

## **Livestock Returns to the Boston Common: A Celebration of Massachusetts Agriculture**

June 3, 2025, was a most gorgeous day as the Massachusetts Farm Bureau's Promotion & Engagement Committee and Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee brought agriculture back to its historical roots on the Boston Common with the highly successful "Livestock on the Common" event!

### **A Day of Connection and Education**

Nearly 300 visitors gathered on the Common to experience firsthand the animals and farmers who produce their food. The diverse crowd included state legislators and their aides, tourists exploring Boston, city workers enjoying their lunch break, and enthusiastic school groups eager to learn about agriculture. The star attraction were the animals from Lilac Hedge Farm in Rutland, who made the journey to downtown Boston to serve as agricultural ambassadors. Two playful lambs delighted children and adults alike, while a mother goat and her two kids provided endless entertainment. "Red" the cow proved to be a gentle giant, patiently allowing visitors to pet and photograph her while learning about livestock farming in Massachusetts.

### **Legislative Interest and Support**

The event drew significant attention from Beacon Hill, with legislators "flocking" to the event throughout the day. Particularly notable was the enthusiasm from legislative interns experiencing their first day at the State House, who found themselves unexpectedly face-to-face with farm animals just steps from the Capitol building. This unique introduction to Massachusetts agriculture provided these future leaders with a memorable connection to the state's farming community.

### **Honoring Agricultural Heritage**

The choice of Boston Common as the event location was particularly meaningful, as it represents a return to the area's agricultural origins. It was established in 1634 and served as a central pasture where colonists could graze their cattle, sheep, and goats. These commons were essential to early agricultural life in Massachusetts, serving not only as grazing areas but as gathering places where farmers could share knowledge, trade animals, and build the communities that would become the foundation of our state's agricultural heritage.

### **Building Bridges between Farm and City**

"Livestock on the Common" successfully fulfilled its mission to connect Massachusetts residents with agriculture. The enthusiastic response from legislators, tourists, and locals alike demonstrated the public's hunger for authentic connections to agriculture and the people who grow their food. Events like these remind us that despite our state's urban development, Massachusetts remains deeply rooted in agriculture, and our farmers continue to play a vital role in feeding our communities while preserving our agricultural heritage for future generations.

The Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation extends its gratitude to Lilac Hedge Farm for sharing their animals and expertise, the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) for tabling at the event and sharing valuable information with visitors, and to all of the volunteers who made this event possible. The success of "Livestock on the Common" proves that there's still a place for agriculture in the heart of our cities, just as there was centuries ago!

**Ashley Randle**, Massachusetts Commissioner of Agriculture with “Noodle” the lamb.



**Ryan MacKay**, owner Lilac Hedge Farm & MFBF Vice-President, and **Natalie Blais**, House Chair of the Joint Committee on Agriculture.



Mama Boer goat with her two “kids” 



“Red” the Hereford 

