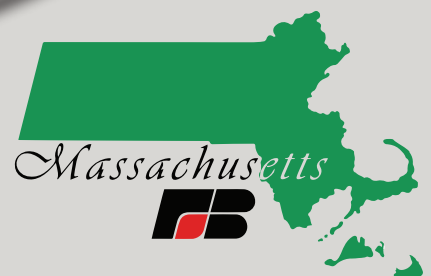


MASSACHUSETTS FARM BUREAU FEDERATION'S

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



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

2022 MFBF Board of Directors

Officers

President, Warren Shaw

Vice President, Ryan MacKay

Treasurer, Wayne Smith

Imm. Past President,
Mark Amato

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Steve Ward

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Meghan Gennings

Laura Abrams

Young Farmers & Ranchers Chair

Heather Bonanno Baker

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Executive Director, Brad Mitchell

Gov. & Public Affairs Director,

Katelyn Parsons

Office Manager, Joan Monaco

Admin. Assistant, Tina Allen

Database Administrator,

Kim Ashe



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



This report examines a Massachusetts Farm Bureau for the year 2021, a year filled with much change

I should start off by thanking some folks who have dedicated a good portion of their lives to Massachusetts Farmers and Farm Bureau (MFBF) leadership positions.

Doug Gillespie for many years was the heart and soul of our organization and he now has moved into retirement. In the last 40 years no one was more important to Massachusetts agriculture than Doug.

Mark Amato stepped down as president at the 2021 annual meeting having led our organization through a period of necessary change. He also spent most of his adult life in Farm Bureau leadership roles.

John Connors, also a long-time member of our staff decided to move on to pursue other career opportunities. He will certainly be missed.

All three deserve your thanks when you get an opportunity.

2021 has brought about staff changes, with Brad Mitchell selected as executive director, and Katelyn Parsons appointed to the new position of director of government and public affairs. Brad has also brought in Dan Bosley as a contract lobbyist.

Since my election as president, I have been more than impressed with how our staff has both embraced the idea of change and accepted new roles with great energy and commitment, and they have done so after being asked to accept some reductions in job benefits. We are fortunate to have such loyal folks working with us.

Member services have become the focus of my work as president as well becoming the focus of your staff.

We have made significant changes in our insurance offerings and signed a three-year contract with A&B Insurance bringing to an end our contractual relationship with American National. MFBF members will have the opportunity to receive competitive offers from A&B along with other insurance products, many at a discount price.

Brad and I have also been working to make improvements to our real estate investments in Littleton, including a new three year lease with a Brighton Commission. It is important to note that MFBF has maintained the FLAME facility in the interest of providing a market opportunity for all of our livestock farmers. A group of MFBF livestock farmers will oversee improvements in that facility going forward.

The Board of Directors, and staff are all committed to our mission statement "to strengthen a diverse agricultural community and advocate for Massachusetts farm families."

Our mission to serve agriculture can best be met by growing and strengthening our membership base. Accordingly there will be ongoing efforts in 2022 to reach out to new potential members and encourage allied businesses to do business with our farms to join us as well.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Bosley".

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Change is a strange thing. Many people dread it, fight it, avoid it or otherwise do everything they can to stop it. Yet, it's inevitable and often necessary. As business people who deal with fickle markets, changing weather, new pests, etc. - farmers understand this more than most. Just like farm businesses need to adapt to change, so do organizations. In my opinion, MFBF has continued doing many of the same things the way we've done for years, ostensibly because that's the way we've always done it. This can't continue if we're to have a vibrant and effective organization.

We're off to a good start, having made some pretty significant changes in the later part of 2021. Even before being elected, your current president and vice president were instrumental in making several critical changes to MFBF operations. These include:



- **Switching our insurance affiliation to A&B Insurance Group.** MFBF had a long affiliation with American National Insurance going back to the days when MFBF was one of the owners of American National's predecessor, Farm Family. Unfortunately, that relationship had changed over time to the detriment of both our members and MFBF. As of Jan. 1, after prolonged and failed negotiations with American National, we ended our relationship with them in favor of A&B Insurance. A&B is an insurance agency, not a company, which means they offer policies from multiple different insurance companies, including several specializing in farm coverage. The resulting competition and choice are in our member's best interest. In just a few weeks since the ink on the contract has dried, A&B has signed up new MFBF members, are co-marketing our brand with other farm groups, and is in the process of hiring a person dedicated to helping grow and retain members.
- **Farmers Live Animal Market Exchange (FLAME).** FLAME is the name of a livestock auction facility in Littleton as well as the name of the for-profit corporation which owns and runs it. It is affiliated with MFBF with the MFBF Board serving as shareholders. FLAME operated the auction for many years, but now leases it out to a 3rd party. The FLAME Board, which is separate from the MFBF Board, has kept rent on the property close to "break even" to ensure the availability of the auction to farmers. However, the building has deteriorated considerably and given we had been operating without profit, the future was looking a bit dim for the future of auction. Led by MFBF President Warren Shaw, we entered a long negotiation period with the current tenants, who agreed to a 50 percent increase in rent. The extra income is being put in a fund for capital improvements on the property.

These are good examples of changes that MFBF undertook in 2021. We need to explore others going into 2022, including but not limited to:

- **The function and purpose of counties.** Most county Farm Bureaus do a great job at legislative breakfasts and annual meetings. Beyond this, many counties have been struggling to attract new members, attract new directors to their county boards, and to engage existing members. We need to take a hard look at how county Farm Bureaus operate and fix these problems.
- **Young Farmers and Ranchers (YF&R).** We currently have a very dynamic YF&R Committee, with many members having risen through the ranks to serve in state leadership positions. With that said, most of the committee is close to aging out, with very few younger members ready to move up. We – the entire organization – need to look at what we can do to attract new YF&R members.

Just like in your business, not every new initiative or change we undertake is going to work out as we'd hoped and planned. We can't dwell on failures. We certainly can't let failures keep us from making trying new approaches to how MFBF operates.

MFBF is a membership organization. Everything we do is driven by our members. As members, many of you may have ideas on ways to meet MFBF's strategic plan, however, we need you to let us know. Ideally, people will come forward with solutions to their concerns.

ADVOCATING FOR YOU

A REVIEW OF PRIORITY ISSUES IN 2021

Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) is the voice of agriculture in the Commonwealth. The direction of the organization's advocacy effort is outlined by members through its grassroots policy development process. Massachusetts has a two-year legislative session. The 2021- 2022 session opened in January 2021 with formal sessions set to end in July 2022. Below is an outline of the key issues that MFBF has been focusing on during the first year of this two year session.



Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B

Chapter 61 programs offer a tax incentive for landowners willing to commit to keeping some or all of their land undeveloped for a specific period. Land that is not in a Chapter 61 program is assessed under Chapter 59 for its 'highest and best use,' which is its development value. The Chapter 61 programs can be helpful for keeping your land affordable and reaching your ownership goals. MFBF has advocated on behalf of its members to keep the Chapter 61 rates affordable and the program workable with deadlines that are manageable for farmers.

MFBF supported several bills this

session relative to chapter lands that would benefit farmers. Those bills would do things such as reduce the acreage threshold to qualify for Chapter 61a from 5-acres. Reducing the threshold from 5 acres would increase the

amount of land available to farmers, protect open space and help farms be more financially viable. Another bill would change the deadline for applications for chapter land from Oct. 1 (preceding months are the busiest for farmers) to Dec. 1.

Labor

Massachusetts farms need labor; however, it is difficult to find workers who are willing to be farm labor. Through temporary guestworker programs, our fruit and vegetable producers have been able to meet their demand for labor. However, these programs involve difficult regulations and oversight. To this end, MFBF works with its members to find workable policy solutions. Additionally, livestock and other farmers who employ year-round labor work with MFBF to ensure the rules and regulations are good for their workers and their farms.

Overall, MFBF works to keep Massachusetts producers on a level playing field with other states relative to labor costs as they compete in a national (and even international) marketplace.

This year, MFBF worked in opposition to two bills that would have capped exemptions from paying overtime to farmworkers at 55 hours per week; do away with the current agricultural minimum wage of \$8 per hour in favor of the prevailing minimum wage; and provide workers with one day a week off. These bills provide Massachusetts farmworkers with more overtime and other protections than is provided under federal law and in 45 other states. Our farmers compete with other states and countries to sell our product. We already have one of the highest costs of production in the country. There is only so much we can pass on to consumers who shop at farm stands, CSAs and farmers markets given foreign and out-of-state product is readily available in supermarkets.

While the discussions on these bills are still swirling, MFBF is at the table and representing the interest of farm families in the Commonwealth.

Livestock

With more and more consumers being farther and farther from the farm, fewer and fewer individuals have background in the raising and handling of

livestock. There are many unique challenges to raising livestock including sheltering them and even processing them when the time comes. MFBF understands this and represents the farmers voice on Beacon Hill when these bills come up. This session, there are bills to update the plumbing code to accommodate agricultural uses, create a livestock shelter commission, and create in-state meat inspection programs.

Transportation

In a relative urban state, Massachusetts farmers have to work and move around many consumers in their cars. MFBF works with legislators to create workable bills to ensure both farmer safety and consumer safety when discussing transportation.

This session, there were two bills filed that would benefit farmers. One would allow ATVs for farm use on roads for agricultural purposes, just as tractors are allowed. It includes provisions for safety equipment and requires the farm to submit information annually to the local police chief identifying those roads they would travel upon.

The second bill was relative to agricultural pup trailers, which is any trailer used in agriculture to haul goods which is towed behind a truck. Currently, all agricultural vehicles are limited to a 10,000-pound weight limit for trailers. This includes both the weight of the trailer and the goods with which it is loaded. This 10,000-pound trailer weight limit is outdated, This bill would allow trucks to tow up to 99,000 pounds

need clear guidance of taxation and a code that recognizes their unique financial challenges. This year, MFBF worked on several bills that would provide Massachusetts farmers with much needed tax relief.

The first bill would provide a tax deduction for charitable donations of food by farmers. This bill mirrors relatively recent changes in federal law and

would allow a tax deduction to farmers for food donations to charitable organizations.

The second bill would provide an exemption for structures and buildings essential to the operation of agricultural and horticultural lands. Where Chapter 61a ensures that agricultural land is

taxed at a rate commensurate with the value of agricultural use, no such protection exists for agricultural buildings. As agritourism, retail sales and on-farm processing become more crucial to the financial viability of farms in the Commonwealth, property taxes on ag buildings have been identified as a major barrier to farm viability. This bill is would waive property taxes on new farm buildings and renovations for a 10-year period.

The single most important factor influencing the passage of a bill is how many people advocate for it, and how well they do it. MFBF has a long history of successfully passing bills that support agriculture and fighting back against those that would harm it. Our success is based largely on members speaking up and offering their voices at legislative breakfasts, Ag Day and/or directly to legislators. Keep an eye out for email alerts and articles. The success of agriculture in the Commonwealth relies on the voice of farmers.

as a combination of truck and trailer when that farmer possesses a Massachusetts overweight permit for their truck. This would help farmers to significantly reduce cost in terms of fuel, time, and labor. With fewer trips, there would also be a reduction in emissions.

Taxation

Running a farm and balancing the books is challenging, even under the best of circumstances. Farmers

MFBF's Mission Statement

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

RESOLUTION PRIORITY RANKINGS

At Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation's annual delegates session, the appointed county representatives discuss and vote on resolutions. These are policy statements that are first voted upon at a county Farm Bureau annual meeting, then voted upon at MFBF's delegate session.



At the end of the session, delegates prioritize those resolutions, which passed. Below is a list of the top five from the 2021 meeting as ranked by MFBF delegates, which MFBF staff will be focusing on in 2022.

#5 - We support the inclusion of shellfish aquaculture into the USDA organic certification program.

#4 - Massachusetts Farm Bureau is to call on the Massachusetts Senate and House of Representatives to appropriate a significant amount of the \$4.9 billion made available to Massachusetts through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 to

Massachusetts' agricultural fairs in order to assist them with deferred fairgrounds maintenance and needed capital improvements.

#3 - We support efforts to rebuild infrastructure for agricultural research and education in Massachusetts whether it be through Extension or another entity.

#2 - We oppose the creations of "water resource control" boards, or similar entities, that would have the authority to meter, generate revenue from, or restrict the amount of water that could be withdrawn from private wells on private land."

#1 - We oppose the Cape Cod Commission taking of land in exchange for approval of proposed house lots, subdivisions and similar proposals by landowners.

Remember, the resolution process is just the beginning. Changing laws and regulations requires your voice. Speak to your legislators about these policy changes and keep an eye for email alerts from MFBF on how you can weigh in and help make these changes.

MFBF's complete policy book is available online at www.MFBF.net.

MFBF BID FAREWELL TO GILLESPIE, WELCOMED MITCHELL

Doug Gillespie, long-time Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation executive director, handed over the organization's reins on June 30, 2021, to Brad Mitchell.

MFBF's Board of Directors promoted Brad Mitchell to executive director after an extensive search process. Mitchell has been with MFBF for almost

12 years and previously served as the organization's deputy executive director and has worked for other agricultural groups, including the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources.

As executive director, Mitchell



is responsible for carrying out the strategic plan. He also is placing emphasis on expanding the organization's membership base and revenue sources.

This change took place on June 30, 2021.

Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee Update

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

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

Instagram: @MAFBYoungFarmers.

Last year, getting together in-person with the Young Farmers and Ranchers (YF&R) committee seemed hopeful. While most of our business meetings were held on zoom, we did manage to get together to tour some farms. We traveled to Northfield to tour Four Star Farm and Brewery, which was the first time I had seen hops grown and I was amazed. The brewery on their farm was elegant and delicious. Next, we visited Martha's Vineyard, where we toured many farms and learned about some of the challenges the farmers face being

on the island. The island and the farms were all beautiful. We saw some farms that were trying their first year of growing in the winter, and some that were as busy as always.

We held two fundraisers this year. These fundraisers raised money to help send us to national leadership conferences and put on statewide events. Our first was an Ice Cream Social. While we only had two farms participate, Barstow's Dairy and Farm Store and Shaw Farm Dairy, we managed to raise a good amount!

We hope to do this again in June 2022. At annual meeting, we held a trivia night during the dinner banquet. This was our first-time hosting trivia, but it seemed to be a hit! We look forward to doing this again.

As we look forward to 2022, we have plenty of ideas up our sleeves. I would like to thank you all for your continuous support of our committee.

Heather Bonanno-Baker
MFBF YF&R Chair

Promotion & Education Committee Update

Learn more about P&E at www.MFBN.net!

In 2020, the Promotion and Education (P&E) committee made a pivot to virtual and in 2021 many of our efforts continued in the virtual format. We held several virtual ag trivia nights on Facebook – and even partnered with 4-H on one such night!

The committee has been focused on creating Ag Learning Boxes with the goal of creating a subscription box for teachers

that are purchased by the Parent-Teacher Organizations. The goal is to introduce young kids to agriculture in a positive light. Last year we placed about 2 dozen boxes into the classroom and hope to see the program continue to expand and grow

The committee also had the opportunity to name farm cat of the year. This photo contest was sponsored by the Pet Food Institute, and we had great

participation. We were pleased to announce Sophie Jane from Thomas Farm in Sunderland as 2021's barn cat of the year. Stay tuned for 2022's barn cat contest!

We are looking forward to a productive 2022 and continuing to expand our ag learning box program into more school systems.

Meg Gennings
MFBF P&E Committee Chair

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.

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393-6080

237C Greenfield Road
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Tel. 413-665-0088

COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

The Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) staff remains committed to providing its members with accurate and timely information through its membership newsletters, e-blasts, and social media platforms. In 2021, the staff managed to send out 52 Weekly Update e-blasts to all regular and associate members, in addition to 6 printed editions of *News and Views*. We also continued to use

the Muster Action Center, which is where we direct members to take action in support of any legislative campaigns we are running.

In fall 2021, MFBF staff launched a new digital marketing effort with Feathr. The campaign's goal is to bring in new, regular members through advertisements shown on their computer based on their web browsing history. This targeted ad campaign is in its

infancy and will likely grow and expand as time continues.

In 2022, our staff is looking forward to helping bridge the communication gap for our members and continuing to be the voice of farmers in Massachusetts. In January 2022, we launched a new version of the website, www.MFBF.net that we highly recommend you check out!

Newsletters



52 E-Blasts of the Weekly Update



6 Editions of News and Views

Social Media

7,531
Followers



101,321
Organic Post
Reach

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION FOUNDATION

Following a competitive selection process, the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Agricultural Preservation Foundation (MFBAPF) selected three farmers from 28 applications to receive grants in 2021 from the John & Liolia Schipper Grant program. These grants are focused on assisting Massachusetts farmers in becoming more economically viable and sustainable.

Grant recipients include the following:

- **Denise Barstow**, who oversees a dairy farm based in Hampshire County. She purchased equipment to upgrade their robotic milker.
- **Chris Parsons**, who oversees a diversified livestock farm based in Hampshire County. He purchased new grain bins to improve his herd's nutrition.

- **Henry Sarafin**, who oversees a diversified timber operation based in Hampshire County. He purchased safety equipment to improve his operation that will also improve productivity.

Pictured below are their completed projects.

Be sure to check out www.MBBF.net for 2023 grant applications!

Denise Barstow



Chris Parsons



Henry Sarafin



MASSACHUSETTS FARM BUREAU FEDERATION, INC.

YEAR END FINANCIAL REPORT

FOR 2021

A consolidated year-end financial statement of Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation, Incorporated and Affiliates, was completed by an independent auditor, John P. Sannella, CPA.

The finances for the organization and affiliates had a net increase of \$777,747 mostly due to a positive return on MFBF's investment portfolio.

	2021	2020
The Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$5,651,518	\$4,873,771
Total revenue and support	\$1,678,878	\$901,665
Investments	\$4,018,628	\$3,110,699
Total expenses	\$970,034	\$1,121,129

There were many mitigating factors to the increase in revenue and decrease in expenses. MFBF was lucky enough to receive a Payroll Protection Program loan of \$135,367, and the full amount was forgiven. No funds were taken from the investment accounts to balance the budget. MFBF's income on the investment portfolio was up, and we were able to keep expenses down over the year partly because of COVID 19 protocol. No in-person meetings, events, and travel helped with staff expenses and staff partially working from home helped keep utilities and office expenses down.

2021 MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS

AS OF DEC. 31, 2021

**5,050 Paid MFBF
Members**

**1,897 Regular,
Farmer Members**

**519 New Members
Joined**

**From July 1 - Dec. 31*

**Learn more about membership online:
www.MFBF.net**

Being A Farm Bureau Member Pays

MFBF Members Enjoy Discounts From National & Local Business Partners

Please visit www.MFBF.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 four 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
978-399-0025.

Massachusetts Farm Bureau members 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 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.



MFBF members receive up to \$500 off Farmall, Maxxum and more! Visit <http://www.farmbureau.co/member-benefits/> and enter your membership ID number and zip code to print a certificate to use

towards your next Case-IH purchase. Please print before heading to your local dealer.



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

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

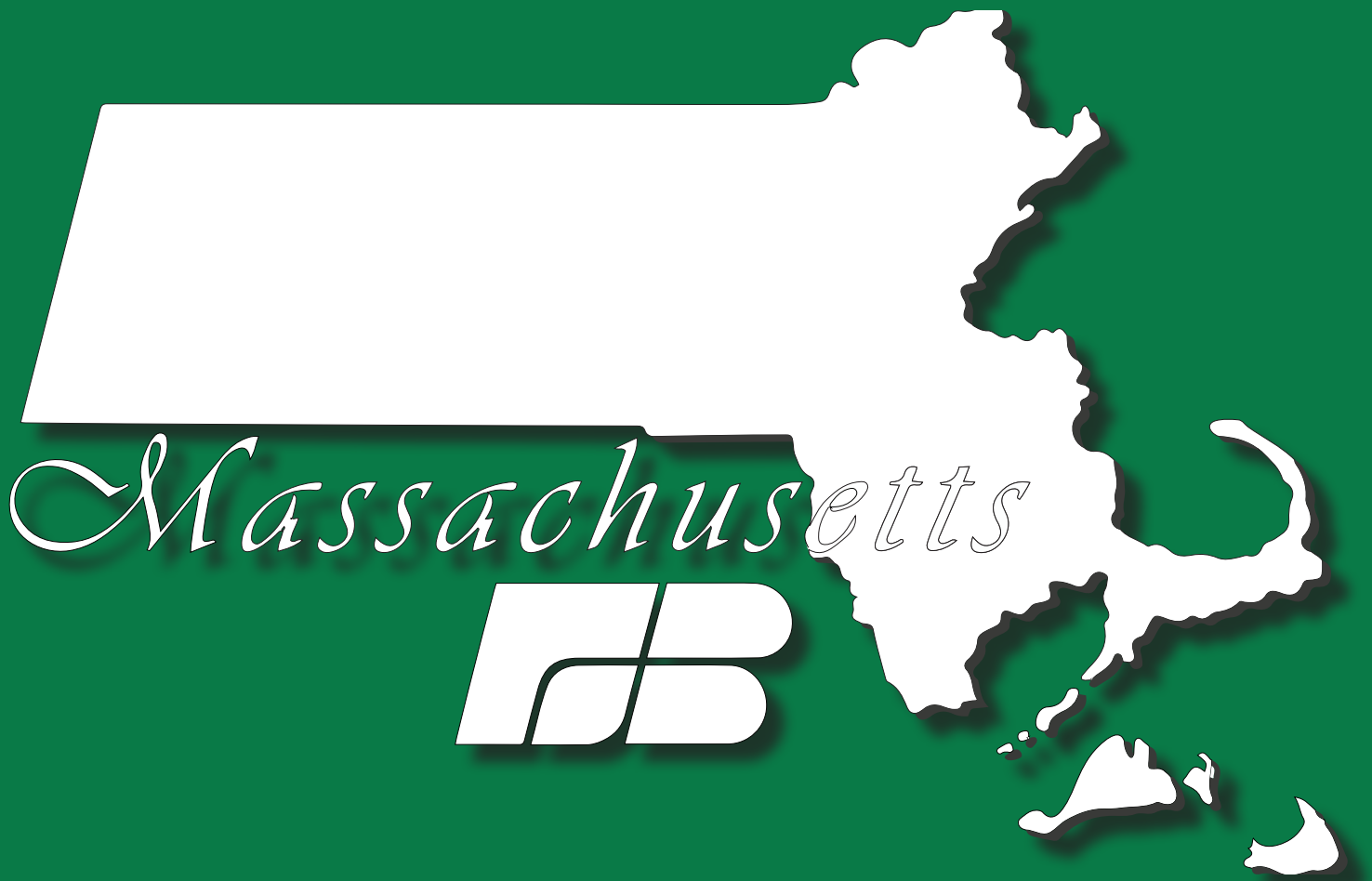


**Tufts University is a referral medical facility and should not replace your primary veterinarian service. This program is only for pre-qualified medical services provided at Tufts University's Large Animal Hospital when referred by your veterinarian.*

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.



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