



June/July Farm & Market Report

7/3/19

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COMMISSIONER'S COLUMN



Greetings, Mass. Agriculture and all its friends,

Boy, that was a fast three months! After our cool damp spring, it seems summer has started along similar lines.

MA Agriculture has been in regional and national focus lately. In early June MDAR hosted the Northeast Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NEASDA) Annual Meeting in Brewster. It's a ten-state organization of the ag departments from each of the New England states, plus NY, NJ, PA, and DE. The other states' agency heads and I are the Board of Directors. NEASDA is one of four regional associations associated with our national group, the [National Association of State Departments of Agriculture](#) (NASDA). This year I'm NEASDA President, and the President's state hosts the meeting.

The last two times the meeting was held in MA, it was located in Northampton and Boston, so we thought it was time to head southeast, to Brewster, and show our guests some interesting and unique farm activities in that region.

Highlights included:

- A visit by Lt. Governor Polito who joined us for a very interesting session with remarks on Climate Change from Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Kathleen Theoharides and WBZ-TV Chief Meteorologist Eric Fisher (Many thanks to Eric for his shout out to NEASDA during the 6 PM news broadcast!)
- A very interesting and equally entertaining presentation by our Keynote Speaker, Lucie Amundsen on marketing techniques she practices at her husband's and her business, Locally Laid Egg Company in Wrenshall, MN
- Two great afternoons of touring some of the agriculture of Barnstable and Plymouth Counties

We had a lot of national, regional and state participants in a series of presentations. USDA was well represented with an animal health talk from Kevin Shea, the Administrator of APHIS, along with presentations from different USDA program representatives on land

conservation, FSA programs, crop insurance, specialty crops grants. My fellow Food Policy Council member Department of Transitional Assistance Commissioner Jeff McCue participated in the food access panel, and State Senator Julian Cyr and State Representative Sarah Peake welcomed us to the beauty of the Cape. NASDA leadership attending included our president, my colleague NM Director/Secretary Jeff Witte and our CEO, Dr. Barb Glenn.

MDAR's team and programs were featured throughout the conference on the following topics: [Food Export](#) (Bonita Oehlke), [Plant Pests](#) (Taryn LaScola-Miner), [Hemp](#) (Taryn and Jessica Burgess), [Urban Agriculture](#) (Rose Arruda), [Animal Fund](#) (Sheri Gustafson), [Dairy](#) (Myron Inglis), [Apiary](#) (Kim Skyrm), [Ag Energy](#) (Gerry Palano), and Food Safety Modernization Act (Mike Botelho). Our team did a great job!

Guest speakers included Tracy Lerman (Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group) on its programs: Ruairi O' Mahony (UMass Lowell) and Francey Slater (Mill City Grows) on urban ag; Eric Steiner from Elanco Animal Health; Catherine de Ronde (AgriMark), Mark Duffy (MA Assn of Dairy Farmers), Bob Gray (State Ratification Committee) on dairy; Dorothy Suput (The Carrot Project); Cris Coffin (American Farmland Trust) and Jim Hafner (Land for Good) on farmland planning; Jennifer Lund (ME State Apiarist); Kimberly O'Brien (Bayer); Bob Rheault (East Coast Shellfish Growers Assn.); and Winton Pitcoff (MA Food System Collaborative), Francie Randolph (Sustainable CAPE), Rochelle Bellin (Just Roots) on healthy food access.

We had two afternoons of fabulous tours. Day One was dominated by the cranberry industry as we toured one of Decas Farms bogs and its processing facility (honestly, I think the bog tour may have been the highlight of the entire event!) We also visited The Farm at Chatham Bars Inn that produces vegetables for the Inn and to the public. Day Two featured a fascinating tour in Dennis of shellfish production at the Agriculture Research Center and we saw how Cape Abilities Farm combines its mission of providing employment to individuals with disabilities with a fully functional retail garden center. We ended Day Two with a delightful tour and reception at Truro Vineyards. Dave Roberts, his family and team put together a great event!

Hosting this conference was a very major undertaking for MDAR that was two years in the making. I can't properly credit our team that made it happen. The events principal organizers were Assistant Commissioner Ashley Sears Randle and Agricultural Markets Division Director Mary Jordan and they did a magnificent job managing every detail for best outcome! Our boots on the ground providing staff support throughout the conference were Ashley and Mary, Chief of Staff Alisha Bouchard, and our entire Agricultural Markets team who took very good care of our attendees and presenters. It was a team effort as other divisions at MDAR also supported the effort. I can't thank these people enough; they successfully put together a great conference while taking care of their normal responsibilities.

Shortly after the NEASDA event CT, MA and RI welcomed USDA Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation Bill Northey to get a first-hand look at our region's agriculture. Bill is the former Iowa Secretary of Agriculture who I knew from NASDA-he was very helpful to me as we developed our Avian Influenza response protocols as Iowa was ravaged by the disease during his tenure as Iowa Secretary. At USDA, Bill oversees much of the Department's domestic programs including three that are very important to our farmers: Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Risk Management Agency.

On a very rainy morning (it poured whenever we got out of the car and stopped whenever we got back in), Ashley and I joined Bill in Wareham where he saw two farming activities that he didn't see in Iowa. First, we visited a cranberry bog at Surecran, followed by an interesting (and delicious) tour at Indian Cove Aquaculture. It was excellent to have a senior USDA official in MA and New England!

Meanwhile back at MDAR, we recently filled our vacant CFO position and welcomed Cullen Roberts to our senior team. Cullen is no stranger to the state's fiscal procedures as he comes to us after working at the Dept. of Public Health for several years, most recently as its Budget Director. We are very happy and lucky to have him! I do want to recognize Chief of Staff Alisha Bouchard who stepped up as Acting CFO since Michael Rock retired in January.

I also want to say farewell to a great friend of MA Ag, former Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Matt Beaton, who recently left the Administration for a position in the private sector. We all benefited from Matt's strong support and advocacy. At the same time we are excited to welcome our new Secretary, Kathleen Theoharides. Secretary Theoharides was most recently EEA's Under Secretary of Climate Change. She is no stranger to ag, having spent time in DC working on Farm Bill analysis and also in her youth as a landscaper. She's expressed great interest in MA Ag, and it wouldn't surprise me if she joins us on some of our tours this summer.

As soon as we flip the calendar to July, our agricultural fair season begins. Yesterday Fran Pearson of Ag Markets and I were welcomed by George Carney at the Brockton Fair. George gave us an excellent tour of the fair, celebrating its 145th anniversary this year. The poultry barn was first-rate and we saw a 4H cattle competition in a very nice setting.

Ashley and I have a summer and fall of fair visits scheduled-we greatly enjoy them. We are also planning one of our favorite items on the schedule-our traditional series of farm tours throughout the state, many of them hosted by the regional Buy Local organizations. Berkshire and Central Mass are next on the agenda. The only downside to a lot of weekend touring is that I've had to dramatically scale back the vegetable garden because I didn't have enough time to care for it the past few years. So far no woodchucks, the garlic is

looking great, the rhubarb stalks were a little thin, but overall it's looking pretty good, though we had a tremendous hailstorm Sunday that shredded my cucumber leaves.

I frequently gently kid Rick about his deadlines for me to submit this column, largely because I'm usually a little late. This time I'm way late, I'm extremely embarrassed and I offer him this public apology.

Here's hoping the rains happen only once or twice a week, and only at night. It's a busy time for all. I hope all that hard work converts into a successful season.

Best regards,



John Lebeaux

FOREFRONT

Energy News

DOER Extends Written Comment Period for Proposed RPS Revisions

The MA Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) have recently had proposed changes. The MA RPS provides definitions, eligibility requirements, qualifications, compliances, etc., for a variety of renewable energy technologies to be incorporated into our state's energy plan, including the ability to receive incentives for implementing such. The MA Department of Energy Resources (DOER) have been holding listening sessions across the state as well as inviting comments on the proposed changes. DOER has recently announced an extension to submitting those comments as noted below:

Deadline Extended to Provide Written Comments

The Department of Energy Resources ("DOER") wishes to notify stakeholders that the deadline to provide written comments on the proposed changes to the RPS Class I (225 CMR 14.00) and RPS Class II (225 CMR 15.00) Regulations has been extended to 5 PM on July 26, 2019. Please submit written comments on the proposed changes to the RPS Class I and RPS Class II regulations to John Wassam electronically to DOER.RPS@mass.gov or via mail to the Department of Energy Resources, 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 1020, Boston, MA 02114.

Copies of the proposed regulations may be obtained from the DOER website www.mass.gov/doer or by contacting DOER at DOER.RPS@mass.gov.

[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. Phone: 413-727-3090 • E-mail: info@massfarmenergy.com, or visit www.massfarmenergy.com, submit a *Request Form*, and then you will be contacted.



MDAR Seeks Qualified Applicants for Massachusetts State Exposition Building during the 2019 Big E Fair, September 13 – 29

In 2019, the Massachusetts Building will be celebrating its 100th anniversary!

Due to a vacancy, MDAR will be accepting applications for (2) two 11'x 14' booths or (1) one 308 sq ft. booth inside the Massachusetts Building during the 2019 fair. MDAR invites Massachusetts businesses and organizations to apply for the opportunity to exhibit in the Massachusetts State Exposition Building at The Big E, September 13 – September 29, 2019. The mission of the Massachusetts State Exposition Building is to showcase Massachusetts agriculture, culture, commerce and tourism through informational, educational, promotional and retail exhibits. It is an opportunity to showcase and sell to over a million attendees that come through the Massachusetts Building. Interested applicants are encouraged to review the exhibitor guidelines and application, and **submit a completed application by Wednesday, July 17, 2019.**

All new exhibitors must attend New Applicant Presentation Day on Friday, July 19th at 10:00am at the Massachusetts Building to be considered or the application shall be deemed incomplete.

Application is available on the MDAR [website here](#).

For more information, please contact Fran Pearson, Building Manager at Frances.Pearson@mass.gov or at 617-616-1748.

2019 Massachusetts Day Application Deadline for the Massachusetts Building at The Big E extended to July 15, 2019

MDAR invites Massachusetts businesses and organizations to apply for the opportunity to exhibit during Massachusetts Day (9/19), and Harvest New England Day (9/27) at The Big E, September 13 – September 29, 2019. Interested applicants are encouraged to review the single day exhibitor guidelines and applications located on the MDAR [website here](#). Applications deadlines are: Massachusetts Day – July 15, 2019 (Extended), Military and Harvest New England Days - July 15, 2019 For more information, please contact Bonita Oehlke (Harvest New England Day) at Bonita.Oehlke@mass.gov, 617-626-1753, or Phu Mai (Military & Massachusetts Day) at Phu.Mai@mass.gov, 617-626-1746.

What's on Your Plate? Support MA Farms and Farmers with the "Fresh & Local" License Plate!

Why Upgrade Your Plate?

- 100% of proceeds go to support new farmers building strong businesses, developing expertise for current farmers, and supporting a resilient, sustainable food system.
- We provide over 500 vending opportunities for our farming community at local MA farmers markets.
- Help New Entry and MA Farmers Market reach our goal of 5,000 "Fresh and Local" plates on the road by 2020 to keep our programming sustainable and fruitful.



To learn more, just text the word "FARMERS" to 55222, or [click here](#).

Already have a plate? Great! Please share with your friends and networks, and keep in touch with New Entry Sustainable Farming Project on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#).

Want to support local farmers in other ways? New Entry offers a CSA with 10 drop-off locations in the Boston area. [Learn more](#). New Entry also provides fresh food for low-income families, seniors and children. [Learn more](#). @NewEntry @MAFarmMarkets #Eatlocal

[UPCOMING EVENTS/WORKSHOPS](#)

- **July 9 - Website and E-Commerce Basics Workshop** – SEMAP - Do you need a website? Are you ready to start selling your products online? Learn how to secure a domain name and how to get a website up and running, options for online shopping functionality, how to accept credit card payments and how to make it all work to enable customers to pay for CSA subscriptions, purchase tickets to on-farm events, order value-added items for pick up, delivery, or shipping. [Details here.](#)
- **July 10 - Sustainable Water Management Practices for Nursery and Greenhouse Operations** - 9:00am to 3:30pm, UMass, Amherst. Increasing production sustainability is of growing importance for all types of plant production. Improving irrigation practices, understanding water quality, and monitoring nutrients are integral to increasing sustainability. Better management of water and nutrients can improve environmental stewardship as well as your bottom line. Join water and nutrient management specialists from around the country for this exciting workshop. [Details here.](#)
- **July 10 - Massachusetts Fruit Growers' Association Summer Meeting** - Sholan Farm, Leominster, 10 am - 2pm. All are invited. There will be a morning orchard tour, followed by a special presentation on "Climate Trends in New England" by Jeremy Reiner, WHDH Channel 7 Meteorologist. Lunch will be BBQ by Meadowbrook Orchard. Two pesticide recertification credits will be offered. Cost is \$40 for MFGA members, \$50 for non-MFGA members. Preregistration is required. [Details here.](#)
- **July 13 - Christmas Tree Twilight Meeting** - 9:00 am - Sugarledge Farm, Plainfield. Hosts: Jon and Carrie Cranston [Updates here.](#)
- **July 13 - Honey Bee Education Days at State Apiaries - Pests, Parasites and Pathogens** - Join the Bee Team from the Department of Agricultural Resources Apiary Program to get a tour of live working honey bee colonies, hands-on demonstrations of hive management techniques, and exposure to the latest knowledge on how to best sustain healthy honey bee colonies in MA. These events are free and open to the public, but will focus on topics of interest to beekeepers. [Details here.](#)
- **July 15 - Farm Machinery Maintenance & Servicing 101** – SEMAP Workshop - An expert mechanic with over 40 years of troubleshooting and repairing everything from weed whackers to wide-body aircraft will share his expertise to help you keep your farm machinery in tip-top shape! You will walk away knowing how to identify basic but important components of your equipment motorized and non-motorized, what basic tools must be in your toolbox, and how to perform basic preventative maintenance on your farm machinery. [Details here.](#)
- **July 25 - MNLA's Down to Earth Summer Conference** - Sylvan Nursery, Dartmouth. Where green industry professionals meet! Unique Mass. industry summer meeting and trade show event. The meeting will offer something for everyone. Whether it is the Hort Olympics, the innovative exhibits, hands-on demonstrations or cutting-edge education, exhibitors and attendees are sure to find what they are looking for! [More here.](#) Register on or before July 12 and Save \$15 per registration. www.MNLA.com/DtE19
- **August 10 - Honey Bee Education Days at State Apiaries - Fall Management Part 1** - Join the Bee Team from MDAR's Apiary Program to get a tour of live working honey bee colonies, hands-on demonstrations of hive management techniques, and exposure to the latest knowledge on how to best sustain healthy honey bee colonies in MA. These events are free and open to the public, but will focus on topics of interest to beekeepers. [Details here.](#)
- **August 9-11 - 45th NOFA Summer Conference** - Hampshire College, Amherst. Nutrition Matters | Soil Health Builds Human Health - Keynote speaker, Sandor Katz. Wide-range of seminars, workshops and other educational opportunities. Immerse yourself in a community of like-minded practitioners and curious learners eager to share inspiration and ideas for organic food, farming, health, activism, and beyond. Always a family friendly event, you can bring the whole family to enjoy workshops for adults, kids and teens, over 60 vendors, live music, games and amazing food! [More here.](#)

Updates made here: [MDAR Events Calendar.](#)

USDA News

Reminder to Report Crop Damages Promptly

2019 has presented farmers with challenging weather conditions and producers covered by a Federal Crop Insurance Policy are reminded to monitor their crops for insurable damage throughout the growing season. If you notice damage contact your crop insurance agent within 72 hours of discovery, 15 days before harvesting begins and within 15 days after harvesting is completed on the insurance unit.

Three other important reminders:

- Check with your crop insurance agents to review any prevented planting options.
- Direct marketed crops must have a yield appraisal before they are harvested, if loss is anticipated.
- Do not destroy crop evidence that is needed to support your claim without clear direction, in writing, from the insurance adjuster.

Producers having coverage under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) administered by the USDA - Farm Service Agency have similar loss reporting requirements. NAP producers should contact the FSA Office that serves their farming operation to report losses and to review prevented planting options.

UMass Extension works in partnership with the USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) and various agricultural organizations to educate and inform Massachusetts producers about Federal Crop Insurance and Risk Management Programs. For more information, please visit www.rma.usda.gov or contact UMass Extension Risk Management Educators, Paul Russell at pmrrussell@umass.edu or Tom Smiarowski at tsmiarowski@umass.edu or visit: <https://ag.umass.edu/risk-management>.

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- [Farmers Markets Seeking Vendors](#) - Check back periodically for updates to this list. If you have updates, please send to David.Webber@mass.gov.
- **Job posting - Farmer Relations Specialist** - New England Dairy Promotion Board – Work from Home in MA or CT. Do you love milk, cheese, and ice cream, and want to help us promote all things dairy on behalf of the dairy farmers in New England? Would you enjoy the challenge of bridging the disconnect between consumers and the dairy farmers who produce the milk and dairy foods they love? If so, consider joining our team! “Work from home” position based in Massachusetts or Connecticut. Work hours are M-F, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm. Experience on a dairy farm, in agriculture, or in the dairy industry is a plus. This position offers a competitive non-profit salary based on relevant experience. Benefits include Blue Cross Blue Shield Health and Dental Blue dental insurance, paid vacation, sick time and holidays, and a 401K program. New England Dairy Promotion Board is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Please send cover letter and describe your expertise and experience by submitting a resume to: jobopening@newenglanddairy.com.

About the Farm & Market Report

Published bi-monthly by MDAR:

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Next issue to be published in June. Please send news, events, or classified information by August 5th 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.

