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MFBF Applauds Steamship Authority's Loosening Restrictions On Hay Transportation

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MARLBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS – April 26, 2021 – The Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) was pleased when the Steamship Authority announced on [April 14 in a memo](#) that it would allow bailed, oil-free hay aboard all SSA vessels. This change came after MFBF members on Martha's Vineyard, MFBF staff and the Steamship Authority met to discuss concerns in January.

"Martha's Vineyard Farm Bureau is a brand-new county, which was created in 2020," said MFBF President Mark Amato. "They have concerns that are unique to them, such as transporting hay on the ferry. I'm pleased to see us working well with them and already seeing success at addressing the issues facing their industries."

Prior to this change, hay had to be transported in an open-air vessel due to its flammable nature. The only way hay could be taken in an enclosed vessel was with the permission of and at the discretion of the vessel's captain.

However, after meeting with MFBF staff and MVFB members, the Steamship Authority changed this policy. Now, all bailed, oil-free hay will be allowed aboard all SSA vessels. For open deck vessels, hay must be tarped or in a closed vehicle and upon a temperature check, it must not exceed 130 degrees Fahrenheit. For covered vessels, it also must be tarped or in a closed vehicle and must not exceed 14 percent moisture content. In the memo announcing the change, it indicates the SSA staff will employ a probe to check hay temperature though remains unclear if that probe also measures moisture.

"We would like to thank the Steamship Authority for their timely and thoughtful action on this matter," Amato said. "This is a step in the right direction, and while we still have work to do to address concerns regarding livestock transportation on the ferry, we are pleased with this first step."

MFBF staff and MVFB leadership have also been discussing ways to improve their ability to move livestock on the ferry. At this time, MFBF has issued a guidance document, found [here](#), to help farmers know best practices when transporting livestock aboard the ferry as approved by the Steamship Authority.

For more information about MFBF, please visit: www.MFBF.net.

About Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation

The Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation is a non-profit organization representing nearly 6,000 family members across the Commonwealth. MFBF is an advocate for farmers, run by farmer members who develop policies through its grassroots process. Its mission statement is to "strengthen a diverse agricultural community by supporting and advocating for Massachusetts farm families." Its vision is to "envision 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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