

Farmland Action Plan – Email Update – December 2024

First Progress Report released!

Hello!

Welcome to another email update for implementation of the [Massachusetts Farmland Action Plan 2023-2050](#) (MFAP). This month focuses on our first Progress Report, as well as our plan spotlight on climate change adaptation and climate smart programs.

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.

Celebrating one year – Progress Report

We are happy to release the Progress Report for year one of the Farmland Action Plan!

This first progress report shares updates on first steps towards implementing the Plan. It reflects initial conversations with potential partners who may lead or assist with implementation of tasks within the Plan. Next steps are being shared so that potential partners and interested individuals can see how everything fits together, and then start to discuss.

Visit the Progress Report on the [Farmland Action Plan webpage](#).

The accompanying Implementation Matrix will be released in the new year.

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!

- Summaries from the potential partner meetings in October and November are published on the [Farmland Action Plan webpage](#).
- In December Katharine met with various audiences including urban agriculture, conservation districts, Farm Bureau Annual Meeting attendees and Food System Forum attendees. Powerpoints and summaries of key takeaways from these discussions will be published on the [Farmland Action Plan webpage](#) in the new year.

In January Katharine will be hosting the first Plan Q&A Session for Potential Partners. It will be a meeting with no presentation – instead the content will be guided by your questions and comments. Recent discussions and the new resources have likely sparked additional thoughts, so this is an easy way to connect in. The primary audience are potential partners. It will be held on Monday, January 13th from 11am – noon. Please RSVP to Katharine for the calendar invite – Katharine.s.otto@mass.gov.

Plan Spotlight – Climate change adaption and climate smart programs

The Farmland Action Plan encourages technical assistance for climate change adaptation strategies in Action III.B.1. This topic has overlap with other plans, so if you are looking for the breadth of tasks related to climate change and agriculture, we recommend also reading the actions and implementation plan within the [2023 ResilientMass Plan](#). The [2023 Healthy Soils Action Plan](#) also has some overlap.

MDAR's Climate Smart Agriculture Program (CSAP) grants seek to support farmers in adapting to changing climate conditions through practices that improve soil health, ensure the efficient use of water, prevent impacts on water quality, reduce energy use and reduce the use of fossil fuels, while also encouraging the use of innovative technologies that improve resource efficiency. It aims to strengthen local food systems, improve farm productivity, and ensure long-term sustainability, all while reducing the environmental footprint of agriculture.

A second round of the CSAP has been opened with a due date of Tuesday, January 7, 2025. CSAP is a competitive, reimbursement grant program that funds 80% of total project costs up to a maximum of \$50,000. This round of funding is for projects that can be completed in a short timeframe and are able to be completed by June 30th, 2025. For more information visit www.mass.gov/how-to/how-to-apply-to-the-climate-smart-agriculture-program or contact Laura Maul at Laura.Maul@mass.gov or (857) 507-5972

Update to MDAR's APR Project Evaluation Form

The Farmland Action Plan seeks to increase the number of applications to farmland protection programs in Action I.A.7. Several tasks focus on updates to the APR program, including Task 1447 that looks at how potential APR projects are reviewed.

MDAR's Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program evaluates and provides recommendations for all APR applications to the Agricultural Lands Preservation Committee (ALPC) on a quarterly basis. These recommendations are based in part on an expanded project evaluation form that was approved by the ALPC in September of 2024. This expanded evaluation places additional emphasis on projects that may advance principles outlined by the Farmland Action Plan. While the evaluation form still primarily considers traditional farmland resources like soil quality and farm business viability, the form now also includes priorities that further state priorities like farmland of local importance, environmental justice neighborhoods, whole farm elements (infrastructure, wetlands, woodlands), and other conservation resource benefits. For more information visit www.mass.gov/info-details/prospective-apr-owners

How can I find out more about the plan? How can I share the plan with others?

The MFAP is a big plan! There are lots of strategies, actions and tasks – and all the supporting information needed to support those. The full plan is available online at www.mass.gov/farmland-action-plan.

Over the last month the website has also gained several [additional resources](#) to explain the plan, focusing on specific topics and audiences. More will be coming as meetings occur.

For more information

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

For questions, please reach out to

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