

# Farmland Action Plan – Email Update – October 2024

## Farmland Action Plan Implementation -

## Upcoming meetings for potential partners and spotlight on state lands used for agriculture

Hello!

Welcome to the second email update for implementation of the [Massachusetts Farmland Action Plan 2023-2050](#) (MFAP). In addition to information about upcoming meetings and events, this month's email includes our first plan spotlight – how state lands are being used for agriculture.

We are still building our contact lists for implementing the Plan. Please share this email with your contacts and listservs! Email Katharine to sign up to get these email updates directly – [Katharine.s.otto@mass.gov](mailto:Katharine.s.otto@mass.gov).

### Meetings and events

Katharine's current focus for engagement is with potential partners for implementation of the plan. There are a lot of potential partners!

**Land Trusts as potential partners** – On September 18<sup>th</sup>, MDAR and the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition hosted a discussion with land trusts about how they could get involved with implementing the plan. There are many opportunities that can suit the wide range of focuses and specialties of land trusts across the Commonwealth. Do you work for a land trust? You can catch up on the meeting by reviewing the [slides](#), [video](#) and/or [meeting notes](#).

**Regional meetings for potential partners** – In late October/ early November, Katharine will be hosting some online meetings which are intended to explore the Plan with local and regional partners. This is a great opportunity to discuss with fellow potential partners which tasks within the plan are already being worked on or might be good to get moving in your area. While these meetings will focus on potential partners who Katharine has not yet connected with, all potential partners are welcome to attend! For potential partners who work in urban agriculture, we will be holding meetings later in the Fall.

If you are interested to connect into one of these online regional meetings, please fill out the relevant doodle poll [and](#) email Katharine to express your interest. The doodle poll will be available until 10/20 with meetings occurring from 10/29 onwards. If the dates do not work for you, please email Katharine to still express interest.

- Berkshire County
- Franklin/ Hampshire/ Hampden Counties
- Worcester County

- Middlesex/ Essex Counties
- Norfolk, Bristol, Plymouth and Suffolk Counties
- Cape and Islands

**Other meetings and events** – Over the fall Katharine will be visiting many other meetings and events. Please reach out if you have a meeting or event you'd like Katharine to attend!

## Plan Spotlight – How can I farm on public lands? What is land licensing?

There are several parts of the Farmland Action Plan which talk about how public lands owned by the state or municipalities can be used by farmers for agriculture.



Middleborough Agricultural Fields at 182 South Main St., Middleborough, MA

MDAR's State-owned Farmland Licensing Program seeks to preserve publicly held agricultural land in the state by licensing state-owned or municipally-owned properties to farmers. MDAR has care and control of 1,058 acres of agricultural land throughout the state, placing permanent Article 97 protection on these properties. MDAR also licenses 164 acres of agricultural land on the behalf of other state agencies, ensuring their continued agricultural use.

The Farmland Licensing Program is regularly seeking new opportunities to preserve public agricultural land and connect it with farmers. The Department can enter into agreements with willing state agencies or municipalities to facilitate the licensing of their agricultural land or provide technical assistance to public entities looking to do this themselves.

MDAR licenses property for an initial period of up to 5 years with the option to renew for an additional 5-year period. As identified in the Massachusetts Farmland Action plan, there is priority for [historically underserved farmers](#) (beginning, socially disadvantaged, veteran and limited

resource farmers) for the licensing of these properties. Tenants have the ability to install temporary structures such as high tunnels, sheds, fences, and irrigation systems on a case-by-case basis.

Properties are currently available in Agawam, Lakeville, and Middleborough, MA totaling 35.4 +/- acres. Proposals for use of the agricultural land are due before November 22<sup>nd</sup> at 2pm. For information on these properties, the application process, and the program please visit [mass.gov/farmlandlicensing](https://mass.gov/farmlandlicensing).

For inquiries regarding public agricultural land in Eastern Massachusetts, contact Ryan Burke at 617-960-6606 or [ryan.p.burke@mass.gov](mailto:ryan.p.burke@mass.gov). For Western Massachusetts, contact Barbara Hopson at 617-459-8545 or [barbara.hopson@mass.gov](mailto:barbara.hopson@mass.gov).

#### For more information

Farmland Action Plan Webpage  
[www.mass.gov/farmland-action-plan](https://www.mass.gov/farmland-action-plan)

#### For questions, please reach out to

Farmland Action Plan Coordinator  
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