

June/July Farm & Market Report

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CLASSIFIED

COMMISSIONER'S COLUMN



Greetings, Mass. Agriculture and all its friends,

There's much to discuss.

On June 11th Governor Baker and Lt. Governor Polito made two important announcements concerning how the Commonwealth is injecting \$41 million into programs to help address issues of food security and its intersection with MA Ag and food production. The announcement which contains additional links may be viewed [here](#).

In brief summary, there is a **new \$36 million Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program** to address infrastructure grants in the food system that were created by the COVID-19 pandemic. **The purpose of this program is not to buy food or employ people; it's to provide support to fund necessary modifications to business practices created by the response to the virus.** Please review the Request For Responses (RFR) (link is in the announcement above) for the formal details.

Also announced was an additional \$5 million dedicated to the [Healthy Incentives Program \(HIP\)](#) led by the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) to which MDAR provides support. The program helps SNAP clients buy more fruits and vegetables for their households only at farmers' markets, farmstands, CSA farms and mobile markets. DTA simultaneously issued a [Notice of Opportunity](#) to expand the number of HIP access points. Please note that one may apply for a Food Security Infrastructure grant to cover the cost of the necessary processing equipment for HIP purchases.

I frequently report to you on my field trips; they have been few and far between since my last column, but we've managed to get a couple in recently.

I had the great pleasure to represent the Baker-Polito Administration at the [Farmers Feeding Families](#) milk giveaway in Dorchester. The event, sponsored by Dairy Farmers of America and its MA dairy farmers, and Vanguard Renewables, in cooperation with HP Hood, gave away 8,600 gallons of milk on May 7th. It was a very generous effort to have "milk with no home" find its way into thousands of homes. There was truly an army (the National Guard was helping) of participating organizations, institutions, individuals, and government agencies that set up a great support infrastructure at the lots at Boston College High School to make for a very efficient and safe event.

Finally, a month later I had the opportunity to join MDAR Chief Apiary Inspector and Apiary Program Coordinator Kim Skyrn at MDAR's State Apiary West located at the UMass Agricultural Learning Center Farm in Amherst to tape a promotional video for the July, **2021** [Eastern Apicultural Society](#) Annual Meeting at UMass Amherst.

We had scheduled a taping date and also a rain date a week apart. On the planned day the forecast was iffy and we cancelled; of course it turned out to be a beautiful day. On the rain date we again had a challenging forecast; the Comm.-Mrs. and I got caught in a downpour on our way there, but the front passed and it turned out to be a beautiful (but hot!) day, and we completed our assignment!

Last June MDAR had the privilege to host the four day Northeastern Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NEASDA) Annual Meeting in Brewster and we were looking forward to attend this year's June meeting hosted by VT Agriculture, Food, and Markets Secretary Anson Tebbetts and his team in Stowe. Unfortunately, COVID-19 required us to transform the 2020 meeting into a 2.5 hour virtual meeting of our Board of Directors.

A key point of all our NEASDA meetings are the state reports, during which the member Secretaries, Commissioners and Chiefs of Agriculture call out their major issues. Similar to non-COVID times, we share many of the same concerns; by joining together as ten states our message to our national organization, USDA and other federal partners is greatly strengthened and enhanced.

By comparison, not all NEASDA states found themselves in a position to do everything we've been able to achieve in MA. Not every state allowed farmers' markets to operate since March (some are just opening up now), and similarly, not all of our NEASDA states allowed garden centers to operate during their traditional busiest months as we did in MA.

Last column, I invited the Buy Local organizations to write about what they do, and I found that was well received. It got me thinking, and as so much of what is going on during this socially distant model we find ourselves in is via the internet, I thought we should feature everything we at MDAR do relative to our assorted online platforms. So with no further adieu, a few words from our programs...

Crop and Pest Services has a few different social media accounts they utilize to keep the green industry and the general public informed about plant pests and diseases, mosquitoes, and pollinator planting resources. Our outreach programs are mainly devoted to keeping people informed about pests, including when and how to report invasive plant pests and pathogens.

- Massnrc.org/pests/blog: Our invasive pest blog, which covers pest alerts, pest-related K-12 educational activities, and the various outreach events attended by the Forest Pest Outreach Program, and also pest and pathogen surveys run by the CAPS Program
- twitter.com/MassPests: News about plant pests, pathogens, invasive plants, and mosquitoes
- twitter.com/albtweets: News about the invasive Asian Longhorned Beetle and the ALB eradication efforts in Massachusetts

The **Massachusetts Dairy Promotion Board (MDPB)** is a group of state officials, dairy farmers and other representatives from the dairy industry. As a result of the Dairy Farm Preservation Act, MDPB was formed to promote Massachusetts dairy products in an ever-growing and competitive marketplace. It operates on the principle that a healthy dairy industry is just as important to consumers as it is to milk producers, and that the availability of Massachusetts dairy products contributes to the good health, well-being and economic growth of the state's population. The MDPB helps promote increased consumption of dairy products through effective use of promotion, education and research. This goal is carried out through outreach efforts and the annual release of the Massachusetts Dairy Promotion Grant Program, which is funded entirely by the state's dairy farmers through check-off. The MDPB Facebook page is managed by the MDPB Coordinator, Katie Rozenas, and regularly releases information about current dairy happenings as well as meeting dates, fun facts, and beautiful imagery of dairy operations from around the state. Like and follow this page [here](#)!

The **Massachusetts Animal Fund** is a program of the Department of Agricultural Resources that was created to help prevent animal homelessness and to help assist animals in need throughout the Commonwealth. The Fund offers support in three main ways: by providing spay/neuter/vaccination access to local cats and dogs, by providing training to municipal animal control officers so that they can better serve their communities, and by providing education and resources to the public to promote responsible pet ownership.

By following the Fund's social media pages, pet owners can get valuable information such as: what to do if you find a stray animal, how to find spay/neuter options, how to keep their pet safe and healthy, what can be done to help animals in their community, and even how to start a pet safe garden at home.

Visit and follow the Fund's pages at:

- www.facebook.com/massanimalfund
- www.twitter.com/line33f
- www.instagram.com/line33f

The Fund's programs are made possible by voluntary donations on Line 33f on the Massachusetts Resident Income Tax Form. Find out more at www.mass.gov/animalfund.

Our "traditional" social media platforms have slightly different individual focuses. We see our two primary missions are to communicate with our stakeholders with information we hope is useful to their particular businesses and organizations, and to also promote all that MA Ag and the local food system has to offer our residents.

Twitter:

- MDAR: www.twitter.com/MassDeptAgr – Over 2,500 followers, started 2010 (emphasis on official news)
- Massgrown: www.twitter.com/MassGrown – Over 1,700 followers, started 2010

Facebook:

- MDAR/MassGrown: www.facebook.com/MassDeptAgr -Over 1,600 followers, started 2017

Instagram:

- MDAR/MassGrown: www.instagram.com/Massgrown - Over 1,200 followers, started 2016

In regards to content, we use Instagram primarily as a promotional tool to highlight the diverse crops, products and offerings of our consumer-oriented agricultural sector. This includes informing the public on seasonal farmers market, agritourism programming, special agricultural-related events, Massachusetts fairs (with emphasis on the Big E given the

Department's role), dairy promotion, horticulture promotion, and the overall importance of buying local and supporting our farmers in the Commonwealth.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we've used Instagram to really drive the point home on our Buy Local campaign, highlighting the fact that our local farmers are here to supply the public with fresh local food as national supply chains were constrained leading to a certain level of anxiety among the public. We advocated to our followers the suggestion of starting a home garden to grow fruits, vegetables and other plants as a fun family activity and provided tips via our partners at UMass Extension. On Earth Day, we educated the public by explaining how Massachusetts farms are on the cutting edge of energy-efficient solutions making them environmentally friendly and by supporting our farms; they're supporting our green efforts.

Of course the grandparent of all our outreach is right here where you are reading this column. The Farm and Market Report dates back to pre-Internet days when hard copies were printed and sent via US Mail. With over 7,000 subscribers, it is by far our largest communication tool, but no one platform contains all our messaging, so please subscribe/follow all that may be helpful or interesting to you. After all, the price is right!

As I begin to close, I do want to note a couple passings in our Ag community.

Judy Gillan, founder of the New England Small Farming Institute died May 24th. Judy was a strong positive force in agriculture on a very large stage that went way beyond the Commonwealth's borders. Her advocacy for beginning farmers, and the protection and preservation of agricultural land never wavered. As the work she began at the Lampson Brook Agricultural Reserve continues, it honors her proud legacy. Judy's obituary may be viewed [here](#).

Russ Davenport of Shelburne died on April 7, 2020. Russ had been on the Board of Food and Agriculture for many years when I came onboard in 2004. He was a kind and friendly man, full of knowledge which he was always willing to share to help others. Russ wasn't shy to share his informed opinions either, which led to a lot of excellent discussions during Board meetings. I consider myself fortunate to have had the opportunity to spend time with him on the Ag Board. He was my very first teacher about the world of commercial Maple Sugaring. Russ's obituary may be viewed [here](#).

MDAR remains committed to its mission to help keep the Massachusetts' food supply safe and secure, and to work to keep Massachusetts agriculture economically and environmentally sound. We greatly appreciate your suggestions, comments, and criticisms about how we are and should be accomplishing that during these unprecedented times.

Stay safe, be well,



John Lebeaux

Deputy's Dialogue

Be A Light: Finding Rays of Hope, Optimism Inherent to MA Farmers and Food System When Faced with Adversity

While fairs, festivals, and farm weddings have been cancelled or postponed this Summer, there is still so much to look forward to in Massachusetts agriculture for the season ahead. [Pick-Your-Own farms](#) are in full swing with strawberries currently being harvested in fields across the state. Several livestock shows and 4-H fairs have made the transition to virtual platforms to allow youth an opportunity to showcase their animals. [Farmers' markets](#) continue to open for the season on a weekly basis with a different look and feel; and provide a much-needed outlet for local, fresh produce, meat, dairy, eggs, and value-added products. Nursery and garden centers have seen a measurable increase in interest

from home garden owners and a resurgence of “Victory Gardens” and home improvement projects. These are just a few examples of the ways in which farmers have continued to operate amidst COVID-19, and what residents and consumers have come to recognize and appreciate during these times.

June Dairy Month is a highlight this time of year and on a personal level, holds great significance in my life. Since 1937, Dairy Month has been celebrated in June to promote the health benefits of milk and dairy products, while helping to strengthen the connection between farmers and consumers. With over 115 dairy farms in the state, Massachusetts dairy farmers have carried on the tradition from previous generations and family members of producing high-quality, wholesome, and nutritious dairy products. One of our oldest dairy farms is now owned and operated by the twelfth generation!

The public health crisis has highlighted the necessity and essential nature of our farmers, as well as processors, distributors, wholesalers, and retailers across the supply chain. Dairy farms have experienced some of the greatest disruptions however, with the loss of institutional and retail markets in March and the need to “dump” milk in significant volumes. At the same time, consumers sought out comfort foods in stores and sales of milk, ice cream, cheese, and butter skyrocketed. Our dairy farmers that produce and process milk on the farm saw their delivery requests double or triple in some instances, while others had to adjust their business models to re-package and distribute milk in a different fashion. Our Dairy Promotion Board & Agricultural Markets Outreach Coordinator, Katie Rozenas, is highlighting “30 Days of Dairy” on the MA Dairy Promotion Board [Facebook page](#); Follow along to learn more about the industry and the dairy farmers that are part of the backbone of Massachusetts agriculture.

Growing up on a fourth-generation dairy farm, many of life’s lessons were learned while completing daily chores, which rings true among farm kids across the state and country. During these unsettling times, weekends on the farm have provided me with a deeper appreciation for this way of life and spending time cleaning pens, feeding calves, and halter-breaking heifers offer solace and peace of mind. The “never give up” mentality that is fostered with this work has served us all well as we have adapted, pivoted, and altered our daily way of conducting business in a COVID-19 world. In addition, our work and interactions with consumers, whether directly on the farm, at a fair/livestock show, or the grocery store, has enabled us to provide insights into the industry and bridge the gap about misconceptions that may be held by consumers. The role of “advocate” and educator has served me well throughout my career and continues to play a role in my daily work at MDAR.

Another highlight of the Spring was the announcement on May 17th from the Baker-Polito administration regarding the establishment of a [Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program](#) (“Fund”) to provide support for our farmers, fisheries, distributors, processors, food banks & pantries, Summer meal sites, and food producers. As part of the recommendations that came out of the Food Security Task Force’s work, the Fund’s intent is to address critical infrastructure gaps, meet the immediate needs of our most vulnerable populations, and build a more resilient, robust food system in the long-term. An additional recommendation included a \$5M increase in Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) funding, and in conjunction with the increase, the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) has announced a [Notice of Opportunity \(NOO\)](#) to onboard more agricultural vendors for the program. The application period for the Fund and NOO opened on June 10th.

Our team remains actively involved with the Task Force, and are continuing to develop the other remaining recommendations that include a job connector link for farms/employers and applicants. A market connector program to align farms with potential buyers and markets also exists. As these are still in the development phase, we anticipate they will be “live” by the first of July. Until then, we will continue our stakeholder engagement to gather feedback to ensure the programs are both user friendly and beneficial to your businesses.

Collaboration across sectors and industries continues to demonstrate the value of our work towards a common goal and mission to provide food at a time when it is needed most. On the state level, our relationships with our sister agencies have evolved through our work with the COVID-19 Response Command Center and the Food Security Task Force. We continue to partner with our Northeast counterparts at departments of agriculture to share state-wide efforts, discuss challenges & potential solutions in terms of policy work, and how we can position our states to come out stronger post-

COVID. We're also all keenly aware of the potential impacts on state operating budgets and programming, and how this will impact our departments in both the short and long-term.

On the federal level, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced on April 17th the allocation of \$3B to establish a [Farmers to Families Food Box Program](#). As stated on the USDA website, "The program will purchase \$461 million in fresh fruits and vegetables, \$317 million in a variety of dairy products, \$258 million in meat products and \$175 million in a combination box of fresh produce, dairy or meat products. Suppliers will package these products totaling \$1.2 billion into family-sized boxes, then transport them to food banks, community and faith-based organizations, and other non-profits serving Americans in need from May 15 through June 30, 2020." Several [New England distributors](#) were awarded contracts, yet there continues to be an unmet demand/need as the number of food insecure individuals has grown tremendously since March.

At the same time, USDA announced the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) to provide payments to producers that experienced a 5% loss or greater from mid-January to mid-April. The \$16B in direct payments to producers are for trade mitigation impacts and to address market disruptions as a direct result of the pandemic. As many of our farmers are not producing crops during this time frame, we are hopeful that additional funding will be provided for losses incurred from April and that point forward. There is an opportunity through the Notice of Financial Opportunity (NOFA) to provide feedback for those crops that are not currently eligible for funding. Nursery, aquaculture, and maple producers are encouraged to submit comments and demonstrate their losses from January to April 2020. County Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices are overseeing the application process and have been processing the applications expeditiously. Many thanks to the FSA team for their assistance to farmers and quick work!

On a recent call with our state partners, the Executive Director of our National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) stated that during the last 90 days, it has been "business more than usual." In Massachusetts, I know this sentiment is shared by our Department as well as all of those involved in the food system. Our days continue to be occupied by *Zoom* meetings, phone calls, social media outreach, and email exchanges with colleagues and partners. Our bi-weekly stakeholder calls allow us to connect, hear about the immediate, on-the-ground concerns, and share a laugh. "Local" has become more than a catchphrase or term used by consumers; and for many now a way of life. The connection between farm and fork is being realized. We must continue to amplify the incredible efforts that those across the food system have undertaken and remember that although we're apart, the work to build a more resilient and viable Massachusetts unites us all.



Wishing you all a safe, healthy, and prosperous Summer ahead.

Locally grown and proud,

Ashley

FOREFRONT

Energy News

MDAR's New Climate Smart Agriculture Program (CSAP)

Open Application Period for MDAR Environmental, Energy, and Produce Safety Grants - **Deadline Extended to June 19, 2020**

MDAR is now accepting applications from agricultural operations who wish to participate in the Department's produce safety, energy, and environmental grant programs. Grants are available to help agricultural operations make farm improvements that enhance their economic viability, help prevent negative impacts to environmental resources, adapt and mitigate climate change, improve energy efficiency, adopt renewable energy, and improve on-farm produce safety.

****New for Fiscal Year '21** is the Climate Smart Agriculture Program that 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 application deadline has been extended from Friday, May 8, 2020 to Friday, June 19, 2020. Applications must be received by the Department no later than 4:00 pm on Friday, June 19th. Applications must be sent by mail or hand delivered to: Laura J. Maul, Program Coordinator, MDAR, 251 Causeway Street, Suite 500, Boston, MA 02114 - **Email and faxes not accepted**.

Please visit the CSAP website for more information and a copy of the application: www.mass.gov/how-to/how-to-apply-to-the-climate-smart-agriculture-program

For more information contact Laura Maul, 617-626-1739, Laura.Maul@mass.gov or Gerry Palano, 617-626-1706, Gerald.Palano@mass.gov.

Below are brief descriptions of each program. For more information (including applications) please visit the program's website. Climate Smart Agriculture Program (CSAP) - Reimbursement grant program that links three of MDAR's grant programs into one application. This includes:

Agricultural Climate Resiliency & Efficiencies (ACRE) Program - Reimbursement grant program that funds the implementation of projects that help the agricultural sector adapt to climate change, mitigate climate change, and improve economic resiliency.

Agricultural Environmental Enhancement Program (AEEP) - Reimbursement grant program that funds materials and labor for conservation practices that mitigate or prevent negative impacts to the state's natural resources that may result from agricultural practices. Practices funded include those that prevent direct impacts on water quality, ensure efficient use of water, and address agricultural impacts on air quality.

Agricultural Energy Program (ENER) - Reimbursement grant program that funds agricultural energy projects in an effort to improve energy efficiency and the adoption of alternative energy by Massachusetts farms. The goal of the program is that farms can become more sustainable and the Commonwealth can maximize the environmental and economic benefits from these technologies.

The Program is broken into two categories: Part I: Climate Adaptation & Mitigation and Part II: Energy Efficiency & Renewable Projects.

Applicants are eligible to apply for consideration under both categories or a single category.

Mid-Fiscal Year 2020 Agricultural Energy Grant FY2020 (ENER)

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) was pleased to award seventeen (17) applicants for a total of \$500,000 for our Mid-Fiscal Year 2020 AgEnergy Grant. Awarded projects included a variety of energy efficiency and renewable

energy projects including geothermal, woody biomass, solar thermal hot water, walk-in freezers/coolers, energy efficient aquaculture aeration, dairy free heater and solar PV, one with battery storage.

[MDAR's MA Farm Energy Program \(MFEP\)](#) - **Energy Audits - Technical Assistance – Be Prepared: Energy Grant Season A-Coming - Now is a BUSY time!**

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.

Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program

The Baker-Polito Administration recently announced the release of the [Request for Responses \(RFR\)](#) for project proposals through its new Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program to ensure that individuals and families throughout the Commonwealth have access to fresh, local food. The goal is to address the food system infrastructure gaps, based upon recommendations from the Food Security Task Force. [Press release here.](#)

Eligible proposals include, but are not limited to, projects seeking to:

- Increase capacity for food direct delivery;
- Increase capacity of food banks and food pantries;
- Increase capacity of local food distribution partners;
- Offer innovative solutions to enable those receiving SNAP and WIC benefits to receive food more easily;
- Offer innovative solutions for urban farming and;
- Help farms, retailers, fisheries and other food system businesses adapt to the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to allow them to provide greater access to local food.

To find out more about the **Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program**, please use the following link: www.mass.gov/service-details/food-security-infrastructure-grant-program

Notice of Opportunity to Add New HIP Farms: Responses Due July 1st

The [Department of Transitional Assistance](#) has released a Notice of Opportunity to strategically onboard new agricultural vendors and access points for the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP). This opportunity is available to both new and existing HIP vendors. All interested farmers must apply regardless of whether or not you have contacted either DTA or MDAR in the past. Applicants will be evaluated on the ability to respond to the needs of communities and populations impacted by COVID-19, establish HIP access points in areas with limited existing HIP access points or other food access barriers, distribute food in ways that limit the transmission of the novel coronavirus while reaching vulnerable populations, and a demonstrated capacity and commitment to serve SNAP clients in culturally appropriate ways. To find out more about the HIP Notice of Opportunity, please use the following link: www.mass.gov/healthy-incentives-program-hip-notice-of-opportunity-noo.

Apiary Program

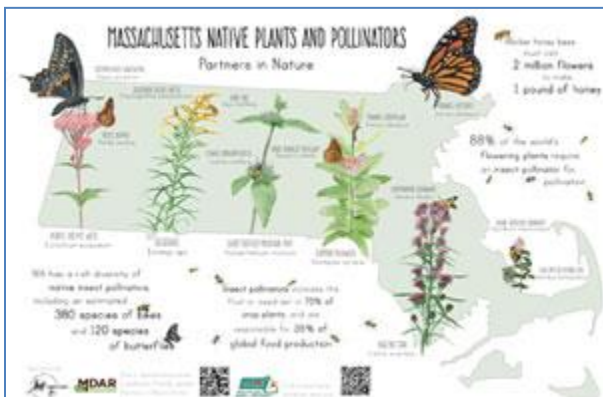
The Apiary Team is still only performing health inspections for regulatory and emergency purposes (i.e. those related to suspected pesticide related Bee Kills or American Foulbrood disease). To learn more visit the COVID Bulletin regarding Honey Bee Colony Health Inspections - www.mass.gov/doc/mdar-bulletin-honey-beecolony-health-inspections/download

Get the New England Honey Bee Update by joining New England states Apiary Inspectors of America members to learn about the latest regional seasonal activity, Coronavirus (COVID-19), and honey bee health updates for our area on **Friday, June 19th from 2-4pm**. Come prepared with questions to ask the inspectors. Join Zoom Meeting ID: 306 878 3894 - umass-amherst.zoom.us/j/3068783894, One tap mobile: +1-646-876-9923, 3068783894 #.

Thank You for another successful year of the [BEE AWARE: The 2019-2020 Massachusetts Honey Bee Health Survey](#) with 562 participants this year! Stay tuned for a summary of the results and signs mailed to those interested.

Seeking Compensation for Colony Losses? Check out the recently updated [USDA ELAP \(Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees and Farm-Raised Fish Program\)](#) that provides financial support. Contact your [local FSA office](#) to get more information.

The USDA-ARS Beltsville Bee Lab is working in a limited capacity and now accepting only brood swab samples. Check [website](#) to get information about submissions.



We look forward to next week as it is “National Pollinator Week.” We will be posting on MDAR’s [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) fun facts and an opportunity to win “sweet” prizes, including our new poster [“Massachusetts Native Plants and Pollinators.”](#)

MDAR offers *Choosing Pollinator-Friendly Native Plants in Home Gardening or Landscaping* [webpage](#) that offer a list of native plant species and tools for developing pollinator-friendly landscapes.

Looking for local honey, [click here](#).

Apiary Program link here: www.mass.gov/apiary-program-honey-bees.

Questions, bees@mass.gov.

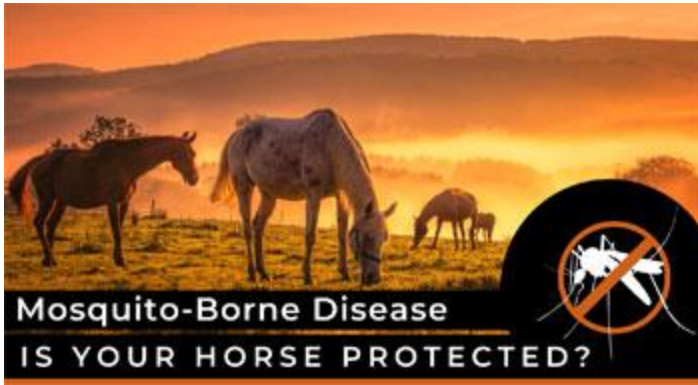
Massachusetts Introduced Pests Outreach Blog

Follow our Massachusetts Introduced Pests Outreach Blog for updates on invasive insects in the state and suggestions for at-home activities to stay connected to nature.

You may even see updates on the Asian giant hornet.

- [Free webinars about invasive insects from UMass Extension](#)
- [Spotted lanternfly origami project people can do at home.](#)
- [Our update on the Asian giant hornet \(AGH\)](#)
- [AGH fact sheet](#)

Is Your Horse Protected Against Mosquito-borne Disease?



Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) is spread by mosquitoes and causes fatal neurologic disease in horses. In 2019, EEE led to the death of eight horses in Massachusetts. EEE has historically been found in Bristol and Plymouth Counties. In 2019 cases occurred in Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Worcester counties and in surrounding counties. This means all of Massachusetts is at risk.

Increased EEE activity is anticipated this year. There is an effective vaccine. Call your veterinarian to schedule this life-saving vaccination for your horses.

You can also reduce the threat of EEE by reducing mosquito habitat. Mosquitos lay their eggs in standing water. Clean water troughs and bird baths at least twice weekly, and remove trash, tires and other items that collect water. Click here for [video](#). For updates and to learn more, [click here](#).

Protect your horse! #EEEVaccinateMA

File Taxes. Help Animals. Tax Deadline Extended to July 15th



Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources is encouraging Massachusetts taxpayers to help animals in need by donating to the [Massachusetts Animal Fund](#) on Line 33f of their income tax returns for homeless animal prevention and care. The Massachusetts tax filing deadline was extended until July 15th, so taxpayers have extra time to donate to help local animals this year! Since the Fund's inception in 2014, the Mass Animal Fund has spent over \$1.6 million dollars to sterilize and vaccinate over 12,600 local animals in over 310 municipalities. The Voucher Program turns donations into a resource that local animal control officers (ACO) can utilize to get assistance for animals in their community. The Mass Animal Fund also provides free training opportunities and support to Massachusetts ACOs so

they can provide uniform enforcement of animal control laws.

Follow the Fund on Facebook (www.facebook.com/massanimalfund) and Twitter (twitter.com/line33f) for the most up-to-date information about ending animal homelessness in the Commonwealth.

Massachusetts Building – One Day Opportunities to Exhibit at the Big E

Massachusetts businesses and organizations can apply to exhibit at one day events including Massachusetts Day (9/24), and Harvest New England Day (10/2) at The Big E, September 18 – October 4, 2020. The 17 day Eastern States Exposition (The Big E) in West Springfield annually attracts over 1.6 million visitors. The Massachusetts Building located on the Avenue of States provides Bay State businesses, non-profits, and other entities a platform to showcase services and sample and sell products.

All food and beverage products, hard goods and other products or services must be local. Food and fiber products must be grown, produced, or manufactured in Massachusetts, and commercially available year-round.

Single day exhibitor guidelines and applications: www.mass.gov/massachusetts-state-exposition-building-0. The application deadline is July 17, 2020.

Questions: Military Day and Massachusetts Day: Phu.Mai@mass.gov. Harvest New England Day: Bonita.Oehlke@mass.gov.

Meeting International Buyers: Meet & Greet Without Leaving Your Seat

With export trade shows, missions and meetings on hold for the moment, a two day virtual fair, August 11 – 12, will provide access to over 50 international retail and foodservice buyers, at your virtual booth. Assistance to develop the booth and pre-event preparation is available including: “How to prepare for meetings with foreign buyers”. In-Market Representatives from around the world will also be in attendance to answer questions and provide market specific insight on emerging market trends.

The event is coordinated by [Food Export USA Northeast](#), of which MDAR is a member. Food Export is a USDA cooperator with export programs and services, accessing funds from the Market Access Promotion line item in the Farm Bill.

Early registration is open until June 26th and costs \$200. Final registration is prior to July 17th, and costs \$275. For more information: Bonita.Oehlke@mass.gov.

Massachusetts Farms Showcased Through the Eat Local MA iOS App This Harvest Season

The [Sustainable Business Network of Massachusetts](#) (SBN) and the [Massachusetts Coalition of Local Food and Farms](#) are working together to organize a statewide “Eat Local MA” campaign this harvest season to encourage more consumers to buy and eat food grown and harvested by Massachusetts farmers and fishermen. Through the [Eat Local MA iOS app](#) launching this August through September, eaters can find consumer-facing Massachusetts farms, restaurants, farmers’ markets and businesses in their area where they can purchase local food. Consumers will be encouraged to upload through the app pictures of farm stands or farm product receipts to become eligible to win local food prizes.

All farms listed on the [Massachusetts Grown and Fresher map](#) will be included on the Eat Local MA app. If you have questions about the app or campaign, please contact elena@sbnmass.org, and if you have any questions about the *MassGrown* map, please contact Richard.LeBlanc@mass.gov.

Farms not listed on MassGrown map: You can fill out [this form](#) to participate or contact your regional Buy Local group. CISA members: You can contact [Zoey](#) at [CISA](#) directly and she will include your farm in the program without having to fill out the form.

UMass Extension’s NEW Invasive Insect Webinar Series

UMass Extension’s Landscape, Nursery, and Urban Forestry Program and UMass Extension’s Fruit Program continues to offer exciting FREE webinars focusing on the impact, monitoring, and management of invasive insects in Massachusetts and the nation!

Topics will include the spotted lanternfly, spotted wing drosophila, brown marmorated stink bug, emerald ash borer, gypsy moth, Asian longhorned beetle, and more!

Remaining webinars are held from Noon-1:00 pm on June 23, and June 30, 2020.

Please note: While participants from anywhere are invited to attend, much of the material presented will be specific to Massachusetts and New England.

Preregistration is required to access each webinar. To register, visit: ag.umass.edu/landscape/upcoming-events. For descriptions of each webinar and to view archived recordings, visit: ag.umass.edu/landscape/education-events/invasive-insect-webinars

Register early! Space is limited to 500 participants.

Soil Health, Pasture & Dairy Online Education Webinar Series [NOFA/Mass]

June 18 - Pasture Management and Silvopasture at Square Roots Farm, Lanesborough. - 5:30 to 7:00 pm

Join NOFA/Mass and Michael Gallagher of Square Roots Farm to explore his intensively managed livestock systems. By rotating dense herds through temporary paddocks within a pasture, livestock eat a variety of forage, are more robust, and will sequester considerable amounts of carbon in the soil. Raise 1000 laying hens, 4000 meat birds, 30 cattle, 12-24 pigs, turkeys and a diversity of vegetables for their CSA customers and market. Will answer many questions and learn about the fencing and shelters they use to keep their flocks and herds moving over the landscape, grazing density and practices. Connor Stedman will explain the principles and practices of further developing pastures into silvopasture systems through functional tree plantings. Discussion about specific practices and tree species that can add additional value to a diversified grazing system. [Click here to register.](#)

June 25 - Rotational Grazing at Sky View Farm: Meat CSA and Small-Scale Dairy with farm, 5:30 to 7:00 pm

Are you looking to improve your pasture management and learn more about rotational grazing? Rotational grazing is a system that mimics the ecology of natural grasslands. By rotating densely stocked herds through fenced-off portions of your pastures, cattle will eat a variety of forage, gain more weight faster, and sequester considerable amounts of carbon in the soil. During this event attendees talk about pasture reclamation with Will and Amelia, discuss fencing systems, stocking density, and grazing plans. Discussion on the process of adding a small-scale dairy into their house.

[Click here to register.](#)

July 9 - Management Intensive Grazing at Cricket Creek Dairy, Williamstown, 5:30 to 7:00 pm

Farm is a small grass-based cow dairy producing a variety of products including raw-milk, grass-fed meat and seven varieties of artisanal farmstead cheeses. They use high density groups of cows rotated through temporary paddocks within their pastures, allowing for the most efficient use of available forage and maximizing the benefit to livestock and soil. Topher Sabot, Owner and Manager, will answer questions about how they use a combination of high-tech and low-tech fencing to manage the cows and maximize efficiency. Discuss grazing density and practices that provide superior nourishment for the animals while building nutrient rich and microbially diverse soil. We will have a conversation about the fine points of producing dairy on a primarily grass-fed system. [Click here to register.](#)

More info at www.nofamass.org/events.

UPCOMING EVENTS/WORKSHOPS

- **June 24 – Tools to Navigate a Challenging Agricultural Environment** - 2-3:30pm, Online Event. Hosted by NewVue Communities and Red Apple Farm. Free - Webinar to learn about grant opportunities and developing programs being offered by the MDAR. Hear from the owners of Red Apple Farm on their strategies and have open discussion on assistance needed as we navigate through the state's reopening. Please email Jacqueline at jmastrangelo@nvcomm.org to register. Facebook [post here](#).
 - **July 20 – August 9 – NOFA Summer Conference Virtual Event** - nofasummerconference.org
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Save the Date: November 11 & 12 - The [Northeast Greenhouse Conference & Expo](#) will be held at the Buxton Regency Hotel. This event is co-sponsored by New England Floriculture, Inc. - a group of grower representatives from the Northeast, augmented by University and Cooperative Extension staff in each state who specialize in greenhouse crops and management. [Sponsor and exhibitor opportunities are available](#). Sponsorship pricing varies depending on level of exposure, and exhibitor pricing varies depending on booth size and location. For additional event information, please visit www.negreenhouse.org.

USDA News

Next Sign-up Period for Conservation Stewardship Program

Deadline for Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) applications to be considered for funding in fiscal year 2020 is [June 26th](#). USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) plans to invest up to \$725 million nationwide for new enrollments and contract extensions in fiscal year 2020. [Details here](#).

USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program

Online Tools and Toll-Free Number Available to Assist Producers - Agricultural producers can apply for USDA's **Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP)**, which provides direct payments to offset impacts from the coronavirus pandemic. The application and a payment calculator are available online, and USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) staff members are available via phone, fax and online tools to help producers complete applications. The agency set up a call center in order to simplify how they serve new customers across the nation.

Applications will be accepted through August 28, 2020. Through CFAP, USDA is making available \$16 billion for vital financial assistance to producers of agricultural commodities who have suffered a five-percent-or-greater price decline due to COVID-19 and face additional significant marketing costs as a result of lower demand, surplus production, and disruptions to shipping patterns and the orderly marketing of commodities.

Producers can download the CFAP application and other eligibility forms from www.farmers.gov/cfap.

Classified

- **Farmers Markets Seek Vendors** - MDAR posts an updated list of new and existing farmers markets looking for vendors [here](#). (Bookmark this link as it is updated often). The contacts for all the markets are posted [here](#). *MassGrown* map of farmers markets [here](#).
- **For Sale: Tree spades** - two red boss tree spades, very little use on small nursery, 38" three blade asking \$9500; 48" four blades- dug less the 100 trees asking \$13500; for pictures and additional information contact psweet1@roadrunner.com.
- **MDAR Job Posting: State Agriculture Inspector, West Springfield**. Please note that requisitions (former Posting IDs) will remain open for 90 days; however, first consideration will be given to those applicants that apply within the first 14 days of the posting. Other positions posted at [MassCareers](#).
- **Do you have a professionally produced video on your website or social media?** Contact Tom@ReelifeProductions.com, 413-575-9707 to find out more about how video can help communicate food system infrastructure gaps and any other messages you need to convey. Affordable and efficient productions, visit www.ReelifeProductions.com.
- **Sweetfern (*Comptonia peregrina*)** - Best for naturalizing and mass plantings in sunny sites where "normal" landscape plants tend to perform poorly, like parking lots and along roadways. Solid root system fixes nitrogen,

holds the soil effectively, helps prevent erosion on bankings/steep slopes, thrives in impoverished soils.

Hundreds now ready in

#1 (6") pots. Hopkinton pickup only. Call/email Wayne for prices: 508-962-1857,
waynem@westonnurseries.com.

- **Meatworks** - Designed with the highest animal welfare and humane handling standards in mind, Meatworks is a state of the art slaughter facility available to small-scale livestock producers in Southern New England. Committed to working with local farms to keep a steady supply of fresh, sustainably raised meats available to our communities, at reasonable prices. Please book your processing date today by calling 774-319-5616. For more information, visit www.meatworkswestport.com.
- **Agricultural Excavation** – Grading Services - Provide earth moving, drainage, land/pasture reclamation, greenhouse preparation, rock raking services and stump grinding. Includes but not limited to orchards/equine facilities/cranberry bogs/nurseries. Feed hay also available. Chris Merrill Excavating - merrilltrucks@comcast.net, 978-897-9977.

About the *Farm & Market Report*

Published bi-monthly by MDAR:

Boston Office:

251 Causeway St., Suite 500,
Boston, MA 02114-2151
617-626-1700

West Springfield:

138 Memorial Avenue, Suite 42
West Springfield, MA 01089

Lakeville:

30 Riverside Drive, Suite 202,
Lakeville, MA 02347
774-419-1800

- John Lebeaux, Commissioner, John.Lebeaux@mass.gov
- Ashley Sears Randle, Deputy Commissioner/Policy & Legislative Affairs Ashley.Randle@mass.gov
- Alisha Bouchard, Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Staff, Alisha.Bouchard@mass.gov
- Margaret Callanan, General Counsel, Margaret.Callanan@mass.gov
- Cullen Roberts, Chief Financial Officer, Administration, Cullen.Roberts2@mass.gov

Division Directors

- Michael Cahill, Director of Animal Health, Michael.Cahill@mass.gov
- Mary Jordan, Director of Agricultural Markets, Mary.Jordan@mass.gov
- Gerard Kennedy, Director of Agricultural Conservation and Technical Assistance, Gerard.Kennedy@mass.gov
- Taryn LaScola-Miner, Director of Crop and Pest Services (C&PS) Division, Taryn.LaScola@mass.gov
- Michael Botelho, Director of Produce Safety, Michael.Botelho@mass.gov

Complete staff directory [here](#).

Next issue to be published in August. Please send news, events, or classified information by August 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.

