

Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
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Final Report

Establishing Sustainability Standards for Massachusetts Cranberry Production.

Project Summary

Customers are increasingly asking questions about the practices of the retailer they purchase goods from, the suppliers who ship to the retailers, and the farmers who produce the food on their tables. These customers want to know that the goods and food they purchase are safe, have been manufactured or grown in a way that takes into account the environment and is produced in a socially responsible way. Because these questions are being asked, it is wise for the cranberry industry to have answers for customers who have many options on the grocery store shelves. Being able to quantify "sustainable" cranberry production means that we are able to help differentiate cranberry products from other products in the grocery store. Market share can shift quickly given the wealth of options available to consumers, and it is vital to not be reactive when questions arise.

Understanding, from the perspective of the customer, how to define sustainable cranberry production will also allow the industry to better communicate with those within the local community. Being an active business, especially one so visible with the amount of open space that cranberry growers hold, results in a partnership with neighbors and those in the community. Therefore, it is helpful to be able to articulate the many good things that cranberry growers do for the community, environment, and local economy.

Activities Performed

The original proposal and the end product of this grant wound up being quite different. Whereas our original proposal envisioned a need for a set of standards which could be audited and certified via a third-party, similar to food safety programs, over the life of the grant it became clear that defining sustainability within a dynamic business environment such as cranberry farming was not going to work. It proved useful to catalog the practices used in cranberry farming but trying to classify singular definitions of what is sustainable cranberry farming would not be useful.

We began by surveying all Massachusetts cranberry growers about their farming practices, their business plans, and their role within their community. After tabulating the returns it became clear that on most environmental and social measures there were not obvious areas of improvement. Many of the responses to the specific questions were already at 90-100% leaving little to no room for improvement, this was encouraging and good news that the adaptation of some of these practices were already at that level of adoption. Nonetheless, there are practices that need improvement, the industry is currently evaluating how to best determine how to implement these practices and measure the improvement. Areas such as water use efficiency and habitat improvement for native pollinators

Given the nature of the cranberry industry (e.g. that approximately 70% of cranberry growers farm under 20 acres and have off-farm income versus having one of the largest cranberry growing companies in the world in MA), measuring economic sustainability would require a wide range of factors. As a result, we decided that rather than try to develop standards, especially when sustainability is an ever-evolving attribute, that our growers would be better served by focusing more of our efforts on the public relations component of our proposal. Originally, we intended to host speaking events with real estate agents and local civic groups as a means to communicate the efforts of cranberry growers. We decided to widen this to also include a print brochure, a page within our website, and several short videos focused on sustainability.

In August 2011 we participated in an international discussion about how sustainability within the cranberry industry should be addressed. This process was led by the Cranberry Institute, an international organization who counts all cranberry handlers and processors as members. This meeting and subsequent conference calls helped the entire industry -- different processors, states, and even countries -- working toward a goal of developing outreach and education materials for the entire North American cranberry industry.

Dawn Allen, CCCGA's Communication Manager, has put together three workshops focused on the sustainability of the cranberry industry in 2012, with seventy people in attendance across all three events. In addition, one workshop was broadcast on the local cable channel and has since aired in several Cape Cod communities.

Project Partners

With focus of this project shifting from defining a rigid set of sustainability metrics for cranberry farms to measure themselves against to an effort to quantify the practices that are already being utilized on the farm to work towards sustainability, the project partners that we chose evolved over time as well.

Jed Colquhoun (University of Wisconsin - Madison) was instrumental in laying the groundwork for understanding sustainability as it relates to cranberry production. He has worked extensively with Wisconsin cranberry growers and other agriculture on devising a strategy for communicating sustainable practices.

Terry Humfeld (Cranberry Institute) began a national conversation on sustainability within the cranberry industry. We worked with the Cranberry Institute on sustainability across the entire industry starting in the summer of 2011.

Rod Serres (Ocean Spray Cranberries) handles questions of sustainability at the farm level for Ocean Spray Cranberries. Rod helped to devise the second sustainability survey which was sent out in 2012.

Outcomes

We have increased our ability to communicate the sustainability of Massachusetts cranberry production through this project. As a result we now have a new page on our website devoted to sustainability

complete with videos as well as a downloadable brochure. This same brochure has proven to be valuable as a hard copy handout. We have used sustainability as a framework for discussion of the cranberry industry, especially in community and neighborhood groups, reaching out to some 70 people directly in three workshops as well as those who watched one presentation on their local access cable.

Goals Accomplished:

- Identified categories of agricultural practices that are relevant to measuring sustainability for the Massachusetts cranberry industry
- Assembled a list of practices that became the basis of the first survey tool (EXHIBIT 2: Survey Tool)
- Surveyed all Cranberry growers in MA with a 38% return rate
- Share survey results with industry members and growers. Survey was distributed and results were shared with over 300 growers, sustaining members and associate members. Including the 4 major handlers of cranberries (who handle 95% of the crop) who use the survey to provide customers with a benchmark as to the current status of sustainability implementation. (EXHIBIT 3: Survey Results)
- A Public relation tool, in this case, a six page brochure, was printed. It has been used in many instances as an educational tool and helps CCCGA to succinctly explain sustainable cranberry production. It is also available on the CCCGA website. We printed 1,000 brochures. Copies were distributed to all growers, legislators and made available at major public events including the cranberry harvest celebration (attendance 30,000), agriculture day at the state house, and Plymouth America's Hometown Celebration (attendance 150,000).
- Website updated to include the above brochure and other information related to sustainable cranberry production. There have been 290 Page views on website. The average time spent on page: 2:39 (that's 80% higher than the site average)
- CCCGA has broadly defined appropriate practices for sustainable cranberry production to mean those practices which provide a benefit both in terms of how the business is run, e.g. make the business more profitable or efficient, and in environmental improvements, e.g. water conservation. Examples of this would include a by-pass canal, which keeps excess water off the bog and allows the natural flow of water to continue unimpeded or encouraging native pollinator habitat which reduces a grower's reliance on rented beehives and allows populations of native insects to thrive.
- March 2011 - Jed Colquhoun of the University of Wisconsin presented on sustainability at our 2011 Winter Meeting. Being the Director of the Wisconsin Institute for Sustainable Agriculture and his work on the National Initiative for Sustainable Agriculture, Mr. Colquhoun was able to fully explain the impetus for retail corporations to push for greater measurement of sustainability of their products. Mr. Colquhoun was also able to draw upon his experience working with cranberry growers in Wisconsin to show how the Massachusetts cranberry industry might tackle the issue of sustainability. ? There were 184 growers and 101 supporting members in attendance at the 2011 winter meeting. While Mr. Colquhoun was in Massachusetts, we also put together a small focus-group workshop with eleven industry members.
- The University of Wisconsin tool that we expected to be a method of broadly evaluating sustainability at the farm level ultimately changed to a tool to measure a farmer's financial and

horticultural risk when deciding what pesticides or fertilizers to apply. This tool would take into account costs of the material, efficacy in field trials, and environmental risk. We looked at this tool in the spring of 2011 and decided to work with UW to make a Massachusetts-specific version, separate from this grant project, as the intent of the evaluation tool had shifted from sustainability to more of an economic decision tool.

- Dawn Allen, CCCGA Communications Manager, put together a workshop for a local real estate office in Plymouth, MA. She currently is working with several other real estate offices to provide the same educational information. Massachusetts is the 3rd most densely populated state in the country and is the 2nd largest producer of cranberries in the world. The lack of agricultural literacy by neighbors and general public of what it takes to produce cranberries creates conflicts. The ability for these realtors to understand and thus communicate to potential neighbors of cranberry bogs about production practices is essential to improve relations between growers and their urban neighbors. The increased pressure from urbanization could result in increased regulation of production practices and thus decrease the ability of Massachusetts growers to compete in a global marketplace with production regions such as Quebec, Canada.
- Dawn Allen hosted an open-to-the-public workshop in Brewster that was filmed and broadcast on local access cable throughout Cape Cod. An 1.5 hour presentation was conducted at each site explaining cranberry production. The presentation included an explanation of cranberry best management practices and the steps the industry has taken to be sustainable.
- Dawn Allen presented to forty five members of the Kingston Gardening Club.
- Scripted, filmed, and edited three videos to communicate how the MA cranberry is sustainable. These videos have been posted on the CCCGA websites. Since the video was posted on October 1, 2012. They have been viewed the following number of times:
 - Environmental – 62
 - Economic – 62
 - Social - 53
- A new survey tool was created through a joint effort of Ocean Spray Cranberries, CCCGA, and WSCGA. It was mailed to all growers in MA in July and results were tabulated in August and September. The 2012 survey was very in-depth with 94 questions as compared to the 40 questions from the first survey (more than double). The possible answers were also much more detailed. This latter survey was a much more definitive and exhaustive look at how growers manage their farms and the role of sustainability in their operations. This second survey has provided a much improved snapshot as to where growers are at in implementing sustainability practices on their farms, where the industry stands in setting sustainability standards and where there are opportunities for improvements. The intent was not to compare the surveys.
- September 2012 - A new page was added to the CCCGA website to capture all of the materials about sustainability within the MA cranberry industry. It is located here: <http://www.cranberries.org/cranberries/sustainability.html>

Illustration of Baseline Data

The major successful outcomes of this project are that growers have a better understanding how the public views sustainability in the context of agricultural production such as cranberry farming, through regular communication at meetings and in articles in the CCCGA newsletter, *Bogside*, but also through presentations at our 2010 and 2011 annual Winter Meeting. In 2010, Andy Whitman, Director of National Capital Initiative at Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, gave a presentation on defining sustainability and some of the developments across retail and marketing of sustainability.

In 2011, Jed Colquhoun, Professor at University of Wisconsin and architect of the National Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, presented to growers a clear vision of what sustainability might mean at the farm level. The 2010 meeting was attended by 305 growers and the 2011 meeting was attended by 184.

Beneficiaries

The chief beneficiaries of this program have been the Commonwealth's cranberry growers. Numbering at some-four hundred growers, these farmers produce a crop that was, in 2011, valued at \$100,000,000. It has been estimated that the cranberry industry employs over 4000 people in Massachusetts through working on the farms and at the handler/processors, five of whom operate here in Massachusetts. By furthering the knowledge base of those producing the crops as well as the public, many of whom are neighbors to cranberry operations, this project has helped the Massachusetts cranberry industry continue to thrive.

Other beneficiaries, besides the growers themselves, have been the handlers and processors who now have access to the results of our surveys which show that the cranberry industry, at the farm level, has already undertaken many developments that are considered "sustainable." This helps the handler as they market their own products and interact with retailers who are asking for a report on the sustainability of their products.

Lessons from Project

One key lesson from this project is that undertaking a project which is driven, in part, by marketing concerns, needs to remain flexible in how it will be applied. In our case, we started with the concept of creating a sustainability metric that individual farms would be able to compare themselves against. This strategy appeared to be sound based on other agricultural crops undertaking efforts to record how sustainable their practices and businesses were. However, as the handler/processors became more involved with this project, it became clear that our approach was going to be adjusted to accommodate the needs of those handlers and processors.

Overall, we feel that the intent of this project was met in full. We are better positioned, as an industry -- growers, handlers, trade association -- to discuss all of the work that the cranberry industry has been engaged in over the past two decades to retool their business models in the face of changing customer preferences, lightening their effect on the surrounding natural environments, and reducing their use of fuels, pesticides, and fertilizers. While the steps that we took to achieve a satisfactory result to the project were not the steps that were outlined within the original application, the end result for us is highly satisfying.

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PROMOTING SPECIALTY CROPS YEAR ROUND IN MASSACHUSETTS COMMUNITY INVOLVED IN SUSTAINING AGRICULTURE—CISA

Project Summary:

Over the last 15 years there have been multiple factors that have made it more difficult for local specialty crop farmers to compete with non-locally grown food in the local marketplace, such as increased global competition, the rise of nationally distributed and widely available organic produce from California and the world, limited access to distribution chains.etc. Yet with these challenges, we have seen mitigating factors arise, most importantly the “buy local” movement. Now more than ever, local farmers need well-crafted and compelling messages to make consumers aware of local specialty crops and compel more consumers to change their behavior to purchase more locally grown food. With this in mind, Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA) conducted a marketing campaign that utilized the media and the Internet, extend the seasons for consumers for specialty crops and engage consumers in getting more local specialty crops into their grocery stores.

Project Approach

The purpose of this project was to enhance the “buy local” effort for specialty crops throughout Massachusetts.

The major activities carried out within this project are summarized below. Outcomes are included and a comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals established for the project is included for each activity.

Major Activities

a. Media campaign

CISA developed a new print ad template and radio ads which we have shared with partner “buy local” groups. With support from MDAR through the Specialty Crop Block Grant, CISA completed 13 weeks of radio advertising (radio ads skip occasional weeks so that we can have a

radio presence for more of the year) and ten weeks of print ads on: sweet corn, tomatoes, peaches, melons, apples, flowers, squash, mixed vegetables and fruits, honey and maple syrup, and Christmas trees.

Increased ad rates led us to do fewer print ads (10) than anticipated (12). However, we augmented our paid radio advertising campaign by partnering with a local radio station to do regular interviews related to local farms and food businesses. During the period of this project, we provided 4 interviews with specialty crops producers.

b. Website campaign

All the ads mention the CISA website and have been helpful in driving traffic to our website. July and August 2010 saw between 500 and 600 more visits per month than the previous year and page views doubled in the same time period. CISA also started a Facebook page which allows us to list when new crops are available and when current crop seasons are winding down. As of the end of 2010 we have nearly 500 people who follow the CISA Facebook page.

We have used the Facebook page, rather than an email alert, to inform interested consumers about harvest seasons and crop availability. We made this choice because more and more consumers are receiving information of this kind through Facebook, and Facebook allows this information to be easily spread from one user to another.

c. Extending the eating seasons of specialty crops

CISA created a web page on storing local crops at home and a web page of food preservation resources to help people preserve the harvest. Our expectation that these resources will encourage people to buy more specialty crops is supported by the level of consumer interest in food preservation workshops offered in our region.

This activity was completed as planned.

d. Expanding the markets

CISA developed a winter and spring local crop list to highlight the specialty crops available in our region during the “off-season.” We also updated the seasonality calendar printed in our annual Farm Products Guide to reflect changes in availability due to season extension, crop storage, and winter-season market opportunities.

This activity was completed as planned.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

To assess the impact of our work on specialty crops producers, CISA collects annual survey data. In 2009, 63% of farmer respondents said that their net income increased over the previous year. In 2010, 86 farmers filled out our survey. Again, 63% said their net income increased over the previous year—though more farmers (16%) said their income increased significantly in 2010 than did in 2009 (12%). The remaining farmers reported that their income “increased somewhat.”

60.8% of full time farmers said that they grossed over \$100,000 and \$250,000, up from 58% in 2009.

Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries of this project fall into two categories. First are specialty crop producers in Massachusetts. Quantitative data concerning this beneficiary group is described above. The second beneficiary is the partnering “buy local” groups and their constituencies of specialty crops growers and consumers interested in locally grown food. The buy local groups benefitted from the opportunity to learn from each other, and our constituencies benefitted from enhanced promotion efforts resulting from our collaboration.

Lessons Learned

Our experience in this project confirms our understanding that continued and repeated exposure to the “Buy Local” message is important for maintaining strong consumer awareness of local products and increasing sales for local farmers. Our farmer and business members continue to tell us that increasing consumer demand is one of the most important ways to strengthen their businesses. We believe that the long-term goal of continuing to build consumer demand for local farm products benefits specialty crop producers in Massachusetts, while also enhancing quality of life, access to fresh food, and community health in towns and cities across the Commonwealth. Promotion of locally grown specialty crops can be accomplished through many means, including events, education, paid advertising, and free or “earned” media. We are increasing our use of the latter category through providing content for local media outlets (print, radio, and television). These activities are effective, but require considerable input of staff time. Continued funding for advertising, social media, outreach, and staff time helps buy local groups to build community support for local farms and demand for local farm products. CISA is committed to increasing community support for this important work and will continue to investigate public and private sources of funding.

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**Developing Sustainability Standards for Massachusetts’ Specialty Crops.
(MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES)**

Project Summary

Commonwealth Quality, a brand designed by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, makes it easy to find farm fresh fruits and vegetables that are safe, sustainable and produced in an environmentally friendly way by local farms right here in Massachusetts. The Commonwealth Quality Seal provides an unspoken guarantee that fresh fruits and vegetables as well as processed foods are not only Massachusetts-grown, processed and tended with care, but that agricultural and production practices adhere to a top level set of criteria that are as good as any in the world.

Commonwealth Quality program participants must adhere to sustainable and environmentally safe practices outlined in the program requirements for Fresh Vegetables and Tree Fruits. These standards were designed to identify and promote production practices that, protect, enhance and sustain the environment as well as our natural resources.

Commonwealth Quality certified products protect the environment by minimizing the impact of long distance storage and transportation, evaluate and adopt energy saving initiatives, and control and minimize farm inputs such as soil amendments, water usage and pesticide application to ensure safety.

Project Approach

The Massachusetts Standards (now called Commonwealth Quality Program (CQP)) were developed using the Best management Practices Guides for vegetables, tree fruits, and small fruits. These Guides were developed in cooperation with the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation and UMass Amherst vegetable, small fruit, and tree fruit teams. These Guides were also reviewed by panels of growers prior to publication.

The CQP produce advisory committee including Steve Verrill, Mark Parlee, and Rich Bonanno met to discuss the concept of creating the CQP program.

A committee of UMass Integrated Pest Management, pesticide safety, commodity, and food safety experts then worked to create the standards for CQP during a series of face to face meetings on the Amherst campus. The standards were based on the Best Management Practices Guides and a combination of:

1. Existing GAP Food Safety standards
2. IPM guidelines from Massachusetts and New York
3. Production Guides developed and UMass and other Land Grants for vegetables, smallfruits, and tree fruits
4. Federal Worker Protection Standards Guidelines
5. Pesticide Safety training guidelines offered by UMass and developed in concert with the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources and based on Massachusetts Pesticide Laws and FIFRA
6. Farm Service Agency (FSA) Best Management Practices Guidelines
7. The UMass committee took several months during 2010 to write, review within the committee, and agree on the final version of the guidelines.

The detailed standards and score sheet can be found on the following web pages contained on the UMass site.

http://extension.umass.edu/agriculture/images/stories/pdf/FruitVegCQChecklist_2011.pdf

http://extension.umass.edu/agriculture/images/stories/pdf/FruitVegCQScoreSheet_2011.pdf

Seven Main Areas Are Covered:

1. Management Considerations for Sites with High or Medium High Leaching or Runoff Potential or Proximity to Sensitive Areas
2. Site and soil considerations
3. Nutrient Management for Established Plantings
4. Plant culture and irrigation practices
5. Pesticide application and records
6. Pest Management Practices
7. Good Agricultural Practices

The standards are written so that growers can rank their current practices against a continuum based on best management practices where 0 is no adoption, 1 is minimal adoption, 3 is acceptable adoption, and 5 is best. Growers must achieve an average of at least a 3 in each category to pass CQP Certification levels.

During the CQP roll out in January, 2011, grower feedback was received from the 108 growers that were present at the meeting in Sturbridge, MA. Final minor changes were made to the criteria and the resulting guidelines and score sheet were posted to the UMass web site through the DAR CQP page.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

During the CQP roll out in January, 2011, grower feedback was received from the 108 growers that were present at the meeting in Sturbridge, MA. Final minor changes were made to the criteria and the resulting guidelines and score sheet were posted to the UMass web site through the DAR CQP page.

Since that time, 52 farms have signed up for the program and we expect that number to at least double in 2012.

Also, in addition to the initial meeting, CQP has become part of the food safety training curriculum. Four additional trainings have taken place, educating an additional 111 growers were trained.

March 1, 2011	Sturbridge, MA	54
May 20, 2011	Shrewsbury, MA	23
December 20, 2011	Hartford, CT	8
January 31, 2012	Marlborough, MA	26

That totals 5 trainings and 219 growers trained with face to face contacts specifically on CQP.

Media Impressions/PR

Since the roll out of the sustainability standards incorporated into the CQP Program there has been extensive media coverage as a consequence of our sign ups and launch of the program. It is estimated that the press and media coverage during the grant generated an estimated 2 million unique media impressions reaching well over 800,000 consumers in the State of Massachusetts. A detailed listing of press coverage is provided below. (Exhibit 1)

Beneficiaries

The Growers attending the program meeting and those who obtain the materials otherwise are the beneficiaries of the program.

In addition ~300 growers have received training from the Commonwealth Quality Program with about soon to be more than 50 growers being certified as part of the Commonwealth Quality Program. Sign-ups for the CQP program were restricted to Specialty crop growers during the period of the grant cycle.

Lessons Learned

It is difficult to abstract concrete lessons learned from this program, since it branched in developed into the Commonwealth Quality Program, which is an ongoing and growing program of its own.

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Orchard Pesticide Reduction with Containment Spraying of High-density Dwarf Apple Orchards

Project Summary

Through this project, the Massachusetts Fruit Growers' Association (MFGA) and the University of Massachusetts Fruit Program (UMass) addressed the following objectives: (1) demonstrate the feasibility of tunnel-sprayer technology in Massachusetts orchards, some with uneven terrain and small blocks; (2) estimate drift to demonstrate whether or not this approach will reduce environmental risk within and near orchards; (3) assess efficacy of reduced chemical application rates per acre in an effort to adjust rates and recommendations to account for much smaller tree volume per acre; (4) compare the economics of higher technology application procedures and much reduced application rates to conventional approaches; and (5) institute educational programs in the forms of grower demonstrations, workshops, written and web-based factsheets, and videos.

Project Approach

The sprayer was delivered to the UMass Cold Spring Orchard on October 1, 2010. Hans Wörthle from H&W Equipment visited on October 19 and 20, along with a crane, to assemble the tunnel sprayer. It was tested briefly and then winterized.

Significant work with the sprayer began in April 2011. Because of the dramatic differences between it and conventional sprayers, it took time to become familiar with its operation and manipulation. First observations were: 1) the sprayer is very tall and because it is offset behind the tractor, it requires more care when driving down a tree row; 2) a wind parallel to the row can blow drift out of the front or back of the sprayer; and 3) the tunnel sprayer is much quieter than an airblast sprayer.

Using published charts relative to the fluid flow out of the sprayer nozzles, we adjusted the tunnel sprayer and an airblast sprayer to deliver the same amount of material per acre. Observation suggested that the airblast sprayer resulted in much more drift, but coverage appeared better than with the tunnel sprayer. This observation puzzled us, so we measured flow out of all of the nozzles and found that the published flow rates were wrong. To obtain the desired flow, we purchased new nozzles, and selected air-induction nozzles (to increase particle size and reduce drift potential). With the new nozzles, the tunnel sprayer provided excellent coverage, with far less drift than the airblast sprayer.

Drift (utilizing water-sensitive paper) was measured on a reasonably calm day. The airblast sprayer, although calibrated well, produced some drift beyond the target trees. It was estimated to be approximately 10-20% of the spray material; this amount would be much larger on a windy day. The tunnel sprayer, however, produced no measurable drift.

To measure the relative effectiveness of spraying with a tunnel sprayer versus a conventional airblast sprayer, a study was conducted in 2012, comparing the applications of two nutrient sprays with each sprayer. A block of approximately 200 Silken trees that were trained to a tall-spindle system was used for this trial. Trees were divided among six replications of an experiment including an untreated control and calcium chloride (at the recommended rate) and an experimental formulation of calcium from Key-Plex applied with the tunnel sprayer or with the conventional airblast sprayer. Treatments were applied three times throughout the summer. Leaf

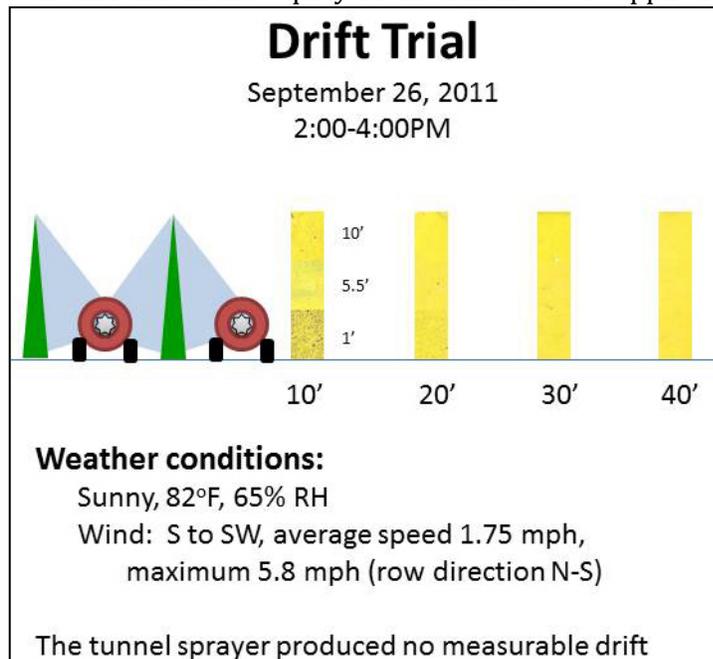


Figure 7. The drift trial measured drift onto water sensitive paper at 1, 5.5, and 10 feet from the soil surface on posts 10, 20, 30, and 40 feet from the outer tree row.

samples and fruit samples were collected at the end of August. Leaf samples were submitted to the UMass Soil & Tissue Analysis Laboratory for the assessment of nutrient element concentrations. The fruit samples were submitted to the Fruit Program's Fruit Analysis Laboratory for the assessment of calcium concentrations. Unfortunately, results will not be available until November, precluding their inclusion in this report. The expectation, however, is that there is no difference between the use of the tunnel sprayer and the airblast sprayer. Educational programs began in earnest in 2011. Details of this project have been recorded in a blog: <http://masscon.blogspot.com> (Massachusetts Containment Spraying Blog). Four video presentations are provided in the blog to describe progress during the early stages of the

process. The blog has been visited a total of 1,579 times since its creation 16 months ago. The videos were also provided on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/user/wrautio1>) and, in total, have been viewed 3,142 times.

Hands-on demonstrations were conducted at twilight meetings on May 17, 2011, and April 17, 2012, at the UMass Cold Spring Orchard Research & Education Center (35 and 30 farmers in attendance in 2011 and 2012, respectively), and presentations (with video) were given at three additional twilight meetings (May 18, 19, and 26, 2011) with total attendance of 129 farmers. It also was demonstrated at the 2012 Annual Summer Meeting of the Massachusetts Fruit Growers' Association at the UMass Cold Spring Orchard Research & Education Center on July 16, 2012, with approximately 100 farmers in attendance. Small-scale demonstrations were conducted several times during the two years to a total of approximately 200 individuals.

In total, about 350 people have seen a hands-on demonstration of the tunnel sprayer. About 130 have seen presentations given in person with video demonstrations, and another 4,700 have viewed web-based presentations.

Work Plan:

The work plan was adjusted to be conducted in 2011 (year 1) and 2012 (year 2).

Adjusted Timeline:

Task	Deadline	Outcome	
Purchase sprayer & trailer	Q1-4, Year 1	Equip. assembled, personnel trained	Completed
Demonstrations (3)	Q2, Year 1	100 farmers view operation	Completed
Twilight meetings (3)	Q2, Year 1	150 farmers introduced to the sprayer	Completed
Spray trails	Q2-3, Year 1	Deposition and drift assessment	Completed
Spray trials	Q2-3, Year 2	Efficacy testing	Underway
Web pages, video, blogs	Q2-, Year 1	Expand educational program	Completed
Final reports published	Q4, Year 2	Educational program completed	Completed

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

1. Sprayer is feasible under our orchard conditions. Hydraulic manipulation of the height and widths of the sprayer allows adjustment specific to tree size and slope.
2. Spray use is reduced by 10 to 20%, likely with no change in efficacy (the latter point still needing verification).
3. Drift is nearly nonexistent with the tunnel sprayer; whereas, it represents 10-20% of the spray material with an airblast sprayer. Environmental benefits are not easily measured but could be significant. Likewise, eliminating drift may allow farming closer to humans, without any risk of off-target exposure.
4. *MEASURABLE* Hands-on demonstrations were conducted at twilight meetings on May 17, 2011, and April 17, 2012, at the UMass Cold Spring Orchard Research & Education Center (35 and 30 farmers in attendance in 2011 and 2012, respectively), and presentations (with video) were given at three additional twilight meetings (May 18, 19, and 26, 2011) with total attendance of 129 farmers. It also was demonstrated at the 2012 Annual Summer Meeting of the Massachusetts Fruit Growers' Association at the UMass Cold Spring Orchard Research & Education Center on July 16, 2012, with approximately 100 farmers in attendance. Small-scale demonstrations were conducted several times during the two years to a total of approximately 200 individuals. In total, about 350 people have seen a hands-on

demonstration of the tunnel sprayer. About 130 have seen presentations given in person with video demonstrations, and another 4,700 have viewed web-based presentations.

Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries are primarily "New England tree-fruit farmers" and secondarily as "farmers worldwide". In total, about 350 people have seen a hands-on demonstration of the tunnel sprayer. About 130 have seen presentations given in person with video demonstrations, and another 4,700 have viewed web-based presentations.

Lessons Learned

This technological advancement comes at a cost of about \$30,000 per sprayer. The extra cost cannot be offset by the cost benefit of reduction in spray material. The potential environmental benefits must be weighed before deciding to purchase such a sprayer. In some settings, it may be becoming impossible to use airblast technology because of the proximity to human dwellings, and this sprayer provides an alternative.

Overall, the sprayer worked very well, performing exactly as expected. We cannot recommend it to the general grower because of price; however, we can recommend it under situations where drift is an insurmountable problem.

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Raise Northern, Winter-Hardy Honey Bee Queens to Improve and increase the quality and quantity of honey in Barnstable County.

Project Summary

The beekeepers of Barnstable County have been frustrated over the last several years due to the high mortality of honey bee hives across Cape Cod. These losses translate into fewer crops being pollinated and a low yield of honey. The demand for local honey far exceeds production here.

Some years we have seen one-half or more of all honeybee hives perish. These losses, mainly during the winter, are not due entirely to weather conditions but poor queens heading the hives. The largest percentage of these queens originates in the southern tier states. Our plan to attempt to raise our own northern, winter-hardy queens might help prevent these high losses.

Strong hives coming out of winter should produce larger quantities of honey with proper management and reasonable weather conditions. Learning and teaching members to raise their own queens was our goal. As the project continued, the intentions were to decrease our winter losses from the current 50 to 60% down to 15 to 25%. We realize this goal cannot be met in a single season but will require 3 to 5 years to complete.

Project Approach

Initially, a large contingent of Barnstable County beekeepers met to construct all the equipment needed to house the new hives. Six hives were thought to be an acceptable starting point. Once these hives were populated with packaged bees, several weeks were needed for them to build with members feeding and managing them every few days. This is normal spring management and took place each spring of 2010, 2011 and 2012. Breeder and local queens were also included in the management sessions.

Late June and into July and August each season, larva from the breeding/breeder queens were grafted into cells in order to begin the queen rearing process. We felt confident that we could successfully raise 5 to 10 queens every week or two. Once they proved to have a good laying pattern, they would be sold to club members for \$20 each. We did fall short of our goal, but did successfully raise over thirty queens to head members' hives each of the first two seasons. Because every queen raised needed a number of young bees and food, we fell short of our goal as our "inventory" or stock of bees and brood was not large enough. Also we had encouraged and attempted to teach members to raise their own few queens using the Miller method. This method we found to be very unreliable and members became discouraged. Thus, this approach was abandoned.

The future of the project fell on the two grant coordinators to salvage the program using another method of queen rearing. Previously mentioned, they began grafting with better results and were able to supply more queens when conditions proved right.

We did change direction again in the spring of 2012. Needing more bees and more hives to produce mated queens proved an obstacle. The committee decided to purchase new packages of bees (9) with monies received from the sale of queens the previous year. Members were asked to donate their time and equipment to raise these hives. In July we were to break up these hives into 4 to 5 smaller nucleus colonies, add a queen cell we had raised and sell these to members to increase our number of locally

raised queens heading hives. Perhaps 30% of this goal was met as many queen cells were destroyed or failed to emerge. We did experience European Foulbrood in some hives due to stress caused by a lack of stores in the spring hives. This set us back 3 to 4 weeks during June of 2012.

Workshops were provided at four locations around the Cape on a monthly basis in 2012. This effort was to encourage members to split their strong hives, making a five frame nucleus colony. They then would be given a queen cell raised by the coordinators to head the new mini-hive. Twenty-eight splits were made with a 60% success rate and a number had to be requeened. Poor mating conditions created some of these losses.

Come the spring of 2013, the results of our efforts will be evident in those nucleus colonies that survived and we see that the queens are laying a decent brood pattern. From these overwintered bees/queens, we have instructed the owners to split these hives again to increase the gene pool for another season.

Each of our three seasons did have different goals as it became necessary to alter our directions. If all our efforts fell into our expectations (5 to 10 queens every 2 weeks for 8 to 10 weeks) the project would have added approximately one hundred locally raised queens to Cape Cod hives each of the three seasons. Realistically we have added thirty queens each season.

Numbers are not as important as is the value of the experience and challenges we encountered. Beekeeping is farming thus we experience variations in our efforts which are directly related to weather conditions here on Cape Cod.

Goals and Outcomes achieved

The measurable outcomes over the last three years did not meet our projected goals of a survival rate of between 75 and 90%. Perhaps the 2012 survival rate might be more impressive, however, that will not be realized until April or May of 2013.

2010 - Ten mated queens went into winter in healthy colonies. Six overwintered and thrived going into the spring of 2011 for a 60% survival rate the first season.

2011 - Thirty-six queens were raised and sold to members. Four were lost during introduction and 18 colonies survived the winter for a 56% survival rate.

2012 - Twenty-eight splits (nucleus colonies) were built and 60% successfully were headed by well mated and laying queens. Entering winter 16 5-frame nucleus colonies are headed by Cape Cod queens. How they over winter will not be realized until April or May of 2013.

Beneficiaries

A power point presentation of our queen rearing efforts was created in order to provide fellow members and beekeepers across the state what we were attempting. It gave an insight into the equipment needed and the successes and failures of the project. During the spring of 2011, this power point was presented to the Massachusetts Beekeepers Association in Topsfield, Ma for over 150 state beekeepers. In addition to this, we created a poster and offered a digital frame power point presentation at the Cape Cod Natural History Conference at the Cape Cod Community College in March of 2012. There were over 250 interested parties in attendance.

Lessons Learned

Without a doubt, most members of the Barnstable County Beekeepers Association were very receptive to our queen rearing project and most hoped to be able to purchase a Cape Cod queen. This encouraged the coordinators to continue with the project and attempt to find ways to increase production without sacrificing the quality of the queens. Many sites on the internet were researched to help overcome negative results. We did find there is no right or wrong direction when rearing queens, but the direction one does take is what will work most successfully with what you have to work with. In essence, this is what the project taught us. Most frustrating was the time it took to realize the good results and failures.

Specifically, the coordinators learned the Miller method of queen rearing was extremely unreliable. Moving to grafting of larva was a technique that took many attempts to be successful. It was very gratifying to watch a queen cell develop over 5 to 6 days. And it was very disappointing to go back into the cell builder colony to realize the cells did not develop or were torn down by a rogue virgin queen that entered the hive or was overlooked by the beekeeper. This was a hard lesson as so much time was lost.

The goals we established were met but not to the degree we had originally projected. Healthy, winter-hardy queens were produced. The numbers produced did not reach our expectations. Based on our successes and failures, the Barnstable County beekeepers will continue with this project including more members to assist in raising more queens and cells.

One critical issue was the decision of what race of honey bees would have the best survival rate on Cape Cod. After much discussion among committee members, it was decided to purchase northern-raised Russian breeding queens from Vermont. Adapted to the cold, some resistance to the Varroa mite and utilizing small quantities of winter stores were the attributes we based our decision on. Keep in mind most members on the Cape were managing Italian queens in their hives from the south. This resulted in the loss of many new young raised queens as our Russian daughters were not readily accepted into these Italian hives. We created and published specific directions on just how to introduce and handle these new queens. The end result was to rethink which breeder queen might be more successful.

In 2011 and 2012 our direction turned to the Carniolan race of honey bees and breeder queens. Their attributes were similar to the Russians. They included a gentle nature, conservative with honey stores and overwintered with small clusters thus requiring less honey for the winter. These daughters proved to be a better selection with greater success in requeening and creating 5 frame nucleus colonies to bring through the winter. Come the spring of 2013, the survival of these hives will prove our selection will work for the beekeepers of Barnstable County.

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Educational programs to foster good agricultural and manufacturing practices that aid the development of commercial grape growing and winemaking in Massachusetts and improve the quality of Massachusetts-made wine

Project Summary:

The rise in number of small-scale artisan farm wineries is, in part, the result of multiple factors including: increased interest in locally produced farm product and advances in grape breeding that have provided new cold hardy hybrid varieties with good winemaking characteristics for non-traditional production regions like New England. The combination of increased demand coupled with wine-production advancements has fueled the growth of a new agricultural sector across the country, small-scale artisan farm wineries.

Grapes offer agriculture in Massachusetts a high value crop with an appealing end product. Expanding sales can aid in the sustainability and growth of existing wineries as well as the establishment of additional wineries. Massachusetts faces an erosion of farms and farmland. Growing grapes and making wine offer an opportunity for new income to farmers.

With the growth of the Massachusetts wine and grape growing industry, there is a need for better and higher quality information about appropriate agricultural and production practices. This need starts in the business planning stages and continues as the business grows. In addition, because grape growing and winemaking are relatively new in Massachusetts – about 30 years since the first commercial vineyard was planted on Martha's Vineyard, there is a relative lack of expertise relating to grape growing practices and the technical aspects of winemaking. Traditionally, Massachusetts vineyardists and winemakers have looked out-of-state for that knowledge.

Massachusetts has a number of grape growing regions with different growing conditions - from the coastal region with moderating influences of nearby bodies of water to Pioneer Valley and The Berkshires with extreme winter conditions. This environment increases the complexity of the information the industry needs related to site, varietal, and clone selection and management. The types of wine grapes grown in various regions of the state differ – hybrids inland and vinifera near the coast. Not only do these two types of grapes often require different growing practices, but the cellar practices in producing wines made from them often differ too.

Funding from the grant was used to help close an existing information gap necessary to sustain the growth of grape growing and winemaking in Massachusetts and ensure the continuing improvement in quality. MFWGA provided quality programs that were available to potential and existing members of the Massachusetts grape growing industry and were delivered by experts from around the country on a variety of subject matters.

Project Approach

Below is a list a breakdown of activities and tasks undertaken to complete the grant project

SPEAKERS & EXPERTS

Date	Topic	# of Attendees
2/9/10	Wine Clinic	18
3/2/10	MFWGA 3 rd Annual Meeting	43
5/18/10	Wine Blending Workshop	14
8/23/10	Canopy Management Practices on Disease Management and Fruit Quality	32
2/8/11	MFWGA 4 th Annual Meeting	62
7/14/11	Grape Diseases and Their Management	17
9/1/11	Wine Analysis Short Course (wine chemistry course)	19

The Harvest boot camp was cancelled

ADVERTISING & PROMOTION

Generic Promotion – full page ad in the June and September 2011 editions of *Edible Boston*

Promotional Events - Eastern State Exposition (2011 and 2012) – 100,000+ wine samples poured

Telescopic Banners/Table Top Display – three retractable banners were produced

Wine Passport - 3,500 wine passports were printed. To date, 18 have been returned that completed all components of the program (visiting 15 wineries). The incentive program will continue in 2013, encouraging current passport holders to continue visiting Massachusetts farm wineries.

Web Video Commercials – 21 videos were filmed, edited and produced

WEBSITE

The website, www.masswinery.com, was completely overhauled. Over 20,000 hits have been recorded since data collection began.

A summary of the contributions and roles of project partners

Massachusetts winery owners, winemakers and staff participated in all aspects of the project. MFWGA members served as committee members to develop meeting agendas, select speakers and developed the generic promotion campaign.

UMASS Extension and MA Department of Agricultural Resources staff serves on the MFWGA Board of Directors, providing invaluable technical assistance and guidance when new programs are being developed.

The MA Office of Travel & Tourism (MOTT) was one of the main sponsors of the MA Wine & Cheese Trail guide. The Second Edition was printed in the summer of 2012 and promoted heavily by MOTT and the local regional tourism offices.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

SPEAKERS & EXPERTS

Annual Meetings:

The 3rd Annual MFWGA meeting was held on March 2, 2010 with 43 members and guests in attendance. Topics included:

Thriving in a Regulated Industry
Wine Clubs and Other Ways to Grow Your Business
Cool Climate Cultivars: Their Viticulture and Winemaking

The 4th Annual MFWGA meeting was held on February 8, 2011 with 62 members and guests in attendance. Topics included:

Selling Wine at Farmers Markets
Infused Wines, Imaginative and Profitable
Sustainability in the Vineyard
Sustainability in the Winery and Tasting Room
Technical Assistance Programs

Twilight Meetings:

Date	Topic	Attendees
8/23/10	Canopy Management Practices on Disease Management and Fruit Quality	32
7/14/11	Grape Diseases and Their Management	17

Other Meetings:

Date	Event	# of Attendees
2/9/10	Wine Clinic	18
5/18/10	Wine Blending Workshop	14
9/1/11	Wine Analysis Short Course	19

ADVERTISING & PROMOTION

Generic Promotion

A full page ad was run in the June and September 2011 editions of *Edible Boston*. Each edition has a circulation rate of 200,000.

Promotional Events

MFWGA was well represented at the Eastern State Exposition, better known as the Big E, in 2011 and 2012. In total, over two million visitors attended the Big E. Through the promotional efforts of MFWGA, an estimated 100,000 wine samples were poured, while winemakers educated consumers about Massachusetts Wine.

Telescopic Banners/Table Top Display

Three retractable banners were produced. The banners can be arranged to create a full free standing or table top promotional display.

Wine Passport

3,500 wine passports were printed. All were distributed through MFWGA member wineries. An incentive program was developed for consumers visiting 15 or more wineries.

Web Video Commercials

Twenty one videos were filmed, edited and posted to the MFWGA website. Each video features a different winery. The videos are used for promotional purposes on our web and social media sites.

WEBSITE

The website, www.masswinery.com, was completely overhauled. The site was developed in a web based program that has allowed for internal updates and modifications. The calendar page is updated on a regular basis with events and activities related to Massachusetts Wine. The information below represents six months worth of website traffic data. The overall monthly pattern shows traffic continuing to increase.

Total Site Visits – 11,905

Unique Visits – 9,812

Page Visits – 52,981

Average # of Pages/Visit – 4.45

Visitor Information

New Visitors – 82.53%

Returning Visitors – 17.47%

Traffic Sources

Direct Search – 83.14%
Referral from another site – 8.9%
Direct Access – 7.95%

All outcomes are long term. All of the activities accomplished through this project will be used as a foundation for future programs. The need for continuing education will always be present, with the topics varying based upon the needs of the current industry professionals. In order to experience growth in the industry, MFWGA must always be poised to be a facilitator for the newest industry developments. Current news and events are monitored on a regular basis to determine which topics would be most relevant to Massachusetts producers.

A successful marketing campaign builds over time. The goal of the generic promotion campaign was to create consumer interest in Massachusetts wine. The project developed an embryonic marketing campaign that can be molded over time to reflect the needs of Massachusetts wineries. The deliverables produced as a result of this project will benefit all wineries in the Commonwealth as consumers continue to be educated about the quality and variety of wine produced locally.

One of the goals of the grant was to increase consumer awareness of Massachusetts Wine. Over 300,000 individuals had direct exposure to our successful generic promotion campaign. Another two million individuals had the potential for exposure through public events such as the Eastern States Exposition.

Another goal was to track the increase in wineries over time. In 2009 there were thirty nine licensed wineries in the Commonwealth. As of the fall of 2012, the number of licensed wineries has grown to fifty.

This project provided the first opportunity for MFWGA to engage in the activities and programs listed. It is still too early to fully evaluate the implementation rate of the information presented at the continuing education programs. Many of the programs focused on topics that take time to fully integrate into winery operations. Therefore it is difficult to accurately measure success at this time. As a result, the data that has been gathered from each event will serve as a benchmark for tracking future success rates.

Summary of the major successful outcomes of the project in quantifiable terms

- Developed www.masswinery.com website. The site has received over 20,000 hits in 2012 alone.
- Produced 3,500 copies of the Massachusetts Wine Passport
- Promoted Massachusetts Wine in print to over 200,000 subscribers (Edible Boston) and over 2 million fair attendees (Big E)
- Introduced consumers to Massachusetts Wine through twenty one web based videos

- Informed and educated 205 current and future Massachusetts winemakers at seven educational events
- Co-sponsored the 2nd Edition of the Massachusetts Wine & Cheese Trail guide. 67,900 pieces were printed.
- Measure wine destroyed as reported on Federal Reports of Winery Operations

Other Measurables:

Wine Destroyed:

Members were surveyed to collect data. All respondents reported that no wine was destroyed in 2010, 2011 or 2012

Measure the increase in medals awarded Massachusetts wines and improvements in standings.

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Double			
Gold	0	1	2
Gold	2	3	4
Silver	3	19	20
Bronze	1	39	21

In addition to the data above, one respondent received the Best In State Award from the 2012 Eastern States Exposition Wine Competition

Measure the percentage of wine made by Massachusetts wineries from Massachusetts-grown grapes

A sub-sample of wineries was contact to obtain this data. Wineries represented new, as well as established producers. Production from the sampled wineries ranged from 364 to 26,000 gallons.

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Min	30%	28%	30%
Max	90%	100%	85%
Avg	61.20%	54.10%	49.50%

Note, the table above includes data only from the wineries that opted to respond to the data request. Actual percentage may be higher or lower. This data pool will be used as a baseline for future reports.

Beneficiaries

There were numerous groups and individuals that benefited from this project. All Massachusetts wineries benefited from the generic promotion campaign and access to continuing education programs. Future benefit lies in the continued effort of MFWGA to promote wineries, vineyard development and wine making in the Commonwealth.

The beneficiaries of the project include all 50 licensed wineries in Massachusetts. Educational programs are made available to all current licensed wineries, as well as any individual who has an interest in professional wine making. Through the use of website and social media, the potential reach to consumers is unlimited. The www.masswinery.com website receives over 1,000 hits per month which serves as consumer education, as well as promotion of Massachusetts wine.

Based on the *Economic Snapshot of the Massachusetts Winery Industry* (MDAR, July 2011), the Massachusetts wine industry has grown by 21% since 2007. Over \$9.3 million was generated in sales in 2010, compared to \$7.8 million in 2007. Given the continued increase in the number of licensed wineries, the potential economic impact of the Massachusetts wine industry is on the rise as well. The data also shows the planned increase of both production and employees in the coming years to meet consumer demand.

Lessons Learned

- The MFWGA website serves as a portal for consumers and producers to meet. Through web videos and frequent site updates, consumers interested in Massachusetts wine are able to connect with a winery that offers the style of wine they are seeking. The growing traffic on www.masswinery.com has illustrated the consumer demand for industry information.
- Consumer interest in Massachusetts wine continues to grow. Consumers are looking for an “experience” when they visit a winery tasting room. Through promotional events and programs, MFWGA has been able to increase consumer awareness of the quality and variety of wine produced in the Commonwealth.
- The need for continuing education for winemakers remains high. As new wineries are developed, there is a need for both base level and high level technical information. The ability to bring wine making and marketing experts to the producers of Massachusetts has enabled them to produce a product of increasing quality and profitability.

Contact

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Marketing Apples with Video and Internet Technology

Summary

With \$7,000 in Specialty Crop funds from the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, the New England Apple Association was able to complete video programs about cider-making, proper storage of apples, and the apple packing house. The funding paid for two days of videotaping (at Carlson Orchards in Harvard, Massachusetts, and J. P. Sullivan and Co. in Ayer, Massachusetts), in April 2010, as well as studio shots and post-production.

The goal of the video project was to provide educational material in a contemporary format about how apples are grown, harvested, eaten, and processed to a wide range of audiences of all ages. The combination of video and the Internet promotes a broad dissemination of the information via the New England Apple Association web page, www.newenglandapples.org, the popular search engine YouTube, and through downloads.

The project enabled the New England apple industry to capitalize on the visual beauty of apples to educate consumers about a wide range of topics, from the critical role of pollination to pruning and grafting.

The three video programs are part of a 14-part series funded over two years with additional grants from the Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Maine departments of agriculture and Northeast Farm Credit's AgEnhancement program. The programs on cider-making, storage, and the packing house total 13 minutes, and were completed over a 10-month span:

Program	Length	Completion date
Proper Storage of New England Apples	2:07	7/21/2010
Cider-Making In New England	3:42	12/22/2010
Packing New England Apples	7:10	2/08/2011

The programs were posted on the association Internet website and YouTube.

Project Approach

For the three-part video series on New England apple varieties, a three-person team comprising Russell Powell, executive director of the New England Apple Association, Associate Director Bar Weeks, and videographer John Browne, spent a day videotaping owners Diane and Chuck Souther of Apple Hill Farm in Concord, New Hampshire.

The setting was Apple Hill's retail store at the orchard. Diane and Chuck took turns choosing apples from the bins of apples and describing their flavor, availability, and other special characteristics. Powell and Weeks coached the Southers on content and tone, and several takes were required for most of the featured varieties, more than 30 in all.

Browne then logged the footage and sent it to Weeks, who prepared a script with narration to organize the variety descriptions into three programs. Browne, Powell, and Weeks then edited the footage at Browne's studio, while Browne read the narration and provided an original musical score on acoustic guitar.

This approach was consistent throughout the series. Powell produced the programs, setting up the shoots, guiding the content and overseeing production. Weeks wrote the scripts and served as art director and production assistant for the videotaping. Both Powell and Weeks assisted with editing. Browne was the project's videographer, editor, and narrator.

The video project was originally conceived as a single, comprehensive program on an annual cycle of apple growing, with a total length of 10 to 15 minutes. This proved unrealistic in length, and unsuitable for the diversity of topics. Early on, we realized that to do subjects justice we had to allow programs to be longer, and presented individually.

The two-part series on pruning apple trees, for example (videotaped at Tougas Family Farm in Northborough, Massachusetts), is nearly 18 minutes long; a three-part series on apple pie-making is an aggregate of 22 minutes. In all, the 14 video programs are more than 90 minutes in length — more than a feature film, spread among nine discrete topics!

A consequence of this was that we reconsidered our initial idea of pressing a single narrative program on a DVD, in favor of a targeted approach taking advantage of the free posting on YouTube and locating the videos strategically on different pages of our website, according to their topic, release date, and season.

We did not encounter any unforeseen delays, and the videos were produced and posted according to our original timetable.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

We achieved our main goal of completing a comprehensive and informative series of video programs about popular and heirloom apple varieties cultivated in New England. The programs were posted on the Internet in two prime locations: the New England Apple Association website and the search engine YouTube. The videos were also promoted through social media, including Facebook and the apple association weblog, www.newenglandorchards.org.

We learned two main lessons from the project: 1) our initial model of a single, comprehensive video program was not ideally suited for our purposes, and 2) building traffic to the website is an ongoing task requiring multiple approaches.

Since our primary means of distributing the videos online was through YouTube and the association website, we needed to break the topics down into manageable lengths (YouTube, for example, places a 10-minute limit on individual videos). There were clear cost savings to posting the videos online for free, and the Internet makes the videos available instantly and on an ongoing basis. These are reasons enough to have amended our original vision of a single program.

The shorter videos on individual topics were also more practical for viewers who might not have the time or interest to watch a 90-minute program; they now can locate videos by topic. People can access the individual programs at any time, on their own, without requiring us to provide them with a DVD. The individual programs have also aided our ability to promote the video series throughout the website and on our weblog, rather than place all of our promotional efforts on a single program.

Even with this added ability to promote the videos, however, they did not increase traffic to the website as dramatically as we had hoped during the grant period. The association website experienced an increase of more than 100,000 hits in 2011 compared to 2010, to more than 760,000 — a 17 percent increase. But the full impact of the videos will clearly be felt over a longer time period. Rather than a sharp spike in hits as a result of the posting of the videos, we have seen a more gradual increase, and it will continue for the foreseeable future.

The varieties programs, for example, have been viewed more than 900 times to date, a relatively small number compared with some of the other programs, but it continues to grow steadily, outperforming the first year of posting (428) in year two (480, with one month to go).

The videos fulfill a major marketing and educational function for the region's apple industry, but we must continue to find creative ways to draw attention to them. The weblog is one of these, as is our quarterly newsletter, *McIntosh News*; projects like our search engine optimization efforts and 2012 New England Apples wall calendar, which promotes the website on every page, are others.

The key toward building and sustaining traffic to the website is to keep the material fresh and use myriad ways to publicize it. We move the videos around the website according to topic and season, highlighting different programs on the home page, for example, at different times of year. Maintaining interest and keeping the site current are reasons that we might add new video programs in the future.

Changes to the website's content will further enhance viewership of the programs. After a lengthy "feature run" on the website's home page, the three videos on New England varieties were moved to the top of the page for "Apple Varieties," for example. Pruning and grafting are now located on the website's "Learn About Apples" page, and the pie-making series can be found under "Recipes." A special page on cider currently is under construction, with a launch date of February 2012. The cider-making video will appear prominently on the new page.

The success of the video series will continue to grow, and as a result we may consider additional programs in the future, as appropriate.

We also met the goal of completing the videos within the project budget.

The grant funds were expended as budgeted, with one alteration: the \$1,200 for videotaping personnel paid for two days of shooting at \$600 rather than one, but without the services of an audio technician. This enabled us to tape on separate days at Carlson Orchards and J. P. Sullivan and Co.

John Browne of Stow, Massachusetts, was both videographer and editor for the project, and he was able to handle the additional audio responsibilities. The post-production costs of \$4,950 were met, despite the additional length of the three programs and the studio footage required for the video on proper apple storage. Post-production costs included video digitizing and editing, fine-cut editing, testing on multiple machines, and uploading on YouTube.

Browne also composed and played original music for the programs on acoustic guitar, and read the narration.

Browne graciously agreed to abide by the original financial terms, despite the changes in the final product. We appreciated his willingness to contribute additional time than was originally expected.

The matching funds from the New England Apple Association paid for 100 hours (@ \$60) for Russell Powell, who produced the programs, and 100 hours (@ \$60) for Bar Weeks, who directed the programs and wrote the scripts.

Travel included Powell and Weeks independently visiting Carlson Orchards and J. P. Sullivan and Co., in advance of the videotaping. Weeks attended the videotaping and art directed the studio shots for the video on proper storage. Powell and Weeks traveled to Stow several times each during the post-production to supervise the editing process.

Beneficiaries

The educational video project was designed to have a broad impact and benefit all New England orchards, large and small, by informing consumers about many of the unusual varieties grown in the region, stimulating their interest in purchasing apples. In tandem with the videos, visitors to the website can search for individual varieties to find out where they are grown and sold, locate orchards by state, or view a photograph and written description of the variety to supplement the video description.

One distinct and quantifiable outcome of the project has been the number of hits to the association website. We anticipated a 20 percent increase in the number of hits experienced by the site; the hits increased from 652,725 in 2010 to 763,243 in 2011, an increase of 17 percent.

While this fell short of our target of a 20 percent increase, the picture for the critical fresh harvest months of September and October was dramatic: during those two months in 2010, the website attracted 239,459 hits. In September and October 2011, that number jumped to 353,427, a 48 percent increase.

Viewership of the videos has increased dramatically in 2011: during the period from February 22, 2011 (two weeks after posting the 14th and final program, on the packing house), through January 9, 2012, viewership of the videos more than doubled, from 14,339 to 33,034.

We expect to see increases in both website hits and views of the videos in 2012. Together, they contribute to increased traffic to our orchards, as customers purchasing apples direct from the orchard, and online.

Lessons Learned

We learned two main lessons from the project: 1) our initial model of a single, comprehensive video program was not ideally suited for our purposes, and 2) building traffic to the website is an ongoing task requiring multiple approaches.

Since our primary means of distributing the videos online was through YouTube and the association website, we needed to break the topics down into manageable lengths (YouTube, for example, places a 10-minute limit on individual videos). There were clear cost savings to posting the videos online for free,

and the Internet makes the videos available instantly and on an ongoing basis. These are reasons enough to have amended our original vision of a single program.

The shorter videos on individual topics were also more practical for viewers who might not have the time or interest to watch a 90-minute program; they now can locate videos by topic. People can access the individual programs at any time, on their own, without requiring us to provide them with a DVD. The individual programs have also aided our ability to promote the video series throughout the website and on our weblog, rather than place all of our promotional efforts on a single program.

Even with this added ability to promote the videos, however, they did not increase traffic to the website as dramatically as we had hoped during the grant period. We are on pace for an increase of nearly 100,000 hits to our website for 2011 compared to 2010, to nearly 750,000 — more than 10 percent. But the full impact of the videos will clearly be felt over a longer time period. Rather than a sharp spike in hits as a result of the posting of the videos, we have seen a more gradual increase, and it will continue for the foreseeable future.

The videos fulfill a major marketing and educational function for the region's apple industry, but we must continue to find creative ways to draw attention to them. The weblog is one of these, as is our quarterly newsletter, *McIntosh News*; projects like our search engine optimization efforts and 2012 New England Apples wall calendar, which promotes the website on every page, are others.

The key toward building and sustaining traffic to the website is to keep the material fresh and use myriad ways to publicize it. We move the videos around the website according to topic and season, highlighting different programs on the home page, for example, at different times of year. Maintaining interest and keeping the site current are reasons that we might add new video programs in the future.

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Tierra de Oportunidades (Land of Opportunities) NUESTRAS RAICES

Project Summary

The Tierra de Oportunidades (Land of Opportunities) Project promoted child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of Massachusetts-grown Specialty Crops in Hampden County.

It promoted Specialty Crops sold at three farmers markets in Hampden and Berkshire Counties and a cooperative farm stand at Nuestras Raíces Farm incubator training site. The project provided

training and technical assistance to beginning farmers in Hampden County, targeted multi-lingual marketing and community education to support producer-to-consumer connections for consumption of Specialty Crops. It continued to pilot a “Double Value” public benefit matching program at the three Farmers’ Market, matching use of EBT, WIC and senior coupons utilized at the market one-to-one, and encouraged increased sales and consumption of specialty crops.

The Tierra de Oportunidades Project is a collaboration of Nuestras Raíces (NR), and the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts (FB). There is a large immigrant population in Western Massachusetts with agrarian roots and interest in specialty herbs, vegetables and fruits.

Over 20 beginning immigrant and refugee farmers will sell ethnic crops at three urban farmers markets, and an urban farm stand. The goals of the project are to increase sales and consumption of healthy Specialty Crops by residents with public benefits.

Project Approach

As our nation’s demographics change quickly, immigrants, refugees and ethnic communities have become the movers and shakers of the food system – an estimated 78% of crop workers in the US are foreign-born (USDA’s Agricultural Resource Management Survey) and Hispanic farmers are the fastest growing demographic group of new farmers in the country (+50% between 1997 and 2002, 2002 Census of Agriculture). A 2002 marketing study, in which interviews with executives representing over 40 supermarket chains and individual stores in the U.S, found that Hispanics, African-Americans, and Asian-Americans account for 37% of all sales in supermarkets. The Greater Springfield metro district is the 6th poorest in the country (2000 census), but that does not mean that it doesn’t have demand or buying power to support farmers’ markets. Holyoke alone, less than half the population of Springfield, has 13,491 SNAP participants (of 38,000 total residents) as of January 2009 and 2380 WIC clients.

The Mason Square, Springfield, market is located in an inner-city neighborhood where about 40% of residents, or 3,534 people, are food-insecure. In North Adams (a market which also has the potential to serve the surrounding low- and moderate-income rural towns of Adams, Cheshire, Clarksburg, Florida, Savoy, and Williamstown), hunger rates are also well above the state and national averages,¹ with about 6,840 people food-insecure. Nearly twenty-two percent of households in both communities cannot afford balanced meals from regular food sources.² Residents of these communities do possess buying power that can and should drive sales of MA farmer’s specialty crops through EBT, Senior and WIC benefits.

Immigrants and refugees are not only the laborer and consumer force of the future; they are, as they always have been, the future of farming, particularly in Western Massachusetts. There are over 280,000 Latinos living in Western Massachusetts, many of whom first came to the area as migrant farm workers, and Holyoke, the home base of Nuestras Raíces, is now the city with the highest percentage of Puerto Ricans in the country outside of Puerto Rico (41% in 2005). There are over 20,000 refugees that have been resettled in Western Massachusetts. The high number of enrollees into the Massachusetts Refugee Resettlement Program annually (approximately 2,000), places the state in the top 20% of states resettling refugees in the US. Refugee populations entering Massachusetts through the Refugee Resettlement Program breaks down in the following manner: 48% African, 28% Former Soviet Union

¹ Food insecurity is defined as inadequate access to safe, nutritious foods that can be obtained in socially acceptable ways. Households experience hunger if they are food-insecure and went hungry one or more days in the past 12 months. Nationally, 11% of households are food-insecure, with 3.9% experiencing hunger. *Household Food Security in the United States, 2006*, Economic Research Service, USDA

² “Food Security in Mason Square” and “Food Security in Northern Berkshire,” Market Street Research, May, 2006.

(FSU), 14% Asian, 8% Caribbean, 2% South/Central American (2006). Over 50% of these refugees come from agrarian origins and have strong interest in farming and fresh Specialty Crops.

While hidden farmers reside in the cities, agriculture in the highly-fertile Connecticut River Valley is under extreme pressure from development. Massachusetts lost over 27% of its farm land between 1982 and 2000 (American Farmland Trust). The Connecticut River Valley was in particular identified as one of the nation's top 20 agricultural areas most threatened by development (The American Farmland Trust, 1997).

Immigrants and refugees face great barriers to becoming farmers – language, lack of access to capital, lack of familiarity with the US economic system. But with training and marketing support, they can succeed. With Nuestras Raíces at the forefront of a movement to grow new farmers, the number of farms in the state increased by 27 percent from 2002 to 2007, the biggest growth in 4 decades (US Census of Agriculture).

Massachusetts has a rich history of small farms and is one of the nation's leaders in direct marketing. Training and supporting a new wave of immigrant and refugee farmers, and re-connecting farmers with communities, will increase sales of Specialty Crops by all Massachusetts farmers, growing the Massachusetts agricultural economy.

INCUBATOR PROGRAM :Land of Opportunities is an Incubator Program that supports beginning farmers by providing them with resources such as financial and loans connections, workshops, farmer's market access and consultation by agricultural, marketing and business planning professionals. The participants enter the program by entering first the Beginner Farmer Courses. During these courses, participants learn about farming in Holyoke and write a farm business plan that is reviewed by agricultural and financial experts. After being approved, the participants rent farm plots from 1/8-1 acre. Also, they are provided with training, shared resources with other participants, marketing assistance, network for farmers loans and community support.

With the shared resources and support, the beginning farmers build the necessary capital, knowledge and connections to graduate the incubation site onto their own farm within four (4) years.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: Technical assistant consisted of Farmer's Market Director attending each farmers market, total of 5 farmer's market per week. During the visits to the farmers market, Farmer's Market Director provided consultation to the beginning farmers including presentation and pricing display, customer service training and specialty crop advertisement by bringing extra flyers and recipe cards to the tables of the farmers.

RECIPE CARDS: An estimate of 1,000 Recipe cards were distributed at Holyoke and Donahue Farmer's Market at least 50 recipe cards were distributed at Holyoke Farmer's Market and 50 at Donahue Farmers market each week. The recipe cards were distributed by providing reusable bags with the recipe cards inside, recipe cards located at the vendor table of the farmers that are part of the incubator program.

FOOD DEMOS: Two food demos per month were hosted at the Holyoke Farmers Market during the farmers market season which was from May-October. An estimate of 500 people per month attended

the food demos. Holyoke Farmers Market food demo hours were 11am-3pm, however, due to the popularity of the food demo, they ran out of samples by 1pm.

SOLEY PROMOTING SPECIALTY CROPS: Nustras Raices' farmer's only sell specialty crops because it is part of our mission as an organization. The limitations of WIC and EBT have policies about these resources only being used for fruits and vegetables. The funds we received from the 2012 specialty crop grant were used to pay salary and marketing specialty crops only. No specialty crop funds were used to purchase or redeem any produce.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

1. As a result of this project, we were able to accomplish all of our goals and more. 21 farmers participated in our farm incubator program. Many of whom partook in multiple markets throughout the week.
2. Continued to provide training and technical assistance to beginner farmers in Hamden County.
3. Provided training and headed a targeted multi-lingual marketing group for Massachusetts specialty crops.
4. Targeted multiengine marketing education to support producer-to-consumer connections for sales and consumption of Specialty Crop.
 - We provided recipe cards at the markets about the specialty crop produce that is sold in the market (cilantro, Caribbean squash, strawberry, peach etc).
 - UMass Extension picked produce from our farmers to prepare food demos in the market and give free examples to the customer at the markets to taste along with instruction on how to prepare this produce.
5. Piloted a Double Value Coupon matching program at two Farmers Markets, matching the use of E.B.T, WIC and Senior Coupons utilized at the market. This encouraged the increased sales and consumption of specialty crops.

In the spring of 2012 Nuestras Raices met with representatives from supporting agencies and institutions including the City of Holyoke, Health New England (HNE), the Valley Opportunity Council (WIC), Dean Technical Institution and West Mass Elder Care (Senior Vouchers), to plan a city-wide fresh foods and specialty crops marketing campaign for the new farmer's market at Donahue.

This year communication with all participating agencies, including the City of Holyoke, went smoothly. All farmers that participated in the program turned in the required information in a timely manner, were paid on time, and did exceptionally well in sales.

Together this group was able to create a diverse marketing campaign including colorful bilingual posters and flyers distributed through partner agencies, local festival, and throughout the City. In addition, Daily Spanish radio advertisements, Spanish television commercials about the farm, bilingual press releases, a Facebook page, banners for every farmer stand, lawn signs in the Main Street near our farm and farmers markets were also used for promotion. Nuestras Raices promoted Farmers Markets and Massachusetts Specialty Crops at each of its community events, classrooms and at the farm where we get over 100 individuals daily. The community learned more about eating healthy and alternatives recipes to encourage buying more and different produce at the Market.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

- Provide training and technical assistance to beginning farmers in Hampden County
- Provide training and lead a targeted multi-lingual marketing group for Massachusetts specialty crops
- Lead a targeted multiengine in community education to support producer-to-consumer connections for sale and consumption of Specialty Crops
- Engaged in the community and held Pilot a Double Value public benefit matching program at two Farmers Markets, matching use of EBT, WIC and senior coupons utilized at the market one-to-one, encouraging increased sales and consumption of specialty crops.
- Partook in supporting Healthy Incentive Pilot Program

Over \$7,500 in public incentives were distributed for the purchase of Massachusetts Specialty Crops through our Double Deal federal benefit matching program. The impact of this program reached close to 10,000 residents weekly; an increase by almost 20% from 2011.

On July 19th Nuestras Raices (in partnership with Wholesome Wave, the City of Holyoke, and supporting community agencies) launched Double Deals, a double value coupon program to promote the sales of healthy Massachusetts specialty fruits, vegetables, and herbs to the Farmers Market shoppers with Federal benefits. This campaign received local media attention which resulted in a boost of attendance. And over \$7,500 sales of healthy produce for Holyoke's low-income families. Of the \$7,500 distributed, \$1,500 was used at the Donahue Market, and the remainder to the Holyoke Market to Double Deals, Senior Vouchers, WIC and EBT benefits. Groups continued to meet throughout the growing season and work in partnership to coordinate outreach efforts to support sales at the Holyoke Farmers Market.

All the funding were used to promote specialty crop and pay part-time assistances in the market programs

We experienced an increase in WIC and Senior voucher sales.

The Holyoke Farmers Market was widely publicized and attended.

- A New Farmer s Market was able to be re-opened in the Holyoke area after having to be closed last year due to the impact of the flooding of the Connecticut River. Donahue School Farmers Market, which is in a popular urban area popular for shopping, but not very popular for healthy food. By having this Farmers Market available in a new neighborhood in Holyoke, we targeted a neighborhood of low income families and seniors.

Increased in redemption and sales between 2011 and 2012:

WIC increased by 340.5

EBT increased by 205.5

Total sales increased by 9361.37

Beneficiaries

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This year Communications with all participating agencies including the City of Holyoke went smoothly. All farmers that participated in the program turned in the required information in a timely manner, were paid on time, and did exceptionally well in sales.

Together this group was able to create a diverse marketing campaign including colorful bilingual posters and flyers distributed through partner agencies, local festivals, and throughout the city, daily Spanish radio advertisements, Spanish Television commercials, bilingual press releases, Facebook pages, and a banner flying over a busy downtown street. Nuestras Raíces promoted Farmers Markets and Massachusetts Specialty Crops at each of its community events, classrooms and at the farm where we get over 100 individuals daily. The community learns more about eating healthy where to get in the farmers markets and alternative recipes cards to buy more and differences produces at the markets.

Lessons learned

CHALLENGES

Problems and obstacles Nuestras Raíces encountered in carrying out our 2012 specialty Crop Block grant included language barriers between farmers and consumers. The need for an increased in Market staff to continue Consistent marketing, Vendor recruitment through the market season. As well as helping farmers and vendors with any specific needs they may have, regarding Help during High-traffic market times when Farm staff is low, later on in the seasons.

The final challenge that Nuestras Raíces encountered in this project is our ability to collect data and evaluate how our actions are affecting the projects outcomes. We aggregate products from farmers who participate in our incubation project to sell at the Holyoke Farmer's Market and we are able to collect data on increases in those sales in cash, EBT and Senior Coupons. However, in order to get statistics from the entire market we need to wait until partner organizations (the City of Holyoke and MDAR) process the information. We usually do not know until January or a little later the EBT, Senior Coupons and WIC sales for the entire market.

FUTURE WORK RECOMMENDATIONS

Next year Nuestras Raíces is planning on addressing the previous challenges and obstacles, making sure that the permits process starts in early January reaching new farmers for the markets, earlier marketing to increase Foot traffic, and our new market at Donahue School being a greater success. As well as expanding our ability to increase farmers market revenue by Providing Double Deals days at markets outside of Holyoke, such as Chicopee and Springfield and the potential of a Mobile Market to make fresh produce even more accessible through the City of Holyoke.

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Ongoing Enhancement of the Southeastern Massachusetts *Buy Fresh, Buy Local* Campaign through working with Local Social Service Agencies to Increase Child & Adult Knowledge & Consumption of Locally Grown Specialty Crops.

Project Summary:

The Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership (SEMAP) proposed to expand its Business-to-Business Network (Network) with Social Service Agencies (SSA) (defined as: child day care centers, schools, Head Start Programs, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, Meals on Wheels Programs, and senior centers) – as new buyers of locally grown specialty crops grown by our farmer members in the Network.

The need we were addressing was the need to increase sales for specialty crop farmers. However, the “anecdotal evidence” that the demand from SSA buyers was based on only showed that there was not sufficient knowledge of what was available or how to purchase, opposed to actual demand for (and hence ability to purchase – budget, processing, storage), and even better – the commitment to buy via a letter of support - was not established. Therefore, while we did research and recruit SSAs they were not able to purchase at the time of the implementation of this grant. Too much stock was put into the assumption that if the SSAs only knew about the local food and were educated on how to purchase it then SEMAP would increase sales for our local farmers growing specialty crops.

Project Approach:

Increase knowledge and consumption of locally grown specialty crops by children and adults served by area social service agencies.

Objective A: Identify thirty (30) social service agencies in Southeastern Massachusetts that have an interest in using locally grown Specialty Crops in the meals they prepare and serve.

Starting in October 2009, SEMAP contacted 34 social service agencies (SSAs) in Southeastern MA. Based on these interactions, we narrowed our search down to facilities/organizations that provide a meal or snack to children and/or adults. This list included Head Start programs, early learning centers, adult day care centers, assisted living facilities, and food pantry programs. All were emailed initial introduction letters outlining what SEMAP is and our hopes of including more SSAs into our 2010 Business-to-Business (B2B)/Buy Fresh Buy Local (BFBL) Network.

Objective B: Provide thirty (30) agencies with complimentary membership in SEMAP’s B2B Network for the 2010 season.

To date, we have provided 19 organizations (listed below) with complimentary SEMAP Farm Memberships (we have restructured B2B Network into the SEMAP Farm Membership). October 2009 – July 2010:

- 1. Cedars Assisted Living*
- 2. Healthy City Fall River*
- 3. Autumn Glen Assisted Living*
- 4. St. Joseph’s Manor*
- 5. PACE Head Start Program, New Bedford*
- 6. South Shore Community Action Council – Healthy Harvest Program*
- 7. Coastline Elderly*
- 8. Bristol Elderly Services*
- 9. Northstar Learning Center – Clasky Common Farmers Market*
- 10. SMILES, Mentoring Program*

August 2010 – January 2011:

- 11. Health Imperatives*
- 12. Barnstable County Elder Services*

13. *Mercy Meals and More*
14. *Taunton Housing Authority*
15. *Dartmouth High School (parent group)*
16. *Brockton Boys & Girls Club*
17. *Dartmouth YMCA's Sharing the Harvest Program*
18. *Our Sisters School*
19. *CHNA, Brockton*

All of the organizations listed above have received the following membership benefits:

- *Bi-weekly updates on available produce, as well as SEMAP meeting announcements and notifications (46 e-mails since December 2009), plus dozens of individual emails;*
- *Individual help from SEMAP's Buy Local Coordinator to find specific local foods, or farms that may improve their local purchasing;*
- *Monthly public email updates on local food news, events, and local stories pertaining to institutions buying locally, 29 since December 2009;*
- *Package of SEMAP Buy Fresh Buy Local materials for display at the facilities, and to give to patrons.*

Between August 2010 and February 1st, 2011, we added nine additional organizations that are in various stages of learning about buying local and addressing the barriers around purchasing specific to their organizations. SEMAP remains committed to offering free Farm Memberships to SSAs and continuing existing memberships established under this grant. This commitment is reflected in SEMAP's three-year strategic plan as a separate objective.

All facilities that showed interest in the initial outreach were automatically entered into the 2010 B2B/BFBL Network membership, and will be listed as SSA members (receiving Farm Member Benefits).

Objective C: At SEMAP's Winter B2B Conference, convene a panel of growers and social service agencies to discuss the challenges and opportunities of selling locally grown fruits and vegetables directly to social service agencies serving children and adults.

During the cycle of this grant we have conducted two of our Winter Networking Events, inviting SSAs to both. In January 2010, several SSAs attended and learned more about SEMAP and our member farmers and buyers. SEMAP highlighted its connection with other organizations focused on sustainable farming. It was, as always, an educational and informing meeting.

One example of positive connections between farms and a social service agency stemming from this meeting was between an organic farm in Middleboro and a Plymouth county food pantry. The organic grower was excited to learn of a free pick-up and delivery program offered within a 50 miles radius of his farm. This program was designed to pick up fresh whole vegetables, paying farmers a fair price, and then re-distributing the vegetables to other SSA centers like Boys and Girls Clubs and several councils on aging in Plymouth County. These 'brown bags' were then given to families with children and elderly adults who otherwise would not have access to fresh nutritious vegetables. A representative of the food pantry that runs this seasonal program was present at the Winter Networking event where the two met.

We held our 2011 Annual Winter Networking Meeting on January 10. As always, the meeting was a great example of SEMAP bringing together the growers, buyers, and distributing sector to discuss purchasing more locally produced food. The 2011 meeting successfully focused on selling and distributing fresh local foods specifically to schools, institutions and SSAs in Southeastern MA. Two guest speakers discussed both the growing and distribution side of local food to schools and larger institutions. Steve Hancock, a year-round vegetable grower in Westport, Mass helped represent the grower's side of the discussion. Steve has sold his fresh greens and vegetables directly to Philips Academy in Andover, Ma. The enlightening talk described his journey, including varieties of vegetables that worked with the school's needs, using a small distributor for book keeping and working with the school's staff and parents to market the successful relationship.

The distribution / buyer side was discussed by a representative from a local produce company, Nasiff Produce of Fall River, Ma. Steve Nasiff spoke about the challenges small producers face with distribution, wholesale prices, variety and consistency. This brought many new ideas to the table including a possible rebirth of co-ops and likeminded collaborative selling models for local foods in the region.

To round out both sides, we also showed a DVD from the Charlottesville area of VA that described how one senior meal program changed their kitchen equipment, mindset, and purchasing habits to better use locally grown foods.

The meeting was a success, bringing over 70 people together to discuss increasing access to local foods in Southeastern Mass., particularly regarding schools and institutions who serve the elderly and youth. Grower, buyers, chefs and schools were present and able to partake in the discussion, asking questions about accountability, price, and ordering systems for local food.

Objective D: Feature 15 articles (monthly) in our bi-weekly Buy Local Update (an online publication received by consumers) on the nutritional benefits of buying and consuming local produce.

Nutritional articles / Printed materials:

SEMAP created, printed and disseminated 1000 brochures that include a panel on "Why Eat Local?" These brochures reflect three key points: health, the environment & community, and local economy in relation to eating local foods. This is a small version of the expanded benefits of eating locally found on SEMAP's website under the "Why" section of the Buy Fresh Buy Local program tab. This brochure quickly connects readers to three important aspects of everyday life and how purchasing local foods has positive impacts for all.

Free/earned media coverage was sustained through feature articles and special features over the season. For example, edible Cape Cod and edible South Shore continue to provide SEMAP colorful half-page ad space in their respective edible communities magazines. Katie Cavanagh, our Farms Forever Coordinator, published a feature article in edible Cape Cod on the importance of supporting local farms and the fresh foods they provide. SEMAP was also interviewed and feature articles were published in our area's largest newspaper, The Standard Times as well as smaller papers including Wareham Week.

Press releases connected to the annual Bioneers: Connecting for Change Conference (www.connectingforchange.org) and SEMAP's re-launch were also published in the Standard Times in

October 2010. These press releases and articles were picked up by several blogs and websites focusing on local food.

SEMAP also ran small ads in the A.D. Makepeace's Cranberry Harvest Festival program and we received a free full-page ad in the Bioneer's program.

SEMAP coordinated a weekly Farmers Market Update with our largest newspaper, The Standard-Times. SEMAP staff acted as a weekly contributing writer, offering insight into what was available at the local farmers markets each week. The weekly blurbs were published June through October 2010 and highlighted vegetable varieties, cooking tips, and general knowledge of seasonal specialty crops available locally. Newspaper staff added photographs from local farmers markets, helping to create a fun and positive message of eating fresh locally grown foods in season.

Nutritional Events:

Throughout this grant period, all nutritional events attended and hosted by SEMAP have been documented in SEMAP's Buy Local public emails. Sent once a month, the Buy Local emails contain listings of available produce, recipes and direct links to farms and producers with seasonal products. Nutritional events were listed with links to learn more about participation. SSA's and SEMAP members who hosted events focused on local food and nutrition were listed whenever available.

Recent SEMAP events highlighting the nutritional benefits of locally grown foods include the Introduction to Nutrient Dense Crops, the Startling Sprouts Nutrition workshop and SEMAP's Annual Meeting. The Nutrient Dense lecture was an event SEMAP co-sponsored with NOFA Mass and Brix Bounty Farm in Dartmouth MA. Dan Kittredge, Director of the Real Food Campaign, (realfoodcampaign.org) spoke on the basics of soil and plant nutrients, connecting those same ideas with our own bodies and its nutritional needs. Event attendees gained practical knowledge to use in their gardens this coming spring including inoculants, foliar sprays, transplanting techniques and different soil amendments that can be found locally and often times free of charge.

The Startling Sprouts class was a great example of a SEMAP member business educating the public on their local production methods and the nutritional benefits of eating their locally grown product. Event registrants were fascinated by the techniques required to grow sprouts on a commercial level, as well as the scientific studies that indicate sprouts are high in natural estrogen, protein and may even help lower bad cholesterol.

SEMAP's 2010 Annual Meeting featured keynote speaker Amy Cotler, author of *The Locavore Way* and the *Farm to School Cookbook*. SEMAP had a record 97 attendees its New Bedford Gallery X location. Amy read and shared her experiences, including founding Berkshire Grown. She answered the audience's questions on small-scale sustainable farming and provided one-on-one time during a book signing. The meeting was paired with locally prepared foods including butternut squash soup, oysters, apple cider and smoked fish, with many of the farmers/producers present to answer questions on their products. There were lively conversations stemming from the main discussion, especially regarding farm to school initiatives, CSA models and more year round purchasing options including winter markets and small distributing pilot programs.

Finally, nutritional events continue to be posted in SEMAP's Buy Local Updates on a year round basis. Since December 2010, SEMAP has upgraded our website capabilities, adding event listings to our main page, as well as our Face Book profile. Both additions have greatly helped to spread the word of nutritionally minded local food events that SEMAP or others are hosting.

Objective E: Provide nutritional information and knowledge of the availability of locally grown Specialty Crops at events held at area schools, food events, and farmers markets promoting local fruits and vegetables to children and adults.

SEMAP regularly attends events that focus on farming and local food issues throughout Southeastern MA. Over the course of the grant we have attended three events focused on child nutrition held by the Healthy City Fall River organization. At these events SEMAP worked with UMass Extension Nutrition Education Program to pass out booklets called Buy Fresh! Enjoy Fruits and Vegetables from Massachusetts Farmers Markets that describes recipes, vegetable nutritional information, as well as storage ideas for fresh vegetables found at farmers markets across Massachusetts. The booklets were very popular in conjunction with SEMAP's 'what's local in winter' handouts, and promotional materials of winter CSAs, winter farmers markets, and extended season farm stands.

Due to organizational challenges occurring in late summer/fall of 2010, SEMAP was unable to attend school events such as Healthy City Fall River's school nights, and Coastline Elderly's housing development meetings. Since that time however, with a new organizational mission, new committees and continued commitment from our board, SEMAP is offering our new Local Food 101 classes to all interested SSAs throughout Southeastern MA.

These classes convey the basic concepts and tools of the local food movement to a variety of audiences. We specifically cover the "Why, Where and How of local food." We have scheduled several 101s throughout our region at a variety of locations including schools, senior centers, libraries and YMCAs, with the goal of holding at least one per month.

We are particularly excited for a joint event with the Dartmouth YMCA this coming May which will raise funds for the Y's Sharing the Harvest Program. SEMAP will conduct an educational lecture for event attendees on buying locally, as well as a children's activity demonstrating the food system, showing how food travels from seed to table. We envision this event will not only help to support the site's four acre farm and the thousands of pounds of food it produces (all donated to the Hunger Commission), but also increase SEMAP's recognition as a local food resource with YMCA families and staff.

As the growing season starts, and New Bedford and Fall River based farmers market open again, SEMAP will connect with both these organizations, offering the nutritional information and awareness of specialty crops grown near or within these cities' limits.

Examples of SEMAP's Local Food 101 classes, workshops and upcoming events:

Local Food Guides were disseminated at all 2010 events SEMAP listed below (along with SEMAP brochures):

Objective F: Feature 8 articles in our bi-weekly B2B Network Update that describe examples of social service agencies using local produce and/or using the Buy Fresh Buy Local materials targeted at their adult and child clients.

SEMAP continues to feature SSAs (and their events) that have successfully connected with local farms either buying produce directly or through a distributor.

As we extend our offer of free BFBL membership through 2011 we have stronger SSA candidates joining our membership each month, including shelters and other organizations serving food to those in need. One such example is our newest member to SEMAP, a shelter in New Bedford called Mercy Meals and More. Working with the shelter's Rev. Russ Chamberlain, SEMAP has connected the group to several local egg producers, helping to provide fresh local eggs for Mercy's daily 'free will' breakfasts, served Monday through Saturdays. Eggs were the easiest first steps in their purchasing of local products, and are excited to help Rev. Russ source more fresh vegetables and other specialty crops to include in his meal programs.

As relationships like Mercy Meals and More develop we look forward to highlighting their successes in our Buy Local e-newsletters. These success stories will help spur other organizations to highlight their use of local, as well as increase their purchases of locally grown foods.

We ensured that these funds solely went to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops by only working with farms growing specialty crops and buyers interested in buying specialty crops. We worked with both parties to facilitate sales of specific crops that are included under the definition of specialty crops.

While the overall Buy Fresh Buy Local program promoted local food, in general, this project was aimed at facilitating sales of specialty crops- and a social service agency isn't going to purchase at a farmers' market. At the time of this grant, a social service agency would be buying directly from the grower, thus ensuring our ability to control the "business to business" concept here and thus ensuring that only specialty crop producers were being "matched-up".

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

Evaluate project outcomes by conducting the end of season B2B survey and one-on-one interviews with farmers and social service agencies.

SEMAP staff conducted two surveys over the grant cycle:

- 1.) The traditional, on-line B2B Network survey, and
- 2.) An evaluation handed out at the B2B 2011 Winter Networking event.

The annual B2B Network survey is placed online each November, with results analyzed and then unveiled at the yearly Winter Networking event. For the 2009 season, SEMAP staff added a survey question regarding member farms' ability and willingness to work with social service agencies. A

positive response was reached with over 30% survey participants responding that they would indeed be interested in selling to SSAs, and wanted to learn more. The Winter Networking meeting evaluation sheets echoed this fact, with 75% of survey participants expressing their interest in connecting with a local SSA, including aquaculture growers and valued added producers.

In 2010, SEMAP continued to survey its farmer, buyer and SSA Network members with our end of the season B2B Network survey. The B2B survey will asked similar questions to those in the 2009 version, making sure to direct at least three questions towards the purchasing of local foods by SSAs. We will also leave a comment section open, to learning more through narrative responses. Over the last few years there has been a decline in the participation of this particular survey. One reason being that as SEMAP was updating its programs and offerings, the B2B Network was among the items cut, due to its inactivity. B2B surveys have shown over the past few years that profits from buying local produce are not often shared by growers, and that the value they see in SEMAP comes more through educational outreach to the public, rather than sales made between growers and buyers. This point was an important part of SEMAP's recent re-launch and refocus of its programs. The new Buy Fresh Buy Local Educational Campaign provides less emphasis on the economic impact than the B2B, and more communications on how communities can work with their local growers to obtain more fresh local foods, while educating the public on the importance of eating nutrient rich foods produced by our local farms.

Despite a low respondent rate of 30 (out of 180 total) the 2010 B2B Survey results are positive:

- 68% of survey respondents said they made at least one business transaction through the B2B Network. (15.7% said they did not make any connections through the Network this past year.)
- 53% of respondents agreed that SEMAP's programs made a difference in their financial viability.
- 10.4% said they made over \$3,000 through B2B Network connections.
- 53% said they had developed a relationship that will lead to future business.

When asked how SEMAP's programs and materials helped member farmstands/restaurants/markets or other places of business in the past year, their top responses were:

- Increased customer awareness, (78%).
- Improved online presence of my business, (72%).
- Has been an effective form of advertisement, (72%).
- Brought new customers, (63%).
- Improved overall look of my business, (50%).

At the beginning of February 2010, we revisited our search into privately owned businesses that offer food to elderly and disadvantaged adults. Positive examples like the Fletcher-Allen Hospital in VT helped strengthen our assumption that local food purchasing relies heavily on agency willingness to change. The change has to occur throughout the organization, from staff up to CEOs, looking at all levels of sustainability. This pattern of thought coincided with our research into Health Care without Harm and their Healthy Food in Healthcare Pledge. Pledge criteria include working with local farmers, community based organizations and food suppliers to increase the availability of fresh, locally produced food.

Beneficiaries:

The direct beneficiaries of this project were the social service agencies that SEMAP worked with and the specialty crop growers that work directly with SEMAP.

Lessons Learned:

We quickly identified several barriers with our initial ten memberships for SSA. While each organization had its own unique challenges, the major point in the local food acquisition chain was purchasing, as opposed to locating the food or farm. While these barriers slowed our pace of outreach to new sectors, we were able to better focus on the initial ten organizations.

Another barrier was the methods utilized for research and outreach. Whether we cold called/e-mailed or had an existing relationship with the organization through a board member or SEMAP member had a significant impact on establishing a successful connection. Ultimately, the initial communication determined whether SSAs gained access to the information and tools necessary to start sourcing local.

Major roadblocks occurred with the majority of SSA groups initially contacted, including Meals on Wheels, and other elderly home bound food service providers. These programs purchase meals prepared daily from a catering service some distance away. The path to success lies in getting this caterer to use more local food, in combination with pressure from the agencies themselves. Large catering companies such as these are feeling pressure to convert to more nutritious raw materials, such as locally grown vegetables, and so we feel confident in the months ahead that progress can be made to help connect these companies to local farms

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The Island Grown Initiative

Project Summary

There were a number of issues or needs that this project addressed. Since its beginning in 2006 The Island Grown Initiative (IGI) had been aware of a general lack of communication and coordination between growers themselves and between growers and outlets. One of the main focuses of this project was to create better working relationships between these groups. IGI has also observed a general lack of knowledge and skills by growers in coming to market. This project provided an opportunity to hold meetings and discuss some of the barriers and lack of skills that affect growers. Many growers expressed relief and getting some support and assistance in this area and admitted freely to feeling overwhelmed and intimidated by approaching a large retail outlet as a local supplier. Another need that this project addressed was that of providing access to growing space by the Brazilian community as well as providing a source of crops that this community was familiar with.

The motivation for this project initially came from a relationship and discussion with UMass vegetable team about the opportunity to study ethnic crops on Martha's Vineyard because 1) there was a large Brazilian population and 2) the geographic confinement of the Island provided a clearly defined study area. The timeliness of the project again reflected an existing relationship w/ UMass and also a stable and growing base of growers of many specialty crops for the general population not specifically the Brazilian community. IGI was still a relatively new organization when we made our application and it was felt that this project would help define some of our work in promoting the production of locally grown food.

Project Approach

Taste Tests

Six taste tests were conducted throughout the summer at Cronig's Market
One taste test was conducted at Living Local Harvest Fest
Four schools conducted six taste test each in the spring and fall of 2011

Crops used for taste test were, Okra, Taioba, Jilo, peppers and collard greens

Cronig's Data Analysis

Data has been collected for the 2010 & 2011 growing season through Cronig's Market. Data gathered from the 2009 season has been a bench mark to measure the growth of locally grown specialty crops through a major retail outlet on the island.

A combination of Cronig's staff time (which was donated) and IGI staff time was used to enter, organize and analyze data from the top five local suppliers to Cronig's.

Community Garden

Initially the approach was to work with an existing farm that had interest and space available for this project. Native Earth Teaching Farm in Chilmark expressed a strong interest in devoting some space for this project. Meetings were held with the owners of Native Earth Teaching Farm and with members of the Brazilian community

Grower Outreach / Meetings

Grower meetings were held through the spring of 2011. These meeting built upon the discussions at the annual farmer's dinner held each year. The topics included, marketing issues, packaging, signage, pricing and distribution. Four different meeting were held on March 16th, March 30th, April 13th and May 5th. A total of 35 growers participated

Outreach is an ongoing process for IGI. Edible Vineyard is the most popular local publication focused on food issues. IGI used this as advertising space for four issues in 2011.

IGI continues to use both Facebook and Orkut as a way to reach different audiences. We regularly post information on taste test events, meetings and other food advocacy issues that we believe our community wants to learn more about. Both of these social networking media outlets have proved very popular especially among younger audiences. For example we had over 300 responses to our post

about our taste tests. We also continue to use our website as a way to promote IGI on Facebook and Orkut.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

Taste Tests

a. How many people who participated

At Cronig's Market this was generally measured by the number of samples given out which ranged from 100 samples to 220 samples. These numbers reflect the change in our seasonal economy. The most samples were given during the peak of summer. However, Cronig's staff confirmed that these numbers were consistent with store customer numbers and roughly represented about 10% of customers on a given day. Sampling was conducted on a variety of days and times to try to reach a varied audience.

Living Local Harvest Festival had approx 1,500 attendees and we distributed 200 samples

Each school taste test had 100 samples

b. Change in quantity of any item being sold or grown.

The only access to this information we have is through Cronig's Market. Although we did not see any noticeable change in growers who sold to Cronig's, we did see a strong correlation between the taste tests and general product movement. The produce manager said that she always sells more of any item on the day of or the few days after sampling. Also it showed that after sampling, customers had a stronger preference of Island grown if it was available.

c. Anecdotal feedback

This showed that taste testing is a successful way to introduce new items, to educate about items and to engage people in conversation about what is being sampled and why. Many Cronig's customers made comments like "I never knew this could taste so good" or "I didn't know you could cook this like that"

The selection of crops used is important. The crops taioba, jilo and okra were selected because of relationship with UMASS doctoral students. These crops were their focus. The Brazilian community on Martha's Vineyard is predominately from one region in the south where jilo and okra are not as popular as in northern areas.

We learned that there is a dual benefit in educating about crops. Local islanders were very interested in tasting new items, prepared in a Brazilian way. This helped forge relationships between some chefs and customers.

Community Garden

Much time was expended on working with Native Earth Teaching Farm to develop a concept and a plan for this project. Although we determined this was not a suitable site, this work is still being used to

develop a more accessible location. This work included outlining potential staff and management need to coordinate the garden growers, to oversee/ manage the actual garden itself (i.e. irrigation, weeding, fencing and general maintenance) and for marketing and outreach efforts. We feel that all this work is still very valuable as we move forward with developing a community garden for ethnic crops.

One of the things we learned was that the Brazilian community we were trying to reach with this project did not often go up-island to Chilmark unless they worked there. This is a rural area approx. 12 miles from Oak Bluffs or Vineyard, where the largest year population reside. Most Brazilians live in these communities, most work long hours and many do not have access or legal right to drive. We realized that the site for this garden needs to be more central and definitely easily accessible by the bus system.

IGI has recently submitted a grant to the USDA's Beginning Farmer/ Rancher Development Program for an apprenticeship program that also include some community garden and garden incubator/ innovation growing zones.

MEASURABLES:

- I. Increase sales of Island Grown Specialty Crops to Vineyard markets and restaurants.

Proposed Measure: Derive reports from Island farmers, Cronig's Market and Zephyrus Restaurant on specialty crops sourced and sold during the 2010 growing season

ACTUAL DATA:

The work completed was an analysis of Cronig's Market sales data from the top five local producers. Items were tracked on a weekly basis and compared to previous year's data. The increase in sales exceeded our goal of 10% on season with a 13% increase and the off season increase was 8%. Measurement at Zephyrus Restaurant was not able to happen as the chef that we had an established relationship with left for another position and we were unable to access the needed information.

- II. Increase sales of Ethnic Crops at Cronig's Market.

Proposed Measure: Derive report from Cronig's Market at the close of the 2010 growing season.

ACTUAL DATA:

Again sales data was used to measure the change in ethnic crops sales. Cronig's gave us access to the season's invoices for ethnic crops. Although sales did increase by more than 10%, they were not sustained. Taste tests were very effective in getting customers to try ethnic crops but once the taste test stopped Cronig's reported that sales slowed down and this coupled with difficulties in gaining regular access to freshly picked ethnic crops resulted in Cronig's not carrying these products eventually. It should be noted that other Brazilian stores continue to sell some ethnic crops when available. Cronig's reported that the volume was so small is became impossible for them to keep ethnic crops in stock on a regular basis and lost too much product to make it worth their while.

III. Increase sales of Massachusetts Grown Specialty Crops to Vineyard markets and restaurants.

Measure: Derive from participating Massachusetts member growers' reports on specialty crops sourced to the island.

ACTUAL DATA:

We were not successful in developing a working relationship with the New England Vegetable and Berry Growers Association (NEVGBA) mostly due to logistical issues. We therefore did not have any access to information about how much of their products were sourced to the island.

Measure: Compile sales statistics for 2010 growing season from Cronig's market in November 2010

Cronig's sales data was used to measure the change in MA Grown Specialty Crops. The data used was from one of Cronig's main distributors for specialty crops, Sid Wainer Co. It was not always possible to tell from invoices which product was sourced from MA but working with the data that did indicate MA Grown we saw a 6% increase in MA Grown. This did not include Island Grown. Cronig's reported that more MA Grown produce was available. However, because of the significant increase in Island Grown produce, they did not need to order as much MA Grown as they expected. They said this was particularly true in the fall when many Island Growers have an abundance of produce and not as many tourist or seasonal residents to sell to.

IV. Improve communication and efficiency of distribution networks for local farmers.

Measure: Survey participating farmers at 2011 growers' meeting regarding effective coordination with local outlets.

ACTUAL DATA: A survey was not conducted due to lack of staffing but grower meetings did occur with more than 20 growers. Informal follow-up was conducted with six growers. Much discussion still continues as to how best coordinate growers with local outlets. Growers have indicated that they would use a centralized web based system to coordinate these efforts. IGI as realized that it does not have the capacity at this point to create and maintain this system.

Measure: Derive outreach report on production and sales from UMass Extension Vegetable Team.

This measurable was not completed. Although the work between IGI and UMass was very beneficial, we fell short on follow-up to our original goals of the project. Sales from UMass was hampered by distribution issues and in the end only a minimal amount of produce was sold this way (less than 200 lbs). The greatest amount of sales came unexpectedly from transplants that were sold in a few different outlets. In the first year approx 250 transplants were sold and in the second year the number rose to 325

Beneficiaries

Taste Tests

Farmers benefitted by having increased outlet potential to sell their products through schools, retailers, restaurants and farmer's markets as consumer demand has increased. Two farmers saw an increase in demand of their products of 20% or more.

Schools benefitted from having taste tests in their cafeterias. This helped introduce new items and improve eating choices by kids. In the West Tisbury school, they received a grant to buy a kid friendly salad bar and since then school lunch participation has increased by 300%. Schools also benefitted by having resources and assistance through UMASS on growing ethnic crops in their school gardens.

Parents and kids have benefitted by being introduced to new and healthy eating choices.

Although Cronig's invested much staff time beyond what was budgeted for this project, they also benefitted more than expected from having taste tests conducted in their store and by taking the time to analyze data from the 5 growers. It showed clearly that outreach and education by the retailer and/or IGI can create real growing opportunities for farmers.

IGI staff and Cronig's staff benefitted by learning with the help of UMASS students how to conduct taste tests and how to use this as a way to engage customers on a variety of topics in a friendly environment.

Some local restaurants have seen an opportunity to create dishes based on some of those sampled and to attract a broader customer base.

Cronig's Data Analysis

Cronig's benefitted by focusing on a growing aspect of their business. The collaboration enabled Cronig's staff to spend time on a project that they would otherwise not have been able to do.

The growers involved benefitted by seeing the data analysis as it applied to their business. This stimulated much discussion about what to do better or differently going forward. Growers in general don't keep very detailed records of what they produce and sell to different outlets. This project helped them see value in some kind of regular review and analysis.

Community Garden

Farmers benefitted from the education and outreach efforts. This helped farmers to identify potential opportunities for new crops along with support and resources from UMASS.

Grower Outreach / Meetings

Farmers benefitted from the education and outreach efforts. This helped farmers to identify potential opportunities for new crops along with support and resources from UMASS.

Lessons learned

Taste Tests

- Taste testing takes more time and organization than originally thought
- Having an excellent chef to prepare samples is very important
- Having knowledgeable sampling staff is very important
- Taste tests provide a great opportunity to access people in a way that is non-threatening and to educate them about other programs and IGI work in general.
- Taste testing is something retailers like in their store, as it helps increase sales on marginal items and provides a fun atmosphere in their store.

It is possible to create increased sales of ethnic crops in the short term by holding taste tests. However, it is a challenge for retailers to commit to keeping the product fresh and in-stock without dependable and regular sales. Distribution channels for ethnic crops were a real challenge. It was easy to get some product for a particular event but more difficult to establish a regular supply through existing distribution channels.

Cronig's Data Analysis

- Data analysis of this nature is time consuming but useful.
- The process of doing this work inherently builds and strengthens existing relationships with growers.
- This is a time consuming project and one that depends heavily on collaboration with Cronig's or another retailer. Staff costs were much higher than expected. Thus, this may not be something that can be accomplished on a regular basis.

Organization of data is important and can be time consuming. Coordinating this work is potentially challenging unless there is a good relationship between both parties involved. Furthermore, data comparisons from year to year are subject to many variables which make analysis difficult in trying to determine the effectiveness of one particular approach to increasing sales.

Consumers preferred products clearly indicated as being from Massachusetts. This was only seconded by those indicated as being Island Grown. The results of this far exceeded our expectations, in part because of general consumer awareness beyond our direct activities.

Off-season sales of local and MA grown produce has significantly increased as more local growers are producing. Better distribution channels have been established with specialty produce distributors to access more MA grown more often. Knowledge and relationships with distributors is important to making change in this area.

Community Garden

An ethnic community garden needs to be centrally located and accessible by public transportation. Having representation from the Brazilian community involved in the planning process is very important to its eventual acceptance by that community. Having a site that is located on or near growing infrastructure, tools and resources especially irrigation is important to the success of this project.

Grower Outreach / Meetings

Education and outreach activities are very important and effective in developing relationships and establishing programs for IGI. Farmer Meetings, Social media and taste tests provided a powerful ways to connect with our audiences on different levels. Social media is very important to the under 30 age group and, going forward, this need to be a key component in our outreach and marketing efforts.

Meetings with individual farmers are very effective ways to help understand their issues and challenges of coming to market. Local growers are still hesitant to coordinate growing and distribution together. Growers were unwilling/ uninterested in completing surveys about coordination. Outreach must be an ongoing process for existing and new farmers. UMass Extension vegetable team was instrumental in making connections for ethnic crops.

We attempted to coordinate a New England Vegetable and Berry Growers Association (NEVBGA) meeting on 3 different occasions and were never able to get enough interest from their group to travel here. The time of year when growing is happening as well as physical logistics were the reasons why this didn't happen.

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THEY WANT MORE! MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOLS DEMAND FOR LOCAL FOODS CAN ENHANCE THE COMPETITIVENESS OF SPECIALTY CROPS

Project Summary

The farm to school movement has greatly increased consumption of and demand for fresh locally grown foods in school cafeterias. In response to the launch of Mass. Harvest for Students Week (partially funded by a previous Specialty Crops grant) and five years of promotion and technical assistance from the Mass. Farm to School Project, more than 200 public school districts reported that they preferentially purchased locally grown foods during the 08-09 school year. These districts represent more than half of the students attending public schools in Massachusetts.

The majority of the districts mentioned above said that they purchased locally grown foods through conventional food vendors, not directly from a farm. In addition, 70 public school food service directors recently asked the Project for assistance in sourcing locally grown foods. Some are looking for fresh fruits and vegetables for the first time, while other want more products than they were able to locate last year.

Wholesale specialty crop operations are in the best position to profit from this new market sector. Lack of understanding about the nature and value of the new school sales “landscape” has hampered the response of Mass. wholesalers. Distribution issues have also curtailed the number of producers who are able to transition to direct-to-school sales. Specialty crop growers should capitalize on schools’ current and increasing interest in local products through direct sales and through sales to appropriate distribution companies.

About 60 Massachusetts specialty crop farmers sold directly to school food services in 2008. Twenty-six of those farms reported direct sales of \$526,000 to schools that year. This was a significant increase over previous years, but it is important to note that less than a third of the reporting farms are primarily wholesale operations.

We know that Mass. wholesale growers are selling products to distributors that are destined for re-sale to school cafeterias. Do these growers know when their crops are intended for student consumption and, if so, are they fully capitalizing on the schools’ demand for locally grown food? Are Mass. wholesale operations effectively promoting the “new” value of their local fruits and vegetables to distributors? Are schools that purchase from distributors aware of when the products are truly local and do they know which Mass. farms provided their food?

This project helped Massachusetts growers maximize sales of specialty crops for student consumption and promote the value of locally grown products to vendors who purchase food for re-sale to schools. It also assisted school food service directors, farmers, and distributors explore possibilities for more efficient, transparent, and mutually beneficial delivery systems.

Project Approach

Workshops and Meetings

The Mass. Farm to School Project held workshops for farmers, particularly those who wholesale, to share what we know about institutional customers, to provide targeted technical assistance in each region, and to learn about the value/logistics of farm sales to produce distribution companies.

Amherst @ MDAR office	2/3/10	25 attendees
Devens @ MassDevelopment Conference Center	2/9/10	21 attendees
Pittsfield @ Pittsfield Athenaeum	2/17/10	7 attendees
Wrentham @ Grange Hall	cancelled due to lack of enrollment	

At our Amherst meeting, the Chartwells produce buyer for the northeast announced a new initiative to always buy locally grown foods first, when in season, for all Compass-USA accounts in his region. This was the culmination of several years of work on our part with Chartwells personnel. Compass is the largest food service management company in the world and serves schools, colleges, hotels, hospitals, etc. Representatives from FreshPoint (formerly Fowler Hunting) and Sid Wainer and Son, the distribution companies with which Chartwells contracts in Mass., were present to meet with our growers, including several large wholesale operators.

We also held a “Local Foods Shoptalk” Statewide Meeting with 91 attendees in Waltham at Bentley College on April 27, 2010. The audience for this Mass. Farm to School Project event included k-college food service professionals, farmers, and representatives of distribution companies. We had an excellent turnout and hosted concurrent workshops and panel discussions all day. Speakers included farmers currently selling to schools, representatives of the Mass. Dept. of Agricultural Resources, distributors

providing locally grown foods to institutions, and food service directors from several states. Topics included “From the Farm to Your Loading Dock,” “Food Grown Just for Your School: How Does That Work?,” “Got Massachusetts Milk at Your College?,” “Regional Outlook: Best Practices from New England Colleges,” and more. Attendees completed evaluations at the end of the day and feedback was very positive. It was clear that volume and distribution continue to be challenging issues. Assuring profitability for farms and affordability for institutions requires diligence and creativity, with third parties often providing procurement and delivery functions.

Chartwells Technical Assistance

Our lead consultant corresponded and met regularly with the regional food buyer for Chartwells management company to encourage him to increase purchasing of Massachusetts-grown produce in all of their school accounts. We also had phone conversations with Chartwells food service managers on campuses around the state. As a result, Chartwells announced their intention to purchase only local produce whenever it is in season for all of their Massachusetts schools. Fall 2010 was the beginning of this initiative, with Chartwells pressing their distributors to meet the challenge, including providing reports with farm names and amounts of local product purchased. Mass. Farm to School staff began, and continue, to investigate the best ways to interact with these distributors and with Chartwells employees regarding the procurement of local products.

E-Blasts for USDA Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program Grantees

We set up an e-blast system to communicate with farmers and FFVP recipient food service directors about when local crops were in season or in surplus and how to sell to schools/obtain them from farms. We received availability lists from farms across the state and forwarded them in an easy-to-use format, giving the food service directors a place to do one-stop shopping for local produce.

Buying Collaborative Research and Meeting

We began researching multi-district buying collaboratives as a potential local purchasing entity. Our technical assistance consultant attended a buying collaborative meeting in Lynnfield, at which the food service directors from a number of eastern Massachusetts districts heard a presentation on Farm to School. A discussion was opened about the mechanics of ordering produce as a collaborative, delivery of said produce – including the option of delivery by commodity distributor, encouraging local purchasing via vendor contracts, and the like. The meeting prompted further research into commodity distributors as a potential vehicle for local product delivery. Nearly every public school in the state has drop-offs of commodity items, and the idea of piggybacking perishables with those non-perishables merits more research. Trucks, billing, and delivery routes may need modification, but the premise is interesting.

Local Farm ID Inserts for Wholesalers

One of the most intensive aspects of this grant was the creation and distribution of “Local Food Is Good Food” box/bag inserts for wholesale farmers to use in their sales to schools via distribution companies. There is a short description of the importance of buying local specialty crops and a place on the insert for each farm to place their identifying stamp or sticker. The goal is to increase transparency of local product at the level of the end customer (school), to ensure that a food service director ordering apples from X Orchard is receiving said apples via their distributor, and to encourage schools to begin or continue requesting product from specific Massachusetts farms. We published information about the ID inserts in UMass Extension's VegNotes publication, MDAR's Farm and Market Report, and in our own e-newsletter, The Farm to School Connection. We brought these inserts to every agriculturally oriented meeting and conference we attended and sent letters to more than 60 wholesale operations in the

state. In addition, our technical assistance consultant spent many hours on the road, visiting wholesale farms across the state to promote these inserts as a method for farmers to increase farm visibility. Twenty-nine wholesale farms with a history of selling to schools via distribution companies were visited.

General Technical Assistance

In addition to the above-mentioned activities, the Mass. Farm to School Project provided individualized technical assistance to more than 90 institutions, farms, and distributors statewide during the grant period. Our consultants attended many conferences and meetings in order to network with agricultural producers, food service professionals, legislators, students and community advocates for the promotion of sustainable, long-term purchasing relationships that are profitable for farmers, affordable for schools, and healthy for kids. These opportunities included: Mass. Agricultural Commissions Conference, Real Food Challenge Conference, presentations at UMass and Hampshire College, Agriculture Day at the State House, Amherst Sustainability Festival, National Farm to School Conference, UMass Extension's Vegetable Growers Field Day, Sustainable Nantucket Annual Meeting, Massachusetts Day at the Big E, Mass. School Nutrition Association Annual Conference, Amherst College Local Foods Day, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Grant Recipients meeting, Holliston and Bolton cable access television forums on agriculture, Mass. Public Health Association Annual Meeting, Farm Bureau Federation Annual Conference, and more.

Ensuring that funds only benefited the consumption of Specialty Crops

The focus of our Spec Crops grant was on increasing the purchase of locally grown specialty crops by schools and colleges in Mass. The three small group meetings for farmers we hosted, promotional materials we printed, and the personalized sales instruction/training we provided were all for specialty crop farmers.

Furthermore, we organized one large statewide "shoptalk" meeting to generally promote institutional purchasing of locally grown foods. (In Massachusetts most customer interest and market opportunity is in specialty crops because consumers are focused on fresh fruits and vegetables.) At this larger meeting one grain farmer and three dairy farmers were in attendance in addition to at least 85 potential customers, distributors, specialty crop farmers, advocates, etc. We allowed milk and wheat berries as samples only because in Mass. we don't have much in the way of fresh specialty crops available to eat in April. We did not pay for the samples. The total cost of that statewide meeting was \$3,446.67 of which only \$1,961.89 was covered by Spec. Crops and the rest by non-USDA funds. No USDA funds were used to promote non-specialty crop items.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

Task	Timeline	Status
Managing Consultant makes initial hiring and promotional plans	Before grant funding begins	Recruitment was conducted and a search completed
Technical Assistance Consultant is hired to provide coordination, TA, and to facilitate discussions with participants	December 2009, continue throughout	Emily French was hired beginning 1/12/2010

Program Consultant is hired to provide research, events planning, and administrative assistance to this effort	December 2009, continue throughout	Subcontractor from Seeds of Solidarity began on this project on 12/1/2009
Discuss project goals with attendees of Mass. School Nutrition Assoc. annual meeting	December 2009	Kelly Erwin made a presentation to the SNA at their annual meeting on 10/28/2009
Research MDAR, MFTS, and other database sources to develop contact list of wholesale farm target group	December 2009	Completed 1/22/2010, in time to invite wholesalers to scheduled meetings
Promotional poster ready for distribution	December 2009	After meetings with farmers in February, we decided that the farmer ID insert was more appropriate and useful for them than a poster; the inserts were designed, printed, and distributed to wholesale farmers
Collect information about USDA commodities distributors in Mass. and investigate possible opportunities for more efficient delivery of local specialty crops	December 2009, continue throughout	Program Consultant collected information and investigated opportunities
Encourage wholesale farmers to promote the value of their specialty crops to the distribution companies with whom school food services are currently contracting	December 2009, continue throughout	Took place at meetings with wholesale farmers beginning 2/3/2010 and statewide meeting on 4/27/2010
Create and promote 2 workshops for wholesale farmers	December 09 to January 10	Four meetings set up and promoted

<p>Work with Chartwells regional food buyer to increase local food sales transparency and purchasing volume in all Chartwells accounts in Mass.; in particular, assist Holyoke schools and work with their distributor, Fowler Hunting</p>	<p>December 2009, continue throughout</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Managing Consultant conference with Holyoke schools on 1/25/10 - Managing Consultant phone conference with Chartwells buyer on 1/11/10 - Meeting for farmers with Chartwells regional food buyer on 2/3/2010; Chartwells announced new initiative to purchase locally grown produce exclusively when in season; Farm to School Project agreed to create a card for farmers to include in all boxes of produce shipped to distributors, identifying the farm from which it came
<p>Set up effective communication system to alert schools with FFVP funding when local crops are in season or in surplus and how to obtain them</p>	<p>December 2009, continue throughout</p>	<p>Began on 11/17/09 via email; heard back from 18 farms and 6 FFVP recipients; continue to send info about produce currently available to all FFVP schools</p>
<p>Program Consultant to record outcomes and gather information about the changes that occur and the challenges and opportunities identified through the project's duration</p>	<p>December 2009, continue throughout</p>	<p>Provided technical assistance to 22 farms and began an intensive farm to school project in Sheffield, Mass.; introduced distributors Sid Wainer and Fresh Point to the farmers at the Amherst meeting</p>
<p>Offer 2 workshops for wholesale farmers</p>	<p>Completed by end of March 2010</p>	<p>Held 3 meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2/3 Amherst – 25 attendees - 2/9 Devens – 21 attendees - 2/17 Pittsfield – 7 attendees
<p>Convene statewide meeting for farmers, distributors, and food service directors to discuss distribution and sales collaboration</p>	<p>Completed by end of March 2010</p>	<p>Ninety-one food service directors, distributors, and farmers attended the meeting on April 27, 2010 at Bentley College in Waltham, Mass.</p>

Beneficiaries

The groups that benefited from the completion of this project's accomplishments are primarily wholesale specialty crop producers in Massachusetts. Profitable avenues for both direct and indirect sales were evaluated and communicated to these farmers.

Secondarily, the children who are served more locally grown foods in school cafeterias are also beneficiaries of this project. There were 959,000 children enrolled in public school districts in Massachusetts at the time of the project, as well as at least 120,000 students enrolled in college and universities that serve meals.

School food service operations as well as specialty crop distributors in Massachusetts also benefitted from the collaborative problem solving performed in this project.

Quantifiable outcomes of this wholesale project:

Wholesale farmers contacted and included in project communications	More than 100
Farmers who received school sales support	More than 40
School districts who received local purchasing support	More than 50
Wholesale farmers, distributors, or school personnel involved in discussions	More than 100

46 specialty crop producers either attended one of our meetings or received personal technical assistance; in addition, more than 100 specialty crop producers with a possible interest in wholesaling to institutional customers were provided with up-to-date information, offered assistance, or sent promotional materials via U.S. mail or email.

It is worth mentioning that the number of Massachusetts specialty crop farmers reporting direct sales to institutions was 45 the year before this Spec Crops grant-funded project began and 95 after it ended.

Lessons Learned

E-Blasts for USDA Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program Grantees

We experienced structural difficulties in implementing a successful FFVP e-blast system. Because Specialty Crops funding did not arrive until winter there were not a lot of local products available or farmers interested in finding new customers at that time. Schools had already set up their relationships for 2009 grant-related purchasing. Despite our pleas for information, the state didn't release the list of who received 2010 FFVP grants until late September, causing us once again to miss the beginning of school and the height of harvest season. Without immediate response from school customers, most farms stop sending in their product lists.

We received feedback from some farmers and food service directors that the e-blast system was not a preferred method of communication and from others that it was a great idea. We have updated our e-

blast format based on feedback from food service directors with whom we work, and are looking for an intern to help us beef up this “system,” trying again to provide current availability lists from local farms to all the schools in Massachusetts that receive FFVP grant money. Our assessment is that this project requires significantly more staff time and more sophisticated digital media to be able to evaluate whether it could be a useful sales communication tool.

Local Farm ID Inserts for Produce Wholesalers

At our workshops for farmers we asked what type of promotional material, if any, would enhance the value of the products they are selling to distributors for re-sale to institutions. The most popular idea was a printed piece that could be tucked into bags, waxed containers, and boxes highlighting locally grown foods and providing space for the individual farm’s name. Farmers said they wanted the end user to know exactly who grew the produce purchased through a distributor. After printing the piece (see enclosed) our Technical Assistance Consultant sent out a letter offering it to wholesaling farmers free of charge and visited farms to offer samples. Of the twenty-nine farms she visited, we were very surprised to find that only two (Szawlowski Potato Farm in Hatfield and Calabrese Farm in Southwick) were interested in taking quantities of 1,500 or more to test immediately on their packing line.

A handful of farmers were actively resistant to the idea, one saying that he feared the distributor would stop doing business with him if he promoted his own farm and he could not afford the risk. This was a surprise; we spoke with several of the major distributors in Mass. about the ID inserts and received what seemed like positive, or at least neutral, feedback. In addition, many orchardists with whom we spoke found these inserts inapplicable to their operation as they sell apples and other tree fruit in bulk to companies like J.P. Sullivan in Ayer, where it is packaged with other growers’ fruit. We have yet to hear from a food service director that they discovered one of these “Local Farm ID inserts” in a box or bag of produce.

Technical Assistance

As demand from producers and customers continues to grow, we feel the need to focus more intensively on discrete geographic regions of the state. Currently, we have one part-time consultant providing technical assistance for both farms and institutions statewide. We are evaluating the possibility of hiring more staff to provide technical assistance. This would allow us to spend more time with each district and farm, thereby providing a more in-depth facilitation of sustainable purchasing arrangements.

Regional Distributor Research

We plan to collaborate with the regional Farm to School Network (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island) to research current distribution models that seem to be successfully moving local foods from the farm to the cafeteria in a way that preserves the identity of products and generates positive community awareness for the growers. The data collected will be used to create a “best practices” template that can be shared as a resource with customers and their distributors.

Contact Person

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Marketing Mass. Grown and Fresher with the Massachusetts Flower Growers

Project Summary:

The purpose of this project was to develop a series of 12 or more fact sheets on a variety of topics for home gardeners based on research-based information. The information on these fact sheets assisted the green industry businesses to address and respond appropriately to questions and issues pertaining to consumer gardening issues. These fact sheets educated the public about pesticide use, organic gardening, water use and best horticultural practices to reduce the public's confusion about environmentally friendly and unfriendly practices with gardening. This program added to the same effort of previous specialty marketing grants which is to help floricultural industry to promote the sale of Massachusetts Grown.

Project Approach:

The topics of the fact sheets were determined through an advisory board made up of garden retail representatives located in Massachusetts. Topics for the fact sheets included information on integrated pest management, best horticultural practices, organic gardening, vegetable, and flower and fruit production. A writer was contracted to both write and enhance the fact sheets with pertinent graphics.

Fact sheets were made available to garden retailers from the Massachusetts Flower Growers Association and University of Massachusetts Extension websites. The information was formatted so that businesses added their business logo and printed these fact sheets for use at their garden centers or farm stands. The fact sheets were also distributed at educational events sponsored by the Flower Growers Association and UMass Extension. The Association also printed out copies of selected fact sheets that were distributed to consumers at public fairs and events such as the Eastern States Exposition and the New England Flower Show.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved:

The Association produced a total of 24 fact consumer "Growing Tips" fact sheets. This doubled the number originally intended. The 24 documents have been integrated as a feature on our massflowergrowers.com website to be used as a resource for consumers. The fact sheets were also downloaded and customized by Massachusetts Flower retailers to provide to their customers and promote local grown products. The fact sheets have a QR code to allow any consumer to use a smart phone to get directly to massflowergrowers.com website where they can find locations to purchase locally grown flower products.

The following Consumer Growing Tips Fact Sheets were. Garden Centers create an opportunity to educate the public about pesticide use, organic gardening, water use and best horticultural practices to reduce the public's confusion about environmentally friendly and unfriendly practices created

1. Asian Longhorn Beetle
2. Planting Tomatoes
3. Growing Tomatoes
4. Hydrangea Pruning for Blooms
5. Hydrangea Care
6. Watering New Plantings
7. Fall Flowers
8. Fall Planting Trees and Shrubs
9. Fall Plantings successful Care
10. Care of Holiday Winter Plants
11. Care of Holiday Spring Plants
12. Pruning Shrubs
13. Growing Herbs
14. Easy Herbs
15. Preserving Herbs
16. Starting Seeds
17. Caring for seedlings
18. Planning a vegetable garden
19. Planting a Vegetable Garden
20. Deer Resistant Plants
21. Perennial color
22. Annuals for Shade
23. Annuals for Sun
24. Colorful Containers

Packets of fact sheets were distributed to all members beginning the spring of 2011 so that they were aware of the supportive information. When additional fact sheets were produced they were added to the Website location and sent to members. Over 12,000 copies of selected fact sheets were printed and distributed to consumers at the Massachusetts State building at the Eastern States Exposition and New England Flower Shows in 2011 and 2012. Another 30,000 impressions were produced by the Association membership

Beneficiaries:

The immediate beneficiaries were the 112 retail businesses that compose 50% of our membership in the Flower Growers Association. These businesses were able to provide, as a service to their customers, information to help those consumers be more successful with the plant products they purchased. A survey was conducted at the annual meeting of the association in January 2011 and January 2012 where retail members were present. 90% of those retailers that attended used the Garden Fact Sheets for customer service and reported positive customer response. Other floriculture retail businesses in Massachusetts benefited from

these Garden Fact Sheets. The University of Massachusetts Cooperative Extension service distributed the information on these Fact sheets to over an estimated 100 non Association floriculture businesses throughout the state.

Lessons Learned:

One of the lessons learned is that retail floriculture businesses are looking for readymade informational brochures that they can customize for their own business. They do not have the time to put information together or the personnel to develop this information on their own. The general public that enjoys gardening also is looking for this information. This is seen in the number of Fact Sheets that are distributed to this consumer public at events such as the New England Flower Show and Eastern States Exposition aforementioned.

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LOCAL FOOD FOR ALL

Sustainable Business Networks

Project Summary

The Local Food for ALL program was created by Sustainable Business Network of Greater Boston (SBN) to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops and local food within the Metro Boston/Eastern Massachusetts region, the most densely populated area in New England. The objective has been to increase the availability, awareness and purchase of locally grown food, primarily fruit and vegetable specialty crops and to develop business opportunities for farmers by expanding connections with restaurants, wholesalers, retailers and eaters. To achieve its objective, SBN created specific events with requirements to shift the portion of the food purchased by consumers, restaurants, and distributors to local growers of specialty crops and providers of other local foods. The programs aimed to demonstrate that meals made from all local ingredients can be delicious, healthy, and affordable during all seasons in New England. A key component of Local Food for ALL involved reaching out to Massachusetts eaters of all ethnic and economic backgrounds, not just people in higher economic brackets who are often targets of local food campaigns. In collaboration with many partners, the campaign organized 6 ALLocal events and the first Boston Local Food Festival. With additional funds from the Mass Grown grant, a Buy Local Trade Show and Local Option for Restaurant Week Boston was added to expand further the connections between local specialty crop growers and restaurants and local food buyers. This led to a series of events benefiting specialty crop providers throughout the time period. The total value of the year long program of events was \$368,000 (\$135,000 cash) of which the Specialty Crop Block grant contributed \$30,000 and Mass Grown contributed \$10,206.

Project Approach

The objective of the ALLocal Events has been to create meals with multiple courses featuring MA grown vegetables, fruits and spices (specialty crops) where ALL ingredients are:

- Sourced as close to Boston as possible and within New England
- Processed by New England artisans and locally-owned companies
- Delivered by New England-owned distribution companies
- Prepared and served at a Massachusetts restaurant
- Eaten by 'Local Eaters' who can return to

The ALLocal Dinners were designed to provide a positive gain for all involved:

- Restaurants in diverse neighborhoods gained a full house (60+) of new guests, new local food connections and a fully funded dinner and all beverage sales on a typically slow night
- Chefs found challenge in creating a menu based on seasonal and local availability
- Specialty crop providers/local food suppliers had increased sales, even new purchases from the restaurants
- Guests engaged with restaurant owners and other local food/local business enthusiasts and learned more about the benefits/challenges of locally sourced food
- SBN learned/expanded connections in the local food system and earned @ \$850/event.

At the festival, the following activities were performed to ensure that grant funds only went to promote the consumption of specialty crops:

- We tracked the time for work spent on the specialty food grant attributed this program
- Funds raised matching fund of \$128,000 covered the cost of the inclusion of both non-specialty and specialty crops as well as non-specialty crop activities. The total cost of the program was \$168,000
- There were 7 farms booths, valuing \$600 per booth = \$4,200. Farms contributed \$600 total, so \$3,400 of grant covered the costs for these booths
- We had 7 nonprofit booths (The Food Project, MDAR, South Boston Grows, Community Servings, Haley House - 2 booths) for organizations representing specialty food. They paid \$100 total, And at \$600 a booth, the grant contributed \$4,100
- All vendors were required to list their sources of specialty food and most of the food sourced locally were specialty crops. \$7,500 of funds went directly to specialty crop activities in the festival
- 75% of the Vendor Coordinator's time went towards supporting the specialty crop portion of the program.
- The local food supplier guide included a majority of specialty foods
- The balance of the grant was used to pay for staff planning the event, collateral materials, equipment, permit fees, and supplies which was a small percentage of the total cost of planning the event.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

- Goal: Increased purchases of Massachusetts specialty crops at restaurants and farmers markets during ALLocal events by comparing purchase data before and after the events.

Result: In terms of specialty crops, 68 items were sourced from 29 farms in MA and a total of 87 were sourced from 43 farms in all of New England. In terms of all local foods, including specialty crops, meat, fish, dairy and specialty foods, 97 items were sourced from 56 providers in MA and 154 items from 99 providers in all of New England.

- Goal: We sought to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops throughout all seasons with the ALLocal events –through 1) immediate purchases by restaurants/event sites and 2) their promotion leading to increased future purchases by the restaurants and guests. Specialty crops were essential components for the events since a vegan/vegetarian option was required as one of the entrée choices and the four-course menu had a fairly low fixed price (discouraging too many expensive meats, etc.).

Result: Each event was required to create a menu that listed the sources of all the ingredients. Concluding results for food:

Event	# MA Specialty Crops	# MA Specialty Crop Providers	# NE Specialty Crops	#NE Specialty Crop Providers	# MA Local Foods	# MA Local Food Providers	# NE Local Foods	# NE Local Food Providers
Upstairs	18	5	18	5	22	9	25	15
Nourish	15	7	20	12	22	14	35	26
Independent	5	5	11	11	13	16	30	32
Ashmont	12	5	20	8	15	7	37	14
Restaurant Laura	6	2	6	2	8	3	10	5
Garden Girl	12	5	12	5	17	7	17	7
TOTAL	68	29	87	43	97	56	154	99
% of Specialty Crop compared to Local Food	70% 68/97	51% 29/56	56% 87/154	43% 43/99				

During the events, various local food experts spoke about preparation of the local ingredients, challenges within the local food system, and sources for these items, etc. As a zero waste organization, we did not create excess paper materials.

SBN found it very difficult to communicate with the restaurants or to get them to plan in advance about the menus. Once the event was over, it was even harder to communicate as they had moved on to other commitments. As a result, the idea of benchmarking volumes of local food purchases ahead of time and after the event was challenging. We also could not get information on the exact quantities of times purchased.

In the future, we will continue to have trouble getting quantifiable data from restaurants – just due to the nature of the restaurant business. One option may be to encourage restaurants to source from Food Ex, a new local food/farm delivery company that creates a comprehensive invoice of all delivered. During winter/spring events, this may be a welcome suggestion since restaurants are less accustomed to seeking local food in these seasons and would appreciate any support.

- Goal: Sales by farmers of Massachusetts specialty crops and CSA shares generated by the Local Food Festival as measured by feedback surveys before and after the events.

Result: 70% of MA local food listed on the menu consisted of specialty crops; 56% of all food, MA and throughout New England, consisted of specialty crops. Only NE Specialty Crop providers as a percentage of all New England providers was less than 50% -mostly due to the sourcing of much of the meat and fish outside of MA.

Additionally, SBN conducted a survey with all vendors, including MA Specialty Crop vendors from vendors who participated in the Boston Local Food Festival. (See attached results). Exhibit 4

We did surveys after the events, but not before the events because the farmers were not forthcoming with this data. The attachments in the last response sent, I believe, summarized the feedback in the report.

For the Food Festival, the benchmark of sales and participation is zero as this will be a new event. We will measure attendance by police estimates and the volume of educational materials distributed, the number of farmers by table fees, the amount of specialty crop sales by farmers' estimates of volumes and sales.

- Goal: Increased purchases at farmers markets by underserved and local income populations measured by comparing sales averages before and after the promotion of the Bounty Bucks program.

Result: We met several times with The Food Project to co-host a table at a community event to promote Bounty Bucks and farmers markets to uninformed, underserved populations. However, the summer schedule was challenging for both The Food Project and us. After considering partnering during the Playhouse series at Franklin Park or during the Boston Night Out events, we decided to pursue the ALLocal Picnic with Garden Girl. We also made plans to promote Bounty Bucks and then Local Food Cash coupons at the Boston Local Food Festival. Due to lack of funding, this evolved into the Crop Share program, where approximately 300-400 pounds/14 bushels of local produce, all specialty crops, was donated during the Festival from farms vendors and festival attendees. South Boston Grows and The Food Project distributed to 4 food pantry sites in South Boston and Dorchester: South Boston Community Health Center and St. Monica's Food Pantry in S. Boston and Kit Clark Senior Services and United House of Prayer in Dorchester.

- Goal: We will use a tool such as Survey Monkey or Zoomerang to collect and compile data from restaurant events, farmers market events and the festival events. Prior to the events, we will work with each group to determine the best way to collect data prior to and subsequent to the events. The pre-event data will serve as a benchmark for the future. We will provide those we are working with a comprehensive list of what are considered specialty crops so responders are clear about the products about which they should provide information.

Result: As stated in our report, it was extremely challenging to collect data from restaurants. SBN created a Wholesale Supplier Resource List that highlighted specialty crops and how to connect with the producers and made this guide available on our website so restaurants and commercial buyers can utilize them. The Wholesale Supplier Resource List was designed to bring more wholesale customers to farmers and specialty food producers. Farmers and Specialty Crop producers are encouraged to list their products available to local buyers via this online form: <https://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?formkey=dE8yYU1heWk3UU03dIN3eI9wWDRyWEE6MA>, The Wholesale Supplier Resource list has been supplemented with our Local Buying Guide, which was developed in 2012. Both are maintained by SBN and shared with restaurants and festival participants. For more information, please view our website. <http://bostonlocalfoodfestival.com/participate/about-the-festivallocal-resources-for-restaurants-and-chefs/>

Goal: For the restaurant events, our preliminary plan is to seek average sales on a comparable night and the percentage of those sales that is typically comprised of local

specialty crops. We will then compare this benchmark to sales and percentages of specialty crops for the ALLocal Dinner. We also would like to check average sales and percentages of specialty crops for several subsequent meals to assess whether restaurant managers made any changes in the percentage of specialty crops incorporated into meals.

Result: SBN found it very difficult to communicate with the restaurants or to get them to plan in advance about the menus. Once the event was over, it was even harder to communicate as they had moved on to other commitments. As a result, the idea of benchmarking volumes of local food purchases ahead of time and after the event was challenging. We also could not get information on the exact quantities of times purchased.

For a number of these restaurants, these purchases were new local foods from new suppliers. Since Upstairs in the Square and Nourish were already more committed to this approach, they included higher numbers of items. For Restaurant Laura, this was a very new approach and therefore the process was simpler. Garden Girl had a simpler menu as a picnic and provided much from the urban garden there.

Food sources were included on menus that guests were encouraged to read and take home so that they too could be considering more specialty crops and local providers in their purchases. Other promotional material was available at the ALLocal Picnic: local sources, farmer markets, upcoming events, etc.

The restaurants did not have any data to share about their previous purchases and all of the restaurants we worked with, it was their first time that they participated in the ALLocal Dinner, so there was no base line to compare. If we do go back to them with another ALLocal event, we would be able to have comparison data.

Goal: For the farmers markets, we expect to work with the market managers and data from the EBT machines in the weeks prior, during and after the promotional activities. It may be more difficult to gather information directly from the farmers at the farmers markets, but we will work with our collaborative partners to see if this is a possibility. We will track the volume of materials distributed.

Result: SBN did reach out to The Food Project to assist them with the Bounty Bucks program. Due to staff turnover at the Food Project and the fact that the Farmers Market program was going through a transition, it was not possible to work on a specific outreach program with The Food Project at any of the farmers markets. However, The Food Project did participate in the Boston Local Food Festival and we offered a booth

for the purpose of promoting their Bounty Bucks program. The Bounty Bucks program is now housed with another partner of SBN, Boston Collaborative for Food and Fitness.

Goal: For the Food Festival, the benchmark of sales and participation is zero as this will be a new event. We will measure attendance by police estimates and the volume of educational materials distributed the number of farmers by table fees, the amount of specialty crop sales by farmers' estimates of volumes and sales.

Result: Estimated police attendance for the festival was 30,000, SBN distributed 30,000 festival programs in advance of the event; 6 farmers participated as vendors. SBN was not able to get data of specialty crop sales from the farmers because they were not forthcoming with this data with us. However, we were able to conduct a post-event survey. *Please see festival survey attached. Exhibit 4*

We worked with festival participants to include specialty crops in their offerings. We have health permits that list the items to be sold and the suppliers for their offerings and from 52 of the participants we have post event surveys that list 88 specialty crops included out of 130 local food items. We also have photos from blogs that show some of the posted menus with sources. That said, we do not have an accurate measure of all the specialty crops included at the festival. We know our efforts delivered far more than at most events or agriculture fairs, but we do not know exactly.

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NOTE: We did surveys after the events, but not before the events because the farmers were not forthcoming with this data. For the Food Festival, the benchmark of sales and participation is zero as this will be a new event. We will measure attendance by police estimates and the volume of educational materials distributed, the number of farmers by table fees, the amount of specialty crop sales by farmers' estimates of volumes and sales.

SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS:

Responses from 55 participants: 4 farms, 8 non foods, 12 non profits, 8 restaurants, 19 specialty food providers, 4 sponsors

- Listing of Local Food: 22 responses: with 88 specialty crops listed and 130 local foods listed
- Overall Rating: Of a total number of 55 booth responses, 96% rated the overall event as either a 4 or 5.
- Booth Traffic: Of a total of 54 responses, 89% of booths rated traffic at their table either a 4 or 5.
- Sales: Of a total number of 45 booth responses, 67% made "Acceptable" to "Sold Out" sales. 20% made no sales, 13% made low sales, 24% made acceptable sales, 18% made high sales, and

24% sold out of their product.

Stated Goals vs. Actual

Goal	Actual	Result
Feature Specialty Crops for Sale and Tasting	88 specialty crops listed out of 130 local foods offered by 22 survey respondents (out of the 52 respondents)	Exceeded 50% goal
Family Activities	20 hands on activities by non profits and other organizations for family and children	Delivered
Cooking Demonstrations	12 demos in 3 locations throughout the day	Delivered
Contests	None	Not pursued
Maps of Local Sources of Specialty Crops and gardening information	MDAR and BNAN exhibits	Delivered
5000 attendees	30,000 attendees (police estimate)	Exceeded
7 – 10 farms	6 farms with total of 7 farm booth spaces	Close
Majority of vendors including local food in their menu, with particular emphasis on including specialty crops	All food vendors required to have local food in menu and many had specialty crops, local meat/fish, dairy and locally produced specialty foods incorporated	Delivered
Facilitate a partnership of local food organizations	60+ nonprofit organizations included in early partner list with 27 participating in the festival	Exceeded
Appropriate staff time spent promoting specialty crops	Jamey Lionette was hired 40 hours/month for 7 months to recruit and match vendors with local food suppliers/specialty crop providers. The rest of the team promoted specialty crops with other vendors and in promotional materials.	Exceeded
Attract volunteers to be part of the movement	We collected a database of 284 volunteers with over 150 assigned jobs in festival activities and zero waste efforts and a core group doing editorial blogging for the festival	Exceeded

Booth Type	Plan	Actual
Farm	10	6

Non Profit	20	20
Restaurant/Prepared Food	30	20
Specialty Food	40	36
Sponsors	20	20 (2 = Restaurants)

Event Summary

In addition to encouraging/helping food vendors include local food, specifically specialty crops in their offerings; Boston Local Food Festival was successful including the following ways:

- Approximately 30,000 people had a glorious day of fun, food, and community
- We showcased nearly 100 food-related vendors that promoted their businesses and causes to great acclaim.
- We developed partnerships and coalitions that were fantastic and uplifted SBN as an organization that is a mover and shaker in Boston and New England
- We helped make connections before and during that will have a transformative effect on the local and regional food festival and will last for years to come.
- We brought together local food leaders who didn't know each other or had not worked together before and we modeled the power of collaboration.
- We demonstrated to participating vendors and skeptical food folks who chose not to participate, the power and impact of the Boston Local Food Festival. Our initial communications with vendors report that 95% were thrilled with the event and want to come back next year. Several vendors sold out by 3 pm.

We received anecdotal results from these events:

Examples:

- JD Kemp of Organic Renaissance (now Food Ex) attended the pilot ALLocal Dinner in July '09 and then agreed to sponsor the food procurement for Nourish in January '10 as a pilot for Organic Renaissance's new local food delivery business. At subsequent events, Organic Renaissance continued to beta test its new local food delivery system in a controlled way before rolling out to the marketplace.
- The owner of Nourish discovered Sophia's Greek Yoghurt and is utilizing more local seafood/fish through the NAMA insights
- The owner of Dave's Pasta attended an event at Nourish and was then challenged to create for The Independent event an "all local" squash ravioli with all ingredients from New England. All local pasta is now part of the regular offerings at Dave's Pasta
- Nella Pasta, participant at our Buy Local Trade Show, teamed up with Four Stars Farm to create ALLocal pasta served at the ALLocal Picnic and later at the Boston Local Food Festival.

- Singh's Roti now sources new vegetables (pumpkin) in addition to the Scotch Bonnet peppers sourced from The Food Project. Singh's also uses wheat from Four Star Farms to make its main dish- Roti. They ordered 200 lbs for the Boston Local Food Festival event.

Excerpts from Post Event Questionnaire (others listed in appendix)

We had a great day at the event and made many wonderful contacts with both retail and individual consumers. The music, the speakers, and the overall enthusiasm of attendees as well as coordinators were invigorating! We were thrilled to be a part of the event and are thankful for the new business relationships it helped to create for us (Nella Pasta, Singh's Roti Shop, etc.).

Four Star Farms - We loved meeting all the people coming by. It was an interested and positive crowd. We had a great, successful day. Thank you very much for organizing it!

Red Fire Farm- There were a number of people that came to our booth who were excited to learn about our existence and will hopefully take part in our programs in the future. one person even came to one of our educational programs the following week after hearing about it at the festival!

Waltham Fields Community Farm - We had a great experience as a sponsor and vendor at the Boston Local Food Festival. The volunteers and staff anticipated all of our needs and helped make the event run very smoothly. We loved being near the music and on the water! The weather was spectacular and everyone who attended was in full support of our cause. It was wonderful to meet new vendors as well as catch up with chefs and other business owners we know! Katsiroubas Produce is looking forward to do it all over again next year! Thank you Nicola and everyone at SBN!

Katsiroubas Brothers - The best well organize Boston local festival, excellent work, all the people who organize the festival and the volunteer, next year I know is going to be bigger. This is smart to evaluate the festival, this year I work in a lot festival, they never evaluate a festival this is the first time. Thank to everybody who help me at the beginning and at the end of the event. Next year you should do a Video. Excellent work

Terry Eldridge, President, Community Swap Shop, Inc. - This event was by far the most rewarding and exciting event we have participated in to raise awareness of our business and connect with like minded people. We really felt the common theme of quality, local food, sustainable living and a sense of community really brought about the best in people. We had wonderful engaging conversations with people who visited our booth and some very nice thoughtful dialog with other vendors. It was a real privilege to part of this event and we look forward to attending more in the future.

No funds were used to purchase food for any of the ALLocal Dinners. The restaurant owners purchased the food and the attendees paid for the food via an admission fee. For Attendees were charged \$50.00-\$55.00 for the dinner and the restaurants were paid from the revenue generated from the dinner in the range of \$25-\$45. The net revenue was used to pay staff for the pro-rated portion of planning the activities. Additionally, other revenue sources at the Boston Local Food festival included sponsorship, vendor income and in-kind resources. Total cash and in-kind resources from this program over and above the Specialty Crop grant was just

over \$100,000. All of these funds and resources were used to pay for staff and production expense related to the project that is not solely to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops

Lessons Learned:

Challenges

1. Challenges: Tracking Change in Purchase of Specialty Crops

We planned to measure the impact on specialty crop purchases through:

- Increased purchases of Massachusetts specialty crops at restaurants and farmers markets during ALLocal events by comparing purchase data before and after the events
- Increased purchases at farmers markets by underserved and local income populations measured by comparing average use of Bounty Bucks for sales before and after the promotion of the Bounty Bucks program and getting feedback from farmers

We found it very difficult to communicate with the restaurants or to get them to plan in advance about the menus. Once the event was over, it was even harder to communicate as they had moved on to other commitments. As a result, the idea of benchmarking volumes of local food purchases ahead of time and after the event was challenging. We also could not get information on the exact quantities of times purchased.

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In the future, we will continue to have trouble getting quantifiable data from restaurants – just due to the nature of the restaurant business. One option may be to encourage restaurants to source from Food Ex, a new local food/farm delivery company that creates a comprehensive invoice of all delivered. During winter/spring events, this may be a welcome suggestion since restaurants are less accustomed to seeking local food in these seasons and would appreciate any support.

2. Challenges: Inclusion

The fast sell out of events created unexpected challenges to sign up guests representing diverse backgrounds outside of the SBN list.

Tactics used to sign up a diverse guest list:

- Moving ALLocal events to various locations in the metro Boston area helped to mix up the guest list as some neighborhoods were more convenient to some guests than others.
- We contacted local suppliers to the restaurants to pre register so they could add their diverse insights to the conversations.
- Restaurants preferring to cater to their local clientele contacted them through email, Facebook and posters prior to the SBN mailing so they had first offer on seats.
- For The Independent, we worked with a reporter to publish an article in the Globe calendar. Unfortunately the article was timed shortly before the dinner, after the event sold out, and this proved frustrating to the reporter and those excited by the article. Thereafter, we decided not to invest the time in generating public calendar notices.
- Restaurant Laura was interested in bringing in all new customers instead of its regulars so we used SBN's growing list and attracted many people to a restaurant/area new to them.
- For the ALLocal Picnic, we reduced the price, changed the date to a weekend, partnered with The Partnership, "an organization advancing leaders of color," set the date so it did not conflict with other Partnership activities and also leveraged the diverse email list of Patti Moreno.
- Even when placed in more local neighborhoods and at lower prices, there are certain groups who could not be reached or afford to attend the ALLocal events and learn from these experiences. Fortunately, we offered many of the same learning opportunities at the Boston Local Food Festival through free demonstrations, the ability to engage with vendors and nonprofit organizations and through the Crop Share program.
- More indirectly, the availability of a local option during Restaurant Week Boston also expanded the access and information about local food to a wider group of settings than the six we engaged.

In the future, we would continue to use all of the approaches generated to attract a diverse guest list.

Challenges: Accessibility to Underserved Populations with Community Event

We met several times with The Food Project to co-host a table at a community event to promote Bounty Bucks and farmers markets to uninformed, underserved populations. However, the summer schedule was challenging for both The Food Project and us. After considering partnering during the Playhouse series at Franklin Park or during the Boston Night Out events, we decided to pursue the ALLocal Picnic

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with Garden Girl. We also made plans to promote Bounty Bucks and then Local Food Cash coupons at the Boston Local Food Festival. Due to lack of funding, this evolved into the Crop Share program, where approximately 300-400 pounds/14 bushels of local produce, all specialty crops, were donated during the Festival from farms vendors and festival attendees. South Boston Grows and The Food Project distributed to 4 food pantry sites in South Boston and Dorchester: South Boston Community Health Center and St. Monica's Food Pantry in S. Boston and Kit Clark Senior Services and United House of Prayer in Dorchester. In the future, we will identify this community event and more abundant funding for it earlier. Perhaps we can team up with The Food Project for the MGH Health Expo, an event we learned about late in the planning process.

Contact

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EXHIBIT 1

MEDIA COVERAGE COMMONWEALTH QUALITY

September 27, 2010 – September 21, 2011

ASSOCIATED PRESS

September 27 - 28, 2010

Boston, MA

Articles (Versions 1 & 2)

"Mass. officials set to unveil 'Seal of Commonwealth Quality' label for local produce, seafood"

By Associated Press

BOSTON — Massachusetts officials are set to unveil a new label to help consumers identify agricultural and seafood products harvested and processed in the state.

The label says, "Seal of Commonwealth Quality."

State officials say the seal will only appear on the products of Massachusetts agribusinesses that agree to maintain high food safety and environmental standards.

The goal is to provide information to consumers while promoting Massachusetts agriculture.

The state agricultural commissioner and local agricultural and seafood producers plan to unveil the seal during a press conference Tuesday in Boston.

"Mass. Unveils New Seal for Local Produce, Seafood"

By Associated Press

BOSTON -- It could soon be easier to figure out just how local that food on your grocery store shelves really is.

State officials are set to unveil a new "Seal of Commonwealth Quality," a label that will help consumers identify agricultural and seafood products that are produced, harvested and processed in Massachusetts.

Officials said the seal will only appear on the products of Massachusetts agribusinesses that agree to maintain high food safety and environmental standards.

The goal is to help provide information to consumers while also promoting Massachusetts agriculture.

The state agricultural commissioner and local agricultural and seafood producers plan to unveil the seal during a press conference Tuesday morning on the Boston Common.

These articles appeared in the following online outlets:

America Business Daily

Bennington Banner

Boston Globe

Boston Herald

Boston Republic

Canada.com

Daily Caller

Finace.Yahoo.com

Georgia Post

Hampshire Gazette

Huffington Post

LA Times

Lincoln Daily News

Mass Live

Miami Herald
Middletown Journal
Minneapolis Post
News Observer
NPR.org
NY Daily News
Omaha Tribune
Salon.com
Seattle Times
Star Tribune
TheBostonChannel.com
TheGardenIsland.com
The State
The Sun News
Today.MSNBC.MSN.com
USA World News
Washington Examiner
WATD-FM.com
WBUR.org
WBZ.CBSLocal.com

BOSTON BUSINESS JOURNAL.COM

September 28, 2010

Boston, MA

Online Article

"Mass. Offers "Seal of Commonwealth Quality"

By Ann Kenda

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, along with farm, fishery and forestry leaders, are embarking on a "Commonwealth Quality" initiative.

The goal is to help consumers identify products that are produced, harvested and responsibly processed in Massachusetts.

A "Seal of Commonwealth Quality" will be offered on produce, dairy, seafood and lumber products that meet the criteria for food safety and environmental stewardship. The products will be found at farm stands, farmers' markets and retail locations around the state beginning in January.

Link: <http://www.bizjournals.com/boston/stories/2010/09/27/daily17.html>

DISHING BLOG (BOSTON.COM)

September 28, 2010

Boston, MA

Online Article

"Grown here and consumed here"

By Sheryl Julian

Bay State residents looking for local products won't have to wonder anymore what's grown here. Today on the Boston Common, the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources launched a "Commonwealth Quality" program to identify products grown and harvested here. In the initiative, the growers will have to meet certain standards in order to use the new logo. Hopefully, this will prevent anything like the tainted egg disaster from happening in our state.

This is Warren Shaw of Shaw Farm in Dracut speaking on behalf of the state dairy industry. Forestry and fishery representatives were also present.

In an interview in the Food section, Nicola Williams of Boston Local Food Festival, an event taking place this weekend at Fort Point Channel, said that Massachusetts residents consume only 5 percent of what we grow, which is an astonishingly low figure.

Perhaps today's section on apples will give folks a head start.

Link: http://www.boston.com/lifestyle/food/dishing/2010/09/grown_here_and.html

PUBLIC BROADCASTING.NET (WFCR 88.5 FM)

September 28, 2010

Amherst, MA

Podcast/Radio Broadcast Segment

"Massachusetts Agriculture's 'Seal of Approval'"

By Bob Paquette, WFCR Announcer, and Scott Soares, MDAR Commissioner

Abstract:

AMHERST, MA (WFCR) – Massachusetts officials have unveiled a new "Seal of Commonwealth Quality." The label will help consumers identify agricultural and seafood products that are produced, harvested and processed in the Bay State. WFCR's Bob Paquette reports.

Broadcast Transcript:

BOB PAQUETTE, WFCR ANNOUNCER: Agriculture Commissioner Scott Soares says other states have similar "made-in" programs, but he says the Massachusetts effort will also emphasize food safety and the environmental impacts of the products produced.

SCOTT SOARES, MDAR COMMISSIONER: "We're doing that through existing standards, but also newer standards that are coming down now that are voluntary, cultural practices that really seek to address food safety and food safety handling; as well as dovetailing in the environmental component through best management practices -- and those are practices that are employed by various producers of food, forestry and fisheries products that really seek to produce those products in a way that doesn't have a negative impact on the environment."

PAQUETTE: Soares says while many of the safety and environmental standards the program will use have been in place for some time, the new seal of quality will allow producers to use those standards as a marketing tool. For seafood products, Soares says the seal will recognize Massachusetts fisherman who follow practices that respond to concerns raised by consumers.

SOARES: "As an example, with lobster, some time ago the industry had used a regulation to use right whale-safe gear on their lobster buoys, which really speaks to the environmental concerns around the impact on the lobster fishery – on the right whale population in particular. It's important, given the way consumers are buying products these days and their reference to how those products are brought to market, that we really advertise the fact that these kinds of environmentally safe practices are being used."

PAQUETTE: Also unlike other states, each Massachusetts product seal will include a specific license number. Producers of the product must apply for the license. For WFCR and WNNZ, I'm Bob Paquette.

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Link:

<http://www.publicbroadcasting.net/wfcr/news.newsmain/article/0/0/1706258/WFCR.Local.News/Massachusetts'.Agriculture's.'Seal.of.Approval'>

BOSTON HERALD.COM

September 29, 2010

Boston, MA

Print/Online Article

"Mass. Food gets birth certificate: State seal to pitch 'quality'"

By Donna Goodison

Bay Staters who like to "buy local" will soon have an easier way to identify Massachusetts-grown products that adhere to high food-safety and environmental standards.

A Department of Agricultural Resources program will allow qualified Massachusetts produce, lobster and dairy, aquaculture and forestry products to be labeled with a “Seal of Commonwealth Quality” beginning in January.

“It’s a branding program,” DAR Commissioner Scott Soares said. “A big part of this is promoting the continuance of buying local and supporting local agriculture.”

Participating producers will undergo initial compliance checks followed by random audits by existing state agricultural inspectors. They also would be subject to oversight by their trade groups and third-party auditors for certain food-safety requirements.

“The Commonwealth Quality seal seeks to identify those producers who take that next step in best management practices in food safety and environmental standards,” Soares said. “What we hope it will do is provide the industry the ability to increase its marketability based on the standards of operation they employ.”

Each producer’s seals will have identifying number codes that will allow customers to trace the products’ origins and allow the state to pull them from store shelves if they fall out of compliance.

The state expects to charge producers for program licenses, but Soares expects the funds to be funneled back to the industry through its trade groups.

Link:

http://bh.heraldinteractive.com/business/general/view/20100929mass_food_gets_birth_certificate_state_seal_to_pitch_quality/

DRACUT FORUM.NET

September 29, 2010

Dracut, MA

Online Article

“Commonwealth Quality’...from Dracut”

By Shawn

Gotta give him a plug.

Warren Shaw was caught speaking this week at an event unveiling the new “Commonwealth Quality” labeling program being created by the State Department of Agricultural Resources.

A new label can be found on produce and products grown and harvested here in Massachusetts in an effort to encourage people to buy local.

Central to the initiative is a licensed "Seal of Commonwealth Quality" which will distinguish Massachusetts products that meet comprehensive program requirements as well as federal, state and local regulatory regulations. The seal will appear on certified Massachusetts produce, dairy, seafood and lumber products at farm stands, farmers' markets and retail locations across the state.

"For consumers, the Commonwealth Quality seal will allow them to recognize products from local growers who maintain practices that are safe and environmentally friendly," said DAR Commissioner Scott Soares. "For Massachusetts growers, Commonwealth Quality provides a marketing opportunity to increase their ability to meet growing consumer demand for local products. It is the ultimate win-win."

Farmers and agricultural industry representatives from **Amherst, Concord, Dennis, Dracut, Methuen,** and **Orange** joined Commissioner Soares at the event.

The farm stands are great, and farmer's markets help out incredibly with finding local products in the summer. But when you look in the stores, supermarkets, and specialty shops we need a system to let us know that the items we are looking to buy are really local, and not shipped in from elsewhere.

So, maybe we can start looking for the quality label when we're shopping for local produce.

Link: <http://www.dracutforum.net/2010/09/29/commonwealth-quality-from-dracut/>

NECN

September 29, 2010

Newton, MA

Video/Abstract

"How to Figure Out Where Your Food Comes From"

By NECN Anchor and Debra Wein, Dietician

Abstract:

(NECN) - Massachusetts introduced a new label yesterday for foods harvested, produced and processed in the state. It's called the "Seal of Commonwealth Quality."

The Environmental Working Group took testing information from the federal government earlier this year and came up with a list called, "The Dirty Dozen," which are foods they recommend to buy organic:

Fruits: apples, cherries, grapes, nectarines, peaches, pears, raspberries, strawberries.

Vegetables: bell peppers, celery, potatoes, spinach.

Registered dietitian Debra Wein talks to NECN about advising consumers to eat locally, when they should splurge on organic produce, and the benefits of drinking pomegranate juice.

Broadcast Transcript:

NECN ANCHOR: Massachusetts introduced a new label yesterday for foods that are harvested, produced, and processed in the state. It's called the "Seal of Commonwealth Quality." And we are joined now by Debra Wein, a registered dietician from Hingham Massachusetts to talk about this and some other things going on with organic food this week. Good morning to you.

DEBRA WEIN, NUTRIONIST: Good morning.

NECN: So this seal is kind of interesting. What does this "Seal of Commonwealth Quality" mean? It's more than a marketing effort on the part of the state; it means something.

WEIN: It definitely does. And it means that consumers can be comfortable knowing that the foods that they're choosing are grown locally from Massachusetts growers.

NECN: So that's a good thing. Do you always try to buy local when you can? It's kind of difficult sometimes in the northeast because we don't have tons of farms, but there are times of the year when you can get a lot of good stuff.

WEIN: Absolutely. And as a nutritionist and health professional, what we try to do is teach consumers to buy seasonally and locally. So this is a great opportunity for consumers to figure out where their food is coming from."

(* * * Unrelated Content * * *)

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Link: http://www.necn.com/09/29/10/How-to-figure-out-where-your-food-comes-landing_health.html?blockID=320703&feedID=4210

GO GREEN WEB DIRECTORY.COM

September 30, 2010

Online Newsletter

“Seal for Bay State Agricultural Products Launched: Products to be labeled and on local shelves beginning in January 2011”

By Andrea Fox

Working with industry and the University of Massachusetts Agricultural Extension Best Management Practices standards, the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural (DAR) resources this week launched a new program where Massachusetts produce, dairy, aquaculture, forestry, and lobster products will be labeled with a new “Seal of Commonwealth Quality” designed to help consumers find and differentiate products that are that are produced, harvested, and processed in Massachusetts.

It could be a boon for localvores, making life easier at the supermarket, especially in winter months when CSA shares are a distant memory, cold gardens are a labor of love, and root cellars make dinner, well, a little hum-drum.

According to Michael Botelho, the Commonwealth Quality Program manager for DAR, the seal will appear on the products of Massachusetts agricultural producers that agree to maintain the high food safety and environmental standards established by their respective industries. “From a business standpoint, farmers are modifying their practices...the Commonwealth Quality Program pulls existing standards together.”

Botelho said this approach helped with producer buy-in, education, and outreach. With just one full time DAR employee, and some contract assistance, most committees in various agricultural industries working on this program have been donating time and labor. While DAR received a federal Specialty Crop Block Grant Fund to launch the produce section of the initiative, it’s been a labor of love. “My role and passion is to help farmers survive,” and program supporters believe that the Seal of Commonwealth Quality will impart brand value and help local producers by appealing to Massachusetts consumers that are searching local. “We’re trying to get people thinking about consumption patterns,” said Botelho.

The program at present imposes no cost to agricultural producers, but may in the future require establishing a shared revenue model to keep the program going. “It’s been done on a shoestring budget,” Botelho noted. Also, the seal could eventually go on products that are exported out of state—that’s up to the producers, he said. The goal is that the seal will help create a strong Massachusetts brand. For more information, go to the [Commonwealth Quality Program Page](#) and the [Savor Massachusetts map of local growers](#).

For a list of local farm stands that will carry the products, see [Farm Stands in the North Shore](#) and other regions on [the GoGreenWebDirectory](#)

Link: <http://www.gogreenwebdirectory.com/newsletter.html>

SLASH FOOD.COM

September 30, 2010

New York, NY

Online Article

"Local Foods Get 'Birth Certificates' in Massachusetts"

By Jennifer Lawinski

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources is taking "buy local" to the next level with a new program that will help consumers identify locally grown food.

Beginning in January, the program lets qualified Massachusetts produce, lobster and dairy, aquaculture and forestry products sport a "Seal of Commonwealth Quality" label, the Boston Herald reported.

"It's a branding program," department Commissioner Scott Soares told the paper. "A big part of this is promoting the continuance of buying local and supporting local agriculture."

"The Commonwealth Quality seal seeks to identify those producers who take that next step in best management practices in food safety and environmental standards," Soares told the Herald. "What we hope it will do is provide the industry the ability to increase its marketability based on the standards of operation they employ."

After initial compliance checks, participating food producers will be randomly audited to ensure they comply with food safety and environmental standards.

Seals will have number codes to allow customers to trace the product's origins -- and allow for their removal from store shelves in the event producers start slacking on compliance, the paper reported.

Link: <http://www.slashfood.com/2010/09/30/local-foods-get-birth-certificates-in-massachusetts/#ixzz112qtFrlf>

WWLP.COM (22 NEWS)

October 2, 2010

Chicopee, MA

News Broadcast, Podcast, and Online Article

"MA unveils seal for local food products"

By Elysia Rodriguez, anchor, Jackie Brousseau, correspondent

Broadcast/Podcast Transcript:

ELYSIA RODRIGUEZ, ANCHOR: It will soon be easier to tell whether the food you're buying is from Massachusetts or another state. Twenty-two's news reporter Jackie Brousseau explains why the small change could boost business for local farmers and food manufacturers.

JACKIE BROUSSEAU, CORRESPONDENT: Rich Drobiak is intrigued by a new plan to let customers know when the food they're buy is locally grown or manufactured.

RICK DROBIAK, CONSUMER: I think it's a good thing to know where you're getting stuff from. Whether it's local produce, local businesses.

BROUSSEAU: The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources unveiled the Seal of Commonwealth Quality today to help consumers choose local meat, seafood and produce.

The emblem will be issued to any agricultural or seafood businesses throughout the state that maintain sustainable and safe business practices. The small stickers will be placed on products throughout the stores.

But Arnold's Meats owner Larry Katz isn't sure the program would be the right fit for his business.

LARRY KATZ, ARNOLD'S MEATS: As far as meat items go, as long as the quality is the same as out west, and as long as the price isn't prohibitive, I think there's nothing wrong with that at all. Most of the meat produced in Massachusetts would be from local farms, and they wouldn't be able to sell us the amount of meat we really need to sell to our institutions and our restaurants.

BROUSSEAU But the new seal could help boost business for some local farms and small manufacturers.

I'm Jackie Brousseau for 22 News.

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Online Article:

"MA unveils seal for local food products: "Seal of Commonwealth Quality" for local foods"

By Jackie Brousseau

Chicopee, Mass. (WWLP) - It'll soon be easier to tell whether the food you are buying is from Massachusetts or another state.

Rich Drobiak is intrigued by a new plan to let customers know when the food they're buying is locally grown or manufactured.

"I think it's a good thing when you know where you're getting stuff from, whether its local produce or local business," said Drobiak.

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources unveiled the "Seal of Commonwealth Quality" on Tuesday, to help consumers choose local meat, seafood and produce.

The emblem will be issued to agricultural and seafood businesses in the state that abide by sustainable and safe business practices. There will be a small sticker placed on products throughout the store.

The new seal could help boost business for some local farms and small manufacturers.

Link: <http://www.wwlp.com/dpp/news/local/ma-unveils-seal-for-local-food-products>

FOOD SAFETY NEWS

October 4, 2010

Seattle, WA

Online Press Release Pickup

"Locally Grown' Gets Bay State's Seal of Approval"

By Michelle Greenhalgh

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) and farm, fishery and forestry leaders this week announced the "Commonwealth Quality" joint initiative, a program to promote local agriculture and help consumers more easily identify products that are produced, harvested, and responsibly processed in the Bay State.

The initiative is a collaborative venture between DAR and representatives from the produce, dairy, forestry, aquaculture and lobster commodities of the Commonwealth.

A licensed "Seal of Commonwealth Quality" will distinguish Massachusetts products that meet requirements of the comprehensive program as well as federal, state, and local regulatory regulations. The seal will appear only on certified Massachusetts produce, dairy, seafood and lumber products sold at farmers' markets and retail locations across the state.

"For consumers, the Commonwealth Quality seal will allow them to recognize products from local growers who maintain practices that are safe and environmentally friendly," said DAR Commissioner Scott Soares. "For Massachusetts growers, Commonwealth Quality provides a marketing opportunity to increase their ability to meet growing consumer demand for local products. It is the ultimate win-win."

Also present at the program launch event were leaders from the cities and towns of Amherst, Concord, Dennis, Dracut, Methuen, and Orange.

The Commonwealth Quality initiative differs from most state agriculture label programs, which typically do not require a product or business to meet specific standards to qualify for a promotional logo. In order to gain the Commonwealth Quality seal, however, products must meet a clearly defined set of standards.

According to DAR, the highly structured program and the collaboration behind it represent a significant advance over traditional state label programs. Officials hope that as a result, consumers will be able to easily identify and enjoy certified products, knowing they are grown, harvested and processed in Massachusetts using safe and eco-friendly practices.

"The Seal of Commonwealth Quality provides an assurance to our customers that food safety and environmental stewardship are practiced every day on local farms," said Dr. Rich Bonanno, president of the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation.

Fred Heyes, Commonwealth Quality contributor and owner of Heyes Forest Products, said that, "Fulfilling local needs with local products is essential to our long-term sustainability...Commonwealth Quality will help clearly convey this message... "

The seal program is set to begin at farm stands, farmers' markets, retail and wholesale locations by January 2011. For more information about the Commonwealth Quality program, visit DAR's [website](#).

Link: <http://www.foodsafetynews.com/2010/10/massachusetts-introduces-seal-of-commonwealth-quality/>

The press release was featured in the following publications:

AmericanTowns.com

BostonBusinessJournal.com

FoodSafetyNews.com

HilltownFamilies.com

TheWarehamObserver.com

THE VALLEY DISPATCH.COM

October 8, 2010

Dracut, MA

Online Article

"Fate of our farms is in your hands"

By Warren Shaw

Massachusetts has lost another dairy farm.

If you read last week's Sunday Sun, a story by Jack Minch detailed the struggles by the Rossbach family of Townsend to keep their family dairy farm going.

I know these folks, and let me assure you that they are competent, hard-working men that didn't give up because they were quitters.

The industry has changed and as the family points out, the economic model of a small New England farm can't compete anymore by selling their product at wholesale prices to large processors.

The demands of what is fast becoming an industrial food supply force farms to grow to sizes not possible in New England. Most of the milk sold in this market comes in from New York and other areas where large industrial farms have as many as 5,000 cows.

The same food industry that also forced some farms to try artificial growth hormones to produce more for less, but consumers wisely put an end to that by demanding to know what the consequences were.

And sadly, that is exactly what is happening these days to folks that try to make a living on New England farms. They are pushed to produce more for less and just don't have the land base to do it. So unless farms can find a way to market directly to consumers and keep more of the food dollar for themselves, they are likely headed in the same direction as the Rossbachs.

The future of New England agriculture is in marketing fresh, local food products directly to consumers.

Farm stores, farmers markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs) are the future, driven by consumers demanding fresh, local products.

Real local that is "drive-by fresh."

I was asked to speak at the launch of the Massachusetts new "Commonwealth Quality" brand kicked off in Boston last week, a move that is designed to help identify local farm products to consumers in search of food that doesn't come from the industrial farms and is grown locally here in Massachusetts.

Say what you want about government, but we in Massachusetts have a Department of Agriculture that gets it. Scott Soares, our commissioner, has been out in front on the issue of finding solutions to the economic struggles of farmers.

Sometime soon, you will be able to identify Massachusetts produced food products by the commonwealth quality brand.

Speaking of people that get it when it comes to farms: I visited my daughter in New Jersey last weekend and along the way found myself in the town of Warwick, N.Y., in a massive traffic jam caused by something called the Apple Fest.

Literally thousands of people came to this town to enjoy this event, which appeared to be much larger than the Lowell Folk Festival.

Clearly the fruit-growing farm community in that area got sick of selling their products to large supermarkets and getting paid next to nothing for it, so they created their own value-added event.

It was an impressive event that brought thousands consumers out to the farms in the area.

Clearly, the future of farms both here in Dracut and in the rest of New England is consumer-driven, and to all of the folks that enjoy the amenities provided by having farms in their community, their survival is in your hands.

Warren Shaw is a former Dracut selectman who hosts a popular Saturday morning radio show on WCAP-AM from 6 to 10.

Link: http://www.thevalleydispatch.com/shaw/ci_16287750

MASS LIVE.COM (THE REPUBLICAN)

October 18, 2010

Springfield, MA

Online Article

"Massachusetts Agriculture chief Scott Soares touts 3-County Fairgrounds, quality initiatives"

By Scott Soares

(Editor's note: Following are excerpts from the latest report of the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture Resources commissioner.)

In spite of the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, our farming community has continued to show the resilience, ingenuity, and roll-up-the-sleeves resolve for which Massachusetts farmers are famous.

At MDAR we've worked to match that dedication and commitment and have come to find that the cultivation (no pun intended?) of a "can-do" mind-set has become a cultural foundation of our agency.

From maximizing and leveraging new public outreach to optimizing federal grant opportunities and forging new partnerships that have provided further expansion of our Commonwealth's agricultural vitality.

Some of you may have already heard of our Sept. 28 launch of the Commonwealth Quality Program. From many perspectives, this is a ground-breaking milestone for Massachusetts and a win-win for growers, producers, harvesters, processors and importantly, consumers.

Components of this program have been under development for about two years, thanks in large part to strong partnerships with Massachusetts farmers, fishers and foresters. We have now begun the sign-up stage with several commodity groups.

Working in concert with Commonwealth Quality Ambassadors, it is our hope that the "CQP" will provide a voluntary option to producers of agricultural, fisheries and forestry products that highlights production standards and practices that address the reasons we "Buy Local."

Following the sign-up phase and producer response period, consumers will soon be able to find a "Seal of Commonwealth Quality" that will guide them to products following verified standards and practices that address growing consumer motivations for purchasing local products food safety and environmental sustainability.

New efforts underway involve the department's work with two major projects that will have statewide and regional impact. The first project is the development of a year-round Boston Public Market, generated by continued demand for greater access to locally grown agricultural products. I'm pleased to announce that today the Department posted a Request for Responses that will lead to the design/implementation of the Boston Market.

The second major effort brings us to Northampton and the Three-County Fairgrounds. As a result of a 2008 bond authorization, the department has been able to pursue development of a contract that will enable the first phase of a \$42 million project at the fairgrounds.

The commonwealth's investment of \$4 million over two years will allow much needed site improvements, (such as) the construction of a 300 stall complex, and lead to a greater than \$30 million impact on the Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden regional economy as a result of the increased and enhanced business and event opportunities at the Three-County Fairgrounds.

In fact, beyond hosting the very popular and well attended annual Three-County Fair, the fairgrounds host a number of community, arts and equestrian events including the American Morgan Horse Association show, with which the fair has a 75-year relationship!

Some additional new MDAR programs on the block are also showing great success. To address the needs of beginning farmers, the Department has initiated the Matching Enterprise Grants for Agriculture Program. This brand new pilot program offers technical and business planning assistance to support the special needs of new farmers. In recognition of the limited availability of capital for new farm enterprises and the opportunity that capital access coupled with technical assistance and smart business planning can bring, MEGA also makes available financial assistance up to \$10,000 for equipment, infrastructure or other capital improvements.

Of 29 applicants this year, 10 have been selected to participate in the pilot round.

The new MassGrown & Fresher website continues to gain traction as an important marketing tool for farmers and a valuable resource to consumers. Perhaps you've also seen our colorful MassGrown & Fresher tent recently? It's been to the Big E, the Solomon Pond Mall, and is now on a road show to colleges and universities. I'm especially excited about the latter, as I think it's a great opportunity to build relationships with a potential new customer base that appears to be "hungry" for all that the agricultural community has to offer.

Link: http://www.masslive.com/business-news/index.ssf/2010/10/massachusetts_agriculture_chief_scott_so.html

THE SALEM NEWS

December 1, 2010
Salem, MA
Online Article

"A growing trend: Thanks to local farmers, markets on the rise statewide"
By Stacie N. Galang

Farmer Mike Raymond spent recent days transplanting vegetables into covered field houses before the ground freezes.

The 6-acre First Light Farm in Hamilton, now in its third season, is part of a farming trend to bring local products to local customers, and it's increasing the acreage devoted to farms, driving up the number of farmers markets and, ultimately, bumping up sales.

With 231 farmers markets, Massachusetts actually ranked sixth nationally in number.

People are drawn to local food for a number of reasons, most notably its freshness and over concerns about food safety, said Scott Soares, the state's agricultural commissioner.

"We're actually seeing, and continuing to verify, that direct sales are key to agricultural opportunities here in Massachusetts," Soares said.

That is driving more people back to farming.

Salem's Maitland Mountain Farm has similarly seized the opportunity. The 2-acre farm off Loring Avenue formally launched when the Salem Farmers' Market opened for business last year.

"It's really a great time to get involved with this," said Holly Maitland, who runs the farm with her father, Peter Maitland, and boyfriend, Andy Varela. "I feel as though people are really looking for local, organic food."

Raymond estimated that 70 percent of his business comes from First Light's community-supported agriculture system in which customers pay upfront for a portion of the bounty.

The remaining income is generated by sales to local restaurants and farmers markets, which also help build more long-term customers.

"We've been really working each year to sell as many shares as we can up to what we can expect with the land," Raymond said.

In 2000, the state tallied 91 farmers markets, according to the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. This year, communities hosted 231 farmers markets, an increase of 154 percent over 10 years.

From 2002 to 2007, Massachusetts saw a 27 percent increase in the number of farms, the largest increase since the U.S. Department of Agriculture started collecting the data, according to Soares.

During that same five years, the acreage of farm land was relatively stable, he said.

"We are creating more farms," Soares said.

Local success

In Salem, attendance increased from 38,000 people attending the city's Thursday farmers markets in its first year to 44,000 this year, according to Jennifer Bell, who oversees the weekly events.

"We continue to get very positive feedback on the market," she said by e-mail.

Beyond the statistics, farmers markets have also become community meeting places reminiscent of agriculture 100 years ago, Soares said.

"We're coming back to those kinds of things and those connections, connections not only because of great local food products but also with members of the local community," he said.

Demand has inspired the Maitlands to build up their farm business, which sells eggs, herbs like basil, and vegetables, such as kale, lettuce, radishes, swiss chard and heirloom tomatoes.

"We're trying to just figure it all out as far as what the demand is so far and so forth," Peter Maitland said.

Most of the money the Maitlands have earned at the Salem Farmers' Market has been reinvested into their operation.

This month, the family purchased 30 more chickens to increase egg production and an 800-square-foot greenhouse to start the growing season sooner.

"We're trying to expand and get bigger and better," Holly Maitland said. "We're experimenting with different crops and finding out what people really want."

For the time being, the farm is more labor of love. Holly Maitland still keeps her day jobs working in restaurants. Peter Maitland is a retired merchant mariner.

"It's our passion," Holly Maitland said. "We are trying to make ends meet. It's going to take a little while for it to make a profit. I think we're doing well with the (farmers) market."

At First Light, they're making their first foray into winter produce, said Raymond, who spent nearly 20 years working on farms before starting his own on rented land.

"It's good that we're doing that," he said. "We have stuff to provide to the restaurants, as well. We don't lose them. There's some continuity with our restaurant accounts."

The farm tries to adapt its crops to extend their growing season and provide a diverse selection of produce for their customers.

First Light grows some 30 different types of vegetables and herbs.

"It's constantly learning by trial and error at least in the first 10 years," he said. "We try to have the greatest variety each week that we can."

Market promotions

At some point, the state will reach a saturation point with the number of farmers markets it can sustain, although it's hard to predict when that will be, Soares said.

Until then, the state is creating programs to help farmers and farmers markets improve sales.

One quality assurance program, which launched in September, gives each farm its own numerical identification and labels to place on their products that say they're Massachusetts-grown.

The state has also tried to increase access to farmers markets for low-income residents who can use their state and federal benefits to purchase food.

The state is coordinating cooking demonstrations at farmers markets, which can be both an attraction for shoppers and an opportunity for vendors to promote a vegetable featured in the dish.

"Those kind of things have worked well not only for the community but from the farming side," Soares said. "It's an opportunity to diversify their products and things they bring to market."

Link: <http://www.salemnews.com/business/x713538807/A-growing-trend>

THE ARLINGTON ADVOCATE

January 24, 2011

Arlington, MA

Online Article

"Guest Commentary: Good food news"

By Robin Cohen

"Another troubling food story came across my desk, and I watched as waves of anger and indignation rolled across the social media groups I follow. Animals held in poor conditions, food recalls; these are the situations that most often make the headlines, but I have come to know that these are the exceptions and there is much more good news out there. But how is the average person supposed to make sense of everything they hear about the important topic of the food they eat.

I decided to ask for some advice from Scott Soares, the Massachusetts Commissioner of Agriculture, on how people who live in or near the city rather than farm country could get a better understanding of local food.

Commissioner Soares bristled at the fact that people often end up "reading about the worst of everything" since the sensational and tragic stories tend to take the center stage. He instead thinks it is important for us to focus on so positive examples of "the many farms that are doing it right".

Soares suggested that people visit farmers markets in their community (some markets now continue into the fall and winter), which will give them an opportunity to talk directly with farmers. For city folks, it may be their main opportunity to meet farmers.

There is also a great website managed by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) that has information on Massachusetts farms, farmers markets, farm stands and culinary tourism spots. There is even a searchable map that allows you to hunt for specific

products or locations from close to 400 destinations across the state. For example, I used it to find turkey farms near Arlington before Thanksgiving. The link is mass.gov/agr/massgrown/

Once you find the farms, you can to arrange visit them and see for yourself how your food is grown and raised. But Soares warns that these are working environments, and it is important to respect that and also to understand what are “Best Practices” for each type of farming activity. We are very lucky to have in Massachusetts four agricultural technical high schools and a premier veterinary medicine school at Tufts. There is also an outstanding agricultural program at UMass Amherst and all of these serve the agricultural community and in turn help consumers like us get the best from our farms.

Your home town or city supermarket or small grocery store can also be a great source for local food. Speak to produce or store managers about their sources. Ask questions, request locally grown produce and products, and discuss your concerns. Some products are hard for large stores to source in Massachusetts but they may be able to buy them regionally. However, if you can't find a local apple in your local supermarket at the height of the New England apple season, perhaps you need to shop elsewhere.

The commissioner also mentioned two programs that help connect consumers with producers; Buy Local groups and the Commonwealth Quality Program. The Buy Local program consists of groups, which are regional educational resources that help spread the word about local food and find ways to get local food available to everyone.

The Sustainable Business Network of Greater Boston is one of the Buy Local groups. It held a huge local food festival this fall, which attracted 30,000 visitors to booths filled with farmers, restaurants and food trucks preparing local food, and a large array of local food crafters.

The new Commonwealth Quality program according to its website “serves to identify locally sourced products that are grown, harvested and processed right here in Massachusetts using practices that are safe, sustainable and don't harm the environment.”

It is a developing program but looks promising to help guide people through the often confusing maze of what is a good local food choice. More information is available at mass.gov/agr/cqp/

Finally, I asked Commissioner Soares what someone can do if they have questions or concerns about animal welfare or other conditions on a local farm. He told me that the MSPCA and Animal Rescue as well as MDAR will respond directly to any issues and give them the highest level of concern. He reminded me that the farmer's livelihood is tied to their land and their animals and stressed animals are unproductive and bad for business.

Soares shifted quickly away from the negative and reminded me that land is a precious resource and land preservation is the key to maintaining small local farms. He also spoke proudly about the work that Massachusetts farmers and professors at UMass Amherst are doing to develop more robust breeds and crops, to preserve heritage animals, and, in general, how farmers are sharing, learning and achieving best practices to bring safe and healthy food to all of us. I feel proud to know some of these farmers.”

Link: <http://www.wickedlocal.com/arlington/features/x1409907396/Guest-commentary-Good-food-news>

METROWEST DAILY NEWS

January 31, 2011

Framingham, MA

Online Article

“Local farmers get behind new Commonwealth Quality seal”

By David Riley

“When Adrian Collins can slap a new Commonwealth Quality label on one of his turkey pies at Out Post Farm in Holliston, he hopes it sends a message to customers: This food was raised locally, safely and sustainably.

That seal will start appearing this year on produce, dairy and other products that are grown, harvested and processed in the Bay State and meet a series of environmental and food safety standards.

State agriculture officials and farm leaders announced the voluntary program in the fall and are working this winter to get farmers on board, with hopes of seeing at least 100 sign up by spring.

Between 30 and 45 vegetable, fruit and berry growers already enlisted earlier this month in Sturbridge after hearing a presentation on the program, said Scott Soares, state Department of Agricultural Resources commissioner.

Organizers are also talking to maple syrup makers, lobstermen and other food producers.

"I think that's a modest number we'll hit," Soares said of the 100-grower goal.

Collins, an owner of Out Post Farm, said he is still learning about the program but plans to sign up.

"I think it's a great combination of oversight and, especially with all the problems we've been having with our food lately...just one way to assure our customers," Collins said.

Several other MetroWest farmers said they were not familiar with the program or did not yet know enough to discuss it. Soares said his agency plans to do more outreach this winter to spread the word.

The Department of Agricultural Resources worked with the Marlborough-based Mass. Farm Bureau and UMass-Extension service to write best management practices that food producers must meet to get the Commonwealth Quality seal.

In part, the program is meant to highlight the good practices that many farms already use, said Rich Bonanno, president of the Mass. Farm Bureau board of directors. While many farmers have done things right over the years, sometimes they are not good at communicating that to customers, he said.

"This is a way of highlighting a lot of the good things that we're already doing and putting it in a package that has sort of a name and a face to it," Bonanno said.

Customers have grown more and more interested in whether their food is produced in ways that are safe and that protect the environment, said Bonanno, who runs Pleasant Valley Gardens in Methuen.

"I think the public feels or wants to feel more connected to agriculture, or more specifically, to their food supply," he said.

At the same time, Commonwealth Quality offers farmers a road map for how to improve their practices, Bonanno said.

Organizers also pushed the initiative forward in part because of new federal action on food safety, he said, with some other states starting to express interest in similar programs.

"I don't see anybody that has something in place like we do," Bonanno said.

Shoppers should not confuse the new program with an existing sticker they may spot on their produce: "Massachusetts grown...and fresher!" Those seals, created about a decade ago, indicate that a product was raised in the Bay State, but little else, Soares said.

Instead, Commonwealth Quality's standards mirror the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Good Agricultural Practices program. It is cheaper and less onerous for farmers to comply, though, Bonanno said.

"We simply have too many small growers in Massachusetts to be able to afford to do the kinds of paperwork requirements that are in place with the full USDA program," he said.

For produce to get the Commonwealth Quality seal, it all must be grown and harvested in the Bay State. Primary ingredients in processed food must be 75 percent or more grown and harvested here.

The program also requires growers to take steps to minimize microbial contamination, maintain and test a safe water supply and restrict contact with animals to avoid tainting by fecal matter, among other standards.

Other highlights require farmers to minimize energy, water and pesticide use. Soares said rules are still in the works for dairy and other products.

Commonwealth Quality differs from organic standards mainly in that they require less record-keeping and were developed in concert with industry, Soares said.

At Out Post Farm, Collins said the program would serve as another constant reminder of how to properly care for his land.

"I think there will be a really good reception to it," he said.

Link: <http://www.metrowestdailynews.com/lifestyle/food/x472439210/Local-farmers-get-behind-new-Commonwealth-Quality-seal>

BOSTON.COM (BOSTON GLOBE)

Boston, MA

June 16, 2011

"Farmers, State Unite on Produce Standards"

By Betsy Levinson

With the lush backdrop of one of the oldest fields to remain in agriculture in the state since the 17th century, a group of farmers and state officials kicked off the new certification program, Commonwealth Quality of Massachusetts, a set of food safety standards and practices that were developed over the last year to ensure that consumers that buy local can buy with confidence.

The state agriculture department worked with a panel of farmers and the UMass Extension service to develop a set of standards that cover all manner of family farming from soil and water testing, to livestock and manure management, to insect and pest control and worker hygiene. Farmers that choose to participate can be certified by the state under the CQ imprimatur.

The program also helps farmers get the word out that high-quality local, sustainable farming is mushrooming in the state. "We want to educate consumers," said farmer Michael Botelho, a CQP-certified member.

The start of the 2011 CQ program was at Verrill Farm, land in Concord that has remained continuously in agriculture since Native Americans farmed it before the British, said current owner, Steve Verrill.

"It's an ongoing educational program that will focus the farmers' minds on their practices," said Verrill. "I think it will be very helpful." He said the program is self-managed and voluntary, but verified with annual soil and water quality tests.

Scott Soares, commissioner of the state Department of Agriculture, lauded "the first group of growers" in the Northeast sector, such as Rich Bonnano of Pleasant Valley Gardens in Methuen, Verrill and the Davidian Brothers from Northborough who were at the small kick off.

Soares said "30 years of standards will now define what being a good farmer is all about." He said the "templates" can be used for first-time farmers and those that have stayed in the business for 350 years or more. He said there are some 7,700 family farms in the state, "on the same farmland," meaning that more families are turning to growing fruits and vegetables on their land.

The CQ program is planning to extend to forestry and lobstermen at a later date.

Ruth Hazzard from the University of Massachusetts Extension program talked about insect management as her component of drawing up the new standards manuals. The website for the program is www.mass.gov/CQP. She said some 50 farms make up the first group to be certified by the program.

"For the public wanting to know about local food, this will enable them to know their farmer and the standards he has in place," said Soares. "Before now, we haven't taken the time to tell the public what we are all about, what family farms do."

Soares said the federal food safety program, GAP or Good Agriculture Practices, is beyond the reach of many farms, but the local CQ program is less expensive and easier to comply with.

"I think consumers were confused," said Bonnano. "Buying local hit the market but no one knew what that meant. We want to create a brand with regulations and standards that consumers could rely on." He said having the extension service as a partner was good because it gave a scientific backing to the farmers and the agriculture department.

Verrill showed off a new "five-row seeder" as a way of describing the more modern practices that he and others are implementing. He also uses propane flammers to eradicate pests in the fields, insect traps and basket weeders that are all more efficient for a large-scale grower.

Link: http://articles.boston.com/2011-06-16/yourtown/29666469_1_family-farms-first-time-farmers-farmers-and-state-officials

CONCORD PATCH.COM (CONCORD PATCH)

Concord, MA

June 16, 2011

"Verrill Farm Among first in Quality Seal Program: The Commonwealth's new program helps

consumers identify fresh agricultural products produced in the state."

By Lauren Kaplan & Greg Abazorius

Concord's Verrill Farm is among the first to participate in the newly announced Commonwealth Quality Seal Program, which helps to identify locally grown agricultural products for consumers.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs provided the following information.

Reflecting a growing national focus on locally produced food, Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) Commissioner Scott J. Soares announced the first farms certified under the state's Commonwealth Quality seal program (CQP), a new state initiative designed to help consumers identify high-quality products that are responsibly produced, harvested and processed in Massachusetts.

Gathered at Verrill Farm in Concord, state agricultural officials, University of Massachusetts Extension Center for Agriculture (UMass Extension) educators and local farms also provided new details about the food safety standards CQP products must meet. Based upon the USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Program, the sustainability standards adapted for CQP include practices such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM), which reduces the use of pesticides and provides an ecological approach to crop management.

"This program provides a unique opportunity for our agricultural community to exhibit its commitment to excellence, while offering consumers assurance that they are purchasing high-quality products from local growers," said Commissioner Soares.

Comprised of a combination of industry best management practices pertaining to soil health, water conservation, insect control, and food safety, these specialized standards serve as a prerequisite for farms certified to sell products using the Commonwealth Quality seal. There are currently 19 farms certified to participate in the program, which has endorsements from the New England Vegetable and Berry Growers' Association and the Massachusetts Fruit Growers Association.

Launched in September 2010, the program has been gaining ground with prominent trade organizations and Massachusetts farms alike. More than 50 farms have applied for certification.

To become licensed to use the seal, applicants must perform a self-audit to determine their current level of eligibility and make improvements as needed before achieving certification through DAR.

Agricultural goods also must be grown, harvested and processed within Massachusetts in order to qualify. As additional agricultural sectors come on board, each will have its own domain-specific set of standards that focus on safety and sustainability.

"The Commonwealth Quality seal takes the guesswork out of determining what it means for a product to be 'local' or 'sustainable'; it signifies that the associated product has been grown on a Massachusetts farm using approved practices for growing, harvesting, and handling," said Steve Verrill, owner of Verrill Farm and Commonwealth Quality advisor. "The program promotes these practices by offering continuing education for participants, with emphasis on continuously improving sustainability, food safety, and soil conservation."

"The Seal of Commonwealth Quality provides assurance to our customers that food safety and environmental stewardship are practiced daily on our local farms," said Dr. Rich Bonanno, president of the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation. "We are proud to announce our endorsement of the program."

Commonwealth Quality establishes a clearly defined set of standards for program participants. This highly structured program and the collaboration behind it represent a significant advancement over traditional state label programs. As a result, consumers will be able to easily identify and enjoy certified products, knowing they are grown, harvested and processed in Massachusetts using practices that are safe and environmentally friendly.

For more information about Commonwealth Quality, visit <http://www.mass.gov/cqp>.

Link: <http://concord.patch.com/articles/verrill-farm-among-first-in-quality-seal-program>

THE PACKER.COM (THE PACKER)

Lenexa, KS

June 16, 2011

"Massachusetts launches quality seal program"

Massachusetts officials set out in September 2010 to define "locally grown, sustainable food" for consumers. June 15 agricultural commissioner Scott Soares unveiled the state's first 20 Commonwealth Quality Seal Program farms and said the definition is more specific than it's ever been.

"This program provides ... consumers assurance that they are purchasing high-quality products from local growers," Soares said, according to a press release about the program launch at Verrill Farm in Concord, Mass.

Steve Verrill, owner of the farm selected for the program's inaugural event, is one of 20 certified growers who have proved they are using the U.S. Department of Agriculture's good agricultural practices and integrated pest management in addition to other approved practices for harvesting and handling.

"The Commonwealth Quality Seal takes the guesswork out of determining what it means for a product to be 'local' or 'sustainable' and it signifies that the associated product has been grown on a Massachusetts farm..." Verrill said, according to the release.

To encourage such practices, the program offers continuing education to certified growers. Of the more than 7,000 farms in Massachusetts, 50 have applied for the Commonwealth Quality Seal. Several agricultural associations have endorsed the program, including the New England Vegetable and Berry Growers' Association, the Massachusetts Fruit Growers Association and the state's Farm Bureau Federation.

Information about how to become certified for the quality seal is available online at www.mass.gov/cqp.

Most of the farms, in addition to Verrill's, that have been certified have farm stands. Almost half of them also sell to local stores, including Whole Foods, Trader Joe's and Foodies. Some also have wholesale operations that provide produce to local restaurants and schools.

The certified farms are:

- Allandale Farm, Brookline;
- Billingsgate Farm, Plympton;
- Brookfield Orchards, North Brookfield;
- C.N. Smith Farm, East Bridgewater;
- Cooks Valley Farm, Wrentham;
- Davidian Bros., Northborough;
- Dowse Orchards, Sherborn;
- Foppema's Farm, Northbridge;
- Four Town Farm, Seekonk;
- Mann Orchards, Methuen;
- Morning Sun Farm, Rehoboth;
- Parlee Farms, Tyngsboro;
- Pease Orchard, Templeton;
- Pleasant Valley Gardens, Methuen;
- Springdell Farm, Littleton;
- The Farm Stand, Colrain;
- The Farmer's Garden, Rehoboth;
- Verrill Farm, Concord;
- Volante Farms, Needham; and
- Wilson Farm, Lexington.

Link: <http://www.thepacker.com/fruit-vegetable-news/Massachusetts-launches-quality-seal-program-123937489.html>

PUBLIC RADIO KITCHEN.WBUR.ORG (WBUR 90.9)

Boston, MA

June 16, 2011

"Thursday Tidbits: Sealing the Deal"

By Talene Bilazrian

This week Massachusetts Agricultural Officials announced the creation of the Commonwealth Quality Seal Program. This new initiative allows the placing, literally, of a seal on Mass-made products that meet specific standards for freshness, safety and sustainability. 20 farms from across the state will pioneer the use of the Quality Seal. Read more about participating farms and licensing criteria [here](#).

Link: <http://publicradiokitchen.wbur.org/2011/06/16/thursday-tidbits-restaurants-to-the-rescue>

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Boston, MA

June 19, 2011

"Mass. Certifies 20 farms for sustainability"

State agriculture officials have recognized 20 Massachusetts farms for meeting new standards for food safety and ecologically responsible growing and harvesting.

The farms are the first to be certified under the Commonwealth Quality seal program, which was instituted last September.

To qualify for the seal, farms must demonstrate sustainability standards that include reducing pesticide use and following best industry practices for soil health, water conservation and food safety.

The 20 farms certified by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources represent every region of the state and are among 50 that have applied for the seal so far.

Online: Commonwealth Quality, www.mass.gov/cqp

This syndicated article appeared in the following online media outlets:

Boston.com (Boston Globe)

Boston Herald.com (Boston Herald)

CBS 3 Springfield.com (WSHM TV)

CT Post.com (Connecticut Post)

NECN.com

Telegram.com (Worcester Telegram & Gazette)

The Boston Channel.com (WGBH TV)

Times Union.com

Washington Examiner.com

WHDH.com (WHDH TV)

WTEN.com (WTEN TV)

WWLP.com (WWLP TV)

Link: http://articles.boston.com/2011-06-19/news/29677525_1_sustainability-food-safety-farms

WICKED LOCAL.COM/CONCORD (CONCORD JOURNAL)

Concord, MA

June 20, 2011

"Verrill Farm in Concord hosts Commonwealth Quality event"

By Amy Carboneau

In increasing numbers, people are hungry to understand where their food comes from. So say the folks behind the new statewide initiative Commonwealth Quality, a program that provides farmers with a sort of safety checklist, and citizens with the confidence their food is fresh and free from infection.

It's a program 50 Massachusetts farmers have joined so far, including Steve and Joan Verrill of Verrill Farm in Concord, as federal authorities close in on new food safety regulations throughout the country.

The idea behind Commonwealth Quality is to mimic those new safety regulations; to create guidelines for orchard, vegetable and fruit farmers to follow a set of standards, which can be used across the board, and seen across the supermarket aisle (come July when the Commonwealth Quality stamp is implemented).

Rich Bonanno owns Pleasant Valley Gardens in Methuen, and is also an adjunct professor at the UMass Extension School and a specialist in weed management. He joined Steve Verrill and other farmers at Verrill Farm June 8 to honor the select number of farmers who have already implemented new practices to keep foods safer, and to keep their farms going strong.

Using safe practices has long been a guideline for farmers, said Bonanno; "What we haven't been good at is taking the time to really tell people what we do."

When citizens ask farmers about food safety, Bonanno said these guidelines should keep the farmer from saying: "Hey, I've been in the business 100 years and I haven't killed anyone yet."

"That's not the message we want to convey," said Bonanno.

Commonwealth Quality awards points to farmers in five categories: worker hygiene, water quality, farm sanitation, waste management, and traceability.

"We've come a long way from walking behind the plow and having the animals walk through the fields," said Bonanno. Still, some practices need to be tweaked.

For Steve Verrill, sifting through the systematic weeds is nothing new.

When he switched from dairy to vegetable farming in 1990, Verrill worked closely with Ruth Hazzard, a UMass Extension education and integrated pest management specialist.

During that time, Hazzard would come out once a week to look at the farm and what needed to be implemented with regards to safe practices.

"We worked together to implement a system that had been developed through UMass research, but then we were testing it," said Hazzard.

What we have now, she added, is a system that is practical and manageable.

The system is different for each farmer, said Verrill, and depends on field differences, and seasonal differences.

One form of safe practice is crop rotation, which Verrill implemented this year with his strawberries, moving them to a field that hadn't seen strawberries in seven, maybe 10 years. This often prevents diseases from building within a field, or a certain crop.

Verrill demonstrated several new techniques to onlookers Wednesday that he and wife Joan have recently put to the test. One new machine, a planter, (the cost of which he is still trying to explain to the Mrs.) helps space seeds efficiently so that none are wasted by thinning as they grow. Another, the flamer, sprays propane onto the ground, which kills the weeds but leaves the vegetable seeds to rise up. By spraying the ground prior to the vegetables popping up, farmers can cut down on their use of pesticides and insecticides. Both are safe and efficient.

Prior to the creation of Commonwealth Quality, the only other option for farmers was to pay upwards of \$10,000 per year to participate in the federally-run GAP, Good Agricultural Practices, said Bonanno.

According to Bonanno, 84 percent of Massachusetts farms gross less than \$50,000 a year. Commonwealth Quality gives local farmers a more affordable option to regulate practices.

"We have to have a way of dealing with these regulations to keep people in business," said Bonanno, of the smaller farms.

The regulations are also helpful for new farmers who may need more guidance, said Bonanno.

"Commonwealth Quality is to not only to really work as a refreshers for established famers, but also to act as a template for new famers.... It's a set of qualities that people could really latch onto and understand what it means to be a good farmer," Bonanno said.

Between 2002 and 2007, Massachusetts saw the creation of 1,500 new farms. Another census is planned for 2012.

Link: <http://www.wickedlocal.com/concord/features/x1260736417/Verrill-Farm-in-Concord-hosts-Commonwealth-Quality-event#axzz1ab1d67Gs>

June 20, 2011

"Verrill Farm in Concord hosts Commonwealth Quality event"

Sarah

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METROWEST DAILY NEWS.COM (METROWEST DAILY NEWS)

Framingham, MA

June 22, 2011

"Northborough farm gets state seal of approval"

By Brad Petrishen

Ed Davidian has always thought of the sweet corn from his Church Street farm as top quality. So when the state announced last September that it was starting a program recognizing its best farms, he was all ears.

The Massachusetts Department of Agriculture announced this month the first round of farms to earn the Commonwealth Quality seal, a moniker affixed only to farms that pledge to till their land

in accordance with rigorous standards in water conservation, insect control, soil health and food safety.

Davidian Bros. Farm joins Dowse Orchards of Sherborn as the only MetroWest farms to be certified so far. Just 20 out of more than 7,000 farms statewide will be able to claim the seal this summer.

"It's about making decisions that are good for the environment and for the healthiness of the food," said Ed Davidian, a third-generation farmer and part owner of the 200-acre farm.

To get certified, farmers must complete a self-assessment and ensure that their practices go along with the state's criteria. This means making sure they not only meet the stipulations of good agricultural practices, as determined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, but also use a practice called integrated pest management.

Under that program, farmers reduce the use of pesticides, limit spraying to areas that absolutely need it and take a more ecological approach to managing their crops.

"Farming has really changed from the old days, when you applied raw manure and do overhead spraying," said Michael A. Botelho, Commonwealth Quality program coordinator. "It's important for farms to start integrating many of these standards."

Davidian said that although he tweaked a few things here or there, for the most part, he was already following the tenets of the program.

"The most important thing on behalf of the public is field sanitation," he said. "A lot of the E. coli breakouts you see going on are usually site-specific problems where a field has been contaminated."

To ensure his fields are clean, Davidian tests the water he uses for irrigation multiple times each year. He makes sure employees have facilities to go to the bathroom near the fields, enforces a strict hand-washing policy and makes sure the barrels used to collect harvest are clean.

"We always try to take the lead," he said. "We feel as though we have one of the nicest, cleanest farms around, and that people can feel secure that the stuff we grow is a little better quality than the next guy."

Davidian said other than a cold May, the growing season is progressing nicely, and he thinks he'll have sweet corn and tomatoes ready for sale around July 4.

When customers start buying that Davidian produce, they'll notice a Quality Commonwealth seal on the label. Each farm gets its own number on the seal to ensure authenticity - and Davidian is proud of his.

"If you see a number 10, you know it's ours," he said, smiling.

Link: <http://www.metrowestdailynews.com/business/x1413087124/Northborough-farm-gets-state-seal-of-approval>

Boston, MA

June 24, 2011

"Field Report: Mass. Adopts A Quality Seal for Local Farms"

By Erin Byers Murray

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources is making an effort to give the public a straight-forward message about local produce. The Commonwealth Quality seal program, set to launch in July (19 farms are currently certified; more than 50 have applied for certification), will be placed on fruits and vegetables from farms that not only grow, harvest, and process within the state but also utilize a strict set of best management practices (factoring in soil health, water conservation, insect control, and food safety). The translation: If you see the seal, you can rest assured that the produce you're buying comes from MA farms that are focused on quality.

Steve Verrill, owner of **Verrill Farm** in Concord hosted a launch event for the seal last week — his management practices, which he's worked years to refine and perfect, were part of the model used to create the certification process. By giving farmers a definable list of criteria (which can be audited every year) he thinks the state is encouraging them to be accountable for their growing methods. "It's not just about food safety but the environmental impact, about conserving land and water, and the economic impact," he said last week.

President of the Mass Farm Bureau Federation, Rich Bonanno (a lifelong farmer who also runs **Pleasant Valley Gardens** in Methuen) says the seal was put in place to define what being a good farmer is all about. "[It] provides assurances to our customers that food safety and environmental stewardship are practiced daily on our local farms."

You'll start to see the seal (above) show up on produce packaging from farms like Verrill, Allandale Farms, Pleasant Valley Gardens, and others starting in July. For a complete list, go to **mass.gov/cqp**.

NORTH SHORE LOCAVORE.COM

Danvers, MA

June 26, 2011

"North Shore Farms Absent from Quality-Seal Program, So Far"

Earlier this month, the Massachusetts agricultural department revealed the first farms to be certified under its new Commonwealth Quality seal program.

There were no North Shore farms included in the list of 20, but more than 30 additional farms have applied, according to an ag department press release. Perhaps, there is at least one going through the certification process right now.

There are currently four sectors covered by the program—produce, forestry, aquaculture, and lobster—but more are on the way. The seal will start appearing on produce from the certified farms next month.

State agriculture officials designed the seal program to help assure consumers that if they buy local food featuring the sticker shown above, they know their getting a product that was responsibly produced, harvested, and processed in Massachusetts.

To become licensed to use the seal, farms must perform a self-audit to assess their compliance with certification standards, which are based on industry best management practices pertaining to soil health, water conservation, insect control, and food safety.

Here is a link to the list of the 20 certified Massachusetts farms.

Link: <http://www.northshorelocavore.com/2011/06/north-shore-farms-absent-from-quality.html>

Keep checking North Shore Locavore for details about the first North Shore farms to achieve quality-seal certification.

FORAGE (MIT BLOG)

Boston, MA

August 1, 2011

"New Massachusetts certification for high-quality local foods"

By Catherine Owens

The Massachusetts Department of Agriculture has made it easier for consumers to identify sustainable and locally produced food with their Commonwealth Quality certification program. The program was officially launched last September, and the first twenty farms to receive the certification were announced by MDAR Commissioner Scott J. Soares earlier this summer. Certifications are awarded based on adherence to a comprehensive set of standards which address origin, environmental sustainability, federal and state regulations, and food safety standards. The seal of quality will appear on certified produce, dairy, and lumber products at farm stands, farmers' markets, and retail locations throughout Massachusetts, and certification programs for aquaculture and lobster operations are currently in the works.

"For consumers, the Commonwealth Quality seal will allow them to recognize products from local growers who maintain practices that are safe and environmentally friendly," said Commissioner

Soares. "For Massachusetts growers, Commonwealth Quality provides a marketing opportunity to increase their ability to meet growing consumer demand for local products. It is the ultimate win-win."

The state certification program is one of the first of its kind and sets the bar much higher than traditional state labeling programs, which often do not have quality and sustainability requirements. To apply for the certification, producers and harvesters must complete a self-audit and pay a one-time registration fee of \$50. Based on the audit, MDAR can either grant a certification or provide guidance to help a business succeed in getting the certification in the future. The program has been met with widespread support from agricultural, environmental, consumer groups alike as a way to clearly identify and distinguish Massachusetts farmers who place high value quality, safety, and sustainability.

For more information on the Commonwealth Quality certification visit <http://www.mass.gov/agr/cqp/index.htm>.

Link: <http://forage.mit.edu/2011/08/new-massachusetts-certification-for-high-quality-local-foods/>

BOSTON GLOBE

September 21, 2011

Boston, MA

Online Article

"Growers look to higher food safety standards"

By Aaron Kagan

Some shoppers stroll to their neighborhood farmers' market because they want to support local food producers. Others are there because they are afraid of getting salmonella.

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources found that food safety is one of the main reasons that people prefer to buy local produce. The department also observed that nationwide recalls of tainted foods have a negative impact on sales of the same kinds of foods that are grown locally and are entirely safe. Hence the creation of the Commonwealth Quality Seal program, whose blue ribbon-like seal appears on in-state products ranging from lobster to lumber.

To earn the Commonwealth Quality seal, a farmer must follow a code inspired by the US Department of Agriculture's Good Agricultural Practices procedures and a guide created by the MDAR, the Massachusetts Farm Bureau, the UMass Extension Center for Agriculture, and representative groups from various industries. Obtaining the seal is purely elective and denotes a producer who chooses to exceed standard requirements for safe handling practices and environmental stewardship.

The program began last year and covers forestry, fruits, vegetables, lobster, and aquaculture products. Eventually the state hopes to certify maple, honey, and dairy items as well as prepared foods such as jams, jellies, and sauces. One day the seal may also appear in the windows of restaurants that prominently feature Commonwealth Quality ingredients. For now, look for it at farm stands, farmers' markets, and select stores. At present there are roughly 60 Commonwealth Quality producers, including Allendale Farm in Brookline and Billingsgate Farm in Plympton.

For a list of Commonwealth Quality members, visit www.mass.gov/agr/cqp

Link:

http://www.boston.com/lifestyle/food/articles/2011/09/21/local_growers_who_earn_commonwealth_seal_adhere_to_strict_food_safety_standards/

Sustainable Cranberry Farm Management Assessment

Produced in cooperation with
Ocean Spray Cranberries, Inc., UW–Madison, WSCGA, CCCGA, CI

1. Soil, Water, and Energy Management
 2. Pest Management
 3. Land Stewardship
 4. Continuous Education and Community Involvement
 5. Business Operations
 6. Worker Safety and Environmental Protection
-

Please indicate where you grow cranberries (*check only one - if you have farms in more than one region, please complete a separate assessment for each region and send to the requesting group*)

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> NJ | <input type="radio"/> NS | <input type="radio"/> MI | <input type="radio"/> WA |
| <input type="radio"/> MA | <input type="radio"/> NL | <input type="radio"/> WI | <input type="radio"/> OR |
| <input type="radio"/> NB | <input type="radio"/> QC | <input type="radio"/> BC | <input type="radio"/> Other _____ |
-

Please indicate which handlers you have delivery contracts with for the 2012 harvest (*check all that apply*)

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Atoka | <input type="radio"/> Decas | <input type="radio"/> Ocean Spray |
| <input type="radio"/> Clement Pappas | <input type="radio"/> Fruit d'Or | <input type="radio"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Cott/Cliffstar | <input type="radio"/> Mariani | <input type="radio"/> Other _____ |
-

1. Soil, Water, and Energy Management

SOIL FERTILITY

- 1A** Do you have a written, annually updated nutrient management plan?
(Check only one)
- Yes **37**
 - No **104**
- 1B** Which of the following options best describes your nitrogen management strategy?
(Check only one)
- Nitrogen is applied according to University/Extension recommendations and is justified by tissue testing, plant growth response, and/or varietal needs **71**
 - Other nitrogen application strategy **68**
- 1C** Which of the following options best describes your phosphorus management strategy?
(Check only one)
- Phosphorus is applied according to University recommendations and is justified by tissue and/or soil test results **76**
 - Other phosphorus application strategy **62**
- 1D** Do you sample soil and/or plant tissue for nutrients in accordance with University guidelines regarding frequency and number of samples?
(Check only one)
- Yes **49**
 - No **91**
- 1E** Are soil pH levels monitored every 1-3 years and managed if needed?
(Check only one)
- Yes **66**
 - No **72**

1F Do you schedule nutrient applications to avoid extended periods of frost protection, excessive rainfall or other saturated soil conditions in order to minimize leaching or other off-site movement?
(Check only one)

- Yes **111**
- No **28**

WATER

1G Do you have a written soil and water conservation plan for your farm?
(Check only one)

- Yes **83**
- No **57**

1H Do you test and maintain proper psi for all irrigation risers/heads and irrigation lines?
(Check only one)

- Yes **108**
- No **33**

1I Do you monitor temperature in your beds?
(Check only one)

- Yes, equipment used: **114**
- No **25**

1J Do you use automated irrigation systems to start/stop water use during frost protection?
(Check only one)

- Yes **48**
- No **94**

1K Do you use soil moisture monitoring tools to determine crop water needs?
(Check only one)

- Yes, type used: **42**
- No **98**

1L Do you recover water from your beds for reuse within your farm?

(Check only one)

- Yes **101**
- No **37**

1M Do you monitor and maintain flumes and boards to optimize water management/movement in the marsh/bog system?

(Check only one)

- Yes **140**
- No **2**

1N For how many years do you maintain irrigation and water use records?

(Check only one)

- Records are not kept **91**
- 1 year **7**
- 2-3 years **11**
- 4 or more years **31**

1O Do you know how much water is utilized annually for production of your crop?

(Check only one)

- Yes, water quantity averages 9 answered; 1,784,100 gallons/acre/year
- No **130**

ENERGY

1P What are the various sources of energy used for running your irrigation system?

(Check all that apply)

- Electricity **60**

Percentage of total 48% (average)

- Diesel **77**

Percentage of total 68% (average)

- Propane **76**

Percentage of total **72% (average)**

- Renewable energy sources (digested materials, solar, wind, etc.) **2**

Percentage of total **10%** Type **solar**

- Other **10**

Please specify **Gasoline (32% average)**

1Q Do you know how much diesel fuel is used annually for producing your cranberries?

(Check only one)

- Yes **53**

Please specify gallons diesel used annually **1368**

- No **65**

1R Do you organize the day's tasks to combine activities in each location and minimize truck travel?

(Check only one)

- Yes **113**

- No **28**

1S Is fuel efficiency one of your top 3 considerations in a farm vehicle purchase?

(Check only one)

- Yes **86**

- No **56**

1T Do you use variable speed controllers on electric pumps (if using diesel pumps, skip question)?

(Check only one)

- Yes **13**

- No **56**

BED ESTABLISHMENT AND RENOVATION

- 1U** Is your farm site designed to optimize water flow and discharge in a way that minimizes environmental impact (such as bank erosion)?
(Check only one)
- Yes **129**
 - No **13**
- 1V** When building or renovating beds, have you minimized energy required to bring materials on to the farm or remove unwanted materials (ex: use own or local sand, find use for old materials)?
(Check only one)
- Yes, how/example 88
 - No **39**
- 1W** Have you used the most up-to-date technologies when renovating or establishing beds? (laser leveling, drain tile, irrigation improvements, etc) *(Check only one)*
- Yes, how/example 109
 - No **19**
- 1X** What factors do you consider in variety selection for your new/renovated planting?
(Check all that apply)
- Cost of planting material **72**
 - Maturity/harvest timing **68**
 - Insect resistance **42**
 - Disease resistance **62**
 - Tolerance of wet soils **42**
 - General ease of culture **59**
 - Consistent year to year yields **113**

2. Pest Management

SCOUTING

2A Whose scouting data do you primarily use to make management decisions for this crop?
(Check only one)

- Independent crop consultant/ co-op IPM program **53**
- IPM trained farm employee **22**
- Farm owner/manager **56**
- Farm employee (not formally IPM trained) **3**
- Farm dealer/co-op representative **0**
- We do not scout **0**

2B If additional scouting data are taken, who provides these data?
(Check only one)

- Independent crop consultant/co-op IPM program **37**
- IPM trained farm employee **15**
- Farm owner/manager **54**
- Farm employee (not formally IPM trained) **3**
- Farm dealer/co-op representative **0**
- Not applicable **22**

2C What method of scouting do you or your hired consultant most commonly use?
(Check only one)

- Follow specific patterns and also track hot spots **86**
- Focus mostly on looking for potential hot spots and spot-checking where problems have occurred in the past **39**
- Informal observations of what was happening on the edge of the crop **7**
- Informal observations during routine farming operations (e.g., while spraying or while going out to check irrigation equipment) **10**

2D Why do you scout or hire a scout?
(Check all that apply)

- To determine when levels of a pest in a crop reached or exceeded thresholds **118**

- To reduce the amount of pesticides you use in order to minimize environmental impact **109**
- To optimize pesticide timing in order to achieve optimal control **122**
- To check on the effectiveness of a pest control measure you took **90**
- In response to a local or recent pest report you heard or read about **38**
- To monitor areas of the fields where you knew pests were already a problem in previous years **67**

2E Which of the following best represents how you, or your farm manager, keep track of the scouting information collected on this crop?

(Check only one)

- Scouting records are analyzed by moving them onto a crop map so you can more effectively identify “hot spots” and observe general patterns of change across time within the crop **11**
- Written or electronic records are kept in a file so we can track changes in pest pressure over time for this crop **76**
- Written or electronic records are kept in a file but not compared to previous reports **24**
- No written or electronic records are kept of scouting reports on this crop **28**

2F How long are crop scouting records kept on file to use for future decision making?

(Check only one)

- Records are not kept **22**
- 1 year **17**
- 2-4 years **38**
- 5 or more years **62**

PEST CONTROL

2G Which of the following **weed** management practices do you use?

(Check all that apply)

- Develop and keep a weed map of our production beds **37**
- Spot spray weeds if scouting reports indicated that there was a weedy spot within the crop **99**
- Hand weeding in beds (mechanical control) **116**

- Scout crops for weeds and identify target weeds prior to control **86**
- Keep crop records for long-term comparisons based on weed density and species **20**
- Use mowing or tillage equipment to control weeds on the bed edges/dikes or adjacent areas to reduce the chance of weeds migrating into crops **101**
- Clean machinery periodically when moving around farm to lessen the chance of spreading weeds **51**

2H Which of the following **insect** management practices do you use?

(Check all that apply)

- Rotate classes of insecticides specifically to avoid the emergence of resistance **107**
- Select an insecticide based on preserving or enhancing natural predators **91**
- Scout for insect pests at critical periods throughout the growing season in a systematic pattern **116**
- Keep crop records on the density of each insect pest for long-term comparisons **48**
- Manage or enhance the habitat in or around the crop to encourage or conserve beneficial insect populations **50**
- Able to identify target insects on the marsh/bog **102**

2I Which of the following **disease** management practices do you use?

(Check all that apply)

- Rotate chemistry families of fungicides specifically to avoid the emergence of resistance **99**
- Manage irrigation, when possible, to minimize conditions favorable to disease **119**
- Scout crops for disease symptoms and able to identify type of disease **88**
- Keep crop records of disease frequency and severity for long-term comparisons **42**
- Manage fertility for healthy plants in order to resist disease **84**

2J Which of the following practices are used for in-season control of cranberry insects?

(Check all that apply)

- Sweep nets to determine insect populations on vines **138**
- Pheromone traps to monitor insect pest flights and populations **99**
- Economic thresholds to initiate pesticide applications **99**
- Pheromone disruptors as cultural control methods **17**

- Biocontrols (e.g. parasitic nematodes) for insect controls **17**
- Flood bogs to limit insect pests **35**
- Use reduced-risk or target-specific control measures when appropriate **79**
- Other **6**_____

PEST RESISTANCE MANAGEMENT

2K Do you keep records of the performance of pesticides to monitor resistance development of pests (insects, diseases and weeds)?

(Check all that apply)

Insects

- Yes **88**
- No **54**

Diseases

- Yes **67**
- No **70**

Weeds

- Yes **78**
- No **62**

2L Are consultants or extension specialists consulted when a resistance concern arises?

(Check only one)

- Yes **115**
- No **25**

2M Do you work with pest management practitioners, crop consultants or extension personnel to develop or map-out season long pest management plans to lower the risk for resistance development?

(Check only one)

- Yes **54**
- No **88**

2N What is the primary factor you use in selecting a specific pesticide for resistance management?

(Check only one)

- I use short residual and pesticides targeting only vulnerable stages of the pest **71**

- I use short lasting, broad spectrum or long lasting specific materials to target pests **13**
- I apply long-lasting, broad spectrum pesticides to minimize the risk of re-current infection or insect re-infestation **18**

20 Do you use FRAC, IRAC, or HRAC information or chemical group numbers (fungicide/insecticide/herbicide resistance action committee) in pesticide selection?
(Check all that apply)

Fungicide resistance action committee (FRAC) information

- Yes **53**
- No or not sure **82**

Insect resistance action committee (IRAC) information

- Yes **56**
- No or not sure **79**

Herbicide resistance action committee (HRAC) information

- Yes **47**
- No or not sure **87**

2P Do you choose pesticide rates within the labeled range that are sufficient to prevent pest reproduction or selection for resistance?
(Check only one)

- Yes **140**
- No **0**

2Q When do you use pesticides with high risk of resistance development (single site) targeted at pests with a high likelihood of developing resistance?
(Check only one)

- Apply pesticides as needed at early stages of insect infestation or weed populations, and when the risk of disease development has been reached **30**
- Apply pesticides once the pest has been identified in the crop, and as needed as the pest population or infection progresses **30**
- Wait to apply pesticides once levels of the associated pest (insects, diseases, weeds) have reached, or exceeded established thresholds **71**

2R Specific to fungicides, if allowed by the label, do you tank mix high resistance risk (single site) fungicides with low resistance risk (multi-site) fungicides?

(Check only one)

- Yes **26**
- No **111**

2S Do you alternate single site, high resistance risk fungicides with multi-site, low/no resistance risk fungicides?

(Check only one)

- Yes **70**
- No **63**

2T Specific to insecticides, do you rotate chemicals with single site modes of action (e.g. chemical classes), with chemicals that possess different modes of action over successive generations of insects?

(Check only one)

- Yes **112**
- No **27**

POLLINATOR CONSERVATION

2U Which of the following practices are used for pollinator management?

(Check all that apply)

- Develop conservation sites that can serve as nesting sites for pollinators **51**
- Maintain a diversity of plants to encourage multiple species of pollinators, and to allow them to hide from their own predators **65**
- Maintain a source of water nearby **104**
- Apply insecticides when pollinators are not in beds (e.g. late evening) **139**
- Limit insecticide drift into pollinator mating, nesting, and off-site areas **116**
- Follow insecticide labels to ensure adequate timing to limit and amount to limit exposure to pollinator species **129**
- Choose control materials that are pollinator safe **118**

3. Land Stewardship

3A Have you met with an ecologist and/or qualified individual to develop a restoration or conservation plan for your non-crop lands?

(Check only one)

- Yes **45**
- No **95**

3B Do you know what natural plant and ecosystem community types you have on your land?

(Check only one)

- Yes **90**
- No **52**

3C Have you documented restoration or maintenance activities on your lands?

(Check only one)

- Yes **41**
- No **99**

3D Did you attend any ecological educational opportunities (grower association, university, county/state, NGO, industry) in the last 3 years?

(Check only one)

- Yes **83**
- No **58**

3E Did you implement any practices to enhance conservation of native wildlife or general biodiversity in and/or around your farm and/or privately owned lands?

(Check all that apply)

- Planted diverse native vegetation for pollinators (e.g. prairie seed mixes in landscapes that were historically grassland) **24**
- Used buffer zones around production beds **69**
- Planted native vegetation in buffer zones **22**
- Protected threatened/endangered species (e.g. planting lupines for Karner Blue Butterfly enhancement) **24**
- Enrolled in conservation incentive program such as EQIP or others **78**
- Planted or protected native ecosystems such as wetlands, prairie, or woodlands **53**

- Attended a training session related to conservation of native plants, animals and/or wildlife habitat **45**
- Regulate hunting/fishing on surrounding uplands and reservoirs to maintain wildlife and fish populations **74**
- Monitor property for invasive plants/animals and consult proper authorities for identification and corrective action as warranted **57**
- Minimize mowing/clearing of non-crop land areas **65**
- Manage reservoir water levels to enhance wildlife habitat as much as practical **83**
- If an active forestry project is occurring on surrounding uplands, we have a forest management plan developed by a certified forester **25**
- Other
Please describe: 3

3F How many acres do you have in cranberries compared to native or non-production support lands that you also own?

- I have 49.1 acres in cranberries and 187.8 acres owned but not in production.

4. Continuous Education and Community Involvement

CONTINUOUS EDUCATION

4A In the past year, did you or your farm manager attend any educational meetings (including field days) regarding farm, crop, or ecosystem management?

(Check only one)

- Yes **86**
Provide specific meetings: CCCGA (41); UMass (28); Ocean Spray (9)
- Yes, and I incorporated a new practice/idea that I learned at that meeting. **29**
Please provide a specific example:

- No **48**

4B Did you attend a professional development/business management seminar this year?

(Check only one)

Yes **24**

Provide Specific Example: _____

No **112**

4C Have you conducted on-farm research in collaboration with the university, Extension or other agricultural entities?

(Check only one)

Yes **71**

No **67**

4D Have you maintained records of farm production practices for 5 or more years to track efficiency of practices?

(Check only one)

Yes **101**

No **37**

INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

4E I am involved in the community

(Check all that apply)

Yes, I am politically involved **35**

Yes, I am involved in a local service organization (e.g. civic group). Example _____ **30**

Yes, I am a local community leader (e.g. serve on local school committees, city/town government, conservation commission or other municipal or county board) **30**

None of these apply **77**

4F I participate in functions to promote the benefits of agriculture in my area and community.

(Check only one)

Yes. Example _____ **49**

No **87**

4G I work on local land issues (e.g. zoning, conservation easements, farmland development rights).

(Check only one)

Yes **41**

No **94**

4H I am a member of a trade organization (such as the state cranberry growers association).

(Check only one)

Yes **115**

No **24**

5. Business Operations

GENERAL SUSTAINABILITY

5A I have a sustainability mission statement for my operation that contains information on my sustainable farming/operations philosophy. This information is presented to all employees.

(Check only one)

Yes **21**

No **115**

5B I buy my production inputs when possible from a local (e.g. state) source.

(Check only one)

Yes. Example 96

No **37**

ECONOMICS

5C Each year I track revenues and net returns for my cranberries.

(Check only one)

Yes, by bed and whole farm **47**

Yes, by whole farm **83**

No **10**

- 5D** Each year I perform a cost of production analysis for my cranberries.
(Check only one)
- Yes, by bed and whole farm **25**
 - Yes, by whole farm **66**
 - No **48**
- 5E** I have a balance sheet and income statement for the most recent year for my farm on file.
(Check only one)
- Yes **103**
 - No **38**
- 5F** I meet with a financial or business advisor to review my farm's financial status and profitability.
(Check only one)
- Yes, 3 or more times per year **17**
 - Yes, 1-2 times per year **29**
 - Yes, once every few years **11**
 - No **85**
- 5G** I have a written marketing plan or handler contract for the upcoming harvest.
(Check only one)
- Yes **125**
 - No **17**
- 5H** I have a risk management and disaster plan on file.
(Check only one)
- Yes **33**
 - No **105**
- 5I** I purchase federal crop insurance (if available) each year.
(Check only one)
- Yes **102**
 - No **40**

5J I currently have property insurance for my farm's buildings, structures, and similar.

(Check only one)

Yes **124**

No **17**

5K I currently have business liability insurance for my farm.

(Check only one)

Yes **111**

No **27**

5L I made a profit in my operation this past harvest year.

(Check only one)

Yes **105**

No **34**

HUMAN RESOURCES (For operations with employees)

5M For my cranberry business, I employ *(write in number)*

1.6 Full-time employees

2.2 Part-time employees

5N My company/farming operation has a written human resources plan with the following:

(Check all that apply)

Mission statement **9**

Company values statement **5**

Strategy for staffing and recruiting **6**

Discrimination policy **9**

Training and employee development section **7**

Performance measurement section **6**

Compensation and benefits section **9**

Record keeping policy **27**

50 I have an employee handbook that each employee receives at hiring that explains policies and procedures for my farm (may include dress code, attendance, grievance policy, etc). *(Check only one)*

- Yes **12**
- No **106**

5P Full time employees have the following benefits: *(Check all that apply)*

- Health Insurance **31**
- Dental Insurance **6**
- Retirement (pension, 401K, etc.) **20**
- Educational reimbursement **10**
- Paid holidays **29**
- Vacation time **30**
- None of these are offered to employees **39**

5Q All employees have access to routine medical care. *(Check only one)*

- Yes **50**
- No **42**

If yes, please note travel time to access medical care from the farm headquarters:
(Check only one)

- 0-30 minutes **59**
- 31-60 minutes **2**
- 61-90 minutes **0**
- more than 91 minutes **1**

5R My company/farming operation conducts an annual safety training session for all employees.
(Check only one)

- Yes **32**
- No **73**

5S My company/farming operation has had formal educational opportunities for employees (schooling reimbursements, ESL classes, etc.) within the last 12 months.

(Check only one)

Yes **16**

No **89**

5T We participate in salary surveys every 1-3 years (e.g. farm surveys or employee surveys).

(Check only one)

Yes **8**

No **97**

5U All state and federal laws for worker standards and compensation are followed and/or exceeded.

(Check only one)

Yes **81**

No **16**

5V I have a written plan for succession of my farming operation.

(Check only one)

Yes **34**

No **82**

6. Worker Safety and Environmental Protection

6A First aid equipment is available on farm site. *(Check only one)*

Yes **124**

No **13**

6B Is the person who makes pesticide applications on your farm a certified applicator (can be private or commercial)?

(Check only one)

Yes **132**

No **6**

6C Is your spray equipment (or the custom applicator's equipment) calibrated (e.g. each nozzle with same flow and coverage rate, chemigation rinse-out times known)?

(Check only one)

4 or more times per year **19**

- 3 times per year **4**
- 2 times per year **21**
- 1 time per year **72**
- Not at all **16**

6D Is all personal protection clothing used during applications appropriate for worker safety?
(Check only one)

- Yes **130**
- No **8**

6E Do you have and follow a written drift management plan for pesticide applications?
(Check only one)

- Yes **43**
- No **92**

6F Do you have an appropriate pesticide storage facility, if you store pesticides on site?
(Check only one)

- Yes **106**
- No **25**

6G Do you have an appropriate nutrient storage facility, if you store fertilizers on site?
(Check only one)

- Yes **95**
- No **33**

6H Do you have a pesticide mixing and loading facility that meets applicable regulatory guidelines?
(Check only one)

- Yes **65**
- No **54**

6I If specified on the label, do you have back flow or siphon prevention for pesticide delivery and handling when chemigating (if chemigation is not used, skip question)?
(Check only one)

- Yes **129**
- No **3**

- 6J** Are pesticide applications timed to limit volatilization (e.g., temperatures, winds, and humidity monitored)?
(Check only one)
- Yes **140**
 - No **3**
- 6K** Do you minimize off-target spray concerns (e.g., using spray buffers, using technology to minimize drift such as drift-reduction nozzle tips, monitoring winds)?
(Check only one)
- Yes **133**
 - No **7**
- 6L** Do you recycle used pesticide containers (including bulk returnable containers)?
(Check only one)
- Yes **79**
 - No **60**
- 6M** Do you have a GAP program, or have you had a GAP or food safety audit.
(Check all that apply)
- Yes, GAP Program **31**
 - Yes, PRIMUS audit **2**
 - Yes, AIB audit **0**
 - Yes, others (Please specify **0**)
 - No **105**
-

Attachment B

CCCGA SCBG Project:

*Establishing Sustainability Standards for
Massachusetts Cranberry Production*

13. Have you participated in any governmental conservation programs, such as EQIP?	Yes	No	69.6%
14. Do you participate in recycling programs, such as for plastics, paper, cardboard, waste oil, etc.?	Yes	No	75.9%
15. Do you have a contained, secure pesticide storage facility?	Yes	No	77.8%
16. Does your farm have an NRCS-approved farm plan?	Yes	No	79.7%
17. Have you used a low-phosphorus program on your farm where you apply under 20lbs of actual P per acre?	Yes	No	64.9%
18. Do you use cycling during frost events?	Yes	No	17.4%
19. Are any of your pumps automated or able to be controlled remotely?	Yes	No	21.7%
20. How many miles does your crop travel from the bog to the receiving facility?	<hr/>		15.1
21. How many acres of bog have you built and/or renovated in the past five years?	<hr/>		6
Grower Experience and Education			
22. What is your age?	<hr/>		58.1
23. How many years of experience do you have in the cranberry industry?	<hr/>		31.7
24. Do you farm full-time?	Yes	No	58.5%
25. Do you regularly participate in grower education events, such as workshops, bogsides, etc.?	Yes	No	85.5%
26. Do you subscribe to or receive any trade journals or newsletters, such as the CCCGA newsletter or UMass Extension newsletter?	Yes	No	98.7%

27. Do you host or conduct on-farm research to improve education?	Yes	No	35.6%
28. Are you a certified pesticide applicator?	Yes	No	78.8%
Farm Structure and History			
29. Are your bogs family-owned?	Yes	No	90.1%
30. What is the total acreage devoted to cranberry production on your farm?	_____		46.2
31. On your farm, how many acres do you own that are not in cranberry	_____		169.0
32. How long have the majority of your bogs been in production? production?	_____		60.4
33. How many family generations have been or are involved in your bogs?	_____		2.6
34. How many year-round employees work on your bogs?	_____		1.5
35. How many seasonal employees work on your bogs?	_____		2.8
36. How many employees, if any, receive health insurance benefits from the farm?	_____		1.0
37. How many employees, if any, receive retirement benefits or participate in a retirement plan provided by the farm?	_____		0.7
38. Do you provide employees with training, such as farm safety or work protection standard training?	Yes	No	60.7%
39. Do you use financial records to improve business decisions?	Yes	No	84.5%
40. Are you planning to transfer your farm to a future generation, even non-family members?	Yes	No	80.0%
41. What percent of your farm purchases are made within 50 miles of your farm?	_____ %		93.7%

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