



April/May Farm & Market Report

4/15/21

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CLASSIFIED

COMMISSIONER'S COLUMN



Greetings, Mass. Agriculture and all its friends,

Despite the unprecedented events of the last year, a new spring and a new season have once again arrived, and I think we all find that wonderfully familiar and comforting.

As I mention to you more often than I probably should, my background is in the nursery business; during March and April there is tremendous activity as the industry rapidly pivots from its slowest season of the year to its busiest. Plants are taken out of winter protection, others are field dug, others potted, greenhouses are packed with tender material, then all those plants are transported on or off farm—it's an amazing transformation in an extremely short period of time.

We saw last year what I guess we could call a "Covid Bump" in all aspects of horticulture. People largely kept closer to home, took interest in all kinds of outdoor activities, and all aspects of residential gardening and landscaping just took off as folks looked for safe activities and more enjoyable outdoor environments. It seems expectations are similar for 2021.

I'm one of those who has upped his game. I generally do a lot of home gardening and landscaping, but we've expanded our scope in the last year. Last time I mentioned my winter indoor lettuce growing experiment. I know many of you grow thousands of pounds of food, and rely on it to make your livings, so for me to write about what essentially is now my hobby and source of relaxation and pleasure is admittedly more than a little self-involved, but I have to tell you how enormously satisfying it was to bring my "crop" from seed to harvest to salad bowl. I wish I could have entered it in an ag fair! And if you're wondering if I'm showing off only my very best result, of course I am!



I've got a lot of seedlings started under grow lights with more to follow, last fall doubled the garlic planting, and we split and transplanted the rhubarb. Finally, I think we're installing a solar powered electric fence, because the woodchucks have been killing me the last few years. We have a 4' chain link fence around the garden with a foot of fencing below grade. It worked well for many years until they started climbing up and over the fence! Since then it's been a bit like Caddyshack around here! By the way, garlic and rhubarb are incredibly easy to grow, and the critters don't like them. My next career may be growing garlic, rhubarb, and select perennials!



Sadly, I couldn't attend the Maple Kickoff at the LeRay's in Royalston because that turned out to be my first vaccination day, but Deputy Commissioner Ashley Sears Randle stepped in and deftly handled the ceremonial tapping of the first tree!

I was pleased I did have the opportunity to join Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Kathleen Theoharides and Ashley for our annual Maple Tour. Accompanied by [MA Maple Producers Assn](#) Coordinator Winton Pitcoff, we toured Stonegate Farm Sugar House, Conway; Paul's Sugarhouse, Williamsburg; and Justamere Tree Farm, Worthington. (The last few miles of the drive to Justamere is one of the most favorite drives I've taken in this job.)

That was our last time in the field, and particularly with the improving weather we are getting antsy and are looking forward to a more normal schedule of tours and visits in 2021! If you think that's me fishing for invitations, you're right!

We continued to also meet virtually through the winter and early spring. I was pleased to virtually attend and speak at the [Harvest New England Agricultural Marketing Conference and Trade Show](#), [Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Association](#) Annual Meeting, the [7th MA Urban Ag Conference](#), the [Sustainable Business Network of Massachusetts](#) Virtual Local Food & Specialty Crop Trade Show, and Legislative Farm Bureau Meetings for Essex, Bristol, Worcester, and Plymouth Counties.

I want to make you aware of a recent action by the [Pesticide Board Subcommittee](#), on which MDAR sits. It took action relative to [neonicotinoid insecticides](#). Following a scientific literature review and a related public hearing, the Subcommittee voted to modify the registration classification of pesticide products containing neonicotinoids that have outdoor non-structural uses or outdoor non-agricultural uses on the label from general use to state restricted use. These uses include, but are not limited to, uses on lawn and turf, trees and shrubs, ornamentals, and vegetable and flower gardens. The reclassification shall begin on July 1, 2022.

Effectively, neonicotinoid insecticides will no longer be available to the general public for outdoor horticultural purposes as of July 1, 2022.

Speaking of pesticides, since I first started at MDAR, I began hearing a lot from the industry urging us to move many of our paper-based Pesticide Program transactions to electronic format. Under the leadership of Crop and Pest Services Division Director Taryn LaScola-Miner, MDAR's Pesticide Program has successfully migrated multiple licensing and registration operations to electronic format, the most recent being online applications for pesticide licensing of applicators.



This has not been an easy process; each operation presented unique problems that required unique solutions, but Taryn, Pesticide Operations Coordinator Steve Antunes-Kenyon, and the entire program team kept pushing. The results have been extremely well received by industry, to the point that the New England Pest Management Association [awarded](#) MDAR a plaque recognizing these achievements.

The Pesticide Program put tremendous effective effort into the online migrations, and we are all very pleased that industry has responded so positively. Thank you, NEPMA, for recognizing this multi-year effort by the team!

My mention of my nursery background reminds me how I wrote a biweekly email newsletter to our customers which had many similarities to this column in its tone and style. I would write about certain plants based on seasonality in an effort to promote sales. Well, I'm not trying to sell anything, but I thought I might briefly start featuring some less than common, but readily available, outstanding plants that you may like to grow in your yard just for your personal enjoyment.

Glory of the Snow (*Chinodoxa luciliae*) is a beautiful, easy to grow, small, very early bloomer. It's grown from a bulb that one plants in the fall like Tulips. It makes a beautiful small grassy mat, just a couple inches tall that reliably blooms pretty heavily with good sized blue flowers for quite a long time in very early spring. It's extremely winter hardy and increases in size through the years, with really no care necessary. Besides the mother plant growing in size each year, it also self-sows so volunteers will pop up throughout one's yard. It may naturalize, but it isn't invasive. Don't plant the tiny bulbs singly-plant in groups of 3, 5, or 7 bulbs in October/November and that's all you'll ever have to do! It's a great plant.



Finally, since my last column, I observed my 6th anniversary as MDAR Commissioner. It's been a tremendous honor and privilege to serve you, and I look forward to continue our work *"to help keep the Massachusetts' food supply safe and secure, and to work to keep Massachusetts agriculture economically and environmentally sound."*

That work is conducted by the terrific team we have at MDAR and the Mosquito Control Projects-I am so proud of their dedication, creative thinking, and hard work as we advance that mission, and I want to publicly thank them for how they help me each and every day.

I know you're already busy, but we're all about to get busier as the season opens up!

Be well and stay safe, everyone,



John Lebeaux

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; MDAR CSAP has just been announced and is due June 11, 2021. 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.

MDAR is now accepting applications for the Climate Smart Agriculture Program (CSAP)

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

The CSAP grant is broken into two sections. Section I: Environment is for environmental projects such as soil health, water use efficiency, or other projects working towards reducing or limiting greenhouse gas emissions. Section II: Energy is Ag-Energy projects to improve energy efficiency or to facilitate clean energy adoption. Applicants can apply to either or both sections. Participants selected for funding under either section are provided with reimbursement grants for 80% of total project costs up to \$50,000.

www.mass.gov/how-to/how-to-apply-to-the-climate-smart-agriculture-program - **Application due: Friday, June 11, 2021 by 4:00pm**

For more information contact:

Section I: Environment - Laura Maul at (617) 626-1739 or at Laura.Maul@mass.gov

Section II Energy - Gerry Palano at (617) 626-1706 or at Gerald.Palano@mass.gov

Farm Viability Grant Programs – Request for Responses

APR Improvement Program (AIP)

AIP provides business planning and technical assistance to farms with land that has already been protected through MDAR's Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program. The program assists with issues of financial viability, resource conservation, family succession, modernization of infrastructure and other issues that by addressing may enhance the long term continued use of the agricultural resource. Grant funds of \$40,000 - \$120,000 may be available on a reimbursement basis with a 25% match to participants for capital infrastructure improvements identified through the planning process. Projects include resource management, new or improved barns, farmstands or other agricultural buildings, or processing facilities.

www.mass.gov/service-details/apr-improvement-program-aip - **Application due: 4:00PM on Thursday, April 29, 2021** - For more information contact Michael Parker at (413) 726-2008 or at Michael.Parker@mass.gov

Farm Viability Enhancement Program (FVEP)

FVEP provides business planning and technical assistance program to help established farms identify strategies to increase farm viability such as new or expanded enterprises, increased productivity, marketing, and/or environmental sustainability. Participants selected to participate in the program may be offered grant funds of \$50,000 to \$150,000 to implement strategies identified during the planning process in return for signing an agricultural covenant on the farm property to keep it in agricultural use for a 5, 10 or 15-year term. Eligible uses of funds are capital projects on the farm such as building or repairing barns, farmstands or other agricultural buildings, modernizing equipment, or improving food processing capacity.

www.mass.gov/service-details/farm-viability-enhancement-program-fvep - **Application due: 4:00PM on Thursday, April 29, 2021** - For more information contact Melissa Adams at (413) 548-1904 or Melissa.L.Adams@mass.gov.

Matching Enterprise Grants Program (MEGA)

MEGA is a reimbursement grant program that assists farmers who are between 1 and 5 years in business by providing technical and business planning and grant funds for farm improvement strategies. Grant funds of up to \$10,000 with a 1:1 match to assist farmers whose goal is to raise agricultural products and who aspire to develop their farms into commercially viable operations. Funds are typically used for equipment, infrastructure, or other

capital improvements to implement strategies that are identified during the planning process to help the business grow.

www.mass.gov/service-details/matching-enterprise-grants-for-agriculture-mega - **Application due: 4:00PM on Thursday, April 29, 2021** - For more information contact Jessica Camp at Jessica.Camp@mass.gov.

Ag Composting Improvement Program (ACIP)

The Ag Composting Improvement Program funds projects and equipment to facilitate composting best management practices, use of compost for agricultural purposes, and enhance overall management of agricultural composting operations. Reimbursement grants up to \$75,000 will be awarded on a competitive basis.

www.mass.gov/how-to/agricultural-composting-improvement-grant-program-acip - **Application due: 4:00PM on Tuesday, June 1, 2021** - For more information contact Sean Bowen at (617) 626-1724 or Sean.Bowen@mass.gov.

Apiary Program

Next New England Honey Bee Updates - June 4th 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.](#)

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.

The MassGrown Exchange

Looking for Business-to-Business connections? Buying, selling, crops, equipment, or offering services? The MassGrown Exchange is the place for you!



Farmstands looking to add new products to supplement your stand? Search for them [here](#).

Looking for a new job? Recent posts include: Bookkeeper, Warehouse helper, Food Runner, Assistant Fruit Farmer.

Other listings include grading services, Kombucha, organic foods and plants.

[See them all listed here.](#)

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

- 234 [Businesses registered](#) (businesses with active listings are shown)
- 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 Rick LeBlanc at MDAR: Richard.LeBlanc@mass.gov.

Farmers Market Season is Starting Up: Markets are Seeking Farmers!

Many farmers markets across the state will open over the next several weeks and farmers market managers are looking forward to a busy season with safety protocols in place for vendors and shoppers. Despite the pandemic, farmers markets remained a popular choice last year with shoppers looking for local foods.

Typically, many farmers markets open in May or June and run through October or November. To help growers find markets, MDAR keeps a list of farmers markets seeking vendors on our website. Market managers are seeking a variety of vendors for the upcoming season, including produce, meat, cheese and more! You can find a list [here](#). Check back often as the list is updated periodically throughout the year.

For more information on selling at farmers markets, contact David Webber, David.Webber@mass.gov or 617-626-1754. Map of farmers markets across the Commonwealth [here](#).

Trade Shows Have Been Cancelled but Virtual Events are Providing Market Connections

With the recent cancellation of the postponed Seafood Expo North America, Boston, the Massachusetts Avenue won't be unveiled again until 2022. The New England Food Show has also been put off until next year. The Summer Fancy Food Show, typically held in June, has been rescheduled for September.

With travel limitations and strict rules for in-person events still in place, moving to virtual platforms has been critical to connect food businesses with buyers from outside the US. Virtual offerings have connected suppliers and buyers, most recently with one-on-one meetings with seafood customers, coordinated by Food Export. MDAR is a member of Food Export USA Northeast. Commissioner Lebeaux is an officer on the board of directors. Funds from the USDA Foreign Agriculture Service support programs and services available to Massachusetts beverage, food and fisher businesses. Bonita Oehlke is MDAR's liaison to Food Export.

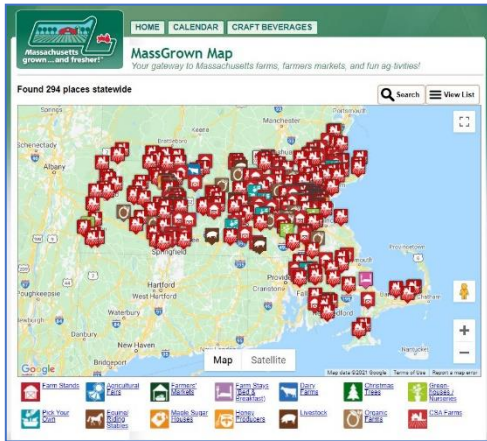
At the seafood virtual meetings, an educational program featured MDAR's sister agency, the Division of Marine Fisheries. The president of the Eastern Shellfish Growers Association also participated, providing detailed information on east coast oysters.

A summer edition of Food Export's Virtual Connect will be held June 28 – July 1. Buyers are being identified as well as a wide variety of products of interest including both retail and foodservice value-added products. The

event offers a low cost, low risk opportunity to get direct product feedback and to build sales with customers outside of the U.S.

For more information, contact Bonita.Oehlke@mass.gov.

The MassGrown Map



As we come into Spring, a reminder for retail flower, nurseries, 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.

Did you know the "MassGrown" map is phone mobile friendly? On your phone, visit www.massnrc.org/massgrown, then "add to home screen", and you will see the MassGrown logo. Now whenever you are looking farms and farmers markets on the

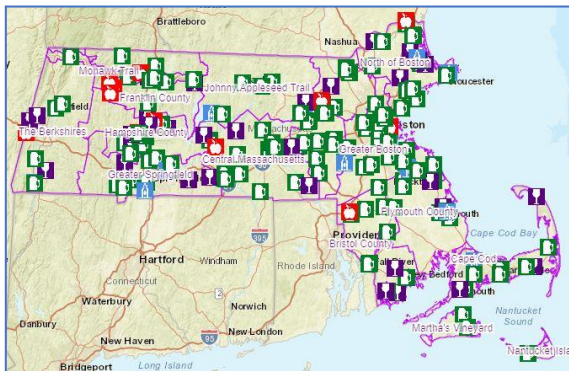


road, you will always find one nearest to you!

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!](#)

Updates to Craft Beverages



With better weather, longer days, and outside tasting options, consider a visit to a brewery, cidemaker, distillery or winery nearby or across the Commonwealth. MDAR's [craft beverages pages](#) have been updated to include over 270 breweries, cideries, and distilleries and wineries that call Massachusetts home. The updated listings are organized by type of beverage and region. These artisans incorporate local fruit, malted grains and other home-grown ingredients into their products when possible.

- [Massachusetts Wineries Page](#), over 35 wineries
- [Massachusetts Breweries Page](#), over 200 breweries
- [Massachusetts Cideries Page](#), over 20 cideries
- [Massachusetts Distilleries Page](#), over 15 distilleries

To map your route and combine a visit with other agritourism opportunities, check out MDAR's [craft beverages map](#). Get some fresh air, enjoy the views across Massachusetts, spend some time with friends and connect with new people. You will experience compelling craft beverage styles and flavors and support local businesses. The updates were made thanks to MDAR's spring intern Lucia Nicastro.

MDAR Mosquito-Borne Disease
 MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES & FORESTRY

IS YOUR HORSE PROTECTED?
 Mosquitoes across Massachusetts and in surrounding states spread Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile Virus (WNV).
 In 2019, eight horses in Massachusetts died from EEE. In 2020, interventions including vaccination eliminated cases of EEE in horses!
Vaccination can prevent EEE and WNV in horses. Protect your horses!

Call your veterinarian to schedule this life-saving vaccination.
 MA residents: Can't afford this vaccine? Ask your vet if MDAR can help.

Funded through USDA APHIS Cooperative Agreement

Is Your Horse Protected?

[Eastern Equine Encephalitis \(EEE\) and West Nile Virus \(WNV\)](#) are spread by mosquitos and can cause fatal neurologic disease in horses, other animals, and people.

Routine vaccination can prevent these diseases in horses.

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

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

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center Opportunities - Dairy Marketing & Branding Services Grant and Cheese Export Opportunity

Dairy Marketing & Branding Services Grant

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) has released the request for applications for the Dairy Marketing & Branding Services Grant. This opportunity will provide funds to established value-added dairy processors in the Northeast U.S. to access professional marketing and branding services to elevate their businesses. Projects funded by this grant will increase the exposure and promotion of regionally produced dairy products guided by marketing/branding professionals. Funded projects will increase consumer awareness of products, develop market channels and distribution opportunities to increase product placement, support innovative strategies to increase consumption, and/or increase business revenues. Grant funds must be used to prioritize the grantee hiring a professional marketing/branding contractor to develop strategy and/or content. Additionally, up to 25% of the grant funds may be used to implement the strategy and/or content developed by the contractor.

Awards will range from \$10,000 - \$50,000. Total funds available for this grant round are \$400,000. NE-DBIC will accept applications starting on April 27. Deadline to apply: June 8, 2021

More information at: agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic/activities/dairy-marketing-branding-services-grant

Cheese Export Opportunity

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) is recruiting cheesemakers from the Northeast region of the US to represent their high-quality cheese products at SIAL Canada, an international food and beverage trade show hosted annually in Toronto and Montreal. SIAL is an entryway to U.S. and international markets, hosting 25,000+ buyers from Canada, the United States, and 60 other countries.

This September, the NE-DBIC will host a turn-key Cheese Pavilion at SIAL Canada. Booths will be branded with the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center logo and the cost of the Pavilion buildout is included as well as reimbursement, coaching, and logistics management.

Please contact us with suggestions of cheesemakers that you feel would be a good fit from your state, or have them reach out directly. Contact Laura.Ginsburg@vermont.gov or 802-522-2252.

Massachusetts Farm to School Offers Series of Professional Development Events



[Massachusetts Farm to School](#) is pleased to share a series FREE professional development events for educators, school nutrition staff, and advocates from farm to school support organizations this spring. These events will be hosted by Mass. Farm to School and partner organizations. All events are virtual.

- April 20 - Navigating Procurement Challenges in Farm to School
- April 29 - Community Farms: How They Bring Farm to School to Life
- May 4 - Bringing USDA Summer Meals to Your Farmers Market
- May 19 - Using A Simple 3-Quote Method to Increase Your Local Purchasing
- May 27 - Harvest of the Month 101

[Complete details and registration here.](#)

UMass Diagnostic Service Updates

Landscape and Turf Problem Diagnostics - The UMass Plant Diagnostic Lab is accepting plant disease, insect pest and invasive plant/weed samples (mail-in only - walk-in samples cannot be accepted). The lab serves commercial landscape contractors, turf managers, arborists, nurseries and other green industry professionals. It provides woody plant and turf disease analysis, woody plant and turf insect identification, turfgrass identification, weed identification, and offers a report of pest management strategies that are research based, economically sound and environmentally appropriate for the situation. Accurate diagnosis for a turf or landscape problem can often eliminate or reduce the need for pesticide use. See our website for instructions on sample submission and for a sample submission form at ag.umass.edu/services/plant-diagnostics-laboratory. Mail delivery services and staffing have been altered due to the pandemic, so please allow for some additional time for samples to arrive at the lab and undergo the diagnostic process.

Soil and Plant Nutrient Testing - The UMass Soil and Plant Nutrient Testing Lab is accepting orders for routine soil analysis and particle size analysis ONLY (please do not send orders for other types of analyses at this time). Send orders via USPS, UPS, FedEx or other private carrier (hand delivered orders cannot be accepted at this time). Processing time may be longer than usual since the lab is operating with reduced staff and staggered shifts. The lab provides test results and recommendations that lead to the wise and economical use of soils and soil amendments. For updates and order forms, visit the [UMass Soil and Plant Nutrient Testing Laboratory website](#).

Tick Testing - The UMass Laboratory of Medical Zoology is currently unable to accept samples for tick testing at this time. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health provides a list of potential tick identification and testing alternatives at www.mass.gov/service-details/tick-identification-and-testing-services.

UPCOMING EVENTS/WORKSHOPS

- **April 20 - Navigating Procurement Challenges in Farm to School** - 2:00 - 3:00 pm - Looking to increase your knowledge about and ability to implement the USDA National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs? This free online training series will provide you with the vital information and skills to improve program operations. Live webinars will provide 1 hour of professional development. Brought to you by The John Stalker Institute & DESE, part of the Nuts & Bolts of School Nutrition Series. [Details here.](#)
- **April 20 - Pesticide Board Subcommittee Meeting** - 9 am - 11 am - [Details here.](#)

- **April 29 - Community Farms: How They Bring Farm to School to Life!** 2:00 - 3:30 pm - Hear from community farms across Massachusetts on how they partner with schools in their district to bring Farm to School to life. Look at different successful models that offer meaningful educational programming that compliments what is already happening in schools. Panelists: Seth Terramane/Medway Community Farm; Ellena Baum/Grow Food Northampton; Elizabeth Green/Three Sisters Garden. [Register in advance here.](#)
- **April 29 - Marketing in a Pinch: Quick Fixes for the Busy Season** - 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm - Free - When you have so many things on your To Do list, social media maintenance and online marketing can fall by the wayside. Join Mieke Ozeki of Radiance Studios, LLC to discuss the quickest and most effective marketing strategies to adopt during the growing season. She'll share low-input and high-reward choices that will elevate your existing marketing practices, or help you begin the process of getting on the map. This workshop is open to all levels of marketing proficiency. [Details here.](#)
- **May 3 - How to Finance and Increase Exports Sales & Limit Risks** – Features seven panelists that will provide different export related services including banking, credit insurance, business counseling, and export financing. [Details here.](#)
- **May 4 - Bringing USDA Summer Meals to Your Farmers Market** - 3:00 - 4:15 pm - The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is a federally-funded, state-administered program which provides free healthy meals and snacks to children and teens during the summer months when school is out. Find out how your farmers market can get involved! Learn how the program works and hear from a farmers market who hosts a summer meal site. Learn about resources and opportunities for incorporating local foods and partnering with organizations in your community. [Register in advance here.](#)
- **May 7 - Massachusetts Food Policy Council Meeting** - 9:30 am - 11:30 am - Updates from Council members on recent and relevant issues is on the agenda, as well as reports from the MA Food System Collaborative, the MA Legislature's Food Caucus, and a discussion about priorities and measuring progress. Remote participation information will be available soon – [updates here.](#)
Contact: Bonita.Oehlke@mass.gov.

[MDAR Calendar](#)

USDA NEWS

AMS Issues Pre-Solicitation Notice for TEFAP Fresh Produce

USDA recently announced plans to purchase Fresh Produce (WBSCM Material Number 111427). Pandemic Assistance funding has been made available to supplement The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) program for the remainder of the fiscal year ending September 30, 2021. Pursuant to that directive, to help those most in need receive healthy, fresh foods, USDA will be offering boxes of pre-packed, fresh produce through TEFAP in addition to the single varieties that are already available to order.

Solicitations will be issued in the near future, and will be available electronically through the [Web-Based Supply Chain Management \(WBSCM\) system](#) and beta.sam.gov. A hard copy of the solicitation will not be available. Public WBSCM information is available without an account on the [WBSCM Public Procurement Page](#). All future information regarding this acquisition, including solicitation amendments and award notices, will be published through WBSCM, the Agricultural Marketing Service's website at www.ams.usda.gov/selling-food, and beta.sam.gov. Interested parties shall be responsible for ensuring that they have the most up-to-date information about this acquisition. The contract type is anticipated to be firmfixed price. Deliveries are expected to be to various locations in the United States on an FOB destination basis.

[Details here.](#) Questions regarding this procurement should be directed to the following contacts: LaShawne Brown, lashawne.brown@usda.gov or David Cottrell, david.cottrell@ams.gov.

USDA - Funding Available to Organizations to Assist Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers under Pandemic Assistance for Producers Initiative

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) [Farm Service Agency](#) (FSA) recently announced the availability of \$2 million to establish partnerships with organizations to provide outreach and technical assistance to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. The funding was made possible by USDA's new Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative, an effort to distribute resources more broadly and to put greater emphasis on outreach to small and socially disadvantaged producers impacted by the pandemic. Today also marks the reopening of FSA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) signup as part of the Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. Farmers and ranchers will have at least 60 days to apply or make modifications to existing CFAP 2 applications.

[Details here.](#)

USDA Seeks Innovative Partner-led Projects Delivering Sustainable Agricultural Solutions

Project proposals are being accepted now through May 28

USDA is seeking proposals to fund up to \$75 million in new, unique projects under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program's (RCPP) Alternative Funding Arrangements (AFA) that take innovative and non-traditional approaches to conservation solutions at the local, regional and landscape scales. In making selections. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will prioritize projects related to climate smart agriculture and forestry. NRCS will fund up to 15 projects this year through AFA, where partners have more flexibility in working directly with agricultural producers to support the development of new conservation structures and approaches that would not otherwise be effectively implemented through the classic RCPP.

[Details here.](#)

Classified

- **[Farm for Sale in Rochester](#)** – Doggett Brook Farm - [Details here.](#)
- **[Job Postings:](#)** Bookkeeper, Warehouse helper, Food Runner, Assistant Fruit Farmer - Find them all [listed on the MassGrown Exchange here.](#)
- **[Farmers Markets Seek Vendors](#)** - MDAR posts an updated list of farmers markets looking for vendors [here.](#) The contacts for markets are posted [here.](#) Questions, contact David.Webber@mass.gov.

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

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[COVID-19 Resources for Agriculture](#)
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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.

