

**FARM BUREAU
CONGRATULATES
TOM VILSACK ON
CONFIRMATION**
Story On Page 2



**MYTH-BUSTING 8
COMMON BELIEFS
ABOUT COVER CROPS**
Story On Page 7



MASSACHUSETTS FARM BUREAU FEDERATION'S

Vol. 29, No. 2

NEWS & VIEWS

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2021

www.MFBBF.net

MFBBF Legislative Update

By: Brad Mitchell, MFBBF Deputy Executive Director

Massachusetts has a two-year legislative session. The 2019-2020 session ended in early January, with the new 2021-2022 session opening soon thereafter. Below is a list of bills which were signed into law and are of interest to the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation (MFBBF) community, as well as a list of new legislation filed in response to resolutions passed at MFBBF's Delegate Session in December 2020.

2019/2020 Legislation Pertinent to Agriculture which Passed into Law

BOH/Ag Commission – This was a bill filed at MFBBF's request which essentially gives Agricultural Commissions (AC) 45 days to review any Board of Health (BOH) regulation that impacts agriculture before regulation can go into effect. This gives the AC time to review the regulation, collect public input and

provide input to the BOH. The new law does not require the BOH to make changes based on AC input. However, the bill addresses the lack of transparency and process with the promulgation of BOH regulation that has plagued the farming community for some time. Senator Hinds and Representative Blais filed this legislation. It had originally been filed by Representative Kulik, who has retired.

21st Century Farm Resiliency Commission – This bill creates a commission to explore policy issues related to ensuring the viability of farms going into the future. MFBBF staff and leadership worked with Representative Hogan on this bill. It remains to be seen how effective this committee will be. However, it does draw attention to some key challenges

Continued on Page 4

Indulge During Maple Month!



INDEX

Across The Nation

FARM STATE OF MIND: YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO IT ALONE
Page 2

AFBF APPLAUDS CFAP APPLICATION DEADLINE EXTENSION
Page 2

Across The State

NEONICOTINOID VOTE BY MASSACHUSETTS PESTICIDE BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE
Page 3

BAKER-POLITO ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR CONTINUED REOPENING
Page 4

COUNTY VIRTUAL LEGISLATIVE BREAKFASTS
Page 6

YOUNG FARMERS & RANCHERS COMMITTEE HAPPENINGS
Page 7

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Farm State of Mind: You Don't Have to Go It Alone

By: Zippy Duvall, AFBF President

Farming can be stressful, even on the best days. Last March when COVID-19 hit, farmers and ranchers got a big load of stress on top of all the issues in farming we are already used to dealing with. Few of us thought back then that we'd still be in the midst of a global pandemic today. There's an old joke about the light at the end of the tunnel being the train coming at you. It sure can feel that way some days, but I remain hopeful that we will continue to get through these challenges together.

At Farm Bureau, we want farmers and ranchers to know they are not alone when stress takes its toll. When we started focusing our attention on rural stress and mental health more than two years ago, we knew these were important matters on the farm, but we had no idea what was coming. Even without the lost markets and income as a result of the pandemic adding to farmers' stress, we had already been facing trade disruptions, extreme weather events, labor shortages--and the list goes on. It can be hard to admit when everything is not OK, but it makes a world of difference to reach out and share that burden with your friends and family.

In February 2020, Farm Bureau expanded the reach and impact of our work in addressing stress and mental health issues in farming and rural communities with the Farm State of Mind campaign from Bayer. This campaign has given us a broader platform to highlight the importance of good mental health on a national scale. It's so important for farmers, ranchers and everyone in rural communities to understand the sources of stress and be willing to talk about it. Through our Farm State of Mind outreach, we're helping people recognize the warning signs of stress, encouraging conversations, and providing resources to help farm and ranch families and rural communities.

In January, AFBF conducted a national poll to find out how the pandemic is impacting farmers' and ranchers' mental health, and it confirmed the need for support is real. Two in three farmers and



Vincent "Zippy" Duvall, a poultry, cattle and hay producer from Georgia, is the 12th president of the American Farm Bureau Federation.

farm employees said the pandemic has impacted their mental health, and younger rural adults were more likely than older rural adults to say it has impacted their mental health a lot. Farmers and farm employees were more likely than rural adults as a whole to have experienced feeling nervous, anxious or on edge during the pandemic. And the percentage of farmers and farm employees who said social isolation impacts mental health increased 22 percent since our last poll in April 2019, a significant finding given the long hours many work alone on the farm.

As farmers and ranchers, we can be proud of our resilience. We get up every day, do the work that needs to be done, and just keep going no matter what. But sometimes the qualities that make us such good

farmers make it very hard for us to ask for help when we are under too much stress. We've all seen this firsthand, but it doesn't have to be this way. It's OK not to be OK, and you don't have to go it alone.

If you or someone you know is struggling emotionally or has concerns about their mental health, please visit the Farm State of Mind website at farmstateofmind.org where you can find crisis hotlines, treatment locators, tips for helping someone in emotional pain, ways to start a conversation and resources for managing stress, anxiety or depression.

We all know farmers help farmers, and this past year has been no exception. In 2021, let's all resolve to look out even more for our friends, family and neighbors, watch for warning signs of stress we may see in them, and offer a helping hand. No matter what comes our way, there's hope and help in our Farm Bureau family and in our rural communities because we are truly stronger together.

Zippy Duvall
AFBF President

Farm Bureau Congratulates Tom Vilsack On Confirmation

American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall commented on the confirmation of Tom Vilsack as Secretary of Agriculture.

"AFBF congratulates Tom Vilsack on his confirmation as the next Secretary of Agriculture. His strong track record of leadership and previous experience at USDA will serve rural America well.

"Secretary Vilsack and I have spoken several times in recent

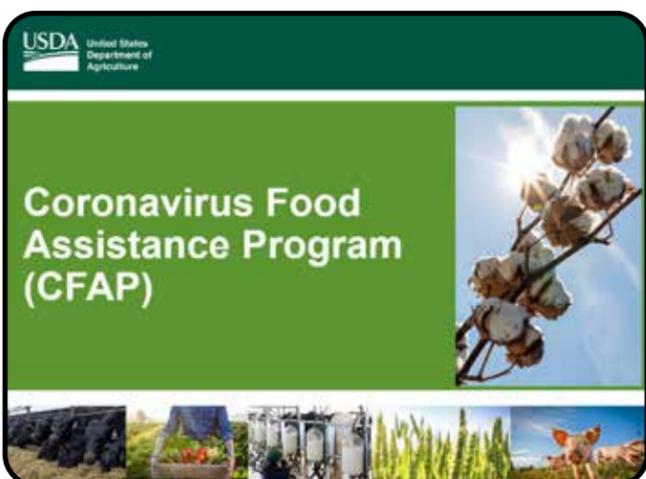
weeks about opportunities and challenges facing America's farmers and ranchers, and I look forward to close collaboration. We have a lot of work to do as we overcome obstacles created by the COVID-19 pandemic. We must commit to resuming CARES Act programs and continue to build on advances made in trade. We must move forward on the successes made in climate-smart practices while seeking partnerships to ensure new environmental policies remain market-based and voluntary.

We also recognize the importance of strengthening the farm bill and bringing broadband to every community in America.

"We stand ready to work with Secretary Vilsack and USDA on issues that benefit this nation's farmers and ranchers – his success means rural America's success."



AFBF Applauds CFAP Application Deadline Extension



American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall commented on USDA's decision to extend the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) application

deadline. AFBF sent a letter to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack requesting an extension for farmers and ranchers.

"AFBF applauds Secretary Vilsack for his swift response to our call for an extension to the CFAP application deadline. Coronavirus aid is a lifeline for farmers and ranchers who are suffering from losses due to the pandemic. Recent severe weather and the

suspension of CFAP payments led to challenges and confusion surrounding the application process. The extra time will help ensure America's farmers have the opportunity to apply for help.

"We encourage USDA to quickly complete its review of CFAP so resources can be distributed to the people who are working to feed families across the country."

Beware Unsolicited Offers, Out-Of-The-Blue Threats

By: Brad Mitchell, MFBF Deputy Executive Director

Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation's (MFBF's) office has received a number of reports from members about what appear to be scams and otherwise somewhat questionable offers. These include:

- We are aware of several instances of farmers having Paycheck Protection Program loans taken out in their names. This is a problem across the country.
- Several farmers have been contacted by those claiming to represent the Internal Revenue Service, stating that they owed taxes on grants and loans which the farmer never took out.
- In a phone scam, folks have been receiving calls from people masquerading as representatives of the Social Security Administration, threatening lawsuits unless a payment is made.

If you suspect you are being targeted for a scam, but are not comfortable ignoring it, contact the organization which has purportedly contacted you. Don't call the number provided in the email or phone call. Rather, contact the main or regional office of the

agency or organization and provide them with the details of the call. They should be able to confirm whether the initial message was from that agency. You may also want to notify your local police department.

In another situation, which falls into the category of "questionable" than a scam, a purported software company has contacted farmers on two projects:

1. A food safety project on which the caller alleges to be "working with Massachusetts legislators on a regulation to enhance food traceability, which is advantageous to both the farmers and consumers." This does not add up. Legislators create laws, not regulations. When MFBF staff checked with legislators the caller's claimed to be working with, staff was told they spoke with people at the organization but were by no means working with them. MFBF is not aware of any such "regulation" to be in the works.

2. The caller's organization is also purportedly conducting an "environment study," which involves the collection of water, soil and



any farm product being sold at the time. They have asked for farms to participate in the study and allow samples to be collected on their farm.

While the companies may appear legitimate, some claims are clearly misleading. It's questionable whether they have any expertise in the farming sector or understanding of food safety.

Farmers should approach allowing the sampling of irrigation water and produce the same way they approach giving out their social security number. Only relevant government agencies should be allowed to

conduct samples, those with whom they really know and trust, or with whom they have a well-defined legal relationship. Like social security numbers, sample results in the wrong hands can cause farms a lot of problems.

If you get a suspicious email or call, you can always feel free to call the MFBF office. We don't have any all-seeing eye but can provide objective advice.

Brad Mitchell
MFBF Deputy Executive Director
brad@mfbf.net

Neonicotinoid Vote By MA Pesticide Board Subcommittee

The Massachusetts Pesticide Board Subcommittee voted on March 1 to restrict the use of neonicotinoid insecticides (neonics) for uses other than agricultural or structural pest control. While this may sound like a loss, it was really a win. The subcommittee vote was the result of a multi-year effort by the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) and partners to ensure that, consistent with standing policy, pesticide regulation remains science-based and in the hands of the subcommittee.

Many concerns have arisen about the impacts of neonics on bees and other pollinating insects. This led to legislation on Beacon Hill, which would have put rather draconian restrictions on neonics, absent any scientific justification for doing so. The legislation, which was driven largely by anti-pesticide advocates and amateur beekeepers, in various iterations would have:

- Restricted all outdoor uses of neonics;
- Required that neonicotinoid treated seeds be limited to certified applicators;
- Prohibited the application of

neonicotinoids on state property;

- Required that applicators applying neonicotinoids on private property inform the owner that these products would be applied and obtain a written acknowledgment that they allowed the application;
- Required that all nursery plants sold, that had been treated with neonicotinoids, be labeled as such.

The science is far from decisive on whether neonics pose any significant risk to pollinator insects. Massachusetts has seen a half-dozen, relatively small bee kills in the last decade related to pesticides. Neonicotinoids were not found to be responsible for any of them. In fact, most were the result of classes of pesticides which are the likely alternative to neonics should they be restricted or taken away. The legislation was not based on any thorough or knowledgeable review of science, but emotion and activist pressure.

From the beginning of the controversy, MFBF supported a scientific review on the potential impacts of neonics on pollinating insects, and any restrictions supported

by science. In fact, MFBF staff and leadership were successful in ensuring the subcommittee was given funding to conduct such a review.

However, MFBF remained adamant that the review and any subsequent changes to the registration of neonics be through the Pesticide Board Subcommittee. This group was created by the legislature through law with the responsibility for ensuring that pesticides used in the Commonwealth do not pose an "unreasonable adverse impact on man or the environment." The subcommittee has a well-established process for conducting a review of pesticides of concern, and based on the results of the review, deciding on its registration status. That is exactly what they did earlier this month.

Pesticides are an emotional topic and there is no shortage organizations who have made it their mission to put any barriers they can to their use. Conversely, they remain an important and necessary tool for farmers and many others. The only rational means to balance to these competing interests is to ensure that pesticide regulation is based on science. While

it is the legislature's job to design the process for doing so – and they did that by creating the Pesticide Board Subcommittee.

To use a drug analogy - Congress created the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to oversee drug safety. If a concern arises with the side effects of heart medication – FDA acts through the authority and processes created by Congress. Congress does not regulate drugs. The same relationship should exist between the Massachusetts legislature and the Pesticide Board Subcommittee when concerns arise with pesticides.

Please note legislation has been filed which would implement all the proposed restrictions of previous neonic legislation. SD 207 – An act protecting pollinators from harmful products was filed by Senator Eldridge, and HD 1267 has been filed by Representative Dykema. The deadline for filing legislation was before the subcommittee decision, so hopefully these bills will be withdrawn by the sponsor or killed in committee. However, the need to advocate for science-based pesticide regulation continues.

MFBF Recognized For Excellence In Innovation

The Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) was honored at American Farm Bureau Federation's (AFBF's) virtual convention with the New Horizon Award. This annual award recognizes Farm Bureaus that implement new, innovative programs.

"Martha's Vineyard Farm Bureau became our twelfth county Farm Bureau and this addition qualified us for AFBF's New Horizon Award," said MFBF President Mark Amato. "We are proud of the work both staff and volunteers put into successfully developing a new County Farm Bureau in the Commonwealth."

By adding Martha's Vineyard Farm Bureau, MFBF is now comprised of 12 county Farm Bureaus with nearly 6,000 members. Previously, this county was part of the Cape and Islands County Farm Bureau.

"It is tough to have farmers take the ferry for meetings on the mainland,"

said Dan Martino in a previous press release. Martino serves as president of the Martha's Vineyard Farm Bureau. "But that is not the only reason for forming a new county. Farmers on Martha's Vineyard and the other islands that make up Dukes County face diverse and unique challenges

Continued on Page 8

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News and Views is published six times a year, by Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation. Subscription comes with membership. It is received in the homes of almost 6,000 MFBF members.

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

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MFBF Legislative Update

Continued From Page 1

the farming community has been facing and will continue to face, including labor and on-farm energy production. Representative Hogan was the primary sponsor of this bill.

Housing – The Economic Development bill signed by the governor does contain provisions to lower threshold for voting in several types of zoning changes from 2/3 to a simple majority. This includes Natural Resource Protection Zoning which can sometimes negatively impact values of farm properties. MFBF and others have opposed this as it weakens the voice of landowners at most town meetings. However, this was a priority for the governor and several key legislators. The farming community will have to make it more of a priority to make a larger showing at planning board and town meetings where this is considered.

Rural Growth Fund – The Economic Development bill also contained provisions of a bill MFBF has long supported having to do with rural development and access to capital in rural areas (the latter being the focus of a long-standing MFBF resolution). In short, the new program is based on both USDA’s Rural Business Investment Program and the Small Business Administration’s (SBA’s) Small Business Investment Company. It offers tax credits for rural investment which are rescinded if stated milestones are not met. Investments are channeled through a fund run through the Massachusetts Office of Business Development. It is anticipated to attract \$100 million in investments in 24 months and committed to rural Massachusetts for six years.

New Legislation Filed/To Be Filed

Slaughter – MFBF is filing a bill to give Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) the authority to enter into a cooperative agreement with USDA to take on the oversight of select inspected slaughter facilities. The intention is to offer an alternative that could lower the cost and barriers to creating new slaughter facilities. Two bills have been filed SD2473 - An act to promote domestic meat and poultry production by Senator Tarr, and SD1705 - An act relative to in-state meat inspection programs by Senator Gobi.

Constitutional Amendment Regarding Chapter 61a – MFBF and others have previously attempted to reduce the 5-acre threshold for qualifying for 61a. There is a significant dispute among House and Senate counsel (and others) as to whether



this is allowed under the state constitution. As such, MFBF has taken the lead and is working with Representative Schmid to change the state constitution. This is a long and difficult process. The bill is HD3316 - An act amending article 99 of the Massachusetts constitution.

Definition of Agritourism – Last session, MFBF legislation created an agritourism task force. This group, which includes a MFBF representative has been meeting for several months. Senator Kennedy has filed SD1325 which defines agritourism as “an agriculturally related educational, entertainment, historical, cultural, or recreational activity, including you-pick operations or farm markets, conducted on a farm that allows or invites members of the general public to observe, participate in, experience, or enjoy that activity.” The definition is being viewed as the first step in addressing several ongoing issues with agritourism, especially a lack of clarity on how agritourism activities fall into local zoning jurisdiction.

MFBF will also be refiling most of those bills filed last session which did not pass. It typically takes several sessions for a bill to pass into law. Whether a refile, or a new bill, the single most important factor influencing the passage of a bill is how many people advocate for it, and how well they do it. MFBF has a long history of successfully passing bills which support agriculture and fighting back those which would harm it. Our success is based largely on members speaking up and offering their voices at legislative breakfasts, Ag Day and/or directly to legislators. Keep an eye out for email alerts and articles. The success of agriculture in the Commonwealth relies on the voice of farmers.

Brad Mitchell
MFBF Deputy Executive Director
brad@mfbf.net

Baker-Polito Administration Announces Plans for Continued Reopening

The Baker-Polito Administration announced that Massachusetts would advance to Step 1 of Phase IV on Monday, March 22.

Gathering Changes and Phase IV Start

Provided public health metrics continue to improve, effective on March 22, all communities in Massachusetts will move into Step 1 of Phase IV of the state’s reopening plan. This will open a range of previously closed business sectors under tight capacity restrictions that are expected to be adjusted over time if favorable trends in the public health data continue. Effective on the planned advancement to Step 1 of Phase IV, the following industries will be permitted to operate at a strict 12% capacity limit after submitting a plan to the Department of Public Health (DPH), including

indoor and outdoor stadiums; arenas; and ballparks.

Also effective on March 22, gathering limits for event venues and in public settings will increase to 100 people indoors and 150 people outdoors. Outdoor gatherings at private residences and in private backyards will remain at a maximum of 25 people, with indoor house gatherings remaining at 10 people.

Additionally, dance floors will be permitted at weddings and other events only, and overnight summer camps will be allowed to operate this coming summer. Exhibition and convention halls may also begin to operate, following gathering limits and event protocols. Other Phase IV sectors must continue to remain closed.

Deadline to Purchase Federal Crop Insurance/NAP Coverage - March 15, 2021

Recent growing seasons have seen hail, drought, excess moisture and freeze occur across Massachusetts. If you're concerned with extreme weather events and the impact they can have on your farm, you should consider purchasing some level of coverage on your insurable crops. The deadline to purchase coverage for spring-seeded crops and the Whole Farm Revenue Program is **March 15, 2021.**

Individual Crop Policies:

Growers can purchase Federal Crop Insurance on **corn (silage/grain), fresh market sweet corn, potatoes, soybeans and cigar binder tobacco.** Availability to purchase coverage on potatoes is limited to Franklin and Hampshire Counties; for soybeans to Hampden, Hampshire & Worcester Counties; and for cigar binder tobacco

to Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire Counties. These are yield-based policies and are based on a producer's historical crop yields.

Whole Farm Revenue Program:

WFRP provides growers with revenue protection from weather related or market losses rather than yield based policies and are based on a five-year revenue history (in some instances as long as a producer has 3 years of records they may purchase a WFRP policy)

Individual crop policies and the WFRP policy are sold through private Federal Crop Insurance Agents. Use the following link to contact an agent: <https://www.rma.usda.gov/Information-Tools/Agent-Locator-Page>

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP):

NAP is available on all annual crops not insured by Federal Crop Insurance. NAP offers Catastrophic (CAT) Coverage which ensures 50 percent of your actual production history of the crop and any losses are paid out at 55 percent of the approved market price for the crop. "Buy-Up" coverage is also available under NAP. Producers can cover between 50 - 65 percent of their actual production history and losses are paid out at 100 percent of the approved market price for the crop. Under CAT, producers pay an administrative fee and for "Buy-Up" coverage, producers pay an administrative fee and a premium based upon the coverage level selected. Beginning, historically underserved, and limited resource famers receive a waiver of the NAP

administrative fee and receive a 50 percent reduction on the "Buy-Up" premium. Check with your local USDA - Farm Service Agency (FSA) Office, which administers NAP for more details. March 15, 2021 is the deadline to purchase NAP coverage for all 2020 Spring-seeded crops.

This is material is based upon work supported by USDA/NIFA under Award Number 2018-70027-28588. UMass Extension works in partnership with the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture and the Northeast Extension Risk Management Education Center to educate Massachusetts producers about Federal Crop Insurance and USDA Disaster Assistance Programs. For more information, please contact UMass Risk Management Specialists Paul Russell at prrussell@umass.edu or Tom Smiarowski at tsmiarowski@umass.edu

Serious Cybersecurity REAL ID Text Scams Directed at Customers Reported by the American Association of Motor Vehicles (AAMVA)

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) wants to remind you the agency would never request personal information via text messaging. The American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA), is reporting several states have experienced customers receiving unsolicited text messages from numbers claiming to be other state government agencies

with links or information about REAL ID and updating their licenses. These messages are SPAM -- customers should not click on the link and should DELETE the message.

The RMV will never request personal information via a text message. We take the privacy of our customers and their personal information very seriously.

Massachusetts is NOT among the states impacted by this scam (at this time). Sharing this information with you is critical in our partnership to keep customer information safe and secure every day.

Should you experience or hear from customers regarding this or any other associated scam related to RMV services, please report them to the

FBI's Scam and Safety Office at 857-386-2000.

Starting on Oct. 1, 2021, you must have a REAL ID or another federally compliant document to fly domestically. Go to Massachusetts RMV's website to learn more about the required documents to obtain a REAL ID.

Bristol County Farm Bureau Bylaw Recommended Change

Attention Bristol County Farm Bureau Members,
Please be advised the Bristol County Board of Directors recommend the following changes to their county bylaws:

Current Bristol County Bylaw:
Article V, Section 3, Quorum: Seven (7) members of Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of all business of this County Farm Bureau. A minority of members of the Board present at any meeting may, in the absence of a quorum, adjourn to a later date.

Proposed Change:
Article V, Section 3, Quorum: Quorum for a Bristol County Board of Directors meeting shall be five (5) Bristol County Directors who are paid and in good standing and who are present during the meeting (In person, via telephone, or virtually).

Current Bristol County Bylaw:
Article IV, Section 5, Quorum: Thirty (30) voting members in good standing shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any and all business at any Annual or Special Meeting. A favorable vote of a majority of such members present in a quorum shall be necessary for the determination of any matter except that any lesser number of such members make a motion of adjournment.

Proposed Change:
Article IV, section 5, Quorum: Quorum for a Bristol County Annual or Special Meeting shall be one more than half the number of voting members whose dues have been paid and who are otherwise in good standing and present during the meeting (in person, by telephone or virtually).

These amendments will allow the county to conduct business with a reduced quorum at our annual meeting. The new bylaws will also be more consistent with other counties.

A special meeting will be conducted virtually (see meeting information below) on April 8, 2021. If you have any questions or comments between now and April 8th please contact Darrin Mendes 508-958-5493 or dtm777@comcast.net. If you are a regular member in good standing and wish to vote via ballot before the meeting, please cut out the below ballot, mark your response and mail it to: Darrin Mendes, 358 Slades Corner Rd, Dartmouth, MA 02748.

MAIL-IN BALLOT For Bristol Members Only (please check only one below)

- YES, I vote to make these changes to Bristol County Farm Bureau's Bylaws
- NO, I vote to NOT make these changes to Bristol County Farm Bureau's Bylaws

County Virtual Legislative Breakfasts

Friday, March

19
at 8:00 A.M.

Essex County Farm Bureau's Virtual Legislative Breakfast

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83637583941?pwd=aGJRSHJJODRRdUIEcXJSYjhtZGVYUT09>

Meeting ID: 836 3758 3941
Passcode: 000285
One tap mobile
+13017158592,,83637583941#,,,,*000285# US (Washington DC))

Friday, March

26
at 9:00 A.M.

Bristol County Farm Bureau's Virtual Legislative Breakfast

Join the Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85711129326?pwd=YINvNIIMNG40NGVaZVQreVhYQXkwdz09>

Meeting ID: 857 1112 9326
Passcode: 396405
One tap mobile
+13017158592,,85711129326#,,,,*396405# US (Washington DC)

Friday, April

2
at 8:00 A.M.

Worcester County Farm Bureau's Virtual Legislative Breakfast

Join the Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84310361942?pwd=b1YxTTBDN2hGcExvK3JwakFhU3FpUT09>

Meeting ID: 843 1036 1942
Passcode: 448735
One tap mobile
+16465588656,,84310361942#,,,,*448735# US (New York)

Friday, April

9
at 8:30 A.M.

Plymouth County Farm Bureau's Virtual Legislative Breakfast

Join the Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81838945459?pwd=ZTFJTGxXcGwxbWpwNHFrWHVZVkrNQT09>

Meeting ID: 818 3894 5459
Passcode: 187509
One tap mobile
+16465588656,,81838945459#,,,,*187509# US (New York)

Friday, April

16
at 7:30 A.M.

Norfolk County Farm Bureau's Virtual Legislative Breakfast

Join the Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85683976101?pwd=NVhrNU55ZU9DYzhRWUJldC9DSGUzd09>

Meeting ID: 856 8397 6101
Passcode: 956062
One tap mobile
+13017158592,,85683976101#,,,,*956062#

The World Wants U.S. Dairy

The false-but-pernicious idea that dairy is dying has already been laid to rest multiple times. Per-capita consumption of all dairy is its highest since the 1950s. Even fluid-milk purchases (the dairy opponents' cherry-picked data of choice) rose at grocery stores last year, as consumers sought out what they needed most during a time of higher stress.

But even all that analysis fails to point out another, increasingly important fact crucial to understanding U.S. dairy's true importance: More than ever, it's not just Americans seeking

out these high-quality, high-nutrition products. U.S. dairy increasingly nourishes the world, with 2020 the most emphatic illustration of that point.

Last year, total milk solids exports (the measurement accommodates for the different types of products milk's made into) topped 2 million metric tons for the first time, reaching 2.086 million, based on government data crunched



by the U.S. Dairy Export Council. Revenues were the highest since 2014.

And the percentage of U.S. milk production that's shipped to other countries increased to 16 percent, showing just how important exports are becoming for U.S. dairy producers – and the consumers around the world who rely on them. These gains will only continue, given

the markets that most crave U.S. dairy. Of those exports, 27 percent were to Southeast Asian markets, 21 percent went to Mexico and 15 percent to China – all areas with growing populations, along with the growing wealth that correlates with greater demand for the high-quality proteins and nutrients that dairy provides.

As the world's leader in dairy greenhouse-gas reductions and as a trailblazer in animal-care practices, U.S. dairy farmers play an increasingly vital role in sustainably providing nutrition well beyond its borders. The world's consumers are taking notice.

Remembering Farm Bureau Members Who Have Passed

- **Stephen L. Root**, 93, formerly of Root Orchards in Great Barrington, MA passed away peacefully with family by his side on Dec. 22, 2020. To read his full obituary, please visit: <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/berkshire/obituary.aspx?n=stephen-l-root&pid=197380843>.
- **Ralph J. Rotondo Jr**, 88, of Lee, passed away peacefully at Berkshire Medical Center on Jan. 7. To read his full obituary, please visit: https://theberkshireedge.com/ralph-rotondo-88-of-lee-farrier-and-renowned-trainer-of-belgian-horses/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=ralph-rotondo-88-of-lee-farrier-and-renowned-trainer-of-belgian-horses

Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee Happenings



Learn more about YF&R at www.MFBF.net!

Or follow us on social media - Facebook: @MAFarmBureauYFR &

Instagram: @MAFYYoungFamers.

A Message From MFBF's YF&R Chair Heather Bonanno-Baker

Happy March! This has been a crazy start to my season, but everything is finally coming together. Last year was a crazy year for all of us, I am sure. Hopefully, we can keep up the retail business that we saw spikes in.

Christina Saccone (MFBF's YF&R vice chair) and I have been focusing our attention on revamping our social media presence. We want to get our organization out there with the hopes of attracting new members. This month, YF&R's social media channels will be focusing on maple. We are currently looking for maple producers to send us photos and facts we can focus on our pages. If anyone is interested, we are also looking for some short videos on

maple production. We can also come out and shoot a video if that is easier. Please email me if you are willing to participate.

Last month, I contacted the other state YF&R chairs from New England. We are coming together to work on some projects that will benefit all of our organizations. With this connection, we hope to contribute ideas and hold events together in the future. New England is so small, and most of us do business in multiple states, so it is nice to be building relationships with our neighboring states.

American Farm Bureau Federation's (AFBF's) Young Farmers and Rancher committee in conjunction with

their Promotion and Education and Women's committees is holding their biennial FUSION conference virtually this year. With the event going virtual – anyone can attend, including non-members. It is free to sign up, and I encourage you to log on if you have the time. It is always a great experience and the knowledgeable speakers and sessions help us with our businesses.

I again want to thank you all for allowing me to serve as your YF&R state chair. Please email me with any maple facts, photos or video, or if you know someone interested in being a part of our group!

Thanks!

Heather Bonanno-Baker
heatherbonanno@gmail.com

If anyone is interested in hosting a virtual tour of their farm or joining the YF&R committee, please email Heather at heatherbonanno@gmail.com.

Myth-Busting 8 Common Beliefs About Cover Crops

Myths surrounding cover crops typically fall into one of two camps. The first camp is that of detriment, with concerns about available moisture being sucked up in a drought prone area or fear that cash crop yields will be hurt. The second is misplaced expectations – placing cover crops on a pedestal as the Holy Grail to simultaneously fix every production woe.

Below, Rob Myers, Director of the Center for Regenerative Agriculture at University of Missouri, and Jerry Hall, Director of Research for GO SEED, bust eight common cover crop myths.

1. There will be interference with cash crop production

"This is the most common myth out there. Understandably, farmers have a lot of acres to plant in the spring and need to do it when the weather window is right," explains Myers. From data collected in the 2019-2020 National Cover Crop Survey, conducted by the non-profit Conservation Technology Information Center, farmers utilizing cover crops were found to often plant earlier following a cover crop due to an improvement in field conditions. This was evident in 2019 when 19 million acres were not able to be planted due to an oversaturated spring. Farmers that were planting green into a standing cover crop reported that they were often able to get into the

field when their neighbors practicing conventional tillage were not. Sometimes the difference is just a few days, but every day counts in a busy spring planting season.

"Cover crops are very beneficial in building soil structure and internal drainage systems that help deal with heavy rainfall. The cover crops root systems create channels for precipitation to flow deeper into the soil, minimizing run-off," adds Myers. However, making sure a cover crop doesn't interfere with cash crop production does come with consideration. If cover crop termination is timed wrong, planting can be delayed due to the decaying cover crops creating a wet mat across fields – termination timing is especially important to get right if the cover crop was high in biomass. First time users of cover crops may want to experiment with planting green on a modest acreage before making it a common practice.

2. Cash crop yields will take a hit

In a business running on tight margins, farmers looking to integrate cover crops into their systems are right to be concerned about the impact they can have on yield. The myth about cash crops seeing a reduction in yield following cover crops typically stems from issues seen when a monoculture of cereal rye is used before corn.

"A monoculture of cereal rye has a high carbon to nitrogen ratio (C:N). As a result, the microbes in the soil will utilize the nitrogen applied during the sowing of corn so that it can break down the high C:N organic material from the cereal rye. The microbes will tie up nitrogen in the soil that the corn needs early on and the corn yield can suffer as result. To avoid yield losses in corn following cereal rye, be sure to provide extra nitrogen at the time of planting corn or sow other species with the cereal rye that have a lower C:N ration, such as clovers, peas, or vetch," says Hall. "Terminating the rye early can also help avoid nitrogen tie-up issues and potential yield loss as the C:N ratio will increase as the plant matures and the percent lignin increases."

Aside from adjusting nitrogen applications in a case like this, yield reductions can also be avoided by simply matching the cover crop life cycle and nutrient output to the cash crop.

"For example, soybean crops will benefit from nitrogen later in the growing season. If the soybean is following a high C:N cover crop such as rye the soybean plant will respond by forming a more robust root system and form greater nodulation and associations with rhizobia. This typically results in a small yield bump following cereal rye, with the yield difference increasing over a period

of years as soil health and rhizobia population in the soil improves," explains Hall. "As a rule of thumb, high C:N covers before legumes and low C:N covers should precede grains."

More importantly, don't throw the baby out with the bathwater over this myth and keep the overall production picture in mind. According to Myers, taking a more holistic approach will not only allow input efficiency in the short term, but our data shows that it will improve productivity in the long term due to soil health improvements.

"Don't expect miracles, but a 3-5 percent increase in yield after a few years of strategic cover crop use is not out of the question. Bigger yield benefits from cover crops will likely be seen in dry years and sometimes in excessively wet years, as cover crops improve the resiliency of the cropping system through soil improvements," says Myers.

3. Water availability will be reduced for the subsequent crop

Decades ago, there were huge concerns about cover crops sucking up too much ground moisture, reducing availability for the subsequent cash crop. According to Myers, the improvements that cover crops contribute to soil resiliency make this concern no longer relevant

Continued on Page 8

Do You Have An Internship Opportunity?

The UMass Stockbridge School of Agriculture requires an internship for students to graduate. To connect students with internship and job opportunities, the school has created a job board that students use to identify and apply for these jobs. If you have an opportunity, you can submit it online to their website: <https://stockbridge.cns.umass.edu/node/add/career-opportunity>.

Myth-Busting 8 Common Beliefs About Cover Crops

Continued From Page 7

for most producers. Diverse root structures will aid in water and nutrient circulation while helping soils drain. Higher levels of organic matter will also serve as a sponge to lock moisture into the soil.

"While the benefits are many, producers in areas with low annual rainfall or regular extended dry spells do need to manage cover crops based on weather patterns to ensure moisture availability is not an issue for the following crop," explains Myers. "For example, if an area is heading into a dry spring, then it is best to terminate the cover crop early to ensure adequate soil availability ahead of planting. If weather conditions are going to be more saturated, then the cover crop can be allowed to keep growing longer and can help reduce excess soil moisture."

"With that being said, it is a smart practice for any producer in any part of the country to pay attention to weather when forming a cover crop termination strategy."

4. New pests will be introduced

With the introduction of new species in a field, comes the concern of attracting new pests. In certain regions, slugs are at the top of the list due to residues giving them an ideal environment but adopting different management strategies will help mitigate this. If a cover crop is terminated well ahead of planting and biomass disintegrates, slugs will likely go after the emerging cash crop.

"If termination happens at planting or shortly after, slugs will typically remain on the cover crop and damage to the emerging plants will be significantly reduced," adds Myers. "Adjusting use of insecticide seed treatments can also allow for more ground beetles that are the natural control agent for slugs." Another pest that draws concern is voles. Their presence varies from county to county and even farm to farm, but increased residues from cover crops or no-till can cause a surge in population.

"Fieldwork is finding that planting things like crimson clover and brassicas tend to be less attractive to voles than the likes of winter cereals such as cereal rye. Another helpful tactic for thinning out the population is to encourage birds of prey to the

area by providing field edge perches," says Myers.

Perhaps the biggest concern regarding pests is the "green bridge." The idea of a green bridge is that some insect or disease pests may feed on the cover crop and then move from the cover crop to attacking the emerging cash crop. While researchers are still studying how much of a problem this is, early indications show that there is less of an issue with insects jumping from the cover crop to a newly emerging crop if termination happens shortly after or immediately before planting the cash crop.

5. Soil temperatures will remain too cold

According to Myers, this myth originated from issues northern farmers were having when first starting no-tilling and soil temperatures were slow to warm up in the spring which eventually led to the adoption of strip-tilling in cooler regions.

While dead crop residue in a no-till system can keep soil temperatures cooler in spring, it is a different ball game once cover crops are introduced. Having a living and growing crop in the ground creates a respiration system that generates energy. The extra energy in the living cover crop system and active soil microbial system usually leads to soils that are comparable in temperature to tilled fields and warmer than no-till fields with no cover crops.

6. Pollinators will be fed

Any cover crop can provide habitat for pollinator insects, but for pollinators to have food, they need cover crops that are allowed to reach the flowering stage. In the past, many cover crops were terminated before flowering. More recently, as farmers see the benefits of letting cover crops grow longer, some cover crops are at least briefly reaching the flowering stage before termination.

"Cover crop maturity is only part of the equation. To best support a thriving habitat for pollinators, we also need to provide more biodiversity. Sometimes that is possible to do with field borders, but it will be more effective if carried throughout the entire field,"

says Myers.

To do this, he recommends planting a small grain with a multi-species cover crop "cocktail" that can provide pollen sources through the summer and into the fall. Such diverse blends of cover crops, if planned well with some high biomass species, can also help speed up the process of soil health improvements.

7. Seed is too expensive

In 2012, the National Cover Crop Survey found cover crop seed to cost between \$20-40 per acre with a median of \$25 per acre. As time has gone on and management practices have improved, farmers have significantly economized through more efficient application and drilling. In the most recent survey, cover crop seed cost is now running between \$15-20 per acre on average. Some producers get costs down to as low as \$10 per acre.

"When looking to cut costs, it is important to note that it does pay to buy quality seed that has been tested for germination and purity, and that comes from genetics proven to perform – otherwise, a cover crop is set up to fail before it is even in the ground," says Hall. "It is also important to look at seed counts per pound of seed. Sometimes there can be large variations within a species, by adjusting your seeding rate to reflect the seeds per pound you can save a substantial amount of money per acre."

According to Myers, there is currently more money than ever before in government programs that provide cover crop incentive payments, so producers looking to reduce seed costs should also reach out to the NRCS and state programs for available opportunities.

"It's important not to solely focus on



seed costs. As mentioned before, over time cover crops will improve the soil and really start to pay for themselves. A national USDA-SARE report on cover crop economics found that cover crops typically break even in profit for corn and soybeans within three years of use, providing a net profit for years afterward," adds Myers. "Some practices, such as using cover crops to help with herbicide-resistant weeds, deal with compaction, or for livestock grazing can speed up the profit return. Because of the long-term gains to profitability, most farmers who give cover crop a fair trial for a few years swear they will never go without them due to the positive returns that occur with time."

8. They are the silver bullet

When implemented strategically, cover crops can build organic matter, improve soil structure, combat erosion and compaction issues, fix notable amounts of nitrogen, increase water holding capability... and the list goes on. But here's the catch-22, cover crops cannot fix production issues overnight, and some cover crops are better than others for certain objectives such as weed control or nutrient management.

"Instead of being a silver bullet that completely fixes a single problem, cover crop's function more like a silver shotgun providing broad coverage to gradually improve cropping system challenges," concludes Myers. "It is best if they are used with specific goals in mind. Addressing field challenges with cover crops is going to take time, patience and strategy."




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MFBF Recognized For Excellence In Innovation

Continued From Page 3

and opportunities. Examples include the variety of agricultural practices, geographic isolation, elevated real estate values, finite agricultural lands, the seasonal population influx from tourism and the community desire for agricultural self-sufficiency. For these reasons, the time was right to begin

a new chapter, leveraging our strong agricultural community, with focused plans and defined solutions."

This county Farm Bureau joins 2,800 county Farm Bureaus nationwide and will be a valuable asset to MFBB moving forward.

Clean Eating: Good News From A Recent USDA Survey

By Chelsea McGuire, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations

In late October, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service released its 2019 Pesticide Data Program summary. The PDP is an ongoing program wherein USDA conducts tests of common commodities to determine to what extent that food may expose a consumer to pesticides. The PDP is a source of high-quality data that represents a national snapshot of the safety of our food supply. And once again, we learned some very good news.

For calendar year 2019, nearly 99 percent of the commodities tested in the PDP survey had residues below the allowable EPA tolerances for those substances. That means that 99% of the food examined by USDA has either no pesticide residue or had minimal levels of residue that fell well within or below the EPA's tolerance levels for any given pesticide product. Only 1.25 percent of the samples tested had residue levels exceeding the tolerance. About 45.2 percent of the samples had no detectable residue at all.

In case you're wondering how reliable the information is, or how decisions are made about what to test, here are



a few things to know about how the study is conducted:

- USDA partners with 10 states, including Washington, California, Texas, Florida and New York, which represent about 50% of the U.S. population, and are major producers of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- The collection seeks to replicate how a consumer would handle and consume the food. The produce is rinsed under cold water before testing, but nothing else is done to clean or alter the product.
- The commodities selected are based on what data EPA needs at the time, as well as which commodities are most likely to be consumed by infants and children. Fresh and processed fruits and vegetables tested during 2019 were asparagus, bananas, basil, cabbage, cantaloupe, cauliflower, cilantro, collard greens, garbanzo beans (dried), hot peppers, kiwi fruit, mustard greens, oats (grain), orange juice, radishes, rice, spinach (canned and frozen), strawberries (frozen), sweet bell peppers, sweet peas (canned and frozen), tangerines and tomato paste.

PDP data is helpful for many reasons. It is not used as enforcement data for pesticide tolerance limits – that's the Food and Drug Administration's job, not USDA's. Nevertheless, the data is helpful to let EPA know if there are particular chemical products that are commonly exceeding their residue limits. But I think that perhaps the most important use of the information is to reassure all consumers that our modern-day food supply is incredibly, remarkably safe.

Lists like "The Dirty Dozen" or click-bait articles telling you "How to Avoid Eating Pesticides" would have American consumers believe that they're feeding their families chemical-soaked science experiments. By contrast, this science-based, unbiased, and meticulous study can help all of us feel confident in the food purchasing decisions we make. Consumers deserve to know that their food is wholesome and safe. Thanks to PDP, we can say with confidence that all eating is "clean" eating.

For the full survey results, visit <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/2019PDPAnnualSummary.pdf>.

USDA Ready To Assist Farmers Affected By Winter Storms

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reminds rural communities, farmers and ranchers, families and small businesses affected by the recent winter storms that USDA has programs that provide assistance. USDA staff in the regional, state and county offices are prepared with a variety of program flexibilities and other assistance to residents, agricultural producers and impacted communities.

"USDA is committed to getting help to producers and rural Americans impacted by the severe weather in many parts of the country. As severe weather and natural disasters continue to threaten the livelihoods of thousands of our farming families, we want you and your communities to know that USDA stands with you," said Kevin Shea, acting Secretary of Agriculture. "Visit farmers.gov or your local USDA Service Center to inquire about assistance."

Risk management and disaster assistance for agricultural operations:

USDA offers several risk management and disaster assistance options to help producers recover after they are impacted by severe weather, including those impacted by winter storms and extreme cold.

Even before disasters strike, USDA provides tools for producers to manage their risk through the Federal Crop Insurance Program, a public-private partnership between USDA's Risk Management Agency and private companies and agents. For crops that do not have crop insurance available, the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) is available

through the local Farm Service Agency. This risk protection includes crop production loss and tree loss for certain crop insurance products. It is recommended that producers reach out to their crop insurance agent or local FSA office for more information.

Producers that signed up for Federal Crop Insurance or NAP who suffer losses are asked to report crop damage to their crop insurance agent or local FSA office, respectively, within 72 hours of damage discovery and follow up in writing within 15 days.

Livestock and perennial crop producers often have more limited risk management options available, so there are several disaster programs for them. Key programs include:

- The Livestock Indemnity Program and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee and Farm-raised Fish Program reimburses producers for a portion of the value of livestock, poultry and other animals that were killed or severely injured by a natural disaster or loss of feed.
- The Tree Assistance Program provides cost share assistance to rehabilitate or replant and clean-up damage to orchards and vineyards that kill or damage the tree, vines or shrubs. NAP or Federal Crop Insurance often only covers the crop and not the plant.

USDA reminds producers that it's critical to keep accurate records to document the losses and illnesses following this devastating cold weather event. Livestock producers are advised to document beginning livestock numbers by taking photos or videos of any losses.

Other common documentation options include:

- Purchase records
- Production records
- Vaccination records
- Bank or other loan documents
- Third-party certification

Additionally, USDA can provide financial resources through its Environmental Quality Incentives Program to help with immediate needs and long-term support to help recover from natural disasters and conserve water resources. Assistance may also be available for emergency

Continued on Page 11

Attention Farmers

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Blood Farm

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West Groton, MA 01472
978-448-6669

Products & Services: We are a 7 generation, family run, slaughter and processing facility.

Cape Ann Tree Service

Ten Fernwood Lake Ave.
Gloucester MA 01930
978-768-7700

capeanntree.com
capeanntree@gmail.com

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Chickadee Hill Farm

Services

Jeffrey Head
366 Central St
Rowley, MA 01969
chickadeehillfarmservices@hotmail.com
978-948-8620

chickadeehillfarmservices.com
Products & Services: firewood, screened loam and compost, mulch, wood chips, lawn mowing and landscaping, pumpkins, Christmas trees and vegetables.

Clearway Energy

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Marlborough MA 01752-5143
(480) 521-1513
daniel.barber@clearwayenergy.com

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easternsolarservices@hotmail.com
Products & Services: Serving the solar industry for 40 years. Service, maintenance, training and repair of existing solar systems.

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franklinagway.com
franklinurbanfarmstore@gmail.com

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Harness / Horseman's Association of New England

POB 1811
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508-918-8852

www.hhane.com
president@hhane.com

Products & Services: We are a non-profit membership association for harness horsemen and women. We promote harness racing both in Massachusetts and nationally.

Hyperion Systems, LLC

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Conway, MA 01341
413-369-4731

http://www.mnla.com/
mnlaoffice@aol.com

Products & Services: MNLA is a statewide association dedicated to advancing the interests of "green industry" professionals.

Meatworks

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Westport, MA 02790
774-319-5616

Products & Services: An animal-welfare focused slaughter & processing facility for Southern New England

Mulch By The Yard

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doug.pope@popeenergy.com

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Info@ProgressiveGrower.com

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SEMAP, Inc.

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www.semaponline.org
kschwalbe@semaponline.org

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East Falmouth, MA 02536
508-548-5288

www.soaresflowergardennursery.com
soaresfgn@gmail.com

Products & Services: retail greenhouse featuring locally grown annuals, perennials, vegetables and herbs and shrubs, as well as a landscape design, build and maintenance firm.

Sprague Energy

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dbogan@spragueenergy.com

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info@thebig.com

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themaneplace.com
linda@themaneplace.com

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World Farmers Inc.

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978-706-7935

http://www.worldfarmers.org/
info@worldfarmers.org

Products & Services: education, beginning farmers and ranchers.

Due to space limitations, products and services listings will be limited to 20 words or less.

Mark Your Calendars For Trivia Night: April 19, 2021 at 7 P.M. On Facebook!

The Promotion and Education Committee, 4-H and Dr. Weston Brown are hosting a virtual trivia night! Come test your knowledge of agriculture...from the comfort of your own home (on Facebook)!

There will be 4 rounds of 10 question each, all relating to agriculture. The live video will start at 6:45 p.m. to give everyone a chance to get situated. We're going to start asking questions at 7:00 p.m. There will be a link to a google form that will be the answer sheet. The questions will be read aloud and presented on the screen, and you can answer on the google doc. At the end of the round, submit the sheet and it will be graded. Once you submit your answer sheet, click "Submit a new response" at the bottom of the page, and a new answer sheet will be generated for the next round. Dr. Brown will be keeping track of points and will announce the standings between each round, and the winners at the end.

Please keep team names the same each round!

A computer would be the best way to participate in this event!

We look forward to seeing you there!



USDA Ready To Assist Farmers Affected By Winter Storms

Continued From Page 9

animal mortality disposal from natural disasters and other causes.

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) also has a variety of loans available including emergency loans that are triggered by disaster declarations and operating loans that can assist producers with credit needs.

Ensure food safety:

USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is helping ensure affected households and communities are taking the proper steps to reduce the risk of foodborne illness during severe weather and power outages. Food safety tips for before, during and after a weather emergency are available on the FSIS website.

During a power outage, a refrigerator will keep food safely cold for about 4 hours if it is unopened, and a full freezer will hold a safe temperature

for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full and the door remains closed). During a snowstorm, do not place perishable food out in the snow. Outside temperatures can vary and food can be exposed to unsanitary conditions and animals.

Care for livestock and pets:

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is helping to meet the emergency needs of pets and their owners, as inspectors coordinate closely with zoos, breeders and other licensed facilities to ensure animals in their care remain safe.

On the livestock front, APHIS veterinarians are ready to work alongside partners to conduct on-site assessments to document the needs of affected producers. More information about protecting livestock is available on APHIS' Protecting Livestock During a Disaster

page. Information about protecting household pets and service animals can be found on APHIS' Animal Care Emergency Programs webpage. APHIS has additional staff on stand-by to provide support should the situation escalate in severity or the number of affected livestock operations increase. Should it be necessary, APHIS has the expertise to assist with carcass removal and disposal as well.

APHIS' Animal Care (AC) program is also prepared to respond. The Animal Care Program oversees the welfare of certain animals that are exhibited to the public, bred for commercial sale and used in medical research. In addition to providing technical assistance to regulated facilities, AC inspectors may be checking affected facilities to assess damage and ensure the welfare of their animals.

Helping individuals recover:

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) works with state, local and nongovernmental organizations to provide emergency nutrition assistance, including food packages and infant formula, to households, shelters and mass feeding sites serving people in need. FNS also provides emergency flexibilities in administering nutrition assistance programs at the request of states and works with local authorities to provide benefits. Emergency nutrition assistance and flexibilities requested by states and approved by FNS are posted to the FNS Disaster Assistance website.

Visit USDA's disaster resources website to learn more about USDA disaster preparedness and response. For more information on USDA disaster assistance programs, contact your local USDA Service Center.

Massachusetts Brittany Named People's Choice Pup In Farm Dog Of The Year Contest

Sawyer, a Massachusetts Brittany, was named the People's Choice Pup in American Farm Bureau Federation's (AFBF's) Farm Dog of the Year contest during the organization's annual convention. Sawyer was also named Northeast Runner-Up in the same contest. Sawyer is owned by Massachusetts Farm Bureau member Liz Smith.

"Congratulations to Sawyer and Liz," said MFBF President Mark Amato. "Sawyer works to guard Liz's backyard chickens and is an excellent hunting

dog. We are thrilled he represented Massachusetts in this competition."



While Sawyer was honored with being the Northeast Runner-Up and People's Choice Pup in this year's contest, Bindi, a New York farm dog owned

by Sonja Galley was named overall Farm Dog of the Year. All prizes for this year's contest were donated by Purina.

"I am honored that Sawyer received these awards," said MFBF member Liz Smith. "A panel of judges with expertise in the pet care industry, veterinary medicine and communications reviewed 90

nominations to select the 2021 Farm Dog of the Year, and it is flattering they consider Sawyer among the best of the best."

Judging criteria included the dog's helpfulness to the farmer and his/her family, playfulness and their role in making life better on and off the farm.

Sawyer competed against 10 other dogs in the People's Choice Pup contest, which was conducted over Facebook. Voting was done during a set time period, during which Facebook users could "react" to the dogs' photos to vote. As People's Choice Pup, Sawyer won bragging rights, a year's supply of dog food and other Purina products.

Congratulations, Sawyer and Liz!

2021 AFBF's County Leader Week

American Farm Bureau Federation will host its fourth annual County Leader Week April 19-23, 2021, in concert with National Volunteer Week. This week is an opportunity for county leaders to strengthen Farm Bureau by investing in their own development, as well as celebrate county leaders' commitment to volunteerism. More information will be available in the coming weeks. Farm Bureau member leaders at all levels of the organization are encouraged to participate.

To prepare for County Leader Week, sign up for Board Essentials on Farm Bureau University and make sure to "like" American Farm Bureau Federation on Facebook.

Being A Farm Bureau Member Pays

MFBF Members Enjoy Discounts From National & Local Business Partners

Please visit www.MFBF.net for more information.

American National Insurance offers special rate plans for MFBF members on personal auto, business owners policies, SFP-10 and Country Estate insurance.



The personal auto special rate plan will represent a 5% savings on your American National personal auto policy if it's associated with an active MFBF membership. The business owners policy special rate plan will save up to \$100 off your business owners policies if associated with an active MFBF membership. The SFP-10 and Country Estate special rate plan will afford about a 3% savings on you Farm Family farm policy if it's associated with an active MFBF membership.

Visit americannational.com to find your local agent.

Massachusetts Farm Bureau members now receive a \$500 Bonus Cash offer from Ford Motor Company or \$750 Lincoln Motor Company on a purchase or lease of a new qualifying vehicle. You must be a Farm Bureau member in Massachusetts for 30 consecutive days prior to purchase or lease.



Visit fordfarmbureauadvantage.com or LincolnFarmBureauAdvantage.com or see your authorized Ford or Lincoln Dealer for qualifications and complete details.

Ford Program Disclaimer:

Farm Bureau Bonus Cash is exclusively for active Farm Bureau members who are residents of the United States. This incentive is not available on Shelby GT350®, Shelby GT350R, Mustang BULLITT, Ford GT, Focus RS and F-150 Raptor. This offer may not be used in conjunction with most other Ford Motor Company and Lincoln Motor Company private incentives or AXZD-Plans. Some customer and purchase eligibility restrictions apply. Must be a Farm Bureau member for 30 consecutive days prior to purchase and take new retail delivery from dealer by January 2, 2020.



Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation members can save up to \$2,500 on eligible Cat® machines. On top of that, members receive an additional \$250 credit on work tool attachments purchased with new Cat machines.

Visit <http://www.farmbureau.co/member-benefits/> for more information.

John Deere now offers GreenFleet Loyalty Rewards to members of Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation. Farm Bureau members receive discounts, special low rate financing and all other benefits associated with GreenFleet Platinum 2 status.



It's easy to become a GreenFleet member too! Just sign up for John Deere GreenFleet Loyalty Rewards program using a valid member ID and zip code for membership verification and become a Platinum 2 level by visiting www.JohnDeere.com/FarmBureau.

MFBF members receive up to \$500 off Farmall, Maxxum and more! Visit <http://www.farmbureau.co/member-benefits/> and enter your membership ID number and zip code to print a certificate to use towards your next Case-IH purchase. Please print before heading to your local dealer.



Massachusetts Farm Bureau members save 20% off published 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. Call 800.258.2847 and mention your Massachusetts Farm Bureau ID or go to choicehotels.com and enter your Massachusetts Farm Bureau ID to book online (*if you don't know the MFBF ID call our office today at 508-481-4766).



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! As a Massachusetts Farm Bureau member, you will save up to 20% off the Best Available Rate* at over 8,000 participating hotels worldwide. Discover the benefits of booking your vacation with Wyndham Hotels & Resorts as a Massachusetts Farm Bureau member. Our vast portfolio of hotels and resorts offer a variety of accommodations to meet your travel needs. Wherever people go, Wyndham will be there to welcome them.

To take advantage of this valuable travel discount rate please call 877-670-7088 to connect with a dedicated travel expert and be sure to mention you are a Farm Bureau member or go to www.wyndhamhotels.com/farm-bureau to book.



Osterman Propane is pleased to offer a discount to any MFBF member when you become a new customer.

If you currently use propane, but are with a different supplier, then contact Osterman today for special rates. Being a member gives you the buying power to great pricing. When switching to Osterman, they will swap out your tanks at no charge. At this time a safety and pressure test will also be performed at no charge.

Contact: Colleen Gilpin at 508-341-9775 (cell) | 508-234-9902 or visit Osterman Propane on the web at: www.ostermangas.com.

Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University in North Grafton will apply a 10% discount to Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation regular members in good standing. Call: 508-839-7926



*Tufts University is a referral medical facility and should not replace your primary veterinarian service. This program is only for pre-qualified medical services provided at Tufts University's Large Animal Hospital when referred by your veterinarian.

MFBF members enjoy exclusive savings when renting from AVIS. Use Avis Worldwide Discount code: A298821 Visit: www.AVIS.com/mafb



Farm Bureau members also enjoy exclusive savings when renting from BUDGET. Use Budget Customer Discount Number: Y775721 Visit: www.budget.com/mafb

There's A Million Reasons To Join Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation

Below Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) outlines the benefits of being a Farm Bureau member and has compiled testimonials from several current members on how the organization has helped them and their farms. Please take this page and ask your local farmer friends to join our organization. *While we work for farmers, we can't work without them!*

<p>Massachusetts Farm Bureau Works On Your Behalf 2020 brought a difficult time filled with a lot of fear and uncertainty to the Massachusetts agricultural community with the spread of COVID-19. MFBF heard from its farmer members, on how this pandemic has been impacting their businesses, including interrupting</p>	<p>sales and disrupting the workforce. Based on this input and feedback, MFBF staff and leadership worked to identify ways to support farms and farmers. It is important to remember in these difficult times that we are stronger together. Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation is built on the power of</p>	<p>consensus and membership is its lifeblood. For less than 0.65 cents a day (\$225 per year), you can support MFBF by becoming a member. Additionally, a membership in Farm Bureau can pay for itself with savings from the organization's discount program for members! Please consider joining MFBF today!</p>	
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“Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation represents the farms in the Commonwealth better than any other organization. MFBF’s very active lobbyist, Brad Mitchell, has done a great job representing us at the Statehouse and representing us at the bargaining table. For example, through the creation of Chapter 61 and 61a, which allows farms to pay taxes on their land at an agriculture value, this organization has always worked for the farmer. Most farmers couldn’t afford to own their property, if we didn’t have the reduced tax rate. More recently, Farm Bureau has been working through a committee and MDAR to update agricultural preservation restriction (APR) regulations. APR is a great program that needs a few changes to make it even better, which MFBF and the APR committee have been working on advocating for.”



Leon and Joyce Ripley
Maple Corner Farm

“Being a member of Farm Bureau has helped me grow as a leader by serving on my county and state board, as well as Promotion and Education committee chair and a member of AFBF’s livestock issues advisory committee. We discuss the issues that are important to our industry and potential ways to address them. Also, MFBF staff is always there when we need assistance with regulations. For example, I serve on the equine committee and MFBF is working to require horse riding instructors to only need a CORI check. Currently, they have to take a written exam for a license. The exam does not cover any safety topics and no other state requires this licensure. This is just one example of MFBF working to better the regulatory environment our farmers work in. The dues money I spend every year goes to support an organization that acts as a watchdog for us.”



Meg Gennings
UMass Educator

MFBF’s Mission & Vision Statement

Mission Statement: Strengthen a diverse agricultural community by supporting and advocating for Massachusetts farm families.

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.

Support Massachusetts Farmers - Join MFBF

Name: _____ Farm Name: _____ Date: __/__/____
 Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____
 Phone: _____ Email: _____ DOB: __/__/____
 Referred by: _____

I hereby make application for an annual membership in the _____ County Farm Bureau and Massachusetts 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 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: _____

<p>Membership dues (please select one):</p> <p>Voting Members</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Regular Member: \$225 for 1 year</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gold Member: \$350 for 1 year</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Platinum Member: \$500 for 1 year</p> <p>Non-Voting Members</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Associate Member: \$70 for 1 year</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Allied Business: \$225 for 1 year</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Student: \$25 for 1 year</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Friend: \$25 for 1 year</p>	<p>Method of Payment</p> <p>Credit Card:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> American Express</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Visa</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Discover</p> <p>CC#: _____</p> <p>CVV: _____ Exp. Date: __/__/____</p> <p>Signature: _____</p>
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Please indicate which commodity areas best fit the product(s) you produce:

Ag/Open Space Supporter

Aquaculture

Equine

Forestry

Fruits

Horticulture

Livestock

Poultry

Vegetables

Other: _____

Check:
 Make checks payable to:
 Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation

Mail completed application and payment to:
Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation
249 Lakeside Ave
Marlborough, MA 01752

Thank you for your support!

Recipe: Maple Brown Sugar Cookies

Ingredients

- 2 and 1/3 cups all-purpose flour (spoon & leveled)
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 1 cup packed dark brown sugar
- 1 large egg, at room temperature
- 1/3 cup pure maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon maple extract
- 1 cup chopped pecans

Maple Icing

- 2 Tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1/3 cup pure maple syrup
- 1 cup sifted confectioners' sugar
- pinch salt, to taste



How to make

1. Whisk the flour, baking soda, and salt together in a medium bowl. Set aside.

2. Using a hand mixer or a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, cream the butter and brown sugar together on medium speed until smooth, about 1-2 minutes. Add the egg and beat on high until combined, about 30 seconds. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl as needed. Add the maple syrup, vanilla extract, and maple extract, then beat on high speed until combined.

3. Pour the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients, then mix on low until combined. Add the pecans, then beat on low speed until combined. Dough will be creamy and soft.

4. Cover and chill the dough for 2 hours in the refrigerator (and up to 3-4 days). If chilling for longer than a few hours, though, allow to sit at room temperature for at least 30 minutes before rolling and baking because the dough will be quite hard.

Preheat oven to 350°F (177°C). Line 2-3 large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. (Always recommended for cookies.) Set aside.

6. Roll cookie dough into balls, about 1.5 Tablespoons of dough per cookie. This cookie scoop is helpful. Bake each batch for 12-13 minutes until lightly browned on the sides. The centers will look very soft.

7. Remove from the oven. If your warm cookies look puffy, lightly bang the pan on the counter when you remove it from the oven. That will help slightly deflate the cookies, creating lovely cracks as you see in the pictured cookies. Cool cookies on the baking sheets for 5 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.

8. Make the icing: In a small saucepan over low heat, melt the butter and maple syrup together, whisking occasionally. Once the butter has melted, remove from heat and whisk in the sifted confectioners' sugar. Taste. Add a pinch of salt, if desired. Drizzle over cooled cookies. Icing will set after about 1 hour.

From: <https://sallysbakingaddiction.com>

All Farmers Organization Searches For Land In The Greater Springfield Area

Agriculture is at the heart of our country's history, and the culture of our local communities. As farmers age out of the profession, and many of their children choose other occupations, All Farmers is working to keep the land in farming. Much like in the early 1900's, when Polish immigrants took up plows and began cultivating the Pioneer Valley, today new immigrants stand ready to steward the land for a productive future.

All Farmers is an organization based in Springfield that connects refugee and immigrant farmers with local farming networks to access the land, training, and resources they need

to succeed. Our network is made up of lifelong, multigenerational family farmers from Africa and Asia who are committed to continuing their agricultural traditions here in the United States. The farmers currently supply produce to over 500 low-income families in Hampden County, and are seeking a permanent farm site on which to build their businesses and continue bringing healthy foods to our communities.



Do you have farmland that you want to keep in production? All Farmers wants to hear from you. Please contact Hannah Spare by phone at 413-342-0064 or by email at land@allfarmers.com. To learn more about this project, visit www.allfarmers.world/land.

New England Leopold Conservation Award Seeks Nominees



Know a farmer or forestland owner who goes above and beyond in their care and management of natural resources? Nominate them for the 2021 New England Leopold Conservation Award®.

Sand County Foundation and national sponsor American Farmland Trust present the Leopold Conservation Award to private landowners in 22 states for extraordinary achievement in voluntary conservation. In New England the \$10,000 award is presented with, New England Forestry Foundation and Wildlands, Woodlands, Farmlands & Communities.

Given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, the award recognizes landowners who inspire others with their dedication to soil health, water quality and wildlife habitat on private, working land. In

his influential 1949 book, *A Sand County Almanac*, Leopold called for an ethical relationship between people and the land they own and manage.

Nominations may be submitted on behalf of a landowner in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont. Landowners may also nominate themselves. The application can be found at www.sandcountyfoundation.org/ApplyLCA.

The application deadline date is July 15, 2021. Applications can be emailed to award@sandcountyfoundation.org. If mailed, applications must be postmarked by July 15, and mailed to: Leopold Conservation Award c/o New England Forestry Foundation P.O. Box 1346 Littleton, MA 01460

Applications will be reviewed by an independent panel of agricultural and forestry conservation leaders.

"As a national sponsor for Sand County Foundation's Leopold

Conservation Award, American Farmland Trust celebrates the hard work and dedication of farmers, ranchers and forestland owners," said John Piotti, AFT President and CEO. "At AFT we believe that conservation in agriculture requires a focus on the land, the practices and the people and this award recognizes the integral role of all three."

"Recipients of this award are real life examples of conservation-minded agriculture," said Kevin McAleese, Sand County Foundation President and Chief Executive Officer. "These hard-working families are essential to our environment, food system and rural economy."

The New England Leopold Conservation Award is made possible through the generous support of American Farmland Trust, New England Forestry Foundation; Wildlands, Woodlands, Farmlands & Communities; Sand County Foundation, David and Ann Ingram, Farm Credit East, Yale School of the Environment and Whole Foods Market.

The first recipient of the award was Bill Hull of Hull Forest Products in Pomfret Center, Connecticut. Linda Rinta and the Rinta Family Farm of West Wareham, Massachusetts received the award in 2020.

AFBF Adds Massachusetts Aquaculture Resolution To Policy Book

A Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) resolution focused on excluding shellfish aquaculture workers from the term "seamen" under the Jones Act (Section 27 of the Merchant Marine Act), has made it into 2021 American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) policy. The resolution provides that while looking for this exclusion, the worker needs to have state workers compensation insurance available.

"We estimate if this policy is enacted that it would save our aquaculture members about \$1,500 per year per

covered employee," said MFBF President Mark Amato. "Those savings would be huge for an industry that has been hard hit from COVID as they depend on restaurant sales for income."

This is just one example of how a local Farm Bureau member can make a difference – even at the federal level. This resolution was submitted to MFBF from its newly formed Martha's Vineyard Farm Bureau. After being adopted by the MFBF delegates at its annual meeting, it was submitted to AFBF for consideration.

AFBF delegates adopted the proposal at their annual meeting and it is now included in AFBF's policy. AFBF will look for opportunities to make the necessary changes in the law over the coming months.

"We always stress that Farm Bureau is a grassroots organization and that all of our policy comes from our members," Amato said. "We work for our farmer members to ensure their businesses can be successful even in challenging legislative environments."

MFBF Members' Classifieds

FOR SALE

FOR SALE: 26% Tax Credit on EPA certified Central Boiler Classic Edge HDX models and installation. Call today to learn more 413-296-4320.

FOR SALE: Tires: Great prices, all sizes, tire repairs, road service, calcium chloride service. Hoey Tire, Worcester. Call 508-755-6666, www.hoeytire.com

FOR SALE: Hay 1st and 2nd cutting. 4' X 5' round and small square bales. Conway Farms, Lakeville, MA 508-821-0149.

FOR LEASE: Marlborough MA, Farm / Nursery Land for

lease. Lease period and cost is negotiable. Seven acres in two adjacent fields with street access. Call Bob, 978-315-6861

SERVICES

SERVICE: Custom Grazing. Goats & Sheep. Solar fields. Ivy/Brush Removal. Shave ~30% off your maintenance contract. All natural & environmental-friendly mowers. The new way of getting things cut! Goats To Go Georgetown, MA. www.goatstogo.farm/services. Call/Text Alan 508-451-1987.

REAL ESTATE APPRAISER/CONSULTANT: Valuations and consulting for estate planning/

gifting, buying/selling, APR/CR, Chapter 61, 61A, 61B tax appeals. William King 508-867-2600 or whking2005@gmail.com

HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED: ORCHARD MANAGER. Massachusetts farm is seeking a reliable Farm Manager responsible for the planning, planting, growing and harvesting of apples, stone fruit and some vegetable crops. This person will be responsible for all aspects of crop production, managing the property and workers, chemical spray program practicing I.P.M, harvest, pruning

and equipment maintenance. This position requires an independent, motivated self-starter who values working in a team setting. Formal education, technical certificate, and/or extensive work experience in the area of orchard production, or management is necessary. Experience producing cider would be helpful but not necessary. Candidate must have a minimum of three years experience and a pesticide license. This is a year-round position located in Central Massachusetts. Compensation will be based on experience, plus benefits. Please apply by email at davisfarms@verizon.net

Want to advertise with us?

Please contact Katelyn Parsons at katelyn@mfbf.net for more details!

We Need You!

Consider Serving On One Of Our Advisory Committees!

Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation has a number of committees that provide leadership and staff with guidance and assistance throughout the year. Many of these committees meet on an as-needed basis, however, some meet more.

These committees include:

- Apiary • Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) • Cannabis
- Equine • Fruit and Vegetables • Livestock • Membership
- Promotion and Education • Resolutions • Young Farmers and Ranchers

Are you interested in serving on one of these committees? Please get in touch with your county



STRONG at the ROOTS



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TAX PREPARATION Just as 2020 was a year unlike any other, filing your 2020 taxes will also be different. The financial circumstances brought on by COVID-19 could have a significant effect on the deductions and allowances available to your business. This year, more than ever, you will need a reliable ag tax specialist to help guide you through your unique tax situation. Contact Farm Credit East to keep your business **Strong at the Roots**.

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farmcrediteast.com/taxprep





LET'S TALK ABOUT THE STATE OF YOUR FARM INSURANCE

Big or small, when you dedicate your life and well-being into a farm, you need more than just a policy—you need an ally. Your operation is unique and a one-size-fits-all insurance policy isn't for you. You deserve a customized coverage plan and American National gets it. An American National Special Farm Package 10® or Country Estate policy can provide you with a flexible package that allows you to tailor a policy to match your individual needs, with coverage options that include windstorm, fire, mechanical equipment and utility line failures, machinery, livestock and more. Find a local agent at an.insure/mfbf



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