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**Out on a Limb—President’s Message**

If getting agriculture’s message out and protecting our agricultural industry is to be our purpose in Farm Bureau, then we still have much work to do. High energy costs, challenges of weather related growing hardships, pressure of new non-farming neighbors encroaching upon our open space industry, and changes in our

increasingly faster paced life all contribute to making farming more of a challenge each and every day.

As Farm Bureau members we will find it necessary to meet all of our normal challenges and to find ways to address new challenges. I think many people still look at “Green Acres” as a represen-



tative view of our life. I think many people will not look beyond the front door of our farms to see the operating families that keep our hillsides green, care for our livestock and put food on our

*(Continued on page 10)*

**Mass Department of Agricultural Resources  
 Working to Assist Dairy Farms**

*By Douglas P. Gillespie, Commissioner*

In the past month, many dairy farmers have called attention to the “perfect storm” of low milk prices, wet weather, and high energy costs that has caused tremendous financial stress to many. Some wonder what the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) is doing and even claim that we’re not doing anything, particularly in light of recent efforts of Connecticut and Vermont to offer one-time

subsidies. While it may seem that way, nothing could be further from the truth. Let me tell you what we’re doing. First, MDAR is governed by statutes that provide the framework for the programs that we provide. We cannot simply invent a new program, or provide money not budgeted for a particular purpose. Only the legislature can do that and attempts are underway to do just that! For example, during the last week of formal legislative session, key sena-

tors submitted a proposal for emergency payments in Massachusetts. Unfortunately the proposal never saw floor action. MDAR did provide background information for that proposal. While the proposal never saw floor action, several legislators invited me to participate in assessing the situation and to begin developing solutions. The critical word here is “solutions.” Massachusetts legislators are not inclined to provide a

*(Continued on page 12)*

# Crop Shoot!



*You can roll the dice ...*

... or you can sign up for multi-peril crop insurance with Crop Growers Insurance Services. Some farmers call it “weather management” insurance. That’s because it helps reduce the financial risk that comes along whenever Mother Nature kicks up a storm. It’s one of the best ways to insure your yields against virtually any natural disaster, including drought, heavy rain, frost, hail and floods.

**For peace of mind: Multi-peril crop insurance.**

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Insurance Services

800.234.7012

## It's County Annual Meeting Time!

By Carl DeMatteo—Deputy Executive Director

With County Annual meetings being scheduled across the Commonwealth, it's time to start thinking about Farm Bureau policies and how well current policies represent the needs and concerns of the agricultural community. Massachusetts Farm Bureau continues to work on policy initiatives developed through our traditional grassroots process. County annual meetings provide an excellent opportunity for members to voice their opinions and concerns and develop local support.

The Farm Bureau office hears on a daily basis the many challenges our members face at the local, state, and federal level. While we always strive to solve as many of these issues as possible, in many cases the organization has no relevant policy or the issue is an entirely new circumstance. Which ever the case, the policy development process is a great venue to address new concerns.

If you need technical or legislative information and support in formulating your ideas and policies, just call us in Ashland and we'll be happy to assist. Come out to your county annual meetings and share your concerns! Collectively we can accomplish our organization's goals. To the right is a list of scheduled County annual and our State annual meetings. Existing Massachusetts Farm Bureau policies can be found on our web site at [www.massfb.org](http://www.massfb.org). Just click on the "Resolutions" title bar.

### Cape and Islands

Tuesday, Oct 17, 7:00 pm

### Middlesex County

Wednesday, October 18, 7:00 pm

### Essex County

Thursday, October 19, 7:00 pm

### Franklin County

Wednesday, October 25, 7:00pm

### Worcester County

Thursday, October 26, 7:00pm

### Hampden County

Thursday, October 26, 7:30pm

### Hampshire County

Friday, October 27, 7:30 pm

## Fred Thompson to Gavel AFBF Meeting to Order

Actor, attorney and former senator Fred Thompson will address Farm Bureau members as the keynote speaker during the American Farm Bureau Federation's 88th annual convention, Jan. 7-10, 2007, in Salt Lake City, Utah. He currently plays the role of a conservative [district attorney](#) on the long-running NBC series *Law & Order*.

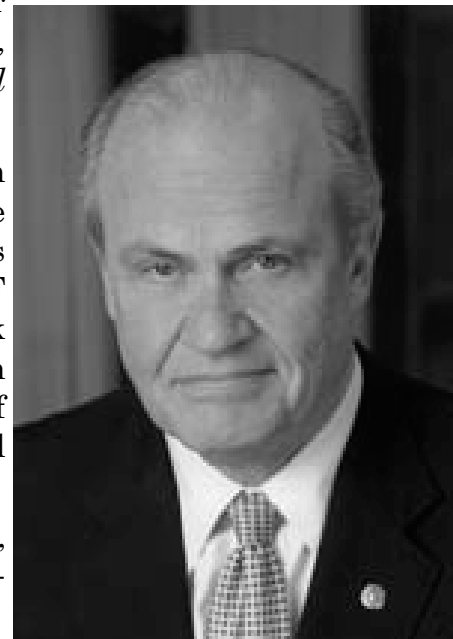
Thompson served in the U.S. Senate from 1994 to 2003, where he was a member of the Finance Committee. The Tennessee Republican also chaired the Governmental Affairs Committee,

earning a reputation for keeping a watchful eye on fiscal matters in Washington. As an assistant U.S. attorney, he served as minority counsel to the Senate Watergate Committee in 1973 and 1974.

Thompson's acting career has included 18 movies, including *Marie*, a 1985 film based on his work in 1977 as he took on the case of a Tennessee Parole Board chairwoman fired under suspicious circumstances. The film told the story of the cash-for-clemency scandal which ultimately toppled Tennessee's governor from power. Thompson's other films include *In The Line of Fire*, *Die Hard II* and *The Hunt for Red October*.

"Fred Thompson's career path gives him a unique perspective from which to address America's farmers and ranchers," said AFBF President Bob Stallman. "We look forward to hearing his insights on life in the power corridors of Washington and in the film and television industry."

To attend the AFBF Annual Meeting, Contact the MFBF office at (508)881-4766. See you there!



US Senator, Assistant US Attorney, and Actor Fred Thompson

## Agricultural Commissions

Eighty-nine communities in the state have created, or are in the process of creating, an Agricultural Commission. The farmers promoted the Commissions because they felt agriculture needed more of a voice in local government since many environmental, health, planning, and zoning issues affected their businesses daily. Farmers from other communities are available to meet with folks who are interested in exploring what a Commission does and how one is formed.

Four Regional Informational meetings have been scheduled to inform farmers and local officials about the benefits of such commissions and how to organize and maintain them. The goals of the Commissions are to advocate for farm interests and improve communication with local government.

If you are interested in starting an AgCom in your town, contact:

**Irene Winkler**, USDA-NRCS, Pilgrim RC&D  
(Bristol, Plymouth, Barnstable, Dukes & Nantucket counties) 508-295-1317 X130  
irene.winkler@ma.usda.gov

**Pete Westover**, Mass. Dept. of Agricultural Resources (Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire counties) 413-665-4077  
westover03@comcast.net

**Cheryl Lekstrom**, Mass. Dept. of Agricultural Resources (Essex, Suffolk, Middlesex, Norfolk and Worcester counties) 508-835-2452  
clekstrom@mac.com

### Meeting Dates:

**North Grafton, Brigham Hill Community Farm**  
37 Wheeler Road, 01536  
October 17, 2006, 7:00 PM

**Petersham, Harvard Forest, Fisher Museum,**  
324 North Main Street., 01366  
October 23, 2006, 7:30 PM

**Walpole, Norfolk County Ag School**  
400 Main Street, 02081.  
October 30, 2006, 7:00 PM

**Littleton, Reuben Hoar Library**  
41 Shattuck Street, 01460  
November 2, 2006, 7:00 PM



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## Michael Martin Murphey and Baxter Black to Perform at AFBF Annual Meeting

Cowboy singer and country performer Michael Martin Murphey will perform for Farm Bureau members Monday, Jan. 8. Murphey, who sang his way into the hearts of Americans with a song about a pony named "Wildfire," has long been considered by the music industry as the "singing cowboy poet" and a pioneer of American cowboy music. His other popular songs include "Geronimo's Cadillac" and "Carolina in the Pines." He also penned New Mexico's state ballad, "The Land of Enchantment." The Texas-born artist created the innovative touring concert "Cowboy Christmas" in 1987, which now spans 40 cities during the holiday season.

Cowboy poet and humorist Baxter Black also will take the stage on Monday. The former large animal veterinarian has published more than a dozen books of fiction, poetry and commentary since the early 1980s. He currently hosts a syndicated weekly radio program, *Baxter Black on Monday* and writes a syndicated weekly newspaper column, "On the Edge of Common Sense." His latest book, *Hey, Cowgirl, Need A Ride?* prompted a reviewer with the *Chicago Booklist* to write, "If you like folksy and smart, earthy and sentimental, Black's your man, and if you like cowboy poetry, no one does it better."

## Public Television Telling the Farmer's Story

*By Mace Thorton* "We just need to do a better job telling the farmer's story to non-farmers." Anyone who has hung out around a machine shed, a small-town diner or a barber shop in rural America has surely heard this lament. Usually, the phrase is preceded by the latest report of well-meaning consumers being snookered by slick campaigns from activist groups determined to drag agriculture through the mud.

The challenge confronting agricultural communicators is how to tell agriculture's story to American consumers in a meaningful and tangible way. It simply is not feasible, affordable or effective to drop leaflets over a city, or buy a series of commercials during the Super Bowl, or even purchase the naming rights to a professional sports stadium – although some might think American Farmer and Rancher Stadium has a nice ring to it.

In the search for an appropriate vehicle to not only give farmers a voice, but one that would attract the interest of consumers, last year, a new public television show came to fruition. *America's Heartland*, a national public television series, has been a resounding success. The show recently embarked on its second season of telling the story of America's farm and ranch families to a sophisticated, consumer-oriented public television audience.

*America's Heartland* celebrates the way of life, the state of mind and the rural pride that embodies American agriculture. The program does that through personal stories, rich in their depth and breadth, highlighting a special group of people – America's farm and ranch families. During each episode, talented and dedicated journalists from KVIE public television in Sacramento, Calif., take their viewers on a journey paved with the stories of the families who help produce food, fiber and renewable fuel for America.

(Continued on page 6)

## The New England Bantam Club 2006 Fall Show

**Sun. December 3, 9am - 2pm**

**Middleboro National Guard Armory**

**Elm St., Middleboro, Mass.**

**Easy to reach off Exit 4 of I-495**

***Public Invited to enter birds or just come and look around. No Admission Charge!***

**Poultry Sales Area, Food Booth, Raffles**

**For more information, contact Dave Anderson 508-942-6208**

**NEBantamclub@aol.com**

**www.newenglandbantamclub.homestead.com**

NEBC Fall Show Dec. 3, 2006 Directions: I-495 exit 4 (Rt. 105). N. on 105 Turn left at lights onto Rt. 28. First right onto Elm St to Armory  
Info: Dave Anderson 508-942-6208

## FDA Clarifies Consumer Guidance On Spinach

The Food and Drug Administration last week revised its former guidance concerning fresh spinach contaminated with E. coli, saying that spinach grown outside the area where investigators now believe the tainted spinach was grown is not implicated in the outbreak, and the public can be confident that they can consume it. The agency said the same thing for canned and frozen spinach.

Since Sept. 14, when the FDA issued the first nationwide warning, the agency has determined that the tainted spinach was grown in three counties in California: Monterey, San Benito and Santa Clara. Spinach is produced in other California counties as well as several other states.

The American Farm Bureau Federation had asked the FDA to amend its advisory, to allow producers outside the targeted investigation area to get their spinach back on the market. Although the new advisory did not say so, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that thorough cooking destroys the E. coli bacteria in meat and vegetables.

More than three weeks have gone by since the FDA warned consumers not to eat fresh spinach because of E. coli contamination. The agency has determined that the tainted spinach was packaged and distributed by Natural Selection Foods of California, which sells spinach un-

(Continued on page 13)

(HEARTLAND Continued from page 5)

Just as it did during its premier season, *America's Heartland* is still telling the farmer's and rancher's story as it celebrates the miracle of American agriculture. The show invites Americans to sit down with farm and ranch families and to take a tour of their orchards and pastures, their fields and their farmsteads.

For this second season, the show's emphasis is to tell more stories that showcase how America's traditional commodity crops – including wheat, corn, soybeans, rice, cotton and livestock – are grown. The show tells the story of how farm and ranch families undertake the major tasks of caring for their animals and planting, nurturing and harvesting their crops in ways that not only sustain their families economically, but also conserve the natural resources on which they rely. Also, the show is continuing to honor the small farmer seeking new and innovative ways to survive and succeed in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Regardless of crop or location, American agriculture always has known the value of telling the farmer's story, but there has never been a vehicle that does so in quite the style of *America's Heartland*. You can bet that officials from the show's flagship supporting groups, Monsanto and the American Farm Bureau Federation, have frequently heard the old mantra about doing a better job telling the farmer's story. Now that they have found an effective way to accomplish that goal, *America's Heartland* is a prime destination for public television viewers for the duration of the 2006-2007 television season.

To learn how you might tune in to the story of *America's Heartland*, visit [www.americasheartland.org](http://www.americasheartland.org) online.

*Mace Thornton is deputy director of public relations for the American Farm Bureau Federation.*

## Is Nanotechnology the Next Big Thing for Agriculture?

A new type of canola oil that pesticides, fertilizers, and is being developed can keep other farm inputs and technologies are betting on cholesterol from entering the nanotechnology to bring unprecedented precision to crop bloodstream. In the future, a new pesticide promises to release its pest-killing properties only after entering the targeted pest, making the pesticide more environmentally friendly. Food packaging is in development that would alert consumers to contents that have spoiled and are no longer safe to eat.

These are applications of nanotechnology in agriculture and food, according to a Sept. 4 report by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars' Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies. The report, "Nanotechnology in Agriculture and Food Production: Anticipated Applications," by Jennifer Kuzma and Peter VerHage, says that five of the world's 10 largest food companies "are aggressively exploring the potential of the really small to make really big improvements in packaging, food safety and nutrition."

And in agriculture, "some of the world's largest makers of

pesticides, fertilizers, and other farm inputs and technologies are betting on nanotechnology to bring unprecedented precision to crop and livestock production," the report says.

These applications are collectively known as "agrifood nanotechnology." It's estimated that nanotechnology will be used in \$20 billion worth of consumer food products by 2010.

For all of its potential to improve food and agriculture, consumers know little about it. A nanometer is one-billionth of a meter. The typical nanotechnology uses structures under 100 nanometers in size. For the sake of comparison, a human hair is about 100,000 nanometers wide.

The substances involved in nanotechnology are so small that they can't even be seen with a common microscope. By breaking materials down into such small pieces—down to individual atoms and molecules—scientists can put them together in new ways to create new substances and materials.

That could lead to everything from better packaging and healthier foods, to pesticides, animal medications and fertilizers that can be delivered more pre-

[www.aliveanddreaming.com](http://www.aliveanddreaming.com)

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Farm Bureau members  
receive a 10% discount off all packages



Alive & Dreaming  
DESIGNS

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(NANOTECHNOLOGY Continued from page 6)

cisely and safely.

A report on nanotechnology by Lux Research, a nanotechnology research and consulting company, says that sales of all types of nanotech products have already generated more than \$30 billion in 2005. However, according to the Wilson Center report, there is no independent and authoritative list of agrifood products made with nanotechnology that include a prediction of their time to market, or thoughts on benefits and risks.

Companies tend to be protective of information about new products in the pipeline, the report says, to prevent competitors from stealing their ideas or taking unfair market advantage. The report also says that companies are afraid that lingering consumer fears about biotechnology in food could lead to a market for "nanofree" products, similar to the market created in Europe for non-biotech foods. From their experiences with biotechnology, the report said, companies should have learned the importance of identifying and addressing health and environmental concerns before products hit the market.

Meanwhile, Congress is asking whether the federal government is doing enough to ensure that nanotechnology is safe. At a Sept. 21 House Science Committee hearing, Rep. Sherwood Boehlert (R-N.Y.), the committee chairman, and Rep. Bart Gordon (D-Tenn.), the ranking minority member, said that the current federal effort to regulate nanotechnology is insufficiently coordinated, lacks an overall re-



search "game plan" and is underfunded. Research on agrifood nanotechnology is mainly the responsibility of USDA, the Food and Drug Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency. The National Nanotechnology Initiative, a federal program under the Cabinet-level National Science and Technology Council, coordinates interagency efforts on nanotechnology research and development.

E. Clayton Teague, director of the National Nanotechnology Coordination Office, says agencies are collaborating, and funding for research is increasing. The president's 2007 budget request calls for increasing nanotechnology environmental, health and safety research funding to \$44 million, from this year's \$38 million.

"As the nanotechnology community's understanding of potential risks of these materials has grown, so have the research investments by the federal government and industry increased," he said.

One witness at the hearing, Lux Research president Matthew Nordan, suggested that Congress set up a new interagency body to put an environment, health and safety plan into action. Nordan said that the federal government should be spending between \$100 million and \$200 million

per year in nanotechnology safety research.

Meanwhile, the authors of the Wilson Center report have begun to develop a database of agrifood nanotechnology products. The database, so far, includes 160 projects that are anywhere from zero to 50 years from market. The group hopes the database will help answer questions about what products are in development, what impact they might have on farming and food production and whether there is any reason to be concerned or excited about ingesting the products or using them in the environment.

"Today, there are only vague and general answers to these questions," the report said. "However, if we are to manage the potential health or environmental concerns these products raise and, ultimately, realize their promised benefits, it is critical that we better understand and anticipate food and agriculture applications of nanotechnology."

## Farm Viability Deadline Almost Here!

During Fiscal Year 2006, the Farm Viability Enhancement Program provided technical assistance to 27 farms with 23 completing business plans. Seventeen farms received funding and were placed under Agricultural Covenants protecting 2,068 acres. The Program impacted an additional 1,828 acres of leased land and protected land under participant management. FY 2006 spending was \$795,000 in direct grants to farms and over \$220,000 was spent on technical assistance costs to consultants and business plan writers.

Since the Farm Viability Program was initiated in 1996, 321 farms have been selected to participate in the program. A total of 263 farms have now been protected by Covenants and received grant awards. For information call (617)626-1700 or see [www.mass.gov/agr](http://www.mass.gov/agr)

# Mass Farm Bureau Annual Meeting—Nov. 30th—Dec. 1st

## Keynote Speaker:

At the request of our Board of Directors, we are proud to welcome Oregon Farm Bureau President and AFBF Board member Barry Bushue as our key note speaker. Mr. Bushue runs a family nursery, berry and flowering basket operation near Boring, OR, and will speak on Land Use and Guest Worker Programs.

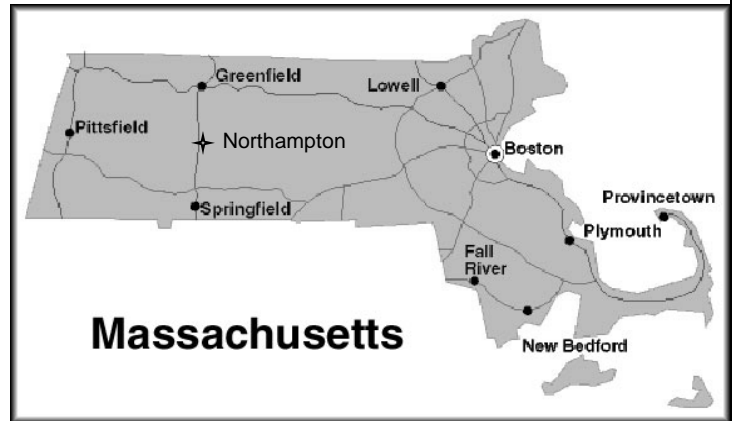
## Tentative Workshop Agenda (subject to change):

- Women’s Committee: The misconceptions of agriculture
- FFA: Students will attend a workshop on the importance of FFA and the growing relationship between MFBF and FFA
- One Pesticide Credit workshop
- Wetlands/Ag Restrictions Panel Discussion
- 61/61A/61B/APR/Viability Changes and Q&A Session
- Woodlot/Forestry Management

## Spouses’ Tour - Dec. 1, 2006 9:00am

– 3:30pm \$35 per person:

- 09:00 Leave Clarion Hotel
- 09:30 Arrive at Magic Wings – butterfly conservatory (with gift shop)
- 11:00 Arrive at Mapleline Farm – view milk bottling plant/store
- 12:00 Leave Mapleline Farm
- 12:30 Arrive at Flayvors for lunch – viability farm stand in operation
- 01:30 Leave Flayvors
- 01:45 Arrive Atkins Fruit Bowl – great produce/ bakery/gift section
- 03:00 Leave Atkins Fruit Bowl
- 03:30 Arrive back at Clarion Hotel



## Annual Meeting Meal Reservations-Make Yours TODAY!

*Don't forget to make your meal reservations. We've planned two wonderful meals to tempt your appetite. Please clip section and return with your check (made payable to MFBF) via mail to Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation, C/O Susan Cornelia, 466 Chestnut Street, Ashland, MA 01721. Fill in the name of each person attending.*

**ALL RESERVATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY NOVEMBER 3RD.**

Names of Each Person	Luncheon Buffet (Nov. 30th) \$25	Dinner Banquet (Nov. 30th) \$36
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

\*For your convenience we are now accepting credit cards for payments.

Call our Ashland office at 508.881.4766 & pay for the meal, renew your membership, or both over the phone with your Visa/MC number

Mail your payment to our Ashland office with the following information:

Include your Visa/MC number and expiration date:

Card type (circle one):

VISA MC Card number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ OR

Email the same information to Mary Ellen Barnatt at: [mebarnatt@massfarmbureau.com](mailto:mebarnatt@massfarmbureau.com)



# AFBF Annual Convention Jan. 7th—10th, 2007

The AFBF Annual Convention for 2007 will be in Salt Lake City, Utah. Massachusetts delegates and other Farm Bureau Members wishing to attend will be housed at the Marriot Courtyard Salt Lake City Downtown located at 130 W 400 South Street Salt Lake City, UT 84101. Our staff will be putting together an affordable package that includes flights, accommodations, a few events, great Farm Bureau workshops and seminars and of course someone to help show you around. So stay tuned for more information—last year was a great success and we hope to see you there this year!



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## Some Picture From Last Year’s Convention:



(PRES. MESSAGE Continued from page 1)

tables.

Farm Bureau members are key to putting a face on farming and especially in this state. Our organization, through our staff, can carry the message about the concerns of

our rural caretakers, but it is you as the Farm Bureau member that proves the reality of what we present. Farm Bureau is many things; our policies are “grass roots” which means you as members develop and decide what issues are important and need to be ad-

dressed. Our influence on issues is supported by your actions in support of those policies; our staff has no credibility without a members support. Our strength as Farm Bureau comes from those that join and support us.

We are at a time in our organization where we must build membership—members recruiting new members and convincing old members to return to the Farm Bureau. Agriculture in Massachusetts is alive and our heritage of adapting to conditions and persevering continues on in a new face: value added, specialty marketers, and farmers markets bring new opportunities to agriculture. Traditional farming enterprises including dairy, vegetable and fruit among many others play a vital role in our economy and share all the challenges of the new enterprises.

Farm Bureau members working together can meet those challenges. Farm Bureau is working to increase the value of your membership and the challenge to you as members is to increase the effectiveness and to bring new members into Farm Bureau. Together we can meet the challenges for agriculture, continue to bring our grass roots issues forward successfully and con-



### ACCESS<sup>®</sup> National Brands Update

The ACCESS<sup>®</sup> program now offers discounts at over 175,000 locations across the U.S. In addition, ACCESS<sup>®</sup> provides savings for members at over 300 national brands—giving you access to discounts on items you use everyday. Visit our website and check out all our deals—including our Hot New Deals section where you can find the latest discounts available to you in your area and around the country. So log on today and start saving!



**Special Offers for Access Members!  
(Change Monthly!)**



**5% off your purchase!**



**\$15 off order of \$150 or more!**



**\$25 off tax preparation services!**



**Free accessory 3-pack, minimum \$150  
instant savings on new activation/upgrades!**



**Complimentary Waterford 3X4  
candle with ring**

## Agricultural Commission: Resource Materials & Support Organizations

As the number of Agricultural Commissions increase across the state (89 as of June 28, 2006) we strive to support the work that you do.

### Resources

The Pilgrim Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Area Council, Inc. and the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources is pleased to provide Massachusetts' Agricultural Commissions (AgComs) with the following new guidance documents:

- *Conflict Resolution Skills—*  
Training for Massachusetts AgComs
- *Effective Meeting Management—*  
Guidance for Massachusetts AgComs
- *Creating Useful Work Plans—*  
A Guide for Massachusetts AgComs

We would like to thank Joe Freitas & Irene Winkler for making these materials available to us and for the continuous support they have given to Agricultural Commissions. Our sincere appreciation goes to the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agricultural (MSPA) for providing the grant funding necessary to produce these resource materials. Copies of these documents are available at [www.pilgrimrcd.org](http://www.pilgrimrcd.org), click on "Ag Commissions" and you will find the following available for your use:

We would also like to take this opportunity to let you know that a Massachusetts AgCom Website is in the proc-

- *A Toolkit for Organizing an Agricultural Commission*
- *A Handbook for Agricultural Commissions*
- *Building Relationships with Town Boards and Staff*
- *Conflict Resolution Skills*
- *Effective Meeting Management*
- *Creating Useful Work Plans*

ess of being developed. It is being planned and designed by members of Massachusetts' AgComs. The website is intended:

To be a central point for all AgComs to refer to for information and tools they need to pursue their work and to see what other AgComs' have accomplished.

To share AgComs successes, projects and challenges.

To highlight what AgComs are doing; "case studies"

To facilitate regional and/or statewide AgCom actions, activities & projects.

To inform AgComs of timely events and activities needing action (Urgent Issue Notification mechanism), and what's coming.

To be a resource for cities and towns needing information about AgComs (how to organize/what they are doing).

To celebrate local agriculture and to make new members feel supported and confident.

### Training

Training and Networking Sessions for existing AgComs are being planned

for **Saturday Nov. 4, 9:00 AM to 3:15 PM**, location to be announced; contact Berkshire Pioneer RC&D at 413-256-1607 and **Saturday Dec. 9, 9:00 AM to 3:15 PM at Hancock Shaker Village**, Route 20, Pittsfield/ Hancock.

### Support

Some of the many AgCom support organizations include: Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, Massachusetts Farm Bureau, CISA, Pilgrim RC&D, Patriot RC&D, American Farmland Trust and a host of others that can be found at [www.mass.gov/agr/agcom/index.htm](http://www.mass.gov/agr/agcom/index.htm).

By, Cheryl Lekstrom, For the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources 508-835-2452, [clekstrom@mac.com](mailto:clekstrom@mac.com)





(SPINACH Continued from page 5)

### US Per Capita Spinach Consumption

der 33 different brands, including Dole, Earthbound Farms, O Organics, Ready Pac and Trader Joe’s. However, FDA has not yet determined how the spinach became contaminated.

“Chances are this happened through some on-farm practice,” said Ron Gaskill, AFBF director of congressional relations. “The government may have to learn more about this particular strain of E. coli to figure out where it came from.”



AFBF supports a thorough investigation to determine the source of the contamination. In addition, California Farm Bureau president Doug Mosebar said that he hoped the investigation would lead to effective actions so farmers could prevent future problems.

“California family farmers and ranchers are committed to do everything within their power to assure a safe food supply. We recognize that as our chief responsibility and we take it very seriously,” Mosebar said. “That is why everyone involved in the spinach business has been cooperating with public health officials as they investigate the source of illness linked to consumption of fresh spinach.”

After several cases of E. coli contamination in lettuce, the FDA in 2004 developed a Lettuce Safety Initiative that recommended good production practices. After the recent spinach outbreak, FDA announced it was expanding the initiative to cover spinach as well.

Guidelines in the lettuce initiative include measures like being aware of all current and histori-

cal uses of the land where produce is grown; following good management practices—testing for microbial contamination, using anti-microbial chemicals and cleaning water contact surfaces, for example—to ensure water quality; and not letting animal waste from adjacent pastures or local waste storage facilities contaminate fresh produce production areas.

In addition, several U.S. fruit and vegetable producers participate in EurepGAP, a voluntary certification program to set and harmonize good agricultural practices around the globe, and particularly for producers that want to sell fruits and vegetables in Europe. Some European retailers will purchase fruits and vegetables only from EurepGAP certified producers. More producers could try to get the certification now as a way to win back consumer confidence.

Spinach consumption had been growing before the outbreak, thanks to Americans’ interest in eating healthier and the availability of convenient pre-washed bagged spinach. Spinach acreage in California alone had grown

from just 15,000 acres in 2001 to 31,000 acres in 2005.

Even though FDA has expanded the lettuce initiative, and even if spinach producers go beyond the initiative with new safeguards after learning more about how the most recent outbreak came about, the wide-ranging impact of the outbreak will make it difficult for spinach producers to regain their former share of the food market, according to Gaskill.

“Packers may start looking at increased testing, to minimize their risk,” he said. “They may have to advertise to make the public aware of their safety practices. They will have to work hard to regain consumers’ trust.”

Mosebar also acknowledged the industry had a tough road ahead.

“Farmers recognize that we must go above and beyond, to restore public confidence in fresh spinach,” he said. “We understand this is about more than words. This is about action. We must make sure that every action we take will be effective, to assure that this problem will never be repeated.”

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Dianne E. Qualter & Paul C. Kennedy, Hyde Park, MA  
Brookwood Community Farm, Inc., Milton, MA

Jermiah Richmond, Manomet, MA

Jonathan H. Dowse, Sherborn, MA

Diane Hubbard, Millis, MA

John McGibney, Springfield, MA

Jill Horton & John C. Lyons, III, Leverett, MA

Max R. Antes, Jr., South Deerfield, MA

Audrey Murphy, Sudbury, MA

Kathleen M. Gallagher & Paul Boulanger—  
North Andover, MA

Robert J. Wood, Peabody, MA

Stephen Wright, Chatham, MA

Antonio Faria, Acushnet, MA

Barbara M. Link, Rehoboth, MA

Victor Reis, North Dartmouth, MA

David Rose, Swansea, MA

Rob Garrison, Aquinnah, MA

Dalby Farm, Scituate, MA

David Sanford, Westfield, MA



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# Annual Meetings!

Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation:

November 30 & December 1



Hosted by Franklin & Hampshire Counties at the Clarion Hotel in Northampton.

Room rates:  
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2 queens 89.95  
call before October 30<sup>th</sup> to get rate 1.800.582.2929

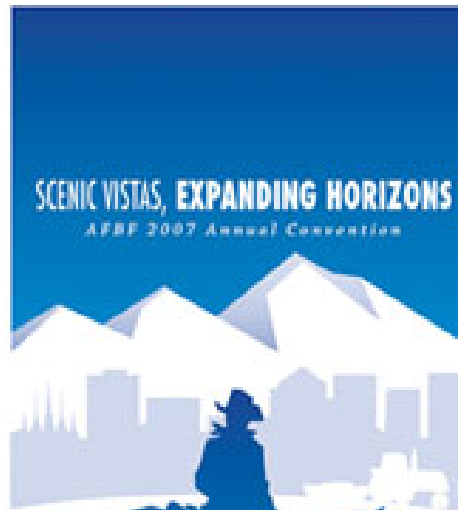
- Key note speaker: Barry Bushue- President, Oregon FB, runs a family nursery, berry, and flowering basket operation near Boring. Per the request of MFBF Board of Directors will speak on Land Use and Guest Worker programs
- Pesticide credit workshop, APR and Wetlands restrictions panel discussion.

If you are from Hampshire or Franklin County and would like to participate in the Taste of the County contact John Conners at 508.881.4766 or

[jconners@massfarmbureau.com](mailto:jconners@massfarmbureau.com)



American Farm Bureau Federation:



Jan. 7-10, 2007  
Salt Lake City, Utah

Last Year was a blast, come and join us this year!

Stay tuned for more information, or

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