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October / November Farm & Market Report

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CLASSIFIED

COMMISSIONER'S COLUMN



Greetings, Mass. Agriculture and all its friends,

I don't know about all of you, but the second half of summer, 2019 went by very quickly. It was the Summer of the "E"s, I guess as in EEE (Eastern Equine Encephalitis) and the Big E, two very different experiences that really had nothing in common except they both required a great deal of effort by the MDAR team, along with many others.

I guess we'll take them in the order they occurred. First, let's provide some background to our EEE virus response.

EEE is a horrible disease for which there is no treatment. It causes brain swelling. It may be fatal as much as 40% of the time, and frequently leaves survivors with permanent neurological damage. That's why these dramatic steps are taken.

Our colleagues at the Department of Public Health (DPH) routinely trap and test mosquitoes throughout the state to determine the presence and concentration of mammal biting mosquitoes that carry certain diseases that can be transmitted to humans, like EEE virus (EEEV) or West Nile Virus. The regional Mosquito Control Districts (MCDs) also do monitoring and trapping, and report to DPH.

Within MDAR is the three member State Reclamation and Mosquito Control Board (commonly referred to as the SRB), which I chair. The other two members are the Commissioners of Conservation and Recreation and Environmental Protection, or their designees. The SRB oversees mosquito control in the Commonwealth and sets certain policies for ongoing mosquito control efforts throughout the state and also provides administrative support (payroll, procurement, etc.) to the MCDs.

In Massachusetts, there are several mosquito-borne viruses present that present a threat to human health or the health of domestic or wild animals. These insect-borne viruses (arboviruses), particularly Eastern Equine Encephalitis virus (EEEV) and West Nile virus (WNV), have a history of causing disease outbreaks in our state. Efforts to reduce the risk of the arbovirus transmission that occurs through mosquitoes typically include routine treatment of adult and larval mosquitoes and management of mosquito habitat, done by the mosquito control districts, and also involve educational outreach to increase public awareness and encourage the public to protect themselves from mosquito bites and to do their part to reduce mosquito habitat.

In late July, DPH advised MDAR of a significant number of EEEV positive pools that heightened the risk level for human exposure to EEEV in portions of Bristol and Plymouth Counties. These findings triggered the response plan for mosquito-borne illness and led to a series of actions including the issuance of a public-health hazard certificate and an emergency meeting of the SRB to consider all interventions to reduce mosquito populations. Ultimately, a decision to proceed with aerial spraying was a necessary intervention to help reduce the risk of human exposure from EEEV.

Once that decision occurred, it was MDAR's responsibility to work with our contractors and manage the aerial spray operation.

I often joke about “the speed of government”, but in this case I’m very pleased to report we moved extremely fast, not fast for government, just plain fast!

The process started on July 30th and by August 8th, planes began flying! That’s fast in any environment. If I seem proud of the MDAR team, you bet I am, along with all the state employees from multiple agencies who participated.

One of the reasons we could move so fast is that we maintain an operational plan that is reviewed and updated annually. The last aerial spray for EEEv was conducted in 2012; prior to that in 2006 and 2010. The good thing about that is obviously threat levels hadn’t reached a critical threshold since 2012; the other side was many who worked that operation were no longer at MDAR. Fortunately, we did have a few personnel who were there for previous sprays. They were key players in 2019.

So what actually happens? MDAR routinely puts aerial mosquito control out to bid, so that contracts are in place for every summer if those services are needed. For this summer the contractor was Clarke Mosquito Control which has an agreement in place with Dynamic Aviation to provide and fly the aircraft. The pesticide product is manufactured and shipped upon order and teams from both companies and aircraft are deployed.

As I’ve learned from DPH, dusk to dawn is the best time to spray, primarily because that’s when the specific mosquito species most likely to infect humans are most active. Also, warm dry nights with a little wind (but not too much) are best.

DPH establishes a risk area map based on current surveillance information, habitat, areas of historical activity likely to contribute to risk, and known patterns of virus spread that delineates boundaries of an area to be sprayed. This information goes to MDAR and the contractors, and it is loaded into navigation systems in the aircraft. The map is converted into a format that can be loaded to mass.gov so everyone can see what is planned.

There are certain areas that are excluded from sprays even if they are in the spray zone: public water supplies, areas with certain highly endangered species, and certified organic farms. Those locations needed to be carefully mapped and loaded into the navigation systems first.

Monitoring and testing of public water supplies and certain other areas, and pre and post spray monitoring of apiaries were implemented.

MDAR’s overnight team, representative(s) from my office, and our Crop and Pest team (Pesticide Program, Entomology, Toxicology) would arrive a couple hours before dusk, review the night’s plan with the contractors, and be on hand through the night. Aircraft would take off and as close to dusk as possible discharge carefully engineered tiny, nearly aerosol pesticide droplets, designed exactly for optimal control of mosquitoes. The pesticide used is appropriately labeled for aerial applications of this type.

Just as the “Night Shift” called it a day towards dawn, the mapping team’s day began, creating the maps to post to show the previous night’s work.

There were twenty-six nights of aerial spraying in parts of Bristol, Hampden, Hampshire, Middlesex, Norfolk and Worcester Counties. Over two million acres were sprayed.

As I mentioned a lot of people played a role in this operation. One third of MDAR’s team (from every one of our divisions) was involved in addition to the regional mosquito control districts and the mosquito advisory

group (MAG). Our sister EEA agencies, DCR, DEP and DFG were highly involved along with many, many people from DPH.

Still we note with great sadness that as of this writing, three people have died from EEE in MA this season, twelve have contracted the disease, and nine animals (eight horses) have been infected.

We could easily see this again in 2020. Though aerial sprays reduce populations, they don't eliminate them. **Personal protection is a must!** You can learn much more about EEEv and control efforts [here](#).

As we move to the other "E", fortunately it's one hundred degrees opposite from EEEv, and it's one of celebration: The Big E! According to its website, "[The Big E](#) is America's only multi-state fair celebrating the rich history, culture and traditions of the six New England states. As the principal event of Eastern States Exposition, The Big E has presented the finest livestock; agriculture; innovative commercial, industrial, and artistic developments; and the highest caliber of varied entertainment to the people of the northeastern United States for over a century. The 17-day event has grown to become the largest fair in the Northeast. "

As one of the largest state fairs in the nation, The Big E's attendance is staggering. Also, according to its website, "A record number of visitors attended the 2019 Big E, in West Springfield, Mass., breaking the Fair's all-time high attendance figure, with a final tally of 1,629,527. The previous record, of 1,543,470, was set in 2018.

During the Fair's run, the all-time highest single day attendance record was also broken when 176,544 visitors attended Saturday, Sept. 21. Five additional daily attendance records were set: Sept. 19, 85,698; Sept. 21, 176,544; Sept. 25, 89,124; Sept. 27, 112,988 and Sept. 28, 173,112."

That exposes so many people to agriculture. So what do we do at MDAR to promote our agriculture? I'm glad you asked! One of the highlights of The Big E is the Avenue of States, where each of the six New England states owns and manages its individual state building. This was a concept of Eastern States Exposition's (its formal name) founder Joshua Brooks.

Mr. Brooks had that in mind from the very beginning. The fair began in 1917. He successfully lobbied the General Court for a \$50,000 appropriation, and on September 16, 1919 Lt. Governor Channing Cox dedicated the very first state building on the Avenue, Massachusetts Building, a replica of the Old State House at the corner of Congress and State Streets in Boston.

Since that day, the management, care, and programming of the Mass. Building has been the responsibility (really, the privilege) of MDAR. It's a year-round task, handled by our Division of Agricultural Markets. Building Manager Fran Pearson works out of the Mass. Building's office several days a week year-round.

So this year was the Building's 100th Anniversary, and we gave it the appropriate celebration exactly on September 16th. As the Lt. Governor dedicated the building in 1919, so did our Lt. Governor rededicate the Building in 2019! We were delighted that Lt. Governor Karyn Polito led our rededication ceremonies, along with legislators, local, state, and Big E officials. The LG placed the first item in a time capsule that will remain sealed until the 200th Anniversary in 2119; a replica of the Building, which she autographed.

The mission of the Building, as set forth in the 1919 legislation is to support Massachusetts agriculture, commerce, and tourism. MDAR achieves that with exhibits and booths inside and on the grounds of the building from a mix of Mass. companies, non-profit organizations, and state agencies.

In recent times we have established the Massachusetts Building Hall of Fame, honoring outstanding contributors to the Building's mission. I'm very proud to report that this year's recipient was MDAR's own, Mary Jordan, our Director of Agricultural Markets. As she is deeply involved in the entire Mass. Building effort, it wasn't easy to surprise Mary at the actual moment of announcement. I'm pleased to report, that through stealth efforts a spy agency would be proud of, we pulled it off-she was completely surprised!

The Big E team informs us that surveys report that the Avenue of States is one of the most attended parts of the fair. MDAR is proud to make sure that our Commonwealth is properly represented. Many thanks to the MDAR team: Mary, Fran, Asst. Commissioner Ashley Sears Randle, our Agricultural Markets Division, staff volunteering from other divisions, former MDAR employees, the Building Advisory Committee and dedicated volunteers who do such a great job at the fair!

I frequently mention how abrupt the transitions are in these columns; I realize much of the reason is how varied MDAR's responsibilities are. We've talked about its role in aerial spraying to reduce mosquito transmitted viruses and a building at the biggest agricultural state fair in the northeast, so I hope your heads don't spin as we pivot to international trade. MDAR has responsibilities there as well.

Traditionally, through financial support provided through the federal Farm Bill, the fifty state departments of agriculture promote export of US agricultural products and US manufactured food products through four regional associations. I serve on the Board of Directors of [Food Export Northeast](#), a ten state organization (CT, DE, MA, ME, NJ, NH, NY, PA, RI, VT). As its website reports, "Food Export supports U.S. suppliers of food and agriculture products by providing exporter education, market entry opportunities to meet qualified buyers, research markets and even ways to save money on international marketing efforts."

Admittedly, Massachusetts is not a huge agricultural commodity exporter when you think about US soy, grain, beef, pork, poultry, and other commodity exports, but a lot of food is manufactured or shipped abroad by MA based companies, and MDAR works hard to support and promote those efforts, largely through the efforts of Bonita Oehlke from our Agricultural Markets Division. Bonita works with Food Export Northeast to connect MA companies with foreign buyers through tours to MA by foreign buyers and trade missions abroad. Fishing industry export is included in our portfolio; just last week Bonita helped host a buyers' mission to MA interested in our aquaculture industry. She often accompanies MA companies on similar missions abroad through the support of Food Export Northeast.

That brings me as to why I'm writing this column from Cologne, Germany, the site of [ANUGA](#), the largest food trade show in the world! As a director and officer of Food Export Northeast, I'm here to promote ag-related exports from our ten states, and of course paying close attention to MA exporting.



ANUGA meets every other year and it is massive! This year's stats aren't available yet, but in 2017, there were over 7,500 exhibitors, 165,000 attendees from 198 countries, in 11 connected buildings covering (gulp) 70 acres! As you can imagine, it's a little overwhelming.

Food Export Northeast's booth, situated in the US Pavilion, is organized by the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS). FAS Administrator Ken Isley officially opened the pavilion. I was lucky enough to be seated next to him at a small luncheon where we spoke about MA Ag and what the Commonwealth exports. It was a fabulous opportunity!

Several Mass. businesses were exhibiting, and I've met with all who were in the US Pavilion. This gave me the opportunity not only to meet with folks back home, but more importantly their teams who are based all over the world. We discussed a variety of ideas to strengthen our businesses' export efforts. I have a lot to discuss with Bonita and staff upon my return to see what we can do, based on those discussions.

So that's it for this edition-Rick's ready to roll, I'm managing the time difference and various internet and email snags from this end, and I'm looking forward to coming home as we head toward the end of the year.

Best regards,



John Lebeaux

FOREFRONT

Energy News

[MDAR's MA Farm Energy Program \(MFEP\) - Energy Audits](#)

MDAR's Massachusetts Farm Energy Program (MFEP) has funds to help farms cover audits, energy efficient projects, and select renewable energy projects. Contact us now for more information through the Center for EcoTechnology (CET), our partner carrying out the MFEP. Contact 413-727-3090, info@massfarmenergy.com, or visit www.massfarmenergy.com, submit a *Request Form*, and then you will be contacted.

FY2020 ACRE Grant Applications

MDAR was pleased to receive 70 total applications for our Agricultural Climate Resiliency and Efficiencies (ACRE) grant program. Applications are currently under review. The grant program is divided between Part 1 Non-energy and Part 2 Energy related technologies, both efforts designed to help provide greater adaptation and mitigation to climate change for agricultural operations.

DOER's SMART Program – 400 MW Review

The Department of Energy Resources (DOER) is currently conducting a 400 MW review of their Solar MA Renewable Target Program (SMART). A straw proposal was presented across the state and found here online: www.mass.gov/files/documents/2019/09/04/400%20MW%20Review%20DRAFT%20090419.pdf

Public comments due September 27, 2019 can be found online under DOER's SMART webpage:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/solar-massachusetts-renewable-target-smart-program>

Proposed Program Guidelines revisions will also be presented shortly for public comment.

Agriculturally, proposed Regulation and Guideline revisions primarily pertain to the Agricultural Solar Tariff Generation Unit (ASTGU), also known as "dual use of land". Proposed revisions were a result of comments, proposed applications and experience gained from the initial ASTGU applications, and are all intended to clarify, improve and strengthen the ability to maintain long term productive open agricultural land in combination with solar PV systems.

Any questions regarding this proceeding can be directed to DOER.SMART@mass.gov.

Additionally, the DOER has amended its Statement of Qualification Reservation Period Guideline to provide an extension for projects impacted by an Affected System Operator Cluster Study. DOER's proposal can be found in the draft guideline link below, and will be accepting comments on the extension. Comments on the proposed extension should be submitted to DOER.SMART@mass.gov by October 18, 2019, with the subject "SQ Reservation Guideline Comments." [Statement of Qualification Reservation Period Guideline Draft 10/03/19](#)

It's Pesticide License Renewal Time!

Please be reminded that your Massachusetts Pesticide Licenses expires each calendar year. The MDAR is now using a new publicly accessible online system known as the ePLACE Portal and will NOT be sending the usual renewal via U.S. Mail. Please renew your license online using this new system. You should have received an email reminder on Tuesday, October 2nd asking you to renew your pesticide license. If you have not done so, please visit the EEA ePLACE Portal, log into your account and complete your renewal. If you forgot your password or security questions or otherwise need help logging into your account, please contact the ePLACE Help Desk at (844) 733-7522. If you have other questions or issues about renewing your pesticide license, please contact Steve Kenyon at (617) 626-1784 or steve.kenyon2@mass.gov.

EEA ePLACE Portal: <https://permitting.state.ma.us/citizenaccess/>

APR Program 2020 – Looking Forward: Farmlands Forever

Please join MDAR Commissioner John Lebeaux, APR landowners, farmers, APR staff, Agricultural Lands Preservation Committee (ALPC), Massachusetts Board of Agriculture, state officials, land trusts, and individuals engaged in Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program efforts to preserve Massachusetts farmlands. This is the first of triennial (every three years), regional, public hearings to review the APR Program. These

events will include: updates on the listening sessions in 2018, policies, procedures, regulations, guidance and efforts to improve and modernize the APR Program. All from 6-8pm:

- January 7 - Red Barn, Hampshire College - 893 West Street, Amherst
- January 14 - Community Harvest Farm - 37 Wheeler Road, North Grafton
- January 21 - Berkshire Athenaeum, Public Library - 1 Wendell Ave, Pittsfield
- January 28 - Bristol County Agricultural High School - Library Rm 212, Gilbert Hall - 135 Center Street, Dighton
- January 30 - Essex North Shore Agricultural/Technical School - Smith Hall Cafetorium - 565 Maple Street, Danvers

Since 1980, the APR Program has permanently protected 932 farms and 73,368 acres in Massachusetts. The APR program was the first in the nation and continues to protect and preserve working farms for generations to come. The APR program was the first in the nation and continues to protect and preserve working farms for generations to come. For information contact Gerard.Kennedy@mass.gov.



[APR Prime Newsletter - 2019](#)

New APR Program Staff Contacts

There have been some staff changes at the MDAR Agricultural Preservation Restriction Stewardship Program, and we want to make sure you know who to contact. In May, we added another stewardship staff person, which allowed us to split the state into three regions. Caroline Raisler was hired to fill that role, in the center of the state. Then in September, we said goodbye to Nick Pitel, who had done a wonderful job of filling the role of Western Massachusetts Stewardship Planer since 2015. We are currently working on filling the vacancy he left. For right now, here is who to contact if you have questions about your APR. Or, if you contact any of us, we will make sure to direct you to the right person.

[Delia Delongchamp](#) - Stewardship Planner - Eastern Massachusetts (from I-395, I-290, and I-190 in Worcester County on east, including part of Worcester County and all of Middlesex, Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Bristol, Plymouth, Barnstable, Dukes, and Nantucket Counties), delia.delongchamp@mass.gov, 617-626-1737

[Caroline Raisler](#) - Stewardship Planner - North/Central Massachusetts (the part of Worcester County west of I-395, I-290, and I-190 and Franklin County), caroline.raisler@mass.gov, 413-726-2006

[Ronald Hall](#) - APR Program Coordinator - Western Massachusetts (Hampshire, Hampden, and Berkshire Counties) – this stewardship region is currently vacant, but Ron will either answer your question or pass it along to other APR staff who can help. ronald.hall@mass.gov

MDAR Western Massachusetts Offices Moved

The MDAR Amherst Satellite office has moved to West Springfield.

The mailing address is:

**138 Memorial Avenue, Suite 42
West Springfield, MA 01089**

If you need new phone numbers for people who were in the Amherst, office, see our staff directory at: www.mass.gov/service-details/mdar-staff-directory

Have Questions on the Overtime Ruling and How it Applies to Your Farm?

As you all know, the Supreme Judicial Court SJC ruled in March that “preparation for market” activities are not covered under the state law exempting farm work from overtime pay. This came about as the result of a case involving a single farm. While the ruling had broad implications for Massachusetts agriculture, the details of how it applies were specific to the farm involved in the court ruling. Massachusetts agriculture is very diverse, and many questions remain as to how the ruling applies to various farm activities around the state.

MFBF is working with the Attorney General’s Wage and Hour Division and the Executive office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) to answer these questions. If you have questions on whether or how the ruling applies to your farm, please email it to brad@mfbf.net by November 15th. Farm Bureau will compile and forward emails to EOLWD and the AG who has agreed to put up written responses on their Web site (MFBF will promote the link when answers are posted).

When sending in questions, please be as detailed as possible. For instance, if asking about whether a worker painting a barn is exempt from overtime, describe the purpose for which the barn is used. Such details might key to whether the activity is exempt or not. Look for more messages on this topic in the future.

Invasive Insect Certification Program Starts Next Week

October 17, 31, and November 14, 2019 at The Publick House, Sturbridge

This three-day program looks at the characteristics of invasive insects, the impacts and costs they have regionally and nationwide, and highlights the biology, ecology, and identification of some of the most destructive insects. This includes (but is not limited to) the Asian longhorned beetle, cynipid oak gall wasp, emerald ash borer, gypsy moth, hemlock woolly adelgid, winter moth, and more. State and federal regulations pertaining to invasive insect management will be discussed, as well as invasive forest and agricultural insects in Massachusetts along with warnings about potential newcomers. Management of invasive insects as a part of landscapes will be presented along with strategies to prevent human assisted movement of these organisms. Integrated Pest Management will be the focus, highlighting cultural and mechanical management options along with the use of biological control. Participants may receive a certificate in INVASIVE INSECT MANAGEMENT by attending all three sections and earning a passing score on a quiz following each class. Participants not interested in a certificate may also attend without taking the quizzes. Attendees are encouraged to take all three sessions in one season to get the most out of the information. Cost: \$95/each class.

See the full agenda at <http://ag.umass.edu/landscape/education-events/invasive-insect-certification-program>

2020 Massachusetts Agriculture Calendar Now Available



Can you believe 2020 around the corner? Now available is the is the [2020 Massachusetts Agriculture Calendar!](#)

Each year the calendar, *Celebrating the Seasons of Massachusetts Agriculture*, features winning photos from this years' public photo contest. Each photograph is selected that best spotlights crops and farms across the Commonwealth. The Calendar's goal is to showcase the beautiful diversity of crops grown in Massachusetts as well as be a learning tool for teachers and educators, as each month includes "Fun Facts" and "Teaching Tips."

The annual Calendar is produced in collaboration with [Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom \(MAC\)](#), the [MA State Grange](#), and the [Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources](#), along with the many great sponsoring associations: [MA Farm Bureau](#), [MA Maple Association](#), [MA Flower Growers Association](#), [MA Fruit Growers](#), [MA Fairs Association](#), [Cape Cod Cranberry Association](#), [MA Dairy Promotion Board](#), [School Nutrition Association of Massachusetts](#), and the [MA Christmas Tree Association](#).

We congratulate the winners of the annual photo contest. We received over 265 photos! We invited the winning photographers to [Massachusetts Day](#) at the Big E for an award ceremony.



Month	Winner	Photograph subject
January	Maryann Gubala at Freeman Farm at Old Sturbridge Village	
February	Reeve Gutsell at Hampshire College Farm, Amherst	
March	Winton Pitcoff at North Hadley Sugar Shack, N. Hadley	
April	Jennifer Galenski at Galenski Farms, S. Deerfield	
May	Tina Bemis at Bemis Farms Nursery, Spencer	
June	Robert Pearson at Elmhurst Dairy Farms, Millbury	
July	Amy Musante at Musante Farm, Dalton	
August	Nina Mollo at Moraine Farm, Beverly	
Sept	Kelly Lewis at Autumn Hills Orchard, Groton	
October	Esther Roe at Maple Park, East Wareham	
November	Jacquelyn Boyden at Dan's Veggies Farm, Erving	
December	Rachel Keating at Bristol County Agricultural High School, Dighton	

Honorable Mentions (small photos in the calendar) January - Kristen Tool Olsen Farm, Lanesborough; February - Laurie Cuevas at Thomas Farm, Sunderland; March - Janet Zwolinski at Lawton Farm, Foxboro; April - Maryann Gubala at Freeman Farm at Old Sturbridge Village, May - Krissy Mikoski at Derby Ridge Farm, Stow; June - Nel Sogoloff at Marini's Farm, Ipswich, July - Amy Musante at Musante Farm, Dalton; August - Peg Mallett at Wayland Summer Farmers' Market; September - Kelly Lewis at Autumn Hills Orchard, Groton; October - Amy Ashley at Ridge Hill Cranberry Company, Freetown; November - Anne Diemand Bucci at Diemand Farm, Wendell; December - Robin VanRotz at Bristol County Agricultural High School, Dighton

Details and ordering information [here](#). If you offer retail sales and would like to offer to your customers, there is a [bulk price offered](#). Contact [Bobbie Oles](#) if any questions.

Learn more about MAC and what they offer educators across the Commonwealth [here](#).

Get out there this fall and take pictures for the 2020 Photo Contest - We're always looking for current/active agriculture, aquaculture, and horticulture photos throughout the seasons of Massachusetts!

[UPCOMING EVENTS/WORKSHOPS](#)

October 16 - Scaling up Pastured Poultry at Square Roots Farm - 4:00 - 6:00 pm, Lanesborough. Michael Gallagher and Ashley Amsden have operated Square Roots Farm since 2010. They produce meat birds, eggs, pork, beef, and vegetables and distribute through pre-order on-farm sales, 3 local farmers markets, and various wholesale accounts. In 2018, Square Roots increased production of eggs and meat birds as they phased out their CSA and sought to fill an unmet demand in the market. Michael and Ashley will share some of what they learned about improving the efficiency of their systems to increase production while keeping labor steady. [Details here](#).

October 29 - Webinar: Managing Your Soil as if the Earth Mattered - 7:00 - 8:00 pm. Free. Jim Schultz and his wife, Annie, own and operate Red Shirt Farm, a diversified, regenerative, no-till farm in western MA. Employ a wide range of regenerative techniques to grow vegetables, a small orchard, and pastured heritage chickens, turkeys, and pigs. Jim will discuss the critical importance of regenerative growing practices to address environmental challenges and mitigate our climate crisis and then provide specific techniques that can be implemented by small farmers, homesteaders and backyard gardeners. Jim will also touch on his Climate Battery, an innovative method for heating a high tunnel without the use of fossil fuels. [Details here](#).

November 3 - How to Successfully Grow Blueberries - The Massachusetts Cultivated Blueberry Grower's Association (MCBGA) annual winter meeting, Harvey's Conference Center, Westborough, 11:30 am - 3:pm. Mary Conklin, Extension Educator in Fruit Production & IPM at the UConn, to speak about how to successfully grow blueberries. Being in the fruit industry for over 35 years as a grower, consultant and an Extension Educator, Mary will talk about site selection, soil preparation, plant selection, plant health, pests, and where to buy supplies/bushes. Please RSVP by emailing Elisabeth Patt at eap1226@verizon.net.

November 16 - Mass. Bee Fall Meeting - 8am – 4:30pm - VFW Hall, 123 Holliston Street, Medway. Outstanding educational event hosted by the Norfolk County Beekeepers Association. [Details here](#).

November 21 - SEMAP 2019 Annual Meeting - 5:30-8:00pm, Groundwork! Coworking Space, 1213 Purchase St. New Bedford. Join SEMAP for a celebration of their accomplishments in 2019, networking with farmers and allies from across the region, and a presentation of awards for local farms, businesses, and people key to the success of local agriculture in Southeastern Mass. Free - [Details here](#).

November 21 - Dairy Farmers: Learn How to Handle Tough Questions at Discussion Training - Free workshop and lunch open to all dairy farmers - 10am - 2pm - Bluebonnet Diner and Banquet Hall, 324 King St, Northampton - Do you think we can do a better job explaining why we do what we do as farmers? Are you hesitant to engage in conversations with the average consumer? Misinformation abounds, but it's up to us in the agricultural community to set the record straight. Learn how to lead positive conversations about the

tough issues surrounding our industry, with a specific focus on water quality and the environment. The workshop will train you to get your point across in all types of settings including in person, in a town hall setting, online or when speaking to a reporter. RSVP your name, farm name, and number attending to Annalise Kieley at AKieley@newenglanddairy.com.

November 22 - 3rd Annual MA Food System Forum - 9:30 am – 4pm, Hogan Campus Center, College of the Holy Cross, Worcester. MA Food System Collaborative brings together more than more than 200 leaders from the Massachusetts food system to exchange ideas and resources, learn about each other’s work, and pursue opportunities for collective action. Attend the 3rd Annual MA Food System Forum to learn new skills, celebrate successes, and collaborate across disciplines to increase equity and sustainability in the MA food system. [Registration here.](#)

Save the Date: 2020 Agriculture Day at the Statehouse – Wednesday, March 25th

[MDAR Calendar](#)

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USDA News

USDA Announces New Massachusetts State Conservationist

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has selected Daniel Wright to serve as State Conservationist for Massachusetts. As State Conservationist, Wright will oversee the federal agency’s programs, operations and staff in the Bay State. He will begin his new position on September 30th, succeeding Christine Clarke, who retired in May.

Wright began his career with NRCS in California as an intern before transitioning to a Soil Conservationist position in California. Dan has worked in five offices across California, New Hampshire and Massachusetts as a Soil Conservationist, Resource Conservationist, District Conservationist and, most recently, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs in Massachusetts.

[Complete release here.](#)

USDA Opens 2020 Enrollment for Dairy Margin Coverage Program - ends Dec. 13th

Dairy producers can now enroll in the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) for calendar year 2020. USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) opened signup today for the program that helps producers manage economic risk brought on by milk price and feed cost disparities. The DMC program offers reasonably priced protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all-milk price and the average feed cost (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer. The deadline to enroll in DMC for 2020 is Dec. 13, 2019.

Dairy farmers earned more than \$300 million dollars from the program in 2019 so far. Producers are encouraged to take advantage of this very important risk management tool for 2020. All producers who want 2020 coverage, even those who took advantage of the 25 percent premium discount by locking in the coverage level for five years of margin protection coverage are required to visit the office during this signup period to pay the annual administrative fee. Dairy producers should definitely consider coverage for 2020 as even the slightest drop in the margin can trigger payments.

More Information

The 2018 Farm Bill created DMC, improving on the previous safety net for dairy producers. DMC is one of many programs that FSA and other USDA agencies are implementing to support America's farmers. For more information on enrolling in DMC and taking advantage of an online dairy decision tool that assists producers in selecting coverage for 2020, visit the [DMC webpage](#).

For additional questions and assistance, contact your local USDA service center. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

NASS announces release of 2017 Census of Agriculture Race, Ethnicity, and Gender Profiles

Census Special Study data releases and data collections coming

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) today released 2017 Census of Agriculture data tabulated by race, ethnicity, and gender. Located on the [NASS website](#), these national, state, and county-level data profiles highlight number of farms, land in farms, land use, value of sales, and producer characteristics, such as years of experience, average age, and more. Redesigned and containing more information than in previous years, the producer profiles provide insights on: women; Hispanic, Latino or Spanish; American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Black or African American; Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander; and white producers. Data are available for geographies with 30 farms or more operated by a specified group.

"The Census of Agriculture is the only time NASS produces detailed demographic information," said NASS Administrator Hubert Hamer. "These important data show the diversity that exists within U.S. agriculture, and the significant contributions made by all groups. Data such as these are often vital to community-based organizations, policy and other decision makers to ensure that all producers are represented when important decisions are made about agricultural programs and grant funding – to name just a few."

NASS also released [2017 Ag Census Web Maps](#) this week. The interactive maps show key Census data in five broad categories down to the county-level: crops and plants, economics, farms, livestock and animals, and producers. The maps give spatial overviews of various aspects of U.S. agriculture, showing the relationships and patterns across regions and topics. Census data summaries are also available at the congressional district, watershed, zip code, and American Indian reservation levels.

[Complete release here.](#)

Classified

- 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. #1 (6”) pots, @ \$18.00 for 6+, @ \$16.50 for 60+. Inquire for wholesale rates. Hopkinton pickup only. www.Hort-Sense.com, call Wayne at 508-962-1857, waynem@westonnurseries.com
- For sale: Land Plow - 3 bottom heavy duty international harvester spring reset – asking \$3,000, John Deere Model 246 2 row corn planter – stored inside – asking \$2,500, Austin Westin 4 wheeled HH100 road grader – running condition - asking \$3,500. Contact Chris – cbm980c@yahoo.com

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Complete staff directory [here](#). Next issue to be published in December. Please send news, events, or classified information by December 2nd to Richard.LeBlanc@mass.gov. To unsubscribe, or change your email address, contact Richard.LeBlanc@mass.gov or call 617-626-1759.

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.

