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RECEIVES NEW  
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MASSACHUSETTS  
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MASSACHUSETTS FARM BUREAU FEDERATION'S

Vol. 30, No. 6

# NEWS & VIEWS

Nov./Dec.2022

*www.MFBBF.net*

## Delegates Prioritize Resolutions, Conduct Business Meeting

The Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation (MFBBF) held its 2022 Annual Meeting and Delegates Session on Dec. 1-2 in Taunton, Massachusetts. Delegates conducted the organization's annual business meeting and discussed and adopted resolutions. At this year's annual meeting we were happy to bring back a full day of workshop sessions. We had a terrific assortment of topics with excellent speakers ranging from equine

liability to grant writing with many workshops being standing room only. MFBBF delegates voted on twelve resolutions and passed eleven and finished this session by prioritizing which resolutions they believe MFBBF staff and leadership should tackle first. Following the statewide meeting, if a resolution has national applicability, the MFBBF will bring the resolution to American Farm Bureau Federation's

resolution committee this month and subsequent annual meeting in January for consideration. 2023 top five resolutions in order of priority:  
1. MFBBF will work to enact legislation or policy to create an agricultural farm stand commercial value for tax purposes in line with the current and/or seasonal use.  
2. MFBBF will work to have Mass RMV/DOT remove the

requirement that all non CDL trucks over 10,000 lbs be required to register with the US DOT and apply numbers to their trucks to be eligible for annual inspection. Whereas many farm-plated vehicles only operate Intrastate, they do not meet a federal requirement of the US DOT. The US DOT only requires registration for trucks being operated for Interstate commerce.  
3. MFBBF will provide farmer fact sheets with information on

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*MFBBF Wishes You, Your Family & Friends  
Happy Holidays!*



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# President's Column

By: Warren Shaw, MFBF President

I wanted to share with the membership my thoughts on our 2022 annual meeting!

Among all of the challenges of 2022, the most significant was finding an effective executive director, who would deliver an annual meeting members would be happy with.

Keeping my ear to the ground, one of the comments heard most in the past two years has been a disconnect with state staff and the inability, largely because



Kim and Tina for doing a really nice

of COVID, to gather. These in person meetings allow us to reconnect with each other and bring home information that will improve the future.

Thanks to a combination of volunteerism and staff support, we held a successful annual meeting. Congratulations to Laura Abrams for guiding the annual meeting committee and to Karen, Nick,

job. Thank you!

We had a nice assortment of breakout sessions, which all were well attended. Iain Ward lead a very interesting discussion on solar on farms. Hopefully we will be doing more as an organization with Iain in the future. If you are interested in solar on your farm, he is a man that can help you!

Julie Ann Smith, Maine Farm Bureau executive director, led a presentation about the growing concern about PFAS. I have no doubt we will be hearing more about this in the coming year.

Just as popular were the sessions on grant writing and grant availability.

American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) was present with their staff members Jordan Henry and

Austin Large, who lead some very informative sessions.

During the delegates session on Friday, elections were held. Not much changed but it marks the end of Charlie Proctor's long service on our budget committee as he did not seek re-election. Thank you for all you have done, Charlie! Mike Sabatini of Essex County was elected to fill the seat.

Former executive director and commissioner Doug Gillespie was honored with our annual John Ogonowski award. Congratulations, Doug!

And lastly, I want to give a shout to the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture (MDAR) Commissioner John Lebeaux for a great dinner speech and for always being a friend to agriculture.

Warren Shaw  
MFBF President

## PLEASE UPDATE YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS

In advance of our 2023 membership database upgrade, we are asking for member e-mail addresses. If you do not currently receive e-mails from us (newsletter, weekly update, etc.), please send a message to Kim Ashe at kim@mfbf.net, and include your name, farm name (if applicable) and email address. This will ensure that you receive all important notifications and news from us. Thank you!

## Wheel-View Farm Receives New England Leopold Conservation Award

Wheel-View Farm of Shelburne, Massachusetts has been selected as the recipient of the 2022 New England Leopold Conservation Award®.

Given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, the prestigious award recognizes those who inspire others with their dedication to land, water and wildlife resources in their care. John and Carolyn Wheeler, the owners and operators of Wheel-View Farm, receive \$10,000 and a crystal award for being selected.

Sand County Foundation and national sponsor American Farmland Trust present the Leopold Conservation Award to private landowners in 24 states for extraordinary achievement in voluntary conservation. In New England the award is presented with New England Forestry Foundation; Wildlands, Woodlands, Farmlands & Communities; and American Farmland Trust-New England.

"Aldo Leopold was a

farmer, forester and revered conservationist educated right here in New England," said Robert Perschel, Executive Director of the New England Forestry Foundation. "Since most of our farms include both agricultural land and forest land it is fitting that the Wheelers were selected as this year's honorees of this legacy."

"We are pleased to present this award to Wheel-View Farm and the entire Wheeler family. I am thrilled that a diversified farm so devoted to conservation agriculture, and the community has been chosen," said Nathan L'Etoile, New England Director of American Farmland Trust. "Their commitment to the land, their community, and agriculture is a prime example of what New England farmers are upholding each and every day."

"These award recipients are examples of how Aldo Leopold's land ethic is alive and well today. Their dedication to conservation shows how individuals can improve the health of the land while producing food and fiber,"

said Kevin McAleese, Sand County Foundation President and CEO.

"As the national sponsor for Sand County Foundation's Leopold Conservation Award, American Farmland Trust celebrates the hard work and dedication of the Wheelers," 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."

Earlier this year, owners of forestland and farmland in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont were encouraged to apply (or be nominated) for the award. Applications were reviewed by an independent panel of agricultural and forestry conservation leaders. The New England Leopold Conservation Award is made



possible through the generous support of American Farmland Trust, New England Forestry Foundation; Wildlands, Woodlands, Farmlands and Communities; Sand County Foundation, Farm Credit East, David and Ann Ingram, and the Yale School of the Environment.

To view all of the recipients chosen for the New England Leopold Conservation Award since 2019, visit [www.sandcountyfoundation.org/NewEngland](http://www.sandcountyfoundation.org/NewEngland).

In his influential 1949 book, *A Sand County Almanac*; Aldo Leopold called for an ethical relationship between people and the land they own and manage. He wrote it was "an evolutionary possibility and an ecological necessity."

Sand County Foundation presents the Leopold Conservation Award® annually in 24 states with a variety of conservation, agricultural and forestry organizations. For more information on the award, visit [www.leopoldconservationaward.org](http://www.leopoldconservationaward.org).

### MFBF's Vision Statement

**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.

# Douglas Gillespie Awarded 2022 John Ogonowski Award During MFBF Annual Meeting

Congratulations to Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation's (MFBF's) Former Executive Director Douglas Gillespie on being awarded the 2022 John Ogonowski Award during MFBF's annual meeting. The annual award is given to a member of the Massachusetts agricultural community who has demonstrated distinguished service to the organization, to agriculture and to the community.

MFBF established the award in 2001 as a memorial to John Ogonowski, longtime MFBF member, county leader and victim of the Sept. 11 attack. Ogonowski was the pilot of American Airlines Flight 11. He was actively involved in the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, serving as a mentor to immigrant farmers.



Below is a biography of this year's award winner.

Douglas Gillespie is a long serving Middlesex County Farm Bureau member from his family's

farm in Weston, MA. A graduate of University of Maine - Orono, Doug has a lifelong interest and involvement in the sheep industry working locally as well as nationally. He has shown animals at fairs around the country and has been a coach and judge for many involved in the industry.

Doug has served in leadership roles at MDAR, including Commissioner. Doug spent many years in the governance of the Town of Weston, including many years as Selectperson.

Doug's roles in Farm Bureau have spanned a period of 20 years or more. He has been an effective legislative agent, field services representative, deputy administrator during his career at Farm Bureau as executive director, serving under five presidents. In his professional roles, Doug was always resourceful, committed and eager to serve his farming constituents. Under his tenure Farm Bureau was active, important and constantly innovative.

He retired from his Farm Bureau leadership position in 2020 and continues to actively be involved with the sheep industry. Doug and his wife currently live and work out of Texas and are proud parents, and grandparents.

We thank Doug for his service and support for agriculture, Farm Bureau, and his fellow citizens.

## P&E Committee Update By: Meghan Gennings, MFBF P&E Committee Chair

The committee would like to thank everyone for their support over the past year. We are looking forward to 2023 and are bolstered by our opportunity to work with Mass Ag in the Classroom to work on distributing our Ag Learning boxes. Please reach out for more information on how you can receive boxes.

Get your cameras ready! Stay tuned for our next farm feline photography contest. We will be hosting our barn cat photo contest on Facebook. Keep an eye out for more details.

Join P&E! We are always looking for new members with fresh ideas. Our next meetings will be Dec. 21 and Jan. 18 at 7:30pm via Zoom. Don't hesitate to reach out to me, Meg, for more details! My email is: [mgennings@gmail.com](mailto:mgennings@gmail.com)

## NE-DBIC Dairy Innovation Grants Available

### Dairy Farm Innovation & Alternative Management Grant

This grant provides funds to support the implementation of community- and climate-forward production strategies. Projects funded through this grant program should take a whole farm system approach and increase collaboration with other farms or dairy sector stakeholders. Projects may address improvements in topics such as, but are in no way limited to, creating new models for collaborative/cooperative milk production, increased new and young farmer engagement, alternative business ownership/management

models, development of green technologies, farm-scale appropriate technology improvements, or creating a culture of continuous improvement.

Grants available of \$15,000 to \$75,000 with a 25% (cash or in-kind) match commitment required. The Request for Applications (RFA) is now available.

Application period: December 1, 2022 - February 2, 2023 at 2:00 PM ET. Open to dairy farmers, producer associations, and technical service providers.

Additionally, the current round

of the Dairy Food Safety & Certification Grant is open now:

### Dairy Food Safety & Certification Grant

This grant will provide dairy farmers, processors, and/or producer associations with funds needed to take actionable steps to improve the safety of dairy products. Projects funded through this program will support increased production safety standards with the goal of accessing new markets. Projects that increase marketability of dairy products will be prioritized. Activities covered by this grant include accessing technical assistance, audits, food safety plan

development, training, testing fees, and certain infrastructure upgrades.

Grants available of \$10,000 - \$40,000 with a 25% (cash or in-kind) match commitment required.

Application deadline: January 19, 2023

The NE-DBIC is seeking additional grant reviewers who represent the dairy supply chain across an 11-state region. Apply online: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic/grants/dairy-food-safety-certification-grant>

## Annual Meeting Recap

*Continued From Page 1*

how to deal and where to appeal unreasonable mandates from zoning, public health, and other state and local regulators.

4. MFBF will work to change the new "2019" changes in the CMR's which the Massachusetts RMV/DOT made to section 5 requirements to apply for Farm Plates.

5. MFBF will work to facilitate a suspension of the state fuel tax for farmers and those registered as agriculture.

During the business meeting, delegates also voted on Board of Director positions that were up for election.

Following this election, MFBF's 2022 - 2023 Board of Directors now includes:

- Warren Shaw, President
- Ryan MacKay, Vice President
- Wayne Smith, Treasurer
- Mark Amato, Immediate Past President
- Bob Kilmer, Berkshire County Rep.
- Fredrick (Skip) Vadnais, Bristol County Rep.
- David Ross, Cape & Island County Rep
- Charlie Tully, Middlesex County Rep
- Barbara Rogers-Scharneck, Essex County Rep.
- Lenny Roberts, Franklin County Rep.

- Richard Woodger, Hampden County Rep.
- Karl Norris, Hampshire County Rep.
- Dan Martino, Martha Vineyard's County Rep.
- Edward Lawton, Norfolk County Rep.
- Jim Hayward, Plymouth County Rep.
- Heidi Cooper, Worcester County Rep.
- Steve Ward, Budget Committee Rep.
- Michael Sabatini, Budget Committee Rep.
- Will Pickard, Budget Committee Rep.
- Alex Dowse, Director At Large
- Meghan Gennings, Director At Large
- Laura Abrams, Director At Large

• Heather Bonanno-Baker, Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee Chair

The new board was seated Dec. 2 and will serve until the organization's 2023 annual meeting. In addition, awards were presented at the meeting that honored members distinguished service to agriculture. We are proud to report the John Ogonowski Award for Distinguished Service to Agriculture was awarded to Doug Gillespie of Weston, Massachusetts. We are grateful to Doug for his many years of service to the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation.



Massachusetts Farm Bureau  
Federation, Inc.  
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MFBF Board of Directors

Officers

President..... Warren Shaw  
Vice President .....Ryan MacKay  
Treasurer .....Wayne Smith  
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Bristol..... Skip Vadnais  
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Essex.....Barbara Rogers-Scharneck  
Franklin .....Lenny Roberts  
Hampden .....Richard Woodger  
Hampshire.....Karl Norris  
Martha’s Vineyard ..... Dan Martino  
Middlesex..... Charlie Tully  
Norfolk..... Edward Lawton  
Plymouth .....Charles (Jim) Hayward  
Worcester ..... Heidi Cooper

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Steve Ward  
Will Pickard

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Meghan Gennings  
Laura Abrams

Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee

Heather Bonanno Baker .....Chair

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Deputy Executive Director.....Nick John  
Database Administrator .....Kim Ashe

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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Marlborough, MA 01752  
www.mfbf.net

# In Major Policy Shift, Massachusetts Clears Marijuana Growers To Use Certain Pesticides

Licensed marijuana growers in Massachusetts will now be allowed to apply certain pesticides to their crops, after state agricultural officials repealed a longstanding ban on the practice that the cannabis industry had long derided as unnecessarily strict.

Under a Nov. 30 edict from the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR), which has jurisdiction over pesticide use at marijuana facilities, cannabis cultivators gained permission to deploy a wide range of mostly natural chemicals that are federally approved as safe for use on hemp and tobacco. They include beneficial bacteria that kill leaf-munching worms, fertilizers and fungicides commonly used to produce organic food, and synthetic hormones used to grow new plants from clipped branches.

“MDAR recognizes that the industry has been in need of tools to help combat pest problems,” a spokeswoman for the agency said in a short statement. “By updating the pesticide policy and adding additional precautionary measures, the new criteria will provide the industry with new tools to protect their crops while still ensuring current laws and safety measures are complied with.”

The new rule replaces an antipesticide policy that growers said was one of the most stringent of any US state with legal cannabis. Previously, MDAR permitted growers to use only a short list of concentrated plant oils, mild detergents, and basic compounds designated by the federal Environmental Protection Agency as posing a “minimal risk” to health.

Massachusetts cultivators had complained for years that those pesticides were ineffective for large-scale operations, especially outdoors, leaving them with few options to prevent and eradicate mold, pests, and other blights affecting their crops. The result of the old policy, they said, was substantial crop loss and lower-quality pot.

Now, commercial growers are ecstatic over the expanded list of allowed pesticides, saying it will help reduce costs without endangering the health of cannabis consumers.

“It’s a huge step in the right direction,” said Suehiko Ono, the cofounder of the Eos Farm outdoor marijuana growing facility in Pittsfield. “Now, our only recourse for mold and pests isn’t walking counterclockwise around the plants during a full moon holding a butterfly wing — we can actually use science and chemistry and biology.”



Ono, who said he lost 60 percent of his 2021 harvest to worm damage, estimated the change in regulations could halve the amount of crop losses for both marijuana

and hemp cultivators. Growers are already facing a squeeze brought on by plunging marijuana prices.

Officials at MDAR said the decision to allow pesticides on pot was made possible in part by the federal government’s 2018 legalization of hemp — a variety of cannabis with almost none of the THC that causes marijuana’s distinctive high — which prompted the EPA to begin approving various pesticides for use on hemp. Officials at MDAR said that because the only distinction between the two plants “is a legal one,” they have decided to allow many of the same compounds to be used on Massachusetts marijuana crops.

In addition to being approved for use on both hemp and tobacco, pesticides under the new MDAR policy must also meet several other criteria to qualify for use on marijuana. While the agency said it will not maintain a list of approved compounds, it has circulated a flow chart meant to help growers verify that a given product is permitted.

Even with those limitations, growers said they’re hopeful the regulatory change will allow them to save money by applying more effective preventative compounds less frequently, while also providing them with more options to suppress pests and microbes that manage to evade those controls. In turn, that should reduce the need for cultivation facilities to employ “remediation” techniques to destroy microbes, such as radiation treatments that rely on pricy equipment and hydrogen peroxide baths that can over-dry flower and reduce its quality.

They also said the use of hormone gels will drastically increase the percentage of clippings from a “mother plant” with desirable traits that successfully take root, making it faster, cheaper, and easier to sow a new crop. Meanwhile, the greater variety of fertilizers now available should help boost the amount of usable marijuana yielded by each plant.

“It’s a boost across the board,” said John Snyder, the chief operating officer of 253 Farmacy in Turners Falls. “These are the safest products you can use, and they’ll really help keep people in business. With the market being as competitive



# Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee Happenings



Learn more about YF&R at [www.MFBF.net](http://www.MFBF.net)!  
Or follow us on social media - Facebook: @MAFarmBureauYFR &  
Instagram: @MAFBYoungFamers.

## Farm Bureau University Expands with New Consumer Advocacy Module

Enhancements to Farm Bureau University continue with the recent launch of a new consumer advocacy module. The module features self-paced lessons covering a variety of topics including tips for active listening, crafting messages about your farm or ranch and honing other skills that build confidence when interacting with consumers.

FB University allows Farm Bureau members to learn through interactive experiences online when and where they want. It's easy to log onto the program from a desktop computer in an office or on an iPad in the field.

Alan Clark, a Farm Bureau member and leader from Idaho, is a member of AFBF's Promotion & Education Committee. He completed the new module and found it to be helpful when planning a Meet the Farmer event at a local grocery store for later this fall. Potato growers and beef cattle ranchers will interact with grocery shoppers and answer their questions about food and

how it's produced. "People really do want to hear farmers' stories, they love hearing about what we do," Clark said. "They're more receptive to hearing from us [farmers] than you might think," he added.

Clark praised the new, self-paced advocacy module, which includes short video segments. He found the training materials "enjoyable to watch," with the section on active listening particularly useful. When advocating about agriculture, "it's so important to listen to what people are saying when they ask questions," he emphasized.

Stacey Lauwers, a Farm Bureau member and leader from Michigan, chairs AFBF's Promotion & Education Committee and also completed the new module.

"Explaining what we do on our farm, with confidence and in a personal way, is how I can better engage with people and share my passion for farming," Lauwers said. "As farmers, we need to be having

conversations about what we do. The module easily walks you through how to be better prepared to do that."

Lauwers acknowledged that sharing with advocating about agriculture may be challenging if you're just getting started, but added, "Everything gets easier with practice and engaging in conversations is no different."

In addition to Consumer Advocacy, other training modules available online through FB University include Political Advocacy, which covers preparing and conducting visits with legislators and relationship-building with elected officials; Board Essentials, which helps county board members develop their skills; FB Builder, an evaluation tool county Farm Bureaus use to assess eight building blocks of organizational health; and Pillars of Agricultural Literacy, a tool to guide individuals or groups in creating a purposeful plan to help consumers learn about agriculture.

*If anyone is interested in hosting a tour of their farm or joining the YF&R committee, please email Heather at [heatherbonanno@gmail.com](mailto:heatherbonanno@gmail.com).*

## MDAR Ag Business Training Courses

NEW Dates!

**Register now for MDAR Agricultural Business Training winter courses**

Growing Your Farm Business Planning Course

Jan. 17 – March 14, 2023  
Tuesday evenings 5:30 – 8:30pm  
MDAR office in Southborough, MA



A hands-on course to help established farmers develop a business plan and financial projections for their farm business. This course covers topics including resource assessment, marketing strategy, financial management, risk management, quality of life, and goal setting. The course is taught by a professional business planner with years of experience working with Massachusetts farms and guest speakers on topics such as succession planning and online marketing. Enrollment is open to farmers who have been operating a farm business in Massachusetts for at least the two prior years. Eight weekly classes will be held in person in Southborough on Tuesday evenings starting January 17th and ending March 14th, (no class February 21st). The course

fee, subsidized by MDAR, is \$150 per farm. The Growing Your Farm business planning course has been approved as a certified USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) borrower training for financial management.

If interested, please complete the brief Growing Your Farm application (available online) and email it to [Diego.Irizarry-Gerould@mass.gov](mailto:Diego.Irizarry-Gerould@mass.gov), or mail a hard copy to: MDAR, Attn: Diego Irizarry-Gerould, 138 Memorial Ave, Suite 42, West Springfield, MA 01089. For more information, see ABTP program webpage or contact Diego Irizarry-Gerould at 857-248-1671.

Exploring the Small Farm Dream Course  
Jan. 12 – Feb. 9, 2023

Thursday evenings 6:00 – 9:00pm  
MDAR office in Southborough, MA

This 5-session course provides guidance to aspiring farmers through the decision-making process of whether to start a farm business. Participants will learn about the many aspects of starting a farm business, assess their own skills and knowledge, and get help finding resources for support, including marketing, financing, and regulations. The course utilizes the Exploring the Small Farm Dream curriculum and workbook developed by the New England Small Farm Institute. Through four guided group sessions and a farmer panel session, participants will analyze the feasibility of their small farm dream and clarify their vision together with other class participants. This course is sponsored and financially supported by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources and is intended for new agricultural entrepreneurs planning to start their farm business in Massachusetts. The course fee is \$100 for up to two participants per enterprise, as

## Call For MFBF YF&R Board Members

Each county Farm Bureau has two seats on the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation's (MFBF's) Young Farmers and Ranchers (YF&R) committee board. Currently we have vacancies from the following counties:

- Berkshire (2)
- Bristol (1)
- Cape and Island (2)
- Franklin (2)
- Hampden (1)
- Hampshire (1)
- Middlesex (1)
- Plymouth (1)

We have approximately four meetings per year via zoom.com and in person (hybrid). We would love to have your support. If you are interested in serving, please email YF&R Chair Heather Bonanno-Baker at [heatherbonanno@gmail.com](mailto:heatherbonanno@gmail.com)

space allows.

If interested, please complete the brief online application and email it to [Jessica.Camp@mass.gov](mailto:Jessica.Camp@mass.gov), or mail a hard copy to: MDAR, Attn: Jessica Camp, 138 Memorial Ave, Suite 42, West Springfield, MA 01089. For more information, see ABTP program webpage or contact Jess Camp at 617-823-0871.

Applications for these winter courses will be accepted until Dec. 2, or until each course is full.

# How To Find, Destroy Eggs Laid By Invasive Spotted Lanternflies

Invasive species experts say that now is the time to find and destroy eggs laid by spotted lanternflies to control their spread in 2023.



The spotted lanternfly first appeared in the United States in Berks County, Pennsylvania,

in 2014. The species is native to Asia, namely China, India and Vietnam, according to PestWorld.org. While the spotted lanternfly

doesn't bite, transmit disease and isn't dangerous to humans, it can be harmful to various types of plants, according to environmental experts.

The insect's main host plant is the tree of heaven, but it can also attack a variety of trees, shrubs, vines and can impact other agricultural commodities such as grapes, wine, apples, peaches and maple syrup, according to the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MASSDARP).

The spotted lanternfly was known to be introduced to areas in Connecticut, Delaware, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia, and since they are not native to the country, they do not have natural predators.

"The reason why there are so many lanternflies, and we care to manage their population, is because there are no natural predators. So, we are acting as a predator to them,"

Continued on Page 7

# Baker-Polito Administration Grants Massachusetts Local Farmers SNAP Food Benefits

The Baker-Polito administration announced that farmers and markets in Massachusetts will be granted SNAP-processing equipment to help expand food access for residents with low incomes. This equipment grant is to promote the acceptance of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits at mobile markets, says DeForge.

On Dec. 5, Governor Charlie Baker and Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito announced that \$95,000 worth of SNAP-processing equipment will be awarded to 65 local farmers and their markets. This equipment grant program is offered through the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), is in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR), and is funded by the United States

Department of Agriculture (USDA).

This program provided a total of \$160,000 worth of equipment and services to 110 local farmers and their markets. The application for this program was open from April 20 until September 30. Local farmers and markets used this program to acquire new or updated SNAP equipment from Novo Dia Group for free, according to McCorkindale.

Officials Released Statements on the Program Secretary of Health and Human Services Marylou Sudders stated that the program aims to build on the success of the Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program and include more than 100 new Healthy Incentives Program vendors. DTA reportedly works on empowering over 600,000 SNAP

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# MA Clears Marijuana Growers To Use Certain Pesticides

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as it is, you'll take anything you can get."

Several Massachusetts marijuana firms have been sanctioned in recent years by state regulators for using banned pesticides.

In 2018, the Department of Public Health temporarily shuttered operators Good Chemistry and Triple M for using common compounds the companies

insisted were natural and safe; Triple M later paid the state \$50,000 for allegedly misleading officials about the incident.

Strict enforcement continued after the Cannabis Control Commission assumed oversight of medical and recreational marijuana in late 2018. The agency in 2020 reached a \$200,000 settlement with Garden Remedies after inspectors caught

the company using rooting gel at its Fitchburg growing facility and falsifying records to disguise its purchase. At the same time, the commission slapped Mission — owned by interstate conglomerate 4Front Ventures — with a \$350,000 fine for repeated violations of the pesticide ban.

Growers expect the new rule from MDAR will reduce the likelihood

of such sanctions, though a large number of synthetic pesticides remain banned.

In a brief statement, the commission said it would continue to collaborate with agricultural officials on pesticide enforcement "to protect public health and safety and ensure all state laws and regulations are being complied with."

## A&B Insurance Corner

Learn more about A&B at: [www.abinsgroup.com](http://www.abinsgroup.com)



### Woodstove Safety

Most wood stoves can be categorized as either freestanding or a wood stove insert. Because a wood stove generates very hot combustion gases, its chimney must be either masonry (with flue tiles intact and in good condition) or manufactured specifically for burning wood. When installing a stove, be sure to have it inspected by the building department or the fire department, which ever is required by your town. Once your stove and install has been approved,

and before you fire up your wood stove or insert, **be sure to do the following:**

- Do:** Make sure you have working carbon monoxide and smoke alarms in your home.
- Do:** Regularly remove ashes and properly dispose of them in a metal container.
- Do:** Have your chimney cleaned and inspected regularly; ideally, at the start of every heating season.
- Do:** Inspect the stove and chimney at least once every year for any wear and

tear, especially to the door hinges, the combustion chamber and the connection between the stove and chimney for any damage or creosote buildup.

- Be sure you do not do the following:**
- Do not:** "Over fire the stove—in other words, make a larger fire than the stove can handle. This will cause damage to the stove & chimney.
  - Do not:** Let ashes build up as it will decrease the temperature of the fire causing combustion issues and creosote back up.
  - Do not:** Burn anything other than

seasoned wood.

**Do not:** Connect a wood stove to a chimney serving another appliance burning other fuels.

Woodstoves can be warm and inviting, as well as an economical way to reduce your energy costs, however, be aware that woodburning as a supplementary source of heat has led to an alarming—and growing—number of fires traceable to careless installation or misuse. Follow safe practices when burning wood and be on alert to any indications that there is a problem with your woodstove or chimney.



# USDA Releases Nationwide Farmer, Rancher and Forest Manager Prospective Customer Survey

Producers can now take a nationwide survey to help the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) improve and increase access to its programs and services for America’s farmers, ranchers, and forest managers. The survey includes new and existing customers. USDA encourages all agricultural producers to take the survey, especially those who have not worked with USDA previously. The survey gathers feedback on programs and services available through USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and

Risk Management Agency (RMA). The survey is available online at farmers.gov/survey, and producers should complete by March 31, 2023. Stakeholder organizations are also encouraged to share the survey link through their networks. The survey is available in 14 different languages including Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Hmong, Korean, Navajo, Punjabi, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Thai, Urdu and Vietnamese. “A robust survey response that includes the perspectives of

all of our customers, including underserved producers, will help USDA better understand the unique needs of both existing and prospective customers, while identifying opportunities to enhance government programs and services. Please take the survey, especially if we haven’t worked with you before,” said Robert Bonnie, USDA’s Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC). “This survey will provide USDA with critical data to help USDA serve all of agriculture.”

In addition to the online survey, the FPAC Business Center, which is administering the survey, will also mail 11,000 printed surveys to various local state stakeholder organizations and farmers markets. The survey is an Office of Management and Budget requirement supported by the Biden-Harris President’s Management Agenda (PMA), which identified FSA and NRCS as High-Impact Service Providers. These agencies provide critical customer-facing services and are expected to use the survey data to make targeted improvements.

# Timely Tools, Resources Available From American Lamb Board

The American Lamb Board (ALB) provides an assortment of tools and resources to producers including market reports, quarterly index reports and a menu trend study to implement in their operations and stay informed about the industry.

### Market Reports

ALB works with American Sheep Industry (ASI) to develop market reports that monitor conditions and trends. Reports are released on both a monthly and annual basis. They include data related to lamb imports, sheep and lamb prices and a market forecast for producers to prepare for the future. Monthly and annual reports can be found on ALB’s industry website, LambResourceCenter.com.

### Index Reports

Quarterly retail sales reports are compiled using data from Information Resources, Inc. (IRI), which provides consumer, shopper, and retail market intelligence. These reports examine retail sales broken down by cuts and by regions and markets to present a detailed analysis of lamb sales at grocery stores. These insights can help the industry monitor market conditions and trends and can help the ALB and suppliers shape promotional programs OR improve the targeting of promotional



activities. The latest report, with data through September 2022, is now available by emailing info@americanlamb.com.

### Menu Trend

### Study

The menu trend study delivers analysis of lamb on restaurant menus including quick service, fast casual, midscale, casual and fine dining sectors. The study documents lamb use on menus by segment and includes menu descriptors such as dish type (entrée, appetizer, soup, salad), flavors and sauces and country of origin descriptions. This

information presents the industry with trends data to develop supply strategies and opportunities. The latest menu study report, done in 2021, reflects the significant impact of Covid on menus – especially fine dining. The report is available by emailing info@americanlamb.com.

“Information drives innovation and the American Lamb checkoff continues to invest in resources to positively influence American Lamb’s value and help producers respond to consumer market signals,” said Peter Camino, ALB Chairman. Additional resources are available for producers at LambResourceCenter.com.

# Find, Destroy Eggs Laid By Spotted Lanternflies

Continued From Page 6

invasive species expert Lauren Bonus told NJ.com. **What stage of life is the spotted lanternfly currently in?** New Jersey Department of Agriculture Public Information Officer Jeff Wolfe told NJ.com that this year’s adult spotted lanternfly season is almost over. “The spotted lanternfly has one life cycle per year, and they all are generally around the same life stage at the same time or transitioning into that same life stage at the same time,” Bonus told the outlet. “So right now, they’re all adults. They’re mating and egg laying.” Bonus is the Camden County Mosquito Commission

Superintendent in New Jersey. Spotted lanternfly eggs are laid starting in September and they can continue to do so until late November or early December, according to the University of Massachusetts Amherst urban forestry program. Each egg mass can contain between 30 to 50 eggs. “Right now is a great time to try to find egg masses, squish them, scrape them, remove the egg masses, or to kill the adults,” Bonus told NJ.com. **Why it’s important to destroy the egg masses** The spotted lanternfly can be damaging to a state’s agricultural business.

“In agriculture, they will wipe out vineyards, hops, a lot of things that (effects) the wine industry, the beer industry, hardwood trees, things that that are high quality commodities,” Bonus told NJ.com. “The biggest reason we want to kill them is their potential harm to agriculture.” Wolfe also told NJ.com: “While a recent early frost helped kill some adults, the recent warm weather has given the remaining population more time to reproduce.” **Where to find the egg masses** Wolfe said spotted lanternfly egg masses can be found on almost any surface. “They can be found in unusual places, such as on park benches, steps, on vehicles, or the

sides of a building,” he told NJ.com. Spotting the egg masses can be tricky, Bonus said, because they are only about an inch long, gray or sometimes brown in color, and can be found on a wide variety of surfaces. “To find them I think is the hardest part. Once you find them removing them is generally pretty easy,” she told the outlet. Wolfe said the egg masses can be scraped with a credit card or something similar. “It is important to press against the egg mass and hear the eggs popping as they are being scraped,” he told NJ.com. “The popping sound signifies the eggs are being destroyed. Scraping cards are available at the Rutgers Extension office in each county.”

# Soil Sensor Yields Beneficial Information For Farmers

If you're a gardener, you know that planting seeds in the ground doesn't always mean you'll have a good yield at the end of a growing season. On a personal level, this can be disappointing. Farmers are in charge of growing dozens to thousands of acres of food. And, they face the same variability in the planting, growing, and harvesting processes as gardeners do.

Agronomists and soil scientists research best practices for farmers to help them make informed decisions on managing their fields and crops. Rintaro Kinoshita and a team of researchers determined that a tool, an "apparent electrical conductivity sensor (ECa)," can give important insights into farm field management.

Kinoshita is an assistant professor at Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine, Japan, but performed this research while working at Cornell University, United States.

The study was published in Agronomy Journal, a publication of the American Society of Agronomy. "In larger farms there are factors that limit yield, or cause variations in yield within a field," says Kinoshita. "Understanding these factors is crucial for optimizing resource investments and financial returns. It also helps avoid adverse environmental effects."

Of course, the soil and its characteristics are some of the most important factors to farming. Spatial variation of crop yield is largely dependent on three factors: topography, soil, and pests/diseases. The soil factor is important and one that farmers

can manage. Farmers often rely on soil tests to understand the properties – but these take time and are expensive. Kinoshita and the team used sensor-based technologies that can collect various crop and soil information, without digging up the soils. These sensors are portable with the help of farm equipment like tractors, and provide critical information. In order to calibrate the information, they compared their sensor data with that from soil samples.

Although the research was done while Kinoshita was working at Cornell University, the study was conducted in Maryland and Delaware, in the Coastal Plain and Piedmont. The team studied 26 cornfields in two contrasting geographical and topical areas.

The apparent electrical conductivity sensor (ECa) was the most successful in estimating soil properties compared to the soil samples taken. These sensors were able to predict soil texture – especially at different depths, and available water content. Since water is the only conducting phase, measurements of soil properties that affect water availability can be predicted using ECa. The measurements related to soil moisture and corn yield, which is valuable information for farmers.

The team also tested other technologies, but the findings were not as conclusive as the apparent electrical conductivity sensor. An advantage to collecting sensor measurements is that it is timely, usually taking 1-2 hours per fifty acres. Soil core testing, on the

other hand, can take weeks to sometimes months depending on the soil properties.

"I chose to use the ECa sensor because it can measure soil properties in deeper layers (subsoils), where it is usually ignored for soil management but a very important reservoir of plant available water," says Kinoshita. "This can be critical under variable weather conditions, especially drought, to stabilize crop yield and maintain high yield."

Kinoshita explains it is important to start paying more attention to deeper soils to better manage crops, and for that the ECa sensor can be very helpful in revealing soil conditions that would otherwise be very difficult to see.

This research was supported by Willard Agri-Service of Frederick, Inc., with support from the Joint Japan/World Bank Graduate Scholarship Program.

In addition, Obihiro University is collaborating on a virtual agronomy exchange program with the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Both the Obihiro area of Japan and Wisconsin in the United States grow many of the same crops: potatoes, soybeans, and farm dairy products. They face some of the same challenges like soil conservation. The program focuses on food systems and soil science, where students learn about the characteristics of the soil for optimizing soil conservation and management by both researchers and local farmers.



2023 AFBF YOUNG FARMERS & RANCHERS

COMPETITION AWARDS



The YF&R program helps young members shape their future and American agriculture through leadership development and personal growth opportunities. Three competitions enable members to showcase their leadership experience, communication skills and successful business plans as they compete against the best of the best from each state Farm Bureau.

As part of the YF&R competitions, the top four competitors in the Achievement Award, Discussion Meet and Excellence in Agriculture areas will receive:

1ST PLACE	<b>\$35,000 Credit Towards a New Ford Vehicle</b> and paid registration to attend the AFBF FUSION Conference in Jacksonville, Florida, courtesy of Ford.	3RD PLACE	<b>\$2,500 Investing in Your Future Cash Prize</b> courtesy of AmericanAg™ and a Case IH branded safe, courtesy of Case IH plus \$1,665 of Stanley Black & Decker merchandise, courtesy of Stanley Black & Decker.
2ND PLACE	<b>\$25,000 Credit Towards a New Case IH Piece of Equipment</b> courtesy of Case IH.	4TH PLACE	<b>Case IH Branded Solo Stove®</b> courtesy of Case IH.

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# Administration Grants Local Farmers SNAP Food Benefits

*Continued From Page 6* households to purchase food in their local communities. This program is also believed to bring fundamental economic support into Massachusetts' food system, their farmers, and employees, says Department of Transitional

Assistance Acting Commissioner Mary Sheehan.

John Lebeaux, Commissioner of the Massachusetts



Department of Agricultural Resources, also commended the program for providing the local farmers and markets the ability to receive SNAP payments.

Correspondingly, this program is believed to bring new customers to Massachusetts' local farm businesses and increase access to fresh, local foods for the residents, as reported by Bennett.

# 2023 Big E Discount Tickets On Sale Now!

The holiday season is here, and what better way to say, "Merry Christmas!" than with the surprise of Big E fun? Check off Christmas wish lists by grabbing advance discount tickets and Value Passes to the 107th edition of The Big E, Sept. 15-Oct. 1, 2023, online at [www.TheBigE.com](http://www.TheBigE.com) and at the Box Office, 9am to 3pm Monday-Friday. The Big E Under the Tree holiday special is valid through New Year's Day.

Ticket options available include: Single Day Admission Tickets – \$12

adults/\$8 children 6-12  
Midway Magic Vouchers – \$30  
Opening Day Tickets (good for use on Sept. 15 only) – \$10  
17-Day Value Passes – \$50 adults/\$20 children age 6-12. This offer includes four FREE Giant Slide tickets for each Value Pass sold  
Cream Puff & Eclair Vouchers – \$30/six pack – any combination of cream puffs and eclairs

All tickets, passes and vouchers are "print at home" documents, making the gift a perfect last-minute shopping option. Don't

miss out on these BIG savings! To learn more, please visit [www.TheBigE.com/holidaytickets](http://www.TheBigE.com/holidaytickets).

Eastern States Exposition hosts more than 100 shows and events throughout the year. Don't miss Yuletide at Storowton, Dec. 3 & 4, all the Yuletide Week happenings Dec. 6-10, including Yuletide Lantern Light Evening, Dec. 7.

Visiting for a weekend event? Wrap up your Christmas gift shopping with the perfect handcrafted presents from local businesses!

From delicious regional wines and cheeses to cozy sweaters, gourmet foods, Yankee Candles, holiday decor and more, stop by the Eastern States Farmers Market and Storowton Village's Gift and Christmas Shops for all of your gift giving needs! Visit [www.TheBigE.com](http://www.TheBigE.com) for dates and hours.

Stay up to date with all the happenings at Eastern States Exposition. Find us on Facebook, follow us on Instagram and Twitter or join our mailing list – all from our home page – [TheBigE.com](http://TheBigE.com).



# Science misinformation on GMOs reaches quarter of a billion people, study finds

Science misinformation about genetically modified crops and foods had a potential global readership of over a quarter of a billion people, according to a new study published by the Alliance for Science, which combats anti-science misinformation on topics like climate, vaccines and GMOs.

The study assessed top English-language media from around the world, with stories published over a two-year period between January 2019 and January 2021. Articles were assessed for misinformation, defined as statements that disagreed with the scientific consensus on the safety of genetic engineering.

Overall, 9% (47) of the 535 relevant articles containing ‘GMO’-related keywords contained misinformation. This false information was considered likely to have had a potential reach of 256 million people.

The problem is particularly acute in Africa, where one-fifth of media



coverage of genetically modified foods contained misinformation. The corresponding figures for North America and Europe were 5% and 7%, respectively.

As well as regional tags, the articles were also subjected to sentiment analysis. While an overwhelming majority of articles were categorized as ‘neutral,’ the majority of misinformation was rated as ‘negative’ in tone. There were no articles containing misinformation with a positive tone towards GMOs.

The biggest category of misinformation concerned human health. This category includes articles containing claims that GMOs cause cancer or other health impacts without refutation,

because such claims contradict a worldwide scientific consensus that food from genetically engineered crops is as safe as food from non-genetically engineered crops. Misinformation on GMOs and human health also had the highest readership, achieving a potential reach of 139 million people.

The study was conducted in partnership with Cision Media, using its NextGen database of global media. Sentiment analysis and categorization was performed manually, not by machine.

The paper, which is published in the peer-reviewed journal GM Crops & Food, is titled “Misinformation in the media: global coverage of GMOs 2019-2021.” The lead author is Mark Lynas, climate and research lead at the Alliance for Science, which is based at the Boyce Thompson Institute in Ithaca, New York.

Lynas has previously published work with the Alliance for Science quantifying the scientific consensus on climate change, and examining media misinformation both on COVID-19 and vaccines. This new paper is thought to be the first to quantify the extent of GMO-related misinformation in the world’s media based on a comprehensive dataset.

On the issue of GMO misinformation, Lynas said: “Our results show that misinformation about GMOs is still a huge problem, and that hundreds of millions of people are being given false information that contradicts the scientific consensus on the safety of genetic engineering. Make no mistake: misinformation about GMOs can be as harmful to society as misinformation on vaccines or climate change. The media must do better, and stop publishing false claims on this subject spread by anti-science activists.”

Dr Sheila Ochugboju, executive director the Alliance for Science, added: “What is most worrying is that the problem of misinformation on GMOs is particularly acute in Africa, where it is harming the livelihoods of smallholder farmers by preventing them from accessing new crop varieties that are resistant to pests and to drought caused by climate change.”

She added: “It is vital that the benefits of scientific innovation are not denied to people in the Global South,” and vowed that the Alliance for Science will continue to combat misinformation on this subject and others via its Nairobi-based Global South Hub, and by working with partners including the Open Forum for Agricultural Biotechnology in Africa (OFAB).

## Grass-fed Dairy May Be Key To Northeast Sector Resilience

The U.S. organic dairy market is experiencing a major shift. After expansion during the 2000s and 2010s, the U.S. sales of organic milk have dropped steadily over the past 5 years—by 2.3 percent in 2022 alone—and prices declined by 25% between 2017 and 2022, according to data from the USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service. The slump is largely due to the market mismatch between the growing organic milk production and lower demand for all dairy milk in the U.S. However, challenges for New Hampshire’s small organic dairy farms, which have 100 or fewer milking cows, have been exacerbated by increasing feed costs and large organic milk processors, such as Horizon Organic and Maple Hill Creamery, recently transitioning to purchasing more milk from larger dairy operations in other U.S. regions.

Despite these challenges, New England organic dairy farmers can increase their sustainability and market competitiveness is through innovation in their management strategies, according to Andre Brito, a scientist with the NH Agricultural Experiment Station and associate professor in the

Agriculture, Nutrition and Food Systems department.

One area of the organic dairy market that has not only seen growth, but rapid recent expansion is the organic grass-fed (OGF) sector. OGF managed farms must adhere to more stringent protocols than a traditional organic dairy operation. But there are two major benefits to OGF management, explains Brito, including greater resiliency to rising costs of feed grain and a generally higher price than regular organic milk.

Until recently, however, the organic grass-fed management systems have had little research directed to identifying best practices for higher milk production. Brito was recently one of several Northeast scientists to contribute to a paper in Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems journal that studied management techniques of OGF dairy farmers. Led by researchers at the University of Vermont, the study provides a better understanding of this sector and its operations and needs.

The research included a national survey of 167 OGF farmers, which gathered information about

general farming practices, herd management, and foraging and grazing management.

The key findings indicated that the majority of OGF dairy farmers belong to the plain, or Amish-Mennonite, community, and that farms with higher milk production most often used Holstein cows, employed an intense regimen of pasture rotation, and supplemented grazing diets with molasses and kelp meal.

“With the margin of profitability declining over time for organic dairy farmers, one solution has been to reduce feed costs and shift to 100 percent forage diets and produce a type of milk that has a higher price point.”

“Pasture and forage are the cheapest source of feed in a dairy farm as imported grains can be very expensive,” he adds. “With the margin of profitability declining over time for organic dairy farmers, one solution has been to reduce feed costs and shift to 100 percent

forage diets and produce a type of milk that has a higher price point.”



Responses from the survey were generally concentrated in the Northeast (particularly New York) and the

Midwest, suggesting that the majority of OGF farms are likely located in those areas, says Brito. The researchers are seeing more and more organic dairy operations transitioning to OGF management, as one way to find a competitive advantage in an otherwise stagnating organic dairy industry.

“I’m positive that the organic dairy sector in New England allowed, and is still allowing, a lot of farmers to remain in business,” Brito says. “Otherwise, those smaller operations wouldn’t be viable economically.” Brito’s and others’ research into OGF management is adding another tool in dairy farmers’ toolbox to allow many small and medium New England dairy farms – in some cases, farms that have been run by the same families for generations – to remain competitive and resilient.



# Allied Business Directory

## Auto Shine Auto Body

310 Bedford St  
Abington MA  
Phone: 781-421-6042  
  
531-549 Pond St  
Braintree MA  
  
Phone: 781-337-4309  
Copeland Street Auto Body  
65 Copeland St Quincy MA  
Phone: 617 479-6352  
**Products & Services:** We are offering 10% off any collision job for Farm Bureau Members! Specializing in Any Collision Job, We work with all insurances and handle all necessary arrangements for Your Convenience Free Estimate.

## Berkshire Agricultural Ventures

314 Main Street Suite#11  
Great Barrington, MA, 01230  
413-645-3594  
glenn@berkshireagventures.org  
**Products & Services:** Provides grants, loans, business and technical assistance to support local farms and food businesses in the Berkshire-Taconic region.

## Blood Farm

94 West Main Street  
West Groton, MA 01472  
978-448-6669  
**Products & Services:** We are a 7 generation, family run, slaughter and processing facility.

## The Big E

1305 Memorial Ave  
West Springfield, MA 01089  
413-205-5011  
https://www.thebige.com/p/agriculture  
info@thebige.com  
**Products & services:** Fairgrounds and Annual Fair

## 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.

## Colonial Restorations

PO Box 868  
Fiskdale, MA 01518-0868  
508-735-9900  
http://www.cr1981.com  
info@cr1981.com  
**Products & Services:** Colonial Restorations, LLC specializes in the structural restoration/repair of post and beam homes and barns throughout New England since 1981.

## Eastern Solar

Ken Nelson  
P.O. Box 60  
Wayland, MA 01778  
508-882-0102  
easternsolarservice.com  
easternsolarservices@hotmail.com  
**Products & Services:** Serving the solar industry for 40 years. Service, maintenance, training and repair of existing solar systems.

## Greenfield Farmers Cooperative Exchange

269 High Street  
Greenfield, MA 01301  
413-773-9639  
greenfieldfarmerscoop.com  
**Products & Services:** Farm, Home, Garden and Pet Supplies, Nursery, Bulk Grain, Wood Pellets. Member Discount, Local Delivery

## Harness / Horseman's Association of New England

POB 1811  
Plainville, MA 02762  
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.

## Higgins Powersports

140 Worcester Rd.  
Barre, MA 01005  
978-355-6343  
www.higginspowersports.com  
www.higginsenergy.com  
**Products and Services:** LS Tractors & implements, DR & Husqvarna power equipment, Polaris & Can-Am ATV's, UTV's, Woodmaster outdoor furnaces, Vermont Castings, Jotul and

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HearthStone stoves  
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Amherst, MA 01002  
413-549-2900  
www.HyperionSystemsLLC.com  
**Products & Services:** Dual-use agricultural solar project development and research company. Funded by NREL and in collaboration with UMass Amherst.

## M5 Landworks

1 Mathewson St  
Plainville, MA 02762  
508-510-2004  
M5Landworks1@gmail.com  
**Products & Services:** We specialize in undergrowth brush clearing/excavation. Give us a call for a free estimate!

## Major Landscaping

626 Lindsey Street  
Attleboro, MA 02703  
508-431-4336  
majorlandscaping508@gmail.com  
**Products & Services:** Landscaping & construction

## Massachusetts Nursery & Landscape Association

P.O. Box 387  
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.

## Otis Poultry Farm

1570 North Main Rd  
Otis, MA 01253  
413-269-4438  
www.otispoultryfarm.com  
**Products & Services:** Selections of chicken & turkey pies with & without vegetables in assorted sizes. They have a large selection of sheepskin slippers & sugarfree candy.

## Pope Energy

Doug Pope  
42 8th Street, #4413B  
Boston, MA 02129  
617-337-0199  
doug.pope@popeenergy.com  
**Products & Services:** ag solar development

## Progressive Grower Inc.

81 Charlotte Furnace Road  
West Wareham, MA 02576  
508-273-7358  
www.progressivegrower.com  
Info@ProgressiveGrower.com  
**Products & Services:** The company carries a full line of chemicals and fertilizers at competitive prices and an extensive stock of farm equipment, tools and clothing.

## Resource Management, Inc.

1171 NH RT 175  
Holderness, NH 03245  
605-536-8900  
www.rmirecycles.com  
RMI@RMIrecycles.com  
**Product & Services:** We provide responsive, innovative and high quality organic residuals and recycling services to address our customer interests and needs.

## Rice Fruit Farms

757 Main St  
Wilbraham, MA 01095  
413-596-4002  
www.ricefruitfarm.com  
info@ricefruitfarm.com  
**Products & Services:** bakery, fruits and vegetables, coffee, homemade ice cream, milk, eggs, local products, honey and olive oil.

## SEMAP, Inc.

P.O. Box 80625  
South Dartmouth, MA 02748  
508-289-1814  
www.semaponline.org  
**Products & Services:** local food promotion, sustainable farming education and healthy food initiatives.

## Soares Flower Garden Nursery

1021 Sandwich Rd  
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.

## The Mane Place

510 W Hartford Ave  
Uxbridge, MA 01569-1384  
508-278-7563  
themaneplace.com  
linda@themaneplace.com  
**Products & Services:** The Mane Place offers Poulin grain, hay, shavings, barn supplies, horse supplies, pet food and supplies, apparel, saddles, tack and gifts in a friendly family-owned setting.

## World Farmers Inc.

769 Main St  
Lancaster, MA 01523  
978-706-7935  
http://www.worldfarmers.org/  
info@worldfarmers.org  
**Products & Services:** education, beginning farmers and ranchers.



# USDA Announces December 2022 Lending Rates For Agricultural Producers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced loan interest rates for December 2022, which are effective Dec. 1, 2022. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) loans provide important access to capital to help agricultural producers start or expand their farming operation, purchase equipment and storage structures or meet cash flow needs.

### Operating, Ownership and Emergency Loans

FSA offers farm ownership and operating loans with favorable interest rates and terms to help eligible agricultural producers, whether multi-generational, long-time, or new to the industry, obtain financing needed to start, expand or maintain a family agricultural operation. FSA also offers emergency loans to help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding, other natural disasters or quarantine. For many loan options, FSA sets aside funding for underserved producers, including veterans, beginning, women, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and Hispanic farmers and ranchers. Interest rates for Operating and Ownership loans for December 2022 are as follows:

- Farm Operating Loans (Direct): 5.125%
- Farm Ownership Loans (Direct): 5.000%
- Farm Ownership Loans (Direct, Joint Financing): 3.000%
- Farm Ownership Loans (Down Payment): 1.500%
- Emergency Loan (Amount of Actual Loss): 3.750 %

FSA also offers guaranteed loans through commercial lenders at rates set by those lenders. To access an interactive online, step-by-step guide through the farm loan process, visit the Loan Assistance Tool on farmers.gov.

### Commodity and Storage Facility Loans

Additionally, FSA provides low-interest financing to producers to build or upgrade on-farm storage facilities and purchase handling equipment and loans that provide interim financing to help producers meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are low. Funds for these loans are provided through the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and are administered by FSA.

- Commodity Loans (less than one year disbursed): 5.625%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans:
- Three-year loan terms: 4.375%
- Five-year loan terms: 4.125%
- Seven-year loan terms: 4.125%
- Ten-year loan terms: 4.000%

- Twelve-year loan terms: 4.125%
- Sugar Storage Facility Loans (15 years): 4.250%

### Pandemic and Disaster Support

FSA broadened the use of the Disaster Set Aside (DSA), normally used in the wake of natural disasters, to allow farmers with USDA farm loans who are affected by COVID-19, and are determined eligible, to have their next payment set aside. Because of the pandemic's continued impacts, producers can apply for a second DSA for COVID-19 or a second DSA for a natural disaster for producers with an initial DSA for COVID-19. The COVID-DSA is available for borrowers with installments due before Dec. 31, 2022, and whose installment is not more than 90 days past due when the DSA request is made. The set-aside payment's due date is moved to

the final maturity date of the loan or extended up to 12 months in the case of an annual operating loan. Any principal set-aside will continue to accrue interest until it is repaid. Use of the expanded DSA program can help to improve a borrower's cashflow in the current production cycle.

FSA also reminds rural communities, farmers and ranchers, families and small businesses affected by the year's winter storms, drought, hurricanes and other natural disasters that USDA has programs that provide assistance. USDA staff in the regional, state and county offices are prepared to deliver a variety of program flexibilities and other assistance to agricultural producers and impacted communities. Many programs are available without an official disaster designation,

including several risk management and disaster recovery options.

### Inflation Reduction Act Assistance for Distressed Producers

On August 16, President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) into law. It is a historic, once-in-a-generation investment and opportunity for the agricultural communities that USDA serves. Section 22006 of the IRA provided \$3.1 billion for USDA to provide relief for distressed borrowers with certain FSA direct and guaranteed loans and to expedite assistance for those whose agricultural operations are at financial risk. USDA has allocated up to \$1.3 billion for initial steps to help these distressed borrowers. This includes both automatic and case-by-case assistance. For more information producers can contact their local USDA Service Center.

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Visit the A&B's Website at [www.abinsgroup.com](http://www.abinsgroup.com) 978-399-0025.



Massachusetts Farm Bureau members now receive a \$500 Bonus Cash offer from Ford 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](http://fordfarmbureauadvantage.com) or [LincolnFarmBureauAdvantage.com](http://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.





Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation members can save up to \$2,750 on eligible Cat® machines. On top of that, members receive an additional \$250 credit on work tool attachments purchased with new Cat machines.

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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.

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\*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.




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Growing up in the farming business, Matt McGovern learned the value of American ag and wants to give Massachusetts farmers an opportunity to save on one of the tools that keep their farms running.

Visit <https://www.mcgovernauto.com/mcgovern-farm-bureau-program.htm> for more info today!

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# Keeping Your Christmas Tree Fresh Through December

By: Julie Tomascik @julietomascik

For many families, picking out the perfect Christmas tree is an annual tradition. But there are a few things you should keep in mind about your real Christmas tree to help keep it fresh through the holiday season.

### Trim the trunk

Make a fresh cut across the bottom of the trunk. I know it seems odd since you just cut down the tree, but it's necessary.

When the tree is first cut, sap rushes to close the gap and seal the bottom. That prevents the tree from absorbing water. Adding a fresh cut at the bottom before you place the tree in water will help it take in the water and stay fresh through December.

It's also recommended to put up the tree the same day you bring it home. But if you can't, you should store the tree in a cool place with water until you're ready and able to set it up.

### Buy a big enough stand

Make sure your tree stand is big enough for the tree and the water it will need.

### Water, water, water

Always keep fresh-cut trees in water.

Don't add sugar, Sprite or any other additives, according to longtime Christmas tree farmer Damian Prause. He recommends watering trees twice a day, and even more often than that, in the beginning if you notice the tree drinking more water.

### Choose an appropriate location

Location is key. Don't place your tree in a window where it will get full sun. That will dry out the tree faster.

and if any young or elderly family members or friends could trip and stumble over the tree.

### Be cautious of heat sources

This goes back to location. Make sure your tree isn't near a heater, fireplace or other heating and cooling sources. Those can dry out the tree or cause it to catch fire.

### Check your lights

Before decking your tree, check your lights. Make sure there aren't any exposed wires or missing bulbs. Smaller lights produce less heat, which is beneficial with fresh-cut trees.

Don't leave your tree lit if you won't be in the same room or at home with it. Real trees, especially if they

are starting to dry, can catch fire. It's important to follow general fire safety tips when you have a real Christmas tree indoors.

### Check water levels daily

There's the water thing again. Make sure you check the water level in your tree's stand daily to ensure the water isn't below the bottom of the trunk. If it becomes very dry, it can become a fire and safety hazard.

### Meet a family who grows Christmas trees

At Old Time Christmas Tree Farm in Harris County, Texas, the

holiday season is all about making memories. The Prause family grows holiday cheer each year on their farm by providing families an opportunity to choose-and-cut their own Christmas tree. Read more about their family here.

Julie Tomascik is associate director-editor at Texas Farm Bureau. This column was originally published on Texas Table Top.



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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.

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Recipe:  
Turkey & Sausage  
Pot Pie

Ingredients

- ½ lb sausage
- ½ cup chopped onions
- 1 TBSP olive oil
- 2 TBSP all-purpose flour
- Salt and pepper
- 2 cup chicken broth
- 1 TBSP fresh thyme leaves or 1 tsp dried thyme leaves
- ¼ cup chopped celery
- 1 cup chopped carrots
- 3 cup leftover turkey meat, cut into chunks
- 1 cup frozen green peas, thawed
- 1 pre-made pie crust, homemade or store-bought in the box such as Pillsbury®
- 1 TBSP finely chopped fresh herbs such as thyme, oregano, basil, or chives mixed
- 1 egg whisked with 1 tbsp water for egg wash



How to make

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. In a large deep skillet, brown Swaggerty’s sausage over medium heat until golden brown breaking into large chunks as it cooks. Remove from pan to drain on paper towels.
3. Add onions to the same skillet along with the 1 tbsp of olive oil. Cook onions until slightly browned and softened.
4. Scatter 2 TBSP flour, salt, and black pepper over the onions and stir with a whisk for about 5 minutes.
5. Slowly pour in 2 cups broth whisking as you pour. Add thyme leaves. Turn heat to medium low and cook, stirring often until mixture is slightly thickened.
6. Add celery and carrots to the slightly thickened broth and cook for about 7-8 minutes. Stir often.
7. Add browned sausage, turkey chunks, and peas to the pan and gently fold ingredients together. Remove from heat and scrape mixture into a 2 quart casserole dish.
8. On a flat work surface lightly dusted with flour roll out pie crust into a circle larger than the casserole dish. Scatter the 1 TBSP chopped herbs over the crust and roll into the surface of the dough.
9. Cut dough into strips and place over the filling creating a lattice top. Press strips of dough to the edges of the casserole dish and brush crust with egg wash.
10. Bake for about 30-40 minutes or until top crust is golden brown and filling is bubbly and hot. Remove from oven.

Can’t Make it to Puerto Rico? Join Us Online!

By: Zippy Duvall, AFBF President

The Farm Bureau family will gather in San Juan for our 104th Annual Convention in less than a month. While we wish everyone could join us there, we understand that not everyone can make it to Puerto Rico. But that doesn’t mean you can’t join the fun and gain some valuable insights about agriculture and how to be a better leader in your community. For the third year in a row, we are offering a virtual registration that includes all the general sessions, eight workshops, and all the programming on the Cultivation Center Stage.

With a virtual registration, you can hear from Bert Jacobs, the co-founder and Chief Executive Optimist of Life Is Good. When he and his brother started their company, they had just \$78 in their pockets and lived out of a van. Bert doesn’t take his success for granted. He recognizes that while life is good, it’s not always perfect. That’s why they donate 10% of their profits to help kids in need. His uplifting and optimistic keynote will be powerful as we prepare to face a new year.

You’ll also be able to hear from Big Kenny of Big & Rich. As a renowned artist, songwriter, and humanitarian, Big Kenny will share about his philanthropic outreach

and efforts to end hunger, a goal shared by Farm Bureau, which farmers and ranchers play an integral part in achieving. Like most of us, Big Kenny is always looking ahead, and he has long-term goals related to ending hunger that I’m looking forward to learning more about as we hear his inspiring remarks.

Virtual attendees will also have live access to every session on the Cultivation Center Stage. Throughout the Convention, you’ll be able to tune into all of the educational, insightful, and competitive event programming we have planned. From the finals for the Young Farmer & Rancher Discussion Meet and the Ag Innovation Challenge to social media influencers and the hosts of the podcast Discover Ag, Tara Vander Dussen and Natalie Kovarik, there is something for everyone on the Cultivation Center Stage.

One of the highlights of any AFBF Convention is our outstanding workshops. While we couldn’t make all of them available online, we picked eight that would be the most valuable to virtual attendees. Over the course of two sessions,

you’ll be able to hear from our team of expert lobbyists on the outlook of the issues that matter most to farmers and ranchers in our nation’s capital. Our economists will present the economic outlook for

2023, and we’ll look at all the moving pieces surrounding the 2023 farm bill. Another session will provide some important tools for farmers and ranchers to utilize when dealing with anxiety and stress on the farm. Find a full list of available workshops at [annualconvention.fb.org/virtual](https://annualconvention.fb.org/virtual).

All the items I mentioned and so much more are available live and on-demand, for three months after Convention ends, for just \$25. That’s quite a value to invest in yourself and your farm! While I wish I could see each and every Farm Bureau member in San Juan, I’ll be happy to know that so many will be joining us from their homes, listening in from the tractor, and enjoying our Convention months after we leave Puerto Rico. Register today at [annualconvention.fb.org/virtual](https://annualconvention.fb.org/virtual).

**Zippy Duvall**  
AFBF President



Vincent “Zippy” Duvall, a poultry, cattle and hay producer from Georgia, is the 12<sup>th</sup> president of the American Farm Bureau Federation.

AFBF Applauds Bipartisan Effort to Keep Economy Moving

American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall commented on President

Biden’s signing of legislation to avert a disastrous rail strike.

“AFBF applauds Congress and President Biden for working



together to avert a rail strike. High diesel prices, a truck driver shortage, and low water levels on the Mississippi River have already made shipping conditions difficult. A rail strike would have had a devastating effect on the American economy, especially as families

grapple with higher prices caused by inflation. “Farmers rely on trains to transport food and feed, and they also depend on the rails to bring important supplies like fertilizer back to the farm, which is why AFBF urged Congress and the president to find a solution to the rail worker impasse. Their bipartisan efforts will help ensure farmers can continue delivering food from their farms to families across the country.”

American Farm Bureau Foundation Awards \$20,000+ in Grants, Scholarships

The American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture has awarded \$10,000 in grants to recognize the exceptional efforts of 10 county Farm Bureaus and their agricultural literacy programs. Additionally, the Foundation has awarded \$15,000 in scholarships to 10 educators who exemplify excellence in engaging students to learn where

their food comes from. The grants and scholarships are funded through the White-Reinhardt Fund for Education, which acknowledges communities



and educators who are engaging with students on the fundamental role of agriculture in the everyday lives of all Americans.

“Teaching the next generation of learners where their

Continued on Page 15



# MFBF Members' Classifieds

## WANTED

**FARM STUFF WANTED:** We are interested in picking your barns, outbuildings. etc. Looking for galvanized buckets. tin roof. old boxes and anything we can make into something cool! Call Mike at 978-230-1131.

**WANTED:** Looking to buy a Black Angus Heifer, 6-12 months old. Contact Gerry at 978-692-8881.

## FOR SALE

**FOR SALE:** Tires: Great prices, all sizes, tire repairs, calcium chloride service. Hoey Tire, Worcester. Call 508-755-6666, [www.hoeytire.com](http://www.hoeytire.com)

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

**FOR SALE:**

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- John Deere wheel extensions/clamps for dual rear tires \$600. 508-866-1149 or 508-269-3693
- Chevy 305 with Berkley irrigation pump \$5200. 508-866-1149 or 508-269-3693
- 6 and 10-inch PVC irrigation pipe. 508-866-1149 or 508-269-3693
- Berkley 12-inch flow pump \$1200. 508-866-1149 or 508-269-3693
- Used aluminum water control flumes 36/30/15-inch outlets. 508-866-1149 or 508-269-3693

- Buckhorn vented/stackable/plastic field bins, 40x48x16, \$60/bin or bulk pricing. 508-866-1149 or 508-269-3693
- Collapsible RPCs vented, perfect for produce \$9 or bulk pricing. 508-866-1149 or 508-269-3693

**FOR SALE:** Five College Farms in Hadley, MA is having a Farm Equipment and Supplies Sale. Everything must go! Tractors, Tote Bins, Horticulture Supplies, Cultivators, Amendments, and many more items. Contact [arthur@fivecollegefarms.com](mailto:arthur@fivecollegefarms.com) or call/text (909) 649-2215 or for a listing <http://l.lead.me/bd3dhy>

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## Foundation Awards \$20,000+ in Grants, Scholarships

Continued From Page 14

food comes from is a tremendous responsibility, and these programs and educators do an outstanding job with such an important task,” said Daniel Meloy, executive director of the Foundation. “I’m honored that the Foundation can acknowledge their impressive commitment to ensuring children across the country know the impact agriculture has on each of us.”

Grants are awarded twice a year, in the spring and fall. State and county Farm Bureaus may apply for \$1,000 grants in support of education programs for grades K-12 in order to create new ag literacy programs or expand existing programs. Organizations and schools can work with their local Farm Bureau to apply for the grants, which are available on a competitive basis.

Additionally, the Foundation has awarded scholarships valued at \$1,500 each to 10 educators to help offset the cost of attending the National Ag in the Classroom Conference. The Foundation will also cover the registration cost of attending the conference for the educators selected.

The White-Reinhardt Fund is a project of the Foundation that sponsors scholarships and grants

in cooperation with the American Farm Bureau Women’s Leadership Committee. The fund is named in honor of Berta White and Linda Reinhardt, two former committee chairwomen.

To read the list of grant and scholarship winners, please visit: <https://www.fb.org/newsroom/american-farm-bureau-foundation-awards-more-than-20000-in-grants-and-schola>



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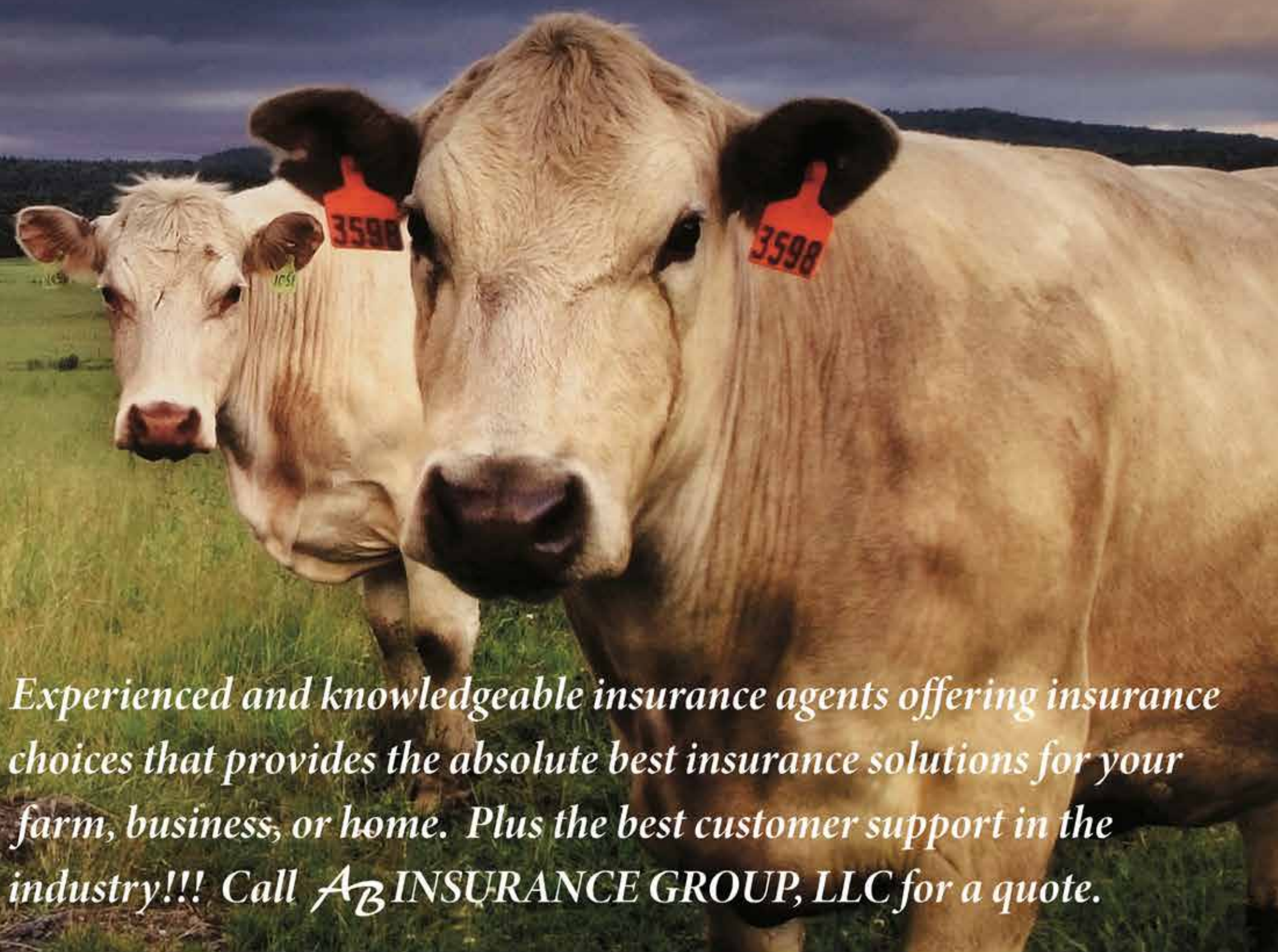
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