safety educators, this remote, three-session program will address product development and food safety issues faced by small value-added food processors. Throughout the course, food science basics, important considerations when developing a new food product, key elements required for product labeling, and an overview of key regulatory requirements for small and emerging food businesses will be discussed.

This course is ideal for specialty food producers including farms making value added products. Participants are eligible to receive one-on-one product food safety development assistance upon completion of the course. This course is taught in collaboration with UMass Extension, University of Rhode Island, Cape Cod Cooperative Extension, Buy Fresh Buy Local Cape Cod, and Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture. [Click here for more information and to register](#).

Navigating the Alphabet Soup of Food Safety

Join Cape Cod Cooperative Extension Food Safety Educators for a FREE 1-hour webinar as an introduction to farm food safety. Confused about farm and food safety lingo? Curious about value added products or marketing Grandma's pickle recipe with your farm grown cukes? Have you tried to sell at a retail store and get 'you're not certified'? Been Selling direct to consumer and gearing up for the 'scale up'? Join us and learn the next steps for your business. When: March 8, 10:00 - 11:00 PM Where: Remote via Zoom. [Click here to register](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS/WORKSHOPS

- February 16-19 - [Mass. Aquaculture Association Annual Mtg](#) - [details here](#).

- **February 17 - MDAR Energy Grants & Rural Energy for America Program (REAP)** - 10-11:30am. [Registration here](#). The MA Farm Energy Program will provide an overview of the application process and requirements for MDAR's energy grants, as well as the USDA's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) Grant. For more info., contact Megan Denardo, megan.denardo@cetonline.org, 413-727-3090.
- **February 22 & 23 - New England Farmers' Market Managers Seminar** - held in conjunction with the Harvest NE Conference. Topics include market challenges and successes of 2020, creating effective community partnerships, conflict resolution, creating a welcoming and inclusive environment, SNAP program participation. Complete program information can be found on www.harvestnewengland.org.
- **February 24 and 25, 2021 - Harvest New England Agricultural Marketing Conference** – New England's premier agricultural marketing conference. Sponsored by the six New England State Departments of Agriculture, this biennial conference began in 2007. This will be the eighth conference. The conference hosted nearly 30 workshops, with about 800 people in attendance, and a trade show of almost 100 exhibitors. For 2021, we virtually hope to bring you the same engaging, valuable and educational conference with six workshops. This is New England's largest agricultural conference solely dedicated to agricultural marketing. Details and updates [here](#).
- **February 25 - Dealing with Invasive Plants: What to Know and What to Watch Out For** - 11:30am - 1pm. MDAR's Jennifer Forman Orth. Did you know that there are currently 140 non-native plant species prohibited from sale in Massachusetts? This presentation will cover the origin of Massachusetts's Prohibited Plant List, how to manage several well-known invasive plants, and will also profile several high-priority invasive plants that nursery owners and landscapers need to be on the lookout for. [Details on this and other MNLA webinars here](#).
- **February 28 - SEMAP's 2021 Agriculture & Food Conference** - Whether you're a professional farmer, a backyard gardener, or just curious about locally grown food, the Ag & Food Conference is for you! SEMAP's flagship event includes workshops for the general public, as well as info-packed sessions for farmers and gardeners of all experience levels. [Register here](#).
- **March 5, 6, 9, and 11th - The Massachusetts Urban Farming Conference** – The 7th Massachusetts Urban Farming Conference (UFC), to advance opportunities and address barriers involved in cultivating a resilient and thriving urban farming sector. Virtual forum designed to provide resources, information, and technical assistance specifically for urban farmers. For more information, contact Rose.Arruda@mass.gov.

[MDAR Calendar](#)

Classified

- **Job Posting** - Incubator Farm Manager - Responsible for providing year-round technical assistance (TA) and farm production and business training to small-scale beginning farmers, both on and off the field, on multiple aspects of farm enterprise development. Responsibilities include: managing New Entry's 15-acre fields and incubator farm sites at the historic Moraine Farm in Beverly, MA. [Details here](#).
- **Job Posting** - Assistant farm manager - Cranberry Sunset Farm - Must have experience working on a farm, operating some equipment, and willing to work. Horse knowledge helpful, cranberries harvest in October. Contact Leslie, leslieballotti@hotmail.com, 860-930-4301.
- **Berkshire Hills Forestry Mulching** - Specialize in clearing of underbrush and invasive species of vegetation. Contact us to schedule a site visit and free estimate. Mike at 413-281-7562.
- **Farmers Markets Seek Vendors** - MDAR posts an updated list of farmers markets looking for vendors [here](#). The contacts for markets are posted [here](#). *MassGrown Map* of farmers markets [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 April. Please send news, events, or classified information by April 1st to Richard.LeBlanc@mass.gov. To unsubscribe, or change your email address, contact Richard.LeBlanc@mass.gov.

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

MDAR's mission is to ensure the long-term viability of agriculture in Massachusetts. Through its four divisions – Agricultural Conservation & Technical Assistance, Agricultural Markets, Animal Health, and Crop and Pest Services – MDAR strives to support, regulate and enhance the rich diversity of the Commonwealth's agricultural community to promote economically and environmentally sound food safety and animal health measures, and fulfill agriculture's role in energy conservation and production. For more information, visit MDAR's website at www.mass.gov/agr.

