



Young Farmers & Ranchers Happenings

If anyone is interested in hosting a tour of their farm
or joining the YF&R committee, please email
Heather at
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 from the following counties:

Berkshire (2)

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

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

Upcoming YF&R Events!

If you are interested in attending any of the following tours, please let us know so we can send you details. Please email katelyn@mfbf.net.

Dec. 2 & 3, 2021

MFBF's Annual Meeting in Marlborough! Details here: <https://mfbf.net/annual-meeting/>

Jan. 7-12, 2022

AFBF Annual Convention in Atlanta. Details here: <https://www.fb.org/events/afbf-convention>

Feb. 25-28, 2022

AFBF YF&R Conference in Louisville. Details here: <https://www.fb.org/events/2022-young-farmers-ranchers-conference/>

New Promotional Opportunity for Agritourism Venues



The American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture is looking for orchards, pumpkin patches, corn mazes and more to showcase on a new app dedicated to connecting consumers with agritourism venues.

The American Farm Trail app, created by the Foundation and sponsored by Corteva, allows farmers, ranchers and farm attraction managers to sign up for free to showcase their agritourism venues. Farms and attractions can create a profile promoting their business, history, available products and more.

Consumers using the app will be able to connect directly with local farms by searching area, type of attraction, or products for sale. The Foundation plans to launch the app in the spring of 2022.

"The Foundation is ecstatic to offer this new resource to help connect agritourism businesses to consumers interested in visiting farms and ranches. There is nothing quite like picking your own apple or hunting for the perfect pumpkin and meeting the farmer who put the time and effort into growing that crop," said Daniel Meloy, executive director of the Foundation. "We think the American Farm Trail app will be a great opportunity for farmers and ranchers to bring curious consumers to their farms and for those consumers to connect in-person to where their food comes from."

The American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture aims to build awareness, understanding, and a positive public perception of agriculture through education by offering learning opportunities, educational resources, and a selection of accurate books about agriculture. Learn more at https://www.agfoundation.org/files/AFBFA_HowToGuide_ER_v2.pdf.

Growing Tomorrow Together at the 2022 American Farm Bureau

Convention

By: Zippy Duvall, AFBF President

It's time to mark your calendars and make your plans to join the Farm Bureau family as we gather in Atlanta, Jan. 7-12, 2022, for the 103rd American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Convention. We are excited to welcome you back in person. Your safety remains our top priority, which means some things might look a little different as we abide by COVID guidance, but what we all value and enjoy most about these gatherings remains the same.

People.

For those who can join us in person we will once again have a full lineup of events, including the popular Flapjack Fundraiser for the Foundation for Agriculture, inspiring general sessions, educational workshops, and the engaging Trade Show with special events on the Cultivation Center Stage. We also understand that some folks may not be able to travel for a variety of reasons, and we will offer a slimmed down array of virtual options, including key components of the event, to keep the doors open to all who wish to join.

The American Farm Bureau Convention provides a time for us to celebrate one another, mark our achievements together and hear from leaders who have helped strengthen agriculture. With three general sessions this year, we can better elevate the work across all 50 states and Puerto Rico and recognize our outstanding members. And new this year, we will host a Farm Bureau Celebration—I am especially excited about this one—at the College Football Hall of Fame on Monday evening. I invite you to reserve your tickets and come dressed in college football gear, ready for a fun night of fellowship with our winning team of American farmers and ranchers.

Purpose.

The AFBF team is preparing a robust lineup of workshops and trainings geared to help strengthen your farms and ranches. We have invited experts and leaders from across the industry to discuss the most pressing topics facing agriculture. You will get the latest policy updates and economic analysis from the team working for you here in Washington, D.C. You will discover ways to better engage with consumers to share your farm story. And, you can participate in AFBF's Farm State of Mind program as we host a rural stress and mental health training, open to all attendees. From innovation and sustainability to market updates and regulatory reform, each session topic is designed to provide you with the resources you need to stay informed, improve your business and engage with your community.

Possibilities.

Innovation on the farm and in rural America takes center stage at the American Farm Bureau Convention every year with the Ag Innovation Challenge. This year is no exception, and I am excited to see which of our 10 semi-finalists will compete live on the Cultivation Center Stage. These are the entrepreneurs and innovators who are helping to shape the future of agriculture, and thanks to the generous support of our partner Farm Credit and our other sponsors, we can take part in boosting their success.

As farmers and ranchers, we look to the future: it's the nature of our work to have an eye on planning for the next season. The 2022 convention theme celebrates how across Farm Bureau we are growing tomorrow together through our people, purpose and possibilities. We want to continue to improve, to bring the next generation to farming and to strengthen our rural communities for our children and grandchildren. I hope each of you will make plans to join us and invite friends and neighbors to be a part of this event. We each share in the success of our organization, our communities and our nation, as tomorrow's growth begins with the seeds we plant today. Let's come ready to engage and share ideas for how we can continue to move forward and grow together.

Zippy Duvall
AFBF President

Please note: if you plan on attending AFBF's 2022 annual convention, please contact MFBF Director of Government and Public Affairs Katelyn Parsons at katelyn@mfbf.net to register.

Ag Groups Formally Object To EPA Chlorpyrifos Rule

More than 80 agricultural groups filed formal objections to the Environmental Protection

Agency's Aug. 30 rule to revoke all tolerances of chlorpyrifos. Stakeholders, by law, can object to pesticide tolerance changes or cancellations, and the EPA Administrator must then respond.

In the coalition letter, objectors from across the agriculture sector cited numerous concerns with EPA's revocation decision, including the processes EPA used and lack of scientific basis. EPA's own scientific record on chlorpyrifos shows there are many safe, high-benefit uses of the chemistry that do not pose a dietary or environmental risk. Regardless, the agency is opting to revoke tolerances for these safe, low-

risk uses.

American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall called the EPA action shortsighted, saying, "Taking care of the land and our natural resources is a top priority for farmers, and this revocation rule actually makes it harder for us to do that. EPA veered from its own scientific evidence in a decision that could be damaging to the land, to farmers and to our efforts to fight food insecurity."

Additionally, EPA's rule revokes tolerances on crop uses where many growers have few or no pest management alternatives, leaving them exposed to hundreds of millions of dollars in irreparable crop damage. The revocation rule would also require food holders to provide retroactively-required application documents, which could result in the destruction of millions of dollars of safe food over a paperwork issue.

"It is upsetting that EPA has revoked such an important chemistry without input from USDA or other stakeholders. Chlorpyrifos is critical to the Michigan and Wisconsin cherry industries, as there are no other products that effectively control trunk borers. With more than 4 million cherry trees, Michigan grows 75% of the total U.S. production of tart cherries and roughly 20% of the total U.S. production of sweet cherries. Without this product, our growers risk losing a lot of trees, potentially jeopardizing their family farms," said Mike VanAgstmael, a west Michigan cherry grower and chairman of the Cherry Marketing Institute.

EPA also has failed to conduct required interagency reviews pertaining to its decision on the rule, which are required in this case because the rule could realistically lead to well over \$100 million in additional costs to the food and agriculture economy; EPA is required to conduct interagency reviews if harm could be found to total more than this threshold.

The groups ask EPA to postpone implementation of the rule until these objections can be formally considered and addressed by the agency.

Growing Your Farm Business Planning Course

Tuesday evenings, January 11 to March 8, 2022 - Location to be determined

MDAR offers a hands-on course to help established farmers develop a business plan and financial projections for their farm business. This course covers topics including resource assessment, marketing strategy, financial management, risk management, quality of life, and goal setting. The course is taught by professional business planners with years of experience working with Massachusetts farms and guest speakers on current topics such as succession planning and online marketing. The cost is \$200 per farm. Enrollment is open to farmers who have been operating a farm business in Massachusetts for at least the two prior years. Eight weekly classes will be held on Tuesday evenings starting January 11 and ending March 8 (with one vacation week).

Plans are for in-person class. Final decision in January based on current COVID conditions. Applications will be accepted until November 19 or until the course is full.

Farmers that complete a business plan by participating in the Growing Your Farm business planning course and then apply and get accepted to MDAR's APR Improvement Program or Matching Enterprise Grants for Agriculture may be able to waive the business planning phase of these programs, enabling them to move to the contract phase earlier to start implementing their projects.

The Growing Your Farm business planning course has been approved as a certified USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) borrower training for financial management.

TO APPLY: For a Growing Your Farm application, [click here](#), or contact Michael Parker at Michael.Parker@mass.gov, 857-895-0023.

94G Hemp Amendment Update

On Dec. 11, 2020, Massachusetts General Laws ("M.G.L.") Chapter 94G, which regulates the use and distribution of adult-use marijuana, was amended to expand opportunities for hemp and hemp-derived products in the Commonwealth.

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR)

Hemp Program is happy to share several important program updates relative to M.G.L. c. 94G, Section 12, including new guidance and policy updates for the sale of hemp and hemp-derived products from MDAR licensees to those licensed by the Cannabis Control Commission (“CCC”). All updates and documents are now available on MDAR’s Hemp Program website: <https://www.mass.gov/industrial-hemp-program>



More information about each guidance and policy issued, including direct links, has been included below for your convenience. Please read all guidance and policy updates carefully and reach out to MDAR’s Hemp Program with any questions. As a reminder, these changes only apply to MDAR’s Hemp Program and those licensed by MDAR. Any questions related to marijuana should be directed to the CCC.

New Guidance for the Sale of Hemp and Hemp-Derived Products to Marijuana Establishments

In order to allow for the sale of hemp and hemp-derived products to a marijuana establishment licensed by the CCC, MDAR has developed guidance for Massachusetts Licensed Hemp Producers and Processors who want to sell hemp and/or hemp derived products to a Marijuana Establishment in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 94G Section 12. This Guidance explains new requirements for MDAR Licensees and introduces a list of hemp products that may now be sold to a CCC Licensee, subject to any further conditions that may be required by the CCC.

Please read the Guidance here: <https://www.mass.gov/guidance/sale-of-hemp-and-hemp-derived-products-to-marijuana-establishments>

Updated Hemp Processor Policy

The updated Hemp Processor Policy replaces the previous Processor Policy that was issued by MDAR on Sept. 6, 2020. The policy updates include revising which products may be manufactured and sold to licensed marijuana establishments, new product labeling requirements, and general clarifications regarding the responsibilities and duties for Licensed Processors. Hemp and hemp-derived products may also be subject to further conditions set forth by the CCC.

The 2021 Processor Policy can be accessed online at: <https://www.mass.gov/policy-statement/massachusetts-industrial-hemp-program-policy>

Updated Retail Sale Policy

The updated Policy Statement Regarding the Sale of Hemp-Derived Products in the Commonwealth replaces the previous Policy issued by MDAR on June 12, 2019. The updates to this policy include authorizing MDAR Licensed Producers to sell unprocessed hemp, including flower, to a CCC licensee, and the sale of finished hemp products to a CCC licensee, including flower, subject to any conditions which the CCC may also require.

The Policy regarding the retail sale of hemp can be accessed online at: <https://www.mass.gov/policy-statement/sale-of-hemp-derived-products-in-the-commonwealth>

Frequently Asked Questions

MDAR updated the FAQ section of their website to address your question about the implementation of M.G.L. c. 94G, Section 12. The updated FAQs can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/guides/faqs-sale-of-hemp-to-licensed-marijuana-establishments>

USDA Introduces New Insurance Policy For Farmers Who Sell Locally



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is rolling out a new insurance option specifically for agricultural producers with small farms who sell locally. The new Micro Farm policy simplifies record keeping and covers post-production costs like washing and value-added products.

USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA) created this new policy based on research directed by the 2018 Farm Bill, and it includes feedback from producers who grow for their local communities. The policy will be available beginning with the 2022 crop year.

“We are excited to offer this new coverage for producers who work to provide their communities with fresh and healthy food,” said RMA Acting Administrator Richard Flourmoy. “USDA is focused on supporting local and regional food systems, and this new crop insurance policy is designed with this important sector of agriculture in mind.”

The new policy is offered through Whole-Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) and it has distinct provisions

that can provide more access to the program, including:

No expense or individual commodity reporting needed, simplifying the recordkeeping requirements for producers

Revenue from post-production costs, such as washing and packaging commodities and value-added products, are considered allowable revenue

The Micro Farm policy is available to producers who have a farm operation that earns an average allowable revenue of \$100,000 or less, or for carryover insureds, an average allowable revenue of \$125,000 or less. RMA's research showed that 85% of producers who sell locally reported they made less than \$75,000 in gross sales. See the full report.

The Micro Farm policy builds on other RMA efforts to better serve specialty and organic crop growers. This includes WFRP, which provides coverage for producers with larger operations that may not be eligible for Micro Farm. RMA recently made improvements to WFRP as part of a broader set of new policies and expanded policies to assist specialty crop and organic producers.

The Federal Crop Insurance Corporation approved the Micro Farm policy in late September, and additional details will be provided later this fall.

More Information Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers and online at the RMA Agent Locator. Learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at rma.usda.gov.

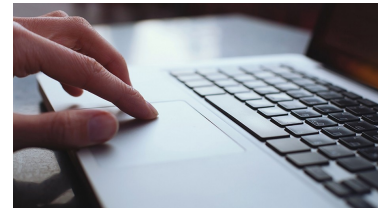
USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to healthy and nutritious 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.

Farm Bureau University

What is Farm Bureau University?

"Online Learning for Farm Bureau"

Learning is no longer confined to four walls and formalized training. Farm Bureau University allows Farm Bureau members to learn through interactive experiences online when and where they want. Farm Bureau members can log onto FB University from a desktop computer in their office or on an iPad in the field.



Currently available to Farm Bureau members:

- Board Essentials – Online training for county board members to develop skills and acquire knowledge as a Farm Bureau leader.
- FB Builder – An evaluation tool for your county Farm Bureau to assess on eight building blocks of organizational health.
- Pillars of Agricultural Literacy – A tool to guide you, or a group, through the Pillars of Agricultural Literacy in order to create a purposeful plan to educate consumers about agriculture.

What's new on Farm Bureau University?

Farm Bureau Board Essentials, the newest online learning program, offers resources and training to county board members to improve governance, planning, policy development and advocacy, and membership.

Whether you've been on the board for three weeks or 30 years, Farm Bureau Board Essentials sharpens your skillset and understanding as a board member.

How to register for Farm Bureau University

Any member can register for free at university.fb.org. New users need to register for an account and type in the correct code. The member code is "statefb" replacing state with the two-letter postal abbreviation. For example a New York Farm Bureau member's code is "nyfb."

Click [here](#) to register today.

**Are you looking for industry events?
Check out MDAR's Agriculture Industry Calendar!**

[Click Here For Calendar](#)

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