



Massachusetts Farm Bureau Sweeps American Farm Bureau's Presidents Awards, Awards of Excellence

MARLBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS - Dec. 14, 2016 - The Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) made a clean sweep of the American Farm Bureau Federation's President Awards and Awards of Excellence for states with similar size memberships. These annual awards are given to states that demonstrate excellence in the programs that they implement and complete during the last year.

"I am pleased and honored that MFBF won these awards," said MFBF President Ed Davidian, who farms in Northborough. "I really want to congratulate everyone, especially the staff, on the hard work that it took to pull off such a clean sweep of these awards. The talented work of our staff with the dedication from our members really is what makes MFBF successful year-after-year."

These awards are broken out into six categories, which include education and outreach; leadership development; member benefits; member initiatives; policy development and implementation; and public relations and communications. All of these categories require a written application explaining programs that MFBF implemented during the past year.

For example, in the application for education and outreach, the staff wrote-up and explained Ag Day at the State House, Livestock on the Common, Agricultural Commission boot camps, hosting a hay-making seminar and Hampshire and Franklin county's tractor rides. They also included in the application a results section, which explained how these programs benefitted MFBF's education and outreach programming.

For leadership development, in the application MFBF discussed the workshops that were held during the annual meeting, lobbying training in March and facilitation training for Agricultural Commissions. It also delved into the membership awards programs that are held annually for both Farm Family agents and for county Farm Bureaus.

The Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation outlined three successful policy actions showing the value of MFBF's legislative work under the member benefits category. The three successful policies including maintaining the Chapter 61A land taxation levels, updating local boards' definitions of agriculture to include agri-tourism and the model livestock regulations for local Boards of Health.

The next category, called membership initiatives, was an area that MFBF had a lot to discuss. From the window sticker program to *Edibles* advertising to benefit awareness to hosting a Farm-To-Table

dinner, MFBB staff outlined quite a few activities that they used to improve interest in membership.

For policy development and implementation, MFBB staff applied outlining the work that MFBB staff and the livestock committee did to develop and distribute the draft model livestock regulations to local Boards of Health (BOHs) and pass legislation that recognizes Agricultural Commissions in state law. Both of these projects were beneficial to livestock farmers who sometimes have trouble with Boards of Health overstepping their boundaries.

Finally, under public relations and communications, the staff outlined a few programs, including Livestock on the Common, advertising efforts in *Edibles* and efforts on social media. In addition, the staff discussed a new email platform was tested this year called *Muster*, to send out legislative alerts.

The awards will be presented in January during American Farm Bureau Federation's annual meeting that is set to be held in Phoenix. Davidian will accept them on behalf of MFBB.

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The Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation is a non-profit organization representing nearly 6,000 family members across the Commonwealth. MFBB is an advocate for farmers, run by farmer members who develop policies through its grassroots process. Its mission is "to protect the rights, encourage the growth, and be of service to its members, in the best interest of agriculture."

For more information about the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation, please visit www.mfbf.net.

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