



MASSACHUSETTS FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

The Voice of Agriculture

News & Views

Toll Free 1.866.548.MFBF

Jan/Feb 2010 - Vol 18, Issue 1

President's Corner

by A. Richard Bonanno



I want to thank the members of Massachusetts Farm Bureau for the privilege to serve as your President. As you know, there are many opportunities for us to help agricultural producers and I wanted to take this first "President's Corner" to outline some of my agenda items.

Membership issues will always be important. I have challenged the membership committee headed by Ed Lawton to look outside the box for ideas to expand membership to the many smaller and beginning farmers that are the majority of agricultural producers in Massachusetts. We will also look at the forestry sector and to the many citizens who benefit from our work on Chapter 61. Food safety issues have surfaced as a major issue for vegetable and fruit growers. Uncertainty about a potential mandate of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), local buyers already requiring GAPs of certain growers, and how farmers with animal operations that are integrated to their farms will comply. USDA is

pushing Marketing Agreements, the first of which is for Leafy Greens. Although voluntary, these agreements will undermine the gains realized in Buy Local and Know Your Farmer efforts. On top of this, the Commonwealth is looking to integrate Best Management Practices, which include GAPs, into a voluntary sustainability standard. MFBF will be working with the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR), Commodity Groups, and UMass Extension on these issues. A new regulation designed to provide guidance to the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program has been released. We have been without a regulation for this program since the Weld administration. A recent survey conducted by MFBF and American Farmland Trust shows that land owners are concerned with constantly changing rules, low land values, and inability to change or expand their operations as needed. I have asked the APR Committee headed by Ed Davidian and Mo Tougas to look at the new regulations and to discuss how MFBF can work with the DAR to help address the important issues that our farmers have raised. While not just a local or even a that our farmers have raised.

...President Corner continued on page 13

Mass Farm Bureau Receives AFBF Pinnacle Award

SEATTLE, January 10, 2010—State Farm Bureaus were recognized for excellence in membership achievement and for implementing outstanding programs serving Farm Bureau members in 2009. American Farm Bureau President Bob Stallman presented the awards during AFBF's 91st annual meeting.

Stallman announced winners of the Pinnacle Award, for overall outstanding program achievement combined with membership growth. The Arizona, Idaho, Kansas, Massachusetts, Ohio and Tennessee Farm Bureaus were honored with Pinnacle Awards.

The Awards for Excellence and the President's Awards were presented in five program areas:

- Agriculture Education and Promotion
- Leadership Development
- Member Services
- Policy Implementation
- Public Relations and Information

The winning states and the number of Awards for Excellence categories won by each are listed below:

Alabama (5), Arizona (5),
Arkansas (5), California (3),

...Farm Bureau continued on page 5

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Nobody puts more energy into agricultural businesses than Farm Credit East — with 19 offices, credit and financial service specialists who know the ins and outs of operations like yours and more than \$4 billion on loan to Northeast agribusinesses. Visit FarmCreditEast.com today to see how our financial services might fuel new growth for you.



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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.

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FARM BUREAU FEDERATION, INC.

Toll Free-1.866.548.MFBF

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AFBF Northeast Leadership Conference 2010

March 16-18, 2010

Sheraton Harrisburg-Hershey Hotel.

Harrisburg, PA

Register for your choice of workshops by January 18 by contacting Cheryl@mfbf.net or 508-881-4766 x15.

Reserve your hotel room by February 1, 771.564.5511 /1.800.325.3535. \$138+taxes.

Another member benefit: attend the leadership conference to develop professional leadership skills to help you in your Farm Bureau work and beyond. For members in good standing, MFBF will pay your \$175 registration fee. Visit www.mfbf.net to choose the workshops you want to attend.

County Legislative Breakfasts:

- Worcester, March 5, 2010
- Bristol, March 12, 2010
- Essex, March 25, 2010
- Middlesex, March 26, 2010
- Plymouth, April 16, 2010
- Norfolk, April 29, 2010

2010 County Annual meetings:

- Plymouth County, August 30th, 2010
- Norfolk County, October 12th.
- Cape & Islands, October 19
- Essex County, October 21
- Worcester County, October 26

- Agricultural Day at the State House: Thursday, April 8, 2010
- Equine Committee Meeting, February 11, 2010, Ashland

MEMBER BENEFITS

More Advantages of your Farm Bureau Membership – 175,000 “Access” discounts by activating your membership card, Grainger -10%, Sports Authority – 15%, Tufts Large Animal Veterinary Hospital –10%, and more.



Follow Mass Farm Bureau on Facebook & Twitter for the most current up to date information. Visit www.mfbf.net to learn more. Or simply visit the following links to become a fan and follow MFBF:

-<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Massachusetts-Farm-Bureau-Federation-Inc/100051006834>

<http://twitter.com/MAFarmBureau>

DOUGLAS GILLESPIE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Happy New Year to all those involved with the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation! As we enter a new decade, there are plenty of opportunities and challenges facing agriculture in The Bay State, and throughout the world.

First, MFBF welcomes a new President, as Dr. A. Richard Bonanno was elected by the delegates at the 2009 MFBF Annual Meeting in Hyannis last month. Rich is a wealth of information and will provide strong leadership as we tackle the issues important to our members.

The delegates in Hyannis also debated, passed, rejected or amended several dozen policy statements or “resolutions” that form MFBF policy. This process provides the “marching orders” to the staff, and guidance to the federation’s leadership as we work on your behalf. At the close of the annual meeting, delegates are also asked to rate each of the action items that passed, so that we have a prioritization of these items to work from. That doesn’t mean that #1 will be the first thing accomplished; we work on any or all the action items where there appears to be an opportunity for progress.

The top priority resolution passed by the delegates in 2009 was encouraging Governor Patrick not to increase the ethanol blend allowed in motor vehicle fuel in Massachusetts. I suspect that this resolution submitted by Hampshire County Farm Bureau originated from livestock producers worried about escalating feed costs caused by more corn being diverted to ethanol. And certainly a higher ethanol blend is harder on the engines and on the environment. So we will be working on that one. On the national level, AFBF supports increasing the ethanol blend because it increases market opportunities for grain producers, but here is an example of where we can follow our local interests within Massachusetts. (If MFBF were to take the same stand on the national ethanol blend rate, then we would have to go through AFBF’s “dissent process” to back the stand of the national federation).

You can find an article in this issue summarizing policy positions adopted at the 2009 annual meeting, or complete text is available on our website, www.mfbf.net.

The past year was a rewarding one in the Ashland office, as MFBF received national

recognition by receiving AFBF President’s Awards for small membership states in Leadership Development, Public Relations & Information, Policy Implementation, and Member Services. These awards, selected by our peers in other states, recognize the value of our programs to our members.

Our challenge in the year ahead is MEMBERSHIP. We need to recruit 1,500 Farm Bureau members during the next six months to reach the membership goal set by the MFBF Board of Directors. Without membership growth, prudent leadership would require us to either increase dues or reduce service levels. In my opinion, during this time of economic stress neither alternative would be wise. Potential new Farm Bureau members are out there, just waiting to be asked. MFBF has expanded services to forest landowners. These people should be joining Farm Bureau. Agriculture in Massachusetts continues to grow, with more part-time and niche farms dotting our landscape. These farmers should be joining Farm Bureau. With the active support of consumers to “Buy Local”, there is genuine loyalty to local agriculture. These people should be Farm Bureau associate members. But none of these constituencies will join unless they are asked. The best person to recruit a new member is a current member, because you believe in the value of your membership.

Please help us remain strong as we move ahead on your behalf. Sign up a new Farm Bureau member this week. Our membership program offers a \$20 cash incentive for each new member brought in by a current member. There are other recognition programs as well.

Mark your calendar for April 8 as “Agriculture Day At The State House”. Here’s your opportunity to reinforce our message to state government officials that agriculture’s needs are reasonable, and essential to the Commonwealth. Remember, Massachusetts Agriculture has been one of a handful of growth businesses during the past few years!

Best wishes for the New Year ahead! ◇

*Douglas Gillespie
Executive Director, MFBF*

Life Insurance: You Do It for Love

by Farm Family Insurance Company



How will you say “I love you” to the most important person in your life this Valentine’s Day? A candlelight dinner or a romantic getaway weekend are nice. But if you want to make a more meaningful and enduring statement about how much your loved one truly means to you, consider the gift of life insurance.

Think about it. Why would you buy life insurance unless you truly loved the person you bought it for? In all likelihood you won’t be around to see or experience the death benefits of a life insurance purchase. But the proceeds of a policy could benefit your loved one for many years after you’re gone.

The gift of life insurance is certainly less traditional than other gifts. But especially during this time of economic uncertainty, it’s hard to think of anything else that could carry greater meaning.

Life insurance offers your loved one the security of knowing that even if the worst were to happen, there would not have to be a drastic change in their home life. Bills would get paid. Your home would stay in the family. And long-range financial plans, like education and retirement, would remain on track.

To begin, check out the LIFE Foundation’s Web site (www.lifehappens.org). It offers a wealth of information and tools about life insurance. You should know the right questions to ask. The very first question to ask is “how much do I need?” If you die prematurely, you want to know that your loved ones will have enough money to continue living the kind of life you hoped they’d have. Once you know how much life insurance you need, then you’re ready to ask “what kind?” Look at the various types of policies available

to you (e.g., term insurance, permanent insurance or maybe a combination of the two).

Most important, seek professional advice from a qualified insurance professional. Your Farm Family agent can help you accurately assess your insurance needs and help you determine what type of life insurance best meets your needs. You can find one in your area at www.farmfamily.com or calling Farm Family General Agent Steve Charette, CLU, ChFC, CLTC at 978-686-0170.

You know how much you love that special person in your life. With life insurance, you can continue to show your love, even after you’re gone. ♦

...MFBF Pinnacle Winner from page 1

Colorado (4), Florida (5), Georgia (4), Idaho (4), Illinois (5), Indiana (5), Kansas (5), Kentucky (5), Louisiana (4), Maryland (3), Massachusetts (4), Michigan (5), Minnesota (5), Mississippi (2), Missouri (4), Montana (5), Nebraska (5), New Jersey (1), New Mexico (1), New York (4), North Carolina (3), Ohio (5), Oklahoma (3), Oregon (4), Pennsylvania (5), Rhode Island (1), South Carolina (4), Tennessee (5), Texas (5), Utah (5), Vermont (3), Virginia (5), Washington (4), West Virginia (2), Wisconsin (5) and Wyoming (2).

A total of 29 President’s Awards were presented. These are the “best of the best” awards presented for excellence in each of the five program areas to states by membership category size.

The winning states and the number President’s Awards won are listed below:

Alabama (1), Arizona (4), Florida (1), Idaho (2), Illinois (2), Indiana (1), Kansas (2), Massachusetts (4), Minnesota (1), Missouri (1), Montana (1), Ohio (3), Oklahoma (1), Pennsylvania (1), Tennessee (2), Utah (1) and Virginia (1).

Two state Farm Bureaus were recognized for special achievements. Larry Wooten, president of North Carolina Farm Bureau, was honored for leading efforts to grow the state’s membership to more than 500,000. Louisiana Farm Bureau was commended for 50 consecutive years of membership growth.

2010 Resolutions Enacted at MFBF Annual Meeting

New Years always comes a bit early at Massachusetts Farm Bureau, with delegates voting on resolutions at the Annual Meeting in early December. This year was no exception with 24 new resolutions passed by county delegates and 78 expiring resolutions reaffirmed (MFBF policies require that all existing resolutions must be voted upon and reaffirmed every three years).

Resolutions are essentially Massachusetts Farm Bureau policies, and the “marching orders” given to our professional staff. They are intended to make it clear to legislators and other interested parties what the goals and position of MA Farm Bureau are on topics important to Massachusetts agriculture.

Resolutions are usually offered at a county Farm Bureau meeting where they are voted on. Once they get approval by a county, they are then reviewed by the Resolutions Committee which consists of two representative of each county. The Committee either accepts them or sends them back to the county for clarification or reconsideration. Resolutions accepted by the Resolutions Committee are taken up by county delegates at the annual meeting for a discussion and vote. Those of national significance are brought to the American Farm Bureau where they are considered for inclusion as American Farm Bureau policy.

Dairy issues dominated the new resolutions with 5 resolutions, most in response to historically low milk prices. Adopted dairy resolutions call for:

- The implementation of a two tiered pricing system with a lower price paid for milk produced in excess of a farm's 7 year average.
- The increase of federal stimulus funding to maintain the viability of dairy farms.
- Maintaining the ability of farmers to sell raw milk and DAR as the regulating authority.
- Keeping the Dairy Farm Preservation Act in place and fully implemented.
- Support for a fix to dairy pricing problems that may encompass supply control, minimizes government intervention, eliminates free riders, is WTO compliant and recognizes regional differences.

Food Safety was also a theme this year. New resolutions in this area would:

- Call on AFBF to remove references to Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP) being “crop specific”.
- Have MFBF and AFBF oppose crop specific food safety Marketing Orders.
- Calls for MFBF to seek legislation or other action that would require local Boards of Health to adhere to food safety standards set by the Department of Public Health.

New Resolutions related to transportation would:

- Change regulations on trailers with divisible loads operating with farm plates to be in line with those of other states.
- Petition the Commonwealth to resist an increase in the ethanol blend rate of gasoline.
- Call for exempting trucks that do not cross state lines from Federal and State Requirements of a DOT Truck Inspection.

Two resolutions are associated with increased interest on Beacon Hill in legalizing casinos and/or slot machines. These resolutions would:

- Establish an agricultural fund to receive a percentage of proceeds from gambling.
- Increase purse awards for Massachusetts bred horses, particularly through gaming bills relative to slot machines.

Other resolutions:

- Call for MFBF to create a Forestry Committee.
- Call for the legislation to reimburse large animal veterinarians for up to 75% of their student loans if they practice in Massachusetts for a minimum of 5 years.
- Defines sustainable agriculture.
- Support legislation, policies and efforts that would constrain municipal authorities from unreasonably regulating agriculture.

...Resolutions continued on page 13

Prescription Drug Discount Program – Save Money

This new benefit helps reduce prescription drug costs. In a time of skyrocketing healthcare costs, Massachusetts Farm Bureau members can now save an average of 30% (savings range as high as 75%) on prescriptions. The card is provided at no cost to Farm Bureau members in good standing. The cards can be used by members and their families who currently have insurance as well as those who find themselves with no prescription coverage in their plan. Further, Farm Bureau members who have full-time, part-time or seasonal workers may provide the card as an employee benefit.

The card is like a coupon that you can use over and over again. The prescription discount program is honored by 75,000 national and regional pharmacies including CVS, Walmart, Stop & Shop, Target, Longs Drugs, Kmart, Winn Dixie, Giant, Safeway, Aurora, Kroger, Super D, Ukrop's, Meijer, Fred's, Walgreens, BiLo, Drug Fair, Fred Meyer, Shopko, HyVee, Schnucks, Cub, Sav-on, Osco, Burno's, Raley's and more.

There are no enrollment forms, no age restrictions, no income requirements, no waiting periods, no eligibility requirements, no exclusions, no claim forms to file, no annual or lifetime limits.

The program offers discounts on brand name and generic medications, is "open formulary" so all prescription drugs, including brand name products and generics are eligible for discounts. All cards are pre-activated and can be used immediately.

The price of the medication is determined at the pharmacy when the card is presented. Frequently Asked Questions: Farm Bureau®

1. Who is eligible for the FB® discount prescription drug card program?

Everyone is eligible for this program. There are no age or income restrictions, no applications to fill out. Members, employees, family, potential-members, anyone and everyone.

2. How is the program free? How is the program funded?

The program is made possible through support of pharmacies and pharmaceutical companies. Through the combined size and volume of Farm Bureau, greater than normal discounts are available.

3. How does this benefit people who already have insurance?

Anyone with insurance can use the FB Card to get a discount on non-formulary medications (drugs that are not covered by their insurance).

4. Can this card be used by people on Medicare part D?

The card can be used to purchase medications not covered in your Part D Plan and when in the donut hole. Make sure to keep your receipts, indicating you were in the donut hole, when using your Farm Bureau Rx Discount Card.

5. What makes FB different from other prescription assistance plans?

There are no enrollment forms, no restrictions, no age no income requirements, no waiting periods, no eligibility required, no exclusions, it covers pre-existing conditions, no claim forms to file, no annual or lifetime limits, includes discounts on brand and generic medications, open formulary so that all medications are eligible for discounts.

6. What type of discounts can you expect when you use this card?

Savings can be as high as 75 percent. Average savings are roughly 30 percent.

7. How do we distribute cards?

Card downloader (HTML Data) email-able cards, hard cards, etc.

8. What prescriptions are discounted with this program?

FB has "LOWEST PRICE" logic to guarantee that members pay the lowest price on their prescriptions (members pay the lower of a discount off the Average Wholesale Price-AWP, a discount calculated off MAC (maximum allowable cost) Pricing, or the Pharmacy Promotional/Retail price). ◇

SDA IMPLEMENTS NEW CROP DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Producers May Begin Applying for SURE Program at FSA County Offices on Jan. 4, 2010

WASHINGTON, Dec. 24, 2009 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that USDA has implemented the new Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments program (SURE) in accordance with the 2008 Farm Bill. Vilsack also encouraged producers to visit their USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) county office beginning on January 4, 2010, to participate in the program if they suffered crop production losses during the 2008 crop year.

“This program is an important component of the farm safety net and will provide financial assistance to producers who have suffered crop losses due to natural disasters,” said Vilsack. “Producers will receive payments beginning in January, in time to help them with planning for next year’s crop.”

SURE provides crop disaster assistance payments to eligible producers on farms that have incurred crop production or crop quality losses. The program takes into consideration crop losses on all crops grown by a producer nationwide. SURE provides assistance in an amount equal to 60 percent of the difference between the SURE farm guarantee and total farm revenue. The farm guarantee is based on the amount of crop insurance and Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage on the farm. Total farm revenue takes into account the actual value of production on the farm as well as insurance indemnities and certain farm program payments.

To be eligible for SURE, producers must have suffered at least a 10 percent production loss on a crop of economic significance. In addition, producers must meet the risk management purchase requirement by either obtaining a policy or plan of insurance, under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or NAP coverage, for all economically significant crops. For 2008 crops, producers had the opportunity to obtain a waiver of the risk management purchase requirement through

a buy-in provision. Producers considered socially disadvantaged, a beginning farmer or rancher, or a limited resource farmer may be eligible for SURE without a policy or plan of insurance or NAP coverage.

In addition to meeting the risk management purchase requirement, a producer must have a farming interest physically located in a county that was declared a primary disaster county or contiguous county by the Agriculture Secretary under a Secretarial Disaster Designation. Regardless of a Secretarial Disaster Designation, individual producers may also be eligible for SURE if the actual production on the farm is less than 50 percent of the normal production on the farm due to a natural disaster. For SURE, a farm is defined as all crops in which a producer had an interest nationwide.

For more information on the new SURE program, please visit your local FSA county office or <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

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, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). ◇

Budget Truck Rental – save 15% on time and mileage rates, local and one-way

Applies only to reservations made by calling Budget Truck Rental Reservations Center, 1-800-566-8422 or using the vanity URL (link), www.budgettruck.com/AFBF) Tell them your BART Account Number: Discounts apply to Consumer Rentals (personal household moves) and Commercial Rentals (for the furtherance of a member’s business). You must be at least 21 years of age, hold a valid driver’s license and have an acceptable method of payment. Discount does not apply to taxes, surcharges, insurance or protection products, refueling service charges, optional equipment, optional services or any other extra fees not specifically included in the rates. ◇

MARCH MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Get active, get rewarded. Ask someone to be a Farm Bureau member in March. For every member you sign up, you get \$20 and a gift. You also help your County Farm Bureau earn points towards the "Farm Bureau Trophy". You don't have to be a farmer to join Farm Bureau. Support the organization by becoming an "Associate Member" for \$60/year. New to Farm Bureau members who sign up in March get 16 months of Membership for the price of one year. Does not include renewing or previous members.

If you would like to be acknowledged for your recruiting efforts, just print your name on the referred by line of the application form. You too will be acknowledged at your County Annual Meeting in 2010 for your achievements. ◇

Individual Awards & Incentives

\$20 Incentive Program — The Membership Recruiter/worker will receive a \$20 sign-up incentive for each new member he or she enrolls during the membership year with a plan approved by MFBF. (Renewals do not qualify for the \$20 incentive.)

To qualify for this incentive, all membership forms must be sent directly to the MFBF Office. MFBF Staff and Farm Family agents not eligible for this incentive.

Impact Club — Write 1 new membership and MFBF will recognize your accomplishment by awarding you a gift at your 2010 county Annual Meeting. Existing member must make the new membership known to the MFBF Director of Member Relations, Cheryl Lekstrom, 508-881-4766, (Cheryl@mfbf.net). ◇

"MVV" (Most Valuable Volunteer) Club — VOLUNTEER-ONLY AWARD.

Write 3 Regular new memberships and MFBF will show its appreciation for your hard work by awarding you a special Farm Bureau jacket. Existing member must make the new memberships known to the MFBF Director of Member Relations, Cheryl@mfbf.net.

2010 Awards & Incentive Programs. Visit www.mfbf.net, click on "The Complete Recruiter" for complete details of our recruiting rewards program.◇

MEMBERSHIP

The highest compliment we can receive from a member is to recommend a family member, friend, or acquaintance to our federation. This demonstrates confidence in our ability to protect the rights, encourage the growth, and be of service to our members in the best interest of agriculture. Your referrals help us achieve this goal.

During the county annual meetings we acknowledge those members who enrolled a member or two during the membership year. They receive a \$20 incentive check and a Farm Bureau logo lapel pin gift for their accomplishment. We sincerely thank you for referring a member to our organization.

Impact Club

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Baxter, Fred | Cakounes, Leo |
| Brownell, David | Foster, Janice S. |
| Coombs, Russell | Hayward, Jim |
| Garretson, Gib | Larkin, James |
| Kramer, Donna | McNamara, Charles |
| Lawton, Ed | Plettner, William |
| Mendes, Darrin | Ripley, Leon |
| Reseska, Andy | Schmidt, Andrew |
| Roberts, Barry | Sherman, Mark |
| Sheldon-Beebe, Briana | Spencer, Leslie |
| Sipler, Dwight | Thayer, Cliff |
| Stone, Anne | Tully, Charles |
| Tryon, Dick | |
| Vadnais, Skip | |

Plan now to attend the state wide gathering of Agricultural Commissions:

March 20, 2010, Worcester State College, Worcester, Massachusetts. Contact Irene Winkler at 508-295-1317 x130, Irene.winkler@ma.usda.gov

Western Mass. Area AgComs are gathering twice:

- December 12, 2009 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., \$10, at the Deerfield Town Hall, 8 Conway Street, South Deerfield, Mass. 01373.
- January 9, 2010, Hancock Shaker Village, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., \$10.

GPS location: 1843 West Housatonic Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201. (proceed to parking lot approx. 1/2 mile further west on Rt. 20).

Agenda includes Roundtable discussion, speakers, current laws and issues, sources of funding.

RSVP: Ann Gibson, Berkshire-Pioneer RC&D, 413-256-1607 or Pete Westover.

Worcester County Area AgComs are gathering at the Farm Service Agency, 52 Boyden Road, Holden, MA, 01520 on January 13, 2010, 7:00 p.m. Paul LeBeau, Holliston Administrator, will be covering various aspects of financing for an AgCom, working with the municipal funding systems and personnel. RSVP to Ann Starbard, astarbard@comcast.net, 978-422-6646.

There are 130 Agricultural Commissions and 100 Right to Farm bylaws in the Commonwealth. Now is the time to consider an AgCom in your town for a vote at the annual town meetings in the spring.

Contacts:

- Irene Winkler, USDA-NRCS, Pilgrim RC&D (Bristol, Plymouth, Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket Counties), 508-295-1317 x130, Irene.winkler@ma.usda.gov.
- Peter Westover, Mass. Dept. of Agricultural Resources (Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire Counties), 413-665-4077,

westover03@comcast.net

- Cheryl Lekstrom, Contractor, Mass. Dept. of Agricultural Resources (Essex, Suffolk, Middlesex, Norfolk and Worcester Counties), 508-835-2452, clekstrom@mac.com ◇

The Women's Committee is on a Quest to Identify Century Farms.

The Women's Committee of the MFBF is updating the "Century Farms" booklet "Family Farms Rooted in History." This booklet was last issued in 2000 and is updated every ten years, making 2010 our target date for the latest issue.

If your farm is 100 years or more, please fill out the following form and return it to the women's committee. We are also searching for farms that have now reached the century farm status. Please let the Women's Committee know if your farm or a neighboring farm has reached this milestone. We want to include as many farms as possible.

Below is the outline to be used in updating our 100 plus year old farms for the new issue. We really appreciate your taking the time to give us this information. We are very pleased to be taking on this project.

Farm name, town:

Current address:

Owner:

Crops/Products:

Current Acreage:

History:

Previous Owner:

Founder of Farm:

Original size (acreage):

Original crops/products:

Interesting Facts:

Please include the following contact information. This information will not be given out or printed. Name, address, telephone, email.

Send completed form to: Joyce Ripley, Chair, MFBF Women's Committee, 794 Beech Hill Rd., Blandford MA 01008, 413-357-8829 or Kerry Reynolds, MFBF, 466 Chestnut St., Ashland, MA ◇

Estate Planning

Over thirty Middlesex County Farm Bureau members were treated to a comprehensive Estate and Medicare Planning Seminar on January 6, 2010 at the Westford Regency Hotel & Conference Center. The presenters were Nicholas Forgione, Esq., Estate Planning Attorney & Partner with the law firm of Devine, Millimet & Branch, P.A. in Andover and Steve Charette, CLU, ChFC, CLTC, Mass. General Agent of Farm Family Insurance Company of North Andover. Middlesex County Farm Family agents and host, Richard Bourgault, were in attendance to address the individual concerns of participants.

Steve and Nick addressed some of the myths and misconceptions about Estate Planning in an entertaining and easy to understand way. Topics included: the unique business and farm succession issues including; available tools to minimize death taxes and estate settlement expenses; assuring cash is available to pay unavoidable death taxes and costs (due nine months after death); providing an orderly distribution of assets that meets the estate owner's objectives and intentions; creating peace of mind and promoting family harmony so that Thanksgiving dinner will continue as a "family" event; wills and intestacy; forms of property ownership (aka "avoiding probate"); estate valuation; the impact of Federal and Massachusetts' gift and estate taxes; the marital deduction; the effective use of bypass trusts and irrevocable life insurance trusts; the generation-skipping transfer tax (GSTT); Medicaid planning and much more!

"A decision to do nothing about estate planning is a decision," but participants learned how much that decision is going to cost them. "It's all about how it's owned", so get your documents in order by taking one small step at a time. Participants left the sessions feeling a sense of urgency to actually "do something" and are now well prepared to take the necessary steps.

Other counties are planning similar events. Contact your county board members or Farm Family agents and stay tuned to www.mfbf.net to attend an event near you. ◇

WORKSHOP AND ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

The new year has begun and Farm to School is launching a series of workshops around the state for farmers who wholesale. Entitled "How to Profit from Institutional Demand for Locally Grown Produce" they will be held in four locations during February. The northeast buyer for Chartwells will be launched at one session, and school food service directors who received grants to buy fresh fruits and vegetables have been invited to the others.

February 3: Hadley UMASS Extension office (the northeast Chartwells/Foodbuy buyer will attend this session only)

February 9: Devens Common Center *

February 17: Pittsfield Athenaeum*

February 25: Wrentham Town Hall*

At each meeting we will discuss:

- The increased value of "local" to distributors who sell to schools.
- When direct sales to schools or other institutions are profitable.
- New ways of distributing produce to institutions.
- Materials the Project could develop for wholesale farms to promote their products to distributors.

Start time is 10:30 a.m. and lunch will be provided.

R.S.V.P. to mafarmtoschool@gmail.com, or call 413-253-3844.

*School food service directors who received Fresh Fruits and Vegetable grants have been invited to join us at these meetings to discuss their increased needs for local produce.

Many thanks to our co-sponsors! MassDevelopment, MDAR, NEVBGA, Mass. Farm Bureau, and UMass Extension ◇

Private Certification Licensure Policy

Massachusetts Pesticide Board Reaffirms Long Standing Private Applicator Policy

Following a series of meetings, the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources through a vote of the Pesticide Board has agreed that Private Applicators do not need to be certified in multiple categories to be able to purchase Restricted Use Pesticides in agricultural categories outside their certification area. Private Applicators, mostly farmers, should obtain their certification in their primary area (ex. Vegetable, Fruit, Cranberry, Greenhouse, etc.). Once that is obtained and recognizing that agricultural producers in Massachusetts are very diversified, they can purchase Restricted Use Pesticides for their other crops if needed. Remember that farmers do not need a Pesticide License if they are using only General Use pesticides.

Rich Bonanno, MFBF President

Background:

The Massachusetts State Auditor's Office conducted an audit of the Department's Pesticide Program and part of the Auditor's conclusion was that the Department was not effectively monitoring / regulating Restricted Use Pesticide sales. Therefore the Department instituted additional procedures when conducting inspections of licensed Massachusetts Pesticide Dealers. In addition, the Department initiated a review of the annual Restricted Use sales reports and found that there were some invalid sales which could consist of the following:

- Selling a Restricted Use Pesticide to an individual with a Commercial Applicator License;
- Selling a Restricted Use Pesticide to an individual with an expired Certification;
- Selling a Restricted Use Pesticide to an individual without the proper commercial certification/category;

and

- Selling a Restricted Use non-agricultural Pesticide to an individual with private certification.

Upon discovering these invalid sales, the Department took enforcement actions against the Dealers, the

companies and individuals who purchased and used the Restricted Use products without having the appropriate license and certification.

In January of 2008, the Department held a training program for the licensed Massachusetts Pesticide Dealers. The requirements for having proper private or commercial certification were among the main issues discussed. As a result of these discussions and cognizant of the need to improve enforcement of the laws related to sales of Restricted Use pesticides, the Department proposed revisions to the Department's policy concerning private certification and their respective categories.

The Department considered changes to, the Private Certification Licensure Policy; however, based on the significant differences between commercial pesticide applicators and individuals maintaining private certification for the use of pesticides in their agricultural operations, the Department will maintain the original interpretation of the private certification regulations.

Conclusion:

The Department maintains the previous interpretation of the laws and regulations and is hereby instructing Massachusetts Licensed Pesticide Dealers to accept any private Certification Category when selling Restricted Use agricultural pesticide products. However, it is still prohibited to sell a Restricted Use agricultural pesticide to an individual without either a private certification or a Commercial Certification in the appropriate category¹. It is likewise, still prohibited to sell a Restricted Use non-agricultural use pesticide to an individual without a commercial certification in the appropriate category.

If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact Lee Corte-Real at 617.626.1776 or at lee.cortereal@state.ma.us. ♦

¹ Category 33, Custom Agriculture, is a commercial credential for the purchase of Restricted Use agricultural pesticide products.

...Resolutions continued from page 6

- Call on members to report wildlife damage to the state.
- Encourage the legislature to create incentives to maintain historic barns.
- Call for reform to current laws so that thefts from agricultural operations are treated similarly to thefts from stores and other businesses.
- Work with the Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) to post names and contact info for appointees and staff of all advisory boards on the DAR Web site.
- Call for the definition of agriculture to be changed to include the harvest of sunlight, wind, and hydro-power and carbon sequestration.
- Call for the removal of matching fund requirements from public grants and loans.
- Promote competitive agricultural lending by increasing the number of lending institutions capable of and willing to work with farmers.

The full text of the new and reaffirmed resolutions as well as all existing resolutions can be found in the MFBF Policy book. This is available online at <http://www.mfbf.net> or by requesting a copy of the policy book from the Ashland Office.

Do you have an idea for a resolution you would like to see passed? Don't like existing resolutions or think they can be improved? Contact your county Farm Bureau president and learn how to get involved. ◇

..President's Corner continued from page 1

While not just a local or even a regional issue, the Dairy industry is under constant bombardment by local regulations, low prices, and national policies. MFBF will be constantly working with dairy farmers, the DAR, AFBF, and the MFBF Dairy Committee headed by Alan Everett to make further headway on this complex issue.

Through my role on the Massachusetts Pesticide Board, I have asked DAR Commissioner Soares to be vigilant regarding the Late Blight issue of 2009. Now that we know what the problem is and how it was expedited to our area last year, farmers will have little tolerance for a repeat and for the massive destruction of both organic and conventional tomato and potato crops that occurred last year. Communication with UMass Extension and other New England states will be key to making progress.

I believe that Farm Bureau must maintain itself as the leading advocate in the Commonwealth for agriculture. I plan to constantly push our organization and to work closely with DAR, UMass Extension, Commodity Groups, Federal Agencies, and others to achieve the policy objectives that our members have laid out for us. ◇

Rich Bonanno, MFBF President

Farmers Urged to Report Wildlife Damage

MFBF members and other members of the agricultural community are urged to report wildlife damage to Mike Huguenin at 508.389.6319. Mr. Huguenin works with the Department of Fish and Game and is responsible for maintaining a database of wildlife damage reports. The data is used in the development of wildlife management strategies so it is in the farmer's best interest to let Fish and Game know when they experience problems. Crop, livestock or property damage caused by deer, moose, bear, bobcat, geese and any other wild species should be reported to this number.

In addition to entering the report into the database, The Department of Fish and Game may also be able to provide you with technical assistance ◇

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DESIGNS



Massachusetts Agriculture Day at the State House Save the Date-Thursday, April 8, 2010

Each year, farmers as well as agriculture officials from across the Bay State visit their legislators on Massachusetts Agriculture Day at the State House to discuss issues and legislation affecting their farms and communities.

The event includes a speaking program, 'Agriculture Day' awards, informational exhibits and a reception featuring Massachusetts' farm and specialty food products. Please join us in recognizing Massachusetts' farmers; learn more about efforts to maintain the long-term viability of Massachusetts' agriculture; and celebrate Massachusetts agriculture products!

For more information, contact Lisa Damon at (617) 626-1731 or Lisa.Damon@state.ma.us

CLASSIFIEDS

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SANDWICH (CAPE COD) FARMER'S MARKET: Sandwich's oldest and largest Farmer's Market is looking for new vendors!! Well-advertised and well-attended. Every Wednesday April 28th-October 27th, 2010. 8AM – 1PM. \$10 Weekly set up fee. Call Lisa Davis for more information 508-685-2767.

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Ad Rates For MFBF Members:

Classifieds: First 20 words for \$10.00, every word thereafter is \$.50

Full Page: \$550.00 (8" X 10 1/4")

Half Page: \$400.00 (4" X 10 1/4" or 8" X 5")

Quarter Page: \$275.00 (4" X 5")

Eighth Page: \$175.00 (3" X 4")

Ad Rates For Non-MFBF Members

Classifieds: First 20 words for \$12.00, every word thereafter is \$.50

Full Page: \$660.00 (8" X 10 1/4")

Half Page: \$480.00 (4" X 10 1/4" or 8" X 5")

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Osterville (508) 428-0440

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

MFBF, Inc. · 466 Chestnut St. · Ashland, MA 01721

Annual Dues

Voting Members:

- REGULAR MEMBER: \$180**
For those who derive income from an agricultural commodity. May vote on issues, sit on committees & receive member services.
- GOLD CLUB MEMBER: \$300**
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- ASSOCIATE MEMBER: \$60**
Must not receive agricultural income. Receive member benefits.
- ALLIED BUSINESSES: \$100**
Supply companies and other service providers essential to agriculture.
- STUDENT: \$25**
Ages 16-25, full-time. School grade/year _____

Name: _____

Farm Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____ Referred by: _____

Please indicate which commodity areas best fit the product(s) you produce:

- Ag/Open Space Supporter
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- Equine
- Forestry
- Fruits
- Horticulture
- Livestock
- Poultry
- Vegetables
- Other _____

I hereby make application for an annual membership in the _____ County Farm Bureau and Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation (which is a member of the American Farm Bureau Federation), whose purpose is to promote, protect, and represent the economic, social, and educational interests of Massachusetts' farmers, as well as encourage the protection of agricultural areas and rural interest within the state. I am interested in promoting these objectives through membership. I understand acceptance or denial and classification of my membership are determined by the County Farm Bureau. Contributions, gifts, or membership dues to a County Farm Bureau, or MFBF are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. However, they may be tax deductible under other provisions of the IRS code. Membership dues are non-refundable and non-returnable. A service fee of \$15 may be assessed for a returned check.

Signature: _____



Mass Farm Bureau
466 Chestnut Street
Ashland, MA 01721
Phone: 508.881.4766