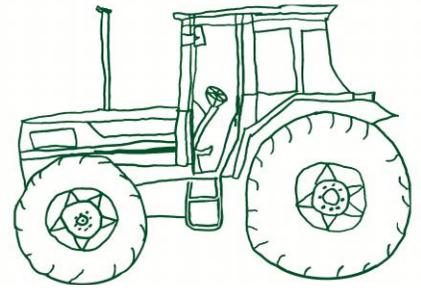


The following organizations are proud to bring you
Massachusetts Agriculture Day at the State House:

Adams Ag Fair · American Farmland Trust · Baaay State
Blanket/Worcester County Sheep Producers · Berkshire Grown ·
Boston Area Gleaners · Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Assoc · CISA ·
CTI-New Entry Sustainable Farming Project · MA 4H Foundation · MA
Ag Fairs Assoc · MA Ag in the Classroom · MA Assoc of Ag
Commissions · MA Assoc of Dairy Farmers · MA Beekeepers Assoc ·
MA Christmas Tree Growers Assoc · MA Farm Bureau Federation ·
MA Farm to School Project · MA Farm Wineries & Growers Assoc · MA
Farmers Markets · MA FFA Assoc · MA Flower Growers Assoc · MA
Forest Landowners Assoc · MA Fruit Growers Assoc · MA In Motion ·
MA Lobstermen's Assoc · MA Maple Producers · MA Nursery &
Landscape Assoc · MA State Grange · MA Tree Farm Program · MA
Wood Producers · NE Vegetable & Berry Growers Assoc · NOFA/MA
Chapter · Norfolk County Ag High School · Northeast Harvest · Our
Family Farms · SEMAP · Topsfield Fair · UMass Extension

Massachusetts Agriculture...

- nourishing your family
- generating local jobs
- preserving open lands



2012 Ag Day Priorities

Massachusetts agriculture is thriving. The Commonwealth has seen more than a 25% increase in the number of farms during the last decade. We also boast more than 113 farms that have been operating in the same family for more than a century - with the oldest in operation for more than 350 years. Whether old or new, the consensus of the agricultural community is that the following issues are our shared priorities:

Department of Agricultural Resources Budget- An effective Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) is critical to the success of Massachusetts agriculture. Unfortunately, successive budget cuts have greatly impacted their efforts. With only 70 or so employees, it is much harder for DAR to absorb cuts than larger agencies. Further, the Department generates approximately \$7.5 million annually through various fees paid largely by the agricultural community. It operates on a \$4 million budget. We do not think this is fair. **We ask that the legislature fund DAR at sufficient levels to continue and maintain key services, and to account for collective bargaining increases, earmarks, etc.**

Restoration of the Agricultural Innovation Center – In 2008, the Legislature provided funding for an *Agricultural Innovations Center*. This virtual center provided for grants and technical assistance to farmers, UMASS and other organizations to fund land improvement efforts and innovative pilot projects focused on marketing, environmental stewardship and new technology. The intent of the program was to ensure the long-term competitiveness and viability of Massachusetts agriculture and it was very successful. Unfortunately, funding was cut for the program. There is never a good time to scrimp on innovation. Massachusetts has some of the highest agricultural land and labor costs in the country. We need to stay ahead to compete. **We ask that the legislature fund an ongoing Agricultural Innovation Center** and consider doing so through a dedicated account.

Investment Tax Credit Bill Representative Carolyn Dykema has filed HB 3554 - An act to promote economic stimulus in natural resource based small businesses. This bill would expand an existing 3% tax credit on tangible personal property available to existing, *incorporated* agricultural and fishing operations to those which are *not incorporated*. Most farm and fishing businesses in the state are not incorporated. These small businesses, many of them new, are very likely to invest this money back into their businesses, and the community. **Please vote for passage of HB 3554 – An act to promote economic stimulus in natural resource-based businesses.**

Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Cuts The Executive Office of Energy and the Environment (EEA) has reduced funding to the APR program at DAR, which is used to preserve farmland. This has several negative impacts for the agricultural community: 1) it would leave federal matching funds on the table for this year; 2) Eligibility for future federal funds would be reduced; 3) Reductions in reimbursements for the coming year would result in cuts to several important DAR programs including funding provided to the *Farm-to-School Program*, the *Agricultural Environmental Enhancement Program*, *Farm Energy Program*, *Farm Viability Enhancement Program*, *Accelerated Environmental Enhancement Program*, *Commonwealth Quality* and *assistance to municipal agricultural commissions*. **Legislators are asked to contact the governor and Secretary Sullivan and ask them to restore funding to the APR program.**