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# Vegetable Notes

For Vegetable Farmers in Massachusetts

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## **DIGGING DEEP: AN ADVANCED SOILS COURSE FOR VEGETABLE GROWERS**

**January 5th, 19th, and February 9th**

**The Lake Morey Resort Fairlee, Vermont**

This course is designed for intermediate to advanced vegetable growers to help you develop a deeper understanding of how to manage soils and soil fertility on your farm.

**Class One:** Soil Testing Tools and Their Use

Tuesday, January 5th 8:30am-4:30pm

**Class Two:** Using Soil Fertility Practices to Solve Problems on Your Farm

Tuesday, January 19th 8:30am-4:30pm

**Class Three:** Putting a System Together on Your Farm

Tuesday, February 9th 8:30am-4:30pm

For more information contact NOFA Vermont, 802-434-4122, [info@nofavt.org](mailto:info@nofavt.org).

## **BRAMBLE CROP WEBINARS**

The Cornell University Berry Program continues to host a series of Webinars for Berry farmers, supported by funding from the Northeastern Integrated Pest Management Center (NEIPM). The webinars feature experts from eastern North America speaking on production and pest management topics and their

current related research. All Webinars are scheduled for 1:00pm so berry growers can enjoy hearing these live presentations in the comfort of their home or office while they eat lunch! Speakers will answer questions live during and after the presentation. Participation is easy; all you need is a high-speed internet connection and a web browser. Participants will connect to a secure Cornell Cooperative Extension server to join the presentation.

Don't have high speed internet access or a home computer? Participate in the webcasts at a group location. Options for attending a group session at extension offices across the region are being arranged, so check the website to find a location near you, or call your local extension office and see if they can arrange a viewing. There is no charge for webcast participation, but registration is required. Connection details are sent to registered participants the day prior to the event. Connections for each webcast are limited, so register now by contacting Laura McDermott, [lmg4@cornell.edu](mailto:lmg4@cornell.edu) or calling 518-746-2562.

**Wednesday, January 6, 2010**

Bramble Production Topics, Dr. Marvin Pritts from Cornell University will present Growing Brambles in High Tunnels and Dr. Fumiomi Takeda of the USDA research station in Kearneysville, WV will present his work on the Rotating Cross Arm Trellis for Brambles.

**Wednesday, January 20, 2010**

Bramble Weed Management, Dr. David Handley of the University of Maine will discuss the Cultural Weed Control Options for Brambles and Dr. Rich Bonanno of the University of Massachusetts will instruct growers on Using Herbicides Effectively in Bramble Plantings.

**Wednesday, February 3, 2010**

Bramble Diseases, Dr. Pam Fisher of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture in Canada will discuss Controlling Root and Crown Diseases in Brambles and Dr. Kerik Cox of Cornell University will speak on Managing Bramble Viruses.

**Wednesday, February 17, 2010**

Bramble Insects, Dr. Hannah Burrack of the University of North Carolina will talk about Controlling Crown and Cane Borers, and TBA.

For additional program details and links to archived seminars: <http://www.fruit.cornell.edu/Berries/webcastindex.htm>.

**VEGETABLE AND BERRY GROWERS ALL DAY MEETING**

**Sponsored by New England Vegetable and Berry Growers' Association and New England Cooperative Extension**

**Friday, January 8**

**Location: Days Inn , 450 Memorial Drive, Chicopee, MA (next to Mass Pike Exit 5)**

To reserve lunch you must pre-register (see below)

**PROGRAM**

**9:30 AM** Registration \$10.00. There is no charge for members of the Association. This does not include lunch.

**10:00** Biodegradable Mulches; What's New and How to Use Them. Becky Grube, University of New Hampshire

**10:30** Cover Crops; Ideas and Choices for Summer and Winter Cover Crops. Becky Grube, University of New Hampshire and Kristen Castrataro, University of Rhode Island

**11:15** Calibrating and Using Fertilizer Spreaders to Achieve Accurate Application. Russ Peck, OESCO, Conway, MA

**NOON** Lunch \$15.00 To reserve a lunch call the NEVBGA Secretary at 413-665-3501 or email: [howell@umext.umass.edu](mailto:howell@umext.umass.edu) Reservations must be received by Jan 2, 2010 so meals can be ordered. If you order a lunch and can't attend please call to cancel or you will be billed.

**1:00 PM** Association announcements

**1:10** Primocane Blackberry Production. Sonia Schloemann, University of Massachusetts

**1:45** Growing and Handling Cut Flowers to Maintain Quality. Tina Smith, University of Massachusetts

**2:15** Evaluating Repellent and Attractive Materials for Strawberry Sap Beetle Management. Hugh Smith Connecticut Experiment Station. NOTE: This is a report on work that was partially funded by a grant from NEV&BGA

**2:45** A Tour With Pictures of Edgewater Farm. Pooh Sprague, Plainfield, NH

## **NORTHAMPTON WINTER FARE**

**January 9, 10am-2pm**

### **Smith Vocational High School**

There is a lot of amazing local food available even in the dead of winter, and over 30 farmers and local food producers will be on hand at the Northampton Winter Fare with root veggies, kale, salad greens, cheese, pickles, meat, maple syrup, honey, dried herbs, garlic, squash, apples, jam, and much more. Workshops, a barter market, and informational displays will make this a community event not to be missed! Contact Claire Morenon <mailto:claire@buylocalfood.org>, CISA Program Coordinator, for more information. <http://buylocalfood.org/page.php?id=216>

## **AG COMMISSION GATHERING**

**Saturday, January 9**

**Hancock Shaker Village** will host a gathering for Agricultural Commission members, farmers and interested friends of agriculture. To register contact Ann Gibson [agibson@berkshirepioneerred.org](mailto:agibson@berkshirepioneerred.org)  
<http://buylocalfood.org/page.php?id=44>

## **TILLING THE SOIL OF OPPORTUNITY**

**An In-depth Business Planning Course for Massachusetts Agricultural Enterprises**

**Amherst, MA on Tuesday evenings January 12, 2010 through March 16.**

**The other location will be determined by interest (toward the east) and will meet Monday evenings January 11, 2010 through March 15.**

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) offers the widely acclaimed NxLevel© “Tilling the Soil of Opportunity” (TTS) agricultural business planning course each year January-March. This innovative, farmer friendly course focuses on existing agricultural businesses that will benefit from an organized look at their current operation in order to plan for growth and change. Over 240 Massachusetts agricultural enterprises have completed TTS.

The course Instructor guides participants through creation of a business plan to improve decision making on the owner/operator’s farm. MDAR has enhanced the 35 hours of group meetings with additional individualized technical assistance and confidential one-on-one financial planning. The Instructor visits every participant’s farm/ag enterprise at least once during the course.

To Take this Course, you should\*

- have been operating for one or more years (experience on other ag enterprises and/or in school ag programs may be considered).
- have current access to land and at least minimal facilities for your enterprise (owned or leased)
- have email and web access as well as basic Office software (Word and Excel)

For additional information and an application form, contact:

Rick Chandler, ABTP Director phone: 413-548-1905 or email [rick.chandler@state.ma.us](mailto:rick.chandler@state.ma.us)

# **MAINE VEGETABLE & SMALL FRUIT GROWERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING**

**Wednesday, January 13**

**Maine Agricultural Trades Show, Augusta Civic Center (Fort Western Room)**

## **AGENDA:**

**8:45 a.m.** Welcome & Announcements

Lauchlin Titus, President MVSFGA

**9:00 a.m.** Vegetable Trials: Melons, Cucumbers, High Tunnel Tomatoes

Mark Hutton, University of Maine Cooperative Extension

**9:45 a.m.** Late Blight! Outlook for 2010

Jim Dill, University of Maine Cooperative Extension

**10:15 a.m.** Sweet Corn: Synergistic Variety and Bt Enhanced Results David Handley, University of Maine Cooperative Extension

**10:45 a.m.** Berry Update: Variety Review, New Product News

David Handley, University of Maine Cooperative Extension

**11:15 a.m.** GAP Update: Where We Are and Where We're Going

Lauchlin and Linda Titus, AgMatters

**11:45 a.m.** Crop Insurance: Are You Ready for 2010?

Tori Jackson, University of Maine Cooperative Extension

**12:00 p.m.** MVSFGA Business Meeting

Lauchlin Titus, President, Presiding

**12:20 p.m.** Lunch on your own

Pesticide applicator credits will be offered for attending the program.

Also scheduled on Wednesday, from 12:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.,

Beyond the Organic/Conventional Rift: Convergence Equals Sustainability Workshop

## **NOFA COURSE IN ORGANIC LAND CARE**

**January 13, 14, 15, 19 and 20**

**Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, 6 Plum Island Tpke.\*\*, Newburyport, MA.\***

This 5-day intensive course trains and accredits professionals to practice organic land care (caring for land without the use of synthetic pesticides or soil amendments). It is recommended for landscapers, designers, municipal and parks employees, horticulturists, master gardeners and entrepreneurs. Visit <http://www.organiclandcare.net/> for more information or call Kathy Litchfield [kathy@nofamass.org](mailto:kathy@nofamass.org) at (413) 773-3830.

## **NOFA/MASS ANNUAL WINTER CONFERENCE "FOOD FROM FARMS FOR FAMILIES"**

**Northeast Organic Farming Association, MA Chapter**

**January 16**

**Worcester Technical High School, Worcester, Ma \***

Joel Salatin to present keynote speech and all day seminar "Introducing Livestock to your Farm". Over 40 workshops on organic farming, gardening, landscaping, and sustainable living. Lively exhibit area, NOFA/Mass Annual Meeting, great children and teens program, potluck lunch! General registration fee \$50 with discounts available. Registration for Salatin seminar \$115 (includes entrance to entire conference). For more information contact Conference Coordinator, Jassy Bratko [jassy.bratko@nofamass.org](mailto:jassy.bratko@nofamass.org), or 978-928-5646. <http://www.nofamass.org/conferences/winter/index.php>

## **WORKSHOP SERIES ON TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR FARMS AND FOREST PRODUCT BUSINESSES**

**January 19th, 9:30am-12:30pm**

**MA Department of Agriculture Office, Conference Room**

**101 University Drive, Suite C4, Amherst**

Attend this free workshop for farmers and forest product business owners about financial incentives available through the state and the USDA 9007 Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQUIP), both part of the current federal Farm Bill. Workshop and information sessions will include an overview of technical and financial assistance programs, eligibility requirements, and anticipated application announcements. To register for a workshop, please contact Emily Boss, Massachusetts Woodlands Institute, at 413-397-8800, or [emily@masswoodlands.coop](mailto:emily@masswoodlands.coop). More information online.

## **HOLISTIC SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE FROM THE SOIL UP**

**February 2 & 3 Barre, MA**

Veterinarian and biological agriculture expert, Paul Dettloff, will give the 2nd annual NOFA/Mass Advanced Grower's Winter Seminar. He'll address soil fertility, raising forage nutritional quality, alternative veterinary tools, managing livestock, and growing fruits and vegetables. Registration: \$165. NOFA membership discount: \$15. Early registration (by Jan 16) discount: \$10. [nofamass.org/seminars/winterseminar.php](http://nofamass.org/seminars/winterseminar.php). Also from the Winter 2009-2010 edition of The Natural Farmer is an interview with Dr. Paul Dettloff about his approach to crop nutrition and what's in store for the seminar, available here.

For info, contact Ben Grosscup: 413-658-5374, [ben.grosscup@nofamass.org](mailto:ben.grosscup@nofamass.org).

## **GREENFIELD WINTER FARE**

**February 6, 10am-2pm**

**Greenfield High School**

Come to the third annual Greenfield Winter Fare for an incredible variety of locally grown food from 30 vendors. Workshops, a barter fair, and hot soup round out this educational, festive, mid-winter celebration of local food. <http://www.winterfare.org>

## **PASA'S 19TH ANNUAL FARMING FOR THE FUTURE CONFERENCE**

**Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture**

**February 4-6**

**Penn Starter Confernece Center Hotel**

**State College, Pennsylvania**

Pre-register by January 31. For confernece details schedule and registration information visit <http://www.pasa-farming.org/conference2010/index.cfm>

# **MID-ATLANTIC FRUIT & VEGETABLE CONVENTION**

**February 2-4**

**Hershey Lodge and Convention Center**

The Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention has become the premier grower meeting in the Northeast combining three days of six or more concurrent educational sessions with a large industry trade show and numerous networking opportunities - all designed to enable fruit, vegetable and berry growers as well as direct marketers to stay on the cutting edge of their industries. About 1,800 persons from throughout the mid-Atlantic region and beyond gather each year at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center. Registration is open to all interested commercial fruit, vegetable and berry growers, direct marketers and allied industry personnel. The 2010 Convention will feature several new sessions. For more information visit <http://www.mafvc.org/html/>

## **EXPLORING YOUR SMALL FARM DREAM**

**4-session Courses to be offered in Massachusetts**

**January/February-March 2010**

**AMHERST IS DEFINITE – following dates: Thursdays February 4, 11, 25 and March 4 with possible extra/snow session February 18 EASTERN COURSE – will be on Wednesday evenings, location TBD**

**The Explorer Program** is intended for those who are considering farming as a (small) business. Its purpose is to help pre-venture, aspiring farmers learn what it will take to start and manage their own profitable agricultural enterprise, and to decide whether this is a path they really want to/can take. Explorer makes use of four guided group sessions, an acclaimed workbook, Instructors experienced in starting ag businesses, and extensive supporting resources. The goal of Explorer is to help you decide whether starting an agricultural business is right for you and, based on that decision, to help you plan practical next steps. It was created to help you articulate the clear vision and goals you will need to guide a new agricultural venture. This course is sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) Agricultural Business Training Program, in cooperation with the Explorer creator, the New England Small Farm Institute (NESFI) in Belchertown and our local site partners. Class size is limited to 15 prospective farms. The registration cost of \$125 includes all materials, guest speakers and access to the in-class library as well as NESFI's extensive library in Belchertown. For more information and a registration form, please contact Rick Chandler; email: [rick.chandler@state.ma.us](mailto:rick.chandler@state.ma.us) or phone: 413-548-1905

## **FUNDING AVAILABLE TO HELP FARMERS EXTEND THE GROWING SEASON**

AMHERST, Mass. (December 21, 2009) – The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has announced a new pilot project under the 'Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food' initiative for farmers to establish high tunnels - also known as hoop houses - to increase the availability of locally grown produce in a conservation-friendly way.

A seasonal high tunnel is a greenhouse-like structure, at least six feet in height, which modifies the climate inside to create more favorable growing conditions for vegetable and other specialty crops grown in the natural soil beneath it. This pilot will test the potential conservation benefits of growing crops under these structures. Participating farms can receive funding for one high tunnel. High tunnels in the study can cover as much as five percent of one acre or approximately a 30 by 72 foot structure.

Local farmers who would like to sign-up for the high tunnel pilot should call or visit the NRCS office at a local

USDA service center by January 15th. USDA service center locations are listed on-line at <http://offices.usda.gov> or in the phone book under Federal Government, U.S. Department of Agriculture. General program information is available on the NRCS Massachusetts website at [www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov).

“Massachusetts is one of 38 states participating in a three-year study that will verify if high tunnels are effective in reducing pesticide use, keeping vital nutrients in the soil, extending the growing season, increasing yields, and providing other benefits to growers,” said Christine Clarke, State Conservationist for NRCS in Massachusetts.

Made of ribs of plastic or metal pipe covered with a layer of plastic sheeting, high tunnels are easy to build, maintain and move. High tunnels are used year-round in parts of the country, providing steady incomes to farmers - a significant advantage to owners of small farms, limited-resource farmers and organic producers.

NRCS will provide financial assistance for the project through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the EQIP Organic Initiative and the Agricultural Management Assistance program. for more information visit [http://www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov/news/news\\_high\\_tunnel\\_pilot.html](http://www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov/news/news_high_tunnel_pilot.html)

## **ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM PAYMENT INCREASE**

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program offered through the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) that provides technical and financial assistance to agricultural producers and forest land owners who want to improve and protect the condition of soil, water, air, plants and animals.

The current cut-off date for EQIP applications is January 15, 2010. Applications are accepted year-round, but are ranked and funded periodically. You may sign up for this program at any time through your local NRCS office. Applications are accepted all year, but are reviewed in a competitive ranking process when funding becomes available - usually once each year.

NRCS will provide financial compensation for part of the cost of establishing and maintaining conservation practices that are necessary for improving the natural resources on your land. Examples of conservation practices include cover cropping, deep tillage and pest management. In the last year the UMass Extension Vegetable Program worked with NRCS to considerably increase the payment schedule for the 595 pest management practice. For more information on the EQIP program including eligibility, conservation practices and payment schedules available visit <http://www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov/programs> or call your local NRCS office. Once contacted, NRCS conservation professionals will discuss with you your conservation objectives, help you identify resource concerns and suggest alternatives for treatment. They will also identify conservation programs that may provide you with financial assistance for implementation of certain practices.

For more information, contact the NRCS office at your local USDA Service Center. USDA service center locations are listed on-line at <http://offices.usda.gov> or in the phone book under Federal Government, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

*If you would like to become a Vegetable notes sponsor, please contact Jessica Dizek at [jdizek@outreach.umass.edu](mailto:jdizek@outreach.umass.edu) or 413 545 1445*

*Vegetable Notes. Ruth Hazzard, editor and Amanda Brown and Andrew Cavanagh, assistant editors. Vegetable Notes is published weekly from May to September and at intervals during the off-season, and includes contributions from the faculty and staff of the UMass Extension Vegetable Program, other universities and USDA agencies, growers, and private IPM consultants. Authors of articles are noted; author and photographer is R. Hazzard if none is cited.*

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