



Check out our Classified section!
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See photos of 2026 Ag Day at the State House
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MASSACHUSETTS FARM BUREAU FEDERATION'S News & Views

Vol. 34, No. 2

SPRING 2026



OGONOWSKI FARM

in Dracut proudly displays the American flag in celebration of the 250th Anniversary! We'd love to see how you are showing your patriotic pride; please send photos to submissions@mfbf.net

your behalf give 150% and are respected and successful, but members are the voices that can make a greater difference and in many cases stop what could be harmful public policy from impacting our economics lives. The reality is that most of what we do in the legislature is play defense.

We need strong numbers

As your volunteer MFBF President, I'm asking each county to take the pledge of "no net loss" annually. We can make this happen folks, and if we believe in that process of county organizations charted long ago, we have to fight for it...go out and bring in members! They are out there.

MFBF President's Column

By Warren Shaw, MFBF President

Is 2026 the year of the county?

From the very beginning, the folks who chartered Farm Bureau had visions of vibrant county organizations developing grassroots policy on behalf of a growing farm community.



It was a brilliant model that gave farmers a voice at every level of government when you look at how our grassroots-policy allows an idea generated on a farm go up the ladder and find itself in Congress. Like every organization, time and economics will have something to say about its effectiveness...

Along the way, the agricultural community stopped growing...three farms became one farm...and farmers found themselves in some cases without anyone to succeed them, so the farm went on the market.

Massachusetts is no different, and as a result, our county farm bureaus have had membership challenges, which plays out

at the state level in terms of revenue and at the national level as numbers stop growing.

I think the question is—is it important to our county Farm Bureaus to remain vibrant going forward? In 2025 I proposed what's called a "late file resolution" at our Annual Meeting to ask the counties to come together and discuss mergers. It passed, but to the best of my knowledge, there have been no meaningful discussions about implementation.

The reason I proposed it was more to get people talking about our future as an organization made up of a dozen counties; we really need to do that. We constantly beat the drum for membership work at the county level, and we continuously work to do a better job at the state level in terms of maintaining current membership.

This past year we proposed allowing each county to give two free memberships to qualified new members under 40. This is planning for our future.

Massachusetts Farm Bureau is excellent in terms of representing you in every level of government and getting the effective voice of American Farm Bureau channeled into our conversations. The folks working on

Dues will be increased slightly this summer for the first time in 9 years to support the efforts being made on your behalf (see Page 4). Growing membership will minimize future dues increases as well.

We had an excellent Ag Day at the State House in March. Thank you to the members who got involved with helping to build relationships with their representatives! We continue to look for a contractor interested in doing work on our FLAME facility in Littleton; it is a very productive, aging facility and important to our livestock members. If you happen to know a contractor who might be qualified, please let me or Karen know.

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Executive Director's Column

By Karen Schwalbe, MFBB Executive Director

Proposed Massachusetts rodenticide restrictions should follow the state's scientific review process

Massachusetts is considering restrictions on anticoagulant rodenticides through several paths at once. More than 20 municipalities have sought state authorization to impose local restrictions through home rule petitions. At the same time, the Legislature is considering statewide and local-option restrictions through the Environmental Bond Bill and separate standalone legislation.

These proposals raise an important question for agriculture: should pesticide restrictions be made through the state's established scientific review process or through separate local and legislative actions before that process is complete?

Massachusetts already has a regulatory structure for pesticide review. Under Chapter 132B, pesticide registration and use standards are handled at the state level. This framework is intended to provide consistent rules across Massachusetts and to ensure that technical decisions are made through the Pesticide Board Subcommittee, with input from scientific review and subject-matter expertise.

That process matters. Pesticide regulation affects farms, food storage, livestock feed, public health, environmental protection, and municipal pest control. Decisions should be based on evidence, risk, available alternatives, and practical implementation.

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources commissioned a scientific review of anticoagulant rodenticides through Eastern Research Group. That review has been completed, but the Pesticide Board Subcommittee has not yet taken final action on the findings. Our concern is that legislative and municipal proposals are moving ahead before the Board has completed its work.

The issue is not whether rodenticide use should be reviewed. It should be. There are legitimate concerns about wildlife exposure, especially involving second-genera-

tion anticoagulant rodenticides. Research cited in the state review has found anticoagulant rodenticide residues in birds of prey, including red-tailed hawks. Second-generation anticoagulants are also recognized as more persistent and more toxic than first-generation products.

Those concerns deserve serious attention. But they should be addressed through the regulatory process designed for that purpose.

The municipal home rule approach creates a separate problem. If individual cities and towns are authorized to ban or restrict anticoagulant rodenticides independently, Massachusetts could end up with inconsistent rules from one community to the next. That would create compliance problems for farms and agricultural businesses that operate across municipal boundaries.

Rodent control remains essential in agriculture. Farmers need to protect grain, livestock feed, barns, farmstands, packing areas, orchards, and other farm infrastructure. Rodents can contaminate feed, damage stored crops, spread disease, and cause economic losses. In orchards, rodents can girdle fruit trees during winter months, which can kill or severely weaken trees and result in substantial economic losses for growers.

Farmers already use a range of control methods, including sanitation, exclusion, trapping, habitat management, and integrated pest management. While farmers employ various control approaches including mechanical methods, chemical tools remain necessary in some situations, especially where infestations are severe or where food, feed, livestock, or public health are at risk.

The current Massachusetts proposals appear more restrictive than approaches taken in some other states. California, for example, has adopted restrictions on certain rodenticides while preserving broader exemptions for agricultural activities, food production, food storage, and related facilities. The Massachusetts proposals under consideration provide much narrower

emergency-use exceptions.

Standalone bills would prohibit registration or reregistration of anticoagulant rodenticides except for limited emergency uses. Those exceptions include public health emergencies, drinking water supply protection, vector control, and emergent infectious disease control. Even then, use would be time-limited and subject to written justification and integrated pest management requirements.

The Environmental Bond Bill amendment takes a different approach by creating a local-option framework rather than a statewide ban. But that does not resolve the underlying concern. A local-option system can still produce inconsistent restrictions across Massachusetts. It also allows restrictions to move forward before the Pesticide Board Subcommittee has completed its review and acted on the scientific record.

Our position is that Massachusetts should allow the state's pesticide review process to work. The Pesticide Board Subcommittee should evaluate the completed scientific review, consider agricultural and public health needs, assess risks and alternatives, and make recommendations through the established regulatory framework.

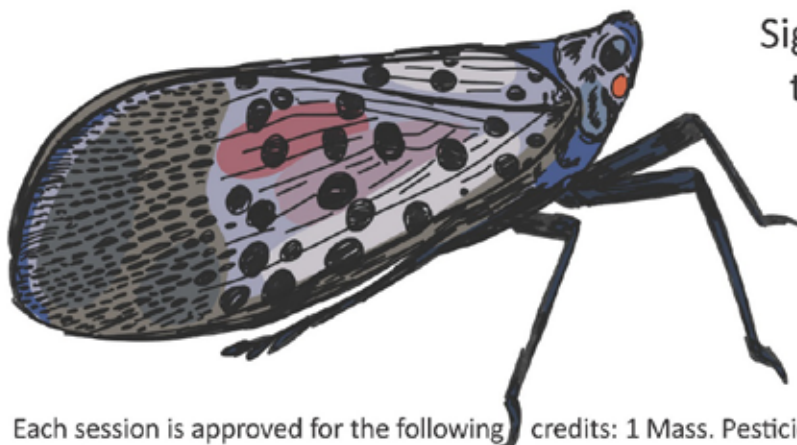
This is also about precedent. If pesticide restrictions are imposed through local exceptions or legislative action before the scientific review process is complete, the same approach could be used in the future for other agricultural tools, including herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, or other products that farmers rely on.

Massachusetts farmers need clear, consistent, science-based rules. Wildlife protection and farm viability do not have to be treated as opposing goals. But the process used to regulate pesticides matters. Decisions should be made through the state's established scientific and regulatory framework, not through a fragmented system of local restrictions or legislative action that moves ahead of that review.



Learn about the invasive spotted lanternfly

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Each session is approved for the following credits: 1 Mass. Pesticide License credit (all categories and license types), 1 MCA credit, 1 MCH credit, 1 MCLP credit, ½ MQTW credit, 1 Forester License credit, ¾ ISA credit, 1 Timber Harvester license credit.

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May 13 registration link: <https://bit.ly/SLFWebMAMay26>



Questions? Email slf@mass.gov

How Much is a Bat Worth? Tiny Insect-Eaters Good for Farms



Protecting these tiny insect-eaters isn't just good for farms – their deaths cost taxpayers and the wider economy

Most Americans tend to think about bats only around Halloween, but the U.S. economy benefits from these furry flying mammals every day.

Bats pollinate plants, including many important food crops, when they stop by flowers to drink nectar. Their guano is mined from caves for fertilizer. And they eat a lot of bugs – the kinds that bother people (think mosquitoes) and others that destroy crops that humans depend on for food.

Sadly, bat populations are declining rapidly in North America. A driving force is a fungal disease known as white-nose syndrome, which has spread among bats throughout the United States. When a bat population crashes, fewer bats are around to eat bothersome insects. All those additional insects can do serious damage.

So, when bats disappear, farms become less productive, and that has broad implications for the agricultural economy, human health, rural governments and even financial markets.

Bats love to eat the bugs that bother people

First, consider how many insects bats eat. A reproductive female big brown bat can eat its body weight in insects every night in the summer, precisely when farmers are growing food.

One of those insects is the cucumber beetle, which matures from rootworm – a scourge of U.S. cornfields. Rootworm destroys more than 340 million bushels of corn across the U.S. Midwest and South each year, even as farmers spend US\$1 billion annually on pesticides to control outbreaks.

A colony of 150 big brown bats can consume 600,000 cucumber beetles in a single year. If each female cucumber beetle – assuming half are female – had 110 rootworm larvae, the typical brown bat colony would prevent the production of 33 million rootworms.

Farmers experience economic damage when rootworm concentrations exceed about 0.5 per corn plant. Typical planting densities exceed 30,000 corn plants per acre in the Midwest. Therefore, the rootworms that would have hatched could damage more than 2,000 acres of corn – if bats weren't around to eat the cucumber beetles first. That is a significant amount of pest control provided by bats!

The disaster known as white-nose syndrome

In the winter of 2006, the fungus that causes white-nose syndrome, the aptly named *Pseudogymnoascus destructans*, was first detected in the U.S. near Albany, New York.

From there, it spread across the country, infecting 12 species of bats, three of which are listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. A 2010 study found white-nose syndrome had killed between 30% and 99% of the bats in infected colonies.

As of March 2026, the fungus causing white-nose syndrome had been detected in 47 states, reaching as far west as California, Washington and Oregon. White-nose syndrome spreads primarily through bat-to-bat contact, though humans also contribute to the spread when cave explorers carry the fungus from one cave to another.

Despite coordinated efforts by state and federal wildlife agencies to limit access to caves where bats live and slow the transmission, white-nose syndrome continues to spread rapidly. When bats get infected, they wake up early from hibernation and use more energy over the winter. This depletes their fat reserves and causes them to die of starvation, leading to plummeting populations.

Bats' role in food production

After white-nose syndrome arrives in an area, the loss of bats has significant consequences for farmers. Yields fall as pests consume crops. To protect their crops, farmers purchase more chemical pesticides, so their costs rise as yields decline. The estimated agricultural losses from white-nose syndrome exceeded \$420 million per year as of 2017. Greater pesticide use is also associated with human health problems that can be avoided if bat populations remain healthy.

Losing bats hurts local governments financially

The story does not stop at the farm. Counties in all U.S. states tax agricultural land based on its "use value" – in other words, based on how profitable the land is in agriculture. Without healthy bat populations, lower profits shrink the tax base, leaving county governments with less revenue.

Those governments must respond by reducing services, raising taxes or increasing how much money they borrow – often at a greater cost of borrowing. The effect is especially pronounced in rural counties, where agriculture makes up a large share of property tax revenue.

Our recent research finds that rural county governments lost almost \$150 per person in annual revenue after the arrival of white-nose syndrome. For an average-size rural county, that is nearly \$2.7 million in lost revenue each year.

How losing bats can hit the bond markets

The loss of county revenue makes municipal bond investors nervous. Buying a municipal bond is a bit like lending money to the county, and the interest rate is what the county pays you for taking on that risk.

When bats disappear, the risk goes up, and the county has to pay about 11.47 hundredths of a percentage point more in interest. That may sound small, but it is 27% larger than the typical risk premium investors already demand from county governments.

The higher interest rate raises borrowing costs for county governments. For example, the borrowing costs on a typical 15-year, \$1 million bond would increase by more than \$33,000. Higher yields also mean lower bond prices for investors, including retirement funds. For example, our

research suggests that investors would discount a \$1 million bond issued by a rural county by nearly \$14,000 if that county's bats have become infected by white-nose syndrome.

Economic benefits of saving bats

The good news is that the benefits from healthy bat populations create opportunities to make money from bat conservation. Farmers can increase their incomes. Local governments can recover property tax revenue to fund public services, such as road maintenance, health infrastructure and public schools. Bond investors can earn financial returns from healthier bat populations.

No silver bullet exists for protecting or restoring bat populations affected by white-nose syndrome, but promising efforts are underway.

A fungal vaccine is being tested by the U.S. Geological Survey and partners. Designing artificial roosts and adding cave protections can also help preserve healthy bat populations. Researchers are also working to better understand bat resistance to the disease to explore whether improving resistance alone can stabilize bat populations.

As these solutions develop, opportunities will emerge for farmers, local governments and investors to earn financial returns through bat conservation. In other words, saving bats isn't just good ecology – it's good economics.

See the full interactive article here: <https://www.morningagclips.com/how-much-is-a-bat-worth-tiny-insect-eaters-good-for-farms/>



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News & Views is published quarterly by the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation. Subscription comes with membership. It is received in the homes of over 2,000 MFBF members.

MFBF's mission is to strengthen a diverse agricultural community by supporting and advocating for Massachusetts farm families.

MFBF's Vision Statement:

Massachusetts Farm Bureau envisions a world with plentiful high-quality agricultural products, productive open land, and a robust and prosperous farming community. We are committed to working with like-minded groups to achieve these goals.

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Increase in Membership Dues for FY2027

By Warren Shaw, MFBF President

Dear Valued Farm Bureau Member:
 At the December 2025 Annual Meeting, the Voting Delegates of the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) approved an adjustment to membership dues **effective July 1, 2026**. This is the first dues increase approved since 2017.

Over the past 9 years, MFBF has worked to hold the line on dues as long as possible, while building additional sources of income and continuing to expand programs and services for our members. During that same period, the cost of advocacy, communications, insurance, staffing, travel, events, and day-to-day operations has continued to rise.

The dues adjustments will be as follows:
Farmer Member: \$225 to \$250
Advocate Member (Family): \$100 to \$110
Advocate Member (Individual): \$70 to \$80

All other membership levels will remain unchanged.

The MFBF delegate body recognizes the importance of maintaining a financially stable organization that can continue to advocate effectively for Massachusetts agriculture and support county farm bureaus and members statewide.

Because we value your continued membership, we are offering current Farmer and Advocate members the opportunity to renew early and/or extend their membership an extra year at the current rate.

You may simply mail a check for another year of membership (postmarked no later than June 30, 2026) or, if you'd like to renew online, contact Kim at the office at (508) 481-4766 or via kim@mfbf.net for assistance.

Thank you for your continued support of MFBF and of agriculture in the Commonwealth. If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact me via email at warren@mfbf.net.

Promotion & Engagement Committee Update

This spring has been an exciting and productive time for the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Promotion & Engagement Committee. In March we hosted a table at the Wayland Farmers Market, giving us a valuable opportunity to connect directly with consumers. It was a fantastic setting to answer questions, share our experiences, and highlight the importance of agriculture in our communities.

As our first event of this kind, it was a great success and one we look forward to building on as we plan to attend additional farmers markets and fairs throughout the summer.

We are also pleased to announce the return of **Livestock on the Common** on Tuesday, June 2, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. (rain date is June 3). Held in front of the State House steps, this annual event continues to be a highlight of our outreach efforts.

The presence of animals naturally draws in visitors and creates a welcoming environment for meaningful conversations. We look forward to engaging with legislators, their staff, and the many individuals who stop by to learn more about agriculture.



and the Whiten family, recent alumni of the AFBF YF&R Committee—joined by my oldest daughter, with the Secretary. Seeing our Farm Bureau family and the next generation of leaders standing together on the South Lawn of the White House was a powerful reminder of the legacy we are working to protect.

Get Involved

We are always excited to welcome new members to the committee. If you have a passion for agriculture and enjoy connecting with others, this is a wonderful opportunity to share your story and help promote our industry. To learn more about us, visit <https://www.fb.org/program/promotion-and-engagement>

~ From the South Lawn: Sharing the American Farmer's Story ~

By Heidi Cooper - Chair, P&E Committee

April was a busy travel month for me, and I had the distinct honor of joining a fellow committee member to represent AFBF on behalf of the American Egg Board and U.S. Soy at the White House Easter Egg Roll.

The Easter Egg Roll is one of the oldest traditions in White House history, dating back to 1878. For us, it was a premier opportunity to put a face to American agriculture for thousands of families. Our spirit of engagement supported our passions right on the White House South Lawn. We spent the day interacting with children and parents, sharing the story of how their food and fiber are grown.

By representing the American Egg Board, we helped facilitate the iconic egg roll and hunt, while our work with U.S. Soy highlighted the versatility of the soybean—from sustainable feed to the very dyes used for the Easter eggs.

A personal highlight was the opportunity to visit with the United States Secretary of Agriculture, Brooke Rollins. I've included a photo of a fellow committee member—

and the Whiten family, recent alumni of the AFBF YF&R Committee—joined by my oldest daughter, with the Secretary. Seeing our Farm Bureau family and the next generation of leaders standing together on the South Lawn of the White House was a powerful reminder of the legacy we are working to protect.

Seeing the joy at the White House reminded me exactly why our mission of promotion and engagement is so critical. I am energized by what we have accomplished so far this year and look forward to the work ahead as we continue to grow!



Legislative Update May 2026

By Dan Bosley, MFBF Lobbyist

SESSION OUTLOOK: THE FINAL PUSH

We are entering the final 10 weeks of the legislative session. As is typical for the second year of a term, the “logjam” has begun. The Legislature continues to favor large “omnibus” bills over individual legislation, meaning many of our priorities are now tucked into massive packages awaiting reconciliation between the House and Senate.

The Macro Environment

Legislative progress is currently shadowed by two factors:

Economic Uncertainty: While the Massachusetts economy remains resilient, national cooling and 3.4% inflation are driving up operational costs for both the Commonwealth and the agricultural community.

Federal Funding: Uncertainty regarding federal support continues to impact long-term fiscal planning.

Top Priority: Budgets & Fiscal Updates

FY2027 STATE BUDGET

Status: Passed House; currently before the Senate.

The Impact: The House budget included a slight decrease for MDAR operating funds for the second consecutive year, though many local food project earmarks were adopted.

Next Steps: Once the Senate passes its version next week, a Conference Committee will reconcile the two before sending it to Governor Healey.

H.5377: SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET

Status: Filed by Governor Healey.

The Impact: Primarily a “bill-paying” exer-

cise (\$227M), but it contains three major policy shifts we have advocated for years: **Sunday Hunting:** Repeals the current prohibition (Section 51).

Crossbows: Permits use under new regulatory frameworks.

Setbacks: Reduces the hunting setback from buildings from 500 feet to 150 feet.

Our Position: We are actively partnering with allied groups to ensure these sections remain in the final bill.

Major Pending Legislation

S.3064: THE MASS READY ACT (ENVIRONMENTAL BOND BILL)

Status: Passed Senate; awaiting House action.

Key Provisions: Authorizes \$3.9B for climate resilience.

Our Focus: We successfully negotiated language for Section 45 (Commercial Feed) to prevent unintended regulatory impacts on farms that needs to be included in the House version. We are also monitoring a “right of first refusal” provision on land transfers to ensure state and municipal processes run concurrently.

S.3040: THE FARM BILL

Status: Passed Senate; awaiting House action.

The Impact: A massive victory for agricultural resilience. Highlights include:

Financial Support: Establishes the Food Security Infrastructure Grant and the Next Generation Farmers Fund.

Regulatory Protection: Defines/protects Agritourism under local zoning and offers 5-year property tax exemptions for new agricultural structures.

PFAS Relief: Bars “roll-back” taxes if PFAS contamination makes farming economically infeasible.

Our Position: Highly supportive; we are currently lobbying the House to retain the Senate’s favorable language.

H.5151: THE ENERGY BILL

Status: Passed House; moving to Senate.

The Concern: The current version deletes the Alternative Portfolio Standard (APS). This would eliminate credits that help farms afford heat pumps, wood heating, and anaerobic digesters.

Action Plan: Our amendment failed in the House; we are now pivoting to the Senate to restore the APS.

ONGOING POLICY CHALLENGES

Issue Current Status: Farm Labor Amendment withdrawn in Senate.

Our Strategy: Educating legislators on the rising cost of labor; seeking sustainable common ground.

Rodenticides: Active debate in several bills moving forward. Opposing a “patchwork” of local bans; fighting for a specific agricultural carve-out.

PFAS/Pesticides: Ongoing monitoring. Tracking several single-issue bills moving through the system.

LOOKING AHEAD

Before the session concludes in July, we anticipate the introduction of a major Economic Development Bill and a significant Education Bill. The coming weeks will be the most intensive period of the year for our advocacy team.



farm energy discount program!

Did you know? The program provides 10% discount to eligible farms on electricity and natural gas!

The Farm Energy Discount Program provides discounts on electricity and natural gas bills of 10% to eligible entities engaged in production agriculture. Subject to certification by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (“MDAR” or “Department”) persons or corporations determined to be principally and substantially engaged in the business of production agriculture or farming for an ultimate commercial purpose will, upon written application, be eligible for a 10% discount on rates.

Persons or corporations with 75 or more full-time employees in January of the application year will not be eligible for nor qualify for the Farm Discount. Full-time employees shall not include any seasonal or part-time workers.

Please note that the discount will not be available until an application is filed and MDAR certifies eligibility to your energy supplier. Each application will be considered on the basis of the information contained therein. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that you provide the Department with as much detail as possible.

To apply please download the **Farm Energy Discount Application Form** by visiting <https://bit.ly/farm-energy-discount> or call 617-620-4398 for assistance. Upon determination that the applicant qualifies for the Farm Discount, MDAR will certify to the appropriate power supplier (either electricity or natural gas) that the applicant meets the requirements for the Farm Discount. The discount is not available for propane or fuel oil accounts. If there have been any changes to energy account(s), participants must notify the Department.

Current participants can also review their account information online to ensure its accuracy. Using their unique User Name and Access Code, **current participants** can access the information at the following website: <https://massnrc.org/fedp/>



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info@ProgressiveGrower.com

www.progressivegrower.com

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info@worldfarmers.org

www.worldfarmers.org

Products & Services: Education, beginning farmers, and ranchers.



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Corinthian Farm & Equine Insurance

scott@corinthianinsurance.com

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tburke@dodgegrain.biz - (603) 893-3739

Essex County Farm Equipment

kathytibs@aol.com - (617) 240-5169

Great Road Farm & Garden

greatroadfarmandgarden@gmail.com - (978) 486-9200

Karin's Mobile Veterinary Service

kazdvm@hotmail.com - (617) 653-6401

Low Places Ranch Feed & Supply Store

maryrae@lowplacesranch.com - (978) 660-9215

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EHBScout@gmail.com - (617) 930-8479

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daniel.lee@numanac.com - (312) 918-1438

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jsmolak@smolakvaughan.com - (978) 327-5215

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White Dog Cranberry, Ltd.

roccobrutus@yahoo.com

TO OUR MEMBERS

Does your business support agriculture? Would you like to be listed in this directory?

Join as an **Allied Business** member today! Perhaps you're already an Allied Business member and don't see your business listed here?

Please call us at 508-481-4766 or email kim@mfbf.net

Nominations Open for 2027 Farm Bureau Farm Dog of the Year Contest

Farmers are invited to submit nominations for the 2027 Farm Bureau Farm Dog of the Year contest, which comes with cash prizes and bragging rights. This is the ninth year of the contest, supported by Nestlé Purina PetCare, which celebrates farm dogs and the many ways they support farmers and ranchers.

The grand prize winner – Farm Bureau Farm Dog of the Year – will win a year’s worth of Purina Pro Plan dog food and \$5,000 in prize money. The winner will be recognized at a Farm Dog of the Year award ceremony at the American Farm Bureau Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina, in January 2027.

The 2027 Farm Dog of the Year will also be featured in a professionally produced video. The profile of 2026 Farm Dog of the Year Max can be viewed [here](#). Since its inception, the contest has provided a link to the farm for pet-loving Americans who vote for their favorite farm dog online.

“Farm dogs are often important partners in our daily work as well as wonderful companions for farm families,” said AFBF President Zippy Duvall. “As we saw with our 2026 winner, Max, these loyal companions go above and beyond to look after both the land and the farm families they work alongside.”

Rounding up livestock, chasing off predators, opening gates, fetching or carrying tools/buckets and greeting visitors are among the many tasks performed by farm dogs.

Scientific research from a collaboration between Mayo Clinic and Purina reveals that interacting with pets can provide health benefits. For example, spending just 20 minutes with a dog increased a hormone that helps moderate stress. This was also associated with a decrease in heart rate and an increase in a self-reported sense of well-being.

“We are honored to continue supporting the hard-working, devoted farm dogs featured in the American Farm Bureau’s Farm Dog of the Year contest,” said Jack Scott, vice president of sustainable sourcing at Purina. “Purina proudly uses nutritious ingredients sourced from American farms to make our pet food, and we remain committed to supporting American farmers who have fed generations of people and pets.”

Desired attributes for the Farm Dog of the Year include helpfulness to the farmer and his/her family, playfulness and obedience. Farm dog owners must be Farm Bureau members to enter their dogs in the competition. Not yet a Farm Bureau member but interested in nominating your farm dog?

Visit fb.org/join to learn about becoming a member.

Eligibility guidelines and submission requirements are available [here](#). Farm Dog of the Year nominations, which include written responses to questions, at least one still photo and a video clip (optional), **must be received by July 11, 2026**, for consideration. The Farm Bureau Farm Dog of the Year contest is sponsored by the American Farm Bureau Federation.

The People’s Choice Pup, a popular social media element of the Farm Dog of the Year competition, returns for 2027. Profiles of several dogs nominated for the contest will be shared beginning in September, with the public invited to vote. Bragging rights and a \$2,500 cash prize from Purina will be awarded to the People’s Choice Pup.



👋 MEMBER FRAUD ALERT 👋

We have been made aware of recent spam phone calls, emails, and text messages claiming to originate from the Massachusetts Farm Bureau and asking for payment; please note that we DO NOT solicit payment in that manner. Do NOT respond to any of those message—block the sender if possible—and contact our office in Marlborough at 508-481-4766 if you have any concerns or would like assistance with fraud prevention.

Farm Bureau Members Receive a

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¹Available on the purchase or lease of an eligible new 2024/2025/2026 model year Ford Maverick®, Ranger®, F-150, Super Duty® or F-150 Lightning®. Not available on any other Ford or Lincoln vehicles, or F-150 Raptor®, F-150 Raptor R™, Ranger Raptor or F-650® and F-750® Super Duty. Vehicle eligibility may change at any time. Available to U.S. residents only. Place a new retail order or take new retail delivery from an authorized Ford Dealer's stock by 1/05/26. Limit of five purchases or leases per household during the program offer (PGM# 32524). Offer subject to dealer participation. May not be used/combined with most other Ford private offers. See an authorized Ford Dealer, or go to <http://www.fordrecognizesu.com>, for complete details and eligibility (PGM# 32524). Due to high demand and global supply chain constraints, some models, trims, and features may not be available or may be subject to change. Check with your local dealer for current information. Offer subject to confirmation of eligibility.

²Available on the purchase of an eligible 2020-2026MY Ford Blue Advantage Gold, EV (F-150 Lightning only), or Blue Certified, Ford Maverick, Ranger, F-150, Super Duty or F-150 Lightning with under 80,000 miles. Not available on any other Ford or Lincoln vehicles, or F-150 Raptor, F-150 Raptor R, Ranger Raptor or F-650 and F-750 Super Duty. Vehicle eligibility may change at any time. Available to U.S. residents only. Take delivery from an authorized Ford Dealer's stock by 1/5/2026. Limit of five purchases per household during the program offer (PGM# 32678). Offer subject to dealer participation. May not be used/combined with most other private Ford offers. See an authorized Ford Dealer, or go to <http://www.fordrecognizesu.com>, for complete details and eligibility (PGM# 32678). Due to high demand and global supply chain constraints, some models, trims, and features may not be available or may be subject to change. Check with your local Ford Dealer for current information. Offer subject to confirmation of eligibility.

The Farm Bureau Exclusive Cash Reward¹² is now compatible with AXZD-Plans.

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PLUS

Retail financing available with approved credit.

Proof of valid and active membership required to take advantage of this deal. Tax, freight and setup are additional.



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2026 Ag Day @ The State House March 11



MFBF President Warren Shaw gave opening remarks in front of the Grand Staircase



MDAR Commissioner Ashley Randle with members of Massachusetts 4-H and Future Farmers of America (FFA)



Members of the public were invited to browse and mingle while enjoying samples of local goods in the Great Hall!



L-R: MFBF Executive Director Karen Schwalbe, Representative Kate Hogan, and MDAR Commissioner Ashley Randle.



L-R: MFBF Membership Coordinator Kim Ashe and Communications Coordinator Sabrina Stidsen.



2026 County Farm Bureau Breakfasts



Plymouth County Farm Bureau gathered at Brack's Tavern in Middleboro



Middlesex County Farm Bureau President Alex Dowse and MDAR Commissioner Ashley Randle spoke at the Colonial Inn in Concord



L-R: Rep. Mark Sylvia, Sen. Kelly Dooner, Rep. Ken Swezey, Plymouth County Farm Bureau President Jim Haywod, Rep. John Gaskey, Rep. Norm Orrall, and Rep. David De Coste.



L-R: MFBF Lobbyist Dan Bosley, MDAR Dep. Commissioner Winton Pitcoff, and MDAR Commissioner Ashley Randle at the Middlesex Breakfast



Tri-County Farm Bureau feasted at the Blue Bonnet Diner in Northampton. L-R: FSA Hampden/Hampshire County Exec. Director Stephane Cawley, FSA Franklin County Exec. Director Bailey Albert, and FSA State Exec. Director Ed Davidian



FFA members from Smith Vocational & Agricultural High School share information about their program.



Meanwhile...at the Canadian Consulate in Boston to discuss the upcoming re-authorization of the Farm Bill are L-R: Consul General Bernadette Jordan, Canadian Minister of Ag Hon. Heath MacDonald, Exec. Director of the Association of Southern Region Extension Directors Rich Bonanno, Exec. Director of the Cranberry Institute Bill Frantz, and MFBF Exec. Director Karen Schwalbe.

👉 PLEASE SEND US PHOTOS OF YOUR MEETINGS AND EVENTS FOR FUTURE PUBLICATION!
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Discounts for MFBF Members



MFBF members enjoy deep discounts from our national & local business partners!

For full details, scan code or visit <https://mfbf.net/for-members/discounts-and-benefits>

Looking for an easy way to save every day? Activate your ACCESS membership and start saving today with great deals on **travel, theme parks, food, events, online shopping** and more!



Eligible MFBF members can **save up to \$2,750** on the purchase or lease of eligible Cat® compact track loaders, compact and small wheel loaders, skid steer loaders, small dozers, backhoe loaders, mini hydraulic excavators, and telehandlers. Receive an **additional \$250 credit** on select work tool attachments purchased with new Cat machines.



Market. Manage. Maximize. Grow. Farm Advantage provides you with **the tools to help market** what you produce, manage your risk, maximize your margins & grow your business for generations to come.



MFBF members **save up to 20%** off published price at almost 5,000 Choice Hotels Worldwide! Save 20% off at participating Comfort Inn®, Comfort Suites®, Quality Inn®, Sleep Inn®, Clarion®, MainStay Suites®, Suburban Extended Stay®, Rodeway Inn®, and Econo Lodge® hotels.



MFBF members now **receive a \$500 bonus** cash offer F-150, Super Duty and Ranger only. You must be a member in Massachusetts for 30 consecutive days prior to purchase or lease.



As a Farm Bureau® member, you and your family have access to a **FREE Prescription Drug Card** program. **Save up to 75%** at more than 68,000 national and regional pharmacies. The program can be used to supplement most health insurance plans including Health Savings Accounts (HSA) and High Deductible Plans.



With FieldClock, you have the power to **manage your farm labor in real time and access that data** from anywhere! In addition to saving time and money with FieldClock, current MFBF members save an additional **\$10 off their monthly bill!** Get started today, and explore all FieldClock has to offer.



MFBF members receive an upgraded **John Deere Rewards** membership (Platinum 1) with deep discounts on equipment, parts, and merchandise. Register today and explore all that **Rewards** has to offer. Check out these savings!

Commercial Mowing: \$200-\$1,700 off
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Utility Vehicles: \$100-\$300 off
Tractors: \$200-\$300 off
Compact Construction: \$550-\$1,400 off



JOHN DEERE

Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine has teamed up with MFBF to provide a **Large Animal Hospital 10% discount** to all Farmer, Gold, and Platinum members in good standing.



Save up to \$500 on Case IH Farmall & Maxxum tractors, hay tools & more! MFBF members save \$200-\$500 per unit on select Case IH equipment. Combine that MFBF offer with other discounts, promotions, or rebates available from Case IH or your Case IH dealer.



Up to \$1,000 off any new or pre-owned vehicles in the McGovern Auto Group! Our selection of new and used vehicles spreads across 19 brands at 20 locations in the Northeast. Take advantage of our diverse inventory to fit whatever needs you may have for your homestead.



Service First Processing (SFP) is a **leading payment processing provider** helping merchants navigate the constant changes in the bank card industry while keeping costs low, ensuring data security, and enhancing efficiency by simplifying transactions. SFP offers MFBF members an SFP credit card and ACH/check processing services at a special discount!



Cut mowing time in half with a Grasshopper Mower—and **cut 15% off** with your Farm Bureau membership! Check with your local dealer to see if they have a participating program. For more information and/or to find a local dealer, click on link above or scan the QR code.



Get a **5% discount on your farm package** with Countryway Insurance, and **save 3%-5% off your personal auto** with various companies! Your knowledgeable, experienced agent can help arrange a program that will best meet your farm and personal insurance needs. In addition to Farm Packages, we also offer personal & commercial auto, homeowners, property insurance, workman's compensation, as well as health, life, and disability insurances.



Farm Bureau Bank is a **full-service bank** that offers a complete array of financial services you need with nationwide convenience and highly competitive rates. Products and services include Reward and Traditional Credit Cards, Deposit Accounts (Checking, Money Market Accounts, CDs, IRAs, and Health Savings Accounts), Vehicle Loans, Mortgage Loans and Business Services. We invite you to enhance your financial well-being and see what better banking is all about!



MFBF members can now **save 20%** off Budget Truck Rental! Use your discount to save 20% on consumer rental rates and mileage charges on Budget Truck's broad range of offerings, from cargo vans up to 26' box trucks.



Save up to 30% off Avis rentals! MFBF members always receive up to 30% off Avis base rates with Avis Worldwide Discount (AWD) number found on our members-only website.



MFBF members **get deep discounts** on critical equipment and supplies AND enjoy free standard ground shipping* when ordering items online, over the phone, or at your local Grainger branch.



Whether you are looking for an upscale hotel, an all-inclusive resort or something more cost-effective, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts has the right hotel for you! MFBF members **receive up to 20% off** the Best Available Rate at approx. 8,000 participating hotels worldwide. Our vast portfolio of hotels and resorts offer a variety of accommodations to meet your travel needs!



MFBF members always **save up to 30%** off Budget base rates* with your Budget Customer Discount (BCD) number found on our members-only website.



IMPORTANT MESSAGE

A proposed \$7.25 billion settlement has been reached involving **Roundup** and other weed killers. If you or anyone you know—including farmworkers, landscapers, or groundskeepers—has been exposed to these products and diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma, you may be eligible for compensation of \$6,000 to \$165,000 or more.

The settlement also covers people who were exposed but have not yet been diagnosed, as this type of cancer can take up to 15 years to develop. Claims will be paid for up to 21 years. If you were exposed, your rights are affected—even without a diagnosis. To learn more, please visit www.WeedKillerClass.com or call 1-888-403-8201.

ROUNDUP WEED KILLER SETTLEMENT

People Diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma (NHL) Now or in the Future Could Receive **\$6,000 to \$165,000 or More.**

If you were exposed to Roundup or other weed killers at work or home, **your rights are affected.**

This settlement will affect you even without a cancer diagnosis.



888-403-8201

WWW.WEEDKILLERCLASS.COM



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NEW STYLES
(cotton twill, grey trucker & tan)

CONTACT US:
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Massachusetts Young Agricultural Professionals Committee

Learn more about us at <https://www.mfbf.net/about/advisory-committees/profile/young-agricultural-professionals>



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Farm Bureau Selects New Partners in Advocacy Leadership Class

The American Farm Bureau Federation recently selected an outstanding group of leaders in agriculture as the organization's 13th Partners in Advocacy Leadership class. AFBF designed PAL to help agricultural leaders accelerate their engagement abilities and solidify their roles as advocates for agriculture.

"Effective advocacy at the local, state and national levels has never been more critical to advancing policies that support agriculture and strengthen rural communities," said AFBF President Zippy Duvall. "We commend the members of PAL Class 13 for their commitment to championing issues that impact the entire farm-to-consumer food chain."

Members of PAL Class 13 are: Ellie Watson, Alabama; Jesse Lasater, Colorado; Mathew Heberling, Illinois; Megan Espinda, Indiana; **Meg Gennings, Massachusetts**; Amanda Cook, Minnesota; Dr. Lorin Harvey, Mississippi; Stuart Beam, North Carolina; Trevor Barnson, Utah; and John Reese, Utah.

PAL training involves four learning modules designed to develop specific advocacy skills while exploring components of leadership and its theories and philosophies. The modules build on one another over the two



years of the program and include intense, in-person, hands-on training.

PAL graduates emerge with experience and confidence—in everything from legislative policymaking and issues management to social media and media relations—to effectively engage all critical stakeholders.

To be eligible for the PAL program, candidates must be Farm Bureau members between the ages of 30 and 45, with demonstrated leadership skills.

The program is sponsored by AFBF, Farm Credit, Syngenta, John Deere, and Merck Animal Health.

Agricultural Views Photo Calendar Contest: Show Your Pride

Help us fill **Farm Credit East's Agricultural Views 2027 calendar** with lots of fresh imagery that illustrates the best of Northeast farming, horticulture, forestry and commercial fishing, as well as creative photos that celebrate country life in New

England, New York, or New Jersey. Your photo entry may appear in Farm Credit East's Agricultural Views 2027 calendar and also earn you a \$100 cash prize! Visit <https://www.farmcrediteast.com/calendar> for details and to submit your photos.

Deadline for submission is **July 31, 2026**. Winners will be contacted by Oct. 15, 2026.



Weathering the Storm

By Zippy Duvall, AFBF President

As we approach Mental Health Awareness Month (May), I've been thinking a lot about the weight so many farmers and ranchers are carrying right now. Farming is rewarding work, but it can also feel overwhelming. Markets shift overnight. Weather can wipe out months of hard work. Costs keep climbing. Too often, the stress builds quietly while we keep pushing forward, because that's just what farmers do.

That's why Farm Bureau continues to invest in resources that support the wellbeing of farm families and rural communities. And this Mental Health Awareness Month, we're unveiling a new resource dedicated to helping farmers consider how to respond to stress before it reaches a breaking point. It's called the Farm State of Mind Checklist: Weathering the Storm.

The checklist was shaped by the experiences of farmers and ranchers, along with guidance from mental health professionals. It's built around simple, practical reminders that can help people take small steps toward managing stress, preventing burnout, and finding clarity during difficult seasons.

Weathering the Storm, One Step at a Time

One thing I've learned over the years is that mental health conversations do not have to start with big speeches or perfect answers. Sometimes they start with small actions. That's the idea behind this checklist.

The first reminder is to **nourish** yourself. Farmers are good at taking care of crops, livestock and equipment, but we are not always good at taking care of our own physical wellbeing. Getting enough rest,

staying hydrated, and fueling your body matters.

The checklist also encourages people to **move**. Physical activity has always helped clear my mind, whether that means walking the farm, working outside, or throwing the ball with my dog, Ziggy.



Vincent "Zippy" Duvall, a poultry, cattle, and hay producer from Georgia, is the 12th AFBF President

Another reminder is to **unplug**. In agriculture, it can feel like there is no off switch. But stepping away from the stress of the farm for even a short time can make a difference. It also encourages people to pause. That might mean prayer, quiet reflection, or taking a moment to breathe before jumping into the next challenge.

And maybe most importantly, it reminds us to connect and share. For me, that lesson became especially clear after losing my first wife, Bonnie, to cancer. The support of my family, friends, and community helped carry me through some of the hardest days of my life. None of us are meant to weather these storms alone.

Supporting Mental Health in Rural America

I'm so proud of Farm Bureau's work through the Farm State of Mind Alliance, which brings together some of the largest membership organizations serving the farm community nationwide to reduce the stigma around mental health in rural communities and connect farm families with support and resources. One resource available through **Farm State of Mind** is **Togetherall**, a 24/7 online peer-to-peer community where farmers and ranchers can talk anonymously with others who under-

stand what they're going through. Farmers can also access counseling support, life coaching and professional consultations through Togetherall. These services are completely free to farm families across the country.

Sometimes the hardest part is taking that first step. That's why I encourage farmers and ranchers to check out Farm State of Mind and sign up for a Togetherall account before hitting a breaking point. Having those resources already at your fingertips can make all the difference on the hard days.

These resources matter because stress in agriculture is real. Unpredictability, financial pressure and isolation can take a toll on farmers and ranchers and their families. And with USDA projecting farm income this year to be **\$48 billion** below the highs we saw in 2022, many farm families are carrying even more financial strain and uncertainty into an already difficult season.

But we know the strength of rural communities is real, too. When farmers check in on one another, share their stories and encourage each other to seek support, it reminds each of us that we are not alone. Sometimes a conversation can make all the difference.

This Mental Health Awareness Month, I encourage you to take a few moments to check in on yourself and the people around you. Share the **Farm State of Mind Checklist** with a friend or neighbor. Start a conversation. Reach out if someone is struggling. And if you need support yourself, know there are people ready to listen and help. No one should have to weather the storm alone.

Do you need to renew your membership?

Fill out & submit this form before prices increase July 1, 2026 - see Page 4



Member Information/Renewal Sheet

Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation
 249 Lakeside Avenue, Marlborough, MA 01752
 508-481-4766 • info@mfbf.net • www.MFBF.net

PLEASE NOTE: Prices will increase after 6-30-26



Your Membership No. <small>(we will confirm if you're not sure)</small> 20	Your Farm Bureau: _____ Form completed by: _____ Date completed: _____ Recruited by: _____ <small>(if applicable)</small>	Check Membership Level: <input type="checkbox"/> Farmer \$225 <input type="checkbox"/> Allied Business \$225 <input type="checkbox"/> Gold \$350 <input type="checkbox"/> Advocate (Individual) \$70 <input type="checkbox"/> Platinum \$500 <input type="checkbox"/> Advocate (Family) \$100 <input type="checkbox"/> Student \$25* <small>*Student = Individual, proof required</small>
Member Name: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> check box if primary member		
Spouse/Partner Name: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> check box if primary member		
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Phone Number: _____		Email: _____
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FORESTRY: <input type="checkbox"/> Christmas trees <input type="checkbox"/> Firewood <input type="checkbox"/> Forest landowner <input type="checkbox"/> Maple syrup <input type="checkbox"/> Trees and timber	POULTRY: <input type="checkbox"/> Broilers <input type="checkbox"/> Eggs <input type="checkbox"/> Exotic Poultry <input type="checkbox"/> Fancy Fowl <input type="checkbox"/> Turkeys	OTHER (please specify): _____		WATERFOWL: <input type="checkbox"/> Ducks <input type="checkbox"/> Geese	
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FB.Org/MemberBenefits



IMPORTANT MESSAGE

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We want to make sure you're not missing out on this valuable *FREE* news source!

Please call us at 508-481-4766 or kim@mfbf.net to make sure we have your correct email address.

We'll get you back on the list in time for the next issue!

HAVE YOU HEARD?

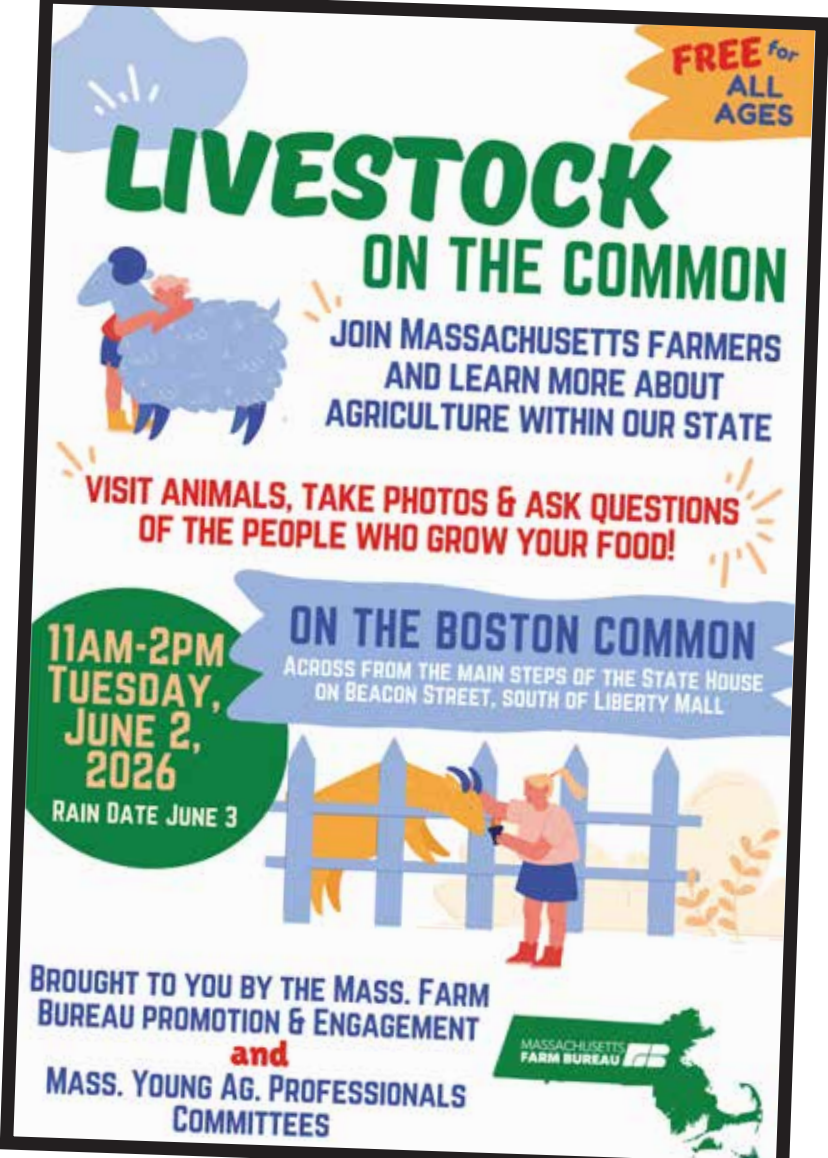
Greg Finn Scholarship

Deadline extended to July 15, 2026

This **\$500 scholarship** is awarded in memory of Gregory Finn and is meant to foster an understanding between the farm community and suburban agriculture.

Applicant **must be** a child or legal dependent of a regular member in good standing of the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation and must be at least in their junior year of college when the scholarship is awarded (majoring in communications, journalism, music, or an agriculture-related field).

Visit <https://bit.ly/Greg-Finn> for full details & application!



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11AM-2PM TUESDAY, JUNE 2, 2026
RAIN DATE JUNE 3

ON THE BOSTON COMMON
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MASSACHUSETTS FARM BUREAU




Farm Bureau®
Tri-State Annual Meeting
NEIGHBORS IN THE FIELD
November 12-14, 2026
Worcester, MA

Save the Date

Our first-ever **Tri-State Annual Meeting** with New Hampshire and Connecticut Farm Bureaus will be held at the DCU Center in Worcester **November 12-14, 2026**. More details & registration coming soon. We hope to see you there!

Are you interested in becoming a delegate? Contact your county president!

BERKSHIRE: Bob Kilmer - twriver.bk@gmail.com
BRISTOL: Darrin Mendes - farmingbear.dm@gmail.com
CAPE: David Ross - ccodcran@gmail.com
ESSEX: Devon Smolak - devonsmolak@gmail.com
FRANKLIN: Peter Melnik - melnikfarm@comcast.net
HAMPDEN: Leon Ripley - maplecornerfarm@comcast.net

HAMPSHIRE: Chris Parsons - cparsons917@gmail.com
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NORFOLK: Ed Lawton - nan.law@verizon.net
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- MFBBF Member Classifieds -

STRUCTURAL REPAIR WORK NEEDED: LITTLETON, MA

Seeking qualified contractor for commercial/industrial building repairs on large multi-section structure.



Priority Structural Repairs Required:

- Structural repairs identified by licensed PE assessment
- Wood structural component repairs and reinforcement
- Preventive maintenance for long-term building integrity

Contractor Requirements:

- Licensed and insured
- Experience with large commercial/industrial buildings and multi-section roof systems
- Structural repair expertise (wood frame construction)
- References from similar commercial projects

Project Details:

- Repairs requiring immediate scheduling
- Professional structural assessment report by licensed PE available
- 24,000 sq. ft. livestock auction facility (three connected pole barns)
- Located in Littleton, MA
- Work must accommodate ongoing business operations

Please contact Karen Schwalbe at 508-481-4766 or email Karen@MFBBF.net

FOR SALE:

Land Pride 5-foot brush hog, Model RCF2060. Six years old. Always kept under cover. Brand-new PTO shaft and slip clutch. New blades last year. Asking \$1,495. Contact Steve Petty at 508-259-7137 or smpetty1@gmail.com



WOULD YOU LIKE TO PLACE AN AD WITH US?

PLEASE EMAIL [KIM@MFBBF.NET](mailto:kim@mfbbf.net) OR CALL 508-481-4766

FOR SALE:

Hay 1st and 2nd cutting. 4' x 5' round and small square bales. Call Conway Farms in Lakeville, MA at 508-821-0149.



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FOR SALE:

Veg Veyor Harvesting Conveyor - used but like new, only used for several partial days during fall of 2024. Machine was delivered new in September. 35' right side conveyor. 3-point hitch mounted. Cleated conveyor belt for harvesting round shaped products but can be used on any crop. Machine works great and everything is in perfect working condition. Asking \$10,000. Email Marina at mlewandowski@patterson-farmllc.com or call Donny at 413-774-0009.



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