
June/July Farm & Market Report

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CLASSIFIED

COMMISSIONER'S COLUMN

Greetings, Mass. Agriculture and all its friends,

First things first!

*Please join friends of Massachusetts agriculture at the WooSox game **Friday, August 19th, 2022**, at 6:45 PM as we gather together to provide an opportunity to*



call the public's attention to Massachusetts' vibrant agriculture and local food system sector, recall its efforts through the pandemic, and simply socialize with friends and acquaintances.

A reserved hospitality section (up to 175 people) includes a buffet and cash bar at the park, which is a mix of seats, high chairs and an area to mingle. The tickets are non-assigned seats. For those that can stay after the game, you will have an opportunity to enjoy the Friday fireworks display.

For tickets please go to [MDAR WooSox custom ticket link](#). Please contact Dalton Bodreau at dbodreau@woosox.com with any questions about this special offer.

Please note there is no financial cost or benefit to MDAR in the organization of this event.

Hope to see you there!

John

Now back to normal programming...

As is my general practice, I seem to have a lot I want to mention, and also following my general practice, I'm pushing Rick's deadline hard, so here we go!

I call to your attention a recent change in leadership at the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) to which MDAR reports. Secretary Kathleen Theoharides left state service in early May. "Climate Katie" as she was known was a good friend to MA Ag and MDAR and was very supportive of much of our work. As her nickname suggests, she was especially interested in and supportive of our Climate Smart Agriculture programs which many of you have used to great advantage.

Though sad to see Secretary Theoharides leave, we were very pleased by Governor Baker's choice to fill the vacancy with the immediate appointment of Bethany Card who was serving as EEA Undersecretary of Environmental Policy and Climate Resiliency. Beth and I go way back to when she was at the Department of Environmental Protection working in water supply. When I was a municipal official, she was someone I frequently worked with relative to municipal Water Management Act issues.

When she joined EEA as Undersecretary, she became very frequently involved with ag issues. Realizing she wanted to increase her knowledge of ag issues, Deputy Commissioners Alisha Bouchard and Ashley Sears Randle had a standing meeting with her early every other Wednesday morning. Noted on our calendars as "Coffee with Beth," it was a fabulous opportunity to speak with EEA senior leadership on a regular one on one basis; that strong link remains as she has assumed her new position.

We've certainly seen more than our fair share of climate/weather issues over the last few years. We've ping-ponged back and forth from too dry to too wet conditions, sometimes in the same growing seasons. We now find ourselves in a situation in which we have Level 2 – Significant Drought in the Northeast and Southeast Regions of the Commonwealth, and a Level 1 – Mild Drought in the Connecticut River Valley, Central, and Islands Regions. The Western and Cape Cod Regions are in Level 0 – Normal condition. Current drought status with an illustrative map is [here](#).

I think most of us would agree that the biggest unknown we constantly face isn't the economy, isn't government (whew!), isn't labor, but it's always the weather. My dad used to constantly remind me that regardless of how much (or how little!) planning one does, in agriculture you look a lot smarter when the weather cooperates, and much less so when it doesn't.

Both USDA NRCS and MDAR have programs that support making farms more climate resilient. I urge all to review them and if desired, speak with staff to determine what might be a potential fit for your operation.

This week, June 20-26 is Pollinator Week! To commemorate, MDAR will host an event at our State Apiary in Amherst. Perfectly timed, WBUR Radio aired a report related to bees and pollinators on June 7, in which a MA food truck business which supports pollinators is featured along with an interview with MDAR Chief Apiary Inspector and Apiary Program Coordinator Kim Skyrn. It's a very interesting, engaging, and highly informative report which I urge all to hear. Just click at top left the white arrow in the red circle [here](#). MDAR's Apiary Program page is [here](#).

As the season progresses, so does our time in the field. I cannot overstate how important I find this part of our work. It gives me the opportunity to see things, not have them described to me, and learn much through more informal conversations than I would have learned in any other fashion.

After a Covid break, Bristol County Farm Bureau hosted a very well attended Legislative Breakfast in Raynham in early April which I attended. There were lots of farmers and a strong contingent of legislators.

Milk cooperative AgriMark held its annual meeting in Springfield mid-April. I was invited to address the group on MA Agriculture. MDAR continues to explore how it can assist an industry caught in some unfavorable economics largely not at all of its own making, so I was joined by Deputy Commissioner and Dairy Promotion Board (DPB) Chair-designee Ashley Sears Randle, DPB Coordinator Katie Rozenas and Ag Markets Coordinator Rebecca Davidson, who are all devoting time to this effort. A vibrant MA Dairy benefits all of MA Ag!

Lt. Governor Polito, then Secretary Theoharides, and I were pleased to attend an event at Worcester's beautiful Union Station at which we announced funding for a round of Food Security Infrastructure grants while US Senator Ed Markey and Congressman Jim McGovern announced federal funding for the Worcester Regional Food Hub. It was a great day for Worcester and food producers in general!

I realize I frequently need to use terms like "after a Covid hiatus..." Another annual event interrupted by Covid was the annual Worcester County 4-H Annual Awards Dinner. Ashley and I attended in late April. We are constantly so impressed by our MA 4-H and FFA members. Once again, interrupted friendships were renewed. UMass Extension's Megan McDermott and the Force of Nature known as Nancy Andrews has this group humming along on all cylinders!

In early May, Ashley and I were delighted to attend the ribbon cutting ceremony for major renovations and expansion at Bristol County Agricultural High School. The new facilities tremendously improve the already excellent curriculum and allow for more students to attend. The work necessary for government to finance and construct a public building is not an easy path. When you add in that it's a regional effort requiring many town meetings and city councils to approve, and that it's a specialized ag campus added to the level of difficulty, but that just makes the success sweeter. What a great final product-congratulations to all involved!

Also in early May, both Deputies, MDAR Chief Fiscal Officer Cullen Roberts and I had a tour at Great Falls Aquaculture in Turners Falls. You may be surprised to know it's the largest protein producer in the state! We learned that much larger facilities are being constructed right now around the country as this type of farming is becoming more and more necessary and attractive from a financial perspective. Sadly, last minute Aquaculture Coordinator Sean Bowen, who had organized the event, couldn't join us.

Under Ashley's coordination, we keep organizing volunteer opportunities with staff. In May we returned to Community Servings in Jamaica Plain to support its mission to provide medically tailored meals to people in

need. Joined by Sunny Cai and Delia Delongchamp from DACTA, Christine Smith from Legal, Cullen Roberts from Fiscal, Ashley and I pulled a shift preparing meals for delivery.

In the second half of the month, we had a great visit, tour, and a delicious meal at Essex County Farm Bureau's and Essex County Fruit Growers Spring Field Day at Cider Hill Farm in Amesbury. Karen and Glenn Cook, their sons, and their entire team have created a very beautiful and productive farm that has embraced agritourism to make it into a regular destination for consumers.

Once we flipped the calendar to June, our field work amped up like crazy! It started with an event to promote pollinators and the plants they need as a food source. In partnership with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), we promoted the state's Growing Wild campaign at Bigelow Nurseries in Northborough. My longtime friend from just over the hill, Pat Bigelow and her team have long promoted native plants for the landscape, so it was a great place to hold the event. I was pleased to be joined by DCR Acting Commissioner Stephanie Cooper and her team who joined Ashley, Director of Agricultural Markets Mary Jordan, Ag Markets Program Coordinator Rick LeBlanc, and Ag Markets Coordinator Katie Rozenas to promote MA Nursery industry's participation by offering appropriate plant material.

That was followed a day later by tours to commemorate MA Dairy Month. We visited McCray's Country Creamery in South Hadley, Flavors of Cook Farm, Hadley, and Allard Dairy Farm, Hadley. Each operation approaches its marketing differently, but all start by raising and milking healthy cows. We also presented Governor Baker's proclamation declaring June as MA Dairy Month!

A day later we were at Growing Places 20th Anniversary Party at Doyle Community Park in Leominster. Another friend from a previous life, its Executive Director (and MA Food Policy Council member) Ayn Yeagle and team do great work supporting human health and the environment through the local food system. We saw the gamut from their community garden plots to aeroponic indoor growing! There was a great sense of pride and tradition as founders and previous executive directors participated in the program.

The next day Ashley and I attended New England Public Media's Annual Asparagus Festival in Hadley. It's a terrific event: educational, entertaining, and delicious! In addition to seeing many farmers, I participated in a panel discussion with Congressman McGovern and USDA Rural Development CT MA RI Director (and former MDAR Commissioner) Scott Soares for a panel discussion on agriculture, followed by a delicious asparagus themed luncheon. Over 8,000 attended on a beautiful day.

A few days later MDAR took another volunteer shift in the fields of the Food Bank of Western MA's new farm in Hadley. Funded partially through MDAR's Agricultural Preservation Restriction program, it produces food that supports the Food Bank's work. Beginning Farmer Specialist Jessica Camp, APR team members Caroline Raisler and Kristina Smith, Ashley, and I dragged tarps, weeded beds, and planted veggie seedlings. Honestly, I wasn't sure I could keep up (and keep hydrated), but I did. Lugging those tarps was the toughest part of the day's work!

We moved the next day back into the city for Commonwealth Kitchen's Food Show in Boston's Seaport District. Jen Faigel and her team like big challenges. They found a location, installed big tents, had around 100 local food vendors exhibit, and brought in hundreds of buyers in addition to the public to enhance the vitality of the local food system.

I was going to note our attendance at the Northeast Association of State Departments of Agriculture Annual Meeting in Hershey PA, but I note Ashley has it covered in her Deputy's Dialogue, so I leave it to her to recount.

It's after 7 on a Friday night; I'm going to call it a column here. As it appears we are rounding third and heading home, we may switch it up a bit for remaining columns. We'll see.

I hope all are well into the swing of things and the season is going (and growing well).

Don't forget about the WooSox event!



John Lebeaux

DEPUTY'S DIALOGUE

The theme for June seems to be “on the road again” as we’ve had several events, meetings, conferences, and opportunities to connect with the agricultural community in-person. As I’ve just returned from the Northeastern State Departments of Agriculture (NEASDA) Annual Meeting in Hershey, PA and unpacked, I’m in the process of repacking and may even be on the plane for my next trip by the time of publication. I have a unique opportunity to participate in a [USDA Foreign Agricultural \(FAS\) Service Agricultural Trade Mission \(ATM\)](#) to London, United Kingdom. Food Export-Northeast provides funding for states to send one senior official on up to three trade missions per year. I’m incredibly grateful to Commissioner Lebeaux for allowing me to participate in this unique opportunity, as well as Food Export-Northeast for providing funding for my participation in the trip.

The United Kingdom is a critical partner to the United States trade sector, with agricultural exports to the country totaling \$1.9B in 2021. Along with my colleagues from state departments of agriculture in Georgia, Indiana, Maine, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin, we will be joined by Deputy Secretary of USDA, Dr. Jewel Bronaugh. In preparation for the trade mission, I have been conducting calls with various commodity sectors that are of particular interest to the UK, including cranberries, craft breweries, and value-added specialty products. While in London, the group will be participating in business meetings, receiving in-depth market briefings from FAS, and participate in site visits. I’ll send your regards to the Queen from across the pond and will report back in our next F&M Report!

As noted above, Commissioner Lebeaux, Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Staff Alisha Bouchard, and I just returned from the NEASDA Annual Meeting. After hosting the meeting in a virtual format in 2020 and 2021, it was so nice to return in-person and connect with colleagues from across the region and country. While I greatly enjoyed the tours to [Messick’s Farm Equipment](#), [Kreider Farms Dairy](#), and [Hershey Farms/Harvest View Barn](#), the policy nerd in me most appreciates the opportunity to learn about the state and federal issues that are impacting our states and how we in Massachusetts can anticipate, mitigate, and/or adopt similar policies to benefit our farmers.

Commissioners/Secretaries/Chiefs report upon the issues that are top of mind in their states and many intersect across our departments, including Spotted Lanternfly (SLF), PFAS, climate change, hemp, environmental justice, dairy, land preservation, mental health programming, solar, pesticides, and staffing/resource challenges. During networking breaks, meals, and often times the evening socials (possibly with a locally sourced liquid beverage in hand), we dig deeper into these topic areas and often times learn

potential ways to address some of these challenges from other state partners. Sponsor organizations and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) team are also in attendance and provide greater context and clarity to our discussions from a national perspective.

Amid these events, there is also a lot of exciting work taking place at the Department. We received word from the USDA that our application to the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA) was fully funded at \$7.5M. The press release is included in this issue and can also be found here: [USDA Announces Massachusetts Signs Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement](#). A truly heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Keri Cornman, Rebecca Davidson, and David Webber for all their time, thoughtful input, and collaborative spirit in drafting the proposal. With this funding, MDAR will purchase and distribute locally grown, produced, and processed food from underserved producers through a competitive Request For Responses (RFR) process. We anticipate that we will post the RFR in July and will host a webinar for interested parties to learn more about the process and how to participate in the program. We are also in the process of hiring a contractor to manage the grant and assist with the successful implementation and completion of identified deliverables. Please see [job description](#) and share this opportunity within your networks for individuals that may be interested in applying.

I'm also excited to share a progress update on the USDA Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) grant we received last fall. As you may recall, we hired Greg Porell in a contractor capacity in late January. Greg has hit the ground running and in a matter of months, researched state mental health program models, hosted several calls with colleagues and stakeholders, and drafted three separate RFRs to begin achieving the grant's objectives. Currently, MDAR is in the process of contracting with a communications firm to aid in research and outreach to the agricultural community, as well as a separate entity that will utilize the research to develop a mental health and wellness toolkit. The toolkit will include print graphics, social media, website development, and educational/awareness materials that can be utilized by farmers, service providers, and stakeholders. The third RFR is currently open until June 23rd and is for mental health trainings. The trainings will be offered both in person and virtually, starting in late fall/early winter 2022. There will be two tracks for the trainings, including farmer and producer focused trainings as well as trainings for service providers and MDAR staff. We look forward to gaining your feedback during the outreach process so we can develop a meaningful and effective program for our ag community.

The summer months ahead signal the harvest of many of our valued agricultural crops, including fresh strawberries, blueberries, cherries, peaches, zucchini, tomatoes, cucumbers, and sweet corn just to name a few. June has already been incredibly hot at times but farmers are reporting they had a good planting season and are looking forward to seeing their crops grow to harvest. Fingers crossed for more periods of rain, particularly in the Northeast and Southeast regions of the state, as they are currently experiencing drought conditions. The weather has unfortunately been more devastating to our colleagues in other parts of the country, most recently Kansas where over 2,000 head of cattle died as a result of extreme heat and humidity. Drought continues to impact the West coast and crops such as almonds are projected to suffer from lack of irrigation. We continue to keep the farmers and producers, as well as their state departments of agriculture, in our thoughts as they navigate these difficult times.

On a positive note, I look forward to seeing many of you at the agricultural fairs and festivals this season. I attended the Sheep and Woolcraft Fair in Cummington on Memorial Day weekend and enjoyed the conversations with exhibitors at the event, including a sheep exhibitor who happens to live on the same street as me and we met for the first time. Looking forward to visiting your farm and flock in the future, Chip! The Commissioner and MDAR team are also excited to visit with the Buy Locals starting next month and meet with farmers in their regions. And I would be remiss if I didn't mention July is National Ice Cream Month. Please indulge and enjoy an extra scoop of your favorite flavor!

In closing, I'd like to acknowledge and thank you for all you do to support the Massachusetts food system, agriculture, and consumers. I always welcome the opportunity to talk about and highlight the work of Massachusetts farmers and producers because of how incredibly proud I am to be a part of this state's industry. Our farmers and producers are some of the most progressive, innovative, and resilient people I know, and I thank you all for the privilege in being able to work for you and represent your interests daily. Please continue to connect with me and our members of our team so we can best assist you in the coming months.

Have a great summer, successful harvest, and find time to enjoy with friends and family.

Locally grown and proud,
Ashley

FOREFRONT

State Agricultural Officials Ask Public to be on Alert for Hatching of Invasive Spotted Lanternfly Eggs

Potential for egg masses to have been accidentally brought in on nursery stock imported from other states

MDAR is asking the public to keep an eye out for the invasive pest known as spotted lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*) due to the risk of egg masses being accidentally brought in on shipments of trees imported from other states. MDAR recently received reports that nursery stock from SLF-infested areas may have been sent to Massachusetts growers. Anyone who has recently purchased trees or shrubs or had them planted on their property, particularly maple or crabapple, is being asked to inspect the trunks and branches to ensure there are no SLF egg masses or any hitchhiking nymphs, and to [report any finds to MDAR](#). Landscapers and plant nurseries are also being reminded to stay on the lookout for this pest. [Press release here](#).



Because SLF egg masses are flat and gray in color, they are difficult to detect, especially on tree bark. For examples, please see this [Pest ID Tool](#). If you find an egg mass or any other life stage of SLF, please report it to MDAR immediately [here](#). You can also use that link to find our [Best Management Practices for Nurseries and Landscapers](#), [BMPs for Beekeepers](#), and other educational materials, including a [map](#) of where this pest has been found in Massachusetts and [elsewhere in the USA](#).

Webinar – August 17th - Spotted Lanternfly in Massachusetts Quarterly Update - hosted by MDAR to provide the green industry, environmental groups, and other interested parties with the latest information about spotted lanternfly occurrences, survey updates, and more. [Register here](#).

Energy News

Application Period for MDAR CSAP Grants Closed - MDAR's Climate Smart Agriculture Program (CSAP) is no longer accepting applications as the deadline was 4PM June 10, 2022.

MA Farm Energy Program (MFEP) - Energy Audits

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

You will need a technical assessment to file an energy grant application whether with MDAR or USDA. Start planning now. If you wait too long you may not be able to have one scheduled in time! 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.

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

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

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

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

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

MassDEP Launches Commercial Refrigeration Grant Program & Listening Sessions

This summer MassDEP will launch a new competitive grant program to support low global warming potential (GWP) commercial refrigeration systems at retail food locations. Many commercial refrigeration systems use refrigerants with GWPs hundreds to thousands of times more potent than carbon dioxide. [The grant program](#) will support the adoption of technologies using refrigerants with low and ultra-low GWPs.

Funding will be available for new systems using ultra-low GWP refrigerants and for refrigerant retrofits converting existing systems using high GWP refrigerants to ones with lower GWPs. MassDEP is holding two listening sessions on June 21, 2022 to receive stakeholder feedback on program design. MassDEP has prepared a presentation with program design elements and specific questions for stakeholders to consider, including ways to build equity into the program design, see below. Feedback may also be submitted via email to climate.strategies@mass.gov. Written feedback should be submitted by June 28, 2022.

Register for the listening sessions using the links below, or [visit the webpage](#) for more information. For questions, contact Emily Lamb at Emily.Lamb@Mass.gov.

- [June 21, 2022 - 10:00am](#)
- [June 21, 2022 - 6:00pm](#)

Apiary Program

Interested in a visit with Apiary Inspectors to get an inspection?

The Apiary Program Team offers health inspections and sampling if warranted of hives during the bee season. To schedule an inspection for your apiary, please submit the [electronic form](#). Please note that inspectors will prioritize Emergency, Dead-Out and Bee Kill requests over Routine Health Inspections for the months of June-July 2022 to best accommodate those in need while also performing inspections of imported hives for cranberry pollination during these months.

Join us for an in person “Hive Dive” or virtual educational program! [Complete details here.](#)

Join the Bee Team and Regional Apiary Inspectors virtually to get the latest update on honey bee health in New England. Virtual only - [Flyer here.](#)

In person presentations will be offered at the State Apiary locations in Amherst and Danvers, MA where the MDAR BEE Team will offer a tour of live working honey bee colonies, hands-on demonstrations of colony management techniques, and exposure to the latest knowledge on how to best sustain honey bee health in the Commonwealth. Events will be held in person and are free and open to the public, no (pre)registration required. Educational components will focus on topics of interest to beekeepers and regional management techniques. In person only - [Flyer here.](#)

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.

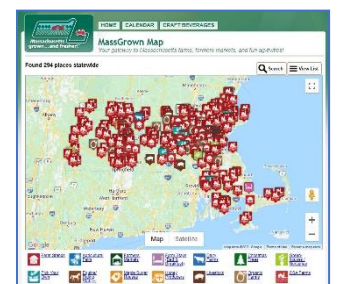
Note the NEW Apiary Program Message Line phone number: 508-281-6784. This will replace the existing message line number: 617-626-1801. [Apiary Program here.](#) Questions, send to bees@mass.gov.

No Asian Giant Hornets have been found in the US anywhere except Washington State, but we are receiving a lot of reports of insect [look a likes](#). Report your Asian Giant Hornet sightings [here](#).

The Markets Corner

The MassGrown Map

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



Posters and price cards available [here](#).

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



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



The Exchange includes many types of business to business listings: Recent ones include [Worcester Regional Food Hub](#) looking for carrots and fruits, Job Postings by [High Lawn Farm](#), Bok-choi by [Fern Hill Farm](#), Oregano by [Holiday Farm](#), and Collard Greens and Napa Cabbage by [Boston Food Hub](#). All current products and services can

be found and [here](#).

Farmers - Looking for new buyers? [Register](#) and post today! Quick and easy registration. Over 375 businesses have registered to date.

Buyers - Be notified automatically for crops or products of interest when posted. [Register](#) and create auto "Alerts".

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

Massachusetts State Exposition Building Seeking Applicants for Special Days During The Big E

MDAR invites Massachusetts organizations and businesses to apply for the opportunity to exhibit on **Massachusetts Day** (September 22nd), and **Harvest New England Day** (September 30th), at the Massachusetts State Exposition Building at the Big E Fair.

The mission of the Massachusetts Building is to showcase agriculture, commerce, culture, and tourism through informational, educational, promotional, and retail exhibits. The Massachusetts Building is located at the Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield, Massachusetts.

The 2022 Big E Fair runs from September 16, 2022, through October 2, 2022. Links to applications and more information, [click here](#).

2022 Farmers' Market Nutrition Program is Still Open for New Certifications

Returning farmers do not need to complete a re-certification until spring 2023. [Farmstand operators](#) and [market managers](#) need to renew annually.

Market managers – please ensure that any **new** fruit and vegetable (or honey) producers are familiar with the [Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program](#). *We expect WIC Coupons to be distributed beginning in early to mid-July, and anticipate a later distribution of Senior coupons than in previous years (early August).*

Interested farmers, market managers, and farmstand operators who are new to the program will need to:

1. Attend an online webinar training.

a. Trainings are offered during the following dates/times:

June 30th -- 11:30am-12:00pm
July 5th -- 10:00am-10:30 am
July 11th -- 2:00pm-2:30pm

b. The webinar training will be on **Microsoft Teams** and participants will receive a confirmation and meeting invite once signed up.

2. Complete the agreement form:

- a. For market managers, please complete [this form](#) only.
- b. For all new farmers (selling at farmers’ markets and farmstands), please complete [this form](#).
- c. For farmers also selling at farmstands, please complete [this form](#). *Farmers who will accept coupons at their farmstand must submit the Farmer Agreement **and** the Farmstand Agreement.*

If you would like to sign up for a training, or if you have any questions, please contact Rebecca Davidson at Rebecca.Davidson@Mass.gov or 857-202-7699.

Beginning Farmers and APR Farmers Benefit from Business Assistance and Grants

MDAR recently awarded Fiscal Year 2022 grants to Massachusetts farms through the APR Improvement Program (AIP) and the Matching Enterprise Grants for Agriculture (MEGA) program. The APR Improvement Program (AIP) helps sustain active commercial farming on land that has been protected by Department funds through the APR Program. The program offers business planning assistance and grants to farmers operating APR farms that have proven success in producing and selling agricultural products. AIP’s goal is to help improve the productivity and profitability of participating farms to enhance the significance of APR farm operations and their contribution to the state’s agricultural industry.

In FY2022, AIP grants totaling \$400,000 are being awarded to the following APR farms:

- Foxcroft Farm in Amherst for a hay & equipment storage building (\$40,000)
- Long Plain Farm in Whately for a multi-use storage building (\$40,000)
- Orr’s Farm in Westport for a multi-use storage building (\$40,000)
- Mountain View Farms in Easthampton for infrastructure improvements to a storage building (\$40,000)
- D.A. Smiarowski Farms in Sunderland for a produce washing/packing facility (\$120,000)
- Wolf Tree Farm in Plainfield for a produce washing/packing facility (\$120,000)

For more information, please visit the [AIP website](#).

In FY2022, MEGA grants totaling \$63,788 are being awarded to the following beginning farms:

- Small Farm Inc in Stow for farm and high tunnel equipment (\$6,238)

- Bell Brook Farm LLC in West Brookfield for a walk-in cooler (\$7,550)
- Dintino Farms in Oxford for haying equipment (\$10,000)
- Hannan Agro Farms in Lincoln for a greenhouse, fencing, and equipment (\$10,000)
- Many Graces LLC in Hadley for a tractor and implements (\$10,000)
- Maplebrook Farmstead in Sterling for chicken housing and an egg processing room (\$10,000)
- Nantucket Sound Shellfish Company in Falmouth for a tumbler grading system (\$10,000)

For more information, please visit the [MEGA website](#).

MDAR's Agricultural Business Training Program - Offering Fall Classes

Exploring the Small Farm Dream Course

October 5 to November 2, 2022 - Wednesday evenings 6:00pm – 9:00pm, location TBD*

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

*Plans are for an in-person class with the location to be determined based on interest from those who submit an application and are added to the waiting list. To be considered for the upcoming session, please complete the brief application found here: [Exploring the Small Farm Dream](#) and email it to Jessica.Camp@mass.gov, or mail a hard copy to: MDAR, Attn: Jessica Camp, 138 Memorial Ave, Suite 42, West Springfield, MA 01089. For more information (including a more detailed course description), see the ABTP [program webpage](#) or contact Jess Camp at 617-823-0871.

Growing Your Farm Business Planning Course

October 11 – November 29, 2022 at MDAR office in Southborough, MA - Tuesdays from 5:30 – 8:30pm

A hands-on course to help established farmers develop a business plan and financial projections for their farm business. This course covers topics including resource assessment, marketing strategy, financial management, risk management, quality of life, and goal setting. The course is taught by a professional business planner with years of experience working with Massachusetts farms and guest speakers on topics such as succession planning and online marketing. Enrollment is open to farmers who have been operating a farm business in Massachusetts for at least the two prior years. Eight weekly classes will be held on Tuesday evenings starting October 11 and ending November 29. The course fee, subsidized by MDAR, is \$150 per farm.

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

For more information, or to access a Growing your Farm application to sign up for the upcoming session, please see the ABTP [program webpage](#).

New Entry's Crop Summer Production Course

Are you interested in starting your own farm business but need to learn technical skills to get started, the Crop Production Course is for you!

This 8-week online course (July 14th – Sept. 1st) covers essential topics related to sustainable crop production, enabling participants to grow food while caring for the soil at the farm or in the garden.

In this course you will learn how to:

- Grow a diversity of fruits and vegetables for your home and/or business
- Identify sustainable agriculture practices
- Create a crop plan
- Manage a greenhouse
- Buy and maintain farm equipment and machinery
- Set up a drip irrigation system
- Manage soil nutrients
- Manage weeds and use cover crops
- Identify pests and implement pest management strategies
- Learn how to prepare crops for market and comply with food safety regulations
- Connect with agencies that provide services for new farmers

Meeting place and time: Online via Zoom each Thursday, 5:00-6:30 pm for 8 weeks. Course cost: \$395. Scholarships for a half-off discount are available. [Click here for details.](#) Questions? Ben Zoba, benjamin.zoba@tufts.edu.

Up to 3 Parcels of State Owned Land on Prime and State Important Soils Available to Rent in Lakeville

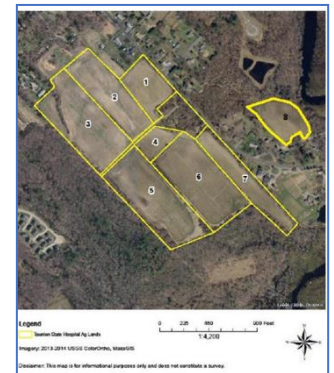
MDAR is seeking applications for the use of up to three parcels of agricultural land in Lakeville off of Bridge Street.

The parcels are shown in the map as Field 2 (8.4 acres); Field 3 (8.2 acres) and Field 7 (4.3 acres). Soils are classified as prime and state important. Applicants may bid on any number of the parcels.

Request for Response (RFR): [RFR # AGR-SFLP-LAKE-FY23](#)

Location: Bridge Street, Lakeville – **Response Deadline: July 15, 2022 at 3:00 PM**

[State-Owned Farmland Licensing Program](#)



Cranberry Grower Updates

Cranberry Renovation Tax Credit – Applications Due August 10, 2022

The Cranberry Renovation Tax Credit is a new program that will allow a credit of 25% of the total qualified renovation costs of a cranberry bog renovation up to \$100,000 during a tax year retroactive to 2020.

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) will accept and review applications for the tax credit and certify tax credits to the Department of Revenue (DOR) based on the regulations 301 CMR 16:00 that were published on June 10, 2022.

The applications for renovations that occurred in 2020 and in 2021 are due August 10, 2022.

For more information visit: www.mass.gov/info-details/cranberry-bog-renovation-tax-credit-program. Questions, contact Tom Anderson at Thomas.Anderson@mass.gov or at 617-519-4587.

Cranberry Bog Renovation Grant – Applications Due July 22, 2022

MDAR is now accepting applications for the Cranberry Bog Renovation Grant Program. This grant program provides reimbursement grant funding for the implementation of bog renovations that promote more efficient bogs both in design and production while enhancing the business and environmental sustainability of the cranberry operation. Awards are limited to \$15,000 per acre up to a maximum of \$75,000.

Applicants interested in applying can submit an application through the online application, submitting a completed application through MDARgrants@mass.gov, or by mailing an application. Applications must be received by 4:00pm on Friday, July 22, 2022.

For more information visit: www.mass.gov/how-to/cranberry-bog-renovation-grant-program. Questions, contact Laura Maul at Laura.Maul@mass.gov, or at 857-507-5972.

The Collaborative Publishes ‘Food Literacy in Massachusetts: Local Successes, Statewide Opportunities’

The **MA Food System Collaborative** has published [Food Literacy in Massachusetts: Local Successes, Statewide Opportunities](#) as part of a project to ensure that all students in grades K - 12 have access to food system education in school. Over the past year, the Collaborative conducted dozens of interviews with key stakeholders in Massachusetts and beyond about the many ways students can learn about agriculture, nutrition, food justice, and culinary skills. Those interviews informed the report which includes case studies of schools that offer food system education, nonprofits and state agencies that provide support for this education, lessons learned from other states that offer food literacy, and recommendations for how to expand food system education in K - 12 schools in Massachusetts. Here is a link to the [Executive Summary](#) and to a list of [Resources to expand food system education at your school](#).

The Collaborative is now convening a coalition of teachers, nonprofit educators, school administrators, parents, students, and community members who will work to expand food system education. The coalition will identify key recommendations that resonate most with the group and advocate for actions to implement those recommendations. [Sign up here](#) to join the Coalition to Expand Food System Literacy.

Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom Announces Teacher of the Year



[Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom \(MAC\)](#) last week announced that Michelle Cooke is the recipient of the [2022 Teacher of the Year Award!](#) Roberta Oles (MAC) and Mary Jordan (MDAR) presented the Mass Ag in the Classroom 2022 Teacher of the Year Award to Michelle at Brookside Elementary, Dracut ([photos here](#)).

Mrs. Cooke has been an educator for 25 years and presently teaches second grade at the Brookside School in Dracut where she incorporates agriculture into many subject areas. She instills a love of animals in her students by her own actions in helping animals needing home. Her classroom is filled with items from nature to teach students about plants, the environment, and conservation of our limited resources.

Michelle is an author, publishing a children's book Don't BEE Afraid to help children learn more about pollinators and also overcome their fear of bees!

Michelle lives on a small farm in New Hampshire and shares her love of animals and farming with her class in many ways. We thank her for integrating agriculture into her lessons to make children aware of the farming history in our state. We are proud to award her the 2022 Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom Teacher of the Year!

Mrs. Cooke will be attending the [National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference](#) in Saratoga Springs, NY as part of her award.

Photo Contest Time – Deadline July 1st



Submit your best photos to our Annual Photo Contest – Winners will be featured in the **2023** Massachusetts Ag Calendar - Open to all!

We are looking for a range of photos to spotlight Massachusetts farms throughout the year: farm animals, flowers, maple, fruits and vegetables, farmers mkts, bees and pollinators, cranberries, apples, pumpkins, Christmas trees and more! You are encouraged to submit up to five of your best photos.

Twelve Winners will be included in the 2023 “Celebrating the Seasons of Massachusetts Agriculture” Calendar and invited to the Big E on Massachusetts Day! The Winning cover photographer wins a “Sweet” MassGrown basket (honey, maple syrup ‘n more!).



Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom, MDAR, and the MA State Grange each year create this attractive, colorful and educational calendar that is a daily reminder of our rich and diverse agricultural landscape in Massachusetts. The annual Calendar serves as a great tool for teachers, as it includes “Fun Facts” and “Teaching Tips.” Each month will feature one full-size photograph portraying a local farm or farm product in season. See last year's winning photos [here](#).

Contest rules [here](#). You can submit photos online [here](#)!

UPCOMING EVENTS/WORKSHOPS

June

- **June 21 - Soil Health Demos at the UMass Research Farm** - 1pm, UMass Crop & Livestock Research & Education Farm. Learn more about several demonstrations for improving soil health. Demos include: New York Soil Health Trailer demonstration No-till transplanting vegetables into a crimped cover crop Cover crop residue management Using tarps to terminate cover crop. [Details here.](#)
- **June 22 & 23 - Successful Food Product Development for New Food Businesses Virtual Course** - Learn about Successful Food Product Development for New Food Businesses: Managing Food Quality & Safety in this virtual course. [Details here.](#)
- **June 28 – SEMAP Twilight Mtg - Raising Alpaca for Fiber** - Moonlight Rose Farm, Swansea. An evening of connecting with local farmers, exchanging fiber skills, and getting answers to your questions. Farmer David Rose also runs a successful market garden. Discuss fiber best practices, pasture & fencing maintenance, and more! Registration is encouraged but not required, and drop-ins are welcome. [Details here.](#)

July

- **July 9 - Honey Bee Education Days at State Apiaries** – In person and free, Amherst and Danvers - Topic: Pests, Parasites, Pathogens. [Details here.](#)
- **July 12 - Notice of Public Hearing - Massachusetts Prohibition Plant List** - [Details here.](#)
- **July 14 – Online Crop Production Course** - For those interested in digging deeper into the enthralling world of sustainable agriculture, New Entry Sustainable Farming Project is offering this 8-week Crop Production Course meeting online on Thursday evenings. The course will include an abundance of resources and activities to help learners increase their ability to work with nature to grow good food, and it will cover topics including: fostering soil health, greenhouse management, irrigation, nutrient management, cover cropping, pest and disease management, and more! [Details here.](#)
- **July 14 – MNLA's Down to Earth 2022** - Weston Nurseries, Hopkinton - 8am-3pm - For green industry professionals, it's a great time to take stock and learn about new products, trends, and business solutions. [Details here.](#)
- **July 14 – Annual Summer Meeting of the Massachusetts Fruit Growers' Association**, UMass Orchard, Belchertown. [Details TBD.](#)
- **July 15 - Massachusetts Food Policy Council Meeting** - 9:30am - 11:30am - [Details here.](#)
- **July 16 - MA Christmas Tree Farm Tour** - Rockhouse Ridge Farm, Huntington. Open to all! [Details here.](#)

August

- **August 5-7 - 48th Annual NOFA Summer Conference** - Hampshire College, Amherst. [Details here.](#)
- **August 13 - Honey Bee Education Days at State Apiaries** – In person, Amherst and Danvers - Topic: Pests, Parasites, Pathogens. [Details here.](#)
- **August 17 - Spotted Lanternfly in Massachusetts: Quarterly Update** - 10am. [Details here.](#)
- **August 20 - MA Christmas Tree Annual Mtg** - Ioka Valley Farm, Hancock. Open to all. [Details here.](#)
- **August 23 - The 37th Massachusetts Tomato Contest** - Save the Date! Updates will be posted [here.](#)
- **August 24 - Twilight Meeting at Harvest Farm of Whately** - S. Deerfield - 4pm - free - In-person twilight meeting covering several post-harvest topics, including the vacuum cooler Harvest Farm recently purchased with a MA Food Security Infrastructure Grant. [Details here.](#)
- **August 27 - Honey Bee Education Day at State Apiary** – Topic: Honey Extraction, Danvers location only. [Details here.](#)

- **August 30 - Sept. 1 - 2022 International Workshop on Agritourism** - Burlington, Vermont. Presentations include nuts and bolts sessions on managing opportunities and risks; creating programs that elevate local culture, diversity, and inclusion; agritourism as a farm viability and rural development strategy; marketing; collaboration; and, half-day field trips to local agritourism programs. [Details here.](#)

[MDAR Calendar](#)

USDA NEWS

USDA Announces Massachusetts Signs Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) recently announced it has signed a cooperative agreement with Massachusetts under the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA). Through LFPA, MDAR seeks to purchase and distribute locally grown, produced, and processed food from underserved producers.

Through a collaborative and regional model, MDAR will administer LFPA funds by contracting with Massachusetts farmers, fisheries, producers, and distributors through a competitive bid process. Special consideration will be given to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) farmers. MDAR will also utilize the Mass Exchange, a business-to-business platform where producers can post listings for products, to facilitate connections between regional organizations and local food producers.

Purchased food will be distributed to underserved communities across the commonwealth in an effort to promote equitable access to food. MDAR will partner with several organizations, which may include regional Buy Local organizations, community kitchens, food banks, food hubs, and emergency food organizations to distribute food purchases. It is expected MDAR will award over \$4.3 million in funding, reach 100 producers, and distribute food to 100,000 people. [Complete News Release here.](#) [Overview of the LFPA program.](#)

MDAR posted position: [LFPA Grant Project Manager](#)

Classified

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

Looking to buy or sell, and job postings? Visit and register on the [MassGrown Exchange!](#)

About the *Farm & Market Report*

Published bi-monthly by MDAR:

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Complete staff directory [here](#). Next issue to be published in August. Please send news and events by August 8th 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.

