

GOVERNOR & LT.  
GOVERNOR ANNOUNCE  
CREATION OF  
DIRECTOR OF RURAL  
AFFAIRS  
*Story On Page 4*



EPA ANNOUNCES  
ACCELERATED ACTION  
ON 4 PESTICIDES  
*Story On Page 6*



MASSACHUSETTS FARM BUREAU FEDERATION'S

Vol. 31, No. 2

# NEWS & VIEWS

MARCH/APRIL 2023

*www.***MFBF***.net*

## Farmers Hear Growing Concerns At Legislative Breakfast

*From: The Vineyard Gazette*

State legislators and farm advocates gathered at the second annual meeting of the Martha's Vineyard Farm Bureau on March 20, 2023, to voice their agricultural concerns and hear about current farm-focused initiatives at the statehouse.

A national lobbying organization, the American Farm Bureau Federation is composed of local chapter organizations which communicate their priorities to

their respective state bureau. The Island's chapter, founded in 2020, was the first local bureau to be created in the last 40 years. Meeting at the Agricultural Hall Monday morning, the farmers heard about two of the statewide bureau's top priorities: the harmful chemicals known as PFAS and labor laws.

"Agriculture is in the air at the Statehouse," said Karen Schwalbe, Executive Director of

the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation. Ms. Schwalbe spoke on a panel with state Sen. Julian Cyr, state Rep. Dylan Fernandes and Martha's Vineyard Farm Bureau president Dan Martino.

The state bureau plans to support a bill which looks to study the levels of PFAS found in agricultural products grown in the state. In that process, the Bureau hopes to incorporate lessons learned from a 2019 regulation passed in Maine.

"It had significant negative implications for farmers," said Mr. Cyr of the Maine law, which required testing for PFAS in food. Many farms, he explained, had previously used processed wastewater sludge as fertilizer. The practice led to contamination on dairy farms and required some herds to be slaughtered after their milk was found to be contaminated.

"We need to figure out what

*Continued on Page 3*

### INDEX

#### Across The State

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COLUMN  
*Page 2*

.....

SPRING IS IN THE AIR  
*Page 3*

.....

YOUNG FARMERS & RANCHERS  
COMMITTEE HAPPENINGS *Page 5*

.....

VA. TECH RESEARCHERS FIGHT  
FIRE BLIGHT'S PLIGHT ON APPLE  
PRODUCTION *Page 8*

#### Across The Nation

USDA ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL  
ASSISTANCE FOR DISTRESSED  
FARMERS FACING FINANCIAL RISK  
*Page 11*



.....

**Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation**  
249 Lakeside Ave, Marlborough, MA 01752  
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Presorted Standard  
US Postage  
PAID  
Permit #1  
Manchester, NH

**BRINGING NEWS TO MASSACHUSETTS  
FARM BUREAU FEDERATION FAMILIES.**

*The Voice of Agriculture in the Commonwealth.*

*Follow Us On Social Media*





### MFBF Welcomes Sabrina Stidsen

We are delighted to announce that Sabrina Stidsen joined our MFBF team in March as our Administrative Assistant! Coming most recently from the Department of Clinical Sciences at Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine and the Tufts Wildlife Clinic, she brings a broad array of administrative and program experience and comes from an equine background. We are excited to have her on board.



In her new role, Sabrina will be the first point of contact for our members both in-person and over the phone, support our counties, and provide bookkeeping and communications support to the office. Stop by the office to say hello!

Please join us in welcoming Sabrina to the team. We look forward to working with her and achieving great things together.

## Executive Director Update

By: Karen Schwalbe, MFBF Executive Director

The value of Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation membership is tangible each spring as our counties sit and break bread with our state and federal legislators and their representatives. These meetings play a critical role in creating a unified voice for farmers. By bringing together our farmers from across different industries, crops, and farming methods, the Farm Bureau helps to create a cohesive community that can advocate for our needs and interests in the agricultural sector. It is our members that are sitting at the table speaking directly with their representatives.

One of the key ways in which Massachusetts Farm Bureau achieves this community is by providing a platform for farmers to connect with one another, share ideas and experiences, and collaborate on common issues. Through local county meetings, legislative breakfasts, and at Agriculture Day at the State House, farmers can come together to discuss the challenges they face, identify opportunities for improvement, and develop solutions that work for everyone. Your problems and concerns are the beginnings of county policy

resolutions. Your involvement helps shape our legislative priorities.

In addition to providing a forum for discussion and collaboration, the Farm Bureau also plays a critical role in advocacy. By representing farmers at the local, state, and national levels, MFBF helps to ensure that the voices of farmers are heard by legislators and other decision-makers.

Massachusetts Farm Bureau’s advocacy efforts are focused on a range of issues that affect farmers. County Farm Bureaus have their unique interests and challenges - agritourism regulations, marijuana, aquaculture - but with common threads including Chapter 61 tax relief, farmland preservation, nuisance deer, and farm viability. By working together to advocate for policies that benefit farmers and their communities, MFBF helps to create a more supportive environment for agriculture and aquaculture. By creating a unified voice for farmers and providing them with the tools and resources they need to succeed, we are critical partners in the ongoing effort to support and strengthen agriculture in Massachusetts.

In Massachusetts, the Farm Bureau provides resources and information on topics such as dealing with municipal officials, right-to-farm protections, and farm management. By providing farmers with these resources, the organization helps to ensure that they are able to operate their farms in a way that is both economically viable and environmentally sustainable.

The Farm Bureau also works to raise public awareness of the importance of agriculture and the contributions of farmers to Massachusetts’ economy and way of life. Through events such as agricultural fairs and farm tours, the organization helps to connect farmers with the broader community and promote a greater understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the agricultural sector.

Together we all play a critical role in creating a unified voice for farmers in Massachusetts. Through our membership structure, advocacy efforts, education and outreach, and public awareness initiatives, our membership helps to support and strengthen the agricultural sector in the state, ensuring that farmers have the resources, information, and support they need to succeed.

**Karen Schwalbe**  
MFBF Executive Director  
karen@mfbf.net

## NE-DBIC \$12 Million Grant Program Invests in Northeast Dairy Processing

Dairy processors across the Northeast can now apply for the Existing Dairy Processor Expansion Grant through the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC). With a total of \$12 million in funding, this grant will fund specialized equipment to help processors increase the use of regionally sourced milk and expand regional dairy processing capacity.

“We’ve seen how impactful NE-DBIC grants have been for our farmers, and we’re thrilled to see this investment for our processors

to further strengthen the dairy supply chain throughout the Northeast,” said Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Commissioner Amanda Beal.

Dairy processors play a vital role in the health of our regional economy, and increasing regional processing capacity leads to a more resilient dairy sector.

“Customers at independent grocers and food co-ops like ours are dedicated to buying local dairy products,” says Allan Reetz, Director of Public & Government Affairs at

Hanover Co-op Food Stores of VT & NH. “Northeast processors are the vital partners we all rely on to meet that demand. With the improved diversity and strength that this grant will support in the dairy community, processors can get the funding they’ve earned to build their business and grow regional food security.”

To accommodate processors of all scales, this grant is broken into three tiers depending on processor size. Large and mid-size processors will go through a multi-stage application process and are

invited to submit pre-applications now through May 11. Small-size processors will be invited to submit a single-stage application when it opens on April 13.

This processing expansion grant is open to existing dairy processors in: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Learn more: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic/grants/existing-dairy-processor-expansion-grant>.

## Shaw Farm Barn Collapses, Kills Animals During Nor’easter

Reprint from Masslive.com

A barn at Shaw Farm in Dracut collapsed during the Nor’easter on March 14, killing some of the animals.

“On March 14 at Shaw Farm we experienced one of life’s unexpected challenges,” the

business wrote on Facebook. “Thankfully, no staff members were hurt. Sadly, we did lose a few of our animals.”

The dairy farm, known for its milk and ice cream, is 110 years old. It hadn’t experienced something

like this in the past, owner Warren Shaw told CBS News, but he assumes it was due to the heavy snow.

Bailey the donkey is OK, the farm clarified after getting questions from customers.

“Thank you everyone for checking,” the farm wrote.

Bailey the donkey is OK, the farm clarified after getting questions from customers.

“Thank you everyone for checking,” the farm wrote.

### 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.



# Spring Is In The Air

By: Nick John, MFBF Deputy Executive Director

The arrival of sunshine and warmer weather in the Bay State brings renewed energy across all aspects of agriculture; it also brings our annual county legislative breakfast season which kicked off on March 17<sup>th</sup> in Plymouth County.

Legislative breakfasts are a great opportunity for our 12 county Farm Bureaus to bring members and legislators together to make introductions and discuss pressing issues pending before the General Court. This is also the time for MFBF to showcase our legislative white paper, which highlights many of our legislative priorities for the two-year legislative session underway on Beacon Hill. The 2023-2024 White Paper is available on our website: MFBF.net.

This year, MFBF President Warren, MFBF Executive Director Karen,



of writing of this, we have seen healthy turnouts and robust discussions at the following county breakfasts: Plymouth, Martha's Vineyard, Essex, Middlesex and Worcester. Upcoming breakfasts include Bristol and Tri-County (Hampden, Hampshire & Franklin); with Norfolk County Farm Bureau closing out the series on April 7<sup>th</sup>.

I'd like to offer a special thanks to our county boards for their diligence in coordinating these events and to our county members and state legislators for their

Contract Lobbyist Dan Bosley and I have been on the circuit, and it is great to be back out in the field and in person as we continue to leave COVID further in the rear view. At the time

attendance! We are anticipating an active and productive legislative session under a new Governor and a renewed focus on agriculture. The Massachusetts Food System Caucus is the largest caucus in the legislature, and their support for agriculture is vital for our farmers. With the formation of the new Joint Committee on Agriculture, Massachusetts Farm Bureau priorities will have a dedicated group of legislators focused on our issues.

We are also excited about Governor Healey's recent announcement of the creation of a Director of Rural Affairs within the Executive Office of Economic Development. While we know agriculture is not just a rural issue with many vibrant farms located inside the I-495 belt, having expanded capacity in the administration to focus on agriculture will be beneficial for agriculture across the Commonwealth.

April also marks the long-anticipated return of Agriculture Day "Ag Day" on Beacon Hill. Ag Day celebrates the cultural heritage, resiliency, and vitality of

Massachusetts's agricultural industry and gives farmers and the organizations that represent them an opportunity to educate legislators about the industry. Being held for the first time since 2019, the event focuses on farmers and the need for supportive state policy and investments. Commodity groups and Buy Local organizations host tables with information about their work and samples of food and agricultural products from their members. Additionally, students from the state's FFA and 4-H programs attend the event to learn about the legislative process.

There are many educational exhibits from the agricultural organizations on display inside the Hall of Flags. This is the one day of the year where farmers and growers come together at the State House to be recognized for their work and the diverse products they produce across Massachusetts, and with this tradition back on the books, Spring has truly arrived in the Commonwealth!!

**Nick John**  
MFBF Deputy Executive Director  
nick@mfbf.net

## For MA Maple Weekend, State, Local Officials Toured Berkshire County Sugarhouses

MAR Commissioner Ashley Randle, State Senator Paul Mark and State Representative Smitty Pignatelli visited three farms in Dalton and Williamstown to learn about the Berkshire maple industry.

Massachusetts Maple Producers Association Coordinator Winton Pitcoff said the objective was to show both the economic benefits and challenges inherent to the maple world.

"Energy and land costs are more expensive in Massachusetts than they are anywhere else in the country, and that makes it very difficult for farmers to sustain themselves just based on selling the products they raise," Pitcoff said.

Maple Weekend is held annually mid-March throughout much of the Northeast, including Massachusetts, New York, and Connecticut.

## Farmers Hear Concerns

Continued From Page 1

happens when we find PFAS in an agricultural environment," Mr. Cyr said.

Ms. Schwalbe also said the bureau is opposing a bill that would change agricultural labor laws. Currently, farms in the state are not obligated to pay overtime, but some legislators are aiming to institute overtime pay after 55 hours of work a week.

"We are worried about farmers going out of business," she said. She felt the regulation would make Massachusetts farmers uncompetitive against supermarkets and other state industries.

Another concerns that came up was the difficulty in accessing

slaughterhouses for Island farmers. Islanders have to send their animals off-Island to be slaughtered, making it a costly and time-consuming process.

"We've been doing a lot of work on slaughtering options," said Mr. Cyr, a former employee of the state Department of Public Health with a special interest in the topic.

The state's current budget has \$150,000 set aside to explore the issue of livestock in isolated communities, and Mr. Cyr said he would explore transport subsidies for Island livestock farmers. Mr. Fernandes added that Islanders themselves could act on several of their concerns at the municipal level, including enacting protections for agritourism,

securing certain aquaculture funding sources and creating farm-friendly zoning bylaws.

For instance, he said a "right-to-farm" bylaw could easily be passed as an amendment to town zoning.

"There's all of these things you already have the power to do," he said. "Get together as an existing group...come up with a farm agenda locally, and then start working at the local level."

Member Events

Worcester County

2023

Summer Picnic

Free for Members & their Guests

Wednesday June 21st

Lilac Hedge Farm, Rutland

Annual Dinner Meeting

Fee TBD

Wednesday October 18th

Spencer Country Inn

RSVP DETAILS: MIKE PINEO

MPINEOPFP@AOL.COM

978-422-7350 (LEAVE VOICEMAIL)

Massachusetts Farm Bureau  
Federation, Inc.  
1-508-481-4766

MFBF Board of Directors

Officers

President..... Warren Shaw  
Vice President .....Ryan MacKay  
Treasurer .....Wayne Smith  
Imm. Past President .....Mark Amato

County Directors

Berkshire ..... Bob Kilmer  
Bristol..... Skip Vadnais  
Cape Cod & Islands .....David Ross  
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

Budget Committee Members

Michael Sabatini  
Steve Ward  
Will Pickard

At-Large Directors

Alex Dowse  
Meghan Gennings  
Laura Abrams

Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee

Heather Bonanno Baker .....Chair

MFBF Staff

Executive Director ..... Karen Schwalbe  
Deputy Executive Director.....Nick John  
Membership Coordinator.....Kim Ashe  
Administrative Assistant ..... Sabrina Stidsen

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 3,000 MFBF members.

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

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter:  
@MAFarmBureau

Join the MFBF chat on Facebook:  
www.facebook.com/groups/farmbureauchat/

NEW! Follow us on Instagram:  
@MassFarmBureau

Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation  
249 Lakeside Ave  
Marlborough, MA 01752  
www.mfbf.net

# Application Period Open For Farm Viability and Urban Agriculture Grant Programs

MAR is accepting applications from Massachusetts farmers who wish to participate in one of these Department programs that help with farm viability in Fiscal Year 2024. The Request for Responses (RFRs) containing program details and the application form are posted on COMMBUYS and can be accessed through a link on each program website below. If you would like an application mailed to you, contact the program coordinator listed. The due date for applications for all three programs is Monday, May 1, 2023.

**Farm Viability Enhancement Program (FVEP)** – for established farms. This program provides business planning and technical assistance to develop or update a business plan for established commercial farms that own and operate unrestricted farmland. In return for a short-term covenant to keep the land in agricultural use, operators may be eligible for grants to implement capital projects on the farm that have been identified in the business plan completed through the program. Grant levels are up to \$75,000, \$120,000, or \$165,000, depending on the size of the farm and acreage protected, in return for a 10- or 15-year term covenant. Uses of funds will vary depending on the needs of the farm – examples include, but are not limited to, new or improved livestock barns or farm stores; purchasing delivery vehicles, tractors, or haying equipment; constructing food processing or storage facilities.

The RFR with FVEP details and application is available at: Farm Viability Enhancement Program (FVEP) | Mass.gov or contact Laura Barley at Laura.Barley@mass.gov or 413-726-2008.

**APR Improvement Program (AIP)** – for APR farms. This program helps sustain active commercial farming on land that has already been protected through the state’s Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program. AIP provides business planning and technical assistance to farmers selected to participate in the program, and grants may be available to implement identified capital improvements

on the farm to increase productivity and profitability. Grant levels are up to \$60,000, \$90,000, or \$125,000 depending on the size of the farm and acreage under APR, available on a cost reimbursement basis with a required 20% match contribution. AIP funds are used primarily for capital improvements to farm infrastructure, such as new or improved buildings for equipment, hay storage, livestock housing, farm stores or processing facilities, or resource improvements for agricultural use, such as orchard renovations or perimeter fencing.

The RFR with AIP details and application is available at: APR Improvement Program (AIP) | Mass.gov or contact Diego Irizarry-Gerould at Diego.Irizarry-Gerould@mass.gov or 857-248-1671.

**Matching Enterprise Grants for Agriculture (MEGA)** – for beginning farmers. This program provides business planning and technical assistance, and grant funds may be available on a one-to-one matching cash reimbursement basis. Funds may be used for equipment, infrastructure, or other capital improvements identified through the business planning process that will have a positive impact on the participating farm’s viability. Common uses of MEGA grant funds include, but are not limited to, greenhouses, barn renovations, tractor implements, chicken coops, farmstands, and refrigerated trucks.

**Expanded eligibility and grant levels in FY2024** – MEGA now assists beginning farmers who have been in business at least one (1) and no more than ten (10) years and are developing their farms into commercially viable operations. Grant levels are up to \$10,000, \$20,000, or \$30,000, based on the number of years the farm has been in business, minimum gross income, and whether the farm has received a prior MEGA award. Prior MEGA participants may be eligible to apply for a second award – see the Request for Response (RFR) for details. The RFR with MEGA details and application is available at: Matching Enterprise Grants for Agriculture (MEGA) | Mass.gov or contact Jess Camp at Jessica.Camp@mass.gov or 617-823-0871.

# Governor Healey and Lieutenant Governor Driscoll Announce Creation of Director of Rural Affairs

Governor Maura T. Healey and Lieutenant Governor Kimberley Driscoll visited Franklin County to announce the creation of a Director of Rural Affairs to ensure that Massachusetts’ rural communities are better represented in state government.

Housed in the Executive Office of Economic Development, the Director of Rural Affairs will serve as a dedicated advocate and ombudsman for rural communities. They will be responsible for cultivating rural economic development and coordinating with secretariats and state agencies to ensure that state government is attuned to the unique needs of rural communities.

“Lieutenant Governor Driscoll and I want to lead an administration for all of Massachusetts, including our rural communities that contribute so much to our state. For the first time in state history, we will have a dedicated staff member committed to coordinating across state government to support economic development in rural communities,” said Governor Healey. “We want to send a clear message to every single person who calls rural Massachusetts home – we see you, we value you, and we’re going to work every day to ensure you have the representation and support you deserve.”



# 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 and Instagram: @MAFBYoungFamers

## YF&R Update

By Heather Bonanno Baker, YF&R Chair

The Massachusetts Young Farmers and Ranchers traveled to both Puerto Rico for the AFBF Convention and Jacksonville, Florida, for the Fusion Convention.

In Puerto Rico, Meg Gennings participated in the Discussion Meet Competition. This competition simulates a board meeting where competitors are given a topic in which they must discuss and come up with solutions. Each competitor gets to make an opening statement and a closing statement following the group discussion. Meg made us all proud, and we commend her for competing!

The Fusion Conference brings together Promotion and Education, Women's Leadership, and Young Farmers and Ranchers. We were joined by our P&E committee members as well. While there, our members attended breakout sessions focused on farm finance planning, mental health awareness in ag, and balancing farm and family life. During this conference, Barbara Rogers Scharneck concluded her years of service to the National Promotion and Education Committee. She has done amazing things while on the Committee, including running their national target training. Heidi Cooper was appointed to the Committee while in Florida. I was appointed Discussion Meet Subcommittee chair for the AFBF Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee. We are very pleased with the enthusiastic support we receive from the state to be involved in AFBF's national committees. Please read the statements below to hear more about our experiences in Jacksonville!

The young farmers are looking to bring the Harvest for All Program back to the state. Every year at the

YF&R leadership conference, awards are given out to states for food quantity, money donated, volunteer hours contributed, and most creative ideas. We have come up with a food donation form that you can fill out when donating product at your business. Please use this form, and it will be submitted directly to us. In addition, if you have a food bank you work directly with, we would love to volunteer our time. Please reach out to me about it.

<https://forms.gle/jZLTiW5vZNm7qMin6>

We have also brought back our monthly newsletter. Please feel free to reach out to be added to our email list!

-----  
"My name is Taylor, and my husband and I are the 15<sup>th</sup> generation of our family farm. Our farm raises and sells grass fed beef, free range eggs, and cage free chicken. As the Retail Manager and Chicken Tender, constantly growing my knowledge is very important to me. Attending the American Farm Bureau Federation's 2023 Fusion Conference was a complete dream. I learned about family farm succession planning, balancing finances in agriculture, how to promote agriculture and educate consumers within my community, agritourism, social media marketing and so much more. It wouldn't have been possible without the support of Massachusetts Young Farmers & Ranchers and the Worcester County Farm Bureau or the encouragement of Heidi Cooper and Heather Baker. It was a fun and busy weekend but I'm home now and so excited to apply all this knowledge and inspiration!"  
-Taylor Tower, Worcester County

"The Fusion Conference in

Jacksonville was not only warm but another fantastic networking and learning opportunity. I was able to participate in workshops that covered event planning and stakeholder surveying. I enjoyed working with Promotion and Education Committee chairs from across the country as well as their staff coordinators to flush out ideas and share resources. I was lucky enough to be able to tour the University of Florida & Beef Teaching and Research Unit as well as their Meat Sciences facilities. The success of their university program relies on industry, farm bureau, and faculty support. I hope that I can help facilitate that support network and redevelop our collegiate farm bureau at UMass.

It was most inspiring to see Barbara Rogers-Scharneck and Heather Bonanno-Baker in action on their respective national committees. So few states have representatives at the national committee level, and we have two! Barbara was commended for her work the past four years on the National Promotion and Education Committee, and now Heidi Cooper will be joining the committee. Congratulations, Heidi, and job well done, Barbara. It speaks to these individuals dedication that coming from a "small state" they bring so much to the table.

I am also proud that we had some first time members attend Fusion. In speaking with these folks, it was evident in how invigorated and empowered they feel. I'm looking forward to working side by side with all of these individuals and more this upcoming year."  
- Meg Gennings, Worcester County

Thank you!  
**Heather Baker**  
MA YF&R Chair  
[heatherbonanno@gmail.com](mailto:heatherbonanno@gmail.com)

*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).*

**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 for 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 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)

## GROWMARK Offers 55 Scholarships Valued At \$2,000 Each

GROWMARK, Inc. announces a revamped scholarship program for 2023. The GROWMARK Foundation will provide 55 scholarships of \$2,000 each to students pursuing agriculture and business-related degrees or certificates at colleges, universities, and technical schools in the U.S. and Ontario, Canada.

"GROWMARK and the FS

member cooperatives are strong supporters of youth leadership education, and this is one more way we can contribute to the future of agriculture," says Amy Bradford, GROWMARK corporate communications manager and GROWMARK Foundation manager.

At the time of application, students must be high school seniors or the equivalent of and enrolled in

a university, community college, or technical school for fall 2023 or continuing students enrolled in good standing at a university, community college, or technical school. Scholarships will be scored by a committee comprised of industry professionals outside of the GROWMARK System.

The 2023 GROWMARK Foundation Scholarship Application may be

found online. The application deadline is May 12, 2023.

Over the last year, GROWMARK has contributed almost \$1 million to community initiatives through its charitable organization, The GROWMARK Foundation. These funds have supported more than \$200,000 in scholarships, \$400,000 in matching funding to ag initiatives across North America, and more than \$70,000 to Ag in the Classroom programs.

## APR Listening Sessions 2023

In April and May, the Department will be conducting a series of five in-person listening sessions across the state as part of its triennial (every three years) review of the APR program.	sale and transfer of APRs, APR eligibility and ranking, the use of ACEP ALE program to leverage APR funding and other APR related issues.	Evenings 6-8pm (registration starts at 5:30 p.m.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>April 11 - Dighton</b> Bristol County Agricultural High School - Student Commons 212, Gilbert Hall 135 Center Street, Dighton</li><li>• <b>April 13 - Stockbridge</b> Stockbridge Town Hall, 50 Main St, Stockbridge</li><li>• <b>May 2 - Amherst</b> Red Barn at Hampshire College, 893 West Street, Amherst</li><li>• <b>May 3 - Danvers</b> Essex North Shore Agricultural</li></ul>	&Tech School, Media Center, 565 Maple Street, Danvers, MA <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>May 4 - Leominster</b> Fidelity Bank - Community Room, 9 Leominster Connector, Leominster</li></ul>
MDAR would like to hear your thoughts on what works well and your concerns or challenges with the program, including: dwellings on APRs, your ability to conduct non-agricultural commercial activities on APRs (Special Permits), alternative energy on APRs, the	Your participation in the meeting is encouraged and welcomed. You can pre-register on mass.gov.		A link to existing guidance, policies, procedures and regulations relative to the management and oversight of the Program of APR policies is available on the APR website.
	The specific dates and locations which are detailed in the program flyer are:		For questions, please email: events@discoverasg.com
	APR Program Events in Spring 2023		

## EPA Announces Accelerated Action On Four Pesticides

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is announcing an effort to expedite protections on some high-risk uses of four organophosphate pesticides. The Agency is releasing the updated occupational and non-occupational spray drift exposure risk assessments for these four pesticides – diazinon, ethoprop, tribufos and phosmet – several years ahead of the scheduled completion of EPA’s work on these chemicals in order to seek early mitigation prior to completing the standard registration review process.	settings for a range of purposes. Diazinon and phosmet controls insects, ethoprop controls worms and other soil pests, and tribufos defoliates cotton prior to harvest. These pesticides are currently undergoing registration review, a process that requires EPA to reevaluate pesticides every 15 years to ensure that as the ability to assess risk evolves and as policies and practices change, pesticides continue to meet the statutory standard of causing no unreasonable adverse effects on human health or the environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The phosmet assessment identified potential risks to workers who mix, load, and apply the pesticide, workers conducting certain post-application activities (e.g., weeding, hand harvesting, or workers re-entering treated areas), and bystanders (including farmworkers) who may be exposed to spray drift.</li><li>• The tribufos assessment identified potential risks to workers who mix, load, and apply the pesticide, and to bystanders (including farmworkers) who may be exposed to spray drift.</li></ul>	equipment for pesticide handlers, spray drift requirements, and new restrictions on when workers can reenter treated fields and perform harvesting and other types of post-application activities. The Agency is asking the registrants to submit label amendments that reflect the necessary risk mitigation measures for each of these four organophosphates and is prepared to expedite label reviews in order to implement the protections as quickly as possible.
“The science is clear: some uses of these four pesticides pose a serious health risk to the people that are exposed to them,” said Michal Freedhoff, Assistant Administrator for the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention. “That’s why we’re taking early action now. While we know there’s still a lot of work to finish our review of these pesticides, today’s announcement helps deliver on our promise to protect farmworkers and uphold our commitment to environmental justice.”	As part of the registration review process, EPA assessed the potential risks to people who mix, load, and apply the four pesticides, farmworkers who work with crops that have been treated with these pesticides, and bystanders who are potentially exposed to spray drift, including families living in agricultural communities.	Although registration review for these pesticides was not scheduled to be completed until 2025-2026, after recognizing that several uses of these four pesticides present significant human health risks, EPA is taking accelerated and early action to address these risks. This will allow the Agency to put important protections in place quickly for some high-risk uses of these pesticides, while allowing time to work through the complicated scientific issues that need to be addressed before completing registration review. EPA is currently meeting with the technical registrants of the four pesticides about early risk mitigation.	The updated exposure risk assessments are now available in the registration review dockets, EPA-HQ-OPP-2008-0351 (diazinon), EPA-HQ-OPP-2008-0560 (ethoprop), EPA-HQ-OPP-2008-0883 (tribufos) and EPA-HQ-OPP-2009-0316 (phosmet) at www.regulations.gov. Given the expedited nature of this effort, the Agency is not taking comment on these assessments. Stakeholders will have an opportunity to comment on the four occupational and non-occupational spray drift risk assessments when the cases progress through the next step of registration review with the proposed interim decision, which will include the full updated human health risk assessment for each. EPA expects to issue the proposed interim decisions in fiscal year 2025 (tribufos) and fiscal year 2026 (ethoprop, diazinon and phosmet).
Diazinon, ethoprop, tribufos and phosmet are part of the group of pesticides known as organophosphates. These pesticides are used in both agricultural (e.g., fruit and nut trees, vegetables and herbs, cotton) and non-agricultural	The Agency identified the following potential risks for each pesticide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The diazinon assessment identified potential risks to workers who mix, load, and apply the pesticide, and to bystanders (including farmworkers) who could be exposed to spray drift.</li><li>• The ethoprop assessment identified potential risks to workers who mix, load, and apply the pesticide, and to bystanders (including farmworkers) who could be exposed to spray drift.</li></ul>	The types of mitigation under consideration include cancellation of uses and formulation types, prohibition of application methods, increased personal protective	For further information: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

## Farm Credit East Releases Report Analyzing Challenges In Northeast Milk Transportation

Challenges in milk marketing are not new. In fact, a 1943 report on milk transportation problems identified many of the same problems the industry faces today – from lack of personnel to low volume routes. Farm Credit East Knowledge Exchange recently took a fresh look at milk transportation, specifically in the Northeast, and released its findings in a new report titled, “Challenges in Northeast Milk Transportation.” “While a great deal has changed	in dairy production and marketing over the past 80 years, many of the issues facing the industry remain the same,” commented Chris Laughton, Farm Credit East Director of Knowledge Exchange and author of the report.	challenges at milk plants; infrastructure limitations at farm facilities; and inadequate transportation infrastructure investment.	public and private investment along with streamlined regulations across state lines.
	The Farm Credit East report identified key challenges facing milk haulers to be driver shortages and aging demographics; regulation barriers; equipment supply-chain issues; logistical	“The logistics of getting milk from the farm to the plant are complex, expensive and fraught with challenges, but they are a key component of the dairy industry,” continued Laughton. To begin to solve for the problems identified, Farm Credit East recommends	To view the report, titled Challenges in Northeast Milk Transportation, visit FarmCreditEast.com, or contact Chris Laughton at (800) 562-2235 or Chris.Laughton@farmcrediteast.com for more information.



# Gov, Lt. Gov Announce Creation of Director of Rural Affairs

Continued from page 4

“Governor Healey and I believe that a Director of Rural Affairs will bring the level of intentionality to our policy making that rural communities deserve. We’ve already gotten started on the work that needs to be done to support these communities, including proposing major funding boosts for Food Security Infrastructure Grants, rural school aid, PILOTs, and regional transit authorities and expanding the dairy tax credit cap,” said Lieutenant Governor Driscoll. “This is only the beginning – from budgeting to policy, we see limitless potential to better serve our rural neighbors. We’re grateful for the work our partners in the legislature have done to support rural communities and look forward to partnering with them to build on these efforts.”

The Director of Rural Affairs will be tasked with conducting a review of all state grant opportunities to ensure that barriers for rural and small towns are mitigated. They will also be instructed to host dedicated office hours for rural towns to receive technical assistance to identify and explore grant opportunities. The Healey-Driscoll Administration also commits to maintaining and updating the Community Compact Connector Calendar so that small municipalities can find all state grants in one place and better coordinate their application efforts.

The Healey-Driscoll Administration’s FY24 proposal also includes a number of provisions to support rural communities, including:

- \$25 million for Food Security Infrastructure Grants (FSIG) to aid farmers, fisherman, schools, nonprofits, and local producers and construct infrastructure to bolster the local food system. This creates a permanent funding source for these grants for the first time.
- \$7.5 million for rural school aid, a \$2 million (36%) increase over FY23. This program provides rural districts with additional funding for the fixed costs of running a school district and exploring strategies to improve longer-term operational efficiencies.
- Increased payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) for state-owned land to ensure full and equitable reimbursement. PILOT reflects property tax revenue forgone by cities and towns due to state ownership of certain land. H.1 funds PILOT at \$51.5 million, a \$6.5 million (14%) increase over FY23. This funding level reflects the most up-to-date property valuations while ensuring all municipalities will receive the same or higher payments in FY24.
- Expanding the dairy tax credit cap from \$6 million to \$8 million to better protect dairy farmers from fluctuations in wholesale milk prices.

- Expanding base funding for RTAs by nearly \$9 million. H.1 also adds \$19 million for new grant opportunities for transit providers, including RTAs, to enable providers to explore new service models that better meet the needs of their communities, expand service to additional hours and days, and improve paratransit infrastructure. At least 25% would go towards providers serving rural communities.
- Increasing by \$570,000 the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resource’s MassGrown and Fresher branding campaign, agricultural fairs, farmers markets, and agricultural education initiatives.
- Funding three new staff positions to support and bolster the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program, facilitating farmland acquisition and protection.
- Expanding support for the Community One Stop for Growth by investing \$1 million into technical assistance to help municipalities identify ways to breathe life into underutilized parcels and committing \$600,000 for the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative to help further community development efforts in town centers and downtowns with planning support. These programs are included in an operating budget for the first time.

The administration’s budget also proposes funding for MassDOT to continue to advance the exploration of next steps for West-East Passenger Rail. This includes \$650,000 for five full-time employees, including the position of a West-East Rail Director. These individuals will collaborate on advancing a strategy to fund and implement service and infrastructure components needed for West-East Rail. The budget also recommends \$12.5 million for components of a future West-East Rail, including track improvements at the Pittsfield Station and the study and design of Palmer Station.

“I’m grateful to Gov. Healey and Lt. Gov. Driscoll for their foresight in creating a position within our office dedicated to the unique challenges rural communities face,” said Secretary Yvonne Hao of the Office of Housing and Economic Development. “Our economy needs to work for everyone, including the 181 rural communities and small towns across our state. Through this role, rural and small towns will have an advocate in state government committed to helping their economies thrive.”

## BLUEWAVE

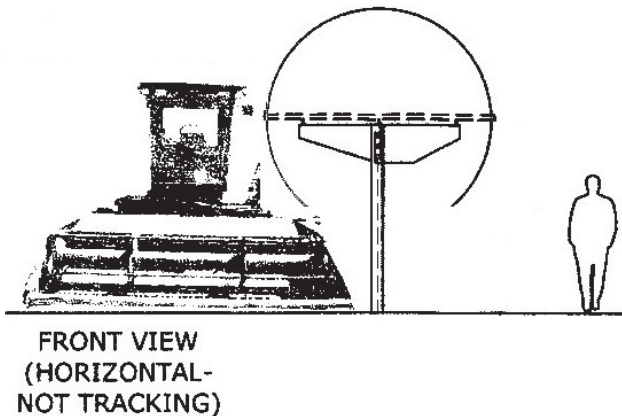
### Agrivoltaics & Dual-Use Solar

bluewave.energy



We create unique designs for each farm that are built around yields, equipment and each farmer. Row spacing is built to accommodate your existing equipment so limited changes are required of your existing farming operation.

**BlueWave develops and owns dual-use agricultural solar projects to support local farms while generating clean energy for Massachusetts communities.**



We have designed dozens of agrivoltaic systems including sheep and cattle grazing, apples, blueberries, corn, hay, and forage, potatoes, squash, and other vegetables, and even christmas trees!

To learn more about adding dual-use solar to your land, or farming existing solar arrays, please contact **Sam Kitfield** at [skitfield@bluewave.energy](mailto:skitfield@bluewave.energy)

# Va. Tech Researchers Fight Fire Blight’s Plight on Apple Production

As the old English proverb goes, “An apple a day keeps the doctor away.”

It’s long been known that apples offer multiple health benefits. Rich in fiber and antioxidants, they are linked to a lower risk of many chronic conditions, including diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. And while apples help protect human health, what is being done to protect the health of this delicious and nutritious fruit?

Researchers at the Alson H. Smith Jr. Agricultural and Extension Research Center, a Virginia Tech facility in Winchester well-known for its contributions to the commercial fruit industry, are studying methods to fight fire blight, a contagious and often deadly disease that affects apples and other pome fruits, such as Asian pears.

In the past 15 years, more frequent warm and wet weather during the spring has sparked epidemics of fire blight, causing losses of up to \$22 million per year in apple and pear crops. Particularly impacted regions include the mid-Atlantic, northeast, and Pacific northwest.

With funding from two grants by the United States Department of Agriculture estimated at a total of more than \$360,000, Srdjan Acimovic, an assistant professor in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences’ School of Plant and Environmental Sciences, is developing new effective treatments for fire blight — more specifically, fire blight bacterium *Erwinia amylovora* in fire blight cankers. Cankers are infected dead zones on wood bark and often cause up to 50 percent of losses of orchard acreage.

“This project will provide growers with critically-needed, next-generation control options for all fire blight phases – cankers, blossom blight, and shoot blight,” Acimovic said.

Fire blight, like so many diseases that affect plants and humans, is complicated to manage. Discovered in the early 1800s, it is the first-ever described bacterial plant pathogen in the history of plant pathology. The disease remains a challenge for today’s researchers because of many factors, including climate change, the way fruit trees are now commonly planted, and the disease’s ability to spread quickly, and often, secretly.

Historically, growers planted fruit trees far apart on large acreages of land — 200 to 300 trees per acre. Trees would grow tall and sprawling and require a ladder and a lot of labor to harvest. Today, most growers plant high-density apple orchard — 1,000 to 2,000 trees per acre — with smaller trees planted closer together.

“The reason why they do this is because it’s lucrative and they can produce much more fruit per acre,” Acimovic said. “But at the same time, if proper control practices are not applied timely, this allows fire blight to spread more easily. Flowers eventually develop on the trees, and that’s where the entry point for fire blight is.”

Fire blight thrives in warm, wet conditions and starts appearing during the correlating spring months. The continual mix of rain and sun allows the bacterium to infect the flowers, resulting in blossom blight.

The infection doesn’t stop there. It spreads into the shoots – resulting in shoot blight. Eventually, the bacterium invades the wood tissue and trunk of the plant, causing cankers. Cankers harbor deadly bacteria that can hibernate during the winter months, a process called overwintering, and spread in the spring to new flowers. They can, and often do, lead to the death of trees, resulting in profit loss and a fear that other trees will, too, be infected.

Acimovic has seen firsthand

fire blight’s devastation. He is stationed at the Alson H. Smith Jr. Agricultural Research and Extension Center, where many of the facility’s apple trees used for research have succumbed to the disease.

“It looks like someone has taken a blowtorch to them,” he said.

Traditional treatment of fire blight begins in the spring. Growers spray the trees with copper-based pesticides as a general sanitation measure. The spray may disinfect the surface of the branches and cankers, but bacteria can remain dormant inside.

And that’s where Acimovic’s research begins. “No matter how well the growers prune the orchards to take cankers out, there will always be enough cankers remaining in the orchard to allow the bacterium to overwinter and potentially infect again the flowers in the spring,” he said. “What I want to do with this research is develop new spray management options that target the bacterium inside of the bark of the cankers and target this stage that has been very poorly investigated in the past.”

To support this research, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) awarded Acimovic, the principal investigator, and his team of researchers at University of Virginia and Oregon State University, a \$75,000 USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant and a \$287,000 USDA-NIFA Crop Protection and Pest Management Grant.

The grants will fund two similar projects with goals to develop effective dormant copper spray treatments in a mix with bark penetrating oils for eradication of fire blight bacterium *Erwinia amylovora* in fire blight cankers, evaluate spray programs with different plant activators that prevent shoot blight and fire blight cankers, and test newly designed antimicrobial enzymes that degrade biofilm of the bacterium

to control blossom and shoot blight.

Acimovic is using an advanced and novel approach to learn more about the bacteria that harbors inside the cankers, the focus of his research to combat fire blight.

The technology is called Droplet Digital (dd) PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction). Its more common counterpart is Digital (d) PCR. Both tools help amplify, or detect, if a pathogen is present. Similar technology was used to detect SARS-Cov-2 and its different variants during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In fire blight’s case, DNA is extracted from a sample of a canker and processed through PCR machines. With a digital PCR, a chip reader machine detects small “fingerprint” regions of DNA molecule specific to *Erwinia amylovora*. If the fire plight pathogen is present, the machine reads as blue dots. Yellow dots mean negative or no detection. The machine can also selectively quantify only the live cells of this pathogen or determine how much of the bacteria is present in a canker.

Droplet digital PRC is similar but superior technology, Acimovic said. Microscopic droplets of oil mix with the DNA of the plant and the pathogen. Should a pathogen be detected, the droplet emits fluorescent light read by the reader. This method can detect very low amounts of the pathogen, even more than the digital PCR, leading to higher sensitivity of detection and accuracy.

“This is the latest technology, and we have made many more advances with this research in my lab,” Acimovic said. “We are excited to continue this revolutionary study that we hope will soon benefit our industry partners and stakeholders across the Commonwealth.”

## Sometimes Soils Need Doctors Too

A visit to the doctor often begins with a stethoscope to assess the heart and lungs because before you treat someone, you need to know how they are. Similarly, to guarantee healthy soils for sustainable agriculture and food production, you first need to know their condition.

Soils are the starting point of food and agriculture. Without healthy soils to provide nutrients, water and air for plant growth and development, we cannot grow the nutritious food we need to lead healthy lives.

Yet, soil degradation is a global problem. Currently, around

one third of the world’s soils is degraded. The situation will continue to worsen if we do not take action.

FAO’s Global Soil Doctors Programme started to do just that —assessing the condition of soils and guiding farmers in remedying soil problems. The educational

material and training modules from this programme help farmers to stay vigilant and responsive to soil health, a vital component of their livelihoods.

Implemented by FAO as part of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP), the Soil Doctors programme provides a space for learning,

*Continued on Page 9*



# Sometimes Soils Need Doctors Too

Continued from page 8

interaction and dialogue between different actors concerned about the proper use and conservation of soils. In addition to sharing diagnostic tools for soil health and implementing practices that avoid soil degradation, this initiative enhances agricultural outputs and consequently, increases nutritious produce and farmers’ incomes.

In collaboration with national partner institutions, extension services or academia, that work as “promoters” for the programme, FAO is helping to educate, train and support local farmers to manage their soil better.

Champion farmers enrolled and trained in the programme become “certified” as soil doctors, teaching others about these practices and helping their communities to safeguard this vital resource.

Jose Luis is helping improve sustainable agricultural practices in Mexico by sharing his knowledge from the programme to other farmers. (©PUEIS Mexico)

Jose Luis Camacho Flores, a soil doctor from Mexico City, is one of the farmers who joined this programme to learn about the importance of sustainable soil management practices for his farming.

There is a critical situation in Mexico because at least half of the soils are degraded, one of the main causes being unsustainable agricultural practices. To address the intensive use of this resource, the GSP is helping farmers restore soils in Mexico by providing them with tools and knowledge to manage soils sustainably.

Jose Luis explains that they learned how to use simple tools to evaluate soil condition. This practical approach can be easily shared farmer-to-farmer, thus improving uptake on a larger scale.

The fact that it is farmers training fellow farmers of a similar culture and background is what makes the programme a success, in Jose Luis’s view. He believes there is more acceptance of and trust in this process. Jose Luis and many other soil doctors now consider themselves responsible for the dissemination of information on sustainable soil management within their local communities, especially to young farmers. Young people who may not previously be interested in soils can see the practical applications of soil management and become more actively involved in protecting soils.

Burkina Faso, Moussa Ouedraogo runs a vegetable farm with three workers. He grows tomatoes, potatoes and green beans in crop rotation with maize and legumes. Over the past several years, he noticed that the soil responds differently depending on their treatment. “In the past, we didn’t need to apply fertilizer to produce,” he explains. Instead, the soils were more fertile because they used mulching, a technique where they cover the soil with residual crops and grasses to protect it. Nowadays, they have animals, which are a valuable addition, but this means there are fewer residues to use as mulch.

To maintain the soil’s ability to produce high quality, nutritious vegetables, they needed to find a new way of protecting soil fertility. Through the programme, Moussa learned that alternating crops and planting legumes is the solution for this. He continues to learn how to better protect his soils so that he can grow healthy and nutritious produce in his market garden.





























On the other side of the world is another soil doctor applying the programme’s knowledge and methods to his farm. Faruk Bhuiyan farms rice in Chandina, in the Cumilla District of Bangladesh. He explains that the old farming methods have resulted in nutrient-depleted soils and reduced nutritious quality of the food. However, with the assistance from the Soil Doctors Programme, he is using improved cultivation methods, such as micronutrient spraying, to supplement standard fertilization plans and is learning about nutrient management.

Faruk hopes that healthy soils will reduce malnutrition in the future. He understands that micronutrient deficiencies are prevalent in the country and with better nutrient management and soil management practices, he can contribute to providing healthy and nutritious food for the community.

Already implemented in nine countries, the Soil Doctors programme currently has 3,475 farmers participating with 403 already certified as Soil Doctors.

As more promoters and farmers join this programme, the world is making greater strides to ensure sustainable soil management whilst simultaneously enhancing agricultural yields and incomes for farmers.

## MFBF Membership Levels & Benefits

Membership Level (Annual Dues)	Farmer (\$225/year)	Gold (\$350/year)	Platinum (\$500/year)	Allied Business (\$225/year)	Advocate - Individual (\$70/year)	Advocate - Family (\$100/year)	Student (\$25/year)
Voting Member							
Serve On Board and/or Committee							
Personal Staff Assistance							
Free Ag. Attorney Consultation							
Member Discounts (excluding Tufts)							
10% Tufts Large Animal Hospital Discount							
A&B Insurance Discount							
Free Allied Business Directory Listing							



# 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.

## AVIV, LLC

115R S Main Street  
Berkley, MA 02779  
Eva Smith. Director of Operations, Partner  
Eva@aviv.life  
www.aviv.life  
774-231-8008

**Products & Services:** We are a farm based mental health practice that specializes in animal assisted psychotherapy. Our practice holds sessions outdoors and with equines or other farm animals.

## 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

## BlueWave

116 Huntington Avenue, Suite 601  
Boston, MA 02116  
W: (413) 450-0190  
M: (413) 824-2000  
Sam Kitfield  
skitfield@bluewave.energy  
https://bluewave.energy/

**Product & Services:** BlueWave develops and owns dual-use agricultural solar projects to support local farms while generating clean energy for Massachusetts communities.

## 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.

## Critter Control of Springfield, MA

Jonathan Cahoon  
Phone: 413-262-0138  
Email: springfieldma@crittercontrol.net

**Products & Services:** Critter Control offers vertebrate control from mice to beaver. We are a certified Avix bird control installer and service provider. Serving the Springfield, MA area

## 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 HearthStone stoves

## Hyperion Systems, LLC

100 University Drive  
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

## 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.

## 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.

## Monroe Tractor & Implement Co., Inc.

97 Turnpike Rd  
Westborough, MA 01581  
508-845-4343  
www.monroetractor.com

**Products & Services:** Monroe Tractor sells and supports a full line of equipment from CASE Construction & CASE IH Tractors and other misc. farm equipment. Monroe Tractor prides itself on quality equipment, rental, parts and service support.

## 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.

## 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 Seeks Nominees to Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is seeking nominations for individuals to serve on the Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers. This Committee recommends solutions to challenges faced by minority farmers and ranchers and is part of USDA's commitment to advance equity for all, especially for farmers and producers in underserved communities. The Committee is administered by USDA's Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE).

The Committee was established in the Food Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 to ensure that underserved farmers have equal access to USDA programs. Advisory Committee members will represent underserved farmers and farming communities and should also reflect the diversity of agriculture in geography, size, scale

and type of production. Members will include: six or more farmers or ranchers; two or more individuals from minority-serving institutions of higher education; two or more individuals from community-based nonprofit organizations; and two or more individuals with civil rights and equity expertise. Interested candidates may nominate themselves. The Committee consists of 15 members who serve two-year terms and may be reappointed for an additional two terms.

The Advisory Committee will meet no less than once per year to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on: (1) implementation of the Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program (aka the 2501 Program); (2) ways to maximize the participation of minority farmers

and ranchers in USDA programs; and (3) civil rights activities related to participants in such programs. Advisory Committee public meetings may be held in hybrid style giving participants the choice to attend in person or virtually.

All nomination packages received by April 24, 2023 will be considered.

Nominations may be submitted electronically to the Advisory Committee's dedicated email at [acmf@usda.gov](mailto:acmf@usda.gov). Nominations may also be sent via first-class mail to: Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers, Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Mail Stop 0601, Washington, DC 20250. For more information, email [acmf@usda.gov](mailto:acmf@usda.gov). Additional guidance on submitting nominations can be found on the Advisory Committee

on Minority Farmers website.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov).

— AVAILABLE ON —  
**ALL MOWER MODELS  
AND DECK SIZES**  
WITH PURCHASE OF NEW TRACTOR & DECK\*  
  
**PLUS**  
Retail financing available  
with approved credit.  
Proof of valid and active membership required  
to take advantage of this deal.



**FARM BUREAU  
MEMBERS SAVE  
UP TO \$300 REBATE\***  
ON GRASSHOPPER  
ASK FOR DETAILS

Commercial-grade gas & diesel engines  
41", 44" & 48" Cutting Decks | 52", 61" & 72" DuraMax® Decks  
PowerFold Electric Deck Lift | Suspension Seats standard on all models  
Optional PowerVac™ Collection Systems | Optional Implements for year-round productivity

ENJOY THIS EXCLUSIVE MEMBER BENEFIT AT YOUR AUTHORIZED GRASSHOPPER DEALER





Committed to the Cut.®

\*\$300 Rebate on 200, 300G, 300, 400, 600, 700 and 900 Series models. \$150 Rebate on 100V, 200V and 500V Series models. Farm Bureau rebate valid when purchasing new, unregistered Grasshopper tractor and mowing deck. No other sales programs may be combined with this offer. Financing available at participating dealers. See dealer for available financing offers and to apply for qualification. Proof of active Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation membership required at time of sale. See dealer for complete Farm Bureau offer details.

Find your nearest dealer at [GrasshopperDealers.com](http://GrasshopperDealers.com)

## USDA Announces Additional Assistance for Distressed Farmers Facing Financial Risk

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that beginning in April it will provide approximately \$123 million in additional, automatic financial assistance for qualifying farm loan program borrowers who are facing financial risk as part of the \$3.1 billion to help distressed farm loan borrowers that was provided through Section 22006 of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). The announcement builds on financial assistance offered to borrowers through the same program in October 2022.

The IRA directed USDA to expedite assistance to distressed borrowers of direct or guaranteed loans administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) whose operations face financial risk. For example, in the October payments, farmers that were 60 days delinquent due to challenges like natural disasters, the pandemic, or other unexpected situations were brought current and had their

Continued on Page 13



# Being A Farm Bureau Member Pays

MFBBF Members Enjoy Discounts From National & Local Business Partners

Please visit [www.MFBBF.net](http://www.MFBBF.net) for more information.

Kickoff 2022 with a 5% discount on your farm package with Countryway Insurance. Coming early 2022, save 3%-5% off your personal auto with various companies. Your friendly A&B Insurance Group Agents offers a full line of insurance services to meet all your needs. Your knowledgeable and experienced agent can help arrange a program that will best meet your farm and personal insurance needs. With six farm carriers and eight personal lines carriers, your agent can tailor a program specifically for you or your family's needs. In addition to Farm Packages, we also offer personal & commercial auto, homeowners, property insurance, workman's compensation as well as health, life & disability insurances.

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.

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

MFBBF 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.



## WYNDHAM

### HOTELS & RESORTS

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](http://www.wyndhamhotels.com/farm-bureau) to book.

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](http://www.JohnDeere.com/FarmBureau).



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](http://choicehotels.com) and enter your Massachusetts Farm Bureau ID to book online ( \*if you don't know the MFBBF ID call our office today at 508-481-4766).






McGovern Auto Group has partnered with MFBBF to provide up to \$500 worth of incentives for members.

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/mcgvorn-farm-bureau-program.htm> for more info today!

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.

MFBBF members enjoy exclusive savings when renting from AVIS. Contact MFBBF's office for savings code or log in to the members only website



Farm Bureau members also enjoy exclusive savings when renting from BUDGET. Contact MFBBF's office for savings code or log in to the members only website





# USDA Announces Additional Assistance

Continued From Page 11

next installment paid to give them breathing room.

“In too many cases, the rules surrounding our farm loan programs may actually be detrimental to helping a borrower get back to a financially viable path. As a result, some are pushed out of farming and others stuck under a debt burden that prevents them from growing or reacting to opportunities,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “Loan programs for the newest and more vulnerable producers must be about providing opportunity and tailored to expect and manage stumbles and hurdles along the way. Through this assistance, USDA is focusing on generating long-term stability and success for distressed borrowers.”

In October 2022, USDA provided approximately \$800 million in initial IRA assistance to more than 11,000 delinquent direct and guaranteed borrowers and approximately 2,100 borrowers who had their farms liquidated and still had remaining debt. USDA shared that it would conduct case-by-case reviews of about 1,600 complex cases for potential initial relief payments, including cases of borrowers in foreclosure or bankruptcy. These case-by-case reviews are underway.

At the same time in October 2022, USDA announced that it anticipated payments using separate pandemic relief funding totaling roughly \$66 million on over 7,000 direct loans to borrowers who used the USDA Farm Service Agency’s disaster-set-aside option during the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of these payments have been processed, and USDA anticipates it will complete all such payments in April 2023.

**New Assistance for Distressed Borrowers**

FSA intends to provide the new round of relief starting in April to additional distressed borrowers. This will include approximately \$123 million in automatic financial assistance for qualifying Farm Loan Program (FLP) direct loan borrowers who meet certain criteria. Similar to the automatic payments announced in October 2022, qualifying borrowers will receive an individual letter detailing the assistance as payments are made. Distressed borrowers’ eligibility for these new categories of automatic payments will be determined based on their circumstances as of today. More information about the new categories that make up the \$123 million in assistance announced today and the specific amount of

assistance a distressed borrower receives can be found described in this fact sheet, IRA Section 22006: Additional Automatic Payments, Improved Procedures, and Policy Recommendations.

To continue to make sure producers are aware of relief potentially available to them, all producers with open FLP loans will receive a letter detailing a new opportunity to receive assistance if they took certain extraordinary measures to avoid delinquency on their FLP loans, such as taking on more debt, selling property or cashing out retirement accounts. The letter will provide details on eligibility, the specific types of actions that may qualify for assistance, and the process for applying for and providing the documentation to seek that assistance.

These steps are part of a process USDA announced along with the October payments that is focused on assisting borrowers unable to make their next scheduled installment. Earlier this year, all borrowers should have received a letter detailing the process for seeking this type of assistance even before they become delinquent. Borrowers who are within two months of their next installment may seek a cashflow analysis from FSA using a recent balance sheet and operating plan to determine their eligibility.

**Tax Resources**

USDA will continue to work with the Department of Treasury to help borrowers understand the potential tax implications from the receipt of an IRA payment, including that options may be available to potentially avoid or alleviate any tax burden incurred as a result of receiving this financial assistance.

In early April, USDA will send a specific set of revised tax documents, educational materials and resources to borrowers that received assistance in 2022, including a link to a webinar hosted by a group of farm tax experts to provide education on the options available. USDA cannot provide tax advice and encourages borrowers to consult their own tax professional, but FSA is providing educational materials for borrowers to be aware of the options. USDA has tax-related resources available at farmers.gov/taxes.

**Improved Procedures and Policy Recommendations**

FSA is finalizing changes to its policy handbooks to remove unnecessary hurdles, improve loan making and loan servicing and provide more flexibility

on how loans are structured to maximize the opportunities for borrowers. Additional details on those changes can be found in the linked fact sheet and are the start of a broader set of process enhancements. The fact sheet also provides information on the eight, no-cost legislative proposals included in the Fiscal Year 2024 President’s Budget that are designed to improve the borrower experience.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America’s food

**Membership dues (please select one):**

**Voting Members**

☐ Farmer Member: \$225 for 1 year

☐ Gold Member: \$350 for 1 year

☐ Platinum Member: \$500 for 1 year

**Non-Voting Members**

☐ Advocate Member (Individual): \$70 for 1 year

☐ Advocate Member (Family): \$100 for 1 year

☐ Allied Business: \$225 for 1 year

☐ Student: \$25 for 1 year

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov).

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

**Method of Payment**

**Credit Card:**

☐ American Express

☐ Visa

☐ MasterCard

☐ Discover

CC#: \_\_\_\_\_

CVV: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**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:

## Beet-Pickled Deviled Eggs

**Ingredients**

- 6 Pete and Gerry’s Organic Eggs, hard-boiled and peeled
- 1 16-ounce can or jar pickled beets
- 1 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon fiery pink peppercorns
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon mayonnaise
- 1/2 teaspoon curry powder
- 1 tablespoon white vinegar
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste



**How to make**

1. Pour pickled beets and juices into a large mason jar or bowl. Add apple cider vinegar, sugar, peppercorns, and salt. Stir mixture. Carefully (the beet juice will stain!) lower hard-boiled eggs into brine. Cover and refrigerate for at least 12 hours, or up to 3 days. The longer you leave them in the brine, the more sour and pink they will end up.
2. Remove eggs from brine. Discard brine, then cut each egg in half and scoop out yolks. Place yolks in a medium bowl along with mustard, mayonnaise, curry powder, white vinegar, and olive oil.
3. Using a fork, mash yolk mixture until smooth, adding a teaspoon or two of water if needed to loosen it up.
4. Using a pastry bag or plastic bag with the corner cut off, pipe the yolk mixture back into the egg whites. Sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste and garnish with fresh dill or enjoy as is.

# #StillFarming: Why the Farm Bill Matters

By: Zippy Duvall, AFBF President

Three years ago, Farm Bureau launched our #StillFarming campaign. Our goal was simple: reassure Americans that farmers and ranchers were committed to maintaining a steady food supply at a time when many Americans witnessed empty grocery store shelves for the first time in generations and supply chain disruptions made headlines. Farmers and ranchers take great pride in rising each day to grow the food, fuel and fiber we all depend on, and managing risk on the farm is critical to keeping food on our tables. We are still farming, for our neighbors near and far, thanks to our public investment in U.S. agriculture through the farm bill. Thanks to risk management programs in the farm bill, farmers can hold on through tough times like high inflation, global market turmoil and natural disasters. We are also building a more sustainable future through conservation programs and agricultural research and helping families facing hunger to keep food on the table through tough times. The farm bill matters to all Americans, and 73% of adults recognize there would be a significant impact if the farm bill were not reauthorized.

Not many Americans today are very familiar with the farm bill, though. To be fair, it’s a big piece of legislation that comes up just once every five years. Even in Congress, many lawmakers are new to the farm bill as nearly half of them have been elected since the 2018 bill. The American Farm Bureau recently conducted a survey to better understand where public

opinion and awareness stands on the farm bill and funding for key programs. We found that 71% of adults had not read or heard much of anything about the farm bill. This was a big reminder that we’ve got a lot of work to do.

The good news is that when it comes to talking about the farm bill, farmers and ranchers are perfect for the job. The American people trust us—nearly 9 out of 10, in fact, say they trust farmers. That’s higher than any other profession. Americans have not forgotten those empty shelves, and they are counting on our success on the farm to keep store shelves and pantries full for everyone. We found there is strong support for risk management programs with the most adults (67%) ranking that as one of the top priorities for federal funding in the farm bill. Risk management along with nutrition programs came in as top funding priorities among those surveyed.

This affirms what we have said for a long time across the agriculture community—the farm bill must remain unified. In fact, support for the farm bill dropped by half when we asked folks if they would still support a farm bill that no longer included funding for nutrition programs. The farm bill’s nutrition programs provide a critical link to families hundreds and thousands of miles from our farms. America’s farmers and ranchers are proud to grow the food that helps supply billions of meals annually to

families facing hunger.

With the added pressures of inflation and rising food costs, we found that most people now see the security of our food supply as critical. Not too long ago, I’d say many took it for granted that we have an abundant supply of American grown products. But following supply chain disruptions and global events like the war between Russia and Ukraine, Americans’ eyes have been opened to how fragile our food system is. Eighty-four percent say that, in light of recent disruptions, the U.S. should make our food supply a matter of national security. Simply meaning, we are a stronger country when we can grow our own food.

Farmers and ranchers take great pride in our work—it is truly a calling for us. We show up, rain or shine, to grow and raise safe, sustainable food, fuel and fiber. We have found our purpose on the farm, and I believe we are still farming because we love the land and this great country. Farmers have America’s back when times are tough, and it’s important for us to know that America has our back and is committed to helping us keep our farms and food supply secure in all seasons. That’s exactly what the farm bill achieves.



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

**Zippy Duvall**  
AFBF President

## Pull On Your ‘Farm Boots’ for Another Ag Adventure with Feeding Minds Press

Families, educators and anyone wanting to follow in the footsteps of farmers and ranchers can now pull on their boots for another exciting agricultural adventure with the latest publication from Feeding Minds Press, the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture’s publishing venture. “Farm Boots” tells the story of several farm families as they work and play throughout the year, in boots for every kind of weather and activity.

Joyous and delightful, “Farm Boots” depicts a wide variety of agricultural settings in all four seasons. The book is a celebration of footwear, fun and life on and off the farm, and brought to you by the award-winning writer and illustrator of “Right This Very Minute,” Lisl H. Detlefsen and Renée Kurilla.

“Many of us don’t think about how our footwear helps us prepare to brave the elements each day. But farmers and ranchers do,”



**FARM BOOTS**

said Foundation for Agriculture Executive Director Daniel Meloy. “Feeding Minds Press is excited to tell the story of agriculture through the lens of something we can all relate to, our shoes. Kids may even learn about some unexpected places farm boots could take them.”

“Farm Boots” joins an ever-expanding list of titles from Feeding Minds Press, including “Right This Very Minute,”

published in January 2019, and “I LOVE Strawberries,” a Good Housekeeping 2022 Best Kids’ Book Award Winner.

Feeding Minds Press also offers several free printable books that focus on careers in agriculture. All Feeding Minds Press publications are available for purchase directly from Feeding Minds Press, as well as on Amazon and Barnes & Noble online.

Educational resources for “Farm Boots,” including an educator’s guide, will be available soon.



# MFBF Members' Classifieds

## HELP WANTED

Become a Supervisor for the Middlesex Conservation District! Are you interested in the conservation of natural resources, including soil and water? You could be an ideal candidate to serve on the board of the Middlesex Conservation District. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/2ffjx7> for more information. You are invited to contact Andrea Grossman, the District Administrator at [admin@middlesexconservationdistrict.org](mailto:admin@middlesexconservationdistrict.org) or Kathie Becker, Chair of Middlesex Conservation District, at [kbecker1@mac.com](mailto:kbecker1@mac.com).

## 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:** Hereford Calves for Sale: hand raised and tame, polled, both steers and Heifers, for your feed lot or pasture. 617-840-2074.

**FOR SALE:** EPA certified Central Boiler Classic Edge HDX models. 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:**
- Ozone International machine on casters \$1000 or b.o. 508-866-1149 or 508-269-3693
  - 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:** Pequea Planter, Max Emerge 2 Row Planter – Has

fertilizer, seed & insecticide hoppers – Recent/New: Opener discs w/ scrapers, finger pick ups w/ brushes, fertilizer spouts. Excellent condition, always kept inside, can be seen in Boxborough, MA 01719. Asking \$5,000. Contact Steve: [Steve.ne.int@gmail.com](mailto:Steve.ne.int@gmail.com). 978-793-0555. Leave contact info on message.

**FOR SALE:** Retiring all types of farm and construction equipment. Call 508-523-3573 or [davidtombarelli@gmail.com](mailto:davidtombarelli@gmail.com) for a complete list.

## EVENTS

**BIRD LASER DEMO** - You're invited to a product demonstration showcasing the AVIX Autonomic Mark II laser bird deterrent system. April 24th at 4:30pm at the Harvest Tap & Table, in Swansea, MA. Dinner will be provided! AVIX lasers have experienced great success in humanely managing bird damage to a variety of crops including sweet corn, berries, grapes, and other soft fruits. Visit <http://www.shopwcs.com/DEMO> for more info. Space is limited, please RSVP to [support@shopwcs.com](mailto:support@shopwcs.com).

**SAMMY P AUCTION SERVICES**  
\*\*\*3 AUCTIONS\*\*\*

**THOMPSON TRACTOR, Woodstock CT—On Location — Pre-Bids — Live Webcast**  
9:00 AM EST , Friday, Mar. 31, 2023  
Complete Equipment Dispersal for Thompson Tractor LLC, Owner Retiring & Other Area Contractors  
KENNEY FARM, Concord, MA—Pre-Bids — Live Webcast

**9:00 AM EST , Thursday, Apr. 6, 2023**  
**Equipment Dispersal for Kenney Farm Major Downsizing - WEBCAST ONLY!!**

**McNAMARA FARMS, Stoughton, MA—On Location — Pre-Bids — Live Webcast**  
9:00 AM EST , Saturday, Apr. 8, 2023  
Owner Retiring, Entire Inventory of AG Tractors, AG Implements, Wagons, Trucks, Farm & Landscape Tools & Supplies

**CONTACT: Danny Anderson 860-823-7610 or <https://sammyp.com/>** for more information.  
(Sales in Conjunction w/ Thomas Industries, MA Auctioneer License #AU000481)

Want to advertise with us?  
Please contact Kim Ashe at [kim@mfbf.net](mailto:kim@mfbf.net) for more details!



# LET US TAKE THE WORRY OUT OF TAX SEASON.

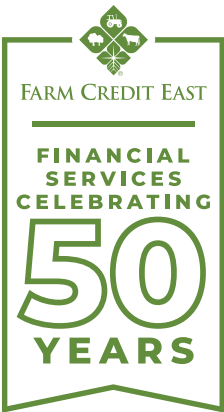


Our specialists understand ag taxes so you don't have to.

Tax laws change every year. Especially ag taxes. That's why more producers rely on the tax specialists at Farm Credit East to do theirs. We know the ever-changing tax laws and requirements that are unique to agriculture. And we do our best to capture every deduction you're entitled.

This tax season, save both time and stress by working with Farm Credit East.

[farmcrediteast.com](http://farmcrediteast.com) | 800.562.2235



- Loans & Leases
- Financial Record-Keeping
- Payroll Services
- Profitability Consulting
- Tax Preparation & Planning
- Appraisals
- Estate Planning
- Beginning Farmer Programs
- Crop Insurance





*Put Your Farm's Future in the Right Hands.*

*Call A&B Insurance Group for a quote!*

*Experienced, knowledgeable agents available to help you get the absolute best insurance solutions for your farm, business, or home.*



Get a **5% discount** on your farm insurance policy from Countryway Insurance.

**Exclusive Insurance Provider for Massachusetts Farm Bureau**



- Farm & Equine Insurance – all types and all sizes
- Commercial Auto – including FARM PLATES
- Workers Compensation
- Contractors & Small Business Insurance
- Home & Auto Insurance – including Rental Properties
- Life, Health and Disability Insurance

**WESTFORD**

235 Littleton Rd., Suite 3  
Westford, MA 01886  
978-399-0025

**DEERFIELD**

237C Greenfield Rd.  
South Deerfield, MA 01373  
413-665-0088

**MARLBOROUGH**

249 Lakeside Ave., Suite 209  
Marlborough, MA 01752  
508-460-2008