



MASSACHUSETTS FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

The Voice of Agriculture

News & Views

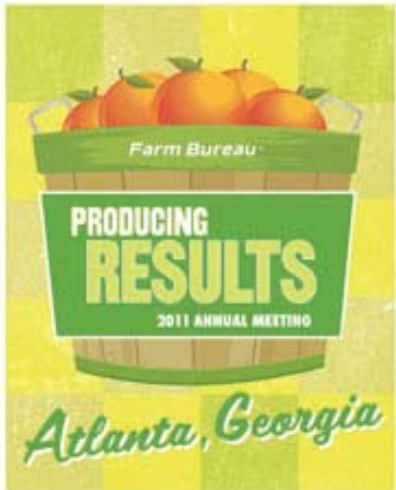
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MASSACHUSETTS FARM BUREAU AFBF ANNUAL CONVENTION TOUR SCHEDULE



Massachusetts Farm Bureau is proud to offer the following tour package for the 92nd AFBF Annual Convention in Atlanta, GA 7-12, 2010

TUESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2011
Poultry & More
Description of stops:
Stork Poultry Processing provides the poultry industry worldwide with the latest technology in processing equipment aimed at increasing the customer's profitability. Stork offers complete systems as well as a wide range of equipment, from live bird handling, eviscerating, cut up, deboning, (fixed weight) batching and packing, up to and including, intelligent management information and production control software.

Hours: 8:30am – 4:30pm

Wednesday, January 12th-DEPART
PRICING:

Single/Double hotel room- \$905 (5 nights)

Annual Meeting Registration: \$100 (per person)

Tours- \$140 per person (includes both tours)

*Tour refund deadline DEC 1

Total cost per person is: \$1145

Total cost per couple is: \$1385

*Flights and Transportation to and from hotel are to be arranged by individual members-

*A non refundable deposit of \$475 will be required by November 1st, 2010 and the final payment is due by December 1st, 2010

Contact John Conners in our Ashland office to register today!
John@mfbf.net or 508.881.4766

operated Expeller® press Oilseeds production facility processing Non-GMO Canola and Sunflower seeds. Resaca Sun produces Kosher, non-GMO, Expeller® pressed food grade Canola and Sunflower oils for commercial refineries and high quality Canola and Sunflower meals for dairy, beef, and chicken farmers.

Chambers Mill Trout Farm is a seven-acre lake located in the mountains of northwestern Georgia near the city of Rome. The lake is fed and flows at over 2,000 gallons per minute. The trout that are located in the lake were hatched and raised on site.

Hours: 8:30am – 3:30pm

Sunday, January 9th-AFBF Convention

Monday, January 10th-AFBF Convention-Mike Rowe, the creator and executive producer of Discovery Channel's Emmy®-nominated series Dirty Jobs with Mike Rowe, will deliver the keynote address to the American Farm Bureau Federation's 92nd annual meeting on January 10, 2011, in Atlanta, GA.

A SUCCESSFUL END TO THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION

July 31 marked the end of formal the two-year legislative session. Despite budget woes and the legislature's focus on gaming and health care, there were a number of eleventh hour wins for the agricultural community. Several bills important to the agricultural community were signed into law.

Small Plot Farming – In the past decade, there has been a significant increase in the number of small farms in the Commonwealth. As small farms became more prolific, it became clear that they needed relief from local zoning ordinances along the lines provided to those farms of 5 acres or more (MGL 40a S3). This was the gist of the Small Plot Farming bill. While the original small plot farming bill died in Committee, emphasis on this bill at County Farm Bureau legislative breakfasts prompted legislators to include provisions in an economic development bill which ultimately passed. Under provisions of this act, a farm of two acres or more, that makes at least \$1000 annually per acre in gross receipts will enjoy the same zoning protections afforded larger farm parcels. The act does NOT change Chapter 61A, and only relates to zoning matters. Thanks to Senators Bruce Tarr, Karen Spilka, Michael Moore, Jamie Eldridge and Representative Brian Dempsey for moving this forward.

Farm Winery Bill – The economic development bill which carried the day for small farms did the same for farm wine growers. Under the new provisions, state law now allows Massachusetts farm wine growers to sell their products at agricultural events, including farmers markets. Sellers would need to obtain a permit from the municipality in which they plan to sell. MFBF was part of a coordinated effort to push for the state to allow the sale of wine at ag events. Senators Eldridge, Ben Downing and Spilka, and Representatives Straus and deMacedo played key roles in the success of this effort.

School Nutrition Bill – This bill is designed to ensure that kids have access to healthy food in school. While much of it focuses on actions schools must take, there are provisions that promote the purchase of local farm products. When going out to bid, public colleges and universities must attempt to procure MA grown or produced products – the same as already in place for public schools. The school must purchase local product if offered, so long as the price does not exceed more than 10 percent of other available product. The new law also clarifies existing provisions for public schools, stating that schools can make multiple purchases from farms, without going out to bid so long as

the contracts do not exceed \$25,000. Kudos to Representative Jeff Sanchez for sponsoring this bill and to Representative Steve Kulik and Senators Stan Rosenberg, Steve Brewer and Bruce Tarr for ensuring that agriculture was included.

Food Policy Council – Following a model started in several other states, the Governor recently signed legislation creating a Food Policy Council. The Council is intended to bring representatives of the hunger, health and agricultural communities together to advise legislators and policy makers on how to create a stronger and healthier local food system. Representative Kulik and Senators Rosenberg, Brewer and Tarr were key to the passage of this bill.

The passage of these bills into law are a testament to the dedication of Farm Bureau members, and a collaboration of stakeholders who worked together to benefit the farm community. This is proof that the events such as Agriculture Day at the State House, and county legislative events really do pay off!

Brad Mitchell
Director of Government Affairs
brad@mfbf.net

MFBF New Office Headquarters Address

For your records, MFBF will be moving to our new location this fall. The new address is:

**249 Lakeside Ave
Marlborough, MA 01752**



Small Farms Program Update

SMALL FARMS Update is intended as a resource for farmers and agricultural service providers in New York, and is provided to you by Cornell's Small Farms Program. The mission is to foster the sustainability of diverse, thriving small farms that contribute to food security, healthy rural communities, and the environment. Their work is made possible by a network of close partnerships among Cornell faculty and staff, Cornell Cooperative Extension educators and staff, NYS agriculture support agencies, non profit agriculture organizations and farmers.

VISIT [HTTP://WWW.SMALLFARMS.CORNELL.EDU/INDEX.CFM](http://www.smallfarms.cornell.edu/index.cfm) for more information

OUR MISSION:

TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS, ENCOURAGE THE GROWTH AND BE OF SERVICE TO OUR MEMBERS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF AGRICULTURE

DOUG GILLESPIE NAMED "BLUE RIBBON AWARD" RECIPIENT FOR 2010!



Douglas P. Gillespie, Executive Director of the Mass. Farm Bureau, has been named as the Blue Ribbon Award winner this year and

will be feted at a local foods luncheon and award ceremony at noon at the Brigham Hill Community Farm Barn in No. Grafton on September 30.

The Blue Ribbon Award is given out as a highlight of Massachusetts Harvest for Students Week, which is September 27 through October 1 this year. The recipient is recognized by the Mass. Farm to School Project as someone who has demonstrated outstanding leadership and vision in supporting viable farm to school connections in the state. Doug's support has been a big component in the success of the Mass. program, which now counts 195 school districts and 95 farms as participants in farm to school transactions. The nine farmers recently featured on "trading cards" as the 2010 Mass. Farm to School team will be on hand to congratulate Doug.

For information about Doug's award, his luncheon, or about the technical assistance that is available to farmers from the Mass. Farm to School Project, please contact mafarmtoschool@gmail.com or 413-253-3844.

Member to Member Marketplace

Roberts Brothers Lumber, 1450 Spruce Corner Road, Ashfield MA 01330, 10% savings on current Lumber Price Sheet, excluding delivery, planning and any other services.

Dowse Orchards, 98 North Main Street, Sherborn, MA 01770, 10% savings on farm produce. 508-653-2639, www.dowseorchards.com.

Twin City Eye Care, 867 Merriam Ave., Leominster, MA 01453, 978-537-6045, www.twincityeyecare.com. 20% discount on lenses and frames.

FROM THE MFBF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we head into Autumn, it is a very busy time for Farm Bureau. As each of our 11 county affiliates are holding their Annual Meeting you have a real opportunity to get involved in establishing the priorities for both MFBF and AFBF. Farm Bureau is a true "grass roots" organization, so our priorities are set by the membership. Policies are established by farmer-members who attend their county meeting, in the form of resolutions that identify a problem, and suggest a solution or several possible solutions.

Any regular Farm Bureau member can initiate such a resolution. Draft something simple in writing and bring it to your county meeting. Don't worry about perfect wording or format, just focus on the issue that needs attention and how best to address it. Resolutions are discussed at the county meeting and voted upon. Those that pass at the county level are then sent on to the state annual meeting and debated at the delegates' session. Resolutions requiring national action then go on to American Farm Bureau Federation, and are debated there as well.

As an example, a few years ago a farmer in Essex County brought a resolution to his county meeting, because he was concerned that government was moving closer to treating animal manure as hazardous waste. That resolution passed the county and state level, and then was adopted as AFBF policy. Less than a year later, AFBF was successful in getting a ruling from the Envi-

ronmental Protection Agency stating that manure was not to be treated as hazardous waste. So the system works!

If you want assistance at the county level, I suggest that you contact your county resolutions chairman. These are as follows: Berkshire: Jim Larkin (413-822-8774); Bristol: Arthur Gareau (508-252-3952); Cape Cod & Islands: Leo Cakounes (508-364-1512); Essex: Lisa Colby (978-465-8868); Franklin: Warren Facey (413-774-3757); Hampden: Will McKinstry (413-536-2043); Hampshire: Darryl Williams (413-247-9625); Middlesex: Frank Matheson (978-486-3824); Norfolk: Charlie McNamara (781-344-6836); Plymouth: Jim Hayward (617-827-1412) and Worcester: Mark Amato (508-951-0901).

At the county annual meeting, many county Farm Bureaus re-organize for the upcoming year. If you have the time and interest to serve on the county board of directors let your county president know, as many counties have board vacancies. Likewise, each county sends representatives to statewide advisory committees that are active in the areas of equine, apiary, dairy, forestry, farmland preservation, membership, women's leadership, and young farmers. These committees meet from time-to-time (usually 2-3 times annually), and welcome your participation.

So choose your pleasure, and get more involved in your Farm Bureau organization

in the way you are most comfortable!

This Summer's hot weather has been a boon to some and a barrier to others. I know that our vegetable and fruit growers are enjoying a strong and early crop, in most cases. Hay producers may be finding it tough to harvest multiple cuttings. This is always the way in farming. We cannot control the weather, but we are innovative in finding ways to make the most of the situation.

Don't forget to contact your US Congressman and US Senators about the Estate tax! If Congress fails to act by the end of the year the burden of the estate tax will force many farm families to liquidate the farm to pay estate taxes. A great deal of explanation was provided in the previous issue, but this is a subject that will impact everyone. Land values alone in Massachusetts will put even small farms in a tough situation.

I hope to see many of you at your county annual meeting.

*Douglas Gillespie
MFBF Executive Director
doug@mfbf.net*

Preserve Life's Wondrous Moments



LIFE INSURANCE
AWARENESS MONTH
SEPTEMBER 2010

Seeing your daughter take her first step, gathering on the couch with a bowl of popcorn for movie night, bear hugs after a long day at work, getting the key to your first home and watching your son cross the stage to receive his diploma. Wondrous moments like these – both small and large – form the patchwork of our lives.

We all want our loved ones to have lives filled with happiness and opportunity. We do almost anything to make that happen, from rearranging schedules to never miss our children's events to putting in extra time at work to save up for that special family vacation.

You work hard to make sure your loved ones have a comfortable life, one that includes its fair share of wondrous moments. But if you were suddenly out of the picture, would your loved ones have the same opportunities and quality of life?

September is Life Insurance Awareness Month, the perfect time for a life insurance review. Life insurance helps ensure that the lifestyle you've worked so hard to achieve for your loved ones won't come to a halt if something were to

happen to you.

1. Create an enduring financial strategy for your family and start with a fundamental tool: life insurance. Life insurance can do wondrous things for you and your fam-



- ily: Buys time. Allows loved ones to focus on their grief by helping to pay for the funeral and other final expenses.
2. Provides a fresh start. Lets loved ones start with a clean slate by helping to pay off credit card bills, outstanding loans and even the mortgage.
3. Generates income. Helps replace lost income for years to come so that surviving family members can continue to pay for life's necessities.
4. Offers flexibility. Gives a surviving

spouse the chance to take time off from work or to switch to a job that offers a more flexible work schedule.

5. Creates opportunities. Can provide funding to start a business, or pay for schooling so surviving family members can train for a new career.
6. Funds the future. Offers a way to fund longer-range goals like a college education for the kids or a secure retirement for a surviving spouse.
7. Leaves a legacy. Gives parents the chance to leave future generations with the legacy of long-term financial security.

LIAM is sponsored by the LIFE Foundation (www.lifehappens.org), a nonprofit organization whose mission is to help Americans make smart insurance-buying decisions, and partnering companies such as Farm Family Life Insurance Company, headquartered in Glenmont, NY and American National Insurance Company, headquartered in Galveston, TX. Don't wait another minute: schedule time to meet with your insurance agent today. ●

USDA Announces Deadline to Apply for Payments Under the 2008 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Administrator Jonathan Coppess today announced that producers have until Thursday, Sept. 30, 2010, to submit an application for payment under the 2008 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program. SURE provides financial assistance for crop production and or quality losses due to a natural disaster.

"We want producers to be aware of this deadline so they are certain to visit their FSA county office to file a 2008 SURE program payment application no later than September, 30, 2010," said Coppess. "It is important to finish the current 2008 SURE program sign-up because the authority for the Recovery

Act supplement for payment benefits expires at the end of the current fiscal year and the Department of Agriculture will then start the 2009 SURE sign-up application process."

FSA began accepting and processing 2008 SURE program applications in January 2010, and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) allowed for a one-time increase in the calculation of 2008 SURE payments that are filed by Sept. 30, 2010. Producers who do not file a 2008 SURE program payment application by Sept. 30, 2010, will not be considered eligible for 2008 SURE program payments.

Producers are encouraged to file an application for 2008 SURE payments regardless of whether they think they may or may not qualify. An electronic SURE program payment calculator and additional information regarding the SURE program is located at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/sure>, or producers can contact their local county FSA office.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

FORM 1099 TAX REPORTING REQUIREMENT UPDATE & HEALTH CARE

ISSUE:

Under current law, IRS Form 1099-Misc must be filed when a person engaged in a trade or business pays \$600 or more to a non-employee for services performed during the calendar year. Rental payments are included in the reporting requirement but payments made to corporations are generally excluded. The business making the payment must provide a taxpayer identification number for each payee. A copy of the 1099 form must be furnished to both the person providing the service and to the IRS.

Beginning in 2012, farms, ranches and other businesses will be required to complete an IRS Form 1099 for all payments including goods and services aggregating \$600 or more in a calendar year to a single non-employee payee. Payments made to corporations will no longer be excluded from the reporting requirement.

Farm Bureau is on record in support of the following two bills to repeal a new tax paperwork requirement passed as part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

- H.R. 5141, the Small Business Paperwork Mandate Elimination Act, introduced in the House by Rep. Dan Lungren (R-Calif.) The bill currently has 163 cosponsors.

- S. 3578, the Small Business Paperwork Mandate Elimination Act, introduced by Sen. Mike Johanns (R-Neb.). The bill currently has 23 cosponsors.

For a listing of cosponsors, go here for the House, or here for the Senate.

House: When the House considered H.R. 5893, the American Jobs and Closing Tax Loopholes Act, in late July, Republicans offered a motion to recommit with along with language to repeal Form 1099 reporting requirements. Democratic leadership pulled the bill and countered with a new bill, H.R. 5892, to repeal Form 1099 reporting requirements paid for by \$19 billion in tax increases that came from modifications to several foreign tax provisions and a new 10-year minimum holding period for grantor-retained annuity trusts (GRATs) that are used for estate tax planning. The House voted 241-154 to repeal the reporting requirements, but the measure failed because a two-thirds majority is needed for passage under suspension.

Senate: Debate on Form 1099 repeal also occurred in late July during Senate con-

sideration of H.R. 5297, the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010. Pending when the Senate returns on September 14 is a cloture vote on two amendments to H.R. 5297 dealing with Form 1099 reporting.

-One amendment (S. Amdt. 4596), by Sen. Mike Johanns (R-Neb.), would repeal the new Form 1099 rules and pay for repeal by reducing the number of people that would be subject to the individual mandate to buy health insurance. Farm Bureau supports.

-A competing amendment (S. Amdt. 4595) by Sen. member Bill Nelson (D-Fla.) would exempt firms with fewer than 25 employees from reporting requirements and raise the threshold for reporting for larger firms from \$600 to \$5,000. Credit card purchases would be exempted from information reporting requirements. The changes would be paid for with a provision to repeal the manufacturing deduction allowed for oil companies. The Nelson alternative amendment keeps this new reporting burden in place, creates confusing new rules, and provides limited relief for small farms and businesses.

NOTE: H.R. the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010, is the bill that has been held up in the Senate over a dispute about how many and which amendments Republicans are able to offer. One of the pending amendments is the Lincoln (D-Ark.)/Kyl (R-Ariz.) estate tax amendment to increase the exemption to \$5 million a person and reduce the top rate to 35 percent. Another pending amendment to extend biodiesel tax incentives has been offered by Sen. Grassley (Iowa).

IMPACT:

Tax paperwork and compliance are already major expenses for farms and ranches and other businesses. This new reporting requirement will increase these costs.

ACTION:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has an open letter to congress urging repeal of Form 1099 reporting requirements that individual businesses (for example a farm name could be listed) and local organizations can sign on to. So far over 1000 businesses and local organizations have signed on. The close date for the letter is August 31. State Farm Bureaus may choose to pass this

information along to interested farmers and ranchers. The link to the letter is: <http://library.uschamber.com/issues/letters/2010/national-sign-letter-repeal-1099-provision-health-care-law>.

Comments Filed on Health Reform Grandfather Rules

ISSUE:

The Small Business Coalition for Affordable Healthcare, to which Farm Bureau belongs, filed comments Monday on the interim final rule dealing with grandfathered health plans under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). The interim rules were issued by the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight, the Department of Labor's Employee Benefits Security Administration, and the Internal Revenue Service.

An employer-sponsored group health plan that was in existence prior to the date of enactment of PPACA is eligible for status as a "grandfathered health plan". This means that if the plan continues unchanged it is exempt from several mandates under the act which take effect on or after September 23, 2010. The interim rule would prohibit existing health care plans from significantly raising copayments or deductibles, or significantly reducing benefits, without having to meet all the new requirements of PPACA.

The coalition believes the Interim Final Rules should allow for more flexibility to keep more plans in grandfathered status. The rules are overly restrictive. It is likely that small businesses faced with unsustainable premium increases may choose to drop their plan. In addition, neither the PPACA, nor the Interim Final Rules, address the core problem facing farmers, ranchers and other small businesses – the rising costs of health-care. Instead, the rule takes away small employers' ability to exercise realistic flexibility to adjust to cost increases in a meaningful way so they can maintain their current plan. The complete text of comments is attached.

IMPACT:

The impact of the "grandfather" regulation is significant for the self-employed and small employers who generally purchase fully-insured health coverage for their employees. There is a greater likelihood that because health insurers will be under pressure to conform their plans with PPACA mandates, the self-employed and small employers will have little choice as their existing plan loses grandfathered status causing higher health insurance premiums.

Devine Millimet and
Nicholas Forgione are
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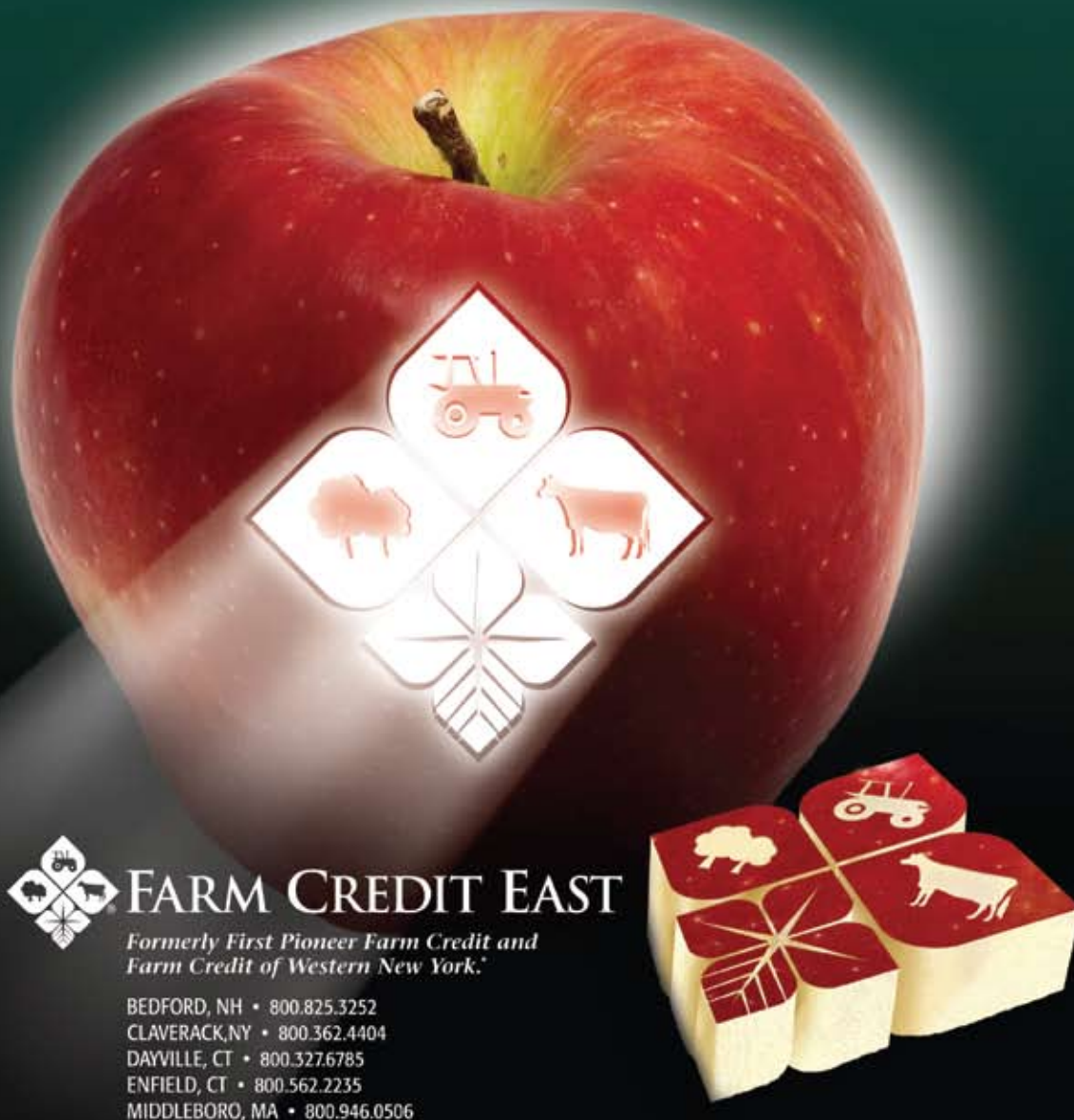
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*The merger of First Pioneer Farm Credit and Farm Credit of Western New York to form Farm Credit East was overwhelmingly approved by our customer-owners, effective January 1, 2010. For us, this merger means more financial resources and flexibility, but the same knowledgeable staff members, 19 convenient offices and highly personal service.

RMA Announces 2010 Financial Assistance Program (FAP) for Massachusetts Producers

Massachusetts producers will pay reduced crop insurance premiums in 2010 thanks to RMA's 2010 Financial Assistance Program (FAP). The program applies to buy up policies and is available to producers in RMA's 16 targeted states, which include Massachusetts. Under the program, RMA will provide a fixed premium reduction of up to \$150 per crop policy for eligible producers. The premium reduction will be automatically applied to eligible policies, and some additional rules and maximum limits apply. Producers are encouraged to get additional details from their crop insurance agent.

Producers should be on the lookout for a "Summary of Protection" or "Schedule of Insurance" that should arrive within a few weeks following a producer's acreage report filing. The statement reflects

the information on which a producer's 2010 protection is based. Producers should compare the Summary of Protection to their acreage report to identify any discrepancies. If discrepancies are found, producers should contact their crop insurance agent immediately to get the issue corrected; otherwise, the problem could adversely affect premium billing and/or claim payment.

As noted in the last crop insurance update, producers facing crop losses should understand and carefully follow RMA's loss reporting and adjustment process. For example, most crop insurance policies require

that damage be reported to your crop insurance agent within 72 hours of discovery. Producers must never destroy evidence of damage until a loss adjuster evaluates it. Producers should also promptly report crop damage to the Farm Service Agency (FSA/USDA) to ensure eligibility for any available SURE Program crop disaster payments.

Finally, dairy producers are reminded of the availability of

RMA's Livestock Gross Margin (LGM) – Dairy Cattle Program. The program provides protection against shrinking margins of milk income over feed costs. It can pay when the actual gross margin is less than projected gross margin, based on Board of Trade prices. The August enrollment

period is 08/27-28 followed by 09/24-25 for September and 10/29-30 for October. The first 11 enrollment periods provided a cumulative opportunity of approximately \$2.76 in loss payments per \$1.00 of premium cost. The LGM Dairy Cattle Program Fact Sheet is available at <http://www.rma.usda.gov/pubs/rme/lgmdairy.pdf>, and a FAQ is available at <http://www.rma.usda.gov/help/faq/lgmdairy.html>.

Custom Ag Solutions works with RMA to educate Massachusetts producers about Federal Crop Insurance Programs. To locate a crop insurance agent or obtain information about risk management and RMA's Federal Crop Insurance Programs, please visit www.RMA.USDA.gov or www.MassAgRisk.com. To receive information by mail, call Custom Ag Solutions at 877-227-8094.



EPA PROPOSES PERMIT SYSTEM FOR PESTICIDES

It's a beautiful day! While outdoor enth 1972 was a monumental year for federal 1972 was a monumental year for federal environmental legislation. Both the Clean Water Act (CWA) and Federal Insecticide Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) came into being that year. The CWA governs the release of pollutants into the nation's water through a permit system known as the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System. FIFRA governs the registration and use of pesticides. Both are administered by EPA.

Until relatively recently, everyone (including EPA) was operating under the belief that FIFRA governed pesticide applications and that the CWA did not cover to pesticide applications. However, beginning in 2001, various environmental organizations began to challenge that assumption through a variety of legal actions. This culminated with a decision in 2009 that applicators will need a NPDES permit to apply pesticides into, around, and over water. NPDES permits will not be required, however, for applications of chemical pesticides that leave no residue in receiving waters. That left EPA with the task of reworking both their pesticide and water programs to meet requirements of the court decision. They have been given until spring of 2011 to do so.

What EPA has proposed is that NPDES permits be required for 4 types of applications:

- Mosquito and Flying Insect Control
 - Aquatic Weed and Algae Control
 - Aquatic Nuisance Animal Control
 - Forest Canopy Pest Control
- These are application methods that could result in direct applications of pesticides to water, or

EPA determined might leave residues in water. EPA is proposing that a general permit (not specific) be required for all such applications. This proposal is only relevant to states in which

EPA administers NPDES permits, including Massachusetts. In other states, the state has an agreement with EPA to administer NPDES permits.

While agricultural applications seem to be out of the picture, EPA has stated that applications other than the four use patterns described above will require coverage under some other NPDES permit if they result in a discharge (not drift or runoff). So far, EPA has not been very specific about applications other than the four above – this is of particular concern for cranberries which operate in close proximity to water.

This is the approach that has been proposed by EPA. They recently closed the comment period on this proposal. Both AFBF and MFBF submitted comment on the proposal to:

- Support a general permit exemption for agriculture. We do not believe it was the intent of congress to include agricultural pesticide applications within the scope of the CWA.
- Oppose EPA broad interpretation of water bodies included in the scope of the CWA to include irrigation ditches and isolated water bodies within the scope of the rule.

Look for more updates on this issue as EPA moves forward with their efforts and finalizes their approach.

Chapter 61A Filing Deadline Approaching:

Chapter 61 A is intended for landowners engaged in agricultural or horticultural use. Assessment is based on the land's ability to produce the agricultural or horticultural product being grown. Forestland may be enrolled in this program and is based on your land's ability to grow timber. Assessments and program requirements for Ch. 61A forestland are the same as they are in the Ch. 61 program. Filing deadline at your local assessor's office is October 1st.

Farm Plate Renewal Reminder:

All farm plates expire on September 30th. Please remember to fill out all the required paperwork and submit your renewal applications to Section 5 of the Massachusetts RMV. Section 5 can be contacted at 617.351.939 for any further information.

Mini-Matching Grants for County FB Activities

Any Farm Bureau member or group of members can apply for a mini-matching grant to support their County Farm Bureau Federation membership efforts. This new program awards grants of up to \$200 to a county Farm Bureau for membership retention and membership enrollment projects. The program's mission is to provide opportunities for the development of new programs and ideas for membership recruiting and retention; for members to develop skills and work cooperatively. Mini-matching grants are due September 1 and February 1. To receive a copy of our mini-matching grant guidelines and application, visit our website or call MFBF at 1-866-548-MFBF.

New from UMass Extension! Pest Identification Guide for Weeds, Insects, and Diseases of Woody Ornamentals

FARMERS - Do you sell directly to consumers? Correct identification of your pest problem is the first and most key step to successful management! This photo guide has 70 pages of clear color photographs for the most frequently encountered weed, insect, disease and nonpathogenic disorders of ornamental trees and shrubs in the Northeast. Compiled by UMass Extension Specialists Randy Prostack, Bob Childs and Dan Gillman.

80 PAGES, includes index. **PRICE: \$18**

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

BY A. RICHARD BONANNO, PH.D.

As I write this, our first rain in over 3 weeks is falling and many farmers, including myself, are breathing a sigh of relief as farm ponds, rivers, and soil moisture are replenished. Renovations are progressing on our new office building. Ed Davidian and I checked out the work today and we hope to be moving sometime in September.

If you have read Brad's legislative column, you are aware of the many successes we have had in the State Legislature this session. The small farm bill and the sale of wine at farmer's markets are sure signs that small farmers are important and are playing a big role in the continued success of agriculture in Massachusetts. The creation of the Food Policy Council demonstrates that many diverse groups working together can strengthen the position of agriculture at the policy setting level. The school nutrition bill will be a great help for our farmers who are trying to move into markets that have been dominated

by large institutional food distributors.

On September 26th at the Big E and October 29th at the State Grange meeting, Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation and the Massachusetts Grange will work together to honor the many Century Farms in Massachusetts. Women's Committee Chair Joyce Ripley, Cheryl Lekstrom, and many volunteers have worked hard to gather information and to prepare it for distribution to our peers and to the public.

In late September, I will be traveling to Washington, DC to participate in meetings of the EPA Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Committee. This committee advises the Administration's Ag Advisor to the EPA Administrator. I know, lots of advising and hopefully someone will listen. Mr. Larry Elworth is the new Ag Advisor replacing John Scholl who worked for the last Administration. Dr. Steve Balling, who heads up pest management for Del Monte, will

chair the committee. I have known both Larry and Steve for over 20 years and hope that this committee will be successful at voicing the opinion of agriculture to EPA, especially regarding the Agency's new interest in expanding their jurisdiction over water, greenhouse gasses, and pesticides. Both Larry and Steve worked together during the Clinton Administration on incentives and strategies to expand the use of Integrated Pest Management in both agricultural and non-agricultural settings.

On a final note, I want to express the importance for members to contact myself or the state office when there is an issue that needs outside help to solve. Issues may be related to our performance within MFBF, concerns at any level of government, or issues with Farm Family insurance. Thank you to all the Farm Family agents who travelled to Verrill Farm in Concord during our July Board meeting. Working together is the only way to effectively ex-

press our issues, identify or develop solutions, and to implement change for the better. As Doug mentioned in his article, don't forget the resolution process. It is an opportunity for all of us to help set policy. Thanks.

A. Richard Bonanno, Ph.D.
rich@mfbf.net





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MA AgComs Update

Today 134 Agricultural Commissions (AgComs) have been organized and 110 Right to Farm Bylaws have been passed in municipalities throughout the Commonwealth.

Visit www.massagcom.org for details.

About MAAC – Massachusetts Association of Agricultural Commissions:

At the March 20, 2010 state wide conference of AgComs, it was unanimously voted to proceed with organizing a state wide association of AgComs. The discussion about organizing began a year prior on January 24, 2009 when AgCom representatives from around the state met at a discussion session entitled "The Future of AgComs". The result of the discussion was to form a steering committee and poll all AgCom members about whether a state association of AgComs was needed and, if so, what the priority functions of an association should be. The results of the poll demonstrated that there was a need for an association to facilitate communication among AgComs, provide necessary training and leadership development for AgComs, develop effective working relationships with state and federal agencies, appointed and elected officials, and the public, and advocate for agriculture.

The 23 member MAAC Steering Committee has been meeting since January of 2009 to further define the role of a future Massachusetts Association of Agricultural Commissions. Well thought out Articles of Organization and Bylaws have been proposed and reviewed for months by the steering committee. Both will be filed with the Secretary of the Commonwealth by July 1, 2010.

All Agricultural Commissions, Agricultural Committees, Forestry Committees and Task Forces can be members, if they

choose. It is the hope of the steering committee that by January of 2011 all will be members of MAAC. The MAAC Board of Directors will be comprised of one person per County (14 Counties). Director duties have been defined, a Director application form has been developed, and a letter explaining the purpose of MAAC, membership and makeup of the Board of Directors will be available soon to all AgCom members.

These documents will be distributed to all existing AgComs, Agricultural Committees and Forestry Committees and Task Forces over the summer with a Director application process concluding December 1, 2010.

In order to file Articles of Organization with the Commonwealth, Officers were chosen from members of the Steering Committee that are currently serving on AgComs. They are: President – Dick Ward, Carver (Plymouth County), Vice President for Advocacy – Laura Sapienza-Grabski, Boxford (Essex County), Treasurer – Kathy Orlando, Sheffield (Berkshire County), Secretary – Laura Abrams, Sudbury (Middlesex County). We congratulate these individuals on embarking on a new journey to promote agriculture and agricultural activities in Massachusetts – primarily through guidance, encouragement and critical support for municipal AgComs.

2010 Annual Meetings:

Berkshire, September 30, First Baptist Church, 88 South St/Rte 7 Pittsfield, MA. Starting at 7:00PM. RSVP to Leona Butler at 413.442.6757

Bristol, October 14, 2010 at Venus De Milo, Rt 6 Swansea, Ma. Social Hour 5:30-6:00, Dinner at 6:00PM. Seafood Newburg Buffet Donation-\$35.00

Cape & Islands, October 19- SAVE THE DATE-Location TBA

Essex, is October 28th, Social Hour 6:00PM, Dinner 7:00PM. Choice of Roast Beef or Chicken, \$25. per person, Danversport Yacht Club in Danvers, MA Rich Bonanno will show slides on previous American Farm Bureau Annual Meetings. Reservations required, Betty Rogers 978-372-4305

Franklin-Wednesday October 13, 2010 at the Greenfield Elks Lodge (2 Church St, Greenfield MA). Cocktail hour begins at 6:30PM, and there is a choice of Prime Rib, Baked Chicken or Baked Haddock. Price has not yet been set, but RSVPs should be directed to Joleen Jurczyk. Ms Jerczyk prefers email (joleenjrczyk@gmail.com), but for those who don't have email access, she can be phoned at 413-204-5330.

Hampden, October 27, 6:30PM Monte Carlo, West Springfield

Hampshire-October 22, Blue Bonnet at 6:00PM

Middlesex, Oct. 20th, 6:00PM Social, 7:00PM dinner at Gibbet Hill in Groton

Norfolk, October 12 2010 at 7:00PM it will be at the Norfolk County Ag. School in Walpole- tickets are \$20.00 each. Reservations to Sandy Medeiros at 781 344-4096

Worcester, October 26-SAVE THE DATE-Location TBA

MFBF: Dec 2 & 3, Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel, One Monarch Place, Springfield, MA 01144, 413-781-1010

AFBF Annual Convention: Jan 7-12. Atlanta, GA.

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