

Farmland Action Plan – Email Update – November 2024

Where is urban agriculture in the plan and where can I learn more?

Doodle poll for upcoming meetings

Hello!

Welcome to another 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 second plan spotlight – urban 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.

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!

Potential Partner meetings by region - In the last week Katharine has been hosting meetings with potential partners across the state. We've explored a wide variety of topics within the plan and had some great discussions about how interests and opportunities might align. In the next few weeks Katharine will be publishing a copy of the collated presentation from all the meetings, as well as a written summary of key discussion points, on the [Plan webpage](#).

Urban agriculture potential partners – In December, Katharine and Rose will be hosting some meetings for individuals who play key roles within their urban agriculture organization and community, who might be interested to help implement the plan. Katharine's [recent presentation](#) to the Urban Agriculture Coalition summarizes some of the urban ag related tasks within the Plan.

- How do we take the plan and translate the Plan into reality, specifically for urban ag?
- What are some actionable next steps that make sense to move forward the tasks identified within the Plan which are important to urban ag?

If you are interested to connect into one of these meetings, please fill out the relevant doodle poll by Tuesday, November 12th or email Katharine to express your interest. You can choose to respond with availability for more than one location – and decide which to attend once the date is announced. If you are willing to host, also let Katharine know!

- Western Massachusetts
- Central Massachusetts
- Boston metro and South Shore
- North Shore
- Online meeting

Please note - To avoid sending too many emails to this broad email list, meeting dates and locations will only be emailed directly to those who RSVP to Katharine and those who receive urban ag email updates from Rose Arruda.

Statewide events - Katharine will be presenting at the following upcoming events and hopefully at others also!

- [Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting](#) – December 5, 2024
- [Massachusetts Food System Forum](#) – December 17, 2024

Plan Spotlight – Celebrating ten years of MDAR’s Urban Agriculture program

There are several parts of the Farmland Action Plan which talk about topics relevant to urban agriculture. In addition to the “Support Urban Agriculture” action with all its tasks (Action III.A.7), there is overlap with various other topics within the plan including land access, zoning and local regulations, food production assessment/ planning, and more. For a quick overview of specific actions and tasks visit Katharine’s [recent presentation](#) to the Urban Agriculture Coalition.



Photo: Urban farm thriving during [2024’s Massachusetts Urban Agriculture Week](#)

The rise in interest of urban agriculture in cities across the Commonwealth and throughout the country over the years has generated an exciting and dynamic sector, which is focused on strengthening local neighborhoods and economies through the production, processing, marketing and sale of fresh food at the local level for greater food security.

Since 2014, MDAR’s Urban Agriculture Program has supported urban food production across the Commonwealth. Based in low-moderate income areas, urban farms with market outlets, community gardens and/or community-based food production sites are thriving and providing greater food access in their communities.

MDAR has conducted 11 rounds of funding and has awarded over \$3 million in grants to organizations sited in low-moderate income communities. These are farms and producers who are providing fresh produce as well as culturally relevant crops and are creating greater access to healthy food with innovative marketing strategies.

Additionally, MDAR's Urban Agriculture Program, along with its non-government partners, has organized seven state-wide Urban Farming Conferences, which have drawn hundreds of people, many from out of state; added funding for community gardens; and presented symposia for municipal planners relative to urban agricultural zoning ordinances and bylaws.

To learn more visit MDAR's [Urban Agriculture Ten Year Funding Report](#) which includes stories from urban ag organizations across the state who have benefited from this program. You can also visit an [interactive map of project sites](#). For more information visit the Program website is available at www.mass.gov/urban-agriculture or contact [Rose Arruda](#).

For more information

Farmland Action Plan Webpage
www.mass.gov/farmland-action-plan

For questions, please reach out to

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